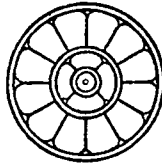


MOTHER INDIA

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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No. 6

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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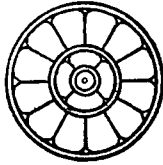
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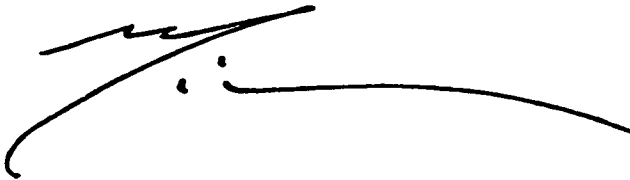


WORDS OF THE MOTHER

To recognise the presence of a “disharmonious atmosphere” is useful only so far as it wakes in each one the will to change it into a harmonious atmosphere and to do that the first important step is for each one to get out of his own limited point of view to understand the point of view of others. It is more important for each one to find the mistake *in himself* rather than insist on the mistake of others.

I add that all those to whom I have given responsibility in the work are expected to be faithful to this responsibility and, without allowing of any “hurt feeling” to creep in, do their best to carry on successfully their duty.

My blessings are with all those who are sincere and have good will.



JEREMIADS AND THE DIVINE FORCE

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

I

20-1-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : As there are several lamentations today besieging me, I have very little time to deal with each separate Jeremiad. Do I understand rightly that your contention is this, "I can't believe in the Divine doing everything for me because it is by my own mighty and often fruitless efforts that I write or do not write poetry and have made myself into a poet." Well, that itself is *épatant*, magnificent, unheard of. It has always been supposed since the infancy of the human race that while a verse-maker can be made or self-made, a poet cannot. "Poeta nascitur non fit," a poet is born not made is the dictum that has come down through the centuries and millenniums and was thundered into my ears by the first pages of my Latin Grammar. The facts of literary history seem to justify this stern saying. But here in Pondicherry we have tried not to manufacture poets but to give them birth, a spiritual, not a physical birth into the body. In a number of instances we are supposed to have succeeded—one of these is your noble self—or if I am to believe the man of sorrows in you, your abject, miserable, hopeless and ineffectual self. But how was it done ? There are two theories, it seems—one that it was by the Force, the other that it was done by your own splashing, kicking, groaning Herculean efforts. Now, sir, if it is the latter, if you have done that unprecedented thing, made yourself by your own laborious strength into a poet (for your earlier efforts were only very decent literary exercises), then, sir, why the deuce are you so abject, self-depreciatory, miserable ? Don't say that is only a poet who can produce no more than a few poems in many months. Even to have done that, to have become a poet at all, a self-made poet is a miracle over which we can only say Sabash ! Sabash ! without ever stopping. If your effort could do that, what is there that it can't do ? all miracles can be effected by it and a giant self-confident faith ought to be in you. On the other hand, if, as I aver, it is the Force that has done it, what then can it not do ? Here too faith, a giant faith is the only logical conclusion. So either way there is room only for Hallelujahs, none for Jeremiads. Q.E.D.

JEREMIADS AND THE DIVINE FORCE

I am obliged to stop—if I go on, there will be no Pranam till 12 o'clock. So send your Jeremiad back tonight and I will see what else to write. Have written this in a headlong hurry—I hope it is not full of lapsus calami.

II

21-1-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : The fact that you don't feel a force does not prove that it is not there. The steam engine does not feel a force moving it, but the force is there. A man is not a steam engine ? He is very little better, for he is conscious only of some bubbling on the surface which he calls himself and is absolutely unconscious of all the subconscient, subliminal, superconscient forces moving him. (This is a fact which is being more and more established by modern psychology though it has got hold only of the lower forces and not the higher, so you need not turn up your rational nose at it.) He twitters intellectually (=foolishly,) about the surface results and attributes them all to his 'noble self', ignoring the fact that his noble self is hidden far away from his own vision behind the veil of his dimly sparkling intellect and the reeking fog of his vital feelings, emotions, impulses, sensations and impressions. So your argument is utterly absurd and futile. Our aim is to bring the secret forces out and unwallled into the open so that instead of getting some shadows or lightnings of themselves out through the veil or being wholly obstructed, they may "pour down" and "flow in a river." But to expect that all at once is a presumptuous demand which shows an impatient ignorance and inexperience. If they begin to trickle at first, that is sufficient to justify the faith in a future downpour. You admit that you once or twice felt a force coming down and delivering a poem out of you (your opinion about its worth or worthlessness is not worth a cent, that is for others to pronounce). That is sufficient to blow the rest of your Jeremiad to smithereens; it proves that the force was and is there and at work and it is only your sweating Herculean labour that prevents you feeling it. Also it is the trickle that gives assurance of the possibility of the downpour. One has only to go on and by one's patience deserve the downpour or else, without deserving, stick on until one gets it. In Yoga itself the experience that is a promise and foretaste but gets shut off till the nature is ready for the fulfilment is a phenomenon familiar to every Yogin when he looks back on his past experience. Such were the brief visitations of Ananda you had some time before. It does not matter if you have not a leechlike tenacity—leeches are not the only type of Yogins. If you can stick anyhow or get stuck that is sufficient. The fact that you are not Sri Aurobindo (who said you were ?) is an inapt irrelevance. One needs only to be oneself in a reasonable way and shake off the hump when

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it is there or allow it to be shaken off without clinging to it with a leechlike tenacity worthy of a better cause.

All the rest is dreary stuff of the tamasic ego. As there is a rajasic ego which shouts "What a magnificent powerful sublime divine individual I am, unique and peerless" (of course there are gradations in the pitch), so there is a tamasic ego which squeaks "What an abject hopeless, worthless, incapable, unluckily unendowed and uniquely impossible creature I am,—all are great Aurobindos, Dilips, Anilbarans (great for their capacity of novel-reading and self-content, according to you) but I, oh I, oh I !" That's your style. It is this tamasic ego (of course it expresses itself in various ways at various times, I am only rendering your present pitch) which is responsible for the Man of Sorrows getting in. It's all bosh—stuff made up to excuse the luxury of laziness, melancholy and despair. You are in that bog just now because you have descended faithfully and completely into the inert stupidity and die-in-the-mudness of your physical consciousness which, I admit, is a specimen ! But so after all is everybody's, only they are different kinds of specimens. What to do ? Dig yourself out if you can ; if you can't, call for ropes and wait till they come. If God knows what will happen when the Grace descends, that is enough, isn't it ? That you don't know is a fact which may be baffling to your—well, your intelligence, but is not of great importance—any more than your supposed unfitness. Who ever was fit, for that matter—fitness and unfitness are only a way of speaking ; man is in nature unfit and a misfit (so far as things spiritual are concerned)—in his outward nature. But within there is a soul and above there is Grace. "This is all you know or need to know" and, if you don't, well, even then you have at least somehow stumbled into the path and have got to remain there till you get haled along it far enough to wake up to the knowledge. Amen.

PARTS OF THE BEING

(Letters of Sri Aurobindo translated by Niranjana from the Bengali "Patravali")

I

It is not possible to leave out any part of the being ; all of it has to be transformed. A particular movement of Nature may be given up but the parts of the being are permanent.

*

In course of sadhana there comes a state when it seems as if there were two distinct beings. One remains occupied with the inner things, pure and tranquil it lives in the vision and experience of the divine truth or is identified with it ; the other is busy with the outer details. Then a divine unity is established between the two—the higher and inner world and the external world become one.

*

Only the front is awake in ordinary people, but this frontal awakened consciousness is not really awake but ignorant, full of obscurity. Behind it stretches the field of the inner being which in appearance seems to be asleep. But when this envelope is removed, the consciousness behind is seen uncovered and it is there that the light, force and peace first descend. This inner being can easily accomplish what is not possible to the external awakened consciousness. By opening itself to the Divine and the universal consciousness, it can become the vast free consciousness.

*

If these attacks cannot enter or if, when they do, they do not last, it has to be understood that the outer being has become conscious, and there has been a great progress in its purification.

*

MOTHER INDIA

When the tamasic state, rising from the subconscious, attacks the body, one feels as if one were ill. Call the Mother's force from above into your body, all this will go away.

*

To get rid of the subconscious difficulties, first one has to recognise them, next reject them, and finally bring the inner or the higher light of the Mother into the body consciousness. Then the ignorant movements of the subconscious will be driven away and the movements of the other consciousness will be established. But this cannot be done easily; you have to do it patiently; a determined patience is required. Trust in the Mother is the only means. However, if one can remain inside and maintain the inner vision and consciousness, there is not much suffering and labour—but it is not always possible to do this and it is then that faith and patience are particularly necessary.

*

When the physical consciousness becomes strong, it covers up everything and tries to spread all over the being, this state is produced—because when the physical consciousness in its distinct nature expresses itself, everything seems to be full of inertia and obscurity, void of the light of knowledge and the drive of force. Do not give your assent to this condition—if it comes, call the Mother's light and force to enter into the body-consciousness and make it luminous and powerful.

*

The physical centre is situated at the end of the vertebral column, in what is called the muladhar; it does not often reveal its position but its presence can be felt.

*

This is the vital purusha who has his seat in the emotional vital. There are three layers of the vital purusha—in the heart, in the navel and below the navel. In the heart he is the emotional being; in the navel the being of desire; and below it the sensational being, in other words, busy with the pull of the senses and the small instincts of life.

*

PARTS OF THE BEING

Only the Self is so vast and limitless etc. When the mind, vital and physical consciousness are fully open, they also become like that—the external mind, life and body are only instruments for the play and transaction with external nature. When the external mind, vital and body become full of light and consciousness they then no longer seem to be narrow and limited. They also become one with the inner.

*

There are many movements of mind which have no coherence; this is as true of a sadhak as of an ordinary person, this happens to all. But the sadhak observes and is aware of them, whereas an ordinary person does not know what is happening within himself. By constantly turning everything to the Divine the mind becomes unified.

*

There are three layers of the ordinary mind. The layer of thought or intellect, the layer of will-power (will directed by the intellect) and the outgoing intelligence. There are also three layers above the mind—higher mind, illumined mind, and intuitive mind. Since you see them inside the head, they must be those three layers of the ordinary mind open to what is above it and in each one a special divine force is coming down to work.

*

When this vast condition prevails in the head, it means the mind is widening to become one with the universal mind. The throat etc. becoming vast indicates that the consciousness in those respective centres is also beginning to widen.

*

To live in the higher mind is not so difficult—it begins when the consciousness rises a little above the head. But the ascent to the Overmind takes a long time, one cannot do it unless one is a very great sadhak. If one can live in these planes, the limitations of the mind are broken down, the consciousness becomes vast, the petty ego-sense decreases, everything is one, all is in the Divine etc.—then the divine or spiritual knowledge comes easily.

ASPECTS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

II

THE INDIAN CONTEXT

If the ultimate solution of the political problem, as indeed of all other problems of life, is to be found in getting back to the source of all existence, by finding our true self and living in our soul, then it is obvious that the experience gathered by India in the course of her long history may be of some use to the world. For, in Sri Aurobindo's words,

"a widest and highest spiritualising of life on earth is the last vision of all that vast and unexampled seeking and experiment in a thousand ways of the soul's outermost and innermost experience which is the unique character of her past; this in the end is the mission for which she was born and the meaning of her future."¹

But if India is to speak again and make her destined contribution to the world's march, one indispensable condition is that she must be politically free and live as a nation master of its destinies.

"In India we do not recognize the nation as the highest synthesis to which we can rise. There is a higher synthesis, humanity; beyond that there is a still higher synthesis, this living, suffering, aspiring world of creatures, the synthesis of Buddhism; there is a highest of all, the synthesis of God, and that is the Hindu synthesis, the synthesis of Vedanta. With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity. It is for this reason that Nationalist thinkers have always urged the necessity of realising our separateness from other nations and living to ourselves for the present, not in order to shut out humanity, but that we may get that individual strength, unity and wholeness which will help us to live as a nation for

¹ *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Bk. II. Ch. 2.

humanity. A man must be strong and free in himself before he can live usefully for others, so must a nation.”¹

“To be ourselves”—this then was the problem which India faced when she took up the question of political freedom for the first time in right earnest, under the inspiration and guidance of Sri Aurobindo in the first decade of this century.

“This and no other was the root-meaning of Swadeshism in Bengal.... The movement of 1905 in Bengal pursued a quite new conception of the nation not merely as a country, but a soul, a psychological, almost a spiritual being and, even when acting from economical and political motives, it sought to dynamise them by this subjective conception and to make them instruments of self-expression rather than objects in themselves....”²

How was the problem to be met ? By living Swaraj in our hearts, by living for the Mother, by learning to die for her. This was the message Sri Aurobindo gave to the nation through the pages of the *Bandemataram* :

“The Kingdom of Heaven is within you ; free India is no piece of wood or stone that can be carved into the likeness of a nation but lived in the hearts of those who desire her, and out of these she must be created. We must first ourselves be free in heart before our country can be free.... When her sons have learned to be free in themselves, free in prison, free under the yoke which they seek to remove, free in life, free in death,... then the chains will fall off of themselves and outward circumstances be forced to obey the law of our inward life....

Those who aspire to free India will first have to pay the price which the Mother demands. The schemes by which we seek to prepare the nation, the scheme of industrial regeneration, the scheme of educational regeneration, the scheme of political regeneration through self-help are subordinate features of the deeper regeneration which the country must go through before it can be free. The Mother asks us for no schemes, no plans, no methods. She herself will provide the schemes, the plans, the methods better than any that we can devise. She asks us for our hearts, our lives, nothing less, nothing more....Regeneration

¹ “The Highest Synthesis” : *Karmayogin*, July 3, 1909.

² *The Human Cycle*, Chapter 4.

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is literally rebirth and rebirth comes not by the intellect, not by the fullness of the purse, not by policy, not by change of machinery, but by the getting of a new heart, by throwing away all that we were into the fire of sacrifice and being reborn in the Mother. Self-abandonment is the demand made upon us. She asks of us, 'How many will live for me ? How many will die for me ? ' and awaits our answer.'¹

To reveal the Motherland in all her glory as the Deity to be worshipped was the mission which the *Bandemataram* preached and brought home to educated India.

"It is not till the Motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves a doomed nation is born. To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others.... The mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself. Once that vision has come to a people, there can be no rest, no peace, no further slumber till the temple has been made ready, the image installed and the sacrifice offered.

A great nation which has had that vision can never again bend its neck in subjection to the yoke of a conqueror".²

It was part of Sri Aurobindo's plan to tell the people of India about their glorious past and to repeat it constantly that the condition of helpless servitude to which they thought they were doomed was a temporary phase, necessary perhaps in the providence of things but bound to change if the people made up their minds to throw off their illusions and set to work.

"The primary aim of the prophets of Nationalism was to rid the nation of the idea that the future was limited by the circumstances of the present, that because temporary causes had brought us low and made us weak, low therefore must be our aims and weak our methods. They pointed the mind of the people to a great and splendid destiny, not in some distant

¹ "The Demand of the Mother" : *Bandemataram*, April 12, 1908.

² "Rishi Bankim Chandra" : *Bandemataram*, April 16, 1907.

millennium but in the comparatively near future, and fired the hearts of the young men with a burning desire to realise the apocalyptic vision. As a justification of what might otherwise have seemed a dream and as an inexhaustible source of energy and inspiration, they pointed persistently to the great achievements and grandiose civilisation of our forefathers and called on the rising generation to recover their lost spiritual and intellectual heritage...."¹

Here was an *aperçu* of India's past and the promise of her future :

"In former ages India was a sort of hermitage of thought and peace apart from the world. Separated from the rest of humanity by her peculiar geographical conformation, she worked out her own problem and thought out the secrets of existence as in a quiet *ashram* from which the noise of the world was shut out. Her thoughts flashed out over Asia and created civilisations, her sons were the bearers of light to the peoples; philosophies based themselves on stray fragments of her infinite wisdom; sciences arose from the waste of her intellectual production.

When the barrier was broken and nations began to surge through the Himalayan gates, the peace of India departed. She passed through centuries of struggle, of ferment in which the civilisations born of her random thoughts returned to her developed and insistent, seeking to impose themselves on the mighty mother of them all. To her they were the reminiscences of her old intellectual experiments laid aside and forgotten. She took them up, re-thought them in a new light and once more made them part of herself. So she dealt with the Greek, so with the Scythian, so with Islam, so now she will deal with the great brood of her returning children, with Christianity, with Buddhism, with European science and materialism, with the fresh speculation born of the world's renewed contact with the source of thought in this ancient cradle of religion, science and philosophy.

The vast amount of new matter which she has to absorb, is unprecedented in her history, but to her it is child's play. Her all-embracing intellect, her penetrating intuition, her invincible originality are equal to greater tasks. The period of passivity when she listened to the voices of the outside world is over. No longer will she be content merely to receive and reproduce, even to receive and improve....The contributions of outside peoples she can only accept as rough material for her immense

¹ "The Past and the Future" : *Karmayogin*, September 25, 1909.

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creative faculty. It was the mission of England to bring this rough material to India, but in the arrogance of her material success she presumed to take upon herself the role of a teacher and treated the Indian people partly as an infant to be instructed, partly as a serf to be schooled to labour for its lords. The farce is played out. England's mission in India is over and it is time for her to recognise¹ the limit of the lease given to her....

Her mission once over, the angel of the Lord who stood by England in her task and removed opponents and difficulties with the waving of his hand, will no longer shield her. She will stay so long as the destinies of India need her and not a day longer, for it is not by her own strength that she came or is still here, and it is not by her own strength that she can remain. The resurgence of India is begun, it will accomplish itself with her help if she will, without it if she does not, against it if she opposes."¹

It was not that India had never known a foreign domination before the British came. She had had the Mussalman invaders on her soil and the Mughals had established a strong enough rule. But there was a difference :

"When the Mogul ruled, he ruled as a soldier and conqueror, in the pride of his strength, in the confidence of his invincible greatness, the lord of the peoples by natural right of his imperial character and warlike strength and skill. He stooped to no meanness, hedged himself in with no army of spies, entered into no relations with foreign powers, but, grandiose and triumphant, sat on the throne of a continent like Indra on his heavenly seat, master of his world because there was none strong enough to dispute it with him. He trusted his subjects, gave them positions of power and responsibility, used their brain and arm to preserve his conquests and by the royalty of that trust and noble pride in his own ability to stand by his innate strength, was able to hold India for over a century until Aurangzeb forgot the *kuladharm*a of his house and by distrust, tyranny and meanness lost for his descendants the splendid heritage of his forefathers.

The present domination is a rule of shop-keepers who are at the same time bureaucrats, a combination of the worst possible qualities for imperial Government. The shop-keeper rules by deceit, the bureaucrat by the use of red-tape. The shop-keeper by melancholy meanness alienates the subject population, the bureaucrat by soulless rigidity deprives

¹ "The Asiatic Role" : *Bandemataram*, April 12, 1907.

the administration of life and human sympathy. The shop-keeper uses his position of authority to push his wares and fleece his subjects, the bureaucrat forgets his duty and loses his royal character in his mercantile greed. The shop-keeper becomes a pocket Machiavel, the bureaucrat a gigantic retail trader. By this confusion of *dharmas*, *varṇasaṅkara* is born in high places and the nation first and the rulers afterward go to perdition. This is what has happened in India under the present regime. The bureaucracy have ruled in the spirit of a mercantile power, holding its position by aid of mercenaries, afraid of its subjects, with no confidence in its destiny, with no trust even in the mercenaries who support it, piling up gold with one hand, with the other holding a borrowed sword over the head of a fallen people....What have been the real sources of bureaucratic strength? An Arms act, a corrupt and oppressive police, an army of spies, a mercenary military force officered by Englishmen, a people emasculated, kept ignorant, out of the world's life, poor, intimidated, abjectly under the thumb of the police constable or the provincial prefect....

A nation politically disorganised, physically broken and stunted is the result of a hundred years of British rule, the account which England can give before God of the trust which He placed in her hands...."¹

Great has been the havoc wrought. The *Bandemataram* spoke thus on the economic ruin:

"We shall just cite a few extracts from the authorities.

'As early as 1769 the Directors...sent orders that the silk-winders should be made to work in the company's factories, and prohibited from working outside under severe penalties by the authority of the Government.'

Prohibitive duties soon began to be imposed on imports from India whilst English goods were forced on the market practically free of duty. The results spell out in figures thus. In 1813 Calcutta exported cotton goods to London of the value of two million pounds; in 1830 Calcutta imported British cotton manufactures of the value of two million pounds. Listen to Wilson, the historian of the time :

'Had not such prohibitive duties existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of India. India could not retaliate. This act of

¹ The New Ideal, *Bandemataram*, April 12, 1907.

self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competition with which he could not have contended on equal terms.'

Professor Devas refers to this strangulation as 'one of the great tragedies in the industrial history of modern times'. List describes it in terse and vivid words :

'England forbade the cotton wares of her own East Indian traders, who prohibited them absolutely. She would have no thread of them. She would have none of those cheap and beautiful wares. She preferred to consume her own dear and inferior stuffs....The statesmen of England had no desire for cheap and perishable goods. What they wished to acquire was dear but enduring manufacturing power... What would England have gained if a century ago she had brought those goods so cheaply ? England gained power, immeasurable power—the others, the very reverse, dependence.'

Words that also throw the light of historic justification on our present Boycott movement.

Let our Anglo-Indian sceptic pause and ponder for a moment on the following words of Larpent and Montgomery Martin :

'Free trade with India had been a free trade from England, not a free trade between India and England,' and further, 'England had no right to destroy the people of a country which she had conquered, for the benefit of herself, for the mere sake of upholding any isolated portion of the community at home.'

One could fill many sheets with similar citations...

Suppose by some stroke of Fate Germany conquered England, and by means similar to those pursued by England in India brought about the annihilation of her present industries, and after that, established such rigorous free trade between England and herself as would make it impossible for the former to rebuild her industries in the face of the competition of the goods pouring in from dominant Germany. Nearly fifty percent of the total labour of England is now employed in her industries; with the exception of a little of it which might be drawn into Government service, the whole of this industrial labour would necessarily be driven to agriculture as the sole source of subsistence left open... and if the increased demand from Germany and other countries for her agricultural produce failed to bring into remunerative re-employment the labour that had been thrown out of the industries, then the resulting

surplusage of labour on the soil would inevitably bring down the wages in agriculture.

And let our critic further imagine the population keeping steadily on the increase, as it does commonly enough amongst a low-waged and ignorant class of labourers; what would be the result ? Further increase of the burden of the soil, lowering of wages, resulting inefficiency of labour, consequent disadvantage in the exchange with foreign countries, and a continuous worsening of the standard of life. All these evils would act and react on each other till England became the permanent abode of a perennial famine sweeping her people off by the hundred thousand. She would then perhaps, if enough vitality was left her, declare a boycott of German goods.

We hardly think the Anglo-Indian disbeliever in our diagnosis of the cause of Indian poverty will have the hardihood to say that the poverty of England in such a case would not be due to the destruction of her industries by Germany, unless of course out of a pious spirit of Christianity he felt disposed to put down the whole thing to the act of an all-wise Providence and refused to descend to the consideration of proximate causes.

Well, what we have only imagined to happen in England in order to bring it home to our critic, has actually taken place in India under the aegis of English rule, and we challenge this light-hearted lecturer of the *Pioneer* to point to any other cause of our country's poverty....

Harsh words easily sliding into filthy abuse, kicks and cuffs, the utter absence of the ordinary human relationship between master and servant are the lot of the labourer in the Anglo-Indian Mills and Factories. He feels himself lower than the mere man God has created him as he enters his master's house. It is this degradation of labour in the Factory and on the plantation that makes the main body of the Indian poor prefer starvation to work under the foreigner....But for this want of humanity on the part of the Anglo-Indians, a well-planned system of recruiting would have easily enabled them to procure the necessary supply of labour for the handful of industries they have started in our country. The strangeness of it all is that the writer in the *Pioneer* after admitting the soundness of our conclusion calls it strange because Anglo-Indians are incapable of solving the problem it puts before the country for solution. We must have our own government first and then we shall show Anglo-India how to solve it."¹

¹ "A 'Pioneer' Economist" : *Bandemataram*, July 22, 1907.

Next, the demoralising effects of a state-controlled anti-national education,

“the Moloch to which we stupidly sacrifice India’s most hopeful sons’ ... our system of public instruction, the most ingeniously complete machine for murder that human stupidity ever invented, and murder not only of man’s body but of a man’s soul, of that sacred fire of individuality in him which is far holier and more precious than the mere mortal breath...”¹

“When the sepoys had conquered India for the English, the choice lay before the British, either to hold the country by force and repression, or to keep it as long as possible by purchasing the co-operation of a small class of the people who would be educated so entirely on Western lines as to lose their separate individuality and their sympathy with the mass of the nation. An essential part of this policy which became dominant owing to the strong personalities of Macaulay, Bentinck and others, was to yield certain minor rights to the small educated class, and concede the larger rights as slowly as possible and only in answer to growing pressure. This policy was not undertaken as the result of our petitions or our wishes, but deliberately and on strong grounds. India was a huge country with a huge people strange and unknown to their rulers. To hold it for ever was then considered by most statesmen a chimerical idea; even to govern it and keep it tranquil for a time was not feasible without the sympathy and cooperation of the people themselves.”²

“The doctrine of Nationality impressed powerfully the early recipients of Western education; and there was, at least for the time being, a faint glimmer of race consciousness in some minds. Even the reforming zeal that was then in evidence did not go the crazy length of depreciating everything Indian. The patriotic tone of the literature of those days is more vigorous and intense even than in these days of utmost nationalistic activities....

But in the lull that intervened, an unnatural education screened from us our past and fostered a dependent spirit and moderate politics. Neither Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee nor Babu Surendra Nath Banerji, nor Mr. Manomohan Ghose, nor Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose, nor Mr. A. M. Bose could escape the influence of an alien civilisation which had by then assumed the aggressive; for they had not the strong individual personality of genius

¹ “Bankim Chandra Chatterji” : *Indu Prakash*, 1894.

² “Is Mendicancy Successful ?” : *Bandemataram*, September, 1906.

which saved Michael and his contemporaries from being thoroughly overshadowed by derivative ideas....A politically designed education produced materials which only echoed the borrowed thought and language of these public men.”¹

“The debasement of our mind, character and tastes by a grossly commercial, materialistic and insufficient European education is a fact on which the young Nationalism has always insisted. The practical destruction of our artistic perceptions and the plastic skill and fineness of eye and hand which once gave our production preeminence, distinction and mastery of the European markets is also a thing accomplished. Most vital of all, the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected, has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great...”²

And what, finally, was the position of Indians under the British regime ? What were their privileges as citizens of the Empire ?

“The Briton in India is the only freeman, the only class allowed the privileges of humanity; he can do what he pleases, say what he chooses, go where he will, serve in any capacity he likes, command the greatest comfort and convenience in all places, but the children of the soil are like so many strangers in their home to whom their country is a prison.

If the Indian is a clerk, he has to drudge from morning to evening at his desk and the struggle to earn a living represses all his other activities. If he is a State servant with a decent pay, he may eat and drink to his satisfaction but he must live and die as something less than a man. He cannot take part in any public or patriotic activity; he must steer clear of all politics; he must not invest money in any Swadeshi concern; he cannot freely admire a Surendranath Banerjee or a Bal Gangadhar Tilak; he is precluded from thinking of the future of his country; he cannot openly contribute anything to any public fund, he cannot subscribe to any newspaper he likes; he lives in a perpetual tremor if his son or wards obeying their youthful and patriotic impulses join any nationalistic movement, he must keep at a respectable distance from the Congress or Conference pandal....He must be the instrument of persecuting his own countrymen....

¹ “The Vernacular Press A Retrospect” . *Bandemataram*, July 5, 1907.

² “The Past and the Future” : *Karmayogin*, September 25, 1909. ...

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The view that the Indian belongs to an eternally inferior race underlies the whole of British policy and individual English action. The Indian is a member of the Oriental races and it is a foregone conclusion with every European political thinker that he is not fit to govern himself.... A Viceroy is free to call our forefathers untruthful; a Lieutenant-Governor or Commissioner enjoys the full right of having a fling at our public men in any public function, and we must profess and practise loyalty and be happy. When in an assembly of our own countrymen we unburthen our mind to them and discuss with them our duties and responsibilities, detectives are entitled to a free entry. At every moment, with every step we try to take,...that self-respect which is the root of human virtue is exposed to outrage: Mr. Tilak very justly asked the other day in delivering his annual Sivaji address at Poona : 'Are we then thieves in our own country ?' ”¹

But there were many among our own countrymen and “leaders” of public opinion who held a very different view. They were dilettantes who shirked the issue and sought to delude. A long battle had to be delivered to convince the nation of their error.

“In a country where subjection has long become a habit of the public mind, there will always be a tendency to shrink from the realities of the position and to hunt for roundabout, safe and peaceful paths to national regeneration. Servitude is painful and intolerable,—servitude is killing the nation by inches,—servitude must be got rid of, true; but the pains and evils of servitude seem almost more tolerable to a good many people than the sharp, salutary pangs of a resolute struggle for liberty.

Hence the not uncommon cry, ‘The violent and frequently bloody methods followed by other nations are not suited to a gentle, spiritual and law-abiding people; we will vindicate our intellectual originality and spiritual superiority by inventing new methods of regeneration much more gentlemanly and civilized.’ The result is a hydra-brood of delusions,—two springing up where one is killed. The old gospel of salvation by prayer was based on the belief in the spiritual superiority of the British people,—an illusion which future generations will look back upon with an amazed incredulity. God answers prayer and the British people are god-like in their nature; so why should we despair? Even now there are

¹ “The First Condition of Peace” : *Bandemataram*, July 6, 1907.

prominent politicians who say and perhaps believe that although there is no historical example of a nation liberated by petition and prayer, yet the book of history is not closed and there is no reason why so liberal and noble a nation as the British should not open a new and unprecedented chapter :—a miracle which never happened before in the world's records may very well be worked for the sole and particular benefit of India!...

Another delusion asks us to seek our regeneration through religion : — only when we have become religiously and morally fit can we hope to be politically free. In spite of the confusion of ideas which underlies this theory, it is one which has a natural charm for a religiously minded people...

If by religion is meant the *nivṛtti mārga*, it is an absurdity to talk of politics and religion in the same breath; for it is the path of the few, the saints, the elect—to whom there is no I or thou, no mine or thine, and therefore no my country or thy country. But if we are asked to perfect our religious development in the *pravṛtti mārga*, then it is obvious that politics is as much a part of *pravṛtti mārga* as any other activity, and there is no rationality in asking us to practise religion and morality first and politics afterwards; for politics is itself a large part of religion and morality.

We acknowledge that nothing is likely to become an universal and master impulse in India which is not identified with religion. The obvious course is to recognize that politics is religion and infuse it with the spirit of religion; for that is the true patriotism which sees God as the Mother in our country, God as Shakti in the mass of our countrymen, and religiously devotes itself to their service and their liberation from present sufferings and servitude.

We do not acknowledge that a nation of slaves who acquiesce in their subjection can become morally fit for freedom; one day of slavery robs a man of half his manhood, and while the yoke remains, he cannot compass a perfect and rounded moral development....Politics is the work of the Kshatriya and it is the virtues of the Kshatriya which must develop if we are to be morally fit for freedom. But the first virtue of the Kshatriya is not to bow his neck to an unjust yoke but to protect his weak and suffering countrymen against the oppressor and welcome death in a just and righteous battle.

A third delusion to which the over-intellectualised are subject is the belief in salvation by industrialism....'Whatever the advantages of political advancement, they sink into insignificance when compared with the blessings which industrial prosperity brings in its train,'—such is the

gospel....It is so far shared by many less loyal people that they consider industrial prosperity as prior to and the cause of political advancement. The idea is that we must be rich before we can struggle for freedom.

History does not bear out this peculiar delusion. It is the poor peoples who have been most passionately attached to liberty, while there are many examples to show that nothing more easily leads to national death and decay than a prosperous servitude. We are particularly thankful that British rule has not, like the Roman, given us industrial prosperity in exchange for political independence; for in that case our fate would have been that of the ancient peoples of Gaul and Britain who buying civilization and prosperity with the loss of their freemanhood fell a prey to the Goth and Saxon and entered into a long helotage from which it took them a thousand years to escape.

We must strive indeed for economic independence, because the despotism that rules us is half-mercantile, half-military, and by mortally wounding the lower mercantile half we may considerably disable the upper; at least we shall remove half the inducement England now has for keeping us in absolute subjection. But we should never forget that politics is a work for the Kshatriya and it is not by the virtues and methods of the Vaishya that we shall finally win our independence.”¹

Loyalist Moderatism with its self-delusions and emphasis on non-essentials had been the bane of nineteenth-century politics. The *Bandemataram* had to challenge the Moderate organs and prepare the nation for the ideal of independence.

“Has it taken our contemporary so long to discover that foreign rule, and especially such a rule as that of the British bureaucracy which demands entire subordination and dependence in the subject people, can have no other effect than to emasculate and degrade ? Loyalists may enumerate a hundred blessings of British rule—though, when closely looked at, they turn out to be apples of the dead sea which turn to dust and cinders when tasted,—none of them can compensate for the one radical and indispensable loss which accompanies them, the loss of our manhood, of our courage, of our self-respect and habit of initiative. When these are gone, merely the shadow of a man is left, and neither the veneer of Western culture, nor enlightenment, nor position nor British peace, nor railways nor telegraphs nor anything else that God can give or man bestow can

¹ “Many Delusions” : *Bandemataram*, April 5, 1907.

ASPECTS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

compensate for the loss of the very basis of individual and national strength and character. Social reform ? What reform can there be of a society of lay figures who pretend to be men ? Industrial progress ? What will be the use of riches which may be taken from us at any time by the strong hand ? Moral and religious improvement ? What truth or value have these phrases to men who see their religion outraged before their eyes and whose wives are never safe from dishonour ?

Get strength first, get independence and all these things will be added unto you. But persist in your foolish moderation, your unseasonable and unreasonable prudence, and another fifty years will find you more degraded than ever, a nation of Greeks with polished intellects and debased souls, body and soul helplessly at the mercy of alien masters..."²

(*To be continued*)

"PUBLICUS"

¹ "Extremism in the 'Bengalee'" : *Bandemataram*, May 3, 1907.

NOTE : In the absence of an authorised and complete edition of Sri Aurobindo's *Bandemataram* and *Karmayogin* articles, doubts may be felt as to the actual authorship of some of the extracts used in this series. But one may be allowed to presume that the views they express had his concurrence. (Editor)

THE HUMAN BODY

GOD dons a human form. But often it is not possible for the common run of men to recognise Him. In good many cases not only do we fail to know or recognise Him but we disbelieve and despise Him. Where has man the vision to see the inner truth ?

The human form is a unique thing. We have said that God makes it His own abode. But all kinds of non-divine existences too may appear in it. The Pishacha or Rakshasa or Asura can become visible in the human form; so may the Gods. In man exist all the worlds and all the elements of the universe—the fourteen worlds and the twenty-four elements. Therefore any being from any world may possess him and through him can found and reveal itself. Why are beings of other planes so eager to have the human body ? The cause is : this physical, inert world, this earth is, as it were, the centre of the world-play—a profound mystery, a unique fulfilment of creation. All beings have an irresistible urge to enjoy happiness in the physical, to lord it over the earth and here in this very form grow up into “His Imperial Majesty”. And to fulfil this purpose, to gratify this desire there is no other vessel and instrument more perfect than man. All his limbs, well-formed and well-constituted, can reflect and harbour all the faculties beyond the power of any other being. Is it for this reason that in order to exorcize a man, Christ compelled the evil spirits to get into the animal body—the herd of swine—and put an end to them by getting them drowned in water ?

Creation originated from the urge of a descent—the descent of the highest, beyond the worlds, and the supreme consciousness—on this dense, hard and solid earth of Matter in the form of a mass of atoms. The urge of this downward tendency continues also in the personalities and the beings that have appeared in the different stages of this descent. They or something in them wants to come down to the level of the earth. Again, in the upward movement as well, their urge is to come up to the status of man, or, it may be, ultimately to partake of the fulfilment that is in bloom or will bloom in the physical. However, we shall shortly deal with that mystery.

Now we were referring to the descent of God in human form. Why has God become man? For what purpose? What were His movement and behaviour at the time? How is He when at rest? How does He move about? Regarding this there is a fine principle, a subtle truth in the Christian way of spiritual

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practice. And it can be said even that it is a unique discovery, a speciality of the Christian sadhana. According to the Christian doctrine God as such has not come down on the earth, but He has sent His own Son in the form of man—even then the Father and the Son are at bottom one—"I and my Father are one." What for ? To take up the sins of man—that means man is a storehouse of sin. By his own effort, by his spiritual practice to get rid of sin and to attain to the spiritual divine consciousness and life is not possible for him. Therefore, the supremely gracious God has come in the human form to expiate the sin of man on his behalf, and thus make him fit for receiving the Grace of God. This is the reality of what is called vicarious atonement and redemption.

Through the allegory of bread and wine, the Eucharist—it has been said that the follower of Christ turns his blood into that of Christ, and his body into that of the Messiah—he makes the body of Christ a part and parcel of his own. As lime clarifies turbid water so by drinking the physical consciousness of Christ his follower purifies his own physical consciousness. To confess one's sins is to accept the Cross—the tragic end of Christ signifies God's compassion for man, because the crucified Christ is the Life everlasting.

In India God has not been depicted in this way. God himself takes away the burden of sin—"I shall deliver thee from all sins"—this is the message of God in this land. So there is a difference between the two approaches.

The sin of the disciple—that is, impurity and weakness—that the preceptor takes upon himself to help the disciple in his self-purification—this truth is well known to us. The reaction that the Guru has to undergo as a result of accepting the impurity of the disciple and the consequences he has to suffer, such as disease, we can know from the example of Sri Ramakrishna. The origin of the malignant disease that had attacked him was the close contact and intimacy with the disciples. Sri Ramakrishna himself has said so. And it is because of the incidence of this disease that the atheist, the wiseacre foolishly say, "God incurs cancer ! What a helpless and poor God !" ¹

But herein lies the real mystery. God has become man; that means he has assumed the human nature and has accepted the human weakness not only in word or allegorically but in fact, in actual practice. That is why we see this human weakness in Christ on the last day of his life when he asks God to remove the vessel of deadly poison from his lips, so that he may not have to drink of it any more.

God having become a man shows by example how one can rise to a godly or divine nature from a human nature. God reveals this sadhana through his human life. Man knows himself as sinful, afflicted, weak and helpless. To

¹ Compare : "the stupid disown me....." *The Gita*

him the spiritual realisation, the divine Life, the divine Consciousness may seem to be futile, hollow and imaginary—like the castle in the air. These are only luxurious idealism which are not for all, at least many. Only a few that are heroic, adventurous and self-confident can afford to spend time and labour in this direction. In order to drive away this error, this false notion, this familiar and common disbelief God has wanted to show, by way of a practical demonstration, as it were, how to rise above human weakness. In man, in spite of his numerous weaknesses, there abides a divine Power by virtue of which even the dumb can be endowed with eloquence.

The second mystery is this that not only for the individual but for the collectivity the human form of God has a special significance. God comes down to the lower level. He abides by His own laws to transform them. He destroys whatever has to be destroyed. He purifies whatever has to be purified. He protects and enriches whatever has to be protected and enriched. This is His mission. That means a collision, a definite battle. Consequently the divine Body too has to undergo scars. That is the law of this plane, that is the rule of His game. But it is thus that God clears the road, makes the path easy. On behalf of man God conquers Nature so that it may be easy for man to reconquer it. A question may be raised here : “the conquest of nature or the transformation of nature—cannot God effect it from His own Self or the World-Self ? What necessity is there to accept a human form in order to do the work ?” First of all, if God were to do everything in a subtle way then why was the physical created, for what purpose ? We have said that this Matter, this world, this very earth, this earthly body itself are the field for God’s *Lila*, the centre and knot of the mystery of the creation. All disembodied powers and personalities want to come down on earth and like to be embodied and to have all the privileges of this place. The Asuras want this, the Gods want this, therefore God too has to come down. He has to become the full expression of body by becoming an embodied being. Then this body has its own purpose and fulfilment. The body has come down with inconscient Matter, it is born here below to become purified and transformed into the divine Being. Moreover, from some other sphere, from a consciousness transcendent and immanent, to act on the Matter of the world or on some particular receptacles means to apply force, an attempt to impose a different principle. There is a necessity for this process and the power does act in this way, but something else must accompany this process. On our part that something is more important. It is the body’s own conscious will, the self-offering the self-opening of Matter—not because of an influence, impulsion or pressure from elsewhere ; the material body of its own accord, by a demand from within, will want the Reality beyond Matter and body. That is why

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the divine Body shows how even Matter can aspire for spirituality and proves that Matter is not absolutely Matter, in it too abides a consciousness and a conscious aspiration.

There is a tradition that if the inhabitants of the other worlds—the Demons, the Giants, the Titans and even the Gods—wanted liberation or wanted to be raised higher or to the highest, then they would come down to the earth and be born as men. In this human body alone the discipline for ascension is possible. To use the language of the Puranas, the other worlds are the fields for enjoyment while this earth is the field for work. That means the other worlds are the regions for some definite and fixed qualities. They are typical existences. The inherent quality of any of them does not change. One's own nature or one's own accumulated actions find their manifestation. One spends and enjoys there. But to acquire new merit, to introduce a new trend in one's nature, to turn its course one will have to accept this human body. For, as we have said at the outset, man is a combination of all the planes of creation. Therefore, the consciousness can go up and come down and can stay on any level. It can be said that in man there is, like his very spine, a stair of consciousness—the Vedic seer has spoken of the possibilities of going up as on a bamboo ladder. But the most secret mystery is this that in man there is that unique part—the divine heart-cave which is the fount of a new sight and a new creation and which guides and gives sanction for the change and the return, and which is the open and illumined gate towards the supreme fulfilment, the highest consciousness, an immortal bridge between this world and the other world. All want to possess and enjoy the plenitude of the earth, and want to establish themselves in an embodied being here on the earth. Man as well as the denizens of the other worlds—all of them are given one more and a greater opportunity. Many of them accept, some consciously, some unconsciously so that they may evolve without remaining confined to their own characteristic qualities for all time—may gain a footing on the ascending levels of consciousness, may make a constant progress, "Nirārata" (Rig Veda), may accept other qualities and transformation and thereby can achieve the higher and the nobler existence. The human receptacle acts as a unique catalytic agent in this chemical progress.

A benediction, a divine Grace reposes on this apparently weak and perishable human body.

God accepts this human body burdened with diseases and afflictions, because there is no other means of accepting the world and mankind. This indeed is the work of God—accepting the creation as it is to purify and transform it gradually from within. If God comes down to stand before us with an immortal embodied consciousness free from age and death then we shall

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keep at a distance from Him. We shall not be able to receive Him as our own. How close to Arjuna was Krishna in his human way ! All on a sudden Arjuna one day happened to see this mystery through the divinely gifted vision and, being overwhelmed, he said, "Thou art father, Thou art friend, Thou art my Beloved; in what rash vehemence have I not spoken to Thee? What disrespect was not shown by me to Thee at play and in the banquet ! O Lord ! do forgive those errors of mine." If God brings to life the dead by His mere touch and endows the blind with sight and heals the diseased then that is a miracle, no doubt, but a greater miracle of His is to accept the troubles of diseases and affliction in spite of being above them all in order to make the body free from them and to fill it with immortality.

Matchless is the description of the glory of the human body of God found in the Vaishnava cult of Bengal. Goloka, the abode of the eternal sport of Radha and Krishna, which is far above the world of Brahma, is the supreme truth. And Radha and Krishna are meaningless without the human form—rather all secrets of the dual personalities consist in the human form. The human form is not one among the hundreds and thousands of forms in Nature ; it is not merely a perishable receptacle manifested in the process of the evolution and confined to time and space. The Vaishnava philosophy teaches us that there is an eternal truth of the human form and it has an intimate connection with the divine Body. To look upon God as a man is not mere anthropomorphism. But in the Vaishnava doctrine prominence and importance have been given to the form made of consciousness, the ultimate form. We go further and bring to the fore even this material human body and have faith in its divine fulfilment.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali in "E Yuger Sadhana")

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US¹

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(17)

HER VEILED WORKING

WHEN I went to see a Minister in connection with my licence for the purchase of machinery from a foreign country, he said that I could get it only if I agreed to pay the amount of purchase to the sellers three years hence and not forthwith ; otherwise, he added, he was not interested to help me in any way.

Although I had not enquired of the representative of the sellers in the city whether he would agree to such terms or not, reserving my doubts I accepted the Minister's offer on the spot in the hope of persuading him. When I went to him he did not accept these terms. It seemed I had vainly spent nearly Rs. 50,000, visiting foreign countries in a look-out for machinery and neglecting for that reason my regular business in India.

For three days I was in a dejected yet a most prayerful mood, remembering and calling the Mother all the time. Finding no way out I thought of leaving the city to return to mine to attend to my regular business. Before this I went to bid good-bye to a clerk in the Ministry, from where I had been trying to arrange for the licence. He had been kind enough to help me in various ways.

When I met him he offered his congratulations on the grant of licence to me. "Why this joke ?" I asked. "What is the use of getting a licence on terms which are not acceptable to the sellers ?"

"No, the licence has been granted on immediate cash-payment basis. We have received a special order from the Secretary granting you the licence. So there you are !"

How it all came about, how the whole situation got changed, I did not know, but I could not attribute it to anything except the Grace of the Mother, and for that I am grateful to her.

SAVIOUR VISION

This happened during the last week of August 1957. My daughter, aged 22 years, was down with serious typhoid for over three weeks. She was running a high temperature and her condition was worsening from day to day. The place being a village, no proper medical aid was available. We were dying with anxiety for the safety of our beloved daughter. I was all along praying to the Mother for her recovery.

During those fateful nights, at the request of my daughter, I used to recite a few verses from Chapter II of the Gita and keep a small photo of the Mother by her bed. I used to talk to her about the Mother and the Ashram

¹ Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or to the Compiler.

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and to this she used to listen with great interest in spite of the bad state of her health. Then she used to be lulled to sleep for an hour or two.

One morning she called me suddenly. She was all joy and her eyes were beaming. She said that in the middle of the previous night she had seen in a dream Goddess Durga clad in spotless white and riding a fierce lion. Durga had distinctly resembled the Mother and had been enveloped in unearthly splendour. She added that in the small hours of the morning there had been another dream wherein the Mother had stood by her bed in her ordinary dress. Seeing the Mother, she continued, she had fallen on her knees and felt her loving touch on her head. She had heard the Mother saying, "Don't worry, my child, I am here to look after you." Her mind had been filled with ineffable joy and peace at these words. Strange to say, this second dream repeated itself till the end of the week. We had no doubt that she would be cured of her illness by the Mother's Grace.

After these happenings, twice her sickness took a serious turn and we almost gave up hopes of her survival. But somehow, as if by a miracle, she began to show signs of improvement and regained her health gradually. She was confined to bed for over five months. Now she is all right and is very eager to see the Mother and the Ashram.

BACK FROM THE REGION OF DEATH

In the year 1951 I had a serious attack of typhoid.

One night I had a dream which was for certain more than a mere dream, for it was symbolic and luminous.

I saw as if some Asuras, signifying perhaps the messengers of Death, had entered my room. They lifted my body in its lying position and took it towards the sky to an unknown place. Some time later I found as if they had put an end to my life. Yet I was the witness of all this and all that followed.

Later they brought back my dead body and threw it on the bed from where I had been removed.

A few minutes later, I saw the Mother entering my room. She lifted my dead body in her arms and took it towards the sky. After a while she brought it back, now living. Then she gently put it on the bed. At once I got up and felt I had got a new life by her Grace.

After this, as long as I was confined to bed, I kept feeling her Presence all around me : she was always there with me to guard and protect.

A few days after, I completely recovered from my illness.

(To be continued)

Compiled and reported by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THREE FAIRY TALES

III

LADY BEAUTIFUL AND PRINCESS CHARMING

LONG ago there lived in a faery castle at the bottom of an enchanted lake, a Lady who was the very soul of beauty.

Her name was Lady Beautiful who often at night would come up from her underwater abode, and using a silver cloud for a chariot would quietly drift over the nearby city and watch the mortals as they worked, or played, or slept, as the case may be.

She was kind of heart, easily moved to sympathy, and she would often intercede to correct some cruel injustice. This she did in a subtle fashion, for she had at her command certain Magic Powers. But more frequently her concern would be for some individual who having fallen a victim to one or more of the many weaknesses of human nature, stood in need of her care, her solace or even, if necessary, her chastisement.

Now, one night as she rode above in her white chariot, she espied a light in the window of the King's Palace. And this was unusual, for the hour was late and most honest citizens were long enfolded in the arms of Morpheus; some were even sound asleep.

Softly she drifted to the window and peered in. There, dressed in a magnificent gown, a tiara of diamonds sparkling on her pretty head, shoes of crystal clasping her tiny feet, stood the Princess Charming. She was admiring herself in a large mirror and what she saw left little to be desired. Presently she began to walk up and down as if treading on roseleaves, and to perform pretty gestures.

"My goodness," said Lady Beautiful to herself, "what on earth is the girl up to ? Why, she's grown so entranced with herself that she will never be able to love anything or anyone else ! I've never seen such conceit ! I must do something and quickly, or the girl will be utterly spoiled."

Quietly Lady Beautiful withdrew a little to think of a stratagem. This, she concluded, was a case for some chastisement. Pride always went before a fall, and now the thing was to provide a fall that the circumstances would merit. The child would have to be altered, though, and not broken : corrected, not crippled.

The solution presented itself to her and she smiled.

When she returned to the window, the light had been turned off, or blown out, but by the light of the moon Lady Beautiful could see that the young princess was asleep in bed. She entered the room and, touching the mirror lightly with her finger, said :

“Prompter of Vanity,
Mirror bright,
Reflect her face
An ugly sight.”

Then she turned and had a last look at the sleeping girl. Softly she whispered :

“My child, although I love you well,
I bring to you a touch of hell.
The blow I give is to impart :
‘True Beauty lies within the heart.’
But all the while I’ll keep close guard
Your lesson does not prove too hard.”

She kissed the sleeping girl on the forehead, stepped through the window onto her cloud, and disappeared into the night.

Now the first thing that Princess Charming did, as a rule, when she woke in the morning, was to look in the mirror. It was just a habit she had. Other people play music to start the day off pleasantly, some say their prayers, and some even do physical exercises. The princess simply looked at herself and felt that everything was going nicely. Then she would climb back into bed and have the servant bring her breakfast : coffee, hot buttered rolls and two nightingale’s eggs. She always had nightingale’s eggs because they improved her singing voice.

So when the morning sun shone through the window, Charming woke up, lightly stepped out of bed as young people do and rushed to the mirror. But alas, alack, woe is me and dark the day, for, instead of her own sweet face, there smiled back something quite hideous. She screamed, and put her hand to her mouth; so did the reflection. The shock was terrible. She could hardly believe that it was she herself and no-one else. No-one else was there. She touched the unsightly face : so did the reflection. She screwed up her eyes : so did the reflection. She opened her mouth : so did the reflection. It was shocking, but that horrid face in there was her own ! It was unbelievable. What had happened ? Why, only last night she had a face that would launch a thousand ships, and now she had one that would sink them. It was all rumpled and crumpled. It was the face of a very old woman whom age had endowed with

THREE FAIRY TALES

nothing but ugliness. And yet, in a strange way, it was still her own face—but as it might be a hundred years hence. She wanted to faint, but it was too late to faint. She had seen the worst and, instead, trembled all over. O, woe, woe, woe !

Weakly, dismally, she crawled back into bed and lost her appetite. Who could eat nightingale's eggs with a face like that ? She just lay stricken and wan and full of despair.

Now here it must be pointed out that most people wake up with crumpled faces. It seems to be natural. They get used to the phenomenon of course, and even become philosophical about it. They merely shrug their shoulders and laugh it off. At the same time they prefer to avoid mirrors until later in the day when things have straightened themselves out a little.

But Charming was different, because, if the truth were to be told, she was as much attached to her looks as thy were to her. Indeed, it might well be said that her face had gone to her head. And the inevitable result of this terrible transformation was that Charming fell into a morbid depression and refused to get out of bed. She lay there feeling very old and wishing she were dead and buried.

- Her mother and father, the King and Queen, were extremely upset. They felt it was time she got married to take her mind off herself. This was an old remedy which often succeeded, although many times it had the strange effect of making people lose their minds completely.

"My dear daughter," said the King as he stood by her bed, "we feel that you have reached an age when it is customary for young ladies to choose some life-companion, a husband, a prince, with whom to share your love, your life, your beauty and your wealth."

The poor girl looked up at her father piteously.

"Father, dear father," she said, "what nobleman would marry himself to a face like mine ? To gaze each morning over the marmalade at such a visage ? O, father, torment me not. Although I am a princess by your blood, forsooth, my fortune lay within my face; my beauty gone, my fortune too is lost."

"Your beauty gone ?" said the King, surprised. But Charming knew he was going to be tactful. He was always careful of other people's feelings :

"My child, you look as fair as any rose
Dew-decked, caressed by the morning sun,
As sweet as honey in a crystal vase
Or tempting as the raisins in a bun.
Those blue eyes have betwixt a perfect nose
As straight as Cupid's arrow and as sharp,
Your lips are roundly fashioned as his bow,

Methinks you'd be an angel, but for a harp.
My dear, your beauty and your youth are past all doubt,
So what in heaven's name do you complain about ?"

The King was obviously a poet, and why not ? He sat down exhausted with the effort.

"O father," quoth the girl, "I know how gentle, kindly is your heart, nor would you with one word offend my face. You are my sire, of you I am a part, of your estate I share, and of your grace. 'Tis true you gave me all and nothing lack; but if you gave this face, then take it back."

The king was quite bewildered, and so was the Queen who had thus far been silent. At last she spoke, and firmly :

"Look here, my child, pray cease this empty noise,
There's nothing wrong that cannot be undone,
Get up at once, regain your proper poise
And smartly take the horse out for a run."

Charming moaned inwardly. She couldn't dare be seen outside, without a mask, and wondered if there could be one inside the house. But, being a dutiful daughter, she decided to obey her royal mother.

"Very well, good mother, be it so," she said. "Pray leave me now. Bid the servant, as you go, to harness Dobbin down below."

When she was alone, she rose and looked in the mirror. Nothing had changed. The face that stared back at her was pale and tear-stained and uglier than ever. In the bottom of a cupboard she found a pretty mask and put it on.

She made up her mind what she must do. She could no longer live with such a face; the only thing to do was die with it. She would ride out quickly to the lake yonder and throw herself in, forthwith.

Quickly she dressed, slipped quietly downstairs, and out at the postern gate.¹ Within a trice she had Dobbin galloping wildly over the meadows towards the lake.

There was a cold wind blowing over the waters when she arrived, and she shivered as she dismounted. If she did not die by drowning she would die by freezing.

For a moment she stood by the edge of the water, deep in thought. She was too young to die, so forlorn a Juliet who had never known a Romeo. Sadly she removed her mask.

And now a strange thing happened. The wind ceased, the waters settled and stilled their turbulence and became quiet and calm and as smooth as a mirror. There was an eerie silence. Charming looked down into the water

¹ A kind of back-door, only more respectable.

LADY BEAUTIFUL AND PRINCESS CHARMING

and saw reflected there the beauty that had been hers. Her heart gave a great bound of joy, and she knelt down to get a closer look. Yes, it was true, it was really her face, her own face with its fresh youthfulness and beauty. O, what a relief, what a release, for now she need not die.

But wait. Tarry. Another reflection lay with hers upon the water, and so ethereal it was, so beautiful, it seemed not of this earth.

Quickly she rose to her feet and, turning, gazed into the wise and gentle eyes of Lady Beautiful, the Spirit of the lake.

“My dear,” said Lady Beautiful, “ ’twas I
That stood behind this play of light and gloom.
I saw you pose and prance and gaze and guy,
And cast a spell on the mirror in your room.
The thing you valued most then seemed to die,
The beauty of a face so young and fair,
And in its place an awful image stood
Of age and weariness, old sins, and heavy care.
Such is the doom that thoughtless vanity buys
When to its vacancy it adds the fruitless years
And robber time takes all : youth, beauty, breath,
And lays upon the hulk the hand of death.
Take care, my child, and learn your lesson well,
Discard this emptiness and wisdom make your goal,
How long upon the body will you dwell
And never cast a glance into your soul ?
All faces are as charts whereon are writ
The etchings of the feelings, thought and wit,
If you would have a winsome face in age
Eschew conceit and emulate the sage.
Now go in peace; my blessings, fare you well.
Forget your face, remember what I tell.”

And so saying, Lady Beautiful disappeared. Charming went home to the Palace rejoicing. She had not only regained her beauty but won wisdom to boot.

Eventually she was wedded to an extremely presentable young man called Prince Handsome, and would have lived happily ever after, were it not for a certain habit of his which seemed to infuriate her beyond all measure. Whenever he got up in the morning the first thing he would do was to look in the mirror; indeed he kept a small one under his pillow in case of emergency.

GODFREY

PSYCHIC PRANA

Most rare and most elusive part
And yet, the very breath of life
That moves the inner waking heart
And the secret thrill threading the mind
Of sense—soft as an opening rose,
Hard as the blade of a warrior's sword.
Frail the body that must enclose
This flame-power of activity,
Force passion and denied desire
To chaos...or creativity !
Yet purged of both, the sacred Fire
Sears the pale orisons of unguarded thoughts,
Transforms dynamic impulse into Bliss
To mount the wings of Immortality.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Continued from the previous issue)

(17)

V. SELF-FATHOMING AND SOUL'S STRUGGLE

(Continued)

38, WILT THOU TOO SHUN?

MURK mists of grief I see
All round about the spheres;
Frustration looms on me,
Phantom with darkling fears.
No pause for peace awhile,
Night-breaking break of smile,
As if my fate were writ in tears.

In this ill-natured state,—
Web-woven false with true,—
My heart's in anxious spate
Thy face of star to view.
My sod wilt Thou too shun ?
See it thus worn and done ?
End doom, make it our Rendezvous !

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE NEW WORLD UNION

(Continued)

Is it an accident that this movement for world peace on a spiritual foundation has come to birth in India ? We are simply facing facts when we acknowledge India's special providential preparation for this hour. As stated earlier: "An impressive succession of spiritual giants—explorers and experimenters in the inner world of man, pioneers in the development of the *experience* of the unity of all life in the Divine—have distinguished India's cultural history, not only in the ancient past but in the present age as well. Is not this divine knowledge our Motherland's most potent and creative resource, her priceless contribution to modern man in his predicament ?"

In these days of Five Year Plans, when the nation is bent upon mobilising every resource for reconstruction, shall we continue to overlook a source of light and power infinitely more potent than all of our great hydroelectric projects ? We have seen unmistakable signs of the dawn of a great Awakening as we have moved up and down this land, and it is our faith that the New World Union is one of many divine instruments to this end.

More than half a century ago Sri Aurobindo had become a mighty instrument of national awakening, not merely a political prophet but "the voice of India's soul". Some time after his vision of the need of *world* awakening and transformation had taken him to Pondicherry, he wrote : "What preoccupies me now is the question what India is going to do with its self-determination, how will it use its freedom, on what lines it is going to determine its future.... No doubt people talk of India developing on her own lines, but nobody seems to have very clear or sufficient ideas as to what these lines are to be."

It is not political but spiritual concern that prompts the question : Can we believe that India's present role on the world scene does justice to her *swa-bhāva*, her creative genius ? Is it the best of which she is capable, the out-flowering and consummation of her distinctive development through the ages, her national self-realisation ? Even before Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo wrote in *Bande Mataram* : "In the next great stage of human progress it is not a material but a spiritual, moral and psychical advance that has to be made, and for this a free Asia and in Asia a free India must take the lead, and Liberty is worth striving for, for the world's sake." In one of his speeches he declared: "Our ideal of patriotism proceeds on the basis of love and brotherhood and it

looks beyond the unity of the nation and envisages the ultimate unity of all mankind."

Now we come to a most meaningful statement of Sri Aurobindo in *Bande Mataram* : "The movement of which the first outbreak was political *will end in a spiritual consummation*." Has this occurred thus far ? Has modern India had a spiritual awakening to match her political, economic and social awakening ? *Is today not the time* for the fulfilment of this prophecy ? Let India's modern Renaissance, which has had its political consummation in Swaraj and is striving for its economic liberation, be crowned by its spiritual consummation, the supreme Renaissance envisaged by the Master. Let our Motherland undergo this new Awakening, not for an ingrown self-fulfilment in the traditional sense, but for the world's sake, better still, for the fulfilment of the Purpose Divine.

If, considering the majority of our readers, our emphasis has been on *India's* role in this divine event, let us quickly add that, as the New World Union moves across the world, it hopes to inspire *all* peoples to discover their "nation-soul" and realise it. It is not by "keeping her light under a bushel" in false modesty that India can truly serve her world neighbours, but by showing what it means for a great people to wake up and be true to its nation-soul, the outflowing from within of its finest potentialities, individual and collective.

It is our faith that the basis of the New World Union offers a great new hope of bridging the present perilous Cold War chasm, outflanking the forces of irreconcilable conflict. The Union thinks in terms of "life", not "religion". It is scientific in its approach, although it recognises that there are depths of life and levels of consciousness which ordinary scientific methods cannot fathom. It is utterly universal, non-sectarian, non-political, and seeks to be imbued with the spirit of true peace-making.

To the intelligentsia of the modern world generally, who have assumed that they must choose between "religion" and materialism of one sort or another, NWU points to a *third alternative*—an experimental approach to spiritual realities, an open-eyed quest for integral self-fulfilment for the individual, the nation, the world. This third alternative, dynamic and attractive, is destined to grow in the eyes of the world of tomorrow.

The past age of rationalism and materialism reached its logical climax in that extremest symbol of division and disintegration, the splitting of the atom for destructive purposes. To meet this threat to our race, the Age of the Spirit has come to birth, calling us to discover within ourselves a superior power of unity and harmony and integration, a Force whose assured victory means a new world for all mankind. It is the privilege of those who join in this New World adventure to learn how to become channels of that power for personal self-development and for world transformation.

MOTHER INDIA

How very appropriate to this moment of history was the last Bengali New Year Message of the Divine Mother addressed to Bangavani, in the same Bengal which first heard Sri Aurobindo's awakening "voice of India's soul" ! Here is Her Call : "A new light is dawning on the world. *Wake up and unite* to receive and welcome it." This is a reminder that the "spiritual consummation", the Great Awakening that has begun, is not proceeding from a human but from a divine initiative. And let us note well that it is to those already dedicated to the Supreme, devoted to the Master and the Mother, that She calls, "*Wake up and unite*". Elsewhere She had spoken of "the realisation of human unity through the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner divinity which is one."

The Mother's Message to us all at the time of the general New Year, 1954, ended with that vibrant phrase "a new world". Is it not in the divine fitness of things that the Sri Aurobindo centres, some 185 in India and a score of them abroad, are providing cores of spiritual workers for the nuclei of the New World Union, and equally appropriate that increasingly this movement for a spirit-based peace, true to the unitive divine purpose in the world today, is drawing into its non-sectarian circle of fellowship and service those of many other spiritual affiliations, and on absolutely equal terms ? Are they not all in Her eyes (and must they not be in ours, as well ?) members of *Her wider family* ? May Her words "*Wake up and unite*" keep ringing in our ears, until all of us, Her sons and daughters, form living, responsive units of the Great Awakening. We pray for the active collaboration of all who hear the Call in this "Hour of God".

(Concluded)

JAY SMITH

Students' Section

TALKS ON POETRY

(These Talks were given to a group of students starting their University life. They have been prepared for publication from notes and memory, except in the few places where they have been expanded a little. Here and there the material is slightly rearranged in the interests of unity of theme. As far as possible the actual turns of phrase used in the Class have been recovered and, at the request of the students, even the digressions have been preserved. The Talks make, in this form, somewhat unconventional pieces, but the aim has been to retain not only their touch of literature and serious thought but also their touch of life and laughter.)

TALK SIX

WE spoke of Hugo soon after discussing the value of metre. Apropos of Hugo I may continue my remarks on metre by a brief consideration of how metre operates in English and French and some other languages. You told me the other day that not all of you had gone through Premanand's metrical mill and come out authorities on Prosody. Let me give you, as a short guide, a piece of verse composed by Coleridge and adapted in some places as well as enlarged at the close by Amal—not exactly rendered, as I would believe if I were of D'Annunzio's temper, *belle* or *magnifique* by being made *Amalienne*. At the same time it tells us the characteristic of each important metrical foot and illustrates in the greater part of the line the very foot which is being spoken of. Coleridge is employing the old terminology of long and short for what we now call stress and slack.

$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} \\ \text{Trochee} & | & \text{trips from} & | & \text{long to} & | & \text{short.} \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} \\ \text{Two longs} & | & \text{paired off,} & | & \text{in calm} & | & \text{grave sort} \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} \\ \text{Slow Spon} & | & \text{dee stalks,} & | & \text{strong foot,} & | & \text{yet proves} & | & \text{ill able} \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{x} & \textit{l} & \textit{x} & \textit{x} \\ \text{Ever to} & | & \text{come up to} & | & \text{Dactyl tri} & | & \text{syllable.} & | \end{array}$

MOTHER INDIA

^{x/} ^x ^l ^x ^l ^x ^l
 Iam|bics march | from short | to long.
^x ^x ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x ^x ^l
 With a leap | and a bound | do the A|napaests throng. |
^x ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x ^l ^l
 A sylla|ble long, with | a short at | each side, |
^x ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x ^l
 The Amphi|brachs haste with | a stately | stride. |
^l ^x ^l ^{lx} ^l ^l ^x ^l ^l ^x ^l ^x
 First and last | being long, | middle short, | Amphima|cer|
^l ^x ^l ^l ^x ^l ^l ^x ^l ^{lx} ^l ^x
 Strikes his firm | hoofs, a proud | thorough-bred | giant ra | cer.

Thus far Coleridge adapted. Now the enlargement. Trochees and iambs (or iambs) are opposites, so are Dactyls and Anapaests, Amphibrachs and Amphimacers (or Cretics). But Spondees are left unopposed. So I have to round off :

^x ^x ^l ^l ^x ^x ^l ^l ^l ^l ^x ^x ^l ^x
 At the | tail-end | is a | small foot, | sheer op|posite | brother |
^x ^x ^l ^l ^x ^x ^l ^l ^x ^x ^l ^l
 To the | strong Spon|dee, the | weak Pyr|rhic with | two shorts |
^x ^l ^x
 together. |

After the “giant racer”, “a tail-end” is quite in place, you will agree. The Pyrrhic is a pretty common foot in English, but, unlike the others, it must always be followed by some other foot and cannot repeat itself. If you put even two Pyrrhics in succession—that is, four shorts in two pairs—you will come in for as much criticism from Prosodists as this Ashram of Yoga has incurred from Puritans by its group on group of girls in “shorts”.

When somehow four shorts (or slacks) do happen in succession, as in the second line of the three—

With the brief beauty of her face—drunk, blind

^x ^x ^x ^x
 To the inexhaustible vastnesses that lure

The song-impetuous mind ?—

what are we to do ? The way out is the foot named tribrach : three slacks. The first two feet of the line in question would be scanned as a tribrach and an iamb :

^x ^x ^x ^x [/]
 To the in|exhaus|tible vastnesses that lure...

In earlier days the poet would have solved the problem by putting an apostrophe after *th* and contracting the three slacks to two: "To th' in ...". A sort of solution is also possible by giving the opening syllable of "inexhaustible" a minor accent and converting the tribrach into what is termed a glide-anapaest—an anapaest in which a syllable (here the third) starts with a vowel almost merging with the vowel-end of the preceding syllable. (The last foot—"...tuous mind"—of line 3 is also a glide-anapaest.)

Now you are technically equipped to meet every situation. Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, wrote :

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan :
 The proper study of mankind is Man.

But if you know your feet you can even attempt the scansion of the poetry written by an Avatar, the poetic work of Sri Aurobindo whom we regard as the Incarnate Divine : you can flout Pope's warning and presume to scan God ! But before you disobey that Papal injunction against sacrilege, I should advise you to add to your technical equipment some understanding of the metrical needs of the inspiration. About this, anon.

English metre is based on stress. Let us not forget that the English language is a language of stresses. It is never enough to know the correct pronunciation of English words in order to speak English with an English intonation. We must deliver hammer-strokes upon certain syllables. This hammer-striking is at a fixed place in a word and unless we know the place we shall commit a lot of awkwardness in metricising our phrases and composing poetry ; for, what we think to be correct metre will turn out to be a chaos of stresses to the ear that knows where the hammer-strokes should fall. There is, of course, another point to bear in mind in the speaking of English. It is something that in an exaggerated form gave to the traitor Englishman who used to broadcast over Berlin Radio during World War II the name "Lord Haw-Haw". English is to be haw-hawed to a certain extent—a bit of extra breath, a bit of special throat-work and a bit of stylishness in the enunciation add the last touch of Englishness to "the tongue that Shakespeare spake". Not that all Englishmen themselves know how to use their own tongue well. Bernard Shaw has remarked that no Englishman can open his mouth to speak his own language without your learning to hate him. This piece of typical Shavian paradox means that even Englishmen must consciously train themselves to speak if they are to achieve English worth hearing.

Shaw is famous for his neat inversion of common opinion in order to shake us up from conventional thinking. He sometimes hits on truths whose presence people do not realise. I remember what he said apropos of the result of the Suffragette Movement of nearly fifty years ago. The Suffragettes were the women who under leaders like Mrs. Pankhurst claimed the right of suffrage, the right to vote. In the first decade of the present century Englishwomen woke up to a sense of inferiority because men could go to the polling booth and women could not. In England today women can influence elections by their votes and even sit in Parliament. In France women have had no suffrage up to now. They evidently feel not the slightest need to go to the polling booth in order to influence the election of ministers or the trend of politics. Frenchwomen are quite confident of their hold on the minds of their menfolk—perhaps through both the hearts and the stomachs of the males. If the Frenchman votes for a candidate or takes to a political action unapproved by his better half, he may get a frigid look at night and a rotten breakfast in the morning—two things he dreads very much. Englishwomen did not feel so sure of their grip on their menfolk and they organised groups of resolute skirted fighters for the right to vote. Demonstrations were held in public and women brandishing their umbrellas went about clamouring for justice and equality. They would, for instance, confront a policeman and ask him if he was for granting the vote to women. If he did not say “Yes” he would get his moustaches twisted. Even the King became a target for criticism and opposition. Indeed, as the chief male in the United Kingdom he was held especially responsible for the deaf ear turned by men to the Suffragettes’ clamour. Once at the Derby the King’s horse was in the lead near the winning post. A Suffragette rushed out to the course and tried, as it were, to twist the horse’s moustaches. She was knocked down but the animal too had a toss and the King lost the race. Soon after, World War I broke out. At once the Suffragettes laid down their militant umbrellas and threw themselves whole-heartedly into co-operation with their men. What the twisting of moustaches had failed to do, this generous gesture achieved. Immediately after the War the women were given access to the ballot-box. What was the comment of Bernard Shaw? He said, “Thank God women are at last equal to men. I can now kick a woman with impunity.” This hits us in the eye with the truth that being officially equal is not an unmitigated advantage for women and can in fact rob them of certain privileges and superiorities enjoyed by them in private.

Shaw’s itch to kick an Englishman as soon as he spoke his own language is a reminder all the more pointed to us who are not even Englishmen and yet use their language for our creative as well as practical purposes. We must try our best to give the language its true sound, and so far as metre is con-

cerned it is the attention to the strong stresses that matters most. German too builds on stress. But French does not. French words have a kind of tone-accent on the last syllable. This naturally does not play a determinant role in the metre. French metre consists of counting the number of syllables. Each foot consists of two syllables and a certain number of such dissyllabic units make a line. Purely metrical beauty is thus debarred. You cannot have a variety of metrical pattern as you can in English with the possibility of disposing variously the stress and the slack in a foot. But, as a critic has observed, English on the other hand cannot approach the wonderful effects produced in French by diphthongs, nasals and long syllables. The critic goes on to say that the wretched indeterminate vowels in English and the English tendency to pronounce clearly just one syllable, in every polysyllabic word or word-group, cuts English off from such effects as Hugo's

Comme c'est triste voir s'enfuir les hirondelles,
(How sad to see the swallows fly away,)

or

Puisque j'ai vu tomber dans l'onde de ma vie
Une feuille de rose arrachée à tes jours,
(Since I have seen upon my life's wave fall
One rose-leaf that was torn out of thy days,)

or

Et venger Athalie, Achab et Jézabel.
(And to avenge Athalie, Achab and Jézabel.)

A language which goes by hammer-strokes is incapable of getting the full value out of words like "Jézabel". Sri Aurobindo has somewhere mentioned that an Englishman, when he wants to say "Strawberries", seems just to say "Strawbs", because the syllables that are unstressed tend to get slurred over. Similarly an Englishman would make "Jézabel" sound like Jezz'ble. His language cannot produce the same effect as the French which makes each of the three syllables distinct with its proper vowel-length: Jé-za-bel.

English differs from French in also being less inflected. For instance, French adjectives as well as past participles have a masculine and a feminine gender and therefore different endings, while in English the same adjective-sound or participle-sound does duty for both the genders and the neuter gender into the bargain. The inflection in French is not sufficient to allow a large freedom in word-arrangement as in Latin or Greek, and whatever freedom it does allow is not very deliberately exploited: I know of only one great poet who exploits it to a marked result—Mallarmé. Latin simply

invites you to virtuosities of word-arrangement. In English the words are related to one another by their order in a sentence and not by inflections. Therefore one single order, with minor exceptions, rules the English sentence. Latin and also Greek are so inflected that they can vary the order as they please : the word-endings immediately denote the proper connections of the words. Words which the writer has married in his mind can stand quite separate in his sentence without the reader ever being fooled into thinking they have obtained a divorce. If a Latin poet were to translate Sri Aurobindo's

I caught for some eternal eye the sudden
Kingfisher flashing to a darkling pool

and if he thought that a finer Latin rhythm would be got from the words by completely breaking up Sri Aurobindo's order he could go even to the length of rearranging them in such a manner that a step-by-step translation back into English might read :

Kingfisher some eternal pool the sudden
I to a darkling flashing caught for eye.

What would be gibberish in English would be marvellous literature in Latin. The words in the above lines would in their Latin forms indicate with perfect precision how they were to be mentally combined in order to make the intended sense. The highly inflected character of Latin, as well as of Greek, enables these languages to achieve countless delicate beauties of rhythm which are impossible in English.

Another difference of Latin from English is that metre in Latin is based on the lengths of vowels, the time taken by the voice to pass over a long vowel or a short one—and in Latin the time is determined not only by the intrinsic length or shortness of a vowel but also by the presence of consonants coming after the vowel, consonants of the next word no less than the same word since in Latin, unlike as in English, the words do not stand out in their individuality as separate units but tend to join up with each other in a general flow. Stress is not the principal determinant. The metres of all ancient languages, including our Sanskrit, are not accentual but quantitative. The quantitative metres wove delightful patterns which the poets never broke, and the attention to proper quantities brought out the full value of a vowel—as French does also by its lack of stress.

Not that in English no vowel can get its full value. It can but only when it is stressed and acquires importance by the voice-weight on it. Of course,

among the unstressed vowels, the ear has to distinguish between the intrinsic long and the intrinsic short. Part of the subtly expressive power of a line of poetry depends on the distinction. But normally the intrinsic long does not come into its own in the full sense, even when it contributes to a line's expressive power. To make it acquire its full value we should have to establish a new principle of metre or rather to develop a principle which is latent in the language and unconsciously operative on many occasions yet not openly recognised. The development has been made by Sri Aurobindo in what he calls "true English quantity" as contraposed to the quantity of the old languages transferred unnaturally into English. Some day I shall elaborate on this matter. At the moment we are concerned with English metre as it stands.

A few words now about practical scansion. We have spoken of the basic beat and the modulations. In English, a lot of modulated movement is the rule, but sometimes we have a choice between one such movement and another. There can be, technically, alternative scansions. But I believe there is always one scansion which is the true help to the significance and the feeling of a line. The critic Chapman has instanced the opening of Sarojini Naidu's *Flute-player of Vrindavan* as posing us a small problem in scansion. Technically both the following lines—

Why didst thou play thy matchless flute
'Neath the Kadamba tree ?—

have a trochee as their first foot : "Why[/] didst^x", "Neath[/] the^x". But if the second line is given a trochaic start the effect is flat and artificial in rhythm, not expressive of the delicate sentiment, with its warm unexpressed shades. This line should be scanned :

'Neath[/] | the^x Kadam^x | ba[/] tree^x ?

A single stressed syllable standing at the beginning of a line as here is known as a truncated foot. It may be compensated, as here, by an extra syllable in the next, but at times there is no compensation : Marlowe's famous bombast—

Bar[/] | barous | and bloody Tamburlane...

On rare occasions a truncated foot comes elsewhere than at the beginning to make what may be called syncopation, a term which in regard to language means really the shortening of a word by dropping a letter or a syllable, as

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“symbology” for “symbolology”. (If some day the oddities of your own professor come in for serious study, we may get the syncopated coinage : Amalogy.) Shakespeare has even that rarer phenomenon, double syncopation :

/ / x / x / / /
Blow, winds, | and crack | your cheeks! | rage! | blow!

The last two feet have only one syllable each—a long stressed syllable which we are supposed to lengthen out and weigh down heavily to make up for the missing part.

Lines with a truncated first foot or syncopation elsewhere are not hard to scan, for the abnormal movement is apparent. Difficulty comes in when a line like Sri Aurobindo's

Measuring vast pain in his immortal mind

is met with in a blank verse of pentameters on an iambic base. We may scan it as

/ x x / / x x / x /
Measur|ing vast | pain in | his immor|tal mind...

where the prominent feature is an inverted third foot, a trochee in place of the expected iamb : the initial trochee is too frequent to be notable. Or we may scan the verse as

/ x x \ / x \ x / x /
Measur|ing vast pain | in his | immor|tal mind...

where there are two feet with minor accents : the second takes the major on “pain” and the minor on “vast”, the third has only one accent and that a minor on the usually unaccented “his” in order to help out the rhythm. Or else we may adopt the scansion :

/ x x / / x \ x / x /
Measuring | vast pain | in his | immor|tal mind...

where the first foot is a dactyl and the second a spondee.

As a foot consisting of one slack and two stresses is not part of normal English prosody but as the adjective “vast” is too important to be slightly slurred over with a minor accent, the second way of scanning disqualifies itself. The first gives “vast” its due, but divides it from “pain” and confers on the latter an extra importance by making it start an inverted foot; and the scansion breaks

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up, just as the second scansion does, the present participle “Measuring”. One feels that no special need exists to stick out “pain” so much and that “vast pain” loses its true effect if divided and that the suggestive power of “Measuring” is also maimed when the word is broken up. The third scansion allows the second foot its full force by making a spondee of “vast pain” and, by dactylising the first foot, renders the participle “Measuring” a strong and deep metrical movement which answers to the psychological act expressed and which strikes one as most apt *vis-à-vis* the spondaic massiveness of the next foot whose verbal significance—“vast pain”—is intended to be both balanced and combated by the verbal significance of “Measuring”. Evidently the third scansion is the sole one in tune with the inspiration and also with the natural reading of the line. In dealing with the metrics of a poet like Sri Aurobindo we have to be careful in particular about what I have designated as the inner form : we must see closely to its needs when we scan the outer.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

SRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER*

A COMMENTARY

V

POLYDAON lives indeed under a black sun ; he is simply incapable of a smile in himself nor can he warm his heart in the smile of even an Andromeda. He is a glum beetle-browed priest, Moloch-Poseidon's dark-browed priest, as gloomy as the den in which he lairs. He has led a strange, lonely, fanatical life in the temple of the Dark God on the headland completely isolated from any normal human relationship. He has lived

Daily devoted to the temple dimness,
And seen the awful shapes that live in night,
And heard the awful sounds that move at will
When Ocean with the midnight is alone

and so he does not doubt the reality of the Occult Force and its power of influencing people for good or bad. This simple faith and primitive belief and life of exclusive concentration and solitude are his strength and weakness.

Such a life makes him abnormal in the absence of any warmth or the possibility of warmth of feeling. He has a stony heart 'much better housed/ In limbs of stone than a kind human body'. It has again made him absolutely self-centred and his cherished aim in life is self-gratification by excitement of sensation which is a brutally sensual and demoniac pleasure in the suffering of as many as he can contrive to torture. He is incapable of emotion ; he has only strong vital feelings perverted by his abnormal self. This secret suppressed complex reveals itself in all its naked horror when he feels madly happy in looking forward to the fulfilment of his life :

The world shall long recall King Polydaon.
I will paint Syria gloriously with blood.
Hundreds shall daily die to incarnadine
The streets of my city and my palace floors.
For I would walk in redness. I'll plant my gardens
With heads instead of lilacs. Hecatombs

Of men shall groan their hearts out for my pleasure
In crimson rivers.

and

I will possess
Women each night, who the next day shall die,
Encrimsoned richly for the eye's delight.

Hate of all that is good, beautiful and noble is in the very grain of his temperament. Iolaus, even before his attempt to save Perseus, is already in peril from Polydaon's gloomy hate, Iolaus hits off correctly the priest's nature :

He'd hurt
And find a curious pleasure. If it were even
My sister sunbeam, my Andromeda,
He'd carve her soft white breasts as readily
As any slave's or murderer's.

Such a dark temperament naturally chooses a Dark Occult Force for acquiring power for the gratification of the lower vital desires. And that explains his being a priest of Moloch-Poseidon and the peculiar kind of Sadhana he undergoes.

The relationship of this peculiar devotee to his terrible god is a strange and horrid game of mutual exploitation. Poseidon thinks of utilising the priest as the necessary lever for action in the human world and the priest dreams of canalising the monstrous force of the deity for his selfish ends and ambitions. So in the initial stages of the action we find the priest playing a hand in power-politics side by side with his *Upasana* of Poseidon. He tries to get the power he needs by alignment with Phineus. Even then he hesitates for a moment and thinks indeed of excusing the deed of sacrilege by Iolaus in return for the promised honours :

Wilt thou confirm
Thy treasury and all the promised honours,
If I excuse the deed ?

But Phineus would not leave him so easily and threatens him :

Thou art a coward, priest, for all thy violence.
But fear me first and then blench from a woman.

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The priest has to yield and Phineus negotiates and demands Perseus as the victim. The shrewd Polydaon naturally exclaims :

What hast thou done, King Phineus ? All is ruined.

He gets something to bite in the plan suggested by Phineus :

Leave something, priest,
To fortune, but be ready for her coming
And grasp ere she escape. The old way's best ;
Excite the commons, woo their thunderer,
That plausible republican. Iolaus
Once ended, by right of fair Andromeda
I'll save and wear the crown. Priest, over Syria
And all my Tyrians thou shalt be the one prelate,
Should all go well.

But the grim god would not wait or tolerate his scheme for his own petty mortal aims abroad, for he is 'insulted in his temple, laughed at by slaves, by children done injurious wrong, his victims snatched from underneath his roof by any casual hand.' He appears before his *upasaka* in a special and exclusive darshan and threatens complete devastation of the land and its people not excluding the priest who will 'go down living into Tartarus where knives fire-pointed shall disclose his breast and pluck his still-renewing heart from him for ever : till the world cease shall be his torments.' And he gives the conditions by which he could escape the doom—sacrifice of the merchants, Iolaus, Perseus and the blotting of the royal household from the light and finally

Thy sordid aims
Put from thy heart : remember to be fearless.
I will inhabit thee, if thou deserve it.

He demands absolute surrender from his devotee who exclaims in horror:

Declare thy will, O Lord, it shall be done.

and

Yes, Lord ! shall not thy dreadful will be done ?

And here begins the inflow of the occult formidable power into the unworthy vessel. The power only maddens the priest and his ambition gets more and more excited and his self puffed up. This madness which makes him demand Andromeda and talk in terms of Poseidon's will alienates Phineus who remarks :

Thou then art mad !
I thought this was a skilful play.

and

Poseidon ! thou gross superstitious fool,
Hast thou seen shadows in the night and took'st them
For angry gods ?

and he threatens the priest :

Refrain thyself from impious deeds, or else
A hundred Tyrian blades shall search thy brain
To look for thy lost reason.

The priest recoils and asks Phineus to be patient and he will secure his whole desire by other means. He will give Syria to Phineus when it is his to give. Events lead to a climax but the Chaldean soldiers are still masters of the situation. So the priest asks Phineus to draw, but the latter coolly replies, 'Tis not my quarrel, priest.' He has come to the conclusion that he cannot trust this superstitious man :

I see that zeal
And frantic superstition are bad plotters.
Henceforth I work for my sole hand, to pluck
My own good from the storms of civic trouble
This night prepares.

Left alone Polydaon turns to his Poseidon exclusively and invokes the dread Power, with his self not indeed abnegated, for that is impossible, but kept in *laya* or suspension or a state of temporary quiescence and he predicts :

Tomorrow, Syrian ? tomorrow is Poseidon's.

So Poseidon's power descends into the priest and begins to use his personality for its purposes. But the self in *laya* now wakes up and inflated by the new power feels itself a god and we have the awful spectacle of every organ and faculty of the organisation of consciousness called Polydaon used by the ambitious megalomaniac and the descended Power. The members of his being are in a high-strung and high-pitched state and, acting quite disharmoniously, unable to stand the demands of the God or the excited ego. The consciousness in Polydaon feels and expresses this curious double element and says :

My heart throngs out in words ! What moves within me ?
 I am athirst, magnificently athirst,
 And for a red and godlike wine. Whence came
 The thirst on me ? It was not here before.
 'Tis thou, 'tis thou, O grand and grim Poseidon,
 Hast made thy scarlet session in my soul
 And growest myself.

All who open to the priest receive the force of Poseidon and the whole kingdom of innocent citizens is converted into a group of devils demanding blood and upholding their King Polydaon who of course gesticulates wildly at the excruciating agony of others like Andromeda, Iolaus and Cassiopea and indulges in horrid inhuman laughter :

Ho, ho ! then you shall see your daughter, queen.

But Perseus has in the meantime killed the dragon by the grace and strength of Pallas Athene and that means the defeat of Poseidon as well. So we find the God making a last desperate attempt to possess his human instrument, Polydaon who barks, foams and clutches and falls to the ground in an epileptic fit, a clear case of temporary violent possession. But the fit is soon over, for the Force withdraws from the body leaving the victim a dull and puny mortal, lying back white and shaking. His consciousness too withdraws from the outer body and in a subliminal awareness he sees his god, saying that his sin and false ambition undid him, and ascending to the Olympian heights—His true home. The Fallen God has got sick of its habitation in the lower world and the false encrustment to his true being has now been dissolved leaving the original core of light. He is new-born to himself and to the world and this transformation too redounds to the glory of Goddess Athene.

The priest has now to face his own evil self (generated by his evil *Karma*) which is being driven fast to the nether regions of Hell, sunless states of con-

SRI AUROBINDO'S PERSEUS THE DELIVERER: A COMMENTARY

sciousness with their agony and torture. And his soul makes one last desperate appeal and prayer to the transformed Poseidon before he falls back dead. Perseus comments on his fate :

This man for a few hours became the vessel
Of an occult and formidable Force
And through his form it did fierce terrible things
Unhuman : but his small and gloomy mind
And impure dark heart could not contain the Force.
It turned in him to madness and demoniac
Huge longings. Then the Power withdrew from him
Leaving the broken incapable instrument,
And all its might was spilt from his body. Better
To be a common man mid common men
And live an unaspiring mortal life
Than call into oneself a Titan strength
Too dire and mighty for its human frame,
That only afflicts the oppressed astonished world,
Then breaks its user.

His strange and terrible life and death evoke the feelings of horror and pity and Perseus advises :

Burn him with rites,
If that may help his soul by dark Cocytus.

(To be continued)

M. V. SEETARAMAN

A DREAM-TALE

TODAY the sea has gone back far towards the horizon. The shore looks like the ruins of a forgotten city. Rocks of various shapes peep hideously out of their sand-sheet. They seem to have been vexed in their under-water sleep. In the dim evening light a file of black vertical stones is standing erect like the sentinels of a gnome-realm. Some are just cracked, some half-broken, some on the point of crumbling.

A sea-bird flies past them, scattering an eeriness all around. I do not consider the lighthouse to be a giant, yet the sporadic invasions of its dazzling rays lead me more and more to a Quixotic state of fancy : the darkness is thickening fast....

I see in front of me a palace, no doubt a splendid one. I see there my own form roaming swiftly its marble corridors, guided by a flickering candle....The candle stops in front of a spacious room on the first floor. The huge carved doors are shut. Something bids me spy through the key-hole. I stoop. I step back at once !

Oh ! what a sight ! An old man in stately robes is sitting on a massive black couch. Cruelty, ruse and hatred glimmer in his dark wild eyes. I look again. Suddenly the man yells, "Rudramurthy, Rudramurthy !"

The whole palace trembles as if every brick of it were shaken by an earthquake. At once a robust young man rushes into the room. Politely bowing to the old man, he fumbles, "Maharaja's servant.. is...present !"

The old man smiles shrewdly; wrinkles as crooked as his nature creep along his face. He speaks out in a brass voice, "Well, Rudramurthy, remember that punctuality and loyal devotion are the only qualities that the king Vishmakratu Chola expects of his Prime Minister. Otherwise he would not kick out the old Prime Minister so heartlessly. Don't you see it is already evening ? Immediately after sunset you should have turned up. Now, what about the letter from the Emperor Ashoka, that wretched patron of a weak cult founded by the madcap of the Himalayas ? Go on ! Read it out !"

Rudramurthy carefully breaks the seals of a precious scroll, after which, in a hesitant tone, he begins to read :

"To the Most Respectable King Vishmakratu Chola.

Dear Friend,

Today, the 15th Baisakha of the 229 Buddhabda, the undersigned, an humble servant of the Gracious Lord, asks whether the King of the free Southern States would grant the former a favour. Would it be pos-

sible for the King to give shelter to the former's son Mahendra and daughter Samghamitra for a night, on their way to Singhala ? On the coming Baisakhi Purnima they will be speaking to the people of that historic island about the teachings of the Lord. Kindly see that the messenger comes back timely with the decision of the King—"

"That will do," interrupts the king, "Enough of stupid words !...Well ! no !...all right !...Yes, let the Emperor know that I am ready to receive them just because —hm !...Here you are my friend ! My bitterest friend ! Now I shall show you !"—His eyes roll in a beastly joy, "Yes, it is in this palace that I will receive them. And, remember," he lowers his voice scrupulously, "remember that this very palace will be burnt to ashes on the night of the coming 25th—do you follow ?—On that cherished night—I will be away in my summer-palace, mind you. All the precious articles will be carried away with me. Mind you, Rudramurthy, loyalty is the key to success. Let not a fly even know of my plan—go on !"

A confusion is created in front of me, as if in a great hurry someone were turning a revolving stage before my eyes.

Another scene appears. A moonlit night—two or three days before the full moon perhaps. I am following that mysterious candle. I have seen the grand reception arranged for the noble guests : the whole city of Vedapuri is decorated with the utmost care. It is midnight. The prince and the princess have retired to their chambers and, after such a long journey, they are enjoying an indispensable sleep.

"Fire, fire !"—Terrible shouts choke the entire revelling atmosphere. Flames—blue, smoky, white—leap up around the splendid palace. Conches blow, elephants scream in blind despair, horses neigh, men, perplexed, lose their distinction in the crowd of animals.

"Sangham, sister !...awake !"—the bewildered prince shouts in the ears of his sister.

"Flood, flood, cyclone !" the clamour has now changed. Angry waves rush in fury against the palace-walls. Plash ! Plash ! goes down the prince, his sister on his shoulders. A ship awaits them, picks them up, disappears as fast as lightning. I see, within a few brief moments, a city completely vanish under the sea. I too am drowning. "Help, help, hel..."

"Well, well ?" my friend giggles beside me, "What about the history examination to-morrow ? Instead of preparing something how dare you doze here so late ? Look back ! The Tennis Ground is almost empty. Come along."

Much surprised, I gaze at the distant pillars on the shore, some just cracked, some broken, others on the point of crumbling.

PRITHWINDRA

THE MOTHER¹

III

AND biune are the things of highest need—
Thy heart of troth, the candour and Bounty high
Of the Mother Divine—they ever move abreast.
If them thou ownest, never terror and pangs
Can seize thy earthly life ; dauntless, at large
Thou shalt proceed along the path of the world.
The lower nature and mind's arrogance
Are only a murky feeble flame that never
Can light thee upward straight to the gold skies.
Thou hast seen earth's daybreak for the work divine,
To help the One to found the Spirit on soil.
Let thy heart pine for the Truth and Force alone,
For purity and light, wideness and calm,
Ananda of the consciousness supreme,
And with its diamond constancy remould
Perfect thy mind and life and outer sheath.
Nothing must quench thy thirst insatiate
Save the pure nectar of the Golden All.
Desire to see it flood with its mystic might
The earth, thyself and all far-visioned souls.
The downfall of its foes be thy one choice.
Our earth shall bear with its help a creation new.
And when thou offerest thyself forget the word
"Reserve" and press the neck of demanding hounds.
Thy tongue must frame no terms of bargaining,
Sunder the shades of doubt with thy naked will.
The life of 'I' no more must breathe in thee,
Not one iota of force undivine—
Then the shower of the Mother's wealth is thine !

Reaching the peak of surrender's plenitude
Thou'lt sense Her diamond-dauntless wings of Grace

¹ A versification of the substance of Chapter 3 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

EVOLUTION

Guarding thee, all within and all without.
No flood but a single drop of Bounty divine
Enough to make thy wakeful bosom brave
The teeming straits and danger's ambush wild.
No titan power of earth or of worlds unseen
Can blight thy heart or halt thy speedy march.
At thy feet the eyes of terrors will bathe in tears.
An alchemy the touch of her Grace unplumbed.
Profits will bloom from stark exigencies.
Failure and futile labour will gain the wreath
Of triumph, weakness be a veerless strength.
A truth it is, a sea of sunlit truth—
Her Grace is flooded with the One's assent.
Unslowed by any dark impediment
The onward stride of hours shall take thy soul
To the Timeless and His epiphany in Time.

“MADAL”

EVOLUTION

“WE come from Time,
To Eternity we climb.
We have seen the deathless dawn
And played on the infinite lawn.
Continuous is the play upon the field—
To the great we climb, to the greatest we yield.”

“Then stay, O mighty brave soul,
Thou who hast loved the earth and heaven,
Loved the Unknown as thy heart's goal,
Loved the Truth-sun and the Bliss-rays seven,
Loved all beauty though knowing none—
It is we who play amidst the One.”

SUHASH

STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

STUDY No. 3 : *ROMEO AND JULIET*

(A) EXPERIMENTAL TRAGEDY AND INSPIRATION

ROMEO and Juliet is a transition from the Sonnets and the Comedies to the unmixed Tragedies of Shakespeare. Its Prologues and even some speeches are Sonnets or parts of a Sonnet. Romeo's love for Rosaline—his secret sighs and cloudy sadness—are the hit of Montague and Benvolio and later the skit of the sweetly-sensitive Mercutio. The sleeping draft of the married Juliet about to wed the second lover Paris, her mock-death, mock-hysterics, mock-funeral and mock-entombment, and lastly Romeo's passionate effusion over her slumbering body have bands common to the Comedies of Shakespeare. The dangerous kiss of Romeo to Juliet at the feast of the Capulets, their love and tryst under the light of the moon, the secret union in the Friar's cell, banishment of Romeo from Verona, poison and death in the dayless gloom of the family vault, the miscarriage of the Friar's letters, Juliet's awakening and the precipitous suicide of the lovers are the threads of the contrary currents of a highly-wrought tragedy. The reconciliation of the two households of Verona over the bodies of the "star-crossed lovers" is a quiet close of Romantic Comedy. Sonneteering, Skit, Farce, Comedy, Romance and Tragedy combine to give the impression of uncertain and youthful hands seeking with the wealth of the Shakespearean fancy the fingering of the loud and full-voiced chords of the Tragic Muse. The experiment is saved from failure by the passion of Romeo, the sweetness of Juliet, and finally by some of the richest volume of poetical utterances in the works of Shakespeare. Sheer inspiration overrides the difficult period of experimental Tragedy.

(B) EXPERIMENTAL STYLES

The fusion of different styles also shows a variety of tentative movements. The choral odes of the Prologues in Sonnet-form are not a successful opening. The interposition in dialogue of the Sestet or parts of a Sonnet—as in the words of Benvolio, "Man one fire burns out with another's burning", or of Paris, "Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew", or of the Prince at

the close of the play, "a glooming peace this morning with it brings"—is a rare experiment. Euphuism, puns, conceits, rhymed couplets are in Shakespeare's later style largely substituted by the overflowing, abundant and gorgeous graces of Blank Verse. In the highest reaches of *Romeo and Juliet* itself, his inspiration sheds the medley of styles and launches into the oceanic undulations characteristic of his genius.

(C) THE TRANSITION

Romeo and Juliet is a transitional play. It looks back to the Sonnets, Poems and Comedies of Shakespeare's youth and looks forward to the Histories and the Tragedies of his maturity. It lies midway between the *Sonnets*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, and *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*. It is his last lyrical phase before he plunges into the full stream of the greater Tragedies. Its fresh, dewy, musical quality, dripping with morning light, tells of the primrose years of Shakespeare's apprenticeship in the theatre.

(D) PREDESTINED MARRIAGE, SOUL UNION AND ESCAPE

The love of Romeo and Juliet takes a predestined course, unaltered by the feud of the families or the subtle contrivances of that unsure apothecary—the holy Friar. A conscious sense of Destiny pervades the play. The barriers of the Capulets and the Montagues break before the rushing spate of unfulfilled desire. The souls of Romeo and Juliet are one before their birth. Their meeting, avowal, and marriage follow closely. The probationary experience commences after matrimony. The ribald rivalry of their parents lingers about the feast, the orchard of the Capulets, and the cell of the Friar. Juliet survives the shock of the murder of Tybalt, Romeo's exile from Verona, the match with Paris, and the drinking of the opiate which seizes a bold escape from life by union in death with her lover.

She suffers an outer, but not an inner disillusionment. The souls of Romeo and Juliet are not shaken by the tempests of Time. A poise of soul is the index of a supremacy. Likewise Romeo, forgetting Rosaline, takes the first kiss from Juliet in the lighted hall of the Capulets, clears the wall to meet new eyes, hurries to the Friar, marries, kills, flees to Mantua, and returns without psychic tension to her tomb, meditating in death a transcendental merger of soul with soul.

(E) PSYCHOLOGICAL EMOTION AND THE TRIAL OF LOVE AND DEATH

Romeo and Juliet is a play of the single emotion of Love and Death. The complexities of Hamlet's introspective disposition, the revolting fires of Othello, the violent wanderings of Lear, the writhing cruelties of Macbeth are wanting. The love of Romeo and Juliet is as the dew of the morning and their death as the exhalation of the night.

When love-lorn Romeo in a storm of sighs meets Rosaline, his suspiration is without fire, his life without brightness, his sickness without hope. Love is a fume, a fret, a smoke. Rosaline is the search of Juliet :

Romeo : "Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs;
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lover's eyes,
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lover's tears."

His first glimpse of Juliet at the banquet of the Capulets is a glitter of conquered eyes. It is Love's "purple wound" wrought by Cupid's unerring shaft:

Romeo : "O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright !
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !"

The holy palmer's kiss, pressed tenderly to responding lips, is none other than that of a masked lover standing in the peril and the shadow of an ancient feud !

A new Romeo, enriched by his lady's hand, possessing the daredom and devilry of youth, overleaps the high walls of the Capulets :

Romeo : "He jests at scars that never felt a wound :
But soft ! what light through yonder window breaks ?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun !
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she."

The attractive, dewy-lipped star-gazing Juliet, an unwilling communicant of a hazardous passion to an unguessed lover in the orchard, breathes the whisper of a loved and unloved name :

Juliet : "O Romeo, Romeo ! wherefore art thou Romeo ?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name."

STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Romeo : (*Aside*) "Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this ?"

Juliet : "...O, be some other name !
What's in a name ? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."

Their love is not roused by passionate desire :

Juliet : "I have no joy of this contract to-night :
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens'."

Romeo : "O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied ?"

Juliet : "What satisfaction canst thou have to-night ?"

Romeo : "The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine."

Their gaze is of soul to soul, their love rich, luxuriant and open as the sea:

Juliet : "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite."

After the murder of Tybalt and the decree of banishment from Verona, the lovers by the contrivance of the Friar meet in the garden of the Capulets.

Juliet : "Wilt thou be gone ? It is not yet near day :
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree :
Believe, me, love, it was the nightingale."

Romeo : "It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale, look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east :
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

In the trial and tilt with death in the vault, challenging the Destinies, Romeo for the last time sees the slumbering Juliet :

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Romeo : "...Beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there."

The immortal union, prepared by birth, evolved by Life, is completed by death :

Romeo : "...O, here,
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look, your last !
Arms, take your last embrace ! and, lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death !"

Juliet also awaits with clear prescience the trial of Love and Death :

Juliet : "Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him but in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possess'd it."

The slaying of Tybalt by Romeo is her first test. Recovering from the initial shock she rebuffs her nurse :

Nurse : "These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo."

Juliet : "...Blister'd be thy tongue
For such a wish ! he was not born to shame :
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned
Sole monarch of the universal earth,
O, what a beast was I to chide at him !

To the proposal of the marriage with Paris she replies to her mother with a cold, quiet, psychic gaze : "I pray you tell my lord and father, madam, I will not marry yet." Abandoned by father, mother and nurse, she meets death

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with the same resolution as Romeo : "If all else fail, myself have power to die." Fortified by the Friar's drug, she acts with worldly wisdom beyond her years, yielding with almost comic pretence to her parents' wishes. Once only in her chamber she falters in the swirls of emotion and perplexed thought, holding with trembling hand to her lips the chalice of sleep. Shall she wake or die ? The dim crypt in which fester the bones of the ancient dead, the damp and odour of the lightless tomb, fear of the injured spirit of Tybalt, the procession of the thousand horrible images of death, shake the natural calm of an intrepid soul. The imminent marriage of Paris restores her poise and pricks her ardour. She drains the mysterious potion to its dregs. Awakening in the vault to a scene of terror she throws the gauntlet to death, draws the dagger, and joins lip and hand with Romeo in the rest which is the life ever-lasting.

(To be continued)

SYED MEHDI IMAM