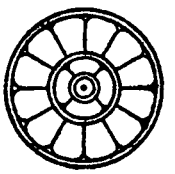
MOTHER INDIA

AUGUST 15, 1959: BIRTHDAY OF SRI AUROBINDO

Price : Re. 1.

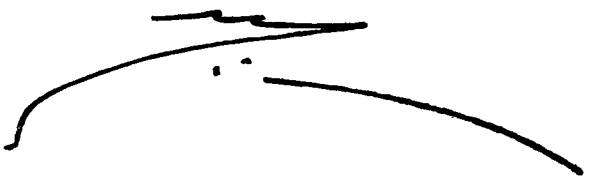


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

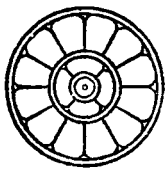
Vol. XI No. 7

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

Students' Section

It is only by remaining perfectly peaceful and calm, with an unshakable confidence and faith in the Divine Grace, that you will allow circumstances to be as good as they can be. The very best happens always to those who have put their entire trust in the Divine and in the Divine alone



WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Q. What is meant by : "To be conscious of the Divine" ?

A. To be always conscious, conscious of the Divine in one's most physical movements does not mean to think of Him constantly, to remember Him mentally at all times. It means to have an inner perception, an intimate feeling of the Divine Presence all the while, however one may be, whatever one may be doing. It is something in the background, one may say, behind and associated with the external movement. In the beginning, it is true, one has to make a conscious effort to associate the two and, for that, mental remembrance is necessary. This has to be done at times and in between. But once the association is formed, the mental remembrance is not required, the inner movement goes on automatically all through whatever one may be doing.

THE SOUL AND GRACE

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

21-4-1936

MYSELF : A most stimulating formula I find in your letter—"Within there is a soul, and above there is Grace"—about which you say: "This is all you know or need to know." Is that all really ?

SRI AUROBINDO : For any one who wants the spiritual life, yes, it is enough.

24-4-1936

MYSELF : Can one arrive at what is called "a state of grace" simply by sticking or simply because there is a soul within ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, one can, plenty of people have done it.

MYSELF : But then the soul is there in everybody and Grace is above everybody. How is it that people have turned their backs on the Divine ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Because of rajasic ego, ambition, vanity—because they believed in their own efforts and not in the Grace.

MYSELF : I have never heard that Grace did everything. And, where it seems to do so, how do we know that somebody has not done sadhana in his past life ? You can't deny this, can you ?

SRI AUROBINDO : You can't affirm it, can you ?

I can point you at many instances in spiritual history—beginning with the famous Jagai Madhai. But it is no use against a brain that does not want to admit that 2+2=4.

MYSELF : Simple sticking won't do. In that case our Ashram cat Bushy would have a chance.

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course she has—of rising to a new grade of birth with all in her favour in the next life.

MYSELF : I hesitate to believe much in Grace. Is not Grace something that comes down unconditionally ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It does not depend on conditions—which is rather a different thing from an unconditional surrender to any and every sadhak.

MYSELF : Even Ramakrishna's baby-cat type of sadhak has to make a decisive movement of surrender and compel the rest of the being to obedience, which is the most difficult thing on earth.

SRI AUROBINDO : I never heard that the baby cat was like that—if it were it would not be a baby cat. (It is the baby monkey trying to become a baby cat who does that.) But you have evidently so great a knowledge of spiritual things (surpassing mine and Ramakrishna's) that I can only bow my head and pass humbly on to people with less knowledge.

MYSELF : If anybody can do the baby-cat surrender at a stroke, is it not because his "unfinished curve" in the past life has finished it in this ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Hail, Rishi, all-knower ! Tell us all about our past lives.

MYSELF : Surely the soul instead of sleeping has to aspire etc. to call down its Lord the Grace. Where do you see that aspiration in me ? If you build my spiritual castle on those one or two minutes' brief visitations of Ananda and that too once or twice only, excluding the moments of *darshan* of your great self, which also have been sometimes marred in these three years—and if you build my poetic mansion on little trickles, then I can only say—well, what shall I say ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Better say nothing. It will sound less foolish.

24-1-1936

MYSELF : You have often inveighed against my asking you not to use yourself as an argument against the Divine. But what is the history of your sadhana in your own words—a Herculean practice of Pranayama, concentration and what not and then, after years and years of waiting, the Grace of Brahman. Still you are *panchamukha* in the praise of Grace.

SRI AUROBINDO : What a wooden head ! what is the use of saying things if you deliberately misinterpret what I write ? I said clearly that the pranayam brought me nothing of any kind of spiritual realisation. I had stopped it long before. The Brahman experience came and I was groping for a way, doing no sadhana at all, making no effort because I didn't know what effort to make, all having failed. Then in three days I got an experience which most yogis get only at the end of a long Yoga, got it without wanting or trying after it,

got it to the surprise of Lele who was trying to get me something quite different. But I don't suppose you are able to understand, so I say no more. I can only look mournfully at your ununderstanding pate.

SRI AUROBINDO : It can mean also waiting on the Grace of the Divine ! The will of the individual in this respect does not mean anything like that. If the will of the individual is towards perdition, if his ego becomes hostile to the Divine, then the Divine is not bound to show him a Grace he does not want at all and kicks at.

MYSELF : Take the case of X. My god, to think that after all those Napoleonic efforts in poetry, and having succeeded, one is still driven to desperation because, after all, one has obtained nothing spiritually in spite of aspiration, meditation etc.—this is blood-curdling and at once smashes your theory of Karmayoga through poetry.

SRI AUROBINDO : Napoleonic rubbish ! He was the worst poet in the world before he came here and here immediately as soon as I put my force he began writing beautiful poems. Yet it was by his Napoleonic efforts that he did it ? Imbecility, thy name is ego.

I was not putting any Karmayoga theory—I was simply mocking at your absurd idea that it was by your own mighty efforts that you had succeeded in writing poetry which any good judge (you are not one) would call genuine poetry.

Non monsieur,—j'ai d'autres chats à fouetter. I have other cats to whip —I can't go on whipping one cat all the time. A few lashes on the margin are all I can spare for you just now.

There are three main possibilities for the sadhak :—

1. To wait on the Grace and rely on the Divine.

2. To do everything himself like the full Adwaitin and the Buddhist.

3. To take the middle path,—go forward by aspiration and rejection etc. helped by the Force. The first, it appears, is too easy for you to do it, the second is too difficult for you to do, the third being easy in parts and difficult in parts is as impossible for you to do it. Right ? Amen ! ! !

2-6-1936

MYSELF : I am feeling dry, dry, dry. But a mood of meditation creeps over the dryness—sometimes a feeling of (stillness). Poetry nowhere near.

A lot of thinking. Que faire ? I suppose this dryness is due to your unexpected progress. That is the only consolation. Addis Ababa—far ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Dryness, no ! that is part of your own pilgrimage. The rest may be due to Add. Ab. Quite a number of people are trying to become स्तब्ध[1]— wide etc. without ever having intended it. I like to think my march may have something to do with it.

3-6-1936

MYSELF : No joy, no energy. Don't like to read or write—as if a dead man were walking about. Do you understand the position ? Any personal experience ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I quite understand ; often had it myself devastatingly. That's why I always advise people who have it to cheer up and buck up.

To cheer up, buck up and the rest if you can, saying "Rome was not built in a day"—if you can't, gloom it through it till the sun rises and the little birds chirp and all is well.

Looks however as if you were going through a training in vairagya. Don't much care for vairagya myself, always avoided the beastly thing, but had to go through it partly, till I hit on *samatā* as a better trick. But samata is difficult, vairagya is easy, only damnably gloomy and uncomfortable.

4-6-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : Vairagya means a positive detachment from things of this life, but it does not *immediately* carry with it a luminous aspiration except for a few fortunate people. For the positive detachment is often a pulling away by the soul while the vital clings and is gloomy and malcontent.

14-6-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : Your analysis and reasonings are those of Grand'mère Depression which sees only what she allows to come to the surface for her purposes. There are other things that Madame suppresses because they don't suit her. It does not greatly matter what brought you here—the important thing is to go on till the psychic truth behind all that becomes manifest. The inertia of your physical nature is only a thick crust on the surface which gives way slowly, but under the pressure it will give way. If you had some big object in the ordinary life and nothing to hope here it might be different, but as things are it would be foolish to walk off under the instigation of this old Mother Gloom-Gloom. Stick on and you will get the soul's reward hereafter.

[1] still

8-1-1937

MYSELF : One misgiving is pressing heavily on my soul. I sense and feel that the tone of your letters has suddenly become very grave, rough, stiff and gruff—the owl-like severity with which you had once threatened me. Have I done anything to deserve such punishment ? Or is it because you are getting supramentalised day by day that you are withdrawing yourself so ? There must be a reason if my sense, feel, is correct. Well, if you want to press me between two planks and pulverise me...Not that I want it, you know.

SRI AUROBINDO : I think your sense feel has been indulging in vain imaginations, perhaps with the idea of increasing your concrete imaginative faculty and fitting you for understanding the unintelligible. As you have now much to do with mystic poetry, it may be necessary. But why object to being pulverised ? Once reduced to powder, think how useful you may be as a medicine, Pulv. Nirod. gr. II. Anyhow disburden your soul of the weight. I am not owled yet, and my supramentalisation is going on too slowly to justify such apprehensions. Neither am I withdrawing, rather fitting myself for a new rush in the near or far future. So cheer up and send the Man of Sorrows with his 'planks' to the devil.

PARTS OF THE BEING

(Translated by Niranjan from Sri Aurobindo's Bengali letters in "Patravali")

2

THE sadhana is done according to the needs of the time. Formerly, it was the inward sadhana, the stage of simple meditation. Now it is necessary to unite the inner and the outer—down to the body-consciousness.

* *

There are many kinds of knowledge depending on the consciousness. The knowledge of the higher consciousness is true and spotless—the knowledge of the lower consciousness is a mixture of knowledge and ignorance and is stained. The knowledge of the intellect is of one particular nature, the knowledge of the Supramental Consciousness is of a different nature, beyond the intellect. The peaceful knowledge belongs to the higher consciousness.

* *

This is the staircase of the higher consciousness—there are many levels of this consciousness. One mounts by these stairs from plane to plane till one reaches the Supermind—the boundless, luminous and blissful infinity of God.

* *

The world above is the plane of the higher consciousness and it is descending by our sadhana. The material world at present is full of a violent dance of the hostile vital world and heading towards destruction.

* *

The psychic being is a portion of the Divine; it has a natural attraction for the truth and the Divine but that attraction is desireless, free from demands and lower cravings. The psychic emotion is pure and stainless. The emotional

vital is a part of it and has much desire, demand, pride and indignation etc. It wants the Divine in order to satisfy its pride and desire but the psychic touch can make it pure and immaculate.

* *

The psychic being remains behind the mind, vital and body, in contact with them. Beyond the mind is the spiritual being and the higher consciousness.

* *

The place of the psychic being is behind and all the centres are situated behind; for instance, the heart centre, the vital centres, the physical centre are connected there with the vertebral column and have their base there. That is why the condition of the consciousness behind is very important.

All depends on the predominance of the psychic—the external nature is busy satisfying its little ego, desires and cravings; the mental being is occupied with the self, but the petty ego derives little pleasure from that, it longs for pettiness. The psychic being is occupied with the Divine, it alone can do the surrender—only the psychic being can control the external nature.

* *

Either the psychic being must become the director (ruler, driver and guide) and open the intellect, mind, vital and physical consciousness or the higher consciousness must descend right into the physical consciousness and occupy the entire vessel, then a solid foundation will be established in the material consciousness.

* *

It is the consciousness of the psychic and the heart that has opened—what comes from above is the light and peace of the higher mind and the Divine Consciousness. What looks like the moon rising is the current of spiritual aspiration flowing from the psychic.

* *

This is what is wanted—to open the lotus in the heart, to bring the whole nature under the control of the psychic being, this will bring about the New Birth.

ASPECTS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

III

Architect of Indian Freedom

"I look upon my country as my Mother. I adore her and worship at her feet.

If a vampire sits on the mother's chest and sucks her blood, what does the son do ? Does he sit down peacefully to his dinner and make merry with his wife and children ? Does he not rush out to her rescue ?

I know I have in me the strength to uplift this fallen people : not the strength of body,—I am not going to war with rifle and sword,—but the power of knowledge. The strength of the warrior is not the only kind of power. There is such a thing as the power of the spirit, a power which is based on knowledge.

This idea of mine is not a new-fangled notion, nor is it a thing of yesterday. I was born with it, it is there in my blood, God sent me on earth for this great purpose. The seed began to grow when I was fourteen. It took firm and strong root at the age of eighteen...

I do not say that I shall live to see the attainment of the goal. But that the goal will be attained is certain...."[1]

These words written in August 1905 for the private information of his wife are the first intimation we have of Sri Aurobindo's life-work and mission. In August 1907, he made a passing reference in public to "the mission that I have taken up from my childhood".[2] He referred to it once again in a public lecture he delivered in 1909 soon after his release from a year's detention in jail on a trumped-up charge of conspiracy to wage war.

"When I turned to the Yoga and resolved to practise it...I did it in this spirit and with this prayer to Him : 'If Thou art, then Thou knowest my heart. Thou knowest that I do not ask for Mukti,[3] I do not ask for

[1] *Sri Aurobinder Patra* (in Bengali).
[2] *Speeches* : "To the Students of the National College, Calcutta."
[3] Salvation

anything which others ask for. I ask only for strength to uplift this nation, I ask only to be allowed to live and work for this people whom I love and to whom I pray that I may devote my life...' I said, 'Give me Thy Adesh[1] ...Give me a message.' In the communion of Yoga two messages came. The first message said, '...I give you the Adesh to go forth and do my work.' The second message came and it said, ...'When you go forth speak to your nation always this word...that it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world...Since long ago I have been preparing this uprising and now the time has come and it is I who will lead it to its fulfilment'..."[2]

In August 1947, on the eve of Independence Day, the nation heard from him about the fulfilment of his mission :

"August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition..."[3]

* *

The early years of Sri Aurobindo's life were spent in England where he was brought up in an alien atmosphere and received a completely Western education. About this period of his career, he has left us a few notes. He speaks there in the third person.

"His father, a man of great ability and strong personality, had been among the first to go to England for his education. He returned entirely anglicised in habits, ideas and ideals,—so strongly that his Aurobindo as a child spoke English and Hindustani only, and learned his mother tongue only after his return from England. He was determined that his children should receive an entirely European upbringing. While in India they were sent for the beginning of their education to an Irish nuns' school in Darjeeling and in 1879 [Sri Aurobindo was then seven years old] he took his three sons to England and placed them with an English clergy-

[1] Command.
[2] *Speeches* : "Uttarpara Speech."
[3] *Messages of Sri Aurobindo.*

> man and his wife with strict instructions that they should not be allowed to make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence. These instructions were carried out to the letter and Aurobindo grew up in entire ignorance of India, her people, her religion and her culture..."[1]

Brought up at first in an English family at Manchester, he joined St. Paul's School in London in 1885. He was already at ease in Latin and soon picked up Greek, and in his last three years at school he

> "spent most of his spare time in general reading, especially English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature and the history of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe. He spent some time also over learning Italian, some German and a little Spanish. He spent much time too in writing poetry. The school-studies during this period engaged very little of his time; he was already at ease in them and did not think it necessary to labour over them any longer...[2]

He ascended the school by leaps and bounds, won the Butterworth Prize in literature and the Bedford Prize in history, won a foundation classical scholarship for King's College, Cambridge, by open competition, and was selected while still in his teens as a Probationer for the Indian Civil Service, the highest administrative service under the Indian government, after passing high in a stiff competitive examination. One of the noted Cambridge dons of the time who examined his papers for the scholarship remarked to him later at the University, "I have examined papers at thirteen examinations and I have never during that time seen such excellent papers as yours. As for your essay, it was wonderful..."[3]

Sri Aurobindo had written about this to his father who evidently held very high hopes about his son's future career. He promised to his brother-in-law: "I may not, but you will live to be proud of three nephews who will adorn your country and shed lustre on your name...Ara [the pet-name of Sri Aurobindo by which he was known to his relatives] I hope will yet glorify his country by a brilliant administration. I shall not live to see it, but remember this letter if you do..." The proud father did not live to see his son again.[4]

Sri Aurobindo himself felt "no call for the Indian Civilian Service".[5] For, as he explained later in conversation to some of his disciples in Pondicherry,

[1] *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*: "Life Before Pondicherry."
[2] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram*, "Early Life And Career."
[3] A.B. Purani: *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, "Childhood and Education".
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram*, "Life Before Pondicherry."

> "I appeared for the Indian Civil Service examination because my father wanted it. I was too young then to understand. Later I found out what sort of work it is...and I had no interest in administrative work. My interest was in poetry and literature and the study of language and patriotic action."[1]

He could not share the opinion of some of the then leaders of Indian opinion that the inclusion of our bright young men in the high administrative posts would be a sure passport to India's salvation. As he wrote soon after his return to India,

> "I leave that for those honest people who imagine that, when they have got the Civil Service and other lucrative posts for themselves, the Indian question will be satisfactorily settled."[2]

Nor did he have the same high regard for the personnel of this "celestial" Service, which most of his countrymen at the time entertained.

> "The Civilian order, which accounts itself, and no doubt justly, the informing spirit of Anglo-India, is credited in this country with quite an extraordinary degree of ability and merit, so much so that many believe it to have come down to us direct from heaven. And it is perhaps on this basis that in their dealings with Indians,—whom being moulded of clay entirely terrestrial, one naturally supposes to be an inferior order of creatures,—they permit themselves a very liberal tinge of presumption and arrogance. Without disputing their celestial origin, one may perhaps be suffered to hint that eyes unaffected by the Indian sun will be hard put to it to discover the pervading soul of magnificence and princeliness in the moral and intellectual style of these demigods. The fact is indeed all the other way.
>
> The general run of the Service suffers by being recruited through the medium of competitive examination : its tone is a little vulgar, its character a little raw, its achievement a little second rate. Harsh critics have indeed said more than this, nay, has not one of themselves, has not Mr. Rudyard Kipling, a blameless Anglo-Indian, spoken and spoken with distressing emphasis to the same effect ? They have said that it moves in an atmosphere of unspeakable boorishness and mediocrity. That is certainly

[2] A.B. Purani : *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, "Childhood and Education".
[1] "New Lamps for Old" : *Induprakash*, August, 21, 1893.

strong language and I would not for a moment be thought to endorse it, but there is, as I say, just a small sediment of truth at the bottom which may tend to excuse, if not to justify, this harsh and unfriendly criticism. And when one knows the stuff of which the Service is made, one ceases to wonder at it.

A shallow schoolboy stepping from a cramming establishment to the command of high and difficult affairs can hardly be expected to give us anything magnificent or princely. Still less can it be expected when the sons of the small tradesmen are suddenly promoted from the counter to govern great provinces. Not that I have any fastidiousness against small tradesmen. I simply mean that the best education men of that class can get in England does not adequately qualify a raw youth to rule over millions of his fellow-beings. Bad in training, void of culture, in instruction poor, it is in plain truth a sort of education that leaves him with all his imperfections on his head, unmannerly, uncultivated, unintelligent..."[1]

The Civil Service order had been one of the idols of anglicised India and the idol had to be broken. But Sri Aurobindo could never be unfair, even to an adversary. He went on to add :

"But in the Civil Service, with all its vices and shortcomings, one does find, as perhaps one does not find elsewhere, rare and exalted souls detached from the failings of their order, who exhibit the qualities of the race in a very striking way; not geniuses certainly but swift and robust personalities, rhetorically powerful, direct, forcible, endowed to a surprising extent with the energy and self-confidence which are the heirlooms of their nation; men in short who give us England — and by England I mean the whole Anglo-Celtic race—on her really high and admirable side. Many of these are Irish or Caledonian; others are Englishmen of good blood and position, trained at the great public schools who still preserve the fine flavour of character, scholarship and power, which was once a common possession in England but threatens under the present dispensation to become sparse or extinct. Others are the veterans of the old Anglo-Indian school, moulded in the larger traditions and sounder discipline of a strong and successful era, who still keep some vestiges of the grand old Company days, still have something of a great and noble spirit, something of an adequate sense how high are the affairs they have to deal with and how serious the position they are privileged to hold..."[2]

[1] "New Lamps for Old" : *Induprakash*, March 6, 1894.
[2] *Ibid.*

But whatever the composition of the governing bureaucracy, it had clearly no place for self-respecting Indians.

> "For an Englishman serves the Government as a member of the same ruling race and can afford to be occasionally independent; but the Indian civilian is a serf masquerading as a heaven-born and can only deserve favour and promotion by his zeal in fastening the yoke heavier upon his fellow-countrymen. As a rule the foreign Government can rely on the 'native' civilian to be more zealously oppressive than even the average Anglo-Indian official."[1]

Sri Aurobindo "was seeking some way to escape from that bondage". So he got himself "disqualified for riding without himself rejecting the Service, which his family would not have allowed him to do." Here is the story in his own words:

> "He neglected his lessons in riding and failed in the last riding test. He was, as is often done, given another chance to pass, but avoided presenting himself in time for the test. He was on this pretext disqualified for the Service, although in similar cases successful Probationers have been given a further chance to qualify themselves in India itself..."[2]

This, it seems, was the first case of its kind, for he had passed all his examinations for the probationary period and was almost automatically entitled to be counted as a full-fledged member of the Service. His disqualification brought an emphatic protest to the authorities from one of the senior dons at Cambridge. Normally, the opinion of the University tutor counts a great deal in matters relating to students and especially in a case like this where the Tutor specifically recorded his view that to reject such a brilliant scholar who had "not only ability but character" would be "a very real loss to the Indian Government." But the authorities in London apparently knew better and the case was finally disposed of by the Secretary of State for India with the remark : "I should much doubt whether Mr. Ghose would be a desirable addition to the Service." Lord Kimberley proved to be wiser in this particular instance than the college don.[3]

The opinion of the India Office had some justification in fact. For, as Sri Aurobindo himself has recorded,"he had already decided to devote his life to

[1] "The Doctrine of Passive Resistance" : *Bandemataram*, April, 1907.
[2] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram* : "Early Life and Career."
[3] A.B. Purani : *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, "Childhood and Education."

the service of his country and its liberation...He had studied with interest the revolutions and rebellions which led to national liberation, the struggle against the English in mediaeval France and the revolts which liberated America and Italy. He took much of his inspiration from these movements and their leaders, especially Jeanne d'Arc and Mazzini..."[1]

> "At Cambridge, as a member of the Indian Majlis of which latterly he became the secretary, he delivered many revolutionary speeches which, as he afterwards learnt, had their part in determining the authorities to exclude him from the Indian Civil Service."[2]

Nor were his anti-government activities confined to giving a few speeches.

> "Among the Indians in London he and his brothers formed a part of a small revolutionary group who rebelled habitually against the leadership of Dadabhai Naoroji and his moderate politics. During the last days of his stay in England he attended a private meeting of Indians in London at which there was formed a secret society with the romantic name of the 'Lotus and Dagger' in which all the members took the vow to adopt each some chosen part which would help in leading to the overthrow of foreign rule. But the society was still-born and its members dispersed without meeting again; some however kept individually to their vow and one of these was Sri Aurobindo."[3]

* *

How was it that a child who had been kept away from the Indian atmosphere from a left age could develop into a revolutionary ? Sri Aurobindo himself has left us some hints on the point.

> "At the age of eleven Aurobindo had already received strongly the impression that a period of general upheaval and great revolutionary change was coming in the world and he himself was destined to play a part in it. His father in his letters had bitterly complained of the mechanical character and heartlessness of the British Government in India. He also sent him Indian newspapers marking for attention news items relating to maltreatment of Indians by Englishmen in that country.

[1] *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother.*
[2] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram* : "Early Life and Career."
[3] *Ibid.*

> This and other circumstances raised a feeling of resentment against the subjection of India to a foreign rule. But the decision to take part himself in some action directed towards the liberation of the country took shape only after some years."[1]

It seems this "firm decision" took full shape only towards the end of another four years, that is at the age of fourteen. "It had already been made when he went to Cambridge."[2]

What those "other circumstances" were which led to the awakening to his mission and life-work we have been left only to guess. Of one thing, however, we are sure, namely, that there was widespread dissatisfaction and anger in India at the injustice which the Ilbert Bill, passed by the Indian Legislature in the early eighties, was designed to perpetuate. The original intention of the Bill had been to remove the "extra-territorial rights" enjoyed by non-Indians in the matter of criminal jurisdiction, by bringing them under the jurisdiction of trying magistrates of Indian birth. To this proposal there was strong opposition on the part of British officials and merchants in India, and the Government of India was forced ultimately to bow before the storm. The Bill as subsequently passed retained the right of the accused to claim their trial at the hands of non-Indian judges and jury. This may have been one of those circumstances which "raised a feeling of resentment against the subjection of India to a foreign rule" in the mind of the young revolutionary.

It was primarily as a direct consequence of the Ilbert Bill agitation that the Indian National Congress came to birth in 1885. This was an event of capital importance in the recent history of India, for it gave concrete proof of the Indians' capacity to unite for achieving their political aims. These aims, in the early years of the Congress, were far short of independence. But the birth of the Congress itself was fraught with immense possibilities for the future. If one were to judge by the great importance which Sri Aurobindo gave to this national institution in his early political writings, one would almost be tempted to suggest that the "firm decision" which he took about this time to take an active part in the liberation of his country had in some way been connected with the birth of the Congress. Describing this event and the enthusiasm it created, he wrote in August 1893, in his first public writing on the Indian question :

> "It is within the recollection of most of us to how giddy an eminence this body was raised, on how prodigious a wave of enthusiasm, against

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and the Mother.*

> how immense a weight of resisting winds. So sudden was it all that it must have been difficult, I may almost say impossible, even for a strong man to keep his head and not follow with the shouting crowd. How shall we find words vivid enough to describe the fervour of those morning hopes, the April splendour of that wonderful enthusiasm ? The Congress was to us all that is to man most dear, most high and most sacred; a well of living water in deserts more than Saharan, a proud banner in the battle of Liberty, and a holy temple of concord where the races met and mingled. It was certainly the nucleus or thrice-distilled essence of the novel modes of thought among us; and if we took it for more than it really was,—if we took it for our pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night; if we worshipped it as the morning-star of our liberty; if we thought of old myths, of the trumpets that shook down Jericho or the brazen serpent that healed the plague, and nourished fond and secret hopes that the Congress would prove all this and more than this;—surely our infatuation is to be passed by gently as inevitable in that environment rather than censured as unnatural or presuming..."[1]

One cannot miss the slight but hardly disguised touch of irony in this encomium on the Congress in its morning glory. But that it was an omen of great value for the future no one could deny. It was the policy and methods of the Congress that were to receive first priority in his hands when Sri Aurobindo took up the question of Indian freedom on return to the land of his birth.

(To be continued)

"PUBLICUS"

[1] "New Lamps for Old" : *Induprakash*, August 7, 1893.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

Reminiscences of Various People in Contact with the Mother

(Continued from the previous issue)

(18)

Perfect Response to the Call for Help

At last I have understood how one can have the practical experience of the call to the Divine for help and the ready response perfect in every detail. Surely the Mother gave me the experience in order to hasten me forward on the Path she has shown us.

I was in a bus, coming homeward across a hundred miles or more. It was filled with people, sardine-packed, mostly with villagers speaking only their native tongue. Suddenly it came to a halt on the way—about four miles from the nearest Railway Station and almost sixteen miles from the first village. The driver made some attempts to restart the bus, but in vain. Then quietly he jumped into a bus that was passing by. Another man of the crew offered to pay back part of the fare, saying that a mechanic had been sent for who was expected the next day. I was told in a mixed kind of jargon that we were to shift for ourselves, each one as best he could. A situation difficult indeed for me, a woman. I was burdened with luggage and had not much money with me, nor could I speak the local tongue nor knew anything of the place around.

Gradually people began to disperse; those who had no luggage got into the buses that passed and were taken to their villages. I was the only person to remain waiting on the road with all my luggage and to face the curious smile of stray villagers—some of whom had the goodness to offer me tea.

Then I thought of the Mother and told myself that her protection was active everywhere and I could sleep very well all alone in the bus and try my luck to return on the following day. Night was coming fast, buses going in my direction became rarer. I withdrew under a tree, away from all possible intrusion and called for the Grace with all my force, telling the Mother inwardly where I was,

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

in what difficult situation, knowing not what to do and so asking for an indication.

I remained thirty minutes in an inner silence that brought calmness into all my body cells. Then I reconsidered the situation and smiled, for a voice within told me to stop all the cars that passed and to return home that night itself.

I spoke out loudly that if such was the order then the Divine Mother must have already prepared for me the means to return home. And with a calm certitude within me I began to stop all the cars that passed by. Twelve cars passed, all either too full or not going in my direction. Seeing my plight a kind villager came up and offered me a hot cup of tea. As I was tasting it with thankfulness, I saw a car passing and had just the time to wave my hand, but the speeding car could stop only somewhat far from me. I ran with the cup of hot tea in my hand and stammered out in English whether the car was going to my destination. Hardly had I finished when a masculine voice called out and invited me to get in after throwing all my baggages into the hold.

What a joy it was ! And before the astonished gaze of the villagers I started my journey like a princess in a fairy tale—all overflowing with joy. As I sat in the car my emotion was quite visible and the old gentleman who had invited me offered me an orange and then hot tea with a pleasant cordiality. At last I could express my gratefulness to him for having rescued me from such a hole. I was almost on the point of crying out to him that he was sent to me by the Divine Mother.

That it was truly—and literally—so was proved by what he said while, completing his good turn to me, he escorted me right up to my house. He said that I was indeed very lucky; for normally he was not taking that route where I lay stranded at that hour. It was in every sense a miraculous conjunction of events. When I found myself again within the warm comfort of my rooms, I bowed down again to the Divine Grace in gratitude.

Doctoring the Dilemma

It was for the 2nd April that I had fixed the thread-marriage of my son and for the 5th of the same month the marriage of my eldest daughter. The dates could be decided upon after great discussion and deliberation as I had to consult and consider the conveniences of the bridegroom's party also. There was hardly an interval of twenty days left. All the members of the household were busy with the preparations. Things were moving at a high speed.

In the 3rd week of March, one young child got fever. The next day the temperature rose very high. After two days it turned out to be chicken-pox. Two or three days after, the child next to it had high fever. There was a danger of this child's also developing chicken-pox. The whole household might get infected too.

According to the practice in our place, no function can be celebreted till the children are given their bath. Even if there is one child suffering, the entire programme has to be stopped.

The children's fever was not abating. I felt helpless and lost my peace of mind when only ten days were left for the functions.

In this plight I naturally turned towards the Mother at Pondicherry. I prayed ardently to her and wrote to her the state of things and sought her Grace.

The Mother answered my call and sent her blessings.

There was a miraculous turning point in the whole situation. The fever of the children began to go down, the chicken-pox was vanishing and the children were quickly coming up for bath. Definitely there was no spread of the contagion to any other child. Curiously in the course of four or five days the whole matter got cleared up like the clouds before the breaking sun. I felt and realised the divine hand of the Mother peacefully averting all the impending obstructions.

The functions were happily and successfully carried through.

(To be continued)

Compiled and reported by
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO*

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1959)

(4)

ALL-DEPENDENT ON GRACE

WHEN I look back upon my fading years, I find that my entire life has been dependent on Grace.

Before coming in contact with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, I had a living contact with Dayananda. I was almost mad about him. In the middle of the twenties of this century I was down with pneumonia. I was lost to all medical hope. I used to remain in a state of delirium. During that delirium I saw Swami Dayananda walking in a jungle. On seeing him I made my obeissance. The memory of what he spoke to me then is yet fresh to me. "My child," he said, "you will be all right." Even though I became all right later, yet I used to remain physically weak and my eyesight was bad.

I first knew about Sri Aurobindo in 1938, through his articles on Dayananda. I was so much impressed by the Master-Yogi's appreciation that I published them in book-form with his permission. The same year I came to Pondicherry for Sri Aurobindo's Darshan. After returning home I saw in a dream Sri Aurobindo sitting on a sofa. I told him, "My eyesight is bad. I can't even read." "Continue coming to me", he said, "all will be done for you." Since then I have been coming to the Ashram once or twice a year.

Later, afflictions of the world made me leave my house. I wrote a letter to the Mother for consolation and help. As soon as I posted it I got a tremendous strength to bear any difficulty. At that time, however, I hesitated to join the Ashram permanently.

During the year 1943, I came as usual to the Ashram for a short visit. Then the Mother used to come to the terrace for giving Darshan to the sadhaks. Waiting for her and meditating in the courtyard, I heard Dayananda's voice, "Why don't you come and settle down here ?" That very year I was accepted by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as an inmate of the Ashram.

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

In 1956, I had an attack of paralysis. My mother had died owing to this disease. Remembering her, I foresaw my own fate, for I was doubtful of recovery. When my son came to Pondicherry for a short stay, he insisted on my going outside for treatment. I asked the Mother. She gave me permission to leave with her blessings. She said, "You will completely recover soon."

Today although I am not entirely cured, yet I am in a position to manage all my affairs. I find a circle of protection in the Mother's immediate atmosphere in the Ashram. I feel that if I ever step out of this protection of the Grace and go outside the Ashram, it will be a clear invitation to death, it will be suicide.

Divine Dispenser of Strength

My father died in 1937 while I was too young studying in the seventh class. My elder brother who was a pleader separated from me just after my father's death. There was none save my widow mother and a younger sister of marriageable age in my little family. I was pulling on anyhow with my studies, health, family affairs, which were in a poor condition. In the year 1945, after the marriage of my sister in 1942, I fell ill. I seemed to be on my deathbed. The world appeared as if it were a devil's workshop. The worldly people had only lip-sympathy for me, but they did not care to see me happy. I was spitting blood the first thing in the morning. The doctor's verdict was gloomy : I was doomed. This was an anxiety only to my mother.

But then came the Divine Grace in silence. I began to read the religious books, *e.g.* Srimad Bhagwat, the Upanishads, the Gita and Sri Ramakrishna's Sayings, and the works of Swami Vivekananda, during the peiod of my taking rest for ill health. I was in search of a Master like Sri Ramakrishna. A relative of mine happened to tell me about Sri Aurobindo. When I read his works it appeared to me as if he had solved all my doubts. But on seeing an early photograph of his, a doubt came to me, "It is written *nāyam ātmā bala hīnena labhya*, 'This Self cannot be realised by a body without strength.' Then could Sri Aurobindo with his frail body have realized the Truth-consciousness ?"

An idea arose in me that I should have his Darshan. I had no money in 1945. But often I used to hear as if Sri Aurobindo were whispering into my ears : "Have confidence." And by and by I saw that my difficulties were turning into stepping-stones on the path. In the year 1948 on the 20th November, I visited Pondicherry. I reached there in the evening. I was directed to take my meal. After the meal, I felt as if enormous strength had been forced into my body. I appeared a changed man to myself. My surprise and ecstasy knew no bounds. An eager feeling for Darshan of the Master and the Mother

captivated my heart and soul and the weakness of my body existed no more. I sat for about an hour in the Dining Hall looking at the surroundings. I felt filled up with a Divine Strength begotten of my taking a meal in the Master's Ashram. My doubt vanished. A voice came from my heart—"Who says that Lord Jagannath Himself is not here in the Ashram ?"

Next morning I had the Darshan of the Mother. The moment I saw her, a soothing sensation of purity pervaded my whole body. All the exertion of my journey was gone before the Mother's smiling gesture. "Is Sri Aurobindo not present here when the Mother is present ? Are they not the obverse and reverse of the same coin ?"—came the question along with an inner answer, "Yes." My eyes were full with tears of joy. Then I realised that it was she whom I had worshipped in the form of Mother Durga.

On the 24th when I went to have Sri Aurobindo's Darshan, there was no lean body sitting, rather the calm Himalayas were leaning against the back of the throne. My doubt again vanished. As I surrendered myself at the feet of the Mother and the Master, I felt myself enveloped by a balmy Presence which left a luminous imprint on my heart and soul.

My financial difficulties are gone now. In fact all difficulties acted as a Grace in disguise. And whoever then deserted me respects me now.

(*To be continued in the December 5 issue*)

Compiled and reported by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

A SENSE OF PROPORTION

"...learn to see and feel vastly and universally."—Sri Aurobindo

PERHAPS one of the difficulties of living in a small community, be it a village, a work settlement, or an ashram, is occasioned by the deterioration of what might be called 'the sense of proportion'. The extent of our activities, which might possibly have included travel, is curtailed, and when the boundaries of our life are restricted, so only too often become the boundaries of our consciousness. There comes a feeling of confinement ,or of oppression, or of a restless dissatisfaction which sometimes impels us to a preoccupation with the trifling and unimportant : we lose our sense of proportion.

"Walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." Not necessarily, but often of course they do, and even if our prisons be self-constructed yet will they be strong enough to hold us prisoner; imaginary troubles are often more real to us than real ones.

Where a deep inner life is established, the problem does not arise, for where there is the wide freedom of an inner consciousness, the desire for outer latitude is never felt. The life of the soul takes precedence over the life of the 'vital', and in the satisfaction of the soul is found the key to the harmonisation of our lesser parts. A pure and transcendent joy is experienced and we know that this is infinitely preferable to the pleasurable thrills of the vital, and that in this is to be found the key to our ultimate release.

"...there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance."[1]

Still, since a true soul-consciousness may not be so easy to come by, or to hold in some permanent measure, it may be worth while to examine how a sense of proportion or dimension assists in its retention, and how the lack of it can negatively affect both the individual and the group.

Considering the negative aspect first, we see that the results of a 'blinkered view-point' are manifold. It implies a lack of balance and perspective, a departure from realities, and is responsible for many of the evils that encroach upon even the most well-intentioned of societies. The sectarian spirit, the exclusive attitude, the frog-in-the-well mentality are a few of its choice products. It

[1] Tagore.

helps to promote that ageless tyranny that seems inherent in all fallible, humanly organised systems. It would have divinely inspired religions lisp and prattle of theirs being the only 'true' faith, creating endless dogmas in order to sustain the Divinity they stifle. It brings into positive and healthy national movements the negative elements of racial superiority and fanaticism, and when a sufficiency of power is achieved, the ancient despotism is wielded by new triumphant instruments. We continue to change our systems and fail to change ourselves.

It would almost seem that unless we can lay hold on some conception of vastness, some comprehension of infinity, we shall succumb to our own human littleness. The pull of nature, it is said, is always downwards.

In this matter, the awareness of the physical immensity of the universe can be of some assistance. The stars can come to our aid, for against this backdrop of a tangible infinity, we can observe things in themselves, in their actuality, and not merely as they affect us personally. Personal as well as group problems which now loom so large in our eyes achieve their truly modest proportion, enabling us to deal with them more effectively because we act from a wider and loftier stance and shall not be crushed confusedly on to a crowded stage.

Insanity, it could be said, is a matter of degree, the degree to which we lose the balance of our perspective; and sanity might be regained in a survey of the stars. They can release us from the oppression of our littleness and we can enter into a realm that savours of beatitude.

In the face of the magnificently vast, it is difficult to give importance to the trifling and little, to the many incidents of life, insignificant in themselves but which we frequently inflate into triumphs or tragedies. And while we thus insist on enjoying our little dramas, we lose sight of the divine play and its eternal Player.

An American journalist, Harry Golden, who can also be described as a philosopher of the likeable 'homespun' variety, says :

> "I have a rule against registering complaints in a restaurant; because I know that there are thousands of millions of suns in the Milky Way. Many of these suns are thousands of times larger than our own, and vast millions of them have whole planetary systems. And mind you, this is only our own small corner (the observable universe)—our own galaxy. Within range of our biggest telescopes there are at least one hundred million such galaxies, and some scientists believe that the further you go out into space the thicker the galaxies become; and there are millions of of millions as yet undiscovered by the scientist's camera and the astrophysicist's calculations.

When you think of all this, it's silly to worry because the waitress brought you string beans instead of broad beans."

It is therefore fitting that we should call in question the scale wherewith we habitually measure things, the consciousness that keeps us chained to a relentless egocentricity, and discard the mental magnifying glass that makes mountains out of molehills.

Maurice Maeterlink, essayist and dramatist, became imbued with the wonder of the heavens and in 1930 produced a small book called the *Magic of the Stars*. In it, after discussing the 'staggering facts' of the universe, he wrote :

> "These universes may appear disproportionately vast to us, but only because we measure all things first by the scale of the earth, and then by the scale of man. We are apt to forget that in the realm of space we ourselves are the infinitely small. No measure is absolute and here we come to the true relativity ; to a creature born on an electron, the voids in the atom world would seem incalculably huge. Further, to a being who would compare with us as we with the electron—and this after all is not impossible—our universe would merely seem comfortably spacious, nor would he regard the others behind it as excessively large".[1]

Considered purely from the viewpoint of physical space, we are certainly insignificant. The whole of our solar system is so comparatively minute that God could hardly be blamed if He lost sight of it altogether. Perhaps some pessimists will aver that He has.

However, while conceding that no measure is absolute and that our habitual assessments are hardly disinterested or detached enough to ensure accuracy, we need not assume that because we are 'infinitely small' we are infinitely unimportant. To do so is again to lose our sense of proportion by, so to speak, falling over backwards, and by going from one extreme to the other. Spatial dimension is one thing, one principle, only ; but that which is truly significant in Man is not subject to it. "Materially," says Sri Aurobindo, "we are nothing, spiritually we are everything."

There is in *The Life Divine* a passage which might be included here since

[1] To envisage the last part of Maeterlink's statement requires a potent imagination. To compare with ourselves we need on the one hand a pin-point figure, and on the other a fantastic giant who could crush millions of such with the pressure of his little finger.

it not only touches upon the subject but reveals the meaning of man and the universe and the deep relation they bear to each other.

> "The universe and the individual are necessary to each other in their ascent and they profit by each other. Universe is a diffusion of the divinen All in infinite space and time, the individual is its concentration within limits of space and time. Universe seeks, in infinite extension, the divine totality it feels itself to be, but cannot entirely realise; for in extension, existence drives at a pluralistic sum of itself which can neither be the primal nor the final unit, but only a recurring decimal without end or beginning. Therefore it creates in itself a self-conscious concentration of the All through which it can aspire. In the conscious individual, Prakriti turns back to perceive Purusha, World seeks after Self; God having entirely become Nature, Nature seeks to become progressively God. On the other hand, it is by means of the universe that the individual is impelled to realise himself. Not only is it his foundation, his means, his field, the stuff of the divine work; but also, since the concentration of the universal Life which he is takes place within limits and is not like the intensive unity of Brahman, free from all conception of bound and term, he must necessarily universalise and impersonalise himself in order to manifest the divine All which is his reality."

And, further about ascent to the divine life:

> "This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification for his existence without which he would be only an insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water that has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe."

GODFREY

DIALOGUE OF ONE

"TELL me, friend, why do you so softly sing to yourself ?"

"I sing because I am very happy."

"Why are you so very happy, friend ? We find little cause for cheer, and even now the clouds of further misfortune gather overhead."

"I am happy because I belong to a secret society."

"Ah, this is interesting. What is its name ?"

"Alas, it has no name."

"That is strange. Who are the members ?"

"I do not know who they are, except—myself."

"That sounds very foolish to me. Who does know the members ?"

"Perhaps only the members themselves."

"Friend, how does one join your secret society which seems to make you so happy—even in the face of misery ?"

"One joins by guessing our secret."

"But how does one guess the secret ? Give us some hints."

"Oh it is written all about you. Not only in books, but in lazy clouds, and in the many rustling leaves. It greets you in the sunrise and touches you throughout the day, yearning to be known. It speaks to you in the winds and the restless waters. It is forever calling you by name. Listen ! Listen quietly when you are most alone. Listen not merely with your ears, but with your inner heart. If your yearning is sincere, who can tell but that the doors of your understanding will swing widely open, moved by the same strong but gentle Hand that unfolds the face of the flower for its first morning caress."

"Friend, I wonder if I do not feel it now. There is a glow within my breast. A white light has spread across my face. My feet only occasionally touch the ground, and gladness has overcome me. Whatever I touch I love, and also all that I cannot touch. A thrill of joy has rippled by and my eyes have found a new and lovely Face."

IRWIN L. ARLT

EPIGRAMS

(1)

In a solitude's splendour stand the mountains high,
Their heads upraised toward the boundless sky
In a passion of delight. Such are the great
Who dwell apart, their soul their only mate.

(2)

Murmuring with joy and happiness and ease
    The tree looks up to heaven in green delight.
    A glad surrender to the call of light
Is prisoner Life's first movement of release.

(3)

The mountain river dreams of infinity
And breaks its bonds to plunge into the sea :
So man when he beholds life's futile aims
Turns sole to God, unmoved by other claims.

(4)

The beauty of the rose ensnares the sense,
    Thy beauty fills the soul with God-delight;
The human love is a star in darkness dense,
    Thy love compels the passing of the Night.

PRITHWI SINGH NAHAR

SEASCAPE

Alone under so vast a sky, borne up by so timeless an element
The swimmer feels his solitude, his lonely setting.
Lifting him on its swell a comber passes
Breaking beyond him in a long encroachment,
Its swirling surf liquid on the sandy beaches,
Hurled by a habit formed in earth's first distant ages.
The swimmer feels a stripping and wide land-forgetting,
Small, in the sea-surges.

DICK BATSTONE

NEW ROADS

BOOK II

THE VALLEY OF MEN

II

DOWN an ever tortuous valley of days they trod;
Into this new wilderness of the soul,
Following a mystic light that went before
Into the unknown silences of Sleep.
The soul's vedettes had climbed the Peaks of God
And from the heights of Pisgah there were seen
New Roads which led towards the Promised Land.
But all in the valley saw not the Road or the Goal
Nor heard the voice of those who went before.
Most lived from hour to hour their programme lives
Worshipping the golden feet of gods
That were no more—caught in a magic poise
Of ancient postures that amuse the crowd;
Who, like wild poppies in an opium dance
Of new desires, were blithely unaware
The time had come when the Great Mother goes
To Shiva,—when She says : 'This is enough.'
O Lord ! must we repeat again the Past,
Enact the Demon-drama of the Worlds
Where man's repeated last stupidity
Affords new laughter for the lesser gods ?
The priests of Babylon plotted the stars,
Measured their movements with exactitude,
And yet were swayed by superstitious fears,
Prayed to the unknown deities of dread,
Not to the Mind of Light that would be born.
The Greeks enshrined an Oracle of Light
In the unlit temple of humanity;

Banished their son of Kroton to his end,
Dismembered the living body of their god
(Sweet Orpheus' head still lies on a Lesbian shore)
To drink the waters of oblivion.
In Plato and Aristotle there arose
Twin peaks of grandeur to uphold a world,
Twin stars to shine for all eternity.
But also they announced the coming fall—
They were the precursors of the ensuing Night
Where man was plunged into the darkest age
For mind and soul to wander through the caves
Of our beginnings. What is to be our fate ?
She only knows the goal, the destined end—
She only can uphold the Truth of the world ;
For She alone has conquered all the Past.
The Buddha walked this land to break its bonds,
To liberate the soul from rigid laws
Which stifle the spirit of the living Word.
He in His compassion leaned to man
And sacrificed His godhead to the world.
Christ came, a Messiah from the heart of Love,
But who now lives the message of His days ?
Who seeks the Kingdom deep within himself
And lives from there towards his fellow men ?
Ramakrishna was the earth's aspiring Soul,
The cry of all humanity,—his heart
Burst with the fervour of the imprisoned God
Calling the Mother from Her agelong Sleep
Into the human temple of our love.
But who now hears the passion of his call
In the modern temples of humanity ?
But God has made a promise now to man :
That he today who follows these New Roads
Firm in the footsteps of She, the Living Light,
Will here attain to Immortality.
No matter what the goal, this longing cry,
This blood new-burning in the singing heart
Demands surrender ; all, all of ourselves
Upon the Altar of the aspiring Flame
To fashion here new patterns of the Soul

Into the living structure of our lives.
Now falsehood can no longer here endure,
Nor the pretensions to a formal play
Of vain politeness, of barrren protocol
Or the pretence of pious rectitude.
A gentleness of soul has entered life,
A sense of gratitude to the Divine
Walks in the hidden moments of our days.
The veils of social manners that once served
To clothe the animal nakedness of man
Are as transparent under this New Light
As wine through the texture of Venetian ware.
Man looks at man and sees the soul within,
Sees the real intention in his eyes :
The God-devotion or the Devil-drive.
The Choice has now been made—the Call of Fate
Rings out across the valley to the hills
Beyond the frontiers of our groping mind
To a consciousness of brighter fields of Bliss.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Continued from the previous issue)

(18)

VI. Agony of Separation

39. Transient

Flung open are my gates of woe to thee,
Unheeding the world's censure and time's slight,
I draw to thy fold unreservedly,—
Today's our secret trysting's first moonlight.

For long my sorrows were shut within my heart,
Life's pangs and glooms I have borne all along,
How far apart have we been, veils apart,
All was dry and dark, without music or song.

O fears grip me, O sombre becomes the sky,
My heart-beats carry a cruel omen for me,
My soul-depths draw a dreadful gloomy sigh,
World-wide looms around a conspiracy.

Starless dome lifts its dark curtain anon;
Ends thus the night, the love, the union ?

Har Krishan Singh

THE NOTION OF OBJECTIVITY

(Continued from the June issue)

III

SINCE the thirties of this century, there has been a complete revolution in science, as a result of which the tables have been turned. The old ideal of objectivity as impersonality, verifiability and physicality has been given up. In other words, the nineteenth-century ideal of objectivity, the postulate on which the whole edifice of physical science was built up is now being seriously called in question. The scientist who used to laugh at the windmill of abstract notions of the philosopher has now landed in the region of pure abstractions. The *terra firma* on which the scientist stood as on the securest rock of ages is now slipping away under his feet and is fast vanishing into smoke and air. Even the world of sense-data which used to be the preoccupation of classical physics is completely given up. The world of sensory perception now appears to the scientist as a very superficial order of reality. He is now preoccupied with what has been termed by J. Clay the *plane of physical reality* and this clearly transcends the domain of the senses. Let us for a while examine the standpoint of modern science which has brought this 'New Illumination'.

Physical science in the nineteenth century did develop a kind of phliosophy of its own. It generated a kind of definite world-view and had its own say about the nature of the universe. Those were the days when science used to move by rapid strides. The scientific world-view of that time was essentially deterministic and mechanistic. It was assumed from early times that the world is composed wholly of matter and motion and that matter is composed of simple units called atoms. And, hitherto, the philosophy of Nature in dealing with the history of the world has uniformly begun with atoms and movements of atoms, in some cases assuming atoms and motion to be self-existent, in others assuming them to be created. In other words, the world is made up of particles that push and pull each other, the particles having certain constant values as such in respect of mass and volume.

Secondly, the laws governing the relations among particles,—in other words their push and pull—are laws of mathematical mechanics; they are fixed and definite and give us determinable quantities called coordinates by which one can ascertain the configuration and pattern of things.

Classical physics thus discovered and affirmed a few fundamental or axiomatic truths called the constants of nature. These were the very basic foundation upon which the whole edifice of scientific knowledge was built up. The chief among them were :

(1) Conservation of matter, (2) conservation of energy, (3) uniformity of Nature, (4) the law of causation and continuity, (5) the presupposition of an absolute space and time in which all things move and have their being.

The whole effort of experimental science was just to find the absolutes of Nature, that is to say, laws governing facts that do not depend for their existence upon anything but themselves. The purely objective world without any taint of an intruding subject was the field of enquiry. But the so-called absolutes of Nature which were the bedrocks of modern science were found to be shaky. The disillusionment came when it was discovered that those 'entities' or laws, which were given solid reality for decades, failed totally to explain facts obtained by progressive experimental science. Let us take for example the principle of conservation of matter. The principle pointed out that in a given system the quantity of matter is constant in and through all transformations. The most recent developments in science shows that this principle holds good only in respect of gross matter belonging to man-sized nature. But as soon as we enter into the ultimate constituents of matter, the units of electric charges, the infinitesimals, we find that matter is destroyed and is or can be recreated : material particles can be dematerialised into light waves or quanta and light quanta are precipitated back again into electric particles of matter. Similarly the law of conservation of energy in respect of particles that move with very great speed. Mass does not remain here constant as in Newtonian Physics but varies with velocity. Again, in classical physics, position and velocity are absolute determinants for all scientific measurement. But when we enter into the sub-atomic regions, we cannot any more determine both the position and velocity of the particles at the same time with exactness and accuracy. Only one, either position or velocity, can be determined accurately but not both at the same moment. The more accurate the one, the less so the other and, if both are to be determined, it can only be done approximately. So in modern physics we do not find the exact measure of things, but only the probable measures.

This gives rise to the principle of indeterminacy, which has two great revolutionary implications. First, accordingly to this principle it is not possible to determine the movement of the ultimate particles of matter individually or severally, it is not even possible theoretically to follow the chain of modulations of an electron from its birth to its dissolution. Secondly, this principle involved, in a certain sense, the subject in all results of observation. The subject

here means the observing instrument or the recording machinery which mirrors or reflects the activities of the observed. It used to be supposed that making an observation on Nature, the universe could be divided into two detached and distinct parts, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. But this kind of division between the subject and the object holds good in 'man-sized' Nature. When from the domain of mechanical forces we enter into the region of electric and radiant energy, we find our normal measuring apparatus almost breaks down and the division between the subject and the object is obliterated. Here accurate observation cannot be made because of the very presence of the observing subject and the very fact of observation. The ultimates that are observed are sub-atomic particles: now when the observer directs a beam of light upon the particle, the latter's direction and velocity are interfered with. For example, the electron is such an infinitesimal that a ray from the observer is sufficient to deflect or modify its movement. And there is no way of determining or eliminating this element of deflection or interference from the subject. The original idea of objectivity breaks down.

We can no longer make a sharp division between the subject and the object. "To try to do so would involve making an arbitrary decision as to the exact point at which the division should be made. Complete objectivity can only be regained by treating observer and observed as parts of a single system; these must now be supposed to constitute an indivisible whole..." (James Jeans, *Physics and Philosophy*, p. 143). The acceptance of the principle of indeterminacy had far-reaching consequences and did away with many important classical laws of physics. In the words of James Jeans, the consequences of the principle of indeterminacy are as many as six :—

" (1) So far as the phenomena are concerned, the uniformity of Nature disappears.

(2) Precise knowledge of the outer world becomes impossible for us.

(3) The process of Nature cannot be adequately represented within a framework of space and time.

(4) The division between the subject and the object are no longer definite or precise; complete precision can only be regained by uniting subject and object into a single whole.

(5) So far as our knowledge is concerned, causality becomes meaningless.

(6) If we still wish to think of the happenings in the phenomenal world as governed by a causal law, we must suppose that these happenings are determined in some substratum of the world which lies beyond the world of phenomena and so also beyond our access." (*Physics and Philosophy*, p. 145.)

Not only this. The effects of the theory of relativity in various fields of human knowledge have been tremendous. It has totally undermined the so-called ideal of objectivity by its various implications. Einstein points out that it is not merely the measuring ray of light, not merely the beam in the eye of the observer, that is the cause of interference, the very mind behind the eye is involved in the object in a very strange manner. The mind is not a *tabula rasa*, it comes into the field with certain presuppositions—axioms and postulates as he calls them—due to its angle of vision and perhaps to the influence upon it of immediate sense-perception. Thus science has landed in the very heart of metaphysics. Eddington says that there is no other go for the scientist to-day but to admit and declare that its pattern and scheme of things as described by what is called laws of Nature are only a mental constant of the scientist. The wonderful discoveries of science are nothing but jugglery of the mind —what it puts out of itself unconsciously into the outside world. A scientific law is a pure deduction from the mind's law. In this sense the scientist does not discover but manufactures. Even Eddington goes so far as to say that if a scientist is sufficiently introspective he can trace out from within his brain each and every law of Nature which he took so much pains to find out from Nature by observation and experiment. "Current relativity theory and quantum theory, as usually accepted, have not yet taken," says Eddington, "full advantage of this epistemological method. It appears that when the epistemological scrutiny of definitions is systematically applied, and its consequences are followed up mathematically, we are able to determine all the 'fundamental' laws of nature (including the purely numerical constants of Nature) without any physical hypothesis. This means that the fundamental laws and constants of physics are wholly subjective, being the mark of the observer's sensory and intellectual equipment on the knowledge obtained through such equipment; for we could not otherwise have this kind of apriori knowledge of laws governing an objective universe." (A. S. Eddington, *The Philosophy of Physical Science*, p. 104) Eddington seems practically to do away with the objective world of science and the entire cosmic order appears to him as nothing but a construction, symbol or convention of the thinking mind. The engineers' model of the world in which classical science believed has now practically disappeared. This is a position which is very disconcerting to the scientists.

Present-day physical science seems sympathetic in a distant say to the Cartesiancum-Berkelyean position that the world is nothing but the reproduction of the ideas of the divine mind. Says Berkeley, "All the choir of heaven and furniture of earth, in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world have not any subsistence without a mind; that their being is to be perceived or known; that consequently so long as they are not

actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit :—it being perfectly unintelligible and involving all the absurdity of abstraction to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of a Spirit." (Berkeley, *Treatise...*) Therefore, the so-called separation between the subject and object is not final. The subject has entered into the object and any definition of the object must necessarily depend upon the particular poise of the subject. That is the Cosmic immanence of the Purusha spoken of in the Upanishads "for the ultimate Self, the Purusha, has found its habitation everywhere." In the Maitri Upanishad it is said that it is the "inner self" which governs the "external existence". This indeed, is, also, the central theme of the doctrine "Internality of Relations" according to which the world is an organic whole, the parts of which are interconnected and interdependent upon each other inwardly or internally. "When we view ourselves in space and time," writes Jeans, "our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle picture, but when we pass beyond space and time, they may perhaps form ingredients of a single continuous stream of life. As it is with light and electricity, so it may be with life; the phenomena may be individuals carrying on separate existences in space and time, while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may all be members of one body. In brief, modern physics is not altogether antagonistic to an objective idealism like that of Hegel." So we approach the conclusion that "the subjective and the objective truth of things are both real, they are two sides of the same reality." (Sri Aurobindo)

(To be continued)

K. C. PATI

MONEY AND ITS DIVINE USE

"Let money come and go in abundance for good works."
—THE MOTHER

Unless money is renounced the supreme good is hard to attain, so runs the prevailing idea. Money is at the root of all evil. Look upon money as an evil—this is the counsel of almost all spiritual thinkers.

But the Rishis of the Vedic age did not give such counsel. In their scheme of life-long sadhana they had a recognised place for the quartette, chaturbarga, —dharma, artha, kama, moksha, virtue, wealth, enjoyment, liberation, the four aims of human pursuit. Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna and other Avatars did not renounce wealth. It is said in the *Bhāgavata* that under the pretext of begging of King Vali the trifle of three paces of land, the Avatar in the form of the Dwarf possessed himself of his all and sent him off to the nether world. Whatever the cause, it was he who was the first to possess all the wealth of Vali, and then he made it over to his brother Indra.

The counsel of giving up wealth has come generally from sannyasis or from great sages who created the order of sannyasis. The Bible echoes the sannyasi's voice, "Ye cannot serve both God and Mammon."

Sankaracharya was quite explicit : "Think of money as a constant evil; not a trace of happiness can be found in it." And Sri Ramakrishna's teaching about the renunciation of lust and gold is world-famous. But then he has added, "Try to earn much for the service of the world of knowledge. Earning is not an end in itself, the end is to serve God. No wrong attaches to the money that goes into the service of the Divine." He has further said, "When you see the Mother in every woman, the world becomes a world of knowledge."

But he himself could not stand the touch of money, its touch would sting him like a scorpion. Hence he said, "Mother Fortune, be you in my heart."

Nor could Bhakta Tulsidas imagine "a world of knowledge." For him, to keep money is a hardship, to lose it is a hardship, to spend it is a hardship. Money gives only sorrow. So treat it as a great foe.

As there is a conflict between money and spirituality there is a conflict as well between spirituality and material economics. For Buddha, money has no value; for the economist, Buddha's *tapasya* has no value. Even among

philosophers without sadhana there are some who have a bitter contempt, a deep aversion for economics.

It is the mind's way, says Sri Aurobindo, to see truth in fragments, the mind cannot take a whole view. The mind calls the fragment the whole and remains satisfied. Whatever knowledge we can attain by a one-sided, partial and imperfect view of a thing cannot be full knowledge. But the mind can grasp only a fraction; full integral knowledge is beyond its reach.

It is true that direct knowledge or knowledge experienced from above the mind is supreme knowledge. The knowledge attempted by means of reason, argument, inference—be it philosophy, science or economics—is all groping about in the dark. The knowledge, said Sri Ramakrishna, that helps attain God is true knowledge; the rest is ignorance. To attain God is true science, the rest is nescience. Yet all this has a utility on the mental plane. It is the supreme knowledge that has assumed different forms of ignorance in the different stages of evolution. The soul's own self is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Hence the natural impulse of the human mind to seek for existence, consciousness and bliss. Man's mind seeks knowledge of everything, says Sri Aurobindo in his New Veda, *The Life Divine* :

> "Mind seeks light for knowledge, for knowledge of the One truth basing all, not only an essential truth of self and things but also of all truth of diversity of that oneness, all its detail, circumstance, manifold way of action, for law of movement and happening; for thinking mind the joy of existence is discovery and penetration of the mystery of creation that comes with knowledge."

The human mind seeks light, seeks knowledge—the knowledge of the One and of the Many—seeks the delight of discovery. But on the mental plane different kinds of knowledge are not possible to harmonise. The harmonisation is possible on a plane above the mind which Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind. On this plane all kinds of knowledge may have a place, for it is the plane of knowledge, "it can hold all knowledge in itself". The supramental plane is not dark as the mental plane. Truth there stands self-revealed. There is no seeking for truth there. It is in possession of the truth.

In the Supermind, says he, there is the integral consciousness of unity in diversity. The law of the Supermind is unity fulfilled in diversity. All are the manifestations of the One because the One has become Many. The true oneness is that which suffers no diminution in its infinity. Sri Aurobindo's aim is to establish on earth this supramental consciousness and power by bringing it down into Matter.

The sharp contrast between economics and spirituality has already been referred to. But behind economics also there is the urge of the soul. When we hear Alfred Marshall say that the economist seeks to discover the Many in the One and the One in the Many,[1] we recall the words of spiritual wisdom : *sarvabhūtasthamātmānam sarvabhūtāni cātmani.* It is a wonder how truths of the higher planes impinge from time to time on the human mind.

Pigon says in his *Economics of Welfare* that the economist does not, like the philosopher, seek knowledge for its own sake but knowledge that fructifies in effecting the needed change.

The conflict between money and spiritual truth is a conflict in the field of mind and intellect, in the field of ignorance. Leaving aside the case of a handful of hermits living on air and fruit and root, one must find that everyone has need of money for the very maintenance of life; sadhus, sannyasis, heads of *mathas* and householders, all need money. Sri Aurobindo also has not denied its utility. He has, in the manner of the economist, said, "Money is indispensable to the fullness of the outward life." He has further said, "Money is the visible sign of a universal force...."

Economists are quite conscious of the power of wealth. But Sri Aurobindo's is not the economist's vision. His vision is spiritual. So he could say, "All wealth belongs to the Divine and those who hold it are trustees, not possessors."

Some decry money and think it creditable for a sadhak to embrace poverty. But Sri Aurobindo calls it a great error and says that it is for this reason that the Asuric power has possessed itself of wealth and all that it brings. All wealth should be conquered from undivine powers for the use of the Divine's work. And the greater will be the power of this conquest in those who are sincere, generous, egoless, who do not demand anything for themselves, who will offer freely and without reserve everything to the Divine Power.

Money is misused by those who spend it for the gratification of their ego, for the satisfaction of their lusts and desires, for the acquisition of power and influence, by those who are no seekers of Truth, who have no quest for God, in one word, who are the instruments of asuras and rakshasas.

Money is needed for the fulfilment of life, for work that makes for spiritual progress. It may appear needless to the other-worldly philosophy and ascetic idealism, for a divine transformation of the world is not their aim; their aim is to escape for ever to some higher world or nirvana. This sort of killing the patient for the cure of his disease or killing the self for its liberation is not the intention of Sri Aurobindo. He says that it is not enough to rescue wealth from the asuric power, one should have no tinge of attachment to wealth.

[1] Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics,* Appendix C, p. 777

It is generally found that the possessors of wealth are possessed by wealth. That is why the Mother says, "The hold of the hostile forces upon money power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task...."

The possessors of wealth are so enslaved to lower forces that one has to struggle hard to get anything out of them for a great cause. Ask of them anything and you are subjected to a barrage of questions and to no end of remarks. Even if God himself comes for help, He would be shown the door. The story of Brikasura in the *Bhāgawat* comes back to mind.

By his tapasya Brikasura won the heart of Mahadeva and asked for the boon : "If I place my hand on anybody's head it must drop off." Moved by love and compassion for Brikasura, Mahadeva granted him the boon. Could the god imagine that he himself would be the first victim of the asura ? Securing the boon the asura thought that he would have to get Gauri but before that he must make an end of Shiva; for Shiva living, Gauri would be impossible to capture. The giver of the boon fled for life but wherever he turned he was pursued by the asura. Alas, his immortality was at stake. Shiva was nonplussed.

Finding Shiva in this plight Vishnu appeared in the form of a Brahmana and asked Brikasura why he was running after Shiva. "Mahadeva," replied he, "has given me the boon that anybody's head I put my hand on will topple down. I am after touching him on the head." The disguised Vishnu said, "I see the self-forgetful god has made you forget your own reason. Shiva has misled you. By tempting you on in this direction he'll kill you. His boon is all bosh. If you don't believe me, try it by putting your hand on your head." Taken in by the playful god, just as Brikasura put his hand on his head, his diabolical career reached its end.

Many a Brikasura has come into being on this earth. By God's grace they have become owners of wealth. Wealth is a divine power. Made powerful by the grace and power of God, they would now pack Him off. Not a penny they would spend on His work.

This is stealing. Not to give Him what is His is theft. A thief is he who denies Him what He has given him. Perhaps a day will come when such people will share the fate of Brikasura. For in the days that are coming all wealth will devote itself to God's work.

Whatever the merits of our present-day economics, it is based on despicable barbarism. Behind this economics there is a deformation of the Vaishya's profession—an excessive ambition to amass, enjoy and appropriate others' things.

The society built upon modern economics has its eye fixed upon profit and loss. Education, art, poetry, literature, religion, everything has been

levelled down to the terms of merchandise. In his *Human Cycle* Sri Aurobindo says that in the barbarous modern life the true and the beautiful are sadly lacking. "The opulent plutocrat and the successful mammoth capitalist and organiser of industry are the supermen of this age and the true, if often occult, rulers of its society...If it persisted too long life would become clogged and perish of its own plethora or burst in its straining to a gross expansion." To this modern civilisation the high ideals of the Upanishad, *tena tyaktena bhunjithā* (By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy) and *mā gṛdha kasyacit-dhanam* (Lust not after anyone's possession), are but alien principles. No renunciation of attachment, only desire for enjoyment: that is how greed goes on enlarging. In this condition of things this civilisation is swelling towards the bursting-point and is getting pressed down under its own weight.

Sri Aurobindo aims at a new order of society which will be free from the least tinge of selfishness, and based upon love of God and a sense of unity, in which mutual relations of give and take will proceed from no commercial motive, in which all action will manifest the Divine Will.

It is true that whoever has no desire has no want; even in poverty he is rich in the plenitude of his self-content. He who has desire, has greed for money, is a beggar even with his hoards of millions. That is why Buddha said, *santushti paramam dhanam*, contentment is supreme wealth. Here, however, contentment does not imply *tamasic nivritti*, inert aloofness. Sankhya speaks of nine kinds of satisfaction.

आध्यात्मिकाश्चतस्र. प्रकृत्युपादानकालभाग्याख्या: ।
बाह्याविषयोपरमात पञ्च नवतुष्टयोभिमना: ॥

"The satisfaction of nature, of the elements, of time, of fortune — these are forms of spiritual satisfaction. The satisfaction arising from apathy or aversion to external things is of five kinds; it proceeds from a satiety of earning, keeping, enjoying, spending and harbouring jealoysy. Real content comes of self-knowledge and in attainment of the Divine."

Buddha's content arose from the attainment of his Enlightenment : 'In quest of the builder of my house, I have passed through life after life of suffering, in different births among different nations. O builder of my house, I have now found you. No more can you build a house for me. Its foundation, its pillars, all its supports have crumbled to pieces. My mind is now freed from every desire. My thirst for things has worn away."

But Buddha's path was the path of nirvana. It means liberation, no doubt, but not the Life Divine, not liberation for the manifestation of the Divine. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is the Yoga of manifestation—manifestation in indivi-

dual and in collectivity; nirvana will be the basis of a free spiritual life, the beginning of his integral yoga.

This world is a playfield of the Divine, here He seeks his playmates. The minimum requirement of fitness for being his playmates is liberation and surrender. Complete self-surrender to the Divine's Will, that is to say, to be able to move and act according as He wants us to move and act, a full consent to His Will. If He wants to set a sadhak on the conquest of wealth and make of him its master, he has gladly to agree. Again if He wants to make of him a destitute, he has with an equal gladness to agree. There must reign, in the heart of the sadhak of the integral Yoga, complete equality in either circumstance.

"The ideal sadhak in this kind is one who if required to live poorly can so live and no sense of want will affect him or interfere with the full inner play of the divine consciousness; and if he is required to live richly, can so live and never for a moment fall into desire or attachment to his wealth or to the things that he uses or servitude to self-indulgence or a weak bondage to the habits that the possession of riches creates. The divine Will is all for him and the divine Ananda" (Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother.*)

Many may wonder what use yoga can have for wealth. This is an idea of the *sannyasin* or of a blind *bhakta.* Wealth is God's, God himself is wealth, He is Mahalaxmi. The inherent meaning of the word Bhagawan is *sovereignly possessed of riches.* He is God of all wealth in the universe. In attaining God in all His aspects, there can be no elimination of His riches. He is full not only of Love and Ananda, not only of Knowledge and Power, He is full as well of Wealth. He has to be attained in all His aspects, to be realised and manifested in all His aspects. Says Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* :

"One rule of the gnostic life is the self-expression of the Spirit, through simplicity or through complexity—to the extreme or through their balance—beauty and plenitude, a hidden sweetness and laughter in things, a sunshine and gladness of life are also powers and expressions of the Spirit."

PURNENDU NANDI

(Translated by Tinkari Mitra with a few omissions from the Bengali article "Artha O Yoga" in "Srinvantu" of Bhadra 1365)

BOOK IN THE BALANCE

The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo: by M. P. Pandit. Publishers, Sri Aurobindo Study Circle, Madras - 5. Pages 75.

A remarkable clearness of thought is felt in the author's exposition of the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo. Especially interesting is the way he demonstrates, with genuine scholarship in Sanskrit, how powerfully the Veda, the Vedanta and the Gita collaborate with the fundamentals of the Teaching. This part of the book will indeed serve as an eye-opener to those who think that Sri Aurobindo has deviated from the great Indian tradition.

Besides expounding the central philosophy and the principles governing the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the author sets forth his Master's illuminating and highly constructive views indicating how humanity is progressively on the way to attaining the social and the still larger human unity and the significant role the individual has to play in quickening that upward march. A lasting unity becomes a naked reality of everyday life when man awakens to live in the soul constantly.

The author speaks of Sri Aurobindo's concept of creation, of the descent of the Spirit into Matter in a series of various gradations and how it evolves by a series of similar ascending grades into its original status of Sachchidananda. The intention of Nature is to unfold in its evolutionary process the Divine in all its splendours. And Sri Aurobindo calls for a conscious cooperation of man with this divine intention of Nature to fulfil his own existence in the universe.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the author says, this world of ignorance, incapacity and death can be transformed into a heaven of Knowledge, Power, Bliss and Immortality. But man, as he is, lives normally on the surface and does not know that he has an inner being and an inmost being called soul or psychic being. Infinite powers of Knowledge, Beauty and Joy are secretly embedded in his depths. By learning to plunge into this Inner Ocean, by means of Yogic discipline man will be able to manifest them and be a master of himself and his circumstances.

But, to Sri Aurobindo, the realisation of the Inner Divine is not all : the Cosmic Divine that is the All, the Transcendent Divine that at once embraces and transcends both the cosmic and the individual, are to be realised by man. The ascent of consciousness into Higher Heights and the descent of the Higher Power into our being is brought about by a discipline of concentration,

will and aspiration. But the transformation of the whole being can be effected only by the Supramental Power that is the Divine Mother.

Sri Aurobindo sees and declares, the author points out, that the individual, the social aggregate and the human race at large are ultimately destined to live in Love, Harmony and Brotherhood, all based on Soul-union and nothing short of it. Relations otherwise are bound to end in discord, as we witness in the world today. "Unity," as the author beautifully puts it, "is the base and unity is the summit of the whole evolutionary movement." The unitary principle, the Supermind, will come to govern, and later transform, the human society and the race the moment the individuals awaken to live in Soul and realise it first in themselves. Living in the Soul man will naturally be able to manifest the native powers of the Soul : Love, Beauty, Harmony and Knowledge. Then Peace and Happiness will descend to reign here upon earth forever. The Kingdom of Heaven long dreamed-of will become a reality.

At the beginning of the volume the author gives us a sharp outline of the existing principal philosophical world-views. In this connection, he could have made a passing reference to the contribution, direct or indirect, these views have made in spurring the spiritual life of humanity. Such a balanced acknowledgement, especially while interpreting the rare integral point of view of Sri Aurobindo, is necessary so that the interpretation may be complete. For instance, Sri Aurobindo himself, after stating the signal service rendered by the daring Materialist Denial, says in his *Life Divine* : "As we have seen how greatly Materialism has served the ends of the Divine, so we must acknowledge the still greater service rendered by Asceticism to Life". So all-inclusive and supremely vigilant was the divine eye of this Master-Seer that it never failed to mark a hand serving the Divine behind even what apparently seemed to be most contradictory, even most anti.

The book has come out with a fine get-up. Though it appears to be a bit costly at first sight, a reading will make us forget the high price. It is opportune that such a creative and powerful Teaching as Sri Aurobindo's should have come in a form that is simple and handy at this troubled hour of humanity so that the world may take it as a guiding star for its thought and life.

POORNA

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 SEVEN

I HAVE already brought to your notice the many kinds of feet which go into a metrical line. There are also many possible lengths of such a line. We have a dimeter (a line of two feet), a trimeter (a line of three), a tetrameter (a line of four), a pentameter (a line of five), an alexandrine (a line of six), a heptameter (a line of seven), an octometer (a line of eight). You must have marked the absence of the word "hexameter" for a line of six feet. I have put an alexandrine instead, because the series I have listed is composed of the feet which are the most common in English—iambic, trochee, anapaest. The iambic is the commonest. And the usual six-foot line of iambs is called the alexandrine. The hexameter has Greek and Latin associations and is based on the ancient model of five dactyls and a closing spondee (or trochee):

Tumtiti tumtiti tumtiti tumtiti tumtiti tumtum (*or* tumti).

Of all the line-lengths the pentameter is the staple one in English, whereas the staple in French is the alexandrine and that in Latin or Greek the hexameter. This difference has its *raison d'être* in one of the problems of poetic expression —namely, to find a line-length in which a significant phrase can reach its most

telling stature, a self-sufficiency and completeness combined with richness. When a language has not a great many words of one syllable, it needs a longer line for such a phrase than where monosyllabic words abound. French is more polysyllabic than English, and Greek and Latin have words of greater length than French. It is natural then that the staple line in Greek and Latin should have the hexameter's fifteen syllables, and that French should have the twelve-syllabled alexandrine as the staple line and English the ten-syllabled iambic pentameter. Homer has an average of five words to his hexameter, which means that the average length of a Greek word is three syllables. The same can hardly be said of an English word. There are thousands of lines in English which are most effectively monosyllabic. There is Shakespare's :

> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain —

in Hamlet's last words to Horatio, a line which is one of the glories of poetic expression, summing up a universal experience in the simplest words whose metrical scheme of pyrrhic, spondee, spondee, iamb and iamb causes with two units of massed stresses on words carrying peculiar accumulations of consonants an actual difficulty to the vocal breath. Shakespeare has also three consecutive lines in *Lear*, twenty-two monosyllabic words in a row :

> And my poor fool is hanged ! No, no, no life !
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all ? O thou wilt come no more—

lines of a predominantly iambic metre which are followed by one of five trochees

> Never, never, never, never, never—

which buttress up the sense of the phrase "O thou wilt come no more" by not only a repetition of hopelessness but also an inversion of the metre as if to press home the negation of life and to utter through the falling movement of the foot at once the absolute drop into the death spoken of and the irreversible collapse of the speaker into despair. Wordsworth has two of his finest lines totally monosyllabic :

> Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,

and

> The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep.

The second quotation is considered by Sri Aurobindo a sheer *Mantra*, a phrase embodying a state or event of the profoundest consciousness in a rhythm arising out of the very thrill of that state or event : it hails from the same supreme source called the Overmind as the greatest expressions from the Rigveda and the Upanishads. Once Sri Aurobindo had put its source a little lower—in the Intuition-plane which is third in "overhead" level from the Mind proper, the intervening two being the Higher Mind and the Illumined Mind; but later he raised its origin to the Overmind, saying that since his first judgment he had himself moved more intimately in "the fields of sleep". Sri Aurobindo can create unforgettable effects with monosyllables :

It bore the stroke of That which kills and saves,

or

With the Light that dwells near the dark end of things,

or

The One by whom all live, who lives by none,

or that tremendous statement of Savitri's whole dynamic being against the argued sophistries of Death, that passionate refusal to be overwhelmed by the mere Reason which can destroy but cannot build :

I am, I love, I see, I act, I will.

Effects like these are as good as impossible in French or Greek or Latin and, we may add, Italian. Even an alexandrine in English can be made immortal poetry with monosyllables. Already the third line of the citation from *Lear* was an alexandrine. Here is another from a sonnet of Phillip Sydney's in which the poet, casting about for matter to communicate to his beloved and unable to do anything genuine, ends with an intense guiding word from the Muse :

Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart and write !

An almost complete hexameter too can be monosyllabic. Take from Sri Aurobindo's *Ilion* the verse about Troy and the aged messenger from Achilles—

Filled with her deeds and her dreams her gods looked out on the Argive—

or the other in which the Amazon Queen Penthesilia recalls her younger days—

Once when the streams of my East sang low to my ear, not this Ocean—

or that on Achilles as figured by his messenger—

Swift as his sword and his spear are the speech and the wrath from his bosom.

In each of these examples the last foot can easily be turned from a trochaic dissyllable to a spondee of two monosyllables : "grey Greek" can substitute "Argive", "loud sea" replace "Ocean", "deep heart" stand instead of "bosom".

Yes, English can give fine effects by monosyllables and uniquely wonderful ones in a pentameter. But the monosyllabic character of much of English, plus its Teutonic base, has its disadvantages too. Sometimes the combined simplicity and splendour that are natural to Greek and Latin, even when they are talking of the commonest things, is difficult in English. Professor Campbell has somewhere drawn our attention to Homer's phrase about the dog Argos which, old and uncared for, is lying at the doorstep when Ulysses returns home after his long wanderings. Homer says of the dog : "*empleios kynoraîsteôn.*" The first word has four syllables, the second has five scanned as four. Considering their reference to a common thing, the English translation which would correspond to the spirit of the phrase would be : "full of lice." But how flat and unmusical the English turn is ! We may essay a polysyllabic version less crude : "swarming with parasites." Here we have some grace and rhythm, yet hardly the richness and delicacy of the Greek original, and there is a *soupçon* of the pompous and artificial if we attend not to the sound alone but also to the significance. Perhaps the best echo and equivalence to the original would be a mixture of the polysyllabic and the monosyllabic : "swarming with lice". Even then the words "with lice" have not one shred of the unpretentious beauty of "*kynoraîsteôn*".

I may tell you, however, that several words which have commonly no dignity (whether monosyllabic or polysyllabic) can in the hands of an inspired poet kindle up with a peculiar charm or force. Take the word "shop", give it to Milton and see what he does :

> And set to work millions of spinning worms
> That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk.

A most original surprise suggestive of exquisite industry springs at us here. Now take the word "digestion" and see what Shakespeare can make of it as compared to what it may be in the mouth of a doctor. He turns it to vigorous and vivid use when he speaks of lives and fortunes

consumed
In hot digestion of this cormorant war.

A cormorant is a voracious sea-bird, three feet in length and its name can strongly suggest rapacity of any kind, but the living touch of war's large-scale terrible destructiveness will hardly be communicated without the support to the adjective "cormorant" by the direct physiological phrase "hot digestion". Then there is the word "business" with its prosaic commercial associations. Stephen Phillips, a poet with whom Sri Aurobindo had some acquaintance in his College days at Cambridge because Sri Aurobindo's brother Manmohan and Phillips were great chums, brings it in when he talks of the underworld, Hades, during Christ's brief visit to that place of shadows and tortures :

Dreadful suspended business and vast life
Pausing....

Sri Aurobindo introduces an almost direct commercial combination or partnership when he writes in *Savitri* :

Then shall the business fail of Death and Night.

"Business" here conveys to us certain aspects of the cosmic dealings of the Spirits of Destruction and Ignorance : the sharpness, the assiduous cunning, the greedy competition with God's work in the world, the alert exploitation of man's folly and frailty. The term "frailty" recalls to me lines of another poet, indicative of God's work through the cosmic process :

There is no haste in heaven, no frailty mars
The very quiet business of the stars.

I used to quote fairly often from this poet during the first year of my professorship and give his name as Narik Lama. The name intrigued a Dutch lady who was attending my lectures, a highly educated person interested in English poetry. She could not trace this poet anywhere. She must have consulted Indo-English anthologies and then looked for Tibeto-English ones, if any. I may provide you with a clue to the poet's identity. Read his name from the wrong side—from right to left.

To ears not sensitive to English poetic sound-values and haunted much by non-English word-music, many English words, especially when monosyllabic, are bound to be somewhat undignified, if not actually crude. There was

the Spanish Ambassador in the days of Elizabeth who felt highly offended on being offered as assistant a man of the name of Cuts. How can the bearer of so plebeian and abbreviated an appellation impress an ear accustomed to grand things like "Don Quixote de la Mancha" ? And I must admit that Spanish names have a very satisfying emotional effect. Some years ago I came across the name of a contemporary Spanish writer, an exile from Franco's Spain who had settled to a professorship at Oxford : Salvador de Madariaga. As soon as I found this name I felt it could not be bettered as an ejaculation in moments of annoyance or anger. I needed no swear-words any more. Whenever worked up and irritated I would explode into "Salvador de Madariaga" and get complete relief and satisfaction. Some time after my discovery I attended at Bombay a Congress for Cultural Freedom to which several eminent men of letters from England and elsewhere had been invited. During a preliminary discussion I got riled and burst into my "Salvador de Madariaga". A very intelligent-faced old man whose brainy aspect was enhanced by his almost total baldness came up to me and inquired with exquisite manners whether he had offended me in any way. I was taken by surprise. "But why do you ask me, sir ?" I queried. He bowed and introduced himself as Salvador de Madariaga. We became great friends and I was charmed by his constant wit and admired his acute intellect and his fund of knowledge. Before I came away to Pondicherry that year—it was 1951—to attend the All-India Convention for the Sri Aurobindo International University I got Don Salvador to send a Message to the Convention.

Don Salvador who knows several European languages besides his own Spanish is a master of English and fully appreciative of English sound-values. But in the seventeenth century an English scholar of Italian—a man named Pinkerton—felt so keenly the lack of dignity in English as compared to Italian that he made the proposal that English words should be provided with Italian endings and thus rendered more aristocratic. The idea did not catch on. I suppose Englishmen felt insulted and also realised that the whole genius of the language would be vitiated and its special possibilities spoiled by such an artificial grafting of foreign terminations. De Quincy summed up very tellingly the failure of Pinkerton's Italianising fantasy : "Luckilissime this proposalio of the absurdissimo Pinkertonio was not adoptado by anybodyini whateverano."

Great English poets have been happy enough with the rhythmic resources of their language. But there have been periods when small poets believed that common words should never be admitted into their verse. In France, after the heyday of Classicism, there was such a period almost down to the time of Hugo. Hugo brought about a number of revolutions in the poetic world. On the one side he was the King of the Romanticists—introducing the titanic and the grandiose and the mysterious into the French poetic imagi-

nation. Up to his time, except for certain tendencies in Corneille, the balanced and the beautiful and the bright were the Gods of poetry. Hugo poured the limit-breaking imperious ocean, thrust up the rugged and monstrous mountain, pushed the savage and shadow-haunted forest into the well-measured, shapely, lucid domain of French literature. Before him Rousseau had brought the essential energy of Romanticism, but Hugo swelled and solidified and spread it in all directions. On the other side, he touched with pleasure the ordinary things of life on which the Classicists had looked down their refined noses—noses which, I suppose, had never been common enough to catch a cold and sneeze. If sneeze they did, it was with the finest fragrant snuff, and O the sneezing was done most artistically so as to make a symphony out of the ordinary "atishoo". I don't know how a sneeze can be made symphonic. Perhaps Ravivala there amongst you can tell us. She won't ? Well, then I must hazard that it was done with something like "a-a-a-ti-shoo-oo". And when the noses were wiped, it was with a piece of cloth which their owners dared not call a mere handkerchief, a *mouchoir*. But Hugo introduced into a poetic drama of his the wretched plebeian word "*mouchoir*". It was flung impertinently into the face of cultured Paris. That was in 1830 on the night when his play *Hernani* was first performed. Instantly there was a commotion in the theatre. Threats and insults were hurled, blows were exchanged, sticks thudded down on heads and shoulders. The Classicists and the Romanticists were at open war. Through the *mêlée* of bloody brows and broken bones the Romanticists won and Hugo set free, as he said, "tous les vieux mots damnés"—"all the old condemned words."

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

ŚRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER*

A COMMENTARY

VI

THE fate of Polydaon has its exact parallel in the life of the modern dictator, Hitler. Sri Aurobindo's poem, *The Dwarf Napoleon* (*Hitler, October* 1939), has the following characterisation of Hitler :

A sentimental egoist poor and rough,
Whose heart was never sweet and fresh and young,
A headlong spirit driven by hopes and fears,
Intense neurotic with his shouts and tears,
Violent and cruel, devil, child and brute,
This screaming orator with his strident tongue,
The prophet of a scanty fixed idea,
Plays now the leader of our human march;
His might shall build the future's triumph arch.
Now is the world for his eating a ripe fruit.
His shadow falls from London to Korea.
Cities and nations crumble in his course.
A terror holds the peoples in its grip :
World-destiny waits upon that foaming lip.
A Titan Power upholds this pigmy man,
The crude dwarf instrument of his mighty Force.
Hater of the free spirit's joy and light,
Made only of strength and skill and giant might,
A Will to trample humanity into clay
And unify earth beneath one iron sway,
Insists upon its fierce enormous plan...

But if its tenebrous empire were allowed,
Its mastery would prepare the dismal hour
When the Inconscient shall regain its right,
And man who emerged as Nature's conscious power,

Shall sink into the deep original night
Sharing like all her forms that went before
The doom of the mammoth and the dinosaur...

In his high villa on the fatal hill
Alone he listens to that sovereign Voice,
Dictator of his action's sudden choice,
The tiger leap of a demoniac skill.
Too small and human for that dreadful Guest,
An energy his body cannot house,—
A tortured channel, not a happy vessel,
Drives him to think and act and cry and wrestle.
Thus driven he must stride on conquering all,
Threatening and clamouring, brutal, invincible,
Until he meets upon his storm-swept road
A greater devil—or thunderstroke of God.

What a contrast to the glorious instruments of Pallas Athene ! They have the wideness and calmness, self-giving and surrender, purity and nobility to receive, assimilate and manifest the Higher Truth, Light, Power and Bliss. The qualities of psychological perfection give them the necessary plasticity and power of receptivity. They do not attempt to possess the Higher Power or pull it down upon themselves before the faculties are ready, as Polydaon does and breaks himself. Instead they allow themselves to be shaped by the Higher Harmonious Consciousness which makes them progressively puissant channels of its manifestation. They become the harbingers of the new order of Sweetness and Light.

VII

Between the fanatical and self-centred priest of Poseidon and the devoted and self-giving votaries of Pallas Athene we have various types and kinds of personalities. Of these perhaps Phineus, Cireas and Smerdas come near to Polydaon in their dedication of life to self-gratification divorced from any great values. They are capable of experiencing only the primitive and crude vital feelings and no chastened emotions at all.

Phineus is concerned only with the pursuit of Imperial Power and his immediate object is to see 'Tyre become the Syrian capital'. All means are valid for the achievement of this end and considerations of religion, morality or even common decency are simply irrelevant. He is the vile politician and

deliberate schemer for whom human beings and relationships are only tools. He will try diplomacy first and when it fails he will employ force. He has two natural gifts which are very conducive to his vocation—a consistently sceptical mind and a thoroughly dry heart. In that oppressive atmosphere of belief in and worship of an evil occult power he is the sole Sceptic. The gods do not exist for him and 'the world's alive and moves by natural law without their intervention.' If at all they are, they

> ...reign unquestioned
> Far from the earth in their too bright Olympus,
> So that they come not down to meddle here
> In what I purpose.

Every miracle can be satisfactorily explained by natural laws and there is nothing supernatural :

> The aegis ?
> Some mechanism of refracted light.
> The wings ? Some new aerial contrivance
> A luckier Daedalus may have invented.
> The Greeks are scientists unequalled, bold
> Experimenters, happy in invention.
> Nothing's incredible that they devise,
> And this man, Polydaon, is a Greek.

Naturally he thinks that priestcraft with its paraphernalia, rituals and special mode of language—*e.g.*, inspiration, propitiation of the God by sacrifice and the sacred will of the Deity which shall not be violated etc., etc.—is another kind of statecraft, a huge game of shams and shibboleths which should be played without any emotional commitment. He is therefore surprised at Polydaon's religious frenzy and declares him a superstitious fool who has seen shadows in the night and taken them for angry gods, and therefore rejects him as a bad plotter not to be associated with by any rational creature.

His dry heart has looked upon his marriage with Andromeda as a very useful device for claiming the throne of Syria after Iolaus's death which shall of course be contrived. Andromeda rightly feels that marriage with him means to be 'torn to pieces by the teeth of the wolf that he is'. But he has to admit that

> A mighty power confounds our policies.
> Is't Heaven ? is't Fate ? What's left me, I will take.

So he tries to take Andromeda from the angry mob by force but she will not go with him because they are her people. And so to 'Death alone he yields her'. But he comes again to claim her from Perseus' hands who reduces him with his host to marble-stone because he would insist upon a battle. He gets a stony immortality to his long crafty nose and stony heart. The new order with its emphasis on Reason based on Intuition and deeper and chastened emotions has no room for the cold sceptic who denies the life-giving values and therefore symbolises Death.

For Smerdas life is worth living because it is the field for getting and accumulating wealth and a life without it is hell indeed. This abnormal obsession with Wealth has blinded him to the true values of life and almost dried up his heart. He has become a sordid treacherous thing of fears, full of a sickening self-pity and ready to do anything for love of gold. Perseus rejects him with a god-like disgust. Only the divine compassion of Andromeda could sympathise with his lot. But it must be said to his credit that he responds to the sunny smile of Andromeda and only when seriously threatened with torture he reveals his saviour. He gets what he deserves :

> Not worse than thy desert.
> For gold thou lustest ? earn it for another.
> Thou'lt save thy life ? it is a freedman's chattel.

But Andromeda's intervention assures him kind treatment.

Cireas is another worshipper of Plutus and is naturally dissatisfied with his long life of unrewarded menial service in the temple of Poseidon. Very close familiarity with the image has made him a little sceptical about the value of the ritual and even about the presence of the god. So he could talk in almost blasphemous terms about the god whom he pities and scolds and threatens with impunity. He is more afraid of his human master, the formidable priest and the believing majority who may punish him for his irreligion with rough chastisement. So he is easily bribed into becoming an accomplice in the release of the merchants. He has an instinctive shrewdness which sees through the opportunism of Therops, and a rich sense of humour and childish curiosity and cheerfulness which help him weather all storms in life. But he assures Iolaus that he has outgrown his past foolishness and grown pious and so becomes worthy of the reward of getting Smerdas as his slave.

VIII

The mob and its directors are not fixed in their reactions but take colour from the changing times and conditions. They are either amorphous or opportunist in their make-up.

The mob is indeed the many-headed multitude having members of all shades and intensities of views on a subject. Thus we have a woman of tender heart, Pasithea, who feels :

> O, do not hurt her ! She is like my child
> Whom the fierce monster tore.

Another thinks her the parent of all their suffering and so says :

> Seize her ! seize her ! the child of wickedness !

And several others share both these views in varying degrees but none are quite decided and fixed in outlook. And that makes them a prey to the suggestions of demagogues. Though they are many individuals they can be fused together into one collective mass by pursuasive oratory which, however illogical in argument, appeals to their vital feelings. Therops is such a gullible King Lungs who makes capital out of the rebellion and preaches revolution against kingship which they do not understand or rather misunderstand as meaning that the present king must go, and therefore declare Therops or Polydaon king. This quality of being swayed by moods leads to inconsistency and unpredictability of response. Thus we see them proclaiming the infallibility of Therops or Polydaon at one moment only to demand their downfall at another. They have a natural admiration for the strong man and an instinct for hero-worship. The clear-headed wealthy butcher with his sharp cleaver is able to command them and direct them to whatever purpose he pleases. He is able to keep them away from Andromeda even by scolding them and yet be uniformly praised as the wealthy butcher who must always be respected. This mob is for a time actually possessed by the force of Poseidon and in the words of Praxilla :

> God ! What a many-throated howl of demons !
> Their eyes glare death. These are not men and Syrians.
> The fierce Poseidon has possessed their breasts
> And breathed his awful blood-lust into all hearts
> Deafening the voice of reason, slaying pity :
> Poseidon's rage glares at us through these eyes,
> It is his ocean roar that fills our streets.

This ceases with the defeat of Poseidon and the return in triumph of Perseus the hero who readily and easily becomes their idol.They have no difficulty in acclimatizing to the new order at all.

Nor do their opportunist leaders have any difficulty in adjustment. Therops has abjured rebellion and does not want his sins to be remembered. Perissus with his unfailing wit and freedom from sentiment sees how the wind is blowing and changes sails accordingly. He becomes the friend of Perseus and his cleaver is henceforward placed at his service. He seems to have considered Polydaon as a fellow-craftsman and when he sees the fox turn into a tiger by the tumult he parries it with evasive replies, all the time confident that its end is fast approaching, and his joy at the immortalising of Phinius's crafty nose is unbounded. For all his mental detachment and coolness, he has his bowels of compassion :

> There was nothing astonishing in that : I am as chockful with natural kindness as a rabbit is with guts; I have bowels, great Perseus. For am I not Perissus ? am I not the butcher ?

This is a quality he shares with his friend Therops who says of Andromeda :

> She droops like a bruised flower beneath their curses,
> And the tears lace her poor pale cheeks like frost
> Glittering on snowdrops. I am sorry now
> I had a hand in this.

This is no mean qualification for preparing oneself for the new age !

(To be continued)

M. V. SEETARAMAN

WHERE LIES THE FAULT OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF EDUCATION?

THE present system of education is faulty because the child really learns by acting, creating, doing a thing and, contrary to the general belief, not by hearing the teacher tell it what it has to do.

It is therefore important that as far as possible the child itself should discover what it has to learn, instead of being presented with a ready-made truth.

That is why Sri Aurobindo has written : "The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught."

The function and the attitude of the teacher, the professor, emerge from this statement.

First of all, he is not the receptacle of the truth, not the one who knows what the students are ignorant of. He should not expect to be so considered; he ought not to consider himself such.

His principal role is to organise, to canalise, to bring order into an activity which without him would be spasmodic, erratic, unfruitful. In addition, he is the adviser, one who can be approached in case of difficulty. He should be fully conversant with his subject, otherwise he would be unable to fulfil his role and to arouse enthusiasm; he should know at the right moment, and without showing it, how to turn the child towards a new way which leads to the solution. But he should avoid the temptation—and, above all, when the child has long been seeking and is on the verge of finding—to offer the answer, the solution. It is very rarely, and only on its insistence, that one may say to a child : "I am going to show you how to do it." It should be made to find out for itself; then alone will it understand and assimilate anything.

Another point, equally important, is that children tend to come together in small groups, that they communicate their ideas, their results to one another, elaborate plans in common and execute them jointly. One should respect and utilise this tendency, divide the students into study-groups, taking into account their affinities, propose to each group a task in keeping with its collective level, take care to distribute the subjects so as to cover the programme, see that each group communicates to the whole class its results for common discussion.

The class-book is the authority to consult for the necessary information. The professor himself will have to be such a book in difficult cases, when the given text does not suffice. The students will thus learn at the same time how to

use a book and to appreciate it for its services. Thus naturally they will become attentive to all that can help them to learn, for they will know the price of an information, of a discovery : they will not yawn—indifferent or blasé—at what is presented to them.

If it is a commonplace to say that it is by drawing that one learns to draw, by dancing that one learns to dance, it is perhaps less obvious to stress

1) that one learns the natural sciences by observing and dissecting, the books supplying only the observations of others;

2) that one learns physics and chemistry by doing experiments and practical work, the theories serving only to collate and explain the facts;

3) that one learns mathematics by grappling with problems : most of the theorems ought to be treated as problems and not as dogmas;

4) that at first one learns a language by using it—that is to say, by speaking, reading and writing: the critical perusal of past masterpieces and the study of the lives of writers are a specialisation which can come afterwards.

In brief, in everything and at each moment, the teacher ought to encourage initiative, spontaneity, discovery. It is thus alone that he will awaken and hold interest. An interested student does not wish to be absent from the class.

Note : Many educators are actually experimenting in this direction under various names : activity school, tutorial classes, seminars, etc.

P.

THE WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

It is a very good sign that people are gradually becoming health-conscious everywhere. Those who have good health like to maintain it and those who have bad health want to correct it. Indeed bad health means a great loss to the individual and to the nation. To the individual, because it robs him of the natural joy of living; it brings an economic burden as he has to spend for medicines and pay the doctor's bill; it saps a good deal of his energy and he is not able to work as hard and as well as he should to earn his living, improve his economic condition and generally to contribute to creative activity. So too he cannot come up in the social sphere and even in the spiritual life he is handicapped. Bad health of the citizen is a great loss to the nation, as a sick person not only cannot contribute his mite for its progress and development, but is a drag upon it.

Though everyone wants to keep healthy, few have any idea how to do it. So a knowledge of the rules of healthful living is absolutely essential. But knowledge only will not do. One has to put into practice all that one knows if one really wants to have good health.

The body can be compared to a very fine and delicate machine like a watch. One has to bestow as much care upon it, if not more, in order to keep it healthy, as one does upon one's watch to keep it giving correct time. The watch has to be wound regularly and at regular intervals. It has to be kept clean and properly oiled. It has to be protected from rough handlings, shocks and violent movements. Only then will it give correct time. Similarly, one has to take due care of the body if it is to function properly, and if the body with all its organs functions properly, there is no reason why it should not be healthy. Strange as it may seem, many people take more care of their precious belongings than their own bodies and remain completely indifferent in matters concerning their health. And when they fall sick as a result of their neglect and suffer from it, they run to the doctors for help. But when they are cured they go back to their old ways and habits with the same indifference to their bodies till a second disturbance in their health makes them fly again to the doctors. This comedy continues to the end of their lives. They are constantly in the habit of doing what is bad for health, knowing fully well the results, and they go on postponing the cultivation of good health-habits on the plea of lack of time and interest.

Health may be defined as the feeling of exhilaration and buoyancy re-

sulting from a harmonious functioning of all the different organs of the body. For such a healthy functioning of the body to be possible one has to take care of it in an all-round way. It will not do if an effort is made in only one or two directions. Healthful living demands a many-sided training and development on the following lines :

i) *Proper Exercise* :

From the angle of the Physical Educator it is the most important builder of health. "It speeds up circulation, keeps hearts strong and arteries clean and flexible, removes waste, improves respiration, strengthens the muscles while keeping them supple and youthful, strengthens and activates all the organs and glands."

ii) *Adequate Nutrition* :

"This means supplying the body with all the materials it needs for building, maintenance and repair." This should include all the essentials of a balanced diet. Common sense must be used in the selection of this diet. It varies according to country, habits, education and culture but surely a balanced combination can always be arrived at. "Eat natural foods as much as possible, reducing refined foods such as white flour and refined sugar etc. to a minimum." Food value should be given more preference than the taste of the palate, and taste should be acquired to appreciate foods of higher nutritional values. Eliminate entirely, if possible, the use of tea, coffee, tobacco and liquor. Sit for your food keeping plenty of time in hand with a happy and cheerful disposition and chew your food thoroughly. Never take food when you are tired, or in a hurry, or upset by mental disturbances, nor immediately before or after hard exercise. Never take bath immediately after food.

iii) *Sleep and Rest* :

Consideration must be given to sufficient sleep, rest and relaxation. Generally speaking, hard-working people need about eight hour's sleep. Some people can do well with six hours. Again, active and growing young people may need ten hours. Rest and relaxation must not be confused with sleep. A man cannot go on like a machine all through the day for an indefinite period. To give a little quiet to the nerves and the mind, rest and relaxation of short durations during the day will be found helpful.

iv) *Hygienic Habits* :

One must be conversant with hygienic practices (personal and environmental), such as bathing, cleanliness, care of the different body organs, pre-

vention of infection, fresh air, sunshine etc. These hygienic habits must become one's second nature. Indeed, a good deal of sickness and health-upset can be prevented if one keeps to proper hygienic habits.

v) *Inner Poise* :

It is not generally known that the body and the inner psychological condition are very closely connected. A disturbance in one brings about a resultant upset in the other. Inner stresses can produce harmful effects on the body and are in fact the indirect cause, if not the source, of so many diseases and physical irregularities. A poised and happy inner state can contribute much to build up physical health and energy and to promote longevity.

To obtain this inner poise, life must be lived in the right way. Selfishness, self-centred, narrow and egoistic movements of mind, life and body, do not conduce to a happy poise. One must cultivate and lead a life of self-consecration and self-dedication governed by an Ideal. And the higher the Ideal, the greater will be the result. True joy does not come with the satisfaction of personal desires and ambitions. It wells up naturally and in abundance when one gives himself entirely with all that he has to his highest Ideal.

PRANAB KUMAR BHATTACHARYA

APPORTAGE

ONE of the most curious and well-authenticated cases of *apportage* occurred in a Devonshire smithy in 1926. A university student named Arthur, preferring to work with his hands, apprenticed himself to a blacksmith named Joe. When Arthur's apprenticeship was ended he bought a smithy of his own in a village five miles away. He asked Joe to sell him an old hammer for which he had developed an affection, but Joe liked that particular hammer, too, and would not part with it.

While clearing a pile of rubbish in his own smithy Arthur found at the bottom of the pile a hammer exactly like Joe's—heavy, short-shafted, pitted, fitting snugly into his hand. In fact, if Joe's hammer had not been five miles away he would have thought this was it. For a week he used the hammer delightedly, and then one day he accidentally struck his thumb with it. In his pain he flung the tool across the smithy and heard it hit the anvil, but when he looked for it later it was nowhere to be found. And it never was found, in spite of the fact that nobody but Arthur had been in the forge.

Some weeks later, when Arthur was paying a visit to Joe, he noticed that his late employer was still using the original old hammer, and he again asked Joe to sell it, but Joe said he was too glad to have it back to part with it. And without knowing of Arthur's experience Joe explained that a few weeks earlier he had been using the hammer when he struck his thumb with it. He had thrown the hammer across the smithy and had not been able to find it again until a week later when he saw it lying in a corner.

A time check established that the day and time when Joe lost his hammer was the day and time when Arthur found one—five miles away; and the day and time when Arthur threw down *his* hammer was the day and time when Joe recovered his own. Coincidence ? Possibly : but why was only one hammer ever found ?

PETER LAWSON

(*With acknowledgements to "The Listener", May* 21 1959)

WHERE IS GOD?

WHERE is God? Where is the limit of beauty? O All-Beauty, where art Thou?

If Thou art all-where why then do my eyes fail to see Thee ? Why is my core not flooded and thrilled with thy sweet and celestial smile? Where art Thou, my Lord, where ?

I take great pains and leave no stone unturned to find out even the most trivial thing when it is lost. But, alas, for millenniums Thou hast been away from me. To my wide surprise I feel no pang within me to vision Thee. Why is it so ?

Boundless is my sorrow not because our sweet union is severed but because I have not cried for Thee with a snow-white heart even for a brief second.

My Lord, the face of Truth is at last revealed. Thou art everywhere when I say 'Yes', and Thou art nowhere when I say 'No'.

CHINMOY

CERTITUDE

EARLY June. The evening sad with rain.
A whistle splits the cloudy sky in two.
The engine hisses.—'Good bye !' round the train :
The platform bustling. I am looking for You.

And slow the train moves : windows...tearful eyes...
Sadder wavings...last glimpse.—Aren't You there ?
The train is gone. Its distant whistle dies.
The sky is one. The clouds are one. Despair.

Aren't You there ? All gone ? Gone with the train ?
This train, this sky, this platform—aren't You they ?
Aren't You the clouds, the tearful eyes, the rain ?
—"I am this night : I am the coming day !"

PRITHWINDRA

THE MOVEMENT

FROM above and of a sudden the Moment came :
The earth was hushed and still.
Dark clouds encircled the sky and Nature grew tame.
No move of desire, no stir of will.

Out of the stillness, a Presence arose,
Out of the heaving ocean, a Force was torn;
The two mingled and in a formidable pose
Stood silent, carrying the hour to be born.

Then a Voice was heard from a cloud :
The hymn of a temple bell, touching and profound.
Then silence followed silence and grew loud.
Time stood mute and to the moment was bound.

OM and OM again, ceased ringing through the air.
The Moment passed and the earth had its promised share.

RAMRAJ

STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

STUDY No. 3 : *ROMEO AND JULIET*

(*Continued from the July Issue*)

(F) SYMMETRICAL PATTERN

THE drama of *Romeo and Juliet* is built upon a symmetrical pattern. Romeo and Rosaline are the response to Juliet and Paris, Capulet the reply to Montague. The meeting of Romeo and Juliet in the light of the moon and their final severance at dawn in the hearing of the lark, the scene of the Friar with Romeo and the scene of the Friar with Juliet, the dropping of Rosaline and the dropping of Paris, the marriage of Romeo and the match of Paris, the death of Romeo and the death of Juliet are carefully balanced movements of the unfolding Drama.

(G) THE DRAMATIC FORM

The Dramatic Form of *Romeo and Juliet* is tentatively experimental. Although the Sonnet-Form is early discarded, the play by reason of its high lyric qualities tends to emphasise Poetry rather than Drama. The Seed of Tragic Action (Harmatia and Praxis) is the feud of the family, the Peripeteia the crisis of the parents, Pathos the suffering of Capulet and Montague, the Katharsis the purgation of strife in the city of Verona. Romeo and Juliet, the victims of a fratricidal social order, dwell in their own world of love and beauty and, when impelled perforce into the whirl of noise and brawl, quit it without delay or regret. The tragic hero and heroine, suffering no personal disillusionment, are not central to the Tragedy. They live, love, and pass on self-contained and self-assured. The Dramatic Form, a mixture and medley of Farce, Comedy, Romance and Tragedy, is a youthful and precarious experiment which is not repeated in the works of Shakespeare.

(H) THE PLOT

The Tragic Plot has a Comic and Romantic movement. The marriage preparations of Paris lead to the wedding of Juliet to Romeo. Juliet's consent to the wedlock with Paris ends in a sleeping draft. Romeo sings a dirge over

a living Juliet. Romeo dies and Juliet wakes; the Friar arrives and Juliet dies. The holy Priest is the architect of death! He despatches Romeo to Mantua to save him from the laws of Verona; Romeo perishes of an apothecary's pill. The Friar mixes a sleeping powder for Juliet to rescue her from a bigamous predicament; Juliet commits suicide. He sends urgent letters to Mantua; the letters go astray. Because the Plot lacks tragic seriousness (SPOUDAIA), *Romeo and Juliet* is a Tragic Farce rather than an unmixed pure Tragedy.

(I) Characters

Comedy, Romance and Tragedy, the triple movement of this drama, affect all the characters. Broadly, Romeo and Juliet represent Romance and Tragedy; and Capulet, Paris and the Nurse, Comedy. The Friar stands at the cross-ways, the harmoniser of Love, Life and Death.

The major characters are Romeo, Juliet and Capulet; the minor ones Paris, the Friar, the Nurse, Tybalt and Mercutio.

Romeo

The tear-bedewed Romeo shut in gloomy cloisters when the sun parts the "shady curtains of Aurora" or at twilight a rover with revellers in Verona in search of the cold half-withdrawn Rosaline, is a languid and lonely youth whose cheeks have never been moistened by the lips of Love. His untouched freshness awaits the incense of a Juliet. Theirs is the first trembling kiss of man and maid "wild with regret", palled in the heavy smoke of a mad feud of kinsmen. At the first spell of the glittering moon beside the window of the leaning Juliet, suspiring an undiscovered passion to the stars, Romeo's mind by the miracle of a new birth becomes a mirror of many glancing imageries of Love. Henceforth he is no more a Romeo or a Montague. He is "new baptised" with the breadth and universality of Love.

Romeo has not the melancholia of Hamlet. His sighs for Rosaline, rooted in no grief, stamped with no ardour, are a ghost of earlier fires quickly kindled and quickly cooled. Hamlet's melancholy is deep and real; Romeo's a surface shadow, a passing pallor.

The chief traits of his character are a precipitancy of youth and an extremity of passion. Hastily he rushes into the love of Rosaline, hastily idolises her, and hastily leaves her. His meeting with Juliet, even where true love is an instant recognition, is rash and unadvised. Promise, pledge and marriage spring from premature action. Tybalt is slain in the unexpected heat of the moment. The Friar stays Romeo's impatient hand from suicide, but his scheme to save the lovers by the sleeping draft of Juliet is frustrated by Romeo's

unreflecting decision to die in the tomb of Capulet. No act of Romeo is weighed, sifted or tested. His sudden emotions are the source of his disasters.

The opposite aspect of his character is the stability of his spiritual emotions. The love of Romeo and Juliet, known, hailed and sealed by an undivided breath, bears them out to the "edge of doom". Despite the prescient cognition of Juliet, Romeo is bold, resolute, certain in spiritual strength.

The volatile disposition of Romeo, unlike the cautious and introspective temperament of Hamlet, is liable to a series of somersaults. The eyes of Rosaline are exchanged for the eyes of Juliet; the love of Tybalt turns into a tournament of swords; their marriage into a banishment to Mantua, and—mark the Tragic Farce—life into death beside the awakening Juliet.

JULIET

Juliet is a child ripening for the kiss but unkissed, ready to desire but not desired. Her palace is her prison; her parents a raging tempest; her home the nest of Capulets; her nurse a confidante but not a stay. She is a star apart from men, unloved, unguessed, unknown. Paris cannot fathom her; Capulet cannot coerce her; Romeo cannot but win her. On a "blessed night" when the winds are still, an opening window, a leaning hand, a whispered breath heard by the listening stars, seal an everlasting pact. The married Juliet grows out of a sunless environment into womanhood. Her faithfulness is a faithfulness unto death. The murder of Tybalt gives assurance of her constancy to Romeo. The proposal of Paris evokes a proud defiance of death. The drowsy drug and the dusky evening in the shadows of the tomb end in the drawn dagger and the spent kiss upon the lips of Romeo.

Juliet, except in her suicide, is not precipitate in her decisions. She marries Romeo without vacillation, rebuffs Paris without hesitation, challenges Capulet without irresolution. The plans of the Friar miscarry by reason of the excitement of Romeo and not the haste of Juliet.

Juliet's love has a peculiar quality of fresh virginal grace. She has not the acuteness of Portia, the alertness of Cleopatra, the pertness of Jessica, the wistfulness of Cordelia, the pastoral beauty of Perdita, the subsiding sweetness of Desdemona or the pretty piteous glances of Ophelia shaken by a tempest of sighs. Like the sun and the moon, she stands aloof from the trodden thoroughfares of men. She attracts none. To Romeo alone her heart is open wide as the silent skies. Her love is psychic, not vital or mental. The Soul of Juliet, bound from distant dawns to Romeo, has the immeasurable sweetness of the kisses of youth, the adolescent yearnings of the first awakened awareness of eager lips, twilight-pauses under the arches of the sparkling stars, morning-glimpses of

lark and nightingale upon the departing steps of love, followed by a darkling night of farewell to the tenements of earth.

THE CAPULETS

Old Capulet, the domineering husband who calls for a sword and uses a crutch, who postpones the proposal of Paris and pushes him to a marriage, the hard-hearted parent who crushes his daughter with the thunder of reprisals and melts towards her in affection, who lives in the drawing room and works in the kitchen, who is quickened by the sight of a Montague in the street but softened as a host in his house, who is merry when he should be sad and sad when he should be merry, who prepares for a marriage and attends a funeral, who is a lover of the Capulets and a reconciler of the Montagues, is half a clown and half a character. He selects the bridegroom for Juliet in earnestness. He presses the suit of Paris genuinely. His wrath against Juliet wells from the spring of the best intentions. His anger against the Montagues is half-hearted. Of the "villain Romeo" at the feast he speaks with sensitive understanding:

> Capulet: Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone
> He bears him like a portly gentleman;
> And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
> To be a virtuous and well-governed youth.

Capulet is a jocular figure whose actions end in tragedies. The match of Paris estranges him from Juliet, the assertion of paternal authority involves her suicide, and the quarrels with the Montagues conclude in the death of Tybalt.

Lady Capulet is the mouthpiece of her husband. Her daughter is her chattel. Her will is the will of the eccentric Capulet.

PARIS

Paris is a lover who seeks to woo and wed by proxies. Capulet and Lady Capulet are for him the doorways to matrimony. His actions are topsy-turvy. He proposes to marry a married Juliet, seeks the banns from the Friar who has wedded her. His contact with Juliet in the Friar's cell is luckless and tactless; for he would possess her, upon her parent's word, before marrying her. His long wail, upon death's beguiling, divorcing, and spiting, releases the artificiality of his passions. The love of Romeo is genuine; the love of Paris false.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Friar Laurence, holy, silent and wise, gatherer of healing herbs and brewer of death, calmer of all hearts and preparer of perpetual sleep, confidant of

Romeo and Juliet and confessor of Paris, knower of the mysteries of virtue which breed vice and the mysteries of vice which breed virtue, philosopher of flowers and master of stratagems, has every gift and every grace except the goodwill of the Stars ! All that he touches is confounded. He is the illustration of the occult paradox: *The best produces the worst.* Plague, failure of his emissary, disruption of communications and the precipitancy of the lovers haunt the blessings of his hand. He speaks in utter desperation of the affairs of Verona :

FR. L. : ...If aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrificed some hour before this time
Unto the rigour of severest law.

PRINCE : We still have known thee for a holy man.

Yet no deed of the Friar is attended with real failure. Paris is not wedded to Juliet; the lovers by death's high release are reunited; the quarrels of Verona are composed.

The Friar is the focus of every crisis. He joins the hands of Romeo and Juliet; he frustrates the marriage of Paris; he whisks Romeo away to Mantua from the dangers of Verona. He prepares the slumber, funeral and removal of Juliet from the tomb. Through him ultimately subsides the rancour of the Capulets and the Montagues.

The Friar is a light in darkness, love in the midst of hate, tranquillity in the tempestuous passions of Verona.

THE NURSE

The three streams of this Drama, the Comic, the Romantic and the Tragic, blend in the character of the Nurse. She has the trust of Romeo, Juliet and the Capulets. She fulfils her double role with a nicety of humour. Puzzle-headed, loquacious and vulgar, she never directly answers a question even in the distresses of Juliet. She is all aches and pains. She knows the secret of Paris and lures Juliet with the secret of Romeo. She watches the pledgings of the lovers at the window and passes Remeo the word of marriage. She is in the full tide of the Romance of Romeo and Juliet. Her silence in the house of the Capulets argues a comic discretion. Their wedding is never disclosed ! The Capulets proceed with the proposal of Paris without interference. The Nurse speaks when she should be silent and is silent when she should speak. She forgets to convey the message of Juliet to Romeo; she holds for long her tongue as to the murder of Tybalt by Romeo. She is slowly tantalizing without excitement; Juliet is quick and impatient. She guards Juliet and also deserts her ! She recedes with the

wrath of Capulet. Unthinking she supports a bigamous proposal ! She does not expose Romeo; she does not relieve the Capulets. Juliet slips out of her hands. The Tragedy of Verona of which she seems to be oblivious sweeps her from the stage. She is the first to awaken the Capulets to the condition of Juliet. Her exit is to the pipe of the music-makers. Her disappearance is the laughter of the Tragic Muse.

TYBALT

Tybalt "the prince of cats" is a turbulent tilter with fiery warm Italian blood. No place is safe from his brawling or his bragging. He is checked only by the dominant Capulet from drawing his sword in the feast. In the open street he stabs Mercutio and returns to kill the gentle but angered Romeo. The murder of Mercutio leads to the slaying of Tybalt, the banishment of Romeo, the marriage under duress to Paris, the slumber of Juliet and ultimately the death of the lovers in the tomb. Tybalt, directly or indirectly, is the motive-cause of the Tragedy of Verona.

MERCUTIO

Of the two dreamers in this drama, Mercutio, whose career is suddenly shorn, outbids the love-sick Romeo. He is a polished speaker, well-acquainted with the Pixies, almost a Prince drawn from the wonderland of Queen Mab. He has an ear for sound, an eye for love, lips to sing or quip with, and a sword to prick with ! Of the revellers he is the merriest; of the drinkers the tipsiest; of the brawlers the rashest. In dreams he is Romeo's rival. Romeo in sleep possibly sees the chill languorous unfelt lips of Rosaline; Mercutio, bright Atomies of gauzy substances, the Fairies of Queen Mab in a chariot of hazel-nut, who stir lovers' brains with fantasies, kisses, curses and plagues. Romeo, heavy with the sense of horror hanging in the secrecy of the stars is dead to earth. Mercutio, delicate with the rapier, a courtier of keen and quickened sense, rests firmly upon the ground whilst aspiring to the clouds. In the encounter with Tybalt, he fences with elegance keeping time, tune and distance until he drops tragically in the arms of Romeo :

Ben : O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead !
That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

(Concluded)

SYED MEHDI IMAM