

MOTHER INDIA

OCTOBER 1966

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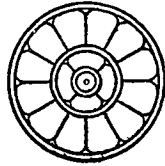
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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Vol. XVIII

No. 9

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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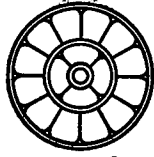
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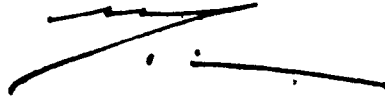


WORDS OF THE MOTHER

La douceur est au fond des cœurs.

L'amertume est une illusion qui fond au Soleil de l'Amour Divin.

July, 1966



Sweetness is in the depth of hearts.

Bitterness is an illusion that melts in the Sun of the Divine Love.

July 1966

THE MOTHER

A X POUR SON MARIAGE

Que vous unissiez vos existences physiques, vos intérêts matériels, que vous vous associiez pour faire face ensemble aux difficultés et aux succès, aux défaites et aux victoires de la vie — c'est la base même du mariage — mais vous savez déjà que cela ne suffit pas.

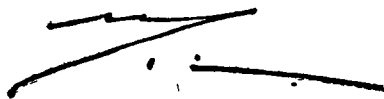
Que vous soyez unis dans les sensations, que vous ayez les mêmes goûts et les mêmes jouissances esthétiques, que vous vibriez en commun aux mêmes choses, et l'un par l'autre, et l'un pour l'autre — c'est bien, c'est nécessaire — mais ce n'est pas assez.

Que vous soyez un dans les sentiments profonds, que votre affection, votre tendresse réciproques ne varient pas en dépit de tous les heurts de l'existence, qu'elles résistent aux fatigues, aux énervements, aux déceptions; que vous soyez toujours et dans tous les cas heureux, les plus heureux, d'être ensemble; que vous trouviez, en toute circonstance, l'un auprès de l'autre, le repos, la paix et la joie — c'est bien, c'est très bien, c'est indispensable — mais ce n'est pas assez.

Que vous unissiez vos mentalités, que vos pensées s'accordent et se complètent, que vos préoccupations et vos découvertes intellectuelles soient partagées; en résumé, que votre sphère d'activité mentale se fasse identique par un élargissement et un enrichissement acquis par les deux à la fois — c'est bien, c'est tout à fait nécessaire — mais ce n'est pas assez.

Par delà tout cela, au fond, au centre, au sommet de l'être, il est une Vérité Suprême de l'être, Lumière Eternelle, indépendante de toute circonstance de naissance, de pays, de milieu, d'éducation; origine, cause et maître de notre développement spirituel, c'est Cela qui donne à notre existence son orientation définitive; c'est Cela qui décide de notre destinée; c'est dans la conscience de Cela qu'il faut s'unir. Etre un dans l'aspiration et l'ascension, avancer du même pas sur le même chemin spirituel — tel est le secret de l'union durable.

Mars 1933



TO X FOR HER MARRIAGE

To unite your physical existences and your material interests, to associate yourselves so as to face together the difficulties and successes, the defeats and victories of life—this is the very basis of marriage—but you know already that it does not suffice.

To be united in feelings, to have the same tastes and same aesthetic pleasures, to vibrate together in a common response to the same things, one by the other and one for the other—it is good, it is necessary—but it is not enough.

To be one in profound sentiments, your affection, your feelings of tenderness for each other not varying in spite of all the shocks of existence; withstanding weariness, nervous irritations and disappointments, to be always and in every case happy, most happy to be together; to find, under all circumstances, one in the presence of the other, rest, peace and joy—it is good, it is very good, it is indispensable—but it is not enough.

To unite your mentalities, your thoughts harmonising and becoming complementary to each other, your intellectual preoccupations and discoveries shared between you; in a word, to make your spheres of mental activity identical through a broadening and an enrichment acquired by the two at the same time—it is good, it is absolutely necessary—but it is not enough.

Beyond it all, at the bottom, at the centre, at the summit of the being, there is a Supreme Truth of the being, an Eternal Light, independent of all circumstances of birth, of country, of environment, of education; the origin, cause and master of our spiritual development—it is That that gives a definite orientation to our existence; it is That that decides our destiny; it is in the consciousness of this that you should unite. To be one in aspiration and ascension, to advance with the same step on the spiritual path—such is the secret of a durable union.

March 1933

THE MOTHER

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

FEBRUARY 6, 1940

EVENING

N : S is rather worried over A's case.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ?

N : He thinks he is responsible for her disease.

SRI AUROBINDO : How ?

N : It was after the wisdom-tooth trouble that it has come. Although he hasn't used a knife, still he makes himself responsible.

SRI AUROBINDO : A knife ? What for ?

N : For cutting the gums. Sometimes one has to cut them to make more space.

SRI AUROBINDO : X considers it a great crime to cut the gums. He denounces in strong terms all who practise it. He says it causes madness in the patients. If you say that there are plenty of people who haven't gone mad because of it, he replies that that they don't know they are mad ! (*Laughter*)

N : Perhaps just as he himself doesn't know ?

P : I was staggered when he said that Anilbaran ran the risk of madness if his headache remained uncured. (*After some time*) Dr. Kantilal has two questions to ask. First, can one have more than one Guru ? Dattatraya had about 20 Gurus, he says, and profited by each. From a bird he learnt something, from a butcher something else and so on.

SRI AUROBINDO : Such Gurus one can have even 20,000. Why only 20 ?

P : His second question is : Can't one have spiritual progress by seeing the Divine in the Gurus ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The Divine is in everybody. So he can see the Divine in all. Why only in the Gurus ?

N : But in the spiritual teachers one can feel the Divine more easily because they have realised Him.

SRI AUROBINDO : That does not mean that the Divine is not in everybody. If one actually *sees* the Divine, it is a different matter. But if it is a question of thinking, one can think as well that the Divine is in all.

P : He asks if one can't have more than one Guru and if it is disloyal to change one's Guru.

SRI AUROBINDO : If one wants to get somewhere, it is better to have one Guru and stick to him. Only under exceptional circumstances can the Guru be changed.

P : He says he has visited many Gurus but nobody has satisfied him.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is not the fault of the Gurus. If he goes on changing like that, he will get nowhere. Moreover, there will be a play of contrary influences.

C : But if one visits spiritual people one can get some help on the spiritual path. They say that *satsaṅga*—holy company—has a great value in life.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, one can get some influence, and that is for people who want some good influence to help them in their living, not for those who want to do Yoga. Besides, even ordinarily there may be a conflict of influences—different people's good influences may also be different.

P : What one has gained from one may go counter to what one gets from another. Now I understand why you asked Dr. Kantilal to quiet his mind. His mind seems to be roaming about from place to place. (*Sri Aurobindo was smiling at this.*)

FEBRUARY 10, 1940

N : If organisms are not the cause of a disease, can you sum up the etiology of a disease ?

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : You have to take into consideration all factors, from the metaphysical down to the physical.

N : That's why I say "sum up". What could be the basic cause of a disease ? We speak of "lowered resistance", due to which one becomes vulnerable to the attacks of micro-organisms.

SRI AUROBINDO : "Lowered resistance" is a vague general expression.

N : You have spoken of the nervous aura. If that aura is strong, no disease can come in.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, so long as the nervous aura is not penetrated, one is quite safe from any disease. Those who have their auras strong are practically immune, except for some minor ailments. Resistance of the aura depends on its reaction to the impacts of life, the world, the environment, etc.

P : A has never been a strong girl. From her childhood she has suffered from one disease or another. Her nerves are very weak.

S : Among these children, T is the strongest.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, he is strong in every way and he has a certain element of mental common-sense. He had tremendous difficulties in England but he overcame them all while M's nervous system is rather weak. Any difficulty knocks him down

at once. Though apparently he has a strong and well-built body, his nervous sheath is not strong. That is why he has been attacked by asthma which is more a nervous than a physical manifestation. It is those people whose nervous system is weak and unstable who get asthma.

N : But M is said to be more receptive or psychic.

SRI AUROBINDO : Said by whom ?

N : That is the general impression.

SRI AUROBINDO : Your impression ?

N : Not particularly mine.

S : People here have impressions of many things which may not happen to be correct.

C : Very often people form their impressions from the Mother's way of dealing with people. Some say that those who remain near her are more receptive. Because they are more receptive the Mother keeps them with her or sees them often. They are more psychic.

SRI AUROBINDO : There are many psychically advanced sadhaks whom the Mother sees only once or twice a year. Receptivity is a complex phenomenon. One may be receptive in one way, another in another way.

C : Sometimes people hear something said by the Mother about somebody and they build up a story. For example, S was said to be very receptive and to have had a past relation with the Mother and so was called by the Mother for special pranams, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : Past relation ? Receptivity is a different thing. There is no one reason for which the Mother sees people.

C : Of course, they also say that the Mother may see people very often because of their special needs or difficulties.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*) : All that is humbug, because it is deduced by mental reasoning. If it was a question of sight or feeling, it would be a different matter.

EVENING

P : J asks : Is there a universal plane called the universal psychic, like the universal vital or the universal mental ? He thinks of the psychic as being only individual.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is a mistake to suppose that the psychic is only individual or consists only of individuality. There is a universal psychic like the rest.

P : Is it there that the soul retires after leaving the body and gathers material for a new birth ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes.

P : He asks also how the distinction is made in *The Life Divine* between Being and Non-Being. Does Non-Being come after the Overmind—or before it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why is he particular about Non-Being ? You arrive at Non-Being by following the negative path. That is to say, when you start from mind, I mean spiritual mind, you come or open yourself to the experience of Nirvana. This

Nirvana is the negation of all that the mind can affirm as Being but it is only a gate of entry into the Absolute. From it you can either take up the negative or the affirmative path. By the negative you reach Non-Being or what the Gita calls the Indeterminate. This Non-Being is the Buddhist Nirvana or the Chinese Tao. The Buddhists consider it as Shunya, the Void, while to the Taoists the Void contains everything. Again, this Nirvana is not the same as the Brahmanirvana of the Gita.

By following the affirmative path you arrive at the Supermind and pass through it to Sachchidananda. In my own case, I passed to the Supermind from a Nirvana which was not of the Buddhist type but a state of mere being with a most essential positive element. The Goraknath people also follow this affirmative way.

From the point of view of realisation, there are three aspects of Brahman—Atman or Self, Purusha or Soul, Ishwara or God. The Adwaitins negate both Purusha and Ishwara and arrive at the unity of Atman and Brahman. The Buddhist negate all three aspects and arrive at the Non-Being.

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO ON THE "FAITH" OF H. G. WELLS

(September 21 this year marked the birth-centenary of H. G. Wells. A most appropriate contribution to the occasion is this article by Sri Aurobindo reproduced from the pages of the Arya, the philosophical monthly he ran almost single-handed from 1914 to 1920. What renders the article especially significant is not only that Sri Aurobindo has written it, but also that it touches on the deepest side of Wells and brings out both the truth it caught and the truth it missed. As Wells was representative of "modernism", we get here a brief verdict, by the highest spiritual vision, on—to use a phrase of Jung's—"modern man in search of his soul".)

"GOD, THE INVISIBLE KING"

A REMARKABLE book with this title by the well-known writer and thinker, Mr. H.G. Wells, has recently appeared, of which only a few extracts are before us, but these are sufficient to reveal its character and thought. It is on the part of the writer, speaking not for himself personally alone but as scribe to the spirit of his generation, a definite renunciation of the gospel of an all-sufficient rationalism, a discovery of God, a profession of faith in spirituality as the one lever by which mankind can rise out of the darkness and confusion of its present state into a more perfect living. He professes his faith in the God within, the invisible King, who is the immortal part of us, in a coming kingdom of God upon earth which shall not only be a spiritual state in the individual, but the open brotherhood of a divine rule among men, and in self-identification with God, service of him, absolute surrender to him as the whole rule of life for the enlightened modern man. This is, indeed, a remarkable change of spirit and change of mental outlook and, if Mr. Wells' claim is just that he is writing as a scribe to the spirit of his generation, it means a revolution in Europe far more important than the Russian with all its idealism and its hopes for a new and beneficent change in politics and society. It means the union of Eastern spiritual knowledge and religious faith with Western pragmatic idealism and their fusion into the basis of a new culture and, we will not say a new universal religion,—for religion must vary with the variations of human nature—but a new practical spirituality in which all mankind can become one.

There is much in Mr. Wells' statement of his newborn belief that is imperfect, limited and a little crude, much that is grasped with an overhasty zeal, as was inevitable in the first light of an unripe awakening. Some of the old limitations of the rationalistic Western mind with its too external outlook upon things still cling about his new spiritual discovery. He tells us that the kingdom of God on earth is "not a metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project,...it is the close and

inevitable destiny of mankind." This classing of the inner spiritual state, the kingdom of God within us, with a metaphor, a dream, an uncertain project reveals the lingering taint of an excessive pragmatism. The spiritual state is the one thing indispensable; until the mass of mankind can awaken into it, the dream of a perfect society, an open brotherhood of God's rule, must end in failure and disappointment. The kingdom of God within is the sole possible foundation for the kingdom of God without; for it is the spirit by which man lives that conditions the outer forms of his life.

Misled by this external view of things Mr. Wells, evidently, still believes that a political and social action is sufficient to bring about the millennium. He has discovered that this action must be driven by a spiritual motive, pursued in the passion of a true religious fervour, consecrated to the indwelling God, effective only by an absolute self-surrender to the Divine. But he has a limited vision of his God and brings to it all the aggressiveness and something of the fanaticism of all such limited religious conceptions. "The new conceptions," he writes, "do not tolerate either kings or aristocracies or democracies. Its implicit command to all its adherents is to make plain the way to the World theocracy. Its rule of life is the discovery and service of the will of God which dwells in the hearts of men and the performance of that will" in the life of the believer, the individual, and of the nation of which he is a part. "I give myself to God not only because I am so and so, but because I am mankind....I become a knight in God's service...I become a responsible minister of my king. I take sides against injustice, disorder, and against all those temporal kings, emperors, princes, landlords and owners who set themselves against God's rule and worship. Kings, owners and all who claim rule and decision in the world's affairs, must either show themselves clearly the fellow-servants of the believer or become the object of his steadfast antagonism."

All this is very forcibly said, but it shows that the writer has not grasped the whole spiritual truth; he has not gone deep enough inward. As once he dreamed of a class of scientific and rational supermen establishing a perfect social rule upon earth, so now he thinks that by the action of his banded servants of the invisible King declaring political and social war upon godless Czars, Kaisers, rulers and capitalists the same end can be achieved. With them is God; in them God dwells, in the others, presumably, he does not dwell; those who have surrendered absolutely to him are the citizens of the kingdom and on them shall be peace; those who do not surrender or even fall short in their surrender, are interlopers, against them the sword. A very old kind of militant religionism in a very modern form. It ignores two ancient, two eternal spiritual truths; first, that God dwells in all and, secondly, that only by becoming conscious of the God within from within can humanity be saved. God dwells in all and not only in the believer who is conscious of him,—dwells disguised and veiled, and it is by helping others to awaken to the veiled Divine within them that we go to the straight way to the founding of his kingdom on earth. True, an outward battle also has to be fought, but against institutions which stand

in the way of the spreading of the light and the reign of brotherhood, not against men as unbelievers,—in a spirit of understanding, of knowledge, of firm will, but also of charity for ignorance and of love for the misled. God, says Mr. Wells, is boundless love, but this boundless love, it seems, is not infinite enough to embrace those who do not believe with you; it rejects them with a steadfast antagonism, it banishes them as “interlopers”. God’s work least of all should be pursued in a spirit of partisan and sectarian antagonism, but rather with a remembrance that the battle is only a way to peace and the peace must come by the inner submission of the opponent through his recognition of the Divine, through his awakening. It is not enough that the believer should perform God’s will and fight for the performance of that will “in the acts and order of the state and nation of which he is a part”. The nation also must be brought not only to believe, but to know, to see, to live in God, otherwise the national performance of God’s will, even if momentarily secured, will soon degenerate into a form. It is possible that what the old religions called “the rule of the saints” may be a preliminary step to the establishment of the full kingdom of God, but that rule can only become secure by the light and fire which is in them kindling itself in the hearts of all mankind.

These defects of outlook come from a defect in the conception of the Divine. It consists of “complete Agnosticism in the matter of God the Creator and entire faith in the matter of God the Redeemer”. A distinction is made between the Veiled Being behind the universe and the living reality in our lives; the latter alone is the true God. He is a personal and intimate God. He is finite. He is a spirit, a single spirit and a single person. He has come, we know not whence, into the conflict of life. He has begun and will never end. And yet he is the immortal part and leader of mankind, our friend and brother and light of the world. And from these first principles is drawn a description of God as certain qualities, boundless love, boundless courage, boundless generosity, thought and steadfast will, and as having motives, characteristics, an aim. “This is the belief of the modern mind,” read, the modern Western mind, “with regard to God.”

We can see whence the crudities of this belief arise. The Western mind is still burdened with its scientific vision of the universe as a play of brute force, of life as a struggle, the world a material entity, and therefore, of the Spirit of the World, if any there be, conceived agnostically or with a sort of materialistic Pantheism standing for these things only, the Breath of a physical universe, a sort of mechanical, inconscient Soul of things. Out of this pure materiality mind and soul inexplicably evolve. God appears only in man and his aspiration, his longings for a higher order of things, for love, universal sympathy, immortality. This God and the mechanical inconscient Spirit of the World the Western mind finds it difficult—and no wonder—to bring under the same term. The simple harmonious truth that God is veiled in the material universe which is only the lowest term, the first appearance of the cosmic Reality, that he unveils himself partially and progressively in man and to man, and that man by growth into self-knowledge and God-knowledge can grow into the

whole truth of God and existence, which is one truth,—this seems still to be hidden from these wise men of the West. His partial unveiling in man seems to them a birth of the once non-existent Divine, a coming of God into the world, one knows not whence; and because man appears to be finite, God whom they conceive of as the sum of human aspiration to good, truth, beauty, immortality, is also conceived of as finite. But how is that which has begun in Time secure against ending in Time? and how can a finite God be infinite love, courage, strength? Only that which was from ever can be for ever, and only that which is infinite in being can be infinite in force and quality. We have here an echo of the inconsequent Christian paradox of a soul born by the birth of the body, yet immortal to all eternity, combined with the metaphysical dogma of a God existent, not in being, but in becoming. There is an element of truth and value in this belief, but it brings disabling limitations into our inner realisation of God and the practice of a divine life to which it gives a foundation.

H. G. WELLS: THE ARCH-PROGRESSIVE

(The following article is of interest in this year of the birth-centenary of H.G. Wells, for two reasons. First, except for a touch in one place at a later moment, it was written by a young man barely 19 who was both appreciative and critical of Wells at a time when the latter was at the height of his career, 42 years ago. Secondly, it was sent to Wells himself by an older friend of the author—A. S. Wadia, one of the best writers of English in the Parsi community—and Wells wrote back: “Your young man will go far.” Whether Wells, who anticipated quite an amount of the future, was here a true prophet is a point of debate; but one thing he could not have had in mind is that the “young man” would go as far as Pondicherry less than 4 years after the article and join the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo. Yet, if Wells had known of this laboratory of souls, he would perhaps have forecast the youth’s progress in its direction to find there the basic formula being worked out of a truly fulfilling future, a movement of inner evolution being initiated towards a greater Utopia than the Wellsian which seems to have fired the budding imagination in this bright bit of juvenile literature.)

It was the pet platitude of Socrates that contraries are generated from contraries. Thus you cannot awake unless you are asleep; you cannot stand up unless you are lying down; you cannot enjoy yourself unless you know what it is to spend an hour with unspeakable bores. And what is more to the purpose, you cannot be an idealist unless you come into contact with hard and horrible realities. For life with its disappointments and the world with its muddles set the mind of the thinker working on higher themes, bring his acute perception to formulate a nobler state of affairs and lead him to the instrument of literature to tell mankind what it ought to do. The result of the unprecedented disappointments and muddles of our own day is that, now and again during this century, H. G. Wells has gone “utopianising” !

Most great men have written Utopias, but he has to his credit not one or two but nearly a dozen. We shall not be far mistaken if we say that almost all his books present a part of the world as Wells would have it. In his early scientific fantasies he invented weird machines for the economy of labour and designed ingenious arrangements for the facilitation of traffic. In his later novels he took up the pressing questions of state-governance, international politics and cultural reconstruction. “Utopia ! Utopia !” has been his party-cry and, though he could not win an election with it when once he tried to catch the reins of public affairs and to put his theories into practice, he has won our gratitude for giving us theories worth practising. If the mediaevals of the past could have looked forward they would have found themselves being justified by G. K. Chesterton; if the ultra-moderns of the future would look backward they would find themselves being anticipated by Wells. Both desire

the destruction of the present, but Chesterton wants to pull the twentieth century back to the thirteenth, Wells to push it on to the thirtieth !

Wells's novels are not mere utopian sociology; they are also vivid psychology. He does not hunt up the secret places of the earth—the murderer's den, the harlot's house, the gambler's cell. He hunts up the secret places of the heart—the den of despair, the house of hate, the cell of suffering. He does not aim at recording the exploits of an individual in a multitude of men; he of course does tell them with marvellous skill but his principal purpose is to relate the adventures of a soul in a society of spirits. Nobody delights in his books any the less on account of this elevated plane of action, but there is one astonishing characteristic, if not a fault, in the construction of his masterpieces. In every book of his a man and a woman are badly matched. Marriage binds them fast when they would fain be free, and usually the man breaks the chain and flies to the woman whom he has daily watched pass outside the iron bars of his matrimonial prison. George Ponderevo, Kipps, Mr. Polly, Sir Richmond and others do the self-same "bunk". Novel on magnificent novel—live slices from the throbbing brain of our cleverest man—and yet the same unchanging plot woven into most of them ! Is it conceivable ? Is it possible that the mind which can conjure up so many worlds is forced to fix for their people a single singular destiny ? What is the true explanation of this anomaly ?

It is this, that Wells is more a thinker than a novelist. He does not invent fiction so much as he discovers truth. Old tales and new ideas : you have here a summing-up of the Wellsian technique as well as the secret of his charm. We know a certain series of words which sound or spell alike and bear different meanings. Wells does not care whether he utters the same words provided each is marked with a unique significance. His plots are the same but his thoughts are different. He employs similar themes to introduce varied theories just as we use only one sort of peg to hang clothes of dissimilar cut and quality ranging from the homely pyjamas to the polished dress-suit. His stories resemble human skeletons, all nearly alike; but his books resemble human beings none of them identical. The bones are of a certain set plan but the flesh and blood which give life and vigour to the wooden framework form here a platform-speaker and there a city-clerk, now a stately matron and then a snub-nosed flapper ! In Wells's novels characters and contemplations are more important than complications and hence more intriguingly diverse and complex too.

Once three eminent critics agreed to write down on slips of paper the name of what they deemed the finest book of Wells; and all of them, without knowing the verdict of one another, voted for *The New Machiavelli*. Indeed he who has not gone through its absorbing pages has missed a rare delight. In it a promising young man Remington tells the story of his life. From his own life he sidetracks to the larger life of the community and deals with the momentous issues raised by politics and sociology. He loves England and tries to make it great. But he gets into a muddle, the England which he loves being gradually supplanted in his thoughts by a woman who loves him. He is already married to Margaret, an amiable little lady but quite

out of tune with her megalomaniac husband. He drags on with her for many a day until there comes into his life a sprightly imp of a girl—Isabel Rivers. He becomes her friend, her tutor, and her lover. She responds to him chord for chord, so that he falls hopelessly and desperately in love with her. He manages to break the news to his wife (whom he now discovers he has never really loved), and casting aside the whole farrago of social formulas and formalities flees with his sweetheart. His hopes, his ambitions, his glorious prospects of taking a part in his country's politics fall to the ground. He is an outcast, shunned and ostracised. But he finds all the world in Isabel....

This is just the bare summary. What is worth in the book is the atmosphere, the sentiment, the suggestive substance Wells has packed into it, the language which is like music at once heard at close quarters and at a distance, for it is not only the frontal intelligence in us that is led to listen : responses are evoked from faint and far backgrounds of the brain and we feel wiser and nobler than we know. The novel is out and out his most exquisite and mature. It centres upon the eternal conflict between Duty and Love. What should be followed, Duty or Love ? Remington decides for Duty. Duty by all means—and Love is the first of duties because it is the sun and shower by which all the seeds of greatness in one are quickened and made fruitful !

In addition to stories Wells has attempted to write histories, not of this country or that, but of the wide world. Carlyle called history the biography of great men; but for Wells, just as biography is the history of an individual, history may be termed the biography of mankind. No natural barriers or national animosities should prevent it from embracing the life of the entire humanity considered as one individual. The historian stands as on a hill looking equally on all sides around him, tracing man's progress from simian to modern times in every quarter of the globe. He dare not note the Stonehenge and ignore the monuments of Mexico, remember the Pyramids and forget the edicts of Asoka. His story above all is a record of facts. Careful enquiry must precede the entry of each item into his data. Fable and fancy are ornaments of a poet's work. The historian may admire them but he should never let his history be a setting for their sparkle. It would be better if he sacrificed all the grandeur of Gibbon and magnificence of Macaulay than if he stated one harmless fib as fact. Moreover, history is one and indivisible—it has no two versions. Seen through the eyes of a Catholic it should appear no other than the spectacle viewed by a Protestant. As long as controversy is rife, and in England America is a rebel against the gracious sovereignty of George the Third and in America England is the cowardly tyrant who used the Colonies as milchcows, history is nothing save a boundless Atlantic of errors. And that branch of it should be in greater demand which treats not of what men did but what they dreamed and created; which is a tale not merely of the wars and ambitions of kings and conquerors but the general march of man's mind. The conquest of Peru by Pizarro dwindles in momentousness before Asoka's wide-spread campaign of universal peace, and the dogged struggle at Waterloo becomes negligible before the establishment of the theory of Evolution,

This and much more did Wells think when he embarked on his famous *Outline of History*. He succeeded in sifting the essential from the trivial, the extensive from the purely local; but his gift of the novelist's vision played the deuce with him by leading him to see mankind in its past making as if it were still to be made. As a result, he sacrificed the purple and passion of the actually great historians without acquiring the pellucid accuracy of the ideally great one. Out of earnestness he gave us often the truth bare and sheer; out of ignorance, frequently the truth stunted and incomplete; out of inventiveness, generally the truth recast and new-coloured. And this inventiveness was guided by his rationalistic, humanistic, anti-authoritarian bent of mind—a valuable bent in certain respects yet rather perversive in a matter like history where religious and spiritual forces are a good deal at work, springs of inspiration and action are a-flow from beyond the apparent human level and individuals rise like giants with a mystery in their hearts to mould and dominate the ages. Wells has not written the one history which is to be the standard textbook of all the countries and creeds. It is an original view, not an authentic review. Still, it has rare attributes; and though many experts have looked askance at the contours and details of particular perspectives, it has achieved a worthy end—there is an overwhelming experience born out of it that mankind is one whole and that a single progressive consciousness pushes on through the criss-cross of cultures and nationalities. The entire record is a powerful pointer towards some interracial World-State to be.

The feeling of interracial unity which Wells seeks to create by his history is what he elucidates elsewhere as the foundation of true religion. Men have not yet realised this unity : Nature has not yet embodied, so to speak, the hovering oneness above the chaos and conflict of separate countries. Vaguely and with an indirect splendour has the super-life shown itself, the nation-units have not understood it as their presiding destiny nor have individuals lived in its full light. It is a Force that has not come into its own, an "Invisible King" manipulating secretly the events of the world—in no arbitrary way like the older God of popular superstition nor with a prescient purpose like the Holy Ghost of the mystics but through slow unsure evolution. For it is indeed no actual basic entity but a growing synthetic tendency, a developing common consciousness. Modern times have seen an exceptional progress in it because of the multifarious means invented for reducing the tyranny of space and time by steam and electricity and radio and because of the spreading of many-sided international knowledge in their wake. To feel intensely a citizen of the world rather than an Englishman or an Indian or a Chinese and to work for realising a state of affairs wherein such a feeling would be concretely and materially justified is to be religious in the Wellsian sense. All so-called mystic rapture and vision are, to him, but misunderstood—nay, even misexperienced—representations of this evolving super-life or common world-consciousness. Thus the foundations of Wells's faith are laid in the earth and not in the clouds. He is a social being whose Church is Society—Society, the glittering fabric of civilisation evolved out of tribal gregariousness. We are in the habit of picturing

individuals as existing by themselves and for themselves, but to Wells such permanent separatenesses are figments of dozing minds. When the sleepers awake they shall learn that mankind is more essential than men; they shall find that their individual existence is not completely cut off as it seemed at first, and slowly there shall unfold a sense of community with their kind, the possibilities of co-operation and the deep and comprehensive meaning of Life. Life is a stream of adventure and we are bubbles and clusters of foam upon it : incidents and experiments occurring where the vital onrush meets the resistance of matter through which it flows : consequences and conquests of difficulties which beset its way like stolid stones, blockading mud, floating refuse and unsuspected walls. We are born because the stream flows; we live because the stream wants to flow further; we die because the flow requires us no more. The race-stream flows through us; the race is the reality and we are the phenomena which come and go. We are episodes in an experience larger than ourselves ! Wells seizes on that as a revelation. It is his faith—the keystone of his Socialism.

From it he draws his ethics; for, if we are parts of a general scheme, right living must consist in contributing to its furtherance, and the service of secret and personal ends must be sin. So far as we seek to be mutually exclusive we are accidental, disconnected and chaotic; when our thoughts compass the welfare of the whole world we gain our proper place and fulfil our logical destiny. The worst of crimes is to be an isolated unit; the ugliest of eye-sores is to stand apart from the collective growth, the blackest of lies is the denial of the solidarity of the race. What is virtue ? Altruism. And what is Altruism ? Doing that which one can best do and adding that which is one's noblest and sincerest quota to the common fund of experience. None of which, if rightly read, makes for the unnatural suppression of one's individual difference. Altruism is no juggernaut crushing its devotees. Altruism is not sacrifice; at its altar we do not immolate ourselves as victims but bend down as worshippers. And we are not expected each to offer the self-same prayer. We must speak what we can, what comes best out of us, what expresses our individuality in the most adequate manner. We have to make the most of ourselves that the race of which we form a part may be able to make the most of us. Remembering we are experiments of Life, original and unique, we should try to realise to the full our particular uniqueness and convert it to a distinction, an honour, a glory. We must not be other people but ourselves, substances not shadows. We must work out our potentialities that on the stream which carries us we may be bubbles which, fleeting as they are, may still be bright and iridescent with gorgeous hues. Our talents are our care, rough material wherefrom to build beautiful things and adorn the general aspect of the race. For the sake of the whole we must attend to the parts that we are; but we must gather and prepare and transfigure experience for ourselves ultimately for the purpose of rendering it available to the race and of subscribing most effectively to collective development. Altruism and Individualism converge and coalesce in the supreme synthesis of Socialism *à la* Wells, since it is for altruistic aims that we are allowed to be individualistic and we have actually to attend to our peculiar egos if we are to advance the cause of Altruism.

When we accept H.G.'s message, says H.G., Utopia will be ours. The message has several shortcomings. The "spirituality" it tries to set up is pretty limited, has hardly a God in His own right; there is no direct breath of the Eternal and the Infinite, only the conception of an emerging World-Brain, a magnified pervasive Manhood. Nor is there discerned a permanent individual spark of God as the hidden truth of our personality. And lacking the authentic Divine, the ethics of Wellsianism is devoid of a conscious basis for that ecstatic fire of righteousness which can be lit by the feeling that we are immortal children of one omniscient Father. Nevertheless, we must not minimise the healthy, sane, sweet and wide vividness of the Wellsian Utopia. We began with the magic of that name and it is fitting we should close with it. For, Wells is in his own element pre-eminently in the Utopian sphere. His Utopia is after all the most interesting of his many cerebrations. And perhaps the most attractive Utopia he has visualised is the one in that novel, *Men Like Gods*. It is an exceedingly beautiful country with roads apparently made of finely streaked glass. But the people are yet more beautiful : they are like the masterpieces of Greek sculpture, and as scantily clothed ! They have dispensed with speech except for the sake of poetry. They talk telepathically, hearing in the brain and not in the ears. They think and their thoughts are transmitted to the novel's chief character Mr. Barnstaple's brain where they automatically fashion themselves in the words of his own vocabulary. The Utopians shift for long-distance purposes in baby-aeroplanes which fly as lightly as swallows and have indeed replaced them, for here there are no birds and ornithology is an antiquated fad. Insects have also become extinct, and there are few animals save the picturesque carnivora which are menacing in nothing but their misleading names, leopards and lions being in Utopia as tame as sheep. The inhabitants are incalculably advanced in physical and chemical sciences. By atomic energy they can turn mountains like tops and from the fourth dimension in which Wells has romantically put them they can revolve their universe into our three dimensions, as a door swings on its hinges, and in the moment when the two universes run into each other they can draw in automobilefuls of flabbergasted earthlings. They have also acquired so firm a grasp on psychology that they have no policemen to preserve the public peace : if a man threatens to run out of order he is taken in hand by mental doctors and subjected to some sort of psycho-analysis !

The population is two hundred and fifty millions, regulated by cautious birth-control and Eugenics. They have made a clean sweep of capitalism. In their Age of Confusion they were like earthlings; but a world-war and a series of economic catastrophes killed the old system and well-ordered productivity replaced the jostling melée of casual trade and individual enterprise. There are no idlers; but there is no uncongenial toil either. Each man takes up what he is fitted for by his natural aptitude, and there is neither wage-earning nor wage-slavery. The Utopians are so law-abiding that they need no laws. There is a state of complete anarchy under which there is nothing anarchical ! Anarchy in the sense that there is not the semblance of a government, but the people are too civilised to abuse the unlimited freedom given

them. How does Wells sum up their blessed condition ? “No parliaments, no politics, no private wealth, no business competition, no police or prisons, no lunatics, no defectives or cripples; and there are none of these things because Utopia has schools and teachers who are all that schools and teachers can be. Politics, trade and competition are the methods of adjustment of a crude society. Such methods of adjustment have been laid aside in Utopia for more than a thousand years. There is no rule, no government needed by adult Utopians because all the rule and government they need they have had in childhood and youth. Their education is their government !”

No doubt, there are many strange things in Utopia which we have not seen, nor dreamt of. But I am sure that the great books we may find there cannot be very much unlike a few choice ones found here: for example, the innumerable glimpses of the future by H. G. Wells.

K. D. SETHNA

BELLA

THE hours and hours of unstinting love,
 An adoration fit for royalty
 You meted out to me, my four-foot friend—
 Recollections that patter eternally !

My shadow followed all day by a brown-velvety form,
 Each step of mine echoed by small swift paws
 A keen anxious glance for my every mood,
 A soft tongue ready between smiling jaws.

The little short legs never tired
 To do my bidding, whatever it be—
 Long body of beauty—long years' companionship
 Dogging with perfect love my memory !

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

OLD BENGALI MYSTIC POEMS

THE authors of these poems or songs were called Siddhacharyas. They belonged to a line of spiritual discipline that stemmed from Buddhism, but, considerably influenced by popular cults and practices, developed into an esoteric Tantricism. The school wielded great power and spread far and wide in North India, especially the North-Eastern regions. It was a reigning influence for several centuries, from the 9th to the 11th—or, according to a more generous computation, from the 8th to the 12th—and great masters of Yoga appeared and taught a discipline with its own, sometimes very unconventional, characteristics.

The story of the discovery of these songs is a romance. They unveil the source, the original form of the Bengali language and letters. The manuscript was discovered by chance in Nepal. Pandit Haraprasad Shastri came across the poems while rummaging old MSS. At first much notice was not taken but some curiosity made him scrutinise a little more closely, and very soon he recognised the gems that he had unearthed. That these writings were highly valued at their time is shown by the fact that they carried a commentary in Sanskrit, giving the esoteric meaning; also there was found a complete Tibetan translation of the collected songs, as though the songs had been considered not as mere literary compositions but as real mantras. Portions of the original that were missing have been since reconstructed from the commentary and the translation.

I

I am she the desireless, my spouse is the Void :
The knowledge I carry is beyond words.
O Mother, as I looked deep into the womb,
 it all burst forth—
But what I wanted is not here.
The first-born out of me is a mass of desires :
That too vanished as its life-line was pursued to the end.
A new youthfulness I achieved.
The original spearhead did the killing;
Kukkuripada says : stable now is the world—
And one who understands is indeed a hero.

*
**

This poem or song is an outright cryptogram. It speaks of mysterious things in an even more mysterious way. First of all, we must note that the poet is a woman.

She calls herself *kukkurī*. But why of all names a “bitch” ? Well, she is in good company. One remembers the Vedic Sarama or Sarameya. The West too has its Hound of Heaven. Only the term here has been put in its vernacular form. Anyhow it is a yoginī who embodies or represents the divine Being, *narātmya-devī*, as the Buddhist commentator says.

The opening lines have a clear Vedic ring, they take us back to the famous Devi Sukta where the poetess—there too it is a Rīshika, Vak or Vagambhrini—feels herself one with the Supreme Shakti and declares her mightinesses.

Here also the woman-singer, filled with the divine afflatus, intones her inexpressible experiences. Her individual consciousness is identified with the universal Mother consciousness. And as such, while she casts her glance into herself, into the depth of her womb, she finds the entire universe there and it comes out in a burst. But she notes that the first creation is only a world of the mere senses, the world of desires and it was not what she had wanted. Therefore she severed the life-line that held it—as though the umbilical cord—by a stroke of the concentrated luminous energy that her consciousness was. So the wrong manifestation, the false world (of Maya and Mara) dissolved and disappeared. And in its stead the true, the world of truth—that is the Void—was firmly established, never to move or change. The process is a difficult path and only a heroic soul can go through it.

II

The night is dark, the mouse stirring :
 It loves nectar and takes it.
 Slay the mouse, O Yogi, the mouse that is like the wind.
 So may he stop his coming and going.
 The mouse pierces into the earth, he digs a hole.
 Restless is the black mouse, be firm and kill it.
 Black is the mouse; it is not visible for its colour.
 When it ascends to the sky, then it enters into a mindless meditation.
 The mouse is restless; it is at rest when it has
 the consciousness of the Great Master.
 When its wandering ceases, then only,
 Bhushuk says, all its bondages break away.

*
 **

This poem presents a simpler allegory and expresses a more familiar experience of the spiritual life.

The mouse is the ignorant being, the small being of ignorance—the restless desire-soul full of hunger and hankerings—moved by the untamed vital urge (“the wind”). It is difficult to spot it, because it is a black thing moving in blackness—

ignorance enveloped in ignorance. *Tamo āsīt tamasā guḍham*. It burrows a hole in the earth consciousness, enters into the basic inconscience, steals all the light and happiness from above and hides them in the underground darkness. No spiritual realisation can come and stay unless this nibbling enemy is tracked and brought to light. The Veda gives a similar image. The Panis, the dark Asuras, seize even the sun and store it away in their secret caverns. Indra, the lord of the Divine Mind, has to come and with his fulgurating thunderbolt pierce the hills—the earth-built consciousness—and rescue and release the Light. Even so here, the poet says, the mouse, the ignorant consciousness, must rise into the sky of the luminous mindlessness, attain a steadfast concentration, then it will lose its normal restlessness; when it is filled with the consciousness of the true Guru, the divine Master, then it becomes stable and tranquillised—it is no more fidgety, bound in its inferior consciousness—its bondages snap, it is free. The little ignorant being of small mind is freed into the luminous vastness of the Buddha consciousness. Then only can it taste of the nectar of immortality for which it yearned even in its ignorant states.

III

Your hut stands outside the city,
 my untouchable maid;
 The bald Brahmin passes sneaking close by.
 O my maid, I would make of you my companion.
 Kanhu is a Kapali, a Yogi, he has no disgust
 and he has no robe on.
 There is only one lotus and it has sixty-four petals:
 Upon that the maid will climb with this poor self
 and dance.
 O my Beauty, I ask you frankly :
 Whose boat is it by which you come and go ?
 O my outcaste maid, no more do I sell twines,
 nor do I weave baskets—
 That game I give up for your sake :
 You are the maid, I am the Kapali;
 For your sake I have abandoned even the garland of bones.
 O my love, I will churn the lake and seize the lotus-stalk—
 I will beat and batter you, take your life out of you !

*
 **

The inner being—the soul—lives outside the pale of the ordinary consciousness. It is, as it were, an outcaste from the civilised, cultured, moral, ceremonial, social mentality.

Even so, the best mind there, the Brahmin, harbours sometimes a secret hankering for the outcaste Beauty.

But only a Kapali—an extreme Tantrik, of the Left-hand Path—an outcaste himself, free and nude in every respect, having no bondages, no prejudices or preoccupations, no presumptions or pretensions, whether of the mind or the life or the body, can aspire to be the fit companion of the deity within.

He can then revel with his Soul Beauty, the Divinity which is at the core of the heart, the fully blown lotus of the divine consciousness with its sixty-four petals of integral delight infusing its fragrant vibration into every nook and corner of the *ādhār* from the crown of the head down to the tip of the toe.

Yes, one must give up all, all worldly avocations and associations; the Kapali has given up even his austerities for the sake of his divine companion.

But he is ready to battle for her sake. He is ready to seize the kingdom of heaven by violence.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

WATER SEEKS ITS OWN LEVEL

A SHORT STORY

ONCE the heavenly sage Narad came to visit the earth. While he was passing through a street, he heard someone chanting the name of 'Narayan'. Narad was surprised to find a competitor. He looked about himself and found that a merchant was sitting on a cushion and repeating the name of Narayan. So he directed his steps towards the shop of this merchant. The latter welcomed the sage, bowed down and requested him to take a seat. Then they discussed religious things, talked of God and the merchant showed so much love for God that Narad was convinced that he was a true *bhakta*. Then after some time Narad took leave of him and thought that God had committed a mistake in placing the merchant on earth instead of in heaven.

So, when Narad met God once more, he said to God that a mistake had been committed and the merchant should be allowed a place in heaven. God said, "He is in his own place and he should not be disturbed." But Narad insisted and so God gave a permit to bring the merchant to heaven. Rejoicing that he had rendered a good service to the merchant, Narad directed his steps towards the shop he had visited. On seeing him the merchant was overjoyed and welcomed the sage as if he had got the greatest boon of his life. After some talk, Narad asked him, "Do you want to come to heaven?" The merchant replied, "Who would not like to come to heaven?" Narad said, "Let us then move for heaven, here is the permit issued by God Himself." On hearing this the face of the merchant fell and he said, "Naradji, you have chosen a very bad moment. My youngest son No. 4 is to be married after 2 months. So I am not in a position to come just now. Can't you wait for 2 to 4 months?" Narad said, "All right, I shall wait for 4 months." And he departed.

After 4 months Narad came again. He asked the merchant whether he remembered him. The merchant replied, "O Naradji, I am not like other people who forget a sage like you. I remember you well; have we not met twice before? Only order and I am at your service." Narad asked whether the marriage of the youngest son had been performed. The merchant replied, "O Bhagwan, by your grace everything was done with ease and pleasure." Then asked Narad, "Now, are you prepared to come to heaven?" Again the merchant's face fell and he said, "No doubt the marriage of the 4th son is performed, now there are seeds of dissension among the brothers and I wish that they should separate peacefully. I shall partition the properties among the brothers and then my mind will be at rest. It will not take long. Please wait for another 6 months and I shall accompany you to heaven." Narad said, "All right, I shall come after 6 months".

Months went by and the period was over. Again Narad directed his steps towards the shop of the merchant. He found it but missed the owner. So he asked the sons about his whereabouts. They replied, "O Naradji, a great calamity has fallen on us. Our father expired some 4 months ago." Narad was taken aback. He had wanted to take the merchant to heaven and now he was hearing that the

man was no more. So Narad used the divine gift of knowledge that he possessed and found that the merchant, after his demise, had incarnated as a cat in the grain godown. So he asked the sons to take him to the godown. The sons were surprised to hear such a request and said, "Naradji, nothing is there but bags of grain; what do you want there?" Narad said, "Please lead me to the godown and oblige." The sons led Narad to the godown.

When the godown was opened, Narad asked the sons to leave him alone for some time. So the sons went away. Narad found the cat and asked it, "Well, my friend, do you remember me?" The cat replied, "Why not? I am not a person to forget. We met thrice before. Did we not?" Narad said, "Well, are you ready to come to heaven now?" The cat said, "Well, I want to come to heaven, but, you see, my sons have collected all these bags of grain and the rats are eating away the grain. So I am much needed here. The sons will dispose of the grain within 3 to 4 months. Can't you wait for 3 to 4 months?" Narad said, "All right, I shall come after 4 months." And he departed.

Time went by and the months passed and again Narad came to the shop of the merchant and asked the sons to show him the godown. The sons said, "What is there to be seen? it is empty now." But Narad insisted and he was taken to the godown. On entering the godown he found that the cat was not there. He asked the sons what had happened to the cat. They said, "O Naradji, the cat was killing the rats, so we got the cat killed." Again Narad was taken aback, again he used his divine knowledge to see where the cat had gone, and he found that the cat had incarnated as a pig and was lying outside the town in a big foul-smelling pit of mud and surrounded by its young ones.

Narad directed his steps towards the pit and found the pig enjoying life. He asked the pig whether it remembered him. The pig said, "Why not? I remember you very well. We have met before four times, thrice at my shop and the 4th time in my godown. I am not a person to forget." Then Narad asked, "Do you want to come to heaven?" The pig said, "Yes, yes, Naradji, I want to come to heaven." Narad said, "Then come with me, the permit is valid yet." The pig said, "Please, one minute, tell me whether I shall get such a pit full of foul-smelling mud and these young ones of mine there in heaven and that too on a larger scale?" Narad said "What nonsense you talk! There will be no foul-smelling mud in heaven; instead there will be sweet-smelling flowers of all kinds and many other good and beautiful things." Then the pig said to Narad, "If that be your heaven and I am not to get all these things that I possess here, I do not want your heaven; let your heaven be for you and the likes of you, I do not want it."

Narad went back much disappointed and, when he saw God again, God inquired of him whether he had brought the merchant to heaven or not. One can imagine Narad's face. It was a good target for any photographer.

TWO VISION LANDS

IN the mirror of vision
I saw a circular plain
Enwombing a city,
The Land of false relationships.

Human beings moved and met,
Each in a house of glass,
His own transparent prison.

They met, spoke, made signs and gestures,
Each in his glass-house.
They thought they were communicating,
And nodded complacently
Behind their glass-panes.

Lips moved and smiled,
But the sound was hollow;
Embrace, a separation;
Recognition, a void.

High up above, another circle,
Another plain, another city,
The land of true relationships.

There in a silence full,
In motions perfect, moments Truth-chosen,
Being met with being,
Willed by conscious wholeness.

Contacts, an interchange of soul with soul,
A flow of light from heart to heart,
A rhythmic motion subtly poised
In the multiple One Being.

Separation there is none,
Nor desire's question-marks,
Nor the pitfall of the void.

A glow of love, the meeting moment;
 A glow of love, the parting one.
 For all are constant Oneness moving,
 Each a ray of musical light,
 Obeying the delicate harp-play,
 The tune of Fingers Divine.

SRIMAYI

ANSWER ME

THY servant, comrade or a child
 Whatever I may be,
 Now Thy own voice must answer me :
 Why have I come to thee ?

Why all illusion do I shun
 Where others blindly run,
 Forgetting every trace of thee ?
 God, thou must answer me.

'This world is merely terror and death,
 Unable to live in azure breath—
 Unless my light flames up within,
 Earth cannot bosom the bliss divine.'

SRIJIT

BUT I HAVE NO HARVEST TO REAP

You wouldn't know, would you ?
 What it was all about—
Living through disciplined years
 With never a moment of doubt.
When someone said : 'You,'
 You walked through the crowds and the cheers
While the world went mad with elation,
 Scorned victory, sentiment, tears.
'Twas the end and the birth of a nation.

I went away and you sorrowed
 But I had a vow to keep
Which lit a flame in my soul
 When the rest of the world was asleep.
Truth is lived, not borrowed,
 Nor found in a begging bowl.
The meadows are filled with sheep
 And each pathway demands a toll,
But I have no harvests to reap.

No need to explain to the others
 That I had found fields within
Where men are, but not yet, brothers
 While they seek the world's pleasure and sin.
Could I know, could I ever engender
 What it was all about ?
When the Day began with splendour
 And the Sun rose up with a shout ?

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART THREE : THE CONQUEST OF FOOD-NEED

(Continued from the September issue)

X. LIFE'S INGENUITY AND SUPERMIND

By Wisdom all these are guided and have their firm abiding in Wisdom.
For Wisdom is the eye of the world, Wisdom is the sure foundation.

(Aitareya Upanishad, III.3)

This evolution of our consciousness to a superconscience or supreme of itself is possible only if the Inconscience which is our basis here is really itself an involved Superconscience; for what is to be in the becoming of the Reality in us must be already there involved or secret in its beginning. Such an involved Being or Power we can well conceive the Inconscient to be when we closely regard this material creation of an unconscious Energy and see it labouring out with curious construction and infinite device the work of a vast involved Intelligence evolving out of its involution an emerging consciousness whose emergence cannot stop short on the way until the Involved has evolved and revealed itself as a supreme totally self-aware and all-aware Intelligence. It is this to which we have given the name of Supermind or Gnosis. For that evidently must be the consciousness of the Reality, the Being, the Spirit that is secret in us and slowly manifesting here; of that Being we are the becomings and must grow into its nature.

(Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, p. 902)

THE foregoing study of *longue haleine* of the problem of alimentation—of its genesis, essential traits, and variations on the same theme—at once prompts us to make a basic suggestion. In order that the human body may be completely autotrophe, that is to say, grow altogether independent of other organisms for its nutritional requirements until at the end it totally transcends all needs for material alimentation, three conditions have to be preliminarily satisfied :

- i) the body must acquire an almost infinite capacity for biosynthesis;
- ii) the organism must be able to dispense with the particular form of energy potentially stored in biochemical foodstuffs and instead draw upon a new source of free energy, physical in the beginning but supraphysical at the end;

iii) the body should be capable of replenishing its substantial stuff not through the assimilation of gross external matter as at present but by some such process as the materialisation of universal energy-substance.

We may very well expect that in the course of further evolutionary progression the human body will undergo the necessary mutation to fulfil the above three essential prerequisites and thus rid itself of the bondage to material food. This evolutionary accomplishment will then translate into realised fact the following prophecy of Sri Aurobindo :

“Conceivably, one might *rediscover and re-establish at the summit of the evolution of life the phenomenon we see at its base*, the power to draw from all around it the means of sustenance and self-renewal.”¹ (Italics ours)

At this point the sceptic may raise his eye-brows and exclaim : “Impossible ! This is too fantastic a possibility to be realised by evolution.” But have not the achievements of each new phase of the evolutionary unfoldment of life upon earth looked like fantasies when viewed from the station of an anterior phase ?

Indeed, no limit need be or can be put to evolutionary possibilities. Actuality never exhausts the sum of potentialities.² And, as Sri Aurobindo has so forcefully pointed out, to argue that something cannot be done because it has never *yet* been done is to “deny the possibility of changing things and thus of evolution, of the realisation of the unrealised,...and reduce all to a matter of rigid and unalterable *status quo*, which is an insolent defiance to both fact and reason(!) and supreason.”³

But this cannot be. And evolutionary Nature brushes aside all our preconceived notions of plausibility and proceeds to conquer ever-new terrains of achievement.⁴ However, a valid question may be raised whether evolution is still continuing, at least so far as form-evolution is concerned. We have suggested that the attainment of victory over our body’s food-need is conditional upon a new type of physiological functioning and the acquisition of hitherto unrealised evolutionary capabilities. But has not the process of evolution stopped long since ? And has not the human body with all its foibles and virtues, its chemistry and physiology, already acquired a well-set unalterable disposition ? If so, the alimentary habits of man’s body must be deemed to be permanent and binding and incapable of any alteration. After all—the disbeliever would so declare—the body is the product of inconscient physical energy and the consciousness that seems to indwell it is only the derivative outcome of the operation of this energy. It follows then that once the evolutionary process has come to a stop, there is no more scope for any adaptive improvement and our bodily system is destined to remain bound down to its present form and functioning. For, if the

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, p. 52.

² Cf. “Impossibility is only a sum of greater unrealised possibles. It veils an advanced stage and a yet unaccomplished journey” (Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glances*, p. 6).

³ Nirodbaran, *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*, pp. 62-63.

⁴ Cf. “All things (not only those that are conceivable at the moment, but all those that are for the moment inconceivable), all are *not only possible*, but will be *realised*.” (Italics ours)

(The Mother, *Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, p. 51)

process of evolutionary transfiguration is set aside as not being operative any longer, what other alternative mechanism can at all be conceived that can bring about the necessary change ?

But what goes before is altogether fallacious. For, the implied assumptions and hence the conclusions are only half-truths and has it not been well said that 'half-truth is its own Nemesis' ? Indeed, doubts and misgivings of the above sort arise from a superficial view of things due to the thought's concentrating on the appearance alone and missing what lies behind the frontal process. But a deeper inquiry reveals that

(1) The true foundation is above while the branchings are downward, *ūrdhva-budhnaḥ nīcīna-sākhaḥ* (Rīg-Veda), *ūrdhvamūlo'vāksākhaḥ* (Gīta). Consciousness is not an epiphenomenon of Matter. On the contrary, Matter itself is a derivative and a phenomenon of Energy, and this Energy that is secretly and universally operative behind all manifestation is 'not without a Being or Existence possessing it or a Consciousness supplying it': it is indeed in its essential nature the Consciousness-Force, *citśakti*, *cit-tapas*, of Sachchidananda.

(2) Thus our body is not mere unconscious Matter : it is a structure of a secretly conscious Energy that has taken form in it. Thus consciousness that "seems to be a result is—in its reality, though not in its form—the origin; the effect is in the essence pre-existent to the apparent cause, the principle of the emergent activity precedent to its present field of action."¹

(3) That the embodied soul is so much dependent upon the bodily and nervous life, that the physiological functionings of the body govern and determine the reactions of the subjective being, is thus seen to be only a minor truth. The major truth is that Consciousness is the real and original determinant of our bodily life; it can, if it so wills and under proper conditions, transmit its commands to the bodily instrument and govern its reactions "even to the overriding of its normal law or conditions of action."²

(4) That the body and not the indwelling consciousness appears to be the primary determinant is only a provisional evolutionary arrangement. For in the involutory self-shrouding of consciousness, the principle of Matter represents the nethermost stage of descent, 'an abysmal sleep, a fathomless trance of consciousness',³ in which the absorbed Energy is totally oblivious of its origin and real self, and supports the physical existence in a somnambulist action. Thus in our body, "the outer force and figure of being, what we might call the formal or form existence as distinguished from the immanent or secretly governing consciousness, is lost in the physical action, is so absorbed into it as to be fixed in a stereotyped self-oblivion unaware of what it is and what it is doing."⁴

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 759.

² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 634.

(5) But behind the outer veil of material inconscience and the iron grip of physico-chemical determinism, a secret involved Consciousness, cosmic and infinite, is always at work in our body. And without this supporting greater Consciousness-Force that is 'awake in all that sleeps',¹ our physical system itself would have no power of action, nor any organising coherence at all.

(6) Now the whole *nisus* of the evolutionary process is to bring out to the front the totality of this involved Consciousness and make it the overt master there even over our outer existence and nature. It follows then that the evolutionary emergence cannot stop short with man or mental consciousness. For Mind is no more than an intermediate power of consciousness, limited in vision and limping in movement. Now, "evolution is an inverse action of the involution : what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution the last and supreme emergence."² Thus spirit, being the original involutory element and factor, must be a final evolutionary emergence. The evolutionary progression is thus bound to continue till Supermind, the original 'creative medium' of the Divine, and the triune glory of Sachchidananda stand evolved here in the material universe.³

(7) The old evolutionary procedure that relied on a prior form-evolution to effectuate a resultant change of consciousness has no doubt been superseded. For "in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable; for it is through his consciousness, through its transmutation and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation that the evolution can and must be effected. ...*It is no longer the change of body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body.*"⁴ (Italics ours)

(8) With the emergence of Supermind in evolution, will come about the discovery of all the hidden truths and powers of the forces of the concealed Spirit; and the right dynamisation of that higher knowledge will establish the Spirit's total mastery over all its fields of operation. Matter in general and the body in particular will be obedient instruments of the Spirit and pliantly move to fulfil without any let or hindrance all the demands made upon them.

We conclude then that when we speak of the ultimate conquest of the body's food-need, achieved through the process of an evolutionary transfiguration, we are not indulging in a child soul's phantasy or its demands for arbitrary miracles nor are we visualising any impossible chumera that goes beyond or outside *all* forces of Nature and becomes automatically effective. What we are envisaging is the control and con-

¹ *Ya esa suptesu jāgarti* (Katha Upanishad, V. 8).

² *The Life Divine*, pp. 759-60.

³ Cf. "The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being, we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of supermind towards the divine being." (*The Life Divine*, p. 243).

⁴ *The Life Divine*, p. 751.

quest of the prevailing determinism of our bodily system by the higher determinism of the supernal grades and powers of our being. And there is nothing "miraculous" or "irrational" here. Indeed, "what seems to us supernatural is in fact either a spontaneous irruption of the phenomena of other-Nature into physical Nature or...a possession of the knowledge and power of the higher orders or grades of cosmic Being and Energy and the direction of their forces and processes towards the production of effects in the physical world by seizing on possibilities of interconnection and means for a material effectuality."¹

But why at all these misgivings and doubts about the prospect of some wonderful achievements expected to come from the supramental evolution? Is not our body, even in its actuality, already a marvel product of organic evolution? We do not pause to study and contemplate its weird functioning and its intricate structure; therefore it appears to our blissful ignorance altogether self-evident, simple and natural! But anyone who studies the physiology and biochemistry of a living body cannot but be struck by the amazing ingenuity displayed by Life although acting so far under the heavy load of a frontal ignorance. To cite only a few amongst a host of other instances that baffle the comprehension of even the twentieth-century men of science:

(a) *Harmony and co-ordination*: We know that life is largely a matter of enzymes. Even the simplest of living cells contains a thousand or more of them. Thus the "picture of the smallest living cells is already one of a complexity which *the mind finds difficulty in grasping*. How all these separate and complex enzyme molecules are packed away in a tiny fragment of protoplasm, how they work in harmony with each other, producing that result which we recognise as life, *we hardly know*."² (Italics ours)

(b) *Enzymatic action: its speed and efficiency*: We have referred to the fact that almost all the biochemical reactions in a living body are mediated by enzymes. But how, through what mechanism, these wonderful bio-catalysts bring about these diverse reactions is "largely a matter of conjecture."³

And the speed and smoothness accompanying these enzymatic actions are something that the chemist can hardly match in his laboratory experiments. "In practice, chemical synthesis in the laboratory is often very difficult. Compounds have to be transformed one step at a time, often by wasteful processes, using powerful chemicals, heat, and sometimes electrical actions, to bring about the desired changes. *It may take months to build up a compound, by a complicated sequence of actions, which a cell can make in a matter of minutes*."⁴ (Italics ours)

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 778.

Cf. The Mother: "I may say with certainty that people who want to see miracles are people who cherish their ignorance! . . . There is miracle, because you do not give people the time to see the procedure by which you do things, you do not show them the steps."

(*Bulletin*, August 1964, p. 31)

² J. A. V. Butler, *Inside the Living Cell* (1959), p. 27.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

It is not only the speed of these enzymatic actions that is breathtaking; their efficiency too is wonderful. These enzymes bring about rapid chemical changes and in large bulks, even when they are present in very small quantities, and without being changed themselves. Thus "a solution containing a ten millionth of an ounce of pepsin has a powerful effect on clotting of milk; rennin, another enzyme present in calves' stomachs and used for making junkets and cheese, can clot ten million times its weight of milk in ten minutes. Urease crystals produce a hundred times their weight of ammonia from urea in five minutes; it is said that one molecule of catalase can decompose over two million molecules of hydrogen peroxide every minute."¹

(c) *The mystery of specific protein synthesis* : Proteins, as we have mentioned before, are the most essential constituents of all living cells. But these are different and specific for different types of cells. Now all these proteins are made up of highly complex chains of amino acids, the number and order of these amino acid components varying from protein to protein. There are about twenty separate amino acids and "the number of possible ways of arranging say a chain of one hundred units chosen from twenty different kinds is enormous. But the cell selects the amino acids and places them in the correct order with great ease and speed. In many bacteria a new generation is produced in thirty minutes or even less time. In this period, the full complement of proteins for a new cell must be synthesized. It is evident that the protein synthesizing mechanism works with great speed and efficiency. What is its nature?"² Modern science has not yet been able to unravel this greatest mystery of life, the mystery of how specific proteins are made.

(d) *The mystery of energy utilization* : We have seen that Nature has so ordained that all heterotrophic organisms have to depend on organic food stuffs for gathering the energy needed for their vital processes. Now the general aim of metabolic studies is "to determine *how* the chemical energy of the food substances is utilized in contraction of muscles, secretion of glands, transmission of impulses along nerves, growth of tissues and the other activities characteristic of the living animal. The present position of the problem is that a very great deal is known about the chemical reactions which occur and the amount of energy made available, but little is known about how this energy is used by the tissues for their purposes."

Instances are indeed legion that demonstrate life's wonderful ingenuity and what has been termed by Walter Cannon 'the wisdom of the body'. We need not cite any more examples here, for even a slight acquaintance with the organisational details of living bodies and with the behaviour patterns of different creatures cannot but convince even the most casual observer that behind the apparent inconscience of the workings of physico-chemical energies there must be operative all the while a conscient purposive Force. The physical scientist may try to 'explain' away all these things in terms of physical causality bearing such high names as adaptability, homoeostasis,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

feed-back reactions, etc. But this sort of explanation does not go very far. For it explains, if at all, only the phenomenal how and not the intrinsic why.

Now we can very well imagine what wonderful results will be achieved in the overt frontal plane of life, when the divine Supermind will emerge from behind and descend from above to take charge of the evolutionary process.

Let us now proceed to study how the New Body, a product of supramental evolution, is expected to solve its twin problems of energy-requirement and substantial need.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

WHOM GOD PROTECTS

THE LIFE-STORY OF A SPIRITUAL ADEPT

(Continued from the September Issue)

27

DAY by day Arka's intimacy with the Dalai Lama became firmer and firmer. About a month later one day when they were alone, remembering the World Mother and invoking Her blessings on himself, Arka told the Dalai Lama the real purpose of his visit.

As soon as he had heard all, the Dalai Lama remembered all about that nearly forgotten robbery. He said, "In all probability the band of robbers were captured later."

Then he ordered one of his attending officers to bring the papers relating to the theft of the bejewelled Yantra and ordered him to read it out. The following is a detailed account of that affair :

"The robbers, who fell upon the Lama of Tigachchi despoiling him of all that he possessed, were Muslims living at the frontiers of Sikkim and Tibet. In both the countries they posed as merchants in wool and, when opportunities came there way, robbed travellers. They robbed the Tigachchi Lama at Bading, passed rapidly through Sikkim arriving at Darjeeling by way of Gratok. They remained at Darjeeling for about a week selling wool, deer skin and musk. They had tried to dispose of the Yantra while they were there. But unsuccessful there the chief of the robbers with five of his companions left for Calcutta promising to share with the others in equal parts the proceeds of the sale. They thought it a costly jewel and decided upon the big city of Calcutta to sell it in, to avoid suspicion.

"In Calcutta they realised that even here it could not be sold on the street, only a big jeweller could handle it. The robber chief then decked himself out in some more decent clothes and entered a big jeweller's shop in Harrison Road.

"The jeweller immediately saw that the article was a priceless jewel, and said that if it were left with him for a day he could ascertain its proper price. But the robber chief did not agree to leave it. Then another man, with the appearance of being a gentleman, came outside with the robber as he was leaving, drew him apart and said that if he came with him the thing could be sold at a high price.

"When the robber chief asked what the price could be, the man assured him that it might easily fetch ten thousand rupees. Greed prompted the robber to accompany him, he was brought to a well-furnished room after being led through a labyrinth of lanes and alleys. The four companions had followed them but lost them after a

couple of turns in the lanes and began to move about aimlessly.

“The robber chief was led into a room and asked to sit down and wait for awhile. Shortly four or five powerful goondas entered and forcibly snatched the jewel from him. He was then bound and gagged and left in the room. At night he was carried through many lanes and by-lanes, to confuse him, and left lying on the side-street.

“When the news arrived to our agents in Calcutta, the five robbers were easily caught by the Police and admitted all. In the Barabazar area there are lanes so intricately formed that even in the day-time a stranger can easily lose his way and it would be well-nigh impossible for him to come out. Goondas have taken advantage of it and many houses there are under their control. During the day they become shopkeepers to deceive the Police. The constables of the locality are all in their pay.

“Considering all these points the Tibetan Government engaged a high-ranking detective to recover the Yantra. His reports revealed that the robbers came through Sikkim and Darjeeling to Calcutta where the goondas got hold of it. Three days later a goonda named Banka Bihari very cleverly snatched it off and left the city. He was from Bhagalpur but there no trace of him could be found. Here ends the enquiry of the detective, and the report was duly forwarded to the Lama of Tigachchi.

“The five robbers were brought to Lhasa; on the way search was made for the rest of the gang but they had made themselves scarce as soon as they had understood the plight of their comrades. The five who were caught were imprisoned and they served the full term of their sentence.”

Needless to say, the Dalai Lama was very happy to know that the Yantra was now in the Avadhuta's keeping as he had never imagined that it would ever again be found. Pronouncing the name of the Lord Buddha he said, “You have bound us all in an unredeemable debt. We have no doubt at all that you have been sent by the Divine. Tell us what we must do now.”

The Avadhuta said, “Since you have done so much already to recover the Yantra of the Lama of Tigachchi, you could send me there. I, too, will be very happy to meet him and hand it over to him personally and consider that enough compensation for my labours.”

The Dalai Lama hearing this stretched out his hands and, fondly embracing Arka, said, “O Great One, your steps on the land of Tibet have sanctified it!”

Within a week all arrangements were made. Arka refused to take with him any guards; two Lamas and an attendant were to accompany him, with a beast of burden to carry their belongings.

With the good wishes of all at Lhasa, Arka left for Tigachchi. A fast messenger on horseback preceded him with a letter to apprise the head Lama of Tigachchi of his coming. In the letter the Lama was told how his Yantra had been recovered and brought here by a great yogi of Bengal, who by his amazing knowledge of the shastras, adherence to dharma and spiritual powers of yoga had earned the

highest esteem and regard of all at Lhasa during his year's sojourn; he who could be compared to the Tathagata in humility and benevolence and had gone through a great deal of troubles and difficulties, intending to hand over personally the Yantra to its rightful owner, had left Lhasa on such and such a date on foot for Tigachchi.

After a journey lasting for a month and a half, when the Avadhuta reached Tigachchi the head Lama there was anxiously waiting to embrace and greet him.

At the very first sight both felt a great surge of love for each other : so great was this love that they both forgot all about rest and food for the travellers and began their talks. It seemed as if the Lama had found a god descended as his friend in Arka, and the latter a friend of many previous lives. While talking the Lama mentioned, "My Guru had told me: 'If, before your realisation the Yantra be stolen, then you must understand that the time was not yet ripe for your realisation and you will have to wait till it returns. More, if stolen, it will mean, that it has some divinely appointed work to accomplish; but it is certain to return and you will live as long as you do not realise.' With this hope in my breast I have been waiting for the last eighteen years."

Arka now well realised the mighty power of that Yantra of Siddhi (realisation). What was before a feeling became a tangible perception now. The feeling within him, that he had been the instrument to the accomplishment of a divinely ordained work, filled his heart with a great delight, an incomparable ananda (bliss).

It is fascinating to think of the great power of this Yantra when one ponders over its theft and all that happened subsequently till it came back to its owner. The Avadhuta thinking over its whole history till the present and then what it was going to accomplish soon—the full realisation of the Tigachchi Lama—mentally bowed down to it a number of times. This unique and glorious Yantra unravelled before his eyes a great mystery of the Kingdom of Shakti, making his experience richer and fuller.

The Lama of Tigachchi would not let him depart soon and insisted that he stay with him to help him as long as his realisation was not completed. The Avadhuta to fulfil the wish of his friend in yoga, and also to further enrich his own experience, agreed to remain. Gradually they came so close that it appeared as if they were incapable of doing anything individually and alone. Noting the Avadhuta's vast store of experiences the Lama was convinced that without him the realisation he was aiming at would be impossible. The Avadhuta too realised that his advent here to aid the Lama was the Will of the Supreme Mother. Therefore these two, united in love and action, employed all their powers to the full to fulfil their mutual welfare. The Avadhuta with his body, mind and soul aspired for the Lama to realise the Tara mantra, and the Lama too aspired for the fulfilment of all that the Avadhuta sought to realise.

Since the Yantra had arrived, just as the Lama's Guru had predicted, to lead him to his realisation, the Lama hoped the Avadhuta would be his *uttar sādḥaka* (a more accomplished sadhaka helping a lesser one). The Avadhuta on his part under-

stood that the opportunity to observe everything relating to the sadhana of the Tara mantra had come his way not without a secret divine intention, perhaps specially because the Tibetan method was still unknown in Bengal. This method is the most difficult one of all the Tantrik methods. The Avadhuta's path was different but after his realisation he had faith in other paths as well and was curious to know their procedures and fruits, and because of this he had seen and known much of many a different practice. Thus he knew from before, that the *uttar sādhanaka* had a great responsibility in this sadhana. Generally in the sadhana of the Tara siddhi, the wife, the sadhaka's own shakti, or the Guru was the person most fit to be the *uttar sādhanaka*. In many cases if the *uttar sādhanaka* must be one with great powers, there it is the Guru who is most fit. It has been seen that for many for want of a proper *uttar sādhanaka*, all their efforts have been in vain. The Lama here had already done all that he could do alone but now he needed an *uttar sādhanaka* to facilitate his work. However, although the Lama was keen to have Arka as his *uttar sādhanaka* yet he was hesitating to request him because the Avadhuta was a foreigner and a guest. But he knew that a greater well-wisher than he, sent by the Divine, did not exist anywhere in the world.

This perplexity was the last effort of the hostile forces. He thought : would the Avadhuta be willing to accept the responsibility ? could he further impose upon him when it was through him that the Yantra had returned ?

He remembered the words of his Guru.

Just then the Avadhuta came and asked, "Is your Guru alive? Is he going to be your *uttar sādhanaka* ?"

The Lama replied, "It is eight years now that he left his body, after living for one hundred and six years, at Lorga." He added after a pause, "Therefore, I can't have him. But he told me while handing the Yantra over that my *uttar sādhanaka* would himself come to me at the right moment and that I need have no worry on that count. Such was his foresight."

When he heard this Arka said, "Then, in all probability, he it is who has sent me to you to be your *uttar sādhanaka*; what do you think ? have you any doubt on that score ?"

Without a word the Lama clasped him in a tight embrace.

The force that was evoked by the combined efforts of the sadhaka and the *uttar sādhanaka* carried without any difficulty the Lama to his complete realisation. In the Avadhuta, too, the knowledge and procedure of the Tibetan method of the Tara sadhana was truly realised and firmly established.

(To be continued)

PROMODE KUMAR CHATTERJI

(Translated by Kalyan K. Chaudhuri from the Bengali)

THE PROBLEM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE

(Continued from the September Issue)

XIII. LORD CURZON AND HIS WORK (2)

CURZON, as we have seen, was never happy about giving Indians an English education. This made him a champion on behalf of the Indian languages. This was perhaps his one genuine contribution to the cause of Indian education, in spite of the sinister motives.

He was somewhat nervous about the way Indians had been using the English language. "I am sometimes lost in admiration," he avowed once, in his usual sarcastic vein, "at the facility with which they speak in a foreign language and I envy the accomplishment. All I say to you is, do not presume upon this talent. Do not believe that the man who can make a speech is necessarily a statesman; do not let your fluency run away with your powers of thought." This was of course an indirect hint to students not to listen to political speeches. But more than this was needed to prevent the further growth of the English language, a language which was uniting the people in their hatred of foreign rule. The only antidote would be to foster the vernaculars.

The vernaculars must obviously remain the sole media of instruction at the Primary level. "Ever since the cold breath of Macaulay's rhetoric passed over the field of the Indian languages and Indian text-books, the elementary education of the people in their own tongue has shrivelled and pined. This I think has been a mistake." To correct this mistake, he laid down the rule : "The reading books prescribed should be written in simple language, not in unfamiliar literary style...The grammar taught should be elementary and only native systems of arithmetic should be used." The Government Resolution on Educational Policy (1904) stated categorically that "except in certain of the larger towns of Madras, where, like Urdu in Northern India, it serves to some extent the purpose of a *lingua franca*, English has no place, should have no place, in the scheme of primary education. It has never been part of the policy of Government to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the country."

But here too, as in the fields of Secondary and higher education, Curzon's motives were not entirely beyond reproach. Indeed, the "reforms" he sought to introduce in the system of Primary education were about the most insidious of all. For he now posed as the true benefactor of the downtrodden millions, and by providing generous funds he hoped to allay all suspicion. But here also he almost betrayed himself through his habit of eloquence. "What," he asks, "is the greatest danger in India ? What is the source of suspicion, superstition, outbreaks of crime—yes, and also of much of the agrarian discontent and suffering among the masses ? It is ignorance. And what is the only antidote to ignorance ? Knowledge. In proportion as

we teach the masses, so we shall make their lot happier, and in proportion as they are happier, so they will become more useful members of the body politic." In other words, the masses must be educated in the benefits of British rule, so that they do not turn into willing tools in the hands of scheming politicians. Already there were signs that they had been growing restive under the double pressure of the tax-gatherer and the landlord. Perhaps some of the ideas of the English-educated classes might also be influencing them to an extent. All this must be stopped. They must be insulated against the touch of ideas. They should be made to concentrate on village affairs and agriculture, so that they remained for ever the dutiful purchasers of British textiles and kerosene and kept supplying British industry with the raw materials of power.

The education to be given to village children should therefore be fundamentally different from that in the urban areas. The emphasis must be on the village economy. "The village maps should be thoroughly understood, and a most useful course of instruction may be given in the accountant's papers, enabling every boy before leaving school to master the intricacies of the village accounts and to understand the demands that may be made upon the cultivator... The aim of the rural schools should be to give the children a preliminary training which will make them intelligent cultivators." They need not look beyond the village.

In the matter of Secondary schools too, Curzon had a decided bias in favour of the vernaculars. "As regards the vernaculars, which must for long be the sole instrument for the diffusion of knowledge among all except a small minority of the Indian people, we found them in danger of being neglected in the pursuit of English, and in many cases very bad English, for the sake of its mercantile value. By all means let English be taught to those who are qualified to learn it; but let it rest upon a solid foundation of the indigenous languages, for no people will ever use another tongue with advantage that cannot first use its own with ease." The Government Resolution of 1904 accordingly laid down that "as a general rule, a child should not be allowed to learn English as a language until he has made some progress in the primary stages of instruction and has received a thorough grounding in his mother-tongue. It is equally important that when the teaching of English has begun, it should not be prematurely employed as the medium of instruction in other subjects... The line of division between the use of the vernacular and of English as a medium of instruction should, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of thirteen. No scholar in a secondary school should, even then, be allowed to abandon the study of his vernacular, which should be kept up until the end of the school course."

In pursuance of this policy, the modern Indian languages came generally to be used as the media of instruction at the Middle school stage (what is known as the lower Secondary level today). An attempt was also made by some universities, like Calcutta, to require a certain proficiency in the vernacular language in all the university examinations. The regulations of the Calcutta University for the matriculation examination prescribed that every candidate be tested in composition in the vernacular,

Madras as well as Calcutta made the vernacular language a compulsory subject for the Intermediate examination. For the B.A. degree, Madras permitted the vernacular language and literature to be chosen from among the various alternatives whereas in Calcutta a compulsory paper on vernacular composition required a familiarity with some of the prescribed books. Calcutta too had the distinction of introducing a comparative study of the vernacular languages at the M.A. stage. But in spite of these laudable attempts to popularise the vernaculars, no one really took them seriously as yet. As the University Commission of 1904 had occasion to remark, "unless a good training in the vernacular is given in the school, no effort of the University will avail. At present the subject is frequently neglected and the teaching is relegated to ill-paid and incompetent instructors. As in the case of English, so in the case of the vernaculars, better teachers are a primary need."

The crux of the problem was : what should be the medium of instruction at the High School level ? On this point, Curzon had not been emphatic enough, and matters were allowed to drift. In 1915, the question came up again in the form of a resolution moved in the Imperial Legislative Council. The mover of the resolution wanted the Indian vernaculars to replace English as the media of instruction for Indian students in all Secondary schools. This met with severe opposition, on several grounds. It is worth while explaining these grounds.

It was suggested that the standard of English would deteriorate if English were not used as the medium of instruction. There being several languages current in each Province, it would be extremely difficult, if not wholly impracticable, to make provision for their use as media. There was a dearth of suitable teachers who could undertake the teaching of subjects like Science and Mathematics through the medium of the vernaculars. Suitable text-books were not available, nor were the modern Indian languages well supplied with the necessary technical terms. And finally, as English had been a language with an all-India appeal, its replacement by the regional vernaculars would accentuate provincial feeling and stand in the way of India's political unification.

Sir Harcourt Butler, the Member in charge of Education, while winding up the debate made a point which is worthy of note. He said, "We must also remember that the supply of education is to a large extent governed by the demand for it. Every educational system in the world is beating itself against this bed-rock fact that A is not willing to learn what B is eager to teach." It was obvious that so long as there was a demand for English as being a precondition for profitable employment, the study of this foreign language would take precedence over any vernacular. This was also one of the reasons why the schemes of national education worked out during the first two decades of this century could not meet with much success. The whole question was postponed by the Government until after the Great War.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

7. THE PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

HERE we are not going to proceed from purely metaphysical or ontological or epistemological standpoints having undiluted philosophical implications. Some philosophy will inevitably creep in, as much as is necessary for our proper evaluation of the two epics. Mostly our treatment will be literary and from the standpoint of literature. But philosophy has got itself so much involved in the schemes of these poems that it would be difficult to keep ourselves fixed to literary interest alone.

Before we begin, we must ask : should a great epic, a great drama or any great piece of literature as such deal with some fundamental problem of human existence ? And if it did not, should we be right not to label it as great ? There are two factors in the answer. As literature, a poem, a drama, need not touch any problems and can be great if its style, its language, its way of presentation, its inspirational greatness, its grandeur and force, its beauty and subtlety carry it along. But we have to see the question of substance as well. A great piece of literature cannot be written on a trivial subject, in a trivial mood and in a trivial manner. Byron's *Don Juan* is a long poem; but its triviality debars us from calling it great. *The Idylls of the King* by Tennyson has been written without any concentration: this facileness makes the poem second-rate.

Secondly, if we want to give our best, we must speak from our height, which means we must tackle some great subject which can stand the test of length and can be varied in spite of its length. This also means we must look at things subjectively.

But subjectivity itself is no reason why a poem must deal with a problem as such. To ask and answer questions relating to problems is the work of the philosopher. Should a poet in order to be great transgress his domain ? A great poet is not only a versifier. He must be a thinker, and he must have a vision that is denied to the common man, which would give him the height and breadth. A philosopher sees the rational, the ethical, the religious, the social, the psychological aspects of the questions. He may or may not possess any vision, but the faculty of reasoning and thinking abstractly must be there. The poet sees a question from his height of vision without bearing any philosophical implications. He need not walk the graded ascent of logic but see the whole truth behind. He presents this in poetry. It is this vision, linked with the capacity to write poetry, that gives the poetry its soar, its plunge, its expansion. With this vision, he may see and solve the mysteries of different problems in his own way. For, as his vision ascends, the problems that vex man come to him and often he has the answer—as we see in Sri Aurobindo. Dante, Milton, Virgil and Homer all attempt to answer problems in their own fashion. Some see the religious aspect, others the ethical, still others the philosophical. As we ascend a greater plane of consciousness certain problems assume lesser importance in the perspective taken. Some-

times the problems assume another aspect. As a rule the problem in a lower state of consciousness is resolved in a higher status of seeing.

A great piece of art, poetry or music is a great unveiling, an unveiling of something essential and eternal. Such an unveiling needs certain conditions: one of them is the preparation of the mind or consciousness, to be definite, to see or feel the higher element. But mind has its limited way of looking at things. It asks questions, poses problems, seeks elucidation of riddles that vex it, and these questionings and problems, these riddles can become obstacles to seeing or sensing the great unveiling the poet is there to accomplish. First, therefore, he must solve these problems, so that the path is cleared to deliver his message.

Also a great work of art is by its very nature extraordinary, out of the common, something that is above the superficial sense of drabness and monotony. It needs acute concentration and self-elevation. By pointing to things uncommon and yet universal, the poet can draw the mind to a greater height; and by his showing the problem he can rouse the seeking spirit in man. If on the other hand he fails to rouse the reader's deeper elements, his larger questioning, the poet has failed in his purpose. He could as well have written a facile novel, a witty journalistic essay.

There is no problem for the material man, except that of existence, desire and acquisition. But for the spiritual man, or specially the aspirant, there come forward innumerable difficulties, problems, enigmas and questionings. To seek to know is to live; but satiety, dullness, a dormant curiosity are sure signs of man's spiritual death.

Milton was not a satisfied man. His earthly failure had roused many heart-rending questionings, some of which he attempted to solve in his epic. To Sri Aurobindo there was no irreconcilable problem as such, for his spiritual vision and experience had pierced to the core of things. But he wanted to share his experience with all, and wanted to show the path of realisation, by cutting the knot of a cosmic problem like that of Ignorance. Milton had his theology and its dogmas as his guide. Sri Aurobindo was guided by the living spirit within. Hence while Milton's problems become problems of faith, of doctrine and of ethics, his problems were essentially that of the world, of Nature and of cosmic evolution. The conclusions they reached are sometimes poles apart, yet in essence both had a common problem, that of man's destiny.

The problems that are raised are not necessarily all philosophical, and the issues they present are linked closely to life. Some are vital and essential, like the problem of human love. Others are purely metaphysical like that of cosmic Ignorance. These are faced in a different light, because Milton regards the distant idealised past to be the one essential truth while Sri Aurobindo stresses the future that is almost on us, and this to him is the ideal condition. Thus the view of the one is necessarily pessimistic while that of the other is essentially happy. Even the light of the Saviour is an uncertain gleam that cannot dissolve the darkness of human destiny; while Savitri is no uncertain and distant saviour, but brings with her the certitude of the divine change so necessary to undo the labour of Ignorance. Even the Biblical

account of the flood and the exodus, the appearance of Moses and finally the advent of Christ are verse-repetitions of the Old Testament and this does not in any way enlighten the great tragedy that has gone before.

The first and principal question we ask after reading Milton is: what is sin and why should it be there? He does not in any way try to provide an answer but takes for granted that sin was a universal constituent of this world, and man was born in sin. Was this sin due to Satan's presence or was it native to the world? Milton does not direct us, much less does Christian theology. We are left to conjectures and reconstructions from scattered pieces of evidence at hand. Such a procedure may be faulty and not inevitably correct.

If sin be the constituent of the world, this was created perhaps indirectly by God Himself who was the world-creator. He constituted it thus, either because He Himself was not above sin, or else His omnipotence was not enough to dissolve the already existing condition of sin, or perhaps let it remain as a corrective condition for man. The mind of the Christian God we are aware of, because it is asserted that God's ways were inscrutable. But from the data we have of His workings, His dictatorial character that we have discovered through His acts, we can conclude that He let sin live, so that man could use his conscience and be on the road assigned to him by God. And such a procedure of test by evil can only be done by some divinity with a crooked or warped mentality, not at all healthy. This give rise to the problem of sin because man, as created by God and though born from sin, had not any idea of sin.'

This makes us take a deeper view and we pause to ask: what is sin after all in which we were born but which we had not created? If we study Milton we get the fact. There was an empyrean above and a following chaos below. As to who created these the Bible is silent. It may be God or may not be. But after the enthronement of the Son (Christ) in Heaven by the Father (God) a change occurred in the cosmic structure. Satan rebelled. Hell was created and a clear demarcation between chaos and empyrean made. Then Satan was hurled from Heaven and the world, this starry universe, was created, hanging by a golden chain from Heaven. This presupposes that God was ready for sin and who its originator was is not sure. It may have been God, or some being greater than God whose creation he could not undo except for shutting up sin and other perilous passions in a pit where one could enter, as Satan did, but from which there was no egress. It was Satan who opened the doors of Hell in his passage to the world. Thus Satan, vanquished before God in one way, was the victor who let loose evil and sin in the world. Of this we can have two explanations. One is: God was preceded by an entity greater than God who had created sin and chaos—God came and created the cosmos, while the other tolerated the advent of the world and God tolerated the presence of evil. Or else God had created all, even evil, deliberately; and all, even Satan's rise and fall and God's vengeance, were predetermined by Him. Then we have to imagine Him as an entity of mixed character, capable of evil and good and yet of capricious nature, not tolerating evil. We face an enigma here. If these two solutions do not resolve our doubt, we shall have, in our own way, to answer the

problem. The concept of the Biblical God is a mental one. Hence God is here as a mental Godhead with all the shortcomings of reason. There was chaos, and reason came along to formulate a definite world where the earth was the centre. Heaven was the paradise of its ideal. The world was the manifestation of Nature in a material form of which mind conceived itself to be the creator. But it had knowledge of anti-moral powers and principles over which it had no control. How to place this in an organised and definite mental creation? Rationally, in the nether regions, where it was shut out against any sudden eruption. Satan is the anti-mental principle. So mind cannot control but can denounce it and cast a curse upon its head. This only makes the anti-rational principle all the more virulent and it sets free sin, error and passion in the world. The rational God sees this phenomenon but cannot do something to check the infamous deluge. Sin is thus an anti-ethical principle and has its origin in the life-element which surges up and possesses the human instrument. Its power is great. And Milton conceives sin as a definite personality and not as an abstract concept. This does not change the status or condition of sin. He confers on it a great anti-ethical power which no reason can stop.

Viewed from a purely religious viewpoint, sin assumes great proportions. But from the spiritual viewpoint it has a meagre existence based on concepts of good and evil. Whatever was good for the religious growth, status and domination was good; but whatever stood in its way of power was evil and hence was a sin.

The problem that we see emerge in Milton takes another dimension in Sri Aurobindo. The ethical cognizance of the problem is of a lesser importance in him. Sin as an ethical principle does not exist. It is the ignorance and ugliness, the blindness and distortion of the world that the soul abhors and it cannot reconcile itself to them because of the Truth and Beauty and Felicity of its own true nature. This aversion is towards what is translated by ethico-religious terms as sin.

So long as one has not risen enough to discover the irrevocable truth, the problem, in whatever terms, either religious, ethical or rational, exists. The problem of the opposition of values and statuses oppresses man and he attempts to justify somehow his own condition with that of the world around him and when the solution does not come forth so easily, he erects a mansion of a myth, as the one conceived by the Bible and supported by Milton. This, instead of clarifying, makes matters more confused and we plunge into great eddies of mysteries. Problems appear irreconcilable.

Sin is an offshoot of Ignorance. All distortions have their origin here. Ethics cannot take such a wide view of things and its self-interests and concepts debar it from seeing dispassionately and clearly. Sin is only a secondary power and not an original entity as Milton conceived it to be. Its problem is the problem of Ignorance.

Because the problem rises from ethics, its solution too is closely allied to morality : that is, it does not get clarified but obscured. Taking recourse to piety and to rites is no safeguard against sin. Christianity is conscious of this deficiency : hence it terms all men as born in sin. Sin even reaches the garden of paradise and vitiates the primal couple. Even Christ does not become much of a saviour, even God cannot

save man. This is the half-hearted solution that religion offers, providing a salvation in after-life in another state, damning the present condition and doing nothing to alleviate ignorance.

Modern psychology takes a different view of sin; it is more linked with the subconscious than with ethics. It is closely associated with fear and censure, and taboo is the result. But in its essence it does not explain the presence of sin, it merely shifts the responsibility on to a domain which is not under human control, just as religion does it on to human free will. Thus both religion and psychology fail to understand this element. And we have to fall back upon the proposition of Sri Aurobindo that sin as a concept emerges from man's idea of good and evil, recompense and damnation. It is ethical, religious, social and psychological. Such rods of censure and lures of recompense aid the vital-physical man, help the mental humanity who needs some potent symbol of control. This barrier is no longer necessary for the spiritualised man. Even the repugnance of soul for the world's evil, he gets over. Aswapathy meets the beings of sin in the lower vital domains in his passage to the discovery of the World-Mother. But Satan meets sin in his ascent from Hell to the world. He helps the propagation of sin. Thus, while Sri Aurobindo takes a cursory view of the problem, Milton gets himself lost in a quagmire from where he does not seem to get out.

But Milton does not associate Satan with sin or Death, because Satan is a fallen angel, while sin was an original dark power. Sri Aurobindo links sin to Ignorance, especially with the lower-vital gods. This means sin is not an original power, as we have already pointed out. Thus Milton takes a subsidiary power to be original, and enigmas are the upshot.

The net result of our finding comes to this : the problem emerges because of a faulty viewpoint and mistaken identity. It deepens and becomes a mystery because of wrong associations and by theological dogmas taking the place of genuine spiritual experience.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

THE TRAGEDIES OF AESCHYLUS

(Continued from the September Issue)

LET us now enter Argos, the capital of King Agamemnon we have been so impatiently waiting to visit. In other words, let us now consider the characters in the *Oresteia Trilogy*, which is rightly known as the Aeschylean masterpiece.

The *Oresteia Trilogy* begins with an overwhelming atmosphere of eager waiting. The tension of expectation is enhanced by the loyal Watchman standing on the terrace of the very House inside which plots are being hatched to kill its master who is at the same time the King of kings. A solitary witness of the 'midnight festival of swarming stars'—the Watchman, year after year, awaits "the sign, the beacon pyre/ That bears Troy's capture on a voice of flame/ Shouting o'erseas". The Watchman seems to have sensed the conspiracy that is thickening inside the House and that makes 'the air heavy and throbbing with hate'; he says,

And when I turn me to my bed—
 ...to which near
Cometh no dream nor sleep, but always Fear
Breathes round it, warning...

He further says,

Think I perchance to sing or trill a tune
For medicine against sleep, the music soon
Changes to sighing for the tale untold
Of this House, not well mastered as of old.

This passage is reminiscent of the crimes already committed by the residents of the palace, the sacrifice of Iphigenia for instance. Then it hints at the fact that there is some "chaos" brooding inside the palace.

Next we see that, overjoyed by the sight of the glimmer of fire increasing to a blaze, the Watchman is beside himself. He eagerly goes to inform "Agamemnon's queen/ To rise, like dawn, and lift in answer strong/ To this glad lamp her women's triumph-song." And he says:

Oh, good or ill, my hand shall clasp again
My dear lord's hand, returning !...

Then, at once, he is reminded of certain unpleasant details which make him utter:

...Beyond that—
 I speak not. A great ox laid his weight
 Across my tongue. But these stone walls know well,
 If stones had speech, what tale were theirs to tell.

Next come the Chorus and narrate the horrors that they have witnessed during the past ten years. This somehow corresponds to the modern flash-back technique of filling up the recesses in the contexture of incidents so as to add further vigour to the advance of the story.

And then appears Clytemnestra, the Queen, the central agent of action in the first part of the trilogy. Dignified, elevated and imposing like an ideal queen, she is first seen praying. Most powerfully represented, she does not, however, lose a bit of her charm and grace until she actually reveals herself emerging from behind the palace doors, after having murdered her husband, and confesses her own deed. Till that moment nothing of the 'villain' can be traced in her character as she talks to the chorus of the elders,

Glad-voiced, the old saw telleth, comes this morn,
 The Star-child of a dancing midnight born,
 And beareth to thine ear a word of joy
 Beyond all hope : the Greek hath taken Troy.

When the Leader of the Chorus asks her, "And who of heralds with such fury came ?" she replies in vivid poetic language,

A Fire-god, from Mount Ida scattering flame.
 Whence starting, beacon after beacon burst
 In flaming message hitherward. Ida first
 Told Hermes' Lemnian Rock, whose answering sign
 Was caught by towering Athos, the divine,
 With pines immense—yea, fishes of the night
 Swam skyward, drunken with that leaping light,
 Which swelled like some strange sun, till dim and far
 Makistos' watchmen marked a glimmering star...

The entire speech is charged with such descriptive and poetic passages. And then she speaks about the peace-time that is ahead—in contrast with the Watchman's weary opening speech :

...there at last under good roofs they lie
 Of men spear-quelled, no frosts beneath the sky,

No watches more, no bitter moony dew...
How blessed they will sleep the whole night through !

But, suddenly, she speaks out in a mysterious warning-like way—perhaps to prepare her field in advance :

...though of God they pass unchallengèd,
Methinks the wound of all those desolate dead
Might waken, groping for its will,...
May good but conquer in the last incline
Of the balance ! of all prayers that prayer is mine.

And here it sounds as if she is pronouncing on herself her own sentence of impiety, as a mouthpiece of the very essence of tragic irony! The legend says that Clytemnestra, formerly widow to one of Agamemnon's enemies and victims, had become perforce Agamemnon's queen; the latter had to lead the Greek army to Troy; and, on the way to Troy, had to sacrifice Clytemnestra's daughter, Iphigenia, acting with the deadly excuse offered by superstition, from gradual temptation, from "his wary acceptance of the great whole of which this *horror* was a part". Thus instead of caring to win the queen's heart, Agamemnon had further hurt and offended her. The agony of her silent prayer is so deep that at once our sympathy is aroused in her favour and till the murder scene, till her committing the *Hubris*, we unconsciously see things from her point of view. In Gilbert Murray's words, she is "the greatest and the most human character of the whole play, conceived on the grand Aeschylean scale—a scale which makes even Lady Macbeth and Beatrice Cenci look smaller...."

The next striking character in the play is the Herald who enters running. "His garments are torn and war-stained. He falls upon his knees and kisses the Earth, and salutes each Altar in turn." His passionate patriotism revealed through slight touches here and there at once shows, like the Watchman's loyal courage, the quality of the Greek citizens of those days. This proves that the masterly observation of Aeschylus did not exclude even the common folk of contemporary Greece. Another such representative figure will be the Nurse's in the *Choephoroe*: she will hardly be able to control her emotions at the sight of Orestes after so many years—Orestes, whom she had rescued from his stepfather Aigisthos' fatal wrath by sending her own son to Orestes' bed, letting Aigisthos kill him.

Again we find a touch of tragic irony as the Herald most sincerely says,

For Agamemnon cometh ! A great light
Cometh to men and gods out of the night.
Grand greeting give him—aye, it need be, grand—
Who, God's avenging mattock in his hand,
Hath wrecked Troy's towers...."

Agamemnon, in contrast to Clytemnestra with her artful duality, is noble, proud, wide, truly royal, outspoken. Even in his moment of such a great victory, he does not lose his equanimity and keen "common sense" and reacts against his queen's spreading 'tapestries of crimson and gold from the Chariot to the Door of the Palace' and telling, "Let all the ground be red/ Where those feet pass; and Justice, dark of yore,/ Home light him to the hearth he looks not for !" Agamemnon replies,

....Though it had been
Seemlier, methinks, some other, not my Queen
Had spoke these honours....
Cry not thy praise to me wide-mouthed, nor fling
The body down, as to some barbarous king,
Nor yet with broidered hangings strew my path,
To awake the unseen ire. 'Tis God that hath
Such worship; and for mortal man to press
Rude feet upon this broidered loveliness....
I vow there is danger in it. Let my road
Be honoured, surely; but as man, not God.

And in this statement we find him anticipating intuitively—again a tragic-ironical touch—a danger which becomes more obvious as he says, "Aye, and not to fall/ Suddenly blind is of all gifts the best." Also, in spite of his anticipating some kind of danger ("the murmur of a people hath strange weight"), he is too generous not to grant the Queen a favour she asks for before the crowd of the people—sensing pretty well the risk behind it—and, all through quite artistically replying to her witty words, he at last yields, saying, "So in this war thou must my conqueror be ?" And farther, "God grant no eye of wrath be cast on me/ From far !"

"Ototoi....Dreams. Dreams.
Apollo. O Apollo !"

A magic formula seems to spread its spell all over the region as Cassandra the prophet-princess utters these words after her long stubborn silence. The 'imminent horror of impending Fate' makes itself manifest through these eerie syllables. The poor princess, once loved and favoured by Apollo, now suffers from a helpless state of mind in which she foresees things, warns others against the upsurging evil, but is herself impotent to save others and herself from the doomed course events take. Struck with wonder and pity, we cannot but marvel at such a character. She is exotic in the entire setting.

As she enters the palace, knowing full well its consequence she predicts the counterpart of this *Hubris* :

Bear witness on that day
When woman for this woman's life shall pay,
And man for man ill-mated then shall lie.
I ask this boon, as being about to die.

And this boon is granted. It becomes the core of the action in the *Choephoroe* where Aeschylus develops the *Dike* part welling from the crimes committed here.

The murder of Agamemnon and his slave-girl the prophetess over, Clytemnestra comes out "possessed by the Daemon of the House," and "almost insane with triumph, utterly dominating the Elders and leaving them no power to answer". At this juncture comes Aigisthos, the spirit of vengeance personified. He seems to be rather an ordinary man kindled and motivated by the Queen's passionate design; also, as he puts it, "But hunger, and bonds, and cold, help men to find/ Their wits." When the leader of the chorus, desperate, warns him, "Not so, if God in after-days shall guide Orestes home again !"—he scoffs at him, saying, "I know how men in exile feed on dreams, and know such food is vain." Clytemnestra pulls Aigisthos aside, leads him inside, declaring, "Vain hounds are baying round thee; oh, forget them ! Thou and I shall dwell/ As kings in this great House. We two at last will order all things well. "

And thus the "reign of terror" begins.

(To be continued)

PRITHWINDRA MUKHERJI

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

EIGHTH SEMINAR

14th AUGUST 1966

THE eighth quarterly Seminar of the New Age Association was held on the 14th August 1966. The subject chosen by the Mother for this Seminar was :

What is the destiny of Man ?

The following six members of the Association participated as speakers :

Amita, Amitangshu, Brajkishore, Manoj, Oscar, Prithwindra and Srijit.

The Seminar was held in the New Hall of the Centre of Education from 8.30 to 10.15 a.m.

A group of students from different universities of America who had come to India under the scheme of the Experiment in International Living and who were on a visit to the Ashram were invited to attend the Seminar.

At the commencement a short piece of the Mother's recorded music was played. Then Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman of the Seminar, made the following introductory speech :

Friends,

At the beginning of this Seminar, on behalf of the New Age Association, I warmly welcome all who have come to attend it. I especially welcome the group of American university students who have come here under the scheme of the Experiment in International Living. Since our Centre of Education is an international centre, having as one of its chief aims the cultivation of the true spirit of international unity, we hope that the visiting students will find themselves here in a congenial atmosphere and will have enough opportunities to make their experiment fruitful.

The subject we have for this Seminar—*What is the destiny of Man ?*—has itself a distinct bearing on international human unity, in the sense that whatever may be our conception of human destiny, it is the common destiny of all mankind. To whatever race or religion or nation or culture we may belong, as human beings we all

have the same common human nature and in our progressive endeavours we are all jointly marching forward to a common goal. This is the basic truth of human unity on which we have to insist if we wish to give the right orientation to our consideration of the problem of human destiny. This will become quite evident if I read a passage from Sri Aurobindo's Message to America given on the 15th August 1949:

“It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference between these two sections of the human family and even oppose them to each other; but, for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference. East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.

“There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers. It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisation of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere.”

The Mother herself said the same thing in a brief message which she gave for the same occasion :

“Stop thinking that you are of the West and others of the East. All human beings are of the same divine origin and meant to manifest upon earth the unity of this origin.”

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To say that all human beings have the same common destiny is, however, not enough to answer the question that we have before us, for we have further to consider : what is that destiny ? There can be different views on this problem depending upon our conception of man's nature and its future potentialities and his place in the universe. The apparently contradictory views of the East and the West on these issues and their true reconciliation have been explained by Sri Aurobindo in his

message to America to which I have already referred, and I think it best to read it to you in his own words :

“But what shall be that ideal and that goal ? That depends on our conception of the realities of life and the supreme Reality.

“Here we have to take into account that there has been, not any absolute difference but an increasing divergence between the tendencies of the East and the West. The highest truth is the truth of the Spirit; a Spirit supreme above the world and yet immanent in the world and in all that exists, sustaining and leading all towards whatever is the aim and goal and the fulfilment of Nature since her obscure inconscient beginnings through the growth of consciousness is the one aspect of existence which gives a clue to the secret of our being and a meaning to the world. The East has always and increasingly put the highest emphasis on the supreme truth of the Spirit; it has, even in its extreme philosophies, put the world away as an illusion and regarded the Spirit as the sole reality. The West has concentrated more and more increasingly on the world, on the dealings of mind and life with our material existence, on our mastery over it, on the perfection of mind and life and some fulfilment of the human being here : latterly this has gone so far as the denial of the Spirit and even the enthronement of Matter as the sole reality. Spiritual perfection as the sole ideal on one side, on the other, the perfectibility of the race, the perfect society, a perfect development of the human mind and life and man’s material existence have become the largest dream of the future. Yet both are truths and can be regarded as part of the intention of the Spirit in world-nature; they are not incompatible with each other: rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in our view of the future.”

“The Science of the West has discovered evolution as the secret of life and its process in this material world; but it has laid more stress on the growth of form and species than on the growth of consciousness : even, consciousness has been regarded as an incident and not the whole secret of the meaning of the evolution. An evolution has been admitted by certain minds in the East, certain philosophies and Scriptures, but there its sense has been the growth of the soul through developing or successive forms and many lives of the individual to its own highest reality. For if there is a conscious being in the form, that being can hardly be a temporary phenomenon of consciousness; it must be a soul fulfilling itself and this fulfilment can only take place if there is a return of the soul to earth in many successive lives, in many successive bodies.

“The process of evolution has been the development from and in inconscient Matter of a subconscient and then a conscious Life, of conscious mind first in animal life and then fully in conscious and thinking man, the highest present achievement of evolutionary Nature. The achievement of mental being is at present her highest and tends to be regarded as her final work; but it is possible to conceive a still further step of the evolution : Nature may have in view beyond the imperfect mind of man

a consciousness that passes out of the mind's ignorance and possesses truth as its inherent right and nature. There is a truth-consciousness as it is called in the Veda, a supermind, as I have termed it, possessing Knowledge, not having to seek after it and constantly miss it. In one of the Upanishads a being of knowledge is stated to be the next step above the mental being; into that the soul has to rise and through it to attain the perfect bliss of spiritual existence. If that could be achieved as the next evolutionary step of Nature here, then she would be fulfilled and we could conceive of the perfection of life even here, its attainment of a full spiritual living even in this body or it may be in a perfected body. We could even speak of a divine life on earth; our human dream of perfectibility would be accomplished and at the same time the aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religions and spiritual seers and thinkers.

“The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit.”

You will see from what I have read that Sri Aurobindo's view of human destiny is based upon his theory of spiritual evolution, which is itself derived from his spiritual vision of the most fundamental truths of existence. It points to the highest summit that man has to scale in his evolutionary development and which is the ultimate aim of his perfection.

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If we admit this view of human destiny then it is apparent that Yoga is nothing else but a conscious and systematic endeavour to realise that destiny at its highest level. The majority of men the world over are hardly even aware of this destiny or, even if vaguely aware, are unwilling to make the necessary effort to realise it. They live on somehow, anyhow, from day to day and give hardly a serious thought as to what is their life's ultimate aim. A Yogi is one who has become conscious of that aim and seeks to realise it swiftly by a systematic practice. It is necessary to make this clear because people in the West very often think of Yoga in terms of some unfamiliar bodily postures and breathing practices. But these things, though they are helpful as part of an external process of certain schools of Yoga, have no intrinsic relation to its essential aim, which is simply the realisation of the highest spiritual goal of human life by a systematic and intensive effort.

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Here it may be asked : what about the general mass of men who are not conscious of their spiritual destiny and who do not make any endeavour to realise it ?

The answer will depend upon our conception of man's place in the terrestrial evolution and of the Power that guides and governs it. Surely man himself is not that governing Power nor is the whole course of evolution worked out through him. Evolution on earth began long before man's emergence in it, and it has worked itself out through many species before he became its dominating figure. The long drama of evolution has been played out on the earth's stage through many scenes by many varieties of players before the human scene was enacted with man in the principal role. Whether, like other players before him, he will pass away after playing out his appointed role in the still unfinished drama of evolution and will be replaced by a new superior being or whether he will convert himself into a superior being by some process of self-transfiguration and continue to play new roles in the new scenes that will be unfolded in future—that is the crucial issue on which man's evolutionary destiny hangs. The outcome of this issue depends practically on how the present man avails himself of the choice that is offered to him by evolutionary Nature. As Sri Aurobindo puts it :

“At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed the choice of its destiny.”¹

“Either man must fulfil himself by satisfying the divine within him or he must produce out of himself a new and greater being who will be capable of satisfying it. He must either himself become a divine humanity or give place to Superman.”²

The final decision however rests in the hands of the Master of Evolution who is the ultimate determinant of all things. Perhaps He will not make an exclusive choice of only one of the alternatives but will allow both the alternatives to have their full play. In any case, the issue will be *settled* definitively by Him. On the eve of His birthday let us remember Him with a confident heart and wait on His Will which, in spite of our blindnesses and blunders, always leads us to our supreme good.

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After this speech, Arati read a passage from “Man a Transitional Being,” which is Sri Aurobindo's most valuable writing on the destiny of man. Then the six members were called to deliver their speeches. After their speeches had ended, Kishor Gandhi read some quotations from Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* bearing on the subject of the Seminar.

The passage from “Man a Transitional Being” is given below. The speeches

¹ *The Life Divine* (American edition), p. 933.

² *Ibid.*, p. 193.

of the members and the quotations from *The Life Divine* will appear in the next two issues of *Mother India*.

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MAN A TRANSITIONAL BEING

Man is a transitional being; he is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees that climb to a divine supermanhood. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and limited mundane existence.

We mean by man mind imprisoned in a living body. But mind is not the highest possible power of consciousness; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only its ignorant seeker. Beyond mind is a supramental or gnostic power of consciousness that is in eternal possession of Truth. This supermind is at its source the dynamic consciousness, in its nature at once and inseparably infinite wisdom and infinite will of the divine Knower and Creator. Supermind is superman; a gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant evolutionary step to be reached by earthly nature.

The step from man to superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution. It is inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner Spirit and the logic of Nature's process.

The appearance of a human possibility in a material and animal world was the first glint of some coming divine Light, the first far-off promise of a godhead to be born out of Matter. The appearance of the superman in the human world will be the fulfilment of this divine promise. Out of the material consciousness in which our mind works as a chained slave is emerging the disk of a secret sun of Power and Joy and Knowledge. The supermind will be the formed body of that radiant effulgence.

Supermanhood is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not a superior degree of human greatness, knowledge, power, intelligence, will, character, genius, dynamic force, saintliness, love, purity or perfection. Supermind is something beyond mental man and his limits; it is a greater consciousness than the highest consciousness proper to human nature.

Man is a mental being whose mentality works here involved, obscure and degraded in a physical brain. Even in the highest of his kind it is balked of its luminous possibilities of supreme force and freedom by this dependence, shut off even from its own divine powers, impotent to change our life beyond certain narrow and precarious limits; it is an imprisoned and checked force, most often nothing but a servitor or caterer of interests or a purveyor of amusement to the life and the body. But divine superman will be a gnostic spirit. Supermind in him will lay hands on the mental and physical instruments and, standing above and yet penetrating our lower already manifested parts, it will transform mind, life and body.

Mind is the highest force in man. But mind in man is an ignorant, clouded and struggling power. And even when most luminous it is possessed only of a thin, reflected and pallid light. A supermind free, master, expressive of divine glories will be the superman's central instrument. Its untrammelled movement of self-existent knowledge, spontaneous power and untainted delight will impress the harmony of the life of the gods on the earthly existence.

Man in himself is little more than an ambitious nothing. He is a littleness that reaches to a wideness and a grandeur that are beyond him, a dwarf enamoured of the heights. His mind is a dark ray in the splendours of the universal Mind. His life is a striving, exulting, suffering, an eager passion-tossed and sorrow-stricken or a blindly and dumbly longing petty moment of the universal Life. His body is a labouring perishable speck in the material universe. This cannot be the end of the mysterious upward surge of Nature. There is something beyond, something that mankind shall be; it is seen now only in broken glimpses through rifts in the great wall of limitations that deny its possibility and existence. An immortal soul is somewhere within him and gives out some sparks of its presence; above an eternal spirit overshadows him and upholds the soul-continuity of his nature. But this greater spirit is obstructed from descent by the hard lid of his constructed personality; and that inner luminous soul is wrapped, stifled, oppressed in dense outer coatings. In all but a few the soul is seldom active, in most hardly perceptible. The soul and spirit in man seem rather to exist above and behind his nature than to be a part of his external and visible reality. They are in course of birth rather than born in Matter; they are for human consciousness possibilities rather than things realised and present.

Man's greatness is not in what he is, but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed place and secret workshop of a living labour in which supermanhood is being made by a divine Craftsman. But he is admitted too to a yet greater greatness and it is this that, allowed to be unlike the lower creation, he is partly an artisan of this divine change; his conscious assent, his consecrated will and participation are needed that into his body may descend the glory that will replace him. His aspiration is earth's call to the supramental creator.

If earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation....

(The Hour of God, pp. 59-61.)

SRI AUROBINDO

A NOTE FOR THE EDUCATION COMMISSION

WE can present to the Education Commission this small message of the Mother which she gave to Shri Vinoba Bhave when he was here in July 1956. She said to him :

“For us here there is only one thing that counts. We aspire for the Divine, live for the Divine, act for the Divine.”

This is perhaps the best summary of India's traditional spiritual values, as well as of its most living and dynamic spiritual values at present as created and activated by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Our educational activity in the Ashram is just a part—though indeed a very significant part—of the total work that the Masters have undertaken for the human race. Our education is not only an integral pursuit of knowledge but an integral attempt at being and becoming, at bringing down into us the highest realisations of Supreme Reality—the Sat-Chit-Ananda—the complete embodiment of the Divine truth in all its multiple expression that will be the fullest development of human personality; man will achieve his integration not only with his own total being, or with humanity, but first and foremost with the Divine. This aspiration for integration and unity with the Divine Truth, with the Divine Himself, is the keynote of our culture.

How to infuse these all-enveloping spiritual values into our educational system is as intricate and baffling a question as how to infuse them into human life at large. The world of matter and mind, the human heart and its passions, the mental ideas and ideals are not quite receptive to these supreme elements of the Spirit that are there manifest in their own realm. Yet an attempt has to be made somewhere and somehow.

The education system is a huge machinery but there are people behind the machinery. Man is always there behind the machine that he creates. And the work can fitly begin with people who are immediately concerned with it. They can very well think and feel in the way the Mother described our position *vis-à-vis* humanity and the Divine. When to aspire, live and act for the Divine becomes a sincere movement of someone working in the field of our education, it will radiate its influence and grow and grow until it reaches all who are concerned with this stupendous task.

In education the teacher and the student are not the only two factors: there is a third factor also—the Divine. But it is a most difficult factor to feel or grasp or understand. Nevertheless it is there, an indispensable element in all human growth. Once the active hand of the Divine in human affairs is realised the whole situation will take a different turn. So let us hope that those who will shape our education will allow themselves to be shaped by the Divine Hand. The outward machinery may take any

form suitable to various situations, but the basic movement will be the feeling of a great work received from Him who has set afoot this whole universe, and when a teacher stands before his students he will feel that he is giving to the students what he is receiving from his Master. He will feel the Supreme Presence above him and around him and within him, and that Presence will effect the growth of the true Person in his students.

We can say to the Education Commission, as to everyone who is serious about doing something, what Sri Aurobindo has said in his *Savitri* :

All can be done if the God-touch is there.

To feel the possibility and the necessity of this 'God-touch' and to work for it is perhaps the first inner work to be done in this most serious effort of our Government and of the Education Commission appointed by it.

SUNDARAM

MARIANNE MOORE

II. MORAL REFLECTIONS IN HER POETRY

(Continued from the July Issue)

“BECAUSE of the curious juxtaposition of curious particulars, most of the things that inhabit her poetry seem extraordinarily bright, exact, and there—just as unfamiliar colours, in unfamiliar combinations, seem impossibly vivid. She is *the* poet of the particular—or when she fails, of the peculiar; and is also, in our time, *the* poet of general moral statement. Often, because of their exact seriousness of utterance, their complete individuality of embodiment, these generalizations of hers seem more particular than the particulars.” (Randall Jarrell)

Her peculiar method of composition often results in moral reflections, as in the poem: “What are Years?” Its subject, illustrated by the singing of the caged bird, is courage that

in misfortune, even death,
encourages others
and in its defeat stirs

the soul to be strong. He
sees deep and is glad, who
accedes to mortality
and in his imprisonment, rises
upon himself as
the sea in a chasm, struggling to be
free and unable to be,
in its surrendering
finds its continuing.

So he who strongly feels,
behaves. The very bird,
grown taller as he sings, steels
his form straight up. Though he is captive,
his mighty singing
says, satisfaction is a lowly
thing, how pure a thing is joy.
This is mortality,
this is eternity.

In a poem about the ostrich she acknowledges that "heroism is exhausting". Elsewhere she exclaims and everywhere implies with the same exultation : "What is there like fortitude !"

a grape-tendrill
ties a knot in knots till

knotted thirty times,—so
the bound twig that's under-
gone and over-gone, can't stir.

The weak overcomes its
menace, the strong over-
comes itself. What is there

like fortitude ! What sap
went through that little thread
to make the cherry red !
(“Nevertheless”)

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Referring to "The Steeple-Jack" Babette Deutsch remarks, "Whether she is looking at steeplejacks or strawberries, she is concerned with morals; the final stanza in the poem reads :

It could not be dangerous to be living
in a town like this, of simple people,
who have a steeple-jack placing danger signs by the church
while he is gilding the solid-
pointed star, which on a steeple
stands for hope."

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"She finds sermons in snails, steam-rollers, camellias, skunks : naturally allegorical embodiments of the functioning principles of life." (Rosenthal)

The illustration
is nothing to you without the application.
You lack half-wit. You crush all the particles down
into close conformity, and then walk back and
forth on them.

Sparkling chips of rock
 are crushed down to the level of the parent block.
 Were not 'impersonal judgment in aesthetic
 matters, a metaphysical impossibility', you
 might fairly achieve
 it. As for the butterflies, I can hardly conceive
 of one's attending upon you, but to question
 the congruence of the complement is vain, if it exists.
 ("To a Steam Roller")

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"It has been remarked, but not sufficiently, that there is a strong streak of didacticism in Miss Moore's poetry. Acute observation is severe limitation, the way in which it is reported is the measure of its significance. So I suggest, further, that Miss Moore's work is most lastingly interesting where it widens into moral statement". (W. T. Scott, *Saturday Review*, Feb. 2, 1957 : quoted by Nyren) For example,

...The inky thing
 adaptively whited with glistening
 goat-fur, is wood-warden. In his
 well-cuttlefish-inked wool, he is
 determination's totem...
 ("The Wood-Weasel")

Here is acute observation and the way in which it is expressed is admirable; the word 'totem' is very aptly used. (Totem—any species of living or inanimate thing regarded by a class or kin within a local tribe with superstitious respect as an outward symbol of an existing intimate unseen relation.)

As a satirist, Miss Moore can be sharp and direct : in her poem "The Paper Nautilus" she writes about

...authorities whose hopes
 are shaped by the mercenaries
 and
 Writers entrapped by
 teatime fame and by
 commuters' comforts...

"This exacting moralist, who enforces with such intricate resonance the profound convictions of her ethical and emotional fastidiousness, has dumbfounded most of those readers whom she has not completely subjugated...(She is) a poet whose style, at once

intensely cultivated and painstakingly honest, never fails to charm me and whose mastery of phrase and cadence overwhelms me." (Yvor Winters)

(To be continued)

C. SUBBIAN

CURIOUS WANTS

"Lost, an umbrella belonging to a gentleman with a curiously carved ivory head."

"Young man wanted to take charge of horses with a religious turn of mind."

"Nurse wanted in a small gentleman's family."

"For sale, a pony suitable for a lady without vicious habits."

"Wanted, a mahogany child's chair."

"Lady having cast off clothing of all description invites inspection."

"Overlooker wanted for 4,000 sheep that can speak Spanish."

**SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND RESEARCH**

NEWSLETTER

No. 10

October 1966

1. The Report of the Education Commission

It will perhaps take some time before the somewhat drastic reconstruction which the Education Commission recommends penetrates the present *status quo* of educational consciousness as a whole. The fact that it will take some time probably accounts for the mildness of the response the report seems to have aroused.

'Science-based and in coherence with Indian culture and values' to serve as 'an instrument for the nation's progress, security and welfare': this statement seems to be quite innocuous (so often the qualification of a definitive statement is lost in implementation), but it could have drastic results if the term 'science-based' was carried out as far as to divorce us from the true base of India's heritage, that of a catholic cultural philosophy seeking the Truth and Purpose of existence. Today's trend towards the worship of scientific technology to the exclusion of all thought for the arts or humanities is an off-balance which ought to be a first consideration of the educationist.

There is considerable foresight of future possibilities in the Commission's recommendations. For example, the recommendation that a school-leaving certificate should confine itself to the student's performance in the different subjects without reference to whether he has passed or failed the examination as a whole is truly a step in the right direction as it takes cognisance of the fact that drastic changes will have to be made with regard to the present inadequacy of the examination system, and that there is already a world-wide claim for Teacher's Assessments of a student's work rather than some indeterminate marking system that may or may not give a true measure of a student's ability to deal with a particular subject.

To implement such major recommendations requires a highly determined effort on a large scale, which alone would be worthy of this most comprehensive half-million word report that so well covers the field of education. The Commission took twenty-one months to complete its task holding 101 meetings, the work being conducted through twelve task forces and seven working groups. Besides receiving over 2,400 memoranda and notes, the Commission interviewed over 9,000 persons from various walks of life. It spent about Rs. 16 lakhs and it recommends a nation-wide campaign to end illiteracy within 20 years. Let us pray that this 'Magna Carta' on education be the foundation on which to build a successful and developing educational system that will take its part in the greatness of Future India.

2. Educational Progress

Since the beginning of the first Five Year Plan the progress in education has been quite considerable. The 1961 census shows that 24% of our population is now literate. The number of Primary and Junior basic schools has increased from about 2,10,000 in 1950-51 to 4,15,000 in 1965-66. The number of pupils in class I to class V has increased from 192 lakhs in 1950-51 to 496 lakhs in 1965-66. This year it is estimated that 76% of the age group between 6 and 11 will have the benefit of Primary education.

The most important work with this kind of progress, however, is to see that the use put to elementary basic education does not empty the rural areas of the growing enlightened population into the growing industrial areas so that the agriculture of the nation suffers.

Is it not yet understood that the "modern" objective of economic "growth" through an advanced science technology is fast becoming a myth? This "growth" which first emerged at the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 has developed a mythology all its own.

The great explosion of economic growth surely began with the far-ranging voyages of discovery towards the end of the 15th century, the Renaissance and the Reformation. Then came the first Industrial Revolution at the end of the 18th century. This growth starting in the West has now encircled the entire globe. It seems to have been with us for quite a while. Economic growth that raises the living standards of the people is most desirable, but it is only one of the several goals of human society. Another is individual freedom to seek truth and happiness. To achieve the first objective at the expense of the second would be a crime against man and the evolution of the human soul.

3. Literacy versus Technology

In his new book, *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan says: "The American stake in literacy as a technology of uniformity applied to every level of education, government, industry, and social life is totally threatened by the electric technology. The threat of Stalin or Hitler was external. The electric technology is within the gates, and we are numb, deaf, blind, and mute about its encounter with the Gutenberg technology, on and through which the American way of life was formed."

C. G. Jung, the eminent psychologist, wrote in *Contributions to Analytical Psychology* (London, 1928): "Every Roman was surrounded by slaves. Because of living constantly in the atmosphere of slaves, he became infected through the unconscious with their psychology. No one can shield himself from such an influence."

One wonders if TV has yet taken the place of the Roman slave for the people of the West.

In their development it is well known that things most often appear under forms opposite to those that they finally present. Alexander Pope wrote:

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien
 As to be hated needs but to be seen;
 But seen too oft, familiar with its face
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

4. *The Price of Technical Civilization*

As a civilized UNESCO experiment, running water—with its lineal organization of pipes—was installed recently in some Indian villages. Soon the villagers requested that the pipes be removed, for it seemed to them that the whole social life of the village had been impoverished when it was no longer necessary for all to visit the communal well.

5. *Écology—the Synthesis*

We have often intimated in these Newsletters that the future trend of teaching methods must soon take into account the growing need to integrate subjects to one another and view them in relation to environment. McLuhan, in the last chapter of his book, says, “In education the conventional division of the curriculum into subjects is already as outdated as the medieval trivium and quadrivium after the Renaissance. Any subject taken in depth at once relates to other subjects. Arithmetic in grade three or nine, when taught in terms of number theory, symbolic logic, and cultural history, ceases to be a mere practice in problems. Continued in their present patterns of fragmented unrelations [Sri Aurobindo calls them “snippets”] our school curricula will insure a citizenry unable to understand the cybernated world in which they live.”

It is not enough that we agree this is so, but that we do something about it. All schools that enjoy the great privilege and freedom to experiment should realize their responsibility, not only to their students of today but to the students of tomorrow, not only to the future of India but to the future of the world and the human race as a whole.

6. *Methods of Teaching—Some Questions*

Several questions have been received from teachers. Apart from those which have been answered personally there are a few which can be dealt with in a more general way :

- 1) Is it a good thing if methods of teaching are constantly changing ?
- 2) What would you prescribe for capturing the attention of students in class when they are apt to day-dream ?

Both these questions can be answered together as they have something in common; they are both heavy with the implication that well-tried methods are the best and the *status quo* should be maintained if the attention is to be held. Our answer to the two questions would be, however : “The subject must be made to show new aspects

of itself, preferably in relation to other subjects; it should demand new questions, pointing towards change and progress.”

3) What is most needed in education today ?

We must think in terms of educating children not only to the utmost of their intellectual capacity, but also to the utmost of their moral and spiritual capacity—this must rest, largely, on the moral and spiritual fibre of the teacher, for what the teacher believes himself will determine what, how and why he teaches.

7. *Thought of the Month*

The Mother, in her little book *On Sri Aurobindo*, writes :

“To express our gratitude to Sri Aurobindo we can do nothing better than to be a living demonstration of his teaching.”

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

ASTERISKS

(TAKE NO RISKS)

A SPACEMAN shot into the air,
He reached a star and landed there.
The star-folk greeted him with smiles,
And star-guns in their hands the whiles !
They asked him questions with great zest—
He told them what he thought was best.
He found the language very similar,
To his own, 'twas quite familiar.
His talk about the life on Earth
Seemed to fill them full of mirth,
This went on for days and days
So keen were they to know Earth's ways.
And all the time he felt great awe,
For in their lives he found no flaw.
Yet, while he praised them to the skies,
His mind just uttered, "Colonise!"
Ideas began to form and flow
And plans for taking over, grow
Then, to settle things in brief,
He asked to see their King or Chief.
They all began to laugh and frisk,
And said, "You mean our Asterisk!"
They took him to a building small—
With trees around it, short and tall.
And in a window was a face,
Majestic, calm, and full of grace.
She looked him over with a smile,
And all the wisdom of the Nile.
Then she firmly shook her head,
As his mind she calmly read,
Then sharply said without a pause—
"We will not have your Earthy wars,
Nor do we need your jet-propulsion,
It fills us all with great revulsion
It seems that what was once earth's sanity ..
Is now a vast, inglorious vanity !
No, no, you earth-man, you go back ..
You may be white, but Oh...your soul is black."

LEENA