

MOTHER INDIA

SEPTEMBER, 1970

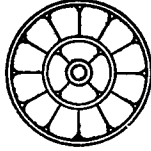
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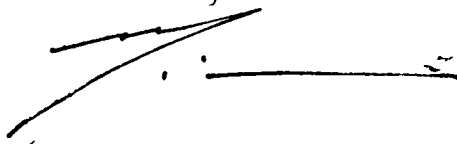
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXII

No. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

AUROVILLE

I

Q: "À Auroville tout est propriété collective." Est-ce que cela veut dire que tous les objets peuvent être utilisés par tout le monde? Où faut-il donner les objets uniquement à ceux qui les traitent bien?

J'ai aussi observé qu'il y a des appareils délicats qui s'attachent à une personne et qui ne marchent pas bien si on les prête aux autres.

A: Tout cela implique une conscience qui n'est pas très répandue sur la terre.

Ça ne veut pas dire qu'on donne les choses à ceux qui ne savent pas s'en servir.

Il faudrait pour régir Auroville une conscience libérée de toutes les conventions, et qui soit consciente de la Vérité supramentale. J'attends encore une personne comme cela.

Il faut que chacun fasse de son mieux pour y arriver.

15-7-1970

LA MÈRE

Q: "At Auroville all is collective property." Does this mean that things can be used by everybody? Or should they be given only to those who handle them carefully?

I have also noticed that delicate appliances attach themselves to a person and that they do not work well if one lends them to others.¹

All this implies a consciousness that is very rare in the world.

It does not mean that things should be given to those who do not know how to use them.

What is needed to administer Auroville is a consciousness free of all conventions and conscious of the supramental Truth. I still await such a person.

Each one must do his best to get to this goal.

15-7-1970

THE MOTHER

¹ "What you feel about physical things is true—there is a consciousness in them, a life which is not the life and consciousness of man and animal which we know, but still secret and real. That is why we must have a respect for physical things and use them rightly, not misuse and waste, ill-treat or handle with a careless roughness. This feeling of all being consciousness or alive comes when our own physical consciousness—and not the mind only—awakes out of its obscurity and becomes aware of the One in all things, the Divine everywhere." Sri Aurobindo (*On Yoga II*, Tome 1, p. 691)

Q: What is the purpose of life—individual and communal—in Auroville in general and Auromodel in particular?

The purpose of life in Auromodel is to learn to live in Auroville, to make all the experiments necessary for learning to live in Auroville.

We want to find a way for the community to live for the Divine.

Each individual has his own way but the group community should find a way to suit everyone.

22-5-1970

Le Matrimandir veut être le symbole de la réponse du Divin à l'aspiration humaine vers la perfection.

L'union avec le Divin se manifestant dans une unité humaine progressive.

14-8-1970

LA MÈRE

Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection.

The union with the Divine manifesting Himself in a progressive human unity.

14-8-1970

THE MOTHER

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM OF SRI AUROBINDO

ASPIRATION

(The New Dawn)

THE rays of the sun clothe the blue heaven with beauty;
the dark masses of the Night are driven far.
There breaks from the lyre of the dawn a song of light and felicity,
and the soul in its groves responds with quivering hope.

One whose hem trails over the dancing crests of the waters,
and touches them to ripples of musical laughter,
Comes chanted by the orient in hymns of worship,
and twilight on its glimmering tambour beats dance-time to the note-play
of the rays.

She whose absence kept Night starved and afraid in its shadows,
a vibrant murmur now are her steps on the horizon:
As in a saddle of sunrise the heart of tameless aspiration
rides to its meeting with the Queen of Light.

One who descends in her golden chariot to the garden ways of earth to create her
many rhythms of life,
her every voice now hails in a long cry of welcome;
The flowers toss on the swings of delight;
the goal beacons, the pathless riddle is dispelled for ever.

Loud sings the shining Charioteer, "Look up, O wayfarer; vanquished is the
gloom of ages:
the high tops are agleam with jewelry of sunlight.
The impediments are shattered, the bonds are broken;
Day's trumpets of victory blare the defeat of Darkness.

Ravine and lightless desert
are fertile with rain of light, O Pilgrim;
Earth's dust and gravel are transmuted into the glory of the lotus,
for the Dawn Goddess has come to us, her hands of boon carrying fulfilment.

THE SUNLIT PATH AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF YOGA

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

(This is really the second part of the same dictated letter which contained what we published in the issue of August 15, as "The Spiritual Life and Participation in the World's Activity". As the subjects of both the parts are entirely different, we have two separate sections which can practically be considered two letters. As stated in the last month's boxnote, the date of the communication is 1944 or 1945 or a little later.)

THERE is no contradiction between my former statements about the sunlit path and what I have said about the difficult and unpleasant passages which the Yoga has to pass through in its normal development in the way of human nature. The sunlit path can be followed by those who are able to practise surrender, first a central surrender and afterwards a more complete self-giving in all the parts of the being. If they can achieve and preserve the attitude of the central surrender, if they can rely wholly on the Divine and accept cheerfully whatever comes to them from the Divine, then their path becomes sunlit and may even be straightforward and easy. They will not escape all difficulties, no seeker can, but they will be able to meet them without pain and despondency,—as indeed the Gita recommends that Yoga should be practised, *anirvinna chetasā*,—trusting in the inner guidance and perceiving it more and more or else in the outer guidance of the Guru. It can also be followed even when one feels no light and no guidance, if there is or if one can acquire a bright settled faith and happy bhakti or has the nature of the spiritual optimist and the firm belief or feeling that all that is done by the Divine is done for the best even when we cannot understand his action. But all have not this nature, most are very far from it, and the complete or even the central surrender is not easy to get, and to keep it always is hard enough for our human nature. When these things are not there, the liberty of the soul is not attained and we have instead to undergo the law or fulfil a hard and difficult discipline.

That law is imposed on us by the Ignorance which is the nature of all our parts; our physical being is obviously a mass of ignorance, the vital is full of ignorant desires and passions, the mind is also an instrument of Ignorance struggling towards some kind of imperfect and mostly inferior and external knowledge. The path of the seeker proceeds through this ignorance; for a long time he can find no light of solid experience or realisation, only the hopes and ideas and beliefs of the mind which do not give the true spiritual seeing; or he gets glimpses of light or periods of light but the light often goes out and the luminous periods are followed by frequent or long periods of darkness. There are constant fluctuations, persistent disappointments, innumerable falls and failures. No path of Yoga is really easy or free from these difficulties or fluctuations; the way of bhakti is supposed to be the easiest, but still we find constant complaints that one is always seeking but never finding and even at the best there is a constant ebb and tide, *milana* and *viraha*, joy and weeping, ecstasy and despair. If one

has the faith or in the absence of faith the will to go through, one passes on and enters into the joy and light of the divine realisation. If one gets some habit of true surrender, then all this is not necessary; one can enter into the sunlit way. Or if one can get some touch of what is called pure bhakti, *suddha bhakti*, then whatever happens that is enough; the way becomes easy or, if it does not, still this is a sufficient start to support us to the end without the sufferings and falls that happen so often to the ignorant seeker.

In all Yoga there are three essential objects to be attained by the seeker: union or abiding contact with the Divine, liberation of the soul or the self, the spirit, and a certain change of the consciousness, the spiritual change. It is this change, which is necessary for reaching the other two objects, necessary at least to a certain degree, that is the cause of most of the struggles and difficulties; for it is not easy to accomplish it; a change of the mind, a change of the heart, a change of the habits of the will is called for and is obstinately resisted by our ignorant nature. In this Yoga a complete transformation of the nature is aimed at because that is necessary for the complete union and the complete liberation not only of the soul and the spirit but of the nature itself. It is also a Yoga of works and of the integral divine life; for that the integral transformation of nature is evidently necessary; the union with the Divine has to carry with it a full entrance into the divine consciousness and the divine nature; there must be not only *sāyujya* or *sālokya* but *sādriśya* or, as it is called in the Gita, *sādharmya*. The full Yoga, Purna Yoga, means a fourfold path, a Yoga of Knowledge for the mind, a Yoga of Bhakti for the heart, a Yoga of Works for the will and a Yoga of Perfection for the whole nature. But, ordinarily, if one can follow whole-heartedly any one of these lines, one arrives at the result of all the four. For instance, by bhakti one becomes close to the Divine, becomes intensely aware of him and arrives at knowledge, for the Divine is the Truth and the Reality; by knowing him, says the Upanishads, one comes to know all. By bhakti also the will is led into the road of the works of love and the service of the Divine and the government of the nature and its acts by the Divine and that is Karmayoga. By bhakti also comes spiritual change of the consciousness and the action of the nature which is the first step towards its transformation. So it is with all the other lines of the fourfold path. But it may be that there are many obstacles in the being to the domination of the mind and heart and will by bhakti and the consequent contact with the Divine. The too great activity of the intellectual mind and its attachment to its own pride of ideas, its prejudices, its fixed notions and its ignorant reason may shut the doors to the inner light and prevent the full tide of bhakti from flooding everything; it may also cling to a surface mental activity and refuse to go inside and allow the psychic vision and the feelings of the inner heart to become its guides, though it is by this vision and this feeling that bhakti grows and conquers. So too the passions and desires of the vital being and its ego may block the way and prevent the self-giving of the mind and heart to the Divine. The inertia, ignorance and inconstancy of one's physical consciousness, its attachment to fixed habits of thought and feeling and action, its persistence in the old grooves may come badly in the way of the needed change. In

such circumstances the Divine may have to bide his time; but if there is real hunger in the heart, all that cannot prevent the final realisation; still, it may have to wait till the obstructions are removed or at least so much cleared out as to admit an unimpeded working of the Divine Power on the surface nature. Till then, there may be periods of inner ease and some light in the mind, periods also of the feeling of bhakti or of peace, periods of the joy of self-consecration in works and service; for these will take long to stay permanently and there will be much struggle and unrest and suffering. In the end the Divine's workings will appear and one will be able to live in his presence.

I have described the difficulties of Yoga at their worst, as they may hamper and afflict even those predestined to the realisation but as often there is an alternation or a mixture of the light and the darkness, initial attainment perhaps and heavy subsequent difficulties, progress and attacks and retardations, strong movements forward and a floundering in the bogs of the Ignorance. Even great realisations may come and high splendours of light and spiritual experience and yet the goal is not attained; for in the phrase of the Rig Veda, "As one climbs from peak to peak there is made clear the much that is still to be done." But there is always something that either carries us on or forces us on. This may take the shape of something conscious in front, the shape of a mastering spiritual idea, indestructible aspiration or fixed faith which may seem sometimes entirely veiled or even destroyed in periods of darkness or violent upheaval, but always they reappear when the storm has passed or the blackness of night has thinned, and reassert their influence. But also it may be something in the very essence of the being deeper than any idea or will in the mind, deeper and more permanent than the heart's aspiration but hidden from one's own observation. One who is moved to Yoga by some curiosity of the mind or even by its desire for knowledge can turn aside from the path from disappointment or any other cause; still more can those who take it up from some inner ambition or vital desire turn away through revolt or frustration or the despondency of frequent check and failure. But if this deeper thing is there, then one cannot permanently leave the path of spiritual endeavour: one may decide to leave the path but is not allowed from within to do it or one may leave but is obliged to return to it by the secret spiritual need within him.

All these things are common to every path of Yoga; they are the normal difficulties, fluctuations and struggles which come across the path of spiritual effort. But in this Yoga there is an order or succession of the workings of the secret Force which may vary greatly in its circumstances in each sadhak, but still maintains its general line. Our evolution has brought the being up out of inconscient Matter into the Ignorance of mind, life and body tempered by an imperfect knowledge and is trying to lead us into the light of the Spirit, to lift us into that light and to bring the light down into us, into body and life as well as mind and heart and to fill with it all that we are. This and its consequences, of which the greatest is the union with the Divine and life in the divine consciousness, is the meaning of the integral transformation. Mind is our present topmost faculty; it is through the thinking mind and the heart with the soul, the psychic being behind them that we have to grow into the Spirit, for what the Force first

tries to bring about is to fix the mind in the right central idea, faith or mental attitude and the right aspiration and poise of the heart and to make these sufficiently strong and firm to last in spite of other things in the mind and heart which are other than [they] or in conflict with them. Along with this it brings whatever experiences, realisations or descent or growth of knowledge the mind of the individual is ready for at the time or as much of it, however small, as is necessary for its further progress: sometimes these realisations and experiences are very great and abundant, sometimes few and small or negligible; in some there seems to be in this first stage nothing much of these things or nothing decisive—the Force seems to concentrate on a preparation of the mind only. In many cases the sadhana seems to begin and proceed with experiences in the vital; but in reality this can hardly take place without some mental preparation, even if it is nothing more than a turning of the mind or some kind of opening which makes the vital experiences possible. In any case, to begin with the vital is a hazardous affair; the difficulties there are more numerous and more violent than on the mental plane and the pitfalls are innumerable. The access to the soul, the psychic being is less easy because it is covered up with a thick veil of ego, passion and desire. One is apt to be swallowed up in a maze of vital experiences, not always reliable, the temptation of small siddhis, the appeal of the powers of darkness to the ego. One has to struggle through these densities to the psychic being behind and bring it forward; then only can the sadhana on the vital plane be safe.

However that be, the descent of the sadhana, of the action of the Force into the vital plane of our being becomes after some time necessary. The Force does not make a wholesale change of the mental being and nature, still less an integral transformation before it takes this step: if that could be done, the rest of the sadhana would be comparatively secure and easy. But the vital is there and always pressing on the mind and heart, disturbing and endangering the sadhana and it cannot be left to itself for too long. The ego and desires of the vital, its disturbances and upheavals have to be dealt with and if not at once expelled, at least dominated and prepared for a gradual if not a rapid modification, change, illumination. This can only be done on the vital plane itself by descending to that level. The vital ego itself must become conscious of its own defects and willing to get rid of them; it must decide to throw away its vanities, ambitions, lusts and longings, its rancours and revolts and all the rest of the impure stuff and unclean movements within it. This is the time of the greatest difficulties, revolts and dangers. The vital ego hates being opposed in its desires, resents disappointment, is furious against wounds to its pride and vanity; it does not like the process of purification and it may very well declare Satyagraha against it, refuse to co-operate, justify its own demands and inclinations, offer passive resistance of many kinds, withdraw the vital support which is necessary both to the life and the sadhana and try to withdraw the being from the path of spiritual endeavour. All this has to be faced and overcome, for the temple of the being has to be swept clean if the Lord of our being is to take his place and receive our worship there.

THE YOUNG AND THE FUTURE*

SRI AUROBINDO'S CALL TO THE YOUTH OF INDIA

THE future belongs to the young. It is a young and new world which is now under process of development and it is the young who must create it. But it is also a world of truth, courage, justice, lofty aspiration and straightforward fulfilment which we seek to create. For the coward, for the self-seeker, for the talker who goes forward at the beginning and afterwards leaves his fellows in the lurch there is no place in the future.... A brave, frank, clear-hearted, courageous and aspiring youth is the only foundation on which the future nation can be built....

If we are to live at all, we must resume India's great interrupted endeavour; we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in political and economic and social formulation, the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in Occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future.

Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit; our life must be a spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for the great new birth and creation. A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit....

Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit....

The West has made the growth of the intellectual, emotional, vital and material being of man its ideal, but it has left aside the greater possibilities of his spiritual existence.... The West has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being

* This old writing of Sri Aurobindo's has been republished by "Sri Aurobindo's Action" as its Pamphlet No.1.

destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth. The time has now come to heal the division and to unite life and spirit.

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita, *yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi*. Its principle is to do all actions in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the power of the Spirit. And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of his problems and difficulties. This then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming. India, she that has carried in herself from of old the secret, can alone lead the way in this great transformation of which the present *sandhyā* of the old *yuga* is the forerunner. This must be her mission and service to humanity,—as she discovered the inner spiritual life of the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order....

Our call is to young India. It is the young who must be builders of the new world.... the young who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an exceeding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity. This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever-extending formation. It is with a confident trust in the spirit that inspires us that we take our place among the standard-bearers of the new humanity that is struggling to be born amid the chaos of a world in dissolution, and of the future India, the greater India of the rebirth that is to rejuvenate the mighty body of the ancient Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF 1922-1926

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

(These notes were not taken on the spot. They are recollections of the talks at which their author, V. Chidanandam, was present. Whatever in these talks seized the young aspirant's mind was jotted down the next day. Neither complete continuity nor absolute accuracy could be maintained. But in reconstructing from memory the author sought to capture something of the language no less than of the thought-substance. In places, later editing has been found necessary in order to clarify notations which had served merely as signposts.)

A REPORT by a sadhika (Mrs. P) to Sri Aurobindo:

"Mirra¹ once took me above the mind, but I did not know where I stood, I could only feel that I rose very high. I could not see that she was taking me up, for how could I see when I did not even know where I was? It required an effort to come down to the normal consciousness and in the coming down I saw a vision above the head, the form of a cup. Mirra has a wonderful capacity of contacting another's consciousness and she accurately described my experience and vision. She told me that I was conscious of the experience for I was conscious of the vision and could describe it to her. Even coming down to the normal consciousness required much effort and therefore there was much exhaustion. Something from within was constantly pulling me in, and I could not read anything. I tried to read but nothing got in and so I gave up reading."

Sri Aurobindo's comment:

"This happens only in the first stages of the movement. It disappears when that vague consciousness becomes clear and normal. The consciousness may be the psychic or the universal or a phase of the Akshara, the Immutable. And there will not be such difficulties as were experienced."

Continuation of the sadhika's report:

"Mirra says that there is the ancient Indian knowledge within me, pure and undefiled by any western contamination, but I am blissfully ignorant of it. She remarks that the atmosphere in my room is purely Indian, not in the things but in the spirit pervading the place."

A sadhaka's report:

"I was consciously trying to establish a connection with Mirra but did not know

¹ The name by which the Mother was known in those days.—Editor.

whether it was established. Mirra told me that the connection was established and that a golden stream of sunlight was passing from my room to her window and forming a curtain there. She said that this was a sign of my receptive power. I was thinking of seeing her and she felt my call.”

*
**

It is no wonder that cats, if they are in intimate contact with men, develop human consciousness. We are trying to push them on in evolution. They have a vital being, which is subtly responsive to all sorts of forces. Kiti was always being worsted in fights by any cat. I put vitality into it and, from then on, it became a fighter and is always the victor now. Intelligence is more difficult to develop. By repeating certain things, sounds or movements, cats can be made to understand them. They develop through coming into contact with our atmosphere and also through our efforts. At a certain point, nature resists and we cannot go farther: for instance, it would be wrong to try to develop a lion like that. These cats are almost like children; they have the same intensity of feeling. Of course, they are not conscious of influences just as children are not conscious, when quite young, of the care bestowed on them by parents. The cats respond to suggestion. If they go out and I send a suggestion to them to come back, they will come back. It requires a little effort at first and it takes some time. We shouldn't be surprised if they took a human birth in their next lives. One of our cats will become a lady of fashion, jealous, vain. Kiti will become a philosopher, or a rogue. They may take birth as primitive humans, not savage but undeveloped. The mental being is not in them yet, but somewhere up above.

Q. How does rest restore energy?

The vital being and the mental being use the body in their workings, and the vital physical energy in the body is expended. Rest is necessary so that the body may draw energy from the universal forces for recuperation. There must be real rest and quiet throughout all the parts of the being—no restlessness in the mental and vital being. These must not be forced into quiet by a pressure but there must be relaxation and passivity. Sleep is refreshing only when there is such relaxation and passivity. If there is restlessness or if the man is too tamasic and sinks much into the subconscious during sleep, the sleep is not wholesome.

There is a kind of passivity in which we can draw energy from the vital plane above and from still higher planes. There is a kind of sleep in which the consciousness is subtly present and there is perfect passivity and the body draws energy from the higher planes. Such sleep gives greater rest than the physical sleep. In hypnotic sleep, the subject goes into the subliminal. From there anything and everything can come, all sorts of thoughts such as in a man who has no centre and control and one thought comes and then another and so on.

Q. What is the subconscious?

The subconscious is that which is below the active consciousness, not behind it. Much of the vital being, even much of the mental being lies in the subconscious. No doubt, a consciousness is there, but it is not like anything we know as such: it is an obscure consciousness as in matter¹. It has to be illumined. The illumination can come through concentrated pressure on it by the active mental consciousness; but an easier method is to bring down the supramental into it.

The subconscious is below even the physical being. The seven Patalas—hells—of the Puranas are there. The physical casts its shadow on it. Below the subconscious there is again the supramental: it is like going down through the earth to the other side and finding the sun once more. The supramental here is only in principle, not in its full body of action. The supramental is everywhere, it encircles as it were the whole universe. The supramental in the physical is not subject to the law of the physical; all the order in the physical is due to the hidden action of the supramental in it.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

¹ Here, as also elsewhere at times, Sri Aurobindo appears to use the term "subconscious" very widely, so as to include what he later always distinguished as "inconscient".—Editor.

“OLD LONG SINCE”*

SOME MEMORIES OF AMRITA

IN this month falls the birth anniversary of our unforgettable and incomparable Amrita whose sudden passing away was felt as a sharp stab from the hand of the unseen forces. What we miss most in his absence is his Birbal-like wit and humour that used to ‘scatter like sparks from an unextinguished hearth’ at all moments and in any situation, either while plunged in his managerial work, talking business with people, going for a bath, on the way to the Bank, while waiting for the Mother, or even in Her presence. He was the one person we knew who could cut jokes with her while the rest of us were petrified into reverential silence. The Mother allowed him that liberty, and enjoyed his humour, sometimes with an appreciative smile, sometimes with an assumed gravity, and even provoked his playfulness.

We used to have much fun on the first day of every month on our way to “Prosperity” to receive our monthly supplies. The Mother used to distribute toffees in the long corridor leading to Pavitra’s room to all those who would accompany her. Sometimes she would throw them to us. Most of us were good catchers, but Amrita had never been a sportsman and the Mother would purposely bring that out by either, throwing the toffee at great speed or tossing it up or hurling it beyond his reach. Poor Amrita would invariably miss it. Once she threw the sweet with some force and Amrita made a violent comic gesture with both arms as if he was trying to embrace someone. “Oh Amrita,” the Mother cried with a smile, “to catch a small thing you make such a violent movement?” “Douce Mère,” he replied, “I was trying to catch what was behind it.” Every one burst into laughter.

Again, after the business sittings which used to take place on the first floor where the Mother’s chair is at present near the staircase, people, on getting up, would now and then get a knock on their heads from the plank-ledge of the adjacent almirah. Udar, it seems, proposed to remove it, but the Mother protested, saying, “No, it will make them conscious.” One day Amrita received a good bump. The Mother enquired, “What’s the matter?” “Getting conscious, douce Mère,” was Amrita’s repartee. The next joke was in the presence of a big gathering. The Mother was taking her usual French translation class in the Playground. Amrita came late and was waiting to enter. The Mother asked him, “You can’t enter before answering a question. What is the relation between the Divine and Art?” Naturally the whole class was in a hushed suspense. Amrita kept silent for a while, replied gravely, “Good relation, Douce Mère”, and quietly walked in. A peal of laughter, and the Mother smiled. Such was Amrita and such was the sweet relation between the Divine and Amrita.

* This was the title (from the Scottish ‘Auld Lang Syne’) of Amrita’s reminiscences published in *Mother India* some years back and later brought out, along with Nolini’s, in book-form.—Editor.

But at the same time the Mother didn't spare him at all for any negligence, mistake, carelessness and other minor or major fault. He accepted all these knocks and shocks bravely, since he knew them to be expressions of her love.

As with the Mother so with all others, particularly when they too were witty persons like Amal or Wilfy. I used to wonder whence came such an endless stock of mirth, wit, such divine levity. Had he found the *rasa* from his contact with his Guru? With so heavy a burden of work upon him, how could he remain the Sadananda Purusha at all times? This was my inner query, specially when I was a chronic sufferer from the attacks of the opposite Purusha. His contact therefore was salutary, not for me alone but for all who approached him, for—to adapt the Poet of the Daffodils—

A sadhak cannot but be gay
In such a jocund company,
and one would look forward to the next meeting.

What was Amrita's heavy burden? Whenever you entered his room, you saw him at his bureau, a small figure with somewhat stooping shoulders, smooth broad forehead, sharp slightly curved nose, black eyes twinkling with mischief—a typical Brahmin face of the South. You would observe on his table bunches of keys and handfuls of pens and pencils; almirahs and chests of drawers stood all around him along the walls, packed with files and files. Entering his small elongated bedroom, smaller than mine, you would notice how he had managed to put every necessary toilet thing, shoes, dhoties, etc., etc., in beautiful order. There was a small peg for the toothbrush, another for the shaving brush, a small bracket for toilet articles; a mirror, a washbasin, a clothesstand were placed with perfect precision, so that even a blind man could pick them out. The Mother has remarked that the state of the wardrobe of a person will give you the clue to his mind. Had Amrita's wardrobe been examined, I am sure Amrita would have passed this test with Honours. Also, he himself made his own bed, smoothed out all the creases of the white bedsheet and lay on it with a clear conscience. I saw him doing all the operations with my own eyes, and felt like lying down on the cosy bed. He would take off the mosquito curtain himself and fold it carefully. When most of us used our servants for doing these jobs and washing our clothes, Amrita had washed his own clothes from the very beginning—and so have Nolini, Dyuman and Bula. In the days before illness overtook him, he would get up early in the morning, go to Padmasini's place for a bath, wash his clothes, attend to the servant department and come back at 5.30 or so.

From early in the day his work would start, and continue till 9-10 p.m. with a short break at noon. The Bank business, money order accounts, house hiring, servant supervision, etc., etc. —multifarious activities were his daily chores. And a stream of people poured into his room and went out, with their complaints, demands, questions, answers to be carried to the Mother. To deal with them was his main occupation. If one just stood at his door, one would see the fun of it all! Some people were sitting, some standing in the small room crowded with chairs, tables, almirahs, some others

waiting outside and himself sitting in his chair, talking with some clients, giving them the Mother's answers or signing a cheque, while the typewriter went rattling away on the next table, money order accounts were being written on another one, he was busy as if with a hundred hands, a hundred mouths, and cracking jokes in between, receiving some people with a smile, sending away others all contented, half contented but rarely grumbling. 'What? servant trouble? don't like the room? not well? blessings?' In all problems minor or major one answer was often repeated: 'I will ask the Mother'. It sounded like Sri Ramkrishna. If you wanted to know what was Karmayoga, you had just to watch him. No fatigue, no leisure, no irritation, affable, amiable with all! it is because of this amiability and kind consideration that most people, Europeans and Indians alike, flocked to him. 'Amrita-da, Amrita-da' was the call you would constantly hear echoing all around. And when he came down from the Mother with the tray full of papers, letters, flowers, people lay in wait for him. 'Oh, I have forgotten, tomorrow, tomorrow!' 'Here are your blessings!' 'No, Mother was too busy, no time.' These were the usual answers. Sometimes the answers also were misplaced; after a hurried search, found or not found! Yet none complained, his sweetness acted like a balm. He was rightly called *Ajatasatru*, one with no enemies. As I was not familiar with him at the beginning I did not know that he was such a witty person. When I knew, I wondered how it was possible to be so jolly with so much botheration on one's shoulders! I myself had to approach him often with what I used to term my Padmasini trouble, *i.e.*, servant trouble. As soon as I entered, 'What, some trouble again?' he would ask, and would uphold my appeal.

Somebody complained to the Mother that Amrita and some others were not very practical people. The Mother replied, 'But they are very faithful.' Faithfulness, love and devotion and entire dedication were the very essence of Amrita's nature. Whatever the Mother said was law unto him. He would not do anything small or big without having first the Mother's sanction. In his illnesses too he had relied entirely on the Mother, and in his last illness when he was advised to go to Madras for an operation, he refused because the Mother didn't approve of it. In the early thirties we used to enjoy the sight of his pranam to the Mother; he and Chandulal, Vasudha's brother and his brother by adoption, both would do pranam together, one at each foot. While Chandulal would almost hang down holding the Mother's foot, Amrita would bow down, giving the impression of an obedient and devoted child.

Though Amrita's efficiency and industry in the various activities under his supervision were not in doubt, I did not fail to notice his ignorance or absence of body sense. In this respect, he was the complete antipodes of Nolini, though they were like counterparts, ancient friends living side by side—antipodes also in one being of divine levity, the other of divine gravity. Amrita did not seem to know what he was suffering from, what restrictions he should observe as regards diet, work, rest, etc. I was very much surprised to learn that just a few days after his first heart attack, he climbed a three-storey building staircase just to inaugurate its opening ceremony, a thing, I am sure, Nolini wouldn't have done with his keen sense of body science. We

were also amused to see him taking part in physical exercises in the playground. After Sri Aurobindo's passing away, a great pressure was felt by all of us, calling for a change in our way of life. Among the older disciples, Nolini, Amrita, Dilip and others joined in the physical exercises as a part of the integral yoga. I have heard that when Amrita proposed it to the Mother, the Mother refused twice, replying, 'Stupid idea!' But when, encouraged by the example of the rest, he made his third appeal, it was conceded. His enthusiasm, however, did not last for long. That is why the Mother had been reluctant, for she knew his nature and habits very well. The spectacle of Amrita and Dilip doing collective exercises in the playground attracted crowds to enjoy the Harry Lauder fun. Both of them marching in blue shorts with others, hardly keeping time, or both falling behind and running to catch up, or right foot falling in place of the left, turning to the left instead of the right and, particularly when commanded to sit on the ground, their inability to rise up promptly—all these at once were an eloquent testimony to the fact of physical exercises being foreign to their nature. In this respect they resembled very much their Master. In his case too, when he was advised by Dr. Manilal to take some exercises in bed in order to tone up his muscles, one could see that he was practising a *para dharma*. Unlike Amrita, Nolini could apply himself most naturally to make his body a perfect instrument. When, in the latter phase of Amrita's life, I drew his attention to his developing paunch, he asked me in Bengali, 'Oh, is it so?' It was very sweet to hear his hesitant, stumbling Bengali; so was his French speech, though he had a good command over the language and was once a teacher of French. Sri Aurobindo told us a humorous story about his teaching. A student complained once that what he was teaching was not according to the book and pointed out the apparent mistake. Quick came the retort: 'That is old French!' It was Sri Aurobindo, it seems, who induced him to learn Bengali in the early dawn of the Ashram—a training which became so useful for his work. And it was Sri Aurobindo, again, who was behind the loss of his stately *shikha*, his prized Brahmin tuft. The story is both amusing and revealing.

Sri Aurobindo is said to have put two or three young men to nipping off his *shikha* at any cost, and it was done by no one else than Nolini at 2 a.m. when Amrita was guarding his *shikha* in his sleep, at Sri Aurobindo's place. "I had an apprehension," he writes, "that night that the *shikha* would be no more on my head and next morning, having got up, as I felt for the *shikha* I found it non-existent." Why did Sri Aurobindo play this prank? Can we imagine Sri Aurobindo doing it, even out of fun? To strike at his orthodoxy? It was in accordance with Sri Aurobindo's decision and order, Amrita writes, that the *shikha* was cut off. Well, the sequel will explain the meaning of the irreligious practical joke. He went to Madras soon after offering the *shikha* 'at the altar of the temple at sacred Pondicherry in which Sri Aurobindo is the deity'. One day his father came to his room. Astounded at Amrita's appearance, bereft of the *shikha* and other traditional marks, he stood fixed like a statue. Tears then streamed down his cheeks. After about an hour he said: 'A girl has been chosen for you. She belongs to a rich family.... They are likely to give, as dowry, fiftythou-

sand rupees in cash. I have just seen the girl. Yes, she is quite dark in complexion with pock marks on the face. Her family is extremely orthodox.... But you have pulled down the whole edifice, Was it Sri Aurobindo's prophetic vision that caused its downfall? Did he anticipate the catastrophe falling on Amrita's head and intervene in time by getting the precious tuft sheared off?

The incident shows at any rate the intimacy that had developed between the guru and the young shishya. His reminiscences further disclose that this closeness was not of our earthly making. Discarding the three big leaders of the Swadeshi days, Lal, Bal and Pal, a boy in his teens to fall in love with simply the name “Aravinda Ghosh” sounds almost like the spell cast by Krishna's flute on the gopis. Afterwards his meeting with his beloved Krishna, the tears, the palpitation, the embrace, the adoration—all these love symptoms attest to his heart's allegiance borne through many lives. Then, his strange vision while standing by a village pond at eventide is a corroboration of my bright surmise, and sends our memory back to the vision of the Magi in the Bible. In later life I had occasion to see him in Sri Aurobindo's presence. Once he had come with papers and documents to be signed by Sri Aurobindo. He was waiting at the door for permission to enter. Sri Aurobindo sat up on the bed, Amrita sat on the floor by the side, put the paper before Sri Aurobindo showing him the place where to sign. ‘What shall I write?’ asked the Master. ‘Your full name.’ Then on two or three pages he indicated with his fingers the places, and said, ‘Now only the initials.’ ‘Any more?’ Sri Aurobindo asked with a smile. ‘No,’ he replied in a grave tone, disappointing my expectation of a witty reply. But I felt that each time he was putting his fingers on the papers, they were eager to have a touch, but the Master did not give the poor fellow any chance. His supramental nature fought shy of any demonstration. Even with regard to the Mother, Sri Aurobindo was very restrained in any external physical exhibition of his feelings. The Mother would come, and do pranam on darshan days, take his hand and kiss it, but he would just lightly place his hand on her head, though his heart was “full of the warm South”. In Champaklal's case, at the end of his term, it was astonishingly different; for, as we have mentioned elsewhere, he heaped embraces upon him as if the last seal and sanction of his eternal love for his devoted servant. We did not realise till then that Sri Aurobindo was capable of so much emotion. I was wondering, ‘Do I wake or sleep?’ The Divine is not limited by any human notions or rules or canons.

The word ‘embrace’, like Keats's unusual word ‘forlorn,’ brings back the happy vision I had of Amrita some months back. He entered Sri Aurobindo's room, taller than his normal stature, more robust, quite muscular, clad in his usual white dhoti and Punjabi. Sri Aurobindo was sitting on the bed. Amrita said in a deliberate tone, ‘I will do pranam.’ Sri Aurobindo answered quietly, ‘Very well.’ ‘No, not only pranam, I will embrace you.’ Then Sri Aurobindo stood up and clasped him with such Bhima-like vigorous affection that he appeared to be simply crushed and absorbed into Sri Aurobindo's bosom. This was Amrita, the hungry heart! Here again I was wondering at the unusual manifestation, and thinking: ‘Is it a vision or a waking dream?’

This hungry heart had some spiritual vital sustenance with the arrival of his two nieces. But let that come at its right place. I was told that in the early period Amrita was given the exceptional privilege of washing Sri Aurobindo's hand by pouring water on it after he had finished his meal. Once when he was late, Sri Aurobindo kept on waiting. Another anecdote of the early days, recounted by Sri Aurobindo, which I have recorded elsewhere, runs like this. Amrita was suffering from an incessant hiccough, became panicky and said to Sri Aurobindo, 'Sir, I am going to die!' 'What does it matter if you die?' was the brutal reply and at once the hiccough stopped!

As I have just hinted, Amrita's loving heart was pining for some channel to express itself, and that was fulfilled when in later days his two young nieces came to seek shelter under his old wings. Those who have witnessed his 'weakness of heart'—not in the Gita's sense—have realised what a warm spring of love lay hidden in the deep cave of the heart of a yogi! One day most unexpectedly I entered his room to see him holding the hand of one of his nieces who seemed to be in a mood of *abhimān*. He at once dropped the hand and I came out with a delighted smile! It looks as if all old sadhaks have to pass through such emotional experiences in order to give a completeness to their integral yoga (as did Shankara), through a renewed contact with either their daughters, sisters, adopted or real, nieces or various other relations. This niece took some lessons in English from me. Amrita used to inquire about her progress, but what he stressed most was that I should try to make her write correctly so that she might be of use in her work. I don't know how far she fulfilled that role, but during his illness she poured out all her tender heart in his service. Her sister also helped.

Speaking of his illness, I was a bit concerned when I first heard about its being an affection of the heart. I knew that he had prostrate trouble, perhaps high blood pressure too, but both were kept in check. During the last days his growing pale complexion was a topic of frequent discussion. When he had the second attack, I felt very uneasy, but the crisis passed and he was slowly recovering. He used to be seen sitting up in his chair in the early morning in front of his central door. One day I enquired, 'How are you?' 'Fairly well; but my sweet heart gives me trouble now and then.' I smiled. That was his last joke. But I came away with a very bad prognostic impression. He looked ash pale, extremely weak, even though cheerful. Two or three days later I was as usual at my evening desk when Bula ran up and cried, 'Doctor, quick, quick! Amrita has fainted.' I ran down to find everything over. The bird had flown away! Soon Dr. Sanyal arrived and gave the same verdict.

The news outwinged the wind, and the rush of visitors followed in a calm mourning procession. One was compelled to close the door with a promise to open it the next morning. From morning till about 4 p.m. the stream of people, the Ashram members, all Ashram servants, officials and respectable men from outside, heaps of garlands, flowers, made a sight bearing witness to his immense popularity and loveliness. Most of the people were in tears. They had lost a true brother. Revealing had been also the occasions of his birthdays—memorable fêtes. Flowers and fruits, garlands and presents filled the whole room and in the midst of them all was seated the

King of Spring, face beaming, lips cracking jokes, hands distributing sweets, a veritable Anandamaya Purusha. Like Lamb among the essayists, Amrita undoubtedly was the most lovable of our old sadhaks.

Questions may rise in our minds: ‘Why, if Amrita had made a complete surrender to the Divine, did he leave his body? Could not the Mother prolong his life?’ If the old sadhaks who have advanced far on the path and on whom we have built our hopes, leave us in the lurch, we cannot but presume a power of darkness still dogging our steps and trying to annul our long sustained efforts; we have no certitude! The answer is that there is no certitude below the Supermind; until it has completely established its victory over the forces of darkness and death, such casualties cannot be ruled out. In Amrita’s case, however, the Mother seems to have said that even at the age of fifty his soul wanted to leave the body and it was kept earth-bound by the Mother for fifteen years to do work for the Divine. Had that work come to a ripe end or was his body so worn out by disease that the soul decided to discard the tattered rags? Whatever it may be, we learn from the Mother that he is always with her, moving about and freely just like a child. He must also be contented to see his two nieces partly filling his place and called to the Mother’s presence.

I have said nothing about his spiritual attainment, firstly for want of any personal knowledge, secondly because it is ‘as plain as a pikestaff’. A man who had clung to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother since his first young promptings, following their footsteps wherever they led him, to whom the only *rasa* in life was entire dedication of self to them with joy and making everyone else who came in contact with him happy, hasn’t he found *ātma-rati*, a supreme status? And his ‘Reminiscences’, aren’t they vibrant with his yearning for the Unknown to be known, the Unclutchable to be clutched? His wonderful early vision, does it not speak of his age-old tie with Sri Aurobindo? What more do we want? Ripeness is all, and that ripeness he attained, whatever technical terms you may apply to his inner status.

I must, however, end on a note of melancholy, from my Man of Doubt. The Ashram rings no longer with ‘Douce Mère’ from Amrita’s lips. The courtyard doesn’t shine with his figure, clad in white, no ‘Bonjour’ from him is echoed by the trees and pillars, walls and pavements. His office is there working efficiently, though perhaps a bit lack-lustre, but the constant humming, the *ānanda-melā* has come to a close. There has passed away from us a presence which will be difficult to replace. Still, as a consolation for what we have lost, we have among us our staunch elders, Nolini, Champaklal, Dyuman, pillars planted by the Mother herself.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN INDIA'S HISTORY

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

THE UNDATED CENTURIES (Contd.)

POLITICAL integration implies, in contrast to cultural integration, the creation of an external, an administrative unity of the component political units; it means in effect the erection of a single state with undisputed authority in place of a number of smaller states exercising more or less independent jurisdiction within their borders without acknowledging any superior authority. Two methods are possible: one, the aggregation of the smaller units to form a bigger whole, and two, the assimilation of the lesser units into a single large unit. The second implies a destruction and obsolescence of the smaller units, the first allows them to continue even if reduced in power but makes it always possible for them to reassert their separate and independent existence. It was the first of these two methods that seemed to find favour with our earliest thinkers, partly no doubt because it was the only method possible under the circumstances but also perhaps because it was more in line with their catholic temper.

Before we examine how the method worked, it would be well to review in outline the political history of India till the end of our period. The traditions preserved in the Vedic, Epic and Puranic literature, supplemented by stray bits of information (no doubt based on hearsay) given by the Greek and Roman writers in their notices on India are the only sources on which we can draw. The traditions are sometimes confused and contradictory, contain an element of myth and legend, cannot be verified by archaeological evidence, and are not universally accepted. Nevertheless certain broad lines seem to emerge clearly enough.

As the literary traditions are couched entirely in Sanskrit, they make but passing references to the deep south, for which we have to go back to the archaic Tamil literature of the Sangam age that still awaits a critical and historical study. For the present, our history for the undated centuries is largely the story of northern and central India, with occasional glimpses of the far east and the far west and some account of south India mainly of a mythical character. Even so, the legends embedded in the Ramayana about the Vanara and Rakshasa peoples of the south would point to a state of civilisation not entirely negligible.

The chronicles begin by assigning an equal prestige to all the ruling dynasties of early India, by tracing their genealogies to a common divine ancestor, Manu the son of the Sun-God Vivaswat, who began the present historical cycle (*manvantara*) after the Great Flood. The tradition of the Flood is as old as the Satpatha Brahmana; it is similar in outline though not in the details to the Sumerian account from which the Genesis story has come. It may have had an element of historical truth, like the

Sumerian account; for the geologists tell us that the Indo-Gangetic plain was once a sea and "became firm and dry enough to be habitable for man only some five to seven thousand years ago" (*The Vedic Age*, p. 82); the southern peninsula and the Himalayan region had of course been in existence much earlier, and must have been the habitat of early man in India as the palaeolithic and neolithic sites would show.

This leads us to the question of dates. The genealogies count some one hundred and twenty steps between the Flood and the accession of Chandragupta Maurya (in about 320 B.C.). Allowing for an average of twenty-five years for each of these steps, we get back to about 3300 B.C. According to one authority, "the Flood in Mesopotamia is generally held to have occurred about 3100 B.C. . . and the date 3102 B.C. supposed to be the beginning of the Kali era (according to old Indian astronomers) may therefore commemorate this event" (*Ibid.*, p. 270). We need not perhaps dogmatise on this possibility, however plausible it may seem. But it may serve as a working hypothesis until some more positive evidence is forthcoming. Many of the "orthodox" scholars would reject the hypothesis outright, on the ground that it clashes with their cherished view of an Aryan invasion of India for the first time around 1500 B.C.

But was there such an invasion? We might as well pass in brief review the main arguments on which this theory of Aryan invasion is based.

The Vedas, the world's earliest surviving documents in an Indo-Aryan language, were, it is conceded, composed in north India. Their language is so akin to that of the Iranian Avesta in its earliest portions that the one could be transliterated into the other with a few phonetic changes. The Avesta cannot be dated earlier than about 1000 B.C., for no more than about four hundred years can be allowed between the language of the Avesta and that of Darius' inscriptions of the 6th century B.C. The names of the gods, many of their functions and the general mythological and ceremonial background of the Avestan and Vedic scriptures are so akin that their authors must at one time have shared a common tradition and later separated into two distinct geographical areas. This separation, implying an inpouring of the Indo-Iranian speaking peoples into India, may therefore be presumed to have taken place a little before 1000 B.C., not earlier than 1500 B.C. in any case.

To buttress up this argument, others of a more or less subsidiary nature have been adduced from time to time. Max Muller for example generously allowed a span of two hundred years for each of the main phases of Indian literary development—the early Vedic, the later Vedic and the Sutra-epic—that had taken place before the Buddha's time and, counting back six hundred years from the sixth century B.C., fixed a date around 1200 B.C. for the Vedic texts. The Boghazkoi tablets (in Hittite Anatolia of the 15th century B.C.) mention the well-known Vedic gods Indra, Varuna Mitra, Nasatyas, as being worshipped by the kings of Mitanni (in north-west Mesopotamia); they also refer to Agni in an unknown context. These gods, it is argued, must have been left in West Asia by the Aryans in the course of their migration to India. The undoubted affinities of the Indo-Aryan languages, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Old Slavonic and old Teutonic, would show that they must have been spoken at one time

by people who later separated into their respected regions from a common habitat, perhaps somewhere in Eastern Europe, judging by the common vocables of these languages.

There is other evidence which is believed to be conclusive. The Harappan culture of the Indus valley has been found to have come to a sudden end around 1500 B.C.; there is some trace of burning. Who could have done the burning but those primitive Aryan invaders from beyond the North-West? Besides, the Rigveda itself gives them away. It rings with the battle cries of Aryan gods and Aryan men fighting with the non-Aryan—the *dasyu* or *dāsa*, robber and low-born slave, whose complexion is black, whose speech is that of a stammerer because it is unintelligible, who does not possess a nose to speak of, he is *anāsa*. All this fits in well enough with the aboriginals, or perhaps the more civilised Dravidians, the authors of the Harappa culture; these the Aryan invaders had to fight and dislodge from north India in their gradual advance eastwards from the land of the seven rivers (*saptasindhu*) which could be no other than the Punjab if we added the once flowing Saraswati to the six rivers that water the land, the seventh could even be the Kabul river (*kubhā* of the hymns). A final argument of the philologists—for they are the main authorities on this question of an Aryan invasion—bases itself on the phonetic structure of the Sanskrit language. The original Indo-Aryan and its European descendants like Greek or Latin do not possess any of the cerebral consonants like *ḷ* or *ṛ* which characterise Sanskrit and must have therefore been acquired by the Aryans because of their contact with the Dravidian languages which abound in these cerebral sounds; the speakers of Sanskrit must therefore be presumed to have come into India from outside. That the Dravidian languages were once spoken all over India is shown by the fact that there is a pocket of Dravidian Brahui in Baluchistan in the midst of an Indo-Aryan speaking area; this must have been a solitary remnant left by the retreating southerners.

Formidable arguments, these, and no wonder that all the world believes in this hypothesis of an Aryan invasion of India; only there is some disagreement on the question of the exact date. Some feeble voices have however been raised here and there among the scholars expressing some doubts, on what grounds we shall have now to see. Here once again Sri Aurobindo comes to the rescue.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

THE BUTTON-MOULDER

IN his notorious attack on Shakespeare, his mind and his art, Shaw did not exactly claim that he himself was the greater dramatist. What he did primarily was insist on his right to be the dramatist he was, and to be judged by non-Shakespearean standards, maintaining that it as a fact of cultural importance that, while there was no Shavian *Hamlet*, there also was no Shakespearean *Man and Superman*. As for relative greatness, he left that a question, and one that was probably not rhetorical. But he was far from insensitive to the power of Shakespeare's poetry, and latterly he acknowledged that in the nature of things most of his own work would eventually fade out, while Shakespeare's remained as fresh as ever. He attempted to add a counterweight by saying that nevertheless his plays, in this brief tenure, would have done more work in the world.

Bearing in mind this frightful and all too Modern idea of what "work in the world" is, one may be doubly glad for the gift of poetry. These times of accelerated "progress" however have led many of those with poetic ability to feel cut off, and to falter in their purpose and mistake their value. A prime case is that of Shaw's "socially conscious" idol Ibsen, who began as a poet and at the end returned to a kind of semi-poetical elevation and mysteriousness, but in his middle period, the one that captured the world for a time, was what may be considered the main fount of that once flourishing development, the "problem play". This development may have brought a kind of life and "excitement" to the theatre for awhile; but the only genuine and lasting life of the drama is in poetry. Ibsen began as a poet, bent not so much on "exciting" and "stimulating" as on revealing; and at the last he betrayed a desolate suspicion that in his "mature" period he had gone astray. No doubt he was right; and, while in that period he may have done a good deal of "work in the world", his real work, that by virtue of which he may keep some permanent place in the world's literature, is that of his earlier days, and chiefly the two dramatic poems, *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*.

These are in part complementary, showing the inadequacies of two radically opposed ways of living. Pastor Brand is a man who by an uncompromising adherence to a narrow moralism blights all he touches; he at last sacrifices himself as it were to his lonely superiority, and dies in an avalanche while climbing a mountain: hearing at the end a voice from the clouds, telling him what he has forgotten, that God is a god of love. Though Brand's particular narrowness is that of a kind of Protestant Christianity—the kind that crippled a mind like Kierkegaard's, which might have been one of our greatest—the fundamentals of the case may be applied more largely. The same is true of the case of Peer Gynt; Norwegian though he is, he is universal. He is a ne'er do well, engaging but quite untrustworthy, who stifles every larger prompting to live altogether on the surface of things. He travels the world, but as an old man at last comes home; to be confronted by feelings of inadequacy and waste. He is eventually met by a Button-Moulder, who tells him that his time has come—to be melted down and recast.

He should have been a "bright button on the waistcoat of the world"; but, being defective, he must go to oblivion. Some rather sentimental hope is at last held out for his redemption by the love of the woman he left behind him, who has waited for him their life long; but the point has been made. Peer has never been really himself, and so what he has been does not matter; it is fit only for oblivion, he must somehow be recast.

Ibsen was not a thinker—not one at least who deserves prominence in the world—and it was probably because he knew that he lacked a firmly based and really independent power of thought, that he could never bear to acknowledge or hear it said that he was influenced by someone else. For he wanted to be an original and profound thinker; and after his student days he stopped reading books, lest other men's ideas should corrupt him; or, perhaps, confuse him. He was much influenced by the Hegelianism that was rife in his time, however, and his long play or double play, *Emperor and Galilean*, which he always considered to be his major work, is, Hegelianly, his most ambitious attempt to be philosophical. Building around the "Apostate" Julian, he adumbrated a kind of synthesis of the thesis of Paganism and the antithesis of Christianity; he broke down, however, and could give no coherent idea of what the new dispensation might be like. He had only the idea that something better must be ahead for mankind, a larger life, in which heaven and earth should be in manifest harmony.

He flourished a little too early to be spattered much by the Darwinian ferment, or to be much concerned with the theories of evolution, physical and social, brought forth by it. But if he had tried to teach Europe in the matter of evolution, he probably would have gone little deeper than Shaw did; whose critique of the history of modern European evolution theory is good, and of course like everything by Shaw extraordinarily articulate and readable, but is entirely on the surface or in the shallowest depths, like the theories including the "creative" Bergsonian with which it deals. There is no apprehension of the meaning and the purpose, let alone the full process of it all: nothing of the involvement or involution of divinity, gradually unfolding that the world shall realize itself divine. The theories are concerned almost exclusively with the modification of the physical configurations, and nothing of the bringing forth of higher faculties, and the eventual superseding and perfecting of the mental by the spiritual, and the appearance of a superhumanity. Some "emergent" theories have envisioned mind as somehow arising from life as life from matter; but they have gone no further, seen truly nothing of indwelling divinity or future destiny while speaking vaguely of "deity" emerging next. Shaw's utmost vision of a Superman is of something entirely mental and remarkably dried up withal.

But given this larger apprehension, of an evolution really creative because divine, Ibsen might have made a good deal more of his powerfully suggestive figure, the Button-Moulder. As it is, his world for all its busyness and "progress" is fundamentally static—a heaven here, a hell there, and a moral law to follow. Peer Gynt is not fit for salvation or for damnation either, because never having been himself he has never really been anything; he is fit only for oblivion, annihilation, his substance remoulded to something better. From the larger and fuller view of the Divinity that unfolds

itself in manifestation, being all the while perfect beyond, eternal and infinite in its temporality and its finitude, requiring that a man live many lives, that he experience enough to come to himself, to the Self that is a spark of Divinity, the higher Self that is divine, one may come to some juster conception and feeling of the requirements, the conditions and the difficulties, and understand how most personalities are phantom selves that cannot well endure. One may understand that to find his real Self, deathless and without pain of psychological difficulty, and to mould himself, his whole nature, upon it, is his purpose here, and his promise that, eventually, cannot fail.

The very idea of moulding oneself according to Truth, however, is antipathetic to the Modern mind; it will have everything relative to the false self and its cherished ignorance. It does not want to grow into what it feels to be some alien largeness; it wants to cut whatever largeness there is to its own dimensions, and be itself the "measure of things". When I was doing Zen Buddhist meditation I met a young man who had some idea that he might like to "try Zen" himself; having read one or two of the many worthless books ostensibly on that subject.... He asked me if Zen was not "what you make of it". I replied that on the contrary it was something to be discovered, and that one who wanted it must make himself in accordance with it. The poor young man was almost in tears, I think, at hearing something so unpalatable. It is an unbearable and outrageous check on one's "creativity", it seems, to have to accept anything like a higher authority. A man *is* the measure of things, and there is no Truth, at least none available, but only truth-for-oneself. The most intellectually respectable manifestation of this attitude is perhaps the Neo-Kantianism of the "creative symbol": the "thing-in-itself" or Truth not being knowable or attainable, the best that one can do is by the fullest use of his mind create a bright and complex world to live in, fed from the greatest depth of consciousness that he can find. It may be that a cultured man can find a good deal of sustenance in such a philosophy. But the real depth and creativity is far more than a mixture of mentality and aesthetic sensitivity can afford; and to try to create oneself or enjoy one's creative self without finding God is to make and be bemused by a simulacrum after all. If Truth were not knowable and attainable, there would be no creation and no striving. In the progressive unfolding of divine Truth one's Self is to be found: and then one lives.

For this one must *want* to live; to take hold, and not just drift and flutter. One must do a turnabout that is hardly imaginable to those hypnotized by the outward movement and the surface lights and shades. One must change himself, and not be futilely concerned only with changing or manipulating his environment. Mankind being what it is, its world cannot but be a very unsatisfactory place to dwell in, however "socially conscious" it may be. George Orwell complained of the innocence and naiveté displayed by Dickens, when he averred that a "change of heart" was the thing, and that only by this, by an improvement in human nature, would society really improve. Orwell despaired of such a change, and thought that the only hope lay in social planning and legislation. But the best plans and laws for human society must be administered by human beings; and however naïve Dickens may have been, and however

shallow his idea of the "good heart", he was fundamentally right. Without better human beings a better society cannot be made to work if it can be conceived. We do have an acute need for a better society, for a radically different one than has yet obtained; a society in which the perfect flowering of human beings is in no way hindered, and is in every way encouraged and supported: a society that, just because it is directed ultimately toward the spiritual and the realization of divinity, does not neglect or stifle any of the faculties of human nature. It would be a society however in which the faculties or tendencies positively inimical to divinity or the evolution of the true being would not be encouraged, and in which the rampant perversity and devilishness of the present would not be possible. It would be a society not based on money, in which the "profit motive" would count for nothing, not a society, that is, in which scuts had all the advantage. Because the human being is potentially divine the change is possible: the turning and the flowering, that shall pour into the world new light and power for a glory of Truth realized.

JESSE ROARKE

MUSK IS THE MYSTERY

MUSK is the mystery of life
 Sealed in the casement of the soul,
 Deer is the runner of God
 Who is but its own swifter goal.

Moon the high charmer of the sea
 Is mirrored in its secret guise,
 And the calm that but folds the tide
 Is a point of infinite size.

Gold is the guest of the hour
 And rapt in clay the timeless Lord,
 Beauty is the Invisible's blaze
 In signs and symbols of the Word.

RENUKADAS DESHPANDE

FACING MODERN PHYSICS

A PERSONAL DOCUMENT OF MENTAL CONVERSION

(This document dates back to September 1948. It notes a turning-point in the author's attitude to the philosophical implications of modern physics. Whether or not it formulates wholly the fundamental position of physical thought, it has some interest both as a personal statement by a sincere student of the problem "Whither Modern Physics?" and as the record of a psychological revolution in a sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga facing the oft-debated issue: "Has Modern Physics gone through a revolution"?)

I

I WAS writing a long essay trying to work out with logical consistency the implications of modern physics for a philosophical world-view. The principle with which modern physics starts, the method it employs, the mathematical structure it raises, the several complicated details of its experimental discoveries—all these I was surveying and weaving into one scheme which would show that modern physics could not really yield any special philosophy and that it left untouched whatever philosophy might have been logically deducible from the old physics.

If that philosophy was indeed materialism, then, according to me, materialism—perhaps not in the gross form given it by the majority of nineteenth-century physicists but still in a form which for all its subtlety did not differ in essence—stood intact. In my eyes, the non-materialistic attitude of many eminent physicists today was independent of the scientific evidence they brought forward. I was not saying that materialism was the correct philosophy on an impartial examination of all evidence, scientific and non-scientific. In fact, I considered materialism as a philosophy absurd and I was convinced from my touch with Sri Aurobindo's Yoga that it was false. I did not even hold that nineteenth-century physics as distinguished from nineteenth-century physicists leaned towards materialism. But I categorically denied that twentieth-century physics by itself provided any grounds for thinking materialism to be untenable.

Complete harmony did not prevail in me during the writing of my essay. I knew what Sri Aurobindo had said apropos of a controversy between me and some inmates of his Ashram: "The rock on which materialism was built and which in the nineteenth century seemed unshakable has now been shattered. Materialism has now become a philosophical speculation just like any other theory; it cannot claim to found itself on a sort of infallible Biblical authority, based on the facts and conclusions of science. This change can be felt by one like myself who grew up in the heyday of absolute rule of scientific materialism in the nineteenth century. The way which had been almost entirely barred except by rebellion now lies wide open to spiritual truths, spiritual ideas, spiritual experiences. That is the real revolution. Mentalism is only a half-way house but mentalism and vitalism are now perfectly possible as hypotheses

based on the facts of existence, scientific facts as well as any others. The facts of science do not compel anyone to take any particular philosophical direction. They are now neutral and can even be used on one side or another though most scientists do not consider such a use as admissible. Nobody here in the Ashram ever said that the new discoveries of physics supported the ideas of religion or churches; they merely contended that science had lost its old materialistic dogmatism and moved away by a revolutionary change from its old moorings. It is this change which I expected and prophesied in my poems in the first *Ahana* volume, 'A Vision of Science' and 'In the Moonlight'."

I knew also that in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* (Book II, Canto X) occurred the lines comparing what the Spirit of Reason finds in modern physics with what "she" found in the old:

All was precise, rigid, indubitable.
 But when on Matter's rock of ages based
 A whole stood up firm and clear-cut and safe,
 All staggered back into a sea of doubt;
 This solid scheme melted in endless flux:
 She had met the formless Power inventor of forms;
 Suddenly she stumbled upon things unseen:
 A lightning from the undiscovered Truth
 Startled her eyes with its perplexing glare
 And dug a gulf between the Real and Known
 Till all her knowledge seemed an ignorance.
 Once more the world was made a wonder-web,
 A magic's process in a magical space,
 An unintelligible miracle's depths
 Whose source is lost in the Ineffable.
 Once more we face the blank Unknowable.
 In a crash of values, in a huge doom-crack,
 In the sputter and scatter of her breaking work
 She lost her clear conserved constructed world.
 A quantum danced remained, a sprawl of chance
 In Energy's stupendous tripping whirl:
 A ceaseless motion in the unbounded Void
 Invented forms without a thought or aim:
 Necessity and cause were shapeless ghosts;
 Matter was an incident in being's flow,
 Law but a clock-work habit of blind force.
 Ideals, ethics, systems had no base
 And soon collapsed or without sanction lived;
 All grew a chaos, a heave and clash and strife...
 All reeled into a world of Kali's dance.

Thus tumbled, sinking, sprawling in the Void,
 Clutching for props, a soil on which to stand,
 She only saw a thin atomic Vast,
 The rare-point sparse substratum Universe
 On which floats a solid world's phenomenal face.
 Alone a process of events was there
 And Nature's plastic and protean change
 And, strong by death to slay or to create,
 The riven invisible atom's omnipotent force.

In this splendid passage the shattering of the rock on which materialism was based is seen very realistically, but as against the already quoted letter it is seen as no unmixed blessing. Sri Aurobindo recognises that man's reason can use any such shattering anarchically. However, the shattering is accepted as a fact and it is regarded as essentially laying open a magic, a miracle, a mystery of the Ineffable which, rightly understood, should lead to a world-view very far indeed from the materialistic.

How was I to reconcile Sri Aurobindo's statements with the conclusion to which months and months of intense study of the ideas of modern physics had led me? I could notice that Sri Aurobindo took the old physics to be itself prompting a materialistic world-view: I could ascribe this to a natural mixing up of what the old physicists had said with what their data might logically suggest: the mixing up could be attributed to a lack of close study, on Sri Aurobindo's part, of those data. I could think also that Sri Aurobindo had not made a close study of modern physics, either, and so did not know how often our physicists jumped to unwarranted conclusions when they attempted to be philosophers. But while I could perceive that he might be stressing the revolutionary change of mental attitude in modern physicists as contrasted to that of those of the nineteenth century, I could not blink one thing: there was in his pronouncements an implication that even those factors, on which the old physicists had believed their materialism to have been based as on a rock, had foundered in the sweep and swell and surge of the ideas which modern physics had let loose.

And yet how could I be false to my own research? The arguments adduced by so many exponents of the alleged revolution in physics seemed to me fallacious. And, when I myself scrutinised what physics could consistently suggest, there appeared no possibility of seeing eye to eye with Sri Aurobindo. I felt that what others had said did not count: they could be mistaken. But when Sri Aurobindo implied something, I could not rest content with an opposite position. I could hardly compose myself even by arriving, as I did, through a study of physics old and new, at a non-materialistic conclusion by another route. Yes, I found reasons of my own to agree with him in general. But a general agreement could scarcely be in keeping with the luminous depth which I felt was present essentially in whatever he stated with positive assurance. How could the particular line he had followed be set aside with an undisturbed conscience?

I was not in a very comfortable state of mind. Yet, with as much detachment as possible, I went on sincerely in the writing of my essay, knowing it would have at least some use in that it would show up certain fallacies and check the too glib declaration one finds nowadays about a revolution in physics. I had the intention to get the essay read to Sri Aurobindo and have his comment in some detail. Something of value surely there was in what I had to say and as I was perfectly open to correction and had not the least attachment to anything I intellectually formulated I could go on differing from him intellectually in one small field without being affected in my inner attitude towards him as my Master in Yoga and as the Lord of my life in all essentials.

This was the state of affairs till the evening of September 5, 1948. After a spell of typing, I got up and stood at a window, gazing out over the trees at the sky. Suddenly, with extreme intensity but as if without effort on my part, I visualised the face of Sri Aurobindo. It carried a sacred look of supreme knowledge. Too grand, too super-human was the look to let me put aside the implication of his statements on modern physics. I felt abashed at the same time that I felt profoundly happy and exalted with the visualisation. More strongly than ever before I had the sense that Sri Aurobindo could know the heart of things.

The gadfly, however, that always drives me to make as complete, as convincing as possible whatever intellectual position I honestly take up would not allow me to stop short of finishing my essay. I was almost at my journey's end, only a few pages remained to be written. It was not possible to give up the work. But I was stirred to the depths of my heart by that face. Then, at about 8 p.m., a friend of mine whom I had helped to send to the *darshan* of Sri Aurobindo on August 15 paid me his first visit on returning from Pondicherry. He ecstatically described his impression of Sri Aurobindo. I remembered both my own impression of August 15 the preceding year and the appearance of the face earlier in the evening. Again, Sri Aurobindo became superbly vivid. I felt his presence like a sovereign power. Deeper sank the conviction of his inevitable rightness.

After dinner, as I was in a particularly Yogic mood, I picked up my record of the talks, most eye-opening and heart-illuminating, the Mother had given a very long time ago to a number of us who used to meet her every evening. I cannot say why exactly I turned to **this** record rather than to any other literature connected with Yoga. It had been more than twelve years since I last looked at it. The record is still unpublished because the Mother has not yet revised it¹. A pity, this, for, as I went on reading what she had said, the word that came again and again to my lips was: "Marvellous!"

In one of the talks is the following passage: "Have you never watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants simply struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying a hundred possible ways just to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants

¹ This is changed by now—September 1970—for some of these talks appeared in *Mother India* in 1949-50 and all of them in *The Words of the Mother* (Third Series) in 1951.

and trees have more of it in their physical being than men. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is, of course, the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents, under material conditions, the Supreme Consciousness. The plants have felt it quite distinctly in their own simple blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know the trick of becoming aware of it. On the plane of matter they are the most open to my influence—I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man: it is very receptive, though it does not know how to formulate its experience to itself because it lacks a mind. But the pure soul-consciousness is instinctive to it. When, therefore, you offer flowers to me their condition is almost always an index to yours...”

In this passage the phrase that connected up with the work I had in hand was: “Light is, of course, the material symbol of the Divine and the sun represents, under material conditions, the Supreme Consciousness.” The phrase had the effect as of a revelation. The idea had not been absent from my mind—always at the back of my mind it had remained—but now it stood out with an apocalyptic imperativeness. Rather, there was not so much compulsion in the revelatory character of the phrase as an absolute naturalness, a self-evidence that required no hammering home. A revelation as effortless as the presence of the furniture in my room, as concrete as their materiality and as quiet in both effortlessness and concreteness—this was how the words made their impression. I felt that if light was the Divine’s representative the examination of the physical universe must sooner or later find that everything reduces to light and that light could never be such a phenomenon as would leave materialism unsinged.

By the way, it is curious to note how relativity theory and quantum theory which constitute modern physics arose. The former reached its ripeness by Einstein’s meditation on the baffling behaviour of light in the Michelson-Morley experiment to discover the “ether drift”. The latter grew from Planck’s study of the puzzling manner in which radiation was emitted from a “black body”.

To resume: I went to bed. Lying in the darkness I made an attempt to see modern physics as Sri Aurobindo must be seeing it. It was presumptuous to try to have the direct insight that he had, but there could be no harm in getting distantly in tune with it. All on a sudden I had an outburst of ideas. I followed up the ideas to some extent and before falling off to sleep formulated within myself in brief the general outlook they suggested.

The next morning I got up feeling unusually happy and put down on paper the words that had occurred to me the previous night. Then I sat from about half-past seven to twelve, typing away at one stretch as if out of a filled and prepared mind the rough draft of a new survey of physics.

2

The previous night’s formulation, which completed the conversion I had undergone, and which summarised a new general outlook, ran as follows:

“Modern physics is not a complete consistent system. It is a number of developments along various lines. These lines run parallel at times but at times they diverge. Modern physics is a collection of discoveries and theoretical schematisations which cannot at present be viewed as one utterly coherent whole. It is an outbreak of new vision and the different centres of light in it stand without very close connection. All of them may suggest something in common but not always in the same way. And it is just this characteristic of various centres of light without very close connection, that makes the minds of present-day physicists differ from those of the nineteenth century’s. Not that physics in the nineteenth century was a really consistent and single scheme, but the physicists imagined so. Today the physicists are under no such delusion and what they see makes them not only undogmatic about materialism but also aware of pointers away from it. There is puzzlement and there is bafflement in spite of the utmost the experimental and the mathematical techniques can do and there is dazzlement as by flashes that make the cocksureness of the old materialists ridiculous and a reopening of fundamental questions natural.

“As regards the lack of oneness and coherence, the chief irreconcilables in a large and round view are relativity theory and quantum theory. The one covers macrophysics and proceeds from the large-scale to the small-scale, the other covers microphysics and proceeds *vice versa*. But this in itself is, of course, no feature of irreconcilableness. Their standing poles apart lies in that the former is the physics of continuity, of unbroken functions in a continuous ‘field’ and the latter has discontinuity everywhere, beginning with quanta, discrete quantities, separate particles and finding no expression of them in a mathematics of unbroken functions applying directly to them. The word ‘directly’ is important; for wave mechanics which is microphysical is a mathematics of unbroken functions, but it is a mathematics of probability, not certainty. It describes in a continuous fashion not the very positions and velocities of particles at any instant, but the increasing and decreasing chances of particles having particular positions and velocities. It does not give the assured future of physical systems: it gives only the likelihood of physical systems acting this way or that in the future. No doubt, it has reference to objective reality and does not subjectivise anything — at least not in the manner physicists like Eddington seem to imagine. Probability and certainty are both characteristics of knowledge and both have an objective reference. But by certain knowledge we can give a definite spatial and temporal description by means of our measuring instruments. By probable knowledge we cannot, though space and time still figure in the readings our instruments provide. The mathematics of probability apply not directly but indirectly to physical systems. The direct connective terms of a physical system’s past with its present and of its present with its future cannot be found in quantum physics as they can be in relativity physics.

“The reason is simple. In quantum physics the entities experimented with are so minute that our measuring instruments disturb them if we want to watch them closely or else the instruments leave them in a blur if we are not particular about a close scrutiny. This dilemma makes the instruments play an entirely different role from the

one they play in relativity physics. In relativity physics, the instruments do not prevent us from thinking that what is 'out there' remains what they record it to be. We can formulate how the objective reality acts independently of our instruments, we can give equations about how it behaves even when instruments are not interacting with them. Quantum physics states only the results of the interaction between instruments and objective reality. Bóhr's celebrated scheme which sums up quantum physics warns us against making assured generalisations about the behaviour of objective reality in the absence of instruments. Bóhr says that, so far as the instruments record, what is 'out there' cannot definitely be called even a world of particles or a world of space and time. He does not deny the existence of particles as the ultimate constituents with which microphysics deals nor a world of space and time, but he wants to restrict physics to readings of apparatus—a non-committal description admitting, if necessary, even self-contradictory behaviour of objective reality.

"Not that in Bóhr's scheme there is actually self-contradictory behaviour. The so-called self-contradictoriness is in that there are aspects which are never found together and are mutually exclusive. The nineteenth century thought the position and velocity of a particle to be aspects which could be measured with precision side by side. Now heisenberg theorised that we must throw light on the electron to observe it but that when we throw light of sufficient strength to catch so small an entity the very strength of the light disturbs this entity by its impact—or else if we do not wish to disturb the electron and throw light of poor strength we leave the electron where it is but can hardly see it in its place. From this it is clear that we can examine precisely either the electron's velocity or its position but never the two together. The one seems to contradict the other—a notion that would have startled the old physicists.

"As startling a notion is that the particle-description itself is such as to be applicable only at certain times. At other times the wave-description is to be applied. A wave always scatters, a particle is compact: so a contradiction seems to be present. The nineteenth-century physicists would have further been startled to see a glaring contradiction of this kind put on a par with what appears to be the merely practical impossibility of measuring position and velocity side by side. But a mitigation of the particle-wave contradiction lies in the fact that, as Born and Jordon have shown, the wave which looks real is just a wave of probability, a mathematical function, a statistical description of how aggregates of particles distribute themselves under particular conditions, and cannot be accorded a physical status, though for purposes of calculation it may be taken as being genuinely 'out there.' Wave mechanics merely gives a formula of how the probability due to our being unable to measure position and velocity side by side is propagated when a large number of particles are concerned and when they are moving through a period of time. A final and total mitigation of the whole business of apparently contradictory aspects is that the contradiction is not really contradiction because, when the particle-aspect is applicable, the wave-aspect is excluded and the same holds the other way round. Any particular experiment never gives

contradictory results. So the two descriptions are at bottom complementary rather than contradictory. Hence Böhr's principle of complementarity.

"To return to our subject: everything in Böhr's scheme is a description in terms of scientific instruments and there is no attempt to describe what reality is without their intervention. Here it is impossible to go beyond instruments to a calculus of certainty such as relativity theory works upon and thus it is impossible to link up with field-equations applying directly to reality. The obstructive role played by instruments would not be less even if we ignored Einstein and stuck to Newton and forgot that relativity theory ever existed. For, Newton's physics is also of continuity of process: there is no place in it for probability. Quantum physics, therefore, has introduced a radical split in the whole body of physical science and across the split we can never pass if we take microphysics as our point of departure.

"Can we pass if we take as our point of departure macrophysics? Einstein admits that quantum physics has made the definite localisation of particles a programme which can never be carried out. But he thinks that a field theory can dispense with definite localisation and, by dispensing with it, avoid all dependence of equations upon instruments. In his opinion, the main difficulty is the discontinuity of things rather than of processes: probability is no hurdle, but how are we to account for particles on the basis of equations for a continuous field? Even a general correlation of electromagnetic phenomena with gravitational phenomena has not yet been achieved in a way that can be tested by experiment. Within this correlation the discovery of field-properties that would account for particles is barred at present by various problems. Einstein has not abandoned the hope of getting microphysics into line with macrophysics. But, to put it bluntly, he seems to be chasing a chimera. Here too there is a split which has the look of being no mere gap in knowledge but an abyss radical and uncrossable.

"And such a split from both sides makes all physics a weak foundation to build upon. There cannot be the least complacency on the part of physicists. Although no indication is provided by the absence of a unifying formula that materialism is invalid separately within the two non-unified sections of physics, a *prima facie* case is created against a cut-and-dried materialism. A similar case is created also against any other 'ism'. And the question thrusts itself upon us: what 'ism' do the non-unified sections suggest? But, whatever be the answer, an open mind must be the consequence of the split."

September, 1948

K. D. SETHNA

AN ENGLISHMAN ABROAD

A LETTER OF REMEMBRANCES

63, St. Cross Road, Winchester, Hampshire, England.

Dear Susanne,

This is a joint letter to the large number of friends I met during my year's travel to India and back. I have to write a joint letter because otherwise the time and cost involved would really make it an impossible task! I do hope you will excuse my not writing individually to you.

I arrived home on September 5th after hitch-hiking from Istanbul, beating a postcard I had sent by 5 minutes! My adventures and good fortune continued all the time; at the Bulgarian frontier they were refusing entry to everyone with a beard. I managed to ignore the demands of the border guard and get successfully through the customs, only to be arrested the same night in Plovdiv, locked up in the local jail for the night and thrown out of town the next morning! They like all their young men to be clean-shaven and well-behaved—obedient to the state, in fact, and they apply the same standard to tourists. I had opportunity to have long discussions with the very pleasant and well-mannered police, and asked what would happen if Karl Marx—or Lenin, for that matter—were to visit Bulgaria today. They replied that they would either have to undergo a shave or be thrown out!

From outside Belgrade, Yugoslavia, I had one lift to Turin, in Northern Italy, with an Italian student of medicine, who gave me guided tours of Venice, Verona, Milan and Turin. Many thanks to him. Then after leaving Geneva (the most expensive of cities?), the first night I was invited home to the flat of a concert solo violinist, the second night at the flat of a German hashish trader, and the third night I was on the ferry home from Ostende, with a lift up to London guaranteed. Even in Waterloo Station, possibly one of the worst in a European Capital, I was offered an empty carriage to sleep in till my train home left, which is not normally allowed.

Let me go back to last October, when I first arrived in New Delhi, a little uncertain, and more than a little sick from the change of food. It was six weeks before I 'escaped' and travelled to Agra, Kanpur, Allahabad, and Varanasi, staying as I had done in Delhi with friends in the Sarvodaya movement. All over India I was made overwelcome by the Gandhians, and I come away very impressed by the personal devotion and sacrifices being made in the cause of a just and non-violent India; but I must also say that I don't think any important change can be brought about unless civil disobedience and non-violent resistance are adopted. Gramdan asks for 1/10th or 1/20th of the land; but would Gandhi have been content, I ask, with only 1/20th of Independence? The fresh wind of a struggle for justice without submission to doctrinaire thinking could maybe catch the enthusiasm of that section of the (huge) younger

generation which still believes in something higher than the accumulation of status symbols.

I feel that Sarvodaya is attempting to live up to two identities: as a movement of love, and as a movement of revolution. It succeeds in its first identity. By failing in its second identity, the long-run benefits of the love may all be washed away in someone else's revolution.

Close to Varanasi, I passed two weeks at Prem Bhai's Utopia Workshop, Agrindus Ashram, which is the first of the dry, poor and remote areas of India that he hopes to transform. Then I was in Varanasi itself for two weeks, at the Sarva Seva Sangh Guerilla Base at Rajghat. Then for Christmas I found myself under a clear and beautiful starry sky, peacefully, at Khadigram, in Bihar's Monghyr district, and on the evening of the 25th I was moving through the night to Calcutta on one of India's amazing, punctual, epic-making, grim, human cattle trains. I hadn't reserved my bourgeois privilege—a seat. That happened often, but this railway journey was the most epic. A child had been sick on the floor where the crushed up travellers would have liked to crouch, and when we got to a station I got a cloth and a fire bucket, and proceeded to mop it up, causing great floods of water and consternation in the process. Needless to say, nobody helped.

Within twenty-four hours of pressurized nightmare I was dancing across the runway at Dum-Dum airport bound for Assam, bamboos and hills and rivers and colourful tribes, deciding that a whole new city should be built for the refugees and vagrants by the refugees and vagrants somewhere well north of Calcutta, and let the rich clean their own shoes!

I had been invited to a South-East Asia Students' gathering up at North Lakhimpur organised by the Sarvodaya movement. I was an intruder from the West whose guitar turned out to be very welcome! It was a marvellous five days for all concerned, during which we were treated like kings, ambassadors to this corner of India. And after the gathering, all the foreign ambassadors were treated to another five days being shown around Assam by coach.

Then I stayed in Gauhati for two weeks hoping that I might get permission to visit some friends in Nagaland, a place that I still long to visit. New Delhi was uncompro-mising, but while staying in Gauhati—at Sarania Ashram, a little island of peace set above the noise and rush, populated by angels, believe it or not, from the NEFA hills, who are there to be trained to work in the villages and border areas, girls who will devote their lives to the service of the Assamese people—while in Gauhati I took the opportunity to conduct an interesting experiment in voluntary work; with a number of students and the angels from Sarania we spent 3 hours one Sunday morning cleaning up a few of the filthy streets. The press took good notice, but the work was not continued on subsequent Sundays, as we had hoped it might have been.

After an amusing evening when I and my Tanzanian Sikh friend gave a talk and sang songs to a hostel of young blood—some in miniskirts—from Nagaland, I returned to Calcutta, this time for a week; the parents of another young Sikh I had met in

Geneva the year before were kind enough to put me up, and I was able to inspect the horrors of the overcrowding without being consumed by them. I travelled around Calcutta with an ex-major from the British Army who now feeds 5,000 hungry mouths every day, not having missed a day for 11 years. Calcutta may have its attractions, but it is also the accumulation of all India's problems and one wonders when the breaking point comes.

Resisting the temptation to turn North again to wander and explore up in the hills, I went south, first to Abhoy Ashram, among the Santal tribes, and then on to Balasore and Cuttack. Around this time I was doing quite a lot of talking to groups of students and Sarvodaya workers about our problems in Europe, and of the way in which the students and the peace-movement were re-acting. I also found people very curious to know about the 'Hippies'. It was at Abhoy Ashram that I gave my first big sing-song to a large group of highly animated, beautiful and vocal children. These afterwards became more regular—whenever I could, I would sing for the children; we all loved it. But one item of sad news for all who enjoyed the music of my guitar is that eventually it was all too much for it. The very day I left India, on the bus from Amritsar to Ferozepur, it completely fell apart, too much sun and too much singing. But that is not the end of the story; it was in a lonely frontier hotel that I was about to abandon it, when a musical dealer from Ferozepur and a student of Ravi Shankar walked in. So to him I was able to give the sorry instrument, and I hope soon to buy a sitar from him. Such is providence—or the magic of the guitar!

I must have spent about two weeks in Orissa; here I really discovered the plight that some of the hills people and tribals are in, exploited hollow by landlords and moneylenders, often outsiders. I also discovered that opposition, a militant stir of fury among the younger generation, is growing, and their day will come, no doubt. From Orissa to Vizayawada, where I rested a full week at the Atheist Centre, getting over a bout of bronchitis. Gora was away pacifying Telengana, so I was never able to meet him, but I was able to sense one thing about the Centre at Patamata—the strongest feeling of family, community, that I felt anywhere in India. Love is certainly no monopoly of the religions!

But by this time (the end of February), I was becoming more and more depressed by the state of "India", and the seeming darkness in every direction. In this mood I was in Madras for a few days, and then I went on south, calling in at Pondicherry for a few days on the way...

But in Pondicherry I found something very different, and the days became weeks, months. I read the works by and about Sri Aurobindo, I thought and wrote, I began to meditate regularly; I spent some time out at AUROVILLE, and was on the edge of getting involved in the work when I decided that I should move on, as time was not timeless. Above all, I was able to meet The Mother, an occasion so powerful and so beautiful that my friends said I wore a glow for a few days after! The time I spent in the Ashram was certainly important for me, a new unfolding in my life, which is helping decisively to shape my thinking and being—even if at times it does get buried under

the realities of the illusion! And Sri Aurobindo—he is certainly one of India's greatest sons; his writings strike me as being more valuable than those of the great European writers, whose outlooks are normally fairly restricted.

At the beginning of June I got away; the weather was oppressive, but only if one was willing to be oppressed. I went to Gandhigram and Madurai, where I sat for many hours in the huge temple. Then across and up to the Nilgiri Hills, to Kotagiri, and to a small cottage on a big hillside 6,000 feet up, where we sat around a coal fire in the evenings. This is Marjorie Sykes' hide-out. I'm afraid we really invaded her—my visit coincided with that of four English nurses and two other peace-minded travellers.

Then turning north again, turning back. A day in Mysore, two days in Bangalore, five days in Bombay, and back to Delhi, which seemed a bit more pleasant this time, even though it was the pre-monsoon days of Hot Weather. Here I stayed at the Gandhi Peace Foundation while preparing a subversive report recommending a more revolutionary outlook (the pretentiousness of these foreigners!), and paying endless visits to banks and Embassies.

When all that was finished, I went with no plans at all up to Rishikesh, which was exceedingly beautiful, and met a young yogi Bal Yogi Prem Varni, in whose quiet jungle ashram I stayed for a week while learning some more Yoga from him. It was a very happy finish to my ten months in India. Since leaving Pondicherry I have been able to look more philosophically upon the problems of India, and have not allowed them to depress me. I see no fantastic solution to it all. The people on the one hand are slowly waking, the problems on the other hand are ever increasing with the population; it is a direct relationship, and the way out can only lie with the arousal of the consciousness of the people, with an escape from the age old chains of caste, taboo and tradition. The future seems to me to be as uncertain as it is unknowable.

So at the beginning of August I set off back home, where I have to complete my final year of Sociology at Nottingham. I travelled fast, reaching the Persian border in 5 days, where I had to wait for two days with a lot of other travellers in a quarantine camp for Cholera, which had broken out somewhere. Then on. To Mashad, Teheran, Tabriz, to Turkey. In Erzurum I left the friends I had been travelling with to go south. I wanted to find somewhere quiet to have a chance to write, which gets difficult when you are always moving, and to enjoy the sun and the sea for a while. The Turkish Riviera is really quite prosperous, still cheap, still uncrowded, and very beautiful. I made good friends, and found a beach-camping site, surrounded by ruined castles and old Christian tombs with Greek inscriptions. So there I stayed 5 days.

Then, equipped with my instant-suntan, I went on to Anatalya, where I got the ferry boat to Istanbul on a student concession. On the second night, however, as the result of a small incident all those young people who had even slightly long hair were locked up all night, and the next morning we were searched and taken off the boat by the army, to be kept all day in the local police station. At the end of the day, after they had tried and failed to prove anything, we were told that we were 'free'! But we

were not allowed to return to the boat; as the result of strong complaints, it seems as if the captain may be in serious trouble.

That brings me back to where I started. Now I have to stay in England and do some concentrated work. The last year has been invaluable to me; I should like to thank you very much indeed for the help you gave me, which had a hand in making it possible. I shall not be forgetting in a hurry! England seems to be quite active at the moment, and there is a lot to do. So I cannot say when I shall find the time again to come East...but before too long, I hope.

With love from Guy

THE UNDYING GLOW

I ASPIRE to grasp within the hollow of my hands the soft-red glow that appears on the distant horizon.....

I want to rub sun-dust on my face and body in order to see if the touch, the taste, of the rising sun is different from that of the setting one.

I, therefore, go with great expectation to the sea-sides of the East and also to the river banks of the West to seek and procure the essence of the sun....

Oh, yes, I find it at last. I discover that it quivers mingling itself with the waves of the sea. It smiles in red ecstasy while playing with the flowing water of the western rivers.

Stealthily I extend my hands. My fingers tremble and on a sudden I capture it within the cavity of my palms. But, alas, immediately it escapes breaking the fetter of my fingers.....

In the same way, Oh Lord, I aspire to clasp You with the extended hands of my heart. And I feel at times that I have almost got You. But then I see with a sad surprise that You are not there....

So I presume, perhaps the question of getting or not getting does not apply in relation to You. You are beginningless and endless and beyond all bounds. But at the same time You are present everywhere and at all times.....

Why then does the darkness of the setting sun still pervade the horizon of consciousness? I pray to You, Oh unseen but almighty All, set blaze the kissing lips of Heaven and Earth with that ray of radiant love which knows no shadow nor end.

Give vision to the blind subconscious to behold the ray of love supernal, the undying grandeur at the core of existence....

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

(A free English rendering by the author of his own Bengali poem not published yet.)

THE REVOLUTION SUPREME

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

WE dare to envisage the coming Sri Aurobindo-inspired global revolution bringing about a Great Truth Encounter on the world stage, leading towards a “Great Detente”, a relaxation in international relations.

Because of its crucial relation to the resolution of the global crisis, we must foresee the probability that the united world people’s movement of the Revolution Supreme, as it gains momentum, will create a friendly but highly dramatic truth encounter among powers. It is our faith that this encounter can issue in a *detente*, an easing of world tensions towards a durable peace and a really new order.

The choice is between such a friendly truth encounter and an all-out hostile encounter one day—or one catastrophic hour!

Would it not be poetic justice if the fate of the human family in this super-crisis hinged upon the *truth*-issue, that is, the attitude to truth of the principals in this human drama? Well, that is precisely the way the climax of the drama is shaping up on the stage of history today!

Who are the principals in the drama? *Now* it is the *governments*, the creatures of the old politics, with propaganda as their stock-in-trade. At the earliest possible, it must be *the people* and their true representatives, with Truth and a unitive sense of imperrative common cause as their strength.

The old propaganda-centered political game has dragged on so long and the rivals on the world stage and in the UN are so habituated to dealing with issues in terms of *propaganda manoeuvres*, that it probably seldom occurs to them to steer by the North Star of Truth. But Judgment Day is at hand, and the Supreme, and the sovereign peoples of the human family, must call us all *back to Reality*.

In any struggle between contending forces, Reality will win. You may beat the other fellow for a time but you can’t beat the universe! Reality will decide the issue in the not-too-long run.

Man is a late-comer to the universe. He had better admit that he is not the lord of creation as his egoistic strutting on the stage of history often seems to assume. Man did not create Reality; his struggle upward from the brute is marked by his increasing discovery of Reality and, however reluctantly, his aligning himself with it. The school of Life has taught us that harmonising with Reality means life, and defying it death.

The universe is cosmos, not chaos. Therefore we must respect and obey the laws of life, the nature of Reality: we must harmonise with Truth if we would survive. We are very dependent beings, on an infinitesimal speck in a universe where our planet is dwarfed by our sun 1,300,000 times earth’s size, and by enormous heavenly bodies (“quasars”), one of them thus far discovered emitting the light of 10,000,000,000,000

suns! "In the universe thus far explored by telescope," says Arthur Clarke, "there may be some 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 other suns!" So we say, let man, ambitious to conquer the cosmos, come down to earth! Let him relax his little old ego and adopt for a change a down-to-earth truthful realism.

How do we see the world truth drama, the Great Truth Encounter, shaping upon the international scene? We do not propose to go into the details of international politics in this brief presentation but to deal with the main features of the world struggle into which those details fit. Let us attempt the approach of spiritual statesmanship, that which Sri Aurobindo calls "*spiritual realism*".

It requires no prophet to tell us that the next few years will be a time of supreme crisis for the human family. It may bring tragedy unimaginable. Or it may mean the beginnings of a new age of confident peace and illimitable progress.

The ancient Chinese wisdom formed the word "crisis", by combining the characters meaning "danger" and "opportunity". The present world situation is indeed a dangerous opportunity. The major powers are confronted by perilous dilemmas, with massive mutual frustration. They do not see a clear road ahead. So vast are the forces at their command that this prolonged state of frustration is highly critical and may easily erupt.

But there is a clear road ahead and that is the opportunity side of this crisis. It requires of the nations a turning from egoistic propaganda-centeredness to truth-centeredness, so simple yet so profound in its implications and effects. This hour of the world's crisis has brought the human drama to the moment of truth. Such a 'Judgment Day' can be the day of the great liberation.

Red China's dilemma is, how actually to fulfil her declared role of inciter and protector of revolutions while confronted with American power as in Vietnam, and with a rapid loss of influence among the new nationalist, non-communist governments of Asia and Africa that do not want to be overthrown. Driven by their unrevised Marxist emphasis on inevitable class conflict, even war, Mao and comrades have become so frustrated in *action* on the world scene that they are themselves in danger of being regarded as paper tigers—much propaganda, little "liberation". It is now over five years since Peking declared that it would not stand idly by and see North Vietnam, on its doorstep, attacked!

Meanwhile the U.S.A. has long been in a dilemma, so far as any creative solution is concerned. President Johnson rightly challenged his critics for years with, "What is your solution?" yet the tens of thousands of bombings of North Vietnam did not seem to have brought the settlement much nearer, and an American resolution to carry on for decades, if necessary, would not really have resolved the dilemma; hence President Nixon has had to bow to a growing demand to end the war.

The Soviet Union, between the two extremes, has a double dilemma on its hands. It has been torn between "brinkmanship" adventures, as in the Cuba missile confrontation, and almost helplessly standing by, so far as action to rescue Vietnam is concerned, while keeping up a world-wide propaganda attack on the U.S.A. The desperation

of the Politburo's dilemma could not have been more dramatically stressed than by the invasion of Czechoslovakia while being driven to claim falsely that it was in response to the Czechoslovakia Government's cry for rescue.

The second Soviet dilemma, a very momentous and trying one, is on the ideological front. Although certain of her own foremost scientists have declared, concerning the Soviet "scientific socialism", that the two pillars of the dialectical materialism which is the Communist philosophy, *determinism and materialism*, have suffered a complete collapse in the eyes of modern science, and although Moscow has been under a fierce and sustained attack from Peking on the ideological issue, being charged with revisionism, *i.e.*, departing from the guiding light of Marx and Lenin, the Western Communist hierarchy deny the charge and, despite the somewhat liberal trend since destalinization, have not yet had the courage to subordinate propaganda to truth—about which more later.

These dilemmas of the most powerful, dynamic nations involve volcanic frustrations, a perilous condition in the nuclear age.

Other powers are not without their dilemmas; they share in these according to their alignment, and share also in responsibility for an astonishing fact: that twenty-five years after Hiroshima these nations, who have become very plan-conscious, have not evolved any master-plan for survival, for resolving the world crisis. It is our conviction that the governments are unconsciously waiting for the people to awaken and do this, seeing that this is *everyman's dangerous opportunity*.

This is indeed the people's cause *par excellence*. As alert world citizens we are confronted by an arresting question: How can we and our fellow-adventurers on this planet unite, in planning and in action, to survive the present world crisis and enjoy the wonders and delights of the New Age?

We must adopt a new ideal of *Cooperative Coexistence* in place of the *combative* coexistence of Mao and comrades and the highly *competitive* coexistence of both the USA and USSR, granted that there are important differences between the latter two nations. *Here is a strategic truth: a New Dialectic* is called for, to replace that of Karl Marx. Instead of thesis—*antithesis*—synthesis, it must be thesis—*supplementary or corrective truth*—synthesis, bypassing the old "*antithesis*", with its "inevitable clashes", which the world cannot afford in the atomic age—or in any other, for that matter, once we see the higher way.

We have an advantage over all previous ages of man in the marvellous means of communication that surround us, therefore the means of awakening and of sustained cooperation which are in our hands for solving such a crucial problem. This can be a decisive factor, when we couple it with a most strategic fact, a master-key to the world situation which has come to our hands for this crucial time.

There is an unrecognised truth of immense importance in the present world situation: the chief declared enemies of the ideological and cooperative coexistence which must be our goal, the present Red China regime and the Soviet Union, base their stand on an ideology, "dialectical materialism," whose basic elements have been

thoroughly outmoded and discredited by modern science; their "scientific socialism", their favourite name for their system, has not a leg to stand on in the eyes of unregimented scientists today. The Communist philosophy is based on a massive error that cannot stand in the face of a mighty truth campaign that must sweep across the world during the next few years.

Soviet scientists themselves have acknowledged this strategic truth. Soviet Nobel and Lenin Prize atomic physicist, Dr. V. A. Fok, dared to declare in a national science congress a decade ago that "in modern physics the deterministic standpoint has suffered a complete collapse". Determinism, a basic element of dialectical materialism, the official Communist philosophy, is the view that life is absolutely determined by the laws governing matter, which are supposed to work with infallible mechanical precision.

In the same congress another eminent Soviet scientist declared that the old *materialism* is nowhere in the eyes of science today. Yet the official propaganda in all Communist lands still holds to dialectical materialism, and it is still described as "scientific socialism"! 'This is a most significant weakness in the Communist case as presented to the world by Party propagandists. Because Marxism has serious implications in the direction of war, through its deterministic emphasis on supposedly inevitable and irreconcilable class war, this dangerous and erroneous ideology must be exposed, *in a scientific and friendly spirit*, in the interest of the peoples of Communist lands and their passion for peace, and for the sake of the whole world family. Let us hope the collective egoism of a Party will not long be permitted to block the path of humanity to peace and progress.

(To be continued)

JAY HOLMES SMITH

TRIPTYCH

I

I prostrate kiss thy wisdom's mercy-seat:
In name of love, O subtly silent Guard
Of incarnation's lore, hast thou debarred
Me from millennial triumph and defeat.

Yet all is not forgot; in thy despite
There's marrow certitude that this life's brute
Blind drive to front the faceless Absolute
Was seeded in my last farewell to light.

No philosophic dalliance, no play
Of vagrant mood has charged this will to plunge
Into the Vast's Icarian sea, expunge
Invented self in gulfs of ocean day;

Mine's been a sacred lust to plumb God's deep—
And this denied, the body's smaller sleep...

II

In slumber-fields at dusk, when thunderhead
Piled snow-deep glory up the sky, there rose
From arcane chamber of my heart's repose
A mystiered Man of Light—who by the bed,

In lotus asana of gathered will,
Fixed yogic eyes on distant golden gates
Behind whose towering mass aeonic fates
Locked fast his being's home: Nirvanic Nil.

A potent song is born of occult hour;
So "Open! Open! Open!" winged its note
From out his wildly pure, demonic throat.
But golden gates ignored that vibrant power.

A distant thunder-roll—then evening's hush
Took all. The song came now from lonely thrush.

III

Torrential fury shakes the somnolent world:
Green lightning stabs a hectic yellow sky,
Beneath blind whips of rain pale pastures lie,
Mad gods of wind ride high, mad flags unfurled.

I half return from sleep to a pregnant air:
Self-shaping words of some Olympian tongue
Amass for cosmic birth: I lie among
Ambiguous saviours from my old despair.

Within the room an imperial Presence lives—
Primordial Woman-Force of chthonic clime,
Inhabitant of stellar-vista'd time,
Whose mighty I AM YOUR SALVATION gives

My quickening flesh a touch of cataclysmic things.
An unknown voice of grandiose adventure sings.

WILLIAM JONES

AT MIDNIGHT

The heart of stillness mutely beats
In rhythms yet unknown to word,
The midnight soul in silence meets
A Something, deeply dumbly stirred.

This tree is in a trance of peace,
Its darkened matted locks proclaim
A glory dim in this abyss
Of Night that hides the ancient flame.

The wandering of the clouds has come
To a sudden end, their face of gloom
Has now become a heaven's home
Midst far-off friendly stars abloom.

The wind wades through a cosmic calm,
Invading and pervading all;
Its murmurs chant a sacred psalm,
Whose echoes fill earth's empty hall.

A soul of silence wakes anon
And meets the Deity of the deep,
And finds that now all worlds are won
In God's omniscient winkless sleep.

27-5-1970

PUNJALAL

KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

(Continued from the issue of July)

XVI

KAMBAN commences the Aranya Kanda, as indeed he commences every one of the six Cantos, with an invocation song about the intriguing nature of God.

What a multitude of forms is there in creation! Trees, hills, rivers, men and animals! The differences in their forms are startling. From the amoeba to the Seer in the whole gamut of creation, infinite are the gradations of sensibility and consciousness and yet all these are but manifestations of God-stuff even as the millions of mountainous waves rising and falling in the sea are but manifestations of the sea-stuff and are no different from the sea. All these separate-seeming forms are facets of, and inseparable from, Ultimate Reality.

The character of God has been expatiated upon in the Vedas and described as limitless in its expanse and depth. The more we study and understand the scriptures, the keener becomes our consciousness and those who have sharpened their sensibilities by such study and understanding are called the Seers. The greatest adept among the Seers is Brahma, the Creator, but even he has not had a full cognizance of the Ultimate Ground. Yet Kamban claims that he has discovered Its real nature and uncovered Its hiding-place.

What is this Primordial Substance?
Without estranging Itself from what It creates,
It dwells in its myriad forms;
It is beyond the grasp of the Scriptures,
Which sharpen our awareness
The more and more we dip into them;
It is beyond the grasp, too,
Of Brahma, the Prince among Seers;
It is nothing but He,
Who is the Mind behind our minds.

The short-sighted man looks through his glasses and is able to see clearer. The glasses, then, are the instrument through which his eyes are able to perceive. If he would but go behind his eyes, he would realize that his eyes are but an instrument through which his mind perceives. The Poet takes us farther behind and says that the

mind of Man is only an instrument through which God perceives even as Man thinks he does through his eyes and glasses. The Mind behind the Ego's mind is so near and yet so far. The Poet's taunt is that book-lore, however satisfying to the ego, is no substitute for a deep-delving into and beyond the mind, which alone can bring Man face to face with God.

Rama with his Consort and brother goes into Dandakaranya where ancient Rishis dwell. Some of them have been performing tapas for hundreds of years and are covered with long bushy hair. By Yogic power, some of them have managed to remain hairless. Yet others have remained absorbed in silence for years on end. Some saints live with their wives in their hermitages. But all of them are united in their quest after Reality and have been patiently putting up with the mischievous harassments of the Rakshasas and their wanton acts of vandalism. The arrival of Rama gladdens their hearts; they feel refreshed like the jungle weeds, which, scorched by the tropical heat, leap to new life at the touch of the ambrosial showers.

The potency of the Rakshasas was increasing day by day, and their very name would strike terror into the hearts of the hermits. With Rama's arrival, they feel like the baby calf, which, separated from her mother by a fast-spreading jungle fire, suddenly sights her leaping to her rescue.

They gazed at Rama
 With understanding comprehension,
 Their tapas lending them expanded insight
 And their wisdom offering support to their understanding.
 Verily, they felt like bursting out of the huge prison
 Of the savage agony of earthly birth.
 They rose up and ran;
 With love, that showered and swelled,
 They embraced the Warrior,
 Who stood there like the shoot of a black cloud;
 Every time he saluted them,
 They uttered a fresh benediction upon him.

The Sages took Rama to a lovely hermitage and requested him to sojourn there. After he had rested there for a while, they came to him again to tell him their tale of woe. Rama, who was pleased with their blessings, said

“May it please you to command me,
 I am at your service.”

The Saints replied:

“There are many called Rakshasas,

Who are devoid of the thing called Pity,
 And who have departed from Virtue;
 Driven by them,
 We have from Virtue strayed
 And slid down the pathless paths of Vice.
 We have abandoned Meditation,
 We contemplate not the Scriptures,
 We help not those who contemplate them,
 We tend not the holy fire,
 We have discarded the Unitive Way
 And, therefore,
 Have we ceased to be Brahmins.

“Oh! Son of the blessed King,
 Who, with his mighty discus,
 Stood guard over this Earth!
 In endless darkness
 Have we been dwelling;
 You are the Sun
 Risen upon this darkness;
 Merciful Warrior!
 In you we seek refuge.”
 “Cast aside your grief,” said Rama,
 “For grief unbecomes you.
 If the Rakshasas fail to come down on their knees,
 They will fall to the ground with my arrow in their hearts,
 Even if they should try to escape into outer space.”

Rama feels emotionally elevated by the opportunity that he now has to liquidate Evil and serve the men of God. He looks back in retrospect at the concatenation of circumstances which have presented him with this opportunity; he thinks that his banishment and all it has led to—the death of the King, the sorrow of the Queen Mother, the agony of Bharata and the inconsolable grief of the citizens—are all but blessings in disguise. He declares:

My coming to the forest is verily a reward
 For all the accumulated acts of Virtue I have done.

The assurance given by Rama relieves the Sages and at their request he sojourns in their midst, guarding them against the forages of the demons. Ten years roll by and the Rishis live unharassed. Now the Saints realize that something more remains to be done before Rama becomes ready to fulfil his epochal mission. They, therefore,

suggest that Rama might visit the great Saint Agasthya. They describe to him the route to Agasthya's hermitage: Rama bids farewell to them and leaves along with Sita and Lakshmana and the blessings of the Sages for the mountain resort of Agasthya, which is criss-crossed with cascades of water "sweeter far than freshly-extracted honey".

(To be continued)

S. MAHARAJAN

UNFATHOMABLE WAS THE SEA

UNFATHOMABLE was the sea, dazzling dark and uncharted—
 The rapture-winged purple call from the spheres of the blue—
 And I dared the great voyage, the self aflame, upgathered;
 Indestructible was the boat, the diamond Name of deathless hue.

Tied to that was a rope of light, the shimmering ladder-dream
 With rung on rumourless star-rung to the sapphire sky-room.
 The long toiling Quest of the ages is ended: I am home
 At the Mother's marvellous feet, the lotus lake of the Supreme,

The golden goal of the labouring suns, the shrine of splendour.
 The baffling sea is but the shoreless sweep of Her liquid God-lust,
 Her being a breath of beatitude, the abode of the mystic Fire,
 And within Her breast the worlds roll in bliss self-lost.

A. VENKATARANGA

SRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER*

AN APPROACH

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

ANDROMEDA is a rare combination of tenderness, strength, firm-mindedness and refined sensibility. In the mythical story she is merely a beautiful puppet helplessly tossed about by the forces represented by the priest and the people of Syria. Here she is full of individuality and follows nothing but the promptings of her own soul and responding in a very personal way to every situation. When the whole city including her parents fear the rage of the monster, she was the only girl who would dare say:

I'll not be older!

I will not understand, I only know

That men are heartless and your gods most cruel.

I hate them!

Clearly she was ready to pursue her act, at the cost of her life, for it is only after she has made up her mind to oppose Poseidon that Athene comes to her help. Sometimes she behaves like a child and yet her wise statements perplex the reader. It is quite natural that her playmates are surprised by her firm-mindedness and individuality, as when, after the merchants have been captured and are to be sacrificed at the temple, she defies the action and with boldness says:

They shall not die,

It is a shame, a cruel, cold injustice!

When her slave Praxila warns her against speaking such defiant language against the gods and asks her to join the ceremony in her role of Princess, she says:

I had rather be

A beggar's daughter who devours the remnants

Rejected from your table, than reign a queen

Doing such cruelty.

Her action causes a turmoil in the city, but defying men and gods she refuses to yield:

I know not what the gods may do;

I'll not allow it.

It seems she has inherited a bit of her mother's spirit and even her father cannot prevail upon her to change her stand. Fearlessly she tells him that she will continue to question the cruelty of Poseidon:

It shall be questioned. Let your gods go hungry.

Athene, when she comes to her aid, warns Andromeda of the shocks and sufferings she will have to face if she persists in her action:

But dost thou know that thy reward shall be

Betrayal and fierce hatred? God and man

Shall league in wrath to kill and torture thee
Mid dire revilings.

To this the reply is:

My reward shall be
To cool this anguish of pity in my heart
And be at peace; if dead, O still at peace.

Rightly is she called by Tyranus the "human merciful divinity".

But not until she stands an awe-inspiring figure, soliloquising in the temple of Poseidon, do we fully appreciate Andromeda's greatness and find ourselves looking to Savitri and Sita for parallels in burning passion and immaculate purity of purpose.:

Alone I stand before thee, grim Poseidon,
Here in thy darkness, with thy altar near
That keeps fierce memory of tortured groans
And human shrieks of victims, and, unforced,
I yet pollute my soul with the bloody nearness
To tell thee that I hate, condemn and defy thee.
I am no more than a brief living woman
Yet am I more divine than thou, for I
Can pity, I have torn thy destined prey
From thy red jaws. They say thou dost avenge
Fearfully insult. Avenge thyself, Poseidon.

This, one of the most powerful speeches in the play, makes Perseus and Iolaus, who are hiding themselves in the temple, shudder; and Iolaus, perplexed at her sister's behaviour, says:

Sometimes we know them least
Whom most we love and constantly consort with.

Blamed as the chief offender of Poseidon in releasing the chain of the merchant Smerdas, even at this crucial point she defends her act as an act of pity;

Because I would not have their human hearts
Mercilessly uprooted for the bloody
Monster you worship as a God! because
I am capable of pain and so can feel
The pain of others! For which if you I love
Must kill me, do it, I alone am guilty.

Even when Phineus, King of Tyre, comes to save her as the people of Syria are violently driving her towards the altar, she thinks first of others' well-being and declares:

Safe!

My father and my mother are not safe
Nor Iolaus; nor is Syria safe.
Will you protect my people, when the god
Not finding me, his preferable victim,
Works his fierce will on these?

The people of Syria and the priest Polydaon chain her to a cliff near the sea-shore and they all escape leaving her to the grim sea and to the rage of Poseidon. The soliloquy of Andromeda at that moment is another powerful passage. She thinks she has been the cause of the tragedy of the whole family and she is completely without hope that her life will be saved.

.....Heaven looks coldly on.

Yet I repent not, O thou dreadful god!

After she has been saved by Perseus, her Sun-god, the one request she makes of her father, for the attainment of which she has striven all her life, is this:

.....Let the dire cult

For ever cease and victims bleed no more

On its dark altar. Instead Athene's name

Spread over all the land and in men's hearts.

Then shall a calm and mighty will prevail

And broader minds and kindlier manners reign

And men grow human, mild and merciful.

(To be continued)

K. S. LALITHA

ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER

WHEN a foreign writer, well-known for his wit and humour, on an all-India tour reached Calcutta, a representative of a noted daily paper, the *Englishman*, approached him with a question:

“In all that you have seen in India, what is that which appeared to you the most striking?”

Without a pause the visitor made the answer:

“...the well-reputed figure of Bhashkarananda Saraswati, Benares.”

Amazed by his amusing answer, the representative inquired in a curious tone: “You discover something of humour which makes one laugh even where there is nothing to incite a joke. So when you made mention of the naked sannyasi we hoped to hear a lot of fun and humorous remarks but you say—

Intercepting the journalist, the visitor said—“Yes, I say, he is the very image of God. People see in him the Eternal Spirit living before their very eyes in flesh and blood.”

How candid he was in his opinion can be gathered from his book, *More Triumphs Abroad*:

“Surely the Tajmahal is one of the marvels of the world whose beauty thrills the being but can it be more marvellous than this living, breathing figure of God from whom thousands derive solace and look up to with worshipping eyes? ”

The author of the book was so influenced by the luminous personality of the sage that he refers to him in his writings again and again.

The Mother needs no legends of superhuman powers to capture the hearts of others. She shines with the Beauty Divine in her graceful acts. Infinite are the aspects of the Mother. Mention is made here of some of her aspects experienced by different people at different times and according to different versions.

The Bhubaneswar Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Society published a souvenir in April 1970 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Mother's arrival at Pondicherry. Here are a few lines from Nolini Kanta Gupta on the Mother.

“In our human frailty we regard the Divine Mother as mother only, forgetting that she is also divine ..She is divine not in the sense that she is afar and aloof, cold and indifferent like the transcendent Brahman. Indeed, the Divine Mother is more motherly than the human mother can be...”

Reading it a youth of 30, leading a celibate life, in Calcutta exclaimed:

“What Nolini writes we actually feel in our everyday life.

“Yes, she is divine. A living Divinity.

“She hears our call though we are a thousand miles away. Her Grace is the very meaning of our life. The Ashram is our ‘Earthly Heaven.’

“In the present chaotic state of the Calcutta market where dishonesty, deceit and

falsehood are the rule of life, it is impossible to stick to honest means of earning without the constant flow of the Mother's Grace.

"Even in an overcrowded bus in Calcutta, not only do I feel her presence but see her on the horizon with open eyes. Believe me, there is not the least exaggeration in what I say.

"In our day-to-day crisis she is at our back. When no hand comes to help, she is there. Off and on we are thrown in to such adverse circumstances that but for her saving Grace, with our limited sources we would be nowhere."

The youth has been coming to the Ashram since the age of nineteen. Once he visioned a bright baby coming out of himself and the Mother caressing it.

On the third anniversary of the Golden Day—the day of what we call the supramental manifestation—he was blessed with an open-eyed vision of golden dust falling like a shower.

This is the story of one of the lay-visitors who assemble in hundreds during the Darshan days on a pilgrimage to the Ashram.

Time and again we hear people saying in all earnestness like the man acting as an Agent of an Insurance company in Hyderabad: "My whole life is the working of the Mother's Grace."

On one of the Darshan days in 1969 came a priest of a temple in U.P. to see me. He was an ardent devotee of the Mother. Among his followers was a little one of four or five years with his grandmother.

Out of fun I asked the boy, "Where is the Mother?"

Beaming and touching his heart, he replied "Here."

On coming to know that her grandmother was preparing to go to Pondicherry a girl of four insisted on accompanying her but the school teacher refused the leave.

Showing the calendar with her little finger she said, again and again, with her streaming eyes, "Look! the Mother is calling me."

A question was recently asked: "A girl of four or five is often found kissing the Mother's photo whenever she sees it. How do we understand this girl?"

Madhav Pandit gives the answer: "The soul is awake and has the contact. The picture reminds her of it and she expresses her joy at the meeting."

Once a little girl of our Centre of Education inquired of her teacher in a soft and sweet tone, "What is sorrow? What is weeping? Why do people weep?"

These are the children who carry heaven in their hearts. It is our hope and aspiration that a day will come when they will carry the message of the Master to the ends of the earth.

A few questions by a visitor with their answers may prove interesting.

Visitor: Everything is grand here and of a very high order but I cannot reconcile myself to one thing—I am not willing to accept the Mother as Divine.

Answer: If the Divine stands before you in person, will you not still ask Him to give proof that he is Divine? The Divine is in me, in you and everywhere. The one, in whom he chooses to manifest Himself, is Divine. A limited appearance should not

stop us. Standing at the sea-shore if we say the sea is only so much as meets our eyes, does it not expose our ignorance?

In these hard times, with what ease the Mother is carrying the Himalayan burden of the Ashram!

Visitor: All the burden is on her shoulders?

Answer: Who else can bear it?

Visitor: Is she your support too?

Answer: Yes, of course.

Visitor: Your family's also?

Answer: They are supported not because they are my family but because they are accepted by the Mother.

Visitor: I marvel at the discipline, the coordination, the worshipping spirit here.

Answer: Who would like to take the burden of others these days!

Visitor: What do you think about the future?

Answer: Sri Aurobindo was all along busy with the problem of man's future. The question of questions that occupied the whole thought and action of Sri Aurobindo was how to transmute the hell fire in human life into the fire of heaven, how to bring into being the beauty and bliss of the Supreme in man's desert life.¹

Visitor: Will all that Sri Aurobindo has said come true?

Answer: Sri Aurobindo saw in his Yogic vision that the time had come for a new principle to be established in the earth consciousness and he staked his all to see it done. Nothing can stop the onward march of evolution. No darkness can stand the might of the rising sun.

Visitor: Shall we live to see the day?

Answer: God is never in a hurry. What is to come will come in its own time—the destined "Hour of God." If the glory of the Supermind could shine in full even in one life, in one person, it would lead to the birth of a race of the Sons of God.

Visitor: How will it be achieved?

Answer: That has been the work going on in the Ashram for the last fifty years. It has still not reached its peak.

Visitor: One question more: Will there be an end of human suffering?

Answer: Yes. Sri Aurobindo is very emphatic on the point but not till the Supermind has planted itself in the subconscious. It is on this principle that the Ashram has evolved and is evolving. ("The appearance of a new force and light and power, accompanying the descent of the supramental consciousness into this world can alone lift man out of the agony and pain and misery under which he is submerged." —The Mother)

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¹ "To bring Divine love and Ananda in the world is the crown and essence of our Yoga." Sri Aurobindo.

Now a cheering instance of how the Mother is more motherly than a human mother can be. A boy of 13, suffering from Phymosis, was not able to pass urine and was very restless. He was allowed to go to the Mother thrice a week. When he spoke about his trouble, the Mother took him to the bath-room, herself applied the medicine to the affected part, and asked the boy to pass urine. When he could not, the Mother lovingly caught hold of his hand and he passed the urine freely.

On a certain day the same boy was feeling very uneasy. He prayed to the Mother to help him get rid of his uneasiness. As it was due to some resistance, the Mother asked him to wait, but he insisted. Again the Mother dissuaded him from getting anything done by force but he did not listen. Rather in his childish way he caught hold of a portion of the Mother's garment and said that he would not budge till the Mother removed the resistance.

The Mother got a glass of fruit juice brought and, herself drinking a portion of it, asked the boy to drink the rest.

When he reached home he got a severe pain in the spine; then he realised his mistake. As he stood again before the Mother, she read his case from his face. Now the time had come for the resistance to be worked out. The Mother gave him a fruit and a sweet to eat. Then and there the pain was gone.

On August 4, 1961 in a dream-vision the boy had seen Mahakali in a dancing posture. Of a sudden Her complexion turned gold, and Her face sweet and compassionate. This was followed by a heavy shower. When he wrote to the Mother all that he had seen, she wrote back:

“The dream is very interesting. It is a clear symbol of the future supramental transformation and a kind of assurance given by Kali, that you will be able to participate in it.”

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

THE SECRET SELF AND THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

PART II—THE SECOND LIBERATION

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

2

FAITH

“Yo yachohhraddhah sa eva sah”—
Whatever a man’s faith, that he becomes.

THE word “faith” comes from the Middle English word “*faith*” yet it is synonymous with the Latin *fidere* meaning *to trust*. If we keep to the simplicity of this meaning without all its religious implications—that is, the *trust*, say, of a little child, a little child before it has evolved a thinking mind, before it need dissimulate or dissemble, before it has come to the age of disenchantment then perhaps we are somewhat near that *trust* which knows itself to be divine. It is a psychic knowledge of the soul within, before it becomes overclouded by the mind, the mind with all its analyses and doubts, the mind that has an arrogance because it has not met intelligence and wisdom in experience yet to be.

True faith is what men call faith without the expectancy. It is the knowledge or experience of the psychic being direct in its relationship with Truth and Truth’s authority, which takes no cognisance of mind or intellect.

By faith man can achieve the impossible because it links itself with the divine creativity.

The question was put to the Mother, “Can mere faith create all, conquer all?” The Mother’s answer was, “Yes, but it must be an integral faith and it must be absolute... If you can create in yourself an integral force of this kind in all your being, then nothing can resist it... There is, now abroad, the beginning of a knowledge among scientists that death is not a necessity. But the whole of humanity believes firmly in death; it is, one might say, a general human suggestion based on a long unchanging experience. If this belief could be cast out first from the conscious mind, then from the vital nature and the subconscious physical layers, death would no longer be inevitable.”¹

“Faith makes the blind to see and the lame to stride over the hills.”²

¹ *Words of the Mother*, pp. 86-87.

² Psalms of David.

It seems that man today has lost faith because he has turned away from God. He has also turned away from the truth of his own being. He has trust only in what he understands by the senses. And *in the west 'God is Dead.'* *Perhaps* it was necessary. The anthropomorphic image that most western people had of God was of an ancient with a long beard sitting up there above the clouds recording the sins and virtues of the human race. The image had to die if man was to become conscious of anything truly Divine. Today man hopes or is without hope, but little children do not hope, they believe, they have faith.

(To be continued)

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

On The Mother Divine by *Pasupati*, published by Phanibhusan Nath, Matri Mandir, Prafullanagar, P.O. Kalyangarh, 24 Parganas, W. Bengal. Price: Rs. 8.00.

IN this fascinating book the very first quotation from Sri Aurobindo is: "It is the lesson of life, that always in this life everything fails a man. Only the Divine does not fail him, if he turns entirely to the Divine." With such an assurance, there is a hope and a possibility for a better human existence on this earth itself. And in Pasupati Bhattacharya's book we find the secret key to open the golden gate for the manifestation of the Divine amongst us: the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Sri Aurobindo has said: "The Mother herself is the destination, everything is in her. When you find her, you find all." Again, there are his words: "If one is open to Sri Aurobindo and not to the Mother it means that one is not really open to Sri Aurobindo." These messages urge us on to explore the book. No doubt, as Sri Aurobindo has remarked about himself, nobody can write with complete adequacy on a life which has not been on the surface for men to see. But a clear mind, coupled with a devoted heart, can bring some intimation of the depths. And that is what Pasupati has succeeded in doing. Here is not only genuine feeling but also fine understanding.

What is achieved is certainly out of the ordinary. It is all the more valuable because of a rare collection of statements from the Mother's own record of her spiritual experiences—scattered statements put together in a significant manner. Everything in the book is beautifully and sincerely arranged in a simple style. The author at many places brings us into a most living touch with the Mother's presence.

Nor do we have the Mother here in isolation. Pasupati puts her in the midst of her Ashram. And the work as a whole can serve as a repository of varied information on the Ashram's activities. We get a true picture of what Sri Aurobindo has established—right from its very birth—with the Mother as its illuminating centre.

Pasupati's book deserves wide circulation.

"DIAL"

Short Stories by *Manoj Das*, published by the Triveni Publishers, Madras, Price: Rs. 4.50.

THIS little volume shines out from the mounds of recent publications like a true gem. Here are stories to be savoured, precious, one by one, and the very simplicity of expression makes them accessible to one and all.

Manoj Das takes some seemingly trivial incident in everyday life, then he describes it with his keen perception of the Divine in man—and more particularly in child—and he touches the heart by giving a sudden, unsuspected glimpse of an inner reality.

There is great diversity and, most of all, there is an uplifting quality in every one of his stories, whether its tune be largo, rondo, luttuoso, or downright scherzo, which stands in felicitous contrast to the downward pull in the works of so many applauded writers.

The perspective from which Manoj Das writes is in close affinity to that of Felix Timmermans. He is also literary brother to that Flemish writer in the choice of theme and in the warm humour. But Manoj Das has over Timmermans the advantage of India being his background, with all the aesthetic wealth it stands for. Just take this humorous little passage out of "The Sage of Tarungiri and the Seven Old Seekers":

"But alas! Instead of a weeping face, the Baba's was a face as smiling as the moon. He looked at them as he strolled and his smile became even wider.

"The seven old seekers stood immobile, like thunderstruck trees. Not only the inspiration for weeping instantly deserted them, but also they felt a severe earthquake shaking their interiors, shattering down a very dearly built structure of expectation.

"The Baba re-entered the cave after a minute or two.

"Mr. Lall broke the silence, saying, 'Pity!'

"And this was followed by several observations.

"Not a drop of tear in his whole face!"

"I feel cheated, I must confess'. ..."

Yes, you must read the whole story to understand the finesse of this passage. All in all, Manoj Das's stories are unsuitable for taking excerpts, they are homogeneous from beginning to end. And, then, to mention one story or another is doing injustice to all the rest of the book.

It is to be hoped that this little collection will find world-wide distribution, as it will not fail to appeal to, and enchant, the English reading public everywhere, and very specially those who, in the middle of the constant mechanical drone of modern life, have preserved the sensorium to appreciate the song of a bird and the fragrance of a wild flower and the radiance of a beautiful thought.

If this review has turned out altogether a eulogy, it is because the only shortcoming of the book is its lack of bulk. Let us hope that the rare quality of these stories does not condemn them to remain rarities.

CARMEN NEVILLE

EYE EDUCATION

SCHOOL CHILDREN

It is estimated that in big cities one-tenth of the school children wear glasses and their defects go on increasing in spite of all care. It is believed by many that the cause of defective eyesight in school children is the use of small print in the text books. When some schools experimented with only large print, eye strain and headache and other troubles became more wide-spread than when small print was employed; repeated trials of books in which large print was used always failed to prevent discomfort. Just as many children wore glasses after the use of text books with large print as when the books were printed in small print. Evidently, the cause of imperfect sight in school children was not connected in any way with the size of print.

It has been generally believed also that the imperfect light of school rooms is the cause of imperfect sight in school children. In fact, the amount of light has nothing to do with the cause of imperfect sight. Children with myopia or hypermetropia have been benefited or cured within a few weeks or earlier by eye education when both a poor light and a bright light were used. They have been cured of their discomforts by reading very small print in good light as well as in candle light or poor light.

Dr. Cohn has done an enormous amount of work to determine the cause, prevention or cure of imperfect sight in school children. He recommended what was considered to be the best form of lighting in schools and also devoted a great deal of time to desks and seats. He believed that he had made a valuable discovery towards prevention of imperfect sight when he recommended an apparatus which prevented school children from leaning far forward when they were studying or writing. After his method had been in use for some time, the vision of children was tested. Much to the surprise of all, the vision was not found benefited. A friend asked Dr. Cohn for his statistics on children who were benefited; he said no children were benefited and that the method was a failure.

Dr. Bates has proved repeatedly through various experiments and clinical observations that any effort or strain to improve the vision always lowers the vision. Straining the eyes to see at long distances always produces near-sightedness or myopia. When efforts are made to see at the near point continuously, the eyes become far-sighted or hypermetropic. It can be demonstrated that the normal eye with normal sight becomes imperfect by a strain to see. When the eyes are relaxed the vision always becomes normal.

Dr. Bates recommends a system of eye education for the prevention and cure of imperfect sight in school children. A Snellen Test Card is used as a means to prevent and improve imperfect sight. The card is placed on the wall of the class-room. Every day, while sitting quietly in their seats, the children are encouraged to read the Snellen Test Card, with each eye separately, covering one eye in such a way as to avoid pressure on the eyeball. It takes only a few minutes and the results obtained from this simple practice are very gratifying. Children suffering from defective vision may read it frequently and do palming.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL, School for Perfect Eyesight