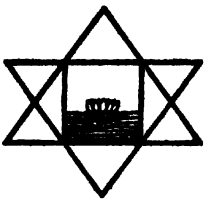
SRI AUROBINDO



THE HARMONY OF VIRTUE

EARLY CULTURAL WRITINGS

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THE HARMONY OF VIRTUE

EARLY CULTURAL WRITINGS

VOLUME 3

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tualised. Nothing is more remarkable in all the characters of the Mahabharata than this puissant intellectualism; every action of theirs seems to be impelled by an immense driving force of mind solidifying in character and therefore conceived and outlined as in stone. This orgiastic force of the intellect is at least as noticeable as the impulse of moral or immoral enthusiasm behind each great action of the Ramayan. Throughout the poem the victorious and manifold mental activity of ~~the~~ age is prominent and gives its character to its civilisation. There is far more of thought in action than in the Ramayan, far less of thought in repose; the one pictures a time of gigantic ferment and disturbance; the other, as far as humanity is concerned, an age of equipoise, ~~order and~~ tranquillity.

Many centuries after ~~Vyasa~~ perhaps a thousand years or even more, came the third great embodiment of the national consciousness, Kalidasa. ~~Far more had happened between his own time and Vyasa's~~ than between Vyasa's and Valmikie's. He came when the dæmonic orgy of character and intellect had worked

Facsimile of a corrected proof of *The Age of Kalidasa*, revised in 1929 — pp. 220-221

Section One

THE HARMONY OF VIRTUE

1890-92

"I read more than once Plato's *Republic* and *Symposium*, but only extracts from his other writings. It is true that under his impress I rashly started writing at the age of 18 an explanation of the cosmos on the foundation of the principle of Beauty and Harmony, but I never got beyond the first three or four chapters."

From notes dictated by Sri Aurobindo

Book One

Keshav Ganesh [Desai] — Broome Wilson

Keshav : My dear Broome, how opportune is your arrival! You will save me from the malady of work, it may be, from the dangerous opium of solitude. How is it I have not seen you for the last fortnight?

Wilson : Surely, Keshav, you can understand the exigencies of the Tripos.

Keshav : Ah, you are a happy man. You can do what you are told. But put off your academical aspirations until tomorrow and we will talk. The cigarettes are on the mantlepiece — excuse my laziness! — and the lucifers are probably stocked in the fruit-shelf. And here is coffee and a choice between cake and biscuits. Are you perfectly happy?

Wilson : In Elysium. But do not let the cigarettes run dry, the alliance of a warm fire and luxurious cushions will be too strong for my vigilance. Do you mean to tell me you can work here?

Keshav : Life is too precious to be wasted in labour, and above all this especial moment of life, the hour after dinner, when we have only just enough energy to be idle. Why, it is only for this I tolerate the wearisome activity of the previous twelve hours.

Wilson : You are a living paradox. Is it not just like you to pervert indolence into the aim of life?

Keshav : Why, what other aim can there be?

Wilson : Duty, I presume.

Keshav : I cannot consent to cherish an opinion until I realise the meaning of duty.

Wilson : I suppose I have pledged myself to an evening of metaphysics. We do our duty when we do what we ought to do.

Keshav : A very lucid explanation; but how do we know that we are doing what we ought to do.

Wilson : Why, we must do what society requires of us.

Keshav : And must we do that even when society requires

something dissonant with our nature or repugnant to our convictions?

Wilson : I conceive so.

Keshav : And if society require us to sacrifice our children or to compel a widow to burn herself we are bound to comply?

Wilson : No; we should only do what is just and good.

Keshav : Then the fiat of society is not valid; duty really depends on something quite different.

Wilson : It appears so.

Keshav : Then what is your idea of that something quite different on which duty depends?

Wilson : Would it be wrong to select morality?

Keshav : Let us inquire. But before that is possible let me know what morality is, or I shall not know my own meaning.

Wilson : Morality is the conduct our ethical principles require of us.

Keshav : Take me with you. This ethical principle is then personal, not universal?

Wilson : I think so. For different localities different ethics. I am not a bigot to claim infallibility for my own country.

Keshav : So we must act in harmony with the code of ethics received as ideal by the society we move in?

Wilson : I suppose it comes to that.

Keshav : But, my dear Broome, does not that bring us back to your previous theory that we should do what society requires of us?

Wilson : I am painfully afraid it does.

Keshav : And we are agreed that this is an accurate plumb-line?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : You see the consequence?

Wilson : I see. I must change my ground and say that we must do what our personal sense of the right and just requires of us.

Keshav : For example if my personal sense of the right and just, tells me that to lie is meritorious, is it my duty to lie to the best of my ability.

Wilson : But no one could possibly think that.

Keshav : I think that the soul of Ithacan Ulysses has not yet completed the cycle of his transmigrations, nor would I wrong the authority of Hippias by ignoring his conclusions. Or why go to dead men for an example? The mould has not fallen on the musical lips of the Irish Plato nor is Dorian Gray forgotten in the hundred tongues of Rumour.

Wilson : If our sense of right is really so prone to error, we should not rely upon it.

Keshav : Then to quote Mrs. Mountstuart, you have just succeeded in telling me nothing. Duty is not based on our personal sense of the right and just.

Wilson : I allow it is not.

Keshav : But surely there is some species of touchstone by which we can discern between the false and the true?

Wilson : If there is, I cannot discover it.

Keshav : Ah, but do try again. There is luck in odd numbers.

Wilson : The only other touchstone I can imagine is religion; and now I come to think of it, religion is an infallible touchstone.

Keshav : I am glad you think so; for all I know at present you are very probably right. But have you any reason for your conviction?

Wilson : A code of morality built upon religion has no commerce with the demands of society or our personal sense of the right and just, but is the very law of God.

Keshav : I will not at present deny the reality of a personal God endowed with passions and prejudices, that is not indispensable to our argument. But are there not many religions and have they not all their peculiar schemes of morality?

Wilson : No doubt, but some are more excellent than others.

Keshav : And do you cherish the opinion that your own peculiar creed — I believe it to be Christianity without Christ — is indubitably the most excellent?

Wilson : By far the most excellent.

Keshav : And your own ethical scheme, again the Christian without the emotional element, the best of all ethical schemes?

Wilson : I have no doubt of it.

Keshav : And they are many who dissent from you, are they not?

Wilson : Oh without doubt.

Keshav : And you would impose your ethical scheme on them?

Wilson : No; but I imagine it to be the goal whither all humanity is tending.

Keshav : That is a very different question. Do you think that when a man's life is in harmony with his own creed, but not with yours, he is therefore not virtuous, or in your own phrase, deviates from his duty?

Wilson : God forbid!

Keshav : Then you really do believe that a man does his duty when he lives in harmony with the ethical scheme patronised by his own religion, as a Mohammadan if he follows the injunctions of the Prophet, a Hindu if he obeys the Vedic Scriptures, a Christian if his life is a long self-denial.

Wilson : That I admit.

Keshav : Then the ethical scheme of Islam is as much the very law of God, as the ethical scheme of Christianity, and the morals of Hinduism are not less divine than the morals of Islam.

Wilson : I hardly understand how you arrive at that conclusion.

Keshav : Did you not say, Broome, that religion is an infallible test of duty, because it is the very law of God?

Wilson : I still say so.

Keshav : And that everyone must adopt his own religion as the test of what he should do or not do.

Wilson : I cannot deny it.

Keshav : Then must you not either admit the reason to be invalid, or that any one's peculiar religion, whatever species it may belong to, is the very law of God.

Wilson : I prefer the second branch of the dilemma.

Keshav : But though every religion is the very law of God, nevertheless you will often find one enjoining a practice which to another is an abomination. And can God contradict himself?

Wilson : You mistake the point. Islam, Hinduism, indeed all scriptural religions were given because the people professing

them were not capable of receiving higher light.

Keshav : Is not God omnipotent?

Wilson : A limited God is not God at all.

Keshav : Then was it not within his omnipotent power to so guide the world that there would be no necessity for different dealings with different people?

Wilson : It was within his power, but he did not choose.

Keshav : Exactly: he did not choose. He of set purpose preferred a method which he knew would lead him to falsehood and injustice.

Wilson : What words you use. The truth is merely that God set man to develop under certain conditions and suited his methods to those conditions.

Keshav : Oh, then God is practically a scientist making an experiment; and you demand for him reverence and obedience from the creature vivisected. Then I can only see one other explanation. Having created certain conditions he could not receive the homage of mankind without various and mutually dissentient revelations of his will. Now imagine a physician with theosophical power who for purposes of gain so modified the climatic features of Judea and Arabia that the same disease required two distinct methods of treatment in the one and the other. This he does wilfully and deliberately and with foreknowledge of the result. As soon as his end is assured our physician goes to Judea and gives the people a drug which, he tells them, is the sole remedy for their disease but all others are the property of quacks and will eventually induce increase of the malady. Five years later the same physician goes off to Arabia and here he gives them another drug of an accurately opposite nature about which he imparts the same instructions. Now if we remember that the climatic conditions which necessitated the deception were the deliberate work of the deceiver, shall we not call that physician a liar and an impostor? Is God a liar? or an impostor?

Wilson : We must not measure the Almighty by our poor mortal standards.

Keshav : Pshaw, Broome, if the legislator overrides his own laws, how can you hope that others will observe them?

Wilson : But if God in his incomprehensible wisdom and goodness...

Keshav : Incomprehensible indeed. If there is any meaning in words the God you have inscribed can neither be wise nor good. Will you show me the flaw in my position?

Wilson : I cannot discover it.

Keshav : Then your suspicion is born of your disgust at the conclusion to which I have forced you, and your dislike of my method: for I am taking nothing for granted, but am going to the root of things.

Wilson : I am afraid it is.

Keshav : Well, shall we go on with the discussion or should I stop here?

Wilson : Certainly let us go on and not shy at a truth however disagreeable.

Keshav : First let me give you a glass of this champagne. I do not keep any of those infernal concoctions of alcohol and perdition of which you in Europe are so enamoured. Now here is the conclusion I draw from all that we have been saying: There are two positions open to you. One is that of the fanatic. You may say that you and those who believe with you are the specially chosen of God to be the receptacles of his grace and that all who have heard and rejected his gospel together with those who have not so much as imagined its possibility must share a similar fate and go into the outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. If that is the line you take up, my answer is that God is an unjust God and the wise will prefer the torment of the damned to any communion with him. The fanatic of course would be ready with his retort that the potter has a right to do what he will with his vessels. At that point I usually abandon the conversation; to tell him that a metaphor is no argument would be futile. Even if he saw it, he would reply that God's ways are incomprehensible and therefore we should accept them without a murmur. That is a position which I have not the patience to undermine, nor if I had it, have I sufficient self-control to preserve my gravity under the ordeal.

Wilson : I at least, Keshav, am not in danger of burdening your patience. I have no wish to evade you by such a back-

door as that.

Keshav : Then is it not plain to you, that you must abandon the religious basis as unsound?

Wilson : Yes, for you have convinced me that I have been talking nonsense the whole evening.

Keshav : Not at all, Broome; only you like most men have not accustomed yourself to clear and rigorous thought.

Wilson : I am afraid logic is not sufficiently studied.

Keshav : Is it not studied too much? Logic dwindles the river of thought into a mere canal. The logician thinks so accurately that he is seldom right. No, what we want is some more of that sense which it is a mockery to call common.

Wilson : But if we were to eliminate the divine element from the balance, would not religion be a possible basis?

Keshav : No, for religious ethics would then be a mere expression of will on the part of Society. And that is open to the criticism that the commands of Society may be revolting to the right and just or inconsistent with the harmony of life.

Wilson : But supposing everyone to interpret for himself the ethics approved by his own creed?

Keshav : The Inquisitors did that. Do you consider the result justified the method?

Wilson : The Inquisitors?

Keshav : They were a class of men than whom you would find none more scrupulous or in their private life more gentle, chivalrous and honourable or in their public conduct more obedient to their sense of duty. They tortured the bodies of a few that the souls of thousands might live. They did murder in the sight of the Lord and looked upon their handiwork and saw that it was good.

Wilson My dear Keshav, surely that is extravagant.

Keshav Why, do you imagine that they were actuated by any other motive?

Wilson Yes, by the desire to preserve the integrity of the Church.

Keshav And is not that the first duty of every Christian?

Wilson Only by the permissible method of persuasion.

Keshav That is your opinion, but was it theirs? Duty is a

phantasm spawned in the green morass of human weakness and ignorance, but perpetuated by vague thought and vaguer sentiment. And so long as we are imperatively told to do any duty without knowing why we should as is the argument of private judgement, the cruelty of social coercion will be the sole arbiter and the saint will be a worse enemy of virtue than the sinner. Will you have another cigarette?

Wilson : Thanks, I will. But, Keshav, I am not disposed to leave the discussion with this purely negative result. Surely there is some guiding principle which should modify and harmonise our actions. Or are you favourable to an anarchy in morals?

Keshav : No, Broome. If culture and taste were universal, principle would then be a superfluous note in the world's composition. But so long as men are crude, without tact, formless, incapable of a balanced personality, so long the banner of the ideal must be waved obtrusively before the eyes of men and education remain a necessity, so long must the hateful phrase, a higher morality, mean something more than empty jargon of socialists. Yes, I think there is that guiding principle you speak of, or at least we may arrive at something like it, if we look long enough.

Wilson : Then do look for it, Keshav. I am sure you will find something original and beautiful. Come, I will be idle tonight and abandon the pursuit of knowledge to waste time in the pursuit of thought. Begin and I will follow my leader.

Keshav : Before I begin, let me remove one or two of those popular fallacies born of indolence which encumber the wings of the speculator. And first let me say, I will not talk of duty: it is a word I do not like, for it is always used in antagonism to pleasure, and brings back the awesome savour of the days when to do what I was told, was held out as my highest legitimate aspiration. I will use instead the word virtue, whose inherent meaning is manliness, in other words, the perfect evolution by the human being of the inborn qualities and powers native to his humanity. Another thing I would like to avoid is the assumption that there is somewhere and somehow an ideal morality, which draws an absolute and a sharp distinction between good and evil. Thus it is easy to say that chastity is good, licence is

evil. But what if some one were to protest that this is a mistake, that chastity is bad, licence is good. How are you going to refute him? If you appeal to authority he will deny that your authority is valid; if you quote religion he will remind you that your religion is one of a multitude; if you talk of natural perception, he will retort that natural perception cancels itself by arriving at opposite results. How will you unseat him from his position?

Wilson : Yes, you can show that good is profitable, while evil is hurtful.

Keshav : You mean the appeal to utility?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : That is without doubt an advance. Now can you show that good is profitable, that is to say, has good effects, while evil is hurtful, that is to say, has bad effects?

Wilson : Easily. Take your instance of chastity and licence. One is the ground-work of that confidence which is the basis of marriage and therefore the keystone of society; the other kills confidence and infects the community with a bad example.

Keshav You fly too fast for me, Broome. You say chastity is the basis of marriage?

Wilson Surely you will not deny it?

Keshav And licence in one leads to prevalent unchastity?

Wilson It has that tendency.

Keshav And you think you have proved chastity to be profitable and licence hurtful?

Wilson Why, yes. Do not you?

Keshav No, my friend; for I have not convinced myself that marriage is a good effect and prevalent unchastity a bad effect.

Wilson : Only paradox can throw any doubt on that. Assuredly you will not deny that without marriage and public decency, society is unimaginable.

Keshav : I suppose you will allow that in Roman society under the Emperors marriage was extant? And yet will you tell me that in those ages chastity was the basis of marriage?

Wilson : I should say that marriage in the real sense of the word was not extant.

Keshav : Then what becomes of your postulate that without

marriage and public decency society is unimaginable?

Wilson : Can you bestow the name on the world of Nero and Caracalla.

Keshav : Certainly if I understand the significance of the word. Wherever the mutual dependence of men builds up a community cemented by a chain of rights and liabilities, that I imagine is a society.

Wilson : Certainly that is a society.

Keshav : And will you then hesitate to concede the name to imperial Italy?

Wilson : Yes, but you will not deny that from the unreality of marriage and the impudent disregard of common decency — at once its cause and effect — there grew up a prevalence of moral corruption, but for which the Roman world would not have succumbed with such nerveless ease to Scythia and its populous multitudes.

Keshav What then? I do not deny it.

Wilson Was not that a bad effect?

Keshav By bad, I presume you mean undesirable.

Wilson That of course.

Keshav Perhaps it was but should we not say that Rome fell because barbarism was strong, not because she was feeble?

Wilson Rome uncorrupted was able to laugh at similar perils.

Keshav : Then to have Rome safe you would have had her remain barbaric?

Wilson : Did I say so?

Keshav : You implied it. In Rome the triumphal chariot of corruption was drawn by the winged horses, Culture and Art. And it is always so. From the evergreen foliage of the Periclean era there bloomed that gorgeous and over-blown flower, Athens of the philosophers, a corrupt luxurious city, the easy vassal of Macedon, the easier slave of Rome. From the blending of Hellenic with Persian culture was derived that Oriental pomp and lavish magnificence which ruined the kingdoms of the East. And Rome, their conqueror, she too when the Roman in her died and the Italian lived, when the city of wolves became the abode of men, bartered her savage prosperity for a splendid decline. Yes,

the fulness of the flower is the sure prelude of decay.

When we say a fruit is wholesome or unwholesome we mean that it is harmless and nutritious food or that it tends to dysentry and colic, but when we say that anything is good or bad, we apply the epithets like tickets without inquiring what we mean by them; we have no moral touchstone that tells gold from spurious metal.

Look at the India of Vikramaditya. How gorgeous was her beauty! how Olympian the voices of her poets! how sensuous the pencil of her painters! how languidly voluptuous the outlines of her sculpture! In those days every man was marvellous to himself and many were marvellous to their fellows; but the mightiest marvel of all were the philosophers. What a Philosophy was that! For she scaled the empyrean on the winged sandals of meditation, soared above the wide fires of the sun and above the whirling stars, up where the flaming walls of the universe are guiltless of wind or cloud and there in the burning core of existence saw the face of the most high God. She saw God and did not perish; rather fell back to earth, not blasted with excess of light, but with a mystic burden on her murmuring lips too large for human speech to utter or for the human brain to understand. Such was she then. Yet five rolling centuries had not passed when sleepless, all-beholding Surya saw the sons of Mahomet pour like locusts over the green fields of her glory and the wrecks of that mighty fabric whirling down the rapids of barbarism into the shores of night. They were barbarous, therefore mighty: we were civilized, therefore feeble.

Wilson : But was not your civilization premature? The building too hastily raised disintegrates and collapses, for it has the seeds of death in its origin. May not the utilitarian justly condemn it as evil?

Keshav : What the utilitarian may not justly do, it is beyond the limits of my intellect to discover. Had it not been for these premature civilizations, had it not been for the Athens of Plato, the Rome of the Caesers, the India of Vikramaditya, what would the world be now? It was premature, because barbarism was yet predominant in the world; and it is wholly due to our premature efflorescence that your utilitarians can mount the high stool of folly and defile the memory of the great. When I remem-

ber that, I do not think I can deny that we were premature. I trust and believe that the civilization of the future will not come too late rather than too early. No, the utilitarian with his sordid creed may exalt the barbarism and spit his livid contempt upon culture, but the great heart of the world will ever beat more responsive to the flame-winged words of the genius than to the musty musings of the moralists. It is better to be great and perish, than to be little and live. But where was I when the wind of tirade carried me out of my course?

Wilson : You were breaching the defences of utilitarian morality.

Keshav : Ah, I remember. What I mean is this; the utilitarian arrives at his results by an arbitrary application of the epithets "*good*" and "*bad*". This mistake is of perpetual occurrence in Bentham and gives the basis for the most monstrous and shocking of his theories. For example the servitude of women is justified by the impossibility of marriage without it. Again he condemns theft by a starving man as a heinous offence because it is likely to disturb security. He quite forgets to convince us, as the author of a system professedly grounded on logic should have done, that the survival of marriage is a desirable effect or property more valuable than life.

Wilson : I confess that Bentham on those two subjects is far too cavalier and offhand to please me, but the utilitarian system can stand on another basis than Bentham supplies.

Keshav : Yours is a curious position, Broome. You are one of those who would expunge the part of Hamlet from the play that bears his name. Your religion is Christianity without Christ, your morality Benthamism without Bentham. Nevertheless my guns are so pointed that they will breach any wall you choose to set up. For this is common to all utilitarians that they lose sight of a paramount consideration: the epithets "*good*" and "*bad*" are purely conventional and have no absolute sense, but their meaning may be shifted at the will of the speaker. Indeed they have been the root of so many revolting ideas and of so many and such monstrous social tyrannies, that I should not be sorry to see them expelled from the language, as unfit to be in the company of decent words. Why do you smile?

Wilson : The novelty of the idea amused me.

Keshav : Yes, I know that "*original*" and "*fool*" are synonymous in the world's vocabulary.

Wilson : That was a nasty one for me. However I am afraid I shall be compelled to agree with you.

Keshav : Do you admit that there is only one alternative, faith without reason or the recognition of morality as a conventional term without any absolute meaning?

Wilson : I should rather say that morality is the idea of what is just and right in vogue among a given number of people.

Keshav : You have exactly described it. Are you content to take this as your touchstone?

Wilson : Neither this, nor faith without reason.

Keshav : Two positions abandoned at a blow? That is more than I had the right to expect. Now, as the time is slipping by, let us set out on the discovery of some law, or should I not rather say, some indicating tendency by which we may arrive at a principle of life?

Wilson : I am anxious to hear it.

Keshav : Let us furnish ourselves with another glass of claret for the voyage. You will have some?

Wilson : Thanks.

Keshav : My first difficulty when I set out on a voyage of discovery is to select the most probable route. I look at my chart and I see one marked justice along which the trade winds blow; but whoever has weighed anchor on this path has arrived like Columbus at another than the intended destination, without making half as valuable a discovery. Another route is called "beauty" and along this no one has yet sailed. An Irish navigator has indeed attempted it and made some remarkable discoveries, but he has clothed his account in such iridescent wit and humour, that our good serious English audience either grin foolishly at him from a vague idea that they ought to feel amused or else shake their heads and grumble that the fellow is corrupting the youth and ruining their good old Saxon gravity; why he actually makes people laugh at the beliefs they have been taught by their venerable and aged grandmothers. But as for believing his traveller's tales — they believe them not a whit. Possibly if we

who do not possess this dangerous gift of humour, were to follow the path called beauty, we might hit the target of our desires: if not, we might at least discover things wonderful and new to repay us for our labour. And so on with other possible routes. Now which shall we choose? For much hangs on our selection. Shall we say justice?

Wilson : Let me know first what justice is.

Keshav : I do not know, but I think no one would hesitate to describe it as forbearance from interfering with the rights of others.

Wilson : That is a good description.

Keshav : Possibly, but so long as we do not know what are the rights of others, the description, however good, can have no meaning.

Wilson : Can we not discover, what are the rights of others?

Keshav : We have been trying for the last three thousand years; with how much or how little success, I do not like to say.

Wilson : Then let us try another tack.

Keshav : Can you tell me which one we should choose? My own idea is that the word "*beauty*" is replete with hopeful possibilities.

Wilson : Is not that because it is used in a hundred different senses?

Keshav : I own that the word, as used today, is like so many others a relative term. But if we were to fix a permanent and absolute meaning on it, should we not say that beauty is that which fills us with a sense of satisfying pleasure and perfect fitness?

Wilson : Yes, I think beauty must certainly be judged by its effects.

Keshav : But are there not minds so moulded that they are dead to all beauty and find more charm in the showy and vulgar than in what is genuinely perfect and symmetrical?

Wilson : There can be no doubt of that.

Keshav : Then beauty still remains a relative term?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : That is unfortunate. Let us try and find some other test for it. And in order to arrive at this, should we not take

something recognised by all to be beautiful and examine in what its beauty lies?

Wilson : That is distinctly our best course. Let us take the commonest type of beauty, a rose.

Keshav : Then in what lies the beauty of a rose if not in its symmetry? Why has the whole effect that satisfying completeness which subjugates the senses, if not because Nature has blended in harmonious proportion the three elements of beauty: colour, perfume and form? Now beauty may exist separately in any two of these elements and where it does so, the accession of the third would probably mar the perfection of that species of beauty; as in sculpture where form in its separate existence finds a complete expression and is blended harmoniously with perfume — for character or emotion is the perfume of the human form, just as sound is the perfume of poetry and music — but if a sculptor tints his statue, the effect displeases us, because it seems gaudy or tinsel, or in plain words disproportionate.

In some cases beauty seems to have only one of these elements, for example frankincense and music which seem to possess perfume only, but in reality we shall find that they have each one or both of the other elements. For incense would not be half so beautiful, if we did not see the curling folds of smoke floating like loose drapery in the air, nor would music be music if not harmoniously blended with form and colour, or as we usually call them, technique and meaning. Again there are other cases in which beauty undoubtedly has one only of the three elements; and such are certain scents like myrrh, eucalyptus and others, which possess neither colour nor form, isolated hues such as the green and purple and violet painted on floor and walls by the afternoon sun and architectural designs which have no beauty but the isolated beauty of form. The criticism of ages has shown a fit appreciation of these harmonies by adjudging the highest scale of beauty to those forms which blend the three elements and the lowest to those which boast only of one. Thus sculpture is a far nobler art than architecture, for while both may compass an equal perfection of form, sculpture alone possesses the larger harmony derived by the union of form and perfume. Similarly the human form is more divine than sculpture because it has the

third element, colour; and the painting of figures is more beautiful than the portrayal of landscapes, because the latter is destitute of perfume while figures of life have always that character or emotion which we have called the perfume of the living form.

Again if we take two forms of beauty otherwise exactly on the same level, we shall find that the more beautiful in which the three elements are most harmoniously blended. As for instance a perfect human form and a perfect poem; whichever we may admire, we shall find our reason, if we probe for it, to be that the whole is more perfectly blended and the result a more satisfying completeness. If we think of all this, it will assuredly not be too rash to describe beauty by calling the general effect harmony and the ulterior cause proportion. What is your opinion, Broome?

Wilson : Your idea is certainly remarkable and novel, but the language you have selected is so intricate that I am in the dark as to whether it admits of invariable application.

Keshav : The usual effect of endeavouring to be too explicit is to mystify the hearer. I will try to dive into less abysmal depths. Can you tell me why a curve is considered more beautiful than a straight line?

Wilson : No, except that the effect is more pleasing.

Keshav : Ah yes, but why should it be more pleasing?

Wilson : I cannot tell.

Keshav : I will tell you. It is because a curve possesses that variety which is the soul of proportion. It rises, swells and falls with an exact propriety — it is at once various and regular as rolling water; while the stiff monotony of a straight line disgusts the soul by its meaningless rigidity and want of proportion. On the other hand a system of similar curves, unless very delicately managed, cannot possibly suggest the idea of beauty: and that is because there is no proportion, for proportion, I would impress upon you, consists in a regular variety. And thus a straight line, tho' in itself ugly, can be very beautiful if properly combined with curves. Here again the like principle applies.

Do you now understand?

Wilson : Yes, I admit that your theory is wonderfully complete and consistent.

Keshav : If you want a farther illustration, I will give you one. And just as before we selected the most commonly received type of beauty, I will now select the most perfect: and that, I think, is a perfect poem. Would you not agree with me?

Wilson : No, I should give the palm to a perfectly beautiful face.

Keshav : I think you are wrong.

Wilson : Have you any reason for thinking so?

Keshav : Yes, and to me a very satisfying reason. The three elements of beauty do not blend with absolutely perfect harmony in a human face. Have you not frequently noticed that those faces which express the most soul, the most genius, the most character, are not perfectly harmonious in their form?

Wilson : Yes, the exceptions are rare.

Keshav : And the reason is that to emphasize the character the divine artist has found himself compelled to emphasize certain of the features above the others, for instance, the lips, the eyes, the forehead, the chin, and to give them an undue prominence which destroys that proportion without which there can be no perfect harmony. Do you perceive my meaning?

Wilson : Yes, and I do not think your conclusions can be disputed.

Keshav : In a perfectly beautiful face the emotion has to be modified and discouraged, so as not to disturb the harmony of form: but in a perfectly beautiful poem the maker has indeed to blend with exquisite nicety the three elements of beauty, but though the colour may be gorgeous, the emotion piercingly vivid, the form deliriously lovely, yet each of these has so just a share of the effect, that we should find it difficult to add to or to detract from any of them without fatally injuring the perfection of the whole.

And so it is with every form of beauty that is not originally imperfect; to detract or add would be alike fatal; for alteration means abolition. Each syllable is a key-stone and being removed, the whole imposing structure crumbles in a moment to the ground. Can we better describe this perfect blending of parts than by the word proportion? or is its entire effect anything but harmony?

Wilson : There are indeed no better words.

Keshav : And this harmony runs through the warp and woof of Nature. Look at the stars, the brain of heaven as Meredith calls them. How they march tossing on high their golden censers to perfume night with the frankincense of beauty! They are a host of winged insects crawling on the blue papyrus of heaven, a swarm of golden gnats, a cloud of burning dust, a wonderful effect of sparkling atoms caught and perpetuated by the instantaneous pencil of Nature. And yet they are none of all these, but a vast and interdependent economy of worlds. Those burning globes as they roll in silent orbits through the infinite inane, are separated by an eternity of space. They are individual and alone, but from each to each thrill influences unfathomed and unconscious, marvellous magnetisms, curious repulsions that check like adverse gales or propel like wind in bellying canvas, and bind these solitary splendours into one supernal harmony of worlds. The solar harmony we know. How gloriously perfect it is, how united in isolation, how individual in unity! How star answers to star and the seven wandering dynasts of destiny as they roll millions of leagues apart, drag with them the invisible magnetic cord which binds them for ever to the Sun! We believe that those lights we call fixed are each a sun with a rhythmic harmony of planets dancing in immeasurable gyrations around one immovable, immortal star. More, is it extravagant to guess that what to us is fixed, is a planet to God? Perhaps to the inhabitants of the moon this tumbling earth of ours is a fixed and constant light, and perhaps the glorious ball of fire we worship as the Lord of Light, is the satrap of some majesty more luminous and more large. Thus we may conceive of the universe as a series of subordinate harmonies, each perfect in itself and helping to consummate the harmony which is one and universal.

Well may the poet give the stars that majestic synonym

> The army of unalterable law.

But the law that governs the perishable flower, the ephemeral moth, is not more changeful than the law that disciplines the movements of the eternal fires. The rose burns in her season;

the moth lives in his hour: not even the wind bloweth where it listeth unless it preserve the boundaries prescribed by Nature. Each is a separate syllable in the grand poem of the universe: it is all so inalterable because it is so perfect. Yes, Tennyson was right, tho' like most poets, he knew not what he said, when he wrote those lines on the flower in the crannies: if we know what the flower is, we know also what God is and what man.

Wilson : I begin to catch a glimpse of your drift. But is there no discordant element in this universal harmony?

Keshav : There is. As soon as we come to life, we find that God's imagination is no longer unerring; we almost think that he has reached a conception which it is beyond his power to execute. It is true that there are grand and beautiful lines in the vast epic of life, but others there are so unmusical and discordant that we can scarcely believe but that Chance was the author of existence. The beautiful lines are no doubt wonderful; among the insects the peacock-winged butterfly, the light spendthrift of unclouded hours; the angry wasp, that striped and perilous tiger of the air; the slow murmuring bee, an artist in honey and with the true artist's indolence outside his art: and then the birds — the tawny eagle shouting his clangorous aspiration against the sun, the cruel shrike, his talons painted in murder; the murmuring dove, robed in the pure and delicate hue of constancy; the inspired skylark with his matin-song descending like a rain of fire from the blushing bosom of the dawn. Nay the beasts too are not without their fine individualities: the fire-eyed lion, the creeping panther, the shy fawn, the majestic elephant; each fill a line of the great poem and by contrast enhance harmony. But what shall we say of the imaginations that inspire nothing but disgust, the grub, the jackal, the vulture? And when we come to man, we are half inclined to throw up our theory in despair. For we only see a hideous dissonance, a creaking melody, a ghastly failure. We see the philosopher wearing a crown of thorns and the fool robed in purple and fine linen; the artist drudging at a desk and the average driving his quill thro' reams of innocent paper; we see genius thrust aside into the hedges and stupidity driving her triumphal chariot on the beaten paths of social existence. Once we might have said that Nature like a novice in

art was rising through failures and imperfections into an artistic consummation and that when Evolution had exhausted her energies, her eyes would gaze on a perfect universe. But when we come to the human being, her most ambitious essay, the cynicism of frustrated hope steals slowly over us. I am reminded of some lines in a sonnet more remarkable for power than for felicitous expression.

> She crowned her wild work with one foulest wrong
> When first she lighted on a seeming goal
> And darkly blundered on man's suffering soul.

It is as if nature in admitting action into her universe were in the position of a poet who trusted blindly to inspiration without subjecting his work to the instincts of art or the admonitions of the critical faculty; but once dissatisfied with his work begins to pass his pen repeatedly thro' his after performances, until he seems at last to have lighted on a perfect inspiration. His greatest essay completed he suddenly discovers that one touch of realism running thro' the whole work has fatally injured its beauty. Similarly Nature in moulding man, made a mistake of the first importance. She gave him the faculty of reason and by the use of her gift he has stultified the beauty of her splendid imaginations.

Tennyson, by one of his felicitous blunders, has again hit upon the truth when he conceives the solemn wail of a heaven-born spirit in the agony of his disillusioning.

> I saw him in the shining of his stars,
> I marked him in the flowering of his fields,
> But in his ways with men I found him not.

How true in every syllable! God burns in the star, God blossoms in the rose, the cloud is the rushing dust of his chariot, the sea is the spuming mirror of his moods. His breath whistles in the wind, his passion reddens in the sunset, his anguish drops in the rain. The darkness is the soft fall of his eyelashes over the purple magnificence of his eyes: the sanguine dawn is his flushed and

happy face as he leaves the flowery pillow of sleep; the moonlight is nothing but the slumberous glint of his burning tresses when thro' them glimmer the heaving breasts of Eternity. What to him are the petty imaginings of human aspiration; our puny frets, our pitiable furies, our melodramatic passions? If he deigns to think of us, it is as incompetent actors who have wholly misunderstood the bent of our powers. The comedian rants in the vein of Bombastes; the tragic artist plays the buffoon in the pauses of a pantomime, and the genius that might have limned the passion of a Romeo, moulds the lumpish ineptitude of a Cloten. God lifting his happy curls from the white bosom of Beauty, shoots the lightning of his glance upon our antics and we hear his mockery hooting at us in the thunder. Why should he squander a serious thought on a farce so absurd and extravagant?

Wilson : And are these the ultimate syllables of Philosophy?

Keshav : You are impatient, Broome. What I have arrived at is the discovery that human life is, if not the only, at any rate the principal note in Nature that jars with the grand idea underlying her harmony. Do you agree with me?

Wilson : He would be a hopeless optimist who did not.

Keshav : And are you of the opinion that it is the exercise by man of his will-power to which we owe the discord?

Wilson : No, I would throw the blame on Nature.

Keshav : After the example of Adam? "The woman tempted me and I did eat." I too am a son of Adam and would throw the blame on Nature. But once her fault is admitted, has not the human will been manifestly her accomplice?

Wilson : Her instrument rather.

Keshav : Very well, her instrument. You admit that?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : Then if the human will, prompted by Nature or her servant, False Reason, has marred the universal harmony, may not the human will prompted by Right Reason who is also the servant of Nature, mend the harmony he has marred? Or if that puzzles you, let me put the question in another form. Does not a wilful choice of sensuality imply an alternative of purity?

Wilson : It does.

Keshav : And a wilful choice of unbelief an alternative of belief?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : Then on the same principle, if the human will chose to mar the harmony of nature, was it not within its power to choose the opposite course and fulfil the harmony?

Wilson : Certainly that follows.

Keshav : And through ignorance and the promptings of False Reason we preferred to spoil rather than to fulfil?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : And we can mend what we mar?

Wilson : Sometimes.

Keshav : Well then, can we not choose to mend the harmony we originally chose to mar?

Wilson : I do not think it probable.

Keshav : An admission that it is possible is all that I want to elicit from you.

Wilson : I do not know that.

Keshav : Have not some episodes of the great epic rung more in unison with the grand harmony than others?

Wilson : Yes; the old-world Greeks were more in tune with the universe than we.

Keshav : The name of the episode does not signify. You admit a race or an epoch which has fallen into the harmony more than others?

Wilson : Freely.

Keshav : Then as you admit the more and the less, will you not admit that the more may become in its own turn the less — that there may be the yet more? May we not attain to a more perfect harmony with the universe than those who have been most in harmony with it?

Wilson : It is possible.

Keshav : If it is possible, should we not go on and inquire how it is possible?

Wilson : That is the next step.

Keshav : And when we have found an answer to our inquiries, shall we not have solved this difficult question of a new basis for morality?

Wilson : Yes, we shall: for I see now that to be in harmony with beauty, or, in other words, to take the guiding principle of the universe as the guiding principle of human life, is the final and perfect aim of the human species.

Keshav : Broome, you have the scent of a sleuth-hound.

Wilson : I am afraid that it is ironical. You must remember that we are not all philosophers yet. Still I should have liked to see how the idea came out in practice.

Keshav : If you can spare me another night or it may be two, we will pursue the idea through its evolutions. I am deeply interested, for to me as to you it is perfectly novel.

Wilson : Shall you be free on Thursday night?

Keshav : As free as the wind.

Wilson : Then I will come. Goodnight.

Keshav : Goodnight, and God reward you for giving me your company.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK

Book Two

Keshav Ganesh [Desai] — Trevor — Broome Wilson

Keshav : Ah, Broome, so the magnetism of thought has broken the chains of duty? May I introduce you? Mr. Trevor of Kings, Mr. Broome Wilson of Jesus. Would you like wine or coffee?

Wilson : Perhaps for an evening of metaphysics wine is the most appropriate prelude.

Keshav : You agree then with the Scythians who made a point of deliberating when drunk? They were perhaps right; one is inclined to think that most men are wiser drunk than sober. I have been endeavouring to explain my line of argument to Trevor, I am afraid with indifferent success.

Wilson : Can I do anything to help you?

Keshav : I have no doubt you can. Would you mind stating your difficulty, Trevor? I think you allowed that every other basis of morality is unsound but uphold the utilitarian model as perfectly logical and consistent.

Trevor : Yes, that is what I hold to, and I do not think, Desai, you have at all shaken its validity.

Keshav : You do not admit that the epithets "good" and "bad" have a purely conventional force.

Trevor : Yes, I admit that, but I add that we have fixed a definite meaning on the epithets and adhered to it all through our system.

Keshav : If so, you are fortunate. Can you tell me the definite meaning to which you refer?

Trevor : The basis of our system is this, that whatever is profitable, is good, whatever is the reverse, is evil. Is not that an unassailable basis?

Keshav : I do not think so; for two ambiguous words you have merely substituted two others only less ambiguous.

Trevor : I fail to see your reasoning.

Keshav : I will endeavour to show you what I mean. You

will admit that one man's meat is another man's poison, will you not?

Trevor : Yes, and that is where our system works so beautifully; for we bring in our arithmetical solution of balancing the good and the evil of an action and if the scale of the evil rises, we stamp it as good, if the scale of the good rises, we brand it as evil. What do you say to that?

Keshav : Dear me! that does indeed sound simple and satisfying. I am afraid, Broome, we shall have to throw up our theory in favour of Bentham's. Your system is really so attractive and transparent, Trevor, that I should dearly like to learn more about it.

Trevor : Now you are indulging in irony, Desai; you know Bentham as well as I do.

Keshav : Not quite so well as all that; but I avow I have studied him very carefully. Yet from some cause I have not discovered, his arguments seldom seemed to me to have any force, while you on the other hand do really strike home to the judgement. And therefore I should like to see whether you are entirely at one with Bentham. For example I believe you prefer the good of the community to the good of the individual, do you not?

Trevor : Not at all: it is the individuals who are the community.

Keshav : It is gratifying to learn that: but if the interests of a few individuals conflict with the interests of the general body, you prefer the interests of the general body, do you not?

Trevor : As a matter of course.

Keshav : And, as a general rule, if you have to deal with a number of persons, and the good of some is not reconcilable with the good of others, you prefer the good of the greater number!

Trevor : That again is obvious.

Keshav : So you accept the dogma "the greatest good of the greatest number"; for if one interest of a given person or number of persons conflict with another interest, you prefer the greater?

Trevor : Without hesitation.

Keshav : And so the Athenians were right when they put Socrates to death.

Trevor : What makes you advance so absurd a paradox?

Keshav : Why, by your arithmetical system of balancing the good and the evil. The injury to Socrates is not to be put in comparison with the profit to the State, for we prefer the good of the greater number, and the pleasure experienced by the youths he corrupted in his discourse and the enjoyment of their corruption is not to be so much considered as the pain they would experience from the effects of their corruption and the pain inflicted on the State by the rising generation growing up corrupt and dissolute, for among conflicting interests we prefer the greatest.

Trevor : But Socrates did not corrupt the youth of Athens.

Keshav : The Athenians thought he was corrupting their youth and they were bound to act on their opinion.

Trevor : They were not bound to act on their opinion, but on the facts.

Keshav : What is this you are telling me, Trevor? We are then only to act when we have a correct opinion, and, seeing that a definitely correct opinion can only be formed by posterity after we are dead, we are not to use your arithmetical balance or at least can only use it when we are dead? Then I do not see much utility in your arithmetical balance.

Trevor : Now I come to think of it, the Athenians were right in putting Socrates to death.

Keshav : And the Jews in crucifying Christ?

Trevor : Yes.

Keshav : I admire your fortitude, my dear Trevor. And if the English people had thought Bentham was corrupting their youth, they would have been right in hanging Bentham, would they not?

Trevor : What a fellow you are, Desai! of course what I mean is that the Athenians and the Jews did not listen to their honest opinion but purely the voice of malice.

Keshav : Then if these wicked people who put wise men to death not in honest folly but from malice, were to have said to you: "Come now, you who accuse us of pure malice, are you not actuated by pure benevolence? If our approval is founded on sentiment, your disapproval is founded on the same flimsy basis, and you have no reasonable objection to the poisoning of Socrates or the crucifixion of Christ or the hanging of Bentham,

as the case may be", and if you were to tell them that your arithmetical balance said it was not profitable, would they not be justified in asking whether your arithemetical balance was infallible and whether you had a satisfactory principle which guided your calculations.

Trevor : Yes, and I should tell them that I value as profitable what conduces to happiness and as unprofitable what detracts from or does not add to happiness.

Keshav : I am afraid that would not satisfy them, for the nature of happiness is just as disputable as the nature of profit. You do not think so? Well, for example, do not some think that happiness lies in material comfort, while others look for it in the province of the intellect?

Trevor : These distinctions are mere nonsense; both are alike essential.

Keshav : Indeed we have reason to thank heaven that there are still some of the sages left who are sufficiently impartial to condemn every opinion but their own. Yet under correction, I should like to venture on a question; if the good that conduces to material comfort is not reconcilable with the good that conduces to intellectual pleasure, how do you manage your arithmetical balance?

Trevor : Material comfort before all things! that is a necessity, intellect a luxury.

Keshav : You are a consistent change-artist, Trevor; yet may there not be diverse opinions on the point.

Trevor : I do not see how it is possible. The human race may be happy without intellectual pleasure, but never without material comfort.

Keshav : Have you any historical data to bear out your generalisation?

Trevor : I cannot say I have, but I appeal to common sense.

Keshav : Oh, if you appeal to Caesar, I am lost; but be sure that if you bring your case before the tribunal of common sense, I will appeal not to common, but to uncommon sense —and that will arbitrate in my favour.

Trevor : Well, we must agree to differ.

Keshav : At any rate we have arrived at this, that you assign

material comfort as the most important element in happiness, while I assign the free play of the intellect.

Trevor : So it seems.

Keshav : And you maintain that I am wrong because I disagree with you?

Trevor : No, because you disagree with reason.

Keshav : That is, with reason as you see it.

Trevor : If you like.

Keshav : And you think I am unique in my opinion?

Trevor : No indeed! there are too many who agree with you.

Keshav : Now we have gone a step farther. Apparently the nature of happiness is a matter of opinion.

Trevor : Oh, of course, if you like to say so.

Keshav : And happiness is the basis of morality. You agree? very well, the nature of the basis is a matter of opinion, and it seems to follow that morality itself is a matter of opinion. And so we have come to this, that after rejecting as a basis of morality our individual sense of what is just and right, we have accepted our individual sense of what conduces to happiness. Therefore it is moral for you to refrain from stealing and for me to steal.

Trevor : That is a comfortable conclusion at any rate.

Keshav : Yet I think it is borne out by our premises. Do you not imagine the security of property to be essential to happiness and anything that disturbs it immoral?

Trevor : That goes without saying and I admit that it is immoral for me to steal.

Keshav : Now I on the other hand am indeed of the opinion that material comfort is essential to happiness, for without it the intellect cannot have free play, but believing as I do that the system of private property conduces to the comfort of the few, but its abolition will conduce to the comfort of the many, I, on the principle you have accepted, the greatest good of the greatest number, am opposed to the system of private property. And I believe that the prevalence of crimes against property will accelerate the day of abolition; I recognise indeed that the immediate effects will be evil, but put a greater value on the ultimate good than on the immediate evil. It follows that, if my reasoning be correct, and we agreed that individual judgement must be

the arbiter, it is perfectly moral for me to steal.

Trevor : There is no arguing with you, Desai. You wrest the meaning of words until one does not remember what one is talking about. The enormous length to which you carry your sophistries is appalling. If I had time, I would stop and refute you. As it is, I will leave you to pour your absurdities into more congenial ears.

Keshav : You are not going, Trevor.

Trevor : I am afraid I must. Goodnight.

Keshav : Goodnight.

That was rather brisker towards the close. I hope you were not bored, Broome.

Wilson : No, I was excellently amused. But do your arguments with him usually terminate in this abrupt fashion?

Keshav : Very often they do so terminate. Trevor is a good fellow — a fine intellect spoiled but he cannot bear adversity with an equal mind. Now let us resume our inquiry.

I think we had gone so far as to discover that human life is the great element of discord in the Cosmos, and the best system of morality is that which really tends to restore the harmony of the universe, and we agreed that if we apply the principles governing the universe to human life, we shall discover the highest principle of conduct. That was the point where we broke off, was it not?

Wilson : Yes, we broke off just there.

Keshav : So we profess to have found a sense in which the theory advanced by philosophers of every age has become true, that life ought to be lived in accordance with nature and not in accordance with convention. The error we impute to them was that they failed to keep nature distinct from human nature and forgot that the latter was complicated by the presence of that fallible reason of which conventions are the natural children. Thus men of genius like Rousseau reverted to the savage for a model and gave weight to the paradox that civilization is a mistake. Let us not forget that it is useless to look for unalloyed nature in the savage, so long as we cannot trace human development from its origin: to the original man the savage would seem nothing but a mass of conventions. We have nothing to learn

from savages; but there is a vast deal to be learned from the errors of civilized peoples. Civilization is a failure, not a mistake.

Wilson : That is a subtle distinction.

Keshav : Not at all. Civilization was necessary if the human race was to progress at all. The pity of it is that it has taken the wrong turn and fallen into the waters of convention. There lies the failure. When man at the very first step of his history used his reason to confound the all-pervading Cosmos or harmonious arrangement of Nature, conventions became necessary in order to allure him into less faulty modes of reasoning, by which alone he could rectify his error. But after the torrent had rolled for a time along its natural course and two broad rivers of Thought, the Greek and the Hindu, were losing themselves in the grand harmony, there was a gradual but perceptible swerve, and the forces of convention which had guided, began to misguide, and the Sophists in Greece, in India the Brahmans availed themselves of these mighty forces to compass their own supremacy, and once at the helm of thought gave permanence to the power by which they stood, until two religions, the most hostile to Nature, in the East Buddhism, her step-child Christianity in the West, completed the evil their predecessors had begun.

Hear the legend of Purush, the son of Prithivi, and his journey to the land of Beulah, the land of blooming gardens and yellow-vested acres and wavering tree-tops, and two roads lead to it. One road is very simple, very brief, very direct, and this leads over the smiling summit of a double-headed peak, but the other through the gaping abysses of a lion-throated antre and it is very long, very painful, very circuitous. Now the wise and beautiful instructress of Purush had indeed warned him that all other wayfarers had chosen the ascent of the beautiful hill, but had not explicitly forbidden him to select the untried and perilous route. And the man was indolent and thought it more facile to journey smoothly through a tunnel than to breast with ardous effort the tardy and panting slope, yet plumed himself on a nobler nature than all who had gone before him because they had obeyed their monitress, but he was guided by his reason and honourably preferred the unknown and perilous to the safe and familiar. From this tangle of motives he chose the enormous lion-throat of

the gaping antre, not the swelling breasts of the fruitful mother.

Very gaily he entered the cave singing wild ballads of the deeds his fathers wrought, of Krishna and Arjun and Ram and Ravan and their glory and their fall, but not so merrily did he journey in its entrails, but rather in hunger and thirst groped wearily with the unsleeping beak of the vulture Misery in his heart, and only now and then caught glimpses of an elusive light, yet did not realise his error but pursued with querulous reproaches the beautiful gods his happy imagination had moulded or bitterly reviled the double-dealing he imputed to his lovely and wise instructress — "for she it was," he complained, "who told me of the route through the cavern." None the less he persevered until he was warmed by the genuine smiles of daylight and joy blossoming in his heart, made his step firmer and his body more erect.

And he strode on until he arrived where the antre split in two branches, the one seeming dark as Erebus to his eyes, though indeed it was white and glorious as a naked girl and suffused by the light of the upper heaven with seas of billowing splendour, had not his eyes, grown dim from holding communion with the night and blinded by the unaccustomed brilliance, believed that the light was darkness, through which if he had persevered, he had arrived in brief space among the blooming gardens and the wavering tree-tops and the acres in their glorious golden garb and all the imperishable beauty of Beulah. And the other branch he thought the avenue of the sunlight, because the glimmer was feeble enough to be visible, like a white arm through a sleeve of black lace. And down this branch he went, for ever allured by unreal glimpses of a dawning glory, until he has descended into the abysmal darkness and the throne of ancient night, where he walks blindly like a machine, carrying the white ashes of hope in the funeral urn of youth, and knows not whence to expect a rescue, seeing the only heaven above him is the terrible pillared roof, the only horizon around him the antre with its hateful unending columns and demogorgon veil of visible darkness, and the beautiful gods he imagined are dead and his heart is no longer sweetened with prayers, and his throat no longer bubbles with

hymns of praise. His beautiful gods are dead and her who was his lovely guide and wise monitress, he no longer sees as the sweet and smiling friend of his boyhood, but as a fury slinging flame and a blind Cyclopes hurling stones she knows not whither nor why and a ghastly skeleton only the more horrible for its hideous mimicry of life. He sends a wailing cry to heaven, but only jeering echoes fall from the impenetrable ceiling, for there is no heaven, and he sends a hoarse shriek for aid to hell, but only a gurgling horror rises from the impenetrable floor, for there is no hell, and he looks around for God, but his eyes cannot find him, and he gropes for God in the darkness, but his fingers cannot find him but only the clammy fingers of night, and goblin fancies are rioting in his brain, and hateful shapes pursue him with clutching fingers, and horrible figures go rustling past him half discerned in the familiar gloom. He is weary of the dreadful vaulted ceiling, he is weary of the dreadful endless floor. And what shall he do but lie down and die, who if he goes on, will soon perish of weariness and famine and thirst? Yet did he but know it, he has only to turn back at a certain angle and he will see through a chink of the cavern a crocus moon with a triple zone of burning stars, which if he will follow, after not so very painful a journey, not so very long an elapse of hours, he will come into a land of perennial fountains, where he may quench his thirst, and glistening fruit-groves where he may fill his hunger, and sweet cool grass where he may solace his weariness, and so pursue his journey by the nearest way to the wavering tree-tops, and the blooming gardens and the acres in their yellow gaberdines for which his soul has long panted.

This is the legend of Purush, the son of Prithivi and his journey to the land of Beulah.

Wilson : That is a fine apologue, Keshav; it is your own, may I ask?

Keshav : It is an allegory conceived by Vallabh Swami, the Indian Epicurus, and revealed to me by him in a vision.

Wilson : There we see the false economy of Nature; only they are privileged to see these beautiful visions, who can

without any prompting conceive images not a whit less beautiful.

Keshav : The germ of the story was really a dream, but the form and application are my own. The myth means, as I dare say you have found out, that our present servitude to conventions which are the machinery of thought and action, is principally due to weaknesses forming a large element in human nature. Our lives ought not to be lived in accordance with human nature which can nowhere be found apart from the disturbing element of reason, but according to nature at large where we find the principle of harmony pure and undefiled.

Wilson : On that we are both at one; let us start directly from this base of operations. I am impatient to follow the crocus moon with her triple zone of burning stars into the Eden of murmuring brooks and golden groves and fields of asphodel.

Keshav : The basis of morality is then the application to human life of the principles governing the universe; and the great principle of the universe is beauty, is it not?

Wilson : So we have discovered.

Keshav : And we described beauty as harmony in effect and proportion in detail.

Wilson : That was our description.

Keshav : Then the aim of morality must be to make human life harmonious. Now the other types in the universe are harmonious not merely in relation to their internal parts, but in relation to each other and the sum of the universe, are they not?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : We mean, I suppose, that the star fills its place in the Cosmos and the rose fills her place, but man does not fill his.

Wilson : That is what we mean.

Keshav : Then the human race must not only be harmonious within itself, but it must be harmonious in relation to the star and the rose and so fill its place as to perfect the harmony of the universe.

Wilson : Are we not repeating ourselves?

Keshav : No, but we are in danger of it. I am aiming at a clear and accurate wording of my position and that is not easy to acquire at a moment's notice. I think our best way would be

to consider the harmony of man with the universe, and leave the internal harmony of the race for subsequent inquiry.

Wilson : Perhaps it would be best.

Keshav : When we say that man should fill his place in the Cosmos, we mean that he should be in proportion with its other elements, just as the thorn is in proportion to the leaf and the leaf to the rose, for proportion is the ulterior cause of harmony. And we described proportion as a regular variety, or to use a more vivid phrase, a method in madness. If this is so, it is incumbent on man to be various in his development from the star, the rose and the other elements of the Cosmos, in a word to be original.

Wilson : That follows.

Keshav : But is it enough to be merely original? For instance if he were to hoist himself into the air by some mechanical contrivance and turn somersaults unto all eternity, that would be original but he would not be helping much towards universal harmony, would he?

Wilson : Well, not altogether.

Keshav : Then if we want to describe the abstract idea of virtue, we want something more than originality. I think we said that proportion is not merely variety, but regular variety?

Wilson : Yes, that is obvious.

Keshav : Then man must be not merely original but regular in his originality.

Wilson : I cannot exactly see what you mean.

Keshav : I cannot at all see what I mean; yet, unless our whole theory is unsound, and that I am loth to believe, I must mean something. Let us try the plan we have already adopted with such success, when we discovered the nature of beauty. We will take some form of harmony and inquire how regularity enters into it; and it occurs to me that the art of calligraphy will be useful for the purpose, for a beautifully written sentence has many letters just as the universe has many types and it seems that proportion is just as necessary to it.

Wilson : Yes, calligraphy will do very well.

Keshav : I recollect that we supposed beauty to have three elements, of which every type must possess at least one, better

two, and as a counsel of perfection all three. If we inquire, we shall find that form is absolutely imperative, seeing that if the form of the letters is not beautiful or the arrangement of the lines not harmonious, then the sentence is not beautifully written. Colour too may be an element of calligraphy, for we all know what different effects we can produce by using inks of various colours. And if the art is to be perfect, I think that perfume will have to enter very largely into it. Let us write the word "beautiful". Here you see the letters are beautifully formed, their arrangement is beautiful, this bright green ink I am using harmonizes well with the word, and moreover, the sight of this peculiar combination of letters written in this peculiar way brings to my mind a peculiar association of ideas, which I call the perfume of the written word.

Wilson : But is it not the combination, not of letters but of sounds, which lingers in your mind and calls up the idea?

Keshav : I do not think so, for I often find sentences that seem to me beautiful in writing or in print, but once I utter them aloud, become harsh and unmusical; and sometimes the reverse happens, especially in Meredith, in whom I have often at first sight condemned a sentence as harsh and ugly, which, when I read it aloud, I was surprised to find apt and harmonious. From this I infer that if a writer's works appear beautiful in print or manuscript, but not beautiful when read aloud, he may be set down as a good artist in calligraphy, but a bad artist in literature, since suggestion to the eye is the perfume of the written, but suggestion to the ear the perfume of the spoken word. In this however I seem to have been digressing to no purpose; for whatever else is uncertain, this much is certain, that form is essential to calligraphy, and this is really all that concerns us. Now if the form is to be beautiful it must be harmonious in effect, and to be harmonious in effect it must be proportionate in detail, and to be proportionate in detail, the words and letters of which it is made must exhibit a regular variety. We can easily see that the letters and words in a sentence are various, but how can they be said to be regular in their variety?

Wilson : I do not know at present, but I can see that the variety is regular.

Keshav : This we must find out without delay. Let us take the alphabet and see if the secret is patent there.

Wilson : That is indeed looking for Truth at the bottom of a well.

Keshav : Do you not see at a glance that the letters in the Latin alphabet are regular in this sense, that the dominant line is the curve and there is no written letter without it, for the straight lines are only used to prevent the monotony generated by an unrelieved system of curves? In the Bengali alphabet again, which is more elaborate, but less perfect than the Latin, there is a dominant combination of one or more straight lines with one or more curves and to obviate monotony letters purely composed of straight lines are set off by others purely composed of curves. In the Burmese and other dialects, I believe but from hearsay only, no line but the curve is admitted and I am told that the effect is undeniably pretty but a trifle monotonous. Here then we have a clue. If we consider, as we have previously considered, every type in the universe to be a word, then, if the sentence is to be beautifully written each word must not only be various from its near companion but must allow one dominant principle to determine the lines on which it must vary; and to avoid monotony there must be straight lines in the letters, that is to say, each type must have individual types within it, departing from the general type by acknowledging another dominant principle. I am afraid this is rather intricate. Would you like it to be made clearer?

Wilson : No, I perfectly understand; but I should like to guard myself against being misled by the analogy between a beautifully written sentence and the beautifully arranged universe. If this rule does not apply to every other form of beauty, we may not justly compare the universe to one in which it does happen to apply.

Keshav : I hope you will only require me to adduce example of perfect beauty, for the aim of morality is to arrange a perfect, not an imperfect harmony.

Wilson : Oh certainly, that is all I am entitled to require.

Keshav : Then you will admit that the stars are various, yet built on a dominant principle?

Wilson : Without doubt.

Keshav : And in making the flowers so various, the divine artist did not fail to remember a dominant principle which prevails in the structure and character of his episode in flowers.

Wilson : But this is merely to take an unfair advantage of the method of species so largely indulged in by Nature.

Keshav : Well, if you prefer particulars to generals, we will inquire into the beauty of a Greek design, for the Greeks were the only painters who understood the value of design; and we will as usual take an example of perfect beauty. Do you know the Nereid and Sea-Horse.

Wilson : Very intimately.

Keshav : Then, if you have not forgotten how in that incomparable work of art to every mass there is another and answering mass and to the limbs floating forward limbs floating backwards and to every wisp of drapery an answering wisp of drapery, and in short how the whole design is built on the satisfying principle of balancing like by like, you will admit that here is a dominant idea regulating variety. And the principle of balancing like with like is not peculiar to Greek designing but prevalent in the designs of Nature, for example the human face, where eye answers to luminous eye and both are luminous with one and the same brilliance, nor is one hazel while the other is azure, and the porches of hearing are two but similar in their curious workmanship, and the sweep of the brow to one ear does not vary from the sweep of the brow to the other and the divergence of the chin describes a similar curve on either face of the design, nor is one cheek pallid with the touch of fear while the other blushes with the flag of joy and health, but in everything the artist has remembered the principle of balancing like with like, both here and in the emerald leaf and swaying apple which if you tear along the fibrous spine or slice through the centre of the core, will leave in your hands two portions, diverse in entity but alike in material and workmanship. And yet the impertinent criticism of the moderns claims for themselves a keener appreciation of Nature, than those great pupils who learned her lessons so gloriously well. If you would like further examples of the dominant principle regulating variety in a design, you need only look at a blowing

rose, a wind-inspired frigate, an evergreen poem, and you will not be disappointed. With all this in your mind, you will surely admit that even if we compare the universe to a system of designs we shall not arrive at other results than when we compared it to God's episode in flowers and his marshalled pomp of stars and a sentence beautifully written.

Wilson : Yet I should like to ask one more question.

Keshav : My dear Broome, you are at liberty to ask a thousand, for I am always ready to answer.

Wilson : A single answer will satisfy me. Why do you compare the universe to a system of designs and not to a single design?

Keshav : The universe itself is a system of designs, first the harmony of worlds and within it the lands and seas and on that the life of flowers and trees and the life of birds and beasts and fishes and the life of human beings. Imagine the Greeks in search of a dominant idea to regulate the variety of their designs and hitting on the human figure as their model; would they not have been foolish, if they had gone away from their study of the human figure and drawn a system balancing like design by like design!

Wilson : I suppose they would.

Keshav : Nor should we be less foolish to draw up an ideal universe or a system of designs on the principle of a single design. Are you satisfied?

Wilson : Perfectly.

Keshav : And our conclusion is that we ought to regulate the variety of the types in the universe, not by balancing like with like, but by determining the lines of variance on one dominant principle.

Wilson : That is the indisputable conclusion.

Keshav : And so now we have panted up to the ridge we once thought the crowning summit we find that we have to climb another slope as arduous which was lying in wait for us behind. We have discovered the presence of a dominant idea in the variety of types, but we do not know what the idea may be.

Wilson : That is what we have to find.

Keshav : But if we find that all diverging types observe a

single requisite in divergence, shall we not infer that we have found the idea of which we are inquisitive?

Wilson : Obviously.

Keshav : And we shall find it most easily by comparing one type with another, shall we not?

Wilson : That is our first idea.

Keshav : But if we compare a rose to a star, we shall not find them agree in any respect except the brilliance of their hues and that is not likely to be the dominant idea.

Wilson : They are both beautiful.

Keshav : Exactly; but we wish to learn the elements of their beauty, and we agreed that these were variety, to begin with, and method in variety. Now we are inquiring what the method is they observe in their variety. We know that they are both beautiful; but we wish to know why they are both beautiful.

Wilson : And how are you going to do it?

Keshav : Well, since it will not do to compare a rose with a star, we will compare a star with a star; and here we find, that, however widely they differ, there is a large residuum of properties, such as brilliance and light, which are invariably present in one and the other, and they diverge not in the possession and absence of properties peculiar to a star, but in things accidental, in their size and the exactness of their shape and the measure of their brilliance and the character of the orbits they are describing. And if we compare flower with flower, we shall find a residuum of properties invariably present in one and the other but the divergence of flower from flower just like the divergence of star from star, not in properties peculiar to a flower, but in accidents like size and peculiarities of shape and varying vividness of hues and time and length of efflorescence. Moreover we perceive that the star is content to pierce the darkness with its rays and to burn like a brilliant diamond in the bodice of heaven, and is not ambitious to shed sweet perfumes upon space or to burden the heart of the night with song, but develops the virtues of a star without aspiring to the virtues of a flower or a bird, and the rose is content to be an empress in colour and perfume and a gorgeous harmony of petals and is not ambitious to give light in the darkness or to murmur a noontide song in response to the bee, but deve-

lops the virtues of a rose without aspiring to the virtues of a bee or a star. And so if we compare with the help of this new light the rose and the star, we see that they are both alike in developing their own virtues without aspiring to the virtues of one another. And this is the case with every natural form of beauty animate or inanimate, is it not?

Wilson : There can be no doubt of that.

Keshav : Then have we not found the dominant idea which governs the variety of types?

Wilson : I really believe we have.

Keshav : And man if he wishes to be in proportion with the other elements of the Cosmos, must be content to develop the virtues of a man without aspiring to the virtues of a rose or a star or any other element of the Cosmos.

Wilson : So it seems.

Keshav : And when we talk of the virtues of a star, do we not mean the inborn qualities and powers which are native to its sidereal character, for example, brilliance and light?

Wilson : Of course.

Keshav : And by the virtues of a flower the inborn qualities and powers which are native to its floral character, such as fragrance, colour, delicacy of texture?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : Then by the virtue of a man we shall have to mean the inborn qualities and powers which are native to his humanity, such as — what shall we say?

Wilson : That we can discover afterwards.

Keshav : Very well; but at any rate we can see already that some things are not inborn qualities and powers native to our humanity; and we know now why it is not an act of splendid virtue to turn somersaults in the air without any visible means of support; for if we did that, we should not be developing the virtues of a man, but we should be aspiring to the virtues of a kite; or, to use one of our phrases, we should be mad without method.

Wilson : That is evident.

Keshav : So a man's virtue lies not in turning somersaults without any visible means of support, but in the perfect evolu-

tion of the inborn qualities and powers which are native to his humanity.

Wilson : Yes, and I believe these are the very words in which you described virtue before we started on our voyage of discovery.

Keshav : That is indeed gratifying: and if we have shown any constancy and perseverance in following our clue through the labyrinth, I at least am amply rewarded, who feel convinced by the identity of the idea I have derived from the pedestrian processes of logical inference with the idea I once caught on the wings of thought and instinct, that as far as human eyes are allowed to gaze on the glorious visage of Truth unveiled, we shall be privileged to unveil her and embrace her spiritual presence, and are not following a willow-the-wisp of the imagination to perish at last in a quagmire.

We have then laid a firm hold on that clear and accurate wording, for which we were recently groping as blindly as Purush in his delusive cavern. And since the human brain is impatient of abstract ideas but easily fixed and taken by concrete images, let me embody our ideas in a simile. I have an accurate remembrance of climbing a very steep and ragged rock on the Yorkshire beaches, where my only foothold was a ladder carved in the rock with the rungs so wide apart that I had to grasp tightly the juts and jags and so haul myself up as slowly as a lizard, if I did not prefer by a false step or misplaced confidence to drop down some thirty feet on a rough sediment of sharp and polished pebbles. It occurs to me that what I did then in the body, I am doing now in the spirit, and it is a reason for self-gratulation that I have mounted safely to the second rung of the perilous ladder and am not lying shattered on the harsh and rasping pebbles of disappointment. And if I aspire to the third rung, I shall have less cause for apprehension than in my Yorkshire peril, since I can hardly fall to the beach but shall merely slip back to the rung from which I am mounting. Let us then estimate our progress. Our first rung was the basis of morality which we may describe by the golden rule "apply to human life the principles dominant in the Cosmos", and our second, as we now see, is the conception of abstract virtue or the perfect expression of the human being

as a type in the Cosmos, and this we describe as the consistent evolution of the inborn qualities and powers native to our humanity. Here then we have two rungs of the ladder, we must now be very careful in our selection of the third.

Wilson : Is it not obviously the next stage to discover what are the inborn qualities and powers native to our humanity?

Keshav : Possibly. Yet have we not forgotten a signal omission we made when we drew inferences from the comparison of a beautifully written sentence to the beautifully arranged universe?

Wilson : I am afraid I at least have forgotten. What was it?

Keshav : Did we not compare the broad types in the Cosmos to the words in a sentence and infer that as the dominant principle governing the word was the prevalence of the curve, so there must be a principle governing the type?

Wilson : We did.

Keshav : And also that as in the letters within the word there were two prevalent lines the curve and the straight line, so within the broad or generic type there are individual types governed by quite another principle.

Wilson : That also. But surely you are not going to argue from analogies?

Keshav : Did we not argue from the beautifully written sentence merely because the principles of calligraphy proved to be the principles of every sort of harmony?

Wilson : I confess we did; otherwise all we have been saying would be merely a brilliant explosion of fancy.

Keshav : Then we are logically justified in what we have been doing. Consider then how in a system of harmony, every part has to be harmonious in itself or else mar the universal music.

Wilson That is true.

Keshav And the human race is a part of such a system, is it not?

Wilson Yes.

Keshav Then must the human race become harmonious within itself or continue to spoil the universal harmony.

Wilson Of course. How foolish of me to lose sight of that.

Keshav And so we have been elucidating the harmony of

man with the Cosmos and saying nothing about the harmony of man with man?

Wilson : Did we not relegate that for subsequent inquiry?

Keshav : We did, but I think the time for subsequent inquiry has come.

Wilson : It is too late in the day for me to distrust your guidance.

Keshav : I do not think you will have reason to regret your confidence in me. Our line then will be to consider the internal harmony of the race before we proceed farther.

Wilson : So it is best.

Keshav : Here again we must start from our description of beauty as harmony in effect and proportion in detail and our description of the latter as a regular variety or method in madness. Then just as in the Cosmos the individual type must vary from all the other types, so in the human Cosmos the individual man must vary from all other men.

Wilson : That is rather startling. Do you mean that there ought to be no point of contact?

Keshav : No, Broome; for we must always remember that the elements of a generic type must have certain virtues without which they would not belong to the type: as the poet says

> One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

Wilson : Then where do you find your variety?

Keshav : If you will compare the elements of those types in which the harmony is perfect, your ignorance will vanish like a mist. You will see at once that every planet develops indeed his planetary qualities, but varies from every other planet, and if Venus be the name and the star be feminine, is a dovelike white in complexion and yields an effulgence more tender than a girl's blush, but if he is Mars, burns with the sanguine fire of battle and rolls like a bloodshot eye through space, and if he is Saturn, has seven moons in his starry seraglio, and is richly orange in complexion like vapour coloured by the sun's pencil when he sets, and wears a sevenfold girdle of burning fire blue as a witch's eye and green as Love's parrot and red as the lips of Cleopatra

and indeed of all manner of beautiful colours, and if he is Jupiter or any one of the planets, has the qualities of that planet and has not the qualities of another, but develops his own personality and has no regard for any model or the example of any other planet.

And if you drop your eyes from the sublimer astral spaces to the modest gauds of Earth our mother, you will see that every flower has indeed the qualities of its floral nature, but varies widely from her sister beauties, and if she is a lily, hides in her argent beaker a treasure of golden dust and her beauty is a young and innocent bride on her marriage-morning, but if she is a crocus, has a bell-like beauty and is absorbed in the intoxication of her own loveliness and wears now the gleaming robe of sunrise and now a dark and delicate purple, and now a soft and sorrowful pallor, but, if she is a rose, has the fragrance of a beautiful soul and the vivid colour of a gorgeous poem, yet conceals a sharp sting beneath the nestling luxury of her glorious petals, and if she is a hyacinth or honeysuckle or meadow-sweet, has the poisonous perfume of the meadow-sweet or the soul-subduing fragrance of the honeysuckle or the passionate cry of the hyacinth, and not the beautiful egoism of the crocus, or the oriental splendour of the rose, but develops her own qualities without aspiring to the qualities of any and every flower.

May we not then say that the dominant principle regulating the variety of individual types is the evolution of the individual as distinct from generic virtues?

Wilson : That is the logical consequence.

Keshav : Then the description of individual virtue runs thus, the evolution by the human being of the inborn qualities and powers native to his personality; that is to say, just as every beautiful building has the solid earth for its basis but is built in a distinct style of architecture, so the beautiful human soul will rest on the solid basis of humanity but build up for itself a personality distinct and individual.

Wilson : That is exactly what the virtuous man must do.

Keshav : And so with infinite ease and smoothness we have glided up to the third rung of our ladder, as if we were running up a broad and marble stair-case. Here then let us stop and

reflect on all we have said and consider whether from confusion of mind or inability to comprehend the whole situation we have made any mistake or omission. For my part I avow that my thoughts have not been so lucid tonight as I could have wished. We are then to continue the inquiry in the Gardens on Tuesday afternoon? I think that was what you suggested.

Wilson : Yes, on Tuesday at half-past two.

Keshav : Would you mind my bringing Prince Paradox with me? He is anxious to hear how we are dealing with our idea and as he will be perfectly willing to go to the lengths we have so far gone, we need not fear that he will be a drag on us.

Wilson : I am perfectly willing that he should come. The more, the merrier.

Keshav : Not at this stage; for this intellectual ascent up the precipice of discovery, is indeed very exciting and pleasant, but strains the muscles of the mind more than a year's academical work; and I trust that next time we shall bring it to a satisfying conclusion.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK

Book Three

Keshav Ganesh [Desai] — Broome Wilson — Treneth

Treneth : But we must not forget our purpose in being here.

Keshav : Well, Broome, what do you say to our resuming our cruise for the discovery of virtue? I avow the speculation weighs on me, and I am impatient to see the last of it.

Wilson : I have not to learn that you are the most indolent of men. No sooner are you in a novel current of thought than you tire and swim back to the shore. I am indignant with Nature for wasting on you a genius you so little appreciate.

Treneth : Ah, but you are really quite wrong, Wilson. Genius is a capacity for being indolent.

Wilson : Enter Prince Paradox! But seriously, Keshav, I think the argument will live beyond this afternoon and I give warning that I shall drag you all over the field of ethics before we have done with it.

Keshav : It will be the corpse of my intellect you will maltreat. But in extremity I rely upon Treneth to slay my Argus with the bright edge of a paradox.

Wilson : We were at the third rung of the ladder, were we not?

Keshav : Yes, thou slave-driving Ishmaelite. I declare it is impious on a day like this to bury ourselves in the gloomy vaults of speculation. But as you will.

To remember how far we have climbed is the best incentive to climb farther, and will give Treneth an idea of the situation. We happened to be weighing the ordinary principles of morality and finding them all wanting cast about for a new principle and discovered that beauty was the sole morality of the universe, and it had colour, form and perfume as elements, harmony as its general effect and proportion, which we described as regular variety or method in madness, as the ulterior cause of the harmony, and we ventured to imagine that as all the other elements of the universe were harmonious notes in a perfect sonata but the human element had wilfully chosen to jar upon and ruin the

exquisite music, the right principle of virtue was wilfully to choose to mend the harmony we had ruined.

With these projections from the rock of speculation to help us we climbed up the three steep and difficult rungs I am going to describe to you. We argued that the only way to remedy a note that rebels against the spirit of the composition is to reduce it into harmony with that spirit, and so arrived at the conclusion that the principle of morality is to apply to human life the principles that govern the rest of the Cosmos. There you have the first rung of our ladder.

We recommenced from this basis and by remembrance of the nature of proportion or regular variety which is the cause of harmony and appears throughout every natural type of beauty, appears in the common principle which determines their line of variance from each other, we thought that in the elements of the Cosmos there must be such a common principle and found it to be the evolution by each element of its own peculiar virtue as distinct from the peculiar virtues of every other element, and so reached our second conclusion, that just as astral virtue lies in the evolution by the star of the inborn qualities and powers native to its astral character, just so human virtue lies in the evolution by the human being of the inborn qualities and powers native to his humanity. This is the second rung of our ladder.

With this second secure basis behind us, we went on to discover that within generic types such as the star, the flower, the human being, there were individual types governed by the similar but different principle of evolving the individual as distinct from the generic virtues, or, when applied to the human being, of evolving the inborn qualities and powers native to his personality. This is the third rung of our ladder.

Have I been correct in my statement, Broome?

Wilson : Perfectly correct.

Treneth : My only quarrel with your conclusions is that you have wasted a couple of evenings in arriving at them. Why, except the first, they are mere axioms.

Keshav : Yes, to the seeing eye they are axioms, but to the unseeing eye they are paradoxes. The truths that are old and stale to the philosopher, are to the multitude new and startling

and dangerous. But now that we have all mounted to the same rung, let us pursue the ascent. And I suppose our immediate step will be to find whether the mere evolution of the inborn qualities and powers is or is not the sole requisite for virtue.

Wilson : Before we go to that, Keshav, you will have to meet a difficulty which you show every sign of evading.

Keshav : Whatever difficulty there is, I am ready to solve, but I cannot guess to what you refer.

Wilson : I suppose you will admit that a definition, to be adequate, must have nothing vague or indefinite about it?

Keshav : If there is anything vague, it must be elucidated or our statement falls to the ground.

Treneth : I dissent: a definite definition is a contradiction in terms. I am for definite indefinitions.

Keshav : I am not in extremities yet, Prince Paradox.

Wilson : Well now, is not your phrasing "the inborn qualities and powers native to our humanity" very vague and indefinite?

Keshav : Indefinite, I admit, and I cannot think that an objection but I plead not guilty to the charge of vagueness.

Wilson : You think with Treneth that a definition should not be definite.

Keshav : If by being definite is implied reduction to its primal elements you will agree with me that a definition need not be definite: or do you want me to enumerate the qualities native to our humanity such as physical vigour, and the faculty of inference and sexual passion and I do not know how many more?

Wilson : You shall not escape me so easily, Keshav. You are merely spinning dialectical cobwebs which give a specious appearance to the pit in which you would have us fall.

Keshav : Then by pointing out the trap, you can easily sweep away my sophistical cobwebs, my good Broome.

Treneth : What penalty for a pun?

Keshav : No penalty, for to punish a lie on the information of Beelzebub is to do God's work at the devil's bidding.

Wilson : Yes, a penalty: you shall be taken at your word. You are setting a trap for us, when you try to shuffle in your phrase about the qualities native to our humanity. If we leave this inexplicit and unlimited, you will be at liberty to describe any

quality you choose as a virtue and any other quality you choose as a defect by assuming in your own insinuating manner that it is or is not native to our humanity. And in reality there is a very distinct gulf between those of our qualities which are native to our humanity and those others which belong to the animal nature we are working out of our composition; for example between lust and love, of which one belongs to the lower animal nature and the other to the higher spiritual. You are ignoring the distinction and by ignoring it, you ignore the patent fact of evolution.

Treneth : To ignore facts is the beginning of thought.

Keshav : No, but to forget facts for the time being — that is the beginning of thought.

Wilson : My dear Keshav, pray don't trail a red paradox across the path.

Keshav : It was the other boy who did it. To return to the subject, are you really unconscious of the flagrant errors of which you have been so lavish in a little space?

Wilson : I am quite unconscious of any error.

Keshav : You have made three to my knowledge, and the first is your assumption that what is animal cannot be human.

Wilson : Can you disprove it?

Keshav : Can you prove it? In the first place you cannot tell what is animal and what is not.

Wilson : Why, the qualities possessed by human beings as distinct from animals are those which are not animal.

Keshav : And, I suppose, qualities possessed in common by human beings and animals, are animal?

Wilson : You are right.

Keshav : And such qualities ought to be worked out of our composition?

Wilson : Yes, as Tennyson says, we ought to be

working out
The tiger and the ape.

Keshav : Then we ought to get rid of fidelity, ought we not?

Wilson : Why so?

Keshav : Because it is a quality possessed in common by the dog and the human being, and the dog is an animal.

Treneth : Of course we should. Fidelity is a disease like conscience.

Keshav : And infidelity is a quality possessed in common by the cat and the human being, and therefore we ought to get rid of infidelity.

Treneth : Again of course; for infidelity is merely a relative term, and if fidelity is not, then how can infidelity be?

Keshav : And so we must get rid of all opposing qualities and acquire a dead neutrality? Your ambition then is not to be a personality, but to be a — negative?

Treneth : I confess you have taken one in the flank; even my paradoxes will not carry me so far.

Keshav : And you, Broome, are you willing to break down the ladder by which we are climbing?

Wilson : Not for a moment. What I mean is that the qualities possessed in common by all the animals and the human being are animal.

Keshav : Is not the human being an animal?

Wilson : Yes, scientifically.

Keshav : But not really?

Wilson : Well, he is something more than an animal.

Keshav : You mean he has other qualities besides those which belong to the animal type?

Wilson That is what I mean.

Keshav And has not the planet other qualities beside those which belong to the astral type?

Wilson Yes.

Keshav Does that warrant us in saying that a planet is not really a star?

Wilson No.

Keshav And are we warranted in saying that man is not really an animal?

Wilson We are not.

Keshav And the animal world is an element in the Cosmos, is it not?

Wilson Yes.

Keshav : Is it not then the virtue of an animal to evolve the qualities and powers native to his animality?

Wilson : I suppose so.

Keshav : And man, being an animal, ought also to evolve the qualities and powers native to his animality.

Wilson : That seems to follow, but is not this to cancel our old description of human virtue and break down our second rung?

Keshav : No, for just as the qualities native to a planet include the qualities native to a star, so the qualities native to the human type include the qualities native to the animal type.

Wilson : I quite agree with you now. What was my second error?

Keshav : You talked of the lower animal nature and the higher spiritual nature and in so talking assumed that the qualities peculiar to the human being are higher than the qualities he shares with some or all of the animals. Is dissimulation higher than love? You reject the idea with contempt: yet dissimulation is peculiar to the human being but love, and love of the most spiritual kind, he shares with the turtle-dove and with the wild-duck of the Indian marshes who cannot sleep the livelong night because Nature has severed him from his mate but ever wails across the cold and lapping water with passionate entreaty that she may solace his anguish with even a word, and travellers straying in the forest hear his forlorn cry "Love, speak to me!" No, we can only say of varying qualities that one is beautiful and another less beautiful, or not beautiful at all; and beauty does not reside in being animal or being more than animal but in something very different.

Wilson : And my third error?

Keshav : Your third error was to confound evolution with elimination.

Wilson : And does it not really come to that?

Keshav : The vulgar opinion, which finds a voice as usual in Tennyson -- what opinion of the British average does he not echo? — the vulgar opinion learns that the principle of evolution or gradual perfection is the reigning principle of life and adopts the idea to its own stupid fallacy that perfection implies

the elimination of all that is vivid and picturesque and likely to foster a personality. Evolution does not eliminate but perfects.

Wilson : But surely perfection tends to eliminate what is imperfect?

Keshav : Oh I don't deny that we have lost our tails, but so has a Manx cat.

Treneth : Dear me! that is a fruitful idea. A dissertation proving that the Manx cat is the crowning effort of Evolution might get me a Fellowship.

Keshav : It would deserve it for its originality. Moreover if we have lost our tails, we have also lost our wings.

Treneth : I maintain that the tails are the more serious loss. Wings would have been useful and we do not want them but we do want tails, for they would have been lovely appendages and a magnificent final flourish to the beauty of the human figure. Just fancy the Dean and Provost pacing up to the Communion Table with a fine long tail swishing about their ears! What a glorious lesson! What a sublime and instructive spectacle!

Wilson : You are incorrigibly frivolous, Treneth.

Keshav : If Prince Paradox is frivolous, he is virtuous, insofar as he is developing the virtue most intimately native to his personality; and the inquiry is dull enough at present to bear occasional touches of enlivening laughter.

Wilson : Yet the inquiry must pass through stifling underground galleries and to avoid them is puerile.

Keshav : I am at one with you, but if we must dive under the ground, there is no need to linger there.

Evolution does not eliminate, but perfects. The cruelty that blossoms out in the tiger, has its seeds deep down in the nature of man and if it is minimised in one generation will expand in another, nor is it possible for man to eradicate cruelty without pulling up in the same moment the bleeding roots of his own being. Yet the brute ferocity that in the tiger is graceful and just and artistic, is in the man savage and crude and inharmonious and must be cultured and refined, until it becomes a virtue and fits as gracefully and harmlessly into the perfect character, as its twin-brother physical courage, and physical love, its remote relative.

Wilson : You are growing almost as paradoxical as Prince Paradox, Keshav.

Keshav : Look for Truth and you will find her at the bottom of a paradox. Are you convinced that animal qualities are not the worse for being animal?

Wilson : Perfectly convinced.

Keshav : And here I cannot do better than quote a sentence that like so many of Meredith's sentences, goes like a knife to the root of the matter. "As she grows in the flesh when discreetly tended, nature is unimpeachable, flowerlike, yet not too decoratively a flower; you must have her with the stem, the thorns, the roots, and the fat bedding of roses." And since I have quoted that immortal chapter so overloaded with truth critical, truth psychologic and truth philosophic, let me use two other sentences to point the moral of this argument and bid you embrace "Reality's infinite sweetness" and "touch the skirts of philosophy by sharing her hatred of the sham decent, her derision of sentimentalism." May we not now ascend to the fourth rung?

Wilson : Yes, I think we may go on.

Keshav : I am especially eager to do so because I am more and more convinced that our description of virtue is no longer adequate: for if the only requisite is to evolve our innate qualities, will it not be enough to be merely cruel and not to be cruel in a refined and beautiful manner?

Wilson : Plainly it will.

Keshav : And is it really enough to be merely cruel?

Treneth : No, for to be inartistic is the only sin.

Keshav : Your paradox cuts to the heart of the truth. Can you tell me, Broome, whether is the rose more beautiful than the bramble or the bramble than the rose?

Wilson : Obviously the rose than the bramble.

Keshav : And why is this? Is it not because the thorn develops unduly the thorn and does not harmonize it with leaves but is careless of proportion and the eternal principle of harmony, and is beautiful indeed as an element in the harmony of plants but has no pretensions to personal beauty but the rose subdues the thorn into harmony with the leaf and the blossoms and is perfectly beautiful in herself no less than as an element in the

harmony of flowers?

Wilson : I believe you are right.

Keshav : And must not cruelty, the thorn of our beautiful human rose, be subdued into harmony with his other qualities and among them tenderness and clemency and generous forbearance and other qualities seemingly the most opposed to cruelty and then only will it be a real virtue but until then nothing more than a potential virtue?

Wilson : You are right; then only will it be a real virtue.

Keshav : So we must modify our description of virtue by affixing an epithet to the word 'evolution' and preferably I think the epithet 'perfect' which does not imply size or degree or intensity or anything but justness of harmony, for example in a poem which is not called perfect when it is merely long drawn out or overflowing with passion or gorgeous even to swooning, but when it blends all the elements of beauty into an irreproachable harmony. We shall then describe virtue as the perfect evolution by the human being of the inborn qualities and powers native to his personality.

Wilson : With that I have no quarrel, but am I too inquisitive when I ask you how cruelty and tenderness can live together?

Keshav : My dear Broome, I shall never think you too inquisitive but above all things desire that you should have a clear intelligence of my meaning. Have you never learned by experience or otherwise how a girl will torment her favoured lover by a delicate and impalpable evasion of his desires and will not give him even the loan of a kiss without wooing, but must be infinitely entreated and stretch him on the rack of a half-serious refusal and torture him with the pangs of hope just as a cat will torture a mouse, yet all the while means to give him everything he asks for and would indeed be more bitterly disappointed than he, if any accident precluded her from making him happy?

Wilson : Yes, I know some women are like that.

Keshav : If you had said most women are like that, you would have hit the truth more nearly. And this trait in women we impute to feminine insincerity and to maiden coyness and to everything but the real motive, and that is the primitive and eternal passion of cruelty appearing in the coarse fibre of man as

crude and inartistic barbarity, but in the sweet and delicate soul of woman as a refined and beautiful playfulness and the inseparable correlative of a gentle and suave disposition.

Wilson : But I am inclined to credit the girl with the purpose of giving a keener relish to the gratified desire by enhancing the difficulty of attainment, and in that case she will be actuated not by cruelty but always by tenderness.

Keshav : You think she is actuated by the principles of Political Economy? I cannot agree with you.

Treneth : And I deny the truth of the principle. A precious thing easily acquired is treasured for its beauty and worth, but if acquired with pain and labour, the memory of the effort leaves a bad taste in the mouth which it is difficult to expunge. I read Virgil at school and never read a line of him now but Catullus I skimmed through in my arm-chair and love and appreciate.

Keshav : Your distinction is subtle and suggestive, Treneth, but it never occurred to me in that light before.

Treneth : It never occurred to *me* in that light before.

Keshav : Yet I do not think it applies to our lovers, and it does not apply always, for the poem I have perfected with labour and thought is surely dearer to me than the light carol thrown off in the happy inspiration of the moment. Rapid generalities seldom cover more than a few cases. So I will take Broome on his own ground, not because I cannot adduce other instances of cruelty and tenderness living in wedded felicity, but because I do not want to fatigue myself by recollecting them. And now, Broome, will you say that a tyrant who desires to give his favourite a keener relish of luxury and strains him on the rack and washes him with scalding oil and dries him with nettles and flays him with whips and then only comforts him with the luxury of downy pillows and velvet cushions and perfect repose, has not been actuated by cruelty but always by tenderness?

Wilson : Oh, of course, if you cite extravagant instances!

Keshav : And will you say that the girl who wishes to give her kiss a sweeter savour on the lips of her favourite and strains him on the rack of suspense and washes him with the scalding oil of despair and dries him with the nettles of hope and flays him with the whips of desire and then only comforts him with

the velvet luxury of a kiss and the downy cushion of an embrace and the perfect repose of desire fulfilled, has not been actuated by cruelty but always by tenderness and not rather that all unnecessary pain is cruelty to the sufferer?

Wilson : Certainly, unnecessary pain is cruelty.

Keshav : Are you perfectly satisfied?

Wilson : Perfectly satisfied.

Keshav : We have discovered then that perfect evolution is requisite for perfect virtue, but I do not think we have distilled its full flavour into the epithet. Or are you of the opinion that we want nothing more than the harmonizing of all the inborn qualities?

Wilson : I cannot think of any other requisite.

Keshav : Can you, Treneth?

Treneth : I was much attracted by something you said in the beginning about the elements of beauty and I suspect it is these we want now.

Keshav : You have exactly hit it. We described it as not merely harmony in effect and proportion in detail but as possessed of one of the three elements, colour, perfume and form, and in most types combining at least two and in many all three. But in confining our outlook to harmony and proportion we have talked as if human virtue were merely possessed of one of the elements; yet is there any reason to suppose that human virtue does not possess the whole three?

Wilson : No reason whatever.

Keshav : Well, might we not inquire whether it does possess all three, and if it does not, whether it may not legitimately or, to speak more properly, may not artisically possess all three?

Wilson : By all means, let us inquire.

Keshav : And if we find that it may artistically possess them, then, if our theory that beauty should be the governing principle in all things, is really correct, must we not say that they not only may but ought to possess all three?

Wilson : Evidently we must.

Treneth : That is as plain as a Cambridge laundress.

Keshav : And it is clear that all qualities may, with diligence, be entirely divested of colour, form and perfume, and when

they have reached the stage of wanting every single element of beauty, we need take no notice of them, for they have no longer anything to do with virtue, until they begin to redevelop.

Wilson : Obviously, for we are talking of perfect virtue or perfect beauty of character.

Keshav : Now if we have not the qualities requisite for a given action, we shall not achieve the action, supposing we attempt it, but shall only achieve a blunder, is it not so?

Wilson : Clearly.

Keshav : But if we have the qualities, we are likely to achieve the action?

Wilson : Necessarily.

Keshav : Then is not action the outward manifestation of a quality, and I include in action any movement physical or intellectual which is visible or whose effects are visible to the human understanding?

Wilson : Yes, but may not an action manifest the want of a quality?

Keshav : No doubt, but we need not touch on those, since we have not to develop defects in order to be virtuous, or do you think we need?

Treneth : Clearly not: negatives cannot be virtues.

Keshav : That is a very just sentiment and I shall have occasion to recall it. Now is not a battle the outward manifestation of the warlike qualities?

Wilson : Evidently.

Keshav : And composition the outward manifestation of the poetical qualities, I mean, of course, the qualities of a maker?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : And do we not mean that the poetical qualities express themselves in composition just as the sidereal in a star?

Wilson : We do.

Keshav : And is not the star the form of the sidereal qualities?

Wilson : Yes.

Keshav : Then is not composition the form of the poetical qualities?

Wilson : That follows.

Keshav : And battle of the warlike qualities?

Wilson : That also.

Keshav : Then is not action the form of a quality, that is to say, the shape in which it expresses itself?

Wilson : So it seems.

Keshav : So we find that virtue has a form.

Wilson : But may not qualities have a form apart from action?

Treneth : For example, thought.

Keshav : But the expression of thought is included in action for our purpose.

Treneth : For our purpose only.

Keshav : As you please. I merely want to use one projection from the rock and not imperil my neck by clutching two in one hand.

Treneth : I am satisfied.

Keshav : I suppose, Broome, you mean by form a concrete shape?

Wilson : I suppose so.

Keshav : Then you must see that qualities unexpressed in action are wholly chaotic and formless; and I mean within the scope of action, the expression of thought and the act of sitting or standing or lying down and the act of being indolent and anything that by any legitimate stretch of language may be called an act.

Wilson : I too am satisfied.

Keshav : Then we are agreed that a quality must possess form, that is to say, express itself in action or it will not be a virtue?

Treneth : May it not prefer to express itself in perfume and colour?

Keshav : I had forgotten that.

Now if we inquire what colour is, we shall see that it is nothing concrete but merely an effect on the retina of the eye, and its prosperity lies in the eye that sees it, and if the retina of the eye is perfect, every different shade impresses itself, but if imperfect, then the eye is blind to one or more colours. Will you agree with me when I say that anything to which we give the name of colour must be the reverse of concrete?

Wilson That follows.

Keshav Then the colour of a virtue must be the reverse of concrete.

Wilson Evidently.

Keshav Now let us take metaphor into our counsel, for metaphor has sometimes an intuitive way of chiming consonantly with the truth; and metaphor tells us that we often talk of a scarlet and sinful character and of a white and innocent character and of neutral and drab-coloured character, and assign various colours to various women and call one woman a splendid carnation, for we are fond of comparing women to flowers, and another a beautiful and gorgeous rose, and a third a pure and sinless lily and yet another a modest violet betraying herself only by her fragrance, and are all the while implying that to the imaginative eye, if the retina is perfect, various characters have various colours. Do you follow me?

Treneth : Yes, the idea is fine.

Wilson : And true.

Treneth : That is immaterial.

Keshav : And character is the composition of qualities just as a poem is the composition of sounds and a painting the composition of pigments.

Wilson Yes, just in that sense.

Keshav Then is it not plain that if a character has colour, the qualities of which it is composed must have colour.

Wilson I think it is.

Keshav And colour is not concrete, but an effect on the retina of the eye?

Wilson So we said.

Keshav Then is not the colour of a quality its effect on the retina of the imaginative eye?

Wilson Yes.

Keshav And a quality in itself may be formless?

Wilson Yes.

Keshav Then to the imaginative eye is not a quality pure colour?

Wilson I suppose so.

Keshav But the imaginative eye is not one of the perceptive

eyes, for it perceives what does not exist, but the perceptive eye only what does exist.

Wilson : You are right.

Keshav : I mean that nothing without form can have an effect on the retina of the perceptive eye.

Wilson : That is evident.

Keshav : Then to be visible to the perceptive eye, the colour of a quality, which is really the soul of the quality, must suffuse the action which expresses it, which is the body of the quality.

Wilson : It must.

Keshav : And is colour without form a perfect type of beauty?

Wilson : No.

Keshav : Then a quality must suffuse its body with its soul, or, since the word action is growing ambiguous, its expression with its colour.

Wilson : Yes, I agree to that.

Keshav : And so the quality will so suffuse its expression as to be visible to the perceptive eye, just as the soul of a rose, which is the effect on the retina of the imaginative eye, suffuses her form with colour which is the effect on the retina of the perceptive eye, and varies according to the variety of colours, and if two roses have the same form but one is crimson and the other yellow, the soul of the red rose is seen to be scarlet with unholy passion, but the soul of the yellow rose is seen to be dull and blanched and languid, like the reaction after extremely voluptuous enjoyment.

And so virtue may possess both form and colour, and, I suppose, may artistically possess both, or will colour be detrimental to the perfection of virtue as tinting to the perfection of sculpture?

Treneth : By no means; for qualities are not hewn of marble or cast in beaten gold or chiselled in Indian ivory, but are moulded in the delicate and flower-like texture of human emotion and, if colourless, are scarcely beautiful.

Keshav : Then we are agreed that a quality must possess both form and colour or will not be a perfect virtue.

Treneth : Plainly.

Wilson : I am afraid I hardly understand what we are saying.

Keshav : I am certain I do not; but we must follow where the argument leads us, and I have a glimmering intelligence which I hope to see expanding into perfect daylight; but I do not want any side issue to distract my thoughts and will go on to inquire what is the perfume of a quality: for I am like a frail canoe that wavers through a tranquil to be buffeted outside by the swelling waters and have with difficulty plunged through these two waves of form and colour, when I see rolling down on me with its curled forehead this third wave of perfume which I do not hope to outlive. But to the venturous Fortune is as compliant as a captive Briseis and I will boldly plunge into the crash of the breaking water and call manner the perfume of a quality, for in manner resides the subtle aroma and sense of something delicious but impalpable which is what we mean by perfume.

Treneth : With your usual good luck you have notched your mark in the centre.

Keshav : So by audacity I have outlived the third wave and am more than ever convinced that you must take liberties with Fortune before she will love you.

I suppose you will agree with me that for a virtue to be beautiful, there must be a perfect harmony in the elements of beauty, and the colour not too subdued as in the clover nor too glaring as in the sunflower, and the perfume not too slight to be noticeable as in the pansy nor too intense for endurance as in the meadow-sweet, and the form not too monotonous as in a canal or too irregular as in the leafless tree, but all perfectly harmonious in themselves and in fit proportion to each other?

Wilson : From our description of beauty, that is evident.

Treneth : I plead not guilty on behalf of the sunflower, but agree with the sentiment.

Keshav : And now since Broome and I are at a loss to conjecture what we mean, do you not think we shall be enlightened by a concrete example?

Treneth : It is likely.

Wilson : Let us at least make an attempt.

Keshav : We will call on the stage the girl and her lover, who have been so useful to us. It is clear at once that if she is not

virtuous but harmonizes the elements of beauty unskilfully, the passion of her favourite will wither and not expand.

Wilson : That is clear.

Keshav : What then will be her manner of harmonizing them?

Wilson : I return the question to you.

Keshav : Well now, will she not harmonize the phases of her dalliance, and hesitate on the brink of yielding just at the proper pitch of his despair, and elude his kiss just at the proper pitch of his expectancy, and fan his longing when it sinks, and check it when it rises, and surrender herself when he is smouldering with hopeless passion?

Wilson : That is probably what she will do.

Keshav : And is not that to cast her dalliance in a beautiful form?

Wilson : It is.

Keshav : But she will not do this grossly and palpably, but will lead up to everything by looks and tones and gestures so as to glide from one to the other without his perceiving and will sweeten the hard and obvious form by the flavour of the simple and natural, yet will be all the while the veriest coquette and artist in flirtation.

Wilson : Yes, that is what a girl like that would do.

Keshav : And is not that to give a subtle perfume to her dalliance?

Wilson : I suppose it is.

Keshav : But if she is perfect in the art, will she not, even when repulsing him most cruelly, allow a secret tenderness to run through her words and manner, and when she is most tenderly yielding, will she not show the sharp edge of asperity through the flowers, and in a word allow the blended cruelty and sweetness of her soul to be just palpable to his perceptive senses?

Wilson : She will.

Keshav : And is not that to suffuse her dalliance with colour?

Wilson : Plainly.

Keshav : And moreover she will not allow her affectation of the natural to be too imperfect to conceal her art or so heavily scented as to betray the intention, or the colour to be unnotice-

able from slightness or from intensity to spoil the delicate effect of her perverseness, or the form to engross too largely the attention, or indeed any element to fall too short or carry too far, but will subdue the whole trio into a just and appropriate harmony.

Wilson : If she wants to be a perfect flirt, that is what she will do.

Keshav : And if coquetry is native in her, to be a perfect flirt will be highest pinnacle of virtue.

Wilson : That follows from the premises.

Keshav : And so here we have a concrete example of perfect virtue, and begin to understand what we mean by the perfect evolution of an inborn quality, or are you still unenlightened?

Wilson : No, I perfectly understand.

Keshav : Hither then we have climbed with much more laborious effort and have almost cut our hands in two on the projections, but do at last really stand on the fourth and last rung of the ladder.

Wilson : The last? I rather fancy we are only half way up and shall have to ascend another three or four rungs before we are kissed by the fresh winds that carol on the brow. I have many things to ask you and you have as yet spoken nothing of the relations between man and man and how this new morality is to be modified by the needs of society and what justice means and what self-sacrifice and indeed a thousand things which will need many hours to investigate.

Keshav : I am Frankenstein saddled with a monster of my own making and have made a man to my ruin and a young man to my hurt. Nevertheless "lead on, monster: we'll follow."

Treneth : Will you not rest on the fourth rung and have a cup of tea in my rooms before you resume.

Keshav : But shall we not put a stop to your spheroids and trianguloids and asinoids and all the other figures of mathematical ingenuity?

Treneth : I am at present watching a body which revolves on six screws and is consequently very drunk; and a day off will sensibly assist my speculations.

Keshav : So let it be, but before we go I may as well recall to you at a glance what is our fourth rung.

We have expanded our description of virtue as the evolution of the inborn qualities native to our personality, by throwing in the epithet "perfect", and have interpreted the full flavour of the epithet in words to the effect that qualities in their evolved perfection must be harmonious one with another and have a beautiful form or expression, and a beautiful colour or revelation of the soul, and a beautiful perfume or justly-attempered manner and must subdue all three into a just appropriate harmony. With this conviction in our souls we will journey on, despising the censure and alarm of the reputable, and evolve our inborn qualities and powers into a beautiful and harmonious perfection, until we walk delicately like living poems through a radiant air, and will not stunt the growth of any branch or blossom, but will prefer to the perishable laurels of this world a living crown of glory, and hear through the chaotic murmur of the ages the solemn question of Christ "What profiteth it a man if he own the whole world and lose his own soul?" and will answer according to the melodious doctrines of philosophy and acquire by a life of perfect beauty the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

Beauty in the Real

I HAD ridden down by Shelsford thro' the gilttering lustre of an afternoon in March and as I was returning somewhat cold and tired, saw at a distance the pink hat[1] and heavy black curls of Keshav Ganesh and with him Broome Wilson and Prince Paradox. As I trotted up Prince Paradox hailed me. "Come round and have tea with me," he said, "we are speculating at large on the primitive roots and origins of the universe, and I know your love for light subjects." "I shall be a delighted listener," I said, and was genuine in the assurance, for I had many a while listened with subtle delight to the beautiful and imaginative talk of Keshav Ganesh. I rode to the stables and returned to the College and quickly changing my apparel repaired to Chetwind Court, but found them already drinking tea with the liberality of artists. "A cup of nectar," I cried, "ere the bowl be empty!" "It seems that Pegasus is blind," said Wilson, "or he would not see the drink of Gods in the brown tincture of tea-leaves and the chased bowls of Hephaestus in a common set of China." "If not the drink of Gods," I replied, "it is the nectar of poets and women." "And that is a more splendid title," put in Prince Paradox. "You are right," said Keshav, "poets and women are the efflorescence of being and the crowning rapture of creation, and if poets are roses in their delicate texture and have the crimson luxury and the heavy fragrance and the petalled sublimity of a blowing rose, women are moulded as fine material but are flowers perpetually in the bud and are only seen in a glint of peeping splendour and not in the consummated outburst of glory, which is only fostered by the living waters of culture and the nurturing warmth of independence." Broome interposed, "No more of that," he said, "if you escape into a byway, Keshav, you will never be wooed back into the high road." "But what is the high road?" I inquired. Broome Wilson, who was gifted with a

[1] Tentative reading.

retentive memory undertook to inform me. "I understand," I said when he had finished, "and am pleased to see my own ideas garbed in the beautiful dialect of poetical analogy, but have you not finished or is there more wine to be pressed from the cluster?" "There is more to be pressed," he answered. Then began an amusing scene, for Broome baited his hook for the argument and kept throwing the line repeatedly, but Keshav was the wariest fish that ever cheated an angler and if he ever appeared to bite, was seen, as the line went flying up, to dart away into some fine thought or voluptuous image. At last when we least expected it, he plunged into the argument.

And so on the gnarled brow of Pisgah we stand and look down on a land flowing with milk and honey. Now whether is it wiser to descend and take the kingdom of heaven by violence or to linger here and feel on our temples the breath of the winds wafting us hints of the beauty we relinquish? Below there are truculent peoples to conquer and strong cities to storm and giants, the sons of Anak, to slaughter, but above the stainless heavens and the sweet, fresh morning and one lingering star.

"Let us go down," I said, "and enjoy the full meaning of the beauty below us."

"Yes," added Broome eagerly, "leave hints to the spiritually indolent."

Treneth threw in a paradox.

"I love the pleasure of anticipation better than the pain of enjoyment."

"We are very far from the enjoyment," said Keshav, "for we have yet to make the descent of Pisgah."

"But what is Pisgah?" I asked.

"In thought, the knowledge of virtue, and, in action, the purpose of evolving the inborn qualities and powers native to our personality."

"Shall I let you off, Keshav," said Broome, "or are you ready to answer my inquiries?"

"Pray do not," he said, "for like Gorgias I profess to answer any question and not be at a loss however strange the inquiry."

"I am glad to hear it, and I hope you will answer and tell me why you have ignored the qualities that are native neither to our

human nature nor to our personality but to a more subtle part of us."

"I see," he replied with a smile, "you shy at the spectre of heredity. Well, we will lay the spectre."

"And a spectre it is, or rather a scarecrow," put in Prince Paradox, "for it seems to me neither beautiful as an idea nor sound as a theory but merely the last resource of bad psychologists."

"I see the lovers of the past as iconoclastic from regret as the lovers of the future from aspiration. We are then agreed that our first step will be to reject or accept heredity?"

We all assented.

"And now, Prince Paradox," he cried, "will you tell me that you do not believe in race?"

"God forbid."

"And you agree with me that an Aryan is various from a non-Aryan and a Teuton from a Celt and a Celt from a Hindu, and a Rajput from a Mahratta and that this is fine as an idea and sound as a theory and consonant with Nature, which is fond of sphering harmony within harmony."

"Yes, I agree with all that."

"And by origin the Saxon varies from the Celt, and is meant for the drudgery of life and not for its beauty and splendour, just as by origin the thistle varies from the rose and is not glorious nor wonderful but simply decent and useful and good diet for donkeys."

"That is true."

"Then if race divergences result from origin, and origin is heredity, is it not? — is not heredity real and not a sciolism?"

"Yes, in broad masses, but not in the individual. What is sauce for the goose abstract is not sauce for the positive gander."

"It would take a positive goose to deny that. But synthesis is the secret of Philosophy and not analysis, and we err widely when we work from without rather than from within. Let us rectify our methods or we shall arrive at incomplete results. I trust some of you are proficient in text-book Psychology?"

We all disclaimed the text-book.

"That is fortunate, for I can now make ridiculous mistakes

without fear of ridicule. This is the theory of race as I conceive it. Temperament is the basis or substratum of character and the character built on anything other than temperament is an edifice rooted in the sea-waves which in a moment will foam away into nothing or tumble grovelling under the feet of fresh conquerors. Indeed it will be more apt to call temperament the root of character, and the character itself the growing or perfect tree with its hundred branches and myriads of leaves. And temperament is largely due to race, or, in another phrasing, varies with the blood, and if the blood is quick and fiery the temperament is subtle and sensitive and responds as promptly to social influences and personal culture as a flower to sunlight and rain, and shoots up into multitudinous leaves and branches, but if the blood is slow and lukewarm, the temperament is dull and phlegmatic and will not answer to the most earnest wooing, but grows up stunted and withered in aspect and bald of foliage and miserly of branches and altogether unbeautiful. On the blood depends the sensitiveness of the nerves to impressions and the quick action of the brains and the heat of the passions, and all that goes to the composition of a character, which if they are absent, leave only the heavy sediment and dregs of human individuality. Hence the wide gulf between the Celt and the Saxon."

"You are the dupe of your own metaphors, Keshav," said Broome, "the quick nature is the mushroom, but the slow is the gradual and majestic oak."

"If the Athenians were mushrooms and the lowland Scotch are oaks, the mushroom is preferable. To be slow and solid is the pride of the Saxon and the ox, but to be quick and songful and gracile is the pride of the Celt and the bird. There is no virtue in inertia, but only absence of virtue, for without growth there is no development and the essence of growth and the imperative need of the spirit is movement, which, if you lose, you lose all that separates the human from the brute."

Broome avowed that in our theory of virtue the remark was convincing. "And do we all recognize," said he, "blood as the seed of temperament and temperament as the root of character?"

We all signified assent.

"Then, Prince Paradox, does it not follow that if our ances-

tors had quick blood, we shall have quick blood and a quick temperament, and if they had slow blood, we shall have slow blood and a slow temperament, and if they had some of both characters, we shall have the elements of either temperament, and either they will amalgamate, one predominant and the other subordinate or driven under, or they will pervert our souls into a perpetual field of battle?"

"Obviously," he assented.

"Then here we have heredity in the individual as in the broad masses."

"But only a racial heredity and to that I do not object, but what I loath is to be told that my virtues are mere bequests and that I am not an original work but a kind of anthology of ancestral qualities."

"But if I called you a poem, in which peculiar words and cadences have been introduced and assimilated and blended in a new and beautiful manner, would you loath to be told that?"

"Dear me, no: it quite reconciles me to the idea."

"And it is the more accurate comparison. Nature does not go to work like a mere imitator of herself, as modern poets do, but transplants the secrets of her old poems and blends them with new secrets, so as to enrich the beauty of her new poem, and however she may seem to grow grapes from thistles, is really too wise and good to do anything so discordant, and only by her involved and serpentine manner gives an air of caprice and anarchy to what is really apt and harmonious. She often leaves the ground fallow for a generation and the world is surprised when it sees spring from Sir Timothy Shelley, Baronet and orthodox, Percy Bysshe Shelley, poet and pioneer of free-thought, but learns in a little while that Percy Shelley had a grandfather and marvels no longer. Could we trace the descent of Goethe and Shakespeare we should find the root of the Italian in the one and the Celt in the other, but the world did not then and does not now appreciate the value of genealogies to philosophy. We are vexed and are sceptical of harmony in nature, when we find Endymion a Londoner, but look back a step and learn that his parents were Devonshire Celts and recover our faith in the Cosmos. And why should we exclaim at the Julian emperors as strange pro-

ducts for stoical virtue-ridden Rome, when we know that Tiberius was a Claudius, one of the great Italian houses renowned for its licence, cruelty, pride and genius, and Calligula the son and Nero the grandson of Germanicus, who drew his blood from Mark Antony. Science is right in its materialist data, though not always in the inferences it draws from them and when she tells us that nothing proceeds from nothingness and that for every effect there is a cause and for every growth a seed, we must remember that her truths apply as much to the spiritual as to the material world. Mommsen has said rightly that without passion there is no genius. We shall not gather beauty from ugliness, nor intellect from a slow temperament, nor fiery passion from disciplined apathy, but in all things shall reap as we sow, and must sow the wind before we can reap the whirlwind."

(*Incomplete*)

Stray Thoughts

FLOWERS and trees are the poetry of nature; the gardener is a romantic poet who has added richness, complexity of effect and symmetry to a language otherwise distinguished merely by facility, by directness and by simplicity of colour and charm.

*

Sound is more essential to poetry than sense. Swinburne who often conveys no meaning to the intellect, yet fills his verse with lovely and suggestive melodies, can put more poetry into one such line than Pope into a hundred couplets of accurate sense and barren music. A noble thought framed in a well-rounded sentence will always charm by virtue of its satisfying completeness, but will never convey that exquisite agony of rapture which a line of perfect melody conveys to the sensitive soul.

The melody of words has this advantage over the melody of mere sounds that it needs only a soul to understand poetry but to comprehend music a technical education as well.

*

To govern life by fixed laws and a pocket-handbook!

*

Beware of heavy touches above all in tragedy: comedy heavily stressed becomes the grotesque, which has its value in art; tragedy heavily stressed becomes melodrama, which has no value anywhere.

*

One step beyond the sublime and you are in the grotesque.

Art holds the mirror up to Nature that Nature may see her own image beside that of Art and realise her own deformity and imperfections.

It was Meredith who taught me that the epigram is the soul of style, and Plato who whispered that rhythm is its body, words are the texture of the flesh and sentences the system of hard matter that gives it consistency: the texture of the flesh may be coarse or delicate, and as you design so you shall build.

Just as Socrates was nothing without his daemon, so the artist is helpless if he has not his daemon at his elbow. And who is the artist's daemon?

The artistic conscience.

Inspiration means that the papyrus of your imagination is held to the fire of memory and reveals characters written in Indian ink by unseen compositors.

NOTE: *Stray Thoughts* - Reproduced from notes found in a manuscript belonging to student days in England, 1890-92.

SECTION TWO

BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJI

On the passing away of Bankim Chandra Chatterji in 1894 Sri Aurobindo wrote a series of seven articles, "Bankim Chandra Chatterji by a Bengali" in the *Induprakash* of Bombay from July 16, 1894 to August 27, 1894. These articles were signed "Zero".

ONE

His Youth and College Life

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, the creator and king of Bengali prose, was a high-caste Brahman and the son of a distinguished official in Lower Bengal. Born at Kantalpara on the 27th June 1838, dead at Calcutta on the 8th April 1894, his fifty-six years of laborious life were a parcel of the most splendid epoch in Bengali history; yet among its many noble names, his is the noblest. His life shows us three faces, his academical career, his official labours and his literary greatness; it will be here my endeavour to give some description of each and all. The first picture we have of his childhood is his mastering the alphabet at a single reading; and this is not only the initial picture but an image and prophecy of the rest. Even thus early men saw in him the three natural possessions of the cultured Bengali, a boundless intellect, a frail constitution and a temper mild to the point of passivity. And indeed Bankim was not only our greatest: he was also our type and magnified pattern. He was the image of all that is most finely characteristic in the Bengali race. At Midnapur, the home of his childhood, the magnificence of his intellect came so early into view, that his name grew into a proverb. "You will soon be another Bankim", — for a master to say that was the hyperbole of praise, and the best reward of industry. He ascended the school by leaps and bounds; so abnormal indeed was his swiftness that it put his masters in fear for him. They grew nervous lest they should spoil by over-instruction the delicate fibre of his originality, and with a wise caution, they obstructed his entrance into the highest class. Bankim had always an extraordinary luck. Just as at school his fine promise was saved by the prudence of its guardians from the altar of High Education, the Moloch to whom we stupidly sacrifice India's most hopeful sons, so it was saved at Hugly College by his own distaste for hard work. At Hugly

College quite as much as at Midnapur he had the reputation of an intellectual miracle. And indeed his ease and quickness in study were hardly human. Prizes and distinctions cost him no effort in the attaining. He won his honours with a magical carelessness and as if by accident while others toiled and failed. But while unconquerably remiss in his duties, he bestowed wonderful pains on his caprices. He conceived at this time a passion for Sanskrit and read with great perseverance at a Pandit's *tol.* In a single year, he had gone through the Mugdhabodh, Raghuvansa, Bhatti and the Meghaduta. Advancing at this pace he managed in something under four years to get a sense of mastery in the ancient tongue and a feeling for its literary secrets which gave him immense leverage in his work of creating a new prose. Not that there is the least touch of pedantry in his Bengali style: rather it was he and Madhu Sudan Dutt who broke the tyranny of the Sanskrit tradition: but one feels how immensely his labour was simplified by a fine and original use of his Sanskrit knowledge. At the age of seventeen, being then a student of five years standing, he cut short his attendance at Hugly College. He left behind him a striking reputation, to which, except Dwarakanath Mitra, no student has ever come near. Yet he had done positively nothing in the way of application or hard work. As with most geniuses his intellectual habits were irregular. His spirit needed larger bounds than a school routine could give it, and refused, as every free mind does, to cripple itself and lose its natural suppleness. It was his constant habit, a habit which grew on with the lapse of time, to hide himself in a nook of the College Library and indulge his wandering appetite in all sorts of reading. At the eleventh hour and with an examination impending, he would catch up his prescribed books, hurry through them at a canter, win a few prizes, and go back to his lotus-eating. I believe this is a not uncommon habit with brilliant young men in all countries and it saves them from the sterilising effects of over-instruction; but it hardly strikes one as a safe policy for slower minds. At the Presidency College, his next seat of instruction, he shaped his versatile intellect to the study of law. He had then some project of qualifying as a High Court Pleader, but at the right moment for literature the Calcutta University came into

being and Bankim took literary honours instead of legal. The Courts lost a distinguished pleader and India gained a great man. Bankim, however, seems to have had some hankering after Law; for he subsequently snatched time from hard official drudgery and larger literary toil to appear with his usual distinguished success for the B.L. But his chief pretension to academical originality is perhaps that he was, together with Jodunath Bose, our first B.A., even in this detail leading the way for his countrymen. His official appointment followed close on the heels of his degree. At the age of twenty he was sent as Deputy Magistrate to Jessore.

I have drawn out, in a manner as little perfunctory as I could manage, this skeleton of Bankim's academical life. In any account of an eminent Hindu a dry sketch of this sort is a form that must be gone through; for we are a scholastic people and in our life examinations and degrees fill up half the book. But examinations and degrees are a minor episode in the history of a mind. An European writer has acutely observed that nothing which is worth knowing can be taught. That is a truth which Dr. Bhandarkar, when he can spare time from his Carlyle, might ponder over with profit. Not what a man learns, but what he observes for himself in life and literature is the formative agency in his existence, and the actual shape it will take is much determined by the sort of social air he happens to breathe at that critical moment when the mind is choosing its road. All else is mere dead material useless without the breath of a vivifying culture. If examinations and degrees are the skeleton of university life, these are its soul and life-blood, and where they exist poorly or not at all, education, except for the one or two self-sufficing intellects, becomes mere wind and dust. Among what sort of men did the student Bankim move? From what social surroundings did his adolescent personality take its colour? These are questions of a nearer interest than the examinations he passed or the degrees he took; and to them I shall give a larger answer.

TWO

The Bengal He Lived in

THE society by which Bankim was formed, was the young Bengal of the fifties, the most extraordinary perhaps that India has yet seen, — a society electric with thought and loaded to the brim with passion. Bengal was at that time the theatre of a great intellectual awakening. A sort of miniature Renascence was in process. An ardent and imaginative race, long bound down in the fetters of a single tradition, had had suddenly put into its hand the key to a new world thronged with the beautiful or profound creations of Art and Learning. From this meeting of a foreign Art and civilisation with a temperament differing from the temperament which created them, there issued, as there usually does issue from such meetings, an original Art and an original civilisation. Originality does not lie in rejecting outside influences but in accepting them as a new mould into which our own individuality may run. This is what happened and may yet happen in Bengal. The first impulse was gigantic in its proportions and produced men of an almost gigantic originality. Rammohan Ray arose with a new religion in his hand, which was developed on original lines by men almost greater one thinks than he, by Rajnarain Bose and Devendranath Tagore. The two Dutts, Okhay Kumar and Michael Madhusudan, began a new Prose and new Poetry. Vidyasagar, scholar, sage and intellectual dictator, laboured hugely like the Titan he was, to create a new Bengali language and a new Bengali society, while in vast and original learning Rajendra Lal Mitra has not met his match. Around these arose a class of men who formed a sort of seed-bed for the creative geniuses, men of fine critical ability and appreciative temper, scholarly, accomplished, learned in music and the arts, men in short not only of culture, but of original culture. Of these perhaps the most finished patterns were Madhusudan's friends, Gaurdas Byshak, and that scholarly

patron of letters, Rajah Jyotindra Mohun Tagore. At the same time there arose, as in other parts of India, a new social spirit and a new political spirit, but these on a somewhat servilely English model. Of all its channels the released energies of the Bengali mind ran most violently into the channel of literature. And this was only natural; for although the Bengali has by centuries of Brahmanic training acquired a religious temper, a taste for law and a taste for learning, yet his peculiar sphere is language. Another circumstance must not be forgotten. Our Renascence was marked like its European prototype, though not to so startling an extent, by a thawing of old moral custom. The calm, docile, pious, dutiful Hindu ideal was pushed aside with impatient energy, and the Bengali, released from the iron restraint which had lain like a frost on his warm blood and sensuous feeling, escaped joyously into the open air of an almost Pagan freedom. The ancient Hindu cherished a profound sense of the nothingness and vanity of life; the young Bengali felt vividly its joy, warmth and sensuousness. This is usually the moral note of a Renascence, a burning desire for Life, Life in her warm human beauty arrayed gloriously like a bride. It was the note of the sixteenth century, it is the note of the astonishing return to Greek Paganism, which is now beginning in England and France; and it was in a slighter and less intellectual way the note of the new age in Bengal. Everything done by the men of that day and their intellectual children is marked by an unbounded energy and passion. Their reading was enormous and ran often quite out of the usual track. Madhusudan Dutt, besides English, Bengali and Sanskrit, studied Greek, Latin, Italian and French, and wrote the last naturally and with ease. Toru Dutt, that unhappy and immature genius, who unfortunately wasted herself on a foreign language and perished while yet little more than a girl, had, I have been told, a knowledge of Greek. At any rate, she could write English with perfect grace and correctness and French with energy and power. Her novels gained the ear of the French public and her songs breathed fire into the hearts of Frenchmen in their fearful struggle with Germany. And as was their reading so was their life. They were giants and did everything gigantically. They read hugely, wrote

hugely, thought hugely, and drank hugely.

Bankim's student days did not happen among that circle of original geniuses; his time fell between the heroes of the Renascence and the feebler Epigoni of our day. But he had contemporary with him men of extraordinary talent, men like Dinabandhu Mitra and Dwarakanath Mitra, men so to speak of the second tier. Bankim was the last of the original geniuses. Since then the great impulse towards originality has gone backward like a receding wave. After Bankim came the Epigoni, Hemchandra Banerji, Nobin Sen, Rabindranath Tagore, men of surprising talent, nay, of unmistakable genius, but too obviously influenced by Shelley and the English poets. And last of all came the generation formed in the schools of Keshab Chandra Sen and Kristo Das Pal, with its religious shallowness, its literary sterility and its madness in social reform. Servile imitators of the English, politicians without wisdom and scholars without learning, they have no pretensions to greatness or originality. Before they came the first mighty impulse had spent itself and Bengal lay fallow for a new. It rests with the new generation, the generation that will soon be sitting in the high places and judging the land, whether there shall be scope for any new impulse to work itself out. Two years ago it looked as if this mighty awakening would lose itself, as the English sixteenth century lost itself, in Puritanism and middle-class politics.

But when Bankim was a student, the traditions of the Hindu College were yet powerful, the Hindu College, that nursery of geniuses, where the brain of the New Age had worked most powerfully and the heart of the New Age had beat with the mightiest vehemence. The men around Bankim were calmer, sedater, more temperate; but they walked in the same ways and followed the same ideals. To that life of hard thinking and hard drinking Bankim was drawn not merely, as some were, by the power of youthful imitativeness, but by sympathy of temperament. He had the novelist's catholicity of taste and keen sense for life, and the artist's repugnance to gloom and dreariness. Even when the thoughts turned to old faith, the clear sanity of the man showed itself in his refusal to admit asceticism among the essentials of religion. He never indulged in that habit of frightful and invete-

rate riot which has killed one or two of our second-rate talents, but it cannot quite be said that he never overstepped the limits or always observed the principle of "nothing in excess", which is the only sure rule for a man's conduct. Some would like to see in this sensuous exuberance the secret of his early decay. It may be so; but speculation on this subject will remain a solemn farce, until it is taken up in a disinterested spirit. At present all our wise disquisitions proceed from unchastened sentiment. Dr. Bhandarkar is a violent social reformer and wants to throw odium upon Hindu society; Mr. Ranade's hobby is a Conservative Radicalism and the spirit moves him to churn the ocean of statistics in a sense more agreeable to his own turn of mind; a third authority, prejudiced against Western Culture, traces all premature deaths to pleasure and wine-bibbing. Each starts from his own sensations, each builds his web of argument in the spirit of a sophist. To this Dr. Bhandarkar brings his moral ardour and grave eloquence, Mr. Ranade his trained reason and distinguished talent, the religionist his prejudices and cold precepts. Widely as they differ, they have this in common that they have not for their aim to speak usefully: they are simply trying to find reasons for their own likes and dislikes. Dealing with subjects of scientific interest in a spirit of this sort is only to invite confusion and exclude light. We in Bengal with our tendency to the sins of the blood are perhaps more apt than others to call to our aid the gloomy moralities of the Puritan; in censuring Bankim we are secretly fortifying ourselves against ourselves; but in this instance it is a false caution. The cultured Bengali begins life with a physical temperament already delicate and high-strung. He has the literary constitution with its femineity and acute nervousness. Subject this to a cruel strain when it is tenderest and needs the most careful rearing, to the wicked and wantonly cruel strain of instruction through a foreign tongue; put it under the very worst system of training; add enormous academical labour, immense official drudgery in an unhealthy climate and constant mental application; crown all with the nervous expense of thought and fever of composition plus the unfailing exhaustion that comes after; and we need not go to the momentary excesses of a generous blood to find the

explanation of broken health and an early decline. The miracle of it is not that the victims die prematurely but that they live so long. Perhaps we might begin to enquire into the causes of that phenomenon for a change.

One thing however is certain that whatever else Bankim lost, he gained from his youthful surroundings much emotional experience and great flexibility of mind. There too he got his initial stimulus. Like Telang, and perhaps even more than Telang, Bankim was blessed or cursed with an universal talent. Everything he touched, shaped itself to his hand. It would have been easy for him to make disastrous mistakes; to miss his vocation, waste himself in English and at the end to leave no enduring monument of his personality behind. What saved him? It was the initial stimulus and the cultured environment; it was that he lived among men who could distinguish a talent when they saw it and once distinguished were bent on realising it; among men in fact who had some instinct for finding their way. With a limited creature like man, the power of the environment is immense. Genius, it is true, exists independently of environment and by much reading and observation may attain to self-expression but it is environment that makes self-expression easy and natural; that provides sureness, verve, stimulus. Here lies the importance to the mind in its early stage of self-culture of fine social surroundings; -- that sort of surroundings which our Universities do nothing and ought to have done everything to create.

THREE

His Official Career

THUS equipped, thus trained Bankim began his human journey, began in the radiance of joy and strength and genius the life which was to close in suffering and mortal pain. The drudgery of existence met him in the doorway, when his youth was still young. His twenty-first year found him at Jessore, his fifty-third was the last of his long official labour. Here too however his inveterate habit of success went always with him. The outward history of his manhood reads more brilliantly even than that of his youth, and if he did not climb to the highest posts, it was only because these are shut to indigenous talent. From start to finish, his ability, delicacy of judgment and careful work were recognised as something unusual: yet it would not be easy to find a more careful or cleverer set of administrators than the Hindu civilians of Bengal. At Jessore his life was chequered by a great boon and a great sorrow. It was here that he made fast his friendship with the dramatist Dinabandhu Mitra, which remained close-soldered to the end, and it was here that his young wife died. At Kanthi, the next stage of his official wanderings, he married again and more fortunately. Khulna, the third step in the ladder, was also the theatre of his most ambitious exploits. Entangled in the Sunderban, that rude and unhealthy tract of marsh and jungle, the zillah was labouring under two morbid ailments, for which none of its official doctors had found an efficient panacea, — the smallpox of piracy and the greater pox of Indigoism. Ruffians from Europe were in hot competition with the native breed which should deserve best the Government Scholarship for lawlessness and brutality; and as they had a racial gift for these things and a wider field it might have been safely awarded to them. Unluckily Bankim stept into their happy hunting-grounds and spoiled the game. But to the unhappy ryots, the battle-field for these rival rascalities, he came

as a champion and a deliverer. At Khulna this mild, thoughtful Bengali wears the strange appearance of a Hercules weeding out monsters, clearing augean stables, putting a term to pests. His tranquil energy quite broke the back of the Indigo tyrants. Their master-criminals and chief indigocrats fled to Anam and Brindaban, but they were overtaken by Bankim's warrant and persuaded to come back. Fine and imprisonment meted out with a healthy severity shattered their prestige and oppressed their brutal spirits. Khulna then saw the last of government by organised ruffiandom. No less terse and incisive were Bankim's dealings with the water-thieves who lurking in creek and brushwood dominated to the perpetual alarm and molestation of travellers the hundred waters of the Sunderban. The outlaws were hunted down and imprisoned and their principal spirits relegated where there was less room for their genius to find self-expression. The hydra of the waters had been crushed as effectually as the indigo pest; and since the era of Bankim's magistracy one may travel the length and breadth of Khulna without peril except from malaria and ague. By a little quiet decisiveness he had broken the back of two formidable tyrannies and given an object lesson in what a Government can do when it heartily intends the good of the people.

Baruipur, a place consecrated in the calendar of literature, was next put into his hands. The event of his residence here was his appointment vice Mr. Justice Princep to the chair of an Official Emoluments Commission, then sitting. The Government intended this to look like an extraordinary distinction, and had not the genius of the man raised him immeasurably above any Englishman in the country, we might have regarded it as such. Berhampur was the next step in his journey, and after Berhampur Maldeh, and after Maldeh the important Suburban district of Hugly. He was now nearing his high-water mark and his official existence, which had been till then more than ordinarily smooth, began to be ploughed up by unaccustomed storms. The Government wanted to give some inadequate expression to its sense of his extraordinary merits and could think of nothing better than a place in the Secretariat. It was here that he came into collision with the spirit of bureaucracy. His superior was a certain

Macaulay, hard working official, whose brains were tied together with red tape. The diligent mediocrity of this man was goaded to extra hours by flickering visions of a Lieutenant-Governorship, but Bankim, having no such high incentive, was careful to close his work at the strict office-hour. For this Macaulay took him severely to task. "It is natural enough," replied Bankim, forgetting unfortunately that he was talking to a piece of red tape, "it is natural enough for you to work hard. You are of the ruling caste and may rise, who knows? to be Lieutenant-Governor. But why should I be subservient to your example? Here is the bourne and goal of my promotion. Beyond it what prospect have I? No, I have no idea of sweating myself to death over extraordinary work." When independence and red tape come into collision, it is usually independence that gets tripped up. Bankim was sent back in a hurry to Magistrate's work, this time at Alipur. But his ill-luck followed him. He was shipwrecked again in a collision with Anglo-Indianism. Walking in Eden Garden he chanced across Munro, the Presidency Commissioner, a farouche bureaucrat with the manners of an Englishman and the temper of a badly-educated hyena. Bankim examined the queer curiosity, as one might any queer curiosity, with a certain lazy interest, but no signal of respect. He was unaware at this time that to Salaam any stray European you may meet is the highest privilege of a Hindu and the whole duty of a Deputy Magistrate. But he was soon to receive instruction: for His Hyenaship was off in a rage to the Government and by a little private roaring easily got Bankim transferred to Jahajpur in Orissa. Bankim was considerably taken aback and not a little angry. "Have I then committed some grave fault?" he enquired of the Chief Secretary, "or is it that the Government has found out a new way to pay its old debts? Resolve me, for I am in doubt." The gibe told. He had hardly set foot in Orissa, when he was gazetted back to Hugly. After a lapse of time — Munro, I believe, had in the meantime been struck by his own astonishing likeness to the founder of Christianity and was away to spread the light of the Gospel among the heathen — after a lapse of time Bankim was allowed to come back to Alipur. But this was the last stage of that thankless drudgery in which he had wasted so

much precious force. His term of service was drawing to a close and he was weary of it all: he wished to devote his remnant of life to literature. But the days that remained to him were few and evil. One or two years clouded with sickness, sorrow and suffering stood between him and the end.

FOUR

His Versatility

WHENEVER a literary man gives proof of a high capacity in action people always talk about it as if a miracle had happened. The vulgar theory is that worldly abilities are inconsistent with the poetic genius. Like most vulgar theories it is a conclusion made at a jump from a few superficial appearances. The inference to be drawn from a sympathetic study of the lives of great thinkers and great writers is that except in certain rare cases versatility is one condition of genius. Indeed the literary ability may be said to contain all the others, and the more so when it takes the form of criticism or of any art, such as the novelist's, which proceeds principally from criticism. Goethe in Germany, Shakespeare, Fielding and Matthew Arnold in England are notable instances. Even where practical abilities seem wanting, a close study will often reveal their existence rusting in a lumber-room of the man's mind. The poet and the thinker are helpless in the affairs of the world, because they choose to be helpless: they sacrifice the practical impulse in their nature, that they may give full expression to the imaginative or speculative impulse; they choose to burn the candle at one end and not at the other, but for all that the candle has two ends and not one. Bankim, the greatest of novelists, had the versatility developed to its highest expression. Scholar, poet, essayist, novelist, philosopher, lawyer, critic, official, philologian and religious innovator, — the whole world seemed to be shut up in his single brain. At first sight he looks like a bundle of contradictions. He had a genius for language and a gift for law; he could write good official papers and he could write a matchless prose; he could pass examinations and he could root out an organised tyranny; he could concern himself with the largest problems of metaphysics and with the smallest details of word-formation: he had a feeling for the sensuous facts of life and a feeling for the

delicate spiritualities of religion: he could learn grammar and he could write poetry.

What shall we say in the presence of this remarkable versatility? Overborne by the pomp of it and the show, shall we set it down as an adjunct of intellectual kingliness? Yes, to have it is an adjunct of intellectual kingliness, but to give expression to it is an intellectual mistake. To give impartial expression to all your gifts is to miss your vocation. Bankim was never so far led astray as that. His province was literature, prose literature, and he knew it. His lyrics are enchanting, but few; metaphysics he followed at the end of his life and law at the beginning; and he used scholarship and philology simply as other great writers have used them, to give subtlety of suggestion and richness of word-colour to his literary style. Even in the province of prose literature, where he might have worked out his versatility to advantage, he preferred to specialise. He never stepped unpardonably out of his province, but he was occasionally led astray by this or that lure to allow small drains on his fund of energy; and so far as he did so, he sinned against his own soul. The one great and continuous drain was the tax put upon him by official drudgery. Under the morbid and wasteful conditions of middle-class life in India genius, when not born in the purple, has put before it, like the fair Rosamund of Norman romance, a choice between two methods of suicide, the Services and the Law. It must either take the poisoned bowl or the dagger. And in this limited circle of professions the Educational Service with its system of respites and remissions, and the Executive Service with its indirect rather than direct tax on the pure intellect, present, it may be, the points of least repulsion. But they are none the less a fearful drain because they are, under existing circumstances, necessary.

In this versatility Bankim was only a type of the intellectual Hindu. This gift, at once a blessing and a curse, is the most singular characteristic of those two Hindu races which have the destinies of the country in their keeping. It is the evidence of our high blood, our patent of nobility among the nations; for it comes of the varied mental experience of our forefathers, of the nation's three thousand years of intellectual life. But it is at the

same time a rock ahead, of which the Hindu genius has yet to pilot itself clear. To find your vocation and keep to it, that is not indeed a showy, but it is a simple and solid rule of life. We however prefer to give an impartial expression to all our gifts, forgetting that the mind is as mortal and as much subject to wear and tear as any perishable thing, forgetting that specialism is one condition of the highest accomplishment, forgetting that our stock of energy is limited and that what we expend in one direction, we lose in another. We insist on burning the candle at both ends. This spirit appears in our system of public instruction, the most ingeniously complete machine for murder that human stupidity ever invented, and murder not only of a man's body but of a man's soul, of that sacred fire of individuality in him which is far holier and more precious than this mere mortal breath. It appeared too with melancholy effects in the literary fate of Kashinath Telang. It was one reason why he, a man of such large abilities, the most considerable genius a highly intellectual people has produced, yet left nothing to which the world will return with unfailing delight. Telang, it is true, worked mainly in English, a language he had learned; and in a language you have learned, you may write graciously, correctly, pleasingly, but you will never attain to the full stature of your genius. But it was a yet more radical mistake that he, whose power was preeminently literary, as any eye trained to these things can see that it was, yet allowed it to run in every direction except the very one that nature had marked out for it. Bankim was more fortunate. He wrote in his own beautiful mother tongue, his best work was literary and his immense originality would in any case have forced its way out. But one cannot think without a pang of the many delightful masterpieces he might have brought into his garner, if he had had leisure to work single-heartedly in the field of his richest harvests. The body of work he gave us in nearly forty years of intellectual activity amounts to ten novels, two critical works on religion and some scattered literature. Small in quantity, it is pure gold in quality. And it may be that in no case would he have written much. Nature gives us quartz profusely and mixed alloy in abundance, but pure gold only in rare parcels and infinitesimal portions.

FIVE

His Literary History

BANKIM'S literary activity began for any serious purpose at Khulna, but he had already trifled with poetry in his student days. At that time the poet Iswara Chandra Gupta was publishing two papers, the *Sangbad Prabhakar* and the *Sudhiranjan*, which Dwarakanath Mitra and Dinabandhu Mitra were helping with clever schoolboy imitation of Iswara Chandra's style. Bankim also entered these fields, but his striking originality at once distinguished him from the mere cleverness of his competitors, and the fine critical taste of Iswara Chandra easily discovered in this obscure student a great and splendid genius. Like Madhusudan Dutt Bankim began by an ambition to excel in English literature, and he wrote a novel in English called *Rammohan's Wife*. But, again like Madhusudan, he at once realised his mistake. The language which a man speaks and which he has never learned, is the language of which he has the nearest sense and in which he expresses himself with the greatest fulness, subtlety and power. He may neglect, he may forget it, but he will always retain for it a hereditary aptitude, and it will always continue for him the language in which he has the safest chance of writing with originality and ease. To be original in an acquired tongue is hardly feasible. The mind, conscious of a secret disability with which it ought not to have handicapped itself, instinctively takes refuge in imitation, or else in bathos and the work turned out is ordinarily very mediocre stuff. It has something unnatural and spurious about it like speaking with a stone in the mouth or walking upon stilts. Bankim and Madhusudan, with their overflowing originality, must have very acutely felt the tameness of their English work. The one wrote no second English poem after the *Captive Lady*, the other no second English novel after *Rammohan's Wife*.

Bankim's first attempt of any importance was begun at Khulna, and finished at Baruipur, the birth-place of some of his finest work. It was the *Durgesh Nandini*, a name ever memorable as the first-born child of the New Prose. At Baruipur he wrote also *Kapala Kundala* and *Mrinalini* and worked at the famous *Poison-Tree*. At Berhampur, his next station, he began editing the *Bangadarshan*, a magazine which made a profound impression and gave birth to that increasing periodical literature of today, of which *Bharati*, the literary organ of the cultured Tagore family, is the most finished type. Since then Bankim has given us some very ripe and exquisite work, *Chandrashekhar*, *Krishna Kanta's Will*, *Debi Chaudhurani*, *Anandamath*, *Sitaram*, *Indira* and *Kamala Kanta*. Dating from his magistracy at Berhampur broken health and increasing weakness attended the great novelist to his pyre; but the strong unwearied intellect struggled with and triumphed over the infirmities of the body. His last years were years of suffering and pain, but they were also years of considerable fruitfulness and almost unceasing labour. He had been a sensuous youth and a joyous man. Gifted supremely with the artist's sense for the warmth and beauty of life, he had turned with a smile from the savage austerities of the ascetic and with a shudder from the dreary creed of the Puritan. But now in that valley of the shadow of death his soul longed for the sustaining air of religion. More and more the philosophic bias made its way into his later novels, until at last the thinker in him proved too strong for the artist. Amid his worst bodily sufferings he was poring over the Bhagavadgita and the Vedas, striving to catch the deeper and sacred sense of those profound writings. To give that to his countrymen was the strenuous aim of his dying efforts. A Life of Krishna, a book on the Essence of Religion, a rendering of the Bhagavadgita and a version of the Vedas formed the staple of his literary prospects in his passage to the pyre. The first two realised themselves and the Bhagavadgita was three parts finished, but the version of the Vedas, which should have been a priceless possession never got into the stage of execution. Death, in whose shadow he had so long dwelt, took the pen from his hand, before it could gather up the last gleanings of that royal intellect. But his ten masterpieces

of fiction are enough. They would serve to immortalise ten reputations.

HIS PLACE IN LITERATURE

To assign Bankim's place in Bengali literature is sufficiently easy: there is no prose-writer, and only one poet who can compete with him. More difficulties enter into any comparison of him with the best English novelists; yet I think he stands higher than any of them, except one; in certain qualities of each he may fall short, but his sum of qualities is greater; and he has this supreme advantage over them all that he is a more faultless artist. In his life and fortunes, and sometimes even in his character, he bears a striking resemblance to the father of English fiction, Henry Fielding; but the literary work of the two men moves upon different planes. Philosophical culture and deep feeling for the poetry of life and an unfailing sense of beauty are distinguishing marks of Bankim's style; they find no place in Fielding's. Again, Bankim, after a rather silly fashion of speaking now greatly in vogue, has been pointed at by some as the Scott of Bengal. It is a marvellous thing that the people who misuse this phrase as an encomium, cannot understand that it conveys an insult. They would have us imagine that one of the most perfect and original of novelists is a mere replica of a faulty and incomplete Scotch author! Scott had many marvellous and some unique gifts, but his defects are at least as striking. His style is never quite sure; indeed, except in his inspired moments, he has no style: his Scotch want of humour is always militating against his power of vivid incident; his characters, and chiefly those in whom he should interest us most, are usually very manifest puppets; and they have all this shortcoming, that they have no soul: they may be splendid or striking or bold creations, but they live from outside and not from within. Scott could paint outlines, but he could not fill them in. Here Bankim excels; speech and action with him are so closely interpenetrated and suffused with a deeper existence that his characters give us the sense of their being real men and women. Moreover to the wonderful passion and poetry of his finest creations there are in English

fiction, outside the Brontës and the supreme genius, George Meredith, no parallel instances. Insight into the secrets of feminine character, that is another notable concomitant of the best dramatic power, and that too Bankim possesses. Wade as you will through the interminable bog of contemporary fiction, you will meet no living woman there. Even novelists of genius stop short at the outside: they cannot find their way into the soul. Here Fielding fails us; Scott's women are a mere gallery of wax figures, Rebecca herself being no more than a highly coloured puppet; even in Thackeray the real women are only three or four. But the supreme dramatic genius has found out this secret of femineity. Shakespeare had it to any degree, and in our own century Meredith, and among ourselves Bankim. The social reformer, gazing, of course, through that admirable pair of spectacles given to him by the Calcutta University, can find nothing excellent in Hindu life, except its cheapness, or in Hindu woman, except her subserviency. Beyond this he sees only its narrowness and her ignorance. But Bankim had the eye of a poet and saw much deeper than this. He saw what was beautiful and sweet and gracious in Hindu life, and what was lovely and noble in Hindu woman, her deep heart of emotion, her steadfastness, tenderness and lovableness, in fact, her woman's soul; and all this we find burning in his pages and made diviner by the touch of a poet and an artist. Our social reformers might learn something from Bankim. Their zeal at present is too little ruled by discretion. They are like bad tailors very clever at spoiling the rich stuffs given over to their shaping but quite unable to fit the necessities of the future. They have passed woman through an English crucible and in place of the old type, which, with all its fatal defects, had in it some supreme possibilities, they have turned out a soulless and superficial being fit only for flirtation, match-making and playing on the piano. They seem to have a passion for reforming every good thing out of existence. It is about time this miserable bungling should stop. Surely it would be possible, without spoiling that divine nobleness of soul, to give it a wider culture and mightier channels! So we should have a race of women intellectually as well as emotionally noble, fit to be the mothers not of chatterers and money-makers,

but of high thinkers and heroic doers.

Of Bankim's style I shall hardly trust myself to speak. To describe its beauty, terseness, strength and sweetness is too high a task for a pen like mine. I will remark this only that what marks Bankim above all is his unfailing sense of beauty. This is indeed the note of Bengali literature and the one high thing it has gained from a close acquaintance with European models. The hideous grotesques of old Hindu Art, the monkey-rabble of Rama and the ten heads of Ravana are henceforth impossible to it. The *Shacountala* itself is not governed by a more perfect graciousness of conception or suffused with a more human sweetness than *Kapala Kundala* and the *Poison-Tree*.

SIX

What He Did for Bengal

I HAVE kept so far to Bankim's achievement looked at purely as literature. I now come to speak of it in the historic sense, of its relations to the Bengali language and potency over the Bengali race. Of this it is not easy to suggest any image without speaking in superlatives. I had almost said in one place that he created the language, and if one couples his name with Madhusudan Dutt's, the statement is hardly too daring. Before their advent the Bengali language, though very sweet and melodious, was an instrument with but one string to it. Except the old poet Bharatchandra, no supreme genius had taken it in hand; hence while prose hardly existed except in *Baital Pachisi* and some other tales about Vikramaditya, Bengali verse had very little to recommend it beyond a certain fatiguing sweetness. Virility, subtlety, scope, these were wanting to it. Then came Madhusudan and Bankim, and, like Terpander and Orpheus added fresh strings to the lyre. In Madhusudan's hands that nerveless and feminine dialect became the large utterance of the early Gods, a tongue epic and Titanic, a tongue for the storms and whirlwinds to speak in: he caught and studied his diction from the echo and rumour of the sea. All the stormiest passions of man's soul he expressed in gigantic language. We seem to hear Milton's Satan speaking in every line he wrote. But in Bankim's hands the Bengali language, before stammering and inarticulate, became a rich, musical and flexible organ vibrating to every human emotion and expressive of every beautiful or noble thought. I do not mean that there were no labourers in the field before Bankim and Madhusudan. The paths of the Gods are always prepared for them. Many daring minds were already at work, but they fell short of their high conception. Rammohan Ray, the great Vidyasagara, Okhay Kumar Dutt and the Bengali playwrights were all working bravely towards

the same consummation. But Vidyasagara, though he had much in him of the scholar and critic, was nothing of an artist; Okhay Kumar's audience ran only to the subscribers of a single magazine; and the literary originality of the rest was not equal to their audacity. None of them could transform and recreate with that sure and easy touch which reveals the true maker of language.

Bankim moreover has this splendid distinction, that he more than any one exalted Bengali from the status of a dialect to the majesty of a language. The immediate effect of English education had been to foster an undiscriminating love of things English and an unwise contempt for things Bengali. Among the rest the Bengali tongue was put by as an instrument hopelessly bad and unsatisfying: even Madhusudan in his youth neglected and forgot it. The strivings of Vidyasagara and Okhay Kumar Dutt were the strivings of a few far-sighted and patriotic men in a generation misled by false ideals. On that generation Madhusudan's first great poems, *Sharmistha* and *Tilottama*, had a complex effect much of a piece with the sensation created by Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* in Elizabethan England or Hugo's *Hernani* in 19th century France. They took men's imaginations by storm with their splendour, passion and mighty imagery; by creating the Bengali blank verse they freed poetry from the facilities and prettinesses of the old rhymed stanza; by their magnificences of style and emotion they brought new elements into Hindu literature, and they gave battle with their strange and fiery coloured music to the classic frigidity of the Sanskritists. They first sounded the note of Romanticism which still governs our literature. They revealed too those magnificent possibilities, latent in every Sanskritic language, which only wait for the magic touch of original genius to open out their store; and they set flowing that perennial fountain of gracious and noble poetry which is doing so much to bring beauty and high feeling into our lives and to produce a race of Bengalis braver and better than we. But at the same time they had to overcome a vast opposition. Lauded with rapturous enthusiasm by the cultured, they were anathematised by the pedants. All the Pandits, all the Sanskritists, all the fanatics of Classicism, even the great Vidyasagara himself, then the intellectual dictator of Bengal, were startled out of their

senses by these magnificent and mighty poems. *Tilottama* was a gauntlet thrown down by the Romantic school to the Classical. Romanticism won; it was bound to win; it had on its side youth, fire, enthusiasm, the future and the poems of an unexampled genius for its battle-cry. *Tilottama* had been the *casus belli*; that marvellous epic, the *Meghnad-badh*, was the *coup de grâce*. When Vidyasagar praised the *Meghnad-badh* as a supreme poem, the day of the Sanskritists was over. That cabal of Pandits which had shouted against Madhusudan could only murmur weakly against Bankim; the conscience of the nation had passed out of their keeping. But still the victor's audience was small and went little beyond the class that followed him into battle, the geniuses, the literary men and women, the cultured zamindars and those men of the stamp of Rajah Jyotindra Mohan Tagore, men of an extraordinary and original culture, who were then so common in Bengal, but are now almost obsolete. The great poet died with a limited audience and before the full consummation of his fame.

Bankim came into that heritage of peace which Madhusudan had earned. There is, indeed, a curious contrast between these two builders of the Bengali language, so alike in their mission but in their fortunes so dissimilar. Both were equipped with enormous stores of reading, both were geniuses of a vast originality, both had creative power, a fine sense for beauty and a gift for emotion and pathos: both made the same false start. But here all likeness between them stops. One was the king of prose, the other the king of poetry; and their lives were of a piece with their writings. Madhusudan's is full of sound and passion, violence of heart, extravagance, intemperance, self-will, a life passing through grief, bitterness and anguish to a mournful and untimely doom. As we read the passage of that Titanic personality over a world too small for it, we seem to be listening again to the thunder-scene in *Lear*, or to some tragic piece out of Thucydides or Gibbon narrating the fall of majestic nations or the ruin of mighty kings. No sensitive man can read it without being shaken to the very heart. Even after his death, Madhusudan's evil star followed him. Though a great poet among the greatest, he is read nowhere outside Bengal and the Punjab;

and his name is not heard even in Bombay and Madras, provinces of his own native land. How different was it with Bankim, the genius of prose. His nature, with plenty of strength in it, was yet mild, calm and equable, clear and joyous, but not intemperate. Fortune's favourite to whom every door opened without keys, his life had in it that sedate maturity and august quiet, which, according to Epicurus, is the true attitude of the Gods, and which the Gods only give to those mortals who, like themselves, have seen life steadily and seen it whole. And if his last years were stained with suffering, yet he died in the fruition of his greatness, amid the mourning of a nation which he had done much to create and whose imagination he had filled with so many beautiful thoughts and so many tender, passionate or glorious images.

Bankim's influence has been far-reaching and every day enlarges its bounds. What is its result? Perhaps it may very roughly be summed up thus. When a Mahratta or Gujerati has anything important to say, he says it in English; when a Bengali, he says it in Bengali. That is, I think, the fact which is most full of meaning for us in Bengal. It means, besides other things less germane to literature, that, except in politics and journalism which is the handmaid of politics, English is being steadily driven out of the field. Soon it will only remain to weed it out of our conversation; and even to that wheel I am told that Babu Kali Prasunna Ghose has set his shoulder. However that may be, the works of this distinguished prose-writer are a remarkable proof of what I have just been saying. Not long ago anyone moving in that province of the mind which Babu Kali Prasunna has annexed, would have held it beneath the dignity of his subject to write in any medium but English. Work like Babu Kali Prasunna's marks an important stage in the great revolution of sentiment which our literary class has set going, the revolution of sentiment which promises to make the Bengalis a nation.

SEVEN

Our Hope in the Future

BUT profound as have been its effects, this revolution is yet in its infancy. Visible on every side, in the waning influence of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, in the triumph of the Bengali language, in the return to Hinduism, in the pride of birth, the angry national feeling and the sensitiveness to insult, which are growing more and more common among our young men, it has nevertheless only begun its work and has many more fields to conquer. Calcutta is yet a stronghold of the Philistines; officialdom is honey-combed with the antinational tradition: in politics and social reform the workings of the new movement are yet obscure. The Anglicised Babu sits in the high place and rules the earth for a season. It is he who perorates on the Congress, who frolics in the abysmal fatuity of interpellation on the Legislative Council, who mismanages civic affairs in the smile of the City Corporation. He is the man of the present, but he is not the man of the future. On his generation, a generation servilely English and swayed by Keshab Chandra Sen and Kristo Das Pal, Bankim had little effect. Even now you will hear Anglicised Bengalis tell you with a sort of triumph that the only people who read Bengali books are the Bengali ladies. The sneer is a little out-of-date, but a few years ago it would not have been so utterly beside the mark. All honour then to the women of Bengal, whose cultured appreciation kept Bengali literature alive! And all honour to the noble few who, with only the women of Bengal and a small class of cultured men to appreciate their efforts, adhered to the language our forefathers spoke, and did not sell themselves to the tongue of the foreigner! Their reward is the heart-felt gratitude of a nation and an immortal renown. Yes, the women of Bengal have always been lovers of literature and may they always remain so; but it is no longer true that they are its only readers. Already we see the embryo of a new generation

soon to be with us, whose imagination Bankim has caught and who care not for Keshab Chandra Sen and Kristo Das Pal, a generation national to a fault, loving Bengal and her new glories, and if not Hindus themselves, yet zealous for the honour of the ancient religion and hating all that makes war on it. With that generation the future lies and not with the Indian Unnational Congress or the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Already its vanguard is upon us. It has in it men of culture, men of talent, men of genius. Let it only be true to itself and we shall do yet more marvellous things in the future than we have done in the past. A Bengali may be pardoned who, looking back to a splendid beginning and on to a hopeful sequel, indulges in proud and grandiose hopes.

Literature and learning are the provinces in which the Bengali is fitted to have kingship, and of the two literature rather than learning; but signs are not wanting that in other spheres also he may win laurels only less splendid. In painting and sculpture, in the plastic arts, the Hindu imagination has had no gift. The favourite style is evidence of a debauched eye and a perverted taste. Yet even in this alien sphere a Bengali has been winning noble renown and that too in Italy, the native land of painting, the land of Raphael, Da Vinci and Angelo, and among Italians, with whom artistic taste is an instinct. In religion too, the Bengali has the future in his hands. He was the first to revolt against the shortcomings of Hinduism, and he is the first who has attempted to give some shape to that New Hinduism, which is, one feels, his religious destiny. He has sojourned for some time in the religious thought of the foreigner, but he is now coming back to the creed of his fathers with strange and precious gifts in his hands. In politics, he has always led and still leads. The Congress in Bengal is dying of consumption; annually its proportions shrink into greater insignificance; its leaders, the Bonnerjis and Bannerjis and Lalmohan Ghoses have climbed into the rarefied atmosphere of the Legislative Council and lost all hold on the imagination of the young men. The desire for a nobler and more inspiring patriotism is growing more intense; and already in the Hindu revival and in the rise of an Indigenous Trade Party we see the handwriting on the wall. This is an omen

of good hope for the future; for what Bengal thinks tomorrow, India will be thinking tomorrow week. Even towards commerce and science, spheres in which he has been painfully helpless, the Bengali is casting wistful glances; but whether he will here as elsewhere ascend the ladder, can only be settled by experiment. He is almost too imaginative, restless and swayed by his feelings for paths in which a cold eye or an untroubled brain is the one thing needful. Nevertheless let Bengal only be true to her own soul, and there is no province in which she may not climb to greatness. That this is so, is largely due to the awakening and stimulating influence of Bankim on the national mind. Young Bengal gets its ideas, feelings and culure not from schools and colleges, but from Bankim's novels and Rabindranath Tagore's poems; so true is it that language is the life of a nation.

Many are carrying on the great work in prose and poetry — Hemchandra, Nobin, Kamini Sen, Rabindranath and Rabindranath's sister, that flower of feminine culture in Bengal, Swarna Kumari Devi, and many more whose names it would take long to repeat; but another Bankim, another Madhusudan comes not again. Some are pointing to this as a sign of intellectual barrenness; but it is not so. Shakespeare and Milton came within the limits of a century! Since then there have been Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, but not a second Shakespeare or Milton. Dante and Boccaccio came successively: since then there have been Berni, Boiardo, Alfieri, Tasso, but not a second Dante or Boccaccio. Such men come rarely in the lapse of centuries. Greece alone has presented the world an unbroken succession of supreme geniuses. There is nothing to prevent us Hindus, a nation created for thought and literature, from repeating that wonderful example. Greece is a high name, but what man has once done, man may again strive to do. All we need is not to tie ourselves down to a false ideal, not to load our brains with the pedantry of a false education, but to keep like those first builders a free intellect and a free soul. If we are careful to do that, there is no reason why the creative impulse in Bengal should for a moment die out. But whatever else may perish or endure, Bankim's fame cannot die. Already it has overleaped the barrier between East and West; translations of his works are already

appearing in English and German, and wherever they are read, they excite admiration, wonder and delight. O sage politicians, and subtle economists, whose heads run on Simultaneous Examinations and whose vision is bounded by Legislative Councils, what a lesson is here for you! Not in this way shall we exalt ourselves in the scale of nations, not in this way, O sages of the bench and sophists of the bar, but by things of which your legal wisdom takes little cognizance, by noble thoughts, by high deeds, by immortal writings. Bankim and Madhusudan have given the world three noble things. They have given it Bengali literature, a literature whose princelier creations can bear comparison with the proudest classics of modern Europe. They have given it the Bengali language. The dialect of Bengal is no longer a dialect, but has become the speech of Gods, a language unfading and indestructible, which cannot die except with the death of the Bengali nation and not even then. And they have given it the Bengali nation; a people spirited, bold, ingenious and imaginative, high among the most intellectual races of the world, and if it can but get perseverance and physical elasticity, one day to be high among the strongest. This is surely a proud record. Of them it may be said in the largest sense that they, being dead, yet live. And when Posterity comes to crown with her praises the Makers of India, she will place her most splendid laurel not on the sweating temples of a place-hunting politician nor on the narrow forehead of a noisy social reformer but on the serene brow of that gracious Bengali who never clamoured for place or for power, but did his work in silence for love of his work, even as nature does, and just because he had no aim but to give out the best that was in him, was able to create a language, a literature and a nation.

Section Three

THE SOURCES OF POETRY AND OTHER ESSAYS

The Sources of Poetry

THE swiftness of the muse has been embodied in the image of Pegasus, the heavenly horse of Greek legend; it was from the rapid beat of his hoofs on the rock that Hippocrene flowed. The waters of Poetry flow in a current or a torrent; where there is a pause or a denial, it is a sign of obstruction in the stream or of imperfection in the mind which the waters have chosen for their bed and continent. In India we have the same idea; Saraswati is for us the goddess of poetry, and her name means the stream or "she who has flowing motion". But even Saraswati is only an intermediary. Ganga is the real mother of inspiration, she who flows impetuously down from the head of Mahadev, God high-seated, over the Himalaya of the mind to the homes and cities of men. All poetry is an inspiration, a thing breathed into the thinking organ from above; it is recorded in the mind, but is born in the higher principle of direct knowledge or ideal vision which surpasses mind. It is in reality a revelation. The prophetic or revealing power sees the substance; the inspiration perceives the right expression. Neither is manufactured; nor is poetry really a poiesis or composition, nor even a creation, but rather the revelation of something that eternally exists. The ancients knew this truth and used the same word for poet and prophet, creator and seer, *sophos*, *vates*, *kavi*.

But there are differences in the manifestation. The greatest motion of poetry comes when the mind is still and the ideal principle works above and outside the brain, above even the hundred-petalled lotus of the ideal mind, in its proper empire, for then it is Veda that is revealed, the perfect substance and expression of eternal truth. The higher ideation transcends genius just as genius transcends ordinary intellect and perception. But that great faculty is still beyond the normal level of our evolution. Usually we see the action of the revelation and inspiration reproduced by a secondary, diluted and uncertain process in the mind. But even this secondary and inferior action is so great that it can

give us Shakespeare, Homer and Valmeki. There is also a tertiary and yet more common action of the inspiration. For of our three mental instruments of knowledge, — the heart or emotionally realising mind, the observing and reasoning intellect with its aids, fancy and memory, and the intuitive intellect, — it is into the last and highest that the ideal principle transmits its inspirations when the greatest poetry writes itself out through the medium of the poet. But if the intuitive intellect is not strong enough to act habitually, it is better for the poetry to descend into the heart and return to the intellect suffused and coloured with passion and emotion than to be formed directly in the observing intellect.

Poetry written from the reasoning intellect is apt to be full of ingenious conceits, logic, argumentation, rhetorical turns, ornamental fancies, echoes learned and imitative rather than uplifted and transformed. This is what is sometimes called classical poetry, the vigorous and excellent but unemotional and unuplifted poetry of Pope and Dryden. It has its inspiration, its truth and value; it is admirable in its way, but it is only great when it is lifted out of itself into intuitive writing or else invaded by the heart. For everything that needs fire rather than Light, driving-force rather than clearness, enthusiasm rather than correctness, the heart is obviously the more potent instrument. Now, poetry to be great must have either enthusiasm or ecstasy.

Yet the poetry that rises up from the heart is usually a turbid stream; our own restless ideas and imaginations mix with the pure inrush from above, and turbulent uprush from below, our excited emotions seek an exaggerated expression, our aesthetic habits and predilections busy themselves to demand a satisfaction greatly beyond their due. Such poetry may be inspired, but it is not always suitable or inevitable. There is often a double inspiration, the higher or ecstatic and the lower or emotional, and the lower disturbs and drags down the higher. This is the birth of romantic or excessively exuberant poetry, too rich in expression, too abundant and redundant in substance. The best poetry coming straight from the right centres may be bare and strong, unadorned and lofty, or it may be rich and splendid; it may be at will romantic or classical; but it will always be felt

o be the right thing for its purpose; it is always nobly or rapturously inevitable.

But even in the higher centres of the intuitive intellect there may be defects in the inspiration. There is a kind of false fluency which misses the true language of poetry from dullness of perception. Under the impression that it is true and inspired writing it flows with an imperturbable flatness, saying the thing that should be said but not in the way that it should be said, without force and felicity. This is the tamasic or clouded stimulus, active, but full of unenlightenment and self-ignorance. The thing seen is right and good; accompanied with the inspired expression it would make very noble poetry. Instead, it becomes prose rendered unnatural and difficult to tolerate by being cut up into lengths. Wordsworth is the most characteristic and interesting victim of tamasic stimulus. Other great poets fall a prey to it, but that superb and imperturbable self-satisfaction under the infliction is his alone. There is another species of tamasic stimulus which transmits an inspired and faultless expression, but the substance is neither interesting to man nor pleasing to the gods. A good deal of Milton comes under this category. In both cases what has happened is that either the inspiration or the revelation has been active, but its companion activity has refused to associate itself in the work.

It is when the mind works at the form and substance of poetry without either the revelation or the inspiration from above that respectable or minor poetry is produced. Judgment, memory and imagination may work, command of language may be there, but without that secondary action of a higher than intellectual force, it is labour wasted, work that earns respect but not immortality. Doggerel and bastard poetry take their rise not even in the observing intellect but from the sensational mind or the passive memory guided only by the mere physical pleasure of sound and emotion. It is bold, blatant, external, imitative, vulgar; its range of intellectuality and imaginativeness cannot go beyond the vital impulse and the vital delight. But even in the sensational mind there is the possibility of a remote action from the ideal self; for even to the animals who think sensationally only, God has given revelations and

inspirations which we call instincts. Under such circumstances even bastard poetry may have a kind of worth, a kind of inevitatability. The poet in the sensational man may be entirely satisfied and delighted, and even in the more developed human being the sensational element may find a poetical satisfaction not of the highest. The best ballad poetry and Macaulay's lays are instances in point. Scott is a sort of link between sensational and intellectual poetry. While there are men mainly sensational, secondarily intellectual and not at all ideal, he will always be admired.

Another kind of false inspiration is the rajasic or fiery stimulus. It is not flat and unprofitable like the tamasic, but hasty, impatient and vain. It is eager to avoid labour by catching at the second best expression or the incomplete vision of the idea, insufficiently jealous to secure the best form, the most satisfying substance. Rajasic poets, even when they feel the defect in what they have written, hesitate to sacrifice it because they also feel and are attached either to what in it is valuable or to the memory of their delight when it was first written. If they get a better expression or a fuller sight, they often prefer to reiterate rather than strike out inferior stuff with which they are in love. Sometimes, drifting or struggling helplessly along that shallow and vehement current, they vary one idea or harp on the same imagination without any final success in expressing it inevitably. Examples of the rajasic stimulus are commonest in Shelley and Spenser, but few English poets are free from it. This is the rajasic fault in expression. But the fiery stimulus also perverts or hampers the substance. An absence of self-restraint, an unwillingness to restrict and limit the ideas and imaginations is a sure sign of a rajasic ideality. There is an attempt to exhaust all the possibilities of the subject, to expand and multiply thoughts and imaginative visions beyond the bounds of the right and permissible. Or else the true idea is rejected or fatally anticipated by another which is or seems to be more catching and boldly effective. Keats is the principal exemplar of the first tendency, the Elizabethans of the second. The earlier work of Shakespeare abounds with classical instances. As distinguished from the Greek, English is pronouncedly rajasic literature and, though there is much in it that is more splendid than almost any-

thing done by the Greeks, — more splendid, not better, — a great deal even of its admired portions are rather rich or meretricious than great and true.

The perfect inspiration in the intuitive intellect is the sattwic or luminous inspiration, which is disinterested, self-contained, yet at will noble, rich or vigorous, having its eye only on the right thing to be said and the right way to say it. It does not allow its perfection to be interfered with by emotion or eagerness but this does not shut it out from ecstasy and exaltation. On the contrary, its delight of self-enjoyment is a purer and more exquisite enthusiasm than that which attends any other inspiration. It commands and uses emotion without enslaving itself to it. There is indeed a sattwic stimulus which is attached to its own luminosity, limpidity and steadiness, and avoids richness, force or emotion of a poignant character even when these are needed and appropriate. The poetry of Matthew Arnold is often though not always of this character. But this is a limited inspiration. Sattwic as well as rajasic poetry may be written from the uninspired intellect, but the sensational mind never gives birth to sattwic poetry.

One thing has to be added. A poet need not be a reflective critic; he need not have the reasoning and analysing intellect and dissect his own poetry. But two things he must have in some measure to be perfect, the intuitive judgment which shows him at a glance whether he has got the best or the second-best idea, the perfect or the imperfect expression and rhythm, and the intuitive reason which shows him without analysis why or wherein it is best or second-best, perfect or imperfect. These four faculties, revelation or prophecy, inspiration, intuitive judgment and intuitive reason, are the perfect equipment of genius doing the works of interpretative and creative knowledge.

On Original Thinking

THE attitude of mankind towards originality of opinion is marked by a natural hesitation and inconsistency. Admired for its rarity, brilliancy and potency, yet in practice and for the same qualities it is more generally dreaded, ridiculed or feared. There is no doubt that it tends to disturb what is established. Therefore tamasic men and tamasic states of society take especial pains to discourage independence of opinion. Their watchword is authority. Few societies have been so tamasic, so full of inertia and contentment in increasing narrowness as Indian society in later times; few have been so eager to preserve themselves in inertia. Few therefore have attached so great an importance to authority. Every detail of our life has been fixed for us by Shastra and custom, every detail of our thought by Scripture and its commentators, — but much oftener by the commentators than by Scripture. Only in one field, that of individual spiritual experience, have we cherished the ancient freedom and originality out of which our past greatness sprang; it is from some new movement in this inexhaustible source that every fresh impulse and rejuvenated strength has arisen. Otherwise we should long ago have been in the grave where dead nations lie, with Greece and Rome of the Caesars, with Esarhaddon and the Chosroes. You will often hear it said that it was the forms of Hinduism which have given us so much national vitality. I think rather it was its spirit. I am inclined to give more credit for the secular miracle of our national survival to Shankara, Ramanuja, Nanak and Kabir, Guru Govind, Chaitanya, Ramdas and Tukaram than to Raghunandan and the Pandits of Nadiya and Bhatpara.

The result of this well-meaning bondage has been an increasing impoverishment of the Indian intellect, once the most gigantic and original in the world. Hence a certain incapacity, atrophy, impotence have marked our later activities even at their best. The most striking instance is our continued helplessness

in the face of the new conditions and new knowledge imposed on us by recent European contact. We have tried to assimilate, we have tried to reject, we have tried to select; but we have not been able to do any of these things successfully. Successful assimilation depends on mastery; but we have not mastered European conditions and knowledge, rather we have been seized, subjected and enslaved by them. Successful rejection is possible only if we have intelligent possession of that which we wish to keep. Our rejection too must be an intelligent rejection; we must reject because we have understood, not because we have failed to understand. But our Hinduism, our old culture are precisely the possessions we have cherished with the least intelligence; throughout the whole range of our life we do things without knowing why we do them, we believe things without knowing why we believe them, we assert things without knowing what right we have to assert them, — or, at most, it is because some book or some Brahmin enjoins it, because Shankara thinks it, or because someone has so interpreted something that he asserts to be a fundamental Scripture of our religion. Nothing is our own, nothing native to our intelligence, all is derived. As little have we understood the new knowledge; we have only understood what the Europeans want us to think about themselves and their modern civilisation. Our English culture — if culture it can be called — has increased tenfold the evil of our dependence instead of remedying it.

More even than the other two processes successful selection requires the independent play of intellect. If we merely receive new ideas and institutions in the light in which they are presented to us, we shall, instead of selecting, imitate — blindly, foolishly and inappropriately. If we receive them in the light given by our previous knowledge, which was on so many points nil, we shall as blindly and foolishly reject. Selection demands that we should see things not as the foreigner sees them or as the orthodox Pandit sees them, but as they are in themselves. But we have selected at random, we have rejected at random, we have not known how to assimilate or choose. In the upshot we have merely suffered the European impact, overborne at points, crassly resisting at others, and, altogether, miserable, enslaved by our

environments, able neither to perish nor to survive. We preserve indeed a certain ingenuity and subtlety; we can imitate with an appearance of brightness; we can play plausibly, even brilliantly with the minutiae of a subject; but we fail to think usefully, we fail to master the life and heart of things. Yet it is only by mastering the life and heart of things that we can hope, as a nation, to survive.

How shall we recover our lost intellectual freedom and elasticity? By reversing, for a time at least, the process by which we lost it, by liberating our minds in all subjects from the thraldom to authority. That is not what reformers and the Anglicised require of us. They ask us, indeed, to abandon authority, to revolt against custom and superstition, to have free and enlightened minds. But they mean by these sounding recommendations that we should renounce the authority of Sayana for the authority of Max Müller, the Monism of Shankara for the Monism of Haeckel, the written Shastra for the unwritten law of European social opinion, the dogmatism of Brahmin Pandits for the dogmatism of European scientists, thinkers and scholars. Such a foolish exchange of servitude can receive the assent of no self-respecting mind. Let us break our chains, venerable as they are, but let it be in order to be free, — in the name of truth, not in the name of Europe. It would be a poor bargain to exchange our old Indian illuminations, however dark they may have grown to us, for a derivative European enlightenment or replace the superstitions of popular Hinduism by the superstitions of materialistic Science.

Our first necessity, if India is to survive and do her appointed work in the world, is that the youth of India should learn to think, — to think on all subjects, to think independently, fruitfully, going to the heart of things, not stopped by their surface, free of prejudgments, shearing sophism and prejudice asunder as with a sharp sword, smiting down obscurantism of all kinds as with the mace of Bhima. Let our brain no longer, like European infants, be swathed with swaddling clothes; let it recover the free and unbound motion of the gods; let it have not only the minuteness but the wide mastery and sovereignty natural to the intellect of Bharata and easily recoverable by it if it once accustoms itself to feel its own power and be convinced of its own

worth. If it cannot entirely shake off past shackles, let it at least arise like the infant Krishna bound to the wain, and move forward dragging with it wain and all and shattering in its progress the twin trees, the twin obstacles to self-fulfilment, blind mediaeval prejudice and arrogant modern dogmatism. The old fixed foundations have been broken up, we are tossing in the waters of a great upheaval and change. It is no use clinging to the old ice-floes of the past, they will soon melt and leave their refugees struggling in perilous waters. It is no use landing ourselves in the infirm bog, neither sea nor good dry land, of a second-hand Europeanism. We shall only die there a miserable and unclean death. No, we must learn to swim and use that power to reach the good vessel of unchanging truth; we must land again on the eternal rock of ages.

Let us not, either, select at random, make a nameless hotchpotch and then triumphantly call it the assimilation of East and West. We must begin by accepting nothing on trust from any source whatsoever, by questioning everything and forming our own conclusions. We need not fear that we shall by that process cease to be Indians or fall into the danger of abandoning Hinduism. India can never cease to be India or Hinduism to be Hinduism, if we really think for ourselves. It is only if we allow Europe to think for us that India is in danger of becoming an ill-executed and foolish copy of Europe. We must not begin by becoming partisans, our first business as original thinkers will be to accept nothing, to question everything. That means to get rid of all unexamined opinions old or new, all mere habitual Sanskaras in the mind, to have no preconceived judgments. *Anityaḥ sarvasaṁskāraḥ*, said the Buddha. I do not know that I quite agree. There are certain Sanskaras that seem to me as eternal as things can be. What is the Atman itself but an eternal and fundamental way of looking at things, the essentiality of all being in itself unknowable, *neti, neti*. Therefore the later Buddhists declared that the Atman itself did not exist and arrived at ultimate nothingness, a barren and foolish conclusion, since Nothingness itself is only a Sanskara. Nevertheless it is certain that the great mass of our habitual conceptions are not only temporary, but imperfect and misleading. We must escape from

these imperfections and take our stand on that which is true and lasting. But in order to find out what in our conceptions is true and lasting, we must question all alike rigorously and impartially. The necessity of such a process not for India, but for all humanity has been recognised by leading European thinkers. It was what Carlyle meant when he spoke of swallowing all formulas. It was the process by which Goethe helped to reinvigorate European thinking. But in Europe the stream is running dry before it has reached its sea. Europe has for some time ceased to produce.

The Interpretation of Scripture

THE Spirit who lies concealed behind the material world, has given us, through the inspiration of great seers, the Scriptures as helpers and guides to unapparent truth, lamps of great power that send their rays into the darkness of the unknown beyond which He dwells, *tamasaḥ parastāt*. They are guides to knowledge, brief indications to enlighten us on our path, not substitutes for thought and experience. They are *śabdabrahma*, the Word, the oral expression of God, not the thing to be known itself nor the knowledge of Him. *Śabda* has three elements, the word, the meaning and the spirit. The word is a symbol, *vāk* or *nāma*; we have to find the *artha*, the meaning or form of thought which the symbol indicates. But the meaning itself is only the indication of something deeper which the thought seeks to convey to the intellectual conception. For not only words, but ideas also are eventually no more than symbols of a knowledge which is beyond ideas and words. Therefore it comes that no idea by itself is wholly true. There is indeed *rūpa*, some concrete or abstract form of knowledge answering to every name, and it is that which the meaning must present to the intellect. We say a form of knowledge, because according to our philosophy, all things are forms of an essentially unknowable existence which reveals them as forms of knowledge to the essential awareness in its Self, its Atman or Spirit, the Chit in the Sat. But beyond *nāma* and *rūpa* is *svarūpa*, the essential figure of Truth, which we cannot know with the intellect but with a higher faculty. And every *svarūpa* is itself only a symbol of the one essential existence which can only be known by its symbols because in its ultimate reality it defies logic and exceeds perception, — God.

Since the knowledge the Scripture conveys is so deep, difficult and subtle, — if it were easy what would be the need of the Scripture? — the interpreter cannot be too careful or too perfectly trained. He must not be one who will rest content in the

thought-symbol or in the logical implication of the idea; he must hunger and thirst for what is beyond. The interpreter who stops short with the letter, is the slave of a symbol and convicted of error. The interpreter who cannot go beyond the external meaning, is the prisoner of his thought and rests in a partial and incomplete knowledge. One must transgress limits and penetrate to the knowledge behind, which must be experienced before it can be known; for the ear hears it, the intellect observes it, but the spirit alone can possess it. Realisation in the self of things is the only knowledge; all else is mere idea or opinion.

The interpretation of the Veda is hampered by many irrelevancies. Men set up an authority and put it between themselves and knowledge. The orthodox are indignant that a mere modern should presume to differ from Shankara in interpreting the Vedanta or from Sayana in interpreting the Veda. They forget that Shankara and Sayana are themselves moderns, separated from ourselves by some hundreds of years only, but the Vedas are many thousands of years old. The commentator ought to be studied, but instead we put him in place of the text. Good commentaries are always helpful even when they are wrong, but the best cannot be allowed to fetter inquiry. Sayana's commentary on the Veda helps me by showing what a man of great erudition some hundreds of years ago thought to be the sense of the Scripture. But I cannot forget that even at the time of the Brahmanas the meaning of the Veda had become dark to the men of that prehistoric age. Shankara's commentary on the Upanishads helps me by showing what a man of immense metaphysical genius and rare logical force after arriving at some fundamental realisations thought to be the sense of the Vedanta. But it is evident that he is often at a loss and always prepossessed by the necessity of justifying his philosophy. I find that Shankara had grasped much of Vedantic truth, but that much was dark to him. I am bound to admit what he realised; I am not bound to exclude what he failed to realise. *Āptavākyam*, authority, is one kind of proof; it is not the only kind: *pratyakṣa* is more important.

The heterodox on the other hand swear by Max Müller and the Europeans. It is enough for them that Max Müller should

have found henotheism in the Vedas for the Vedas to be henotheistic. The Europeans have seen in our Veda only the rude chants of an antique and primitive pastoral race sung in honour of the forces of Nature, and for many their opinion is conclusive of the significance of the *mantras*. All other interpretation is to them superstitious. But to me the ingenious guesses of foreign grammarians are of no more authority than the ingenious guesses of Sayana. It is irrelevant to me what Max Müller thinks of the Veda or what Sayana thinks of the Veda. I should prefer to know what the Veda has to say for itself and, if there is any light there on the unknown or on the infinite, to follow the ray till I come face to face with that which it illumines.

There are those who follow neither Sayana nor the Europeans, but interpret Veda and Vedanta for themselves, yet permit themselves to be the slaves of another kind of irrelevancy. They come to the Veda with a preconceived and established opinion and seek in it a support for some trifling polemic; they degrade it to the position of a backer in an intellectual prize-fight. Opinions are not knowledge, they are only sidelights on knowledge. Most often they are illegitimate extensions of an imperfect knowledge. A man has perhaps travelled to England and seen Cumberland and the lakes; he comes back and imagines England ever after as a country full of verdant mountains, faery woodlands, peaceful and enchanted waters. Another has been to the manufacturing centres; he imagines England as a great roaring workshop, crammed with furnaces and the hum of machinery and the smell of metal. Another has sojourned in the quiet country side and to him England is all hedges and lanes and the daisy-sprinkled meadow and the well-tilled field. All have realised a little, but none have realised England. Then there is the man who has only read about the country or heard descriptions from others and thinks he knows it better than the men who have been there. They may all admit that what they have seen need not be the whole, but each has his little ineffaceable picture which, because it is all he has realised, persists in standing for the whole. There is no harm in that, no harm whatever in limitation if you understand and admit the limitation. But if all the four begin quarrelling, what an aimless confusion will arise! That is what

has happened in India because of the excessive logicality and too robust opinionativeness of southern metaphysicians. We should come back to a more flexible and rational spirit of inquiry.

What then are the standards of truth in the interpretation of the Scripture? The standards are three, the knower, knowledge and the known.

The known is the text itself that we seek to interpret. We must be sure we have the right word, not an emendation to suit the exigency of some individual or sectarian opinion; the right etymology and shade of meaning, not one that is traditional or forced to serve the ends of a commentator; the right spirit in the sense, not an imported or too narrow or too elastic spirit.

The knower is the original *draṣṭā* or seer of the *mantra*, with whom we ought to be in spiritual contact. If knowledge is indeed a perishable thing in a perishable instrument, such contact is impossible; but in that case the Scripture itself must be false and not worth considering. If there is any truth in what the Scripture says, knowledge is eternal and inherent in all of us and what another saw I can see, what another realised I can realise. The *draṣṭā* was a soul in relation with the infinite Spirit, I also am a soul in relation with the infinite Spirit. We have a meeting-place, a possibility of communion.

Knowledge is the eternal truth, part of which the *draṣṭā* expresses to us. Through the part he shows us, we must travel to the whole, otherwise we shall be subject to the errors incidental to an imperfect knowledge. If even the part is to be rightly understood, it must be viewed in the terms of the whole, not the whole in the terms of the part. I am not limited by the Scriptures; on the contrary I must exceed them in order to be master of their knowledge. It is true that we are usually the slaves of our individual and limited outlook, but our capacity is unlimited, and if we can get rid of *ahaṅkāra*, if we can put ourselves at the service of the Infinite without any reservation of predilection or opinion, there is no reason why our realisation should be limited. *Yasmin vijñāte sarvam idam vijñātam.* He being known, all can be known. To understand Scripture, it is not enough to be a scholar, one must be a soul. To know what the *draṣṭā* saw one must oneself have *dṛṣṭi*, sight, and be a student if not a master of the

knowledge. *Atha parā yayā tad akṣaram adhigamyate.* Grammar, etymology, prosody, astronomy, metaphysics, logic, all that is good; but afterwards there is still needed the higher knowledge by which the Immutable is known.

Social Reform

REFORM is not an excellent thing in itself as many Europeanised intellects imagine; neither is it always safe and good to stand unmoved in the ancient paths as the orthodox obstinately believe. Reform is sometimes the first step to the abyss, but immobility is the most perfect way to stagnate and to putrefy. Neither is moderation always the wisest counsel: the mean is not always golden. It is often an euphemism for purblindness, for a tepid indifference or for a cowardly inefficiency. Men call themselves moderates, conservatives or extremists and manage their conduct and opinions in accordance with a formula. We like to think by systems and parties and forget that truth is the only standard. Systems are merely convenient cases for keeping arranged knowledge, parties a useful machinery for combined action, but we make of them an excuse for avoiding the trouble of thought.

One is astonished at the position of the orthodox. They labour to deify everything that exists. Hindu society has certain arrangements and habits which are merely customary. There is no proof that they existed in ancient times nor any reason why they should last into the future. It has other arrangements and habits for which textual authority can be quoted, but it is oftener the text of the modern Smritikaras than of Parasara and Manu. Our authority for them goes back to the last five hundred years. I do not understand the logic which argues that because a thing has lasted for five hundred years it must be perpetuated through the aeons. Neither antiquity nor modernity can be the test of truth or the test of usefulness. All the Rishis do not belong to the past; the Avatars still come; revelation still continues.

Some claim that we must at any rate adhere to Manu and the Puranas, whether because they are sacred or because they are national. Well, but, if they are sacred, you must keep to the whole and not cherish isolated texts while disregarding the body of your authority. You cannot pick and choose; you cannot

say, "This is sacred and I will keep to it, that is less sacred and I will leave it alone." When you so treat your sacred authority, you are proving that to you it has no sacredness. You are juggling with truth; for you are pretending to consult Manu when you are really consulting your own opinions, preferences or interests. To recreate Manu entire in modern society is to ask Ganges to flow back to the Himalayas. Manu is no doubt national, but so is the animal sacrifice and the burnt offering. Because a thing is national of the past, it need not follow that it must be national of the future. It is stupid not to recognise altered conditions.

We have similar apologies for the unintelligent preservation of mere customs; but various as are the lines of defence, I do not know any that is imperiously conclusive. Custom is *śiṣṭācāra*, decorum, that which all well-bred and respectable people observe. But so were the customs of the far past that have been discontinued and, if now revived, would be severely discountenanced and, in many cases, penalised; so too are the customs of the future that are now being resisted or discouraged, — even, I am prepared to believe, the future no less than the past prepares for us new modes of living which in the present would not escape the censure of the law. It is the *ācāra* that makes the *śiṣṭa*, not the *śiṣṭa* who makes the *ācāra*. The *ācāra* is made by the rebel, the innovator, the man who is regarded in his own time as eccentric, disreputable or immoral, as was Sri Krishna by Bhurishrava because he upset the old ways and the old standards. Custom may be better defended as ancestral and therefore cherishable. But if our ancestors had persistently held that view, our so cherished customs would never have come into being. Or, more rationally custom must be preserved because its long utility in the past argues a sovereign virtue for the preservation of society. But to all things there is a date and a limit. All long continued customs have been sovereignly useful in their time, even totemism and polyandry. We must not ignore the usefulness of the past, but we seek in preference a present and a future utility.

Custom and Law may then be altered. For each age its Shastra. But we cannot argue straight off that it must be altered, or even if alteration is necessary, that it must be altered in a given direction. One is repelled by the ignorant enthusiasm of social

reformers. Their minds are usually a strange jumble of ill-digested European notions. Very few of them know anything about Europe, and even those who have visited it know it badly. But they will not allow things or ideas contrary to European notions to be anything but superstitious, barbarous, harmful and benighted, they will not suffer what is praised and practised in Europe to be anything but rational and enlightened. They are more appreciative than Occidentals themselves of the strength, knowledge and enjoyment of Europe; they are blinder than the blindest and most self-sufficient Anglo-Saxon to its weakness, ignorance and misery. They are charmed by the fair front Europe presents to herself and the world; they are unwilling to discern any disease in the entrails, any foulness in the rear. For the Europeans are as careful to conceal their social as their physical bodies and shrink with more horror from nakedness and indecorum than from the reality of evil. If they see the latter in themselves, they avert their eyes, crying, "It is nothing or it is little; we are healthy, we are perfect, we are immortal." But the face and hands cannot always be covered, and we see blotches.

The social reformer repeats certain stock arguments like shibboleths. For these antiquities he is a fanatic or a crusader. Usually he does not act up to his ideas, but in all sincerity he loves them and fights for them. He pursues his nostrums as panaceas; it would be infidelity to question or examine their efficacy. His European doctors have told him that early marriage injures the physique of a nation, and that to him is the gospel. It is not convenient to remember that physical deterioration is a modern phenomenon in India and that our grandparents were strong, vigorous and beautiful. He hastens to abolish the already disappearing nautch-girl, but it does not seem to concern him that the prostitute multiplies. Possibly some may think it a gain that the European form of the malady is replacing the Indian! He tends towards shattering our cooperative system of society and does not see that Europe is striding Titanically towards Socialism.

Orthodox and reformer alike lose themselves in details; but it is principles that determine details. Almost every point that the social reformers raise could be settled one way or the other

without effecting the permanent good of society. It is pitiful to see men labouring the point of marriage between subcastes and triumphing over an isolated instance. Whether the spirit as well as the body of caste should remain, is the modern question. Let Hindus remember that caste as it stands is merely *jāt*, the trade guild sanctified but no longer working, it is not the eternal religion, it is not Chaturvarnya. I do not care whether widows marry or remain single; but it is of infinite importance to consider how women shall be legally and socially related to man, as his inferior, equal or superior; for even the relation of superiority is no more impossible in the future than it was in the far-distant past. And the most important question of all is whether society shall be competitive or cooperative, individualistic or communistic. That we should talk so little about these things and be stormy over insignificant details, shows painfully the impoverishment of the average Indian intellect. If these greater things are decided, as they must be, the smaller will arrange themselves.

There are standards that are universal and there are standards that are particular. At the present moment all societies are in need of reform, the Parsi, Mahomedan and Christian not a whit less than the Hindu which alone seems to feel the need of radical reformation. In the changes of the future the Hindu society must take the lead towards the establishment of a new universal standard. Yet being Hindu we must seek it through that which is particular to ourselves. We have one standard that is at once universal and particular, the eternal religion, which is the basis, permanent and always inherent in India, of the shifting, mutable and multiform thing we call Hinduism. Sticking fast where you are like a limpet is not the Dharma, neither is leaping without looking the Dharma. The eternal religion is to realise God in our inner life and our outer existence, in society not less than in the individual. *Eṣa dharmaḥ sanātanaḥ*. God is not antiquity nor novelty: He is not the Manava Dharmashastra, nor Vidyaranya, nor Raghunandan; neither is He an European. God who is essentially Sachchidananda, is in manifestation Satyam, Shakti, Prema, — Truth, Strength and Love. Whatever is consistent with the truth and principle of things, whatever increases love among men, whatever makes for the

strength of the individual, the nation and the race, is divine, it is the law of Vaivaswata Manu, it is the *sanātana dharma* and the Hindu Shastra. Only, God is the triple harmony, He is not one-sided. Our love must not make us weak, blind or unwise; our strength must not make us hard and furious; our principle must not make us fanatical or sentimental. Let us think calmly, patiently, impartially; let us love wholly and intensely but wisely; let us act with strength, nobility and force. If even then we make mistakes, yet God makes none. We decide and act; He determines the fruit, and whatever He determines is good.

He is already determining it. Men have long been troubling themselves about social reform and blameless orthodoxy, and orthodoxy has crumbled without social reform being effected. But all the time God has been going about India getting His work done in spite of the talking. Unknown to men the social revolution prepares itself, and it is not in the direction they think.

Education

INTELLECTUAL

WE NOW come to the intellectual part of education, which is certainly a larger and more difficult, although not more important than physical training and edification of character. The Indian University system has confined itself entirely to this branch and it might have been thought that this limitation and concentration of energy ought to have been attended by special efficiency and thoroughness in the single branch it had chosen. But unfortunately this is not the case. If the physical training it provides is contemptible and the moral training nil, the mental training is also meagre in quantity and worthless in quality. People commonly say that it is because the services and professions are made the object of education that this state of things exists. This I believe to be a great mistake. A degree is necessary for service and therefore people try to get a degree. Good! let it remain so. But in order for a student to get a degree let us make it absolutely necessary that he shall have a good education. If a worthless education is sufficient in order to secure this object and a good education quite unessential, it is obvious that the student will not incur great trouble and diversion of energy in order to acquire what he feels to be unnecessary. But change this state of things, make culture and true science essential and the same interested motive which now makes him content with a bad education will then compel him to strive after culture and true science. As practical men we must recognise that the pure enthusiasm of knowledge for knowledge's sake operates only in exceptional minds or in exceptional eras. In civilised countries a general desire for knowledge as a motive for education does exist but it is largely accompanied with the earthier feeling that knowledge is necessary to keep up one's position in society or to succeed in certain lucrative or respectable pursuits or professions. We in India have become so barbarous that we send our children to school with the grossest

utilitarian motive unmixed with any disinterested desire for knowledge; but the education we receive is itself responsible for this. Nobody can cherish disinterested enthusiasm for a bad education; it can only be regarded as a means to some practical end. But make the education good, thorough and interesting and the love of knowledge will of itself awake in the mind and so mingle with and modify more selfish objects.

The source of the evil we complain of is therefore something different; it is a fundamental and deplorable error by which we in this country have confused education with the acquisition of knowledge and interpreted knowledge itself in a singularly narrow and illiberal sense. To give the student knowledge is necessary, but it is still more necessary to build up in him the power of knowledge. It would hardly be a good technical education for a carpenter to be taught how to fell trees so as to provide himself with wood and never to learn how to prepare tables and chairs and cabinets or even what tools were necessary for his craft. Yet this is precisely what our system of education does. It trains the memory and provides the student with a store of facts and second-hand ideas. The memory is the woodcutter's axe and the store he acquires is the wood he has cut down in his course of tree-felling. When he has done this, the University says to him, "We now declare you a Bachelor of Carpentry, we have given you a good and sharp axe and a fair nucleus of wood to begin with. Go on, my son, the world is full of forests and, provided the Forest Officer does not object, you can cut down trees and provide yourself with wood to your heart's content." Now the student who goes forth thus equipped, may become a great timber merchant but, unless he is an exceptional genius, he will never be even a moderate carpenter. Or to return from the simile to the facts, the graduate from our colleges may be a good clerk, a decent vakil or a tolerable medical practitioner, but unless he is an exceptional genius, he will never be a great administrator or a great lawyer or an eminent medical specialist. These eminences have to be filled up mainly by Europeans. If an Indian wishes to rise to them, he has to travel thousands of miles over the sea in order to breathe an atmosphere of liberal knowledge, original science and sound culture. And even then he seldom succeeds,

because his lungs are too debilitated to take in a good long breath of that atmosphere.

The first fundamental mistake has been, therefore, to confine ourselves to the training of the storing faculty memory and the storage of facts and to neglect the training of the three great using (manipulating) faculties, viz. the power of reasoning, the power of comparison and differentiation and the power of expression. These powers are present to a certain extent in all men above the state of the savage and even in a rudimentary state in the savage himself; but they exist especially developed in the higher classes of civilised nations, wherever these higher classes have long centuries of education behind them. But however highly developed by nature these powers demand cultivation, they demand that bringing out of natural abilities which is the real essence of education. If not brought out in youth, they become rusted and stopped with dirt, so that they cease to act except in a feeble, narrow and partial manner. Exceptional genius does indeed assert itself in spite of neglect and discouragement, but even genius self-developed does not achieve as happy results and as free and large a working as the same genius properly equipped and trained. Amount of knowledge is in itself not of first importance, but to make the best use of what we know. The easy assumption of our educationists that we have only to supply the mind with a smattering of facts in each department of knowledge and the mind can be trusted to develop itself and take its own suitable road is contrary to science, contrary to human experience and contrary to the universal opinion of civilised countries. Indeed, the history of intellectual degeneration in gifted races always begins with the arrest of these three mental powers by the excessive cultivation of mere knowledge at their expense. Much as we have lost as a nation, we have always preserved our intellectual alertness, quickness and originality; but even this last gift is threatened by our University system, and if it goes, it will be the beginning of irretrievable degradation and final extinction.

The very first step in reform must therefore be to revolutionise the whole aim and method of our education. We must accustom teachers to devote nine-tenths of their energy to the

education of the active mental faculties while the passive and retaining faculty, which we call the memory, should occupy a recognised and well-defined but subordinate place and we must direct our school and university examinations to the testing of these active faculties and not of the memory. For this is an object which cannot be affected by the mere change or rearrangement of the curriculum. It is true that certain subjects are more apt to develop certain faculties than others; the power of accurate reasoning is powerfully assisted by Geometry, Logic and Political Economy; one of the most important results of languages is to refine and train the power of expression and nothing more enlarges the power of comparison and differentiation than an intelligent study of history. But no particular subject except language is essential, still less exclusively appropriate to any given faculty. There are types of intellect, for instance, which are constitutionally incapable of dealing with geometrical problems or even with the formal machinery of Logic, and are yet profound, brilliant and correct reasoners in other intellectual spheres. There is in fact hardly any subject, the sciences of calculation excepted, which in the hands of a capable teacher does not give room for the development of all the general faculties of the mind. The first thing needed therefore is the entire and unsparing rejection of the present methods of teaching in favour of those which are now being universally adopted in the more advanced countries of Europe.

But even in this narrower sphere of knowledge acquisition to which our system has confined itself, it has been guilty of other blunders quite as serious. Apart from pure mathematics, which stands on a footing of its own, knowledge may be divided into two great heads, the knowledge of things and the knowledge of men, that is to say, of human thought, human actions, human nature and human creations as recorded, preserved or pictured in literature, history, philosophy and art. The latter is covered in the term humanities or humane letters and the idea of a liberal education was formerly confined to these, though it was subsequently widened to include mathematics and has again been widened in modern times to include a modicum of science. The humanities, mathematics and science are therefore the three

sisters in the family of knowledge and any self-respecting system of education must in these days provide facilities for mastery in any one of these as well as for a modicum of all. The first great error of our system comes in here. While we insist on passing our students through a rigid and cast-iron course of knowledge in everything, we give them real knowledge in nothing. Mathematics, for instance, is a subject in which it ought not to be difficult to give thorough knowledge, most of the paths are well beaten and, being a precise and definite subject, it does not in itself demand such serious powers of original thought and appreciation as literature and history; yet it is the invariable experience of the most brilliant mathematical students who go from Calcutta to Bombay to Cambridge that after the first year they have exhausted all they have already learned and have to enter on entirely new and unfamiliar result. It is surely a deplorable thing that it should be impossible to acquire a thorough mathematical education in India, that one should have to go thousands of miles and spend thousands of rupees to get it. Again, if we look at science, what is the result of the pitiful modicum of science acquired under our system? At the best it turns out good teachers who can turn others through the same mill in which they themselves have been ground...

(*Incomplete*)

NOTE: There seem to have been other articles in this series but only this one has come to light.

Lecture in Baroda College*

IN ADDRESSING you on an occasion like the present, it is inevitable that the mind should dwell on one feature of this gathering above all others. Held as it is towards the close of the year, I am inevitably reminded that many of its prominent members are with us for the last time in their college life, and I am led to speculate with both hope and anxiety on their future careers, and this not only because several familiar faces are to disappear from us and scatter into different parts of the country and various walks of life, but also because they go out from us as our finished work, and it is by their character and life that our efforts will be judged. When I say, our efforts, I allude not merely to the professorial work of teaching, not to book-learning only, but to the entire activity of the college as a great and complex educational force, which is not solely meant to impart information, but to bring out or give opportunities for bringing out all the various intellectual and other energies which go to make up a man. And here is the side of collegiate institutions of which this Social Gathering especially reminds us, the force of the social life it provides in moulding the character and the mind. I think it will not be out of place, if in dwelling on this I revert to the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge which are our famous exemplars, and point out a few differences between those Universities and our own and the thoughts those differences may well suggest.

I think there is no student of Oxford or Cambridge who does not look back in after days on the few years of his undergraduate life as, of all the scenes he has moved in, that which calls up the happiest memories, and it is not surprising that this should be so, when we remember what that life must have meant to him. He goes up from the restricted life of his home and school and finds himself in surroundings which with astonishing

* An address delivered by Professor Ghose at the College Social Gathering — from the Baroda College Miscellany — Vol. V, No. II — September 1899, pp. 28-33.

rapidity expand his intellect, strengthen his character, develop his social faculties, force out all his abilities and turn him in three years from a boy into a man. His mind ripens in the contact with minds which meet from all parts of the country and have been brought up in many various kinds of trainings, his unwholesome eccentricities wear away and the unsocial, egoistic elements of character are to a large extent discouraged. He moves among ancient and venerable buildings, the mere age and beauty of which are in themselves an education. He has the Union which has trained so many great orators and debaters, has been the first trial ground of so many renowned intellects. He has, too, the athletics clubs organized with a perfection unparalleled elsewhere, in which, if he has the physique and the desire for them he may find pursuits which are also in themselves an education. The result is that he who entered the university a raw student, comes out of it a man and a gentleman, accustomed to think of great affairs and fit to move in cultivated society, and he remembers his College and University with affection, and in after days if he meets with those who have studied with him he feels attracted towards them as to men with whom he has a natural brotherhood. This is the social effect I should like the Colleges and Universities of India also to exercise, to educate by social influences as well as those which are merely academical and to create the feeling among their pupils that they belong to the community, that they are children of one mother. There are many obstacles to this result in the circumstance of Indian Universities. The Colleges are not collected in one town but are scattered among many and cannot assemble within themselves so large and various a life. They are new also, the creation of not more than fifty years — and fifty years is a short period in the life of a University. But so far as circumstances allow, there is an attempt to fill up the deficiency, in your Union, your Debating Club and Reading Room, your Athletic Sports and Social Gathering. For the success of this attempt time is needed, but your efforts are also needed: and I ask you who are soon to go out into the world, not to forget your College or regard it as a mere episode in your life, but rather as one to whose care you must look back and recompense it by your future life and work,

and if you meet fellow-students, alumni of the same College, to meet them as friends, as brothers.

There is another point in which a wide difference exists. What makes Oxford and Cambridge not local institutions but great and historic Universities? It is the number of great and famous men, of brilliant intellects in every department which have issued from them. I should like you to think seriously of this aspect of the question also. In England the student feels a pride in his own University and College, wishes to see their traditions maintained, and tries to justify them to the world by his own success. This feeling has yet to grow up among us. And I would appeal to you — who are leaving us — to help to create it, to cherish it yourselves, to try and justify the College of its pupils. Of course, there is one preliminary method by which the students can add fame to their College. Success in examinations, though preliminary merely, and not an end in itself, is nevertheless of no small effect or importance. You all know how the recent success of an Indian student has filled the whole country with joy and enthusiasm. That success reflects fame not only on India but on his University and College, and when the name of the first Indian Senior Wrangler is mentioned, it will also be remembered that he belonged to Cambridge and to St. John's. But examinations, however important, are only a preliminary. I lay stress upon this because there is too much of a tendency in this country to regard education as a mere episode, finished when once the degree is obtained. But the University cannot and does not pretend to complete a man's education; it merely gives some materials to his hand or points out certain paths he may tread, and it says to him, — "Here are the materials I have given into your hands, it is for you to make of them what you can"; or — "These are the paths I have equipped you to travel; it is yours to tread them to the end, and by your success in them justify me before the world."

I would ask you therefore to remember these things in your future life, not to drop the effects of your College training as no longer necessary, but, to strive for eminence and greatness in your own lines, and by the brilliance of your names add lustre to the first nursing home of your capacities, to cherish its memory

with affection as that which equipped your intellects, trained you into men, and strove to give you such social life as might fit you for the world. And finally I would ask you not to sever yourselves in after days from it, but if you are far, to welcome its alumni when you meet them with brotherly feelings and if you are near to keep up connection with it, not to regard the difference of age between yourselves and its future students but associate with them, be present at such occasions as this social gathering and evince by your acts your gratitude for all that it did for you in the past.

Section Four

VALMIKI AND VYASA

because they are content to write about them after having seen them with the mind only, and have not been able or have not taken care first to be the things of which they would write and then not so much write about them as let them pour out in speech that is an image of the soul. They have been too easily attracted by the materials of poetry, *artha* and *śabda*; drawn by some power and charm in the substance of speech, captivated by some melody, harmony or colour in the form of speech, arrested by some strong personal emotion which clutches at experience or gropes for expression in these externals of poetry, they have forgotten to bathe in the Muses' deepest springs.

Therefore among those ancient voices, even when the literature of the ages has been winnowed and chosen by Time, there are very few who recreate for us in poetic speech deeply and mightily the dead past, because they were that past, not so much themselves as the age and nation in which they lived and not so much even the age and nation as that universal humanity which in spite of all differences, under them and within them, even expressing its unity through them, is the same in every nation and in every age. Others give us only fragments of thought or outbursts of feeling or reveal to us scattered incidents of sight, sound and outward happening. These are complete, vast, multitudinous, infinite in a way, impersonal, many-personed in their very personality, not divine workmen merely but fine creators endowed by God with something of His divine power and offering therefore in their works some image of His creative activity.

(*Incomplete*)

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THE greatest poets are usually those who arise either out of a large, simple and puissant environment or out of a movement of mind that is grandiose, forceful and elemental. When man becomes increasingly refined in intellect, curious in aesthetic sensibility or minute and exact in intellectual reasoning, it becomes more and more difficult to write great and powerful poetry. Ages of accomplished intellectuality and scholarship or of strong scientific rationality are not favourable to the birth of great poets or if they are born, not favourable to the free and untrammelled action of their gifts. They remain great, but their greatness bends under a load: there is a lack of triumphant spontaneity and they do not draw as freely or directly from the sources of human action and character. An untameable elemental force is needed to overcome more than partially the denials of the environment. For poetry, even though it appeals in passing to the intellect and aesthetic sense, does not proceed from them but is in its nature an elemental power proceeding from the secret and elemental Power within which sees directly and creates sovereignly, and it passes at once to our vital and elemental parts. Intellect and the aesthetic faculties are necessary to the perfection of our critical enjoyment; but they are only assistants, not the agents of this divine birth.

(*Incomplete*)

NOTES ON THE MAHABHARATA

Notes on the Mahabharata of Krishna Dvypaiana Vyasa prepared with a view to disengage the original epic of Krishna of the Island from the enlargements, accretions and additions made by Vaishampaiana, Ugrashravas and innumerable other writers.

PROPOSITA

An epic of the Mahabharata was written by Krishna of the Island called Vyasa, in 24,000 couplets or something more, less at any rate than 27,000 on the subject of the great civil war of the Bharatas and the establishment of the Dharmarajya or universal sovereignty in that house.

This epic can be disengaged almost in its entirety from the present form of nearly 100,000 Slokas.

Vyasa: Some Characteristics

THE Mahabharata, although neither the greatest nor the richest masterpiece of the secular literature of India, is at the same time its most considerable and important body of poetry. Being so, it is the pivot on which the history of Sanskrit literature and incidentally the history of Aryan civilisation in India, must perforce turn. To the great discredit of European scholarship the problem of this all-important work is one that remains not only unsolved, but untouched. Yet until it is solved, until the confusion of its heterogeneous materials is reduced to some sort of order, the different layers of which it consists separated, classed and attributed to their relative dates, and its relations with the Ramayana on the one hand and the Puranic and classic literature on the other fully and patiently examined, the history of our civilisation must remain in the air, a field for pedantic wranglings and worthless conjectures. The world knows something of our origins because much labour has been bestowed on the Vedas, something of our decline because post-Buddhistic literature has been much read, annotated and discussed, but of our great medial and flourishing period it knows little, and that little is neither coherent nor reliable.

All that we know of the Mahabharata at present is that it is the work of several hands and of different periods — this is literally the limit of the reliable knowledge European scholarship has so far been able to extract from it. For the rest we have to be content with arbitrary conjectures based upon an unwarrantable application of European analogies to Indian things or random assumptions snatched from a word here or a line there, but never proceeding from that weighty, careful and unbiassed study of the work, canto by canto, passage by passage, line by line, which can alone bring us to any valuable conclusions. A fancy was started in Germany that the Iliad of Homer is really a pastiche or clever rifacimento of old ballads put together in the time of Pisistratus. This truly barbarous imagination with its rude

ignorance of the psychological bases of all great poetry has now fallen into some discredit; it has been replaced by a more plausible attempt to discover a nucleus in the poem, an Achilleid, out of which the larger Iliad has grown. Very possibly the whole discussion will finally end in the restoration of a single Homer with a single poem, subjected indeed to some inevitable interpolation and corruption, but mainly the work of one mind, a theory still held by more than one considerable scholar. In the meanwhile, however, haste has been made to apply the analogy to the Mahabharata; lynx-eyed theorists have discovered in the poem — apparently without taking the trouble to study it — an early and rude ballad epic worked up, doctored and defaced by those wicked Brahmins, who are made responsible for all the literary and other enormities which have been discovered by the bushelful, and not by Europeans alone — in our literature and civilisation. A similar method of "arguing from Homer" is probably at the bottom of Professor Weber's assertion that the War Parvas contain the original epic. An observant eye at once perceives that the War Parvas are more hopelessly tangled than any that precede them except the first. It is here and here only that the keenest eye becomes confused and the most confident explorer begins to lose heart and self-reliance. Now whether the theory is true or not, — and one sees nothing in its favour, — it has at present no value at all; for it is a pure theory without any justifying facts. It is not difficult to build these intellectual card-houses. Anyone may raise them by the dozen if he can find no better manner of wasting valuable time. But the Iliad is all battles and it therefore follows in the European mind that the original Mahabharata must have been all battles. Another method is that of ingenious, if forced, argument from stray Slokas of the poem to the equally stray and obscure remarks in Buddhist compilations. The curious theory of some scholars that the Pandavas were a later invention and that the original war was between the Kurus and Panchalas only and Professor Weber's singularly positive inference from a Sloka[1] which does not at first sight bear

[1] अष्टौ श्लोकसहस्राणि अष्टौ श्लोकशतानि च।
अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति संजयो वेत्ति वा न वा ॥

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Adiparva, I. 81.

the meaning he puts on it, that the original epic contained only 8,800 verses, are ingenuities of this type. They are based on the Teutonic art of building a whole mammoth out of a single and often problematical bone and remind one strongly of Mr. Pickwick and the historic inscription which was so rudely, if in a Pickwickian sense, challenged by the refractory Mr. Blotton. All these theorisings are idle enough; they are made of too airy a stuff to last.

Yet to extricate the original epic from the mass of accretions is not, I believe, so difficult a task as it may at first appear. One is struck in perusing the Mahabharata by the presence of a mass of poetry which bears the style and impress of a single, strong and original, even unusual mind, differing in his manner of expression, tone of thought and stamp of personality not only from every other Sanskrit poet we know, but from every other great poet known to literature. When we look more closely into the distribution of this peculiar style of writing, we come to perceive certain very suggestive and helpful facts. We realise that this impress is only found in those parts of the poem which are necessary to the due conduct of the story; seldom to be detected in the more miraculous, Puranistic or trivial episodes, but usually broken up by passages and sometimes shot through with lines of a discernibly different inspiration. Equally noteworthy is it that nowhere does this part admit any trait, incident or speech which deviates from the strict propriety of dramatic characterisation and psychological probability. Finally, in this body, Krishna's divinity is recognised but more often hinted at than aggressively stated. The tendency is to keep it in the background as a fact to which, while himself crediting it, the writer does not hope for a universal consent, still less is able to speak of it as a general tenet and matter of dogmatic belief; he prefers to show Krishna rather in his human character, acting always by wise, discerning and inspired methods, but still not transgressing the limit of human possibility. All this leads one to the conclusion that in the body of poetry I have described, we have the real Bharata, an epic which tells plainly and straightforwardly of the events which led to the great war and the empire of the Bharata princes. Certainly, if Professor Weber's venture-

some assertion as to the length of the original Mahabharata be correct, this conclusion falls to the ground; for the mass of this poetry amounts to considerably over 20,000 Slokas. Professor Weber's inference, however, is worth some discussion; for the length of the original epic is a very important element in the problem. If we accept it we must say farewell to all hopes of unravelling the tangle. His assertion is founded on a single and obscure verse in the huge prolegomena to the poem which takes up the greater part of the Adiparva, no very strong basis for so far-reaching an assumption. The Sloka itself says no more than this that much of the Mahabharata was written in so difficult a style that Vyasa himself could remember only 8,800 of the Slokas, Suka an equal amount and Sanjaya perhaps as much, perhaps something less. There is certainly here no assertion such as Prof. Weber would have us find in it that the Mahabharata at any time amounted to no more than 8,800 Slokas. Even if we assume what the text does not say that Vyasa, Suka and Sanjaya knew the same 8,800 Slokas, we do not get to that conclusion. The point simply is that the style of the Mahabharata was too difficult for a single man to keep in memory more than a certain portion of it. This does not carry us very far. Following the genius of the Sanskrit language we are led to suppose the repetition was intended to relate *aṣṭau ślokasahasrāṇi* etc. with each name, otherwise the repetition has no *raison d'être* and it is otiose and inept. But if we understand it thus, the conclusion is irresistible that each knew a different 8,800. The writer would have no object in wishing us to repeat the number three times in our mind. If, however, we are to assume that this verse means more than meets the eye, that it is a cryptic way of stating the length of the original poem — and I do not deny that this is possible, perhaps even probable — we should note the repetition of *vetti — aham vedmi śuko vetti sañjayo vetti vā na vā.* The length of the epic as derived from this single Sloka should then be 26,000 Slokas or less, for the writer hesitates about the exact number to be attributed to Sanjaya. Another passage farther on in the prolegomena agrees remarkably with this conclusion and is in itself much more explicit. It is there stated plainly enough that Vyasa first wrote the Mahabharata in 24,000 Slokas and afterwards enlarged

it to 100,000 for the world of man as well as a still more unconscionable number of verses for the Gandharva and other worlds.[1] In spite of the embroidery of fancy, of a type familiar enough to all who are acquainted with the Puranic method of recording facts, the meaning of this is unmistakable. The original Mahabharata consisted of 24,000 Slokas; but in its final form it runs to 100,000. The figures are probably loose and slovenly, for at any rate the first form of the Mahabharata is considerably under 100,000 Slokas. It is possible therefore that the original epic was something over 24,000 and under 26,400 Slokas, in which case the two passages would agree well enough. But it would be unsafe to found any dogmatic assertion on isolated couplets; at the most we can say that we are justified in taking the estimate as a probable and workable hypothesis and if it is found to be corroborated by other facts, we may venture to suggest its correctness as a moral certainty.

This body of poetry then, let us suppose, is the original Mahabharata. Tradition attributes it to Krishna of the Island called Vyasa who certainly lived about this time and was an editor of the Vedas; and since there is nothing in this part of the poem which makes the tradition impossible and much which favours it, we may as a matter both of convenience and of possibility accept it at least provisionally. Whether these hypotheses can be upheld is a question for long and scrupulous consideration and analysis. In this article I wish to formulate, assuming their validity, the larger features of poetical style, the manner of thought and creation and the personal note of Vyasa.

Vyasa is the most masculine of writers. When Coleridge spoke of the femineity of genius he had in mind certain features of temperament which, whether justly or not, are usually thought to count for more in the feminine mould than in the masculine, the love of ornament, emotionalism, mobile impressionability, the tyranny of imagination over the reason, excessive sensitiveness to form and outward beauty, tendency to be dominated imaginatively by violence and the show of strength; to be prodigal of oneself, not to husband the powers, to be for showing them off, to fail in self-restraint is also feminine. All these are natural

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Adiparva, I. 102-107.

properties of the quick artistic temperament prone to lose balance by throwing all itself outward and therefore seldom perfectly sane and strong in all its parts. So much did these elements form the basis of Coleridge's own temperament that he could not perhaps imagine a genius in which they are wanting. Yet Wordsworth, Goethe, Dante and Sophocles show however that the very highest genius can exist without them. But none of the great poets I have named is so singularly masculine, so deficient in femineity as Vyasa, none dominates so much by intellect and personality, yet satisfies so little the romantic imagination. Indeed no poet at all near the first rank has the same granite mind in which impressions are received with difficulty but once received are ineffaceable, the same bare energy and strength without violence and the same absolute empire of inspired intellect over the more showy faculties. In his austere self-restraint and economy of power he is indifferent to ornament for its own sake, to the pleasures of poetry as distinguished from its ardours, to little graces and indulgences of style. The substance counts for everything and the form has to limit itself to its proper work of expressing with precision and power the substance. Even his most romantic pieces have a virgin coldness and loftiness in their beauty. To intellects fed on the elaborate pomp and imagery of Kalidasa's numbers and the somewhat gaudy, expensive and meretricious spirit of English poetry, Vyasa may seem bald and unattractive. To be fed on the verse of Spenser, Shelley, Keats, Byron and Tennyson is no good preparation for the severe classics. It is, indeed, I believe, the general impression of many "educated" young Indians that the Mahabharata is a mass of old wives' stories without a spark of poetry or imagination. But to those who have bathed even a little in the fountain-head of poetry, and can bear the keenness and purity of these mountain sources, the naked and unadorned poetry of Vyasa is as delightful as to bathe in a chill fountain in the heats of summer. They find that one has an unfailing source of tonic and refreshment to the soul; one comes into relation with a mind whose bare strong contact has the power of infusing strength, courage and endurance. There are certain things which have this inborn power and are accordingly valued by those who have felt deeply its properties

— the air of the mountains or the struggle of a capable mind with hardship and difficulty; the Vedanta philosophy, the ideal of the *niṣkāma dharma*, the poetry of Vyasa, three closely related entities are intellectual forces that exercise a similar effect and attraction.

The style of this powerful writer is perhaps the one example in literature of strength in its purity, a strength undefaced by violence and excess, yet not weakened by flagging and negligence. It is less propped or helped out by any artifices and aids than any other poetic style. Vyasa takes little trouble with similes, metaphors, rhetorical turns, the usual paraphernalia of poetry, nor when he uses them, is he at pains to select such as will be new and curiously beautiful; they are there to define more clearly what he has in mind, and he makes just enough of them for that purpose, never striving to convert them into a separate grace or a decorative element. They have force and beauty in their context but cannot be turned into elegant excerpts; in themselves they are in fact little or nothing. When Bhima is spoken of as breathing hard like a weakling borne down by a load too heavy for him, there is nothing in the simile itself. It derives its force from its aptness to the heavy burden of unaccomplished revenge which the fierce spirit of the strong man was condemned to bear. We may say the same of his epithets, that great preoccupation of romantic artists; they are such as are most natural, crisp and firm, but suited to the plain idea and only unusual when the business in hand requires an unusual thought, but never *recherché* or existing for their own beauty. Thus when he is describing the greatness of Krishna and hinting his claims to be considered as identical with the Godhead, he gives him the one epithet *aprameya*, immeasurable, which is strong and unusual enough to rise to the thought, but not to be a piece of literary decoration or a violence of expression. In brief, he religiously avoids overstress, his audacities of phrase are few, and they have a grace of restraint in their boldness. There is indeed a rushing vast Valmikian style which intervenes often in the Mahabharata, but it is evidently the work of a different hand, for it belongs to a less powerful intellect, duller poetic insight and coarser taste, which has yet caught something of the surge and cry of Valmiki's oceanic poetry. Vyasa in fact stands at the opposite pole from

Valmiki. The poet of the Ramayana has a flexible and universal genius embracing the Titanic and the divine, the human and the gigantic at once or with an inspired ease of transition. But Vyasa is unmixed Olympian, he lives in a world of pure verse and diction, enjoying his own heaven of golden clearness. We have seen what are the main negative qualities of the style; pureness, strength, grandeur of intellect and personality are its positive virtues. It is the expression of a pregnant and forceful mind, in which the idea is sufficient to itself, conscious of its own intrinsic greatness; when this mind runs in the groove of narrative or emotion, the style wears an air of high and pellucid ease in the midst of which its strenuous compactness and brevity moves and lives as a saving and strengthening spirit; but when it begins to think rapidly and profoundly, as often happens in the great speeches, it is apt to leave the hearer behind; sufficient to itself, thinking quickly, briefly and greatly, it does not care to pause on its own ideas or explain them at length, but speaks as it thinks, in a condensed often elliptical style, preferring to indicate rather than expatiate, often passing over the steps by which it should arrive at the idea and hastening to the idea itself; often it is subtle and multiplies many shades and ramifications of thought in a short compass. From this arises that frequent knottiness and excessive compression of logical sequence, that appearance of elliptical and sometimes obscure expression, which so struck the ancient critics in Vyasa and which they expressed in the legend that when dictating the Mahabharata to Ganesha — for it was Ganesha's stipulation that not for one moment should he be left without matter to write — the poet in order not to be outstripped by his divine scribe threw in frequently knotty and close-knit passages which forced the lightning swift hand to pause and labour slowly over the work.[1] To a strenuous mind these passages are, from the exercise they give to the intellect, an added charm, just as a mountain climber takes an especial delight in steep ascents which let him feel his ability. Of one thing, however, we may be confident in reading Vyasa that the expression will always be just to the thought; he never palters with or labours to dress up the reality within him. For the rest we must

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Adiparva, I. 78-83.

evidently trace this peculiarity to the compact, steep and sometimes elliptical, but always strenuous diction of the Upanishads in which the mind of the poet was trained and his personality tempered. At the same time, like the Upanishads themselves or like the enigmatic Aeschylus, he can be perfectly clear, precise and full whenever he chooses; and he more often chooses than not. His expression of thought is usually strong and abrupt, his expression of fact and of emotion strong and precise. His verse has similar peculiarities. It is a golden and equable stream that sometimes whirls itself into eddies or dashes upon rocks, but it always runs in harmony with the thought. Vyasa has not Vaimiki's movement as of the sea, the wide and unbroken surge with its infinite variety of waves, which enables him not only to find in the facile *anuṣṭup* metre a sufficient vehicle for his vast and ambitious work but to maintain it throughout without its palling or losing its capacity of adjustment to ever-varying moods and turns of narrative. But in his narrower limits and on the level of his lower flight Vyasa has great subtlety and fineness. Especially admirable is his use, in speeches, of broken effects such as would in less skilful hands have become veritable discords; and again in narrative of the simplest and barest metrical movements, as in the opening Sarga of the Sabhaparva, to create certain calculated effects. But it would be idle to pretend for him any equality as a master of verse with Valmiki. When he has to rise from his levels to express powerful emotion, grandiose eloquence or swift and sweeping narrative, he cannot always effect it in the *anuṣṭup* metre; he falls back more often than not on the rolling magnificence of the *triṣṭup* (and its variations) which best sets and ennobles his strong-winged austerity.

Be its limits what one will, this is certain that there was never a style and verse of such bare, direct and resistless strength as this of Vyasa's or one that went so straight to the heart of all that is heroic in a man. Listen to the cry of insulted Draupadi to her husband:

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ किं शेषे भीमसेन यथा मृतः।
नामृतस्य हि पापीयान् भार्यामालभ्य जीवति॥[1]

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Virataparva, 17. 15.

"Arise, arise, O Bhimasena, wherefore liest thou like one that is dead? For nought but dead is he whose wife a sinful hand has touched and lives."

Or the reproach of Krishna to Arjuna for his weak pity which opens the second Sarga [Adhyaya] of the Bhagavadgita. Or again hear Krishna's description of Bhima's rage and solitary brooding over revenge and his taunting accusations of cowardice:

"At other times, O Bhimasena, thou praisest war, thou.art all for crushing Dhritarashtra's heartless sons who take delight in death; thou sleepest not at night, O conquering soldier, but wakest lying face downwards, and ever thou utterest dread speech of storm and wrath, breathing fire in the torment of thy own rage and thy mind is without rest like a smoking fire, yea, thou liest all apart breathing heavily like a weakling borne down (distressed) by his load, so that some who know not, even think thee mad. For as an elephant tramples on uprooted trees and breaks them to fragments, so thou stormest along with labouring breath hurting earth with thy feet. Thou takest no delight in all these people but cursest them in thy heart, O Bhima, son of Pandu, nor in aught else hast thou any pleasure night or day; but thou sittest in secret like one weeping and sometimes of a sudden laughest aloud, yea, thou sittest for long with thy head between thy knees and thy eyes closed; and then again thou starest before thee frowning and clenching thy teeth, thy every action is one of wrath. 'Surely as the father Sun is seen in the East when luminously he ascendeth and surely as wide with rays he wheeleth down to his release in the West, so sure is this oath I utter and never shall be broken. With this club I will meet and slay this haughty Duryodhana,' thus touching thy club thou swearest among thy brothers. And today thou thinkest of peace, O Warrior! Ah yes, I know the hearts of those that clamour for war alter very strangely when war showeth its face, since fear findeth out even thee, O Bhima! Ah yes, son of Pritha, thou seest omens adverse both when thou sleepest and when thou wakest, therefore thou desirest peace. Ah yes, thou feelest no more the man in thyself, but an eunuch and thy heart sinketh with alarm,

therefore art thou thus overcome. Thy heart quakes, thy mind fainteth, thou art seized with a trembling in thy thighs, therefore thou desirest peace. Verily, O son of Pritha, wavering and inconstant is the heart of a mortal man, like the pods of the silk-cotton driven by the swiftness of every wind. This shameful thought of thine, monstrous as a human voice in a dumb beast, makes the heart of Pandu's son to sink like (ship-wrecked) men that have no raft. Look on thine own deeds, O seed of Bharata, remember thy lofty birth! Arise, put off thy weakness; be firm, O heart of a hero; unworthy of thee is this languor; what he cannot win by the mightiness of him, that a Kshatriya will not touch."[1]

This passage I have quoted at some length because it is eminently characteristic of Vyasa's poetical method. Another poet would have felt himself justified by the nature of the speech in using some wild and whirling words seeking vividness by exaggeration, at the very least in raising his voice a little. Contrast with this the perfect temperance of this passage, the confident and unemotional reliance on the weight of what is said, not on the manner of saying it. The vividness of the portraiture arises from the quiet accuracy of vision and the care in the choice of simple but effective words, not from any seeking after the salient and graphic such as gives Kalidasa his wonderful power of description; and the bitterness of the taunts arises from the quiet and searching irony with which the shaft is tipped and not from any force used in driving them home. Yet every line goes straight as an arrow to its mark, every word is the utterance of a strong man speaking to a strong man and gives iron to the mind. Strength is one constant term of the Vyasic style; temperance, justness of taste is the other.

Strength and a fine austerity are then the two tests which give us safe guidance through the morass of the Mahabharata; where these two exist together, we may reasonably presume some touch of Vyasa; where they do not exist or do not conjoin, we feel at once the redactor or the interpolator. I have spoken of another poet whose more turbid and vehement style breaks con-

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Udyogaparva, 75.4-23.

tinually into the pure gold of Vyasa's work. The whole temperament of this redacting poet, for he is something more than an interpolator, has its roots in Valmiki; but like most poets of a secondary and fallible genius he exaggerates, while adopting the more audacious and therefore the more perilous tendencies of his master. The love of the wonderful touched with the grotesque, the taste for the amorphous, a marked element in Valmiki's complex temperament, is with his follower something like a malady. He grows impatient with the apparent tameness of Vyasa's inexorable self-restraint, and restlessly throws in here couplets, there whole paragraphs of a more flamboyant vigour. Occasionally this is done with real ability and success, but as a rule they are true purple patches, daubs of paint on the stainless dignity of marble. For his rage for the wonderful is not always accompanied by the prodigious sweep of imagination which in Valmiki successfully grasps and compels the most reluctant materials. The result is that puerilities and gross breaches of taste fall easily and hardily from his pen. Not one of these could we possibly imagine as consistent with the severe, self-possessed intellect of Vyasa. Fineness, justness, discrimination and propriety of taste are the very soul of the man.

Nowhere is his restrained and quiet art more visible than when he handles the miraculous. But since the Mahabharata is honeycombed with the work of inept wondermongers, we are driven for an undisturbed appreciation of it to works which are not parts of the original Mahabharata and are yet by the same hand, the Nala and the Savitri. These poems have all the peculiar qualities which we have decided to be very Vyasa: the style, the diction, the personality are identical and refer us back to him as clearly as the sunlight refers us back to the sun, and yet they have something which the Mahabharata has not. Here we have the very morning of Vyasa's genius, when he was young and ardent, perhaps still under the immediate influence of Valmiki (one of the most pathetic touches in the Nala is borrowed straight out of the Ramayana), at any rate able, without ceasing to be finely restrained, to give some rein to his fancy. The Nala therefore has the delicate and unusual romantic grace of a young and severe classic who has permitted himself to go a-maying in the

fields of romance. There is a remote charm of restraint in the midst of abandon, of vigilance in the play of fancy which is passing sweet and strange. The Savitri is a maturer and nobler work, perfect and restrained in detail, but it has still some glow of the same youth and grace over it. This then is the rare charm of these two poems that we find there the soul of the pale and marble Rishi, the philosopher, the great statesman, the strong and stern poet of war and empire, when it was yet in its radiant morning, far from the turmoil of courts and cities and the roar of the battle-field and had not yet scaled the mountain-tops of thought. Young, a Brahmacharin and a student, Vyasa dwelt with the green silences of earth, felt the fascination and loneliness of the forests of which his earlier poetry is full, and walked by many a clear and lucid river white with the thronging water-fowl, perhaps Payoshni, that ocean-seeking stream, or heard the thunder of multitudinous crickets in some lone tremendous forest, or with Valmiki's mighty stanzas in his mind saw giant-haunted glooms, dells where faeries gathered, brakes where some Python from the underworld came out to bask or listened to the voices of Kinnaris on the mountain-tops. In such surroundings wonders might seem natural and deities as in Arcadia might peep from under every tree. Nala's messengers to Damayanti are a troop of golden-winged swans that speak with a human voice; he is intercepted on his way by gods who make him their envoy to a mortal maiden; he receives from them gifts more than human, fire and water come to him at his bidding and flowers bloom in his hands; in his downfall the dice become birds who fly away with his remaining garment; when he wishes to cut in half the robe of Damayanti, a sword comes ready to his hand in the desolate cabin; he meets the Serpent-King in the ring of fire and is turned by him into the deformed charioteer, Bahuka; the tiger in the forest turns away from Damayanti without injuring her and the lustful hunter falls consumed by the power or offended chastity. The destruction of the caravan by wild elephants, the mighty driving of Nala, the counting of the leaves or the cleaving of the Vibhitaka tree; every incident almost is full of that sense of beauty and wonder which were awakened in Vyasa by his early surroundings. We ask whether this beautiful fairy-tale is the

work of that stern and high poet with whom the actualities of life were everything and the flights of fancy counted for so little. Yet if we look carefully, we shall see in the Nala abundant proof of the severe touch of Vyasa, just as in his share of the Mahabharata fleeting touches of wonder and strangeness, gone as soon as glimpsed, evidence a love of the supernatural, severely bitted and reined in. Especially do we see the poet of the Mahabharata in the artistic vigilance which limits each supernatural incident to a few light strokes, to the exact place and no other where it is wanted and the exact amount and no more than is necesssary. (It is this sparing economy of touch almost unequalled in its beauty of just rejection, which makes the poem an epic instead of a fairy-tale in verse.) There is, for instance, the incident of the swans; we all know to what prolixities of pathos and bathos vernacular poets like the Gujarati Premanand have enlarged this feature of the story. But Vyasa introduced it to give a certain touch of beauty and strangeness and that touch once imparted, the swans disappear from the scene; for his fine taste felt that to prolong the incident by one touch more would have been to lower the form and run the risk of raising a smile. Similarly in the Savitri what a tremendous figure a romantic poet would have made of Death, what a passionate struggle between the human being and the master of tears and partings! But Vyasa would have none of this; he had one object, to paint the power of a woman's silent love and he rejected everything which went beyond this or which would have been merely decorative. We cannot regret his choice. There have been plenty of poets who could have given us imaginative and passionate pictures of Love struggling with Death, but there has been only one who could give us a Savitri.

In another respect also the Nala helps us materially to appreciate Vyasa's genius. His dealings with Nature are a strong test of a poet's quality; but in the Mahabharata proper, of all epics the most pitilessly denuded of unnecessary ornament, natural description is rare. We must therefore again turn for aid to the poems which preceded his hard and lofty maturity. Vyasa's natural description as we find it there corresponds to the nervous, masculine and hard-strung make of his intellect. His treatment

is always puissant and direct without any single pervasive atmosphere except in sunlit landscapes, but always effectual, realizing the scene strongly or boldly by a few simple but sufficient words. There are some poets who are the children of Nature, whose imagination is made of her dews, whose blood thrills to her with the perfect impulse of spiritual kinship; Wordsworth is of these and Valmiki. Their voices in speaking of her unconsciously become rich and liquid and their words are touched with a subtle significance of thought or emotion. There are others who hold her with a strong sensuous grasp by virtue of a ripe, sometimes an over-ripe delight in beauty; such are Shakespeare, Keats, Kalidasa. Others again approach her with a fine or clear intellectual sense of charm as do some of the old classical poets. Hardly in the rank of poets are those who like Dryden or Pope use her, if at all, only to provide them with a smoother well-turned literary expression. Vyasa belongs to none of these, and yet often touches the first three at particular points without definitely coinciding with any. He takes the kingdom of Nature by violence. Approaching her from outside his masculine genius forces its way to her secret, insists and will take no denial. Accordingly he is impressed at first contact by the harmony in the midst of variety of her external features, absorbs these into strong retentive imagination, meditates on them and so reads his way to the closer impression, the inner sense behind that which is external, the personal temperament of a landscape. In his record of what he has seen, this impression more often than not comes first as that which abides and prevails; sometimes it is all he cares to record; but his tendency towards perfect faithfulness to the vision within leads him, when the scene is still fresh to his eye, to record the data through which the impression was reached. We have all experienced the way in which our observation of a scene, conscious or unconscious, forms itself out of various separate and often uncoordinated impressions which, if we write a description at the time or soon after and are faithful to ourselves, find their way into the picture, even at the expense of symmetry; but if we allow a long time to elapse before we recall the scene, there returns to us only a single self-consistent impression which without accurately rendering it, retains its essence and its atmosphere.

Something of this sort occurs in our poet; for Vyasa is always faithful to himself. When he records the data of his impression, he does it with force and clearness, frequently with a luminous atmosphere around the object, especially with a delight in the naked beauty of the single clear word which at once communicates itself to the hearer. First come the strong and magical epithets or the brief and puissant touches by which the soul of the landscape is made visible and palpable, then the enumeration sometimes only stately, at others bathed in a clear loveliness. The fine opening of the twelfth Sarga of the Nala is a signal example of this method. At the threshold we have the great and sombre line,

वनं प्रतिभयं शून्यं झिल्लिकागणनादितम्[1]

A void tremendous forest thundering
With crickets,

striking the keynote of gloom and loneliness, then the cold stately enumeration of the forest's animal and vegetable peoples, then again the strong and revealing epithet in his "echoing woodlands sound-pervaded"; then follows "river and lake and pool and many beasts and many birds" and once more the touch of wonder and weirdness:

सा बहून् भीमरूपांश्च पिशाचोरगराक्षसान्.... ददृशे[2]

She many alarming shapes
Of fiend and snake and giant...beheld,

making magical the bare following lines and especially the nearest,

पल्वलानि तडागानि गिरिकूटानि सर्वशः[3]

And pools and tarns and summits everywhere,

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Vanaparva, 64.1. [2] *ibid.*, Vanaparva, 64.7,9.
[3] *The Mahabharata*, 64.8.

with its poetical delight in the bare beauty of words. It is instructive to compare with this passage the wonderful silhouette of night in Valmiki's Book of the Child:

निष्पन्दास्तरवः सर्वे निलीना मृगपक्षिणः।
नैशेन तमसा व्याप्ता दिशश्च रघुनन्दन॥
शनैर्वियुज्यते सन्ध्या नभो नेत्रैरिवावृतम्।
नक्षत्रतारागहनं ज्योतिर्भिरवभासते॥
उत्तिष्ठति च शीतांशुः शशी लोकतमोनुदः।
ह्लादयन् प्राणिनां लोके मनांसि प्रभया स्वया॥
नैशानि सर्वभूतानि विचरन्ति ततस्ततः।
यक्षराक्षससङ्घाश्च रौद्राश्च पिशिताशनाः॥[1]

"Motionless are all trees and shrouded the beasts and birds and the quarters filled, O joy of Raghu, with the glooms of night; slowly the sky parts with evening and grows full of eyes; dense with stars and constellations it glitters with points of light; and now yonder with cold beams rises up the moon and thrusts away the shadows from the world gladdening the hearts of living things on earth with its luminousness. All creatures of the night are walking to and fro and spirit-bands and troops of giants and the carrion-feeding jackals begin to roam."

Here every detail is carefully selected to produce a certain effect, the charm and weirdness of falling night in the forest; not a word is wasted: every epithet, every verb, every image is sought out and chosen so as to aid this effect, while the vowelisation is subtly managed and assonance and the composition of sounds skilfully yet unobtrusively woven so as to create a delicate, wary and listening movement, as of one walking in the forests by moonlight and afraid that the leaves may speak under his footing or his breath grow loud enough to be heard by himself or by beings whose presence he does not see but fears. Of such delicately imaginative art as this Vyasa was not capable, he could not sufficiently turn his strength into sweetness. Neither had he that rare, salient and effective architecture of style which makes Kalidasa's

[1] *The Ramayana*, Bala Kanda, 34. 15-18.

तनुप्रकाशेन विचेयतारका प्रभातकल्पा शशिनेव शर्वरी ।[1]

"Night on the verge of dawn with her faint gleaming moon and a few just decipherable stars."

Vyasa's art, as I have said, is singularly disinterested, *niṣkāma*; he does not write with a view to sublimity or with a view to beauty, but because he has certain ideas to impart, certain events to describe, certain characters to portray. He has an image of these in his mind and his business is to find an expression for it which will be scrupulously just to his conception. This is by no means so facile a task as the uninitiated might imagine; it is indeed considerably more difficult than to bathe the style in colour and grace and literary elegance, for it demands vigilant self-restraint, firm intellectual truthfulness and unsparing rejection, the three virtues most difficult to the gadding, inventive and self-indulgent spirit of man. The art of Vyasa is therefore a great, strenuous art; but it unfitted him, as a similar spirit unfitted the Greeks, to voice fully the outward beauty of Nature. For to delight infinitely in Nature one must be strongly possessed with the sense of colour and romantic beauty, and allow the fancy equal rights with the intellect.

For all his occasional strokes of fine Nature-description he was not therefore quite at home with her. Conscious of his weakness Vyasa as he emancipated himself from Valmiki's influence ceased to attempt a kind for which his genius was not the best fitted. He is far more in his element in the expression of the feelings, of the joy and sorrow that makes this life of men; his description of emotion far excels his description of things. When he says of Damayanti:

.....विललाप सुदुःखिता ।
भर्तृशोकपरीताङ्गी शिलातलमथाश्रिता ॥[2]

In grief she wailed,
Erect upon a cliff, her body aching
With sorrow for her husband,

[1] *Raghuvamsha*, 3.2. [2] *The Mahabharata*, Vanaparva, 64.12.

the clear figure of the abandoned woman lamenting on the cliff seizes indeed the imagination, but it has a lesser inspiration than the single puissant and convincing epithet *bhartṛśokaparītāṅgī*, her whole body affected with grief for her husband. Damayanti's longer laments are also of the finest sweetness and strength; there is a rushing flow of stately and sorrowful verse, the wailing of a regal grief; then as some more exquisite pain, some more piercing gust of passion traverses the heart of the mourner, golden felicities of sorrow leap out on the imagination like lightning in their swift clear greatness.

हा वीर नल नामाहं नष्टा किल तवानघ।
अस्यामटव्यां घोरायां किं मां न प्रतिभाषसे ॥[1]

Still more strong, simple and perfect is the grief of Damayanti when she wakes to find herself alone in that desolate cabin. The restraint of phrase is perfect, the verse is clear, equable and unadorned, yet hardly has Valmiki himself written a truer utterance of emotion than this:

हा नाथ हा महाराज हा स्वामिन्कि जहासि माम्।
हा हतास्मि विनष्टास्मि भीतास्मि विजने वने ॥
ननु नाम महाराज धर्मज्ञः सत्यवागसि।
कथमुक्त्वा तथा सत्यं सुप्तामुत्सृज्य मां गतः ॥

पर्याप्तः परिहासोऽयमेतावान्पुरुषर्षभ।
भीताहमतिदुर्धर्ष दर्शयात्मानमीश्वर ॥
दृश्यसे दृश्यसे राजन्नेष दृष्टोऽसि नैषध।
आवार्य गुल्मैरात्मानं किं मां न प्रतिभाषसे ॥
नृशंस बत राजेन्द्र यन्मामेवङ्गतामिह।
विलपन्तीं समागम्य नाश्वासयसि पार्थिव ॥
न शोचाम्यहमात्मानं न चान्यदपि किञ्चन।
कथं नु भवितास्येक इति त्वां नृप रोदिमि ॥
कथं नु राजंस्तृषितः क्षुधितः श्रमकर्षितः।
सायाह्ने वृक्षमूलेषु मामपश्यन्भविष्यसि ॥[2]

"Ah my lord! Ah my king! Ah my husband! Why hast thou forsaken me? Alas, I am slain, I am undone, I am afraid in the lonely forest. Surely, O king, thou wert good and truthful,

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Vanaparva, 64.19. [2] *The Mahabharata*, Vanaparva, 63.3,4,8-12.

how then having sworn to me so, hast thou abandoned me in my sleep and fled? Long enough hast thou carried this jest of thine, O lion of men, I am frightened, O unconquerable; show thyself, my lord and prince. I see thee! I see thee! Thou art seen, O lord of the Nishadas, covering thyself there with the bushes; why dost thou not speak to me? Cruel king! that thou dost not come to me thus terrified here and wailing and comfort me! It is not for myself I grieve nor for aught else; it is for thee I weep thinking what will become of thee left all alone. How wilt thou fare under some tree at evening, hungry and thirsty and weary, not beholding me, O my king?"

The whole of this passage with its first pang of terror and the exquisite anticlimax, "I am slain, I am undone, I am afraid in the desert wood", passing quietly into sorrowful reproach, the despairing and pathetic attempt to delude herself by thinking the whole a practical jest, and the final outburst of that deep maternal love which is a part of every true woman's passion, is great in its truth and simplicity. Steep and unadorned is Vyasa's style, but at times it has far more power to move and to reach the heart than mere elaborate and ambitious poetry.

As Vyasa progressed in years, his personality developed towards intellectualism and his manner of expressing emotion became sensibly modified. In the Savitri he first reveals his power of imparting to the reader a sense of poignant but silent feeling, feeling in the air, unexpressed or rather expressed in action. Sometimes even in very silence; this power is a notable element in some of the great scenes of the Mahabharata: the silence of the Pandavas during the mishandling of Draupadi, the mighty silence of Krishna while the assembly of kings rages and roars around him and Shishupala again and again hurls forth on him his fury and contempt and the hearts of all men are troubled, the stern self-restraint of his brothers when Yudhishthira is smitten by Virata, are instances of the power I mean. In the Mahabharata proper we find few expressions of pure feeling, none at least which have the triumphant power of Damayanti's laments in the Nala. Vyasa had by this time taken his bent; his heart and imagination had become filled with the pomp of

thought and genius and the greatness of all things mighty and bold and regal; when therefore his characters feel powerful emotion, they are impelled to express it in the dialect of thought. We see the heart in their utterances but it is not the heart in its nakedness, it is not the heart of the common man; or rather it is the universal heart of man but robed in the intellectual purple. The note of Sanskrit poetry is always aristocratic; it has no answer to the democratic feeling or to the modern sentimental cult of the average man, but deals with exalted, large and aspiring natures whose pride it is that they do not act like common men (*prākṛto janaḥ*). They are the great spirits, the *mahājanāḥ*, in whose footsteps the world follows. Whatever sentimental objections may be urged against this high and arrogating spirit, it cannot be doubted that a literature pervaded with the soul of hero-worship and *noblesse oblige* and full of great examples is eminently fitted to elevate and strengthen a nation and prepare it for a great part in history. And with this high tendency of the literature there is no poet who is so deeply imbued as Vyasa. Even the least of his characters is an intellect and a personality, and of intellectual personality their every utterance reeks, as it were, and is full. I have already quoted the cry of Draupadi to Bhima; it is a supreme utterance of insulted feeling, and yet note how it expresses itself, in the language of intellect, in a thought:

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ किं शेषे भीमसेन यथा मृतः।
नामृतस्य हि पापीयान् भार्यामालभ्य जीवति॥[1]

The whole personality of Draupadi breaks out in that cry, her chastity, her pride, her passionate and unforgiving temper, but it flashes out not in an expression of pure feeling, but in a fiery and pregnant apophthegm. It is this temperament, this dynamic force of intellectualism blended with heroic fire and a strong personality that gives its peculiar stamp to Vyasa's writing and distinguishes it from that of all other epic poets. The heroic and profoundly intellectual rational type of the Bharata races, the Kurus, Bhojas and Panchalas who created the Veda and the Vedanta, find in Vyasa their fitting poetical type and exponent,

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Virataparva, 17.15.

just as the mild and delicately moral temper of the more eastern Koshalas has realised itself in Valmiki and through the Ramayana so largely dominated Hindu character. Steeped in the heroic ideals of the Bharata, attuned to their profound and daring thought and temperament, Vyasa has made himself the poet of the high-minded Kshatriya caste, voices their resonant speech, breathes their aspiring and unconquerable spirit, mirrors their rich and varied life with a loving detail and moves through his subject with a swift yet measured movement like the march of an army towards battle.

A comparison with Valmiki is instructive of the varying genius of these great masters. Both excel in epical rhetoric, if such a term as rhetoric can be applied to Vyasa's direct and severe style, but Vyasa's has the air of a more intellectual, reflective and experienced stage of poetical advance. The longer speeches in the Ramayana, those even which have most the appearance of set, argumentative oration, proceed straight from the heart, the thoughts, words, reasonings come welling up from the dominant emotion or conflicting feeling of the speaker; they palpitate and are alive with the vital force from which they have sprung. Though belonging to a more thoughtful, gentle and cultured civilisation than Homer's, they have, like his, the large utterance which is not of primitive times, but of the primal emotions. Vyasa's have a powerful but austere force of intellectuality. In expressing character they firmly expose it rather than spring half-unconsciously from it; their bold and finely planned consistency with the original conception reveals rather the conscientious painstaking of an inspired but reflective artist than the more primary and impetuous creative impulse. In their management of emotion itself a similar difference becomes prominent. Valmiki, when giving utterance to a mood or passion simple or complex, surcharges every line, every phrase, turn of words or movement of verse with it; there are no lightning flashes but a great depth of emotion swelling steadily, inexhaustibly and increasingly in a wonder of sustained feeling, like a continually rising wave with low crests of foam. Vyasa has a high level of style with a subdued emotion behind it occasionally breaking into poignant outbursts. It is by sudden beauties that

he rises above himself and not only exalts, stirs and delights us at his ordinary level, but memorably seizes the heart and imagination. This is the natural result of the peculiarly disinterested art which never seeks out anything striking for its own sake, but admits it only when it arises uncalled from the occasion.

Vyasa is therefore less broadly human than Valmiki, he is at the same time a wider and more original thinker. His supreme intellect rises everywhere out of the mass of insipid or turbulent redaction and interpolation with bare and grandiose outlines. A wide searching mind, historian, statesman, orator, a deep and keen looker into ethics and conduct, a subtle and high-aiming politician, theologian and philosopher, it is not for nothing that Hindu imagination makes the name of Vyasa loom so large in the history of Aryan thought and attributes to him work so important and manifold. The wideness of the man's intellectual empire is evident throughout the work; we feel the presence of the great Rishi, the original thinker who has enlarged the boundaries of ethical and religious outlook.

Modern India since the Musulman advent has accepted the politics of Chanakya in preference to Vyasa's. Certainly there was little in politics concealed from that great and sinister spirit. Yet Vyasa perhaps knew its subtleties quite as well, but he had to ennoble and guide him a high ethical aim and an august imperial idea. He did not, like European imperialism, unable to rise above the idea of power, accept the Jesuitic doctrine of any means to a good end, still less justify the goodness of the end by that profession of an utterly false disinterestedness which ends in the soothing belief that plunder, arson, outrage and massacre are committed for the good of the slaughtered nation. Vyasa's imperialism frankly accepts war and empire as the result of man's natural lust for power and dominion, but demands that empire should be won by noble and civilised methods, not in the spirit of the savage, and insists, once it is won, not on its powers, but on its duties. Valmiki too has included politics in his wide sweep; his picture of an ideal imperialism is sound and noble and the spirit of the Koshalan Ikshwakus that monarchy must be broad-based on the people's will and yet broader-based on justice, truth and good government, is admirably developed as an

undertone of the poem. But it is an undertone only, not as in the Mahabharata its uppermost and weightiest drift. Valmiki's approach to politics is imaginative, poetic, made from outside. He is attracted to it by the unlimited curiosity of an universal mind and still more by the appreciation of a great creative artist; only therefore when it gives opportunities for a grandiose imagination or is mingled with the motives of conduct and acts on character. He is a poet who makes occasional use of public affairs as part of his wide human subject. The reverse may, with some appearance of truth, be said of Vyasa that he is interested in human action and character mainly as they move and work in relation to a large political background.

From this difference in temper and mode of expression arises a difference in the mode also of portraying character. Vyasa's knowledge of character is not so intimate, emotional and sympathetic as Valmiki's; it has more of a heroic inspiration, less of a divine sympathy. He has reached it not like Valmiki immediately through the heart and imagination, but deliberately through intellect and experience, a deep criticism and reading of men; the spirit of shaping imagination has come afterwards like a sculptor using the materials labour has provided for him. It has not been a light leading him into the secret places of the heart. Nevertheless the characterisation, however reached, is admirable and firm. It is the fruit of a lifelong experience, the knowledge of a statesman who has had much to do with the ruling of men and has been himself a considerable part in some great revolution full of astonishing incidents and extraordinary characters. With that high experience his brain and his soul are full. It has cast his imagination into colossal proportions, provided him with majestic conceptions which can dispense with all but the simplest language for expression; for they are so great that the bare precise statement of what is said and done seems enough to make language epical. His character-drawing indeed is more epical, less psychological than Valmiki's. Truth of speech and action gives us the truth of nature and it is done with strong purposeful strokes that have the power to move the heart and enlarge and ennoble the imagination which is what we mean by the epic in poetry. In Valmiki there are marvellous and revealing touches

which show us the secret something in character usually beyond the expressive power either of speech and action; they are touches oftener found in the dramatic artist than the epic, and seldom fall within Vyasa's method. It is the difference between a strong and purposeful artistic synthesis and the beautiful, subtle and involute symmetry of an organic existence evolved and inevitable rather than shaped and purposed.

His deep preoccupation with the ethical issues of speech and action is very notable. His very subject is one of practical ethics, the establishment of a Dharmarajya, an empire of the just, by which is meant no millennium of the saints, but the practical ideal of government with righteousness, purity and unselfish toil for the common good as its saving principles. It is true that Valmiki is a more humanely moral spirit than Vyasa, in as much as ordinary morality is most effective when steeped in emotion, proceeding from the heart and acting through the heart. Vyasa's ethics like everything else in him takes a double stand on intellectual scrutiny and acceptance and on personal strength of character; his characters having once adopted by intellectual choice and in harmony with their temperaments a given line of conduct, throw the whole heroic force of their nature into its pursuit. He is therefore pre-eminently a poet of action. Krishna is his authority in all matters, religious and ethical, and it is noticeable that Krishna lays far more stress on action and far less on quiescence than any other Hindu philosopher. Quiescence in God is with him as with others the ultimate goal of existence, but he insists that that quiescence must be reached through action and, so far as this life is concerned, must exist in action; quiescence of the soul from desires there must be but there should not be and cannot be quiescence of the Prakriti from action.

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
स च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥
न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥
नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥[1]

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, III. 4,5,8.

"Not by refraining from actions can a man enjoy actionlessness, nor by mere renunciation does he reach his soul's perfection; but no man in the world can even for one moment remain without doing works; everyone is forced to do works, whether he wills or not, by the primal qualities born of Prakriti.... Thou do action self-controlled (or else "thou do action ever"); for action is better than inaction; if thou actest not, even the maintenance of thy body cannot be effected."

Hence it follows that merely to renounce action and flee from the world to a hermitage is but vanity, and that those who rely on such a desertion of duty for attaining God lean on a broken reed. Their professed renunciation of action is only a nominal renunciation, for they merely give up one set of actions to which they are called for another to which in a great number of cases they have no call or fitness. If they have that fitness, they may certainly attain God, but even then action is better than *sannyāsa*. Hence the great and pregnant paradox that in action is real actionlessness, while inaction is merely another form of action itself.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥[1]
संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते॥[2]
ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते॥[3]
कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः।
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत्॥[4]

"He who quells his sense-organs of action but sits remembering in his heart the objects of sense, that man of bewildered soul is termed a hypocrite." "Sannyasa (renunciation of works) and Yoga through action both lead to the highest good but of the two, Yoga through action is better than renunciation of action. Know him to be the perpetual Sannyasi who neither loathes nor longs, for he, O great-minded, being free from the dualities is easily released from the chain." "He who can see inaction in

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, III. 6. [2] *ibid.*, V. 2. [3] *ibid.*, V. 3. [4] *ibid.*, IV. 18.

action and action in inaction, he is the wise among men, he does all actions with a soul in union with God."

From this lofty platform the great creed rises to its crowning ideas, for since we must act, but neither for any human or future results of action nor for the sake of the action itself, and yet action must have some goal to which it is devoted, there is no goal left but God. We must then devote our actions to God and through that rise to complete surrender of the personality to him, whether in the idea of him manifest through Yoga or the idea of him unmanifest through God-Knowledge. "They who worship Me as the imperishable, illimitable, unmanifest, controlling all the organs, one-minded to all things, they doing good to all creatures attain to Me. But far greater is their pain of endeavour whose hearts cleave to the Unmanifest, for hardly can the salvation in the unmanifest be attained by men that have a body. But they who reposing all actions in Me, to Me devoted contemplate and worship Me in single-minded Yoga, speedily do I become their saviour from the gulf of death and the world, for their hearts, O Partha, have entered into Me. On Me repose thy mind, pour into Me thy reason, in Me wilt thou then have thy dwelling, doubt it not. Yet if thou canst not steadfastly repose thy mind in Me, desire, O Dhananjaya, to reach Me by Yoga through askesis. If that too thou canst not, devote thyself to actions for Me, since also by doing actions for My sake thou wilt attain to thy soul's perfection. If even for this thou art too feeble, then abiding in Yoga with Me with a soul subdued abandon utterly desire for the fruits of action. Far better than askesis is knowledge and better than knowledge is concentration and better than concentration is renunciation of the fruit of deeds, for on such renunciation followeth the soul's peace."[1] Such is the ladder which Vyasa has represented Krishna as building up to God with action for its firm and sole basis. If it is questioned whether the Bhagavadgita is the work of Vyasa (whether he be Krishna of the Island is another question to be settled on its own merits), I answer that there is nothing to disprove his authorship, while on the other hand, allowing for the exigencies of

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, XII. 3-12.

philosophical exposition, the style is undoubtedly his or so closely modelled on his as to defy differentiation. Moreover, the whole piece is but the philosophical justification and logical enlargement of the gospel of action preached by Krishna in the Mahabharata proper, the undoubted work of the poet. I have here no space for anything more than a quotation. Sanjaya has come to the Pandavas from Dhritarashtra and dissuaded them from battle in a speech taught him by that wily and unwise monarch; it is skilfully aimed at the most subtle weakness of the human heart representing the abandonment of justice and their duty as a holy act of self-abnegation and its pursuit as no better than wholesale murder and parricide. It is better for the sons of Pandu to be dependents and beggars and exiles all their lives than to enjoy the earth by the slaughter of their brothers, kinsmen and spiritual guides. Contemplation is purer and nobler than action and worldly desires. Although answering firmly to the envoy, the children of Pandu are in their hearts shaken, for as Krishna afterward tells Karna, when the destruction of a nation is at hand, wrong comes to men's eyes clothed in the garb of right. Sanjaya's argument is one Christ and Buddha would have endorsed; Christ and Buddha would have laboured to confirm the Pandavas in their scruples. On Krishna rests the final word and his answer is such as to shock seriously the conventional ideas of religious teachers to which Christianity and Buddhism have accustomed us. In a long and powerful speech he deals at great length with Sanjaya's arguments. We must remember therefore that he is debating a given point and speaking to men who have not like Arjuna the *adhikāra* to enter into the "highest of all mysteries". We shall then realise the close identity between his teaching here and that of the Gita.

अस्मिन् विधौ वर्तमाने यथावदुच्चावचा मतयो ब्राह्मणानाम् ॥५॥
कर्मणाऽऽहुः सिद्धिमेके परत्र हित्वा कर्म विद्यया सिद्धिमेके।
नाभुञ्जानो भक्ष्यभोज्यस्य तृप्येद्विद्वानपीह विहितं ब्राह्मणानाम् ॥६॥
या वै विद्याः साधयन्तीह कर्म तासां फलं विद्यते नेतरासाम्।
तत्रेह वै दृष्टफलं तु कर्म पीत्वोदकं शाम्यति तृष्णयाऽऽर्तः ॥७॥
सोऽयं विधिर्विहितः कर्मणैव संवर्तते सञ्जय तत्र कर्म।
तत्र योऽन्यत् कर्मणः साधु मन्येन्मोघं तस्यालपितं दुर्बलस्य ॥८॥

कर्मणाऽग्नी भान्ति देवाः परत्र कर्मणैव प्लवते मातरिश्वा।
अहोरात्रे विदधत् कर्मणैव अतन्द्रितो नित्यमुदेति सूर्यः ॥९॥
मासार्धमासानथ नक्षत्रयोगानतन्द्रितश्चन्द्रमाश्चाभ्युपैति।
अतन्द्रितो वहते जातवेदाः समिध्यमानः कर्म कुर्वन् प्रजाभ्यः ॥१०॥
अतन्द्रिता भारमिमं महान्तं बिभर्ति देवी पृथिवी बलेन।
अतन्द्रिताः शीघ्रमपो वहन्ति सन्तर्पयन्त्यः सर्वभूतानि नद्यः ॥११॥
अतन्द्रितो वर्षति भूरितेजाः सन्नादयन्नन्तरिक्षं दिशश्च।
अतन्द्रितो ब्रह्मचर्यं चचार श्रेष्ठत्वमिच्छन् बलभिद्देवतानाम् ॥१२॥
हित्वा सुखं मनसश्च प्रियाणि तेन शक्रः कर्मणा श्रेष्ठ्यमाप।
सत्यं धर्मं पालयन्नप्रमत्तो ..... ॥१३॥[1]

The drift of Vyasa's ethical speculation has always a definite and recognisable tendency; there is a basis of customary morality and there is a higher ethic of the soul which abolishes in its crowning phase the terms of virtue and sin, because to the pure all things are pure through an august and selfless disinterestedness. This ethic takes its rise naturally from the crowning height of the Vedantic philosophy, where the soul becomes conscious of its identity with God who, whether acting or actionless, is

[1] *The Mahabharata*, Udyogaparva, 29.

"With regard to the matter at present under discussion the opinions of the Brahmanas differ.

One school say that it is by work that we obtain salvation and again another school say that it is by putting aside work, and through knowledge, that we attain to salvation. It has been so laid down by the superior beings that a man, even knowing all the properties of food, will not be satisfied without eating.

That knowledge alone bears fruit, which does work, not others. In this world the result of action admits of ocular proof; one oppressed by thirst is satisfied by drinking water.

Therefore it has been ordained by the creator that through work results, O Sanjaya, work. Therefore the opinion that anything other than work is good, is nothing but the uttering of a fool and of a weak man.

Elsewhere (i.e., in the other world) the gods are resplendent through work, the wind blows through work. Causing day and night, through work, the sleepless sun rises every day.

The sleepless moon, too, goes through half months and months and certain peculiar positions of the moon (through work) and the sleepless fire enkindled (by work) burns, doing good to the creatures of the Earth.

The goddess Earth, sleepless, carries this great load through her strength and the sleepless rivers carry their waters with speed, satisfying the desire of all beings.

The sleepless one of mighty strength (Indra) showers rain, resounding every corner and the cardinal points; and desiring kingship among the gods he practised the austerities of a Brahmacharya life, being sleepless.

Giving up pleasure and the satisfaction of his desires, the position of a chief was obtained by Shakra by means of work. He strictly observed truth, virtue."

The Mahabharata (English Translation) Edited by Sri Manmatha Nath Dutt.

untouched by either sin or virtue. But the crown of the Vedanta is only for the highest; the moral calamities that arise from the attempt of an unprepared soul to identify self with God is sufficiently indicated in the legend of Indra and Virochana. Similarly this higher ethic is for the prepared, the initiated only, because the raw and unprepared soul will seize on the non-distinction between sin and virtue without first compassing the godlike purity without which such non-distinction is neither morally admissible nor actually conceivable. From this arises the unwillingness of Hinduism, so ignorantly attributed by Europeans to priestcraft and the Brahmin, to shout out its message to the man in the street or declare its esoteric thought to the shoeblack and the kitchen-maid. The sword of knowledge is a double-edged weapon; in the hands of the hero it can save the world, but it must not be made a plaything for children. Krishna himself ordinarily insists on all men following the duties and rules of conduct to which they are born and to which the cast of their temperaments predestined them. Arjuna he advises, if incapable of rising to the higher moral altitudes, to fight in a just cause, because it is the duty of the caste, the class of souls to which he belongs. Throughout the Mahabharata he insists on this class-standpoint that every man must meet the duties to which his life calls him in a spirit of disinterestedness, — not, be it noticed, of self-abnegation, which may be as much a fanaticism and even a selfishness as the grossest egoism itself. It is because Arjuna has best fulfilled this ideal, has always lived up to the practice of his class in a spirit of disinterestedness and self-mastery that Krishna loves him above all human beings and considers him and him alone fit to receive the higher initiation.

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥[1]

"This is the ancient Yoga which I tell thee today; because thou art My adorer and My heart's comrade; for this is the highest mystery of all."

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, IV. 3.

And even the man who has risen to the heights of the initiation must cleave for the good of society to the pursuits and duties of his order; for, if he does not, the world which instinctively is swayed by the examples of its greatest will follow in his footsteps; the bonds of society will then crumble asunder and chaos come again; mankind will be baulked of its destiny. Sri Krishna illustrates this by his own example, the example of God in his manifest form.

"Looking also to the maintenance of order in the world thou shouldst act: for whatever the best practises, that other men practise; for the standard set by him is followed by the whole world. In all the Universe there is for Me no necessary action, for I have nothing I do not possess or wish to possess, and I abide always doing. For if I so abide not at all doing action vigilantly, men would altogether follow in my path, O son of Pritha; these worlds would sink if I did not actions, and I should be the author of confusion (literally, illegitimacy, the worst and primal confusion, for it disorders the family which is the fundamental unit of society) and the destroyer of the peoples. What the ignorant do, O Bharata, with their minds enslaved to the work, that the wise man should do with a free mind to maintain the order of the world; the wise man should not upset the mind of the ignorant who are slaves of their deeds, but should apply himself to all works doing customary things with a mind in Yoga."[1]

It is accordingly not by airy didactic teaching so much as in the example of Krishna — and this is the true epic method — that Vyasa develops his higher ethic which is the morality of the liberated mind. But this is too wide a subject to be dealt with in the limits I have at my command. I have dwelt on Vyasa's ethical standpoint because it is of the utmost importance in the present day. Before the Bhagavadgita with its great epic commentary, the Mahabharata of Vyasa, had time deeply to influence the national mind, the heresy of Buddhism seized hold of it. Buddhism with its exaggerated emphasis on quiescence and the

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, III. 20-26.

quiescent virtue of self-abnegation, its unwise creation of a separate class of quiescents and illuminati, its sharp distinction between monks and laymen implying the infinite inferiority of the latter, its all too facile admission of men to the higher life and its relegation of worldly action to the lowest importance possible stands at the opposite pole from the gospel of Sri Krishna and has had the very effect he deprecates; it has been the author of confusion and the destroyer of the peoples. As a result, under its influence half the nation moved in the direction of spiritual passivity and negation, the other by a natural reaction plunged deep into a splendid but enervating materialism. Our race lost three parts of its ancient heroic manhood, its grasp on the world, its magnificently ordered polity and its noble social fabric. It is by clinging to a few spars from the wreck that we have managed to perpetuate our existence and this we owe to the overthrow of Buddhism by Shankaracharya. But Hinduism has never been able to shake off the deep impress of the religion it vanquished; and therefore though it has managed to survive, it has not succeeded in recovering its old vitalising force. The practical disappearance of the Kshatriya caste (for those who now claim that origin seem to be, with a few exceptions, Vratya Kshatriyas, Kshatriyas who have fallen from the pure practice and complete temperament of their caste) has operated in the same direction. The Kshatriyas were the proper depositaries of the gospel of action; Sri Krishna himself declares:

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥
एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।[1]

"This imperishable Yoga I revealed to Vivaswan, Vivaswan declared it to Manu, Manu told it to Ikshwaku; thus did the royal sages learn this as a hereditary knowledge."

And when in the immense lapse of time it was lost, Sri Krishna again declared it to a Kshatriya. But when the Kshatriyas disappeared or became degraded, the Brahmins remained

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, IV. 1,2.

the sole interpreters of the Bhagavadgita, and, they, being the highest caste or temperament and their thoughts therefore naturally turned to knowledge and the final end of being, bearing moreover still the stamp of Buddhism in their minds, dwelt mainly on that in the Gita which deals with the element of quiescence. They have laid stress on the goal, but they have not echoed Sri Krishna's emphasis on the necessity of action as the one sure road to the goal. Time, however, in its revolution is turning back on itself and there are signs that if Hinduism is to last and we are not to plunge into the vortex of scientific atheism and the breakdown of moral ideals which is engulfing Europe, it must survive as the religion of Vyasa for which Vedanta, Sankhya and Yoga combined to lay the foundations, which Sri Krishna announced and which Vyasa formulated.

But Vyasa has not only a high political and religious thought and deep-seeing ethical judgments, he deals not only with the massive aspects and world-wide issues of human conduct, but has a keen eye for the details of government and society, the ceremonies, forms and usages, the religious and social order on the due stability of which public welfare is grounded. The principles of good government and the motives and impulses that move men to public action, no less than the rise and fall of States and the clash of mighty personalities and great powers form, incidentally and epically treated, the staple of Vyasa's epic. The poem was therefore, first and foremost, like the Iliad and Aeneid and even more than the Iliad and Aeneid, national — a poem in which the religious, social and personal temperament and ideals of the Aryan nation have found a high expression and the institutions, actions and heroes in the most critical period of its history received the judgments and criticisms of one of its greatest and soundest minds. If this had not been so we should not have had the Mahabharata in its present form. Valmiki had also dealt with a great historical period in a yet more universal spirit and with finer richness of detail, but he approached it in a poetic and dramatic manner, he created rather than criticised; while Vyasa in his manner was the critic far more than the creator. Hence later poets found it easier and more congenial to introduce their criticisms of life and thought into the Mahabharata than

into the Ramayana. Vyasa's poem has been increased to three-fold its original size; the additions to Valmiki, few in themselves if we set apart the Uttara Kanda, have been immaterial and for the most part of an accidental nature.

Gifted with such poetical powers, limited by such intellectual and emotional characteristics, endowed with such grandeur of soul and severe purity of taste, what was the special work which Vyasa did for his country and in what, beyond the ordinary elements of poetical treatise, lies his claim to world-wide acceptance? It has been suggested already that the Mahabharata is the great national poem of India. It is true the Ramayana also represents an Aryan civilisation idealised: Rama and Sita are more intimately characteristic types of the Hindu temperament as it finally shaped itself than are Arjuna and Draupadi; Sri Krishna, though his character is founded in the national type, yet rises far above it. But although Valmiki, writing the poem of mankind, drew his chief figures in the Hindu model and Vyasa, writing a great national epic, lifted his divine hero above the basis of national character into an universal humanity, yet the original purpose of either poem remains intact. In the Ramayana under the disguise of an Aryan golden age, the wide world with all its elemental impulses and affections finds itself mirrored. The Mahabharata reflects rather a great Aryan civilisation with the types, ideas, aims and passions of a heroic and pregnant period in the history of a high-hearted and deep-thoughted nation. It has, moreover, as I have attempted to indicate, a formative ethical and religious spirit which is absolutely corrective to the faults that have most marred in the past and mar to the present day the Hindu character and type of thought. And it provides us with this corrective not in the form of an alien civilisation difficult to assimilate and associated with other elements as dangerous to us as this is salutary, but in a great creative work of our own literature written by the mightiest of our sages (*munīnāmapyahaṁ vyāsaḥ*, Krishna has said), one therefore who speaks our own language, thinks our own thoughts and has the same national cast of mind, nature and conscience. His ideals will therefore be a corrective not only to our own faults but to the dangers of that attractive but unwholesome Asura civilisation which has

invaded us, especially its morbid animalism and its neurotic tendency to abandon itself to its own desires.

But this does not say all. Vyasa too, beyond the essential universality of all great poets, has his peculiar appeal to humanity in general making his poem of world-wide as well as national importance. By comparing him once again with Valmiki we shall realize more precisely in what this appeal consists. The Titanic impulse was strong in Valmiki. The very dimensions of his poetical canvas, the audacity and occasional recklessness of his conceptions, the gust with which he fills in the gigantic outlines of his Ravana are the essence of Titanism; his genius was so universal and Protean that no single element of it can be said to predominate, yet this tendency towards the enormous enters perhaps as largely into it as any other. But to the temperament of Vyasa the Titanic was alien. It is true he carves his figures so largely (for he was a sculptor in creation rather than a painter like Valmiki) that looked at separately they seem to have colossal stature, but he is always at pains so to harmonise them that they shall appear measurable to us and strongly human. They are largely and boldly human, oppressive and sublime, but never Titanic. He loves the earth and the heavens but he visits not Patala nor the stupendous regions of Vrishaparvan. His Rakshasas, supposing them to be his at all, are epic giants or matter-of-fact ogres, but they do not exhale the breath of midnight and terror like Valmiki's demons nor the spirit of world-shaking anarchy like Valmiki's giants. This poet could never have conceived Ravana. He had neither unconscious sympathy nor a sufficient force of abhorrence to inspire him. The passions of Duryodhana though presented with great force of antipathetic insight are human and limited. The Titanic was so foreign to Vyasa's habit of mind that he could not grasp it sufficiently either to love or hate. His humanism shuts to him the outermost gates of that sublime and menacing region; he has not the secret of the storm nor has his soul ridden upon the whirlwind. For his particular work this was a real advantage. Valmiki has drawn for us both the divine and anarchic in extraordinary proportions; an Akbar or a Napoleon might find his spiritual kindred in Rama or Ravana, but with more ordinary beings such figures impress the

sense of the sublime principally and do not dwell with them as daily acquaintances. It was left for Vyasa to create epically the human divine and the human anarchic so as to bring idealisms of the conflicting moral types into line with the daily emotions and imaginations of men. The sharp distinction between Deva and Asura is one of the three distinct and peculiar contributions to ethical thought which India has to offer. The legend of Indra and Virochana is one of its fundamental legends. Both of them came to Brihaspati to know from him of God; he told them to go home and look in the mirror. Virochana saw himself there and concluding that he was God, asked no farther; he gave full rein to the sense of individuality in himself which he mistook for the deity. But Indra was not satisfied; feeling that there must be some mistake he returned to Brihaspati and received from him the true God-Knowledge which taught him that he was God only because all things were God, since nothing existed but the One. If he was the one God, so was his enemy, the very feelings of separateness and enmity were not permanent reality but transient phenomena. The Asura therefore is he who is profoundly conscious of his own separate individuality and yet would impose it on the world as the sole individuality; he is thus blown along on the hurricane of his desires and ambitions until he stumbles and is broken, in the great phrase of Aeschylus, against the throne of Eternal Law. The Deva, on the contrary, stands firm in the luminous heaven of self-knowledge, his actions flow not inward towards himself but outwards toward the world. The distinction that Indra draws is not between altruism and egoism but between disinterestedness and desire. The altruist is profoundly conscious of himself and he is really ministering to himself even in his altruism; hence the hot and sickly odour of sentimentalism and the taint of the Pharisee which clings about European altruism. With the perfect Hindu the feeling of self has been merged in the sense of the universe; he does his duty equally whether it happens to promote the interests of others or his own; if his action seems oftener altruistic than egoistic it is because our duty oftener coincides with the interests of others — than with our own. Rama's duty as a son calls him to sacrifice himself, to leave the empire of the world and become a beggar

and a hermit; he does it cheerfully and unflinchingly; but when Sita is taken from him, it is his duty as a husband to rescue her from her ravisher and as a Kshatriya to put Ravana to death if he persists in his wrong-doing. This duty also he pursues with the same unflinching energy as the first. He does not shrink from the path of the right because it coincides with the path of self-interest. The Pandavas also go without a word into exile and poverty, because honour demands it of them; but their ordeal over, they will not, though ready to drive compromise to its utmost verge, consent to succumb utterly to Duryodhana, for it is their duty as Kshatriyas to protect the world from the reign of injustice, even though it is at their own expense that injustice seeks to reign. The Christian and Buddhistic doctrine of turning the other cheek to the smiter, is as dangerous as it is impracticable. The continual European see-saw between Christ on the one side and the flesh and the devil on the other, with the longer trend towards the latter comes straight from a radically false moral distinction and the lip profession of an ideal which mankind has never been either able or willing to carry into practice. The disinterested and desireless pursuit of duty is a gospel worthy of the strongest manhood; that of the cheek turned to the smiter is a gospel for cowards and weaklings. Babes and sucklings may practise it, because they must, but with others it is a hypocrisy.

The gospel of the *niṣkāma dharma* and the great poetical creations which exemplify and set it off by contrast, this is the second aspect of Vyasa's genius which will yet make him interesting and important to the whole world.

The Problem of the Mahabharata

THE POLITICAL STORY

IT WAS hinted in a recent article of the *Indian Review*, an unusually able and searching paper on the date of the Mahabharata war, that a society is about to be formed for discovering the genuine and original portions of our great epic. This is glad tidings to all admirers of Sanskrit literature and to all lovers of their country. For the solution of the Mahabharata problem is essential to many things, to any history worth having of Aryan civilisation and literature, to a proper appreciation of Vyasa's poetical genius and, far more important than either, to a definite understanding of the great ethical gospel which Sri Krishna came down on earth to teach as a guide to mankind in the dark Kali Yuga then approaching. But I fear that if the inquiry is to be pursued on the lines the writer of this article seemed to hint, if the Society is to rake out 8000 lines from the War Parvas and dub the result the Mahabharata of Vyasa, then the last state of the problem will be worse than its first. It is only by a patient scrutiny and weighing of the whole poem, disinterestedly, candidly and without preconceived notions, a consideration canto by canto, paragraph by paragraph, couplet by couplet, that we can arrive at anything solid or permanent. But this implies a vast and heart-breaking labour. Certainly, labour however vast ought not to have any terrors for a scholar, still less for a Hindu scholar; yet, before one engages in it, one requires to be assured that the game is worth the candle. For that assurance there are three necessary requisites, the possession of certain sound and always applicable tests to detect later from earlier work, a reasonable chance that such tests if applied will restore the real epic roughly if not exactly in its original form and an assurance that the epic when recovered will repay from literary, historical or other points of view the labour that has been bestowed on it. I believe that these three requisites are present in this case and shall attempt to adduce

a few reasons for my belief. I shall try to show that besides other internal evidence on which I do not propose just now to enter, there are certain traits of poetical style, personality and thought which belong to the original work and are possessed by no other writer. I shall also try to show that these traits may be used as a safe guide through the huge morass of verse. In passing I shall have occasion to make clear certain claims the epic thus disengaged will possess to the highest literary, historical and practical value.

It is certainly not creditable to European scholarship that after so many decades of Sanskrit research, the problem of the Mahabharata which should really be the pivot for all the rest has remained practically untouched. For it is no exaggeration to say that European scholarship has shed no light whatever on the Mahabharata beyond the bare fact that it is the work of more than one hand. All else it has advanced, and fortunately it has advanced little, has been rash, arbitrary or prejudiced; theories, theories and always theories without any honestly industrious consideration of the problem. The earliest method adopted was to argue from European analogies, a method pregnant of error and delusion. If we consider the hypothesis of a rude ballad-epic doctored by "those Brahmins" — anyone who is curious on the matter may study with both profit and amusement Fraser's *History of Indian Literature* — we shall perceive how this method has been worked. A fancy was started in Germany...as a moral certainty.

But it is not from European scholars that we must expect a solution of the Mahabharata problem. They have no qualifications for the task except a power of indefatigable research and collocation; and in dealing with the Mahabharata even this power seems to have deserted them. It is from Hindu scholarship renovated and instructed by contact with European that the attempt must come. Indian scholars have shown a power of detachment and disinterestedness and a willingness to give up cherished notions under pressure of evidence which are not common in Europe. They are not, as a rule, prone to the Teutonic sin of forming a theory in accordance with their prejudices and then finding facts or manufacturing inferences to support it.

When, therefore, they form a theory on their own account, it has usually some clear justification and sometimes an overwhelming array of facts and solid arguments behind it. The German scholarship possesses infinite capacity of acuteness, labour, marred by an impossible and fantastic imagination, the French of inference marred by insufficient command of facts, while in soundness of judgment Indian sane scholarship has both. It should stand first, for it must naturally move with a far greater familiarity and grasp in the sphere of Sanskrit studies than any foreign mind however able and industrious. But above all it must clearly have one advantage, an intimate feeling of the language, a sensitiveness to shades of style and expression and an instinctive feeling of what is or is not possible, which the European cannot hope to possess unless he sacrifices his sense of racial superiority and lives in some great centre like Benares as a Pundit among Pundits. I admit that even among Indians this advantage must vary with the amount of education and natural fineness of taste; but where other things are equal, they must possess it in an immeasurably greater degree than an European of similar information and critical power. For to the European Sanskrit words are no more than dead counters which he can play with and throw as he likes into places the most unnatural or combinations the most monstrous; to the Hindu they are living things the very soul of whose temperament he understands and whose possibilities he can judge to a hair. That with these advantages Indian scholars have not been able to form themselves into a great and independent school of learning is due to two causes, the miserable scantiness of the mastery in Sanskrit provided by our universities, crippling to all but born scholars, and their lack of a sturdy independence which makes us over-ready to defer to European authority. These, however, are difficulties easily surmountable.

In solving the Mahabharata problem this intimate feeling for language is of primary importance; for style and poetical personality must be not indeed the only but the ultimate test of the genuineness of any given passage in the poem. If we rely upon any other internal evidence, we shall find ourselves irresistibly tempted to form a theory and square facts to it. The late Rai Bahadur Bankim Chandra Chatterji, a genius of whom

modern India has not produced the parallel, was a man of ripe scholarship, literary powers of the very first order and a strong critical sagacity. In his Life of Krishna (*Krishnacharitra*) he deals incidentally with the Mahabharata problem, he perceived clearly enough that there were different recognizable styles in the poem and he divided it into three layers, the original epic by a very great poet, a redaction of the original epic by a poet not quite so great and a mass of additions by very inferior hands. But being concerned with the Mahabharata only so far as it covered the Life of Krishna, he did not follow up this line of scrutiny and relied rather on internal evidence of a quite different kind. He saw that in certain parts of the poem Krishna's godhead is either not presupposed at all or only slightly affirmed, while in others it is the main objective of the writer; certain parts again give us a plain, unvarnished and straightforward biography and history, others are a mass of wonders and legends, often irrelevant extravagances; in some parts also the conception of the chief characters is radically departed from and defaced. He therefore took these differences as his standard and accepted only those parts as genuine which gave a plain and consistent account of Krishna the man and of others in their relation to him. Though his conclusions are to a great extent justifiable, his *a priori* method led him to exaggerate them, to enforce them too rigidly without the proper flexibility and scrupulous hesitation and to resort occasionally to special pleading. His book is illuminating and full of insight, and the chief contentions will, I believe, stand permanently; but some parts of his argument are exaggerated and misleading and others, which are in the main correct, are yet insufficiently supported by reasoning. It is the failure to refer everything to the ultimate test of style that is responsible for these imperfections. Undoubtedly inconsistencies of detail and treatment are of immense importance. If we find gross inconsistencies of character, if a man is represented in one place as stainlessly just, unselfish and truthful and in another as a base and selfish liar or a brave man suddenly becomes guilty of incomprehensible cowardice, we are justified in supposing two hands at work; otherwise we must either adduce very strong poetic and psychological justification for the lapse or else suppose that the poet

was incompetent to create or portray consistent and living characters. But if we find that one set of passages belongs to the distinct and unmistakable style of a poet who has shown himself capable of portraying great epic types, we shall be logically debarred from the saving clause. And if the other set of passages shows not only a separate style, but quite another spirit and the stamp of another personality, our assurance will be made doubly sure. Further, if there are serious inconsistencies of fact, if for instance Krishna says in one place that he can only do his best as a man and can use no divine power in human affairs, and in another foolishly uses his divine power where it is quite uncalled for, or if a considerable hero is killed three or four times over, yet always pops up again with really commendable vitality without warning or explanation until some considerate person gives him his *coup de grâce*, or if totally incompatible statements are made about the same person or the same event, we may find in either or all of these inconsistencies sufficient ground to assume diversity of authorship. Still even here we must ultimately refer to the style as corroborative evidence; and when the inconsistencies are grave enough to raise suspicion, but not so totally incompatible as to be conclusive, difference of style will at once turn the suspicion into certainty, while similarity may induce us to suspend judgment. And where there is no inconsistency of fact or conception and yet the difference in expression and treatment is marked, the question of style and personality becomes all-important. Now in the Mahabharata we are struck at first by the presence of two glaringly distinct and incompatible styles. There is a mass of writing in which the verse and language is unusually bare, simple and great, full of firm and knotted thinking and a high and heroic personality, the imagination strong and pure, never florid or richly coloured, the ideas austere, original and noble. There is another body of work sometimes massed together but far oftener interspersed in the other, which has exactly opposite qualities, it is Ramayanistic, rushing in movement, full and even overabundant in diction, flowing but not strict in thought, the imagination bold and vast, but often garish and highly-coloured, the ideas ingenious and poetical, sometimes of astonishing subtlety, but at others common and trailing, the

personality much more relaxed, much less heroic, noble and severe. When we look closer we find that the Ramayanistic part may possibly be separated into two parts, one of which has less inspiration and is more deeply imbued with the letter of the Ramayana, but less with its spirit. The first portion again has a certain element often in close contact with it which differs from it in a weaker inspiration, in being a body without the informing spirit of high poetry. It attempts to follow its manner and spirit but fails and reads therefore like imitation of a great poet. We have to ask ourselves whether this is the work of an imitator or of the original poet in his uninspired moments. Are there besides the mass of inferior or obviously interpolated work which can be easily swept aside, three distinct recognizable styles or four or only two? In the ultimate decision of this question inconsistencies of detail and treatment will be of great consequence. But in the meantime I find nothing to prevent me from considering the work of the first poet, undoubtedly the greatest of the four, if four there are, as the original epic.

It may indeed be objected that style is no safe test, for it is one which depends upon the personal preferences and ability of the critic. In an English literary periodical it was recently observed that a certain Oxford professor who had studied Stevenson like a classic attempted to apportion to Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne their respective work in the *Wrecker*, but his apportionment turned out to be hopelessly erroneous. To this the obvious answer is that the *Wrecker* is a prose work and not poetry. There was no prose style ever written that a skilful hand could not reproduce as accurately as a practised forger reproduces a signature. But poetry, at any rate original poetry of the first class, is a different matter. The personality and style of a true poet are unmistakable to a competent mind, for though imitation, echo, adaptation or parody is certainly possible, it would be as easy to reproduce the personal note in the style as for the painter to put into his portrait the living soul of its original. The successful discrimination between original and copy depends then upon the competence of the critic, his fineness of literary feeling, his sensitiveness to style. On such points the dictum of a foreign critic is seldom of any value. One would not ask a mere

labourer to pronounce on the soundness of a great engineering work, but still less would one ask a mathematician unacquainted with mechanics. To minds well-equipped for the task there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in disengaging the style of a marked poetic personality from a mass of totally different work. The verdict of great art-critics on the genuineness of a professed Old Master may not be infallible, but if formed on a patient study of the technique and spirit of the work, it has at least considerable chances of being correct. But the technique and spirit of poetry are far less easy to catch by an imitator than those of great painting, the charm of words being more elusive and unanalysable than that of line and colour.

In unravelling the Mahabharata especially, the peculiar inimitable nature of the style of Vyasa immensely lightens the difficulties of criticism. Had his been poetry of which the predominant grace was mannerism, it would have been imitable with some closeness; or even had it been a rich and salient style like Shakespeare's, Kalidasa's or Valmiki's, certain externals of it might have been reproduced by a skilled hand and the task of discernment rendered highly delicate and perilous. Yet even in such styles to the finest minds the presence or absence of an unanalysable personality within the manner of expression would be always perceptible. The second layer of the Mahabharata is distinctly Ramayanistic in style, yet it would be a gross criticism that could confuse it with Valmiki's own work; the difference, as is always the case in imitations of great poetry, is as palpable as the similarity. Some familiar examples may be taken from English literature. Crude as is the composition and treatment of the three parts of *King Henry VI*, its style unformed and everywhere full of echoes, yet when we get such lines as

> Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just,
> And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted,

we cannot but feel that we are listening to the same poetic voice as in *Richard III*,

Shadows tonight
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers.
Armèd in proof and led by shallow Richmond,

or in *Julius Caesar*,

The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interrèd with their bones,

or in the much later and richer vein of *Antony and Cleopatra*,

I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

I have purposely selected passages of perfect simplicity and straightforwardness, because they appear to be the most imitable part of Shakespeare's work and are really the least imitable. Always one hears the same voice, the same personal note of style sounding through these very various passages, and one feels that there is in all the intimate and unmistakable personality of Shakespeare. We turn next and take two passages from Marlowe, a poet whose influence counted for much in the making of Shakespeare, one from *Faustus*,

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?

and another from *Edward II*,

I am that cedar, shake me not too much,
And you the eagles, soar ye ne'er so high,
I have the jesses that will pull you down
And Aeque tandem shall that canker cry
Unto the proudest peer in Brittanny.

The choice of words, the texture of style has a certain similarity, the run of the sentences differs little if at all; but what fine literary sense does not feel that here is another poetical atmosphere and the ring of a different voice? And yet to put a precise name on the difference would not be easy. The personal difference becomes still more marked if we take a passage from Milton in which the nameable merits are precisely the same, a simplicity in strength of diction, thought and the run of the verse,

What though the field be lost....

And when we pass farther down in the stream of literature and read

Thy thunder, conscious of the new command...

we feel that the poet has nourished his genius on the greatness of Milton till his own soft and luxurious style rises into epic vigour; yet we feel too that the lines are only Miltonic, they are not Milton.

Now there are certain great poetical styles which are of a kind apart, they are so extraordinarily bare and restrained that the untutored mind often wonders what difficulty there can be in writing poetry like that; yet when the attempt is made, it is found that so far as manner goes it is easier to write somewhat like Shakespeare or Homer or Valmiki than to write like these. Just because the style is so bare, has no seizable mannerism, no striking and imitable peculiarities, the failure of the imitation appears complete and unsoftened; for in such poets there is but one thing to be caught, the unanalysable note, the personal greatness like everything that comes straight from God which it is impossible to locate or limit, and precisely the one that most eludes the grasp.

This poetry it is always possible to distinguish with some approach to certainty from imitative or spurious work. Very fortunately the style of Vyasa is exactly such a manner of poetry. Granted therefore *adhikāra* in the critic, that is to say, a natural gift of fine literary sensitiveness and the careful cultivation of

that gift until it has become as sure a lactometer as the palate of the swan which rejects the water mingled with milk and takes the milk alone, we have in the peculiar characteristics of this poetry a test of unquestionable soundness and efficacy.

But there is another objection of yet more weight and requiring as full an answer. This method of argument from style seems after all as *a priori* and Teutonic as any other; for there is no logical reason why the mass of writing in this peculiar style should be judged to be the original epic and not any of the three others or even part of that inferior work which was brushed aside so contemptuously. The original Mahabharata need not have been a great poem at all; it was more probably an early, rude and uncouth performance. Certain considerations however may lead us to consider our choice less arbitrary than it seems. That the War Parvas contain much of the original epic may be conceded to Professor Weber; the war is the consummation of the story and without a war there could be no Mahabharata. But the war of the Mahabharata was not a petty contest between obscure barons or a brief episode in a much larger struggle or a romantic and chivalrous emprise for the rescue of a ravished or errant beauty. It was a great political catastrophe employing the clash of a hundred nations and far-reaching political consequences; the Hindus have always considered it as the turning-point in the history of their civilisation and the beginning of a new age, and it was long used as a historical standpoint and a date to reckon from in chronology. Such an event must have had the most considerable political causes and been caused by the collision of the most powerful personalities and the most important interests. If we find no record of or allusion to these in the poem, we shall be compelled to suppose that the poet, living long after the event, regarded the war as a legend or romance which would form excellent matter for an epic and treated it accordingly. But if we find a simple and unvarnished, though not necessarily connected and consecutive account of the political conditions which preceded the war and of the men who made it and their motives, we may safely say that this also is an essential part of the epic. The Iliad deals only with an episode of the legendary siege of Troy, it covers an action of about eight days in a

conflict lasting ten years; and its subject is not the Trojan War but the Wrath of Achilles. Homer was under no obligation therefore to deal with the political causes that led to hostilities, even supposing he knew them. The Mahabharata stands on an entirely different footing. The war there is related from beginning to end consecutively and without break, yet it is nowhere regarded as of importance sufficient to itself but depends for its interest on causes which led up to it and the characters and clashing interests it involved. The preceding events are therefore of essential importance to the epic. Without the war, no Mahabharata, is true of this epic; but without the causes of the war, no war, is equally true. And it must be remembered that the Hindu narrative poets had no artistic predilections like that of the Greeks for beginning a story in the middle. On the contrary they always preferred to begin at the beginning.

We therefore naturally expect to find the preceding political conditions and the immediate causes of the war related in the earlier part of the epic and this is precisely what we do find. Ancient India as we know was a sort of continent, made up of many great and civilised nations who were united very much like the nations of modern Europe by an essential similarity of religion and culture rising above and beyond their marked racial peculiarities; like the nations of Europe also they were continually going to war with each other, and yet had relations of occasional struggle, of action and reaction, with the other peoples of Asia whom they regarded as barbarous races outside the pale of the Aryan civilisation. Like the continent of Europe, the ancient continent of India was subject to two opposing forces, one centripetal which was continually causing attempts at universal empire, another centrifugal which was continually impelling the empires once formed to break up again into their constituent parts; but both these forces were much stronger in their action than they have usually been in Europe. The Aryan nations may be divided into three distinct groups, the Eastern of whom the Koshalas, Magadhas, Chedis, Videhas and Haihayas were the chief, the central among whom the Kurus, Panchalas and Bhojas were the most considerable; and the Western and Southern of whom there were many, small and rude yet warlike

and famous peoples; among those there have been none that ever became of the first importance. Five distinct times had these great congeries of nations been welded into Empire, twice by the Ikshwakus under Mandhata, son of Yuvanashwa and King Marutta, afterwards by the Haihaya Arjuna Kartavirya, again by the Ikshwaku Bhagiratha and finally by the Kuru Bharata. That the first Kuru empire was the latest is evident not only from the Kurus being the strongest nation of their time, but from the significant fact that the Koshalas by this time had faded into utter and irretrievable insignificance. The rule of the Haihayas had resulted in one of the great catastrophes of early Hindu civilisation belonging to the Eastern section of the continent which was always apt to break away from the strict letter of Aryanism. They had brought themselves by their pride and violence into collision with the Brahmin with the result of a civil war in which their empire was broken for ever by Parashurama, son of Jamadagni, and the chivalry of India massacred and for the time broken. The fall of the Haihayas left the Ikshwakus and the Bharata or the Ilian dynasty of the Kurus the two chief powers of the continent. Then seems to have followed the golden age of the Ikshwakus under the beneficent empire of Bhagiratha and his descendants as far down at least as Rama. Afterwards the Koshalas, having reached their highest point, must have fallen into that state of senile decay which, once it overtakes a nation, is fatal and irremediable. They were followed by the empire of the Bharatas. By the time of Shantanu, Vichitravirya and Pandu this empire had long been dissolved by the centrifugal force of Aryan politics into its constituent parts, yet the Kurus were among the first of the nations and the Bharata Kings of the Kurus were still looked up to as the head of civilisation. But by the time of Dhritarashtra the centripetal force had again asserted itself and the idea of another great empire loomed before the imaginations of all men. A number of nations had risen to the greatest military prestige and political force, the Panchalas under Drupada and his sons, the Kurus under Bhishmuc and his brother Acrity who is described as equalling Parashurama in military skill and courage, the Chedis under the hero and great captain Shishupala, the Magadhas built into a strong nation by Briha-

dratha, even distant Bengal under the Poundrian Vasudeva and distant Sindhu under Vriddha Kshatra and his son Jayadratha began to mean something in the reckoning of forces. The Yadava nations counted as a great military force in the balance of politics owing to their abundant heroism and genius, but seemed to have lacked sufficient cohesion and unity to nurse independent hopes. Strong, however, as these nations were none seemed able to dispute the prize of the coming empire with the Kurus, until under Jarasandha the Barhadratha Magadha for a moment disturbed the political balance. The history of the first great Magadhan hope of empire and its extinction — not to be revived again until the final downfall of the Kurus — is told very briefly in the Sabhaparva of the Mahabharata. The removal of Jarasandha restored the original state of politics and it was no longer doubtful that to the Kurus alone could fall the future empire. But contest arose between the elder and the younger branches of the Bharata house. The question being then narrowed to a personal issue, it was inevitable that it should become largely a history of personal strife and discord; other and larger issues were involved in the dispute between the Kaurava cousins, but whatever interests, incompatibilities of temperament and difference of opinion may divide brothers, they do not engage in fratricidal conflict until they are driven to it by a long record of collision and jealousy, ever deepening personal hatred and the worst personal injuries. We see therefore that not only the early discords, the slaying of Jarasandha and the Rajasuya sacrifice are necessary to the epic but the great gambling and the mishandling of Draupadi. It cannot, however, have been personal questions alone that affected the choice of the different nations between Duryodhana and Yudhishthira; personal relations like the matrimonial connections of Dhritarashtra's family with the Sindhus and Gandharas and of the Pandavas with the Matsyas, Panchalas and Yadavas doubtless counted for much, but there must have been something more; personal enmities counted for something as in the feud cherished by the Trigartas against Arjuna. The Madras disregarded matrimonial ties when they sided with Duryodhana; the Magadhas and Chedis put aside the memory of personal wrong when they

espoused the cause of Yudhishthira. I believe the explanation we must gather from the hints of the Mahabharata is this, that the nations were divided into three classes, those who desired autonomy, those who desired to break the power of the Kurus and assert their own supremacy and those who imbued with old imperialistic notions desired an united India. The first followed Duryodhana because the empire of Duryodhana could not be more than the empire of a day while that of Yudhishthira had every possibility of permanence; even Queen Gandhari, Duryodhana's own mother, was able to hit this weak point in her son's ambition. The Rajasuya sacrifice had also undoubtedly identified Yudhishthira in men's minds with the imperialistic impulse of the times. We are given some important hints in the Udyogaparva. When Vidura remonstrates with Krishna for coming to Hastinapur, he tells him it was highly imprudent for him to venture there knowing as he did that the city was full of kings all burning with enmity against him for having deprived them once of their greatness, driving, by the fear of him, to take refuge with Duryodhana and eager to war against the Pandavas. This can have no intelligible reference except to the Rajasuya sacrifice. Although it was the armies of Yudhishthira that had traversed India then on their mission of conquest, Krishna was generally recognised as the great moving and master mind whose hands of execution the Pandavas were and without whom they would have been nothing. His personality dominated men's imaginations for adoration or for hatred; for that many abhorred him as an astute and unscrupulous revolutionist in morals, politics and religion, we very clearly perceive. We have not only the fiery invectives of Shishupala but the reproach of Bhurihshravas the Valhika, a man of high reputation and universally respected. Krishna himself is perfectly conscious of this; he tells Vidura that he must make efforts towards peace both to deliver his soul and to justify himself in the eyes of men. The belief that Krishna's policy and statesmanship was the really effective force behind Yudhishthira's greatness, pervades the epic. But who were these nations that resented so strongly the attempt of Yudhishthira and Krishna to impose an empire on them? It is a significant fact that the Southern and Western peoples went almost solid for

Duryodhana in this quarrel — Madra, the Deccan, Avanti, Sindhu Sauvira, Gandhara in one long line from Southern Mysore to Northern Kandahar; the Aryan colonies in the yet half-civilised regions of the Lower valley of the Ganges espoused the same cause. The Eastern nations, heirs of the Ikshwaku imperial idea, went equally solid for Yudhishthira. The Central peoples, repositories of the great Kuru Panchala tradition as well as the Yadavas, who were really a Central nation though they had trekked to the West, were divided. Now this distribution is exactly what we should have expected. The nations which are most averse to enter into an imperial system and cherish most their separate existence are those which are outside the centre of civilisation, hardy, warlike, only partially refined; and their aversion is still more emphatic when they have never or only for a short time been part of an empire. This is the real secret of the invincible resistance which England has opposed to all Continental schemes of empire from Philip II to Napoleon; it is the secret of her fear of Russia; it is the reason of the singular fact that only now after many centuries of great national existence has she become imbued with the imperial idea on her own account. The savage attachment to their independence of small nations like the Dutch, the Swiss, the Boers is traceable to the same cause; the fierce resistance opposed by the greater part of Spain to Napoleon was that of a nation, which once imperial and central, has fallen out of the main flood of civilisation and is therefore become provincial and attached to its own isolation. That the nations of the East and South and the Aryan colonies in Bengal should oppose the imperialist policy of Krishna and throw in their lot with Duryodhana is therefore no more than we should expect. On the other hand, nations at the very heart of civilisation, who have formed at one time or another dominant parts of an empire fall easily into imperial schemes, but personal rivalry, the desire of each to be the centre of empire, divides them and brings them into conflict, not any difference of political temperament. For nations have very tenacious memories and are always attempting to renew the great ages of their past. In the Eastern peoples the imperialistic idea was very strong and having failed to assert a new empire of their own under Jarasan-

dha, they seem to have turned with one consent to Yudhishthira as the man who could alone realise their ideal. One of Shishupal's remarks in the Rajsuya sacrifice is very significant:

वयं न तु भयादस्य कौन्तेयस्य महात्मनः।
प्रयच्छामः करान् सर्वे न लोभान्न च सान्त्वनात्॥
अस्य धर्मे प्रवृत्तस्य पार्थिवत्वं चिकीर्षतः।
करानस्मै प्रयच्छामः सोऽयमस्मान्न मन्यते॥

We remember that it was an Eastern poet who had sung, perhaps not many centuries before, in mighty stanzas, the idealisation of Imperial Government and Aryan unity and enshrined in his imperishable verse the glories of the third Koshalan Empire. The establishment of Aryan unity was in the eyes of the Eastern nations a *holy work* and the desire of establishing universal lordship with that view a sufficient ground for putting aside personal feelings and predilections in order to farther it. Shishupala, one of the most self-willed and violent princes of his time, had been one of the most considerable and ardent supporters of Jarasandha in his attempt to establish a Magadhan empire. The divisions of the Central nations follow an equally intelligible line. Throughout the Mahabharata we perceive that the great weakness of the Kurus lay in the division of their counsels. There was a peace party among them led by Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Vidura, the wise and experienced statesmen who desired justice and reconciliation with Yudhishthira and a war-party of the hot-blooded younger men led by Karna, Duhsasana and Duryodhana himself who were confident of their power of meeting the world in arms; King Dhritarashtra found himself hard put to it to flatter the opinions of the elders while secretly following his own predilections and the ambitions of the younger men. These are facts patent on the face of the epic. But it has not been sufficiently considered what a remarkable fact it is that men of such lofty character as Bhishma and Drona should have acted against their sense of right and justice and fought in what they had repeatedly condemned as an unjust cause. If Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Ashwatthama and Vikarna had plainly intimated to Duryodhana that they would support Yudhishthira with their

arms or even that they would stand aloof from the war, it is clear there would have been no war at all. And I cannot but think that had it been a question purely between Kuru and Kuru, this is the course they would have adopted. But Bhishma and Drona must have perceived that behind the Pandavas were the Panchalas and Matsyas. They must have suspected that these nations were supporting Yudhishthira not out of purely disinterested motives but with certain definite political objects. Neither Drupada nor Virata would have been accepted by India as emperors in their own right, any more than say Sindhia or Holkar would have been in the last century. But by putting forward the just claims of a prince of the imperial Bharata line, the descendant of Bharata Ajamida, connected with themselves by marriage, they could avoid this difficulty and at the same time break the power of the Kurus and replace them as the dominant partners in the new Empire. The presence of personal interests is evident in their hot eagerness for war and their unwillingness to take any sincere steps towards a just and peaceful solution of the difficulty. Their action stands in striking contrast with the moderate statesmanlike yet firm policy of Krishna. It can hardly be supposed that Bhishma and the Kuru statesmen of his party were autonomists; they must have been as eager for a Kuru empire as Duryodhana himself.

At any rate they eagerly welcomed the statesmanlike reasoning of Krishna when he proposed to King Dhritarashtra to unite the forces of Pandava and Kaurava and build up a Kuru empire which should irresistibly dominate the world. "On yourself and myself," says Krishna, "rests today the choice of peace or war and the destiny of the world; do your part in pacifying your sons, I will see to the Pandavas" —

सहायभूता भरतास्तवैव स्युर्जनेश्वर ॥
धर्मार्थयोस्तिष्ठ राजन् पाण्डवैरभिरक्षितः ।
न हि शक्यास्तथाभूता यत्नादपि नराधिप ॥
न हि त्वां पाण्डवैर्जेतुं रक्ष्यमाणं महात्मभिः ।
इन्द्रोऽपि देवैः सहितः प्रसहेत कुतो नृपाः ॥
यत्र भीष्मश्च द्रोणश्च कृपः कर्णो विविंशतिः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सोमदत्तोऽथ बाह्लिकः ॥

सैन्धवश्च कलिङ्गश्च काम्बोजश्च सुदक्षिणः।
युधिष्ठिरो भीमसेनः सव्यसाची यमौ तथा॥
सात्यकिश्च महातेजा युयुत्सुश्च महारथः।
को नु तान् विपरीतात्मा युद्धचेत भरतर्षभ॥

तस्य ते पृथिवीपालास्त्वत्समाः पृथिवीपतेः।
श्रेयांसश्चैव राजानः सन्ध्यास्यन्ते परन्तप॥
स त्वं पुत्रैश्च पौत्रैश्च पितृभिर्भ्रातृभिस्तथा।
सुहृद्भिः सर्वतो गुप्तः सुखं शक्ष्यसि जीवितुम्॥
एतानेव पुरोधाय सत्कृत्य च यथा पुरा।
अखिलां भोक्ष्यसे सर्वां पृथिवीं पृथिवीपते॥
एतर्हि सहितः सर्वैः पाण्डवैः स्वैश्च भारत।
अन्यान्विजेष्यसे शत्रूनेष स्वार्थस्तवाखिलः॥
तैरेवोपार्जितां भूमिं भोक्ष्यसे च परन्तप।
यदि सम्पत्स्यसे पुत्रैः सहामात्यैर्नराधिप॥[1]

But the empire of Yudhishthira enforced by the arms of Matsya and Panchala or even by the armed threats meant to Bhishma and Kripa something very different from a Kuru empire; it must have seemed to them to imply rather the overthrow and humiliation of the Kurus and a Panchala domination under a Bharata prince. This it concerned their patriotism and their sense of Kshatriya pride and duty to resist so long as there was blood in their veins. The inability to associate justice with their cause was a grief to them, but it could not alter their plain duty. Such as I take it is the clear political story of the Mahabharata.

[1] *Mahabharata*, Udyogaparva, 95.16-21, 23-27.

2

THE problem of the Mahabharata, its origin, date and composition, is one that seems likely to elude scholarship to times indefinite if not for ever. It is true that several European scholars have solved all these to their own satisfaction, but their industrious and praiseworthy efforts....

In the following pages I have approached the eternal problem of the Mahabharata from the point of view mainly of style and literary personality, partly of substance; but in dealing with the substance I have deferred questions of philosophy, allusion and verbal evidence to which a certain school attach great importance and ignored altogether the question of minute metrical details on which they base far-reaching conclusions. It is necessary therefore out of respect for these scholars to devote some space to an explanation of my standpoint. I contend that owing to the peculiar manner in which the Mahabharata has been composed, these minutiae of detail and word have very little value. The labour of this minute school has proved beyond dispute one thing and one thing only, that the Mahabharata was not only immensely enlarged, crusted with interpolations and accretions and in parts rewritten and modified, but even its oldest parts were verbally modified in the course of preservation. The extent to which this happened has, I think, been grossly exaggerated, but that it did happen, one cannot but be convinced. Now if this is so, it is obvious that arguments from verbal niceties must be very dangerous. It has been sought to prove from a single word, *surańga*, an underground tunnel, which European scholars believe to be identical with the Greek *suringks* that the account in the Adiparva of the Pandavas' escape from the burning house of Purochana through an underground tunnel must be later than another account in the Vanaparva which represents Bhima as carrying his brothers and mother out of the flames; for the former they say must have been composed after the Indians had learned the Greek language and culture and the latter, it is assumed, before that interesting period. Now whether *surańga*

was derived from the Greek *suringks* or not, I cannot take upon me to say, but will assume on the authority of better linguists than myself that it was so — though I think it is as well to be sceptical of all such Greek derivations until the connection is proved beyond doubt, for such words even when not accounted for by Sanskrit itself may very easily be borrowed from the original languages. Bengali, for instance, preserves the form "Sudanga" where the cerebral letter is Dravidian. But if so, if this word came into fashion along with Greek culture, and became *the* word for a tunnel, what could be more natural than that the reciter should substitute for an old and disused word the one which was familiar to his audience? Again much has been made of the frequent occurrence of Yavana, Vahlika, Pehlava, Saka, Huna; as to Yavana its connection with Iaon does not seem to me beyond doubt. It was certainly at one time applied to the Bactrian Greeks, but so it has been and is to the present day applied to the Persians, Afghans and other races to the northwest of India. Nor is the philological connection between Iaon and Yavana very clear to my mind. Another form Yauna seems to represent Iaon fairly well; but are we sure that Yauna and Yavana were originally identical? A mere resemblance however close is the most misleading thing in philology. Upon such resemblances Pocock made out a very strong case for his theory that the Greeks were a Hindu colony. The identity of the Sakas and Sakyas was for a long time a pet theory of European Sanskritists and on this identity was based the theory that Buddha was a Scythian reformer of Hinduism. This identity is now generally given up, yet it is quite as close as that of Yavana and Yauna and as closely in accordance with the laws of the Sanskrit language. If Yauna is the original form, why was it changed to Yavana? It is no more necessary than that *mauna* be changed to *mavana*. If Yavana be earlier and Yauna a Prakrit corruption, how are we to account for the short 'a' and the 'v'; there was no digamma in Greek in the time of Alexander. But since the Greeks are always called Yavanas in Buddhist writings, we will waive the demand for strict philological intelligibility and suppose that Yavana answers to Iaon. The question yet remains: when did the Hindus become acquainted with the existence of

the Greeks? Now here the first consideration is: why did they call the Greeks Ionians and not Hellenes or Macedonians? That the Persians should know the Greeks by that name is natural enough, for it was with the Ionians that they first came into contact; but it was not Ionians who invaded India under Alexander, it was not an Ionian prince who gave his daughter to Chandragupta, it was not an Ionian conqueror who crossed the Indus and besieged....[1] Did the Macedonians on their victorious march give themselves out as Ionians? I for my part do not believe it. It is certain therefore that if the Hindus took the word Yavana from Iaon, it must have been through the Persians and not direct from the Greek language. But the connection of the Persians with India was as old as Darius Hystaspes who had certainly reason to know the Greeks. It is therefore impossible to say that the Indians had not heard about the Greeks as long ago as 500 B.C. Even if they had not, the mention of Yavanas and Yavana kings does not carry us very far; for it is evident that in the earlier parts of the Mahabharata they are known only as a strong barbarian power of the North West, there is no sign of their culture being known to the Hindus. It is therefore quite possible that the word Yavana now grown familiar may have been substituted by the later reciters for an older name no longer familiar. It is now known beyond reasonable doubt that the Mahabharata war was fought out in or about 1190 B C.;[2] Dhritarashtra, son of Vichitravirya, Krishna, son of Devaki and Janamejaya are mentioned in Vedic works of a very early date. There is therefore no reason to doubt that an actual historical event is recorded with whatever admixture of fiction in the Mahabharata. It is also evident that the Mahabharata, not any "Bharata" or "Bharati Katha" but the Mahabharata existed before the age of Panini, and though the radical school bring down Panini the next few centuries...

(*Incomplete*)

[1] Word missing.

[2] This date was accepted by Sri Aurobindo at the time of writing. On p. 66 of his *Gitar Bhumika* (in Bengali — written in 1909) he says: "It should be remembered that the war of Kurukshetra took place 5000 years ago." It may be that later he accepted still another date.

NOTES

Notes on the Mahabharata dealing with the authenticity of each separate canto i.e. whether it belongs or not to the original epic of 24,000 Slokas on the great catastrophe of the Bharatas.

UDYOGAPARVA

CANTO ONE

1. *Kurupravīrāḥ...sapakṣāḥ* — This may mean in Vyasa's elliptic manner the Great Kurus (i.e. the Pandavas) and those of their side. Otherwise "The Kuru heroes of his own side", i.e. Abhimanyu's, which is awkward.

3. *Vṛddhau* — This supplies the reason of their pre-eminence.

5. *Pradyumna-sāmbau ca yudhi pravīrau.* This establishes Pradyumna and Samba as historical sons of Krishna.

Virāṭaputraiśca — Virata has therefore several sons, three at least.

कृत्वा विवाहं तु कुरुप्रवीरास्तदाऽभिमन्योर्मुदिताः सपक्षाः ।
विश्रम्य रात्रावुषसि प्रतीताः सभां विराटस्य ततोऽभिजग्मुः ॥१॥
सभा तु सा मत्स्यपतेः समृद्धा मणिप्रवेकोत्तमरत्नचित्रा ।
न्यस्तासना माल्यवती सुगन्धा तामभ्ययुस्ते नरराजवर्याः ॥२॥
अथासनान्याविशतां पुरस्तादुभौ विराटद्रुपदौ नरेन्द्रौ ।
वृद्धौ च मान्यौ पृथिवीपतीनां पित्रा समं रामजनार्दनौ च ॥३॥
पाञ्चालराजस्य समीपतस्तु शिनिप्रवीरः सहरौहिणेयः ।
मत्स्यस्य राज्ञस्तु सुसन्निकृष्टौ जनार्दनश्चैव युधिष्ठिरश्च ॥४॥
सुताश्च सर्वे द्रुपदस्य राज्ञो भीमार्जुनौ माद्रवतीसुतौ च ।
प्रद्युम्नसाम्बौ च युधि प्रवीरौ विराटपुत्रैश्च सहाभिमन्युः ॥५॥
सर्वे च शूराः पितृभिः समाना वीर्येण रूपेण बलेन चैव ।
उपाविशन्द्रौपदेयाः कुमाराः सुवर्णचित्रेषु वरासनेषु ॥६॥
तथोपविष्टेषु महारथेषु विराजमानाभरणाम्बरेषु ।
रराज सा राजवती समृद्धा ग्रहैरिव द्यौर्विमलैरुपेता ॥७॥

7. The simile is strictly in the style of Vyasa who cares little for newness or ingenuity, so long as the image called up effects the purpose. The assonance *rarāja sā rājavatī* is an epic assonance altogether uncommon in Vyasa and due evidently to the influence of Valmiki.

8. Strong, brief and illumining strokes of description which add to the naturalness of the scene, *tataḥ kathāste samavāyayuktāḥ*: while also adding a touch that reveals the inwardness of the situation:

kṛtvā vicitrāḥ puruṣa-pravīrāḥ,
Tasthurmuhūrtaṁ paricintayantaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ nṛpāste
samudikṣamāṇāḥ.

9. *Saṁghaṭṭitāḥ* — surely means "assembled" and nothing else. P. C. Roy in taking it as "drew their attention to" shows his usual slovenliness. Lele also errs in his translation. He interprets it: "as soon as the talk was over Krishna assembled the kings for the affairs of the Pandavas." But the kings were already assembled and seated; not only so but they were waiting for Krishna to begin. It is absurd to suppose that as soon as Krishna began speaking they left their seats and clustered around him like a pack of schoolboys. Yet this is the only sense in which we can take Lele's rendering. I prefer to take the obvious sense of the words: "As soon as they had reached an end of talk, all those lion-kings assembled by the den of Madhou in the interests of the Pandava listened in a body to his high-thoughted and fateful speech."

Sumahodayam — having mighty consequences.

10. *Ayam* — here beside me. See verse 4. Yudhishthira is sitting just by Krishna separated by Virata.

ततः कथास्ते समवाययुक्ताः कृत्वा विचित्राः पुरुषप्रवीराः।
तस्थुर्मुहूर्त्तं परिचिन्तयन्तः कृष्णं नृपास्ते समुदीक्षमाणाः ॥८॥
कथान्तमासाद्य च माधवेन संघट्टिताः पाण्डवकार्यहेतोः।
ते राजसिंहाः सहिता ह्यशृण्वन्वाक्यं महार्थं सुमहोदयं च ॥९॥
सर्वं भवद्भिर्विदितं यथाऽयं युधिष्ठिरः सौबलेनाक्षवत्याम्।
जितो निकृत्याऽपहृतं च राज्यं वनप्रवासे समयः कृतश्च ॥१०॥

Kalidasa

ONCE in the long history of poetry the Great Powers who are ever working the finest energies of nature into the warp of our human evolution met together and resolved to unite in creating a poetical intellect and imagination that, endowed with the most noble and various poetical gifts capable in all the great forms used by creative genius, should express once and for all in a supreme manner the whole sensuous plane of life, its heat and light, its vigour and sweetness. And since to all quality there must be a corresponding defect, they not only gifted the genius with rich powers and a remarkable temperament but drew round it the necessary line of limitations. They then sought for a suitable age, nation and environment which should most harmonise with, foster and lend itself to his peculiar powers. This they found in the splendid and luxurious city of Ujjayini, the capital of the great nation of the Malavas, who consolidated themselves under Vikramaditya in the first century before Christ. Here they set the outcome of their endeavour and called him Kalidasa. The country of Avanti had always played a considerable part in our ancient Aryan history for which the genius, taste and high courage of its inhabitants fitted it; and Ujjayini their future capital was always a famous, beautiful and wealthy city. But until the rise of Vikrama it seemed to have been disunited and therefore unable to work out fully the great destiny for which the taste, genius, force marked it out. Moreover the temperament of the nation had not fitted it to be the centre of Aryan civilisation in the old times when that civilisation was preponderatingly moral and intellectual. Profoundly artistic and susceptible to material beauty and the glory of the senses they had neither the large, mild and pure spiritual and emotional temperament of the eastern nations which produced Janaka, Valmiki, and Buddha nor the bold intellectual temperament, heroic, ardent and severe of the central nations which produced Draupadi, Bhima, Arjuna, Bhishma, Vyasa and Srikrishna;

neither were they quite akin to the searchingly logical, philosophic and scholastic temperament of the half Dravidian southern nations which produced the great grammarians and commentators and the mightiest of the purely logical philosophers, Madhva, Ramanuja, Shankaracharya. The Malavas were westerners and the western nations of India have always been material, practical and sensuous. For the different races of this country have preserved their basic temperaments with a marvellous conservative power; modified and recombined, they have been in no case radically altered. Bengal colonised from the west by the Chedis and Haihayas and from the north by the Koshalas and Magadhans, contains at present the most gentle, sensitive and emotional of the Indian races, also the most anarchic, self-willed, averse to control and in all things extreme; there is not much difference between the characters of Shishupal and that thoroughly Bengali king and great captain, Pratapaditya; the other side shows itself especially in the women who are certainly the gentlest, purest and most gracious and loving in the whole world. Bengal has accordingly a literature far surpassing any other in an Indian tongue for emotional and lyrical power, loveliness of style and form and individual energy and initiative. The north-west, inheritor of the Kurus, has on the other hand produced the finest modern Vedantic poetry, full of intellectual loftiness, insight and profundity, the poetry of Suradasa and Tulsi; its people are still the most sincerely orthodox and the most attached to the old type of thought and character, while the Rajputs who are only a central nation which has drifted westward preserved longest the heroic and chivalrous tradition of the Bharatas. The Dravidians of the south, though they no longer show that magnificent culture and originality which made them the preservers and renovators of the higher Hindu thought and religion in its worst days, are yet, as we all know, far more genuinely learned and philosophic in their cast of thought and character than any other Indian race. Similarly the west also preserves its tradition; the Punjab is typified by its wide acceptance of such simple and practical and active religions as those of Nanak and Dayananda Saraswati, religions which have been unable to take healthy root beyond the frontier of the five rivers;

Gujarat and Sindh show the same practical temper by their success in trade and commerce, but the former has preserved more of the old western materialism and sensuousness than its neighbours. Finally the Maharattas, perhaps the strongest and sanest race in India today, present a very peculiar and interesting type; they are south-western and blend two very different characters; fundamentally a material and practical race, — they are, for instance, extremely deficient in the romantic and poetical side of human temperament — a race of soldiers and politicians, they have yet caught from the Dravidians a deep scholastic and philosophical tinge which, along with a basic earnestness and capacity for high things, has kept them true to Hinduism, gives a certain distinction to their otherwise matter-of-fact nature and promises much for their future development.

But the Malavas were a far greater, more versatile and culturable race than any which now represent the west; they had an aesthetic catholicity, a many-sided curiosity and receptiveness which enabled them to appreciate learning, high moral ideals and intellectual daring and ardour and assimilate them as far as was consistent with their own root-temperament. Nevertheless that root-temperament remained material and sensuous. When therefore the country falling from its old pure moral ideality and heroic intellectualism, weakened in fibre and sank towards hedonism and materialism, the centre of its culture and national life began to drift westward. Transferred by Agnimitra in the second century to Vidisha of the Dasharnas close to the Malavas, it finally found its true equilibrium in the beautiful and aesthetic city of Ujjayini which the artistic and sensuous genius of the Malavas had prepared to be a fit and noble capital of Hindu art, poetry and greatness throughout its most versatile and luxurious age. That position Ujjayini enjoyed until the nation began to crumble under the shock of new ideas and new forces and the centre of gravity shifted southwards to Devagiri of the Jadhavas and finally to Dravidian Vijayanagara, the last considerable seat of independent Hindu culture and national greatness. The consolidation of the Malavas under Vikramaditya took place in 56 B.C. and from that moment dates the age of Malava

pre-eminence; the great era of the Malavas afterwards called the Samvat era. It was doubtless subsequent to this date that Kalidasa came to Ujjayini to sum up in his poetry the beauty of human life, the splendours of art and the glory of the senses.

The Age of Kalidasa

VALMIKI, Vyasa and Kalidasa are the essence of the history of ancient India; if all else were lost, they would still be its sole and sufficient cultural history. Their poems are types and exponents of three periods in the development of the human soul, types and exponents also of the three great powers which dispute and clash in the imperfect and half-formed temperament and harmonise in the formed and perfect. At the same time, their works are pictures at once minute and grandiose of three moods of our Aryan civilisation, of which the first was predominatingly moral, the second predominatingly intellectual, the third predominatingly material. The fourth power of the soul, the spiritual, which can alone govern and harmonise the others by fusion with them, had not, though it pervaded and powerfully influenced each successive development, any separate age of predominance, did not like the others possess the whole race with a dominating obsession. It is because, conjoining in themselves the highest and most varied poetical gifts, they at the same time represent and mirror their age and humanity by their interpretative largeness and power that our three chief poets hold their supreme place and bear comparison with the greatest world-names, Homer, Shakespeare and Dante.

It has been said truly that the Ramayana represents an ideal society and assumed illogically that it must therefore represent an altogether imaginary one. The argument ignores the alternative of a real society idealised. No poet could evolve entirely out of his own imagination a picture at once so colossal, so minute and so consistent in every detail. No number of poets could do it without stumbling into fatal incompatibilities either of fact or of view, such as we find defacing the Mahabharata. This is not the place to discuss the question of Valmiki's age and authorship. This much, however, may be said that after excluding the Uttarakanda which is a later work, and some amount of interpolation for the most part easy enough to detect, and reforming

the text which is not unfrequently in a state of truly shocking confusion, the Ramayana remains on the face of it the work of a single, mighty and embracing mind. It is not easy to say whether it preceded or followed in date Vyasa's epic; it is riper in form and tone, has some aspects of a more advanced and mellow culture, and yet it gives the general impression of a younger humanity and an earlier, less sophisticated and complex mind. The nature of the poem and much of its subject-matter might at least justify the conclusion that Valmiki wrote in a political and social atmosphere much resembling that which surrounded Vyasa. He lived, that is to say, in an age approaching the present disorder and turmoil, of great revolutions and unbridled aristocratic violence, when the governing chivalry, the Kshatriya caste, in its pride of strength was asserting its own code of morals as the one rule of conduct. We may note the plain assertion of this standpoint by Jarasandha in the Mahabharata and Valmiki's emphatic and repeated protest against it through the mouth of Rama. This ethical code was, like all aristocratic codes of conduct, full of high chivalry and the spirit of *noblesse oblige*, but a little loose in sexual morality on the masculine side and indulgent to violence and the strong hand. To the pure and delicate moral temperament of Valmiki, imaginative, sensitive, enthusiastic, shot through with rays of visionary idealism and ethereal light, this looseness and violence were shocking and abhorrent. He could sympathise with them, as he sympathised with all that was wild and evil and anarchic, with the imaginative and poetical side of his nature, because he was a universal creative mind driven by his art-sense to penetrate, feel and re-embody all that the world contained; but to his intellect and peculiar emotional temperament they were distasteful. He took refuge therefore in a past age of national greatness and virtue, distant enough to be idealised, but near enough to have left sufficient materials for a great picture of civilisation which would serve his purpose — an age, it is important to note, of grandiose imperial equipoise such as must have existed in some form at least, since a persistent tradition of it runs through Sanskrit literature. In the framework of this imperial age, his puissant imagination created a marvellous picture of the human world as it might be if the actual and

existing forms and materials of society were used to the best and purest advantage, and an equally marvellous picture of another non-human world in which aristocratic violence, strength, self-will, lust and pride ruled supreme and idealised or rather colossalised. He brought these two worlds into warlike collision by the hostile meeting of their champions and utmost evolutions of their peculiar character-types, Rama and Ravana, and so created the Ramayana, the grandest and most paradoxical poem in the world which becomes unmatchably sublime by disdaining all consistent pursuit of sublimity, supremely artistic by putting aside all the conventional limitations of art, magnificently dramatic by disregarding all dramatic illusion, and uniquely epic by handling the least as well as the most epic material. Not all perhaps can enter at once into the spirit of this masterpiece; but those who have once done so, will never admit any poem in the world as its superior.

My point here, however, is that it gives us the picture of an entirely moralised civilisation, containing indeed vast material development and immense intellectual power, but both moralised and subordinated to the needs of purity of temperament and delicate ideality of action. Valmiki's mind seems nowhere to be familiarised with the high-strung intellectual gospel of a high and severe Dharma culminating in a passionless activity, raised to a supreme spiritual significance in the Gita, which is one great key-note of the Mahabharata. Had he known it, the strong leaven of sentimentalism and feminity in his nature might well have rejected it; such temperaments when they admire strength, admire it manifested and forceful rather than self-contained. Valmiki's characters act from emotional or imaginative enthusiasm, not from intellectual conviction; an enthusiasm of morality actuates Rama, an enthusiasm of immorality tyrannises over Ravana. Like all mainly moral temperaments, he instinctively insisted on one old established code of morals being universally observed as the only basis of ethical stability, avoided casuistic developments and distasted innovators in metaphysical thought as by their persistent and searching questions dangerous to the established bases of morality, especially to its wholesome ordinariness and everydayness. Valmiki, therefore, the father of our

secular poetry, stands for that early and finely moral civilisation which was the true heroic age of the Hindu spirit.

The poet of the Mahabharata lives nearer to the centre of an era of aristocratic turbulence and disorder. If there is any kernel of historic truth in the story of the poem, it records the establishment of those imperial forms of government and society which Valmiki had idealised. Behind its poetic legend it celebrates and approves the policy of a great Kshatriya leader of men who aimed at the subjection of his order to the rule of a central imperial Power which should typify its best tendencies and control or expel its worst. But while Valmiki was a soul out of harmony with its surroundings and looking back to an ideal past, Vyasa was a man of his time, profoundly in sympathy with it, full of its tendencies, hopeful of its results and looking forward to an ideal future. The one might be described as a conservative idealist advocating return to a better but departed model, the other is a progressive realist looking forward to a better but unborn model. Vyasa accordingly does not revolt from the aristocratic code of morality; it harmonises with his own proud and strong spirit and he accepts it as a basis for conduct, but purified and transfigured by the illuminating idea of the *niṣkāma karma*.

But, above all, intellectuality is his grand note; he is profoundly interested in ideas, in metaphysics, in ethical problems; he subjects morality to casuistic tests from which the more delicate moral tone of Valmiki's spirit shrank; he boldly erects above ordinary ethics a higher principle of conduct having its springs in intellect and strong character; he treats government and society from the standpoint of a practical and discerning statesmanlike mind, idealising solely for the sake of a standard. He touches, in fact, all subjects and whatever he touches he makes fruitful and interesting by originality, penetration and a sane and bold vision. In all this he is the son of the civilisation he has mirrored to us, a civilisation in which both morality and material development are powerfully intellectualised. Nothing is more remarkable in all the characters of the Mahabharata than this puissant intellectualism; every action of theirs seems to be impelled by an immense driving force of mind solidifying in character and therefore conceived and outlined as in stone. This

orgiastic force of the intellect is at least as noticeable as the impulse of moral or immoral enthusiasm behind each great action of the Ramayana. Throughout the poem the victorious and manifold mental activity of an age is prominent and gives its character to its civilisation. There is far more of thought in action than in the Ramayana, far less of thought in repose; the one pictures a time of gigantic creative ferment and disturbance; the other, as far as humanity is concerned, an ideal age of equipoise, tranquillity and order.

Many centuries after these poets, perhaps a thousand years or even more, came the third great embodiment of the national consciousness, Kalidasa. There is a far greater difference between the civilisation he mirrors than between Vyasa's and Valmiki's. He came when the daemonic orgy of character and intellect had worked itself out and ended in producing at once its culmination and reaction in Buddhism. There was everywhere noticeable a petrifying of the national temperament, visible to us in the tendency to codification; philosophy was being codified, morals were being codified, knowledge of any and every sort was being codified; it was on one side of its nature an age of scholars, legislators, dialecticians, philosophical formalisers. On the other side, the creative and aesthetic enthusiasm of the nation was pouring itself into things material, into the life of the senses, into the pride of life and beauty. The arts of painting, architecture, song, dance, drama, gardening, jewellery, all that can administer to the wants of great and luxurious capitals, received a grand impetus which brought them to their highest technical perfection. That this impetus came from Greek sources or from the Buddhists seems hardly borne out: the latter may rather have shared in the general tendencies of the time than originated them, and the Greek theory gives us a maximum of conclusions with a minimum of facts. I do not think, indeed, it can be maintained that this period, call it classical or material or what one will, was marked off from its predecessor by any clear division: such a partition would be contrary to the law of human development. Almost all the concrete features of the age may be found as separate facts in ancient India: codes existed from old time; art and drama were of fairly ancient origin, to whatever date we may

assign their development; physical Yoga processes existed almost from the first, and the material development portrayed in the Ramayana and Mahabharata is hardly less splendid than that of which the Raghuvamsha is so brilliant a picture. But whereas before, these were subordinated to more lofty ideals, now they prevailed and became supreme, occupying the best energies of the race and stamping themselves on its life and consciousness. In obedience to this impulse the centuries between the rise of Buddhism and the advent of Shankaracharya became — though not agnostic and sceptical, for they rejected violently the doctrines of Charvak — yet profoundly scientific and outward-going even in their spiritualism. It was therefore the great age of formalised metaphysics, science, law, art and the sensuous luxury which accompanies the arts.

Nearer the beginning than the end of this period, when India was systematising her philosophies and developing her arts and sciences, turning from Upanishad to Purana, from the high rarefied peaks of early Vedanta and Sankhya with their inspiring sublimities and bracing keenness to physical methods of ascetic Yoga and the dry intellectualism of metaphysical logic or else to the warm sensuous humanism of emotional religion, before its full tendencies had asserted themselves, in some spheres before it had taken the steps its attitude portended, Kalidasa arose in Ujjayini and gathered up in himself its present tendencies while he foreshadowed many of its future developments. He himself must have been a man gifted with all the learning of his age, rich, aristocratic, moving wholly in high society, familiar with and fond of life in the most luxurious metropolis of his time, passionately attached to the arts, acquainted with the sciences, deep in law and learning, versed in the formalised philosophies. He has some notable resemblances to Shakespeare; among others his business was, like Shakespeare's, to sum up the immediate past in the terms of the present: at the same time he occasionally informed the present with hints of the future. Like Shakespeare also he seems not to have cared deeply for religion. In creed he was a Vedantist and in ceremony, perhaps, a Shiva-worshipper, but he seems rather to have accepted these as the orthodox forms of his time and country, recommended to him by his intellec-

tual preference and aesthetic affinities, than to have satisfied with them any profound religious want. In morals also he accepted and glorified the set and scientifically elaborate ethics of the codes, but seems himself to have been destitute of the finer elements of morality. We need not accept any of the ribald and witty legends with which the Hindu decadence surrounded his name; but no unbiassed student of Kalidasa's poetry can claim for him either moral fervour or moral strictness. His writings show indeed a keen appreciation of high ideal and lofty thought, but the appreciation is aesthetic in its nature: he elaborates and seeks to bring out the effectiveness of these on the imaginative sense of the noble and grandiose, applying to the things of the mind and soul the same aesthetic standard as to the things of sense themselves. He has also the natural, high, aristocratic feeling for all that is proud and great and vigorous, and so far as he has it, he has exaltation and sublimity; but aesthetic grace and beauty and symmetry sphere in the sublime and prevent it from standing out with the bareness and boldness which is the sublime's natural presentation. His poetry has therefore never been, like the poetry of Valmiki and Vyasa, a great dynamic force for moulding heroic character or noble or profound temperament. In all this he represented the highly vital and material civilisation to which he belonged.

Yet some dynamic force a poet must have, some general human inspiration of which he is the supreme exponent; or else he cannot rank with the highest. Kalidasa is the great, the supreme poet of the senses, of aesthetic beauty, of sensuous emotion. His main achievement is to have taken every poetic element, all great poetical forms and subdued them to a harmony of artistic perfection set in the key of sensuous beauty. In continuous gift of seizing an object and creating it to the eye he has no rival in literature. A strong visualising faculty, such as the greatest poets have in their most inspired descriptive moments, was with Kalidasa an abiding and unfailing power and the concrete presentation which this definiteness of vision demanded, suffused with an intimate and sovereign feeling for beauty of colour and beauty of form, constitutes the characteristic Kalidasian manner. He is besides a consummate artist, profound in conception and

suave in execution, a master of sound and language who has moulded for himself out of the infinite possibilities of the Sanskrit tongue a verse and diction which are absolutely the grandest, most puissant and most full-voiced of any human speech, a language of the Gods. The note struck by Kalidasa when he built Sanskrit into that palace of noble sound, is the note which meets us in almost all the best works of the classic literature. Its characteristic features of style are a compact but never abrupt brevity, a soft gravity and smooth majesty, a noble harmony of verse, a strong and lucid beauty of chiselled prose, above all, an epic precision of phrase, weighty, sparing and yet full of colour and sweetness. Moreover, it is admirably flexible, suiting itself to all forms from the epic to the lyric, but most triumphantly to the two greatest, the epic and the drama. In his epic style Kalidasa adds to these permanent features a more than Miltonic fullness and grandiose pitch of sound and expression, in his dramatic an extraordinary grace and suavity which makes it adaptable to conversation and the expression of dramatic shade and subtly blended emotion.

With these supreme gifts Kalidasa had the advantage of being born into an age with which he was in temperamental sympathy and a civilisation which lent itself naturally to his peculiar descriptive genius. It was an aristocratic civilisation, as indeed were those which had preceded it, but it far more nearly resembled the aristocratic civilisations of Europe by its material luxury, its aesthetic tastes, its polite culture, its keen worldly wisdom and its excessive appreciation of wit and learning. Religious and ethical thought and sentiment were cultivated much as in France under Louis XIV, more in piety and profession than as swaying the conduct; they pleased the intellect or else touched the sentiment, but did not govern the soul. It was bad taste to be irreligious, but it was not bad taste to be sensual or even in some respects immoral. The splendid and luxurious courts of this period supported the orthodox religion and morals out of convention, conservatism, the feeling for established order and the inherited tastes and prejudices of centuries, not because they fostered any deep religious or ethical sentiment. Yet they applauded high moral ideas if presented to them in

cultured and sensuous poetry much in the same spirit that they applauded voluptuous description similarly presented. The ideals of morality were much lower than of old; free drinking was openly recognised and indulged in by both sexes; purity of life was less valued than in any other period of our civilisation. Yet the unconquerable monogamous instinct of the high-class Hindu woman seems to have prevented promiscuous vice and the disorganisation of the home which was the result of a similar state of society in ancient Rome, in Italy of the Renascence, in France under the Bourbons and in England under the later Stuarts. The old spiritual tendencies were also rather latent than dead, the mighty pristine ideals still existed in theory, — they are outlined with extraordinary grandeur by Kalidasa, — nor had they yet been weakened or lowered to a less heroic key. It was a time in which one might expect to meet the extremes of indulgence side by side with the extremes of renunciation; for the inherent spirituality of the Hindu nature finally revolted against the splendid and unsatisfying life of the senses. But of this phase Bhartrihari and not Kalidasa is the poet. The greater writer lived evidently in the full heyday of the material age, and there is no sign of any setting in of the sickness and dissatisfaction and disillusionment which invariably follow a long outburst of materialism.

The flourishing of the plastic arts had prepared surroundings of great external beauty of the kind needed for Kalidasa's poetic work. The appreciation of beauty in Nature, of the grandeur of mountain and forest, the loveliness of lakes and rivers, the charm of bird and beast life had become a part of contemporary culture. These and the sensitive appreciation of trees and plants and hills as living things, the sentimental feeling of brotherhood with animals which had influenced and been encouraged by Buddhism, the romantic mythological world still farther romanticised by Kalidasa's warm humanism and fine poetic sensibility, gave him exquisite grace and grandeur of background and scenic variety. The delight of the eye, the delight of the ear, smell, palate, touch, the satisfaction of the imagination and taste are the texture of his poetical creation, and into this he has worked the most beautiful flowers of emotion and intellec-

tual or aesthetic ideality. The scenery of his work is a universal paradise of beautiful things. All therein obeys one law of earthly grace; morality is aestheticised, intellect suffused and governed with the sense of beauty. And yet this poetry does not swim in languor, does not dissolve itself in sensuous weakness; it is not heavy with its own dissoluteness, heavy of curl and heavy of eyelid, cloyed by its own sweets, as the poetry of the senses usually is. Kalidasa is saved from this by the chastity of his style, his aim at burdened precision and energy of phrase, his unsleeping artistic vigilance.

As in the Ramayana and Mahabharata we have an absorbing intellect-impulse or a dynamic force of moral or immoral excitement driving the characters, so we have in Kalidasa an intense hedonistic impulse thrilling through speech and informing action. An imaginative pleasure in all shades of thought and of sentiment, a rich delight of the mind in its emotions, a luxuriousness of ecstasy and grief, a free abandonment to amorous impulse and rapture, a continual joy of life and seeking of beauty mark the period when India, having for the time exhausted the possibilities of soul-experience attainable through the spirit and the imaginative reason, was now attempting to find out the utmost each sense could feel, probing and sounding the soul-possibilities in Matter and even seeking God through the senses. The emotional religion of the Vaishnava Puranas which takes, as its type of the relation between the human soul and the Supreme, the passion of a woman for her lover, was already developing. The corresponding Tantric development of Shaivism may not yet have established itself fully; but the concretisation of the idea of Purusha-Prakriti, the union of Ishwara and Shakti, from which it arose, was already there in the symbolic legends of the Puranas and one of these is the subject of Kalidasa's greatest epic poem. The *Birth of the War-God* stands on the same height in classical Sanskrit as the *Paradise Lost* in English literature: it is the masterpiece and *magnum opus* of the age on the epic level. The central idea of this great unfinished poem, the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, typified in its original idea the union of Purusha and Prakriti, the supreme Soul and dynamic Nature by which the world is created; but this type of divine legend was

used esoterically to typify also the Nature-Soul's search for and attainment of God and something of this conception pierces through the description of Parvati's seeking after Shiva. Such was the age of Kalidasa, the temper of the civilisation which produced him; other poets of the time expressed one side of it or another, but his work is its splendid integral epitome, its picture of many composite hues and tones. Of the temperament of that civilisation the *Seasons* is an immature poetic self-expression, the *House of Raghu* the representative epic, the *Cloud-Messenger* the descriptive elegy, *Shacountala* with its two sister love-plays intimate dramatic pictures and the *Birth of the War-God* the grand religious fable. Kalidasa, who expressed so many sides and faces of it in writing, stands for its representative man and genius, as was Vyasa of the intellectual mood of Indian civilisation and Valmiki of its moral side.

It was the supreme misfortune of India that before she was able to complete the round of her experience and gather up the fruit of her long millenniums of search and travail by commencing a fourth and more perfect age in which moral, intellectual and material development should be all equally harmonised and all spiritualised, the inrush of barbarians broke in finally on her endless solitary *tapasyā* of effort and beat her national life into fragments. A preparation for such an age may be glimpsed in the new tendencies of spiritual seeking that began with Shankara and continued in later Vaishnavism and Shaivism and in new turns of poetry and art, but it found no opportunity of seizing on the total life of the nation and throwing it into another mould. The work was interrupted before it had well begun; and India was left with only the remnants of the culture of the material age to piece out her existence. Yet even the little that was done afterwards proved to be much; for it saved her from gradually petrifying and perishing as almost all the old civilisations of Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, petrified and perished, as the material civilisation of Europe, unless spiritualised, must before long petrify and perish. That there is still an unexhausted vitality in her, that she yet nourishes the seeds of rebirth and renewal, we owe to Shankara and his successors and the great minds and souls that came after them. Will she yet arise, new-combine her past

and continue the great dream where she left it off, shaking off, on the one hand, the soils and filth that have grown on her in her period of downfall and futile struggle, and re-asserting, on the other, her peculiar individuality and national type against the callow civilisation of the West with its dogmatic and intolerant knowledge, its still more dogmatic and intolerant ignorance, its deification of selfishness and force, its violence and its ungoverned Titanism? In doing so lies her one chance of salvation.

The Historical Method

OF Kalidasa, the man who represents one of the greatest periods in our civilisation and typifies so many sides and facets of it in his writing, we know if possible even less than of Valmiki and Vyasa. It is probable but not certain that he was a native of Malva born not in the capital Ujjayini, but in one of those villages of which he speaks in the *Cloud-Messenger* and that he afterwards resorted to the capital and wrote under the patronage of the great Vikramaditya who founded the era of the Malavas in the middle of the first century before Christ. Of his attainments, his creed, his character we may gather something from his poetry, but external facts we have none. There is indeed a mass of apocryphal anecdotes about him couching a number of witticisms and ingenuities mostly ribald, but these may be safely discredited. Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa, our three greatest names, are to us, outside their poetical creation, names merely and nothing more.

This is an exceedingly fortunate circumstance. The natural man within us rebels indeed against such a void; who Kalidasa was, what was his personal as distinguished from his poetical individuality, what manner of man was the great king whose patronage he enjoyed, who were his friends, who his rivals and how he dealt with either or both, whether or not he was a lover of wine and women in practice as well as in imagination, under what special surroundings he wrote and who were the minds by whom he was most influenced, all this the natural man clamours to know; and yet all these are things we are very fortunate not to know. The historical method is certainly an attractive one and it leads to some distinct advantages, for it decidedly aids those who are not gifted with fine insight and literary discrimination, to understand certain sides of a poet's work more clearly and intelligently. But while it increases our knowledge of the workings of the human mind, it does not in the end assist or improve our critical appreciation of poetry; it helps to an understanding of the man

and of those aspects of his poetry which concern his personal individuality but it obstructs our clear and accurate impression of the work and its value. The supporters of the historical method put the cart before the horse and placing themselves between the shafts do a great deal of useless though heroic labour in dragging both. They insist on directing that attention to the poet which should be directed to the poem. After assimilating a man's literary work and realising its value first to ourselves and then in relation to the eternal nature and scope of poetry, we may and indeed must, — for if not consciously aimed at, it must have been insensibly formed in the mind, — attempt to realize to ourselves an idea of his poetic individuality from the data he himself has provided for us; and the idea so formed will be the individuality of the man so far as we can assimilate him, the only part of him therefore that is of real value to us. The individuality of Shakespeare as expressed in his recorded actions and his relations to his contemporaries is a matter of history and has nothing to do with appreciation of his poetry. It may interest me as a study of human character and intellect but I have no concern with it when I am reading *Hamlet* or even when I am reading the *Sonnets*; on the contrary, it may often come between me and the genuine revelation of the poet in his work, for actions seldom reveal more than the outer, bodily and sensational man while his word takes us within to the mind and the reason, the receiving and the selecting part of him which are his truer self. It may matter to the pedant or the gossip within me whether the sonnets were written to William Herbert or to Henry Wriothesley or to William himself, whether the dark woman whom Shakespeare loved against his better judgement was Mary Fitton or someone else or nobody at all, whether the language is that of hyperbolical compliment to a patron or that of an actual passionate affection; but to the lover of poetry in me these things do not matter at all. It may be a historical fact that Shakespeare when he sat down to write these poems intended to use the affected language of conventional and fulsome flattery; if so, it does not exalt our idea of his character; but after all it was only the bodily and sensational case of that huge spirit which so intended, — the food-sheath and the life-sheath of him, to use Hindu

phraseology; but the mind, the soul which was the real Shakespeare felt, as he wrote, every phase of the passion he was expressing to the very utmost, felt precisely those exultations, chills of jealousy and disappointment, noble affections, dark and unholy fires, and because he felt them, he was able so to express them that the world still listens and is moved. The passion was there in the soul of the man, — whether as a potential force or an experience from a past life, matters very little, — and it forms therefore part of his poetic individuality. But if we allow the alleged historical fact to interfere between us and this individuality, the feelings with which we ought to read the *Sonnets*, admiration, delight, sympathy, rapt interest in a soul struggling through passion towards self-realisation, will be disturbed by other feelings of disgust and nausea or at the best pity for a man who with such a soul within him prostituted its powers to the interests of his mere bodily covering. Both our realisation of the true Shakespeare and our enjoyment of his poetry will thus be cruelly and uselessly marred. This is the essential defect which vitiates the theory of the man and his *milieu*. The man in Dr. Johnson expressed himself in his conversation and therefore his own works are far less important to us than Boswell's record of his daily talk; the man in Byron expresses himself in his letters as well as his poetry and both have therefore to be read. It is only the most sensational and therefore the lowest natures that express themselves mainly by their actions. In the case of great poets with whom expression is an instrument that answers spontaneously and accurately to the touch of the soul, it is in their work that we shall find them, the whole of them and not only that meagre part which struggled out brokenly and imperfectly in the shape of action. It is really this difference that makes the great figures of epic poetry so much less intimately and thoroughly known to us than the great figures of drama. Kalidasa was both an epic poet and a dramatist, yet Shiva and Parvati are merely grand paintings while Dushyanta, Shacountala, Sharngava, Priyamvada, Anasuya, Pururavas and Urvasie and Chitraleqha, Dharinie and Iravatie and Agnimitra are living beings who are our friends, whom we know. The difference arises from the importance of speech in self-revelation and the comparative

inadequacy of action, except as a check or a corroboration. The only epics which have creations equal to dramatic creation in their nearness to us are the Mahabharata and Ramayana; and the art form of these far more closely resembles the methods of the modern novel than those of epic poetry as it is understood in Europe; they combine, that is to say, the dramatic method with the epic and introduce a minuteness of observant detail with which European poets would have shrunk from tempting the patience of the sensational and soon-wearied West. The importance of the *milieu* to criticism has likewise been immensely exaggerated. It is important as literary history; but history is not criticism; a man may have a very wide and curious knowledge of literary history and yet be a very poor critic and the danger of the present times lies in the immense multiplication of literary historians with their ass's load of facts and theories and opinions and tendencies and the comparative rarity of really illuminating critics. This is at least the case with all poets who represent their age in some or most of its phases and with those who do not do this the *milieu* is of very small importance. The *milieu* of Shakespeare or of Homer or of Kalidasa, so far as it is important to an appreciation of their poetry, can be gathered from their poetry itself, and knowledge of the history of the times would only litter the mind with facts which are of no real value as they mislead and embarrass the judgment instead of assisting it. (I do not say that these things are not in a measure necessary but they are always the scaffolding and not the pile.) The tendency of the historical method beginning with and insisting on the poet rather than the poem is to infer from him as a "man" the meaning and value of his poetry — a vicious process, for it concentrates the energies on the subordinate and adds the essential as an appendix. It has been said that in a rightly constituted mind the knowledge of the man and his *milieu* will help to a just appreciation of his poetry; but this knowledge in its nature rather distorts our judgment than helps it, for instead of giving an honest account to ourselves of the impression naturally made by the poem on us, we are irresistibly led to cut and carve that impression so as to make it square with our knowledge and the theories, more or less erroneous and ephemeral, we

deduce from that knowledge. We proceed from the *milieu* to the poem, instead of arguing from the poem to the *milieu*. Yet the latter is the only fair method; for it is not the whole of the *milieu* that affects the man nor every part of it that affects him equally; the extent to which it affects him and the distribution of its various influences can only be judged from the poem itself. We know from literary history that Marlowe and Kyd and other writers exercised no little influence on Shakespeare in his young and callow days; and it may be said in passing that all poets of the first order and even many of the second are profoundly influenced by the inferior and sometimes almost worthless work which was in vogue at the time of their early efforts, but they have the high secret of mental alchemy which can convert not merely inferior metal but even refuse into gold. It is only poets of a one-sided minor genius who can afford to be aggressively original. Now as literary history, as psychology, as part of the knowledge of intellectual origins, this is a highly important and noteworthy fact. But in the task of criticism what do we gain by it? We have simply brought the phantoms of Marlowe and Kyd between ourselves and what we are assimilating, and so disturbed and blurred the true picture of it that was falling on our souls, and if we know our business, the first thing we shall do is to banish those intruding shadows and bring ourselves once more face to face with Shakespeare.

The historical method leads besides to much confusion and is sometimes a veil for a bastard impressionism and sometimes a source of literary insincerity or at the best anaemic catholicity. As often as not a critic studies, say, the Elizabethan age because he has a previous sympathy with the scattered grandeurs, the hasty and vehement inequalities, the profuse mixture of flawed stones, noble gems and imitation jewellery with which that school overwhelms us. In that case the profession with which he starts is insincere, for he professes to base his appreciation on study, whereas his study begins from, continues with and ends in appreciation. Often on the contrary he studies as a duty and praises in order to elevate his study; because he has perused all and understood all, he must sympathise with all, or where is the proof of his having understood? Perfect intelligence of a man's

character and work implies a certain measure of sympathy and liking; antipathy has only half sight and indifference is blind. Hence much false criticism misleading the public intelligence and causing a confusion in critical weights and measures, a depreciation of the literary currency from which in the case of the frank impressionist we are safe. In more truth the historical method is useful only with inferior writers who, not having had full powers of expression, are more interesting than their work; but even here it has led to that excessive and often absurd laudation of numberless small names in literature, many of them "discoveries", which is the curse of latter-day criticism. The historical method is in fact the cloven foot of Science attempting to insinuate itself into the fair garden of Poetry. By this I mean no disrespect to Science. The devil is a gentleman and Shakespeare himself guaranteed his respectability; but he is more than that, he is a highly useful and even indispensable personage. So also is Science not only a respectable branch of intellectual activity, — when it does not indulge its highly civilized propensity for cutting up live animals, — but it is also a useful and indispensable branch. But the devil had no business in Paradise and Science has no business in the sphere of Poetry. The work of Science is to collect facts and generalize from them; the smallest and meanest thing is as important to it as the highest, the weed no less than the flower and the bug that crawls and stinks no less than man who is a little lower than the angels. By introducing this method into criticism, we are overloading ourselves with facts and stifling the literary field with the host of all the mediocrities more or less "historically" important but at any rate deadly dull and uninspiring who at one time or another had the misfortune to take themselves for literary geniuses. And just as scientific history tried to lose the individual genius into movements, so the historical method tries to lose the individual poem in tendencies. The result is that modern poets, instead of holding up before them as their ideal the expression of the great universal feelings and thoughts which sway humanity, tend more and more to express tendencies, problems, realisms, romanticisms, mysticisms and all the other local and ephemeral aberrations with which poetry has no business whatever. It is the sign of a decadent and morbid

age which is pushing itself by the mass of its own undigested learning into Alexandrianism and scholasticism, cutting itself off from the fountainheads of creation and wilfully preparing its own decline and sterility. The age of which Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes and Simonides were the Homer and the age of which Tennyson is the Shakespeare and Rudyard Kipling the Milton present an ominous resemblance.

On Translating Kalidasa

THE life and surroundings in which Indian poetry moves cannot be rendered in the terms of English poetry. Yet to give up the problem and content oneself with tumbling out the warm, throbbing Indian word to shiver and starve in the inclement atmosphere of the English language seems to me not only an act of literary inhumanity and a poor-spirited confession of failure, but a piece of laziness likely to defeat its own object. An English reader can gather no picture from and associate no idea of beauty with these outlandish terms. What can he understand when he is told that the *atimukta* creeper is flowering in the grove of *kesara* trees and the *mullica* or the...is sending out its fragrance into the night and the *chacravaque*[1] is complaining to his mate amid the still ripples of the river that flows through the *jambous*? Or how does it help him to know that the scarlet mouth of a woman is like the red *bimba* fruit or the crimson *bandhoul* flower? People who know Sanskrit seem to imagine that because these words have colour and meaning and beauty to them, they must also convey the same associations to their reader. This is a natural but deplorable mistake; this jargon is merely a disfigurement in English poetry. The cultured may read their work in spite of the jargon out of the unlimited intellectual curiosity natural to culture; the half-cultured may read it because of the jargon out of the ingrained tendency of the half-cultured mind to delight in what is at once unintelligible and inartistic. But their work can neither be a thing of permanent beauty nor serve a really useful object; and work which is neither immortal nor useful what self-respecting man would knowingly go out of his way to do? Difficulties are after all given us in order that we may brace our sinews by surmounting them; the greater the difficulty, the greater our chance of the very highest success. I can only point out rather sketchily how I have myself thought it best to meet the difficulty; a detailed discussion would require a sepa-

[1] *cakravāka.*

rate volume. In the first place, a certain concession may be made but within very narrow and guarded limits to the need for local colour, a few names of trees, flowers, birds etc., may be transliterated into English, but only when they do not look hopelessly outlandish in that form or else have a liquid or haunting beauty of sound; a similar indulgence may be yet more freely permitted in the transliteration of mythological names. But here the licence ends; a too liberal use of it would destroy entirely the ideal of translation; what is perfectly familiar in the original language must not seem entirely alien to the foreign audience; there must be a certain toning down of strangeness, an attempt to bring home the association to the foreign intelligence, to give at least some idea to a cultured but not orientally erudite mind. This may be done in many ways and I have availed myself of all. A word may be rendered by some neologism which will help to convey any prominent characteristic or idea associated with the thing it expresses; blossom of ruby may, for instance, render *bandhoula*, a flower which is always mentioned for its redness. Or else the word itself may be dropped and the characteristic brought into prominence; for instance, instead of saying that a woman is lipped like a ripe *bimba*, it is, I think, a fair translation to write, "Her scarlet mouth is a ripe fruit and red". This device of expressingly declaring the characteristics which the original only mentions, I have frequently employed in the *Cloud-Messenger*, even when equivalent words exist in English, because many objects known in both countries are yet familiar and full of common associations to the Indian mind while to the English they are rare, exotic and slightly associated or only with one particular and often accidental characteristic.[1] A kindred method, especially with mythological allusions, is to explain fully what in the original is implicit; Kalidasa, for instance, compares

[1] It is an unfortunate tendency of the English mind to seize on what seems to it grotesque or ungainly in an unfamiliar object; thus the elephant and peacock have become almost impossible in English poetry, because the one is associated with lumbering heaviness and the other with absurd strutting. The tendency of the Hindu mind on the other hand is to seize on what is pleasing and beautiful in all things and turn to see a charm where the English mind sees a deformity and to extract poetry and grace out of the ugly. The classical instances are the immortal verses in which Valmiki by a storm of beautiful and costly images and epithets has immortalised the hump of Manthara and the still more immortal passage in which he has made the tail of a monkey epic.

a huge dark cloud striding northwards from Crouncharundhra to "the dark foot of Vishnou lifted in impetuous act to quell Bali", *śyāmaḥ pādo baliniyamanābhyudyatasyeva viṣṇoḥ*. This I have translated,

> "Dark like the cloudy foot of highest God
> When starting from the dwarf-shape world-immense
> With Titan-quelling step through heaven he strode."

It will be at once objected that this is not translation, but the most licentious paraphrase. This is not so if my original contention be granted that the business of poetical translation is to reproduce not the exact words but the exact image, associations and poetical beauty and flavour of the original. There is not a single word in the translation I have instanced which does not represent something at once suggested to the Indian reader by the words of the text. Vishnou is nothing to the English reader but some monstrous and bizarre Hindu idol; to the Hindu He is God Himself, the word is therefore more correctly represented in English by "highest God" than by Vishnou; *śyāmaḥ pādaḥ* is closely represented by "dark like the cloudy foot", so the word cloudy being necessary both to point the simile which is not apparent and natural to the English reader as to the Indian and to define the precise sort of darkness indicated by the term *śyāmaḥ*; Bali has no meaning or association in English, but in the Sanskrit it represents the same idea as "Titan"; only the particular name recalls a certain theosophic legend which is a household word to the Hindu, that of the dwarf-Vishnou who obtained from the Titan Bali as much land as he could cover with three steps, then filling the whole world with himself with one stride measured the earth, with another the heavens and with the third placing his foot on the head of Bali thrust him down into bottomless Hell. All this immediately arises before the mental eye of the Hindu as he reads Kalidasa's finely chosen words. The impetuous and vigorous term *abhyudyatasya* both in sound and sense suggests images, the sudden starting up of the world-pervading deity from the dwarf shape he had assumed while the comparison to the cloud reminds him that the second step of the three referred

to is that of Vishnou striding "through heaven". But to the English reader the words of Kalidasa literally transliterated would be a mere artificial conceit devoid of the original sublimity. It is the inability to seize the associations and precise poetical force of Sanskrit words that has led so many European Sanskritists to describe the poetry of Kalidasa which is hardly surpassed for truth, bold directness and native beauty and grandeur as the artificial poetry of an artificial period. A literal translation would only spread this erroneous impression to the general reader. It must be admitted that in the opposite method one of Kalidasa's finest characteristics is entirely lost, his power of expressing by a single simple direct and sufficient word ideas and pictures of the utmost grandeur or shaded complexity; but this is a characteristic which could in no case be possible in any language but the classical Sanskrit which Kalidasa did more than any man to create or at least to perfect. Even the utmost literalness could not transfer this characteristic into English. This method of eliciting all the values of the original of which I have given a rather extreme instance, I have applied with great frequency where a pregnant mythological allusion or a striking or subtle picture or image calls for adequate representation, more especially perhaps in pictures or images connected with birds and animals unfamiliar or but slightly familiar to the English reader. (At the same time I must plead guilty to occasional excesses, to reading into Kalidasa perhaps in a dozen instances what is not there. I can only plead in apology that translators are always incorrigible sinners in this respect and that I have sinned less than others; moreover, except in one or two instances, these additions have always been suggested either by the sound or substance of the original. I may instance the line,

A flickering line of fireflies seen in sleep,

Kalidasa says nothing equivalent to or suggesting "seen in sleep", but I had to render somehow the impression of night and dim unreality created by the dreamy movement and whispering assonances of the lines

alpālpabhāsaṁ khadyotālīvilasitanibhāṁ vidyudunmeṣadṛṣṭim

with its soft dentals and its wavering and gliding liquids and sibilants. Unable to do this by sound I sought to do it by verbal expression, in so far made a confession of incompetence, but in a way that may perhaps carry its own pardon.)

There is yet another method which has to be applied far more cautiously, but is sometimes indispensable. Occasionally it is necessary or at least advisable to discard the original image altogether and replace it by a more intelligible English image. There is no commoner subject of allusion in Sanskrit poetry than the passionate monotoned threnody of the forlorn bird who is divided at night by some mysterious law from his mate, divided if by a single lotus leaf, yet fatally divided. Such at least was the belief suggested by its cry at night to the imaginative Aryans. Nothing can exceed the beauty, pathos and power with which this allusion is employed by Kalidasa. Hear, for instance, Pururavas as he seeks for his lost Urvasie,

> Thou wild-drake when thy love,
> Her body hidden by a lotus-leaf,
> Lurks near thee in the pool, deemest her far
> And wailest musically to the flowers
> A wild deep dirge. Such is thy conjugal
> Yearning, thy terror such of even a little
> Division from her nearness. Me thus afflicted,
> Me so forlorn thou art averse to bless
> With just a little tidings of my love.

And again in the *Shacountala*, the lovers are thus gracefully warned:

> O Chacravaque, sob farewell to thy mate,
> The night, the night comes down to part you.

Fable as it is, one who has steeped himself in Hindu poetry can never bring himself wholly to disbelieve it. For him the melancholy call of the bird will sound for ever across the chill dividing stream and make musical with pity the huge and solemn night.

But when the Yaksha says to the cloud that he will recognise her who is his second life by her sweet rare speech and her loneliness in that city of happy lovers, "sole like a lonely Chacravaque with me her comrade far away", the simile has no pathos to an English mind and even when explained would only seem "an artificiality common to the court-poetry of the Sanskrit age". I have therefore thought myself justified by the slightness of the allusion in translating

"Sole like a widowed bird when all the nests are making",

which translates the idea and the emotion while suggesting a slightly different but related image.

I have indicated above the main principles by which I have guided myself in the task of translation. But there still remains the question, whether while preserving the ideals one may not still adhere more or less closely to the text. The answer to this is that such closeness is imperative, but it must be a closeness of word-value, not oneness of word-meaning; into this word-value there enter the elements of association, sound and aesthetic beauty. If these are not translated, the word is not translated, however correct the rendering may be. For instance, the words *salila*, *āpaḥ* and *jala* in Sanskrit all mean water, but if *jala* may be fairly represented by the common English word and the more poetic *āpaḥ* by "waters" or "ocean" according to the context, what will represent the beautiful suggestions of grace, brightness, softness and clearness which accompany *salila*? Here it is obvious that we have to seek refuge in sound-suggestions and verse-subtleties to do what is not feasible by verbal rendering. Everything therefore depends on the skill and felicity of the translator and he must be judged rather by the accuracy with which he renders the emotional and aesthetic value of each expression than brought to a rigid [regard] for each word in the original. Moreover the idiom of Sanskrit, especially of classical Sanskrit, is too far divided from the idiom of English. Literal translation from the Greek is possible though sometimes disastrous, but literal translation from the Sanskrit is impossible. There is indeed a school endowed with more valour than discretion and more

metaphor than sense who condemn the dressing up of the Aryan beauty in English clothes and therefore demand that not only should the exact words be kept but the exact idiom. For instance they would perpetrate the following: "Covering with lashes water-heavy from anguish, her eye gone to meet from former pleasantness the nectar-cool lattice-path-entered feet of the moon and then at once turned away, like a land-lotus-plant on a cloudy day not awake, not sleeping". Now quite apart from the execrable English and the want of rhythm, the succession of the actions and the connexions of thought which are made admirably clear in the Sanskrit by the mere order of the words, is here entirely obscured and lost; moreover the poetic significance of the words *prītyā* (pleasantness) and *abhre*, implying here rain as well as cloud and the beautiful force of *salilagurubhiḥ* (water-heavy) are not even hinted at, while the meaning and application of the simile quite apparent in the original needs bringing out in the English. For the purpose of immediate comparison I give here my own version: "The moon beams...."

This I maintain though not literal is almost as close and meets without overstepping all the requirements of good translation. For the better illustration of the method, I prefer however to quote a more typical stanza:

Śabdāyante madhuramanilaiḥ kīcakāḥ pūryamāṇāḥ
Saṁsaktābhistripuravijayo gīyate kinnarībhiḥ,
Nirhādī te muraja iva cet kandareṣu dhvaniḥ syāt
Saṅgītārtho nanu paśupatestatra bhāvī samagram.

Rendered into literal English this is:

The bamboos filling with winds are noising sweetly, the Tripour-conquest is being sung by the glued-together Kinnaries, if thy thunder should be in the glens like the sound on a drum — the material of the concert of the Beast-Lord is to be complete there, eh?

My own translation runs,

Of Tripour slain in lovely dances joined
And linkèd troops the Oreads of the hill

Are singing and inspired with rushing wind
Sweet is the noise of bamboos fluting shrill;
Thou thundering in the mountain-glens with cry
Of drums shouldst the sublime orchestra fill.

The word Tripura means the "three cities", refers to the three material qualities of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, light, passion and darkness, which have to be slain by Shiva the emancipator before the soul can rejoin God; but there is no reference here to the theosophic basis of the legend, but possibly to the legend itself, the conquest of the demon Tripura by Mahadeva. There was no means of avoiding the mythological allusion and its unfamiliarity had simply to be accepted. *Tripuravijayo gīyate*, "of Tripour slain are singing" requires little comment. *Saṁsaktābhiḥ*, meaning "linked close together in an uninterrupted chain" is here rendered by "joined in linked troops"; but this hardly satisfied the requirement of poetic translation, for the term suggests to an Indian a very common practice which does not, I think, exist in Europe, women taking each other's hands and dancing as they sing, generally in a circle; to express this in English, so as to create the same picture as the Sanskrit conveys, it was necessary to add "in lovely dances". The word Kinnaries presents a serious initial difficulty. The Purana has, mythologising partly from false etymology, turned these Kinnaras into men and women with horse faces and the description has been copied down into all Sanskrit dictionaries. But the Kinnaries of Valmiki have little resemblance with these Puranic grotesques; they are beings of superhuman beauty, unearthly sweetness of voice and wild freedom who seldom appear on the earth, their home is in the mountains and in the skies; he speaks of a young Kinnar snared and bound by men and the mother wailing over her offspring; and Kekayie lying on the ground in her passion of grief and anger is compared to a Kinnaric fallen from the skies. In all probability they were at first a fugitive image of the strange wild voices of the wind galloping and crying in the mountain-tops. The idea of speed would then suggest the idea of galloping horse and by the usual principle of Puranic allegory which was intellectual rather than artistic, the head, the most

prominent and essential member of the human body, would be chosen as the seat of the symbol. Kalidasa had in this as in many other instances to take the Puranic allegory of the old poetic figure and new-subject it to the law of artistic beauty. In no case does he depart from the Puranic conception, but his method is to suppress the ungainly elements of the idea, often preserving it only in an epithet, and bring into prominence all the elements of beauty. Here the horse-faces are entirely suppressed and the picture offered is that of women singing with unearthly voices on the mountain-tops. The use of the word Kinnarie here would have no poetic propriety; to the uninstructed it would mean nothing and to the instructed would suggest only the ungainly horse-face which Kalidasa here ignores and conflict with the idea of wild and divine melody which is emphasised. I have therefore translated "the Oreads of the hills"; these spirits of the mountains are the only image in English which can at all render the idea of beauty and vague strangeness here implied; at the same time I have used the apparently tautologous enlargement "of the hills", because it was necessary to give some idea of the distant, wild and mystic which the Greek Oreads does not in itself quite bring out. I have moreover transposed the two lines in translation for very obvious reasons. The first line demands still more careful translation. The word *śabdāyante* means literally "sound, make a noise", but unlike its English rendering it is a rare word used by Kalidasa for the sake of a certain effect of sound and a certain shade of signification; while therefore rendering by "noise" I have added the epithet "shrill" to bring it up to the required value. Again, the force and sound of *pūryamāṇāḥ* cannot be rendered by its literal rendering "filled", and *anila*, one of the many beautiful and significant Sanskrit words for wind, — *vāyu*, *anila*, *pavana*, *samīra*, *samīraṇa*, *vāta*, *prabhañjana*, *marut*, *sadāgati* — suggests powerfully the breath and flowing of wind and is in the Upanishad used as equivalent to Prana, the breath or emotional soul; to render adequately the word "inspired" has been preferred to "filled" and the epithet "rushing" added to wind. *Kīcakāḥ pūryamāṇāḥ anilaiḥ* in the original suggests at once the sound of the flute, because the flute is in India made of the hollow bamboo and the shrillness of the

word *kīcakāḥ* assists. The last two lines of the stanza have been rendered with great closeness, except for the omission of *nanu* and the substitution of the epithet 'sublime' for *paśupateḥ*. *Nanu* is a Sanskrit particle which sometimes asks a rhetorical question but more often suggests one answered; the delicate shades suggested by the Sanskrit particles cannot be represented in English or only by gross effects which would be intolerably excessive and rhetorical. The omission of Pasupati, the name of Shiva as the Lord of Wild Life, though not necessary, is, I think, justified. He is sufficiently suggested by the last stanza and to those who understand the allusion, by the reference to Tripura; the object of suggesting the wild and sublime which is served in Sanskrit by introducing this name is equally served in English by the general atmosphere of wild remoteness and the insertion of the epithet 'sublime'.

This analysis of a single stanza – *ex uno disce omnes* — will be enough to show the essential fidelity which underlies the apparent freedom of my translation. At the same time it would be disingenuous to deny that in at least a dozen places of each poem, — more perhaps in the longer ones – I have slipped into words and touches which have no justification in the original. This is a literary offence which is always condemnable and always committed. In mitigation of judgment I can only say that it has been done rarely and that the superfluous word or touch is never out of harmony with or unsuggested by the original; it has sprung out of the text and not been foisted upon it.

The remarks I have made apply to all the translations but more especially to the *Cloud-Messenger*. In the drama except in highly poetical passages I have more often than not sacrificed subtlety in order to preserve the directness and incisiveness of the Sanskrit, qualities of great importance to dramatic writing, and in the epic to the dread of diffuseness which would ruin the noble harmony of the original. But the *Cloud-Messenger* demands rather than shuns the careful and subtle rendering of every effect of phrase, sound and association. The *Meghadūtam* of Kalidasa is the most marvellously perfect descriptive and elegiac poem in the world's literature. Every possible beauty of phrase, every possible beauty of sound, every grace of literary association,

every source of imaginative and sensuous beauty has been woven together into a harmony which is without rival and without fault; for amidst all its wealth of colour, delicacy and sweetness, there is not a word too much or too little, no false note, no excessive or defective touch; the colouring is just and subdued in its richness, the verse movement regular in its variety, the diction simple in its suggestiveness, the emotion convincing and fervent behind a certain high restraint, the imagery precise, right and not overdone as in the *Raghuvamsha* and yet quite as full of beauty and power. The *Shacountala* and the *Cloud-Messenger* are the *ne plus ultra* of Hindu poetic art. Such a poem asks for and repays the utmost pains a translator can give it; it demands all the wealth of word and sound effect, all the power of literary beauty, of imaginative and sensuous charm he has the capacity to extract from the English language. At the same time its qualities of diction and verse cannot be rendered. The diffuseness of English will not thus lend itself to the brief suggestiveness of the Sanskrit without being so high-strung, nervous and bare in its strength as to falsify its flowing harmony and sweetness; nor to its easy harmony without losing close-knit precision and falsifying its brevity, gravity and majesty. We must be content to lose something in order that we may not lose all.

In Kalidasa another very serious difficulty meets the unhappy translator beyond the usual pitfalls. Few great Sanskrit poems employ the same metre throughout. In the dramas where metrical form is only used when the thought, image or emotion rises above the ordinary level, the poet employs whatever metre he thinks suitable to the mood he is in. In English, however, such a method would result in opera rather than in drama. I have therefore thought it best, taking into consideration the poetical feeling and harmonious flow of Kalidasa's prose to use blank verse throughout varying its pitch according as the original form is metrical or prose and the emotion or imagery more or less exalted. In epic work the licence of metrical variation is not

quite so great, yet there are several metres considered apt to epic narrative, and Kalidasa varies them without scruple in different cantos, sometimes even in the same canto. If blank verse be, as I believe it is, a fair equivalent for the *anuṣṭubh*, the ordinary epic metre, how shall one find others which shall correspond as well to the "thunderbolt" Sloka (*Indravajrā*) or the "lesser thunderbolt" Sloka (*upendravajrā*), "the gambolling-of-the-tiger" Sloka (*śārdūlavikrīḍita*) and all those other wonderful and grandiose rhythmic structures with fascinating names of which Kalidasa is so mighty a master? Nor would such variation be tolerated by English canons of taste. In the epic and drama the translator is driven to a compromise and therefore to that extent a failure; he may infuse good poems or plays reproducing the architecture and idea-sense of Kalidasa with something of his spirit, but it is a version and not a translation. It is only when he comes to the *Cloud-Messenger* that he is free of this difficulty; for the *Cloud-Messenger* is written throughout in a single and consistent stanza. This *mandākrāntā* or "gently stepping" stanza is entirely quantitative and too complicated to be rendered into any corresponding accentual form. In casting about for a metre I was only certain of one thing that neither blank verse nor the royal quatrain stanza would serve my purpose; the one has not the necessary basis of recurring harmonics; in the other the recurrence is too rigid, sharply defined and unvarying to represent the eternal swell and surge of Kalidasa's stanza. Fortunately, by an inspiration and without deliberate choice, Kalidasa's lines, as I began turning them, flowed into the form of triple rhyme and that necessarily suggested the terza rima. This metre, as I have treated it, seems to me to reproduce with as much accuracy as the difference between the languages allows, the spiritual and emotional atmosphere of the *Cloud-Messenger*. The terza rima in English lends itself naturally to the principle of variation in recurrence which imparts so singular a charm to this poem, recurrence in especial of certain words, images, assonances, harmonies, but recurrence always with a difference so as to keep one note sounding through the whole performance underneath its various harmony. In terza rima the triple rhyme

immensely helps this effect, for it allows of the same common rhymes recurring but usually with a difference in one or more of their company.

The prose of Kalidasa's dialogue is the most unpretentious and admirable prose in Sanskrit literature; it is perfectly simple, easy in pitch and natural in tone with a shining, smiling, rippling lucidity, a soft carolling gait like a little girl running along in a meadow and smiling back at you as she goes. There is the true image of it, a quiet English meadow with wild flowers on a bright summer morning, breezes abroad, the smell of hay in the neighbourhood, honeysuckle on the bank, hedges full of convolvuluses or wild roses, a ditch on one side with cress or forget-me-nots and nothing pronounced or poignant except perhaps a stray whiff of meadow-sweet from a distance. This admirable unobtrusive charm and just observed music (Coleridge) makes it run easily into verse in English. In translating one has at first some vague idea of reproducing the form as well as the spirit of the Sanskrit, rendering verse stanza by verse stanza and prose movement by prose movement. But it will soon be discovered that except in the talk of the buffoon and not always then Kalidasa's prose never evokes its just echo, never finds its answering pitch, tone or quality in English prose. The impression it creates is in no way different from Shakespeare's verse taken anywhere at its easiest and sweetest:

> Your lord does know my mind. I cannot love him,
> Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
> Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
> In voices well divulged, free, learned and valiant;
> And in dimension and the shape of nature,
> A gracious person; but yet I cannot love him.
> He might have took his answer long ago.[1]

Or again, still more close in its subtle and telling simplicity:

[1] *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc. 5.

Ol. What is your parentage?
Vi. Above my fortunes, yet my state is well.
I am a gentleman.
Ol. Get you to your lord,
I cannot love him; let him send no more;
Unless perchance you came to me again
To tell me how he takes it.[1]

There is absolutely no difference between this and the prose of Kalidasa, since even the absence of metre is compensated by the natural majesty, grace and rhythmic euphony of the Sanskrit language and the sweet seriousness and lucid effectiveness it naturally wears when it is not tortured for effects.

[1] *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc 5.

Kalidasa's "Seasons"

I. ITS AUTHENTICITY

THE *Seasons* of Kalidasa is one of those early works of a great poet which are even more interesting to a student of his evolution than his later masterpieces. We see his characteristic gift even in the immature workmanship and uncertain touch and can distinguish the persistent personality in spite of the defective self-expression. Where external record is scanty, this interest is often disturbed by the question of authenticity and where there is any excuse for the doubt, it has first to be removed. The impulse which leads us to deny authenticity to early and immature work is natural and almost inevitable. When we turn from the great harmonies and victorious imaginations of the master to the raw and perhaps faltering workmanship of these uncertain beginnings, we are irresistibly impelled to cry out, "This is not by the same hand." But the impulse, however natural, is not always reasonable. The maxim that a poet is born and not made is only true in the sense that great poetical powers are there in the mind of the child and in this sense the same remark might be applied with no less truth to every species of human genius; philosophers, sculptors, painters, critics, orators, statesmen are all born and not made. But because poetical genius is rarer or, at any rate, wider and more lasting in its appeal than any other, the popular mind with its ready gift for seizing one aspect of truth out of many and crystallising error into the form of a proverb, has exalted the poet into a splendid freak of Nature exempt from the general law. If a man without the inborn oratorical fire may be trained into a good speaker or another without the master's inspiration of form and colour work out for himself a blameless technique, so too may a meagre talent become by diligence a machine for producing elegant verse. But poetic genius needs experience and self-discipline as much as any other and by its very complexity more than most. This is eminently true of great poets with a varied gift. A narrow though

a high faculty works best on a single line and may show perfection at an early stage; but powerful and complex minds like Shakespeare or Kalidasa seldom find themselves before a more advanced period. Their previous work is certain to be full of power, promise and genius, but it will also be flawed, unequal and often imitative. This imperfection arises naturally from the greater difficulty in imposing the law of harmony of their various gifts on the bodily case which is the instrument of the spirit's self-expression. To arrive at this harmony requires time and effort and meanwhile the work will often be halting and unequal, varying between inspiration expressed and the failure of vision or expression.

There is no more many-sided, rich and flexible genius in literature than Kalidasa's, and in his case especially we must be on our guard against basing denial of authenticity on imperfection and minor differences. We have to judge, first, by the presence or absence of the essential and indefinable self of Kalidasa which we find apparent in all his indubitable work, however various the form or subject, and after that on those nameable characteristics which are the grain and fibre of his genius and least imitable by others. In the absence of external evidence, which is in itself of little value unless received from definite and contemporary or almost contemporary sources, the test of personality is all-important. Accidents and details are only useful as corroborative evidence, for these are liable to variation and imitation; but personality is a distinguishable and permanent presence as fugitive to imitation as to analysis. Even a slight fineness of literary palate can perceive the difference between the *Nalodaya* and Kalidasa's genuine work. Not only does it belong to an age or school in which poetic taste was debased and artificial, — for it is a poetical counterpart of those prose works for whose existence the display of scholarship seems to be the chief justification, — but it presents in this matter of personality and persistent characteristics no sufficient point of contact either with the *Shacountala* or the *Kumarsambhava* or even with the *House of Raghu.* But in the *Seasons,* Kalidasa's personality is distinctly perceived as well as his main characteristics, his force of vision, his architecture of style, his pervading sensuousness, the

peculiar temperament of his similes, his characteristic strokes of thought and imagination, his individual and inimitable cast of description. Much of it is as yet in a half-developed state, crude consistence, not yet fashioned with the masterly touch he soon manifested, but Kalidasa is there quite as evidently as Shakespeare in his earlier work, the *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece*. Defects which the riper Kalidasa avoids, are not uncommon in this poem, — repetition of ideas, use of more words than are absolutely required, haphazard recurrence of words and phrases, not to produce a designed effect but from carelessness, haste or an insufficient vocabulary; there is, moreover, a constant sense of uncertainty in the touch and a frequent lack of finished design. The poet has been in too much haste to vent his sense of poetic power and not sufficiently careful that the expression should be the best he could compass. And yet immature, greatly inferior in chastity and elegance to his best work, marred by serious faults of conception, bearing evidence of hurry and slovenliness in the execution, the *Seasons* is, for all this, not only suffused by a high though unchastened beauty, but marked with many of the distinctive signs of Kalidasa's strong and exuberant genius. The defects are those natural to the early work of a rich sensuous temperament, eagerly conscious of poetic power but not yet instructed and chastened.

II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE POEM

Kalidasa's *Seasons* is perhaps the first poem in any literature written with the express object of describing Nature. It is precisely similar in its aim to a well-known eighteenth-century failure in the same direction — Thomson's *Seasons*. The names tally, the forms correspond, both poems adopting the plan of devoting a canto to each season, and the method so far agrees that the poets have attempted to depict each season in its principal peculiarities, scenes and characteristic incidents. But here all parallel ends. Wide as the gulf between the genius of one of the greatest world-poets and the talent of the eighteenth-century versifier is the difference between the gathered strength and com-

pact force, the masterly harmonies and the living truth of the ancient Indian poem and the diffuse artificiality and rhetoric of the modern counterpart. And the difference of spirit is not less. A poet of the prosaic and artificial age when the Anglo-Saxon mind emerged in England and got itself Gallicised, Thomson was unable to grasp the first psychological laws of such descriptive poetry. He fixed his eye on the object, but he could only see the outside of it. Instead of creating he tried to photograph. And he did not remember or did not know that Nature is nothing to poetry except in so far as it is either a frame, setting or ornament to life or else a living presence to the spirit. Nature interpreted by Wordsworth as a part of his own and the universal consciousness, by Shakespeare as an accompaniment or note in the orchestral music of life, by more modern poets as an element of decoration in the living world-picture is possible in poetry; as an independent but dead existence it has no place either in the world itself or in the poet's creation. In his relations to the external, life and mind are the man, the senses being only instruments, and what he seeks outside himself is a response in kind to his own deeper reality. What the eye gathers is only important in so far as it is related to this real man or helps this expectation to satisfy itself. Kalidasa with his fine artistic feeling, his vitality and warm humanism and his profound sense of what true poetry must be, appears to have divined from the beginning the true place of Nature in the poet's outlook. He is always more emotional and intellectual than spiritual, like Shakespeare to whom he has so many striking resemblances. We must not expect from him the magical insight of Valmiki, still less the spiritual discernment of Wordsworth. He looks inside, but not too far inside. But he realises always the supreme importance of life as the only abiding foundation of a poem's immortality.

The first canto is surcharged with the life of men and animals and the life of trees and plants in summer. It sets ringing a note of royal power and passion and promises a poem of unexampled vigour and interest. But to play variations on this note through six cantos seems to have been beyond the young poet's as yet limited experience and narrow imaginative mastery. He fell back on the life of sensuous passion with images of which, no

doubt, his ungoverned youth was most familiar. But instead of working them into the main thought he turned to them for a prop and, when his imaginative memory failed him, multiplied them to make up the deficiency. This lapse from artistic uprightness brought its own retribution, as all such lapses will. From one error indeed Kalidasa's vigour and aspiring temperament saved him. He never relaxed into the cloying and effeminate languor of sensuous description which offends us in Keats' earlier work. The men of the age with all their sensuousness, luxury and worship of outward beauty were a masculine and strenuous race, and their male and vigorous spirit is as prominent in Kalidasa as his laxer tendencies. His sensuousness is not coupled with weak self-indulgence, but is rather a bold and royal spirit seizing the beauty and delight of earth to itself and compelling all the senses to minister to the enjoyment of the spirit rather than enslaving the spirit to do the will of the senses. The difference perhaps amounts to no more than a lesser or greater force of vitality, but it is, for the purposes of poetry, a real and important difference. The spirit of delightful weakness swooning with excessive beauty gives a peculiar charm of soft laxness to poems like the *Endymion*, but it is a weakening charm to which no virile temperament will trust itself. The poetry of Kalidasa satisfies the sensuous imagination without enervating the virile chords of character; for virile energy is an unfailing characteristic of the best Sanskrit poetry and Kalidasa is inferior to none in this respect. His artistic error has, nevertheless, had disastrous effects on the substance of his poem.

It is written in six cantos answering to the six Indian seasons, Summer, Rain, Autumn, Winter, Dew and Spring. Nothing can exceed the splendour and power of the opening. We see the poet revelling in the yet virgin boldness, newness and strength of his genius and confident of winning the kingdom of poetry by violence. For a time the brilliance of his work seems to justify his ardour. In the poem on Summer we are at once seized by the marvellous force of imagination, by the unsurpassed closeness and clear strenuousness of his gaze on the object; in the expression there is a grand and concentrated precision which is our first example of the great Kalidasian manner, and an imperial

power, stateliness and brevity of speech which is our first instance of the high classical diction. But this canto stands on a higher level than the rest of the poem. It is as if the poet had spent the best part of his force in his first enthusiasm and kept back an insufficient reserve for the sustained power proper to a long poem. The decline in energy does not disappoint at first. The poem on the Rains gives us a number of fine pictures with a less vigorous touch but a more dignified restraint and a graver and nobler harmony, and even in the Autumn, where the falling off of vigour becomes very noticeable, there is compensation in a more harmonious finish of style, management and imagery. We are led to believe that the poet is finding himself and will rise to a finale of flawless beauty. Then comes disappointment. In the next two cantos Kalidasa seems to lose hold of the subject; the touches of natural description cease or are, with a few exceptions, perfunctory and even conventional and the full force of his genius is thrown into a series of extraordinary pictures, as vivid as if actually executed in line and colour, of feminine beauty and sensuous passion. The two elements, never properly fused, cease even to stand side by side. For all description of Winter we have a few stanzas describing the cold and the appearance of fields, plants, waters in the wintry days, by no means devoid of beauty but wanting in vigour, closeness of vision and eagerness. In the poem on Dew-tide the original purpose is even fainter. Perhaps the quietness of these seasons, the absence in them of the most brilliant pictorial effects and grandest distinctive features, made them a subject uninspiring to the unripeness and love of violence natural to a richly-endowed temperament in its unschooled youth. But the Spring is the royal season of the Indian year and should have lent itself peculiarly to Kalidasa's inborn passion for colour, sweetness and harmony. The closing canto should have been the crown of the poem. But the poet's sin pursues him and, though we see a distinct effort to recover the old pure fervour, it is an effort that fails to sustain itself. There is no falling off in harmonious splendour of sound and language, but the soul of inspired poetic observation ceases to inform this beautiful mould and the close fails and languishes. It is noticeable that there is a double close to the Spring, the two

versions having been left, after the manner of the old editions, side by side. Kalidasa's strong artistic perception must have suffered acutely from the sense of failure in inspiration and he has accordingly attempted to replace the weak close by an improved and fuller cadence. What is, we may presume, the rejected version, is undoubtedly the weaker of the two but neither of them satisfies. The poem on Spring which should have been the finest, is the most disappointing in the whole series.

III. ITS POETIC VALUE

Nevertheless the *Seasons* is not only an interesting document in the evolution of a poetic genius of the first rank, but in itself a work of extraordinary force and immense promise. Many of the most characteristic Kalidasian gifts and tendencies are here, some of them in crude and unformed vigour, but characteristic and unmistakable, giving the poem a striking resemblance of spirit and to some extent of form to the *House of Raghu*, with a far-off prophecy of the mature manner of Kalidasa in the four great masterpieces. There is his power of felicitous and vivid simile; there is the individual turn of his conceits and the single-minded force with which he drives them home; there is his mastering accuracy and life-likeness in description conspicuous especially in the choice and building of the circumstantial epithets. That characteristic of the poet, not the most fundamental and important, which most struck the ancient critics, *upamāsu kālidāsaḥ*, Kalidasa for similes, is everywhere present even in such early and immature work and already they have the sharp clear Kalidasian ring, true coin of his mint though not yet possessed of the later high values. The deep blue midsummer sky is like a rich purple mass of ground collyrium; girls with their smiling faces and lovelit eyes are like "evenings beautifully jewelled with the moon"; the fires burning in the forest look far-off like clear drops of vermilion; the new blades of grass are like pieces of split emerald; rivers embracing and tearing down the trees on their banks are like evil women distracted with passion, slaying their lovers. In all these instances we have the Kalidasian simile,

a little superficial as yet and self-conscious, but for all that Kalidasian. When again he speaks of the Moon towards dawn, growing pale with shame at the lovelier brightness of a woman's face, of the rains coming like the pomp of some great king all blazing with lights, huge clouds moving along like elephants, the lightning like a streaming banner and the thunder like a peal of drums, of the clouds like archers shooting their rains at the lover from the rainbow stringed with lightning, one recognises, in spite of the occasional extravagance of phrase and violent fancifulness, the Kalidasian form of conceit, not only in the substance which can be borrowed, but in the wording and most of all in the economy of phrase expressing a lavish and ingenious fancy. Still more is this apparent in the sensuous and elaborate comparison of things in Nature to women in ornamental attire, – rivers, autumn, the night, the pale Priyangou creeper.

Most decisive of all are the strokes of vivid description that give the poem its main greatness and fulfil its purpose. The seasons live before our eyes as we read. Summer is here with its sweltering heat, the sunbeams burning like fires of sacrifice and the earth swept with whirling gyres of dust driven by intolerable gusts. Yonder lies the lion forgetting his impulse and his mighty leap; his tongue lolls and wearily from time to time he shakes his mane; the snake with lowered head panting and dragging his coils labours over the blazing dust of the road; the wild boars are digging in the dried mud with their long snouts, as if they would burrow their way into the cool earth; the bisons wander everywhere dumbly, desiring water. The forests are grim and parched, brown and sere; and before long they are in the clutch of fire.... But the rains come, and what may be yonder writhing lines we see on the slopes? It is the young water of the rains, a new-born rivulet, grey and full of insects and dust and weeds, coiling like a snake down the hillside. We watch the beauty of the mountains streaked everywhere with waterfalls, their high rocks kissed by the stooping clouds and their sides a gorgeous chaos of peacocks: on the horizon the great clouds blue as lotus-petals climb hugely into the sky and move across it in slow procession before a sluggish breeze. Or look at yonder Covidara tree, its branches troubled softly with wind, swarming with

honey-drunken bees and its leaves tender with little opening buds. The moon at night gazes down at us like an unveiled face in the skies, the racing stream dashes its ripples in the wild-duck's face, the wind comes trembling through the burdened rice-stalks, dancing with the crowding Courbucs, making one flowery ripple of the lotus-wooded lake. Here there can be no longer any hesitation. These descriptions which remain perpetually with the eye, visible and concrete as an actual painting, belong, in the force with which they are visualised and the magnificent architecture of phrase with which they are presented, to Kalidasa alone among Sanskrit poets. Other poets, his successors or imitators, such as Bana or even Bhavabhuti, overload their description with words and details; they have often lavish colouring but never an equal power of form; their figures do not appear to stand out of the canvas and live.

And though we do not find here quite the marvellous harmonies of verse and diction we meet in the Raghu, yet we do come across plenty of preparation for them. Here, for instance, is a verse whose rapidity and lightness restrained by a certain half-hidden gravity is distinctly Kalidasa's:

ज्वलति पवनवृद्धः पर्वतानां दरीषु
स्फुटति पटुनिनादैः शुष्कवंशस्थलीषु।
प्रसरति तृणमध्ये लब्धवृद्धिः क्षणेन
ग्लपयति मृगवर्गं प्रान्तलग्नो दवाग्निः॥

"Clinging to the woodland edges the forest fire increases with the wind and burns in the glens of the mountains; it crackles with shrill shoutings in the dry bamboo reaches; it spreads in the grasses gathering hugeness in a moment and harasses the beasts of the wilderness."

And, again, for honeyed sweetness and buoyancy what can be more Kalidasian than this?

पुंस्कोकिलश्चूतरसासवेन
मत्तः प्रियां चुम्बति रागहृष्टः।
गुञ्जन् द्विरेफोऽप्ययमम्बुजस्थः
प्रियं प्रियायाः प्रकरोति चाटु॥

"The male cuckoo, drunk with wine of the juice of the mango flower, kisses his beloved, glad of the sweet attraction, and here the bee murmuring in the lotus-blossom hums flattery's sweetness to his sweet."

There are other stanzas which anticipate something of the ripest Kalidasian movements by their gravity, suavity and strength:

आकम्पयन् कुसुमिताः सहकारशाखा
विस्तारयन् परभृतस्य वचांसि दिक्षु।
वायुर्विवाति हृदयानि हरन्नराणां
नीहारपातविगमात् सुभगो वसन्ते॥

"Making to tremble the flowering branches of the mango trees, spreading the cry of the cuckoo in the regions the wind ranges ravishing the hearts of mortals, by the passing of the dew-falls gracious in the springtide."

If we take Kalidasa anywhere in his lighter metres we shall at once perceive their essential kinship with the verse of the *Seasons*:

इदमसुलभवस्तुप्रार्थनावर्तिवारं
प्रथममपि मनो मे पञ्चबाणः क्षिणोति।
किमुत मलयवातोन्मीलितापाण्डुवर्ण-
मुपवनसहकारंदर्शितेष्वंकुरेषु॥

"Already Love torments my mind importunate in prayer for a thing unattainable; what shall it be when the woodland mango-trees display their buds, a pallid whiteness opening to the southern wind?"

It is the same suave and skilful management, the same exquisite and unobtrusive weaving of labial, dental and liquid assonances with a recurring sibilant note, the same soft and perfect footing of the syllables. Only the language is richer and more developed. We do not find this peculiar kind of perfection

in any other master of classical verse. Bhavabhuti's manner is bold, strenuous, external; Jayadeva's music is based palpably upon assonance and alliteration which he uses with extraordinary brilliance and builds into the most enchanting melodies, but without delicacy, restraint or disguise. If there were any real cause for doubt of the authorship, the verse would clearly vindicate the *Seasons* for Kalidasa.

Such is this remarkable poem which some, led away by its undoubted splendours, have put in the first rank of Kalidasa's work. Its artistic defects and its comparative crudity forbid us to follow them. It is uncertain in plan, ill-fused, sometimes raw in its imagery, unequal in its execution. But for all that, it must have come upon its contemporaries like the dawning of a new sun in the skies. Its splendid diction and versification, its vigour, fire and force, its sweetness of spirit and its general promise and to some extent actual presentation of a first-rate poetic genius must have made it a literary event of the first importance. Especially it is significant in its daring gift of sensuousness. The prophet of a hedonistic civilisation here seizes with no uncertain hand on the materials of his work. A vivid and virile interpretation of sense-life in Nature, a similar interpretation of all elements of human life capable of greatness of beauty, seen under the light of the senses and expressed in the terms of an aesthetic appreciation, — this is the spirit of Kalidasa's first work as it is of his last. At present he is concerned only with the outward body of Nature, the physical aspects of things, the vital pleasures and emotions, the joy and beauty of the human body; but it is the first necessary step on the long road of sensuous and poetic experience and expression he has to travel before he reaches his goal in his crowning work, the *Birth of the War-God*, in which he takes up for treatment one of the supreme fables of the life of the Gods and the Cosmos and in its handling combines sublimity with grace, height of speech with fullness and beautiful harmony of sound, boldness of descriptive line with magnificence of sensuous colour in a degree of perfection never before or afterwards surpassed or even equalled in poetic literature.

Vikram and the Nymph

"VIKRAM and the Nymph" is the second, in order of time, of Kalidasa's three extant dramas. The steady development of the poet's genius is easy to read even for a superficial observer. The *Malavica and the King* is a gracious and delicate trifle, full of the sweet and dainty characterisation which Kalidasa loves, almost too curiously admirable in the perfection of its structure and dramatic art but with only a few touches of that nobility of manner which raises his tender and sensuous poetry and makes it divine. In the *Urvasie* he is preening his wings for a mightier flight; the dramatic art is not so flawless, but the characters are far deeper and nobler, the poetry stronger and more original and the admirable lyrical sweetness of the first and fourth acts as well as the exaltation of love and the passion of beauty which throb through the whole play, lift it into a far rarer creative atmosphere. It is a worthy predecessor of the *Shacountala*, that most nobly tender, loveliest and most faultless of all romantic plays. Other indications of this development may be observed. The conventional elements of an Indian romantic comedy, the humours of the Brahmin buffoon and the jealousy of the established wife for the new *inamorata* occupy the whole picture in the *Malavica*, though they are touched with exquisite skill and transfigured into elements of a gracious and smiling beauty; in the *Urvasie* the space given to them is far more limited and their connection with the main action far less vital; and they are less skilfully handled; finally in the *Shacountala* we have only vestiges of them, — a perfunctory recognition of their claims to be admitted rather than a willing use of them as good dramatic material. The prologues of the three plays point to a similar conclusion. Introducing the *Malavica* Kalidasa comes forward as a new and unrecognised poet challenging the fame of the great dramatic classics and apprehensive of severe criticism for his audacity, which he anticipates by a defiant challenge. When the *Urvasie* is first represented, his position as a dramatist is more

assured; only the slightest apology is given for displacing the classics in favour of a new play and the indulgence of the audience is requested not for the poet but for the actors. The prologue of the *Shacountala* on the other hand breathes of the dignified and confident silence of the acknowledged Master. No apology is needed; none is volunteered.

The prologue of this play contains an apparent allusion to the great Vikramaditya, Kalidasa's patron, and tradition seems to hint, if it does not assert, connection of a kind between the plot of the drama and, perhaps, some episode in the King's life. At any rate the name of the drama is an obvious compliment to that great ruler and conqueror and one or two double entendres in the play which I have not thought it worthwhile to transfer into English are, it is clear, strokes of delicate flattery pointed to the same quarter. The majority of European scholars identify this Vikram with Harsha of Ujjayin, the *Grand Monarque* of classical India; indigenous scholarship mostly dissents from this view, and an imaginative mind may well prefer to associate our greatest classical poet with the earlier and more heroic, if also more shadowy, Vikram, who united the Malavas and founded the power of that great nation, the most gifted and artistic of the earlier Hindu peoples. There are not sufficient data to fix Kalidasa's epoch; he was certainly not later than the 6th century after Christ, certainly not earlier than the 1st century before; but a chronological margin of seven hundred years is too wide to encourage dogmatism.

The legend which forms the subject of the plot is one of the older Indian myths; it may have been a sun myth dear to the heart of the late Prof. Max Müller; or it may have meant something very different. The literary critic is only concerned with the changes and developments it has undergone in the hands of Kalidasa; that these are all in the direction of emotional sweetness and artistic beauty, may easily be seen by comparing with the drama a translation of the original story as it appears in the...

(*Incompiete*)

Kalidasa's Characters

I. PURURAVAS

PURURAVAS is the poet's second study of kinghood; he differs substantially from Agnimitra. The latter is a prince, a soldier and man of the world yielding by the way to the allurements of beauty, but not preoccupied with passion; the sub-title of the piece might be, in a more innocent sense than Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. He is the mirror of a courteous and self-possessed gentleman, full of mildness and grace, princely tact, *savoir faire*, indulgent kindness, yet energetic withal and quietlv resolute in his pleasure as well as in his serious affairs. "Ah, Sire," says Dharinie with sharp irony, "if you only showed as much diplomatic skill and *savoir faire* in the affairs of your kingdom, what a good thing it would be!" But one feels that these are precisely the gifts he would show in all his action, that the innocently unscrupulous and quite delightful tact and diplomacy with which he pursues his love-affair is but the mirror of the methods he pursued in domestic politics. We see in him the typical and ideal king of an age hedonistic, poetic, worldly but withal heroic and capable. Pururavas is made of very different material. He is a king and a hero, a man of high social and princely virtues, otherwise Kalidasa would not have taken the trouble to depict him; but these qualities are like splendid robes which his nature has put on, and which have become so natural to him that he cannot put them off if he would; they are not the naked essential man. The fundamental Pururavas is not the king and the hero but the poet and lover. The poet on a throne has been the theme of Shakespeare in his *Richard II* and of Renan in his *Antichrist*; and from these two great studies we can realise the European view of the phenomenon. To the European mind the meeting of poet and king in one man wears always the appearance of an anomaly, a misplacement, the very qualities which have fitted him to be a poet unfit him to rule. A mastering egotism becomes the mainspring of the poetic temperament so

placed; the imagination of the man is centred in himself, and the realm and people whose destinies are in his hands, seem to him to be created only to minister to his ingenious or soaring fancies and his dramatic, epic or idealistic sense of what should be; his intellect lives in a poetic world of its own and thinks in tropes and figures instead of grappling with the concrete facts of the world; hence he is unfitted for action and once absolute power is out of his hands, once he is no longer able to arrange men and events to his liking as if he were a dramatist manoeuvring the creatures of his brain but is called upon to measure his will and ability against others, he fails and his failure leads to tragic issues; for he persists in attempting to weave his own imaginations into life; he will not see facts; he will not recognize the inexorable logic of events. Hence, though not necessarily a coward, though often a man of real courage and even ability, he plays the part of an incompetent or a weakling or both. Moreover, he tends to become a tyrant, to lose moral perspective and often all sense of proportion and sanity; for he regards himself as the centre of a great drama, and to all who will not play the part he assigns them or satisfy his emotional needs and impulses, to all who get in the way of his imaginative egotism he becomes savage and cruel; his rage when a word of this life-drama is mispronounced or a part ill-studied or a conception not complied with is a magnified reflection of the vexation felt by a dramatist at a similar *contretemps* in the performance of his darling piece; and unfortunately unlike the playwright he has the power to vent his indignation on the luckless offenders in a fashion only too effective. The last end of the poet-king is almost always tragic, the mad-house, the prison, suicide, exile or the dagger of the assassin. It must be admitted that this dramatic picture largely reflects the facts of history. We know some instances of poet-kings in history, Nero and Ludwig of Bavaria were extreme instances; but we have a far more interesting because typical series in the history of the British Isles. The Stuarts were a race of born poets whom the irony of their fate insisted upon placing one after the other upon a throne, with the single exception of Charles II (James VI was a pedant, which for practical purposes is as bad as a poet) they were all men of an imaginative temper,

artistic tastes or impossible ideals and the best of them had in a most wonderful degree the poet's faculty of imparting this enthusiasm to others. The terrible fate which dogged them was no mysterious doom of the Atridae, but the natural inexorable result of the incompatibility between their temperament and their position. Charles II was the only capable man of his line, the only one who set before him a worldly and unideal aim and recognized facts and using the only possible ways and means quietly and patiently accomplished it. The first James had some practical energy, but it was marred by the political idealism, the disregard of a wise opportunism, and the tyrannical severity towards those who thwarted him which distinguished his whole dreamy, fascinating and utterly unpractical race. Nor is the type wanting in Indian History. Sriharsha of Cashmere in the pages of Kalhana affords a most typical picture of the same unhappy temperament. It is interesting therefore to see how Kalidasa dealt with a similar character.

To our surprise we find that the Hindu poet does not associate incompetence, failure and tragedy with this image of the poet-king; on the contrary, Pururavas is a Great Emperor, well-loved of his people, an unconquered hero, the valued ally of the Gods, successful in empire, successful in war, successful in love. Was then Kalidasa at fault in his knowledge of the world and of human nature? Such a solution would be inconsistent with all we know of the poet's genius as shown in his other works. The truth is that Kalidasa simply gives us the other side of the shield. It is not an invariable law of human nature that the poetic temperament should be, by its temperament, absolutely unfitted for practical action and regal power. Nero and Charles I were artistic temperaments cursed with the doom of kingship. But Alexander of Macedon and Napoleon Buonaparte were poets on a throne, and the part they played in history was not that of incompetents and weaklings. There are times when Nature gifts the poetic temperament with a peculiar grasp of the conditions of action and an irresistible tendency to create their poems not in ink and on paper, but in living characters and on the great canvas of the world; such men become portents and wonders, whom posterity admires or hates but can only imperfectly under-

stand. Like Joan of Arc or Mazzini and Garibaldi, they save a dying nation, or like Napoleon and Alexander they dominate a world. They are only possible because they only get full scope in races which unite with an ardent and heroic temperament a keen susceptibility to poetry in life, idealism and hero worship. Now the Hindus, before the fibre of their temperament had been loosened by hedonistic materialism on the one side and Buddhistic impracticability on the other, were not only the most ardent and idealistic race in the world, the most ready to put prose behind them, the most dominated by thought and imagination, but also one of the most heroic, and they still preserved much of this ancient temper in the days of Kalidasa. It was only natural therefore that the national dramatist in representing the great legendary founder of the Kurus as of the poet-emperor type, should mould him of stronger make and material and not as one of the beautiful porcelain vessels that are broken. Yet always, even when gifted with the most extraordinary practical abilities, the poetic temperament remains itself and keeps a flaw of weakness in the heart of its strength. The temperaments of Alexander and Napoleon were both marked by megalomania, gigantic imaginations, impossible ideals; though not wantonly cruel or tyrannical, they at times showed a singular insensibility to moral restraints and the demands of generous and humane feeling; especially in times of abnormal excitement or temporary indulgence of their passions, the birth-mark came out and showed itself in acts of often insane tyranny. This was especially the case with Alexander; but Napoleon was not free from the same taint. Alexander, we know, strove consciously to mould his life into an Iliad; Napoleon regarded his as a Titanic epic and when facts would not fit in ideally with his conception of himself as its great protagonist, he would alter and falsify them with as little scruple as a dramatist would feel in dealing licentiously with the facts of history. All men of this type, moreover, show a strange, visionary impracticability in the midst of their practical energy and success, make huge miscalculations and refuse to receive correction, insist that facts shall mould themselves according to their own imaginations and are usually dominated by an unconquerable egoism or self-absorption which is not necessarily base or

selfish. Their success seems as much the result of a favouring destiny as of their own ability and when the favour is withdrawn, they collapse like a house of cards at one blow. Joan of Arc dreamed dreams and saw visions, Mazzini and Garibaldi were impracticable idealists and hated Cavour because he would not idealise along with them. The rock of St. Helena, the blazing stake at Rouen, the lifelong impotent exile of Mazzini, the field of Mentena and the island of Caprera, such is the latter end of these great spirits. Alexander was more fortunate, but his greatest good fortune was that he died young; his next greatest that the practical common sense of his followers prevented him from crossing the Ganges; had Napoleon been similarly forced to recognize his limit, his end might have been as great as his beginning. Pururavas in the play is equally fortunate; we feel throughout that the power and favour of the Gods is at his back to save him from all evil fortune and the limits of a legend help him as effectively as an early death helped Alexander.

Kalidasa's presentation of Pururavas therefore is not that of a poetic nature in a false position working out its own ruin; it is rather a study of the poetic temperament in a heroic and royal figure for no issue beyond the study itself. This is in accordance with the temper of the later poetry which, as I have said, troubles itself little with problems, issues and the rest, but is purely romantic, existing only to express disinterested delight in the beauty of human life and emotion and the life and emotion of animate and inanimate Nature.

When Pururavas first appears on the scene it is as the king and hero, the man of prompt courage and action, playing the part which he has assumed like a royal robe of purple, but it is not in the practical side of his character that Kalidasa is interested. He has to introduce it only as a background to his inner temperament, in order to save him from the appearance of frivolous weakness and unworthiness which always surrounds the dilettante in life, the epicure of his own emotions. This he does with his usual consummate art. Pururavas is introduced to us at the very beginning in a scene of extraordinary swiftness, decision and tumultuous excitement, like an eagle cleaving the winds in his rushing swoop upon his prey. The remembrance of

this rapid and heroic episode lingers with us and gives us a sense of concealed iron behind his most feminine moods as lover and poet. Then when again at the end of the play Kalidasa skilfully strikes the same note and we take leave of the Ilian, it is again as the king and hero whose strong arm is needed by the Gods in their approaching war with the Titans. Thus finding and leaving him as the warlike prince, we always have the impression that however great the part played by his love for Urvasie in his life, it is not the whole, that we are listening only to a love episode in some high epic. This impression again is skilfully aided by brief but telling touches in each Act, such as the song of the Bards, for example, which remind us of the King of Kings, the toiling administrator, the great warrior; in not a single Act are these necessary strokes omitted and the art with which they are introduced naturally and as if without design is beyond praise. But here again Kalidasa does not depart from the artistic principle of "nothing too much, nothing too little"; the purple robes of the Emperor and the bow of the hero being needed only for the background are not allowed to intrude upon the main interest, which is Pururavas the man in his native temperament.

From the very first utterance that temperament reveals itself; the grandiose and confident announcement of his name and his communion with the Gods is characteristic of the epic megalomaniac. We are not deceived by his proud assumption of modesty, which he only wears as a fit outward ornament of the role he is playing on the world's stage, part of the conventional drapery of the heroic king. "For modesty was ever valour's crown." Through this drapery we see the man glorying in himself as a poet might glory in some great creation and when madness has removed all conventional disguise, this temper breaks out with the most splendid frankness. We see his mind empurpled with the consciousness of his world-wide fame, "This is too much, it is not possible he should not know me"; of his marvellous birth, "the grandson to the Sun and Moon"; of his matchless achievements as "the chariot-warrior, great Pururavas"; of his mighty empire, "the universal sceptre of the world and sovran footstool touched by jewelled heads of tributary monarchs". The glory of this triple purple in which

he has wrapped himself, matchless valour, matchless fame, matchless empire commingles in his imagination, and he speaks in the proud brief language of the hero but with an evident consciousness of their fine suitability to the part. We seem to see Napoleon robing himself in the dramatic splendour of his despatches and proclamations or Alexander dragging Batis at his chariot wheels in order that he may feel himself to be Achilles. Shall we accuse these men as some do of being liars, theatrical braggarts, inhuman mad men, mountebanks? Let us not so in our feeble envy spit our venom on these mighty souls to half whose heights we could never rise even if we have no opportunity given us of sinking to their depths!

And then as he rushes in pursuit of the Titan and revels in the speed of his chariot and the scenic splendour of the crumbling thunder-clouds flying up like dust beneath it, all the poet in him breaks out into glories of speech. Surely no king before or after, not even Richard II, had such a royal gift of language as this grandson of the Sun and Moon. It is peculiar to him in the play. Others, especially those who habitually move near him, Manavaka, the Chamberlain, the Huntsman, the Charioteer catch something at times of this enthusiastic poetry, but their diction is usually simple and unpretending and, when most ambitious, pale to the colour, energy and imaginativeness which floods all his utterance. For example in the scene of the vulture how he catches fire from a single trope of the Huntsman's and his imagination continues coruscating and flashing over the jewel until it has vanished from sight. I have said that his imagination has become empurpled but the tendency is really inborn in him, he sees, thinks and speaks in purple. Not only is his mind stored with pictures which break out in the most splendid tropes and similes, but he cannot see any natural object or feel any simplest emotion without bathing it in the brilliant tones of his imagination and expressing it in regal poetry. He has also the poet's close and inspired observation, the poet's visualizing power, the poet's sensuousness and aim at the concrete. Little things that he has seen in Nature, a portion of the bank of a river collapsing into the current, the rapid lightening of a dark night by the moon, fire at night breaking its way through a volume of smoke,

a lotus reddening in early sunlight, a wild swan flying through the sky with a lotus fibre in his beak, remain with his inner eye and at a touch burst out in poetry. So inveterate is this habit of seizing on every situation and emotion and turning it into a poem, that even when he affects a feeling as in his flattery of the queen, he takes fire and acts his part with a glory and fervour of speech which make the feigned emotion momentarily genuine. Thus with a mind stored and brimming with poetry, a habit of speech of royal splendour and fullness and an imagination fired and enlarged by the unequalled grandeur of his own destiny, Pururavas comes to the great event which shall be the touchstone of his nature. Such a man was alone fit to aspire to and win the incarnate Beauty of the world and its sensuous life, the Apsara who sprang from the thigh of the Supreme. The Urvasie of the myth, as has been splendidly seen and expressed by a recent Bengali poet,[1] is the spirit of imaginative beauty in the universe, the unattainable ideal for which the soul of man is eternally panting, the goddess adored of the nympholept in all lands and in all ages. There is but one who can attain her, the man whose mind has become one mass of poetry and idealism and has made life itself identical with poetry, whose glorious and starlike career has itself been a conscious epic and whose soul holds friendship and close converse with the Gods. This is Pururavas, "the noise of whom has gone far and wide", whose mother was Ila, divine aspiration, the strange daughter of Human Mind (Manu), who was once male and is female, and his father Budha, inspired and mystic wisdom, Hermes of the moonlike mind, and his near ancestors therefore are the Sun and Moon. For Urvasie he leaves his human wife, earthly fame and desire, giving her only the passionless kindness which duty demands and absorbs his whole real soul in the divine. Even he, however, does not enjoy uninterrupted the object of his desire; he transgresses with her into that fatal grove of the Virgin War-God where ethereal beauty and delight are not suffered to tread, but only ascetic self-denial and keen swordlike practical will; at once she disappears from his ken. Then must his soul wander through all Nature seeking her, imagining her or hints and tokens of her in everything he meets

[1] *Urvasie* (1895) by Tagore.

but never grasping unless by some good chance he accept the Jewel Union born from the crimson of the marvellous feet of Himaloy's Child, Uma, daughter of the mountains, the mighty Mother, She who is the Soul behind Nature. Then he is again united with her. And their child is Ayus, human life and action glorified and ennobled by contact with the divine. It is therefore one of the most profound and splendid of the many profound and splendid allegories in the great repertory of Hindu myth that Kalidasa has here rendered into so sweet, natural and passionate a story of human love and desire. [The religious interpretation of the myth, which is probably older than the poetical, is slightly but not materially different.][1]

In one sense therefore the whole previous life of Pururavas has been a preparation for his meeting with Urvasie. He has filled earth and heaven, even as he has filled his own imagination with the splendour of his life as with an epic poem. He has become indeed Pururavas, he who is noised afar, but he has never yet felt his own soul. But now he sees Urvasie and all the force of his nature pours itself into his love for her like a river which has at last found its natural sea. The rich poetry of his temperament, the sights and images with which his memory is stored, his dramatic delight in his own glory and greatness and heroism, are now diverted and poured over the final passion of his life, coruscate and light it up and reveal it as in a wonderful faeryland full of shimmering moonlight. Each thought, image, emotion of his mind as it issues forth, connects itself with his love and for a moment stands illumined in the lustre of his own speech. The same extraordinary vividness of feeling and imagination is poured over Ayus when Pururavas finds himself a father; never has the passion of paternity been expressed with such vivid concreteness or with such ardent sensuousness of feeling. Yet the conventions of life and the dramatic part in it he feels bound to sustain cling about him and hamper his complete utterance. In order therefore to give him his full opportunity, Kalidasa has separated him from Urvasie by a more romantic device than the dramatically unmanageable contrivance of the original legend, and liberated him in the infinite freedom of madness.

[1] The square brackets are in the original.

The fourth Act therefore which seems at first sight episodical is really of essential importance both to the conduct of the play and the full revelation of its protagonist.

Yet madness is hardly the precise word for the condition of Pururavas; he is not mad like Lear or Ophelia; it is rather a temporary exaltation than a perversion or aberration from his natural state. An extraordinarily vivid and active imagination, which has always felt a poetic sense of mind and sympathy in brute life and in the encouragement of romantic "inanimate" Nature, leaps up under the shock of sudden and inexplicable loss into gigantic proportions; it is like a sudden conflagration in a forest which transfigures and magnifies every petty object it enlightens and fills the world with the rush and roar and volume of its progress. The whole essential temperament of the man comes whirling out in a gyrating pomp of tropes, fancies, conceits, quick and changing emotions; everything in existence he gifts with his own mind, speech, feelings and thus moves through the pageantry of Nature draping it in the regal mantle of his imagination until the whole world exists only to be the scene and witness of his sorrow. For splendour of mere poetry united with delicate art of restraint and management, this scene is not easily surpassed. We may note one of the smaller and yet essential features of its beauty, the skill with which the gradations of his excitement are indicated. When he first rushes in he is in the very height and tumult of it mistaking the cloud for a Titan who carries off his Urvasie and threatening him with a clod of earth which he imagines to be a deadly weapon. But he is not really mad; the next moment he realises his hallucination, and the reaction produces a certain calming down of the fever; yet his mind is still working tumultuously and as it ranges through the forest, every object is converted for a moment into a sign of Urvasie and the megalomaniac in him bursts out into the most splendid flights of self-magnification. But each fresh disappointment brings a reaction that sobers him just a little more; he turns from the inanimate objects of nature to the bee in the flower, then to the birds, then to the beasts; he gifts them with a voice, with articulate words, with thoughts lent out of the inexhaustible treasury of his teeming imagination. Next he appeals to the God

of the mountain and fancies the Echo to be his answer. Mark that now for the first time it is a real articulate voice that he hears, though but the reflection of his own. And immediately afterwards his mind, coming nearer and nearer to sanity, hits upon something very close to the truth; he realises that a divine force may have transformed her to some object of nature and at first by a natural misapprehension imagines that it must be the river which has the appearance Urvasie wore when she fled from him. Then reason as it returns tells him that if he wishes to find her, it must be nearer the place where she disappeared; as he hurries back he appeals for the last time to an animal to speak to him, but does not lend him a voice or words; again also he sees tokens of her in flower and tree, but they are no longer hallucinations but real or at least possible tokens. He touches the Jewel Union and hears the actual voice of the sage; he is now perfectly restored to reason and when he embraces the creeper, it is not as Urvasie but as an "imitatress of my beloved". Through the rest of the scene it is the old natural Pururavas we hear — though in his most delicate flights of imagination. What a choice of a "conveyance" is that with which the scene closes and who but Pururavas could have imagined it! I dwell on these subtle and just perceptible features of Kalidasa's work, the art concealing art, because the appreciation of them is necessary to the full reception on our mind-canvas of Kalidasa's art and genius and therefore to the full enjoyment of his poetry.

And while Pururavas glorifies and revels in his passion, he is also revealed by it; and not only in the strength of the poetic temperament at its strongest, its grasp of, devotion to and joy in its object, its puissant idealism and energy and the dynamic force with which for a time at least it compels fate to its will, but also in its weaknesses. I have spoken of his self-magnification and touches of megalomania. There is besides this a singular incompetence or paralysis of activity in occasional emergencies which, as I have before suggested, often overtakes the poetic temperament in action even in its most capable possessors. His helplessness when confronted by Aushinarie compares badly with the quiet self-possession and indulgent smile with which Agnimitra faces Iravatie in a much more compromising situation.

Characteristic too is his conduct when the jewel is lost. We feel certain that Agnimitra when rushing out of his tent would have caught up his bow and arrows and shot the thief on the spot; Pururavas occupies [himself] in pouring out splendid tropes and similes over the bird and the jewel and appeals helplessly to Manavaka for advice. This is characteristic of the poetic temperament whose mind has long trained itself to throw out its imagination to meet every new object or situation and not its acting faculties; except in natures of a very firm balance the habit must lead to paralysis of the will. Such a sapping of vigour has been going on in Pururavas during the long years of absorption in his romantic passion. One must hope that when he stands again in the forefront of battle, "Heaven's great soldier" will have sufficient plasticity of character to recover in the shock of action what he has lost in the peace of the seraglio. Then there are certain moral insensibilities, certain feelings which seem to have been left out in his composition. It is part of his self-assumed role in life to be the ideal king, the mirror of gallantry and conjugal duty, the champion of the gods and of religion. Yet it is Urvasie and not he who remembers that his "high capital awaits him long" and who shrinks from the displeasure of the people. He exhibits deference and a show of love to Aushinarie because he "owes" her respect and affection, but in spite of his glowing language and fine acting we feel that he cherishes towards her none of the genuine respect and affection or of the real and indulgent kindliness Agnimitra feels for Dharinie and Iravatie. In the last Act he expresses some fear that he may lose religious calm; one feels that religious calm in Pururavas must have been something like the king's robe in Hans Anderson's story. But it was one of the necessary "belongings" of the great semi-divine king which Pururavas just considered his "part" in life as impassive calm and insensibility to human misfortune and grief was one of the necessary "belongings" of the great demi-god, the human Jove which Napoleon thought to be his destined role. If the vast, flaming and rushing mass of genius and impetuosity which we call Napoleon was incompatible with stoical calm and insensibility, so was the ardent mass of sensuousness and imagination which Kalidasa portrayed in Pururavas incompatible with the high austerity

of religion. It is in the mouth of this champion of Heaven Kalidasa has placed one of the few explicit protests in Sanskrit of the ordinary sensuous man against the ascetic idealism of the old religion:

> And yet I cannot think of her
> Created by a withered hermit cold.
> How could an aged anchoret dull and stale
> With poring over Scripture and oblivious
> To all this rapture of the senses build
> A thing so lovely?

The minor male characters of the piece look too wan in the blaze of this great central figure to command much attention except as his adjuncts. As such the Charioteer, the Huntsman and the Chamberlain, Latavya, appear; the former two merely cross the stage and are only interesting for the shadow of tropical magnificence that their master's personality has thrown over their mode of speech.

II. URVASIE

In nothing else does the delicacy and keen suavity of Kalidasa's dramatic genius exhibit itself with a more constant and instinctive perfection than in his characterisation of women. He may sometimes not care to individualise his most unimportant female figures, but even the slightest of his women have some personality of their own, something which differentiates them from others and makes them better than mere names. Insight into feminine character is extraordinarily rare even among dramatists for whom one might think it to be a necessary element of their art. For the most part a poet represents with success only one or two unusual types known to him or in sympathy with his own temperament or those which are quite abnormal and therefore easily drawn; the latter are generally bad women, the Clytemnestras, Vittoria Corombonas, Beatrice Joannas. The women of Vyasa and of Sophocles have all a family resemblance: all possess a quiet or commanding masculine strength of character which reveals their parentage. Other poets we see succeeding in a single feminine character, often repeating, but failing or not succeeding eminently in the rest. Otherwise women in poetry are generally painted very much from the outside. The poets who have had an instinctive insight into women, can literally be counted on the fingers of one's hand. Shakespeare in this as in other dramatic gifts is splendidly and unapproachably first, or at least only equalled in depth though not in range by Valmiki. Racine has the same gift within his limits and Kalidasa without limits, though in this as in other respects he has not Shakespeare's prodigal abundance and puissant variety. Other names I do not remember: there are a few poets who succeed with coarse easy types, but this is the fruit of observation rather than an unfailing intuitive insight. The *Agnimitra* is a drama of women; it passes within the women's apartments and pleasure gardens of a great palace and is full of the rustling of women's robes, the tinkling of their ornaments, the scent of their hair, the music of their voices. In the *Urvasie* where he needs at least half the canvas for his hero, the scope for feminine characterisation is of necessity greatly contracted, but

what is left Kalidasa has filled in with a crowd of beautiful shining figures and exquisite faces each of which is recognizable. These are the Apsaras and Urvasie the most beautiful of them all. To understand the poetry and appeal of these nymphs of heaven, we must know something of their origin and meaning.

In the beginning of things, in the great wide spaces of Time when mankind as yet was young and the azure heavens and the inter-regions between the stars were full of the crowding figures of luminous Gods and gigantic Titans by the collision of whose activities the cosmos was taking form and shape, the opposing forces once made a truce and met in common action on the waves of the milky Ocean. The object for which they had met could not have been fulfilled by the efforts of one side alone; the good must mingle with the evil, the ideal take sides with the real, the soul work in harmony with the senses, virtue and sin, heaven and earth and hell labour towards a common end before it can be accomplished; for this object was no less than to evolve all that is beautiful, sweet and incredible in life, all that makes it something more than existence, and in especial to realise immortality, that marvellous thought which has affected those even who disbelieve in it, with the idea of unending effort and thus lured men from height to height, from progress to progress, until mere beast though he is in his body and his sensations, he has with the higher part of himself laid hold upon the most distant heavens. Therefore they stood by the shore of the milky Ocean and cast into it the mountain Mandara for a churning stick and wound round it Vasukie, the Great Serpent, the snake of desire, for the rope of the churning and then they set to it with a will, god and devil together, and churned the milky Ocean, the ocean of spiritual existence, the ocean of imagination and aspiration, the ocean of all in man that is above the mere body and the mere life. They churned for century after century, for millennium upon millennium and yet there was no sign of the nectar of immortality. Only the milky Ocean swirled and lashed and roared, like a thing tortured, and the snake Vasukie in his anguish began to faint and hang down his numberless heads hissing with pain over the waves and from the lolling forked tongues a poison streamed out and mingled with the anguish of the Ocean so that it became

like a devastating fire. Never was poison so terrible for it contained in itself all the long horror and agony of the ages, all the pain of life, its tears and cruelty and despair and rage and madness, the darkness of disbelief and the grey pain of disillusionment, all the demoniac and brute beast that is in man, his lust and his tyranny and his evil joy in the sufferings of his fellows. Before that poison no creature could stand and the world began to shrivel in the heat of it. Then the Gods fled to Shankara where he abode in the ice and snow and the iron silence and inhuman solitudes of the mountains where the Ganges streams through his matted locks, for who could face the fire of that poison? Who but the great ascetic Spirit clothed in ashes, who knows not desire and sorrow, to whom terror is not terrible and grief has no sting, but who embraces grief and madness and despair.

And now wonderful things began to arise from the Ocean; Ucchaisravas arose, neighing and tossing his mighty mane, he who can gallop over all space in one moment while hooves make music in the empyrean. Varunie arose, Venus Anadyomene from the waters, the daughter of Varuna, Venus Ourania, standing on a lotus and bringing beauty and delight and harmony and opulence into the universe; Dhanwantari arose, cup in hand, the physician of the Gods who can heal all pain and disease and sorrow, minister to a mind diseased and pluck out from the bosom its rooted sorrow; the jewel Kaustubha arose whose pure luminousness fills all the world and, worn on the bosom of the Saviour and Helper, becomes the cynosure of the suffering and striving nations.

Such then is Urvasie, Narain-born, the brightness of sunlight, the blush of the dawn, the multitudinous laughter of the sea, the glory of the skies and the leap of the lightning, all in brief that is bright, far-off, unseizable and compellingly attractive in this world, all too that is wonderful, sweet to the taste and intoxicating in human beauty, human life, the joy of human passion and emotion: all finally that seizes, masters and carries away

in art, poetry, thought and knowledge, is involved in this one name. Of these outward brilliances Kalidasa's conception of Urvasie is entirely void. His presentation of her is simply that of a beautiful and radiant woman deeply in love. Certainly the glories of her skiey residence, the far-off luminousness and the free breath of the winds are about her, but they are her atmosphere rather than part of herself. The essential idea of her is natural, frank and charming womanliness; timidity, a quick temper, a harmless petulance and engaging childishness, afterwards giving way to a matronly sedateness and bloom, swift, innocent and frank passion, warm affections as mother, sister and friend, speech always straight from the heart, the precise elements in fact that give their greatest charm to ideal girlhood and womanhood are the main tones that compose the picture. There is nothing here of the stately pace and formal dignity of the goddess, no cothurnus raising her above human stature, no mask petrifying the simple and natural play of the feelings, the smile in the eyes, the ready tears, the sweetness of the mouth, the lowered lashes, the quick and easy gesture full of spontaneous charm. If this is a nymph of heaven, one thinks, then heaven must be beautifully like the earth. Her terror and collapse in the episode of the abduction and rescue, where Chitraleqha manages pretty successfully to keep up her courage as a goddess, is certainly not Apsara-like. Chitraleqha with sisterly impatience expresses her sense of that, "Fie, sweet! thou art no Apsara" — but it is nevertheless attractively human and seizes our sympathies for her from the outset. There is also a sensitiveness in her love, a quickness to take alarm and despond which make her very human. If this is jealousy, it is a quick and generous jealousy having nothing in it of "jealous baseness"; it is hardly more than the quick rush of hasty temper which leads to her separation from Pururavas, but rather a panic born of timidity and an extreme diffidence and ignorance of the power of her own beauty. This detail is very carefully observed and emphasized as if Kalidasa wished to take especial pains to prevent even the most hidebound commentator from reading into her character any touch of the heavenly courtesan. The ostentations, splendours, the conscious allurements of the courtesan are not there, but rather a divine simplicity and

white candour of soul. It is from an innate purity and openness that the frankness and impulsiveness of her love proceeds. Incapable of disguise, hastily open, direct in words, even tremulously playful at times, she is easily dashed in her advances and quick to distrust her merit. And she can be very sweet and noble too, even dignified as in a few utterances of the Third Act, her reunion with Pururavas in the Fourth and all through the Fifth where she is wife and mother, and while losing the girlishness, petulance and playfulness of the earlier scenes has greatly deepened her charm. I see nothing of the heavenly courtesan which some overprecise commentators insist on finding in her; within the four corners of the play which is all Kalidasa allows us to consider, she is wholly delightful, innocent, even modest, at any rate not immodest. Certainly she is more frank and playful in her love than Shacountala or even Malavica could venture to be, but something must be allowed to a goddess and her demeanour is too much flavoured with timidity, her advances too easily dashed to give any disagreeable impression of forwardness. There are few more graceful touches in lighter love-drama than her hasty appearance, unconsciously invisible, before Pururavas, and her panic of dismay when he takes no notice of her. In the same scene her half playful, half serious self-justification in embracing her lover and her immediate abashed silence at his retort, portray admirably the mixture of frank impulsiveness and shy timidity proper to her character. These are the little magic half-noticeable touches of which Kalidasian characterisation is mainly composed, the hundred significant trifles which Kalidasa's refined taste in life felt to be the essence of character in action. Urvasie's finest characteristic, however, is her sincerity in passion and affection. The poet has taken great pains to discharge her utterance of all appearance of splendour, ornament and superfluity; her simple, direct and earnest diction is at the opposite pole to the gorgeous imaginativeness of the Ilian. And while her manner of speech is always simple and ordinary, what she says is exactly the unstudied and obvious thing that a woman of no great parts, but natural and quick in her affections, would spontaneously say under the circumstances; it is even surprisingly natural. For example, when she sees Ayus fondled

by Pururavas, "who is this youth", she asks with the little inevitable undertone of half jealousy

> Himself
> My monarch binds his curls into a crest !
> Who should this be so highly favoured?

and then she notices Satyavatie and understands. But there is no positive outburst of maternal joy and passion. "It is my Ayus! How he has grown!" That is all and nothing could be better or truer. Yet for all the surface colourlessness there is a charm in everything Urvasie says, the charm of absolute sincerity and direct unaffected feeling. Her passion for Pururavas is wonderfully genuine and fine from her first cry of "O Titans! You did me kindness!" to her last of "O a sword is taken out of my heart!" Whatever the mood, its speech has always a tender force and reality. Her words with Chitraleqha and the other Apsaras, from the outburst, "O sisters, sisters, take me to your bosoms", to her farewell "Chitraleqha, my sister! do not forget me", are instinct, when moved, with "a passion of sisterliness" and at other times bright and limpid in their fair kindness and confidence. She comes to her son "with her whole rapt gaze

> Grown mother, the veiled bosom heaving towards him
> And wet with sacred milk".

And her farewell to the Hermitess sets a model for the expression of genuine and tender friendship. Urvasie is doubtless not so noble and strong a portraiture as Shacountala, but she is inferior to no heroine of Sanskrit drama in beauty and sweetness of womanly nature.

III. MINOR CHARACTERS

Nothing more certainly distinguishes the dramatic artist from the poet who has trespassed into drama than the careful pains he devotes to his minor characters. To the artist nothing is small; he bestows as much of his art within the narrow limit of his small characters as within the wide compass of his greatest. Shakespeare lavishes life upon his minor characters; but in Shakespeare it is the result of an abounding creative energy; he makes living men as God made the world, because he could not help it, because it was in his nature and must out. But Kalidasa's dramatic gift, always suave and keen, had not this godlike abundance; it is therefore well to note the persistence of this feature of high art in all his dramas. In the *Urvasie* the noble figure of Queen Aushinarie is the most excellent evidence of his fine artistry; but even slight sketches like the Apsaras are seen upon close attention to be portrayed with a subtle and discriminating design; thought has been bestowed on each word they speak, an observable delicacy of various touch shows itself in each tone and gesture they employ. A number of shining figures crowded into a corner of the canvas, like in meaning, like in situation, like in nature, they seem to offer the very narrowest scope for differentiation; yet every face varies from its sister, the diction of each tongue has its revealing individuality. The timid, warm-hearted Rumbha easily despondent, full of quick outbursts of eagerness and tenderness is other than the statelier Menaca with her royal gift of speech and her high confidence. Sahajanya is of an intenser, more silent, less imaginative, more practical type than either of these. It is she who gives Pururavas the information of the road which the ravisher has taken, and from that point onward amid all the anxious and tender chatter of the sisters she is silent until she has the practical fact of Pururavas' disappearance to seize upon. This she is again the first to descry and announce. Her utterance is brief and of great point and substance; from the few words she has uttered we unconsciously receive a deep impression of helpfulness, earnestness and strength. We know her voice, are ready and recognize it again in the Fourth Act. Her

attitude there is characteristic; she will not waste time over vain lamentation, since she cannot help. Fate has divided the lovers, Fate will unite them again; so with a cheerful and noble word of consolation she turns to the immediate work in hand.

Chitraleqha, more fortunate than the other Apsaras, obtaining through three Acts a large canvas as the favourite and comrade of Urvasie, suffers dramatically from her good fortune, for she must necessarily appear a little indistinct, so near to the superior light of her companion. Indeed, dramatic necessity demands subdued tones in her portraiture lest she should deflect attention from Urvasie; richness of colour and prominence of line therefore are not permissible. Yet in spite of these hampering conditions the poet has made her a sufficiently definite personality. Indeed, her indulgent affection, her playful kindliness, her little outbreaks of loving impatience or sage advice, — the neglect of which she takes in excellent part, — her continual half-smiling surrender to Urvasie's petulance and wilfulness and her whole half matron-like air of elder-sisterly protection, give her a very sensible charm and attractiveness; there is a true nymph-like and divine grace, tact and felicity in all that she says and does. Outside the group of Apsaras the Hermitess Satyavatie is a slighter but equally attractive figure, venerable, kind, a little impersonal owing to the self-restraint which is her vocation, but with glimpses through it of a fine motherliness and friendliness. The perpetual grace of humanness, which is so eminently Kalidasian, forming the atmosphere of all his plays, seems to deepen with a peculiar beauty around his ascetics, Kanwa, Satyavatie, the learned and unfortunate lady of the Malavica. The "little rogue of a tiring woman" Nipounica, sly and smooth-tongued, though with no real harm in her beyond a delight in her own slyness and a fine sense of exhilaration in the midst of a family row, pleasantly brings up the slighter of these feminine personalities. The masculine sketches are drawn in even more unobtrusive outlines and, after Kalidasa's manner, less individualized than his women. The Charioteer and the Huntsmen are indeed hardly distinct figures; they have but a few lines to utter between them and are only remarkable for the shadow of the purple which continual association with Pururavas has cast over their manner of

speech. Manavaca and Ayus need a larger mention, yet they are less interesting in themselves than for their place, one in the history of Kalidasa's artistic development, the other among the finest evidences of his delicacy in portraiture and the scrupulous economy, almost miserliness, with which he extracts its utmost artistic utility, possibility, value from each detail of his drama. The Chamberlain again, fine as he is in his staid melancholy, his aged fidelity, his worn-out and decrepit venerableness and that continual suggestion of the sorrowfulness of grey hairs, is still mainly the fine Kalidasian version of a conventional dramatic figure. The one touch that gives him a personal humanity is the sad resignation of his, "It is your will, Sire", when Pururavas, about to depart to asceticism in the forests, commands the investiture of his son. For it is the last and crowning misfortune that the weary old man must bear; the master over whose youth and greatness he has watched, for whose sake he serves in his old age, with the events of whose reign all the memories of his life are bound up, is about to depart and a youthful stranger will sit in his place. With that change all meaning must go out of the old man's existence; but with a pathetic fidelity of resignation he goes out to do his last bidding uttering his daily formula, – now changed in its newly acquired pathos from the old pompous formality, "It is your will, Sire."

The age of childhood, its charm and sportive grace and candour, seems to have had a peculiar charm for Kalidasa's imagination; there is an exquisite light and freshness of morning and dew about his children; an added felicity of touch, of easy and radiant truth in his dramatic presentation. Kalidasa's marvellous modesty of dramatic effect and power of reproducing ordinary, hardly observable speech, gesture and action, magicalising but not falsifying them, saves him from that embarrassment which most poets feel in dealing dramatically with children. Even Shakespeare disappoints us. This great poet with his rich and complex mind usually finds it difficult to attune himself again to the simplicity, irresponsibility and naïve charm of childhood.

Arthur, whom the Shakespeare-worshipper would have us regard as a masterpiece, is no real child; he is too *voulu*, too eloquent, too much dressed up for pathos and too conscious of the fine sentimental pose he strikes. Children do pose and children do sentimentalise, but they are perfectly naïve and unconscious about it; they pose with sincerity, they sentimentalise with a sort of passionate simplicity, indeed an earnest business-likeness which is so sincere that it does not even require an audience. The greatest minds have their limitations and Shakespeare's overabounding wit shuts him out from two Paradises, the mind of a child and the heart of a mother. Constance, the pathetic mother, is a fitting pendant to Arthur, the pathetic child, as insincere and falsely drawn a portraiture, as obviously dressed up for the part. Indeed throughout the meagre and mostly unsympathetic list of mothers in Shakespeare's otherwise various and splendid gallery there is not even one in whose speech there is the throbbing of a mother's heart; the sacred beauty of maternity is touched upon in a phrase or two; but from Shakespeare we expect something more, some perfect and passionate enshrining of the most engrossing and selfless of human affections. To this there is not even an approach. In this one respect the Indian poet, perhaps from the superior depth and keenness of the domestic feelings peculiar to his nation, outstripped his greater English compeer.

Kalidasa, like Shakespeare, seems to have realised the instinct of paternal tenderness far more strongly than the maternal; his works both dramatic and epic give us many powerful and emotional expressions of the love of father and child to which there are few corresponding outbursts of maternal feeling. Valmiki's Cowshalya has no parallel in Kalidasa. Yet he expresses the true sentiment of motherhood with sweetness and truth if not with passion.

Ayus and Urvasie in this play were certainly not intended for the dramatic picture of mother and child. This mother has abandoned her child to the care of strangers; this child is new to the faces of his parents. Such a situation might easily have been made harsh and unsympathetic, but for the fine dramatic tact of the poet which has purified everything that might repel and

smoothed away all the angles of the incident. But here the circumstances excuse it, not justify Urvasie. Acting under hard conditions, she has chosen the lesser of two evils; for by keeping Ayus she would have lost both her child and Pururavas; by delivering him into wise and tender hands, she has insured his welfare and for her part only anticipated the long parting which the rule of education in ancient India demanded from parents as their sacrifice to the social ideal; but it is not from maternal insensibility that she bears quietly the starvation of the mother within her. Knowing that the child was in good hands she solaces herself with the love of her husband. When he returns to her, there is a wonderful subdued intensity, characteristic of her simple and fine nature, in the force with which that suppressed passion awakes to life; she approaches her son, wordless, but her "veiled bosom heaving towards him and wet with sacred milk"; in her joy over him she forgets even the impending separation from the husband to avert which she has sacrificed the embrace of his infancy. It is this circumstance, not any words, that testifies to the depth of her maternal feeling; her character forbids her to express it in splendours of poetic emotion such as well spontaneously from the heart of Pururavas. A look, a few ordinary words are all; if it were not for these and the observation of others, we should have to live with her daily before we could realise the depth of feeling behind her silence.

Ayus himself is an admirable bit of dramatic craftsmanship. There is a certain critical age when the growing boy is a child on one side of his nature and a young man on the other and of all psychological states such periods of transitional unstable equilibrium are the most difficult to render dramatically without making the character either a confused blur or an ill-joined piece of carpenter's work. Here Kalidasa excels. He has the ready tact of speech-gradations, the power of simple and telling slightness that can alone meet the difficulty. By an unlaboured and inevitable device the necessary materials are provided. The boy comes straight from the wild green and ascetic forest into the splendours of an Oriental court and the presence of a father and mother whom he has never seen; a more trying situation could not be easily imagined; he inevitably becomes self-conscious,

embarrassed, burdened with the necessity of maintaining himself against the oppression of his surroundings. He attempts therefore to disguise his youthful nervousness behind the usual shield of an overdose of formal dignity, a half unconscious pompousness and an air of playing the man. We are even conscious of a slight touch of precocity, etc. Confronted with all these new faces making claims upon him to which his past consciousness is an alien, the whole adult side of his nature turns uppermost. But fortunately for our comprehension of his true state of mind, something of the green forest which is his home has come with him in the person of his fostermother Satyavatie. With her he feels as a child may feel with his mother. When he turns to her or speaks to her, he is again and instinctively in manner, utterance and action the child who ran by her side clutching the skirts of her dress in the free woodland. He speaks like a child, thinks like a child, acts docilely at her bidding like a child. Nothing could be more finely artistic in execution or more charmingly faithful to nature in its conception.

Vasuluxmie in the *Malavica* does not even appear on the stage, yet in that urbane and gracious work there is nothing more charming than her two fateful irruptions into the action of the play. They bring up a picture of the laughing light-hearted and innocent child, which remains with us as vividly as the most carefully-drawn character in the piece. The scene of the child playing with the lion's cub in the *Shacountala* has the same inevitable charm; ninety-nine poets out of a hundred would have hopelessly bungled it, but in Kalidasa's hands it becomes so admirably life-like and spontaneous that it seems as natural as if the child were playing with a kitten.

Manavaca on the other hand is an element of weakness rather than of strength. I have already spoken of the progressive attenuation of the traditional buffoon part which keeps pace with Kalidasa's dramatic development. Gautama in the *Malavica* is a complete and living personality who has much to say to the action of the plot; witty, mischievous, mendacious and irresponsible, he adds to the interest of the play even independently of this functional importance. But in the *Urvasie* to have made the main action of the plot turn in any way on the buffoon

would have been incongruous with the high romantic beauty of the drama and therefore a serious dramatic error. The function of Manavaca is accordingly reduced to that of an interlocutor; he is there because Pururavas must have somebody to confide in and talk with, otherwise his only dramatic purpose is to give rise by his carelessness to the episode of Aushinarie's jealousy and self-subdual. Nevertheless his presence affects the composite tone of the picture. He is other than the buffoons of the *Malavica* and *Shacountala*, far more coarse in the grain, far less talented and high-spirited than Gautama, yet not a stupid block. He has, along with the stock characteristics of gluttony, ugliness and cowardice, an occasional coarse humour, infertile and broad, and even a real gift of commonsense and rather cynical practicality, to say nothing of that shadow of the purple flung across the speech of all those who associate habitually with Pururavas; he is at the same time low in mind, unable to understand characters higher than his own. His best virtue is perhaps the absence of all pretensions and readiness to make a gibe on himself. Such a figure necessarily tends to set off by its drab colour and equal dimensions the lyric idealism of Pururavas, the radiant charm of Urvasie and the pale loftiness of the Queen. But it is by his place in the picture and not what he is in himself that he justifies his existence. He does not attract or interest, indeed he at times only just escapes being tiresome. At the same time he lives.

Among all these minor figures who group themselves around the two protagonists and are of purely accessory interest, there is one who stands out and compels the eye by her nobler proportions and her independent personality. Queen Aushinarie has no real claim by any essentiality in her action on the large space she occupies in the play; her jealousy does not retard and her renunciation sanctifies rather than assists the course of Pururavas' love for Urvasie. The whole episode in which she figures fits more loosely into the architecture of the play than can be exampled elsewhere in Kalidasa's dramatic workmanship. The interest of her personality justifies the insertion of the episode rather than the episode that justifies the not inconsiderable space devoted to her. The motif of her appearance is the same conventional element of wifely rivalry, the jealousy of the rose-in-bloom

against the rose-in-bud that has formed the whole groundwork of the *Malavica.* There the groundwork, here its interest is brief and episodical. And yet none of the more elaborated figures in the earlier play, not even Dharinie herself, is as fine and deep a conception as the wife of Pururavas. Princess of Kashie, daughter of the Ushinars, acknowledged by her rival to deserve by right of her noble majesty of fairness the style of Goddess and of Empress, we feel that she has a right to resent the preference to her even of an Apsara from heaven and the completeness of Pururavas' absorption in Urvasie gives a tragic significance to her loss which is not involved in the lighter loves and jealousies of Vidisha. The character is more profoundly and boldly conceived. The passion of her love strikes deeper than the mere heyday of youth and beauty and the senses in Iravatie, as the noble sadness of her self-renunciation moves more powerfully than the kind and gentle wilfulness of Queen Dharinie. And in the manner of her delineation there is more incisiveness, restraint with a nobler economy of touch. The rush of her jealousy comes with less of a storm than Iravatie's but it has fierier and keener edge and it is felt to be the disguise of a deep and mighty love. The passion of that love leaps out in the bitter irony of her self-accusal:

> Not yours the guilt, my lord. I am in fault
> Who force my hated and unwelcome face
> Upon you.

And again when in the very height of her legitimate resentment she has the sure consciousness of her after-repentance:

> And yet the terror
> Of the remorse I know that I shall feel
> If I shun his kindness, frightens me.

Anger for the time sweeps her away, but we are prepared for the repentance and sacrifice in the next act. Even in her anger she has been imperially strong and restrained and much of the poetic force of her renunciation comes from the perfect sweet-

ness, dignity and self-control with which she acts in that scene. The emotion of self-sacrificing love breaks out only once at the half-sneering reproach of the buffoon:

> Dull fool!
> I with the death of my own happiness
> Would give my husband ease. From this consider
> How dearly I love him.

Putting gently but sorrowfully away from her the king's half-sincere protestations of abiding love, she goes out of the drama, a pure, devoted and noble nature, clad in gracious white and sylvanly adorned with flowers, her raven tresses spangled with young green of sacred grass; yet the fragrance of her flowers, of sacrifice and the mild beauty of the moonlight remain behind her. She does not reappear unless it is in the haste of Urvasie to bring her recovered child to his "elder mother". This haste with its implied fullness of gratitude and affection is one of Kalidasa's careful side-touches to tell us better than words that in spirit and letter she has fulfilled utterly the vow she made on the moon-lit terrace under seal of

> The divine wife and husband, Rohinie
> And Mrigalanchan named the spotted moon.

The deepening of moral perception, the increase in power and pathos, the greater largeness of drawing and finer emotional strength and restraint show the advance Kalidasa has made in dramatic characterisation. Grace, sweetness, truth to life and character, perfect and delicate workmanship, all that reveals the presence of the artist were his before; but the *Urvasie* reveals a riper and larger genius widening the scope, raising mightier vans before yet it takes its last high and surpassing flight.

IV. APSARAS

There is nothing more charming, more attractive in Kalidasa than his instinct for sweet and human beauty; everything he touches becomes the inhabitant of a moonlit world of romance and yet — there is the unique gift, the consummate poetry — remains perfectly natural, perfectly near to us, perfectly human. Shelley's *Witch of Atlas* and Keats' *Cynthia* are certainly lovely creations, but they do not live; misty, shimmering, uncertain, seen in some half-dream where the moon is full and strange indefinable shapes begin to come out from the skirts of the forest; they charm our imagination, but our hearts take no interest in them. They are the creations of the mystic Celtic imagination with its singular intangibility, its fascinating other-worldliness. The Hindu has been always decried as a dreamer and mystic. There is truth in the charge but also a singular inaccuracy. The Hindu mind, in one sense, is the most concrete in the world. It seeks after abstraction, yet is it never satisfied so long as it remains abstraction. To make the objects and concepts of this world concrete, that is comparatively easy; sun and rain or air are, at their most ethereal, the sublimated secrets of matter. The Hindu is not contented till he has seized things behind the sunlight also as concrete realities. He is passionate for the infinite, the unseen, the spiritual, but he will not rest satisfied with conceiving them, he insists on mapping the infinite, on seeing the unseen, on visualising the spiritual. The Celt throws his imagination into the infinite and is rewarded with beautiful phantoms, out of which he evolves a pale, mystic and intangible poetry. The Hindu sends his heart and his intellect and eventually his whole being after his imagination and for his reward he has seen God and interpreted existence. It is this double aspect of Hindu temperament which is the secret of our civilisation, our religion, our life and literature; extreme spirituality successfully attempting to work in harmony with extreme materialism. On the one side we spiritualise the material out of all but a phenomenal and illusory existence, on the other we materialise the spiritual in the most definite and realistic forms; this is the secret of the high

philosophic idealism which to the less capable European seems so impossible an atmosphere and of the prolific idolatry which to the dogmatic and formalising Christian seems so gross. In any other race-temperament this mental division would have split into two broadly disparate or opposing types and attempts at compromise comprising action and reaction would have built up the history of thought. In the myriad-minded and undogmatic Hindu it worked not as mental division, but as the first discord which prepares for a consistent harmony; the best and most characteristic Hindu thought regards either tendency as essential to the perfect and subtle comprehension of existence; they are considered the positive and negative sides of one truth, and must both be grasped if we are not to rest in a half light. Hence the entire tolerance of the Hindu religion to all intellectual attitudes except sheer libertinism; hence also the marvellous perfection of grades in thought-attitudes which the Hindu mind travels between the sheer negative and the sheer positive and yet sees in them only a ladder of progressive and closely related steps rising through relative conceptions to one final and absolute knowledge.

The intellectual temperament of a people determines the main character-stamp of its poetry. There is therefore no considerable poet in Sanskrit who has not the twofold impression (spiritual and romantic in aim, our poetry is realistic in method), who does not keep his feet on the ground even while his eyes are with the clouds. The soaring lark who loses himself in light, the ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings in the void are not denizens of the Hindu plane of temperament. Hence the expectant critic will search ancient Hindu literature in vain for the poetry of mysticism; that is only to be found in recent Bengali poetry which has felt the influence of English models. The old Sanskrit poetry was never satisfied unless it could show colour, energy and definiteness, and these are things incompatible with true mysticism. Even the Upanishads which declare the phenomenal world to be unreal, yet have a rigidly practical aim and labour in every line to make the indefinite definite and the abstract concrete. But of all our great poets Kalidasa best exemplifies this twynatured Hindu temperament under the conditions of

supreme artistic beauty and harmony. Being the most variously learned of Hindu poets he draws into his net all our traditions, ideas, myths, imaginations, allegories, the grotesque and the trivial as well as the sublime and the lovely, but touching them with the magic wand teaches them to live together in the harmonising atmosphere of his poetic temperament. Under his slight touch the grotesque becomes strange, wild and romantic, the trivial refines into a dainty and gracious slightness, the sublime yields to the law of romance, acquires a mighty grace, a strong sweetness; and what was merely lovely attains power, energy and brilliant colour. His creations in fact live in a peculiar light, which is not the light that never was on sea or land but rather our ordinary sunshine recognisable though strangely and beautifully altered. The alteration is not real; rather our vision is affected by the recognition of something the sunbeams concealed and yet the cause of the sunbeams; but it is human sunlight we see always. May we not say it is that luminousness behind the veil of this sunlight which is the heaven of Hindu imagination and in all Hindu work shines through it without overpowering it? Hindu poetry is the only Paradise in which the lion can lie down with the lamb.

The personages of Kalidasa's poetry are with but few exceptions gods and demigods or skiey spirits, but while they preserve a charm of wonder, sublimity or weirdness, they are brought on to our own plane of experience, their speech and thought and passion is human. This was the reason alleged by the late Bankim Chandra Chatterji, himself a poet and a critic of fine and strong insight, for preferring the *Birth of the War-God* to *Paradise Lost;* he thought that both epics were indeed literary epics of the same type, largely planned and sublime in subject, diction and thought, but that the Hindu poem, if less grandiose in its pitch, had in a high degree the humanism and sweetness of simple and usual feeling in which the *Paradise Lost* is more often than not deficient. But the humanism of which I speak is not the Homeric naturalism; there is little of the sublime or romantic in the essence of the Homeric gods though there is much of both in a good many of their accidents and surroundings. But Kalidasa's divine and semi-divine personages lose none of their godhead by

living on the plane of humanity. Perhaps the most exquisite masterpiece in this kind is the *Cloud-Messenger*. The actors in that beautiful love-elegy might have been chosen by Shelley himself; they are two lovers of Faeryland — a cloud, rivers, mountains, the gods and demigods of air, hill and sky. The goal of the cloud's journey is the ethereal city of Alaka crowned by the clouds upon the golden hill and bathed at night in the unearthly moonlight that streams from the brow of Shiva, the mystic's God. The earth is seen mainly as a wonderful panorama by one travelling on the wings of a cloud. Here are all the materials for one of those intangible harmonies of woven and luminous mist with which Shelley allures and baffles us. The personages and scenery are those of *Queen Mab*, of *Prometheus Unbound* and the *Witch of Atlas*. But Kalidasa's city in the mists is no evanescent city of sunlit clouds; it is his own beautiful and luxurious Ujjayini idealised and exempted from mortal afflictions; like a true Hindu he insists on translating the ideal into the terms of the familiar, sensuous and earthy.

> For death and birth keep not their mystic round
> In Ullaca,[1] there from the deathless trees
> The blossom lapses never to the ground
> But lives for ever garrulous with bees
> All honey-drunk — nor yet its sweets resign.
> For ever in their girdling companies...

And when he comes to describe the sole mourner in that town of delight and eternal passion unsated, this is how he describes her, how human, how touching, how common it all is! While we read, we feel ourselves kin to and one with a more beautiful world than our own. These creatures of fancy hardly seem to be an imaginary race but rather ourselves removed from the sordidness and the coarse pains of our world, into a more gracious existence. This, I think, is the essential attraction which makes his countrymen to this day feel such a passionate delight in Kalidasa; after reading a poem of his the world and life and our fellow creatures human, animal or inanimate have become

[1] Alaka,

suddenly more beautiful and dear to us than they were before; the heart flows out towards birds and beasts and the very trees seem to be drawing us towards them with their branches as if with arms; the vain cloud and the senseless mountain are no longer senseless or empty, but friendly intelligences that have a voice to our souls. Our own common thoughts, feelings, and passions have also become suddenly fair to us, they have received the sanction of beauty. And then through the passion of delight and the sense of life and of love in all beautiful objects we reach to the Mighty Spirit behind them whom our soul recognizes no longer as an object of knowledge or of worship but as her lover to whom she must fly, leaving her husband, the material life and braving the jeers and reprobation of the world for His sake. Thus by a singular paradox, one of those beautiful oxymorons of which the Hindu temperament is full, we reach God through the senses, just as our ancestors did through the intellect and through the emotions; for in the Hindu mind all roads lead eventually to the Rome of its longing, the dwelling of the Most High God. One can see how powerfully Kalidasa's poetry must have prepared the national mind for the religion of the Puranas, for the worship of Kali, our Mother and of Sri Krishna of Vrindavan, our soul's Paramour. Here indeed lies his chief claim to rank with Valmiki and Vyasa as one of our three national poets, in that he gathered the mind-life of the nation into his poetry at a great and critical moment and helped it forward into the groove down which it must henceforth run.

This method is applied with conspicuous beauty and success in the *Urvasie*. The Apsaras are the most beautiful and romantic conception on the lesser plane of Hindu mythology. From the moment that they arose out of the waters of the milky Ocean, robed in ethereal raiment and heavenly adornment, waking melody from a million lyres, the beauty and light of them has transformed the world. They crowd in the sunbeams, they flash and gleam over heaven in the lightnings, they make the azure beauty of the sky; they are the light of sunrise and sunset and the haunting voices of forest and field. They dwell too in the life of the soul; for they are the ideal pursued by the poet through his lines, by the artist shaping his soul on his canvas, by the sculptor

seeking a form in the marble; for the joy of their embrace the hero flings his life into the rushing torrent of battle; the sage, musing upon God, sees the shining of their limbs and falls from his white ideal. The delight of life, the beauty of things, the attraction of sensuous beauty, this is what the mystic and romantic side of the Hindu temperament strove to express in the Apsara. The original meaning is everywhere felt as a shining background, but most in the older allegories, especially the strange and romantic legend of Pururavas as we first have it in the Brahmanas and the Vishnoupurana.

But then came in the materialistic side of the Hindu mind and desired some familiar term, the earthlier the better, in which to phrase its romantic conception: this was found in the Hetaira. The class of Hetairae was as recognised an element in the Hindu society as in the Greek, but it does not appear to have exercised quite so large an influence in social life. As in the Greek counterpart they were a specially learned and accomplished class of women, but their superiority over ladies of good families was not so pronounced; for in ancient India previous to the Mahomedan episode respectable women were not mere ignorant housewives like the Athenian ladies, but often they were educated though not in a formal manner; that is to say, they went through no systematic training such as men had, but parents were always expected to impart general culture and accomplishments to them by private tuition at home; singing, music, dancing and to some extent painting were the ordinary accomplishments. General knowledge of morality and Scripture-tradition was imperative and sometimes the girls of high-born, wealthy or learned families received special instruction in philosophy or mathematics. Some indeed seem to have pursued a life of philosophic learning either as virgins or widows; but such instances were in pre-Buddhistic times very rare. The normal Hindu feeling has always been that the sphere of woman is in the home and her life incomplete unless merged in her husband's. In any case, the majority of the *kulavadhus*, women of respectable families, could hardly be more than amateurs in the arts and sciences, whereas with the Hetairae (Ganikas) such accomplishments were pursued and mastered as a profession. Hence beside their ordinary occupation of

singing and dancing in the temples and on great public occasions such as coronations and holy days, they often commanded the irregular affections of high-born or wealthy men who led openly a double life at home with the wife, outside with the Hetaira. As a class, they held no mean place in society; for they must not be confused with the strolling actor or mountebank caste who were a proverb for their vileness of morals. Many of them, no doubt, as will inevitably happen when the restraints of society are not recognized, led loose, immoral and sensual lives; in such a class Lais and Phryne must be as common as Aspasia. Nevertheless the higher and intellectual element seems to have prevailed; those who arrogated freedom in their sexual relations but were not prostitutes are admirably portrayed in Vasantasena of the *Toy Cart*, a beautiful melodrama drawn straight from the life; like her they often exchanged, with the consent of their lover's family, the unveiled face of the Hetaira for the seclusion of the wife. This class both in its higher and lower type lasted late into the present century, both are now under the auspices of western civilisation almost entirely replaced by a growing class of professional prostitutes, an inevitable consummation which it seems hardly worth while to dub social reform and accelerate by an active crusade.

The Apsaras then are the divine Hetairae of Paradise, beautiful singers and actresses whose beauty and art relieve the arduous and world-long struggle of the Gods against the forces that tend towards disruption by the Titans who would restore Matter to its original atomic condition or of dissolution by the sages and hermits who would make phenomena dissolve prematurely into the One who is above phenomena. They rose from the Ocean, says Valmiki, seeking who should choose them as brides, but neither the Gods nor the Titans accepted them, therefore are they said to be common or universal.

We shall now understand why the Apsara is represented as the Hetaira of heaven. They represent all that is sensuous, attractive or voluptuous in the Universe, the element of desire which, being unspiritual and non-moral, finds its sphere in the satisfaction of the senses of beauty and for that satisfaction needs freedom.

We see then the appropriateness of the Hetaira as a material form into which the vague idea of sensuous beauty in the world might run. For the charm of the Apsara even when working on the plane of the mind, is still vital and sensational; it does not belong to the more rarefied regions of the spirit. Now vital and sensational charm in seeking its fulfilment demands that the pursuit of sensuous beauty shall be its sole object, that it shall be without check as without any side-glance or after-thought; it does not seek to be immoral, but simply rejects all moral tests; it recognizes no law but the fulfilment of its own being. This is the very spirit of the Hetaira. The beauty of nakedness sculptured, painted or shaped into words, is not immoral. For the moment we apply the test of morality, it becomes clear that we must either rule it out as not belonging to the world of morality or rule out morality itself for the moment as not belonging to the world of beauty, which is essentially a world of nakedness, in the sense that dress there is an occasional ornament, not a necessary covering; not because there is any essential opposition between them, but because there is no essential connection or necessary point of contact. Ideals of all the plastic and sensuous arts fall within the scope of the Apsara; she is actress, songstress, musician, painter. When they arose from the waves neither the gods nor the demons accepted them as wives; accepted by none they became common to all; for neither the great active faculties of man nor the great destructive recognize sensuous delight and charm as their constant and sufficient mistress, but rather as the joy and refreshment of an hour, an accompaniment or diversion in their constant pursuit of the recognized ideal to which they are wedded. Moreover sensuous beauty has a certain attraction and splendour which seem to some minds finally, and occasionally to most, fairer and brighter than that other ideal which by daily occupation with it, by permissibility and by sameness, grows stale for some, fades into homeliness and routine for others and preserves its real, undying, unageing and unforsakeable freshness and delight only to the few constant and unswerving souls, who are the elect of our human evolution. In all this the idea of the Apsara coincides with the actuality of the Hetaira. In choosing the Hetaira therefore for the Apsara's earthly similitude, the

Hindu mind showed once more that wonderful mythopoeic penetrativeness which is as unerring and admirable in its way as the Greek mythopoeic felicity and tact.

When Narayana, the primeval and dateless sage of old, entered upon austerities in the most secret and desolate recesses of the Snowy Mountains, Indra, prince of the air, always hostile to asceticism, always distrustful of the philosophic and contemplative spirit, was alarmed for the balance of the world and the security of his own rule. He therefore sent the Apsaras to disturb the meditations of Narayana. Then upon the desolate Himalaya Spring set the beauty of his feet; the warm south wind breathed upon those inclement heights, blossoming trees grew in the eternal snow and the voice of the cuckoo was heard upon the mountain tops. It was amidst these vernal sweetnesses that the Apsaras came to Narayana; they were the loveliest of all the sisterhood, and subtlest and most alluring of feminine arts and enchantments was the way of their wooing; but Narayana who is Vishnu the World-Saviour when he comes in the guise of the ascetic, moved neither by the passion of love nor by the passion of anger, smiled in the large and indulgent mood of his world-embracing nature and opening his thigh took from it a radiant and marvellous creature, of whose beauty the loveliest Apsaras seemed but pale and broken reflections. Ashamed they veiled their faces and stole silently away from the snowy hermitage. But Narayana called this daughter of his creation Urvasie (she who lies in the thigh of the Supreme, the thigh being the seat of sensuousness) and gave her to Indra to be his most potent defence against the austerities of spiritual longing.

And yet the work of the philosophic mind incidentally serves sensuous and material life by increasing its resources and the depth of its charm. For the power of the philosophic ideals which have profoundly affected humanity is not limited to the domain of the intellect but also affects, enlarges and strengthens man's aesthetic outlook upon the world. The sensuous world becomes fuller of beauty, richer in colours, shades and suggestions, more profound and attractive in each widening of the human ideal. It is Urvasie who sprang from the thigh of the withered hermit cold and not any of those original daughters of

the inconstant waves who is the loveliest and most dangerous of the Apsaras.

In dramatic tone and build therefore this is an admirable creation, but there is so far no hint of the world-wide divineness of Urvasie, of the goddess within the woman. In direct allegory Kalidasa was too skilful an artist to deal, but we expect the larger conception of this beautiful and significant figure to enter into or at least colour the dramatic conception of the woman; some pomp of words, some greatness of gesture, some large divinity whether of speech or look to raise her above a mere nymph, however charming, into the goddess we know. Yet in rigidly excluding the grandiose or the coloured Kalidasa has shown, I think, his usual unerring dramatic and psychological tact. Dramatically, to have made both Pururavas and Urvasie equally dramatic in spirit and diction, to have clothed both in the external purple of poetry would have been to offend the eye with unrelieved gorgeousness and converted the play from an interesting and skilfully woven drama into a confused splendour of lyrical dialogue. Psychologically, the divinity and universal charm of Urvasie would have been defaced rather than brought out by investing her with grandeur of feeling or a pomp of poetic ornament. Perfect beauty has in it a double aspect, its intrinsic self and the impression it makes on the vivid and receptive mind. In itself it is simple, unconscious and unadorned, most effective when it is most naked; ceasing to be these, it loses its perfection and a great part of its universal charm. The nude human figure in painting and sculpture, unadorned magic or strength of style and conception in poetry, clear, luminous and comprehensive thought in philosophy, these are what the pursuing human spirit feels to be ideal, highest, most worthy of itself. Drapery blurs the effulgence of the goddess, ornament distracts the spirit and disappoints it of its engrossed and undisturbed sense of possession. On the other hand, the mind while most moved by what is simple and natural in its appeal, is romantic in its method of receiving the impression; becoming engrossed and steeped in the idea of it, it directs to it and surrounds it with all the fresh impres-

sions that continually flow in on the consciousness, gathers from it colour, fire and passion, creates around it a host of splendid associations and clothes it in the pomp of its own passionate imagery. The first period of a literary race when its mind is yet virgin and has to create beauty, is invariably simple and classical, the last period when its mind is saturated and full of past beauty is always romantic and aesthetic. The relations of Urvasie and Pururavas are true to this psychological principle. She herself is mere beauty and charm sufficient to itself and commanding delight and worship because she is herself, not because of any graces of expression, imagination, intellectual profundity. But the mind of Pururavas receiving her pure and perfect image steeps her in its own fire and colour, surrounding her with a halo of pomp and glory which reveals himself while seeking to interpret her.

Hindu Drama

THE vital law governing Hindu poetics is that it does not seek to represent life and character primarily or for their own sake; its aim is fundamentally aesthetic: by the delicate and harmonious rendering to awaken the aesthetic sense of the onlooker and gratify it by moving and subtly observed pictures of human feeling; it did not attempt to seize a man's spirit by the hair and drag it out into a storm of horror and pity and fear and return it to him drenched, beaten and shuddering. To the Hindu it would have seemed a savage and inhuman spirit that could take any aesthetic pleasure in the sufferings of an Oedipus or a Duchess of Malfi or in the tragedy of a Macbeth or an Othello. Partly this arose from the divine tenderness of the Hindu nature, always noble, forbearing and gentle and at that time saturated with the sweet and gracious pity and purity which flowed from the soul of Buddha; but it was also a necessary result of the principle that aesthetic and intellectual pleasure is the first object of all poetic art. Certainly poetry was regarded as a force for elevation as well as for charm, but as it reaches these objects through aesthetic beauty, aesthetic gratification must be the whole basis of dramatic composition, all other super-structural objects are secondary. The Hindu mind therefore shrank not only from violence, horror and physical tragedy, the Elizabethan stock-in-trade, but even from the tragic in moral problems which attracted the Greek mind; still less could it have consented to occupy itself with the problems of disease, neurosis and spiritual medicology generally which are the staple of modern drama and fiction. An atmosphere of romantic beauty, a high urbanity and a gracious equipoise of the feelings, a perpetual confidence in the sunshine and the flowers are the essential spirit of a Hindu play; pity and terror are used to awaken the feelings, but not to lacerate them, and the drama must close on the note of joy and peace; the clouds are only admitted to make more beautiful the glad sunlight from which all came and into which

all must melt away. It is in an art like this that the soul finds the repose, the opportunity for being confirmed in gentleness and in kindly culture, the unmixed intellectual and aesthetic pleasure in quest of which it turned away from the crudeness and incoherence of life to the magic regions of Art.

If masterly workmanship in plot-making and dramatic situation, subtlety, deftness and strength in dialogue and a vital force of dramatic poetry by themselves make a fine and effective poetical play for the stage, for a really great drama a farther and rarer gift is needed, the gift of dramatic characterisation. This power bases itself in its different degrees sometimes upon great experience of human life, sometimes on a keen power of observation and accurate imagination making much matter out of a small circle of experience, but in its richest possessors on a boundless sympathy with all kinds of humanity accompanied by a power of imbibing and afterwards of selecting and bringing out from oneself at will impressions received from the others. This supreme power, European scholars agree, is wanting in Hindu dramatic literature. A mere poet like Goethe may extend unstinted and superlative praise to a *Shacountala*, but the wiser critical and scholarly mind passes a far less favourable verdict. There is much art in Hindu poetry, it is said, but no genius; there is plenty of fancy but no imagination; the colouring is rich, but colour is all, humanity is not there; beautiful and even moving poetry is abundant, but the characters are nil. Indian scholars trained in our schools repeat what they have learnt. A Hindu scholar of acute diligence and wide Sanscrit learning has even argued that the Hindu mind is constitutionally incapable of original and living creation; he has alleged the gigantic, living and vigorous personalities of the Mahabharata as an argument to prove that these characters must have been real men and women, copied from the life, since no Hindu poet could have created character with such truth and power. On the other side, the Bengali critics, men of no mean literary taste and perception, though inferior in pure verbal scholarship, are agreed in regarding the characters of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti as beautiful and energetic creations, not less deserving of study than any personality of an Elizabethan drama. This contradiction, violent as it is, is not

difficult to understand, since it takes its root in an element always more or less present in criticism, the national element; national characters, national prejudices, national training preordain for the bulk of us the spirit in which we approach unfamiliar poetry. Now the average English mind is capable of appreciating character as manifested in strong action or powerfully revealing speech, but constitutionally dull to the subtleties of civilised characters which have their theatre in the mind and the heart and make of a slight word, a gesture or even silence their sufficient revelation. The nations of Europe, taken in the mass, are still semi-civilized; their mind feeds on the physical, external and grossly salient features of life; where there is no brilliance and glare, the personality is condemned as characterless. A strength that shuns ostentation, a charm that is not luxuriant, not naked to the first glance are appreciable only to the few select minds who have chastened their natural leanings by a wide and deep culture. The Hindu on his side dislikes violence in action, excess in speech, ostentation or effusiveness in manner; he demands from his ideal temperance and restraint as well as nobility, truth and beneficence; the Aryan or true gentleman must be *mitācāraḥ* and *mitabhāṣī*, restrained in action and temperate in speech. This national tendency shows itself even in our most vehement work. The Mahabharata is the section of our literature which deals most with the external and physical and corresponds best to the European idea of the epic; yet the intellectualism of even the Mahabharata, its preference of mind-issues to physical and emotional collisions and catastrophes, its continual suffusion of these when they occur with mind and ideality, the civilisation, depth and lack of mere sensational turbulence, in one word, the Aryan cast of its characters are irritating to the European scholars. Thus a historian of Indian literature complains that Bhima is the really epic character in this poem. He meant, evidently, the only character in which vast and irresistible strength, ungovernable impetuousness of passion, warlike fury and destroying anger are grandiosely deployed. But to the Hindu whose ideas of epic are not coloured with the wrath of Achilles, epic motive and character are not confined to what is impetuous, huge and untamed; he demands a larger field for the epic and does not confine it to

savage and half savage epochs. Gentleness, patience, self-sacrifice, purity, the civilised virtues appear to him as capable of epic treatment as martial fire, brute strength, revenge, anger, hate and ungovernable self-will. Rama mildly and purely renouncing the empire of the world for the sake of his father's honour seems to them as epic and mighty a figure as Bhima destroying Cichaka in his wild fury of triumphant strength and hatred. It is noteworthy that the European temperament finds vice more interesting than virtue, and, in its heart of hearts, damns the Christian qualities with faint praise as negative, not positive virtues; the difficulty European writers experience in making good men sympathetic is a commonplace of literary observation. In all these respects the Hindu attitude is diametrically opposed to the European. This attitude of the Hindu mind as evinced in the Mahabharata is so intolerable to European scholars that they have been forced to ease their irritation by conjuring up the phantom of an original ballad-epic more like their notions of what an epic should be, an epic in which the wicked characters of the present Mahabharata were the heroes and the divine champions of right of the present Mahabharata were the villains! The present Mahabharata is, they say, a sanctimonious monastic corruption of the old vigorous and half-savage poem. To the Hindu the theory naturally seems a grotesque perversion of ingenuity, but its very grotesqueness is eloquent of the soil it springs from, the soil of the half-barbarous temperament of the material and industrial Teuton which cannot, even when civilised, entirely sympathise with the intellectual working of more radically civilised types. This fundamental difference of outlook on character, generating difference in critical appreciation of dramatic and epic characterisation is of general application, but it acquires a peculiar force when we come to consider the Hindu drama; for here the ingrained disparity is emphasised by external conditions.

It has been often noticed that the Hindu drama presents many remarkable points of contact with the Elizabethan. In the mixture of prose and poetry, in the complete freedom with which time and scenery vary, in the romantic life-likeness of the action, in the mixture of comedy with serious matter, in the gorgeousness of the poetry and the direct appeal to the feelings, both these

great literatures closely resemble each other. Yet the differences, though they do not strike us so readily as the similarities, are more vital and go deeper; for the similarities are of form, the differences of spirit. The Elizabethan drama was a great popular literature which aimed at a vigorous and realistic presentation of life and character such as would please a mixed and not very critical audience; it had therefore the strength and weakness of great popular literature; its strength was an abounding vigour in passion and action and an unequalled grasp upon life; its weakness a crude violence, imperfection and bungling in workmanship combined with a tendency to exaggerations, horrors and monstrosities. The Hindu drama, on the contrary, was written by accomplished men of culture for an educated, often a courtly audience and with an eye to an elaborate and well-understood system of poetics. When therefore English scholars, fed on the exceedingly strong and often raw meat of the Elizabethans, assert that there are no characters in the Hindu drama, when they attribute this deficiency to the feebleness of inventive power which leads "Asiatic" poetry to concentrate itself on glowing description and imagery, seeking by the excess of ornament to conceal poverty of substance, when even their Indian pupils perverted from good taste and blinded to fine discrimination by a love of the striking and a habit of gross forms and pronounced colours due to the too exclusive study of English poetry, repeat and reinforce their criticisms, the lover of Kalidasa and his peers need not be alarmed; he need not banish from his imagination the gracious company with which it is peopled; he need not characterise Shacountala as an eloquent nothing or Urvasie as a finely-jointed puppet. These dicta spring from prejudice and the echo of a prejudice; they are evidence not of a more vigorous critical mind but of a restricted critical sympathy. If we expect a Beautiful White Devil or a Jew of Malta from the Hindu dramatist, we shall be disappointed; he deals not in these splendid or horrible masks. If we come to him for a Lear or a Macbeth, we shall go away discontented; for these also are sublimities which belong to cruder civilisations and more barbarous national types; in worst crimes and utmost suffering as well as happiness and virtue, the Aryan was more civilized and temperate, less crudely

enormous than the hard and earthy African peoples whom in Europe he only half moralised. If he seeks a Père Goriot or a Madame Bovary, he will still fail in his quest; for though such types doubtless existed at all times among the mass of the people with the large strain of African blood, Hindu Art would have shrunk from poisoning the moral atmosphere of the soul by elaborate studies of depravity. The true spirit of criticism is to seek in a literature what we can find in it of great or beautiful, not to demand from it what it does not seek to give us.

SKELETON NOTES
ON THE KUMARASAMBHAVAM

CANTO Five

1. Thus by Pinaka's wielder burning the mind-born before her eyes, baffled of her soul's desire, the Mountain's daughter blamed her own beauty in her heart; for loveliness has then only fruit when it gives happiness in the beloved.

तया may go either with **दहता** or **भग्नमनोरथा** but it has more point with the latter.

समक्षम् : The Avachuri takes singularly **जया-विजयाप्रत्यक्षम्** i.e., before Jaya and Vijaya, her friends. The point would then be that the humiliation of her beauty was rendered still more poignant by occurring before witnesses. In this case, however, the obscurity caused by the omission of the names would be the grossest of rhetorical faults. **समक्षम्** by itself can mean nothing but "before her (Parvati's) very eyes", **अक्ष्णोः समीपम्**, as Mallinath rightly renders it.

निनिन्द : found fault with, censured as defective.

हि : S. takes this as the emphatic **हि (निश्चितम्)**. It is more appropriate and natural to take it in the usual sense of *for*, giving the reason or justification (Mallinath) for her finding fault with her own beauty.

प्रियेषु : loc. of object (**विषये**), "with regard to those loved".

सौभाग्य : The "felicity" of women consists in the love and welfare of those they love. Here only the first element is intended; so here **प्रियवाल्लभ्यम्** = the affection of the beloved.

2. By asceticisms she wished, embracing mind-centred me-

तथा समक्षं दहता मनोभवं पिनाकिना भग्नमनोरथा सती।
निनिन्द रूपं हृदयेन पार्वती प्रियेषु सौभाग्यफला हि चारुता ॥१॥
इयेष सा कर्तुमवन्ध्यरूपतां समाधिमास्थाय तपोभिरात्मनः।
अवाप्यते वा कथमन्यथा द्वयं तथाविधं प्रेम पतिश्च तादृशः ॥२॥

ditation, to make her beauty bear its fruit of love; for how else should these two be one, such love and such a husband.

अवन्ध्यरूपताम् : literally the "unsterile beautiness of herself". Notice the extraordinary terseness which Kalidasa has imparted to his style by utilising every element of pithiness the Sanskrit language possesses.

समाधिम् : the bringing (धा) together (सम्) and centring on (आ) a single subject of all the faculties; used technically of the stage of ध्यान, meditation, in which the mind with all the senses gathered into it is centred on God within itself and insensible to outside impressions.

तपोभिः : to translate this word "penances", as is frequently done, is altogether improper. The idea of "self-imposed or priest-imposed penalty for sin" which the English word contains does not enter even in the slightest degree into the idea of तपः which implies no more than a fierce and strong effort of all the human powers towards any given end. According to Hindu ideas this could only be done to its best effect by conquering the body for the mind; hence the word finally came to be confined to the sense of ascetic practices having this object. See Introduction for the history and philosophy of this word.

वा : "or", answering an implied objection; "she had to do this, or (if you say she had not) how else could she succeed?" वा in this use comes to mean "for" in its argumentative, not in its causative or explanatory sense.

अवाप्यते : the present in its potential sense.

अन्यथा : otherwise, i.e., by any less strenuous means. Cf. Manu quoted by Mallinath:

यद् दुष्करं यद् दुरापं यद् दुर्गं यच्च दुस्तरम्।
तत् सर्वं तपसा प्राप्यं तपो हि दुरतिक्रमम्॥

तथाविधं प्रेम : anticipating the result of the तपः. The love of Siva for Uma was so great that he made himself "one body with his beloved", one half male, the other half female. See Introduction for the Haragauri image.

तादृशः : Mallinath glosses: i.e., "Mrityunjaya death-conquering (an epithet of Siva). For the two things desired of women are that their husbands should love them and that they should

not die before them." This may have been Kalidasa's drift, but it is surely more natural to take तादृशः of Siva's qualities and greatness generally; "such a lord as the Almighty Lord of the Universe", तादृशः जगदीशः, (Kv.).

3. But hearing of her daughter soul-compelled towards the Mountain-Lord, towards asceticism endeavouring, said Mena to her, embracing her to her bosom, forbidding from that great eremite.

C. gives this verse as क्षेपक; it could certainly be omitted without loss to the sense but not without great loss to the emotional beauty of the passage. Is there any other authority for supposing this to be an interpolation?

कृतोद्यमां : उद्यमः here in the sense of उद्योगः, preparatory action or efforts. Apte takes उद्यमः in the sense of "exertion or perseverance"; the commentator, X, of "fixed resolve", the sense in which Apte takes it in the...[1] Sloka. The word really means "active steps", "active efforts".

मुनिव्रतात् : a vow practicable only to a saint.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते॥

Whose mind is not shaken in sorrows, who has banished the craving for delights, who has passed beyond joy and terror, fear and wrath, whose thought is calm and firm, he is called a saint. (*Gita* 2. 56)

4. There are Gods desired that dwell in homes. Oh my child, how alien is austerity from this body of thine; the delicate Shirisha flower may bear the foot-fall of the bee, but not of the winged bird.

निशम्य चैनां तपसे कृतोद्यमां सुतां गिरीशप्रतिसक्तमानसाम्।
उवाच मेना परिरभ्य वक्षसा निवारयन्ती महतो मुनिव्रतात्॥३॥
मनीषिताः सन्ति गृहेषु देवतास्तपः क्व वत्से क्व च तावकं वपुः।
पदं सहेत भ्रमरस्य पेलवं शिरीषपुष्पं न पुनः पतत्रिणः॥४॥

[1] See sloka 5 of this canto.

मनीषिताः : formed from मनीषा, desire (मनः + ईष + आ) by the application of the passive suffix इत = desired, अभीष्टाः, अभिलषिताः. I do not understand on what principle of grammar the Avachuri followed by Deshpande takes this form as मनोऽभिलाषदाश्यः "desired" taking the sense of "able" or "thought able to fulfil desire". This is but one more instance of the blamable slovenliness of this commentary. Adopting this untenable rendering these commentators further suppose that the gods in the house are to be worshipped by Parvati for the purpose of gaining Siva as her husband, but it is difficult to see how other gods could give her the Supreme, and in any case मनीषिता can only mean "desired" which renders this version impossible. But desired by whom? If by Parvati, we must suppose Mena to imagine her daughter aiming simply at making a good match in the celestial world. The sense will then be "Thou desirest a God in marriage; well, there are gods in our home whom thou canst win by easy adoration, while Siva must be wooed by harsh asceticism in the woods." Or it may signify "desired generally, desired by others", when it will have the force of desirable. I prefer therefore this latter interpretation.

This is supported by the later इयं महेन्द्रप्रभृतीनधिश्रयश्चतुर्विगीशानवमन्य मानिनी and Siva Purana.

गृहेषु : The plural may here be used in the sense of a great mansion. The old Aryan house seems to have many storeys, each storey consisting of several flats, and in the palaces of princes and great nobles it was composed of several wings and even several piles of buildings. The female apartments specially formed a piece apart. Cf. the Siva Purana where Mena says

कुत्र यासि तपः कर्तुं देवाः सन्ति गृहे मम।
तीर्थानि च विचित्राणि सन्ति किं न पितुर्गृहे॥

Wherefore goest thou forth to practise austerities; gods are there in my house and wondrous holinesses, and are there none in thy father's mansion?

A similar rendering is also favoured by another passage of the same Purana:

इति स्वतनयावाक्यं श्रुत्वा तु पितरौ मुने।
ऊचतुर्दुःखितौ भूत्वा बाष्पगद्गदया गिरा॥

तस्मात् त्वं भक्तियोगेन पूजयस्व शिवं गृहे।
उ मा गच्छ वनं घोरं सर्वविघ्नास्पदं सदा॥

It is perhaps a reminiscence of these lines that induces the Avachuri and Deshpande to render "worships the gods in the house to gain Siva for husband"; but this is incompatible with मनीषिताः If Siva Purana then were Kalidasa's authority, we should have no choice as to our interpretation, but I have tried to show that the Siva Purana and not Kalidasa was the borrower. It is possible therefore that the former may in borrowing have misinterpreted गृहेषु and that the word has a strictly plural sense. "There are gods desired that dwell in homes", i.e., not like the undesirable and homeless Siva, who must be sought by austerity in wild woods and desolate mountains. The only objection to this rendering which certainly gives the best and most poetic sense, is that the contrast with Siva is implied, and not expressed, while तपः immediately following seems to be opposed to household worship. But Mena under the circumstances would not venture openly to dispraise Siva; implied dispraise therefore is what we should naturally expect. Such suppression of the implied contrast one term expressed and the other left to be gathered is not in itself unpoetic and might be expected in a work written under the strong influence of the elliptical and suggestive style of the Mahabharata.

The reading गृहेऽपि would of course leave no doubt; it confines us to our first rendering.

क्व क्व : Again the characteristic Sanskrit idiom implying महदन्तरम्, "a far cry". It is a far cry from your tender body to the harshness of ascetic austerities. Notice again the fine precision, the *netteté* of Kalidasa's style; there are no epithets with तपः and वपुः, these being sufficiently implied in the contrasting क्व क्व and in the simile that follows.

शिरीषपुष्पम् : Cf. the Padma Purana:

परुषस्तपोविशेषस्तव पुनरङ्गं शिरीषसुकुमारम्।
व्यवसितमेतत्कठिनं पार्वति तव दुष्करमिति प्रतिभाति॥

— a fine Vyasian couplet.

"Harsh is this austerity of thy choosing; thy body again is tender as a Shirish flower; yet iron-firm is thy resolve, O Parvati, a hard thing truly this seemeth." Who is here the

borrower, if loan there has been?

पेलवं : the other readings कोमलं and पेशलं are less commendable and not supported by Mallinath.

पुनः : on the other hand, however.

5. Thus though she urged her, yet could not Mena rein in her daughter's fixed purpose from action; for who can turn back (resist) a mind steadfastly resolved on the object of its desire, or a downward moving stream?

ध्रुवेच्छाम् : the reading व्रतेच्छाम् is weak and श्रुतेच्छाम् absolutely without force. Neither is noticed by Mallinath. The point of course is the unspeakable fixity of her resolve and not its object.

नियन्तुमुद्यमात् : the delicate etymological assonance is a fine survival of one of Kalidasa's favourite rhetorical artifices.

उद्यमात् : this word is variously taken in various contexts. S. here renders by उत्साह, Apte by "fixed resolve" and Deshpande by "undertaking", whereas Mallinath consistently renders by उद्योग. It is as well therefore to fix its exact meaning. The root यम् meaning "to put a strain on" with उद् "up" in an intensive, implies the strain put on the faculties in preparing for or making a great effort. It means therefore "active effort" or "endeavour" or else "active preparation". In this latter sense Apte quotes गन्तुमुद्यमो विहितः = preparations to go were taken order for. In Sloka 3 the dative तपसे having the same force as an infinitive leads us to prefer this meaning; "effort towards austerity" has no meaning in the context. I think in this Sloka, it has as Mallinath perceived, the same sense. Uma is still in the stage of preparation, and is not yet even ready to ask her father's consent. Effort or endeavour would therefore be obviously out of place. Now these are the only two ascertained senses of उद्यम. The sense of उत्साह or undertaking cannot be established and is not recognised by Apte. That of "perseverance", "fixed resolve" given to it by A. in Sloka 3 and by Apte here seems to me equally without

इति ध्रुवेच्छामनुशासती सुतां शशाक मेना न नियन्तुमुद्यमात्।
क ईप्सितार्थस्थिरनिश्चयं मनः पयश्च निम्नाभिमुखं प्रतीपयेत् ॥५॥

authority; I believe there is no passage in which उद्यम occurs where it cannot be rendered by "effort", "labour" or "preparation". Here moreover Mr. Apte is obviously wrong, for the sense of "fixed resolve" has already been given by ध्रुवेच्छाम् and Kalidasa is never tautologous, never expresses the same thing twice over in a line. Perhaps he intends us to take his next quotation, from the Panchatantra, in this sense उद्यमेन हि सिध्यन्ति कार्याणि न मनोरथैः. But the opposite to मनोरथाः, desires, is obviously not "perseverance" but "effort". "It is by active effort and not by mere desires that accomplishment is reached." For a more detailed discussion of this subject see Excursus.

पयश्च निम्नाभिमुखम् : Water which has set its face towards descent. पयः the general is here obviously used for प्रवाह the particular.

प्रतीपयेत् : the commentaries take in the sense of "turn back", most definitely expressed by S. पश्चात् प्रचालयेत्. Mallinath recognising that प्रतीपयेत् primarily means प्रतिकूलयेत् "oppose", gives that sense and deduces from it प्रतिनिवर्तयेत्. Apte also quotes this passage to establish this sense of प्रतीपय. This of course is taking प्रतीपय = प्रतीपं कृ, प्रतीप being "reverse, inverted", e.g. in अम्भसामोघसंरोधः प्रतीपगमनादिव (अनुमीयते), Canto 2. 25. But प्रतीप also and primarily means "adverse, hostile", so प्रतीपयति, प्रतीपः भवति, "be hostile to, oppose". It might possibly be taken in this sense here without Mallinath's deduction of "turn back"; the general nature of the proposition justifying the more general sense.

6. Once she, the clear-minded, by the mouth of her personal friend begged of her father not ignorant of her longing, that she might dwell in the forests there to practise austerity and meditation until she saw fruit of her desire.

कदाचित्...मनस्विनी : Once, at a certain time. कस्मिंश्चित् काले गते सति says V. It certainly means that; but that is not the precise shade of expression used by Kalidasa. कदाचित् means "at a certain time", and its full force is brought out by मनस्विनी. The commentators

कदाचिदासन्नसखीमुखेन सा मनोरथज्ञं पितरं मनस्विनी।
अयाचतारण्यनिवासमात्मनः फलोदयान्ताय तपःसमाधये ॥६॥

are all astray in their rendering of this word, even Mallinath rendering स्थिरचित्ता while Avachuri and C. give मानिनी and साभिमाना, meaning proud, ambitious which is ludicrously wrong. मनीषी can mean nothing but wise, intellectual, a thinker. The wisdom of Parvati lay in her choice of a time, hence Kalidasa's use of कदाचित् which at first seems awkward and vague, but in relation to मनस्विनी takes force and body. The wisdom is further specified by मनोरथज्ञः. The commentators take this as meaning "knowing of her desire to marry Hara", but this was very old news to Himalaya and there would be no point in recording his knowledge here; V.'s explanation "for he who does not know the desire, does not give his consent", is inexpressibly feeble. मनोरथ means here not her desire for Siva but her desire to practise austerity as a means of winning Siva. Parvati wisely waited till the news of this intention had travelled to her father and he had time to get accustomed to it and think it over. If she had hastily sprung it on him his tenderness for her might have led him to join Mena in forbidding the step, which would have been fatal to her plans.

आसन्नसखी : The Avachuri absurdly says तटस्थ, a mediating friend. Mallinath is obviously right आप्तसखी, a friend who is always near one, i.e., a personal or intimate friend. Cf. आसन्न-परिचारिका.

मुखेन : Mallinath takes उपाय "by means of her friend" and quotes Amara.

तपःसमाधये : Mallinath says तपोनियमार्थं, and the commentators generally follow him. Apte also takes समाधि = penance (meaning, of course, austerity), religious obligation (?), devotion to penance. I fail to see why we should foist this sense on समाधि. There is none of the passages quoted by Apte in support of it which cannot be as well or better translated by concentration. Here we may take as a Dwandwa-compound "austerity and concentration" or even better in accordance with Sloka 2 तपोभिः समाधये, "concentration to be gained by austerities". See Excursus.

अयाचत: only आत्मने *ātmane*, having the middle sense "to ask for oneself". Notice the skilful use of compounds in this verse getting its full value out of this element of the language without overdoing it like Bhavabhuti and other late writers.

7. Then by her graver parent permitted, for pleased was he at passion so worthy of her, she went to the peacock-haunted peaks of the white mother famed afterwards among the people by her name.

अभिनिवेश is anything that takes possession of the mind or the nature, "passion", "engrossing resolve". The first seems to me more appropriate here.

शिखण्डिमत् : V. considers this merely an ornamental epithet expressing the beauty of the hill; but ornamental epithets find little place in the Kumarasambhava. Mallinath explains "not full of wild beasts of prey", which is forced and difficult to reconcile with **विरोधि-सत्त्वोज्झित-पूर्वमत्सरम्** in Sloka 17. The Avachuri is characteristically inane; it says "peacocks are without attachment (**सङ्ग** = attachment to worldly objects), the sight of attachment breaks Samadhi". I have reared peacocks myself and I can assure the reader that they have as much attachment as any other creature. I believe that this is a very beautiful and delicate allusion to the destined fruit of Uma's journey and consummation of the poem, the birth of the Kumara, Skanda being always associated with the peacock. Kalidasa thus skilfully introduces a beautifying epithet without allowing it to be otiose.

8. In her irremovable resolve she put off the necklace whose restless string had rubbed off the sandal smeared and fastened on the bark tawny-red like the young dawn though ever her high swelling breasts rent (broke) its firm compactness.

विलोलयष्टि etc. : The meaning conveyed is that the movements of the necklace had already rubbed off the sandal paste from her breasts which otherwise she would have had to refuse herself as being a piece of luxury incompatible with **तपः**. Some of the commentators take **यष्टि** as meaning "her slender figure"; "the necklace

अथानुरूपाभिनिवेशतोषिणा कृताभ्यनुज्ञा गुरुणा गरीयसा ।
प्रजासु पश्चात्प्रथितं तदाख्यया जगाम गौरीशिखरं शिखण्डिमत् ॥७॥
विमुच्य सा हारमहार्यनिश्चया विलोलयष्टिप्रविलुप्तचन्दनम् ।
बबन्ध बालारुणबभ्रु वल्कलं पयोधरोत्सेधविशीर्णसंहति ॥८॥

which owing to the restlessness of her slender body had rubbed off the sandal-paste". But to take विलोलयष्टि = यष्टिविलोलता (चञ्चलाङ्ग-तया) is very awkward and in any case it is extremely doubtful whether यष्टि by itself could mean अङ्गयष्टिः. I should therefore reject this rendering which as far as significance goes one might perhaps prefer. If we take यष्टि in this sense, it is better to adopt the reading अहार्यनिश्चया विलोलयष्टिः, understand not विलोलयष्टिः with J. for that would be merely an ornamental epithet, but अविलोलयष्टिः "She put off her necklace having rubbed off the sandal-paste, and her slender body forgot its swaying", i.e., the amorous beauty of motion attributed by the Kalidasian poets to beautiful women. प्रविलुप्तचन्दनम् will be in this rendering an adverbial (.....)[1] compound. The reading however has little authority.

बालारुणबभ्रु : Mallinath curiously translates अरुण by अर्क, sun; but अरुण means "dawn" and not "sun"; moreover, the young sun is not tawny-red unless seen through mist.

पयोधरः : *lit.* "whose compactness is rent by the loftiness of her breasts". The Avachuri is even more amazingly foolish than usual on this line. It construes अहार्यनिश्चया by आहारं त्यक्त्वा "abandoning food", a rendering which makes one suspect the sanity of the commentator and पयोधरोत्सेधविशीर्णसंहति by मेघोदयेन विस्तारितः समवायो यस्य, "the close composition of which is spread out by the rising of the clouds"; perhaps an unequalled instance of perverted scholastic ingenuity, though Mallinath's interpretation of the Dingnagian stanza of the Meghaduta runs it close. It is needless to say that उत्सेध and विशीर्ण will not bear the strained meanings put on them and that even if they could, Kalidasa's fine taste in the choice of words would never have employed such out of the way expressions. He would have said plainly उदय and विस्तीर्ण. The sense arrived at by these unnecessary violences is the most prosaic, pointless and inept possible.

9. Even as her face was sweet with its fair adorned tresses,

यथा प्रसिद्धैर्मधुरं शिरोरुहैर्जटाभिरप्येवमभूत्तदाननम् ।
न षट्पदश्रेणिभिरेव पङ्कजं सशैवलासङ्गमपि प्रकाशते ॥९॥

[1] The parenthesis left blank in MS.

so was it even with the ascetic's tangled crown; not set with lines of bees alone the lotus has splendour but also coated with moss.

प्रसिद्धैः : X strangely takes "famous". The meaning of course is "dressed and adorned" as opposed to the neglected **जटा**. **प्रसिद्धौ ख्यातभूषितौ** (Amara). **प्रसिद्ध** means "famous" or "adorned".

षट्पदश्रेणिभिरेव : **एव** = alone, in its limiting sense. Note the implied comparison, favourite form in Sanskrit classic poetry.

10. The triple plaited girdle of rough grass she wore — for her vow she wore it though every moment it caused discomfort, now first tied on reddened the seat of her zone.

कृतरोमविक्रियाम् : the turning of the hair on the body is used by the concrete Sanskrit for the sense of discomfort caused by the contact of anything rough and uncomfortable. The same symptom also denotes in other circumstances great sensuous delight.

व्रताय, here **व्रतार्थम्** : with a view to her vow, for the sake of her vow.

अकारि : the passive aorist; notice the tendency of later Sanskrit towards passive constructions in past time, prevalent in prose (see the Panchatantra passim) and breaking its way occasionally into poetry. The ripe and mature style of the Kumarasambhava specially shows this tendency to approximate to prose construction. So also **कृतोऽक्षसूत्रप्रणयो तया करः**.

तत्पूर्वनिबद्धया : For **पूर्व** in the sense of **प्रथमम्** cf...

11. Her hand ceased from her lip from which the colouring was effaced and the ball all reddened with her breasts' vermillion, and its fingers wounded with the plucking of Kusha grass, she made it a lover of the rosary.

प्रतिक्षणं सा कृतरोमविक्रियां व्रताय मौञ्जीं त्रिगुणां बभार याम्।
अकारि तत्पूर्वनिबद्धया तया सरागमस्या रसनागुणास्पदम् ॥१०॥
विसृष्टरागावधराज्निवर्तितः स्तनाङ्गरागारुणिताच्च कन्दुकात्।
कुशाङ्कुरादानपरिक्षताङ्गुलिः कृतोऽक्षसूत्रप्रणयी तया करः ॥११॥

निवर्तितः : Deshpande singularly supposes that this may mean formerly, i.e., always kept away from. Such a rendering if possible would be wholly out of place and meaningless. The difficulty as regards the first line is avoided by supposing it meant that her lip was naturally too red to need artificial colouring or that her maidens did the colouring for her. This is most jejune and artificial, nor has such a detail the slightest appropriateness in the context. As regards the ball, it is explained that her hand was too tender to play with it! This is not only jejune, it is laughable. Kalidasa would never have perpetrated such an absurd conceit even if there were no other objections; the absence of a word indicating past time would dispose of the rendering; for निवर्तित is the causal of वृत् with नि. Now the simple निवृत्तः means "cessation from प्रवृत्ति, i.e., from any habit of mind, practice or course of action", "Turning away from something it had been turned to". निवर्तित therefore obviously means "caused to cease from, turned from". It cannot possibly have the sense of "never busied with"; but means "ceasing to be busy with". Kalidasa is speaking in these stanzas of Uma putting off all her former girlish habits for those appropriate to asceticism; to suppose that he brings in matter foreign to the idea in hand is to suppose that he is not Kalidasa. And to interpret "she never used to colour her lips or play at ball and she now plucked Kusha grass and counted a rosary" introduces such foreign matter, substitutes non-sequence for sequence and ruins the balanced Kalidasian structure of these stanzas. Such commentary falls well under Mallinath's vigorous censure that the muse of Kalidasa swoons to death under the weight of bad commentaries.

The poet's meaning is plain. Her hand no longer as before was employed in colouring her lip, she had put that away from her; neither did it play with the ball all reddened with the vermilion of her breasts; for both the vermilion was banished from her breasts and the ball from her hand; it was only used now to pluck Kusha grass and count the rosary.

स्तनाङ्गरागात् : resolve the compound स्तन + अङ्गरागात्, the body-colour of the breast. For the toilet of women in Kalidasa's time, see Appendix.

अक्षसूत्र : String of beads, rosary. The use of the rosary, to this day a Hindu practice with devotees and pious women, is thus more than two thousand years old. The use of the rosary among the Roman Catholics is an unmistakable sign of Hindu influence, as with the Hindus it has a distinct meaning, with the Christians none. See Excursus.

12. She who would be tormented by the flowers shaken by her own hair, by her tumbling on some costliest couch, now lay with her fair soft arm for pillow reclining (sunk) on the bare altar-ground.

पुष्पैरपि : like the lady of the fairy tale who was discovered to be a princess and no maid-servant when she could not sleep all night for the pain of a single flower which had been surreptitiously introduced into her bed.

बाहुलतोपधायिनी : the appropriateness of the creeper-like arm rests in the rounded softness and supple willowy grace of the arm. It is the Indian creeper and not the English, be it remembered, that is intended. There is therefore no idea of slenderness.

उपधायिनी : this is the verbal adjective (cf. दायिनी) from धा and उप in the sense of "lay upon", so "lie upon" उपधाय वामभुजशायिनी D. K. III, lay pillowed on her left arm. For the full form compare वामहस्तोपहितवदना (quoted by Apte) and numerous other instances.

निषेदुषी : S. strangely construes "slept sitting on the bare ground". It is obvious that she could not at the same time sleep sitting and sleep with her arm as her pillow; if we are to render निषेदुषी = उपविष्टा we must follow Mallinath "slept pillowed on her arm and sat on the bare ground"; but this is not justified by the Sanskrit; the word being a participle and not as it then should be, a finite tense like अशेत with or without च. Moreover the idea of sitting is foreign to the contrast between her former bed and her present, and therefore would not be introduced by Kalidasa. We must take निषद् in its primary sense of "sink down", "recline";

महार्हशय्यापरिवर्तनच्युतैः स्वकेशपुष्पैरपि या स्म दूयते।
अशेत सा बाहुलतोपधायिनी निषेदुषी स्थण्डिल एव केवले ॥१२॥

it implies "entire recumbence", and is opposed to परिवर्तन in the first line. "She who was formerly restless on softest couches, now lay restfully on the hard bare ground."

स्थण्डिले...केवले : केवले means "without any covering", not merely of grass as some have it but of either grass or any sheet or coverlet. The स्थण्डिल is the वेदिका, a level and bare platform of earth used as sacred ground for sacrifice.

एव : emphatic.

13. She while busied her vow seemed to lay by as a deposit, for after resuming her duet (of graces) in a duet (of forms) in the slender creepers her amorous movements and her wantoning glance in the hinds.

पुनर्ग्रहीतुम् : notice the strict supine use which is the proper function of the infinitive in Sanskrit. It has of course the dative force = पुनर्ग्रहणाय.

द्वयेऽपि द्वयम् : the pair in the pair. अपि is here little more than emphatic.

निक्षेप : a deposit on trust.

पुनर्ग्रहीतुं नियमस्थया तया द्वयेऽपि निक्षेप इवार्पितं द्वयम्।
लतासु तन्वीषु विलासचेष्टितं विलोलदृष्टं हरिणाङ्गनासु च ॥१३॥

A PROPOSED WORK ON KALIDASA*

CHAPTER I

Kalidasa's surroundings

CHAPTER II

Kalidasa and his work

The Malavas — the three ages, Valmiki...Vyasa... Kalidasa... — surrounding circumstances — materialism and sensuousness...the historic method...psychological principles of criticism...variety of Kalidasa's work...probable chronological succession of his works

CHAPTER III

The Seasons

CHAPTER IV

The *House of Raghu*; its scope and outline; nature of the poem; descriptive epic of later Hindu civilisation; its limitations. Qualities of verse, diction, similes. Description. Sentiment; pathos and eloquence. Relative merits of later and earlier cantos. Comparison of Kalidasa's pathos and Bhavabhuti's

CHAPTER V

The *Cloud-Messenger.* Kalidasa's treatment of the supernatural...substance of the poem...chastened style...perfection of the harmony...moderation and restraint...pathos and passion

* A number of chapters in this proposed work on Kalidasa were written fully or in part, as is evident from the foregoing pages, i.e. *The Seasons*, *The Characters*, *The Hindu Drama*, etc. Some chapters, however, if we may judge from internal references, seem to have been lost.

CHAPTER VI

The Drama before Kalidasa; elements of Hindu drama...the three plays, studies of one subject

CHAPTER VII

The *Agnimitra* — its plot; perfection of dramatic workmanship; Kalidasa's method of characterisation; the characters; dramatic style. Relation of the *Agnimitra* to the *Raghu*

CHAPTER VIII

The *Urvasie*...dramatic workmanship and conception; character of the poetry; relation to *Meghaduta*

CHAPTER IX

The Characters

CHAPTER X, XI, XII

The *Shacountala*

CHAPTER XIII, XIV

The *Kumara*

CHAPTER XV

Retrospect...poetic greatness of Kalidasa; comparison with other classical writers

CHAPTER XVI, XVII

Hindu civilisation in the...[1]
Kalidasa (This may go with *Raghu* or *Kumara*)

[1] Text illegible here.

Section Six

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THE BRAIN OF INDIA

The Brain of India

THE time has perhaps come for the Indian mind, long preoccupied with political and economic issues, for a widening of its horizon. Such a widening is especially necessary for Bengal.

The Bengali has always led and still leads the higher thought of India, because he has eminently the gifts which are most needed for the new race that has to arise. He has the emotion and imagination which is open to the great inspirations, the mighty heart-stirring ideas that move humanity when a great step forward has to be taken. He has the invaluable gift of thinking with the heart. He has, too, a subtle brain which is able within certain limits to catch shades of meaning and delicacies of thought, both those the logic grasps and those which escape the mere logical intellect. Above all, he has in a greater degree than other races the yet undeveloped faculty of direct knowledge, latent in humanity and now to be evolved, which is above reason and imagination, the faculty which in Sri Ramakrishna, the supreme outcome of the race, dispensed with education and commanded any knowledge he desired easily and divinely. It is a faculty which now works irregularly in humanity, unrecognised and confused by the interference of the imagination, of the limited reason and of the old associations or *saṁskāras* stored in the memory of the race and the individual. It cannot be made a recognised and habitual agent except by the discipline which the ancient Indian sages formulated in the science of Yoga. But certain races have the function more evolved or more ready for evolution than the generality of mankind, and it is these that will lead in the future evolution. In addition, the race has a mighty will-power which comes from the long worship of Shakti and practice of the Tantra that has been a part of our culture for many centuries. No other people could have revolutionised its whole national character in a few years as Bengal has done. The Bengali has always worshipped the Divine Energy in her most terrible as well as in her most beautiful aspects; whether as the Beautiful or

the Terrible Mother he has never shrunk from her whether in fear or in awe. When the divine force flowed into him he has never feared to yield himself up to it and follow the infinite prompting, careless whither it led. As a reward he has become the most perfect *ādhāra* of Shakti, the most capable and swiftly sensitive and responsive receptacle of the Infinite Will and Energy the world now holds. Recently that Will and Energy has rushed into him and has been lifting him to the level of his future mission and destiny. He has now to learn the secret of drawing the Mother of Strength into himself and holding her there in a secure possession. That is why we have pointed to a religious and a spiritual awakening as the next necessity and the next inevitable development.

But along with his great possessions the Bengali has serious deficiencies. In common with the rest of India he has a great deficiency of knowledge, the result of an education meagre in quantity and absolutely vicious in method and quality. And he is inferior to other Indian races, such as the Madrasi and Maratha, in the capacity of calm, measured and comprehensive deliberation which is usually called intellect or reasoning power, and which, though it is far from the whole of thought, is essential to the completeness of thought and action. By itself the logical or reasoning intellect creates the accurate and careful scholar, the sober critic, the rationalist and cautious politician, the conservative scientist, that great mass of human intelligence which makes for slow and careful progress. It does not create the hero and the originator, the inspired prophet, the mighty builder, the maker of nations; it does not conquer nature and destiny, lay its hand on the future, command the world. The rest of India is largely dominated by this faculty and limited by it, therefore it lags behind while Bengal rushes forward. The rest of India has feared to deliver itself to the Power that came down from above to uplift the nation; it has either denied its call or made reservations and insisted on guiding it and reining it in. A few mighty men have stridden forward and carried their race or a part of it with them, but the whole race must be infused with the spirit before it can be fit for the work of the future.

On his side the Bengali, while in no way limiting the divine

inrush or shortening the Titan stride, must learn to see the way he is going while he treads it. For want of a trained thought-power, he follows indeed the ideas that seize him, but he does not make them thoroughly his own. He thinks them out, if at all, rapidly but not comprehensively, and, in consequence, though he has applied them with great energy to the circumstances immediately around him, a new set of circumstances finds him perplexed and waiting for a lead from the few men to whom he has been accustomed to look for the source of his thought and action. This is a source of weakness. For the work of the present, and still more, for the work of the future, it is imperatively necessary to create a centre of thought and knowledge which will revolutionise the brain of the nation to as great an extent as its character and outlook has been revolutionised. A new heart was necessary for our civilisation, and, though the renovation is not complete, the work that has been done in that direction will ensure its own fulfilment. A new brain is also needed, and sufficiency of knowledge for the new brain to do its work with thoroughness.

2

A NEW centre of thought implies a new centre of education. The system prevailing in our universities is one which ignores the psychology of man, loads the mind laboriously with numerous little packets of information carefully tied with red tape, and, by the methods used in this loading process, damages or atrophies the faculties and instruments by which man assimilates, creates, and grows in intellect, manhood and energy. The new National Education, as inaugurated in Bengal, sought immensely to enlarge the field of knowledge to which the student was introduced, and in so far as it laid stress on experiment and observation, employed the natural and easy instrument of the vernacular and encouraged the play of thought on the subject of study, corrected the habit of spoiling the instruments of knowledge by the use of false methods. But many of the vicious methods and ideas employed by the old system were faithfully cherished by the new, and the domination of the Council by men wedded to the old lines was bound to spell a most unfavourable effect on the integrity of the system in its most progressive features. Another vital defect of the new education was that it increased the amount of information the student was required to absorb without strengthening the body and brain sufficiently to grapple with the increased mass of intellectual toil, and it shared with the old system the defect of ignoring the psychology of the race. The mere inclusion of the matter of Indian thought and culture in the field of knowledge does not make a system of education Indian, and the instruction given in the Bengal National College was only an improved European system, not Indian or National. Another error which has to be avoided and to which careless minds are liable, is the reactionary idea that in order to be national, education must reproduce the features of the old *tol* system of Bengal. It is not eighteenth century India, the India which by its moral and intellectual deficiencies gave itself into the keeping of foreigners, that we have to revive, but the spirit, ideals and methods of

the ancient and mightier India in a yet more effective form and with a more modern organisation.

What was the secret of that gigantic intellectuality, spirituality and superhuman moral force which we see pulsating in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, in the ancient philosophy, in the supreme poetry, art, sculpture and architecture of India? What was at the basis of the incomparable public works and engineering achievement, the opulent and exquisite industries, the great triumphs of science, scholarship, jurisprudence, logic, metaphysics, the unique social structure? What supported the heroism and self-abandonment of the Kshatriya, the Sikh and the Rajput, the unconquerable national vitality and endurance? What was it that stood behind that civilisation second to none, in the massiveness of its outlines or the perfection of its details? Without a great and unique discipline involving a perfect education of soul and mind, a result so immense and persistent would have been impossible. It would be an error to look for the secret of Aryan success in the details of the instruction given in the old Ashrams and universities so far as they have come down to us. We must know what was the principle and basis on which the details were founded. We shall find the secret of their success in a profound knowledge of human psychology and its subtle application to the methods of intellectual training and instruction.

At the basis of the old Aryan system was the all-important discipline of Brahmacharya. The first necessity for the building up of a great intellectual superstructure is to provide a foundation strong enough to bear it. Those systems of education which start from an insufficient knowledge of man, think they have provided a satisfactory foundation when they have supplied the student with a large or well-selected mass of information on the various subjects which comprise the best part of human culture at the time. The school gives the materials, it is for the student to use them, — this is the formula. But the error here is fundamental. Information cannot be the foundation of intelligence, it can only be part of the material out of which the knower builds knowledge, the starting-point, the nucleus of fresh discovery and enlarged creation. An education that confines itself to imparting knowledge, is no education. The various faculties

of memory, judgment, imagination, perception, reasoning, which build the edifice of thought and knowledge for the knower, must not only be equipped with their fit and sufficient tools and materials, but trained to bring fresh materials and use more skilfully those of which they are in possession. And the foundation of the structure they have to build, can only be the provision of a fund of force and energy sufficient to bear the demands of a continually growing activity of the memory, judgment and creative power. Where is that energy to be found?

The ancient Aryans knew that man was not separate from the universe, but only a homogeneous part of it, as a wave is part of the ocean. An infinite energy, Prakriti, Maya or Shakti, pervades the world, pours itself into every name and form, and the clod, the plant, the insect, the animal, the man are, in their phenomenal existence, merely more or less efficient *ādhāras* of this Energy. We are each of us a dynamo into which waves of that energy have been generated and stored, and are being perpetually conserved, used up and replenished. The same force which moves in the star and the planet, moves in us, and all our thought and action are merely its play and born of the complexity of its functionings. There are processes by which man can increase his capacity as an *ādhāra*. There are other processes by which he can clear of obstructions the channel of communication between himself and the universal energy and bring greater and greater stores of it pouring into his soul and brain and body. This continual improvement of the *ādhāra* and increase in quantity and complexity of action of the informing energy, is the whole aim of evolution. When that energy is the highest in kind and the fullest in amount of which the human *ādhāra* is capable, and the *ādhāra* itself is trained utterly to bear the inrush and play of the energy, then is a man *siddha*, the fulfilled or perfect man, his evolution is over and he has completed in the individual that utmost development which the mass of humanity is labouring towards through the ages.

If this theory be correct, the energy at the basis of the operation of intelligence must be in ourselves and it must be capable of greater expansion and richer use to an extent practically unlimited. And this also must be a sound principle, that the more

we can increase and enrich the energy, the greater will be potentially the range, power and activity of the functions of our mind and the consequent vigour of our intellectuality and the greatness of our achievement. This was the first principle on which the ancient Aryans based their education and one of the chief processes which they used for the increased storage of energy, was the practice of Brahmacharya.

3

THE practice of Brahmacharya is the first and most necessary condition of increasing the force within and turning it to such uses as may benefit the possessor or mankind. All human energy has a physical basis. The mistake made by European materialism is to suppose the basis to be everything and confuse it with the source. The source of life and energy is not material but spiritual, but the basis, the foundation on which the life and energy stand and work, is physical. The ancient Hindus clearly recognised this distinction between *kāraṇa* and *pratiṣṭhā*, the north pole and the south pole of being. Earth or gross matter is the *pratiṣṭhā*, Brahman or spirit is the *kāraṇa*. To raise up the physical to the spiritual is Brahmacharya, for by the meeting of the two the energy which starts from one and produces the other is enhanced and fulfils itself.

This is the metaphysical theory. The application depends on a right understanding of the physical and psychological conformation of the human receptacle of energy. The fundamental physical unit is the *retas*, in which the *tejas*, the heat and light and electricity in a man, is involved and hidden. All energy is latent in the *retas*. This energy may be either expended physically or conserved. All passion, lust, desire wastes the energy by pouring it, either in the gross form or a sublimated subtler form, out of the body. Immorality in act throws it out in the gross form; immorality of thought in the subtle form. In either case there is waste, and unchastity is of the mind and speech as well as of the body. On the other hand, all self-control conserves the energy in the *retas*, and conservation always brings with it increase. But the needs of the physical body are limited and the excess of energy must create a surplus which has to turn itself to some use other than the physical. According to the ancient theory *retas* is *jala* or water, full of light and heat and electricity, in one word, of *tejas*. The excess of the *retas* turns first into heat or *tapas* which stimulates the whole system, and it is for

this reason that all forms of self-control and austerity are called *tapas* or *tapasyā* because they generate the heat, or stimulus which is a source of powerful action and success; secondly, it turns to *tejas* proper, light, the energy which is at the source of all knowledge; thirdly, it turns to *vidyut* or electricity, which is at the basis of all forceful action whether intellectual or physical. In the *vidyut* again is involved the *ojas*, or *prāṇaśakti*, the primal energy which proceeds from ether. The *retas* refining from *jala* to *tapas*, *tejas* and *vidyut* and from *vidyut* to *ojas*, fills the system with physical strength, energy and brain-power and in its last form of *ojas* rises to the brain and informs it with that primal energy which is the most refined form of matter and nearest to spirit. It is *ojas* that creates a spiritual force or *vīrya*, by which a man attains to spiritual knowledge, spiritual love and faith, spiritual strength. It follows that the more we can by Brahmacharya increase the store of *tapas*, *tejas*, *vidyut* and *ojas*, the more we shall fill ourselves with utter energy for the works of the body, heart, mind and spirit.

This view of the human soul was not the whole of the knowledge on which ancient Hinduism based its educational discipline. In addition it had the view that all knowledge is within and has to be evoked by education rather than instilled from outside. The constitution of man consists of three principles of nature *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the comprehensive, active and passive elements of universal action, which, in one of their thousandfold aspects, manifest as knowledge, passion and ignorance. *Tamas* is a constitutional dullness or passivity which obscures the knowledge within and creates ignorance, mental inertia, slowness, forgetfulness, disinclination to study, inability to grasp and distinguish. *Rajas* is an undisciplined activity which obscures knowledge by passion, attachment, prejudgment, predilection and wrong ideas. *Sattva* is an illumination which reveals the hidden knowledge and brings it to the surface where the observation can grasp and the memory record it. This conception of the constitution of the knowing faculty made the removal of *tamas*, the disciplining of *rajas* and the awakening of *sattva* the main problem of the teacher. He had to train the student to be receptive of illumination from within. The disciplining of *rajas* was effec-

ted by a strict moral discipline which induced a calm, clear, receptive state of mind, free from intellectual self-will and pride and the obscuration of passion, — the famous discipline of the *brahmacārin* which was the foundation of Aryan culture and Aryan morale; and the interference of wrong ideas was sought to be removed by strict mental submission to the teacher during the receptive period, when the body of ascertained knowledge or right ideas already in man's possession was explained to him and committed to memory. The removal of *tamas* was effected by the discipline of moral purity, which awakened the energy of *tejas* and electricity in the system and by the power of *tapasyā* trained it to be a reservoir of mental force and clarity. The awakening of illumination was actively effected by the triple method of repetition, meditation and discussion. *Āvṛtti* or repetition was meant to fill the recording part of the mind with the *śabda* or words, so that the *artha* or meaning might of itself rise from within: needless to say, a mechanical repetition was not likely to produce this effect. There must be that clear still receptivity and that waiting upon the word or thing with the contemplative part of the mind which is what the ancient Indians meant by *dhyāna* or meditation. All of us have felt, when studying a language, difficulties which seemed insoluble while grappling with a text suddenly melt away and a clear understanding arise without assistance from book or teacher after putting away the book from our mind for a brief period. Many of us have experienced also the strangeness of taking up a language or subject, after a brief discontinuance, to find that we understand it much better than when we took it up, know the meanings of words we had never met with before and can explain sentences which, before we discontinued the study, would have baffled our understanding. This is because the *jñātā* or knower within has had his attention called to the subject and has been busy in the interval drawing upon the source of knowledge within in connection with it. This experience is only possible to those whose sattwic or illuminative element has been powerfully aroused or consciously or unconsciously trained to action by the habit of intellectual clarity and deep study. The highest reach of the sattwic development is when one can dispense often or habitually with outside aids, the

teacher or the text book, grammar and dictionary and learn a subject largely or wholly from within. But this is only possible to the Yogin by a successful prosecution of the discipline of Yoga.

4

WE have stated, as succinctly as is consistent with clearness, the main psychological principles on which the ancient Indians based their scheme of education. By the training of Brahmacharya they placed all the energy of which the system was capable and which could be spared from bodily functions, at the service of the brain. In this way they not only strengthened the *medhā* or grasping power, the *dhī* or subtlety and swiftness of thought conception, the memory and the creative intellectual force, making the triple force of memory, invention, judgment comprehensive and analytic, but they greatly enlarged the range, no less than the intensity, of the absorbing, storing and generative mental activities. Hence those astonishing feats of memory, various comprehension and versatility of creative work of which only a few extraordinary intellects have been capable in Occidental history, but which in ancient India were common and usual. Mr. Gladstone was considered to be the possessor of an astonishing memory because he could repeat the whole of Homer's Iliad, beginning from any passage suggested to him and flowing on as long as required; but to a Brahmin of the old times this would have been a proof of a capacity neither unusual nor astonishing, but rather, petty and limited. The many-sidedness of an Eratosthenes or the range of a Herbert Spencer have created in Europe admiring or astonished comment; but the universality of the ordinary curriculum in ancient India was for every student and not for the exceptional few, and it implied, not a tasting of many subjects after the modern plan, but the thorough mastery of all. The original achievement of a Kalidasa accomplishing the highest in every line of poetic creation is so incredible to the European mind that it has been sought to cleave that mighty master of harmonies into a committee of three. Yet it is paralleled by the accomplishment in philosophy of Shankara in a short life of thirty-two years and dwarfed by the universal mastery of all possible spiritual knowledge and experience of Sri Ramakrishna in our own era. These instances are not so

common as the others, because pure creative genius is not common; but in Europe they are, with a single modern exception, non-existent. The highest creative intellects in Europe have achieved sovereignty by limitation, by striving to excel only in one field of a single intellectual province or at most in two; when they have been versatile it has been by sacrificing height to breadth. But in India it is the greatest who have been the most versatile and passed from one field of achievement to another without sacrificing an inch of their height or an iota of their creative intensity, easily, unfalteringly, with an assured mastery. This easy and unfailing illumination crowning the unfailing energy created by Brahmacharya was due to the discipline which developed *sattva* or inner illumination. This illumination makes the acquisition of knowledge and all other intellectual operations easy, spontaneous, swift, decisive and comparatively unfatiguing to body or brain. In these two things lies the secret of Aryan intellectual achievement, Brahmacharya and sattwic development created the brain of India: it was perfected by Yoga.

It is a common complaint that our students are too heavily burdened with many subjects and the studying of many books. The complaint is utterly true and yet it is equally true that the range of studies is pitifully narrow and the books read miserably few. What is the reason of this paradox, the justification of these two apparently contradictory truths? It is this, that we neglect the basis and proceed at once to a superstructure small in bulk, disproportionately heavy in comparison with that bulk, and built on a foundation too weak to bear even the paltry and meagre edifice of our imparted knowledge. The Indian brain is still in potentiality what it was; but it is being damaged, stunted and defaced. The greatness of its innate possibilities is hidden by the greatness of its surface deterioration. The old system hampered it with study in a foreign language which was not even imperfectly mastered at a time when the student was called upon to learn in that impossible medium a variety of alien and unfamiliar subjects. In this unnatural process it was crippled by the disuse of judgment, observation, comprehension and creation, and the exclusive reliance on the deteriorating relics of the ancient

Indian memory. Finally, it was beggared and degraded by having to deal with snippets and insufficient packets of information instead of being richly stored and powerfully equipped.

The new system of National Education sought to undo the evil by employing the mother-tongue, restoring the use of the disused intellectual functions and providing for a richer and more real equipment of information, of the substance of knowledge and the materials for creation. If it could not triumphantly succeed, that was partly because it had to deal with minds already vitiated by the old system and not often with the best even of these, because its teachers had themselves seldom a perfect grasp of the requirements of the new system, and because its controllers and directors were men of the old school who clung to familiar shibboleths and disastrous delusions. But in the system itself there was a defect, which, though it would matter less in other epochs or other countries, is of primary importance in such periods of transition when bricks have to be made out of straw and the work now done will determine the future achievement of our nation. While calling itself national, it neglected the very foundation of the great achievement of our forefathers and especially the perfection of the instrument of knowledge.

It is not our contention that the actual system of ancient instruction should be restored in its outward features, — a demand often made by fervid lovers of the past. Many of them are not suited to modern requirements. But its fundamental principles are for all time and its discipline can only be replaced by the discovery of a still more effective discipline, such as European education does not offer us. The object of these articles has been to indicate the nature and psychological ideas of the old system and point out its essential relation of cause and effect to the splendid achievement of our ancestors. How its principles can be reapplied or be completed and to some extent replaced by a still deeper psychology and a still more effective discipline is a subject fit for separate treatment.

SECTION SEVEN

FROM THE "KARMAYOGIN"

All the articles collected in this section first appeared in the weekly review, the *Karmayogin* (1909-10), except the last two — *Hathayoga* and *Rajayoga* — which came out in *The Standard Bearer* (1920-21).

Karmayoga

WE HAVE spoken of Karmayoga as the application of Vedanta and Yoga to life. To many who take their knowledge of Hinduism secondhand this may seem a doubtful definition. It is ordinarily supposed by "practical" minds that Vedanta as a guide to life and Yoga as a method of spiritual communion are dangerous things which lead men away from action to abstraction. We leave aside those who regard all such beliefs as mysticism, self-delusion or imposture; but even those who reverence and believe in the high things of Hinduism have the impression that one must remove oneself from a full human activity in order to live the spiritual life. Yet the spiritual life finds its most potent expression in the man who lives the ordinary life of men in the strength of the Yoga and under the law of the Vedanta. It is by such a union of the inner life and the outer that mankind will eventually be lifted up and become mighty and divine. It is a delusion to suppose that Vedanta contains no inspiration to life, no rule of conduct, and is purely metaphysical and quietistic. On the contrary, the highest morality of which humanity is capable finds its one perfect basis and justification in the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita. The characteristic doctrines of the Gita are nothing if they are not a law of life, a *dharma*, and even the most transcendental aspirations of the Vedanta presuppose a preparation in life, for it is only through life that one can reach to immortality. The opposite opinion is due to certain tendencies which have bulked large in the history and temperament of our race. The ultimate goal of our religion is emancipation from the bondage of material Nature and freedom from individual rebirth, and certain souls, among the highest we have known, have been drawn by the attraction of the final hush and purity to dissociate themselves from life and bodily action in order more swiftly and easily to reach the goal. Standing like mountain-peaks above the common level, they have attracted all eyes and fixed this withdrawal as the highest and

most commanding Hindu ideal. It is for this reason that Sri Krishna laid so much stress on the perfect Yogin's cleaving to life and human activity even after his need of them was over, lest the people, following, as they always do, the example of their best, turn away from their *dharma* and bastard confusion reign. The ideal Yogin is no withdrawn and pent-up force, but ever engaged in doing good to all creatures, either by the flood of the divine energy that he pours on the world or by himself standing in the front of humanity, its leader in the march and the battle, but unbound by his works and superior to his personality.

Moreover the word Vedanta is usually identified with the strict Monism and the peculiar theory of *māyā* established by the lofty and ascetic intellect of Shankara. But it is the Upanishads themselves and not Shankara's writings, the text and not the commentary, that are the authoritative Scripture of the Vedantin. Shankara's, great and temporarily satisfying as it was, is still only one synthesis and interpretation of the Upanishads. There have been others in the past which have powerfully influenced the national mind and there is no reason why there should not be a yet more perfect synthesis in the future. It is such a synthesis embracing all life and action in its scope that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have been preparing. What is dimly beginning now is a repetition on a wider stage of what happened once before in India, more rapidly but to smaller issues, when the Buddha lived and taught his philosophy and ethics to the Aryan nations. Then as now a mighty spirit, it matters not whether Avatar or Vibhuti, the full expression of God in man or a great outpouring of the divine energy, came down among men and brought into their daily life and practice the force and impulse of utter spirituality. And this time it is the full light and not a noble part, unlike Buddhism, which, expressing Vedantic morality, yet ignored a fundamental reality of Vedanta and was therefore expelled from its prime seat and cradle. The material result was then what it will be now, a great political, moral and social revolution which made India the Guru of the nations and carried the light she had to give all over the civilised world, moulding ideas and creating forms which are still extant and a living force. Already the Vedanta and the Yoga have exceeded

their Asiatic limit and are beginning to influence the life and practice of America and Europe; and they have long been filtering into Western thought by a hundred indirect channels. But these are small rivers and underground streams. The world waits for the rising of India to receive the divine flood in its fullness.

Yoga is communion with God for knowledge, for love or for work. The Yogin puts himself into direct relation with that which is omniscient and omnipotent within man and without him. He is in tune with the infinite, he becomes a channel for the strength of God to pour itself out upon the world whether through calm benevolence or active beneficence. When a man rises by putting from him the slough of self and lives for others and in the joys and sorrows of others; — when he works perfectly and with love and zeal, but casts away the anxiety for results and is neither eager for victory nor afraid of defeat; — when he devotes all his works to God and lays every thought, word and deed as an offering on the divine altar; — when he gets rid of fear and hatred, repulsion and disgust and attachment, and works like the forces of Nature, unhasting, unresting, inevitably, perfectly; — when he rises above the thought that he is the body or the heart or the mind or the sum of these and finds his own and true self; — when he becomes aware of his immortality and the unreality of death; — when he experiences the advent of knowledge and feels himself passive and the divine force working unresisted through his mind, his speech, his senses and all his organs; — when having thus abandoned whatever he is, does or has, to the Lord of all, the Lover and Helper of mankind, he dwells permanently in Him and becomes incapable of grief, disquiet or false excitement, — that is Yoga. Pranayam and Asanas, concentration, worship, ceremonies, religious practice are not themselves Yoga but only a means towards Yoga. Nor is Yoga a difficult or dangerous path, it is safe and easy to all who take refuge with the Inner Guide and Teacher. All men are potentially capable of it, for there is no man who has not strength or faith or love developed or latent in his nature, and any one of these is a sufficient staff for the Yogin. All cannot, indeed, reach in a single life the highest in this path, but all can go forward; and in proportion as a man advances he gets peace, strength and joy. And even a little

of this *dharma* delivers man or nation out of great fear.

"स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्।"[1]

It is an error, we repeat, to think that spirituality is a thing divorced from life. "Abandon all," says the Isha Upanishad, "that thou mayest enjoy all, neither covet any man's possession. But verily do thy deeds in this world and wish to live thy hundred years; no other way is given thee than this to escape the bondage of thy acts." It is an error to think that the heights of religion are above the struggles of this world. The recurrent cry of Sri Krishna to Arjuna insists on the struggle; "Fight and overthrow thy opponents!", "Remember me and fight!", "Give up all thy works to me with a heart full of spirituality, and free from craving, free from selfish claims, fight! let the fever of thy soul pass from thee." It is an error to imagine that even when the religious man does not give up his ordinary activities, he yet becomes too sattwic, too saintly, too loving or too passionless for the rough work of the world. Nothing can be more extreme and uncompromising than the reply of the Gita in the opposite sense, "Whosoever has his temperament purged from egoism, whosoever suffers not his soul to receive the impress of the deed, though he slay the whole world yet he slays not and is not bound." The Charioteer of Kurukshetra driving the car of Arjuna over that field of ruin is the image and description of Karmayoga; for the body is the chariot and the senses are the horses of the driving and it is through the bloodstained and mire-sunk ways of the world that Sri Krishna pilots the soul of man to *vaikuṇṭha*.

[1] *Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.*

The Process of Evolution

THE end of a stage of evolution is usually marked by a powerful recrudescence of all that has to go out of the evolution. It is a principle of Nature that in order to get rid of any powerful tendency or deep-seated association in humanity, whether in the mass or in the individual, it has first to be exhausted by *bhoga* or enjoyment, afterwards to be dominated and weakened by *nigraha* or control and, finally, when it is weak, to be got rid of by *saṁyama*, rejection or self-dissociation. The difference between *nigraha* and *saṁyama* is that in the first process there is a violent struggle to put down, coerce and, if possible, crush the tendency, the reality of which is not questioned, but in the second process it is envisaged as a dead or dying force, its occasional return marked with disgust, then with impatience, finally with indifference as a mere ghost, vestige or faint echo of that which was once real but is now void of significance. Such a return is part of the process of Nature for getting rid of this undesirable and disappearing quantity.

Saṁyama is unseasonable and would be fruitless when a force, quality or tendency is in its infancy or vigour, before it has had the enjoyment and full activity which is its due. When once a thing is born, it must have its youth, growth, enjoyment, life and final decay and death; when once an impetus has been given by Prakriti to her creation, she insists that the velocity shall spend itself by natural exhaustion before it shall cease. To arrest the growth or speed unseasonably by force is *nigraha*, which can be effective for a time but not in perpetuity. It is said in the Gita that all things are ruled by their nature, to their nature they return and *nigraha* or repression is fruitless. What happens then is that the thing untimely slain by violence is not really dead, but withdraws for a time into the Prakriti which sent it forth, gathers an immense force and returns with extraordinary violence ravening for the rightful enjoyment which it was denied. We see this in the attempts we make to get rid of our evil *saṁskāras* or asso-

ciations when we first tread the path of Yoga. If anger is a powerful element in our nature, we may put it down for a time by sheer force and call it self-control, but eventually unsatisfied Nature will get the better of us and the passion return upon us with astonishing force at an unexpected moment. There are only two ways by which we can effectively get the better of the passion which seeks to enslave us. One is by substitution, replacing it whenever it rises by the opposite quality, anger by thoughts of forgiveness, love or forbearance, lust by meditation on purity, pride by thoughts of humility and our own defects or nothingness; this is the method of Rajayoga but it is a difficult, slow and uncertain method; for both the ancient traditions and the modern experience of Yoga show that men who had attained for long years the highest self-mastery, have been suddenly surprised by a violent return of the thing they thought dead or for ever subject. Still, this substitution, slow though it be, is one of the commonest methods of Nature and it is largely by this means, often unconsciously or half-consciously used, that the character of a man changes and develops from life to life or even in the bounds of a single life-time. It does not destroy things in their seed and the seed which is not reduced to ashes by Yoga is always capable of sprouting again and growing into the complete and mighty tree. The second method is to give *bhoga* or enjoyment to the passion so as to get rid of it quickly. When it is satiated and surfeited by excessive enjoyment, it becomes weak and spent and a reaction ensues which establishes for a time the opposite force, tendency or quality. If that moment is seized by the Yogin for *nigraha*, the *nigraha* so repeated at every suitable opportunity becomes so far effective as to reduce the strength and vitality of the *vṛtti* sufficiently for the application of the final *saṁyama*. This method of enjoyment and reaction is also a favourite and universal method of Nature, but it is never complete in itself and if applied to permanent forces or qualities, tends to establish a see-saw of opposite tendencies, extremely useful to the operations of Prakriti but from the point of view of self-mastery useless and inconclusive. It is only when this method is followed up by the use of *saṁyama* that it becomes effective. The Yogin regards the *vṛtti* merely as a play of Nature with which he is not con-

cerned and of which he is merely the spectator; the anger, lust or pride is not his, it is the universal Mother's and she works it and stills it for her own purposes. When, however, the *vṛtti* is strong, mastering and unspent, this attitude cannot be maintained in sincerity and to try to hold it intellectually without sincerely feeling it, is *mithyācāra*, false discipline or hypocrisy. It is only when it is somewhat exhausted by repeated enjoyment and coercion that Prakriti or Nature at the command of the soul or Purusha can really deal with her own creation. She deals with it first by *vairāgya* in its crudest form of disgust, but this is too violent a feeling to be permanent; yet it leaves its mark behind in a deep-seated wish to be rid of its cause, which survives the return and temporary reign of the passion. Afterwards its return is viewed with impatience but without any acute feeling of intolerance. Finally, supreme indifference or *udāsīnatā* is gained and the final going out of the tendency by the ordinary process of Nature is watched in the true spirit of the *saṁyamī* who has the knowledge that he is the witnessing soul and has only to dissociate himself from a phenomenon for it to cease. The highest stage leads either to *mukti* in the form of *laya* or disappearance, the *vṛtti* vanishing altogether and for good, or else in another kind of freedom when the soul knows that it is God's *līlā* and leaves it to Him whether He shall throw out the tendency or use it for His own purposes. This is the attitude of the Karmayogin who puts himself in God's hands and does work for His sake only, knowing that it is God's force that works in him. The result of that attitude of self-surrender is that the Lord of all takes charge and according to the promise of the Gita delivers His servant and lover from all sin and evil, the *vṛttis* working in the bodily machine without affecting the soul and working only when He raises them up for His purposes. This is *nirliptatā*, the state of absolute freedom within the *līlā*.

The law is the same for the mass as for the individual. The process of human evolution has been seen by the eye of inspired observation to be that of working out the tiger and the ape. The forces of cruelty, lust, mischievous destruction, pain-giving, folly, brutality, ignorance were once rampant in humanity, they had full enjoyment; then by the growth of religion and philo-

sophy they began in periods of satiety such as the beginning of the Christian era in Europe to be partly replaced, partly put under control. As is the law of such things, they have always reverted again with greater or less virulence and sought with more or less success to re-establish themselves. Finally, in the nineteenth century it seemed for a time as if some of these forces had, for the time at least, exhausted themselves and the hour for *saṁyama* and gradual dismissal from the evolution had really arrived. Such hopes always recur and in the end they are likely to bring about their own fulfilment, but before that happens another recoil is inevitable. We see plenty of signs of it in the reeling back into the beast which is in progress in Europe and America behind the fair outside of Science, progress, civilisation and humanitarianism, and we are likely to see more signs of it in the era that is coming upon us. A similar law holds in politics and society. The political evolution of the human race follows certain lines of which the most recent formula has been given in the watchwords of the French Revolution, freedom, equality and brotherhood. But the forces of the old world, the forces of despotism, the forces of traditional privilege and selfish exploitation, the forces of unfraternal strife and passionate self-regarding competition are always struggling to reseat themselves on the thrones of the earth. A determined movement of reaction is evident in many parts of the world and nowhere perhaps more than in England which was once one of the self-styled champions of progress and liberty. The attempt to go back to the old spirit is one of those necessary returns without which it cannot be so utterly exhausted as to be blotted out from the evolution. It rises only to be defeated and crushed again. On the other hand, the force of the democratic tendency is not a force which is spent but one which has not yet arrived, not a force which has had the greater part of its enjoyment but one which is still vigorous, unsatisfied and eager for fulfilment. Every attempt to coerce it in the past reacted eventually on the coercing force and brought back the democratic spirit fierce, hungry and unsatisfied, joining to its fair motto of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" the terrible addition "or Death". It is not likely that the immediate future of the democratic tendency will satisfy the utmost dreams

of the lover of liberty who seeks an anarchist freedom, or of the lover of equality who tries to establish a socialistic dead level, or of the lover of fraternity who dreams of a world-embracing communism. But some harmonisation of this great ideal is undoubtedly the immediate future of the human race. On the old forces of despotism, inequality and unbridled competition, after they have been once more overthrown, a process of gradual *saṁyama* will be performed by which what has remained of them will be regarded as the disappearing vestiges of a dead reality and without any further violent coercion be transformed slowly and steadily out of existence.

The Greatness of the Individual

IN ALL movements, in every great mass of human action it is the Spirit of the Time, that which Europe calls the Zeitgeist and India *kāla*, who expresses himself. The very names are deeply significant. Kali, the mother of all and destroyer of all, is the *śakti* that works in secret in the heart of humanity, manifesting herself in the perpetual surge of men, institutions and movements; Mahakala is the Spirit within whose energy goes abroad in her and moulds the progress of the world and the destiny of the nations. His is the impetus which fulfils itself in Time, and once there is movement, impetus from the Spirit within, Time and the Mother take charge of it, prepare, ripen and fulfil. When the Zeitgeist, God in Time, moves in a settled direction, then all the forces of the world are called in to swell the established current towards the purpose decreed. That which consciously helps, swells it, but that which hinders swells it still more, and like a wave on the wind-swept ocean, now rising, now falling, now high on the crest of victory and increase, now down in the trough of discouragement and defeat, the impulse from the hidden Source sweeps onwards to preordained fulfilment. Man may help or man may resist, but the Zeitgeist works, shapes, overbears, insists.

The great and memorable vision of Kurukshetra when Sri Krishna manifesting His world-form declared Himself as destroying Time, is significant of this deep perception of humanity. When Arjuna wished to cast aside his bow and quiver, when he said, "This is a sin we do and a great destruction of men and brothers, I will forbear," Sri Krishna, after convincing his intellect of error, proceeded by that marvellous vision described in the eleventh canto of the Gita to stamp the truth of things upon his imagination. Thus run the mighty stanzas:

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धो
लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः।

ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥
तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥[1]

"I am Time who waste and destroy the peoples; lo, I have arisen in my might, I am here to swallow up the nations. Even without thee all they shall not be, the men of war who stand arrayed in the opposing squadrons. Therefore do thou arise and get thee great glory, conquer thy foes and enjoy a great and wealthy empire. For these, they were slain even before and it is I who have slain them; be the occasion only, O Savyasachin."

It is not as the slow process of Time that Sri Krishna manifests Himself; it is as the Zeitgeist consummating in a moment the work carefully prepared for decades that He appears to Arjuna. All have been moving inevitably towards the catastrophe of Kurukshetra. Men did not know it; those who would have done everything possible to avert the calamity, helped its coming by their action or inaction; those who had a glimpse of it strove in vain to stop the wheels of Fate; Sri Krishna Himself as the *niṣkāma karmayogin* who does His duty without regard to results, went on that hopeless embassy to Hastinapura; but the Zeitgeist overbore all. It was only afterwards that men saw how like rivers speeding towards the sea, like moths winging towards the lighted flame, all that splendid, powerful and arrogant Indian world with its clans of kings and its weapons and its chariots and its gigantic armies were rushing towards the open mouths of the Destroyer to be lost in His mighty jaws, to be mangled between His gnash-

[1] *kālo'smi lokakṣayakṛt pravṛddho*
lokān samāhartumiha pravṛttaḥ.
ṛte'pi tvāṁ na bhaviṣyanti sarve
ye'vasthitāḥ pratyanīkeṣu yodhāḥ.
tasmāttvamuttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaiveite nihatāḥ pūrvameva
nimittamātraṁ bhava savyasācin.

ing teeth. In the *līlā* of the Eternal, there are movements that are terrible as well as movements that are sweet and beautiful. The dance of Brindaban is not complete without the death-dance of Kurukshetra; for each is a part of that great harmonic movement of the world which progresses from discord to accord, from hatred and strife to love and brotherhood, from evil to the fulfilment of the evolution by the transformation of suffering and sin into beauty, bliss and good, *śivam, śāntam, śuddham, ānandam.*

Who could resist the purpose of the Zeitgeist? There were strong men in India then by the hundred, great philosophers and Yogins, subtle statesmen, leaders of men, kings of thought and action, the efflorescence of a mighty intellectual civilisation at its height. A little turning to the right instead of to the left on the part of a few of these would, it might seem, have averted the whole catastrophe. So Arjuna thought when he flung aside his bow. He was the whole hope of the Pandavas and without him their victory must seem a mere dream and to fight an act of madness. Yet it is to him that the Zeitgeist proclaims the utter helplessness of the mightiest and the sure fulfilment of God's decree. "Even without thee all they shall not be, the men of war who stand arrayed in the opposing squadrons." For these men are only alive in the body; in that which stands behind and fulfils itself, they are dead men. Whom God protects who shall slay? Whom God has slain who shall protect? The man who slays is only the occasion, the instrument by which the thing done behind the veil becomes the thing done on this side of it. That which was true of the great slaying at Kurukshetra is true of all things that are done in this world, of all the creation, destruction and preservation that make up the *līlā.*

The greatness of this teaching is for the great. Those who are commissioned to bring about mighty changes are full of the force of the Zeitgeist. Kali has entered into them and Kali, when she enters into a man, cares nothing for rationality and possibility. She is the force of Nature that whirls the stars in their orbits lightly as a child might swing a ball, and to that force there is nothing impossible. She is *aghaṭanaghaṭanapaṭīyasī*, very skilful in bringing about the impossible. She is the *devātmaśaktiḥ svaguṇair nigūḍhā*, the Power of the Divine Spirit hidden in the

modes of its own workings, and she needs nothing but time to carry out the purpose with which she is commissioned. She moves in Time and the very movement fulfils itself, creates its means, accomplishes its ends. It is not an accident that she works in one man more than in another. He is chosen because he is a likely vessel, and having chosen him she neither rejects him till the purpose is fulfilled nor allows him to reject her. Therefore Sri Krishna tells Arjuna:

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥[1]

"The thought which thou thinkest and takest refuge in egoism saying, 'I will not fight', this thy resolve is a vain thing; Nature will yoke thee to thy work."

When a man seems to have rejected his work, it merely means that his work is over and Kali leaves him for another. When a man who has carried out a great work is destroyed, it is for the egoism by which he has misused the force within that the force itself breaks him to pieces, as it broke Napoleon. Some instruments are treasured up, some are flung aside and shattered, but all are instruments. This is the greatness of great men, not that by their own strength they can determine great events, but that they are serviceable and specially-forged instruments of the Power which determines them. Mirabeau helped to create the French Revolution, no man more. When he set himself against it and strove, becoming a prop of monarchy, to hold back the wheel, did the French Revolution stop for the backsliding of France's mightiest? Kali put her foot on Mirabeau and he disappeared; but the Revolution went on, for the Revolution was the manifestation of the Zeitgeist, the Revolution was the will of God.

So it is always. The men who prided themselves that great events were their work, because they seemed to have an initial hand in them, go down into the trench of Time and others march

[1] *yadahaṁkāramāśritya na yotsya iti manyase*
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyaste prakṛtistvāṁ niyokṣyati.

forward over their shattered reputations. Those who are swept forward by Kali within them and make no terms with Fate, they alone survive. The greatness of individuals is the greatness of the eternal Energy within.

Yoga and Human Evolution

THE whole burden of our human progress has been an attempt to escape from the bondage to the body and the vital impulses. According to the scientific theory, the human being began as the animal, developed through the savage and consummated in the modern civilized man. The Indian theory is different. God created the world by developing the many out of the One and the material out of the spiritual. From the beginning, the objects which compose the physical world were arranged by Him in their causes, developed under the law of their being in the subtle or psychical world and then manifested in the gross or material world. From *kāraṇa* to *sūkṣma*, from *sūkṣma* to *sthūla*, and back again, that is the formula. Once manifested in matter, the world proceeds by laws which do not change from age to age, by a regular succession, until it is all withdrawn back again into the source from which it came. The material goes back to the psychical and the psychical is involved in the cause or seed. It is again put out when the period of expansion recurs and runs its course on similar lines but with different details till the period of contraction is due. Hinduism regards the world as a recurrent series of phenomena of which the terms vary but the general formula abides the same. The theory is only acceptable if we recognise the truth of the conception formulated in the Vishnu Purana of the world as *vijñānavijṛmbhitāni*, developed of ideas in the Universal Intelligence which lies at the root of all material phenomena and by its indwelling force shapes the growth of the tree and the evolution of the clod as well as the development of living creatures and the progress of mankind. Whichever theory we take, the laws of the material world are not affected. From aeon to aeon, from *kalpa* to *kalpa* Narayan manifests himself in an ever-evolving humanity which grows in experience by a series of expansions and contractions towards its destined self-realisation in God. That evolution is not denied by the Hindu theory of *yugas*. Each age in the Hindu system has its own line

of moral and spiritual evolution and the decline of the *dharma* or established law of conduct from the *satya* to the *kaliyuga* is not in reality a deterioration but a detrition of the outward forms and props of spirituality in order to prepare a deeper spiritual intensity within the heart. In each *kaliyuga* mankind gains something in essential spirituality. Whether we take the modern scientific or the ancient Hindu standpoint the progress of humanity is a fact. The wheel of Brahma rotates for ever but it does not turn in the same place; its rotations carry it forward.

The animal is distinguished from man by its enslavement to the body and the vital impulses. *Aśanāyā mṛtyuḥ*, Hunger who is Death, evolved the material world from of old, and it is the physical hunger and desire and the vital sensations and primary emotions connected with the *prāṇa* that seek to feed upon the world in the beast and in the savage man who approximates to the condition of the beast. Out of this animal state, according to European Science, man rises working out the tiger and the ape by intellectual and moral development in the social condition. If the beast has to be worked out, it is obvious that the body and the *prāṇa* must be conquered, and as that conquest is more or less complete, the man is more or less evolved. The progress of mankind has been placed by many predominatingly in the development of the human intellect, and intellectual development is no doubt essential to self-conquest. The animal and the savage are bound by the body because the ideas of the animal or the ideas of the savage are mostly limited to those sensations and associations which are connected with the body. The development of intellect enables a man to find the deeper self within and partially replace what our philosophy calls the *dehātmakabuddhi*, the sum of ideas and sensations which make us think of the body as ourself, by another set of ideas which reach beyond the body, and existing for their own delight and substituting intellectual and moral satisfaction as the chief objects of life, master, if they cannot entirely silence, the clamour of the lower sensual desires. That animal ignorance which is engrossed with the cares and the pleasures of the body and the vital impulses, emotions and sensations is *tāmasika*, the result of the predominance of the third principle of nature which leads to ignorance and inertia. That

is the state of the animal and the lower forms of humanity which are called in the Purana the first or *tāmasika* creation. This animal ignorance, the development of the intellect tends to dispel and it assumes therefore an all-important place in human evolution.

But it is not only through the intellect that man rises. If the clarified intellect is not supported by purified emotions, the intellect tends to be dominated once more by the body and to put itself at its service and the leadership of the body over the whole man becomes more dangerous than in the natural state because the innocence of the natural state is lost. The power of knowledge is placed at the disposal of the senses, *sattva* serves *tamas*, the god in us becomes the slave of the brute. The disservice which scientific materialism is unintentionally doing the world is to encourage a return to this condition; the suddenly awakened masses of men, unaccustomed to deal intellectually with ideas, able to grasp the broad attractive innovations of free thought but unable to appreciate its delicate reservations, verge towards that reeling back into the beast, that relapse into barbarism which was the condition of the Roman Empire at a high stage of material civilization and intellectual culture and which a distinguished British Statesman declared to be the condition to which all Europe approached. The development of the emotions is therefore the first condition of a sound human evolution. Unless the feelings tend away from the body and the love of others take increasingly the place of the brute love of self, there can be no progress upward. The organisation of human society tends to develop the altruistic element in man which makes for life and battles with and conquers *aśanāyā mṛtyuḥ*. It is therefore not the struggle for life, or at least not the struggle for our own life, but the struggle for the life of others which is the most important term in evolution, — for our children, for our family, for our class, for our community, for our race and nation, for humanity. An everlasting self takes the place of the old narrow self which is confined to our individual mind and body and it is this moral growth which society helps and organises.

So far there is little essential difference between our own ideas of human progress and those of the West, except in this

vital point that the West believes this evolution to be a development of matter and the satisfaction of the reason, the reflective and observing intellect, to be the highest term of our progress. Here it is that our religion parts company with Science. It declares the evolution to be a conquest of matter by the recovery of the deeper emotional and intellectual self which was involved in the body and overclouded by the desires of the *prāṇa*. In the language of the Upanishads the *manaḥkoṣa* and the *buddhikoṣa* are more than the *prāṇakoṣa* and *annakoṣa* and it is to them that man rises in his evolution. Religion further seeks a higher term for our evolution than the purified emotions or the clarified activity of the observing and reflecting intellect. The highest term of evolution is the spirit in which knowledge, love and action, the three-fold *dharma* of humanity, find their fulfilment and end. This is the *ātman* in the *ānandakoṣa*, and it is by communion and identity of this individual self with the universal self which is God that man will become entirely pure, entirely strong, entirely wise and entirely blissful, and the evolution will be fulfilled. The conquest of the body and the vital self by the purification of the emotions and the clarification of the intellect was the principal work of the past. The purification has been done by morality and religion, the clarification by science and philosophy, art, literature and social and political life being the chief media in which these uplifting forces have worked. The conquest of the emotions and the intellect by the spirit is the work of the future. Yoga is the means by which that conquest becomes possible.

In Yoga the whole past progress of humanity, a progress which it holds on a very uncertain base, is rapidly summed up, confirmed and made an inalienable possession. The body is conquered, not imperfectly as by the ordinary civilised man, but entirely. The vital part is purified and made the instrument of the higher emotional and intellectual self in its relations with the outer world. The ideas which go outward are replaced by the ideas which move within, the baser qualities are worked out of the system and replaced by those which are higher, the lower emotions are crowded out by the nobler. Finally all ideas and emotions are stilled and by the perfect awakening of the intuitive

reason which places mind in communion with spirit the whole man is ultimately placed at the service of the Infinite. All false self merges into the true self. Man acquires likeness, union or identification with God. This is Mukti, the state in which humanity thoroughly realises the freedom and immortality which are its eternal goal.

The Stress of the Hidden Spirit

THE world is a great game of hide and seek in which the real hides behind the apparent, spirit behind matter. The apparent masquerades as real, the real is seen dimly as if it were an unsubstantial shadow. The grandeur of the visible universe and its laws enslaves men's imaginations. "This is a mighty machine," we cry, "but it moves of its own force and needs neither guide nor maker; for its motion is eternal." Blinded by a half-truth we fail to see that, instead of a machine without a maker, there is really only an existence and no machine. The Hindus have many images by which they seek to convey their knowledge of the relation between God and the world, but the idea of the machine does not figure largely among them. It is a spider and his web, a fire with many sparks, a pool of salt water in which every particle is penetrated by the salt. The world is a waking dream, an embodied vision, a mass of knowledge arranged in corporeal appearances expressing so many ideas which are each only a part of one unchanging truth. Everything becomes, nothing is made. Everything is put out from latency, nothing is brought into existence. Only that which was, can be, not that which was not. And that which is, cannot perish; it can only lose itself. All is eternal in the eternal Spirit.

What was from of old? The Spirit. What is alone? The Spirit. What shall be for ever? The Spirit. All that is in Space and Time, is He; and whatever there may be beyond Space and Time, that too is He. Why should we think so? Because of the eternal and invariable unity which gives permanence to the variability of the many. The sum of Matter never changes by increase or diminution, although its component parts are continually shifting, so is it with the sum of energy in the world, so is it with the Spirit. Matter is only so much mobile energy vibrating intensely into form. Energy is only so much Spirit manifesting the motion that we call energy. Spirit is Force, Spirit Existence, — matter and energy are only motions in Spirit.

Force and Existence made one in Bliss, *saccidānandam*, this is the eternal reality of things. But that Force is not motion, it is Knowledge or Idea. Knowledge is the source of motion, not motion of Knowledge. The Spirit therefore is all. It is alone. Idea or Force, Existence, Bliss are only its triune manifestations, existence implying idea which is force, force or idea implying bliss.

The Spirit manifest as Intelligence is the basis of the world. Spirit as existence, *sat*, is one; as Intelligence it multiplies itself without ceasing to be one. We see that tree and say, "Here is a material thing"; but if we ask how the tree came into existence, we have to say, it grew or evolved out of the seed. But growth or evolution is only a term describing the sequence in a process. It does not explain the origin or account for the process itself. Why should the seed produce a tree and not some other form of existence? The answer is, because that is its nature. But why is that its nature? Why should it not be its nature to produce some other form of existence, or some other kind of tree? That is the law, is the answer. But why is it the law? The only answer is that it is so because it is so; that it happens, why, no man can say. In reality when we speak of Law, we speak of an idea, when we speak of the nature of a thing, we speak of an idea. Nowhere can we lay our hands on an object, a visible force, a discernible momentum and say, "Here is an entity called Law or Nature". The seed evolves a tree because tree is the idea involved in the seed; it is a process of manifestation in form, not a creation. If there were no insistent idea, we should have a world of chances and freaks, not a world of law — there would be no such idea as the nature of things, if there were not an originating and ordering intelligence manifesting a particular idea in forms. And the form varies, is born, perishes, the idea is eternal. The form is the manifestation or appearance, the idea is the truth. The form is phenomenon, the idea is reality.

Therefore in all things the Hindu thinker sees the stress of the hidden Spirit. We see it as *prajñā*, the universal Intelligence, conscious in things unconscious, active in things inert. The energy of *prajñā* is what the Europeans call Nature. The tree does not and cannot shape itself, the stress of the hidden Intelligence

shapes it. He is in the seed of man and in that little particle of matter carries habit, character, types of emotion into the unborn child. Therefore heredity is true; but if *prajñā* were not concealed in the seed, heredity would be false, inexplicable, impossible. We see the same stress in the mind, heart, body of man. Because the hidden Spirit urges himself on the body, stamps himself on it, expresses himself in it, the body expresses the individuality of the man, the developing and conscious idea or varying type which is myself. Therefore no two faces, no two expressions, no two thumb-impressions even are entirely alike; every part of the body in some way or other expresses the man. The stress of the Spirit shows itself in the mind and heart; therefore men, families, nations have individuality, run into particular habits of thought and feeling, therefore also they are both alike and dissimilar. Therefore men act and react, not only physically but spiritually, intellectually, morally on each other, because there is one self in all creatures expressing itself in various ideas and forms variously suitable to the idea. The stress of the hidden Spirit expresses itself again in events and the majestic course of the world. This is the Zeitgeist, this is the purpose that runs through the process of the centuries, the changes of the suns, this is that which makes evolution possible and provides it with a way, means and a goal. "This is He who from years sempiternal hath ordered perfectly all things."

This is the teaching of the Vedanta as we have it in its oldest form in the Upanishads. *Advaita*, *viśiṣṭādvaita*, *dvaita* are merely various ways of looking at the relations of the One to the Many, and none of them has the right to monopolise the name Vedanta. *Advaita* is true, because the Many are only manifestations of the One, *viśiṣṭādvaita* is true because ideas are eternal and having manifested, must have manifested before and will manifest again, — the Many are eternal in the One, only they are sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest. *Dvaita* is true, because although from one point of view the One and the Many are eternally and essentially the same, yet from another, the idea in its manifestations is eternally different from the Intelligence in which it manifests. If Unity is eternal and unchangeable,

duality is persistently recurrent. The Spirit is infinite, illimitable, eternal; and infinite, illimitable, eternal is its stress towards manifestation, filling endless space with innumerable existences.

The Strength of Stillness

THERE are two great forces in the universe, silence and speech. Silence prepares, speech creates. Silence acts, speech gives the impulse to action. Silence compels, speech persuades. The immense and inscrutable processes of the world all perfect themselves within, in a deep and august silence, covered by a noisy and misleading surface of sound — the stir of innumerable waves above, the fathomless resistless mass of the ocean's waters below. Men see the waves, they hear the rumour and the thousand voices and by these they judge the course of the future and the heart of God's intention; but in nine cases out of ten they misjudge. Therefore it is said that in history it is always the unexpected that happens. But it would not be the unexpected if men could turn their eyes from superficies and look into substance, if they accustomed themselves to put aside appearances and penetrate beyond them to the secret and disguised reality, if they ceased listening to the noise of life and listened rather to its silence.

The greatest exertions are made with the breath held in; the faster the breathing, the more the dissipation of energy. He who in action can cease from breathing, — naturally, spontaneously, — is the master of Prana, the energy that acts and creates throughout the universe. It is a common experience of the Yogin that when thought ceases, breathing ceases, — the entire *kumbhaka* effected by the Hathayogin with infinite trouble and gigantic effort, establishes itself easily and happily, — but when thought begins again, the breath resumes its activity. But when the thought flows without the resumption of the inbreathing and outbreathing, then the Prana is truly conquered. This is a law of Nature. When we strive to act, the forces of Nature do their will with us; when we grow still, we become their master. But there are two kinds of stillness — the helpless stillness of inertia, which heralds dissolution, and the stillness of assured sovereignty which commands the harmony of life. It is the sovereign stillness

which is the calm of the Yogin. The more complete the calm, the mightier the yogic power, the greater the force in action.

In this calm, right knowledge comes. The thoughts of men are a tangle of truth and falsehood, *satyam* and *anṛtam*. True perception is marred and clouded by false perception, true judgment lamed by false judgment, true imagination distorted by false imagination, true memory deceived by false memory. The activity of the mind must cease, the *citta* be purified, a silence falls upon the restlessness of Prakriti, then in that calm, in that voiceless stillness illumination comes upon the mind, error begins to fall away and, so long as desire does not stir again, clarity establishes itself in the higher stratum of the consciousness compelling peace and joy in the lower. Right knowledge becomes the infallible source of right action. *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam.*

The knowledge of the Yogin is not the knowledge of the average desire-driven mind. Neither is it the knowledge of the scientific or of the worldly-wise reason which anchors itself on surface facts and leans upon experience and probability. The Yogin knows God's way of working and is aware that the improbable often happens, that facts mislead. He rises above reason to that direct and illuminated knowledge which we call *vijñānam*. The desire-driven mind is enmeshed in the intricate tangle of good and evil, of the pleasant and the unpleasant, of happiness and misfortune. It strives to have the good always, the pleasant always, the happiness always. It is elated by fortunate happenings, disturbed and unnerved by their opposite. But the illuminated eye of the seer perceives that all leads to good; for God is all and God is *sarvamaṅgalam*. He knows that the apparent evil is often the shortest way to the good, the unpleasant indispensable to prepare the pleasant, misfortune the condition of obtaining a more perfect happiness. His intellect is delivered from enslavement to the dualities.

Therefore the action of the Yogin will not be as the action of the ordinary man. He will often seem to acquiesce in evil, to avoid the chance of relieving misfortune, to refuse his assent to the efforts of the noble-hearted who withstand violence and wickedness; he will seem to be acting *piśācavat*. Or men will think him *jaḍa*, inert, a stone, a block, because he is passive,

where activity appears to be called for; silent, where men expect voicefulness; unmoved, where there is reason for deep and passionate feeling. When he acts, men will call him *unmatta*, a madman, eccentric or idiot; for his actions will often seem to have no definite result or purpose, to be wild, unregulated, regardless of sense and probability or inspired by a purpose, a vision which is not for this world. And it is true that he follows a light which other men do not possess or would even call darkness; that what is a dream to them, is to him a reality; that their night is his day. And this is the root of the difference that, while they reason, he knows.

To be capable of silence stillness, illuminated passivity is to be fit for immortality — *amṛtatvāya kalpate*. It is to be *dhīra*, the ideal of our ancient civilisation, which does not mean to be tamasic, inert and a block. The inaction of the tamasic man is a stumbling-block to the energies around him, the inaction of the Yogin creates, preserves and destroys; his action is dynamic with the direct, stupendous driving-power of great natural forces. It is a stillness within often covered by a ripple of talk and activity without, — the ocean with its lively surface of waves. But even as men do not see the reality of God's workings from the superficial noise of the world and its passing events, for they are hidden beneath that cover, so also shall they fail to understand the action of the Yogin, for he is different within from what he is outside. The strength of noise and activity is, doubtless, great, — did not the walls of Jericho fall by the force of noise? But infinite is the strength of the stillness and the silence in which great forces prepare for action.

The Three Purushas

THE greatest of all the philosophical problems which human thought has struggled to solve is the exact nature and relation to us of the conscious Intelligence in the phenomenal existence around. The idealist denies the phenomenal existence, the materialist denies the conscious Intelligence. To the former, phenomenon is a passing shadow on the luminous calm of the single universal Spirit: to the latter, Intelligence is a temporary result of the motions of Matter. The idealist can give no satisfactory explanation of the existence of the shadow; he admits that it is inexplicable, a thing that is and yet is not: the materialist can give no satisfactory explanation of the existence of intelligence; he simply tries to trace the stages of its development and the methods of its workings, and covers over the want of an explanation by the abundant minuteness of his observations. But the soul of Man, looking out and in, is satisfied neither with Shankara nor with Haeckel. It sees the universal existence of phenomena, it sees the universal existence of Intelligence. It seeks a term which will admit both, cover both, identify both; it demands, not an elimination of either, but a reconcilement.

The Upanishads do not deny the reality of the world, but they identify it with Brahman who transcends it. He is the One without a second; He is the All. If all is Brahman, then there can be nothing but Brahman, and therefore the existence of the All, *sarvam idam*, does not contradict the unity of Brahman, does not establish the reality of *bheda*, difference. It is one Intelligence looking at itself from a hundred viewpoints, each point conscious of and enjoying the existence of the others. The shoreless stream of idea and thought, imagination and experience, name and form, sensation and vibration sweeps onward for ever, without beginning, without end, rising into view, sinking out of sight; through it the one Intelligence with its million self-expressions pours itself abroad, an ocean with innumerable waves. One particular self-expression may disappear into its

source and continent, but that does not and cannot abolish the phenomenal universe. The One is for ever, and the Many are for ever because the One is for ever. So long as there is a sea, there will be waves.

In the oceanic stir and change of universal Nature the soul or Purusha is the standing-point, stable, unmoving, unchanging, eternal, — *nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇur acalo'yam sanātanaḥ*. In the whole, the Purusha or soul is one, — there is One Spirit which supports the stir of the Universe, not many. In the individual the One Purusha has three stages of personality; He is One, but triple, *trivṛt*. The Upanishads speak of two birds on one tree, of which one eats the fruit of the tree, the other, seated on a higher branch, does not eat but watches its fellow; one is *īśa* or Lord of itself, the other is *anīśa*, not lord of itself, and it is when the eater looks up and perceives the greatness of the watcher and fills himself with it that grief, death, subjection, — in one word *māyā*, ignorance and illusion, — cease to touch him. There are two unborn who are male and one unborn who is female; she is the tree with its sweet and bitter fruit, the two are the birds. One of the unborn enjoys her sweetness, the other has put it away from him. These are the two Purushas, the *akṣara* or immutable spirit, and the *kṣara* or apparently mutable, and the tree or woman is Prakriti, universal Energy which the Europeans call Nature. The *kṣara* Purusha is the soul in Nature and enjoying Nature, the *akṣara* Purusha is the soul above Nature and watching her. But there is One who is not seated on the tree but occupies and possesses it, who is not only lord of Himself, but lord of all that is; He is higher than the *kṣara*, higher than the *akṣara*, He is Purushottama, the Soul one with God, with the All.

These three Purushas are described in the fifteenth chapter of the Gita. "There are two Purushas in the world, the *akṣara* and the *kṣara*, — the *kṣara* is all creatures, the *akṣara* is called *kūṭastha*, the one on the summit. There is another Purusha, the highest (*uttama*), called also the *paramātmā* or Supreme Spirit, who enters into the three worlds, (the worlds of *suṣupti*, *svapna*, *jāgrat*, otherwise the causal, mental and physical planes of existence), and sustains them as their imperishable lord." And in the thirteenth chapter, while drawing the distinction between

the lower Purusha and the higher, Sri Krishna defines more minutely the relations of God and the individual soul to Nature. "Prakriti is the basic source of cause, effect and agency; the Purusha, of the sense of enjoyment, of happiness and grief; for it is the soul in Nature (Purusha in Prakriti) that enjoys the threefold workings of things caused by Nature (the play of conservation, creation and destruction; reception, reaction and resistance; illumination, misconception and obscuration; calm, work and inertia; all being different manifestations of three fundamental forces called the *guṇas* or essential properties of Prakriti), and it is the attachment of the soul to the *guṇas* that is the cause of births in bodies, good and evil. The highest Purusha in this body is the one who watches, who sanctions, who enjoys, who upholds, who is the mighty Lord and the Supreme Soul."

The personality of the Supreme Soul is universal, not individual. Whatever is in all creatures, character, idea, imagination, experience, sensation, motion, is contained by Him as an object of spiritual enjoyment without limiting or determining Him. He is all things at once. Such universality is necessary to support and supply individual existence, but it cannot be the determining limit of individual existence. Something has to be reserved, something put forward, and this partial manifestation is the individual. "It is verily an eternal part of Me that in the world of individual existence becomes the *jīva* or individual." The *jīva* or individual is *kṣara* Purusha, and between him and the Supreme stands the *akṣara* Purusha, the bird on the summit of the tree, joyous in his own bliss, undisturbed by the play of Nature, impartially watching it, receiving its image on his calm immovable existence without being for a moment bound or affected, eternally self-gathered, eternally free. This *akṣara* Purusha is our real self, our divine unity with God, our inalienable freedom from that which is transient and changing. If it did not exist, there would be no escape from the bondage of life and death, joy and grief, sin and virtue; we should be prisoners in a cage without a door, beating our wings against the bars in vain for an exit; life and death, joy and grief, sin and virtue would be eternal, ineffugable realities, not temporary rules determining the great game of life, and we should be unwilling actors, not free

playmates of God able to suspend and renew the game when we will. It is by realising our oneness with the *akṣara* Purusha that we get freedom from ignorance, freedom from the cords of desire, freedom from the imperative law of works. On the other hand, if the *akṣara* Purusha were all, as the Sankhya philosophy contends, there would be no basis for different experience, no varying personality, every individual existence would be precisely like every other individual existence, the development and experience of one soul in Nature an exact replica of the development and experience of another soul. It is the *kṣara* Purusha who is all creatures, and the variety of experience, character and development is effected by a particular part of the universal *svabhāva* or nature of conscious existence in phenomena, being attached to a particular individual or *jīva*. This is what is meant by saying that it is a part of God which becomes the *jīva*. This *svabhāva*, once determined, does not change; but it manifests various parts of itself, at various times, under various circumstances, in various forms of action and various bodies suited to the action or development it has to enjoy. It is for this reason that the Purusha in Nature is called *kṣara*, fluid, shifting, although it is not in reality fluid or shifting, but constant, eternal and immutable, *sanātana*. It is the variety of its enjoyment in Time, Space and Causality that makes it *kṣara*. The enjoyment of the *akṣara* Purusha is self-existent, beyond Time, Space and Causality, aware of, but undisturbed by the continual multitudinous flux and reflux of Prakriti. The enjoyment of Purushottama is both in Prakriti and beyond it, it embraces and is the reality of all experience and enjoyment.

Development is determined by the *kṣara* Purusha, but not conducted by him. It is Prakriti, the Universal Energy, that conducts development under the law of cause and effect and is the true agent. The soul is not the agent, but the lord who enjoys the results of the action of his agent, Prakriti or nature; only by his attachment to Prakriti he forgets himself and identifies himself with her so as to have the illusion of agency and, by thus forgetting himself, ceases to be lord of himself, becomes subject to Causality, imprisoned in Time and Space, bound by the work which he sanctions. He himself, being a part of God, is made in

His image, of one nature with Him. Therefore what God is, he also is, only with limitation, subject to Time, Space and Causality, because he has, of his own will, accepted that bondage. He is the witness, and if he ceased to watch, the drama would stop. He is the source of sanction, and what he declares null and void, drops away from the development. He is the enjoyer, and if he became indifferent, that individual development would be arrested. He is the upholder, and if he ceased to sustain the *ādhāra*, the vehicle, it would fall and cease. He is the lord, and it is for his pleasure that Nature acts. He is the spirit, and matter is only his vehicle, his robe, his means of self-expression. But all his sanctions, refusals, behests act not at once, not there and then, not by imperative absolute compulsion, but subject to lapse of time, change of place, working of cause to effect. The lapse may be brief or long, a moment or centuries; the change small or great, here or in another world; the working direct or indirect, with the rapid concentration of processes which men call a miracle or with the careful and laboured evolution in which every step is visibly ordered and deliberate; but so long as the *jīva* is bound, his lordship is limited and constitutional, not despotic and absolute. His sanction and signature are necessary, but it is the Lords spiritual and temporal of his mind and body, the Commons in his external environment who do the work of the State, execute, administer, legislate.

The first step in self-liberation is to get rid of the illusion of agency, to realise that Nature acts, not the soul. The second is to remove the siege of phenomenal associations, by surrendering lordship to God, leaving Him alone to uphold and sanction by the abdication of one's own independent use of these powers, offering up the privilege of the enjoyer to Him. All that is then left is the attitude of the *akṣara* Purusha, the free, blissful self-existence watching the action of Prakriti, but outside it. The *kṣara* withdraws into the *akṣara*. When the *sākṣī* or witness withdraws into God Himself, that is the utter liberation.

Man – Slave or Free?

THE exclusive pursuit of Yoga by men who seclude themselves either physically or mentally from the contact of the world has led to an erroneous view of this science as something mystic, far-off and unreal. The secrecy which has been observed with regard to Yogic practices, a necessary secrecy in the former stages of human evolution — has stereotyped this error. Practices followed by men who form secret circles and confine the instruction in the mysteries strictly to those who have a certain preparatory fitness, inevitably bear the stamp to the outside world of occultism. In reality there is nothing intrinsically hidden, occult or mystic about Yoga. Yoga is based upon certain laws of human psychology, a certain knowledge about the power of the mind over the body and the inner spirit over the mind which are not generally realised and have hitherto been considered by those in the secret too momentous in their consequences for disclosure until men should be trained to use them aright. Just as a set of men who had discovered and tested the uttermost possibilities of mesmerism and hypnotism might hesitate to divulge them freely to the world lest the hypnotic power should be misused by ignorance or perversity or abused in the interests of selfishness and crime, so the Yogins have usually preserved the knowledge of these much greater forces within us in a secrecy broken only when they were sure of the previous ethical and spiritual training of the neophyte and his physical and moral fitness for the yogic practices. It became therefore an established rule for the learner to observe strict reserve as to the inner experience of Yoga and for the developed Yogin as far as possible to conceal himself. This has not prevented treatises and manuals from being published dealing with the physical or with the moral and intellectual sides of Yoga. Nor has it prevented great spirits who have gained their Yoga not by the ordinary careful and scientific methods but by their own strength and the special grace of God, from revealing themselves and their spiritual knowledge

to mankind and in their intense love for humanity imparting something of their power to the world. Such were Buddha, Christ, Mahomed, Chaitanya, such have been Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. It is still the orthodox view that the experiences of Yoga must not be revealed to the uninitiated. But a new era dawns upon us in which the old laws must be modified. Already the West is beginning to discover the secrets of Yoga. Some of its laws have revealed themselves however dimly and imperfectly to the scientists of Europe while others through Spiritualism, Christian Science, clairvoyance, telepathy and other modern forms of occultism are being almost discovered by accident as if by men groping in the dark and stumbling over truths they cannot understand. The time has almost come when India can no longer keep her light to herself but must pour it out upon the world. Yoga must be revealed to mankind because without it mankind cannot take the next step in the human evolution.

The psychology of the human race has not yet been discovered by science. All creation is essentially the same and proceeds by similar though not identical laws. If therefore we see in the outside material world that all phenomena proceed from and can be reduced to a single causal substance from which they were born, in which they move and to which they return, the same truth is likely to hold good in the psychical world. The unity of the material universe has now been acknowledged by the scientific intellect of Europe and the high priests of atheism and materialism in Germany have declared the *ekamevādvitīyam*, in matter with no uncertain voice. In so doing they have merely re-affirmed the discovery made by Indian masters of the yogic science thousands of years ago. But the European scientists have not discovered any sure and certain methods, such as they have in dealing with gross matter, for investigating psychical phenomena. They can only observe the most external manifestations of mind in action. But in these manifestations the mind is so much enveloped in the action of the outer objects and seems so dependent on them that it is very difficult for the observer to find out the springs of its action or any regularity in its workings. The European scientists have there-

fore come to the conclusion that it is the stimulations of outside objects which are the cause of psychical phenomena, and that even when the mind seems to act of itself and on its own material, it is only associating, grouping together and manipulating the recorded experiences from outside objects. The very nature of mind is, according to them, a creation of past material experience transmitted by heredity with such persistence that we have grown steadily from the savage with his rudimentary mind to the civilised man of the twentieth century. As a natural result of these materialistic theories, science has found it difficult to discover any true psychical centre for the multifarious phenomena of mind and has therefore fixed upon the brain, the material organ of thought, as the only real centre. From this materialistic philosophy have resulted certain theories very dangerous to the moral future of mankind. First, man is a creation and slave of matter. He can only master matter by obeying it. Secondly, the mind itself is a form of gross matter and not independent of and master of the senses. Thirdly, there is no real free will, because all our action is determined by two great forces, heredity and environment. We are the slaves of our nature, and where we seem to be free from its mastery, it is because we are yet worse slaves of our environment, worked on by the forces that surround and manipulate us.

It is from these false and dangerous doctrines of materialism which tend to subvert man's future and hamper his evolution that Yoga gives us a means of escape. It asserts on the contrary man's freedom from matter and gives him a means of asserting that freedom. The first great fundamental discovery of the Yogins was a means of analysing the experiences of the mind and the heart. By Yoga one can isolate mind, watch its workings as under a microscope, separate every minute function of the various parts of *antaḥkaraṇa*, the inner organ, every mental and moral faculty, test its isolated workings as well as its relations to other functions and faculties and trace backwards the operations of mind to subtler and ever subtler sources until just as material analysis arrives at a primal entity from which all proceeds, so Yoga-analysis arrives at a primal spiritual entity from which all proceeds. It is also able to locate and distinguish the psychical

centre to which all psychical phenomena gather and so to fix the roots of personality. In this analysis its first discovery is that mind can entirely isolate itself from external objects and work in itself and of itself. This does not, it is true, carry us very far, because it may be that it is merely using the material already stored up by its past experiences. But the next discovery is that the farther it removes itself from objects, the more powerfully, surely, rapidly can the mind work, with a swifter clarity, with a victorious and sovereign detachment. This is an experience which tends to contradict the scientific theory, that mind can withdraw the senses into itself and bring them to bear on a mass of phenomena of which it is quite unaware when it is occupied with external phenomena. Science will naturally challenge these as hallucinations. The answer is that these phenomena are related to each other by regular, simple and intelligible laws and form a world of their own, independent of thought acting on the material world. Here, too, Science has this possible answer that this supposed world is merely an imaginative reflex in the brain of the material world and to any arguments drawn from the definiteness and unexpectedness of these subtle phenomena and their independence of our own will and imagination, it can always oppose its theory of unconscious cerebration and we suppose unconscious imagination. The fourth discovery is that mind is not only independent of external matter, but its master; it can not only reject and control external stimuli, but can defy such apparently universal material laws as that of gravitation and ignore, put aside and make nought of what are called laws of nature and are really only the laws of material nature, inferior and subject to the psychical laws because matter is a product of mind and not mind a product of matter. This is the decisive discovery of Yoga, its final contradiction of materialism. It is followed by the crowning realisation that there is within us a source of immeasurable force, immeasurable intelligence, immeasurable joy far above the possibility of weakness, above the possibility of ignorance, above the possibility of grief which we can bring into touch with ourselves and, under arduous but not impossible conditions, habitually utilize or enjoy. This is what the Upanishads call the Brahman and the primal entity

from which all things were born, in which they live and to which they return. This is God and communion with Him is the highest aim of Yoga — a communion which works for knowledge, for work, for delight.

Fate and Free-Will

A QUESTION which has hitherto divided human thought and received no final solution, is the freedom of the human being in his relation to the Power intelligent or unintelligent that rules the world. We strive for freedom in our human relations, to freedom we move as our goal, and every fresh step in our human progress is a further approximation to our ideal. But are we free in ourselves? We seem to be free, to do that which we choose and not that which is chosen for us; but it is possible that the freedom may be illusory and our apparent freedom may be a real and iron bondage. We may be bound by predestination, the will of a Supreme Intelligent Power, of blind inexorable Nature, or the necessity of our own previous development.

The first is the answer of the devout and submissive mind in its dependence on God, but, unless we adopt a Calvinistic fatalism, the admission of the guiding and overriding will of God does not exclude the permission of freedom to the individual. The second is the answer of the scientist; Heredity determines our Nature, the laws of Nature limit our action, cause and effect compel the course of our development, and, if it be urged that we may determine effects by creating causes, the answer is that our own actions are determined by previous causes over which we have no control and our action itself is a necessary response to a stimulus from outside. The third is the answer of the Buddhist and post-Buddhistic Hinduism. "It is our fate, it is written on our forehead, when our Karma is exhausted then alone our calamities will pass from us"; — this is the spirit of *tāmasika* inaction justifying itself by a misreading of the theory of Karma.

If we go back to the true Hindu teaching independent of Buddhistic influence, we shall find that it gives us a reconciliation of the dispute by a view of man's psychology in which both Fate and Free-Will are recognised. The difference between Buddhism

and Hinduism is that to the former the human soul is nothing, to the latter it is everything. The whole universe exists in the spirit, by the spirit, for the spirit; all we do, think and feel is for the spirit, Nature depends upon the *ātman*, all its movement, play, action is for the *ātman*.

There is no Fate except insistent causality which is only another name for Law, and Law itself is only an instrument in the hands of Nature for the satisfaction of the spirit. Law is nothing but a mode or rule of action; it is called in our philosophy not Law but *dharma*, holding together, it is that by which the action of the universe, the action of its parts, the action of the individual is held together. This action in the universal, the parts, the individual is called *karma*, work, action, energy in play, and the definition of *dharma* or Law is action as decided by the nature of the thing in which action takes place — *svabhāva-niyatam karma*. Each separate existence, each individual has a *svabhāva* or nature and acts according to it, each group, species or mass of individuals has a *svabhāva* or nature and acts according to it, and the universe also has its *svabhāva* or nature and acts according to it. Mankind is a group of individuals and every man acts according to his human nature, that is his law of being as distinct from animals, trees or other groups of individuals. Each man has a distinct nature of his own and that is his law of being which ought to guide him as an individual. But beyond and above those minor laws is the great *dharma* of the universe which provides that certain previous *karma* or action must lead to certain *karma* or results.

The whole of causality may be defined as previous action leading to subsequent action, *karma* and *karmaphala*. The Hindu theory is that thought and feeling, as well as actual speech or deeds, are part of *karma* and create effect, and we do not accept the European sentiment that outward expression of thought and feeling in speech or deed is more important than the thought or feeling itself. This outward expression is only part of the thing expressed and its results are only part of the *karmaphala*. The previous *karma* has not one kind of result but many. In the first place, a certain habit of thought or feeling produces certain actions and speech or certain habits of action

and speech in this life, which materialise in the next as good fortune or evil fortune. Again it produces by its action for the good or ill of others a necessity of happiness or sorrow for ourselves in another birth. It produces, moreover, a tendency to persistence of that habit of thought or feeling in future lives, which involves the persistence of good fortune or evil fortune, happiness or sorrow. Or, acting on different lines, it produces a revolt or reaction and replacement by opposite habits which in their turn necessitate opposite results for good or evil. This is the chain of *karma*, the bondage of works, which is the Hindu Fate and from which the Hindu seeks salvation.

If, however, there is no escape from the Law, if Nature is supreme and inexorable, there can be no salvation; freedom becomes a chimera, bondage eternal. There can be no escape, unless there is something within us which is free and lord, superior to Nature. This entity the Hindu teaching finds in the spirit ever free and blissful which is one in essence and in reality with the Supreme Soul of the Universe. The spirit does not act, it is nature that contains the action. If the spirit acted, it would be bound by its action. The thing that acts is Prakriti, Nature, which determines the *svabhāva* of things and is the source and condition of Law or *dharma*. The soul or *puruṣa* holds up the *svabhāva*, watches and enjoys all the action and its fruit, sanctions the law or *dharma*. It is the king, Lord or *īśvara* without whose consent nothing can be done by *prakṛti*. But the king is above the law and free.

It is this power of sanction that forms the element of free-will in our lives. The spirit consents not that itself shall be bound, but that its enjoyment should be bound by time, space and causality and by the *svabhāva* and the *dharma*. It consents to virtue or sin, good fortune or evil fortune, health or disease, joy or suffering, or it refuses them. What it is attached to, that Nature multiplies for it, what it is weary of, has *vairāgya* for, that Nature withdraws from it. Only, because the enjoyment is in space and time, therefore, even after the withdrawal of consent, the habitual action continues for a time just as the locomotive continues to move after the steam is shut off, but in a little while it slows down and finally comes to a standstill. And because the enjoyment is

in causality, the removal of the habit of action is effected not spontaneously and freely, but by an established process or one of many established processes. This is the great truth now dawning on the world, that Will is the thing which moves the world and that Fate is merely a process by which Will fulfils itself.

But in order to feel its mastery of Nature, the human soul must put itself into communion with the Infinite, the universal Spirit. Its will must be one with the universal Will. The human soul is one with the universal Spirit, but in the body it stands out as something separate and unconnected, because a certain freedom is permitted to it in order that the *svabhāva* of things may be diversely developed in different bodies. In using this freedom the soul may do it ignorantly or knowingly. If it uses it ignorantly, it is not really free, for ignorance brings with it the illusion of enslavement to Nature. Used knowingly, the freedom of the soul becomes one with surrender to the universal Will. Either apparent bondage to Fate in Nature or realised freedom from Nature in the universal freedom and lordship of the *paramātman* and *parameśvara*, this is the choice offered to the human soul. The gradual self-liberation from bondage to Nature is the true progress of humanity. The inert stone or block is passive sport of natural laws, God is their Master. Man stands between these two extreme terms and moves upwards from one to the other.

The Principle of Evil

THE problem of evil is one that has taxed human thought and evolved various and conflicting solutions. To the rationalist who does not believe in anything not material, the problem does not exist. Everything is in nature as the result of evolution. Nature is blind and unintelligent and has therefore no conception of good or evil, the conception belongs to the human mind and is the result of the social sense and the ideas of pleasure and pain developed in human beings by a perfectly intelligible natural process. It is to men who believe in Intelligence as governing and developing the world that the problem exists. Why did evil come into existence and what is its purpose?

The unwillingness of the devout soul to admit that evil can have its existence in God, has led to variations of the Manichean theory which sees a double control in the world, God as the Principle of Good and Satan as the Principle of Evil. Those who regard the belief in the existence of an intelligent evil power as superstition, find the origin of evil in man who abuses his freedom and by his revolt and self-will gives birth to sin. This solution solves nothing, for it does not explain why there should have been a possibility of evil at all. Unless we limit our conception of God as the source and creator of all, that from which all proceeds, we must admit that evil as part of the economy of the world must have proceeded from Him no less than good. Even if we violently posit another creative force in the world limiting His universality, we shall have to assume that He, having the power to prevent evil, permits it; for He is omnipotent and none can do anything except by the permission of His all-wise and overruling Providence. And if we limit the omnipotence of God, we reduce Him to a mere Demiurgus, a great Artificer of things, struggling amongst forces over which He has not entire control. Such a conception is unphilosophical and contrary to the universal spiritual experience of mankind. The problem remains why, if He is God, All-Love, *sarvamaṅgalam*, He creates evil or, if

He does not create it, permits it.

To our mind there is no escaping from that belief that, if God exists, He is all. All proceeds from Him: from what other source can it proceed? All exists in Him: in what other being or continent can it exist? Therefore evil must proceed from Him, evil must exist in Him. Since He is All-Wise, for all knowledge is His, it must exist for some wise and perfect purpose. Since He is All-Love, it must exist for good and not for anything which contradicts the good. Only, His is an infinite wisdom, ours a finite, His perfect, ours undeveloped. His is an infinite and all-wise love, ours a finite and unwise love, a love imperfectly informed by knowledge ful[1] of *māyā*, attachment to passing happiness and pleasure. God's love looks beyond, ours fixes its eyes on the moment.

Experience must always be the basis of true knowledge, but it must be experience illuminated by true perception, not experience dominated by surface impressions. The experience of the mind which has compassed calm and is able to preserve its tranquillity under the most strenuous assaults of pain, misfortune and evil, is alone worth having. The mind which is not *dhīra*, which feels grief and thinks under the influence of affection and passion, even if it be a noble affection and passion, cannot arrive at the *samyagjñānam*, the complete and perfect truth. Emotion is for the heart, it should not besiege the intellect; for the proper business of the intellect is to observe and understand, not to be obscured by the slightest prejudice, the least trace of feeling. One who is *dhīra* will look narrowly at every incident and, if he cannot see at once, wait for enlightenment as to its ultimate purpose and issue; so waiting, so calmly considering, the meaning of life dawns on the mind, an infinite purpose reveals itself in things small and great, in occurrences good and bad: omniscient Providence reveals itself in the fall of the sparrow and the death of the ant as well as in the earthquake that destroys great cities and the floods that make thousands destitute and homeless. Rudra and Shiva reveal themselves as One. The Yogin sees God in all things, not only in all things, but in all events. He is the flood. He is the earthquake. He is death, that leads to a higher life, He is Pain that prepares us for a higher bliss. This is a thing

that cannot be argued, it has to be seen, *paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*. And sight is only possible to the calm heart and the unperturbed understanding.

The materialist is not wrong when he holds good and evil to be merely operations of Nature which she uses impartially and without making a distinction, and that the distinction is an evolution in the human mind. Evil is good disintegrating to prepare for a higher good. That which is now tyranny was once necessary to consolidate human society. What was once an ideal state of society, would now be barbarous and evil. Morality progresses, religion widens with the growing manifestation of that which is divine in the human race. As with the individual, so with the race and the world, evil tends to good, it comes into existence in order that men may reject the lesser good and rise to the higher.

The problem of pain remains. Was it necessary that the process should be accompanied with pain to the individual? At one time the capacity for pain, physical and mental, was infinitely less than it is now, so little that it might be pronounced to be nil. It is a remarkable fact that disease, pain and grief have grown keener with the growing fineness of the human organisation. Obviously this can only be a temporary development necessary to prepare a higher race which shall rise above pain to a higher capacity for pleasure and happiness. The lower organisation resisted the *saṁskāra* of pain and grief by the coarseness of its composition, it rejected pain in the sense of not knowing it. The higher organisation of the future will not be below it, but rise above it. It was the knowledge of good and evil that brought grief and sin into the world; when that knowledge is surmounted man will rise above grief and sin. Before he ate the forbidden fruit, he had the innocence of the animal; when he shall cease to eat it, he will have the innocence of the God. Is it not so that in nature pain is a possibility which has to be exhausted and man has been selected as the instrument to bring it into existence, in a limited space, for a limited time, and work it out of the cosmos. In the light of this idea the Christian doctrine of the Son of Man on the cross acquires a new significance and man himself becomes the Christ of the universe.

Another question occurs. Is pain real or a shadow? The

Vedantist believes that the soul is a part of God or one with God Himself, and cannot feel pain or grief, but only *ānanda*, bliss. The *jīva* or soul takes the *rasa*, the delight of the dualities, and it changes to bliss in his nature; but this is veiled by the ignorance and separates the *jīva* in his *svarūpa* from the mind and the heart. Pain is a negative *vikāra* or corruption of true experience in the mind, pleasure a positive *vikāra*. The truth is *ānanda*. But this is a knowledge for which mankind is not ready. Only the Yogin realises it and becomes *sama*, like-minded to pain and pleasure, good or evil, happiness or misfortune. He takes the *rasa* of both and they give him strength and bliss; for the veil between his mind and his soul is removed and the apparent man in him has become one with the *svarūpa* or real man. If mankind as a whole came too early by that knowledge, the evolution of the perfect Good would be delayed. The utter sweetness of *dayā* and *prema*, pity and love, might never be extracted from the *līlā*.

Yoga and Hypnotism

WHEN the mind is entirely passive, then the force of Nature which works in the whole of animate and inanimate creation, has free play; for it is in reality this force which works in man as well as in the sun and star. There is no doubt of this truth whether in Hinduism or in Science. This is the thing called Nature, the sum of cosmic force and energy, which alone Science recognises as the source of all work and activity. This also is the Prakriti of the Hindus to which under different names Sankhya and Vedanta agree in assigning a similar position and function in the Universe. But the immediate question is whether this force can act in man independently of man's individual will and initiative. Must it always act through his volition or has it a power of independent operation? The first real proof which Science has had of the power of action independent of volition is the phenomena of hypnotism. Unfortunately, the nature of hypnotism has not been properly understood. It is supposed that by putting the subject to sleep the hypnotist is able in some mysterious and unexplained way to substitute his will for the subject's. In a certain sense all the subject's activities in the hypnotic state are the results of his own volition, but that volition is not spontaneous, it is used as a slave by the operator working through the medium of suggestion. Whatever the hypnotist suggests that the subject shall think, act or feel, he thinks, acts or feels, and whatever the hypnotist suggests that the subject shall become, he becomes. What is it that gives the operator this stupendous power? Why should the mere fact of a man passing into this sleep-condition suspend the ordinary reactions of mind and body and substitute others at the mere word of the man who has said to him "sleep"? It is sometimes supposed that it is the superior will of the hypnotist which overcomes the will of the other and makes it a slave. There are two strong objections to this view. It does not appear to be true that it is the weak and distracted will that is most easily hypnotised; on the contrary,

the strong concentrated mind forms a good subject. Secondly, if it were the operator's will using the will of the subject, then the results produced must be such as the latter could himself bring about, since the capacities of the instrument cannot be exceeded by the power working through the instrument. Even if we suppose that the invading will brings with it its own force still the results produced must not exceed the sum of its capacity plus the capacity of the instrument. If they commonly do so, we must suppose that it is neither the will of the operator nor the will of the subject nor the sum of these two wills that is active, but some other and more potent force. This is precisely what we see in hypnotic performance.

What is this force that enables or compels a weak man to become so rigid that strong arms cannot bend him; that reverses the operations of the senses and abrogates pain? That changes the fixed character of a man in the shortest of periods? That is able to develop power where there was no power, moral strength where there was weakness, health where there was disease? That in its higher manifestations can exceed the barriers of space and time and produce that far-sight, far-hearing and far-thinking which shows mind to be an untrammelled agent or medium pervading the world and not limited to the body which it informs or seems to inform. The European scientist experimenting with hypnotism is handling forces which he cannot understand, stumbling on truths of which he cannot give a true account. His feet are faltering on the threshold of Yoga. It is held by some thinkers, and not unreasonably if we consider these phenomena, that mind is all and contains all. It is not the body which determines the laws of the body. It is the ordinary law of the body that if it is struck, pierced or roughly pressed, it feels pain. This law is created by the mind which associates pain with these contacts, and if the mind changes its Dharma and is able to associate with those contacts not pain but insensibility or pleasure, then they will bring about those results of insensibility or pleasure and no other. The pain and pleasure are not the result of the contact, neither is their seat in the body; they are the result of association and their seat is in the mind. Vinegar is sour, sugar sweet, but to the hypnotised mind vinegar can be sweet, sugar sour. The sour-

ness or sweetness is not in the vinegar or sugar, but in the mind. The heart also is the subject of the mind. My emotions are like my physical feelings, the result of association, and my character is the result of accumulated past experiences with their resultant associations and reactions crystallising into habits of mind and heart summed up in the word, character. These things like all the rest that are made of the stuff of associations are not permanent or binding but fluid and mutable, *anityāḥ sarve saṁskārāḥ*. If my friend blames me, I am grieved; that is an association and not binding. The grief is not the result of the blame but of an association in the mind. I can change the association so far that blame will cause me no grief, praise no elation. I can entirely stop the reactions of joy and grief by the same force that created them. They are habits of the mind, nothing more. In the same way though with more difficulty I can stop the reactions of physical pain and pleasure so that nothing will hurt my body. If I am a coward today, I can be a hero tomorrow. The cowardice was merely the habit of associating certain things with pain and grief and the shrinking from the pain and grief; this shrinking and the physical sensations in the vital or nervous man which accompany it are called fear and they can be dismissed by the action of the mind which created them. All these are propositions which European science is even now unwilling to admit, yet it is being proved more and more by the phenomena of hypnotism that these effects can be temporarily at least produced by one man upon another; and it has even been proved that disease can be permanently cured or character permanently changed by the action of one mind upon another. The rest will be established in time by the development of hypnotism.

The difference between Yoga and hypnotism is that what hypnotism does for a man through the agency of another and in the sleeping state, Yoga does for him by his own agency and in the waking state. The hypnotic sleep is necessary in order to prevent the activity of the subject's mind full of old ideas and associations, from interfering with the operator.

In the waking state he would naturally refuse to experience sweetness in vinegar or sourness in sugar or to believe that he can change from disease to health, cowardice to heroism by a mere

act of faith; his established association would rebel violently and successfully against such contradictions of universal experience. The force which transcends matter would be hampered by the obstruction of ignorance and attachment to universal error. The hypnotic sleep does not make the mind a *tabula rasa*, but it renders it passive to everything but the touch of the operator. Yoga similarly teaches passivity of the mind so that the will may act unhampered by the *saṁskāras*, or old associations. It is these *saṁskāras*, the habits formed by experience in the body, heart or mind, that form the laws of our psychology. The associations of the mind are the stuff of which our life is made. They are more persistent in the body than in the mind and therefore harder to alter. They are more persistent in the race than in the individual; the conquest of the body and mind by the individual is comparatively easy and can be done in the space of a single life, but the same conquest by the race involves the development of ages. It is conceivable, however, that the practice of Yoga by a great number of men and persistence might bring about profound changes in human psychology and, by stamping these changes into body and brain through heredity, evolve a superior race which would endure and by the law of the survival of the fittest eliminate the weaker kinds of humanity. Just as the rudimentary mind of the animal has been evolved into the fine instrument of the human being so the rudiments of higher force and faculty in the present race might evolve into the perfect *buddhi* of the Yogin.

Yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ. According as is a man's fixed and complete belief, that he is, not immediately always but sooner or later, by the law that makes the psychical tend inevitably to express itself in the material. The will is the agent by which all these changes are made and old *saṁskāras* replaced by new, and the will cannot act without faith. The question then arises whether mind is the ultimate force or there is another which communicates with the outside world through the mind. Is the mind the agent or simply the instrument? If the mind be all, then it is only animals that can have the power to evolve; but this does not accord with the laws of the world as we know them. The tree evolves, the clod evolves, everything evolves. Even in

animals it is evident that mind is not all in the sense of being the ultimate force in nature. It seems to be all, only because that which is all expresses itself in the mind and passes everything through it for the sake of manifestation. That which we call mind is a medium which pervades the world. Otherwise we could not have the instantaneous and electrical action of mind upon mind of which human experience is full and of which the new phenomena of hypnotism, telepathy, etc., are only fresh proofs. There must be contact, there must be interpenetration if we are to account for these phenomena on any reasonable theory. Mind therefore is held by the Hindus to be a species of subtle matter in which ideas are waves or ripples and it is not limited by the physical body which it uses as an instrument. There is an ulterior force which works through this subtle medium called mind. An animal species develops, according to the modern theory, under the subtle influence of the environment. The environment supplies a need and those who satisfy the need develop a new species which survives because it is more fit. This is not the result of any intellectual perception of the need nor of a resolve to develop the necessary changes, but of a desire, often though not always, a mute, inarticulate and unthought desire. That desire attracts a force which satisfies it. What is that force? The tendency of psychical desire to manifest in the material change is one term in the equation; the force which develops the change in response to the desire is another. We have a will beyond mind which dictates the change, we have a force beyond mind which affects it. According to Hindu philosophy, the will is the Jiva, the Purusha, the Self in the *ānandakoṣa* acting through *vijñāna*, universal or transcendental mind; this is what we call spirit. The force is Prakriti or Shakti, the female principle in Nature which is at the root of all action. Behind both is the single Self of the universe which contains both Jiva and Prakriti, spirit and material energy. Yoga puts these ultimate existences within us in touch with each other and by stilling the activity of the *saṁskāras* or associations in mind and body, enables them to act swiftly, victoriously and as the world calls it, miraculously. In reality, there is no such thing as a miracle; there are only laws and processes which are not yet understood.

Yoga is therefore no dream, no illusion of mystics. It is known that we can alter the associations of mind and body temporarily and that the mind can alter the conditions of the body partially. Yoga asserts that these things can be done permanently and completely. For the body, conquest of disease, pain and material obstructions, for the mind, liberation from bondage to past experience and the heavier limitations of space and time, for the heart victory over sin and grief and fear, for the spirit unclouded bliss, strength and illumination, this is the gospel of Yoga, this is the goal to which Hinduism points humanity.

Stead and the Spirits

CONSIDERABLE attention has been attracted and excitement created by the latest development of Mr. W. T. Stead's agency for communicant spirits which he calls Julia's Bureau. The supposed communications of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield and other distinguished politicians on the question of the Budget have awakened much curiosity, ridicule and even indignation. The ubiquitous eloquence of Lord Curzon has been set flowing by what he considers this unscrupulous method of pressing the august departed into the ranks of Liberal electioneering agents, and he has penned an indignant letter to the papers in which there is much ornate Curzonian twaddle about sacred mysteries and the sanctities of the grave. If there is anything at all in the alleged communications from departed souls which have become of increasing interest to the European world, it ought to be fairly established that the grave is nothing but a hole in the earth containing a rotting piece of matter with which the spirit has no farther connection, and that the spirit is very much the same after death as before, takes much interest in small, trivial and mundane matters and is very far from regarding his new existence as a solemn, sacred and mysterious affair. If so, we do not see why we either should approach the departed spirit with long and serious faces or with any more unusual feelings than curiosity, interest and eagerness to acquire knowledge of the other world and communication with those we knew and loved in this, in fact, the ordinary human and earthly feelings existing between souls sundered by time and space, but still capable of communication. But Lord Curzon still seems to be labouring under the crude Christian conception of the blessed dead as angels harping in heaven whose spotless plumes ought not to be roughly disturbed by human breath and of spiritual communication as a sort of necromancy, the spirit of Mr. Gladstone being summoned from his earthy bed and getting into it again and tucking himself up comfortably in his coffin after Julia

and Mr. Stead have done with him. We should have thought that in the bold and innovating mind of India's only Viceroy these coarse European superstitions ought to have been destroyed long ago.

It is not, however, Lord Curzon but Mr. Stead and the spirits with whom we have to deal. We know Mr. Stead as a pushing and original journalist, not always over-refined or delicate either in his actions or expressions, skilful in the advertisement of his views, excitable, earnest, declamatory, loud and even hysterical, if you will, in some of his methods, but certainly neither a liar nor a swindler. He does and says what he believes and nothing else. It is impossible to dismiss his Bureau as an imposture or mere journalistic réclame. It is impossible to dismiss the phenomena of spirit communications, even with all the imposture that unscrupulous money-makers have imported into them, as unreal or a deception. All that can reasonably be said is that their true nature has not yet been established beyond dispute. There are two conceivable explanations, one that of actual spirit communication, the other that of vigorously dramatised imaginary conversations jointly composed with wonderful skill and consistency by the subconscious minds, whatever that may be, of the persons present, the medium being the chief dramaturge of this subconscious literary Committee. This theory is so wildly improbable and so obviously opposed to the nature of the phenomena themselves, that only an obstinate unwillingness to admit new facts and ideas can explain its survival, although it was natural and justifiable in the first stages of investigation. There remains the explanation of actual spirit communication. But even when we have decided on this hypothesis as the base of our investigation, we have to be on our guard against a multitude of errors; for the communications are vitiated first by the errors and self-deceptions of the medium and the sitters, then by the errors and self-deceptions of the communicant spirits, and, worst of all, by deliberate deceit, lies and jugglery on the part of the visitants from the other world. The element of deceit and jugglery on the part of the medium and his helpers is not always small, but can easily be got rid of. Cheap scepticism and cheaper ridicule in such matters is only useful for comforting small brains and weak

imaginations with a sense of superiority to the larger minds who do not refuse to enquire into phenomena which are at least widespread and of a consistently regular character. The true attitude is to examine carefully the nature of the phenomena, the conditions that now detract from their value and the possibility of removing them and providing perfect experimental conditions which would enable us to arrive at a satisfactory scientific result. Until the value of the communications are scientifically established, any attempt to use them for utilitarian, theatrical or yet lighter purposes is to be deprecated, as such misuse may end in shutting a wide door to potential knowledge upon humanity.

From this point of view Mr. Stead's bizarre experiments are to be deprecated. The one redeeming feature about them is that, as conducted, they seem to remove the first elementary difficulty in the way of investigation, the possibility of human deceit and imposture. We presume that he has got rid of professional mediums and allows only earnest-minded and honourable investigators to be present. But the other elements of error and confusion are encouraged rather than obviated by the spirit and methods of Mr. Stead's Bureau. First, there is the error and self-deception of the sitters. The spirit does not express himself directly but has to give his thoughts at third hand; they come first to the intermediary spirit, Julia or another, by her they are conveyed to the human medium and through him conveyed by automatic or conscious speech or writing to the listeners. It is obvious how largely the mind of the medium and, to a smaller but still great extent, the thought-impressions of the other sitters must interfere, and this without the least intention on their part, rather in spite of a strong wish in the opposite direction. Few men really understand how the human mind works or are fitted to watch the processes of their own conscious and half-conscious thought even when the mind is disinterested, still less when it is active and interested in the subject of communication. The sitters interfere, first, by putting in their own thoughts and expressions suggested by the beginnings of the communication, so that what began as a spirit conversation ends in a tangle of the medium's or sitters' ideas with the little of his own that the spirit can get in now and then. They interfere not

only by suggesting what they themselves think or would say on the subject, but by suggesting what they think the spirit ought dramatically to think or say, so that Mr. Gladstone is made to talk in interminable cloudy and circumambient periods which were certainly his oratorical style but can hardly have been the staple of his conversation, and Lord Beaconsfield is obliged to be cynical and immoral in the tone of his observations. They interfere again by eagerness, which sometimes produces replies according to the sitters' wishes and sometimes others which are unpleasant or alarming, but in neither case reliable. This is especially the case in answers about the future, which ought never to be asked. It is true that many astonishing predictions occur which are perfectly accurate, but these are far outweighed by the mass of false and random prediction. These difficulties can only be avoided by rigidly excluding every question accompanied by or likely to raise eagerness or expectation and by cultivating entire mental passivity. The last however is impossible to the medium unless he is a practised Yogin, or in a trance, or a medium who has attained the habit of passivity by an unconscious development due to long practice. In the sitters we do not see how it is to be induced. Still, without unemotional indifference to the nature of the answer and mental passivity the conditions for so difficult and delicate a process of communication cannot be perfect.

Error and self-deception from the other side of the veil cannot be obviated by any effort on this side, all that we can do is to recognise that the spirits are limited in knowledge and cabined by character, so that we have to allow for the mental and moral equation in the communicant when judging the truth and value of the communication. Absolute deception and falsehood can only be avoided by declining to communicate with spirits of a lower order and being on guard against their masquerading under familiar or distinguished names. How far Mr. Stead and his circle have guarded against these latter errors we cannot say, but the spirit in which the sittings are conducted, does not encourage us to suppose that scrupulous care is taken in these respects. It is quite possible that some playful spirit has been enacting Mr. Gladstone to the too enthusiastic circle and has

amused himself by elaborating those cloudy-luminous periods which he saw the sitters expected from the great deceased Opportunist. But we incline to the view that what we have got in this now famous spirit interview, is a small quantity of Gladstone, a great deal of Stead and a fair measure of the disembodied Julia and the assistant psychics.

Stead and Maskelyne

THE vexed question of spirit communication has become a subject of permanent public controversy in England. So much that is of the utmost importance to our views of the world, religion, science, life, philosophy, is crucially interested in the decision of this question, that no fresh proof or disproof, establishment or refutation of this genuineness and significance of spirit communications can go disregarded. But no discussion of the question which proceeds merely on first principles can be of any value. It is a matter of evidence, of the value of the evidence and of the meaning of the evidence. If the ascertained facts are in favour of spiritualism, it is no argument against the facts that they contradict the received dogmas of science or excite the ridicule alike of the enlightened sceptic and of the matter-of-fact citizen. If they are against spiritualism, it does not help the latter that it supports religion or pleases the imagination and flatters the emotions of mankind. Facts are what we desire, not enthusiasm or ridicule; evidence is what we have to weigh, not unsupported arguments or questions of fitness or probability. The improbable may be true, the probable entirely false.

In judging the evidence, we must attach especial importance to the opinion of men who have dealt with the facts at first hand. Recently, two such men have put succinctly their arguments for and against the truth of spiritualism, Mr. W. T. Stead and the famous conjurer, Mr. Maskelyne. We will deal with Mr. Maskelyne first ,who totally denies the value of the facts on which spiritualism is based. Mr. Maskelyne puts forward two absolutely inconsistent theories, first, that spiritualism is all fraud and humbug, the second, that it is all subconscious mentality. The first was the theory which has hitherto been held by the opponents of the new phenomena, the second the theory to which they are being driven by an accumulation of indisputable evidence. Mr. Maskelyne, himself a professed master of jugglery and illusion, is naturally disposed to put down all mediums as irregular compe-

titors in his own art; but the fact that a conjuror can produce an illusory phenomenon, is no proof that all phenomena are conjuring. He farther argues that no spiritualistic phenomena have been produced when he could persuade Mr. Stead to adopt conditions which precluded fraud. We must know Mr. Maskelyne's conditions and have Mr. Stead's corroboration of this statement before we can be sure of the value we must attach to this kind of refutation. In any case we have the indisputable fact that Mr. Stead himself has been the medium in some of the most important and best ascertained of the phenomena. Mr. Maskelyne knows that Mr. Stead is an honourable man incapable of a huge and impudent fabrication of this kind and he is therefore compelled to fall back on the wholly unproved theory of the subconscious mind. His arguments do not strike us as very convincing. Because we often write without noticing what we are writing, mechanically, therefore, says this profound thinker, automatic writing must be the same kind of mental process. The one little objection to this sublimely felicitous argument is that automatic writing has no resemblance whatever to mechanical writing. When a man writes mechanically, he does not notice what he is writing; when he writes automatically, he notices it carefully and has his whole attention fixed on it. When he writes mechanically, his hand records something that it is in his mind to write; when he writes automatically, his hand transcribes something which it is not in his mind to write and which is often the reverse of what his mind would tell him to write. Mr. Maskelyne farther gives the instance of a lady writing a letter and unconsciously putting an old address which, when afterwards questioned, she could not remember. This amounts to no more than a fit of absent-mindedness in which an old forgotten fact rose to the surface of the mind and by the revival of old habit was reproduced on the paper, but again sank out of immediate consciousness as soon as the mind returned to the present. This is a mental phenomenon essentially of the same class as our continuing unintentionally to write the date of the last year even in this year's letters. In one case it is the revival, in the other the persistence of an old habit. What has this to do with the phenomena of automatic writing which are of an entirely different class

and not attended by absent-mindedness at all? Mr. Maskelyne makes no attempt to explain the writing of facts in their nature unknowable to the medium, or of repeated predictions of the future, which are common in automatic communications.

On the other side Mr. Stead's arguments are hardly more convincing. He bases his belief, first, on the nature of the communications from his son and others in which he could not be deceived by his own mind and, secondly, on the fact that not only statements of the past, but predictions of the future occur freely. The first argument is of no value unless we know the nature of the communication and the possibility or impossibility of the facts stated having been previously known to Mr. Stead. The second is also not conclusive in itself. There are some predictions which a keen mind can make by inference or guess, but, if we notice the hits and forget the misses, we shall believe them to be prophecies and not ordinary previsions. The real value of Mr. Stead's defence of the phenomena lies in the remarkable concrete instance he gives of a prediction from which this possibility is entirely excluded. The spirit of Julia, he states, predicted the death within the year of an acquaintance who, within the time stated, suffered from two illnesses, in one of which the doctors despaired of her recovery. On each occasion the predicting spirit was naturally asked whether the illness was not to end in the death predicted, and on each she gave an unexpected negative answer and finally predicted a death by other than natural means. As a matter of fact, the lady in question, before the year was out, leaped out of a window and was killed. This remarkable prophecy was obviously neither a successful inference nor a fortunate guess, nor even a surprising coincidence. It is a convincing and indisputable prophecy. Its appearance in the automatic writing can only be explained either by the assumption that Mr. Stead has a subliminal self, calling itself Julia, gifted with an absolute and exact power of prophecy denied to the man as we know him, — a violent, bizarre and unproved assumption, — or by the admission that there was a communicant with superior powers to ordinary humanity using the hand of the writer. Who that was, Julia or another, ghost, spirit or other being, is a question that lies beyond. This controversy,

with the worthlessness of the arguments on either side and the supreme worth of the one concrete and precise fact given, is a signal proof of our contention that, in deciding this question, it is not *a priori* arguments, but facts used for their evidential value as an impartial lawyer would use them, that will eventually prevail.

Hathayoga

THE evolution of man has been upwards from the body to the spirit and there are three stages in his progress. He bases himself upon the body, rises through mind and soul and culminates in spirit. And to each stage of his evolution belong certain kinds of *sādhanā*, a particular type of Yoga, a characteristic fulfilment. There was no aeon in man's history, no *kalpa* to use the Indian term, in which the Yoga was withheld from man, or fulfilment denied to him. But the fulfilment corresponded to his stage of progress, and the Yoga corresponded to the fulfilment. In his earlier development, he was realising himself in the body and the divinity of the body was his fulfilment. He is now realising himself in the heart and mind and the divinity of the heart and mind will be his culmination. Eventually he will realise himself in the spirit and the divinity of his true spiritual self will round off his history. Yoga is the realisation of one's capacity of harmony, communion or unity with God. Whatever religious standpoint, creed or philosophy one adopts, Yoga is possible as long as God's existence or omnipresence is admitted, whether it be as a Personality, a Force or a Condition of Things. The infinite in some form or idea must be admitted. To be in tune with the Infinite, that is harmony. To be in touch with the Infinite that is communion. To be one in kind, extent or self-realisation with the Infinite, that is unity. But fulfilment is not possible, unless the "Soham" — "He am I" — is recognized and practised as the ultimate truth of things. The realisation of God in self with the eye on the body is the fulfilment of the tamasic or material man; that with the eye on the mind is the fulfilment of the rajasic or psychic man; that with the eye on the spirit is the fulfilment of the sattwic or spiritual man. And each fulfils himself, by rising beyond himself. When the material man fulfils the divinity of the body, he does so by rising into the psychic part and finding his strength in the *ahaṅkāra* or the psychic principle of egoism. The psychic man fulfils the

divinity of the soul, by rising into the spirit and finding his strength in the super-psychic Will or Intelligent Force in things. The spiritual man fulfils the divinity of the spirit by rising beyond the human spirit, the *jivātman* and finding his strength in the *parameśvaram* and *parabrahman*, the *saḥ* and *tat*, God revealed and unrevealed, the Universe and Supreme Spirit who supports and contains the individual. To put it in language easier but more capable of misconception, the material man realises himself by identifying God with his own ego; the psychic man by identifying God with passionless, intelligent, blissful Will in himself, the spiritual man by identifying God with the All, in whom everything abides. The first is the *rākṣasa* or *asura* of the lower order, the second is the *deva* or the *asura* of the highest order, the third is the *pūrṇa* or *siddhapuruṣa*, the perfect being.

The pure Hathayoga is the means of the fulfilment through the body. Its processes are physical, strenuous, colossal, complex, difficult. They centre in *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and the physical purifications. The number of *āsanas* in the modern mixed Hathayoga is limited and even they are numerous and painful; in the ancient or pure Hathayoga they were innumerable and the old *yogin* practised them all. The *āsana* means simply particular position of the body and is perfect or 'conquered' in the technical language, when a man can stay in a single posture, however strained or apparently impossible, for an indefinite period, without being forced by strain to remember the body.

The first object of the Asana is to conquer the body, for the body must be conquered before it can become divine — to be able to lay any command upon it and never be commanded by it. The second object is to conquer physical nature, by developing the four physical *siddhis* — *laghimā*, *aṇimā*, *garimā*, *mahimā*. By perfect *laghimā*, man can rise into the air and tread the winds as his natural element, by perfect *aṇimā* he can bring the nature of the subtlety into the gross body which the fire will no longer burn, nor weapon wound, nor want of air stifle, nor the waters drown; by perfect *garimā* he can develop an adamantine steadiness which no shock of even an avalanche can overbear; by perfect *mahimā* he can without muscular development outdo the feats of a Hercules. These powers in their fullness are no longer

visible in men, but in some degree they belong to all adepts in Hathayoga. Their existence no one can doubt, who has gone deep into Yoga at all, or who had any personal experience of the Siddhis. The third object is to develop in the body yogic force, the Tapah or the Viryam, the fire of Yoga. The fourth object is to become *ūrdhvaretāḥ*, that is to say to draw the whole virile force in the body into the brain up and return so much of it as is needed for the body, purified and electrified. Pranayama is the mastery of the vital force, the mobile energy that keeps the universe going. In the human body, the most notable function of the Prana or vital force, is the breathing which is in ordinary men necessary to life and motion. The Yogin conquers it and renders himself independent of it. But he does not confine his attention to the simple vital operation. He distinguishes five major vital forces and several minor to each of which he has given a name and he learns to control all the numerous pranic currents in which they operate. As there are innumerable Asanas, so there are a great number of different kinds of Pranayama and a man is not a perfect Hathayogin till he has mastered them all. The conquest of the Prana confirms the perfect health, vigour and vitality gained by the Asanas; it confirms the power of living as long as one pleases and it adds to the four physical Siddhis — the five psychical — *prākāmya* or absolute keenness of the mind and the senses, including telepathy, clairvoyance and the faculties commonly supposed to be supernormal; *vyāpti* or the power of receiving other men's thoughts, powers and feelings and projecting one's own thoughts etc. or personality into others; *aiśvaryam* or the control over events, lordship, wealth and all objects of desire; *vaśitā* or the power of exacting implicit and instantaneous obedience to the spoken or written word; *īśitā* or the perfect control over the powers of nature and over things inert and intelligent. Some of these powers have recently been discovered in Europe as phenomena of hypnotism or will-force. But the European experiences are feeble and unscientific if compared with the achievements of the ancient Hathayogins or even with those of some of the modern. The will-power developed by Pranayama is said to be psychical, not spiritual.

Besides these two great practices, the Hathayogins have

numerous others, such as the extraordinary means by which they clean out daily all physical impurities. By these numerous and difficult practices, they attain an extraordinary power, vitality, virility, longevity and are also able to attain knowledge transcending the ordinary human bounds, leave the body in Samadhi, and in one word exercise every mere power that comes by Yoga. But the practice of unmixed Hathayoga generates a colossal egoism and the Yogin seldom exceeds it. The modern Hathayoga is mixed with Rajayoga and neither so virile and potent nor so dangerous as the ancient. The modern Hathayogin often falls a prey to egoism but he knows he has to transcend it. The ancient embraced it as a fulfilment; only he managed and directed it by the use of psychic Will-power.

Rajayoga

MAN fulfilling himself in the body is given Hathayoga as his means. When he rises above the body, he abandons Hathayoga as a troublesome and inferior process and rises to the Rajayoga, the discipline peculiar to the aeon in which man now evolves. The first condition of success in Rajayoga is to rise superior to the *dehātma-buddhi*, the state of perception in which the body is identified with the Self. A time comes to the Rajayogin, when his body seems not to belong to him or he to have any concern in it. He is not troubled by its troubles or gladdened by its pleasure; it has them itself and very soon, because he does not give his sanction to them, they fall away from it. His own troubles and pleasures are in the heart and the mind, for he is the rajasic and psychical man, not the tamasic, material. It is these that he has to conquer in order that he may realise God in his heart or in his *buddhi* or in both. God seen in the heart — that is the quest of the Rajayogin. He may recover the perception and enjoyment of God as love and God as knowledge.

The processes of the Rajayoga are mental and emotional. Patanjali's science is not the pure Rajayoga; it is mixed and allows an important element of the Hathayoga in its initial processes. It admits the *āsana* and the *prāṇāyāma*. It is true, it reduces each to one of its kind, but the method of conquest is physical and therefore not Rajayogic. It may be said that the stillness of the body is essential to concentration or to *samādhi*; but this is a convention of the Hathayoga. The Rajayoga concedes no such importance to the body; he knows by experience that concentration can be secured in any easy and unconstrained posture, which allows one to forget the body; it is often as much helped by rhythmic motion as by stillness. *Samādhi*, when it comes, itself secures stillness of the body. The pure Rajayogin dispenses therefore with the physical practice of *āsana*. The real reason why Patanjali laid so much importance on *āsana*, was that

he thought *prāṇāyāma* essential to *samādhi* and *āsana* essential to *prāṇāyāma*. It is difficult though not impossible to do the practice of *prāṅāyāma*, according to Patanjali's system, without perfect bodily stillness. It can be done and has been done, even while walking about, but this is not so easy or usual.

Now *prāṇāyāma*, in its proper sense, the mastery of the vital force in oneself and Nature, is essential to every Rajayogin, but it can be brought about by much simpler methods. The only process that the Rajayogin finds helpful enough to be worth doing is *nāḍi-śuddhi* (नाड़ीशुद्धि) or the purification of the nerve system by regular breathing, and this can be done while lying, sitting, reading, writing and walking. This process has great virtues. It has a wonderful calming effect on the whole mind and body, drives out every lurking disease in the system, awakens the yogic force accumulated in former lives and even where no such latent force exists removes the physical obstacles to the awakening of the *kuṇḍalinī-śakti*. But even this process is not essential. The Rajayogin knows that by tranquillising the mind, he can tranquillise the body, by mastering the mind he can master both the body and the *prāṇa*. This is the great secret of the Rajayoga — that mind is the master of the body, creates it and conditions it, body is not the master, creator or law-giver of the mind. It may be said that the body at least affects the mind; but this is the other discovery of the Rajayogin that the body need not in the least affect the mind, unless by our consent we allow it to do so.

The *kumbhaka* or cessation of the natural breathing is essential to the deeper kinds of *samādhi*, not to all; but even so he finds that by the cessation of the lawlessness, the restlessness of the mind, which we mistakenly call thought, we can easily, naturally and spontaneously bring about the cessation of the breathing, a calm, effortless and perfect *kumbhaka*. He therefore dispenses with physical processes, easy or laborious and goes straight to the root of the problem, the mind.

Rajayoga is of three kinds, *saceṣṭa*, *upaceṣṭa* and *niśceṣṭa*. Patanjali's, the systematised, though each is quite methodical, is *saceṣṭa*, involving great strain of effort, throughout. We may best compare the systems by taking each of Patanjali's steps separately and seeing how much the three kinds of the Rajayogins

will deal with them. (In the present article, we shall deal with Patanjali.)

The first step is the preparation of the moral nature, the perfection of the heart in the four great qualities of love, purity, courage and calm, without which *siddhi* in the Rajayoga is impossible. Patanjali prescribes the practice of the five *yamas* or regulating moral exercises, truth, justice and honesty, harmlessness, chastity and the refusal of ownership and the five *niyamas* or regulating moral habits, cleanliness and purity, contentment, austerity, meditation on scriptures, worship and devotion to God. In order to establish these habits and exercises and remove the impurities of the heart, it is evident that Patanjali intends us to use the method of *abhyāsa* or constant practice. Any one who has made the attempt will realise how difficult it is to compass all these qualities and how long and tedious a discipline is required to establish them even imperfectly. Patanjali seeks to purify and quiet the life, while the heart and mind are yet impure and restless, a system possible only to hermits in an *āśrama*. For this reason, the Rajayoga has fled from the homes of man and taken refuge in the forest and cavern. Afterwards Patanjali recommends the quieting of the body and mastering of the *prāṇa* by *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. The reason of this is clear enough. The Pranayama in Hathayoga does not lead to purity, but to force and intensity, every quality that it finds potent in the system, it raises to tenfold activity and power. Unless therefore the life and character be made quiet and pure, *prāṇāyāma* done in one's own strength may do immense mental, physical and moral mischief. Allowing for the overcome of this initial difficulty and for the admission of Hathayoga into Rajayoga, it must be admitted that Patanjali's system is admirably logical and reasonable in its arrangement.

Next comes the control of the mind, that restless, self-willed and shifting force which is difficult to control. Again, as in his previous steps, Patanjali relies wholly on practice. He arranges concentration in four stages of development. *Pratyāhāra* or the drawing inward of the senses from their objects; *dhāraṇā* or the success in this process resulting in the fixing of mind for a moment on a single thought, feeling or object, such as the

nāsāgra or the *bhrūmadhya* for preference; *dhyāna* or the continuation of this state for a fixed period; *samādhi* or the withdrawing into oneself for an indefinite time. The preliminary exercise once successful, the rest follows with comparative ease, but the preliminary process is so enormously difficult that one should be amazed at Patanjali's putting it first, if one did not perceive that he is relying on the rigorous and thorough mastery of each step, before the next is attempted; he trusts to the Hathayogic *kumbhaka* to bring about *pratyāhāra* with comparative ease. Even as it is, most Yogins prefer to take *dhāraṇā* first (on a single object), trusting to the practice of *dhāraṇā* to bring about *pratyāhāra* by a natural process. This is undoubtedly the more easy and straightforward process, though Patanjali's is the more logical and scientific and if mastered may lead to greater results. Concentration, once attained, we proceed to what Patanjali evidently considers the essence of Yoga, the coercion of all *vṛttis* or functionings of the mental or moral qualities, so as to arrive at *saṁyama* or throwing the whole passionless intelligent will in the spirit on whatsoever he wishes to possess from the realisation of God to the enjoyment of mundane objects. But how is this silencing of the *vṛttis* to be effected? For the *yamas* and *niyamas* only establish certain good habits of life, they do not thoroughly purify the mind and heart. We have to do it by a process of removal, by replacement, always depending on *abhyāsa*, replacing bad *vṛttis* by good, the many good by the few better, the few better by the still few best, until we arrive at absolute *saṁyama*. This can be done, not easily but daily without insuperable difficulty, if the power of concentrating is thoroughly obtained by Patanjali's method. *Saṁyama* is a mighty power. Whatever the Yogin does *saṁyama* upon, says Patanjali, that he masters. The knowledge of one's past lives, of the thoughts of men in this world and spirits in the other, the vision of the past and the future, the knowledge of all that is, is in his grasp. As to what he shall do with the power, Patanjali leaves the choice to the successful Yogin.

Section Eight

ART AND LITERATURE

Art

ALL Art is interpretation. Creation is a misnomer; nothing in this world is created, all is manifested. All exists previously in the mind of the Knower. Art may interpret that which is already manifest or was manifest at one time, or it may interpret what will be manifest hereafter. It may even be used as one of the agencies in the manifestation. A particular type of face and figure may be manifested in the work of a popular artist and in a single generation the existing type of face and figure in the country may change and mould itself to the new conception. These things are there in the type in the causal world with which our superconscious selves are perpetually in touch; they manifest in the psychical and become part of our thought. That thought we put out into the material world and there it takes shape and body as movements, as institutions, as poetry, Art and knowledge, as living men and women. Man creates his world because he is the psychic instrument through whom God manifests that which He had previously arranged in Himself. In this sense Art can create the past, the present and the future. It can re-manifest that which was and has passed away, it can fix for us that which is, it can prophesy that which will be.

Its normal sphere, however, is interpretation of a less pregnant and forceful kind. Here too, there are three things which it can interpret in the object it selects, the causal part or thing in itself, the psychical part, or its passing imaginations, phases, emotions; or the physical part, the outward appearance, incident or movement as our eyes see them. Indian Art attaches itself to the two higher interpretations, European to the two lower. They meet in the middle term of Art, the imaginative and emotional; but each brings with it the habits of vision, the conventions, the mastering movement and tendency of the soul downward to earth

or upward to heaven, born of their main preoccupation so that even here, though they meet on common ground, they remain diverse and unreconciled.

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In dealing with the form the question between them is: shall I reproduce what the eye sees or shall I reproduce what the soul sees? The lower type of European Art is content with reproducing what the eye sees. This it calls realism and fidelity to Nature -- narrowing Nature to the limited confines of the materially sensible. The reproduction, of course, is not a real reproduction but only an approximation within the limitations imposed by the canvas, the brush and the paint box. It is really as close an imitation as our instruments will allow, absolute fidelity being rarely possible. This style of Art had perhaps its utility, but now that we have photographs and can put colour into the photographs, its separate field is in danger of being taken from it.

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A higher European Art takes imitation of the form as its basis, but its nobler objective is not the imitation of form, but the imitation of emotion. The artist tries to see and recover on canvas not only the body, but so much of the feeling as the body can for the moment express. This may often be a great deal. In certain moments of powerful feeling or critical action a great deal of our psychical selves may come out in the eyes, the face, the gesture, the pose. This the artist imitates. He not only shows us an object or an incident, but he fixes on the canvas a moment in the soul-life of the object. The habitual mood also stamps itself to a great extent on the face and certain traits of character betray themselves in expression and feature. These too the imitative artist transfers to the canvas. When not exaggerated or theatrical, this kind of art can be strong, effective and dramatic. But it has serious limitations. So much of the inner truth as the outward form interprets, this Art interprets. Its interpretation

is second-hand, its vision derived and unable to go beyond its authority.

A still higher reach is attained by imaginative European Art. Imagination, according to the European idea, is creative, not interpretative. What is really meant is that the imaginative artist transfers something that belongs to himself into the object of his study, some fancy that has flashed across or some idea that has mastered his mind. Either he reads it into his subject by unconscious transference or he deliberately uses his subject as a mere excuse for putting his fancy or his idea into line and colour. The artist is interpreting himself, not his subject. This egoistic Art has often a very high value and some of the best European work has been done in this kind. More rarely his imaginative sympathy enables him to catch a glimpse of the thing itself hidden in the form. His imagination usually plays with it and prevents the vision from being true in all its parts, but he is able to do work of the highest attractiveness, vigour or artistic beauty.

In all these kinds the European binds himself by the necessity of reproducing the actual outward form imposed by material Nature. He is a bondsman to form and such do not attain to that spiritual freedom which is the first condition of the sight spiritual. When he tries to interpret the thing in itself, he degenerates usually into allegory. Recently the Impressionist School in Europe have tried to break the fetters of the form; they have insisted that what one really sees in an object is not the rounded, solid material form but something rarer and different. In reality, they are groping their way towards an attempt at seeing and interpreting something hidden in the object, something the soul sees before the eye can catch it. Ignorant of the way, they seldom rise beyond a striking and fantastic imagination, but sometimes an inspired eye catches the true vision.

The Indian begins at the other end. He sees the thing itself either by *sūkṣma-dṛṣṭi*, the soul-sight, or by *dhyāna*, a spiritual union with the object studied in which the truth it expresses dawns on the mind by the process of revelation. This he transfers to canvas by letting his inspired and informed Will guide the pencil and the brush instead of using his intellect or merely technical means to find the best way of expression. He uses technique with power, but does not rely on it chiefly. The body he paints is the one which will in every part of it express the thing itself, not the actual material body which largely conceals it. When he descends into the psychical part and seeks to express imaginations, emotions, or passing phases, he carries his method with him. Not content with expressing as much of the feeling as the actual body reveals, he sees the emotion in its fullness by *dhyāna* or soul-sight and forces the body into a mould fit for its absolute expression. He sees the soul and paints it or he sees the heart or mind and paints it. He sees and, can, if he will, paint the body merely. But usually he does not will it.

The Revival of Indian Art

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE

THE greatness of Indian art is the greatness of all Indian thought and achievement. It lies in the recognition of the persistent within the transient, of the domination of matter by spirit, the subordination of the insistent appearances of Prakriti to the inner reality which, in a thousand ways, the Mighty Mother veils even while she suggests. The European artist, cabined within the narrow confines of the external, is dominated in imagination by the body of things and the claims of the phenomenon. Western painting starts from the eye or the imagination; its master word is either beauty or reality, and, according as he is the slave of his eye or the playfellow of his imagination, the painter produces a photograph or a poem. But, in painting, the European imagination seldom travels beyond an imaginative interpretation or variation of what the physical eye has seen. Imitation is the key-word of creation, according to Aristotle; Shakespeare advises the artist to hold up the mirror to Nature; and the Greek scientist and the English poet reflect accurately the mind of Europe.

But the Indian artist has been taught by his philosophy and the spiritual discipline of his forefathers that the imagination is only a channel and an instrument of some source of knowledge and inspiration that is greater and higher; by meditation or by Yoga he seeks within himself that ultimate centre of knowledge where there is direct and utter vision of the thing that lies hidden in the forms of man, animal, tree, river, mountain. It is this *samyag jñāna*, this *sākṣād darśana*, the utter, revealing and apocalyptic vision, that he seeks, and when he has found it, whether by patient receptivity or sudden inspiration, his whole aim is to express it utterly and revealingly in line and colour. Form is only a means of expressing the spirit, and the one thought of the artist should be how best to render the spiritual vision. He is not bound by the forms that compose the world of gross matter, though he

takes them as a starting-point for his formal expression of the vision within him; if by modifying them or departing from them he can reveal that vision more completely, his freedom and his duty as an artist emancipate him from the obligation of the mere recorder and copyist. The ancient Asiatic artists were not incapable of reproducing outward Nature with as perfect and vigorous an accuracy as the Europeans; but it was their ordinary method deliberately to suppress all that might hamper the expression of their spiritual vision.

Reality for its own sake, one of the most dominant notes of Art in Europe, Indian artistic theory would not have recognised; for we have always regarded the reality of the Europeans as an appearance; to us the true reality is that which is hidden; otherwise, there would be no need of the prophet, the philosopher, the poet and the artist. It is they who see with the *sūkṣma dṛṣṭi*, the inner vision, and not like the ordinary man with the eye only. Beauty for beauty's sake, the other great note of European Art is recognised by us, but not in the higher work of the artist. Just as in the first ideal, the tyranny of the eye is acknowledged, so in the second is the tyranny of the aesthetic imagination. The Indian seeks freedom, and the condition of freedom is the search for ultimate Truth. But in this search the imagination is an unsafe and capricious guide; it misinterprets as often as it interprets. The claim of the eye to separate satisfaction can only be answered by the response of decorative beauty; the claim of the imagination to separate satisfaction can only receive the response of fancy playing with scene and legend, form and colour, idea and dream, for pure aesthetic delight; but in the interpretation of things the eye and the imagination can assert no right to command, they are only subordinate instruments and must keep their place. Whenever, therefore, the Indian artist put away from him his high spiritual aim, it was to seek decorative beauty informed by the play of the imagination. Here he held decorative beauty to be his paramount aim and declined to be bound by the seen and the familiar. If by other lines than the natural, by subtler or richer methods than those of outward Nature, our old masters could gain in decorative suggestion and beauty, they held themselves free to follow their inspiration. Here, too, they

often deliberately changed and suppressed in order to get their desired effect. If they had been asked to deny themselves this artistic gain for the sake of satisfying the memory in the physical eye, they would have held the objector to be the bondslave of an unmeaning superstition.

We of today have been overpowered by the European tradition as interpreted by the English, the least artistic of civilised nations. We have therefore come to make on a picture the same demand as on a photograph, — the reproduction of the thing as the eye sees it, not even as the retrospective mind or the imagination sees it, exact resemblance to the beings or objects we know, or, if anything more, then a refinement on Nature in the direction of greater picturesqueness and prettiness and the satisfaction of the lower and more external sense of beauty. The conception that Art exists not to copy, but for the sake of a deeper truth and vision, and we must seek in it not the object but God in the object, not things but the soul of things, seems to have vanished for a while from the Indian consciousness.

Another obstacle to the appreciation of great art, to which even those Indians who are not dominated by European ideas are liable, is the exaggerated respect for the symbols and traditions which our art or literature has used at a certain stage of development. I am accustomed for instance to a particular way of representing Shiva or Kali and I refuse to have any other. But the artist has nothing to do with my prejudices. He has to represent the essential truth of Shiva or Kali, that which makes their Shivahood or Kalihood, and he is under no obligation to copy the vision of others. If he has seen another vision of Shiva or Kali, it is that vision to which he must be faithful. The curious discussion which arose recently as to the propriety or otherwise of representing the Gods without beard or moustache, is an instance of this literalism which is a survival of the enslavement to form and rule characteristic of the eighteenth century. The literalist cannot see that it is not the moustache or beard or the symbol which makes the godhead, but the divine greatness, immortal strength, beauty, youth, purity or peace within. It is that godhead which the artist must draw and paint, and in the forms he chooses he is bound only by the vision in *dhyāna*.

Whether his interpretation will gain an abiding place in the thought and imagination of the race, depends on its power to awake the deeper vision in the race. All that we can demand is that it shall be a real God, a real Shiva, a real Kali, and not a freak of his imagination or an outcome of some passing *saṁskāra* of his education or artistic upbringing. He must go to the fountain-head of knowledge within himself or his claim to freedom does not stand. It has already been said that the condition of freedom is the search for truth, and the artist must not allow his imagination to take the place of the higher quality.

Indian Art demands of the artist the power of communion with the soul of things, the sense of spiritual taking precedence of the sense of material beauty, and fidelity to the deeper vision within, of the lover of art it demands the power to see the spirit in things, the openness of mind to follow a developing tradition, and the sattwic passivity, discharged of prejudgments, which opens luminously to the secret intention of the picture and is patient to wait until it attains a perfect and profound divination.

Two Pictures

THE *Modern Review* and *Prabasi* are doing monthly a service to the country the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. The former review is at present the best conducted and the most full of valuable matter of any in India. But good as are the articles which fill the magazine from month to month, the whole sum of them is outweighed in value by the single page which gives us the reproduction of some work of art by a contemporary Indian painter. To the lover of beauty and the lover of his country every one of these delicately executed blocks is an event of importance in his life within. The *Reviews* by bringing these masterpieces to the thousands who have no opportunity of seeing the originals are restoring the sense of beauty and artistic emotion inborn in our race but almost blotted out by the long reign in our lives of the influence of Anglo-Saxon vulgarity and crude tasteless commercialism. The pictures belong usually to the new school of Bengali art, the only living and original school now developing among us and the last issues have each contained a picture especially important not only by the intrinsic excellence of the work but by the perfect emergence of that soul of India which we attempted to characterise in an article in our second issue.

The picture in the July number is by Mahomed Hakim Khan, a student of the Government School of Art, Calcutta, and represents Nadir Shah ordering a general massacre. It is not one of those pictures salient and imposing which leap at once at the eye and hold it. A first glance only shows three figures almost conventionally Indian in poses which also seem conventional. But as one looks again and again the soul of the picture begins suddenly to emerge, and one realises with a start of surprise that one is in the presence of a work of genius. The reason for this lies in the extraordinary restraint and simplicity which conceals the artist's strength and subtility. The whole spirit and conception is Indian and it would be difficult to detect in the composi-

tion a single trace of foreign influence. The grace and perfection of the design and the distinctness and vigour of form which support it are not European; it is the Saracenic sweetness and grace, the old Vedantic massiveness and power transformed by some new nameless element of harmony into something original and yet Indian. The careful and minute detail in the minutiae of the dresses, of the armour of the warrior seated on the right, of the flickering lines of the pillar on the left are inherited from an intellectual ancestry whose daily vision was accustomed to the rich decoration of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri or to the fullness and crowded detail which informed the massive work of the old Vedantic artists and builders, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist. Another peculiarity is the fixity and stillness which, in spite of the Titanic life and promise of motion in the figure of Nadir, pervade the picture. A certain stiffness of design marks much of the old Hindu art, a stiffness courted by the artists perhaps in order that no insistence of material life in the figures might distract attention from the expression of the spirit within which was their main object. By some inspiration of genius the artist has transformed this conventional stiffness into a hint of rigidity which almost suggests the lines of stone. This stillness adds immensely to the effect of the picture. The petrified inaction of the three human beings contrasted with the expression of the faces and the formidable suggestion in the pose of their sworded figures affects us like the silence of murder crouching for his leap.

The central figure of Nadir Shah dominates his surroundings. It is from this centre that the suggestion of something terrible coming out of the silent group has started. The strong, proud and regal figure is extraordinarily impressive, but it is the face and the arm that give the individuality. That bare arm and hand grasping the rigid upright scimitar are inhuman in their savage force and brutality; it is the hand, the fingers, one might almost say the talons of the human wild beast. This arm and hand have action, murder, empire in them; the whole history of Nadir is there expressed. The grip and gesture have already commenced the coming massacre and the whole body behind consents. The face corresponds in the hard firmness and strength of the nose, the brute cruelty of the mouth almost lost in the

moustache and beard. But the eyes are the master-touch in this figure. They overcome us with surprise when we look at them, for these are not the eyes of the assassin, even the assassin upon the throne. The soul that looks out of these eyes is calm, aloof and thoughtful, yet terrible. Whatever order of massacre has issued from these lips, did not go forth from an ordinary energetic man of action moved by self-interest, rage or blood-thirst. The eyes are the eyes of a Yogin but a terrible Yogin; such might be the look of some adept of the left-hand ways, some mighty Kapalik lifted above pity and shrinking as above violence and wrath. Those eyes in that face, over that body, arm, hand seem to be those of one whose spirit is not affected by the actions of the body, whose natural part and organs are full of the destroying energy of Kali while the soul, the witness within, looks on at the sanguinary drama tranquil, darkly approving but hardly interested. And then it dawns on one that this is not so much the Nadir of history; unconsciously perhaps the artist has given a quiet but effective delineation of the Scourge of God, the man who is rather a force than a human being, the Asura with a mission who has come to do God's work of destruction and help on the evolution by carnage and ruin. The soul within is not that of a human being. Some powerful Yogin of a Lemurian race has incarnated in this body, one born when the simian might and strength of the *vānara* had evolved into the perfection of the human form and brain with the animal still uneliminated, who having by Tapasya and knowledge separated his soul from his nature has elected this reward that after long beatitude, *prāpya puṇyakṛtāṁ lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*, he should reincarnate as a force of nature informed by a human soul and work out in a single life the savage strength of the outward self, taking upon himself the forcordained burden of empire and massacre.

From Nadir the coming carnage has passed into the seated warrior and looks out from his eyes at the receiver of the order. The gaze is contemplative but not inward like Nadir's, and it is human and indifferent envisaging massacre as part of the activities of the soldier with a matter-of-fact approval. The figure is almost a piece of sculpture, so perfect is the rigidity of arrested and expectant action. The straight strong sword over the

shoulder has the same rigid preparedness. There is a certain defect in the unnatural pose and obese curve of the hand which is not justified by any similar detail or motive in the rest of the figure. We notice a similar motiveless strain in the position of Nadir's left arm, though here something is perhaps added to the force of the attitude. A standing figure receives the sanguinary command. The folded hands and the scimitar suspended in front are full of the spirit of ready obedience and there is an expression of pleasure, almost amusement which makes even this commonplace face terrible, for the decree dooming thousands is taken as lightly as if it were order for nautch or banquet. The three mighty swords, by a masterly effect of balanced design, fill with death and menace the terrace on which the men are seated. Behind these formidable figures is a part of the palace gracious with the simple and magical lines of Indo-Saracenic architecture and in the distance on the right from behind a mass of heavy impenetrable green a slender tapering tower rises into the peaceful quiet of Delhi.

On another page of the same review we have a picture by one of the greatest Masters of European Art, Raphael's vision of the Knight. The picture is full of that which Greece and Italy perfected as the aim of Art, beauty and such soul-expression as heightens physical beauty. It is beauty that is expressed in the robust body and the feminine face of the armed youth both full of an exquisite languor of sleep, in the sweet face, the voluptuous figure, the gracious pose of the temptress offering her delicate allurement of flowers, in the other's grave, strong and benign countenance, the vigorous physique and open gesture of promise and aspiration extending a book and a fine slender sword, in the delicacy of the landscape behind and the tree under which the dreamer lies. There is suggestion but it is the suggestion of more and more beauty, there is harmony and relation but it is the harmony and relation of loveliness of landscape as a background to the loveliness of the nobly-grouped figures. There is an attempt to express spiritual meanings but it is by outward symbols only and not by making the outward expression a vehicle for something that comes from within and overpowers impalpably. This is allegory, the other is the drawing and painting of

the very self of things. Only in the delicate spiritual face of the Knight is there some approach to the Eastern spirit. This is one kind of art and a great art, but is the other less? Beauty for beauty's sake can never be the spirit of art in India, beauty we must seek and always beauty, but never lose sight of the end which India holds more important, the realisation of the Self in things. Europeans create out of the imagination. India has always sought to go deeper within and create out of the Power behind imagination, by passivity and plenary inspiration, in Yoga, from Samadhi.

Indian Art and an Old Classic

WE HAVE before us a new edition of Krittibas' Ramayana, edited and published by that indefatigable literary and patriotic worker, Sj. Ramananda Chatterji. Ramananda Babu is well known to the Bengali public as a clear minded, sober and fearless political speaker and writer; as editor of the *Modern Review* and the *Prabasi* he has raised the status and quality of Indian periodical literature to an extraordinary extent, and has recently been doing a yet more valuable and lasting service to his country by introducing the masterpieces of the new school of Art to his readers. His present venture is not in itself an ambitious one, as it purports only to provide a well-printed and beautifully illustrated edition of Krittibas for family reading. With this object the editor has taken the Battala prints of the Ramayana as his text and reproduced them with the necessary corrections and the omission of a few passages which offend modern ideas of decorum. Besides, the book is liberally illustrated with reproductions of recent pictures by artists of Bombay and Calcutta on subjects chosen from the Ramayana.

The place of Krittibas in our literature is well established. He is one of the most considerable of our old classics and one of the writers who most helped to create the Bengali language as a literary instrument. The sweetness, simplicity, lucidity, melody of the old language is present in every line that Krittibas wrote, but, in this recension at least, we miss the racy vigour and nervous vernacular force which was a gift of the early writers. Our impression is that the modern editions do not faithfully reproduce the old classic and that copyists of more learning and puristic taste than critical imagination or poetical sympathy have polished away much that was best in the Bengali Ramayana. The old copies, we believe, reveal a style much more irregular in diction and metre, but more full of humanity, strength and the rough and natural touch of the soil. In no case can our Rama-

yana compare with the great epic of Tulsidas, that mine of poetry, strong and beautiful thought and description and deep spiritual force and sweetness. But it must have been greater in its original form than in its modern dress.

The great value of the edition lies however in the illustrations. All the pictures are not excellent; indeed we must say quite frankly that some of them are an offence to the artistic perceptions and an affliction to the eye and the soul. Others are masterpieces of the first rank. But in this collection of pictures, most of them now well-known, we have a sort of handy record of the progress of Art in India in recent times. Turning over the pages we are struck first by the numerous reproductions of Ravivarma's pictures which were only recently so prominent in Indian houses and, even now, are painfully common, and we recall with wonder the time when we could gaze upon these crude failures without an immediate revolt of all that was artistic within us. Could anything be more gross, earthy, un-Indian and addressed purely to the eye than his "Descent of Ganges", or more vulgar and unbeautiful than the figure of Aja in the "Death of Indumati", or more soulless and commonplace than the Ahalya, a picture on a level with the ruck of the most ordinary European paintings for the market by obscure hands? Some of these efforts are absolutely laughable in the crudeness of their conception and the inefficiency of their execution; take for instance the fight between Ravan and Jatayu. Raja Rukmangad's Ekadashi is one of the few successes, but spirited as the work undoubtedly is, it is so wholly an imitation of European workmanship that it establishes no claim to real artistic faculty. All that can be said for this painter is that he turned the Indian mind to our own mythology and history for the subject of art, and, that he manifests a certain struggling towards outward beauty and charm which is occasionally successful in his women and children. But he had neither the power to develop original conceptions, nor the skill to reproduce finely that which he tried to learn from Europe. He represents in Art that dark period when, in subjection to foreign teaching and ideals, we did everything badly because we did everything slavishly. It is fortunate that the representative of

this period was a man without genius; otherwise he might have done infinitely more permanent harm to our taste than he has done.

The art of Sj. M. V. Durandhar shows a great advance. The basis is European but we see something Indian and characteristic struggling to express itself in this foreign mould. Unlike Ravivarma Sj. Durandhar has always a worthy and often poetic conception, even when he fails to express it in line and colour. In the stillness and thoughtfulness of the figures in the second illustration of the book there is a hint of the divine presence which is suggested, and Indian richness, massiveness and dignity support this great suggestion. There is augustness and beauty in the picture of Rama and Sita about to enter Guhyaka's boat. Others of his pictures are less successful. Another intermediate worker in the field who is very largely represented, is Sj. Upendra Kishore Ray. This artist has an essentially imitative genius whose proper field lies in reproduction. There are attempts here to succeed in the European style and others which seek to capture the secret of the new school, especially where it is original, strange and remote in its greatness; but these are secrets of original genius which do not yield themselves to imitation and the attempt, though it reproduces some of the mannerisms of the school, often ends merely in grotesqueness of line and conception.

We have not left ourselves the space to do justice to the really great art represented in the book, the wonderful suggestions of landscape in Sj. Abanindranath Tagore's "Slaying of the Enchanted Deer", the decorative beauty of the "Last Days of Dasarath", and the epic grandeur and grace and strange romantic mystery of "Mahadev receiving the Descent of the Ganges". We would only suggest to the readers whose artistic perceptions are awakened but in need of training, to use the comparative method for which Sj. Ramananda Chatterji has supplied plentiful materials in this book; for instance, the three illustrations of the Kaikayi and Manthara incident which are given one after the other, — Sj. Nandalal Bose's original and suggestive though not entirely successful picture, Sj. Durandhar's vigorous and character-revealing but too imitatively European work, and Sj. U. Ray's attempt to master the new style with its striking evidence

of a great reproductive faculty but small success where originality is the aim. Finally, let him look at the few examples of old art in the book, then at the work of the new school, especially the two pictures against page 22, and last at Raja Ravivarma's failures. He will realise the strange hiatus in the history of Indian Art brought about by the enslavement of our minds to the West and recognise that the artists of the new school are merely recovering our ancestral heritage with a new development of spiritual depth, power and originality, which is prophetic of the future.

Suprabhat: A Review

THE paper *Suprabhat*, a Bengali monthly edited by Kumari Kumudini Mitra, daughter of Sj. Krishna Kumar Mitra, enters this month on its third year. The first issue of the new year is before us. We notice a great advance in the interest and variety of the articles, the calibre of the writers and the quality of the writing. From the literary point of view the chief ornament of the number is the brief poem *Duhkhabhisar*, by Sj. Rabindranath Tagore. It is one of those poems in which the peculiar inimitable quality of our greatest lyric poet comes out with supreme force, beauty and sweetness. Rabindra Babu has a legion of imitators and many have been very successful in catching up his less valuable mannerisms of style and verse, as is the manner of imitators all the world over. But the poignant sweetness, passion and spiritual depth and mystery of a poem like this, the haunting cadences subtle with a subtlety which is not of technique but of the soul, and the honeyladen felicity of the expression, these are the essential Rabindranath and cannot be imitated, because they are things of the spirit and one must have the same sweetness and depth of soul before one can hope to catch any of these desirable qualities. We emphasise this inimitableness because the legion of imitators we mention are doing harm to the progress of our poetry as well as to the reputation of their model and we would suggest to them to study this poem and realise the folly of their persistent attempt. One of the most remarkable peculiarities of Rabindra Babu's genius is the happiness and originality with which he has absorbed the whole spirit of Vaishnav poetry and turned it into something essentially the same and yet new and modern. He has given the old sweet spirit of emotional and passionate religion an expression of more delicate and complex richness voiceful of subtler and more penetratingly spiritual shades of feeling than the deep-hearted but simple early age of Bengal could know. The old Vaishnav *bhāva* — there is no English word for it, — was easily seizable, broad and strong.

The *bhāva* of these poems is not translatable in any other language than that the poet has used, — a striking proof is the unsatisfactory attempt of the poet himself, recorded in another article in this issue, to explain in prose his own poem, *Sonar Tari*. But while the intellect tries in vain to find other intellectual symbols for the poet's meaning, the poetry seizes on the heart and convinces the imagination. These poems are of the essence of poetry and refuse to be rendered in any prose equivalent. Poetry is created not from the intellect or the outer imagination but comes from a deeper source within to which men have no means of access except when the divine part within seizes on the brain and makes it a passive instrument for utterance the full meaning of which the brain is unable at the moment to grasp. This is the divine mania and enthusiasm which the subtle spiritual discernment of Plato discovered to be the real meaning of what we call inspiration. And of this unattainable force the best lyrics of Rabindranath are full to overflowing.

The article *Shantiniketane Rabindranath* by Sj. Jitendranath Banerji is another feature of great interest. The writer has a good descriptive gift and the passages which describe the *Shantiniketan* are admirable; but the chief interest naturally centres in the conversation with the poet which is recorded with great fullness. The private talk of a rich and gifted nature with a power of conversational expression is always suggestive and we await with interest the future issue of this article. We hope Jitendra Babu will give us a fuller view of the remarkable educational experiment which this original mind is developing in the quiet shades of Bolpur. The brief hints given of the moral training and the method of education followed point to a system far in advance of the National Council of Education which is still tyrannised over by a tradition and method not only European but unprogressively European. A brief instalment of Sj. Aurobindo Ghose's *Karakahini* is also given which describes the identification parades of the Bomb Case, gives some glimpses of the approver Noren Gossain and deals with the personal character of some of the jail officials. *Nanak Charit* by Krishna Kumar Mitra, the first instalment of which is given in this issue, commands interest both by its subject and the name of its writer. The two chapters

given are full of interesting details of Nanak's birth and childhood and promise an attractive biography of one of the greatest names in religious history. An article of minor importance is the continuation of Sj. Jadunath Chakrabarti's *Ekannabarti Paribar o Strishiksha*, which is of considerable merit. The author has seized on two of the great advantages of the joint family system, its ideal of a wider brotherhood and unity and its ample training in morale and capacity. *Dainik Bal* and the poem *Bodhan* seem to us to be failures, but there is no other feature of this number which is without merit or interest.

We have left to the last Dr. P. C. Ray's long article on "The Bengali Brain and its Misuse". It is a long indictment of past and present Bengal, covering sixteen pages of the magazine. Dr. P. C. Ray is a name which is already a pride to the nation to which he belongs and his deep scientific knowledge, original research and creativeness are one of the most conspicuous instances of that strong, acute and capable Bengali intellect which he admits to be inferior to none. Any article from his pen must be of great interest and cannot be without value. But it is one of the unfortunate results of the denationalising influence of our past education that a mind like Dr. Ray's should be without intellectual sympathy for the old culture whose inherited tendencies his own character, life and achievements illustrate in so distinguished a manner. If it had not been for the past which Dr. P. C. Ray condemns, such noble types as the last fifty years of Bengal teems with, would not have been possible. As to the necessity of far-reaching changes in the future we do not greatly differ with the writer. The immediate past has been a period of contraction and the reservation of strength, the future will be a period of expansion and the liberation and expenditure of strength. The structure of the new age must necessarily differ from that of the old. But the spirit of the article is narrow and intolerant. It is couched in that general spirit of self-depreciation and indiscriminate fault-finding which was a characteristic of our people when national hope and energy were at their nadir. There are all the stock denunciations with which we were familiar before the recent resurgence. Such writings void of the note of hope, encouragement and energy, will not help a nation

to rise but rather depress it and push it back into the past. Moreover, Dr. Ray makes the same mistake which European writers made when they condemned the Middle Ages wholesale because they were a period of contraction and not of expansion. That mistake has now been recognised in Europe and justice has been done to that which was praiseworthy as well as to that which was bad in the "Dark Ages". We in India are recovering from a similar error and if there are those who go to the opposite extreme and see nothing good outside the mediaeval Hindu culture and forms, the same thing happened in Europe and for the same reason, as a reaction from that very intolerance and sweeping denunciation which are the spirit of Dr. Ray's article. It cannot last any more than it lasted in Europe. Some of the strictures we hold to be too much at secondhand; especially in his criticisms of religion the writer seems to us to be wandering outside the province in which he can speak with authority. After all one must enter into the spirit of an age and civilisation before one can profitably criticise it, otherwise we miss the meaning of history and falsify its values. Nevertheless the article is ably written and should be studied as a complete expression of the Europeanised standpoint in looking at Indian problems. As to the present, Dr. Ray lays too much stress on the survivals of the end of the nineteenth century when the national consciousness touched bottom and ignores the youthful strength and energy which is preparing the twentieth.

Section Nine

PASSING THOUGHTS

Passing Thoughts

ACHARA — is a mould in which the thing itself rests and feels stable, it is not the thing itself. It is this sense of stability, which is the greater value of *ācāra*; it gives the thing itself the *śraddhā*, that it is meant to abide. It is a conservative force, it helps to preserve things as they are. But it is also a danger and a hindrance, when change becomes necessary. Conservative forces are either sattwic or tamasic. *Ācāra* with knowledge, observance full of the spirit of the thing itself, is sattwic and preserves the thing itself; *ācāra* without knowledge, looking to the letter of custom and observance, disregarding the spirit, is tamasic and destroys the thing itself. Intelligent observance and custom are always ready to change, when it is needed, for they know themselves to be important, but not essential; whereas ignorant observance prefers to rot rather than change. Tamasic *ācāra* must be broken that the thing itself may be preserved. But if it is broken to pieces by anger or prejudice, the thing itself is likely to withdraw from us. It must be loosened and split asunder by the heat of knowledge. The present mould of Hinduism has to be broken and replaced by knowledge and Yoga and not by the European spirit.

Vicāra — the use of *vicāra* is urgent in times of transition. Revolutionary periods generate a sort of minds who are *avicārī*, without perception and deliberation, the mind which clings fiercely to the old, because it is old, and that which runs violently after the new, because it is new. Between them rises the self-styled moderate man, who says, "Let us have something of the old and something of the new." He is no less an *avicāri* than the extremes. He swears by moderation as a formula and a fetish and runs after an impossible reconciliation. It was this kind of thought which Christ had in view, when he said, "You cannot put new wine into old bottles." *Vicāra* never sets up a formula, never prejudges, but questions everything, weighs everything. When a man says — alter your notions and habits on the lines of

European enlightenment, *vicāra* answers: "Let me consider it. Why should I assume Europe to be enlightened, India barbarous? It is possible that Europe may be the real barbarian, Indian knowledge the true enlightened one, I must see." On the other hand, if a man says, "Be an Indian and do as the Indians," *vicāra* replies, "I am not sure that I must do as the Indians to be an Indian. It may be that the present men of the country have become something which the Indians were never intended to be. I must see what Indians have been in the various epochs of our civilisation and find out what is eternal in it and what is temporary. It may be that Europeans have certain things really Indian, which we have lost. It is good to be Indian, but to be Indian because of knowledge, not because of prejudice." Hinduism itself is based on *vicāra*, *viveka* and *jñānam*, deciding what *ācāra* is best for the preservation of human society and the fulfilment of our individual and associated manhood.

Viveka — Indian *vicāra* guides itself by *viveka*. Vichara, by itself questions and considers, weighs, examines and ponders and so arrives at certain perceptions and conclusions, by which it guides itself. This is European *vicāra* and its supreme example is Socrates. The danger of *vicāra* is, that if it does not start with certain premises and assumptions, it will end in absolute uncertainty of the academic philosophers, who could not be sure whether they existed or not. On the other hand if it starts with premises and assumptions, there is danger of these premises and assumptions being erroneous and vitiating the conclusions. For this reason modern science insists on all the premises being thoroughly proved before the *vicāra* commences and its method of proof is experiment. Modern science is an application of this principle of experiment to politics, society and every human belief and institution. This is a rather dangerous business. In the process of experiment, you may get an explosion, which may blow society out of existence and bring a premature end to the experiment. Moreover you may easily think a premise proved, when it is not. Science has had to abandon notion after notion, which it thought were based on unshakably proved premises. Nothing was thought more certainly proved than that the process of breathing was necessary to life. But we know in India

that a man can live without breathing. The principle of proof by experiment was known to the ancient Indians, but just as the Europeans, dissatisfied with *vicāra*, progressed beyond it to *vicāra* guided by experiment, so the Indians, dissatisfied with experiment progressed beyond it to *vicāra* and experiment, guided by Viveka, intuition and inspired judgment, gained by a previous purification of the organs of thought and knowledge. The modern Indians have lost this guide and are compelled to rely on *āptavākyam* or authority, the recorded opinions of men who had *viveka*, or traditions and customs founded on an ancient enlightenment. This is unsatisfactory, because we do not know that we have the opinions correctly recorded or that the traditions and customs have not been distorted by time and error. We must recover and go back to the fountain-head.

Jñānam — There are four operations in the Indian method of knowledge. First, the inquirer purifies his intellect by stilling of passions, emotions and prejudgments and old *saṁskāras* or associations. Secondly, he subjects received knowledge to a rigid scrutiny by sceptical *vicāra*, separating opinion from ascertained truth, mere conclusions from facts. Even the facts he takes as only provisionally true and is prepared to find his whole knowledge to be erroneous, misapplied or made up of half-truths. Thirdly, he experiments to get *upalabdhi* or personal experience. Fourthly, he again uses *vicāra* in order to ascertain how far his experiment really carries him and what he is or is not justified in concluding from it. Lastly, he turns the light of the *viśuddha buddhi* on the subject and by inspired discrimination arrives at *jñānam*. The conclusions of *viveka* he does not question, because he knows by experience that it is a fine and accurate instrument. Only he is on his guard against mistaking *vicāra* for *viveka*, and is always prepared to balance and amplify his conclusions by fresh truth he had not considered and to find that there is another side to truth than the one with which he is familiar. He does not like the European scientists, wed himself to previous generalisations and theories or consider every fresh enlargement of knowledge an imposture.

Stray Thoughts and Glimpses

TRUE heroism findeth not its symbol in the splendour and majesty of the shining armour and accoutrement, nor seeth its glory in the trophies of a thousand victories; for its symbol is the Holy War in which the might and puissance of the Eternal plays through its willing hands, and its glory the laurel-wreath of Delight wherewith God crowns all doughty champions of His Cause.

*

Not he the philosopher that achieves marvels in ratiocination and winneth the applause of an intellectual age, but he whose organon is a sharply whetted instrument which God pierces into the closed strongholds of prejudice, pedantry, error and obscurantism.

*

Guruhood shall attain its apex, only when it turns the disciple's eye towards the beacon light of his own godhead; for not in the borrowed lights of a single aureola, but in the original effulgence of all points in a shining galaxy of pioneers is to be heralded the dawn of the coming age.

*

The true reformer is no mere compassionate fighter of evils, dashing upon the fenced ramparts of society and directing from without the might of his assault upon stereotyped customs and usages; but he who has realised the Collective Soul in the profundities of his being, and with an unerring sureness of aim born of an inner illumination and with the conscious omnipo-

tence of an intense Will, sendeth forth mighty currents reverberating from the centre of society's life to its outer surface, dethroning and annihilating the distorted and ugly usurpers of the Throne of God.

II

The glories of the cross attract more than the laurel of victory. Still the laurel, and not the cross, must be our end.

*

Man runs after the good, but incurs the evil, for the two are intertwined. He that sits in the Self beyond both, enjoyeth both; for the two are the extreme notes of a single gamut.

*

Renunciation impoverisheth materially, materialism impoverisheth spiritually. Integral richness cometh from a divine living which consecrates itself to the Indwelling Deity and becometh a dynamic centre and instrument of God's creative power.

*

Mere devotion maketh an intellectual pigmy, and mere knowledge an imperfect actor in God's drama. It is only into surrendered minds that God pours forth both devotion and knowledge, making these the twin bases of a mighty action.

*

In every age man has awaited the advent of a Messiah or a Teacher, and found his highest glory in discipleship. But the Coming Teacher shall point out the Messiah and the follower, the Teacher and the disciple, in every man and reveal to his gaze the sempiternal glory of a perfect godhead.

*

God is equally in joy and in suffering, in victory and in defeat. And the warrior in His cause shrinketh not before the

suffering, nor is afraid of the defeat; for he seeth the Divine strategy which sometimes retires into ignominy and ridicule to exhaust the Satanic force of its exulting opponents, then rushes forward with immense vehemence and conquers.

III

Mankind hath hitherto placed God too far above man for each to approach the other. But on the identity of the human with the divine shall rest the foundation of the coming ages of humanity.

*

In His ascent of evolution God moveth not only from success to success, for he often useth victory and defeat, honour and dishonour as the twin processes of an efflorescent movement.

*

The New Yoga begins where all efforts at personal salvation end, where the self of the individual consecrates itself to the self of Humanity and proceedeth to realise an individual life.

*

The Pentecostal showers of inspiration descend upon him who worketh unceasingly for God, not upon him who waiteth actionless for inspiration to come and move him to action.

*

Only when the gorgeous temples of the Earth have ceased to monopolise our God, and He is realised in the flight of the sparrow and the mattock of the labourer that leavening of humanity shall begin.

*

Not in the eager rushing of the senses towards the objects of the earth but in the spiritual enjoyment of sense objects, consisteth the *bhoga* of the integral Yogin.

Renunciation is cowardice only when it evadeth the objects of sense and taketh refuge in the lonely forest or in the meditation room, but it surpasseth the highest intrepidity when moving among the objects of sense it showeth a high-seated and divine indifference to the beatings of waves of desire and passion.

Academic Thoughts

The Object of Government — It is the habit of men to blind themselves by customary trains of associated thought, to come to look on the means as an end and honour it with a superstitious reverence as a wonder-working fetish. The principle of good government is not to keep men quiet, but to keep them satisfied. It is not its objective to have loyal servants and subjects, but to give all individuals in the nation the utmost possible facilities for being men and realising their highest manhood.

The ideal of the state is not a hive of bees or a herd of cattle, shepherded by strong watch-dogs, but an association of free men for mutual help and human advancement. The mere fact of a government doing what it does well and firmly, is nothing in its favour. It is more important to know what it does and where it is leading us.

*

European Justice — The modern court is a curious and instructive institution. Under a civilised disguise it is really the mediaeval ordeal by battle; only in place of the swords or lances of military combatants, it is decided by the tongues of pleaders and the imagination of witnesses; whoever can lie most consistently, plausibly and artistically has the best chance of winning. In one aspect, it is an exhilarating gamble, a very *Monte-Carlo* of surprising chances. But there is skill in it too and satisfies the intellect as well as the sensations. It is a sort of human game of 'Bridge', combining luck and skill or an intellectual gladiatorial show. The stake in big cases is a man's property or his soul. *Vae Victis*! Woe to the conquered! If it is a criminal case, the tortures of the jail are in prospect, be he innocent or be he guilty. And as he stands there — for to add to the pleasurableness of his case, the physical ache of long standing is usually added to the strain on his emotions — he looks eagerly not to the truth or falsehood of the evidence for or against him, but to the skill with

which this counsel or the other handles the proofs or the witnesses and the impressions they are making on the judge or jury. One understands, as one watches, the passion of the Roman poet's eulogy of the defence-lawyer, *præsidium mœstis reis*, a bulwark to the sorrowful accused. For in this strange civilised game of pitch and toss, where it is impossible to be certain about guilt or innocence, one's sympathies naturally go to the sufferer who may be innocent yet convicted. If one could eliminate this element of human pity, it would be a real intellectuai pleasure to watch this queer semi-barbarous battle, appraise the methods of chief players, admire in whatever climes the elusiveness and fine casualness of Indian perjury or the robust, manly downrightness of Saxon cross-swearing. And if one were to complain that modern civilisation [eliminates] from life danger and excitement one could well answer him, "Come into the courts and see!"

But after all praise must be given what it is due and the English system must be lauded for not normally exposing the accused to the torture of savage pursuit by a prosecuting judge or the singular methods of investigation favoured by the American Police. If the dice are apt to be loaded, it is on both sides and not on one.

*

The European Jail — is a luminous commentary on the humanitarian boasts of the Occident and its pious horrors at Oriental barbarities. To mutilate, to impale, to torture, how shocking, how Oriental! And we are occasionally reminded that if we had independence, such punishments would again be our portion. England forgets that to half hang a man, draw out his entrails and burn them before his eyes was an English practice in the 18th Century. France has forgotten the wheel and galleys. But these things have gone out. What of the penal system? It strikes us as the refined and efficient organisation of the methods of savages, who have indeed progressed and have learned that the torture of the soul is a more terrible revenge than the torture of the body, to murder the human nature a greater satisfaction than to slay the animal frame.

Ancient nations punished their enemies by death, slavery,

torture, humiliation and degradation. The jail system is an organisation of these four principles. Physical death has been reduced to a minimum, it is now only a punishment for murder and rebellion. A century or more ago, every crime almost was punished with death in England. The principle was — your life for my shilling, your life for my handkerchief. It is now — your life for the life you have taken, your life for the mortal fear you put me into of the loss of my power, emoluments and pleasures. The organisation of slavery is the first principle of the system. I take my enemy, put him on a dog's diet, load him with chains, set guards to beat and kick him into obedience and diligence, and make him work for my profit for a period fixed by myself, careless whether his nature is brutalised or his life shortened in the process — for he is my slave to do my will with, and if I do not kill him for taking my shilling or my handkerchief, it is because I am civilised and merciful, not a barbarous Oriental. For the same reason, I do not inflict physical torture on him, unless he is unwilling or unable to do the amount of work I have fixed for him, or either deliberately or accidentally remembers that he was a human being or behaves like the brute I have successfully laboured to make him. Even then I torture according to his physical capacity and take care not to maim or kill this serviceable animal. Degradation and humiliation are as well organised as the slavery. It is done, not once in a way but driven in daily, hourly, momently, in every detail of his dress, food, conduct, discipline. In every possible way I brand in upon his soul that he is no longer such a one, no longer possessed of the name, rights or nature of humanity, but my slave, beast and property — of myself and of my servants. It is my object to wipe out every trace of the human in him and I stamp my foot daily on anything in him that may remind him of such human qualities as modesty, culture, self-respect, generosity, fellow-feeling. If everything else fails, I have the exquisite rack of mental torture, called solitary imprisonment to shake his reason or destroy his manhood. And if in the end I have not succeeded, if he comes out a man and not a brute or idiot, it is not my fault, but his, I have done my best. This is the European prison system, and it is inflicted on all alike with machine-like efficiency. The curious thing is, that

it is inflicted in part even on undertrial prisoners, who may be perfectly innocent. This also is probably directed by the finer feelings of the modern civilised accident and intended mercifully to prepare his gentle and easy descent into Inferno around them.

ONE

Things Seen in Symbols

WHAT is *dhyāna*? Ordinarily, when a man is absorbed in thought and dead to all that is going on around him, he is supposed to be in *dhyāna*. Or concentration of the whole thought on a single object to the exclusion of every other, is called *dhyāna*. But neither of these ideas corresponds exactly with the whole truth; they represent only particular stages of the process of meditation. *Dhyāna* is a wide term covering a number of processes which rise from ordinary attention to *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

The distinguishing feature of *dhyāna* is that it puts out a steady force of knowledge on the object of knowledge. When this process is successful, when there is a steady demand on the object to give up its secret, it is called by Patanjali *saṁyama*. Even when it is only partially successful, it is called *dhyāna*.

Ordinary thought is not *dhyāna*. Ordinary thought is simply the restlessness of the mind playing with associations, speculations, trains of reasoning. In order to have *dhyāna*, the restlessness of the mind must be utterly settled, the intellect must become like a calm and waveless sea, not a ripple on its surface.

The principle is that all knowledge is in oneself, in the knower. The knower is in myself; he is also in the object of knowledge, e.g., a stone or a tree. By *dhyāna* the veil of ignorance, the chaos of misunderstandings which interfere between the knower in me and the knower in the tree or the stone is removed; we enter into relation with each other; we are in Yoga. All knowledge about the stone is in the stone itself; in *dhyāna* it comes into my mind. When it comes into my mind, the knower in me says: "It is true, the knowledge is in me also and I see it there." Or, if there is a mistake, he says, "There is a mistake, the mind is interfering; the knowledge is in me and I see it otherwise."

The whole world is one. The knower in the stone and the knower in myself are one; I am He. It is God in me, God in the stone. The knowledge in me and the knowledge in the stone are one; I am that. It is God in me, God in the stone. The stone is an object of knowledge, I am also an object of knowledge. These two also are one, God as myself, God as the stone. God is the only object of knowledge, there is no other. God is the only knower, there is no other. God is the knowledge also. *Jñātā, jñānam, jñeyam*, they are one.

The mind creates difference. When there is disturbance on the waters, there are many waves, and each wave cries, "I am I, I am I; you are you; we are different." When the sea sinks to rest, the waves as they go inward, no longer cry, "I am I", but "I am He". The still and waveless sea, that is a delightful and beautiful condition. The stormy, myriad-crested ocean, that also is a very beautiful and delightful condition. Only let the waves have the knowledge, let them say, "I am I for the sake of delight; you are you for the sake of delight. But also you are I, I am you. And both you and I are He." That is *jñānam*, that is Yoga.

The still sea is a condition, and the thousand waves are a condition. He who is the sea, is more than disturbance, more than stillness. He contains All. He is All. Even the infinite sea is only one of His manifestations.

TWO

Things Seen in Symbols

THERE are four who are Beyond and they rule the mighty game of evolution. It is they who build the universe with their thoughts and imaginations. Vishnu or Virat puts them in front each in turn and they govern each a cycle. All the sons of immortality come forth from them and return to them, all the children of Earth are their portions. One stands in front, the others incarnate to help him. They are God Himself in His fourfold manifestation. Once in each *caturyuga* they come down together, — the *caturvyūha*, Srikrishna, Balarama, Pradyumna, Aniruddha.

*

Srikrishna contains all the others and puts them out from His being. He is Ishwara, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu. Lordship is His manifestation, Might and Wisdom are His *guṇas*. Balarama is the second Power. Force is His manifestation; strength and wrath are His attributes. Pradyumna is the third Power. Love is His manifestation; sweetness and delight are His attributes. Aniruddha is the fourth Power. Desire is His manifestation; bodily enjoyment and worldly reason are His attributes.

*

Srikrishna is the Brahmin served by the Kshatriya. He has the divine Knowledge and uses His might under the guidance of the Knowledge. Balarama is the Kshatriya. He allows Srikrishna in Him to guide His strength and wrath, but He does not guide them Himself, He enjoys them. He is Rudra. Pradyumna is the Vaishya. He is for *dāna, prema, karuṇā*. He gives Himself to men and buys their love in exchange. He is the uni-

versal philanthropist. He is the sweet and throbbing heart in things. Aniruddha is the Sudra. He is the *kāmin*, the *bhogin*, the scientist, the user of material means, the democrat, the leveller.

*

The Satya is full of Srikrishna; it is the Golden Age when men are full of might and wisdom. The Treta is full of Balarama; the Chakravarti Raja is the incarnation of the Treta; it is full of great wars and mighty sacrifices. The Dwapara is full of Pradyumna. He prepares in the Dwapara the love which supports men through the Kali. Aniruddha, the Sudra reigns in the Kali. He breaks the ancient moulds, He shatters to pieces the *ācāra*, He questions everything, destroys everything, levels everything, rebuilds everything. He is a Sudra and has the passion for work and service; He puts off lordship in order to become the divine Slave of humanity.

*

For each of Them is not simple in Himself, but contains the other three and their attributes; only His own are usually foremost. Each is not a part but God Himself in His fullness. They are not different, but the same, Four who are One, One who is Four. That One is Srikrishna.

ONE

Epistles from Abroad

Dearly beloved,

You, my alter ego, my second existence, now sitting comfortably at home and, doubtless, reading the romantic fictions of the *Empire* by the light of heavily-priced kerosine; I, who roam uncomfortably in foreign climes, sighing for the joys of the Press Act and the house-search; these faces, white and unfamiliar, that surround me; these miles of soulless brick and faultless macadam, the fitting body for a point-device and dapper civilisation which has lost sight of grandeur, beauty and nobility in life, — are we, I wonder, flitting visions of a nightmare that passes or real men and women made in God's image? Was life always so trivial, always so vulgar, always so loveless, pale and awkward as the Europeans have made it? This well-appointed comfort oppresses me, this perfection of machinery will not allow the soul to remember that it is not itself a machine.

Is this then the end of the long march of human civilisation, this spiritual suicide, this quiet petrifaction of the soul into matter? Was the successful businessman that grand culmination of manhood toward which evolution was striving? After all, if the scientific view is correct, why not? An evolution that started with the protoplasm and flowered in the ourang-outang and the chimpanzee, may well rest satisfied with having created hat, coat and trousers, the British Aristocrat, the American Capitalist and the Parisian Apache. For these, I believe, are the chief triumphs of the European enlightenment to which we bow our heads. For these Augustus created Europe, Charlemagne refounded civilisation, Louis XIV regulated society, Napoleon systematised the French Revolution. For these Goethe thought, Shakespeare imagined and created, St. Francis loved, Christ was crucified. What a bankruptcy! What a beggary of things that were rich and noble!

Europe boasts of her science and its marvels. But an Indian cannot content himself with asking like Voltaire, as the supreme question, "What have you invented?" His glance is at the soul; it is that into which he is accustomed to enquire. To the braggart intellect of Europe he is bound to reply, "I am not interested in what you know, I am interested in what you are. With all your discoveries and inventions, what have you become? Your enlightenment is great, — but what are these strange creatures that move about in the electric light you have installed and imagine that they are human?" Is it a great gain for the human intellect to have grown more acute and discerning, if the human soul dwindles?

But Science does not admit the existence of soul. The soul, it says, is only an organised republic of animalcules, and it is in the mould of that idea Europe has recast herself; — that is what the European nations are becoming, organised republics of animalcules, — very intelligent, very methodical, very wonderful talking and reasoning animalcules but still animalcules. Not what the race set out to be, creatures made in the image of the Almighty, gods that having fallen from heaven remember and strive to recover their heritage. Man in Europe is descending steadily from the human level and approximating to the ant and the hornet. The process is not complete but it is progressing apace, and if nothing stops the debacle, we may hope to see its culmination in this twentieth century. After all our superstitions were better than this enlightenment, our social abuses less murderous to the hopes of the race than this social perfection.

It is a very pleasant inferno they have created in Europe, a hell not of torments but of pleasures, of lights and carriages, of balls and dances and suppers, of theatres and cafés and music-halls, of libraries and clubs and Academies, of National Galleries and Exhibitions, of factories, shops, banks and Stock Exchanges. But it is hell all the same, not the heaven of which the saints and the poets dreamed, the new Jerusalem, the golden city. London and New York are the holy cities of the new religion, Paris its golden Paradise of Pleasure.

It is not with impunity that men decide to believe that they are animals and God does not exist. For what we believe, that

we become. The animal lives by a routine arranged for him by Nature; his life is devoted to the satisfaction of his instincts bodily, vital and emotional, and he satisfies himself mechanically, by a regular response to the working of those instincts. Nature has regularised everything for him and provided the machinery. Man in Europe arranges his own routine, invents his own machinery, and adds to the needs of which he is a slave, the intellectual. But there will soon be no other difference.

System, organisation, machinery have attained their perfection. Bondage has been carried to its highest expression, and from a passion for organising external liberty Europe is slaying her spiritual freedom. When the inner freedom is gone, the external liberty will follow it, and a social tyranny more terrible, inquisitorial and relentless than any that caste ever organised in India, will take its place. The process has already begun. The shell of external liberty remains, the core is already being eaten away. Because he is still free to gratify his senses and enjoy himself, the European thinks himself free. He does not know what teeth are gnawing into the heart of his liberty.

Still in his inmost self he has an uneasy consciousness of something terribly, vitally wrong, and therefore he is turning more and more to Socialism among the thinking or cultured, among the unthinking to Anarchism. The Socialist hopes, by accepting, swiftly fulfilling and thoroughly organising the inevitable tyranny of society, at least to recover leisure and create a breathing space in which to realise the dignity, beauty and repose of the god in man. The Anarchist sees in Government and Society the enemy of the race and gropes for the bomb and the revolver to recover individual liberty and destroy the tyranny of the majority. Both are guilty of the same fallacy, the mechanical fallacy. One hopes to liberate man by perfecting machinery, the other by destroying it.

And yet the true secret is ready to their hand in the formula of the great Revolution. Two ideas of that formula Europe has pursued with some eagerness, Liberty and Equality; but she has totally rejected the third and most necessary, Brotherhood. In its place she has erected the idol of her heart, Machinery, and called it Association; for Association without Brotherhood is

merely Machinery. Yet what can be more evident than that the French thinkers were perfectly guided in their selection of the three things necessary for an ideal associated happiness? It is only Love that can prevent the misuse of Liberty; it is only Brotherhood which can make Equality tolerable.

TWO

Epistles from Abroad

Friend and Brother,

I am as yet among the unregenerate. Instead of my eccentric notions of life changing under the pressure of victorious European enlightenment, they seem to harden and fix their hold. Here I am in Paris, the centre of civilisation, and I am still the same dark-skinned barbarian you knew. Neither the complexion of my face nor the complexion of my thoughts has improved. I still believe in God and Vedanta, in India and impossibilities. Man is still to my eyes divine and not an animal. I believe in the soul and am afflicted with the imagination that it has a past and a future, that it neither came ready made into the world out of the mother's womb nor will disintegrate at the end whether on the pyre or in the coffin. That our first stage is an embryo and our last worms or ashes, is a creed I hold to be still unproved and unprovable. I believe that nothing in this world is made, but everything grows; that body cannot create soul and that a mass of cells is not Buddha or Napoleon. And if you ask for my ground of belief, I shall still refuse to base it on the logical reason which can only argue and cannot see, and I shall give the answer of the visionary, the victim of hallucinations, that I have seen my soul and talked face to face with my Creator.

There are excellent logicians in Paris. One of them spoke the other day of the power of telepathy and, while admitting it to be a fact, argued that to develop the power would be to go back to the savage; it would be a denial of Science and civilisation. The civilised man sees with his eyes, talks with his tongue; to see with the soul, mind to talk with mind is a thing weird and barbarous. That is what the logical reason is. It can support the grossest absurdity under the sun and yet satisfy its user. The savage had the power, the civilised man has renounced it as an encumbrance or a superstition; to develop the power is to go back from civilisation to the savage. The argument is unde-

niable. Whether it is not worth while, in this respect, to go back to the savage, is a question my logical friend refuses to discuss. To entertain it would be an insult to civilisation. Another gentleman of equal clarity poohpoohed the idea of considering the existence of God and immortality on the ground that the very motion would be retrograde. "It would be going back," he cried, "it would be going back. We have got rid of God; we have finished with the superstition of immortality. Will you deny the progress of enlightenment? My friend, let these ghosts rest in their shadows." And nothing would induce him to give God a chance. Darwin and Huxley and Haeckel had settled the Creator's hash for Him; it was *res judicata.* It is wonderful how easily man tramples on one formula merely to bow reverently before another. Nature replaces God, Progress dethrones Immortality. Yet, in fact, these are merely different names for one thing in its varying aspects. Nature is God manifest in Matter; Progress is possible because the soul of man is immortal.

This talk wearies you. You would prefer perhaps that I should write of the municipality in Paris, the merits and defects of the sewer system, the latest plays at the theatres, a description of boulevard and café or the debates in the Chamber or some hint as to whether I have made acquaintance with any of the French Academicians. "Plague take the fellow!" you will cry, "he is like the Englishman who marches about in the full panoply of Europe in the heats of a Calcutta summer; wherever he goes he takes India with him." Pardon me, my friend; that is not wholly correct. I have forgotten for the time what a detective looks like. I no longer look round at every fifty yards to see how many policemen in plain clothes are following me. Dacoits and approvers are growing as far away from my mind as Titus Oates or Tiberius. I no longer pant to know our excellent Baikuntha Babu's latest blank question or withdrawn resolution in Bengal's new Parliament or what Bengal's only Maharajadhiraj thinks about English coolies. I have left India behind; I have not brought it with me.

But in the sense you mean, I have brought India with me, that which is eternal in India. Danton, when pressed to escape from the coming doom to Switzerland, answered, "One does not

carry one's country away with one on the sole of one's shoes." That is the materialist's answer, to whom the body is all. No, one cannot carry it on the shoe-soles, but one can carry it in one's heart and one can carry it in one's soul. When I listen to the nightingale singing on English river-bank or garden-reaches or see the Seine flowing through the modern gaiety of Paris, I can hear again the manifold noise of the birds on an Indian morning and see rather Ganges flowing grandiose and leonine to her Eastern seas. The body is bound to its surroundings, but the heart exceeds them, and I carry the love of India with me even to the coldest climes. The soul is yet more free. It will be well when every Indian, instead of taking a waxlike stamp from his foreign surroundings, is able to carry India with him wherever he goes. For that will mean that India is destined to conquer and place her stamp upon the whole world.

THREE

Epistles from Abroad

Dear Biren,

Your list of questions is rather a long one. I will answer you in the mass rather than in detail; and chiefly I will attack two fallacies with which your letter teems, if I may use such an expression, and which lie at the root of your very disfavourable attitude. There are two Hinduisms; one which takes its stand on the kitchen and seeks its Paradise by cleaning the body; another which seeks God, not through the cooking pot and the social convention, but in the soul. The latter is also Hinduism and it is a good deal older and more enduring than the other; it is the Hinduism of Bhishma and Srikrishna, of Shankara and Chaitanya, the Hinduism which exceeds Hindusthan, was from of old and will be for ever, because it grows eternally through the aeons. Its watchword is not *kriyā*, but *karma*; not *śāstra*, but *jñānam*; not *ācāra*, but *bhakti*. Yet it accepts *kriyā*, *śāstra* and *ācāra*, not as ends to be followed for their own sake, but as means to perfect *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*. *Kriyā* in its dictionary means every practice which helps the gaining of higher knowledge, such as the mastering of the breath, the repetition of the Mantra, the habitual use of the Name, the daily meditation on the idea. By *śāstra* it means the knowledge which regulates *karma*, which fixes the *kartavyam* and the *akartavyam*, that which should be done and that which should not, and it recognizes two sources of that knowledge, — the eternal wisdom, as distinct from the temporary injunctions in our ancient books and the book that is written by God in the human heart, the eternal and *apauruṣeya* Veda. By *ācāra* it understands all moral discipline by which the heart is purified and made a fit vessel for divine love. There are certain *kriyās*, certain rules of *śāstra*, certain details of *ācāra*, which are for all time and of perpetual application; there are others which are temporary, changing with the variation of *deśa*, *kāla* and *pātra*, time, place and needs of humanity. Among

the temporary laws the cooking pot and the lustration had their place, but they are not for all, nor for ever. It was in a time of calamity, of contraction, under external pressure that Hinduism fled from the inner temple and hid itself in the kitchen.

The higher and truer Hinduism is also of two kinds, sectarian and unsectarian, disruptive and synthetic, that which binds itself up in the aspect and that which seeks the All. The first is born of rajasic or tamasic attachment to an idea, an experience, an opinion or set of opinions, a temperament, an attitude, a particular Guru, a chosen Avatar. This attachment is intolerant, arrogant, proud of a little knowledge, scornful of knowledge that is not its own. It is always talking of the *ku-saṁskāras*, superstitions, of others and is blind to its own; or it says, "My Guru is the only Guru, and all others are either charlatans or inferior," or, "My temperament is the right temperament, and those who do not follow my path are fools or pedants or insincere," or "My Avatar is the real God Himself and all the others are only lesser revelations;" or "My *iṣṭadevatā* is God, the others are only His partial manifestations." When the soul rises higher, it follows by preference its own ideas, experiences, opinions, temperament, Guru, *iṣṭa*, but it does not turn an ignorant and exclusive eye upon others. "There are many paths," it cries, "and all lead equally to God. All men, even the sinner and the atheist are my brothers in Sadhana and the Beloved is drawing them each in His own way to the One without a second." But when the full knowledge dawns, I embrace all experiences in myself, I know all ideas to be true, all opinions useful, all experiences and attitudes means and stages in the acquisition of universal experience and completeness, all Gurus imperfect channels or incarnations of the one and only Teacher, all *iṣṭas* and Avatars to be God Himself.

That is what Ramakrishna taught by His life and Sadhana and therefore is He the Avatar of the age, the One who prepares the future of humanity. But there is a danger of turning Him into the Guru of a sect, the incarnate God of a dogmatic religion, to stultify His own life and teachings by making Him the object of a narrow attachment, an intolerant reverence, a sectarian worship. That must be avoided. It is the great curse which attends

the organisation of religion. Let us have done with sects and churches and worship God only.

The destruction of bondage, the realisation of freedom, the trampling upon our fetters, that is the first need of the future. It was to give *mukti* that Ramakrishna came, not to impose a new bondage. Therefore was Vivekananda His Apostle to the Gentiles, a man who in all things asserted freedom. The soul of Hinduism languishes in an unfit body. Break the mould that the soul may live. Is it not the first teaching of Yoga to destroy the *dehātmaka-buddhi*, the blindness that identifies the soul with its temporary body? If the body were young, adaptable, fit, the liberated soul might use it, but it is decrepit, full of ill-health and impurity. It must be changed, not by the spirit of Western iconoclasm which destroys the soul with the body, but by national Yoga.

In the Society's Chambers

Professor: Let me assure you, my friends, that the method of enquiry is alone responsible for all the error in the world. Mankind is in a hurry to know and prefers to catch at half-truths rather than wait for the full truth to dawn on him. Now a half-truth is a few degrees more mischievous than absolute error. It is the devil himself in the disguise of an angel.

The Practical Man: But surely, Professor, half-truths are the preparation for whole truths. And mankind must have something to go by. We are not all College Professors who can wait comfortably in our studies for Truth to call on us at her leisure. I have got to get to my place of business and, if motor cars have not been invented, I must use bike or tram car.

Professor: There you are, my friend, in possession of a metaphor and under the delusion that you have got an argument. Half-truths are the greatest enemies of whole truths. Mankind gets besotted with the half-truth and when the whole truth happens and it cries, "Here's this queer-looking idiot and scoundrel who has not been properly introduced to me, wanting to turn out my half-truth whom I know and who has helped me for centuries. Out with the cuckoo! A horse-whip for the bounder!" And out goes Truth, lucky if she is only expelled, not burned, garrotted, mobbed or censorshipped out of existence, and has to take her next chance five hundred years later.

Scientist: You are right, Professor. Everything should be proved, nothing admitted.

Professor: Excuse me, Scientist. Your tribe, once champions of progress, are now the stiffest and blindest opponents of new Truth going. Torquemada was a babe to you.

Scientist: Well, and what about the Mystic here, who wants to go back to Paracelsus and Saint Teresa?

Mystic: I should say rather, to keep unbroken the most important thread in the long and intricately woven cord of evolving knowledge.

Professor: My friends, I know nothing about mysticism and

materialism. These are mere words to me. I know Truth only. If Truth is mystic, I cannot help it. If, on the other hand, Truth turn out to be a rank materialist, a follower of Huxley and Haeckel, who am I to insist on spiritualising her? Let us have Truth as she is and not insist on creating her in our own image.

The Practical Man : How is that to be done?

Professor : By inquiry, by dispassionate, disinterested, calm, judicious, leisurely inquiry. Let us consider everything, accept only when acceptance is thoroughly justified, reject only when we must, and for God's sake let us not rush violently and enthusiastically to premature conclusions!

The Practical Man (*with levity*) : Why not establish a Society for the dispassionate discussion of everything discussable and the quiet questioning of everything questionable? It might be styled briefly S.D.D.D.Q.Q.Q. or, still better $S.D^3 Q^3$, and, I believe, it would revolutionise knowledge.

Professor : I have always served the Practical Man in spite of his gross and numerous limitations. Why not? Let us at least try.

Scientist (*doubtfully*) : What would be the conditions of discussion?

Professor : Put it like this. We agree to consider no question closed, not even gravitation, nor the motion of the earth, nor the necessity and beneficence of the British Government.

All (*in chorus*) : The Press Act, Professor, the Press Act! Section 124A! Section 121! We shall be transported, we shall get forfeited!

Professor (*reluctantly, but obviously alarmed by the outcry*) Well, well, we will reserve the question. There are plenty of others, there are plenty of others. To proceed. If the Mystic advances sound arguments to show that the devil habitually swallows the moon, even that we shall not lightly declare impossible. What do we know about the tastes of the devil, supposing he exists, or the eatability of the moon? I have never tasted it, nor has the Scientist. The Mystic and the devil may have.

Scientist (*uneasily*) : Confound it, Professor!

Professor : No, I insist. Absolute tolerance, absolute openness of mind are essential to the success of the experiment. Who-

ever interrupts, whoever refuses to discuss an argument, whoever contradicts or says, Absurd! whoever substitutes assertion for reasoning, whoever loses his temper or allows his voice to rise to a higher key, whoever tries to make out that he has conquered in debate because he has appealed to a polysyllable such as hallucination, coincidence, subconscious cerebration, whoever questions authority for his opinion, will be instantly called to order by the Chairman and, if he repeats the offence, condemned to silence for the evening.

All are silent and gaze awe-struck at the Professor.

The Practical Man : Hang it, Professor! Where will be the fun? I quite looked forward to the Scientist throwing chemicals at the Mystic and immediately withering into something infra-human under the onslaught of the Mystic's *mohanam*, *stambhanam* and *māraṇam*. Don't interfere with human nature.

Professor : We will provide the fun, but let it be human, civilised fun. We must curb the excess of our original semi-ancestors in our humour.

Mystic : You can't, Professor, and we shouldn't. It is a perpetual and valuable part of Ananda, the joy of existence.

Scientist : It can't work. We are not gods or angels.

Professor : There you go making assumptions ! How do you know we are not? Let us at least make the experiment. Obviously, with only the four of us, the circle will be incomplete. We must have other human specimens. A Jurist now, a Priest, a Historian, a Sanscritist, a Doctor, an Attorney, and a few others that may occur to me. I know where all these reasoning animals are to be found. Then, a live Extremist would be an acquisition. I know one. He is amiable, pleasing and warranted not to bite, though his views are fiery and his language, when excited, apt to be sulphurous.

The Practical Man : No use for him, if we are not to question the beneficence of the British Government.

Professor : He will complete us. We must be a representative society. Besides, Extremism, I understand, has its positive aspects.

Scientist : Will it be safe?

Professor (*coldly, haughtily and severely*) : We are not cow-

ards. (*more mildly*) I can guarantee that, though he talks sometimes like a bomb, he never made one. It is agreed, gentlemen. (*rising enthusiastically*) Today creates an epoch in the history of mankind; Truth lays the foundation-stone of her final temple.

Mystic : Professor, Professor, for God's sake, let us not rush violently and enthusiastically to premature conclusions!

At the Society's Chambers

Professor : Gentlemen, I believe we are here in full strength. It is gratifying to find so much enthusiasm still abroad for the dispassionate acquisition of knowledge. I trust it is not a short-lived fervour; I trust we shall not soon have to declare our society extinct from constitutional inability to form a quorum.

Jurist : I believe this is a society for the discussion of all things discussable and the discovery of all things discoverable. Am I right in my supposition?

Professor : Your definition is rather wide, but it may pass. What then?

Jurist : In that case I suggest that the first subject we should discuss is whether this society should come into existence at all and should not rather adjourn its birth *sine die*.

A silence

Professor : Gentlemen, I think we should not be damped. Even this should not damp us. I believe it is nothing worse than the Indian spirit of scepticism — not malaria, not inertia, not even spiritual cramp. Courage, let us not shirk even this dangerous inquiry.

Jurist : Let me explain. My suggestion is dictated not by the spirit of academical doubt, but by the more mundane love of safety. Have you reflected, Professor, that there are other dangers abroad besides the chance of automatic dissolution? Is it not conceivable that we may be dissolved as an association for unlawful objects or arrested as a gang of dacoits?

Professor : Good Heavens! My dear sir! And yet — I don't know. As a member of a society pledged to regard truth from all possible directions, I cannot rule it out as an impossibility. But if we have none but unobjectionable members —

Jurist : Pardon me, Professor. How do you know who is an unobjectionable member or who is objectionable? As a Professor you are acquainted with hundreds of students. It is possible one of them might stray in here of an evening. He might be

arrested. He might turn approver. And what would his statement be? Why, that Prof. So-and-So was leader of a gang of political dacoits, that the Society met at such a number in Harrison Road, that they were accustomed to arrange their nefarious enterprises there under cover of intellectual conversation and that you were the receiver of the booty. And then there would be the Andamans where you would probably get more physical exercise in one week than you have done in all your life, Professor. There are other joys, Professor, the whipping triangle, handcuffs, *laphsy*.[1] Is it worth while?

The Professor gazes in horrified silence at the Jurist, then with a flash of hope : He might recant.

Jurist : That is only an off chance. I would not rely on it. You see he would be laying himself open to an unanswerable accusation of perjury, while, if he persisted in his story, he would be perfectly safe.

Professor : But surely some corroboration, some documentary evidence —

Jurist : Certainly; why not? He would point out your house; it would be proved that it was your house. He would identify these rooms, it would be proved that we all met here. Then, Professor, do you never use the word *kāj* in your letters? Do you scrupulously avoid any reference to *bibāha*?

Professor : It is quite possible I may use both.

Jurist : And yet you say, where is the documentary evidence? One such letter coinciding with your absence from Calcutta! The Andamans, Professor, the Andamans!

Professor : I will scrupulously avoid both in future.

Jurist : There are other words in the Bengali language. In any case, if you escaped any special charge, you would be sure to be rearrested on the general charge of conspiracy.

Professor (*exasperated*) : Proofs, sir, the proofs!

Jurist : Quite easy. We shall merely have to prove association. Have you no student who may be either mixed up or liable to be suspected of being mixed up in a dacoity or a conspiracy?

Professor : Association for a criminal object, sir!

Jurist : That could be assumed from the closeness of your

[1] A broth served to prisoners in varied forms.

intimacy. The burden of proving your association innocent would then fall upon you. I challenge you to prove your association even with me innocent. All you can prove is that your other acquaintances did not know its criminal object.

Professor : I shall keep a diary of all my words and actions.

Jurist : It could easily be shown that it was kept with an eye to this contingency. Do not do it, Professor. You might put in things unknown to you which would be damning evidence against you in the hands of a skilful lawyer. If many names of suspects occurred in it, it would be itself the basis of his case and the keystone of his theory.

The Professor collapses

Jurist : In any case you would have a year or more in *hājut*. Do you know what *hājut* is like, Professor? There would be *laphsy* there too; there would be the joys of solitary confinement; you would have to sit for hours on your haunches, to which you are not accustomed; there would be parades of various kinds; warders with boots to whom you are supposed, I believe, to salaam; daily physical researches on yourself in a nude condition. To the last rapture I do not object; but you, Professor, are constitutionally modest.

A silence

Jurist : Gentlemen, allow me again. I seem to have disconcerted and appalled this nascent society. It was far from my intention. The case I have put is an extreme and highly hypothetical one. My object is to put you on your mettle and induce you to adopt all reasonable precautions.

The Practical Man : We can be careful to exclude detectives.

Jurist : My dear sir! The very way to invite suspicion. The police would first learn the existence of a society. On inquiry they would find out that special care was taken to exclude detectives. We would have only ourselves to thank for the house-search and arrests that would follow.

Professor (*reviving*) : I would recommend paying a member of C.I.D. to attend our meetings.

The Extremist (*scornfully*) : Why only one, Professor? Why not the whole damned department?

Professor : My dear Biren, pray take care of your words. They are highly irregular and seditious and may bring about your forfeiture under the Press Act. No, not all. There is such a thing as moderation. Besides, your proposal is as extravagant as your expressions. Do you realise that it would amount to subsidising one third of the literate population of India?

Jurist : Such an extraordinary procedure would attract suspicion. It might be thought you were a particularly adroit, ingenious and hardened conspirator using this apparent frankness to cover up your nefarious secret operations. What are the declared objects of the Society?

Professor : Self-improvement —

Jurist : A very dangerous term. Pray drop it.

Professor : The discovery of truth —

Scientist : I object. Truth is a highly explosive substance. I am not sure that the police would not be justified in carrying it away as an incriminatory document along with the Gita and Seeley's *Expansion of England.*

Professor : And discussion and question on all questionable things, subjects or persons.

Extremist (*unpleasantly*) : Take care! That is obviously an innuendo, reference, allusion or metaphor intended or calculated to bring the Government into contempt or hatred.

Professor (*innocently*) : Good Lord, so it is! (*in despair*) We'll have to give it up.

Jurist : Why not add a second object, to present and offer addresses of loyalty and depute congratulatory deputations to high officials on every occasion possible or impossible? That, I think, would cure everything.

He sits back triumphantly and invites admiration. Applause.

Professor : A very attractive proposal. Dear me, this is very attractive.

Extremist (*wrathfully*) : There is such a thing as truth and self-respect.

Professor (*warmly*) : Truth? Are we not loyal? Do you dare to say we are Anarchists?

Extremist : I decline membership.

Professor : Well, Biren, well! Perhaps you had better. But

you can drop in and have a cup of tea whenever we meet. What do you say? I think I too should have made my mark as a political leader!

He beams seraphically on the society, which breaks up with shouts of Rule, Britannia!

Section Ten

CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD

I

Dinshah – Perizade

II

Turiu — Uriu

III

Mazzini — Cavour — Garibaldi

IV

Shivaji — Jai Singh

V

Littleton — Percival

ONE

Dinshah – Perizade

DINSHAH

Perizade, the shades of Iran were not so cool and sweet as these in our city of Mazinderan. The gardens that bloom on the banks of the river of peace are carpeted with lovelier and sweeter-scented flowers and the birds that sing upon every tree and make the day melodious with the unearthly delight of their clamorous harmonies, are of so various a plumage and hue that one is content to satiate the eye with the softness and splendour without caring to know name and kind. Here for two thousand years we have tasted the bliss of the angels; but, I know not why, it seems to me that memories of Iran come back to my heart. The waters of the Jihun and the tents of the Tartars where the tribes of Afrasiab wander, Damascus the opulent, and our own cities, where the houses of our parents adjoined and we leaned from the balcony and talked in soft whispers seem to me again desirable.

PERIZADE

I too would not mind returning to our old haunts. It is not that I am weary of Mazinderan, but something calls to me to have joy again that is mortal and fleeting, but not without its poignant sense of a swiftly-snatched and perfect bliss. Yet Dinshah, two thousand years have passed and shall we not consider before we go what has come to the places we loved? Other men, other tongues, other manners may now possess them, and we should come as strangers into a world for which we are no longer fit.

DINSHAH

I will go and see. Wait for me, Perizade.

II

DINSHAH

Perizade, Perizade, let us not return to earth, but remain for ever in Mazinderan. I have seen the earth and it is changed. How wise wert thou, my angel!

PERIZADE

What didst thou see or hear, beloved?

DINSHAH

I saw a world stripped of beauty. Mean and clumsy were the buildings, or pretentious and aimed at a false elegance. Miles of brick, with hardly a bit of green here and there, these are the cities. Ever a raucous roar goes up from them, the glint of furnaces and the clang of metal; a dull, vicious smoke clouds the sky; the gardens are blasted and there is no beauty in them. Men wear a hideous dress uglier than their joyless faces and awkward limbs. It is a world of barbarians; the gnomes have come up from under the earth to work in the sunlight.

PERIZADE

Dinshah, this is sorrowful news, for go we must. Do you not know that these urgings are the signal?

DINSHAH

Yes, my Perizade, but not to this hideousness did our hearts move us to resort, but to the towers and gardens of Iran.

PERIZADE

It may be, Dinshah, that we go down to make the world once more what it was, a place of beauty, song and delight. Surely, if we enter into the world you describe, we shall not be content to leave it till it is utterly changed into the likeness of our desire.

DINSHAH

I think you are right, Perizade, as you always are. Let us then arise and go.

TWO

Turiu – Uriu

TURIU

Goddess Leda who from heaven descendest, how beautiful are thy feet as they gild the morning. The roses of Earth are red, but the touch of vermilion with which thy feet stain the heavens, is redder, -- it is the crimson of love, the glory of passion.

Goddess Leda, look down upon men with gracious eyes. The clang of war is stilled, silent the hiss of the shafts and the shields clamour no more against each other in the shock of the onset. We have hung up our swords on the walls of our mansions. The young men have returned unhurt, the girls of Asilon cry through the corn sweet and high to the hearts of their lovers.

Goddess Leda, lady of laughter, lady of bliss! in the chambers of love, in the song of the bridal, in the gardens and by the delightful streams where boy and girl look into each other's eyes, speak low to the heart, enter in. Drive out hatred, drive out wrath. Let love embrace the world and silence the eager soul of strife with kisses.

URIU

The song of Turiu is beautiful, but the chant of Uriu is mighty. Listen to the Hymn of Tanyth.

Tanyth, terrible Mother! laced with a garland of skulls, thou that drinkest the blood of the victim upon the altar loud with death-shriek, mighty and merciless Mother!

Tanyth, thou in the shock of the fighting, with the raucous cry that rises high and drowns the crash of the car and the roar of the battle, — blood-stained, eager and terrible, pitiless, huge and swift, — wonderful, adorable Mother!

Hear me! I who fear thee not, I who love thee, ask of thee, art thou weary, art thou satiate now with the blood of the foe and the flesh of the victims? Why has it sunk to rest, the thunder of war in Asilon, land of the mighty?

I am not weary, I am not satiate. I charge thee, awake and give me again delight of the slaughter, trampling the face of the fallen foe as I scatter with shafts the ranks that boasted and shouted, forgetting that Uriu fought in the van of the battle.

Mother, arise! leave to Leda her gardens and delicate places, the faces lovely and smooth of Asilon's boys and the joyous beauty of women. I am old and grey in the council and battle. She has nothing for me; what shall I do with her boon of peace and promptings of love and beauty?

Mother, arise, Tanyth the terrible! shake the world with thy whisper, loom in the heavens, madden men's hearts with thirst of blood, the rapture of death and the joy of the killing. We will give thee thy choice of the captives, women and men to fall and to bleed on thy altar.

Tanyth, lady of death, queen of the battle! there is a joy in the clash of death that is more than woman's sweet embrace, a pleasure in pain that the touch of her lips cannot give us; lovelier far is the body torn by the spears than her white limbs covered with shining gems. Tanyth's skulls are more than the garland upon thy breasts, O Leda.

TURIU

It is great, Uriu, master of war and song, but mine too is beautiful. It is long since we met in the temples and market-places of Asilon. Ages have rolled by and the earth is changed, Prince of the Asa.

URIU

I have lived in the heavens of the great where we fight all day and meet to feast in the evening.

TURIU

And I in gardens of love and song where the sea murmurs low on flower-skirted beaches. But the time comes when I must go down and take up again the song and the sweetness in mortal places of pleasure.

URIU

I also go down, for the warrior too is needed and not only the poet and lover.

TURIU

The world is changed, Uriu, Prince of the Asa. Thou wilt not get again the joy of slaughter and pitilessness. Men have grown merciful, full of tenderness and shrinking.

URIU

I know not. What Tanyth gives me to do, that I will do. If there were no sternness, no grimness in the world that she creates, I should not be called.

TURIU

We will go down together and see what this world is in which after so many millions of years we are again wanted.

THREE

Mazzini – Cavour – Garibaldi

MAZZINI

The state of Italy now is the proof that my teaching was needed. Machiavellianism rose again in the policy of Cavour, and Italy, grasping too eagerly at the speedy fruit of her efforts, fell from the clearness of the revelation that I gave her. Therefore she suffers. We must work for the fruit, but there must not be such attachment to the fruit that to hasten it the true means is sacrificed, for that leads eventually to the sacrifice of the true end.

CAVOUR

The state of Italy is the proof of the soundness of my policy. Mazzini, you speak still as the ideologist, the man of notions. The statesman recognises ideals, but he has nothing to do with notions. He strikes always at his main objective and is willing to sacrifice much in details.

MAZZINI

What you say is true, but the sacrifice has been not of details but of the essential.

CAVOUR

Italy is one, Italy is free.

GARIBALDI

The unity was my work. I did not use Machiavellianism or rely on statecraft and kingcraft. I did not buy liberty by mutilating my country. But I called to the soul of the nation and the soul of the nation awoke and shook itself free of the great tyrants and the petty. It was on the heroism and kingliness of the Italian soul, the resurrection in Florence and Rome and Naples of the ancient Roman, Etruscan and Sammite that Cavour should have relied, not on the false-hearted huckster of States and principalities, Louis Napoleon.

MAZZINI

Italy is one, Italy is free, but in the body, not in the soul. Garibaldi, you gave united Italy to a man, not to the nation.

GARIBALDI

I gave it to the King and hero, Italy's representative. I do not yet think that I did ill. The nation said, "He stands for me", and as a democrat I bowed to the voice of the nation.

CAVOUR

It was the best-inspired action of your life. If there are problems unsolved, if there are parts of the body politic that are still ailing, that was to be expected. Only the dreamer demands a rapid convalescence from a disease so long and wasting. We did the work of the surgeon, that of the physician is being done quietly and without ostentation.

MAZZINI

Italy has not fulfilled her mission; my heart is full of sorrow when I look upon her. She whom I would have educated to lead the world, is only an inferior Power leaning for support upon the selfish and unscrupulous Teuton. She who should have reorganised government and society into a fit mould for the ideas of an age of emancipation, is a laggard lingering in the steps of the Gaul and the Saxon. She who should have been the fountain of a new European culture, hardly figures among the leaders of humanity. The semi-Asiatic Muscovite is doing more for mankind than the heirs of the Roman.

CAVOUR

The statesman must have patience and work quietly towards his goal, securing each step as he goes. When the economic ills of Italy have been removed and the Church no longer opposes progress, the ideal of Mazzini may be fulfilled. The brain and sword of Italy may yet lead and as of old refashion Europe.

MAZZINI

It is not the diplomatist and the servant of the moment who can

bring about that great consummation, but the heroic soul and the mighty brain that command Time and create opportunity. I sought to cast Italy into a Roman mould. I knew that a third revelation had to be made to Europe and that Italy was the chosen channel. So I was told when I went down from this world of the ancients to be born again into humanity. "Twice has Italy given a new civilisation to Europe, the third time she shall give it." The voice that speaks when we are sent does not lie.

CAVOUR

No, but the fruit does not always come at once. There is sometimes a long probation, a slow agony of purification, and the thing destined seems a dream that has come to nothing. We have to work knowing that the fruit will come, not impatient, not embittered and disappointed by its postponement. It is possible we shall be called again to bring about the consummation. We have helped Italy always; once more we shall help her.

MAZZINI

I know not, but the days grow long to me in the world of the Happy. When the call comes, I pray that it may be to conquer, not by diplomacy but by truth and ardent courage, —

GARIBALDI

Not by bargaining but by the sword of the hero, —

MAZZINI

Not by kingcraft but by love for humanity and a noble wisdom.

CAVOUR

I shall be content, so that Italy conquers.

GARIBALDI

When the sword that was struck out of her hand by the Abyssinian, is lifted again, I shall be there to lift it.

FOUR

Shivaji – Jai Singh

JAI SINGH

Neither of us have prevailed. A third force has entered into the land and takes the fruits of your work and as for mine, it is broken and the ideal I have cherished has gone down into the dust.

SHIVAJI

For the fruit I did not work and I am not amazed by the failure nor discouraged.

JAI SINGH

I too did not work for my reward, but to uphold the ideal of the Rajput. Unflinching courage in honourable warfare, chivalry to friend and foe, a noble loyalty to the sovereign of our choice, this seemed to me the true Indian tradition, preferable even to the unity and predominance of the Hindu races. Therefore, I could not accept your overtures. But I gave you the opportunity to accept my own tradition and when faith was not kept with me and with you, I saved my honour and assisted your escape.

SHIVAJI

God extended to me His protection and moved the heart of a woman to give me love and aid. Traditions change. The ideal of the Rajput has its future, but the mould had to be broken in order that what was temporary in it might pass. Loyalty to the sovereign of my choice is good, but loyalty to the sovereign of my nation's choice, that is better. The monarch is divine by the power of God expressed within him, but he has it because he is the elect of the people. God in the nation is the deity of which the monarch is the servant. *Vithova, virāṭ* of the Marhattas — *Bhavāni* incarnate as India — in *their* strength I conquered.

JAI SINGH

Your political ideal was great but your standard of means was abhorrent to our morality. Ruse, treachery, pillage, assassination, these were not excluded from your action!

SHIVAJI

Not for myself I fought and ruled, but for God and the Maharashtra *dharma*, the religion of Hindu Nationality, which Ramdas enunciated. I offered my head to *Bhavāni* and She bade me keep it to scheme and plot for the welfare of the nation. I gave my kingdom to Ramdas and he made me take it back as a gift from God and the Marhattas. Both commands I obeyed. I slew when God commanded, I plundered because He pointed out that as the means He had given me. Treacherous I was not, but I helped my weakness in resource and numbers by ruse and stratagem, conquered physical force by keenness of wit and brain-force. The world has accepted ruse in war and politics and the chivalrous openness of the Rajput is not owned either by the European or the Asiatic nations.

JAI SINGH

I held the *dharma* as supreme and even the voice of God could not persuade me to abandon it.

SHIVAJI

I gave up all to Him and did not keep even the *dharma*. His will was my religion; for He was my Captain and I his soldier. That was my loyalty, not to Aurangzebe, not to a code of morals, but to God who sent me.

JAI SINGH

He sends us all, but for different purposes and according to the purpose he moulds the ideal and the character. I am not grieved that the Mogul has fallen. Had he deserved to retain sovereignty he could not have lost it, but even when he ceased to deserve, I kept my faith, my service, my loyalty. It was not for me to dispute the will of my emperor. God who appointed him might judge him; it was not my office.

SHIVAJI

God also appoints the man, who rebels and refuses to prolong unjust authority by acquiescence. He is not always on the side of power; sometimes He manifests as the deliverer.

JAI SINGH

Let Him come down Himself then as He promised. Then alone would rebellion be justified.

SHIVAJI

But whence will He come down, when He is here already, in our hearts? Because I saw Him there, therefore was I strong enough to carry out my mission.

JAI SINGH

Where is the seal upon your work, the pledge of His authority?

SHIVAJI

I undermined an empire and it has not been rebuilt. I created a nation and it has not yet perished.

FIVE

Littleton – Percival

LITTLETON

After so long a time, Percival, we meet. It is strange that our ways, upon earth associated and parallel, should in this other world be so entirely divergent.

PERCIVAL

Why is it strange to you, Littleton? The world in which we find ourselves, is made, as we have both discovered, of the stuff of our earthly dreams and the texture of our mortal character. Physically, our ways on earth were parallel. We walked together over Cumberland mountains or watched the whole sea leap and thunder titanically against the Cornwall cliffs. You were stroke and I was cox in the same boat on the Isis. We bracketed always for College honours and took the same class in the same subject in the Tripos. Afterwards too, we entered Parliament side by side in the same party and by an august and noble silence helped to administer the affairs of our country. But what greater difference could divide men than that which existed between our bodily frames and moral constitutions? You, the tall, fair, robust descendant of the Vikings; I, dark, spare and short from the Welsh mountains. You, the hard-headed, practical, successful lawyer; I, the dilettante and connoisseur who knew something about everything except my own affairs and could deal successfully with every business that did not concern me.

LITTLETON

Yet we clung together; our tastes often lay in the same direction; our affections were similar, and even our sins connected us.

PERCIVAL

We completed each other, I think. Our tastes were very dissimilarly similar. We read the same book; but you tore the essence

out of it, briefly, masterfully, and then flung it aside, satisfied that you had made even the dead useful to you; I wound my way into the heart of its meaning like a serpent and lay there coiled till I had become one with it, then wound myself out again replete and affectionately reminiscent of the soul that had given me harbourage. As for our sins, let us not talk of them. We have been too tediously familiar with them after death to cherish their memory. But even there we differed. You sinned voraciously, robustly, with gusto but with very little of feeling; I stumbled in out of excess of emotion and could not recover myself because of the vibrant intensity of my memories.

LITTLETON

Let me know what world harboured you since we parted.

PERCIVAL

Let me rather hear your experiences.

LITTLETON

The details fade in the retrospect and will not bear telling. Certain periods of mortal agony there were, each with its own physical surroundings, that I long to forget but cannot. Some of them recalled strangely, not in detail but in kind, Greek Tartarus and Catholic Inferno. I was the prey of Harpies, I was hunted and torn and devoured, I experienced the agonies of the men I had sent to the deliberate and brutal torture of our jails or beggared of their honour or their property. I renewed the successes of my life and sickened of their selfishness, boldness, hardness. Money became as red-hot metal in my hands and luxury was a gnawing fire that embraced my body. I lingered in regions where Love was not known and the souls of the inhabitants were hard and strong as bronze, dry and delightless as the Sahara. O Percival, Percival, when I go again upon earth, I shall know love and execute mercy.

PERCIVAL

Had you no hours of respite, entered no regions of happiness?

LITTLETON

That, I believe, is yet before me.

PERCIVAL

I too have had experiences similar to yours, though different in their nature and quality. I have sickened of the repeated weakness and selfishness of my life, I have experienced in my soul the sufferings of those I had injured. I can understand why the Christians believed Hell to be eternal; it was a memory in the self of the moral endlessness of those torments. But I had my release. I have lived in Elysium, I have trod the fields of asphodel. And in those happy experiences I have deepened the strength and quality of my love, intensified the swiftness of my emotions, refined and purified my taste and intellect.

LITTLETON

What is this world in which we meet?

PERCIVAL.

The heaven of comrades.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE HARMONY OF VIRTUE, Volume 3 of the SRI AUROBINDO BIRTH CENTENARY LIBRARY, contains Sri Aurobindo's early prose writings on subjects of cultural import. They cover a period of twenty years, from 1890 to 1910, prior to his withdrawal to Pondicherry. The political writings and speeches of this period, revealing the active part he played in India's struggle for independence, are collected in Volumes 1 and 2, the poetry, plays, translations in their appropriate volumes.

Section One: It contains the earliest available prose writings, dated 1890-92, his student days in England. *Stray Thoughts* in this section are gleaned from scattered notes found in the same manuscript.

Section Two: On the passing away of Bankim Chandra Chatterji in 1894 Sri Aurobindo contributed this series of seven articles to the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay edited by his Cambridge friend K. G. Deshpande. It ran from 16 July to 27 August 1894.

Sections Three, Four and Five: The writings in these three sections belong to the Baroda period. Most of them are from manuscripts that remained unknown till 1950. Only *The Age of Kalidasa* and *Kalidasa's "Seasons"* were available earlier. They were first printed in 1909 in the *Karmayogin*, the English Weekly Review Sri Aurobindo edited in 1909-10. They were later published in book-form in 1929 after some revision, under the title KALIDASA.

Sections Six, Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten: All the articles in these five sections were written for the *Karmayogin*, except *Hatha Yoga* and *Raja Yoga* (Section Seven) and *Mazzini – Cavour Garibaldi, Shivaji – Jai Singh, Littleton – Percival* (Section Ten). A few of the articles in Section Seven were brought out in book-form under the title THE IDEAL OF THE KARMAYOGIN in 1918. The fourth edition in 1927 was revised.

Section Nine: The articles *Epistles from Abroad, In the Society's Chambers, At the Society's Chambers* are published for the first time. The rest of the articles in this section, the manuscripts of which had passed for a time into other hands when Sri Aurobindo had left British India, were published in the *Standard Bearer* in 1920.