

THE ARYAN PATH

**Point out the "Way"—however dimly,
and lost among the host—as does the evening
star to those who tread their path in darkness.**

—The Voice of the Silence

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LITERATURE AND NATION BUILDING

Now, since the first, I mean natural genius, plays a greater part than all the others, here too, although it is rather a gift than an acquired quality, we should still do our utmost to train our minds into sympathy with what is noble and, as it were, impregnate them again and again with lofty inspiration. "How?" you will ask. Well, elsewhere I have written something like this, "Sublimity is the true ring of a noble mind." And so even without being spoken the bare idea often of itself wins admiration for its inherent genius.....

It is impossible that those whose thoughts and habits all their lives long are petty and servile should flash out anything wonderful, worthy of immortal life. No, a great style is the natural outcome of weighty thoughts, and sublime sayings naturally fall to men of spirit....The nobler faculties of the soul decay, and wither, and lose all the fire of emulation, when men neglect the cultivation of their immortal parts, and suffer the mortal and worthless to engross all their care and admiration.

—LONGINUS

One of the ill effects of the disease of greed from which rulers of all nations have been suffering is to be seen in the place accorded to the science of economics as being of supreme importance. In educational programmes applied science, craftsmanship, and mechanism are given a higher place than literature, fine arts and the humanities. In India a mechanic earns more than a Pandit of Sanskrit or a Munshi teaching

Arabic. Time was when other-worldliness was accorded the highest place in this country; from that extreme the pendulum is swinging and now the crass belief is growing that man lives by bread alone. It becomes necessary, therefore, to repeat the note struck more than once in past years by THE ARYAN PATH in favour of the study of literature. Its mellowing influence is an important ingredient of real culture, which

scientific and vocational education cannot provide. Modern science contributes very greatly to the realization of the true, but it cannot elevate human character to express the good and the beautiful as literature and fine arts do.

We publish in this issue several articles which reveal the power of literature to transform the drab plane of existence into a world of delight. Between the active struggle for existence and the passive resignation to misfortunes, men and women feel not the strength of real contentment. The insight which creates it comes from literature; insight as necessary for daily living as the capacity to earn the bread of livelihood; perhaps, more necessary. If Europe had been guided more by her poets than by her politicians, she would have avoided the ills to which she is now heir.

If India follows the Occident and, particularly, Britain, and becomes physically and mechanically proficient, she must also accept the consequences of weakening her moral stamina. In developing her educational policy and programme India, of course, should not neglect scientific and technical subjects; but she must not pursue the methods of "development" which have brought Britain to the pass when poets are not heeded, when the poetic tempo has failed, as Mr. Clifford Bax points out in his article.

Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar in his essay values the capacity of the poet (equally true of other literary

creators) as a nation-builder. The superiority of the literary genius, even over the practising mystic, consists in this: the record of his experiences made by the mystic does not convey to the man in the mart or the woman in the home their meaning and message, as does the poet's sonnet or ode. The exposition of the philosopher demands mental labour which that man and woman has not the time or the inclination to bestow, while they more readily absorb, the mellowing influence, however indirect the process, through entertainment, which the story-teller offers. Mr. Clifford Bax refers to the intellectual delight which forms so great a part of culture. The true function of education is to develop the capacity of people to experience this delight. Education can build a civilization but cannot create the Kingdom of Culture without endowing the mind with the capacity to enjoy the flowers and the fruits of literature. Mr. Bax speaks of his countrymen as "highly civilized but uncultured." There is something fundamental in this distinction over which Indians should ponder.

There is a silent literary renaissance going on in India. With their roots in the ancient soil of Sanskrit and in the medieval one of Arabic Indian languages are showing a remarkable development. From Malayalam in the South to Kashmiri in the North, from Gujarati-Marathi on the Western coast to Telugu-Tamil on the Eastern, an amazing

output of verse and prose is taking place. It is a day of small beginnings though the output is great, for much of the writing is poor in form, poorer in substance ; authors do not find it remunerative to publish their books ; there is a dearth of really enterprising Indian publishers ; and the public buys scantily. But its discrimination is noticeable, and that is a very promising feature. It readily purchases gems or uses them in public libraries. The renaissance as a movement needs co-ordination ; it has been hanging together very loosely, but the labours of the P.E.N. All-India Centre and of its organ *The Indian P. E. N.* have already achieved fair results. The Indian public can know the details of literary developments by perusing every month *The Indian P. E. N.* And not only the Indian public. The small monthly goes to foreign countries where nothing is known of the literary developments in the Indian languages. And now the P. E. N. has taken another step. The first of its series on Indian Literatures is just published—*Assamese Literature* by Birinchi Kumar Barua—and a dozen more are to appear. Each of these books will give to the entire English knowing public an outline of the story of the literary developments in one Indian language and as each volume is to contain an anthology of the best writings in that language the reader of the series will get an excellent idea of the developing literary renaissance of this great country.

But returning to the contents of our present number Mr. Claude Houghton, the novelist, also complains of the absence of culture. To-day the novel is more popular than the essay and the poem, and as a creator of excellent symbol-stories Mr. Houghton would like his *confrères* "to depict even one aspect of this new-dimensional age" for which they will need "new themes, new treatment, new tempo."

Mr. Sturge Moore, contributes some thought provoking pages on symbolism, which the literary creator of tomorrow will find instructive. The faculty to use symbols is even more difficult an undertaking than that of deciphering them. It is the metaphor, allegory and symbol—the expression in the compact—used by the poet, the dramatist, the master-mystic which kindles divine fire and keeps it aglow and aburning in common minds. It is literature which keeps alive today in the masses the light of the Spirit. Religious books are apt to obscure it, and one of the functions of the *littérateur* and the educator is to teach people to read the Bible, the Koran, the Upanishads as books of literature which fecundate the mind and not as tomes of creeds which compel belief and so deaden the intellect.

In the world of tomorrow, literature has a very great and a very important part to play. It has no frontiers and so, as a builder of the International State, it is of priceless value. The poet, the dramatist, the novelist, the essayist is the teacher of all humanity and therefore a maker of the citizens of the world.

LITERATURE

ITS VALUE IN THE MAKING OF THE NATION—

[**Dr. K. R. Shrinivasa Iyengar**, Professor of English at the Lingaraj College, Belgaum, is the author of the deservedly admired volume on *Lytton Strachey*. He is a joint author of *Life of S. Srinivasa Iyengar* and of *Musings of Basava*. He has written an excellent brochure on *Indo-Anglian Literature*, one of the P. E. N. Books sponsored by the All-India P. E. N. Centre to be published soon.—ED.]

I

It would be difficult to attempt a satisfactory answer to the question: What is Literature? When a gifted person uses a language in its purity for expressing thoughts and emotions that have a perennial appeal, the result is a work of prose or poetic art; we can generalize, therefore, by saying that Literature is what certain gifted people like Valmiki, Homer, Kalidasa, Dante, Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe, and Tolstoy have bequeathed to the world.

Nor is it any easier to explain in precise terms what, exactly, great poets, dramatists and novelists have tried to achieve in their works. It is, perhaps, not wide of the mark to state that an author has, in the main, two preoccupations: firstly, he desires, through the medium of his art, to emancipate the human personality from its bondage to a three-dimensional world reared on a basis of ceaseless flux; and, secondly, he desires to unify mankind by integrating our conflicting experiences into the shining unity of Form, by fusing the attributes of Beauty, Truth and Goodness and the dynam-

ics of Love and Sacrifice into a splendourous reality, one and indivisible.

Take *Hamlet*, for instance: how has Hamlet's creator visualized him? Is he thirty years old, or is he much younger? All that we know is that he has a mature intellect, and that he is young; he experiences a bewildering siege of contraries; he is himself, he is Hamlet. In your three-dimensional world, change and decay are the laws of life; and death is the end of the business. Shakespeare's art has facilitated Hamlet's escape from this prison-house, and he now inhabits a different world, for ever posing problems ever new. Whether we understand Hamlet or not, we never question his reality; whether or not we regret the final catastrophe, we never question its sheer inevitability. Hamlet no less than the current of events that sweeps him along are endowed with a higher Realism which we mutely accept and treasure in our hearts.

We are thus drawn towards *Hamlet*, not because it offers for our scrutiny a chunk of the raw-stuff of humanity and everyday reality (for

this we have always about us in abundance), but because it gains for us intimacy with an emancipated soul and, further, permits us to contemplate a pattern of life from which the merely trivial and the merely casual have been eliminated. We feel that the play has been patterned in terms of Beauty, Truth and Goodness because, for all its violence and the surge of evil it lets us witness, it leaves us somehow satisfied in the end. After life's fitful fever, Hamlet sleeps well; it is best that it should be so; nothing else was really possible: that is our final conviction, and it certainly induces a mood of *sānti* which is none the less real for being mixed up somewhat with sadness.

Literature achieves this transformation again and again: the local is extended into the universal, disorder and change are compacted into a shining star, and seeming contradictions are resolved into a perceptible unity of design and execution. Great literature acquires, in result, the efficacy of the Life-tree Yggdrasil whose roots reach the remote Past while its branches stretch out to the distant Future. The *Ramayana*, the *Iliad*, *La Chanson de Roland*, *Hamlet*, *War and Peace*, they are not of an age but of all time; they are so many attempts at integrating the million and one bits of racial memory and endeavour; one and all, they try to sum up the values of life, and hence they abide with us, and their message is perennially life-giving.

Idealization, then, is the key-note of all great Literature. Springing up from life, Literature yet transcends it; the deformed is transformed by Literature into a thing of purposeful order and proportion; and Literature forges all the time the lineaments of the ideal world, the land of our heart's desire. The poet is fully conscious of the thousand ills that beset our ways; he has seen bestiality, cruelty, vulgarity, triviality; and yet

from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality.

To quote a modern poet, Mr. Herbert Palmer, "The major poet is surely a transcendent example of normality...his excessive individualism functions as a plea for larger sanity of thought and behaviour... (and he) dictates his creations to futurity."

II

Now more than ever the warring nations of the world need their poets—and alas! the poets are hushed by the roar of aircraft above and the groans of maimed humanity below. We have the misfortune to be living in dangerously insecure times. The law of the jungle prevails in international relations; and values and verities seem to have little relevance now to human beings. The blinding blaze of action and opinion seems to have usurped the place of the mellow light of reason and understanding. Organized lying masquerades as propaganda and capricious prejudice

sits on the high judgement seat. Whole communities, nations, the very world itself seem to dwindle into mere pawns in an individual's distracting game of chance. Nations are being mangled or vivisected, race antagonisms are being fanned from an incipient nothing into a fury of riot and massacre and the laborious achievement of years is being destroyed to satisfy an unpredictable surge of spleen. Whither civilization? Whither humanity? Whither Oh World?

A mad world it demonstrably is! And it is the compulsion of our anguish that we mouth these questions in despair. To whom, then, can we turn for guidance, for solace, for reviving in us a belief in the significance of life? Who will sustain our hope, battered as it already is, during these days of travail and general hurt? Who will give us glimpses of the "New Order" to come, and who will hasten its establishment in our midst?

The politician has ever been an over-worked person, preoccupied with the hustling present, wondering how best he could trim his insufficient sails to the prevailing uncomfortable breeze. He can at best carry on, but he cannot create. The soldier's job is in all conscience difficult enough, and it is different as well. The religious devotee is often incapacitated by the very extremity of his other-worldliness from taking an intelligent interest in his immediate surroundings; the souls of Prahladas dare suffering and

defeat, and discover Eternity in a moment of time and bliss ineffable in physical pain; but nation-building is not ordinarily their business. The metaphysician revels in the realm of abstract thought, and although he is one of the props of a nation's culture, he cannot decisively inspire and influence average man. The politician, the soldier, the religious mystic, the philosopher, they all live, from a severely human standpoint, unharmonized lives. A great poet, however, in so far as he puts himself into his works, is a more fully realized human being and is consequently competent to be a surer guide to us. He can be, and often he is, the

Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of Heaven & Home.

He tries to maintain in his works a proper balance of outer and inner experience, of this-worldliness and other-worldliness, of intellect and imagination. Our great men of letters are thus the only persons who could be trusted with the job of indicating the configuration of the future; they alone can wring out of anguish itself the promise of hope; they alone can see in the prevalent discordance the seeds of future harmony.

III

The wise Aristophanes makes Aeschylus ask Euripides this crucial question: "Pray, tell me on what particular ground a poet should claim admiration?" And Euripides answers without hesitation; "If his art is true, and his counsel sound:

and if he brings help to the nation by making men better in some respect." Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Thucydides and Herodotus,—their literary ideals were the same: to serve the nation "by making men better in some respect." Little is known of Homer, the first of them all; but he was Hellas; he saw its reality and unity and forged it in his immortal poems; he gave Hellas its pattern of civilization and its consciousness of oneness; and he facilitated its cultural realization. Others followed him—dramatists and philosophers and statesmen—and raised the splendid edifice of Greek civilization; but they only built on Homer's secure foundations. The material superstructure has since been swept away by the Mediterranean, but the Homeric foundations challenge Time itself and persist. Similarly, the Romans of Virgil's day found in the *Aeneid* a trumpet call to patriotism; it urged them to dedicate themselves to a career of service, and it made them realize that they were the citizens of the first of all cities. Knowledge of the *Aeneid* was then as good as obtaining a certificate of Roman citizenship.

It is not, of course, a question of religion but of national and racial identity. The Greek and the Roman of today believe neither in Zeus nor in Minerva: but they believe in the poetry of Homer and of Virgil, and in the nations they helped to create. In India, again, the vast

majority of its inhabitants infer its integrity and unity from a knowledge of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* rather than from any precise apprehension of its history or geography. What is, after all, common between a Punjabi and a Bengali? or between a Kashmiri and a Madrasi? There is nothing common between them if they think so,—if they are taught to think and feel so. But everything is common between them if they think so,—if they are taught to think and feel so. As it is, we come under the influence of our two national epics even as children, and the fascinating vistas they open up before us tingle in our memories all through our lives; and that is why the proposition that India is not a nation shocks us and profoundly disturbs us. In these days of neo-nomadism when many of us are obliged to be perpetually on the move, devotion to any one place may prove more and more difficult. One's birth-place may appear to be no worse and no better than any other spot on the earth's surface; but to the typical villager, be he an Indian or a Russian or an Englishman, leaving one's birth-place is verily like leaving one's soul behind. As Luigi Pirandello might have put it to both these types of men, "Right you are, if you think you are!"

The poet, however, and those who habitually surrender themselves to poetry, believe in strong attachments—to one's relations and to one's friends, to one's hearth and to

one's vocation, to one's country and to humanity itself at large. And great Literature definitely fosters these attachments, and men become "better in some respect or other," and prove helpful to the "nation." Differences—in dress, in language, in manners and customs, in the minutiae of social life—fade away as of no moment; the paramount fact that all Indians—nay, all human beings—are equally authentic specimens of "dear and dogged man" sweeps the variations away. Pride in a common past, concern for the immediate present, aspiration for the future, these can and must, cement us together; and it is the poet's duty to reiterate this message of unity to all.

A nation can be born out of a multitude of scattered hamlets and islands: ancient Hellas was born in that way. Former adversaries may club together under compulsion or for convenience; and in due course new generations of poets and novelists may induce in the erstwhile enemies the feeling of kinship—and thus nations like Canada, Great Britain and U. S. A., have emerged from their nonage and have reached their maturity. Elsewhere, as in the Scandinavian and Low Countries, the partnership of convenience did not endure, and the parts pursued their individual destinies in their own respective ways. *A national literature is ever the best insurance against similar disintegration.*

There is, no doubt, a very real danger to be guarded against.

Authors may grow hysterical and sow prejudices in the minds of their readers; patriotism may be vulgarized into jingoism and a plea for pugnacity. Decent Literature, however, eschews these perilous extravagances. On the other hand, it aims at emphasizing "the community of sentiments and ideals which results from a common history and education." *For India, at any rate, we need a Literature today that would in these terms teach us the alphabet of true patriotism.* Our country as a whole needs to be projected before us so that every Indian could sing ecstatically *Hindustan hamara!* or *Bande Mataram!* The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, though they are national to their very marrow, are suspect in the minds of some of our countrymen on account of their religious associations. We therefore need other masterpieces—Iqbal and Tagore have already led the way—which would re-assert our racial identity and national solidarity in the current languages. We want our men of letters to rise to the height of their noble calling and create a national literature, governed by the grammar of patriotism and citizenship, and functioning as the warp and woof of a new India, happy and healthy and united; and purged of all rancour and jealousy, this new India would certainly come to her own. Besides, the nation's men of letters have another duty to perform, *viz.* to interpret her to the peoples of other countries. As the American critic, Mr. George Wood-

berry remarks, "A nation's poets are its true owners; and by the stroke of the pen they convey the title-deeds of its real possessions to strangers and aliens."

Literature can thus help a nation to infer and to realize its potentialities; and it can also promote understanding between nations.

That is why these words of Matthew Arnold's ring as opportune today as they did over fifty years ago when they were first uttered: "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay."

K. R. SHRINIVASA IYENGAR

A HOPEFUL SIGN

It is a hopeful sign that our Indian youth are beginning to recognize the cramping and narrowing influence of the artificial barriers which their reactionary elders have erected and are seeking to maintain between the different communities of this country. The Bombay Students' Union announced early in September an attack on the ignorance and prejudice which form the foundation of those barriers, in the shape of a series of lectures by Hindus and Muslims known for their breadth of outlook. The lecturers announced included Shri K. M. Munshi, Mr. A. A. Fyzee, Mr. K. A. Abbas and Shri Mahadev Desai. An intercommunal dinner was also arranged by

these youthful friends of National unity.

Our Universities should have it as their first aim to produce men of broad culture, to whom the masses of this country can look with confidence for disinterested guidance in the many problems which press for solution. Large-minded tolerance and freedom from prejudice are indispensable marks of the cultured man. What are our educational institutions doing with the specific aim of fostering these qualities in their students? University authorities throughout the country as well as other student organizations may well follow the excellent lead of this Bombay students group.

THE POET AND THE DRAMATIST

THEIR INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY

[Clifford Bax published in 1910 a small volume of *Twenty-Five Chinese Poems*, and in 1912 produced in the commercial theatre his play *The Poetasters of Isphan*. His more recent *The Immortal Sea* and *Leonardo da Vinci* show that his was a true intuition when he abandoned painting and concentrated upon literary work.—ED.]

The Editor has asked me to think about an elusive theme,—namely, the cultural influence of the poet and the dramatist upon modern society. We must obviously begin by saying what we mean by culture. It is a word which I like and respect but we have to admit that many people associate it with intellectual phariseism. What else should the word really describe, however, but the contents of a mind which has been reclaimed from the jungle, ordered, tilled and planted? The uncultured mind is a place of primitive instincts and violent prejudices. If we hold to this simple distinction we shall see that to remain uncultured is a misfortune in the poor and a dishonour to the rich.

One day when I was a growing lad, already in love with literature and with the obstreperous English language, a middle-aged Scotsman said to me "My father was a passionate Liberal. His greatest hero was of course Mr. Gladstone; and I can still remember his irritation, after some public dinner in honour of Tennyson, because Mr. Gladstone had said that of all the persons present Tennyson alone would exercise

a living influence upon posterity. My father," said the Scotsman, "was really annoyed that the leader of the Liberal Party should thus exalt a mere poet."

And a few years later a lady told me that at some time in the eight-eighties she was seeing her brother off to Australia. "On the P. & O. liner," she said, "there was the usual bustle and hubbub, the usual last-minute jokes and messages, the usual tramlings of porters and stewards. Then suddenly the ship became completely silent. What do you think had happened? There, coming up the gangway, was Lord Tennyson with his son Hallam who, I think, was going out as Governor of New South Wales."

I have set down these anecdotes because they illustrate the width and depth of Tennyson's prestige, and because, whatever I may find myself thinking about the Dramatist, I do not believe that any living poet has or could have a hundredth part of Tennyson's influence upon society. I am thinking mostly of the situation in Great Britain,—and so, of necessity, I must continue to do. Perhaps a poet, such as Rabindranath Tagore,

may still have a deep influence in India where saints, I understand, are national heroes and where poets, I daresay, are expected to be somewhat saintly. Conversely, it is impossible to suppose that any poet has the slightest cultural effect upon contemporary Germany or Italy. On the other hand, I can imagine a great poet emerging out of Poland's newest agony.

So much have I always been impressed by the indifference of British society to the poets of our time that once I observed to Sir John Squire, himself an excellent poet, how odd it is that men should gladly spend the whole of their lives in the practice of an art which brings them no reward and seems to have no interest at all for their fellow-citizens. He answered, somewhat lamely, that perhaps the poets do have some influence "from the top"; by which he meant that although the banker or the "base mechanic" ignores all the poetry of the world, past or present, a few enlightened men (the Prime Minister, for example) may infect the rank and file with some faint sense of beauty. I have loved poetry all my life, and have known most of the living or lately-living poets of Great Britain and Ireland, and I should therefore like to believe Sir John's wistful fancy, but I fear that *our poets are voices crying in a wilderness of politics and machinery*.

Two or three years ago I bought in Oxford an extremely beautiful gold coin. It is an Elizabethan

"angel". Despite its beauty and its heroic associations a taxi-driver, a greengrocer or a dentist would, I suppose, refuse to accept it in payment for his services. It is not current coin, and my taxi-driver would much prefer a dirty piece of paper if it happened to be a Treasury Note. Well, so it is with poetry. It is not current. Men prefer the newspaper, women prefer the novel; or, as a Canadian lumberjack once said to me "You can keep your Shakespeare,—I prefer Ruff's Guide." There are several reasons for this increasing distaste for poetry. Shall we examine a few of them? Very well, then,—(1) the metrical beat in traditional poetry has an emotional origin and an emotional effect. Indeed, the regular rhythms of that old poetry may be fundamentally derived from our heartbeats. Now, every student of occultism knows that men have been steadily living more and more in their intelligence, less and less in their emotions and instincts. Prose is the medium of our age. (2) Politics and the will-to-power have brought us into so violent an era that poetry to most people seems to have no connection with what they call "real life". The newspaper, in a word, wins again. (3) Most of the newest poets, very significantly abandoning repeated rhythm, have been "left-wingers" and champions of the proletariat. This has not stayed them from writing in an idiom so obscure that, quite apart from any member of the proletariat,

no hot-house professor can tell us what Mr. Auden or Mr. Dylan Thomas means. The poets themselves have alienated "the common reader" as far as they possibly could have done so. Your true left-wing poet should have written like Vachel Lindsay or even like Longfellow: but their creed lay only in their skulls.

Let us admit, nevertheless, that there is just one living poet—T. S. Eliot—who has had a considerable cultural influence upon "Young England". We may feel that for some time he has been strangely over-rated, but the point is that his expression of the feeling that nothing matters and that everything is rotten did chime with the post-other-war attitude of his juniors especially in the two most famous of our Universities. He was the voice of a generation. We cannot say this of any poet since the Kipling of nineteen-hundred.

The productions of these rhymeless writers are frequently of considerable sociological interest (why, for example, should most of them pine for a communistic revolution?) but our grandchildren may decide that these notable minds were writing something which is no more poetry than a tongue-sandwich is a ham-sandwich. Well, there it is,—I conceive that the poetic tempo has faded from the mind of humanity as definitely as youth fades out in a man.

The poet does at least work by his fireside or under his fig-tree. The dramatist is out in the hurly-burly

of the world. He must attract interest at once or his play will be sunk for good. In my country, drama is a commercial commodity which, in many instances, men of æsthetic aspiration must try to sell. Fitzgerald's "Omar" became a twopenny "remainder" in Quaritch's shop. It became subsequently the "bed-book" and constant companion of millions of people, many of them (as I could testify) the most unforeseeable. This belated glory does not happen to the dramatist. He must hit or miss.

Long ago in the days when my Elizabethan angel was, like poetry, current coin, drama had an incalculable influence upon the vocabulary, and therefore the thought-power, of Londoners. They were learning their own language, and these dramatists were making it. Shakespeare, the perfect humanist (for we cannot say this of all his contemporaries), must also have had a strong moral influence upon the England of his age if only because his plays are suffused with admiration of courage and pity for pain. He probably civilised us English in a degree which no wiseacre has truly appreciated.

Since then—and how long ago it is—the English drama has, I am afraid, done little or nothing to till the soil of the English mind. In pre-war Paris the best theatres upheld a high standard of speech; and by familiarising the public with the works of men like Racine those theatres provided men and women with what is so great a part of

culture,—an intellectual delight. In Germany and in Russia the public used to attend a play in order that it might at least attempt to grow beyond itself. In the British Empire and in the United States the theatre, not subsidised by the State, solely on account of the puritanism which was common to both countries, has always been a commercial enterprise comparable with the selling of fire-arms or cosmetics. That is why our London theatre was ignored by two brightminded American students who visited Europe some fifteen years ago. We supplied a minimum of thought. Our theatre-managers catered (a most significant word) for two tastes,—for those who liked “thrillers” and for those who were more interested in the savouries which they had left than in the drawing-room comedy which, ostensibly, they were watching.

There has, all the same, been one dramatist who very powerfully affected the culture of his time and country,—to wit, Bernard Shaw. We are not being extravagant if we say that Shaw and H. G. Wells have had a large part in forming the minds of two generations of young people in this country,—and perhaps elsewhere. Shaw's most valuable contribution to British culture has been, I believe, in stretching and opening our minds, very much in the manner of a gym-sergeant, so that the current generation is ready to examine any nation, and to pre-judge none. Shaw must have added immensely to the political tolerance and moral

broadmindedness of England. For more than half a century he has been a pick-me-up and a tonic.

Just on the other side of the present hideous war, J. B. Priestley was bravely attempting to use the theatre for something of more value than surface entertainment. Those of us who wish that Englishmen could see that to be cultured is only to be a little more civilised, and who regret that so many fine Englishmen leave their brains with their hats in the theatre cloakroom, can hardly praise Priestley with sufficient force. What courage,—to invite pre-war West-Enders to leave their dinners, in order that they should consider Mr. Dunne's difficult but exciting theory of time,—a theory which, if it should be proven, will establish the immortality of the long derided “soul”... Even this daring, uncommercial venture impressed and delighted me, however, much less than the same author's courageous and profound play,—“Johnson Over Jordan”. Here drama, even in the West End of London, was exclusively concerned with the dreamlike, after-death adventures of the soul. The theatre had become, as it once was, a Hall of Initiation. Every man and woman in that audience was shown vividly the experiences which he or she is likely to face when the soul has left the body.

The public, misled by the cretinous dramatic critics, who were quite unable to expand their little minds, neglected this play: but if Mr. Priestley, as a dramatist, survives the present war, he indeed might do something to cultivate my highly-civilised but uncultured fellow-countrymen.

CLIFFORD BAX

THE GIANT AND THE DWARFS

THE NOVELIST OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

[**Claude Houghton** has been described as "a novelist with a message." He is the author of *Crisis*, *I am Jonathan Scrivner*, *Chaos is Come Again*, *Julian Grant Loses His Way*—all novels which deal with psychological problems and spiritual themes. He has also written plays and in his *Judas* and *In the House of the High Spirit* there are striking imaginative elements.—ED.]

When a word is prominently in use, it is possible that what it represents is conspicuously absent from the contemporary scene. For some years before the war, the word, *Security*, dominated every political discussion. It is only too easy to assume that a thing exists because you are talking about it, whereas, quite often, you are talking about it because it has ceased to be. When *Health* is the dominant topic in a house, some one is sick—and when all men cry *Peace, Peace*, there is no peace.

There may be a two-edged significance, therefore, in the fact that the word, *Culture*, has invaded everyday speech in such a surprising manner of recent years and it would be instructive to know what meaning is attached to the word by those who now use it daily.

Culture has been defined as "the self-evident" and it would be a mistake to dismiss this definition on account of its brevity. We should add little if we amplified it by the statement that: *Culture* is a hierarchy of standards, the inevitability of which is *instinctively* recognised. The whole point is that

Culture is—or was—a scale of values accepted unquestioningly by the choice and master spirits of the age.

What scale of values is accepted unquestioningly by any class today? What pattern is imposed, as a corporate spiritual creation, on "the flux of things"? What is "self-evident"? What aim compels instinctive allegiance? Which creed is a rallying centre? Is not *Culture*—in the former connotation of the word—dead long ago, and buried long ago, and do we merely invoke its ghost by discussing it?

Unless the world is again to become without form and void, a new *Culture* must be evolved, for, lacking any distinction between essentials and non-essentials—lacking the latitudes and longitudes created by values held in common—life must be reduced to an uncharted waste of meaningless monotony.

If the actual situation today is that the old order has collapsed and a new order is struggling to emerge from ruins, what is the task of the novelist who is not wholly an entertainer, or chiefly a reporter, or merely an anæsthetist?

Of recent years, in the majority

of cases, his work has been negative in that it consisted either of revealing the ruins of the old régime—or a stripping of those “myths” which the past cherished. But, today, everything has been debunked—including debunking—and *the problem of problems, therefore, is to find positive values with which to give shape to an ever-widening void.* It is necessary to stress this need for positive values, because there is still a monkey-like delight over the fall of the old order, rather than a realization of the titanic challenge created by the fact that chaos is come again. Only a mighty spirit will move upon the face of these modern waters.

It follows that the task facing the novelist is different from any which confronted his predecessors. Today, there are no “givens”. There is only an unknown *X*. The map of the future has been torn up and, oddly enough, one result is to invest our most intimate memories with an unreal air. The world has entered a new dimension.

One consequence of this, for the novelist is, that all normal ‘settings’—all stock-in-trade ‘situations’—all ready-made ‘plots’—all standard ‘problems’—have gone with the wind. The familiar is a fast-fading memory. Inevitably, therefore, the ‘background’ paraphernalia of some recent novels has almost a period interest. Humanity is on trek (although it has no idea where it is going) with the consequent result that boundaries, frontiers, sign-posts,

destinations, have no more significance for us than they have for sleep-walkers. It follows that if a novelist is to depict even one aspect of this new-dimensional age, he will need new themes, new treatment, new tempo. It is important to remember that, already, a not inconsiderable part of his audience consists of those who have no memories of the pre-1914 world and, obviously, their number increases rapidly, so the novelist who wants to employ the old technique would be wise to use the Georgian or Victorian past for background. The Georgian or Victorian past—treated romantically and slickly edited, in conformity with the well-known recipe.

One fact is plain, although its many implications may not be so obvious, and that is:—People are thinking, feeling, suffering as they never thought, felt, suffered. A new universe, therefore, awaits exploration, revelation, and interpretation by the novelist equipped for the task; but, to be equipped, it is essential that he too is thinking, feeling, suffering, on unprecedented levels. *Extremity* has invaded life—and extremity reveals unsuspected potentialities and unsuspected abysses in the human spirit. The spiritual and psychological states of being awakened by the coming of extremity await revelation by the novelist equipped to reveal them.

Another, and a greater, task confronts the writer whose vision is broad and deep enough to confer meaning on the apocalyptic events

of these years. The deepest darkness in many hearts today is cast by the dread that nothing has meaning—that the individual is an isolated atom in a chaotic universe. It is this feeling of individual emptiness—this sense of individual importance—which is responsible for modern mass movements. Humans herd together like cattle when skies lower and storm threatens. In every crisis the desire to be with others becomes an overwhelming necessity for most people, and the greater the crisis the more overwhelming does this necessity become. Few go willingly, alone, to Gethsemane. Even those whose temperaments handcuff them to solitude—even a Baudelaire—know and welcome the numbing effect of the “bath of the multitude.” It has been suggested that even the fear of death is lessened for those who live in monstrous modern cities with their endless distractions and ever-moving mobs—and that this fact is at any rate one of the reasons why home-sickness for the thronged pavements is a unique type of nostalgia, especially for those who “can never find the country again, since the love of it died long ago in their hearts.” *Nevertheless, it is well to remember that physical proximity is the lowest form of unity and that, therefore, modern mass movements tragically reveal the inner emptiness of countless individuals to whom life is becoming increasingly meaningless.*

The world awaits the writer or the seer who can reveal and interpret all that has happened to us by relating

it to a vision which will confer meaning and substance on events which are chaotic and spectral to us. This is the supreme task for, given its accomplishment, the values of the new Culture will have emerged. This task awaits the man, but the work of every novelist—of every writer, in his degree—will consist in part of revealing and interpreting what has happened to us; because, mysteriously enough, it is only the writer or the artist who *can* compel us to recognise our deepest experience. His work shocks and startles us to a recognition of what has become ours without our being aware of it. And, it may be, that his work shocks and startles us to a recognition of what has withered in us. But, in either event, it is through his work that we learn what has happened to us.

Surely it follows that, as people are thinking and feeling on unprecedented levels, every novelist is confronted with a unique task of revelation and interpretation. To induce readers to recognise what has happened to them as the result of cataclysmic experience is certainly no easy task but it is an essential one—if modern fiction is to have any substance; any relevance to this new-dimensional age. In addition to this, if the work of a modern novelist is to have purpose and direction, it can possess these only to the degree to which it is oriented towards positive values. Surely that must be so, if literature is to retain its claim to be creative. And if it

be argued, as it might well be, that only a giant could give definition and meaning to the void which encompasses us today, the argument would have to be admitted—with the qualification that there is plenty of preliminary work to be done by dwarfs.

We are frequently reminded that man's extremity is God's opportunity—and it may be the novelist's. It depends on the novelist. But there are two certainties:—One is that extremity is here; and the other is that, *unless literature is to abdicate, it must accept extremity and challenge with positive values the despair which extremity so easily breeds.*

Literature must cease to be negative. It must cease to be content with petty virtues and backwater triumphs. It must stop sniggering. It must stop analysing itself out of existence. It must give up its glib acceptance of corruption, and surrender its little vanities. It is better to be crude and vital than dignified and dead. And literature would do well to remember that it is threatened as it has never been threatened, even in those countries which still pay lip-service tribute. It is threatened by those who would indignantly and sincerely deny that they are its foes. (Few people nowadays know the front on which they are fighting.)

Nothing is going to survive today if it does not possess the virility that ensures survival. The times are too revolutionary to be impressed by a facade, or by the deafening self-applause of the long-established, the

once-venerated. It will be useless for literature, as it is useless for virtue, to seek "remuneration for the thing it was." *The simple fact is that the heavens have opened—and the familiar has been obliterated.* That is the fact, and literature is confronted by it just as much as everything else—and perhaps more nearly. Facile optimism, senile sentimentality, silly sensationalism will avail nothing. Only the Ark survived the Flood.

We must find courage to face full up to the situation. Issues which, formerly, were clear only to prophets and poets are now clear—or very soon will be—to every man who is not a fool. We may as well confront the situation because in the end we shall be unable to evade it.

Novelists, certainly, will be unable to evade it—if only by reason of the fact that every novel is to some extent a social commentary and, surely, it is now clear to the intelligence of the least intelligent that a revolutionary age has overwhelmed us as suddenly and as totally as a tidal wave. Consequently it is no longer a question of fidelity to long-established and clearly defined frontiers. It is no longer a question of allegiance to venerable standards. *And it is no longer a question of serving Culture—it is a question of creating it.*

It seems therefore that we must do one of two things:—either we must make a final and total surrender to the machine, in which case it would be agony to retain even a

glimmer of the imaginative faculty; or we must accept the challenge of destiny and create a new Culture. We cannot deny the experience of these years and so *we cannot accept former standards—in religion, in politics, in literature, or in anything else.* We must evolve new forms, new standards, adequate to our experience.

The task, then, that seems to challenge all of us—statesmen, writers, men with a will-to-good everywhere—is to salvage from the wreck of the past those elements of enduring value and to fuse them with all that is vital, positive, creative in the dynamism of today.

The new Culture will be a new synthesis.

CLAUDE HOUGHTON

PRISON REFORM

It has been stated time and time again that the death penalty is no deterrent to crime. The National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty has just issued its fourth War-Time Bulletin which includes convincing statistics proving that

the volume of murder is little or not at all affected at any time by the nature of the penalty inflicted but is almost wholly determined by a set of general circumstances having nothing to do with the penal code.

We might even claim that the very fact that the law authorizes and inflicts legalized murder on a large scale is bound to increase crime waves. Facts and figures however are enough to prove our point to those who prefer not to go into the domain of psychology. In 1939 there were in the whole of the U. S. A. 7,514 murders, or more than twenty a day. New York City alone had 291 murders, Chicago 239, Boston only 6.

It should be noted that, in all but a tiny

minority, the cities investigated have the death penalty in active operation, obviously with little deterrent effect. In the cities specifically mentioned above, the death penalty is in the penal code of all three and, yet, there is an immense disparity shown as between Boston and the other two.

In England and Wales there were in 1940 twenty-one death sentences and twelve executions. In certain cases where the sentence is never carried out and reprieve is automatic the pronouncement of the death penalty by the Judge with the black cap on his head is still carried out, a needless, cruel and hideous formality. For some this is true mediæval mental torture. As a matter of fact, not much progress seems to have been made by our civilization, since looting can now be paid for by death. About a century ago property offences were punishable by death. Today there are those who demand death for "profit-eers acting against the national interest"! How much further shall we go?

MODERN INDIAN LITERATURE

[The two essays on Indian literature which we publish here with the kind consent of their respective writers will be of added interest to readers of *THE ARYAN PATH* from their having been among the articles collected by Mr. Alexander Janta in 1939, for the proposed Special Indian Number of the Polish literary journal *Wiadomosci Literackie*. The swift and merciless crushing of Poland in the early autumn of that year meant, alas, the abandonment of that project, so valuable to international understanding, along with all other cultural undertakings.

Amiya Chakravarty, M. A., D. PHIL. (Oxon.), who in *The Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry : A Study in Modern Ideas* presented some of the results of his research in modern English literature, is well fitted to make this sympathetic evaluation of trends in contemporary Indian letters, especially in the languages of North and Central India.

K. Ramakotiswara Rau, through the English translations in his admirable cultural journal *Triveni*, published from Madras, has long been making a distinguished contribution to the spread of appreciation, in India and abroad, of the literatures in all the leading languages of India. In the second of these articles, he examines the literary tendencies in the great South Indian language group, with one of which, Telugu, his own affinities are particularly close.—ED.]

I.—A NOTE ON CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES

Literature in India is passing through a phase of conscious adjustment. The impact of Western civilization was disturbing, there was an initial process of submergence, mere imitation, and a turning away from the deeper traditions of our own civilization. Up to the twentieth century, we find a gradual process of absorption of new tendencies. A fusion of culture was taking place in our provincial literatures in which indigenous culture began asserting itself, but mainly in an atmosphere of unsure individuality.

In Tagore, for the first time the Indian voice was heard again ; here was a blending of the European stream of thought with the genius

of India. Tagore's poetry rooted itself in the soil ; he lived very near to the elemental life of nature, both in its human and its cosmic aspects. For years he frequented the river ways of Bengal, using his boat as moving contact with life in the fairs, the market-places and the villages. But his mind at the same time was nourished with the great thoughts and visions that came from the West. He was a poet who had been brought up in daily communion with the Upanishads and with Sanskrit literature, whose early childhood was saturated with the lore, the legends and the epics of India. We know also that the Vaishnava poets played a great part in the

formation of his mind. In the home of the Tagores, which was like a cultural island, had mingled diverse influences, Persian as well as Chinese and Japanese, Western as well as ancient Indian. But in Tagore the blending which had started as an unconscious process rapidly reached the conscious plane.

With the later works of Tagore began that new stage in Indian literature which still continues. Flourishing on original roots, our literatures have gained light and inspiration from many skies and their movement is no longer naive and purely reactionary, but creative. The Bengali literature, which came directly under Tagore's powerful influence, soon put forth new branches and vivid flowers and foliage. In tracing the growth of Hindi, which perhaps comes next in importance, in variety and in excellence of creative output, we find the stamp of Tagore's creative nationalism which had restored and renovated the ancient mould and poured into it the new wine of civilization. In various degrees writers and poets, with Munshi Premchand as their most distinguished leader, followed in the wake of Tagore. In Gujarati, the influence of Tagore can similarly be traced and also in other Indian literatures. But here we must pause and recognise another influence which, coming from outside the domain of literature, practically revolutionised the life and the thought of the land.

This great force in Indian civiliza-

tion has been the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. It would be difficult for a contemporary to trace the manifold effects of Mahatma Gandhi's dynamic personality on the trend of Indian culture. But the self-conscious phase of absorption and assertion of the Indian art and literature has received a tremendous impetus from the Gandhian concept of Indianism. Nandalal Bose's posters and paintings done for a recent Indian National Congress at Mahatma Gandhi's invitation are outstanding examples. In one way Mahatma Gandhi has a greater affinity with Western religious thought and with certain Western social ideas than any other maker of modern India. More than Tagore he has followed some definite Western ideas which, though universal in character, are yet associated with specific leaders of thought. The Tolstoyan ethics, for example, have a very large place in Gandhiji's concept and practice. Profoundly influenced by the Gita and by medieval saintly literature, steeped in Indian traditions and beliefs, Gandhiji has also chosen leadership of great European minds. As his autobiography points out, he has read few books but among these were great works which, produced outside India, have remained as models throughout his self-creative career. The influence of his thinking, in this regard, has made for greater self-consciousness in Indian culture, and has helped towards a wide catholicity in the selective process.

Gandhiji's influence on literature has been pervasive and has fed the sources of India's continuing emergence. Characterised by a new outlook on village problems, a new conception of specific details, of economic and social facts, his influence has made for a sterner discipline of imagination than India has known in recent times. Economic awareness as well as an insistent social conscience have penetrated and are still penetrating into the literatures of India. The incessant vital impact of Gandhiji's ideas, even when some of them are rejected, and of the social and political movement which is being shaped by them must be realised in tracing the growth of the Indian mind.

Gujarati naturally has been the language most affected by Mahatma Gandhi's inspiration. His own writings in Gujarati—his autobiography was first written in that language during a period of prison life—have imparted to it the lucid and vital power which characterises his utterances, whether written or verbal. The Gujarati language has been practically transformed and its scope has been widened almost beyond recognition. His humour, earnestness, penetrating analysis of moral problems, concreteness of mind and imagery have made Gujarati a powerful medium for modern use.

Mahatma Gandhi's influence, therefore, has supplemented Tagore's though the mould for modern Indian literature remains Tagorian. As a

thinker and a philosopher who has expressed the synthetic mind of India and has projected into the modern age the tradition of cultural communion which can be traced to Ram Mohan Roy, the poet Tagore represents the Modern Age in India. Gandhiji's literary contribution has been of potent force but mainly from an extra-literary domain. Though no dividing line can be drawn between the trends of literature and the fundamental political and social movements, a distinction must be made between the creative arts flourishing in their own atmosphere and the many vital currents which enrich and sustain literary tradition. Tagore, in every realm a pioneer, has revolutionised the social texture and the political thinking of our times. It is not always realised that his contribution as a reformer, as an interpreter of India's social traditions and as a builder of true nationalism is no less important than his purely literary and philosophical contribution. Both Tagore and Gandhi have been, in the fullest sense, both technical and moral, educators. Their gift to the human race, in creative advancement and in stabilisation of culture, awaits the chronicler not merely of Indian history but also of the ascent of civilization.

The late Sir Muhammad Iqbal's luminous mind has stirred our literature but, due to a variety of causes, cultural and linguistic, his poems have found congenial soil almost entirely among the Urdu-speaking

people of India. His appeal is restricted though powerful. His epigrammatic mind chose a few aspects of life for brilliant satire and deliberately narrowed the field of imagination. He represents the latest phase of disillusionment and intellectual discontent. European civilization is anatomised in its post-war atavism, and though he is one with Tagore and Gandhi in standing for the culture of the East, he does not admit, as his great contemporaries do, the spiritual power of the West. In this he represents a section of the modern Indian ferment, and his poetry also touches the desperate hopes of revolutionary and iconoclastic moderns whose affiliations with the West are to be found in groups which deny Western spiritualism. But Iqbal's power of language, no less than his profound interpretation of Islamic faith, is destined to spread beyond the confines of the Urdu literature to which he has added immortal lustre.

Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar has enriched Panjabi literature and the Gurumukhi script now enshrines a new wealth of mystic poetry as well as of patriotic Sikh literature which is now being known and admired outside of the Panjab. If Sarojini Naidu has sacrificed her poetic career for a life of devoted national service in the sphere of politics and social reform, the sacrifice has produced its own great results. Her poetry belongs to a particular province of Indian literature written in the

English language. Its music has charmed Indian as well as Western lovers of literature

The story of modern Indian literature is thus simply told ; the details and the variations should occupy a more elaborate discussion. The main point to reckon with is that the Indian literatures have found their own soil and have responded self-consciously to the call of the new age. Life in Indian villages and industrial areas, political problems and cultural assertions are imparting new reality to the experimental writings of modern Indian writers. The new humanism, in which Science begins to inspire the religious spirit, the attempt to link up moral law with material law and thus to provide a sane foundation for a complete expression of life—these are the deeper characteristics of modern Indian literature. Analysis will show that the influence of Tagore and Gandhi are dominant and the stamp of the age that they have inaugurated is evident in all significant products of contemporary India. It remains to be seen whether the humanistic, spiritual aspects will play an increasing part or whether there will be, as some fear, a rejection of science in favour of a truncated spiritual life because of the disastrous abuse of scientific achievement. The emergent India, it seems likely, will outgrow a somewhat acutely self-conscious phase in our literary life. Industrialised India may establish new values of science, which, as we would interpret them,

are necessary for the fullest spiritual expression of man's inherent gifts. In achieving this balance between the life forces of modern history,

Indian thought may well prove once again its synthetic power and its literatures avert the spirit of frustration or of false compromise.

AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY

II.—THE LITERATURES OF SOUTH INDIA

The influence of Tagore and of Gandhi, which Dr. Amiya Chakravarty mentions in his article, is as pervasive in the literatures of South India as in those of the North. The Southern languages, however, belong to a distinctive group, the Dravidian, and there are some special features of their recent development.

Tamil was undoubtedly the first to evolve an independent literature: its great classics are nearly two thousand years old. But the primacy with regard to literary achievement in the *modern* period belongs to Telugu, judging from abundance of volume, variety of form, and richness of content. Telugu (or Andhra), "the Italian of the East", occupies in the South today a position similar to that of Bengali in the North. The harmonious blending of the Sanskritic and Dravidian elements in its vocabulary and its verse-forms have contributed to its enrichment. Sweetness allied to strength, and energy combined with ease, have made it the principal language of music in the entire South, and the language also of diplomacy and of commerce.

The task of assimilating the culture of the West and of paving the way

to fresh creative effort in Telugu fell to Viresalingam of Rajahmundry, on the bank of the Godavari. Viresalingam was great as a scholar and a social reformer, and he fashioned a great prose style in Telugu. In poetry, the transition from the decadent classicism of the Post-Vijayanagara period to the lyrical outburst of the present day was rendered easy by the gifted poets Tirupati Sastri and Venkata Sastri, who, like Beaumont and Fletcher, wrote as twin-poets. Their verse marks at once the end of the old poetry and the commencement of the new.

Among contemporary poets, Prof. Rayaprolu Subba Rao of the Osmania University, Hyderabad, D. V. Krishna Sastri, Viswanatha Satyanarayana and Nayani Subba Rao occupy the front rank. They have studied English literature with care and their knowledge of the Sanskrit and Telugu classics is intimate. While the drama, the novel, the short story, biography and history have all made rapid strides in recent years in Telugu, that which constitutes the special glory of modern Telugu literature is the poetry of love and of devotion which

these poets have given us. In their poetry we see the idealisation of woman, the homage paid to the Beloved, and the age-old yet ever-new longing for the Lord. Choice in expression and elevated in sentiment, the poetry of the modern group of Telugu writers represents the peak of achievement in Indian literature today.

The short lyrical poem, expressive of the dominant mood of the poet who pours forth the inmost yearnings of his soul, is the typical literary form in modern Telugu. But the first important modern *Kavya*—a long, sustained poetic effort—is the *Soundara-Nandam* of Lakshmi Kantam and Venkateswara Rao. This long poem possesses the perfection of form associated with the classic tradition, together with the lyrical sweetness of the moderns. The composing of songs and ballads of great beauty, in the manner of the folk-songs of the peasants, is an interesting development. The best writers of such songs are Adivi Bapiraju, painter, poet and storyteller, and Nanduri Subba Rao, the Andhra Burns whose “Yenki Patalu” are on everybody’s lips.

In Kannada (Canarese) the growth of literature in its many forms has not been far different from that in Telugu. Both peoples reacted similarly to the contact with Western culture and the first steps towards the creation of a new literature were taken by scholars well-versed in English. The pioneer of the new movement in Kannada poetry is

Prof. B. M. Srikantia. His *English Geetagalu* began a new era in the literary history of Karnataka. By his lectures and essays, no less than by his poems, Professor Srikantia has contributed to the literary awakening among his Kannada countrymen. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, D. R. Bendre, K. V. Puttappa and V. K. Gokak are among the foremost poets in modern Karnataka. Kailasam and Jagirdar, the playwrights, and Rajaratnam the songwriter, are other prominent figures. If lyrical poetry is the distinguishing feature of modern Telugu literature, the Kannadigas are pre-eminent in the field of the short story. “Masumatti” and some other stories of Masti Venkatesa Iyengar deserve to rank with the best of Tagore and of Premchand.

In the expression of the Renaissance spirit the Tamils are not so vocal as the Telugus or the Kannadigas. By temperament they are conservative—more intellectual than emotional, more critical than creative. The greatest modern *littérateur* among them, Pandit Swaminatha Iyer, has given a lifetime to the editing and interpretation of the classics of ancient Tamil. He wields a clear, incisive prose style. The greatest Tamil poet in recent times, Subrahmanya Bharati, broke away from the classic tradition and wrote verse and song instinct with the new life of an awakened India. In him, the poetry of patriotism took the highest flights. Neglected during his lifetime, Bharati’s is today a

name to cherish and to adore. A few of his immediate disciples have written elegant verse, but there is as yet no great outpouring of soulful Tamil poetry in our day comparable to that in Bengali, or in the other South Indian languages. In the domain of prose, however, the Tamils are marching ahead, and they have very nearly outstripped the Kannadigas and the Telugus. Journals like *Ananda Vikatan* and *Kalaimagal* have helped, within an incredibly brief space of time, the growth of a live Tamil, easy, humorous and extremely effective as a vehicle of modern thought. The short story, the satire, and the critical essay are the means which the modern Tamil has chosen for the expression of his peculiar genius.

Malayalam is an offshoot of Tamil, but it has absorbed much more of the Sanskritic element than the latter. Thus it happens that in Kerala—the home of Malayalam—good writers are also good Sanskrit scholars. The tradition of the great classic poets of Kerala is a living force, and Mahakavi Ullur Parmeswara Iyer represents the best in that tradition. The late Kumaran

Asan was a poet after the manner of Keats and his lyrical poems are treasured by his countrymen. In Vallathol Narayana Menon the modern Renaissance has found its greatest votary. In the Far South, he is hailed as the “Kerala Tagore.” Like Tagore he is a poet and a prophet who dreams golden dreams. Like him too, he has set himself to preserve and advance the great arts of music and dance embodied in the “Kathakali”. The “Kerala Kalamandalam” founded by the poet Vallathol is a veritable Temple of the Muses, where incense is offered by art-lovers, Indian and foreign. The short story in Malayalam is of recent growth, but the “Tarwad” of Sardar K. M. Panikkar and some other stories point to a great future.

To sum up, the literatures of South India have achieved some notable triumphs. While they share some features with their North Indian sisters, they are developing, each of them, a marked individuality due to differences in cultural heritage and to historical accident. The story of their growth in the last three or four decades is a necessary part of any literary history of modern India.

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

SYMBOLISM, ALLEGORY AND COLERIDGE

[**T. Sturge Moore** has already made an impress on English literature by creating poems that delight, entertain and, at times, uplift. More, he has also put his countrymen under a debt by rendering into English verse exquisite pieces of other tongues ; for example, " *Les Chercheuses de Poux* " of Arthur Reinbaud. The following is from a forthcoming book of the author, entitled " *Provocations*. "—ED.]

For long I scouted symbol and allegory. So many tastes seemed entirely vitiated because they prized works of art as allegories in spite of obvious defects. Should not art justify estimation by formal felicities and other reasons be discounted ? Yet, many masterpieces were intended as allegories, and symbols are meant to convey more than simple images.

I myself enjoyed reading unapparent interpretations into poems, though I held this made them neither better nor worse. But why should I differentiate this from any other general character which, though an essential part of a valuable whole, might also occur in a worthless one, and therefore could not, apart from a given instance, be considered valuable ; that persons seeking uplift or religious confirmation are misled does not alter success.

Evocative language can never be exact. Theology should be poetry. By parading as science its true function is thwarted. God is not subject to investigation and therefore can be neither defined nor argued about. Likewise value is always hypothetical and to be tentatively proposed.

Art enriches the possibilities of

conception but holds a mirror up to nature at its peril.

Of course nature mirrored as seen by a more gifted man does enrich conception, but this effect entirely depends on his extra potency and not on the mechanical fidelity of the mirror.

Conception is dual as concerned with the use of the master's materials and as concerned with the evocation of his theme.

A landscape that conveys some master's conception may often be poetical only not by fidelity to what was seen, but by what was never on sea or land but solely in the spirit of man. Artists forget that nature cannot be copied (duplicated) and that the paintable can only be partially reminiscent of the observed.

We admire art for evoking better than it represents ; we admire natural appearance for unintentional actuality ; merely by being they exercise our power of conceiving, till we become more sublime, more delicate, more peaceful, more self-sufficing than we were.

In art the manner is more valuable than the matter ; the vastness, infinitesimal subtlety and incomprehensibility of nature enlarges both

mind and soul. The opportunity is so great and constant as often to stupefy, so rarely are we able to respond.

Allegory and symbol are tentative responses to that in natural sequences which provokes yet baffles.

I have ready regrets that *The Ancient Mariner* had been proved wholly derived from books and not from experience. A very prevalent confusion this, for language is always derived from language, new uses of words from older, as has been proved for Shakespeare even more mincingly than for Coleridge.

So with pigment, stone and bronze, actual treatments are derived from traditional.

To confuse language with experience, images with significance, treatment with theme, as critics, who so complain, do, is gross.

That detective story, *The Road to Xanadu*, hides Coleridge's "pleasure dome" in a fog and fastens attention on separate coloured titles. A wish that Memory were not merely mother of the Muses but the only Muse seems to lurk there and is certainly abroad in the world.

We must enter imaginatively into another's described experience before we realize the descriptability of our own; a young child cannot describe any event, not having heard the words he needs frequently enough.

Thought too derives from thought, even when freshly applied. Our devotees of first-hand experience imply that physical events and observations are the only theme and

truth the only value, all else is derived—is, as they scornfully say, "literature" (see Verlaine "Art poétique" Jadiset Naguère).

Mere observation never appears in art, and has no value save for science. Those who clamour for it really attribute all value to chance; for them what happens has innate virtue; fact is the only source. But art is never a direct reflection but at nearest one strangely altered by a living mirror.

Poets are all blunderers till they have so loved the happy phrases of their predecessors that the texture of their own equally satisfies man's desire for enchantment, which, working through individuals, is hindered in various degrees.

Experience is both of the world and of the spirit; this latter informs each private capacity for joy, for suffering, for distinction and for sympathy. Language must furnish symbols: a precarious process since multitudes of words will serve. The nearest may look more strange than those far-fetched. Oddity arouses attention, yet precision is only attained when syntax compels the mind to consent. Thus the soul not only thieves from commonplace, but, if outlawed by usage, depends on affinity and intuition for communication.

Value being independent of origin, the inner experience symbolised in *The Ancient Mariner* may have been extremely private though it has proved universal. The soul's discovery of its own complicity with

the casual heartlessness of the world kills delight and creates the immeasurable loneliness of guilt. Then an accidental worship of beauty, and of the kindness thus experienced, leads to recovery. The fable is both novel and comprehensive and is far less dependent on any previous use of symbols than Dante's *Comedy*.

Coleridge, when eight years old, thwarted by his brother, snatched a carving knife with intent to kill; that incident may have crushed a paralysing cramp over his will, even as the rheumatic fever from which he suffered life-long was bruised into his flesh by the night of exposure he then underwent from dread of returning to his father's house. The whole poem thus becomes a projection of the poet's lonely frustrate "nightmare life in death," which, in spite of almost constant torture, yet remains so eloquent and fascinating.

The growth of eloquence is easily prophetic as it gages the spirit's assimilative power. He cut his coat out of the rarities of report because they fitted better than his bodily history. And philosophy and theology served him worse, for when he had recourse to their vocabularies he lost poetic power and critical divination, and grew confused and dogmatic. His acceptance of common terms destroyed his distinction and felicity.

Lovers of *The Ancient Mariner* have often reluctantly come to believe they had been tricked. But this was merely because they tried

to analyse; sympathy and intuition would have enlightened instead of blindfolding them.

A symbol acts as a nucleus for emotion: if there is no emotion nothing happens. Half-way between an intuition and conclusion it collects potency till the spirit can experiment, whereupon discoveries sometimes follow.

The beauty of symbols is chiefly that of the object or event referred to, not that of those symbolised, though the apposite use of symbols enhances this value.

Art is always derived from art and can only be original in effect. *The Ancient Mariner* is as original as it is moving. Such symbols as the incidents and observations used had never occurred before. What travelled poet has ever so flooded his experience with spiritual intensity?

Why should we suppose that Coleridge did all this sub-consciously, as though he had not taught that symbol and image should be suspended in poetry like salts dissolved in water, not pinned out and explained like scientific specimens?

He does not tell us how much of his mariner's tale was rooted in delirium or how much is a foreshortened record of actuality, but assumes that the narrator believed that the whole had happened and had revealed kindness. Superstitious and religious lore are mingled as in such a man's mind was inevitable. Daylight and vision, extravagance and homeliness, fuse in its beauty.

Some confusion as to the nature

of *The Ancient Mariner* seems to have arisen between Coleridge and Wordsworth before it was drafted. Since it was intended to illustrate the use of the supernatural as opposed to natural agents and events. This purpose is at once well nigh contradicted as supernatural incidents are asserted to be "real to any human being who, from whatever source of illusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency." What more could be wanted? Coleridge would seem to have come never-the-less to think of the spirit agents objectively except in the poem itself where all is put into the mouth of the Mariner who obviously and self-confessedly believes himself "under supernatural agency," and who has passed through trances and deliriums the contents of which he recounts as objective events. All Wordsworth pedantic tale of obvious faults in the poem succumbs to this constata-tion. The Mariner from being callous, as young men in pursuit of sport are apt to be, becomes an active member of the Christian church. The true superiority of the poem over *Peter Bell* is due to the form and theme having arisen together and developed hand in hand. Whereas *Peter Bell* illustrates a theme intellectually digested beforehand, *The Feast at Brougham Castle* in this respect resembles *The Ancient Mariner*. Perhaps Coleridge intended to illustrate a moral, but his impulse proved too strong for

later on he was seeking excuses for not having proceeded more as Wordsworth prescribed. Of course there never had been an essential difference between the classes of theme they set out to contrast. Aesthetically one thing alone was necessary to create the illusion that whatever was recounted had seemed true to the mind of the narrator, beyond that there is no reason why he should have a character and for this the Mariner's is more than sufficient.

Those for whom it merely is a story told are blind to the profound psychological intuitions from which it bloomed with or without premeditation.

Each statement should double its significance as though accompanied by an image. Rossetti alone, and never in a poem of equal length, has since equalled Coleridge in resolving symbols into a spiritual iridescence*. And they prefer Christina to him because those who are running after omnibuses can take her meaning at a glance! How like them!

I once found fault with that invention, the Spirit who loved the Albatross, for coming like cogwheels between intention and effect, whereas direct action is the essence of spirit. I feel less certain now; an hierarchy of transmitters well symbolises the painful ground swell of the poet's conscience: the lover of slain beauty lives "nine fathom deep" in the heart and pursues individual cruelty "from the land of mist and snow"

* Of course Baudelaire, Paul Valery and Yeats have triumphed in the like kind.

till it founder in compassion and humility and leave helplessness spinning round, on a whirlpool where it sunk. But where all is suggestion, statements venture too far, and yet may awaken more delicate interpretations in those who once read in the poet's words only what a child might.

Admiration quickens aromas of meaning which resemble those auras partly due to atmosphere and which obtain locality and shape from objects. Never was so much done with so little as in the seascapes of *The Ancient Mariner*. The ship, the calm, the motions of sun and moon interpreted by fever and ecstasy become as manifold as the story of Psyche, implication veiling implication, as tears mist sight, while all echoes the past and prophesies the future of the poet's endurance.

Might not the Albatross figure that animal buoyancy which clothes one phase of the soul's growth with a foreign charm?

As if it had been a Christian soul
We hailed it in God's name

after its death the personal and communal consequences lead on to

Instead of the Cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung

the mariner's moods having re-integrated his outraged sense of value,

The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Although the interplay of the poem's symbols with Christian symbols is extremely fecund, and makes the query "why we are told nothing of ship's officers and captain or of the purpose of the voyage" sound grotesque, since this spiritual body is too alive to suggest anatomy lessons, the corpse-like commonplaces of realism being more suitable for dissection. However reluctantly, we must accept the fact that poetry is poetry and neither riddles nor sermons. We are asked to feel and wonder not to analyse and conclude.

Stillness immense sinks through the printed
page

Till gentleness there floods unbounded room
While youth expands the cramping ribs of age
And bliss from grief returns as from a tomb.

You must let the poem dissolve in your life before it can be yours. Mere intellectuals never have sufficient time. They must crystallize every suggestion into some inadequate phrase before they have been reached; they freeze what should permeate.

T. STURGE MOORE

ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

ITS EFFECT ON URDU POETRY

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Those who wish to have a vision of God, says the *Quran*, must do good deeds. Mohammad Ibn Arabi, the great exponent of Sufism, has this passage of the *Quran* in mind when he says: " The reward for a virtuous life is the illumination of the heart by the Divine Being. " A man is to be judged by his behaviour in this world, by his service to humanity, by his true, honest and just life. Humanity is regarded as one compact whole. The *Quran* says :—

O men, fear your Lord who created you from a single nafs (essence) and from that created its mate and spread from these two, many men and women,

The ascetic life itself did not mean goodness. Indeed the ascetic life was tabooed. The Prophet says, there is no renunciation or asceticism in Islam. Mohammad Ibn Arabi also repeats this idea when he says : " There are religions fabricated by human misconception, as for instance asceticism. " Shaikh Saadi very vividly explains this : Sufism is nothing but service to humanity. It does not consist in counting the rosary, kneeling before the altar and wearing ascetic robes.

In Islam, life has two aspects, *Husn* and *Quba*, beauty and ugliness. All that is conducive to the realiza-

tion of man's responsibilities towards God and man is beauty and the rest is ugliness. The conquest over ugliness is possible only by struggle and endeavour and not by inactivity and seclusion. The main Sufis of this school are Owais Qarni with his love for spiritual elegance, Sulaiman with his love for the eminence of truth and Junaid with his love for patience.

This phase of Islam gradually passed into oblivion but there emerged from contact with different philosophies and religions, including the Vedantic philosophy, a mysticism which aimed at minimising the value of dogmas and laid stress on purification of heart. Maulana Rumi says :—

Religious ritual and prayers are good but the dwelling of the beloved is not in the mosque, temple or church ; it is in a pure heart.

Jami, the well-known Sufi poet of Iran, expresses this idea more boldly thus :—

Control the heart, for it is the biggest pilgrimage to Mecca.

One heart is better than thousands of Kabas, [the house of God.]

The word " Love " became the whole of the dictionary of this school ; from its phases were derived the

names of different stages of spiritual progress, *e. g.*, *Mahw* or *Jazb* (self-effacement), *Lahq* (Sobriety, or consciousness of men's spiritual progress), *Fana* (Annihilation), *Maqam* (a stage, or a stage of spiritualization) and *Haal* (the state of ecstasy, or a mystic practice). A Sufi regards the various mystic practices as indispensable for illuminating his heart and for edifying his soul.

This high philosophy permeated the Urdu poetry of the early days when in fact most of the Urdu poets were themselves Sufis, like Wali, Mirza Mazhar Jan Jana, Ameer Khusru and Mir Dard.

Their poetry is full of such thoughts. They know no distinction of caste or creed and see the atmosphere of Divinity in a universe full of harmonies. The following lines illustrate this :—

Mir ke deen wa mazhab ko kiya pochhte ho
unne to—
Qashqah khincha, deer men baitha, kab ka
tark islam kiya.—Mir.

(What do you ask about the faith and religion of Mir? He made such a sign on his forehead as Brahmans do, sat in the temple and left Islam long ago.)

Ham mowahid hain hamara kaesh hai tark-e-
rasoom—
Millaten jab mit gayeen ajzai eaman ho
gayeen.—Galib.

(I am atheist and my faith is abolition of ceremonies. When creeds die, they merge in a faith which recognises but one thing in the world.)

Zunnar bandh sabha-e-sad dana toor dal-
Rahrou chale hai rah ko hamwar dekh kar.
—Galib.

(Tie the thread and break the rosary of a hundred beads. The traveller moves along after fully judging the evenness of the path.)

In these lines the poets have condemned the sectional tendencies of religion and have preached a brotherhood of man by pointing out that there is no difference between Muslim and Hindu and Christian methods of approach to God.

Allah re jazb kamil raha umr bhar tasawwar-
Keh main tere rubaru hun tu mere rubaru hai.

(What an ecstasy that for the whole life! I was under the impression that I was before Thee and Thou wast before me.)

Jannat men bhej de keh jahannam men dal de-
Jalwah dekha ke par meri hasrat nikal de.

(Send me to Heaven or throw me into Hell but do satisfy my ambition by showing me Thy vision!)

Azan de kaaba men naqoos deer men phunka-
Kahan kahan tera ashik tujhe pukar aaya.

(A call to prayer was made in the Kaaba and a conch was blown in the temple. In how many places has Thy lover searched for Thee!)

Hogaya mehman sarai kasrat-e-mauhoom ah!
Woh dil khali keh tera khas khilwat khana tha.

(It is a pity that the heart which was Thy abode alone, now accommodates a number of unreal things.)

In these lines the poets have given expression to the deepest love for God — a passion which makes them indifferent to all mundane happiness.

Jabkeh tum bin nahin koi maojood-
Phir yeh hangama aye khuda kiya hai.

—Galib.

(When no one exists except Thee, why is there all this struggle and commotion in the world, O! God?)

Parda kiya hai eak baray-e-nam hai-
Husn tera Jalwah gah-e-am hai.

(The veil is but nominal. Thy beauty is visible in everything.)

The central idea moving in the minds of the poets in these lines is the Vedantic philosophy of Hama Ust (All is he) which finds Divinity in everything and denies everything else.

Material happiness as a reward for attaining Divinity does not appeal to Sufi poets.

Aisi jannat ko kiya kare koi—
Jismen lakhon baras ki hooren hon.—Galib.

(What will one do with a paradise where there are houris (damsels) of lacs of years?)

Kiya karoonga hath se horoon ke waiz leke
jam—
Hun main sagar kash kisi ke nargis-e-makh-
moor ka.—Sauda.

(O preacher, why should I take a cup from the hand of a damsel of paradise? I am athirst for a transcendent vision.)

Gar huwa hai talib-e-azadgi—
Band mat ho sabah-o-zunnar ka.—Wali.

(If you are searching after freedom (light) don't bind yourself to rosary and thread.)

The time came when the spirit of Sufism was replaced only by its outer expressions of renunciation, by rosary and robe of a peculiar kind. This was the time when the Muslim rule also was feeling the pangs of death. These acted and reacted on Urdu poetry. It has been said that when a nation is at its ebb poetry flows. This is true of the Urdu poetry of this time. Perhaps that is why we find its Ghazals full of pangs, pathos and pessimism.

At this stage material love was

uppermost and therefore the poetry appealed only to the lower passions of man. Daag is the chief exponent of this school and his pupils are still moving in the same groove.

Bosa lekar dil diya hai aur phir nalan hain
daag—
Koi jane muft men hazrat ka nuqsan
hogaya.—Hy.

(Daag has given his heart in return for a kiss and yet he complains that he has been robbed.)

A reaction to this school was set up by Hasrat, Josh and Jigar, three living poets. They dive deep into the philosophy of love. Jigar has even something of Hafiz of Shiraz in him.

Usne sagar ko uchchala the kisi din dam-e-
kaif—
Ban gaya alam-e-hasti hamatan alam-e-kaif,
—Jigar.

(He had raised the cup of drink one day in a state of deep exhilaration. That is why the whole region of existence is intoxicated with love for Him.)

The first note of warning against aimless poetry, especially that of the Daag school, was struck by Hali, a great realist among poets. He reminded the poets of early Islam and introduced into Urdu poetry that philosophy of life which prepares a man for success in the worldly struggle. But the poet who revived the early thoughts of Islam and who has rejuvenated and galvanised into action all that is desirable for the struggle of life is Iqbal, who rides the crest of the wave of the present renaissance of Islam.

While the old poets repudiate the self, Iqbal emphasises it and warns

it to face the storm and stress of life; while the old poets say that our existence is like a short-lived dew and therefore we should ignore it, Iqbal says that even this dew is not to be despised, for if collected together and put to work, it can perform miracles; while the old poets opine that self must be destroyed because it is a veil between man and God, who is love, Iqbal says that if there were no self there would be none to appreciate the beauties of "Love"; while the old poets ask, since one is to die one day, why not die now—that is, become inactive in life—Iqbal says that man is born with some purpose in view, to attain which he has to lead an active life in this world, and that, therefore, to bring about an unnatural death would be ingratitude to Nature.

The main drawback of the old school is that it creates an atmosphere of pessimism and depression. Some people say that this is due to the mystic principles of renunciation and negation of self, but it may be that since Sufi ideas are mostly expressed in Ghazals and a Ghazal is generally full of *Yas* (Depression) and *Hirman* (Sadness) expressing disappointment and yearning to attain the *beau-idéal* of love, it naturally develops a feeling of pessimism. Bloomfield says that there is something inherent in the climate and the environment of India which leads to pessimism. But pessimism is natural to man, even according to Homer, who says that man is the saddest of creatures. An Urdu poet

also expresses this idea beautifully:—

Bulbul ko diya nalah to parwanah ko jalna-
Gham hamko diya sabse jo mushkil nazar
aaya.

(Bewailing is for the nightingale and burning is for the moth, but sorrow, the most difficult thing, is for us.)

Iqbal, on the other hand, creates optimism and youthful vitality. The following comparison between the old school and Iqbal will bear out the point. The old poets sing:—

Waye nakami keh bad az marg yeh sabit
huwa-
Khab that jo kuch keh dekha jo suna afsana
tha.

(Alas, failure! It came to light after death that what we had seen was a dream and that what we had heard was only a story.)

Aye ajal eak din akhir tujhe aana hai walay-
Aaj aati shab-e-furqat men to ahsan hota.

(O death, after all, thou hast to come one day. If thou comest tonight—the night of separation—I shall feel grateful.)

Zindigi hai ya koi toofan hai
Ham to is jine ke haton mar chalay.

(Is it life or a storm? The hands of life have done me to death.)

Iqbal, on the contrary, exclaims:—

Kion chaman men besada misl-e-ram shabnam
hai tu.
Lab Kusha hoja surood-e-barbat-e-alam hai
tu.

(Why art thou lifeless and silent in this garden like an evaporating dew? Open thy lips; get on; thou art the tune of the music of this world.)

Be khabar tu jawahar-e-aaina-e-aiyam hai-
Tu zamana men khuda ka akhri paigam hai.

(O ignorant, thou art the essence of the reflex of the times. Thou art the last message of God in this world.)

Apni duniya aap paida kar agar zindoon men
 hai-
 Sir-e-aadam hai zamire-e-kun fikan hai zin-
 digi.

(Create thy own world if thou hast
 life. Life is the secret of men and an
 expression of the wishes of Nature
 which brought about the world.)

Aashakara hai yeh apni quwat-e-taskhir se-
 Garche eak mitti ke paiker men nihan hai
 zindigi.

(Although life is hidden in an earthen
 body, yet it is apparent by its magnetic
 and conquering powers.)

A number of poets still aim at
 composing lines of *marfat* (poetry
 containing high mystic philosophy.)
 For example :—

Asrar-e-ishiq hai dil-le-muztar liye huwe-
 Qatra hai bay qarar samundar liye huwe.—
 Asghar.

(The secrets of love have within

them a palpitating heart. The drop
 is in a state of perturbation having
 within it an ocean (*i. e.*, God).)

Bay hijabi yeh keh har zarrah men jalwah
 aashikar-
 Us pah ghunghat yeh keh surat aaj tak na
 didah hai.—Aasi.

(Manifestation goes to the extent
 that he is seen in every particle in this
 world and the veil is such that the
 face is not seen to this day.)

But among living poets the one
 who has put Sufism in a nutshell is
 Hafeez Jalundhari who says :—

Brahman nalah naqoos masjid tak to pahun-
 cha de-
 Bura kiya hai moazzin bhi agar bedar hojai.

(O Brahman, send forth the noise of
 your conch to the mosque! What is
 the harm if the bugler of prayers also
 is wakened?)

S. N. A. JAFRI

The true Knight of the Way must perforce be both broad-shouldered and stout of heart; his burden is heavy and he has far to go. For Goodness is the burden he has taken upon himself; and must we not grant that it is a heavy one to bear? Only with death does his journey end: then must we not grant that he has far to go?

—The Analects of Confucius.

NAWAB JÂFFAR 'ALĪ KHĀN ASAR'S MYSTICAL POETRY

[The poet is the natural ally of the prophet and both build with their words a bulwark against the tidal wave of materialism that ever and anon threatens to engulf men's minds. **Dr. Md. Hafiz Syed** contributes this sensitive appreciation of the mysticism of a leading Urdu poet whose own study of "The Poet Insha" appeared in our January 1940 issue.—ED.]

There is no dearth of Urdu poets in modern India. Some of them are quite content in pursuing the traditional forms of poetry, whereas a few have departed from the beaten track and have chalked out a line of their own which they follow independently. Asar combines in his poetry both the early and modern forms. He is a purist in language and his diction is as flawless as that of any mediæval poet. Notwithstanding his great admiration for Mir and Sauda and Dard he does not always linger in their footsteps, but occasionally gives evidence of a boldness of conception and a flight of thought all his own. He has a deep insight into the value and the dignity of man, whom he believes to be the crest-jewel of creation. He has endless faith in man's progress and glorious destiny.

A careful and critical study of Asar's works reveals that he has a philosophical outlook on life. He has bestowed no small amount of thought on the problem of the origin and the final destiny of man. His poetic imagination has raised the flight of his thought to unknown and invisible regions where words

have no value and expressions no significance. It is the realm of direct vision, beyond the limitations of time and space.

His observations on human society, man and his relation to nature, and the lack of ethical values in ordinary life, and his distrust of cant and hypocrisy are so thought-provoking and striking that one cannot help admiring them.

Almost all the schools of Eastern and Western mysticism believe that unless a man transcends his limitations and overcomes his sense of separateness by self-forgetfulness he cannot be vouchsafed Divine vision. The Infinite is invisible and fathomless. It is the real source of our being. It lies beyond time and space. In Christian phraseology, "He who loseth his life shall find it." This ideal of self-realization through self-forgetfulness is pithily summed up in the following couplet :—

*Dekhā lai aksar mujhay bekhudī
Woh ālam jahān koi ālam nahin.*

[My] self-forgetfulness has shown me oftentimes that world where no one world exists, i. e., the region beyond time and space. [In other words, the

aspirant gets a glimpse of the Reality only when through self-abnegation he rises above his physical surroundings and dives deep into his real being.]

Our common humanity, a fact in nature, is verbally admitted by many but in actual dealings it is hardly recognized by even a few. People talk grandly of the philosophy and the underlying religious significance of it but never show fellow-feeling when they see some one in distress.

Asar has embodied this ideal in a couplet and says in an emphatic tone :—

*Iman ghalat, ūsūl ghalat, iddeā ghalat—
Insan kī dildēhī agar insān na kar sake.*

A man's claim to superiority, his moral principles and his faith [in God or in religion] are all false if a man [has not learnt] to sympathise with his fellow beings

It is a long-accepted mystic maxim that self-knowledge is the beginning of Divine knowledge. In the words of Ali the great, in order to acquire Divine knowledge it is necessary first to know oneself. The higher human self, free from all limitations, has an affinity—nay, according to some, identity—with the Divine Self, the Supreme Reality. Ordinarily a man is not aware of his Divine nature. He is deluded in thinking that he is too frail and weak to rise to any height, moral or spiritual. When he is awakened to his higher self he finds that he has immense possibilities and that he can attain self-realization in course of time. What stood in his

way was his ignorance and his underestimation of his own worth. This idea is beautifully portrayed in the following verse :—

*Ay bandai auhām kidhar dhyān hay terā
Ay mard-e-khudakhuḍ talabī, haq talabī hay.*

O you who are the victim of delusion, what are you thinking of? O man in search of God, to seek one's self is the [true] search of God.

It may be noted that the self referred to here is the higher self, that which is called in Sūfī terminology *anāniyat-haqīqī* as against *anāniyat-shahshī*, human personality. Therefore one who truly seeks to understand his higher self is in a position to know what Divine knowledge really means.

Spiritual life, union with God, truly begins with renunciation. It is the *sine qua non* of higher life. There is nothing so great as supreme Reality. Everything earthly, however great or glorious it may be, loses all its value in His presence. He is the fount of life, glory and greatness. He is really the highest, the incomparable, the Supreme. It is in accordance with this fundamental principle of spiritual life that the poet gives vent to his innermost feelings in these words :—

*Khayāl us Jân-e-Jân kā hay to har raf'at ko
thukrāday
Nazar kī had sahi, parwāz kī had āsman
kiyon ho.*

Spurn every kind of [worldly] greatness if thou desirest [union] with that life of life. The sky is the limit of vision, one cannot see beyond it; it cannot be the limit of flight [of thought].

Man shares the Divine life. His essential nature is creative. There is nothing of value in this world of which he is not an architect. Man is acknowledged to be the lord of creation. The fact of the immense potentialities hidden in man is couched in the following lines which awaken man's self-respect in no small measure and remind him of his hidden power and untold possibilities :—

*Khudā mālūm ketne gulstān maine banaddāle,
Khaso Khāshāk kī tāmīr mera ashīyan
keyon ho.*

God alone knows how many gardens I have created. My nest is not made of straw and grass.

The first and the last duty of man is self-realization, self-awareness. If a man does not occupy his time and energy in this noble pursuit his life is spent in vain. The purpose of his earthly existence is defeated. So the poet has well said :—

*Maqsūd zindigī kā bedāriye khūdī hay
Ay bekhābar, wagar na besūd zindigī hay.*

The purpose of [human] life is the awakening of [the higher] Self, O negligent one; otherwise life has no value.

Man is not a mere speck of dust come today into existence and tomorrow gone away for ever. His outer form may change and disappear but the real man, the ensouling life, remains for ever and ever. It is immutable and eternal. The solidity of man is proclaimed in no uncertain tone in these lines :—

*Insān ruhe-e-āzam, insān wajhe ālam;
aur tum samajh rahe ho murat wo mitti kī hai.*

Man is a great soul; he is the cause of the world; you are under the impression that he is a mere image made out of clay.

In another couplet the same ideal of man's immortality is thus expressed :—

*Ak mustaqil haqīqat, nāqabile-taggaīyyūr;
Hasti Jo yah nāhi hay hastī hi naystī hay.*

[Man has in him] a permanent reality which is incapable of change. If this is not [the nature] of his existence, this existence is no better than non-existence.

Some of the Sufis and Vedāntists believe that there is only one Reality without a second. He alone exists at all times. There is none else beside Him. He is all-pervasive and omniscient. If once it is accepted that throughout the whole of this manifested universe there is nothing real save Him, the Supreme Reality, then the question of existence or non-existence loses its force. The same idea is beautifully expressed in poetic language by Asar. He says :—

*Jab tū hī tū hay to phir ghāib o hūzūr kaisī
Ak hī rang fanā aur baqā ka nekla.*

When thou alone existest, what sense is there in the assertion that one is present or absent from Him? [In that case] eternity and annihilation may be said to have been tinged with the same colour.

A Tibetan mystic has well said, "Thou art the object of thine own search." When an aspirant comes to the end of his journey and finds his rest and peace in Him, he is amazed at the final discovery that

he has found nothing more than his own higher Self. This is a great mystical truth known and accepted by all the great mystics of the world. Asar has put it in his own words:—

*Āp apnī arzū hay, āp apnī justujū
Jalwa zār-e-bekhudī main laili-e-mahmil
kahan.*

Thou art thy end of thy desire and the object of thy search. The Laila sitting in a Camel-litter [*i. e.* the beloved separated from the lover] loses her charm when an aspirant enters the garden of self-forgetfulness.

The problem of life and death has always puzzled humanity. Only those who have deeper insight and who see the everlasting life pulsating through all existence, have been known to face death calmly and bravely. They know that death does not put an end to our existence. It is a mere stage in evolution. Every particle has endless potentialities embedded in it. Its future destiny is glorious. No amount of change and transformation can mar its utility and existence. Life is a continuous stream, never-ending, ever-existing, perpetual,

ancient and eternal. This comforting and consoling ideal is brought out in this couplet:—

*Mustaqbil-e-tāza hay jo khāḥ ka zarvā hay,
Jab zīst musalsal hai, mar jāne ko kayd
kahiya?*

Every particle of earth has a fresh future [every time]. When life is continuous, what will you say to death? [*i. e.*, it should have no terror].

Pleasure and pain, joy and happiness are passing phases in human life. A man who is endowed with wisdom tries to transcend both. He knows that the real self is beyond their influence. It is free from the anxiety of joy or fear. It is eternally peaceful and above all change and sorrow. So Asar warns us to beware of their seductions and look up to our higher destiny.

*Raghuzare hayāt men kaisī khūshī, Kāhān kā
gham*

In say baland tar hāy tū aur yah arzī-na dekh.

In the thoroughfare of [human] life what is pleasure and what is pain [*i. e.*, both are passing and therefore unreal]. Thy real self is higher than these; do not set thy eyes on their transitory phase.

M. HAFIZ SYED

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIAN MYSTICISM

VI.—NORTH INDIAN HINDU MYSTICISM IN THE MIDDLE AGES:

[**Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri**, District and Sessions Judge (Retired), brings to this series of studies of the evolution of mysticism on the congenial soil of India—the sixth instalment of which we publish here—a wide acquaintance with this country's mystical lore and an understanding sympathy with its varying expressions.—ED.]

Hindu mysticism in the middle ages flowed in two great streams which had more similarities than dissimilarities and many points of contact with each other. The one stream carried forward the early mystical tradition as enriched by the Puranas and the Agamas. The other stream carried forward a mingled tradition in which blended the ancient tradition and Sufi mysticism as well as orthodox Islamic tradition which insisted on God's being above form and on there being no barrier between man and man. In North India the ancient Hindu mystical tradition centres round Tulsidas and Mira Bai and others in the West and round Vidyapati and Chandidas and others in the East. Tulsidas's *Rama Charita Mānas* was and is and ever will be one of the greatest spiritual forces in the world. Mira Bai's songs on Krishna are full of the spiritual fervour which breathes in the *Bhāgawata*. The songs about the Universal Mother and Krishna in Bengal are of supreme charm. But probably the greatest works in the line of traditional Hindu mysticism are Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* and

Chaitanya's songs. The former glorifies the longings of the Soul of Devotion and its mystical union with the Oversoul. The *Sankirtan* movement and the mood of devotional ecstasy which it achieved and communicated are among the finest flowers of North Indian Mysticism.

Beside this stream of traditional Hindu mysticism, there flowed also the blended triple stream already referred to. Ramananda, inspired by Ramanuja, spread liberal Vaishnavism in North India and gave a great impetus to Hindi by giving his message in that language. Among his disciples are Ravidas, a shoemaker, Kabir, a Mahomedan weaver, Sena, a barber, and others belonging to the lower castes. He had women disciples also. He is reported to have said: "Why do you any longer call me to go to the temple? Him, omnipresent and all-pervading, I have met in the very temple of my heart." He taught that Rama was the supreme God. The following couplet is significant:

Bhakti Dravir Upaji laye Ramanand.
Pragat Kiyo Kabir-ne Sapta Dvip nam-
khand !

(Bhakti was born in Dravida. Ramanand took it north. Kabir spread it all over the world which consists of seven islands and nine khandas).

Kabir's poems are among the most famous in Indian literature. Rabindranath Tagore published some years ago an excellent translation of one hundred poems of Kabir. The following are among the finest of Kabir's mystic poems. These are in Hindi, and he said, comparing Sanskrit with the spoken Indian languages: " O Kabir, Sanskrit is the water of the well while Bhāsā (the spoken languages) are the waters of the running stream." He says about the interrelation of the Infinite and the Finite: " From beyond the Infinite the Infinite comes, and from the Infinite the Finite extends". He speaks about " the unstruck music of the Infinite ". The following are some other beautiful songs by him:—

" O Servant ! Where dost thou seek Me ? Lo ! I am beside thee. I am neither in temple nor in mosque. I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailas. Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga and renunciation.

" If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me. Thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.

Kabir says: ' O Sādhu ! God is the breath of all breath. "

" The musk is in the deer, but it seeks it not within itself.

It wanders in quest of grass. "

" Do not go to the garden of flowers. O friend ! go not there.

In your body is the garden of flowers. Take your seat on the thousand petals

of the lotus and there gaze on the Infinite Beauty."

Putting aside the legends about Kabir, one view is that probably he was the son of a Mahomedan weaver whose ancestor had become a convert to Islam from Hinduism. Another view is that he was a Hindu who was brought up by a Muslim couple. He imbibed both Sufi and Hindu mysticism. His son Kamāl and his daughter Kamālī also were mystics of a high order. His disciple Dādu was another famous mystic who organised what is known as the Brahma-Sampradāya (the Divine tradition).

There is a story about Kabir which is significant in many ways. Once, Hindu Pandits and Mahomedan Kazis made common cause to arraign him before the Court of Emperor Sikandar Shah Lodi. Kabir said to the Emperor: " My object was to unite the Hindus and the Mussulmans but it looked impossible. I am glad that it has become possible today. If it could occur under the throne of an earthly sovereign like your Majesty, would not a bigger platform be available for them under the throne of the Lord of the Universe ? If it is possible through hatred, would it not be even more possible through love ? Is not love stronger than hate ? " The Emperor felt the justice of his words and respected him and let him go.

Dādu was probably a son of *muchī* (shoemaker parents) though about him also we have legends—as about Kabir—which try to give him a

higher caste. His earlier name was Daud. He taught the worship of God in the heart through love and the service of the children of God and the uselessness of pilgrimage and vows and rituals and image-worship. He, like Kabir, had both Hindu and Mahomedan disciples. He spent his life in meditation and contemplation. He says: "From separation I have come to union. The bonds of self are loosened, all error has fled, and the light of Brahman shines upon my soul." He looked upon the married state not as a hindrance but as a help in the practice of *Sādhana*. According to him, *Sādhana* meant the development of all our good qualities. He says:—

"When all the strings of the Vina are played, then is the melody entrancing. So when all the powers and faculties and ideas of man are cultivated in the same degree, in tune with the wisdom of all cults, all ages, all climes, then does it become a true Yoga, the Brahma Yoga."

He says further:—"As the scent is in the flower, the life in the veins, as everywhere the light of the sun, so is He naturally within you." He says again: "This body is my book, in which the All Merciful writes his messages. My life is my Pandit....My temple of God is within me." He held that God took form in the universe because of his joy in it. Man is like God when he is artistically creative and when he finds joy in service. Dādu gave a new meaning to the old words Dwaita and Adwaita. He said that in

Dwaita Man was a suppliant before God and that in Adwaita Man and God merge into each other and into the creation. The knowledge of the Many makes us proud but our communion with the One makes us joyful. God's Bliss flashes as Beauty in Nature and in Love. He is mirrored in His Creation and beholds His beauty in that mirror. The world is His Leela.

Ravidas's songs are equally beautiful. In one of them he says: "Him for whose sake I have wandered far away, I have discovered just now in my own worthless body." About communion with God, he says: —

"The pure sweetness of it is peerless and it has no birth or death. It is past and yet not past; it never decays; and it exists in all beings."

Bhavanada, who was a learned disciple of Rāmānada, wrote a work called *Amrit-Dhar* which explains in simple Hindi the highest Vedantic mysticism. He as well as the other disciples of Rāmānanda walked in the latter's footsteps and spread the doctrine of mystic love and devotional ecstasy all over North India.

Nanak, who founded Sikhism, was another great saint. He composed many beautiful songs. He was against caste and image-worship and all forms of sectarian bigotry. He taught that if we surrender ourselves to God in a spirit of pure love and meditate on God we can easily realise him. The Sikh Granth Sahib contains the songs and poems of various saints. It contains *pad*s (teachings)

arranged according to *rāgs*. After the *rāgs* come the *bhōg* (offering), *stav* (adoration) and *dohā* (collection of verses). The ideas therein are of an exalted and spiritual character. Guru Nanak was deeply influenced by Islam. In the preamble to the *Japji* he said: "There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and bountiful. Repeat His name." He replied to the High Priest of Baghdad: "I reject all sects and only know one God, whom I recognise in the earth, the heavens and in all directions." His successors were Guru Argud, Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjun, Guru Har Gobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tej Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. They carried forward his principles and his policy and founded and spread Sikhism.

It is not possible to go in detail into the poems and songs composed by the innumerable mystic poets and saints of North India. The following sayings of Agra Das are very fine :—

Worship God who is the god of gods.

Days that are spent in joy are the fruit of life.

To attain Hari, lose your body and mind in him.

Rajjab says: "Within our own selves is that lamp which will dispel the darkness that surrounds us." He says further :—

"There are as many sects as there are men. The worship of different sects, which are like so many small

streams, are moving together to meet God who is like the ocean.... All the world is the Veda and the entire creation is the Koran."

"My eyes have opened unto God in His own form, and the wealth of beauty that I now see is too vast to be contained by this world....*Sadhana* means the end of all doubt and hesitation. It means lying prostrate at the feet of God." (Kesava Das)

A special mention should, however, be made of the Baul singers. Rabindranath Tagore has made them immortal by his essay on *An Indian Folk Religion* in his *Creative Unity*. He says in it :—

"Man would never feel the indignity of his limitations if these were inevitable. Within him he has glimpses of the Infinite, which give him assurance that this truth is not in his limitations but that this truth can be attained by love....The members of the religious sect I have mentioned call themselves 'Baul'. They live outside social recognition, and their very obscurity helps them in their seeking, from a direct source, the enlightenment which the soul longs for, the eternal light of love."

He refers to the following Baul songs :—

Make way, O bud, make way,

Burst open thy heart and make way.

The opening spirit has overtaken thee,

Canst thou remain a bud any longer?

Where shall I meet him, the Man of my
Heart?

He is lost to me and I seek him, wandering
from land to land.

I am listless for that moonrise of beauty,
which is light to my life,

which I long to see in the fulness of
vision, in gladness of heart.

The author of the above song was

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

The Mind of The Maker. By DOROTHY L. SAYERS. (Methuen, London. 6s.)

Miss Sayers published some time ago an article in which she plainly set down the essentials of Christian doctrine as the Church defines them, and was irritated to find that reviewers and readers insisted on regarding this objective statement as a profession of personal faith or opinion. The irritation is understandable, but I have some sympathy with the reviewer who called it "a personal confession of faith by a woman who feels sure she is right."

For it is Miss Sayers's strength (and may be her weakness) to write with the utmost assurance, to write, one might almost say, with a punch, which is stimulating, though it may flatten out a little the finer shades. Her new book, also, has a reference to Christian doctrine, but it is not, as she hastens to say, either an apology for Christianity or an expression of personal religious belief, exact by implication. It is a commentary in the light of her experience as a creative writer on certain statements made in the Christian creeds which aim at defining the nature of God, conceived in his capacity as Creator. As she truly says, the "experience of the creative imagination in the common man or woman and in the artist is the only thing we have to go upon in entertaining and formulating the concept of creation." And the Christian doctrines which attempt to define the nature of the Creator, notably the

doctrine of "the Trinity", are those which, rightly understood, can be most readily accepted by non-Christians and which indeed are not peculiar to Christian teaching.

Certainly Miss Sayers by re-interpreting them in the light of the artist's actual experience infuses new meaning into them, while at the same time adding significance to the problems of the artist, in whom the trinity of idea, energy, and power, as she calls them, are seen at work, seeking the synthesis of a perfect embodiment. One of her most fascinating chapters is that in which she distinguishes writers who are respectively 'father-ridden', 'son-ridden', and 'ghost-ridden', placing Swinburne, for example, or the Euphuists among the 'son-ridden', in whom "the immense ingenuity and sensuous loveliness of the manner is developed out of all proportion to the tenuity of the ruling idea"; or Beddoes as a supreme example of "genuine incoherence and atrophy of the fatherhood". Stated thus, out of its context, this may seem far-fetched. But in fact it is based in exact and verifiable experience. Nor is it confined to the artist since everyone is a potential artist. We all have a trinity in us which is striving to become a unity. And Miss Sayers neatly defines the different possibilities of failure when she writes that "whereas failure in the father may be roughly summed up as a failure in Thought and failure in the son as a failure in Action, failure in the ghost is a failure in Wisdom."

But she does not confine herself to the mystery of the Trinity. In the artist's experience she finds, too, an exemplification of the combined transcendence and immanence of the Creator, of the necessity of evil and its redemption, and the reconciliation of divine pre-destination with free created will. For the novelist or playwright in creating imaginary characters is, as she writes, "conscious of the paradoxical need—namely the complete

independence of the creature combined with its willing co-operation in his purpose in conformity with the law of its nature."

This will suggest the kind of way in which she seeks to illuminate the mind of the divine Maker through that of the human. She has written a stimulating little book, the interest of which transcends any narrow Christian boundaries.

H. I'A. FAUSSET

My Spirit Walks Alone. By HERMON OULD. (Published by the Author from The Porch, Tring, Herts., England. 2s. 6d.)

This little book, creeping from privacy into an exploding world, deserves more attention than it is likely to receive. It is the best book, in any form, which Mr. Ould has produced. It is simple, sincere, intense and deft.

On the left-hand pages are short passages in a kind of rhymed prose. On the right-hand pages are twelve-line poems all of them in the simplest stanza that could be used. And the whole work forms a dialogue between Body and Spirit, Body not wishing to give up his accustomed delights (not all of them sinful even from the strictest height of morality), and Soul who, intent upon her high and lonely quest, pities Body and weeps for his "doubt" and "pain".

These lines will show the style and

the direction of the poems :—

" Within the walls of paradise
The body knows not shame ;
Five senses, heritage of man,
Their rightful tribute claim.
And you, my spirit, make no moan :
Scale your Tibetan heights, alone."

Again :—

" But how can body be content ?
Can body be aware
Of beatific bliss, if Truth
Be one with Dark Despair ?
Shake free, my spirit, from concern
With body's bliss. Let body learn."

And even when Body has to resign some of his major hopes of happiness, the poet consoles him by saying " All poetry remains, all music, art ; Hamlet eternally reveals his heart and ours. Beethoven through the blackest night proclaims the light ; and what poor lover's tears will e'er efface the Wingéd Victory of Samothrace ? " There is more gold in this small book than in twenty volumes of ordinary verse.

CLIFFORD BAX

The Preparation of Peace. By LAURENCE HOUSMAN. (Jonathan Cape, London. 8s. 6d.)

Everyman's Affair : A Plea for a Sane Peace. By A. RUTH FRY. (Andrew Dakers, London. 1s.)

A Real Peace. By VISCOUNT CECIL. (Hamish Hamilton, London. 6d.)

The paradox of peace as a war aim is apparently deterring Western politicians from preparing for peace after the war. But constructive planning is being done by some thoughtful, non-political people behind the scenes. These three books limn a representative picture of intelligent minority opinion in Britain.

Mr. Housman brings his highly civilised mind to bear on the problem of post-war security, and asks for " consent to move in the direction of that fundamentally necessary concession for international control of powers and possessions which we have hitherto held to be exclusively our own ". Miss Fry, a Christian Quaker, calls upon us to envisage problems from a world point of view, working and planning for the good of all. Viscount Cecil believes that " there must be a general international authority " if world peace is to be achieved and maintained.

In some respects, Miss Fry's book accomplishes best what all three set out to do. If she could only have overcome a tendency to lay down God's laws, the influence of her pen might have moved the war-ridden mass-mind in the direction of peace. Such phrases as " War is like sliding down a water chute " are calculated

to catch the popular eye and, backed by straightforward argument as they are, might well have made the colourful rhetoric of opportunist politicians pale by comparison.

Mr. Housman's approach is subtler, more spiritual than conventionally religious. He speaks of " conscientious objectors to State-worship "; he attributes war-mindedness to tribal religion, national convention, lack of thought and imagination, selfrighteousness and sentimentality ; he reduces the familiar militarist plea that " Human nature cannot change " to a delightful *reductio ad absurdum*. On man's mismanagement of human relationships he feels strongly, and is an advocate of love against hatred, of heart rather than head.

The Treaty of Versailles, stands a monument to the unimaginativeness of clever minds, clinging obstinately to an old school of thought which has again and again failed to bring peace or security by methods of vengeance and punishment, and will always so fail. . . Imagination is a spiritual gift, working for the realisation of things spiritual ; and war is not, and never can be, either in its operation or its results, a spiritual thing.

Viscount Cecil gives the impression that he would be shocked by much that Mr. Housman has had the courage to write. His own book is altogether too reserved and cautious. He makes an astonishing, but refreshingly unpharisaical admission on the ethics of war : " The rightfulness of using force does not depend on the moral guilt of the person against whom it is employed. " If only politicians were as explicit in their propaganda, there would be fewer and shorter wars.

D. STOLL

The Secret Splendour. By K. D. SETHNA. (Published by the Author, 47, Warden Road, Bombay. Rs. 2/8)

These lyrics are described on the dust-cover as "Poems seeking a new intensity of vision and emotion, a mystic inwardness that catches alive the deepest rhythms of the Spirit." It is an apt description. True, "the deepest rhythms of the Spirit" are hardly to be captured in any net of words, however cunningly spread, but Mr. Sethna certainly has caught the haunting echo of a wing-beat in these lines.

The eponymous poem is not the best of this collection and has wisely not been given first place—but its title does give a clue to the predominant mood. This is poetry for the mystically inclined. Others will make little of it.

For every poet except the greatest

genius there are certain images to which he turns again and yet again for the embodiment of his thought: he can never exhaust their possibilities. Mr. Sethna has many symbols at his command but of them all Night, with her "circumambient mystery," her "wide magnificence of silent beauty half-revealed, remote" draws him most often to her contemplation. "Night in the Open" and "Violet Wisdom" are very beautiful. So are many other poems in the collection. The transcendent significance for Dante of "mystery-haunted, flower-sweet" Beatrice has a fascination for Mr. Sethna; he devotes to it three of his loveliest lyrics. His translations of French sonnets are felicitous.

We heartily commend *The Secret Splendour* to lovers of poetry, East and West.

E. M. H.

Marxism and the Indian Ideal. By BRAJENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY. (Thacker, Spink & Co., Ltd., Calcutta. Cloth Rs. 3/—, Paper Re. 1/—)

This little book endeavours to show the utter uselessness of such forms of government as the West has instituted, Marxism in particular, to which many of India's young thinkers are attracted, for the future development of India. The picture given by the author of Ancient India and its system of Government is indeed an attractive one, and we cannot think why "it is not possible

or necessary to bring back those ancient formations".

And as the author further points out, it is because of this ancient background that foreign institutions are not in keeping with the life of the Indian people, for in their "subconsciousness there remains the essentials of the Ancient Indian organization."

Sir S. Radhakrishnan, in a very fine Foreword, puts forward the goal not only for India, but that towards which it should be the constant endeavour of all nations to reach.

C. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

LITERATURE AS PROPAGANDA

The Greeks and the ancient Indians agree that the purpose of literature is to enable man to know himself. Christian thinkers from Paul to Thomas 'A Kempis proclaim that the Bible transforms the reader into Christ. But with the emergence of nationalism as the religion of Europe, literature began to serve as the unconscious tool of collective greed and collective prejudice.

The modern tragedy is that man's control of himself has not kept pace with his control of external forces. Literature, if properly used, can restore the balance: but the impulse that produced the major evil also produces the illusion that literature gives information about the external world. Literature is therefore used as a means to transform not the world within but the world outside. The unbalanced civilization of the West is meeting its end.

But the wrong idea about literature is spreading to India. In a village of the U. P., I came across an enthusiast who had got his knowledge of economics from "progressive" novels. He was positive that all zamindars were bloodsuckers. The information that 97% of the zamindars of the locality were really petty peasants came to him as a surprise. If a man has no time, inclination or ability to study facts and figures, let him not go to literature in order to decide whether zamindars deserve to be shot. For one thing, even the most objective art deals with some particular event or object. Miss Mayo may have seen what she record-

ed, but, in judging that what she saw was typical, she erred because she had made no statistical survey. And so prejudice got free play. Art is coloured and distorted because artistic needs and the facts of the outer world do not coincide.

The function of art is not to spread opinions. Our opinions are determined by feelings, feelings spring from inner dissociation, and this in turn is traceable to identifications. Propagandists know this. An advertising agent puts up a picture of an enchanting girl smoking "Abdulla" cigarettes, and the demand for that brand increases. Unconscious identification deprives us of the power to reason coherently. People believe that a particular economic or political doctrine is sound because they have identified themselves with the leader who has propounded it. Modern psychology shows that certain men quarrel and commit murder because of lack of inner adjustment. Even to respond to outer environment we need some insight into ourselves.

Literature is the time-honoured method of bringing this about. In essence it has not changed from Greek to modern times. Galsworthy, for example, enlists our sympathy with the character who evinces sympathy. The spectator of his play identifies himself with the progressive principle and experiences a conflict within himself. Our true nature is Divine, and its final victory is *swaraj*. I have been reading the *Bhagawata*, the *Saptasati*, the *Skanda Purana*, the *Ramayana* and other ancient Indian books. Everywhere I find the one truth: the surrender of the individual will to the Cosmic. This is the teaching also of Islam and Christianity.

C. NARAYANA MENON

Hindu University, Benares.

ENDS AND SAYINGS

“_____ends of verse
And sayings of philosophers.”

HUDIBRAS

The seventeenth session of the All-India Education Conference took place in Srinagar (Kashmir) from September 25 to 29. Shri Amaranatha Jha, Vice Chancellor of the Allahabad University, delivered the Presidential Address. It is a pity that a copy of this address could not come into the hands of every teacher and professor the world over. It would be hard to find a broader, more truly international and humanitarian and cultural point of view. Shri Amaranatha Jha reviewed the present day systems of education impartially and speaking of the Ideals of Education quoted Eric Gill who said a few months ago :

that most educators have no idea of man except that his only reason for existence is to get on in this world and have as good a time as possible.

Continuing, he said :

It is necessary that we should be clear in our minds about human destiny and be sure whether we are merely to earn our living and enjoy our life on earth or are a being nobler and higher than only a larger ape. Of course, the ability to live and live well must be acquired, but the notion of the survival of the fittest and struggle for existence is responsible for giving to education a purely materialistic turn and for the loss of faith in a spiritual perfection of life. The proper care of the body and the training of the intellect are of course necessary; they are the foundation of all systems of education. But must the process stop there? Is it not to lead to something higher? The healthy animal, the intellectual animal—is that all we seek to produce?....Education should equip men so that their body, mind and spirit should work in harmony for the glory and ad-

vancement of man as a creature of God. They should be trained for harmony and not for strife. They should be taught to work for Peace, for the Universe, and for the Soul of Man. That should be the teacher's great aim; towards that must all his efforts be directed. He should consciously and of set purpose put this ideal before himself. The young should be taught to aspire to harmony in bodily movement, harmony in thought, harmony in vision and aspiration. The oneness of life must be stressed: oneness with one's neighbours, oneness with environment, oneness with the Creator of all things. The young should be taught that the ultimate reality is joy. If all the world over, they can be brought up on this ideal, if strife and discord can be shown to be what they really are—the results of base ambition and want of respect for others,—if the youth can be imbued with the sense of the dignity of manhood and of the sanctity of human life, what a difference will it mean to the world! Will the teachers take up the challenge?

To these ideals Shri Amarnatha Jha adds practical suggestions about Vocational, Art and Adult Education and about Nursery Schools, but we lack space to comment upon them. But his pronouncement on religious and denominational institutions is most important and we quote it at length with our whole-hearted acceptance of his views:—

They have had their day and should cease to be. They recognize, if they do not actively promote, religious differences. They impart to the young mind ideas of separatism rather than of solidarity. They teach the impressionable youths to look upon themselves as units distinct from the rest. They breathe the spirit of discord and faction. From very early youth the Mussalman, the Christian and the Hindu is taught that he is Mussalman, Christian and Hindu. As if that were not

bad enough, there are sub-denominational institutions now. But sectarianism in modern institutions spells disaster and may to a large extent be responsible for the separatist movements that are disturbing the harmony of national life.

Religious education, however, is not to be abandoned but rather enlarged to include all religions.

How shall we train our youths so that they may grow to be God-fearing and God-loving? All religions are attempts to state and explain the problems of life, of the universe and of the real nature of man; they are all based on certain fundamental truths. Round these basic principles have grown, in course of centuries, accretions of commentary, gloss, explanation, elucidation. Shorn of these, the naked truths shine resplendent, serving as beacon lights on the path of enlightened progress. If the main principles of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and the other faiths are collected together not only would much religious bitterness and misunderstanding disappear, but every young person would learn to have a wide, tolerant, and catholic outlook that would augur well for the future of mankind. There would then be no talk of Kafir, mlechha or heathen. Religion would then cease to be a pretext for preserving effete institutions and customs that smother Truth beneath their dead weight.

Dr. K. C. Varadachari contributes to the latest issue of the *Journal of Sri Venkatesvara Oriental Institute*, Triupati, a study of "The Doctrine of Substitution in Religion and Mysticism." He defines the goal and the content of mystical experience as Reality (*satyam*) and places the mystic vision higher than intuition. Of practical value is his maintaining that the mystic vision, while sometimes apparently sudden and unexpected, is actually the result of prolonged preparation of the inner being through control of the psychophysical organism. It

could not be otherwise. The mystic experience brings about a "transvaluation of all values" by the new vision that it opens, but that (not "psychical" but) spiritual "perception of a new order of existence" is "an extension in the direction of depth rather than elongation." It is not that previously accepted ends or those which are instinctive or habitual are suddenly expelled from the consciousness. Rather there is a gradual substitution of new ends. Patanjali is cited in substantiation of the development of moral life's depending on the substitution of bad habits by their contraries.

So far, so good. But when Dr. Varadachari goes on to declare that the drive or power inherent in any instinct must be conserved and its force canalized towards ideal ends, he enters debatable territory. With his doctrine of substitution we have no quarrel, but substitution is not sublimation. It is a most dangerous fallacy that "lust could be utilized in such a way as to yield love instead of disgust and hate and misery."

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong.—*The Voice of the Silence*

It is vain to fancy that the fury and force of the animal passions can be turned towards higher and holier purposes. As soon could mutton tallow be transmuted into the crystalline waters of life. A relationship that begins in lust may yield at last the fine flower of love, but that love is in no sense the outcome of lust, of which it is the direct antithesis. It is only when lust has been overcome that pure love can come to birth in the

English-language publications, by Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, Anagarika B. Govinda and Rahula Sankrtaayam, respectively. This is surely not a very creditable showing. Indian writers might well, for the honour of the country, send this American journal adequate English abstracts of the outstanding recent publications in the field of philosophy, whether written in English or in one or other of the Indian languages. As we mentioned previously, the Editor, Mr. Dagobert D. Runes, promises careful attention to unsolicited reviews. It touches Indian pride in a very sensitive spot to have this country figure—in philosophy of all subjects—as an “also ran.”

Runaway slaves with hounds hot on their trail used to have one chance of safety; if they could reach and cross a stream of running water their pursuers would be thrown off the scent. The baffled pack might bay their discomfiture on the bank, while their intended victim, far out of hearing, made good his escape. Death interposes a more effective barrier between the victim of orthodox persecution and his tormentors. But if the dead are happily unaware of post-mortem indignities visited upon the bodies they have left, the offering of such indignities reflects small credit on the living.

The pious Christians' refusal to the unrepentant sinner of burial in consecrated ground is paralleled by the orthodox Hindus' objection to the burning of the body of a Harijan at a cremation ground reserved for the elect. Both in Bombay and in its suburb Vile Parle there has been recent agitation for the removal of this final stigma

of untouchability. The movement is most commendable.

The agitation brings to the fore again, however, the desirability of a modern crematorium for the metropolis of Western India.

The sanitary and hygienic advantages of cremation are incontestable; so is the desirability of making available to all on equal terms the most scientific developments in this method of disposal of the corpse.

The growing recognition by the educated women of India of their responsibilities towards their less fortunate sisters in the villages is one of the most hopeful recent developments. *The Rural India* for September describes the project for remodelling one or more selected villages, which the All-India Women's Conference is to consider at its next annual meeting, which is to be held at Rajahmundry during Christmas week. It is a noble ideal for Indian womanhood formulated by Dr. M. B. Kagal in her recent article in the *Bulletin* of the National Council of Women in India—that of every educated woman's feeling that “she holds both her leisure and wealth, in trust, for the benefit of her helpless sister in the village.” It is natural that, as Dr. Kagal shows, the haphazard attempts of the urban amateur at village uplift often arouse the village woman's suspicion. It is a normal human reaction, which Thoreau expressed when he wrote that if he knew for a certainty that a man was coming to his house with the conscious design of doing him good, he “would run for his life.” And he added sagely what every village uplift worker would do well to keep in mind:—

Be sure that you give the poor the aid they most need, though it be your example which leaves them far behind. If you give money, spend yourself with it.

There is something infinitely pathetic in the harping of so many of the younger poets upon the need of facing "reality," of coming to grips with "reality." They make so much of "reality," Robert Herring writes editorially in *Life and Letters Today* for June, "because, familiarizing themselves with the word, they hope to lessen their fright of the fact." The phantasmagoria passing before our eyes is frightening enough, in all conscience, if regarded as real, but are we children, to tremble before bogies?

The only Real is the Unchanging, in which both man and the universe have their roots. As the *Gita* puts it, "The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away." He who has established conscious touch, however fleeting, however partial, with that Unchanging Real, can go through the battle of embodied existence cool and unwearied, in the spirit which Walt Whitman expressed in the words,

Whether I came to my own today, or in
ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal
cheerfulness I can wait;
My foothold is tenon'd and mortised in
granite;
I laugh at what you call dissolution;
And I know the amplitude of time.

But the very world of forms moves under law; History alone, with its record of the successive rise and fall of civilization and culture, brings assurance that values threatened with submergence in our unhappy time will certainly re-emerge in a rising cycle.

No achievement, no effort even, is ever lost, and certainly no vision of a better, happier world can fade out forever, leaving no impress behind.

But the threat to the civilization of our own generation, and perhaps of many generations to come, is real enough and, curiously, it does not come only from the avowed foes of humane ideals. To quote Mr. Herring again:—

Straining every nerve to defend what they hold most dear, men subconsciously tend to blame that very thing for the strain it puts upon them. Then they belittle it, next they belabour it.

Take the ideal of Democracy itself, betrayed in our day by so many of its own household. On every side the cry is raised that Democracy has failed. No. We have failed Democracy. We have looked upon Democracy as a form of government and have forgotten that it is first and foremost a mental attitude and a way that begins in self-control and good-will to all men and that would lead, if followed to the end, to that general realization of Universal Brotherhood which would be the Kingdom of Heaven brought down on earth.

What may turn out to be more important to humanity in the long run than any military campaign of the present war is the stirring of revolt among scientists themselves against the prostitution of science to destructive ends. The attitude that the scientist's business is discovery and that he can wash his hands of responsibility for the application of his findings is almost out of date. Francis Thompson, nearly half a century ago, wrote that "Science is a Caliban only fit to hew wood and draw water for Prospero."

Years ago, too, Albert Einstein said to the Right Hon. Viscount Samuel that "the present troubles of the world are due to science having advanced faster than morality; when morality catches up with science those troubles will draw to an end." Presidents of the British Association in other years, notably Sir Alfred Ewing in 1932, have similarly warned that the command of Nature has been put into man's hands before he knows how to command himself; but Sir Richard Gregory, the present President, went farther in explaining in advance the objects of the proposed World Conference on Science and World Order which was held at the Royal Institute at the end of September, officially under the auspices of the Ministry of Information but with the support of the British Association.

The war now raging not only makes a "World" Conference a sad misnomer, despite the attendance of German and Austrian expatriates, but also makes it very doubtful how far the States represented will tolerate decisive action in the direction proposed while hostilities continue, for the chief exploiters of science today are undoubtedly the national governments themselves. But the explanation of Sir Richard is fraught with hope for the future. The London Correspondent of *The Hindu* quotes him as saying,

that science could be used for good or evil and the time had arrived when scientists, who themselves constituted a great democracy that knew no distinctions of race, colour or

creed, should determine how their work should benefit, not injure, humanity. The main theme of the Conference would be the use of science for constructive, not destructive, purpose. They hoped to devise a Charter to which scientists could subscribe and reach decisions that would keep science from the hands of gangsters, who used it to wreck society.

A perhaps prudent reticence left the gangsters unspecified and the means to foil them nebulous, but Sir Richard told the Conference plainly at its opening session that

the anguish which the world is suffering today is due to the perverted use of knowledge and the rejection of all high ideals by cultivated barbarity.

Did the conference ask why man has been faithless to high ideals and why scientists have been false to their trust? Are not both betrayals rooted in one cause—man's ignorance of his own nature and of the bond that links him willy-nilly with all other men? Man as a free-will being stands between his higher nature, in which ideals are inherent and to which altruism is natural, and his body, with its selfish cravings and the personal ambitions which, multiplied to national dimensions, become imperialistic greed and the will-to-power.

Fellow-feeling for all men everywhere and willing co-operation for the common good would be natural expressions if men but recognized their own divinity; and the scientist who made a lethal discovery would die himself before he would reveal it to the irresponsible.