SRI AUROBINDO ON “SAVITRI”

As to the title of the three cantos about the Yoga of the King, I intended the repetition of the word “Yoga” to bring out and emphasise the fact that this part of Aswaplata’s spiritual development consists of two yogic movements, one a psycho-spiritual transformation and the other a greater spiritual transformation with an ascendant supramental power. The omission which you suggest would destroy this significance and leave only something more abstract. In the second of these three cantos there is a pause between the two movements and a description of the secret knowledge to which the Yoga is led and of which the results are described in the last canto, but there is no description of the Yoga itself or of the stages by which this knowledge came. That is only indicated, not narrated; so, to bring in “The Yoga of the King” as the title of this canto would not be very appropriate. Aswaplata’s Yoga falls into three parts. First, he is achieving his own spiritual self-fulfilment as the individual and this is described as the Yoga of the King. Next, he makes the nearest as a typical representative of the race to win the possibility of discovery and possession of all the planes of consciousness and this is described in the Second Book: but this too is yet only an individual victory. Finally, he aspires no longer for himself but for all, for a universal realisation and new creation. That is described in the Book of the Divine Mother. (1946)

Yes,—an accumulating grandiose effect is intended by the repetition of adjective-and-noun in four consecutive line-endings:—

Almost they saw who lived within her light
Her playmate in the semitropical aether
Descended from its sustainant realms
In her presence death and death an agony.

The white-fire birds of endless bliss
Drifting with burning wings above her doors
The purpose is to create a large luminous trailing repetitive movement like the flight of the bird with its dragon wings of white fire. (1936)

All birds of that region are relatives. But this is the bird of eternal Ananda while the Rippogriff is the divinised Thought and the Bird of Fire is the Agni-bird, psychic and vaporous. All that, however, is as mental not too much and mentalising always takes most of the life out of spiritual things. That is why I say, the dragon bird can be seen but nothing said about it. (1956)

As to: One dealt with her who meets the burdened great. — It is not Love who meets the burdened great and governs the fate of man. Nor is it Pain. Time also does not do these things—it only provides the field and the movement of events. If I had wanted to give a name, I would have done it, but he was purposely to be left nameless because he is indistinguishable. He may use Love or Pain or Time or any of these powers but is not any of them. You can call him the Master of the Evolution, if you like. (1936)

**The relevant passages on “Savitri” in the long letter published in our Special Number of August 15 must be taken as Section 7. These passages will be included when “Sri Aurobindo on Savitri” will be brought out in book-form next month to coincide with the publication of Vol. II of “Savitri.”


2 The proposition was “In the mystical region, is the dragon bird any relation of your white-winged Fire with ‘gold-white wings’ or your Rippogriff with ‘face harried, pale-blue-lined’?”

**The context of the line (Vol. I p. 17) is:

As to the plane spoken of by Virgil in the lines you quote—

Languor hic campos aether et lumine vestit Purpureo, sollemne suavis, uis sidera sorunt,*

I don’t know, but purple is a light of the Vital. It may have been one of the vital heavens he was thinking of. The ancients saw the vital heavens as the highest and most of the religions also have done the same. I have used the suggestion of Virgil to insert a needed line:

In grieved countries under purple aures.*

As to: Often a familiar vineyard strolling…

His vision vassayed by the spirit’s inward eye

Discovered suddenly Heil’s trademark there*—

It is a reference to the beings met in the vital world, that seem like human beings but, if one looks closely, they are seen to be Hostiles; often assuming the appearance of a familiar face they try to tempt or attack by surprise, and betray the stamp of their origin—there is also a hint that on earth too they take up human bodies or possess them for their own purposes. (1936)

The lines—

Bliss into black: coma fallen, inaneable

Colled back to itself and God’s eternal joy

Through a false poignant figure of grief and pain

Still dolorously nailed upon a cross

Fired in the soul of a dumb incontinent world

Where birth was a pain and death an agony.

Left all too soon should change again to bliss—**

have nothing to do with Christianity or Christ but only with the symbol of the cross used here to represent a seemingly eternal world-pain which appears falsely to replace the eternal bliss. It is not Christ but the world-soul which hangs here.

Your objection to the “finger” and the “clutch” in the lines— As a childlike finger laid on a cheek

Reminding of the endless need in things

The heedless Mother of the universe.

An infant loosing clutched the sombre Vast—§ moves me only to change “reminding” to “reminisced” in the second line. It is not intended that the two images “finger laid” and “clutch” should correspond exactly to each other; for the “void” and the “Mother of the universe” are not the same thing. The “void” is only a mask covering the Mother’s cheek or face. What the “void” feels as a clutch is felt by the Mother only as a reminding finger laid on her cheek. It is one advantage of the expression “as if” that it leaves the field open for such variation. It is intended to suggest without saying it that behind the sombre void is the face of a mother. The two other “as if”?

As if a soul long dead were moved to line

One dealt with her who meets the burdened great.

Antigone of the ocean and the path

Who chooses in this holocaust of the soul

Death, fall and sorrow as the spirit’s goods.

The drowsy godhead with his touch of pain

Lift up the charm of the unfinished world

And called her to fill with beauty ‘themselves’—

The question was: “Who is One here? Is it Love, the godhead mentioned before? If not, does this ‘clutch’ of grief correspond to the ‘length white and high of godlike Pain’ spoken of a little earlier? Or is it Time whose ‘armes’ mark the last line of the poem and their own star?”

*There an amber elder spreads over the plains and clothes them in purple light, and they have a touch of the violet and their own stars.”

Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri"

As if solicited in an alien world—

have the same motive and I do not find them jarring upon me. The second is at a sufficient distance from the first and it is not obtrusive enough to prejudice the third which more nearly follows. Your suggestion as though for the third does not appeal to me: it almost makes a suggestion of falsity and in any case it makes no real difference as the two expressions are too much kin to each other to repel the charge of reiteration.

(1846)

Owing to a mistake in the punctuation which is now corrected, you have made what seems to me a strange confusion as regards the passage—As if solicited in an alien world

With timidity, hazardous instinctive grace, Orphaned and driven out to seek a home, An errant marverl with no place to live, Into a far-off nook of heaven there came A slone miraculous gesture’s dim appeal.

You took the word “solicited” as a past participle passive and this error seems to have remained fixed in your mind so as to distort the whole building and sense of the passage. The word “solicited” is the past tense and the subject of the verb is “an errant marvel” delayed to the fourth line by the parenthesis “Orphaned...” This kind of inversion, though longer than usual, is common enough in poetical style and the object is to throw a strong emphasis and prominence upon the line, “An errant marvel with no place to live.” That being explained, the rest about the gesture should be clear enough.

I see no sufficient reason to alter the passage; certainly, I could not alter the line beginning “Orphaned...” It is indispensable to the total idea and its omission would leave an unfilled gap. If I may not expect a complete alertness from the reader,—but without it can be grasped the subtilityes of a mystical and symbolic poem,—be surely ought to be alert enough when he reads the second line to see that it is somebody who is soliciting with a timid grace and it can’t be somebody who is being gracefully solicited; also the line “Orphaned...” ought to suggest to him at once that it is some orphan who is soliciting and not the other way round: the demur of the past participle passive ought to be dissipated long before he reaches the subject of the verb in the fourth line. The obscurity throughout, if there is any, is in the mind of the hasty reader and not in the grammatical construction of the passage.

(1846)

Miltonian? Surely not. The Miltonian has a statelier more spreading rhythm and a less direct more lofty arranged language. Miltonically I should have written not

The gods above and Nature’s soul below

Were the spectators of that mighty sight

but

Only the Sons of Heaven and that executive She
Watched the arbitration of the high dispute.

(1936)

I take upon myself the right to coin new words. “Immanостей” in

...Driven by a pointing hand of light Across his soul’s unspread immanостей

is not any more fantastic than “infinities” to pair “infinity...” Use “eternities”!! Not likely! I would think of the French “éterniser” and sneeze.

(1936)

“Flasque”, in

Knowledge was rebuilt from cells of inference

Into a fixed body flasque and perpetual,... in

a French word meaning “slack,” “loose,” “flaccid,” etc. I have more than once tried to thrust in a French word like this, for instance: “A harlot empress in a bouge”—somewhat after the manner of Eliot and Ezra Pound.

(1946)

“Is its passive flower of love and doom it gave?” Good heaven! how did Gandhi come in there? Passion-flower, sin—passion, not passive.?

(1936)

To bend and blur shades owing to technical exigencies might be all right for mental poetry—it won’t do for what I am trying to create—in that, one word won’t do for the other. Even in mental poetry I consider it an inferior method. “Glam” and “glow” are two quite different things and the poet who uses them indifferently has constantly got his eye upon words rather than upon the object.

(1937)

In the lines—

A lovely splendour from the invisible goal

Almost was flung on the opaque franc—??

no word will do and I cannot think there are too many “ly” in

in fact such multiplications of a vowel or consonant assonance or several together as well as syllabic assonances in a single line or occasionally between line-endings (e.g. face-face) are an accepted feature of the technique in Savitri.

(1936)

In the two passages ending with the same word “alone” I think there is sufficient space between them and neither one nor mind need be offended. In

All-seeing, motionless, sovereign and alone, the word “sole” would flatten the line too much and the word “alone” would here have no atmosphere and it would not express the idea. It is not distance and aloofness that has to be stressed but unaccompanied solitude.

(1946)

In the incertitude of man’s proud confident thought,

“uncertainty” instead of “incertitude” would mean that the thought was confident but uncertain itself, which would be a contradiction. “Incertitude” means that its truth is uncertain in spite of its proud confidence in itself.

(1936)

The line is:

The calm immunity of spirit Space.

“Immunities” in the plural is much feelier and philosophically abstract—one begins to think of things like “quantities”—naturally it suggested itself to me as keeping up the plural sense.

The golden plateaus of immortal Fire,

The moon-flame oceans of unfallen Bliss—

but it grated on the sense of the actual objective reality and I had to reject it at once. The calm immunity was a thing I could not feel with. Immunities the mind has to ask: “Well, what are they?”

(1937)

In the line—

Dropped in the leaves vivid emerald monotone—

the first foot is taken as a dactyl. A little gambol like that must be occasionally allowed in an otherwise correct metrical performance.

(1936)

The best way to scan

Bliss into black come fallen, insensible—

will be to spell “fallen” “fell’n” as is occasionally done and treat “bliss into” as a dactyl.

(1946)

The line—

This truth broke in a triumph of fire—

to which you object on account of forced rhythm in the phrase, “in a triumph,” has not been so arranged through negligence. It was very deliberately done and deliberately maintained. If it were altered the whole effect of rhythm would be lost and the alterations you suggest would make a good line perhaps but with an ordinary and inexpressive rhythm. Obviously this is not a natural rhythm, but there is no objection to its being forced when it is a forcible and violent action that has to be suggested. The rhythm cannot be called artificial, for that would mean something not true and genuine or significant but only patched up and insincere: the rhythm has its own turn of art and not a manifestation. The sanguis is usual, reversed spondee, pyrrhic, trochee, iamb. By reversed spondee I mean a foot with the first syllable long and highly stressed and the second stressed but short or with a less heavy iotas. In the ordinary sponsde we the greater iambus is on the second syllable while there are equal spondaeus with two heavy stresses, e.g. “vast spaces” or such a line as

He has seized life in his restless hands.

In the first part of the line on which you comment the rhythm is appropriate to the violent breaking in of the truth while in the second half it expresses a high exultation and exaltation in the intrus. This is brought out by the two long and highly stressed vowels in the first syllable of “triumph” and in the word “fire” (which in the elocution of the line have to be given their full force), coming after the pyrrhic with two short syllables between

† Vol. I. p. 31.
†† Vol. I. p. 32.
§ Vol. I. p. 5.
** Vol. I. p. 244.
‡‡ Vol. I. p. 73.
† The line originally was:

The calm immunities of spirit space.

Owing to the close occurrence of the word “immunities” in another line, “immunity” was here used. At present the original word has been restored to a new context (Vol. I. p. 44) and the line comes at the end instead of at the beginning of the section of imperishable Light.

Still regions of imperishable Light,

All-seeing single-pocks of ether over

And moon-flame oceans of twif childless Bliss

And calm immunities of spirit Space.

Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri"—Continued from page 2.

Its being an interloper in a new house does not show that it was an interloper in an old one. The colours and the spaces being heightened and widened, this tint which was appropriate and needed in the old design could not remain in the new one. These things are a question of design; a line has to be seen not only in its own separate value but with a view to its just place in the whole.  

(1867)

* * *

I have wholly failed to feel the poetic flatness of which you accuse the line, All he had been and all that now he was.

No doubt, the diction is extremely simple, direct and unadorned but that can be said of numberless good lines in poetry and even of some great lines if there is style in them. It is a large statement to say that it is a large statement which confines itself to what is possible and that the line or the passage in which it occurs has some elevation or profundity or other poetic quality in the idea which it expresses, there cannot be any flatness nor can any such line or passage be set aside as prosaic.

(1946)

* * *

Your new objection to the line, All he had been and all that now he was, is somewhat self-contradictory. If a line has a rhythm and expressive turn which makes it poetic, then it must be good poetry; but I suppose what you mean is fine or elevated poetry. I would say that my line is good poetry and is further uplifted here for it is a continuation of its subsequent context which gives it its full poetic meaning and suggestion, the evolution of the inner being and the abrupt end or failure of all that had been done unless it could suddenly throw all into some larger something greater. I do not think that this line in its context is merely passable, but I admit that it is less elevated and intense than what precedes or what follows. I do not see how that can be avoided without truncating the thought significance of the whole account by the omission of something necessary to its evolution or else overstretching the expression where it needs to be direct or clear and bare in its lucidity. In any case the amended version—All he had been and all towards which he grew**—curves any possibility of the line being merely passable as it raises both the idea and the expression through the vividness of image which makes us feel and not merely think the living evolution in Aswathapathy’s inner being.

As for the line,

All in her pointed to a nobler kind.

I refuse entirely to admit that that is poor poetry. It is not only just the line that is needed to introduce what follows but it is very good poetry with the strength and pointed directness, not intellectualised like Pope’s, but intuitive, which we often find in the Elizabethans, for instance in Marlowe supporting adequately and often more than adequately his “mighty lines”. But the image must be understood, as it was intended, in its concrete sense and not as a vague rhetorical phrase substituted for a plainer wording—it shows Savitri as the forerunner or first creator of a new race. All poets have lines which are bare and direct statements and meant to be in order that they carry their full force; but to what category of simplicity belongs or whether a line is only passable or more than that depends on various circumstances. Shakespeare’s To be or not to be, that is the question introduces powerfully one of the most famous of all soliloquies and it comes with a great dramatic force, but in one of the poetry and some might say that it would not be otherwise written in prose and is only saved by the metrical rhythm. The same might be said of the well-known passage in Keats which I have already quoted:

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty—that is all.

Ye know an earth and all ye need to know.

The same might be said of Milton’s famous line, Full’s Cherub! to be seek’d is miserable.

But obviously in all these lines there is not only a concentrated force, power or greatness of the thought, but also a concentration of intense poetic feeling which makes any criticism impossible. Then take Milton’s lines,

Were it not better done, as others use,

To sport with Amaranth in the shade

Or with the tangles of Nerere’s hair?

(1936)

* * *

(The passage originally stood:

A cosmic vision looked at things through light:

Atomic now the shapes that seemed so large

Illusion lost her apparent size,

The body and the life no more were all,

The mind itself was only a motionless

His soul the tongue of an unmeasured fire.

The passage then became:

A cosmic vision looked at things through light:

Atoms now the shapes that seemed so large

Illusion lost her apparent size,

The body and the life no more were all,

The mind itself was only a motionless

His soul the tongue of an unmeasured fire.

At present some of the lines have changed, but not in the poem and the passage as it stands on page 73 of Vol. I. I do not quite see the

* * *

(1936)

* * *
SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

By C. C. Dutt

Continued from previous issue

Today man has passed beyond the stage of clans, and tribes, countries and duchies, and has arrived at the nation-state—the living collective unit of man. Now, for this, there are a number of causes, two of them, external exigencies, and dynamic ambitions brought them into existence. Some of them passed away after the first world war, some after the Second, some still linger. Austro-Hungary, that strange combination of the Teuton and the Magyar, split up under outside pressure, never to come together again. The Arab states will never merge into a Turkish empire again. There was no cement of unification in these empires—no soul, so to speak. It is not connected with the splitting up of the German Empire after the Second War. It was not connected with the unification of the German Empire, but of the empire of southern Germany, the empire of which Germany had been a part. Through centuries of foreign rule and ultimately created the Greek State and the Italian State. Some examples of lesser nations are cited by Sri Aurobindo. "The nation in modern times is practically indestructible unbaptized. The name of the ancient and revered names of three powerful empires, ceased to exist; the Polish nation survived and was once more reconstituted. Alsace after forty years of the German yoke remained faithful to its French nationalism. Foreign rule has often rendered valuable service to the process of nation making. In Russia and England it was the domination of a foreign conquering race which rapidly became a ruling caste and was in the end assimilated and absorbed."

Generally speaking a distinct group-soul driven by an inner urge takes advantage of outer circumstances and constitutes for itself an organized body. The most remarkable instance of this is the evolution of India. We shall quote a few eloquent lines from Chapter V of The Idea of Human Unity. "Nowhere else have the centrifugal forces been so strong, numerous, complex, obstinate. The mere time taken by the evolution has been prodigious, the disastrous vicissitudes through which it had to work itself out have been appalling. And yet throughout all the inevitable tendency has worked constantly... with the... relentless obstinacy of Nature... and finally, after a struggle enduring through millenniums, has triumphed."

The spirit of unification goes back to the earliest times in India. It is said to be the cause of all the Hindu sacrifices, like Awtameda, that he performed. Indian history is the recital of a long series of empires, national and foreign, each destroyed by another power and yet each having its own greatness and its triumphs. The whole experience of India is the failure and the triumph of the spirit of unification.

So far, then, we see that the nation is immortal. Empires are as yet impermanent units. A real unit bigger than the nation will possibly emerge in human affairs and the question we have to consider is whether the spirit of unification is that destined unit. Obviously it cannot be that unless it develops into a psychological power. If psychological unification precedes and leads to an inner unity. Two ideas have emerged out of the recent world-wide conflicts. They are, on the one hand, a federation of free nations and, on the other, the division of the earth into a few big empires or hegemonies. Whether these two can be combined and made the basis of a new and permanent order is an important point for our consideration.

Empires are primarily of two kinds—the homogeneous natural and the heterogeneous composite. All empires are composite to start with, that is to say, the component parts have a separate sense within the whole. But, in some, these parts develop a psychological sense of oneness and the whole becomes a homogeneous aggregate. Taking the example of Great Britain and Ireland, one finds that Scotland and Wales fairly easily developed a sense of unity with England and became the United Kingdom while the major portion of Ireland could not develop this sense and ultimately seceded and formed an independent State. Germany without all these, Slavish-Holstein and Poland would have been an empire of the homogeneous kind, but with these three regions it belonged to the second kind. Japan would have been a national natural empire without

Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri"—Continued from page 3

It might be said that the first line has nothing to distinguish it and is merely repetitive or only saved by the charm of what follows; but there is a beauty of its own. We have not often seen a line like this, a line that is as fine in itself and not merely passable. If there is not some saving grace like that, then the danger of laxy may become possible. I do not think there is much in Savitri which is of that kind. But I can perfectly understand your anxiety that all should be lifted up to a consciousness at least the minimum overhead level or so near as to be touched by its influence or at the very least a good substitute for it. I do not know what is always possible in so long a poem as Savitri dealing with so many various heights and degrees of both varying substance much of thought and feeling and descriptive matter and narrative. But that has been my gene-
The latter-day empires like that of the British in India and Ceylon, of the French in Algeria and of Dutch in Indonesia were of a mixed Roman and Carthaginian type. The only reality in them was organised exploitation of the inferior races made up of a host of provinces linked together by any further exploitation they began to crumble down. Britain has turned over a new leaf already. Holland after a great deal of hesitation has granted self-rule to Indonesia. The problems in the colonies are by no means solved yet, but the idea of the United States is spreading across continent by another. The methods of Rome and Carthage are dead, never to be revived. It is ridiculous today to base an empire on racial superiority. The failure of Germany has amply demonstrated that. If a government is based on the idea that its existence is to be prolonged by other methods. It is no use ranting about a superior culture and trying to impose on other people. The process of Europeanisation of “natives” has proved to be futile. “The earth is in travail now. ...” a country, be it the whole human race for the whole human race.” Only those empires are likely to endure which recognise the new law of inter-
change and adaptation and reshape themselves accordingly.

The new federal model has begun to evolve already. The question before us is: how is it possible to create a securely federated empire of a vast extent composed of many races and many cultures and how to weld it into a natural and psychological unit? The problem resolves itself into two factors—the form, and the reality which the form is to express. What is the logical form one would like to invent for a federal state? Is it only an enlargement of the Nation-type or is it a new type of group life which must exceed and supersede the nation? The human mind, in the mass, does not readily accept a radical change of its ideal. If by some fiction of language a form is to appear, the ideal of the literate man in the West is more easily accepted. The French idea of empire is illustrative of this. The possession of France are, by a fiction, conceived to be not depend-
encies but colonies of the French empire grouped together as French provinces. In the same way the British have tried to centre their national sentiments around the glory and greatness of the common mother. A fiction like this has great power, especially for certain temperaments. But it is based upon a reason-
able parallel, is it true that imperial unity will be only an enlarged national unity? Or is the fiction intended to prepare another realisable fact? There have been many composite nations known in history. Is our federal empire going to create another such composite nation?

Sri Aurobindo has considered in some detail, here, the fully evolved composite empire, this time a federating composite British Empire. The British nation has been formed out of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. As far as the first three are concerned, they have been welded into a psychological unit very successfully, while the major portion of Ireland has gone out of the United Kingdom and formed an independent republic. In the two islands of Britain and Ireland, there was always a geographical necessity of union. The conquest of Ireland and Wales with the union with Scotland were events of history which brought about a political union and satisfied the geographical necessity. This necessity is a relative thing; it can be counteracted by a strong feeling of disunion. Belgium and Holland, Sweden and Norway, Spain and Portugal are sepa-
rate, and yet they are not a unit, though they have a common origin. View them from a national point of view, and you will find one.

Indeed, in fact, they have been, at different times, one temporarily. The feeling of disunion, again, can be got over. In the case of Ireland, the British rulers never attempted it. Instead of trying to bridge the gulfs between the two, they rather emphasised it, in the strongest pos-
sible manner. The difference of race and religion was there, but over and above that, “the economic life and prosperity of Ireland were delib-
errateley crushed in the interests of British trade.” And this is a thing which cannot be done without having, for, as Sri Aurobindo says, if it does not destroy the oppressed organisms, it provokes necessarily the bitterest revolt and ends in one of Nature’s inexorable retaliations. Non-interference and peaceful pressure solved the difficulty in Wales and Scotland, but in Ireland the approach was pursued and brought about an opposite effect. While Wales and Scotland were fused into England, secession be-
came inevitable in the case of Ireland. The result, says Sri Aurobindo, may deprecate as one of the few remodelling of the British empire. Europe have marched across space, and the idea of a British Commonwealth of Nations has advanced so far that it has been found possible to include the Indian republic—entirely different from the other British units in race, language and culture—in its framework.

The British colonial empire is scattered all over the globe. The geographical necessity of union is entirely absent. Not so long ago, it was believed by many that the secession of Australia, Canada and South Africa was inevitable in the near future. The economic interests of Brit-

ain were unimportant, their basis was the agricultural interest of this country. To safeguard their colonial interests, these colonies adopted Protection as against the Free Trade of the mother country. A result, the former enjoyed the powerful protection of the British navy, but, on the other hand, they had hardly any share in the export trade of that country. The British policy was to deport to those far flung colonies to hold them loose, for, after all, the race origin varied considerably. A peaceful sepa-
ration was predicted by many.

But what has actually happened is something quite different. Two great World Wars have led nations definitely towards the formation of large aggregates. Thirty years ago Sri Aurobindo said, “It is easy to see that the fusion of the colonial empire units into a great federated Commonwealth—is practically inevitable.” Today we are much nearer to that idea. The racial difficulty is no longer formidable. The problem of both India and Sri Lanka is one which was discussed almost in a footnote (page 68). In fact, a large part of the situation which this Chapter (VIII) discusses is no longer prevalent, as things have taken a different turn in the last three decades. The Commonwealth, the Soviet Union, the concept of a united Europe and the United States of Europe holds more power at present. There is a great deal in this chapter as to how Britain should shape her conduct towards the colonies. Britain has certainly moved in the direction point-

deut by Sri Aurobindo, but world conditions seem so uncertain that no conclusion can be made in the present volume. It would be safe to say that world conditions are more uncertain than ever.

Every nation seems to be occupied in picking its friends in view of a possible third confederation. In the meantime the U.N.O. is functioning as best it can.

The present is the stage to a realised psychological truth: it is no more than a more possibility. The folly of leaders, the passions of the masses, the vested interests of the classes will in all prob-

ability prevent its fruition. If so, what other way is there of unifying humanity? A free association of free nations may, of course, do it if the Himalayan obstacles on the way can be removed. Or the establishment by force of a single World-empire can do it also, if such a thing be feasible. In Chapter IX Sri Aurobindo considers the latter alternative and comes to the conclusion that the conditions for the successful pursuit of world-

empire are such that we need look only for a range of practi-

cal possibility. But he adds that Nature being ever full of surprises we cannot lay down that it is utterly impossible. Very probably it will be tried again, but it is more likely to fail. Even if by force or luck, or by both, a single empire is imposed on the earth, it is more than probable that it would come to an early end.

The dream of world-domination is a very old dream. Alexander and Caesar dreamt of it; Napoléon dreamt of it, and, a hundred years later, the Kaiser dreamt of it. Possibly the last named did not start fighting with a conscious intention of establishing his sway over the world. But it grew inside him under the pressure of circumstances. So great was the general efficiency of Germany, so ingeniously did she utilize the discoveries of science, so powerful was her military and civil organisation, that the high ambition could not but enter her ruler’s head. Yet there were so many things Germany lacked. Sri Aurobindo enumerates them. We shall be satisfied with a short resume. “Germany had the strongest military, scienti-

cific and national organisation which any people has yet developed, but she lacked the gigantic driving impulse which could alone bring an attempt so colossal to fruition”—it lacked the impulse that drove Napoléon France. It lacked a powerful diplomatic genius. It had overwhelming land-power but no corresponding sea-power. Its diplomacy was faulty, too, in so far as it failed to secure the aid or at least the neutrality of France and Russia. It could then have concentrated on England instead of defying all and running amok, to use a trite phrase. All these mistakes must not be avoided if this new bid made for world domination by a new power. But, in these days of rapid communication, why should the world stand by and see a miscreant nation making preparations to disturb the peace of the earth? Sooner or later, there is bound to be a counter combination against the culprit. It is not a question of matters of the discovery of a particularly murderous weapon. What one nation has dis-

covered today, another will discover tomorrow. In fact, all civilised nations are engaged just now, in inventing monstrous engines of destruc-

tion. They are all actually using no one will know of them, as was the case with America’s atomic bomb. Conquest of the world by one power is, therefore, very unlikely, and even if there is such a conquest, it is sure to be short-lived.

* * *

A Soul-touched Tranquility

In the limpid silence of a moon-white space, Sweet Mother, lulled in Thy lap of tender grace I slept, drunken with a clear crystal dream That blossomed like a lotus of bliss supreme.

With virgin lips I drank Thy nectar-sweet, And kissed, Beloved Moon, Thy dewy feet, That tuned my lonely lyre with miraculous art To symphonies unknown to the human heart.

From Thy eyes, serene like the depths of a silent well, Descended a soothing hue, a mystic spell, More cool and tender than the rays of the moon, That brought to my weary heart an unwaning boon.

Composed, O Mother, like a lotus of immaculate grace, In a soul-touched tranquility I saw Thy Angel Face. * * *

CHINU
We have attained our freedom from the shackles of foreign yoke and we feel that we have reached the end of our goal. But if we look at the condition of our society carefully and critically we find that freedom has not been fully and completely realised in the true sense of the word. Political freedom is not the end. The truly free man is one in which the idea of nationalism which is in the repression of traditional and dogmatic ways of education. Unless this reformed our society and nation can never rise among the free nations of the world as a civilized and forward country.

Most uselessly and wrongly is the word "freedom" has been interpreted. "Freedom" in the sense of mere absence from foreign domination and therefore we have lost touch with our own spiritual and intellectual heritage. During the last 150 years we followed the Western system of education and organized all our institutions according to the Western pattern. Education has provided great fruit in India. It is in the structure of the Western system of education, it is admitted on all hands, one must have a sound philosophy of life. The Western people, in whose footsteps we have been treading up till now, have all along been influenced by Christian theories, and they have believed that man is basically evil and that society must assume that it applies to man also. To say that because grown up men and women behave badly, therefore man is born bad, is as though one were to blame nature for the impurity of a polluted river, forgetting that it had flowed pure, and would always flow pure from its fountain-head. If we would know what we are by nature we must get nearer to the fountain-head, we must study the child. If child study is to be effective, we must, for obvious reasons, give the child the maximum of freedom instead of binding ourselves to the dogma of everything for nothing. Freedom for the child must be gained by studying the child's ways and work, so long as these are ours rather than his, so long as we control, or try to control, his actions, his motives, his feelings, his thought. Therefore, true child study must be carried on at the present day. But in our country no such provision is made, nor is there any society or organisation which seriously takes up this work.

The Montessori lines in England have clearly realized through their direct experience of child study that the child is born good in the widest and deepest sense of the word, and that his frequent failures to grow up good are due to his being subjected to some influences that are acting during the first seven years of his life. That influence is the pressure of dogmatic education.

It must be clearly borne in mind that if education has so far failed to show man the way to his divine destiny, it must now help him to see that the ideal of the free human being is gradually becoming a reality. If the nature of man is to be evolved to express itself, the child must be given freedom. It must be remembered that the business of growing must be done by the growing child and cannot be done for him by his parent or teacher. Education is the training of the individuality, so that the child can give freedom sufficiently and in full measure to children who have been kept for years under strict control, is to court disaster.

The experiments of Dr. Maria Montessori in Italy, which are now arousing the interest of the whole educational world have proved that freedom can safely be given in fullest measure to children of the very tenderest years; and that where freedom is given under judicious and sympathetic guidance, growing children will develop even in nature carries with it, in due season, the out-growth of all these qualities which distinguish the older children of the school called "Utopia": patience, perseverance, resourcefulness, self-reliance, good fellowship and charm of manners—all interpenetrated by loving devotion to the teacher whose self-effacement is rewarded by an ascendency over her pupils which the dogmatic teacher can never hope to acquire.

In any case, the experiment of giving freedom to the child must be "shielded" in all its steps and the progress of the child can grow stimulation and development aided. The child himself must digest the food that is provided for him. The child himself must exercise his limbs and organs and powers and faculties. The attempt of the dogmatic teacher is to do it for him. We must improve the child's brain by stimulating its needs end in failure; the teacher on the other hand is ought to be idealist. His function is to guide the current of life into the channel, or system of channels which leads towards true 'manhood'. But if he is to do this, he must have some knowledge of what true manhood is; he must know which tendencies are central in human nature and which derivative, which are dominant and which subordinate, which are permanent and which provisional, which are high and to be encouraged and which are low and to be controlled and eradicated. If he is to acquire this necessary knowledge, he must study the child's opening nature under conditions which are favourable to its healthy harmonious development.

The system of education which is not based on child study is a house that is built in sand. In such a house, even the most skillful and clever man could not keep it up. Even the most skillful and clever man could not keep it up. Even the most skillful and clever man could not keep it up. Even the most skillful and clever man could not keep it up. But for most men, including even the poets and heroes, the struggle for freedom is nothing more than the attempt to throw off the yoke of a despot or a conquering people. But the real meaning of the word lies deeper than this. Freedom is the struggle against the deadening pressure of dogmatism, a struggle for the right to live one's own life, to grow along the line of one's own being.

Clamorous as we have been in demanding freedom for ourselves we have never known how to give it to the child; and the result of this has been that generation after generation has grown up, and still grows up, hardened, narrowed and materialised by dogmatic pressure, dominated by false ideals of self-culture, and unfruitful to enjoy it. If this catastrophe is to be averted, we must rear a generation of men who will prove themselves worthy of freedom; in other words, we must transfer the struggle against dogmatism to the nursery school.

Freedom can recover the worst into the best. It is between these alternatives that the teacher must make his choice. If we would reform education, we must first reform society, and if we would reform society, we must first reform man. If we would reform man, we must first reform nature, if we would know what are the central tendencies of his nature, we must educate him in an atmosphere of freedom. We should always bear in mind in this connection that the teacher will of course have much to unlearn and much to learn. The teacher's principal duty would be to efface himself as much as possible, to realise that not he but the child, plays the leading part in the drama of school life.

The child's nature is of early weaknesses, crudities, and other shortcomings, feeling sure that its higher tendencies, if allowed to unfold themselves in due season, will gradually develop itself, or as the saying goes, "form grows much freedom is as compatible with the maintenance of the reality rather than the semblance of order. To relieve him from the deadening pressure of the discipline of drill, and to help him to subject himself to the discipline of self-control.

Free outlets for the child's healthy activities for all his healthy instincts, so that these shape their own channels, as far as may be possible, and are not merely directed into ready-made canals. To place at his disposal such materials as will provide him both with mental and spiritual food, and with opportunities for the exercise of his mental and spiritual faculties. To give him such guidance as his expanding nature may seem to need, taking care that the guidance given is the outcome of sympathetic study of his instinctive tendencies, and interferes as little as possible with his freedom of choice.

The teacher can reconcile the child's love of freedom with the need of what is needed; and the child's regard for himself to abstain from that excessive fault-finding which the dogmatic spirit (always prone to mistake correctness for goodness) is apt to engender and which paralyses the child's initiative, and makes him morbidly self-conscious and self-distrustful. To help him to overcome all his coming difficulties, and doing things well, than of producing plausible and possibly deceptive results. To foster his natural sincerity, and keep far away from him whatever savours of make-believe self-deception, and fraud. To study and develop all his expensive instincts, so that he may learn to give freedom to himself and in full measure to children who have been kept for years under strict control, it is to court disaster.

The experiments of Dr. Maria Montessori in Italy, which are now arousing the interest of the whole educational world have proved that freedom can safely be given in fullest measure to children of the very tenderest years; and that where freedom is given under judicious and sympathetic guidance, growing children will develop even in
SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

By "Synergist"

SECTION III. THE NEW WORLD VIEW

(i) THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC

(ii) KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE REALITY

SUPRAMENTAL INTEGRALITY AND MENTAL SEPARATIVENESS

As the consciousness ascends from the mental level its range of awareness gradually increases—it becomes wider and more luminous on the intermediate spiritual levels of the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind and the Intuitive Mind, attaining a global and all-seeing total vision on that of the Overmind; when it finally reaches the gnostic summit of the Supermind it possesses perfect unity, integrity, and absolute Truth-consciousness. A greater knowledge is attained of forces beyond the ken of the rational and scientific mind—spiritual forces, subtle mind-forces, life-forces, and material forces,—of the working of universal processes, of individual existents and their structures, of the intrinsic as well as dynamic-functional relations of these existents to other existents and to the organic whole and the relation of such wholes to other wholes and to the cosmic totality, of ontological relationships at the summit of Being, and of causal sequences, as well as of values, ends and purposes.

As the very basis of cognition changes and knowledge-approach becomes more immediate and direct to a state of knowledge by identity, the dissonances, conflicts and oppositions of the ordinary mental-vital-physical human life are seen to be resolved; the seed-truth behind each discordant element is clearly perceived, its right place in the universal configuration is established, the archetypal realities, the "real ideas", behind the earth actualities are directly apprehended; for example, the right value and significance of the idea-forces behind various philosophical and religious systems and of personal and political ideologies followed by men, and the true relation between these idea-forces are fully understood.

It becomes apparent that these conflicting elements are but parts of a vast cosmic harmony, each attempting to reveal its inner truth amidst terrestrial conditions, its transcendent value in the universe of Time, where a certain problem of Being is worked out to its logical conclusion. The working of this an evolutionary process which proceeds from Incoherence to the heights of the Spirit, with a simultaneous movement of the Spirit descending into the Incoherence and creating in an unbroken ascending series different orders of organized existence. The problem working out in the appearance and growth of consciousness in a world of Incoherence, the emergence of the Divine Consciousness from its involvement in Matter degree by degree till it recuperates its highest spiritual and Supramental status and manifests its powers in existence.

The conflict that is at present seen on the transitional human mental level is in fact one that is found to be on the Supramental level a mutually enriching exchange and interplay of divers elements, a vast and integral divine harmony holding them in their right place in the totality. In terrestrial existence each element has to yield its particular truth, its right value and contribute to the general whole without annulment the value of other elements; but such a harmony has not yet been realised in the world as man's consciousness has not yet reached the Supramental level; it is limited in its range because it is impregnated by the egoic consciousness, the ego is calling itself the one and only conception either of its universality and its cosmic bond or of its transcendent status and its divine source. This limitation of his consciousness prevents man, as we have seen, from creating a synthesis of knowledge, and devising systems of social and political relationships which can ensure a lasting human unity. Only poisoned in a wider and higher gnostic consciousness can he correlate and fuse into a harmonious whole the various opposing ideas, ideals and forces and create a more illuminised and happier life.

In the world at present we see that a single idea is generally put forward by an orthodox group, a party, or a nation, as the fundamental truth or the whole truth and the only valid explanation of things: witness the dogmatic assertions made by Materialism in all its different guises, by Vitalism, Materialism and Idealism, by the various religious creeds and.esoteric systems of philosophy, psychology, and social, political or religious or political philosophy; or witness the exaltation of ideals like the pursuit of Beauty, Utility, Pleasure and Happiness, or the Moral Good, or again, Equality and Liberty, Collectivism and Individualism. No doubt all these idea-forces contain a powerful truth in them, but in their self-expression in human life they get distorted, because each idea-force tries to affirm itself at the expense of the others, to seek its separate fulfilment to the exclusion of that of the others, with the result that an exaggerated emphasis or twist pervades it and the truth it is really trying to express.

The failure of an idea-force to realise itself because of an exaggerated application, is seen very clearly today when we examine the ideal of Equality with its Collectivistic leanings. When this ideal tries to realise itself, it is found to deny the truth of the other great idea, Liberty and Freedom—freedom of thought, of speech, of action, to be free in the life, material and intellectual, and seek intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual fulfilment. The term Collectivity becomes a mere abstraction if the living, thinking, feeling individual beings who constitute it are ignored or sacrificed. The freedom of the individual is of the utmost importance because he is the spearhead of the evolutionary march of humanity, and without his growth and development the Collectivity must eventually stagnate; it is only through his evolution that it can advance. Equality also introduces uniformity and ignores the play of differentiations, and fails to respect hierarchical levels.

This does not imply that the ideal of Equality is false; such an admission would give an exaggerated importance to the ideal of Liberty which leads to an extreme form of individualism and ego-centrism. The idea of Equality undoubtedly expresses a great ontological and cosmic truth which has to be pragmatically translated in human life; a fundamental sign, or has to be, of an epoch which values the free play of variations, admits a hierarchy of Being and, as a necessary consequence, levels and grades of functions. The ontological truth behind the Divine spiritual status of the One and the Many is translated in the social and political life of men as the manifestation of diversity on a great scale. This means that unity need not give rise to absolute uniformity, with all differentiations and variations ground into flatness. Such a one-sided solution can come only from the spiritually unenlightened rational and materialist orientation of life and the complexity and beauty of the creative process. It is not possible to ensure the harmonious realisation of such apparently opposing ideals on the human level unless man learns to live and act from a higher consciousness; it is not possible to control and govern life by the mental idea, however great it may be, or by rationalistic norms; only a higher spiritual and Supramental dynamism can effectively do it.

The metaphysical source of the separative tendencies of idea-forces was discussed in the essays: Self-realisation and the Supermind and The Overmind Level.** Whilst in the Supermind, with its integral and unitarian consciousness there is a concerted and harmonious play of the One and the Many in the expression of Unity and Diversity, on the Overmind level, with its global but not integral consciousness, the emphasis is on the multiplicity, the unity remaining in the background and supporting it. The Overmind stresses the multiplicity, and gives each idea, each Force, each Power, a separate direction and makes it extend itself to its utmost limit for development and self-expression. Though it sets into action a play of differentiations and divergent possibilities it has the unity of the Supermind behind supporting it and compelling the apparently contradictory elements to fall into harmony and contribute to its total movement. The separative tendency of the Overmind gets more pronounced as the lower levels of Being are reached, becoming extremely sharp and acute on the Mind level. This separative factor is the originating cause of the existence of the world of so many different philosophies, religions, creeds and ideologies. The various idea-forces having been estranged from their source in the Supermind, become oblivious of their true inter-relatedness and oppose one another as if they were irreconcilable contrary aspects of reality. As projected by the Overmind are innumerable, says Sri Aurobindo; consequently the idea-forces behind them give rise to so many systems of thought, worship, and social and political organisation.

It has been found necessary to state this aspect of the problem of Higher Knowledge in detail because the Supermind is very often confused, even by those who have a knowledge of spiritual metaphysics, with Self-realisation which is looked upon as a power of the Supramental mind, or the whole truth and the only valid explanation of things: witness the dogmatic assertions made by Materialism in all its different guises, by Vitalism, Materialism and Idealism, by the various religious creeds and esoteric systems of philosophy, psychology, and social, political or religious philosophy; or witness the exaltation of ideals like the pursuit of Beauty, Utility, Pleasure and Happiness, or the Moral Good, or again, Equality and Liberty, Collectivism and Individualism. No doubt all these idea-forces contain a powerful truth in them, but in their self-expression in human life they get distorted, because each idea-force tries to affirm itself at the expense of the others, to seek its separate fulfilment to the exclusion of that of the others, with the result that an exaggerated emphasis or twist pervades it and the truth it is really trying to express.

* Issue Dated: November 25, 1939.
** Issue Dated: May 19, 1939.
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE
SELF-PORTRAIT OF A POET
WORLD WITHIN WORLD

by STEPHEN SPENDER

(Continued from next page)

SPRAMENTAL INTEGRALITY AND MENTAL SEPARATIVENESS--Continued from previous page

The Ultimate Reality—who is the Transcendent, the Universal and the Individual, the Personal God and the Impersonal Absolute, the Static and Immutable Self and the Dynamic Shakti, who is the Edwards and Father in Heaven as well as the Sunnymen and the Clear Light of the Void, and is more than all these aspects through which He reveals Himself to man in spiritual evolution—can only be apprehended in all its totality if a union is made with Him through the spiritual path of Vedanta. This path leads only then one can truly possess a vision of the whole and attain to the Higher Knowledge. By knowing That, the undifferentiated Ground of all existence, the essential Brahman, we do not know everything, for the riddle of the Universe remains unsolved. We know only one thing through a horizontal widening of consciousness, or a movement of withdrawal from the cosmic manifestation is not sufficient; a vertical ascension to the summit light of the Spirit and a union with the Divine Intelligence is an absolute necessity—the ultimate knowledge of God, man and the universe is in the Supermind.
Into Spender’s accounting, for it is the true integrating factor he has been seeking. His chief weakness perhaps is that he has a strong sympathetic feeling, and to a certain extent insight but he does not possess the counterbalancing detachment necessary to raise himself above the present generation. He has not, I think, the critical faculty which, if he had, he would have realized that he could not avoid being drawn into unsavoury relationships and soul-stunting movement. It is impossible, as Somerset Maugham observed, for a writer or artist to get the correct angle or perspective on things unless he is able to keep himself detached from the current stream. In this way he can train his insight to act without disturbing his balance, and equal view of things. Perhaps this is more difficult for the poet to achieve than the pure prose-writer, since the former depends more on his subtle feelings and foibles. But the element which is the latter’s asset is Spender’s weakness in this category of detachment is equally necessary. The poets of the ’30’s in their quest for a freedom and emancipation from the supposed fetters of the past certainly neglected this necessity of discipline, and the consequence was a drastic slipping away of all higher values, together with the loss of faith and of higher ideals. This could only lead, as it has done, to the frustration and nihilism of the present world-outlook. The one hope left is that the young generation of the ’30’s will recover and re-integrate in their life what has been lost and discarded by the between-wars generation of poets and artists.

As a document of frustration Spender’s analysis has its interesting points, but as the autobiography of a Poet it is a literary disappointment. (And of course this effort of autobiography itself would have been unnecessary had he been able to make his poetry his Life). It is not that he cannot write prose, as he sometimes leads us to imagine. There are a number of good terse descriptive pieces and observations scattered through the book, some of which would have gone to make excellent essays had he sought to develop this aspect of his writing. The whole book hounds together too loosely and disjointedly to make a composite entity. And all too often the skeleton of his past poxes discoloringly through the canvas, breaking into what could otherwise have been a fair objective account of the literary personalities and tendencies of the period. It all seems to be like the attempt to assemble together the already shattered fragments of what he and his world once had been, before they are irretrievably swept away in the all-absorbing stream of Time. (One wonders whether this latter course would not after all have been the better.) Furthermore he follows too closely that all-too-prevalent tendency of the moderns to resurrect and expose indiscriminately all experiences of the past, particularly the distasteful and infantile ones. This is in fact regarded to be the sign of the unbridled (and hence liberated) period. However, to really give us a critical backround in position to become completely detached from these experiences (and thus see their true nature), they merely fall into the category of so many exhibition-pieces which cling to one’s nature and even become more identified with and embodied in the personality. There is no other way than that of complete detachment, in the spiritual sense of the term, whereby one can clearly analyze one’s past experiences, separating truth from error so that the latter falls away naturally. In this process suppression of distasteful experiences does not enter at all, since all things are faced fairly and squarely with the knowledge that errors are but stepping-stones to truth and right-thinking—and eventually right doing.

One cannot but hope that having eased his conscience in unburdening himself of these mixed experiences in which he had become involved, Spender will now be free to devote his energies to nobler creative work.

A GREAT CONTROVERSIAL CHARACTER

D. H. LAWRENCE AND HUMAN EXISTENCE by FATHER WILLIAM WITH A FOREWORD by T. S. ELIOT

Published by Rockliff Publishing Corporation Ltd., Salisbury Square, London, Price 12s. 6d., with a Self-Portrait Frontispiece

Few writers in recent years have been such an enigma as D. H. Law- rence (1885-1930). As a poet, novelist and critic he stands high, yet his works have been misunderstood and misrepresented by those who call themselves critics. Dallas Kenmore’s Fire-Bird: A Study of D. H. Lau- rence gives a due to his personality and to the many inconsistencies and contradictions which critics meet in their discussions on him. Father William Tiverton’s D. H. Lawrence And Human Existence sheds new light on the man and writer in a religious light, with a vital message to Christians.

These two critics, it is hoped, will help the critics of Lawrence to understand him better, and men and women of all ages and conditions as they have never done before.

For Lawrence was primarily a man in advance of his age, “possessed of great talent” and by no stretch of imagination can he be called sex- obsessed though he popularized Freud. As Aldous Huxley says in his Introduction to The Letters of Lawrence (a Heinemann publication): “To be with Lawrence was a kind of adventure, a voyage of discovery into newness and otherness”; and he rightly thinks that his writings cannot be explained “in terms of Freudian hypothesis.” Like Blake, Lawrence was absurd in the mysterious, and sex and love led him to the realm of mystery in contact with the Beautiful and the Infinite. He was always wanting to feel the “impassive” love or “to die in its absence.” He saw Love as a “great force” and he felt an “ache” when he was not in love. To those who were strangers to love Lawrence appeared silly, childish, as one who wanted to “slobber” about with women and to take their arms and feel happy. But Lawrence saw something profound in love and we understand what he means when he refers to love in Paventa: “No man ever had a wife unless he served a great predominant purpose. Otherwise, he has a lover, a mistress. No matter how much she may be married to him, unless his days have a living pur- pose, constructive or destructive, but a purpose behind her and all she stands for; unless his days have this purpose, and his soul is really committed to his purpose, she will not be a wife, she will be only a mistress and he will be her lover.”

Here we see him belonging to the school known as existentialist who believe that communion is possible, and he sees in sex a something within a larger whole. He once told Cadavars: “You cannot separate the man’s purpose to ‘meet and mingle’, but to remain intact, essentially, whatever your experience may be.” It is this intenseness that has made him a lonely figure, remote, “essentially separated from the cotton run of men and his learned contemporaries. His novels, poems, letters and essays, brought out last year by the Pelican Books, will enable the layman to judge him aright.

The timely publications of Lawrence’s life after his death by sym-pathetic biographer-critics like Thurber, Potter and Gregory have done much to remove the odium that friendly critics of Lawrence have brought to his works. Revivals of Lawrence have enabled readers to judge him as he knew and, thanks to Father Tiverton, we have a full-length study of Law- rence the man and writer from the Christian standpoint and he makes ample amends for the rash criticisms made by acknowledged critics. The work is highly fitting to the critical acumen of Father Tiverton.

“Poe or Priest?” is the opening chapter of the book D. H. Lawrence And Human Existence. Here we see Lawrence as a self-critic who not only saw the faults of others (e.g. Hardy and Bennett) but also his own and he could laugh his faults away in his works. To Lawrence the novel was akin to philosophy and comes “unwatched out of one’s pen” when there is “pure passionate experience.” The second chapter “Death of a Son” shows Lawrence the son die to live as a man and to question life’s problems seriously. Sex awakens him to the mystery of life and to the personal man as opposed to the outward man o’ pose or civilization. Chapter three “My England, My England!” brings out Lawrence’s love for his country, as illustrated by quotations from his works, and expresses the pang that he felt when he left England even temporarily. The fourth chapter “The Death of the Gods” makes us see Lawrence’s conflict with God whom he gradually understood and appreciated and thereby enrich- ed his life and his works. He saw in marriage an indisolubility and sym- bol of creation, and he hated to see pornographic literature or books that promoted contraception. His books, unlike those of some of his con- temporaries, are free of sex perversions and are delightful to read. In the fifth chapter “Resurrection” we have a glimpse into Lawrence’s be- lief and his hope in the risen Christ of the Catholics as opposed to the Catholic Christ of the Protestants. The final chapter “The Protestant” sums up the man and writer Lawrence; as a Christian with a belief in Prayer, Fasting and Heaven; as an existentialist who has affinity with Marcel, De La Mothe and Jaspers. D. H. Lawrence And Human Existence is a pioneer- effort in the right direction; or as T. S. Eliot hall it—a “serious piece of criticism of Lawrence, of a kind for which the time is now due.” There is justice done to the writings of “a great controversial literary character and mystic.”

WILLIAM HOOKENS
Marching to the august peak of the vast,
His life was an alternate climb and descent
Between his heavenhood and nature's abyss,
Till passed were all the shadow-gates of the dust,
Till crossed were all the seas of birth and time,
Till with his topless self was he alone:
Then he faced an unfallen faultless ascent.
Descended from his own Being's ancient peak,
He had forced his passage in the womb of clay;
Donning the sepulchral robe of ignorance.
Betimes with himself his own summit-gold,
He had lost himself in the darkness unknown
Like a sleeping skived boy within the soil.
Then started the ascent of his faltering earth
Into waking-dawn from the remnant night.
Almost his child-clay-face became divine,
For a moment was beheld God's communion,
By a sudden and miraculous touch unveiled.
Then came a gradual engulfing shroud,
Upon the still waves of his hour's youth-sea.
Veiled was the silent radiance of the west,
And the unknown toiled from behind, unseen.
Lost was he seemingly to the glorious light.
A shrouded sun lowered over his earthy mound.
But a wide hush embraced his heaven-flame
To flood him with a beam bright, unforeseen.
And awakened an ideal-gleam in his heart;
A secret godhead in his breast arose.
In the arena of humanity dim,
Men felt the ray that litly burned in their soul;
They glimpsed a topless tranquil mound above
The grey flood of the Lilliputian sea,
But the dust averted by insidious powers
Resayed to waylay his Flame's splendid form
And throttle the magnificence of his soul.
But on him a hidden effulgence of blue-gold
Bestowed a white talisman of love divine,
An armour-light of a celestial strength.
And here he was beyond the orbit of night
Into a realm of perpetual sun-gleam.
This was his high sanctuary of the Blue.
Where he was troubled no more by rise and fall,
By human tears and strife, and droughts and pain.
Absolved from griefs of a dying dust life.
The white Domains of higher realities
Unmasked their grandeurs to his stirless mind.
Immense oceans of luminous unwalled knight's
And bright streams of a shining rapture-surge
Flowed into his cave-soul, silver and gold.
Cataracts of delight poured into his cup.
Floods of a giant ecstasy welled up.
Torrents of nectar-calm his spirit bethed.
From high above came lightning-fountains of might
Possessing the evergrowing chalice of his mind.
The unknown mysteries to him truth.
Denied by groping life-sense and little sights,
A crystal-rubied lore, unwalled and wide
Broadened more and more the sphere of his heart.
All his members were cast into an heavenly forge
And on the huge anvil of the Infinite
Harnessed with glowing hue and equipoise
By an unseen might and will of paradise.
To reshape his might-dust into wide noon-gold.
His manhood was an antiluvian tale
Whish now it must forget and wipe away.
His human birth was a mere means to propel
The sky to descend upon the abyssmal soul.
And that act of the drama was now complete;
Passed was the brief hour of oblivion.
For in him was the seed of omnipotence,
Ascent was now his spirit's ecoloith path,
Light and wideness his guide to his great climb,
Stillness and calm his soul's secrecy vast;
To attain the unattained his aspired goal.
His life now must follow the highway of the sun,
Not the dusty by-lanes on the mine's dark home.
A dweller of the bright metropolis of the sky.
He must renounce the sombre caves of earth.
Not be a troglodyte in the dust's gloom,
But an archangel in the white heaven-room.
Infancy was the vast field of his play.
His playmates were the cosmic heights and breadth.
Living on an unhorizoned continent,
His fate was led not by a gambling chance
Or unrumed by the negation of the void.
But crowned by a deity within his breast
Leading his pace with its viewless wand of light.
A giant radiance unnamable, free
Watched his path to the discovery of his soul.
A secret will immortal and alone
Remained behind him like a towering might,
Moulding his mind to a god's mighty shape.
Casting his earthhood to the All-beautiful form—
A kingship ruling over all mutable shapes,
One who is rapt in his own vastness-sleep,
One who is the deep soul of motion and might;
For in him was the kernel of a Mind
Which sees all and supports all shining worlds
Of thought and vision and consciousness divine.
Not a human soul attaining the summit supreme
Of deathless Being and calm Truth and Delight.
But a god-ray returning to its parent sun
Like a vast boomerang of light speeding back.
From its aim of nescience with its love
Into the fathomless arms of an ocean-depth
Of effulgence that had shot it into the gloom.
Not a goal half-attained was ever his aim.
But a compleatly clay has never seen.
A blaze that would cover the two opposite ends
Of conscious trance and self-best oblivion
With its birthless unimaginable flame.
A priest he would be and a summoner august
To a radiance that would span the blinded mire.
Within the boundless spaces of the Invisible
Inaugurating the Gold's advent on earth.
But such a close needs a toll undreamable,
Labour colossal and work beyond the ken.
Of fragile humanity and the world's reach.
Vast must he be and limitless and above
All change and time, a child of the Infinite,
Purged of all ignorance of fate and birth;
Freed from the myriads bonds of the pole stars,
A free, immaculate godhead immolable.
His sight must traverse all the ethereal space;
His brain be unpeopled of the thralls of night.
His mind must reach the periphery of the highest climb
And widest flight of thought.
An incomemissable vastness must he be
To bear the grandeur of the Gnostic Flame.
A deep spirit unfathomable like a star
A sempiternal life grandiose and true.
A mind unequalled by earth's horizoned skies
And a timeless body that will know no death.
Can be the sacred seat of the Ultimate Blaze.
No vestige of insentience there must be,
No speech of dust and its fallen satellites
Lark in a self that calls down the super-sun.
Earth's topmost ideal is too far below.
To reach its diamond throne; the vaster worlds
Of sight and being are inapt totally.
To urge its descent from its summit-Mind
Into a ground that denies all light and bliss.
Only the sapphire-gold seas can appeal
The majesty of Its puissance unknowable
And silence supernal and passive infinite,
The unmanifest Being of all the beings.
To descend into its heart of azure expanses;
Then below into the worlds multitudinous,
Changing their substance and their air into flames,
Changing all that it touched with Its light and fire.
Silencing insurgent mights with its footfalls,
Stilling yeaning souls with its blazing downpour.
Into the endless abyss of somnolence.
Even the high cobalt vastnesses had not
The potency and the kinetic might,
The thinker and the Gold's imperial light.
To change the very stuff of insentient earth,
For it were not the diadem supreme.
Continued on next page
MOTHER INDIA, October 13, 1931

If we agree with Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living, weonlty George aagreed with Karl Marx that the first and most important critical inquiry is the inquiry into the private domain of religion. Marx exalted himself that nature alone is real and that consequence of any higher power that is not natural must be wishful fantasy. Man cannot know himself on the universe and makes God in his own image, or perhaps more truly, in the image of himself not as he is but as he would like to be. Why does he project himself on the universe? Because from time to time he finds himself at the end of an alley with no further aid of a help more powerful than his own. Marx illustrated these two ways, first by natural sciences, Indus, and a deep and tempest, by famine and drought, and by sickness and death, and second by social injustice arising out of economic conditions which men do not understand and cannot control. "The omnipotence of God is nothing but the fantastic reflection of the impotence of people before nature and the economic social relations created by themselves."

In a recent essay on religion Professor M. G. Wood Thomson has presented the Marxist view in an attractive and disarming manner. As in the case of his latest book, he has presented Lenin's booklet on religion but he does not echo Lenin's contempt for religion. Nor does he lose theolling for Christian socialists since he has made the case that we need to become fellow-travellers. He hastens to clear Marx from any charge of lack of sympathy with popular feelings in his description of religion as "the opium of the people."

"His meaning has been wilfully misrepresented by quoting the phrase out of its context, which is as follows: Religious misery is, on the one hand, the expression of actual misery, on the other, a protest against actual misery. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the desolate murmur of a heartless world, the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the people's opium." Marxists' Four Assumptions

On closer analysis the Marxist view of religion will be found to be correct, but there are two points which are false. It assumes, first, that religion is the "only" root of social division; second, that frustration by nature and frustration by an unjust social organization is the only serious forms of frustration; third, that natural science is the only real source of knowledge for social injustice and economic exploitation; and fourth that religion, the people's "alternative" to social injustice, is the only source of religious experience and conviction.

Secondly, frustration is not confined to frustration by external nature or economic injustice in the social order. Men's worst conflicts and failures are inward ones. The very fervent radicals, whose political beliefs were based on the proposition that they were not part of organized society, who saw the society as a whole within the sphere of their own interest, found that they were not the only source of religious experience and conviction.

The fourth assumption of the Marxists that religion is the people's opium is merely a deluding form of consolation for the socially distressed is refuted by Professor George Thomson himself. He says of early Christianity that it was "not even in those early days, a revolutionary movement. That in the circumstances was impossible."

But it was progressive. Professor Thomson perceives and tactfully corrects the self-contradiction of Marx who describes religion both as a protest against actual misery and also as an accompaniment of the protest, even an ineffectual protest, is not optimum. And Professor Thomson of the "authoritarian" and "oppressive" form of the Engelsian revolution and of the English Revolution of 1917, whose protest was not ineffectual, thus he says of Bunsen, "He had laid up his hopes in heaven. Even so, he was not surrendered to the oppressor—he had preserved the independence that was to be his spirit—and his Pilgrims' Progress remained an inspiration to generations of English workers and peasants whose revolutionary vigour was to burst out anew after the Industrial Revolution had precipitated a new economic and social upheaval."

Death—The Leveller

From the standpoint of Stalinitists, Professor George Thomson's thesis must be condemned as deviantism. He seems to barely the positive contribution of the Christian church in some of its forms and expressions social progress. But he helps many to see that the Marxist failure to understand either religion or human nature or man's capacity for progress in human history. To confine attention to material and economic considerations is to ignore the social and cultural aspect of human life. And, as the Marxist social revolution, so far from being a complete cure for economic exploitation and social injustice, it generates several fresh forms of exploitation for each one that it eliminates. Economic exploitation is a kind of Hydra with nine heads. Marxists are under the illusion that it has only one, and they fail to observe that the removal of one head is no attempt to remove that onlone produces two: the main obstacle moral and economic consequence is very at the present time is precisely the Marxists' philosophy, and the most serious source of frustration is neither nature nor the social order, but the abstract and ideal faith in false politics in the Marxists social revolution.

"People's Opium"—A Contradiction

The four assumptions of the Marxists that religion is the people's opium and is merely a deluding form of consolation for the socially distressed is refuted by Professor George Thomson himself. He says of early Christianity that it was "not even in those early days, a revolutionary movement. That in the circumstances was impossible."

The Einstenian Method

I am sorry to see my critic going scientifically astray everywhere. He confused the heresy by treating an entire method of reaching fundamental theory by an intuitive leap, a mathematical divination, a "free creation" of reality-revealing concepts, instead of by a purely inductive reasoning method. He falls foul of my interpretation of the significance of the Einsteinian method—an interpretation in accordance with Einstein's own avowed pantheism which holds our mind and the world to be secretly single conscious Being and his belief in a hidden pre-established harmony between the human and the absolute and the all-encompassing World-Intelligence. But Mr. Jagjit Singh ignores all my logic and shoots off at a tangent by starting to talk of Einstein's new "unified field theory" claiming to synthesise the gravitational and electromagnetic phenomena under one comprehensive concept. What has this theory to do with the point under discussion?

We are told: "I have not studied it yet but similar attempts have been made before, though unsuccessfully by Weyl, Ein, and M.Einstein. It is quite unlikely that the new 'unified pattern field', even if verified by observation, will lend any greater support to the mystical view of the universe than the earlier speculations. and general theories have done." Well, whether it will support my thesis or not will depend upon us, right or my critic. But it is surely arrived at by the same method of mathematical divination as the general theory or even the special. And the new divination serve as an index to the existence of a "World-Intelligence" that sustains us. Mr. Jagjit Singh does not even realise the issue at stake. I am led to wonder why throughout his review of my paper he has forgotten the elementary principle of adverse criticism, as summed up by the Dictionary: 'Strike, but hear!'"
MOTHER INDIA, October 12, 1951

MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE(2)

By K. D. SETHNA

Mr. Jagjit Singh cannot perhaps be blamed very much for misconceiving the nature of mysticism. We are not out yet of the grossly materialistic period of modern science and one of the characteristics of this period is to dismiss all mystical experience and testimony without even caring to study them with the open inquiring mind and the scruple about detail of fact which we are so apt to overlook, much less apply to the genuine scientific researcher. But it is curious that a reviewer who professes to be a man of mysticism on the one hand maintains that he is a scientific thinker should make statements about physics that are, on the face of them, inadequate. The slightest attention to the body of this reviewer’s arguments will show up in my Mysticism and Einstein’s Relativity Physics would have saved him from these superficialities.

The Meaning of Four-Dimensionality

He writes: “To say that the world is a four-dimensional continuum is only a rather pedantic way of saying that to specify world events we need a set of four independent numbers, three to indicate space and one to give the time of its occurrence.” If this were all, then there would be no need to ask what Minkowski meant when he systematized Einstein’s revolutionary discovery of the relativity of motion, space and time as a four-dimensional continuum. Strictly speaking, this was a pedantic way of saying that the time aspect of the space-time continuum was necessitated by the insufficiency of a mere set of four independent numbers in describing the world of physics. To call a specification of world events by such a set a description of four-dimensionality is itself a piece of pedantry. As long as the time factor plays no role at all, then from that of the space-time terms, the four numbers fell apart into one dimension of time and three of space: a close-unist systematize block of four dimensions, analogous to the block of three that we call space, can come about only if both time and space are subjective or inseparable variables ending in an essential indistinguishability of character as belongs to the three spatial dimensions. The significance of Einstein’s relativity theory is that the world which we to common experience is a combination of three spatial dimensions and one temporal must be considered for scientific purposes a single block in which space and time, losing their function, become as one single entity.

The question I posed after clarifying this point was: Does the single block of homogeneous and isotropic space-time figure in our common experience? My answer was: No, it does not and all that we effectively have is a concept of it. Then I proceeded to show that our concept of it is no convenient device for calculation but the formula for a reality transcending the common experience with which science actually deals and from which it leaps into theoretical constructs. It is the formula for such a reality that I brought into relation with the mystic experience of a Totum Simul (All At Once) and a Nunc Stans (River-standing Now).

Physical Theory and the Mystical View

Einstein himself misses the ultimate philosophical bearing of the formula a Minkowski which he incorporated in his special theory and later elaborated in his general theory. But when he went through my paper he did express some feeling of the scientific concept of space-time, but only expressed a difficulty in understanding how mysticism can be brought together with the theory of relativity when there is no place in that theory, as also in any other physical theory, for psychological concepts.

My explanation to Einstein ran: “The Supreme Reality that is the object of mysticism is an infinite and eternal Existence, Consciousness, Bliss and what we may call Power of Truth which brings forth the oneness and the manyness implicit in the Supreme Reality and formulates, interrelates, organizes, cosminises. As this Reality is not only the originator, supporter and indwelling principle of a cosmos but also its material and its moral content (though, of course, not exhausted in to being by any cosmic self-formulation), what science studies as the physical universe is this Reality itself in one pace or status of its manifestation. Quantity, number, mathematical structure—the objects of physical science—are characteristics of the lower or superficial plane of reality, and we cannot express the Existence-aspect of that Reality as conceived by what we have called Power of Truth. And we, when considering the mathematical structure of the universe, are still in touch with the object of mysticism, though not in terms of the specific mathematical expertise which would directly perceive in the subtle and dynamism of the physical universe the living presence of the Supreme Reality. It is, therefore, quite legitimate to ask whether the formula in mathematical language implies a structure which bears out in scientific terms the nature of this Reality and its set of residing and interacting factors which yield the mystical insight. The fact that this formula, by being confined to purely physical terms, has no place in it for psychological concepts makes no odd, so far as a philosophical research is concerned.”

I should request Mr. Jagjit Singh also to ponder this point as answer to his jibe that to relate the mystical view of reality to “reconcile equations and numbers, e.g. tensor equations or Dirac’s n and q numbers” is “merely a reshuff of Euler’s argument in the story with which Hogben begins his fascinating book Mathematics for the Million.” Hogben relates that when Euler wrote, the Encyclopaedist and materialist, was confronted with Euler, the mathematical mystic, the latter confounded the former with a masterpiece of the existence of God. Euler simply said: “a2 + b2 = c2, therefore God exists, now answer!” Well, Euler’s may be too much of a mathematical mystagogy, but the principle is not unsound. As I have said to Mr. Singh himself, a mathematical concept of basic physical fact suggests the nature of that fact by the manner in which the terms of the concept are combined. It may function as a materialism or lean towards the world-view: all depends on the implications of the mathematical structure it regards as final. We commit, therefore, to "boulder" in inquiring whether relativity theory sheds on basic physical fact a light in the direction of mysticism.

Physics, Idealism and Materialism

Instead of appraising this position and trying to understand the implications I draw out from Einstein’s concepts, Mr. Jagjit Singh plunges into a discourse of his own on particular items of physics and follows up his misconception of four-dimensionality with remarks on Einstein’s concept of energy. But strangely enough, he has no materialism which hallmarks the proper. He merely digresses to the problem whether modern physics has refuted not only naive mechanical materialism but also the dialectical materialism. Strictly speaking, the former is ruled out by the content of physics. And the digression seems to me pretty messy. Contrary to a long proof by Mr. Singh to the contrary, he is supported by quotations from authorities in which Einstein proved the relativity of so-called “objective” qualities like mass, size, motion, he proved Dialnet’s materialism by bearing directly on the issue between materialism and idealism and that only the “immaterial” of the four-dimensional continuum is left untainted by idealism. Mr. Jagjit Singh further imagines that when Heisenberg established his Principle of Indeterminacy he showed even the Einsteinian interval to be dependent on the observer and to be only a “thought” and therefore to be heuristics and the idealist position refuting completely the materialist unless we scrap mechanical materialism and resort to the dialectical variety whose proponent is Max. I do not pretend to choose between what I call the subject of mechanical materialism and the kernel of the dialectical variety, but I must declare that here is capital confusion on the part of Mr. Jagjit Singh.

There is no specific idealism involved, no specific refutation of the old materialism, in either Einstein’s Principle of Relativity as applied to quantum physics or Heisenberg’s Principle of Indeterminacy. No resort to a new kind of materialism is required. For, what we have is nothing more than a particular brand of pointer-reading. A measuring instrument is made to interact with phenomena and in the one case it is found that different motions of the instrument relative to the phenomena yield different surmising readings and in the other case it is found that the instrument interacts with the phenomena and so does not yield a reading of what they may be without the interference. All that the observer does is to read off the quantitative indications given by the instrument. The observation in one case does not determine the pointer-reading in any way that is incompatible to any measuring experiment conducted in days prior Einstein and Heisenberg. The observer receives a visual stimulus from the pointer-reading, his optic nerves react, a nerve-messanger runs to the back part of the brain, the grey matter there responds and we have the conscious perception. Whatever be the magic or mystery of perception, the whole observing process is the very same as occurred when Newton or even Archimedes stood before a measuring instrument. Neither relativity theory nor quantum theory, by using the term “observer”, makes out a special case for idealism that could not have been valid in the days of classical or any other physics.

In this context, the whole picture is enacted by Mr. Jagjit Singh of physics being rescued from turning idealism by a materialism which, while the mechanical kind of D’Holbach and Diderot, does not separate the object from the subject and regard it contemplatively but, like the dialectical kind of Marx and Engels, views it as "a subject-object relation arising out of man’s living or his practice on the object around him"—this whole picture is utterly illogical and spurious.

Perhaps the reader is anxious to avoid any hand being afforded to the Positivists against whom Lenin rallied in his Materialism and Empirio-Criticism. But Positivism—or, rather, Logical Positivism since that is the form now current—does not rest on an idealist attitude vis-a-vis the observables but on a noema of the inferences arrived at by the pointer of a measuring instrument. It does make argumentative use of the instruments interference with microscopic phenomena, but that raises an issue that has little connection with what Mr. Jagjit Singh is talking about. The issue is not one of those by which the Positivist fundamentally lay store: their main armoury consists of a peculiar analysis of language and of a refurbished Humean empiricism.

Continued on page II

Printed by K. R. Poddar at the Popular Press (Bombay) Ltd., 35, Tyrconnel Road, Bombay 7 and published by him from 52, Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay, India. Subscriptions: Rs. 5 or 12 sh. or 31, half-yearly Rs. 3-4-