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SELECTED MODERN PROSE

Edited by

J. S. ARMOUR, M. A.,

Indian Educational Service

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PREFACE

This selection of Modern English Prose is intended for the use of Indian schoolboys who are nearing the completion of their school course, and for students who have just begun the study of English in a College. It may therefore be prescribed for both Matriculation and Intermediate courses, and for this reason the extracts have been arranged in a rough order of difficulty, beginning with the simple and concrete and going on to the more abstract. For their choice the editor is indebted to Professor Kripa Nath Misra, of the English Department in the Science College at Patna, whose predilection for, and acquaintance with, present-day prose literature is beginning to be recognized in other than local education circles.

Subjects with an Indian or Eastern setting and background have been preferred; such passages as demand a knowledge of England which youthful Indian students cannot possibly possess have been rejected. In other words, an attempt has been made to limit the readers' difficulties to matters of expression and interpretation, without adding to these an unfamiliarity with the subject. No fewer than eight passages are definitely Eastern in setting; four others may be said to have no local setting at all; in fact, one only,—*The Great Thames Frost*—postulates a knowledge which few Indian boys possess; and these readers may perhaps find comfort in the fact that the extremes of physical phenomena, snow and ice, severe frost and violent thaw, described in the passage, are almost as unfamiliar to the average English youth.

In matters of style a wide variety is offered, from the simple narrative prose of the account of the Nanda Devi ascent to the polished and sparkling sentences of R. L. Stevenson's essay; from the colloquially journalistic presentation favoured by Wells and Huxley to the academic aloofness of Professor Lascelles Abercrombie; from the oratorical flights of Earl Baldwin to the whimsically humorous tones of the celebrated author of *The Good Companions*. Students are invited to examine closely the English expression of foreign writers like Count Keyserling and Dr. Axel Munthe; because, while your native writer bows to traditional use, and models his prose upon the chaste and elegant English of Addison, Steele and Goldsmith, where simplicity and clarity are the essentials: foreign masters of English prose, on the other hand—Joseph Cronad is a brilliant example—are tempted by the wealth and variety of the English vocabulary to a definite ornateness in style.

Care has been taken to provide examples of the real *Essay*, a type of English literature deservedly famous. The student cannot progress very far in his studies without having to write an essay; and he must therefore know what is expected of him. His attention is directed particularly to the construction of *My First Flight* and *Walking Tours*. Various definitions of the *Essay* have been offered; but we need not, perhaps, go far beyond that of Dr. Johnson:—‘a loose sally of the mind’. A *sally* is a military movement in which there is a general plan, but in which the details are usually left to chance, opportunity, and the accident of the moment. The essayist likewise has a general plan; but his actual words and phrases, his quotations and illus-

trations, his figures of speech, paradoxes, antitheses, and triumphant climaxes, etc., must depend upon the direction of his thoughts during the throes of composition. In all his writings the youthful student must strive after careful and correct expression. Successful composition depends, like so many other things, upon the capacity for taking pains.

The notes, and particularly the questions and exercises, are designed to indicate lines of approach, methods of attack, hints for the more profitable study of the passages, individually and by comparison. They may afford the young teacher some guide to the more successful presentation of his lesson.

The thanks of the editor are due to the publishers for their unvarying courtesy at each successive stage of preparation.

Pinner, 1938.

J. S. ARMOUR.

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Sir Francis Young-Husband for the “Himalayan Heritage” from “Everest; the Challenge.”

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Mr. John Murray for “The Bird Sanctuary” from Axel Munthe’s “The Story of San Michele.”

Messrs Martin Secker, Ltd., for Abercrombie’s “Enchantment in Poetry.”

Mr. Aldous Huxley for “Islands amid the sands” & “On Keeping up appearances.”

Mr. E. M. Forster for “The Birth of Krishna” from “A passage to India.”

Mr. J. B. Priestley for “An Idle Speculation” & “Cranks.”

Mr. H. B. Wells for “My First Flight.”

Mr. E. Shipton for “The Second Nanda Devi Venture.”

Messrs Chatto & Windus for “Stevenson’s Walking Tours”.

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1. THE HIMALAYA HERITAGE

That the Himalaya is the most prominent feature on the face of the earth is well known. What is not so well recognized is the influence it is bound to exert upon the human race. Already it has had a profound effect upon the people of India. For thousands of years the most spiritual among them have been inspired by the Himalaya. To this day multitudes of them every year make pilgrimage to sacred shrines at the sources of the great rivers which rise there. And now the influence of the Himalaya is extending to Europeans, and, through them, to the whole world.

But upon neither Indians nor Europeans has the Himalaya yet exercised anything like so profound an influence as it is bound to exert in the future. For the Indians are no real lovers of mountains. They have hitherto rather feared than loved them. They have never dared to face them straightly and strive to climb their highest summits. And as for Europeans, our love of mountains is only in its initial stages. With the Himalaya in particular we are only beginning to be acquainted. What we Europeans shall be wanting to know then, as we accept the challenge of Everest, and come to closer grips with the highest summits, is what effect the Himalaya will ultimately have upon the human race. Already we have realized the astounding altitudes of the supreme peaks, and have luxuriated in the richness and variety of the vegetation which clothes their lower slopes. But as we become more familiar with the Himalaya, a question which will be perpetually arising is: What will be the eventual effect upon us

of this deeper intimacy with the most impressive object in Nature? The contemplation of any great mountain has an elevating influence upon a man. To what heights will the Himalaya raise men as they pit themselves against its loftiest peaks and brace themselves to face its utmost rigours? This is what we would be told.

Indians already see the vision, though as yet only dimly and not in the full splendour in which they will eventually behold it as they come to love the mountains more. And there are a few of us Europeans who have spent many years of our lives in the Himalaya, who have seen something of what these mountains mean to the more spiritual Indians, and who have caught some of that meaning ourselves. General Bruce is such a one. He has climbed in the Himalaya more than any living person, and the more he has seen of these wonderful mountains the more passionately he has come to love them. Hugh Ruttledge, the leader of the 1933 Everest Expedition, who had served as Deputy-Commissioner in the Himalayan District of Almora, is another. I may count myself a third. For I was born in the Himalaya, have lived for years there, have eleven times crossed the entire breadth of the range from the plains of India to the plains of Turkestan or Tibet and back, and have seen all the very highest peaks. And there are others like Bruce, Ruttledge and myself, who have spent many years in the Himalaya, or have gone there on leave for big-game shooting year after year, and have become increasingly devoted to the Himalaya as they have come to know it better.

Then railways, motor cars, and aeroplanes are making the Himalaya yearly more accessible to those Europeans whose lives are spent in India in the Government Civil or Military Service, or for purposes of

business. These improved means of conveyance are also bringing from Europe itself, and from America, more persons who come out with the specific object of travelling in the Himalaya or climbing some great peak. Expeditions great and small penetrate deeper in among the mountains, and climb higher and higher peaks. And these mountaineers write books about what they have seen and achieved and thus attract much attention to the Himalaya.

In consequence of all this activity the glories of the Himalaya are becoming known throughout the world. The appetite to see them is being whetted. The exploits of the climbers in the Himalaya thrill the souls of mountaineers in every country, and even those who can never hope to see the splendour of a Himalayan peak catch from the description something of the glow which the climbers themselves had felt.

And there is just now beginning a contact which may have important results in the future. Climbers of the highest peaks have to employ as porters some of the hardier peoples of the Himalaya, and between European climbers and Himalayan porters a strong feeling of comradeship is growing up. This is important enough; but not nearly so important in its eventual results as the touch which is just beginning to be made between the European lover of the mountains and those sensitively spiritual Hindus from the plains of India who come to visit the sacred shrines of the Himalaya, and who, having come there, are as impressed as their far remote predecessors had been by the solemn grandeur of the mountains and by the exquisite beauty of the Himalayan scenes. There is a deep affinity between the European mountain-lover and the Indian pilgrim to the Himalaya which closer contact

between the two will most beneficially strengthen. The more vigorous European will stimulate the more passive Indians, and give strength and substance and perhaps clarity also, to their thoughts and feelings about the Himalaya, while the Indians, with their more sensitive refinement of feeling, will communicate a greater delicacy to the robuster European.

Cynics like Dean Inge may say that the hills of England are good enough for them. And there is some truth in this. We all know what an influence the hills of Cumberland and Westmorland had upon Wordsworth. But that is not the point. Beautiful as is the influence which the hills of England exert upon Englishmen, the impression which the first sight of a supreme Himalayan peak makes upon a man is of an altogether different order. The sight of even the highest hill in England does not set him gasping as does the sight of a Himalayan peak—and gasping with something more than mere delight. Nor is he impressed for a lifetime by an English hill as he is by a Himalayan giant. An English rose makes one kind of impression upon us, and an English hill quite another. The one does not rule out the other; it supplements it. But no one who ever had the chance of going to the Himalaya should miss it. For he will find there something different from what he can get anywhere else in the world—something both more expanding and more elevating. He will be a bigger man for the experience.

He will be more likely to gain such inspiration if he can go to the mountains with ample leisure for enjoyment of their beauty—if he can go there in some sense as a pilgrim and make for himself the opportunity of getting away for a time from the fret and worry and stress of life, so as to give his mind a chance of

“settling” and of seeing things in their due proportion. In such case there may come to him special moments when he will be in a peculiarly receptive mood, and able to take in to the full the wonderful impressions the Himalaya has to give. The like of these moments, if they come, he may never know elsewhere. In them he may have the experience of a lifetime. During those previous times of calm and receptivity all his previous learning and all his previous knowledge of life may be summed up in a single experience. It may be a case not only of his mind but of his whole personality, feeling as well as intelligence, responding to the mighty impression being made upon it. And he may then get an insight into the deepest nature of things such as he may never acquire without this quiet for reflection, and without that incitement to the soul which these greatest of all mountains give.

[from *Everest: the Challenge*.]

2. MY FIRST FLIGHT

Hitherto my only flights had been flights of imagination, but this morning I flew. I spent about ten or fifteen minutes in the air; we went out to sea, soared up, came back over the land, circled higher, planed steeply down to the water, and I landed with the conviction that I had had only the foretaste of a great store of hitherto unsuspected pleasures. At the first chance I will go up again, and I will go higher and further.

This experience has restored all the keenness of my ancient interest in flying, which had become a little fagged and flat by too much hearing and reading about the thing and not enough participation. Sixteen years

ago, in the days of Langley and Lilienthal, I was one of the few journalists who believed and wrote that flying was possible—it affected my reputation unfavourably and produced in the few discouraged pioneers of those days a quite touching gratitude. Over my mantel as I write hangs a very blurred and bad but interesting photograph that Professor Langley sent me sixteen years ago. It shows the flight of the first piece of human machinery heavier than air that ever kept itself up for any length of time. It was a model, a little affair that would not have lifted a cat; it went up in a spiral and came down unsmashed, bringing back, like Noah's dove, the promise of tremendous things.

That was only sixteen years ago, and it is amusing to recall how cautiously even we out-and-out believers did our prophesying. I was quite a desperate fellow; I said outright that in my lifetime we should see men flying. But I qualified that by repeating that for many years to come it would be an enterprise only for quite fantastic daring and skill. We conjured up stupendous difficulties and risks. I was deeply impressed and greatly discouraged by a paper a distinguished Cambridge mathematician produced to show that a flying machine was bound to pitch fearfully, that as it flew on, its pitching *must* increase until up went its nose, down went its tail, and it fell like a knife. We exaggerated every possibility of instability. We imagined that when the aeroplane wasn't "kicking up ahind and afore" it would be heeling over to the lightest side wind. A sneeze might upset it. We contrasted our poor humble equipment with the instinctive balance of a bird, which has had ten million years of evolution by way of a start. . . .

The waterplane in which I soared over Eastbourne

this morning with Mr. Graham-White was as steady as a motor-car running on asphalt.

Then we went on from those anticipations of swaying insecurity to speculations about the psychological and physiological effects of flying. Most people who look down from the top of a cliff or high tower feel some slight qualms of dread, many feel a quite sickening dread. Even if men struggled high into the air, we asked, wouldn't they be smitten up there by such a lonely and reeling dismay as to lose all self-control? And above all, wouldn't the pitching and tossing make them quite horribly sea-sick?

I have always been a little haunted by that last dread. It gave a little undertow of funk to the mood of lively curiosity with which I got aboard the water-plane this morning—that sort of faint, thin funk that so readily invades one on the verge of any new experience: when one tries one's first dive, for example, or pushes off for the first time down an ice run. I thought I should very probably be sea-sick—or, to be more precise, air-sick; I thought also that I might be very giddy, and that I might get thoroughly cold and uncomfortable. None of those things happened.

I am still in a state of amazement at the smooth steadfastness of the motion. There is nothing on earth to compare with that, unless—and that I can't judge—it is an ice yacht travelling on perfect ice. The finest motor-car in the world on the best road would be a joggling, quivering thing beside it.

To begin with, we went out to sea before the wind, and the plane would not readily rise. We went with an undulating movement, leaping with a light splashing pat upon the water, from wave to wave. Then we came about into the wind and rose, and looking over I

saw that there were no longer those periodic flashes of white foam. I was flying. And it was as still and steady as dreaming. I watched the widening distance between our floats and the waves. It wasn't by any means a windless day; there was a brisk, fluctuating breeze blowing out of the north over the downs. It seemed hardly to affect our flight at all.

As for the giddiness of looking down, one does not feel it at all. It is difficult to explain why this should be so, but it is so. I suppose in such matters I am neither exceptionally steady-headed nor is my head exceptionally given to swimming. I can stand on the edge of cliffs of a thousand feet or so and look down, but I can never bring myself right up to the edge nor crane over to look to the very bottom. I should want to lie down to do that. And the other day I was on that Belvedere place at the top of the Rotterdam sky-scraper, a rather high wind was blowing, and one looks down, down through the chinks between the boards one stands on upon the heads of the people in the streets below; I didn't like it. But this morning I looked directly down on a little fleet of fishing boats over which we passed, and on the crowds assembling on the beach, and on the bathers who stared up at us from the breaking surf, with an entirely agreeable exaltation. And Eastbourne, in the early morning sunshine, had all the brightly detailed littleness of a town viewed from high up on the side of a great mountain.

When Mr. Grahame-White told me we were going to plane down I will confess I tightened my hold on the sides of the car and prepared for something like the down-going sensation of a switchback railway on a larger scale. Just for a moment there was that familiar

feeling of something pressing one's heart up towards one's shoulders and one's lower jaw up into its socket and of grinding one's lower teeth against the upper, and then it passed. The nose of the car and all the machine was slanting downwards, we were gliding quickly down, and yet there was no feeling that one rushed, not even as one rushes in coasting a hill on a bicycle. It wasn't a tithe of the thrill of those three descents one gets on the great mountain railway in the White City. There one gets a disagreeable quiver up one's backbone from the wheels, and a real sense of falling.

It is quite peculiar to flying that one is incredulous of any collision. Some time ago I was in a motor-car that ran over and killed a small dog, and this wretched little incident has left an open wound upon my nerves. I am never quite happy in a car now; I can't help keeping an apprehensive eye ahead. But you fly with an exhilarating assurance that you cannot possibly run over anything or run into anything—except the land or the sea, and even those large essentials seem a beautifully safe distance away.

I had heard a great deal of talk about the deafening uproar of the engine. I counted a headache among my chances. There again reason reinforced conjecture. When in the early morning Mr. Travers came from Brighton in this Farman in which I flew I could hear the hum of the great insect when it still seemed abreast of Beachy Head, and a good two miles away. If one can hear a thing at two miles, how much the more will one not hear it at a distance of two yards? But at the risk of seeming too contented for anything I will assert I heard that noise no more than one hears the drone of an electric ventilator upon one's table. It was only

when I came to speak to Mr. Grahame-White, or he to me, that I discovered that our voices had become almost infinitesimally small.

And so it was I went up into the air at Eastbourne with the impression that flying was still an uncomfortable, experimental, and slightly heroic thing to do, and came down to the cheerful gathering crowd upon the sands with the knowledge that it is a thing achieved for everyone. It will get much cheaper, no doubt, and much swifter and be improved in a dozen ways—we *must* get self-starting engines, for example, for both our aeroplanes and motor-cars—but it is available to-day for anyone who can reach it. An invalid lady of seventy could have enjoyed all that I did if only one could have got her into the passenger's seat. Getting there was a little difficult, it is true; the waterplane was out in the surf, and I was carried to it on a boatman's back, and then had to clamber carefully through the wires, but that is a matter of detail. This flying is indeed so certain to become a general experience that I am sure that this description will in a few years seem almost as quaint as if I had set myself to record the fears and sensations of my First Ride in a Wheeled Vehicle. And I suspect that learning to control a Farman waterplane now is probably not much more difficult than, let us say, twice the difficulty in learning the control and management of a motor-bicycle. I cannot understand the sort of young man who won't learn how to do it if he gets half a chance.

The development of these waterplanes is an important step towards the huge and swarming popularization of flying which is now certainly imminent. We ancient survivors of those who believed in and wrote about flying before there was any flying used to make a great

fuss about the dangers and difficulties of landing and getting up. We wrote with vast gravity about "starting-rails" and "landing-stages," and it is still true that landing an aeroplane, except upon a well-known and quite level expanse, is a risky and uncomfortable business. But getting up and landing upon fairly smooth water is easier than getting into bed. This alone is likely to determine the aeroplane routes along the line of the world's coast-lines and lake groups and waterways. The airmen will go to and fro over water as the midges do. Wherever there is a square mile of water the waterplanes will come and go like hornets at the mouth of their nest. But there are much stronger reasons than this convenience for keeping over water. Over water the air, it seems, lies in great level expanses; even when there are gales it moves in uniform masses like the swift, still rush of a deep river. The airman, in Mr. Grahame-White's phrase, can go to sleep on it. But over the land, and for thousands of feet up into the sky, the air is more irregular than a torrent among rocks; it is—if only we could see it—a waving, whirling, eddying, flamboyant confusion. A slight hill, a ploughed field, the streets of a town, create riotous, rolling, invisible streams and cataracts of air that catch the airman unawares, make him drop disconcertingly, try his nerves. With a powerful enough engine he climbs at once again, but these sudden downfalls are the least pleasant and most dangerous experience in aviation. They exact a tiring vigilance.

Over lake or sea, in sunshine, within sight of land, this is the perfect way of the flying tourist. Gladly would I have set out for France this morning instead of returning to Eastbourne. And then coasted round to Spain

and into the Mediterranean. And so by leisurely stages to India. And the East Indies. . . .

I find my study unattractive to-day.

3. THE TRANS-SIBERIAN EXPRESS

Everyone is a romantic, though in some the romanticism is of a perverted and paradoxical kind. And for a romantic it is, after all, something to stand in the sunlight beside the Trans-Siberian Express with the casually proprietorial air of the passenger, and to reflect that that long raking chain of steel and wood and glass is to go swinging and clattering out of the West into the East, carrying you with it. The metals curve glinting into the distance, a slender bridge between two different worlds. In eight days you will be in Manchuria. Eight days of solid travel: none of those spectacular but unrevealing leaps and bounds which the aeroplane, that agent of superficiality, to-day makes possible. The arrogance of the hard-bitten descends on you. You recall your friends in England, whom only the prospect of shooting grouse can reconcile to eight hours in the train without complaint. Eight hours indeed . . . You smile contemptuously.

Besides, the dignity, or at least the glamour of trains has lately been enhanced. *Shanghai Express*, *Rome Express*, *Stamboul train*—these and others have successfully exploited its potentialities as a setting for adventure and romance. In fiction, drama, and the films there has been a firmer tone in Wagons-Lits than ever since the early days of Oppenheim. Complacently you weigh your chances of a foreign countess, the secret emissary of a Certain Power, her corsage stuffed with documents of the first political importance. Will

anyone mistake you for No. 37, whose real name no one knows, and who is practically always in a train, being 'whirled' somewhere? You have an intoxicating vision of drugged liqueurs, rifled dispatch-cases, lights suddenly extinguished, and door-handles turning slowly under the bright eye of an automatic.

You have this vision, at least, if you have not been that way before. I had. For me there were no thrills of discovery and anticipation. One hears of time standing still; in my case it took two paces smartly to the rear. As I settled down in my compartment, and the train pulled out through shoddy suburbs into a country clothed in birch and fir, the unreal rhythm of train-life was resumed as though it had never been broken. The nondescript smell of the upholstery, the unrelenting rattle of our progress, the tall glass of weak tea in its metal holder, the unshaven jowl and fatuous but friendly smile of the little attendant who brought in all these unmemorable components of a former routine, suddenly resurrected, blotted out the interim between this journey and the last. The inconsequent comedy of two years, with the drab or coloured places, the cities and the forests, where it had been played, became for a moment as though it had never been. This small, timeless, moving cell I recognized as my home and my doom. I felt as if I had always been on the Trans-Siberian Express.

The dining-car was certainly unchanged. On each table there still ceremoniously stood two opulent black bottles of some unthinkable wine, false pledges of conviviality. They were never opened, and rarely dusted. They may contain ink, they may contain the elixir of life. I do not know. I doubt if anyone does.

Lavish but faded paper frills still clustered coyly

round the pots of paper flowers, from whose sad petals the dust of two continents perpetually threatened the specific gravity of the soup. The lengthy and trilingual menu had not been revised; 75 per cent. of the dishes were still apocryphal, all the prices were exorbitant. The cruet, as before, was of interest rather to the geologist than to the gourmet. Coal dust from the Donetz Basin, tiny flakes of granite from the Urals, sand whipped by the wind all the way from the Gobi Desert—what a fascinating story that salt-cellar could have told under the microscope! Nor was there anything different about the attendants. They still sat in huddled cabal at the far end of the car, conversing in low and disillusioned tones, while the *chef du train*, a potent gnome-like man, played on his abacus a slow significant tattoo. Their surliness went no deeper than the grime upon their faces; they were always ready to be amused by one's struggles with the language or the cooking. Sign-language they interpreted with more eagerness than apprehension; as when my desire for a hard-boiled egg—no easy request, when you come to think of it, to make in pantomime—was fulfilled, three-quarters of an hour after it had been expressed, by the appearance of a whole roast fowl.

The only change of which I was aware was in my stable-companion. Two years ago it had been a young Australian, a man much pre-occupied with the remoter contingencies of travel. 'Supposing,' he would muse, 'the train breaks down, will there be danger of attack by wolves?' When he undressed he panted fiercely, as though wrestling with the invisible Fiend; he had a plaintive voice, and on his lips the words 'nasal douche' (the mere sound of Siberia had given him a cold) had the saddest cadence you can imagine. This

time it was a young Russian, about whom I remember nothing at all. Nor is this surprising, for I never found out anything about him. He spoke no English, and I spoke hardly any Russian. A phrase-book bought in Moscow failed to bridge the gap between us. An admirable compilation in many ways, it did not, I discovered, equip one for casual conversation with a stranger. There was a certain petulance, a touch of the imperious and exorbitant, about such observations as: 'Show me the manager, the assistant manager, the water closet, Lenin's Tomb,' and 'Please to bring me tea, coffee, beer, vodka, cognac, Caucasian red wine, Caucasian white wine.' Besides, a lot of the questions, like 'Can you direct me to the Palace of the Soviets?' and 'Why must I work for a World Revolution?' were not the sort of things I wanted to ask him; and most of the plain statements of fact—such as 'I am an American engineer who loves Russia' and 'I wish to study Architecture, Medicine, Banking under the best teachers, please,'—would have been misleading. I did not want to mislead him.

So for two days we grinned and nodded and got out of each other's way and watched each other incuriously, in silence. On the second day he left the train, and after that I had the compartment to myself.

There is a great deal to be said against trains, but it will not be said by me. I like the Trans-Siberian Railway. It is a confession of weakness, I know; but it is sincere.

You wake up in the morning. Your watch says it is eight o'clock; but you are travelling east, and you know that it is really nine, though you might be hard put to it to explain why this is so. Your berth is comfortable. There is no need to get up, and no

incentive either. You have nothing to look forward to, nothing to avoid. No assets, no liabilities.

If you were on a ship, there would be any number of both. A whacking great breakfast, sunny decks, the swimming bath, that brilliant short story you are going to write, the dazzling creature whose intuitive admiration for your writings you would be the last to undermine—these are among the assets. Liabilities include the ante-final of the deck quoits, the man who once landed on Easter Island, the ship's concert, dressing for dinner, and boat-drill.

At first the balance-sheet strikes you as sound. But gradually, as the tedious days become interminable weeks, the traitorous assets insensibly change sides and swell the ranks of the liabilities. A time comes when there is nothing to look forward to, everything to avoid. That brilliant short story still-born, weighs upon your conscience, a succession of whacking great breakfasts upon your digestion; the sunny decks are now uncomfortably so, and even the swimming bath has been rendered for practical purposes inaccessible by that dazzling creature whose intuitive admiration for your writings you have been the first to undermine. At sea there is always a catch somewhere, as Columbus bitterly remarked on sighting America.

But on the Trans-Siberian Railway there are neither ups nor downs. You are a prisoner, narrowly confined. At sea you are a prisoner too, but a prisoner with just enough rope to strangle at birth the impulses of restlessness or inspiration. The prisoner sits down to write, then thinks it would be more pleasant on deck. On deck there is a wind; his papers are unmanageable. With a sigh he takes up a book, a heavy book, a book which it will do him good to read. After four pages

there comes an invitation to deck-tennis. He cannot refuse. He goes below to change, comes up again, and desultorily plays. There follows conversation and a bath. The morning is over.

The morning is over. His typewriter is in the smoking room, his book is on B deck, his coat is on A deck, and he has lost his pipe and broken a finger-nail. In everything he has attempted he has failed. All this peace and leisure has been sterile without being enjoyable. The afternoon will be the same.

Most men, though not the best men, are happiest when the question 'What shall I do?' is supererogatory. (Hence the common and usually just contention that 'My school-days were the happiest days of my life.') That is why I like the Trans-Siberian Railway. You lie in your berth, justifiably inert. Past the window plains crawl and forests flicker. The sun shines weakly on an empty land. The piles of birch logs by the permanent way—silver on the outside, black where the damp butts show—give the anomalous illusion that there has been a frost. There is always a magpie in sight.

You have nothing to look at, but no reason to stop looking. You are living in a vacuum, and at last you have to invent some absurdly artificial necessity for getting up: fifteen magpipes from now; or 'next time the engine whistles.' For you are inwardly afraid that without some self-discipline to give it a pattern this long period of suspended animation will permanently affect your character for the worse.

So in the end you get up, washing perfunctorily in the little dark confessional which you share with the

next compartment, and in the basin for which the experienced traveller brings his own plug, because the Russians, for some reason connected—strangely enough—with religion, omit to furnish these indispensable adjuncts to a careful toilet.

Then, grasping your private pot of marmalade, you lurch along to the dining-car. It is now eleven o'clock, and the dining-car is empty. You order tea and bread, and make without appetite a breakfast which is more than sufficient for your needs. The dining-car is almost certainly stuffy, but you have ceased to notice this. The windows are always shut, either because the weather is cold, or because it is warm and dry and therefore dusty. (Not, of course, that the shutting of them excludes the dust. Far from it. But it is at least a gesture; it is the best that can be done.)

After that you wander back to your compartment. The *provodnik* has transformed your bed into a seat, and perhaps you hold with him some foolish conversation, in which the rudiments of three languages are prostituted in an endeavour to compliment each other on their simultaneous mastery. Then you sit down and read. You read and read and read. There are no distractions, no interruptions, no temptations to get up and do something else; there is nothing else to do. You read as you have never read before.

And so the day passes. If you are wise you shun the regulation meal at three o'clock, which consists of five courses not easily to be identified, and during which the car is crowded and the windows blurred with steam. I had brought with me from London biscuits and potted meat and cheese; and he is a fool who does not take at least some victuals of his own. But as

a matter of fact, what with the airless atmosphere and the lack of exercise, you don't feel hungry on the Trans-Siberian Railway. A pleasant lassitude, a sense almost of disembodiment, descends on you, and the food in the dining-car, though seldom really bad, is open to more vigorous criticism than it would be on a shorter journey.

At the more westerly stations—there are perhaps three stops of twenty minutes every day—you pace the platforms vigorously, in a conscientious British way. But gradually this practice is abandoned. As you are drawn farther into Asia, old fetishes lose their power. It becomes harder and harder to persuade yourself that you feel a craving for exercise, and indeed you almost forget that you ought to feel this craving. At first you are alarmed, for this is the East, the notorious East, where white men go to pieces; you fear that you are losing your grip, that you are going native. But you do nothing about it, and soon your conscience ceases to prick and it seems quite natural to stand limply in the sunlight, owlsh, frowsty, and immobile like everybody else.

At last evening comes. The sun is setting somewhere far back along the road that you have travelled. A slanting light always lends intimacy to a landscape, and this Siberia, flecked darkly by the tapering shadows of trees, seems a place at once more friendly and more mysterious than the naked non-committal flats of noon. Your eyes are tired, and you put down your book.

Against the grey and creeping distances outside memory and imagination stage in their turn the struggles of the past and of the future. For the first time lineliness descends, and you sit examining its

implications until you find Siberia vanished and the grimy window offering nothing save your own face, foolish, indistinct, and as likely as not unshaved. You adjourn to the dining-car for eggs.

[from *Trans-Siberian Express*.]

4. ALONE IN THE WONDERFUL SKIES

Magnificent days of blue and crystal, when to be in the air made everything worth while, were over. Damp hangars, muddy roads, cold quarters, clouds and rain—these were to be our lot from now on.

One dreary grey morning I went up alone on patrol. The clouds were at two hundred feet, but they might break farther east over the lines. I rose into the cloud-bank—a featureless obscurity, a white dark, as you might say—and started climbing.

A pilot flies by his horizon. He keeps his machine on an even keel, or indeed in any position, by reference to it. Take away the horizon and he doesn't know where he is. This is the reason for gyroscopic controls, false horizon indicators, and all the modern gadgets (to say nothing of beam wireless) which enable a man to fly "blind" and a commercial pilot to bring his thirty-eight passengers on to Croydon aerodrome in a pea-soup fog without too much anxiety. But in 1916 a chap had an air-speed indicator and a lateral bubble (which was supposed to tell him if he was on an even keel), and the rest was the luck of the game and his native "nous."

In a cloud there is no horizon, nothing above, below, in front, behind, but thick white mist. It's apt to make you panic after a while, and many a man has

fallen out of the clouds in a spin through losing his head and, without knowing it, standing his machine on its ear. Usually low cloud-banks aren't so very deep, so if you go carefully and watch the control closely you get up through them all right; but on this particular morning there seemed to be no top to them. I climbed and climbed, looking up all the time, hoping to see that thinning of the mist and the halo of the sun above which means you're almost through. But it wasn't until I reached two thousand feet that I saw the welcome sheen of gold overhead. It thinned. Mist wraiths drew back and showed blue. They curled away. I was out.

But what in heaven had happened to this cloud-bank? It wasn't level. It was tilted as steeply as the side of a house. The machine was all right—air-speed constant, bubble central—and yet here were the clouds defying all natural laws! I suppose it took me a second to realize that I was tilted, bubble or no bubble, that I had been flying for the best part of fifteen minutes at an angle of thirty degrees to the horizon—and had never noticed it! If I had tried to fly this way on purpose, it would have seemed impossible, at the best most unpleasant. The machine would have shuddered and slipped. I should have been in a dither after half a minute. If you'd told me any one could fly like it quite happily for ten minutes, I should just have laughed. It shows what a little ignorance can do.

I put the machine level and gazed around in wonder. Here it was still summer. Below, life was dying back into the earth. Gold plumes fluttering from the poplars. The mournful voice of the October wind. But here! As far as the eye could reach, to

the four horizons, a level plain of radiant whiteness, sparkling in the sun. The light seemed not to come from a single source, but to pervade and permeate every atom of air—a dazzling, perfect empty basin of blue.

A hundred miles, north, south, east, west. Thirty thousand square miles of unbroken cloud-plains! No traveller in the desert, no pioneer to the poles had ever seen such an expanse of sand or snow. Only the lonely threshers of the sky, hidden from the earth, had gazed on it. Only we who went up into the high places under the shadow of wings!

I sailed on for a time, alone in the wonderful skies, as happy as I have ever been or ever shall be, I suppose, in this life, looking lazily for some rift in the white floor; but there was none. It was complete, unbroken, absolute. I was about to turn west again when I saw, in the distance, a cloud floating above the floor, small, no bigger than a man's hand; but even as I looked, it seemed to grow. It swelled, budded, massed, and I realized I was watching the very birth of a cloud—the cumulus cloud that chiefly makes the glory of the sky, the castles, battlements, cathedrals of the heavens. What laws had governed its birth at that moment, at that place, amid the long savannahs of the blue? Heaven! that bore it, knew. Still it was there, creating a growing loveliness out of nothing! A marriage of light and water, fostered by the sun, nourished by the sky!

I turned towards it, fascinated. It grew rapidly. Soon it was vast, towering, magnificent, its edges sharp, seemingly solid, though constantly swelling and changing. And it was alive with light. Radiant white, satin soft, and again gold, rose-tinted, shadowed

and graded into blue and mauve shadows—an orient pearl in the oyster shell of heaven! And all the time I knew that I had but to come close enough for all the illusion to be gone, the solidity and beauty to dissolve, the edges to fray and dull, and that within it would be the same grey mist that you may meet on any moor in England.

Wisdom said: Keep distance and admire. Curiosity asked: How much closer without losing the illusion? I edged nearer. I was utterly alone in the sky, yet suddenly, against the wall of the cloud, I saw another machine. It was so close that instinctively, as an instantaneous reaction to the threat of collision, I yanked the stick and reeled away, my heart in my mouth. A second later, I looked round and laughed. There was nothing there! It was my own shadow I had seen, the silhouette of the machine on the white cheek of the cloud. I came back to observe the strange and rare phenomenon. There on the cloud was my shadow, dark, clean-cut; but more than the shadow, for around it was a bright halo of light, and outside that a perfect circular rainbow, and outside that again another rainbow, fainter, reversed.

From the ground the rainbow is an arch spanning the visible heaven. From the next hill-top, so it seems, one would be high enough to solve the riddle of where it ends. But here it was small, bright, compact, a perfect circle, and at the centre the shadow of the Parasol, like the stamped image on a golden coin.

I shut off, turned east, and came down. The white floor, several thousand feet below, rose up towards me, turned at last from a pavement of pearl to just a plain bank of fog. I plunged into it. I might be going back

from paradise to purgatory, so grey and cold and comfortless it was. And as I sank through it listening to the singing of the wires, I was thinking how some day men might no longer hug the earth, but dwell in heaven, draw power and sustenance from the skies, whirl at their will among the stars, and only seek the ground as men go down to the dark mysteries of the sea-floor, glad to return, sun-worshippers, up to the stainless heaven.

The melancholy landscape of stubble fields and bare trees appeared. I picked up a road, got my bearings, and swept off home at a hundred feet.

* * * *

[from *Sagittarius Rising.*]

5. ISLANDS AMID THE SANDS

Waking at dawn, I looked out of the window. We were in the desert. On either side of the railway an immense plain, flat as Holland, but tawny instead of green, stretched out interminably. On the horizon, instead of windmills, a row of camels was silhouetted against the grey sky. Mile after mile, the train rolled slowly southward.

At Tozeur, when at last we arrived, it had just finished raining—for the first time in two and a half years—and now the wind had sprung up; there was a sandstorm. A thick brown fog whirled into eddies by the wind, gritty to the skin, abolished the landscape from before our smarting eyes. We sneezed; there was sand in our ears, in our hair, between our teeth. It was horrible. I felt depressed, but not surprised. The weather is always horrible when I travel.

Once, in a French hotel, I was accused of having

brought with me the flat black bugs, of whose presence among my bed-clothes I complained to a self-righteous proprietress. I defended myself with energy against the impeachment. Bugs—no; I am innocent of bugs. But when it comes to bad weather, I have to plead guilty. Rain, frost, wind, snow, hail, fog—I bring them with me wherever I go. I bring them to places where they have never been heard of, at seasons when it is impossible that they should occur. What delightful skating there will be in the Spice Islands when I arrive! On this particular journey I had brought with me to every place on my itinerary the most appalling meteorological calamities. At Naples, for example, it was the snow. Coming out of the theatre on the night of our arrival, we found it lying an inch deep under the palm trees in the public gardens. And Vesuvius, next morning, glittered white, like Fujiyama, against the pale spring sky. At Palermo there was a cloud burst. ‘Between the Syrtes and soft Sicily’ we passed through a tempest of hail, lightning and wind. At Tunis it very nearly froze. At Sousse it very nearly froze. At Sousse the wind was so violent that the stiff board-like leaves of the cactuses swayed and trembled in the air like aspens. And now, on the day of our arrival at Tozeur, it had rained for the first time in thirty months, and there was a sandstorm. No, I was not in the least surprised; but I could not help feeling a little gloomy.

Towards evening the wind somewhat abated; the sand began to drop out of the air. At midday the brown curtain had been impenetrable at fifty yards. It thinned, grew gauzier; one could see objects at a hundred yards. From the windows of the hotel bedroom in which we had sat all day, trying—but in vain,

for it came through even invisible crannies—to escape from the wind-blown sand, we could see the fringes of a dense forest of palm trees, the dome of a little mosque, houses of sundried brick and thin brown men in flapping nightshirts walking, with muffled faces and bent heads, against the wind, or riding, sometimes astride, sometimes sideways, on the bony rumps of patient little asses. A malicious gust of wind caught them unawares; simultaneously the two helmets shot into the air, thudded, rolled in the dust. The too professional tourists scuttled in pursuit. The spectacle cheered us a little; we descended, we ventured out of doors.

A walk through an Arab village is reminiscent of walks through Pompeii. Roman remains are generally in a better state of preservation, and cleaner; that is all. One is astonished to see, among these dusty ruins, white-robed families crouching over their repasts.

Our guide patted a brown mud wall.

‘*Briques*,’ he said, and repeated the word several times, so that we might be certain what he meant.

We passed into the market-place.

‘*Viande*,’ said our guide, fingering as he passed a well-thumbed collop of mutton, lying among the dust and flies on a little booth.

We nodded.

‘*Tres joli*’ commented our guide. ‘*Tres Plaisant*.’ Noisily he spat on the ground. The proprietor of the booth spat too. We hurried away; it needs time to grow inured to Tunisian habits. These frightful hoickings in the throat, these sibilant explosions and semi-liquid impacts are almost the national music of the country.

There are in the desert of southern Tunisia three great oases: Gabes by the sea, a little north of that island of Djerba which is, traditionally, the classical Island of the Lotus Eaters; Tozeur, to the west of it, some seventy miles inland; and Nefta, fifteen miles west of Tozeur, the starting-point of the caravans which trade between southern Tunisia and the great oases of the Algerian Sahara Biskra and Touggourt. These oases are all of much the same size, each consisting of some six or seven thousand acres of cultivated ground, and are all three remarkable for their numerous and copious springs. In the middle of the desert, suddenly, a hundred fountains come welling out of the sand; rivers run, a network of little canals is dug. An innumerable forest of date palms springs up—a forest whose undergrowth is corn and roses, vines and apricot trees, olives and pomegranates, pepper trees, castor-oil trees, banana trees, every precious plant of the temperate and the sub-tropical zones. No rain falls on these little Edens—except on the days of my arrival—but the springs, fed from who knows what distant source, flow inexhaustibly and have flowed at least since Roman times. Islands among the sands, their green luxuriance is a standing miracle.

Of the three great Tunisian oases, my favourite is Nefta. Gabes runs it close for beauty, while the proximity of the sea gives it a charm which Nefta lacks. But, on the other hand, Gabes is less fertile than Nefta and, socially, more sophisticated. There must be the best part of two hundred Europeans living at Gabes. There is dancing once a week at the hotel. Gabes is quite the little Paris. The same objection applies to Tozeur, which has a railway station and positively

teems with French officials. Nefta, with fourteen thousand Arabs, has a white population of a dozen or thereabouts. A hundred Frenchmen can always make a Paris; twelve, I am happy to say, cannot. The only non-Arabian feature of Nefta is its hotel, which is clean, comfortable, French and efficient. At Nefta one may live among barbarians in the Middle Ages, and at the same time, for thirty francs a day, enjoy the advantages of contemporary Western civilization. What could be more delightful?

We set off next morning by car, across the desert. From Tozeur the road mounts slightly to a plateau which dominates the surrounding country. The day was clear and sunny. We looked down on the green island of Tozeur—four hundred thousand palm trees among the sands. Beyond the oasis we could see the *chotts*, glittering in the sun. The *chotts* are shallow depressions in the ground, at one time, no doubt, the beds of considerable lakes. There is no water in them now; but the soil is furred with a bright saline efflorescence. At a distance, you could swear you saw the sea. For the rest, the landscape was all sand and lion-coloured rock.

We bumped on across the desert. Every now and then we passed a camel, a string of camels. Their owners walked or rode on asses beside them. The womenfolk were perched among the baggage on the hump—a testimony, most eloquent in this Mohammedan country, to the great discomfort of camel riding. Once we met a small Citroen lorry, crammed to overflowing with white-robed Arabs. In the Sahara, the automobile has begun to challenge the supremacy of the camel. Little ten-horse-power

Citroens dart about the desert. For the rougher mountainous country special six-wheeled cars are needed, and with caterpillar wheels one may even affront the soft and shifting sand of the dunes. Motor buses now ply across the desert. A line, we were told, was shortly to be inaugurated between Nefta and Touggourt, across two hundred kilometres of sand. In a few years, no doubt, we shall all have visited Lake Tchad and Timbuctoo. Should one be glad or sorry? I find it difficult to decide.

The hotel at Nefta is a long low building, occupying one whole side of the market-square. From your bedroom window you watch the Arabs living; they do it unhurriedly and with a dignified inefficiency. Endlessly haggling, they buy and sell. The vendor offers a mutton chop, slightly soiled; the buyer professes himself outraged by a price which would be exorbitant if the goods are spotlessly first-hand. It takes them half an hour to come to a compromise. On the ground white bundles doze in the sun; when the sun grows too hot, they roll a few yards and doze again in the shade. The notables of the town, the rich proprietors of palm trees, stroll past with the dignity of Roman senators. Their garments are of the finest wool; they carry walking sticks; they wear European shoes and socks, and on their bare brown calves—a little touch entirely characteristic of the real as opposed to the literary East—pale mauve or shell-pink sock suspenders. Wild men ride in from the desert. Some of them trusting to common sense as well as Allah to preserve them from ophthalmia, wear smoked motor goggles. With much shouting, much reverberant thumping of dusty, moth-eaten hides, a string of camel

is driven in. They kneel, they are unloaded. Supercilious and haughty, they turn this way and that, like the dowagers of very aristocratic families at a plebeian evening party. Then, all at once, one of them stretches out its long neck limply along the ground and shuts its eyes. The movement is one of hopeless weariness; the grotesque animal is suddenly pathetic. And what groanings, what gurglings in the throat, what enormous sighs when their masters begin to reload them! Every additional package evokes a bubbling protest, and when at last they have to rise from their knees, they moan as though their hearts were broken. Blind beggars sit patiently awaiting the alms they never receive. Their raw eyelids black with flies, small children play contentedly in the dust. If Allah wills it, they too will be blind one day: blessed be the name of Allah.

Sitting at our window, we watch the spectacle. And at night, after a pink and yellow sunset with silhouetted palm trees and domes against the sky (for my taste, I am afraid, altogether too like the coloured plates in the illustrated Bible), at night huge stars come out in the indigo sky, the cafés are little caves of yellow light, draped figures move in the narrow streets with lanterns in their hands, and on the flat roofs of the houses one sees the prowling shadows of enormous watch-dogs. There is silence, the silence of the desert: from time to time there comes to us, very distinctly, the distant sound of spitting.

Walking among the crowds of the market-place or along the narrow labyrinthine streets, I was always agreeably surprised by the apathetically courteous aloofness of Arab manners. It had been the same in Tunis and the other larger towns. It is only by Jews

and Europeanized Arabs that the tourist is pestered : through the native quarters he walks untroubled. There are beggars in plenty, of course, hawkers, guides, cab-drivers ; and when you pass, they faintly stir, it is true, from their impassive calm. They stretch out hands, they offer Arab antiquities of the most genuine German manufacture, they propose to take you the round of the sights, they invite you into their fly-blown vehicles. But they do all these things politely and quite uninsistently. A single refusal suffices to check their nascent importunity. You shake your head ; they relapse once more into the apathy from which your appearance momentarily roused them—resignedly : nay, almost, you feel, with a sense of relief that it had not, after all, been necessary to disturb themselves. Coming from Naples, we had been particularly struck by this lethargic politeness. For in Naples the beggars claim an alms noisily and as though by right. If you refuse to ride, the cabmen of Pozzouli follow you up the road, alternately cursing and whining, and at every hundred yards reducing their price by yet another ten per cent.

The guides at Pompeii fairly insist on being taken ; they cry aloud, they show their certificates, they enumerate their wives and starving children. As for the hawkers, they simply will not let you go. What, you don't want coloured photographs of Vesuvius ? Then look at these corals. No corals ? But here is the last word in cigarette holders. You do not smoke ? But in any case, you shave ; these razor blades, now You shake your head. Then toothpicks, magnifying glasses, celluloid combs. Stubbornly, you continue to refuse. The hawker plays his last card—an ace, it must be admitted, and of trumps. He comes very

close to you, he blows garlic and alcohol confidentially into your face. From an inner pocket he produces an envelope; he opens it, he presses the contents into your hand. You may not want corals or razor blades, views of Vesuvius or celluloid combs; he admits it. But can you honestly say—honestly, with your hand on your heart—that you have no use for pornographic engravings? And for nothing, sir, positively for nothing. Ten francs apiece: the set of twelve for a hundred . . .

The touts, the pimps, the mendicants of Italy are the energetic members of a conquering, progressive race. The Neapolitan cabman is a disciple of Samuel Smiles; the vendors of pornographic post cards and the sturdy beggars live their lives with a strenuousness that would have earned the commendation of a Roosevelt. Self-help and the strenuous life do not flourish on the other shore of the Mediterranean. In Tunisia the tourist walks abroad unpestered. The Arabs have no future.

And yet there were periods in the past when the Arabs were a progressing people. During the centuries which immediately followed Mohammed's apostolate, the Arabs had a future—a future and a most formidable present. Too much insistence on the fatalism inherent in their religion has reduced them to the condition of static lethargy and supine incuriousness in which they now find themselves. That they might still have a future if they changed their philosophy of life must be obvious to anyone who has watched the behaviour of Arab children, who have not yet had time to be influenced by the prevailing fatalism of Islam. Arab children are as lively, as inquisitive, as tiresome and as charming as the children of the most progressively Western people. At Nefta the adult beggars and

donkey drivers might leave us, resignedly, in peace; but the children were unescapable. We could never stir abroad without finding a little troop of them frisking around us. It was in vain that we tried to drive them away; they accompanied us, whether we liked it or not, on every walk, and when the walk was over, claimed wages for their importunate fidelity.

To provide tourists with guidance they did not need—this, we found, was the staple profession of the little boys of Nefta. But they had other and more ingenious ways of making money. Close and acute observers of tourists, they had made an important psychological discovery about this curious race of beings. Foreigners, they found out, especially elderly female foreigners, have a preposterous tenderness for animals. The little boys of Nefta have systematically exploited this discovery. Their methods, which we had frequent opportunities of observing, are simple and effective. In front of the hotel a gang of little ruffians is perpetually on the watch. A tourist shows himself, or herself, on one of the balconies: immediately the general of the troop—or perhaps it would be better to call him the director of the company, for it is obvious that the whole affair is organized on a strictly business footing—runs forward to within easy coin-tossing distance. From somewhere about his person he produces a captive bird—generally some brightly-coloured little creature not unlike a goldfinch. Smiling up at the tourist, he shows his prize. ‘Oiseau,’ he explains in his pidgin French. When the tourist has been made to understand that the bird is alive, the little boy proceeds, with the elaborate gestures of a conjurer, to pretend to wring its neck, to pull off its legs and wings, to pluck out its feathers.

For a tender-hearted tourist the menacing pantomime is unbearable.

‘Lache la bete. Je te donne dix sous.’

Released, the bird flaps ineffectually away, as well as its clipped wings will permit. The coins are duly thrown and in the twinkling of an eye picked up. And the little boys scamper off to recapture the feebly fluttering source of their income. After seeing an old English lady blackmailed out of a small fortune for the ten-times-repeated release of a single captive, we hardened our hearts whenever birds were produced for our benefit. The little boys went through the most elaborately savage mimicry. We looked on calmly. In actual fact, we observed, they never did their victims any harm. A bird, it was obvious, was far too valuable to be lightly killed; gold-finches during the tourist season laid golden eggs. Besides, they were really very nice little boys and fond of their pets. When they saw that we had seen through their trick and could not be induced to pay ransom, they grinned up at us without malice and knowingly, as though we were their accomplices, and carefully put the birds away.

The importunity of the little boys was tiresome when one wanted to be alone. But if one happened to be in the mood for it, their company was exceedingly entertaining. The exploitation of the tourists was a monopoly which the most active of the children had arrogated, by force and cunning, to themselves. There was a little gang of them who shared the loot and kept competitors at a distance. By the time we left, we had got to know them very well. When we walked abroad, small strangers tried to join our party; but they were savagely driven away with shouts and blows. We were private property; no trespassing was tolerated.

It was only by threatening to stop their wages that we could persuade the captains of the Nefta tourist industry to desist from persecuting their rivals. There was one particularly charming little boy—mythically beautiful, as only Arab children can be beautiful—who was the object of their special fury. The captains of the tourist industry were ugly : they dreaded the rivalry of this lovely child. And they were right ; he was irresistible. We insisted on his being permitted to accompany us.

A fertile oasis possesses a characteristic colour scheme of its own, which is entirely unlike that of any landscape in Italy or the north. The fundamental note is struck by the palms. Their foliage, except where the stiff shiny leaves metallically reflect the light, is a rich blue-green. Beneath them, one walks in a luminous aquarium shadow, broken by innumerable vivid shafts of sunlight that scatter gold over the ground or, touching the trunks of the palm trees, make them shine a pale ashy pink through the sub-aqueous shadow. There is pink, too, in the glaring whiteness of the sand beyond the fringes of the oasis. Under the palms, beside the brown or jade-coloured water, glows the bright emerald green of corn or the deciduous trees of the north, with here and there the huge yellowish leaves of a banana tree, the smoky grey of olives, or the bare bone-white and writhing form of a fig tree.

As the sun gradually sinks, the aquarium shadow beneath the palm trees grows bluer, denser ; you imagine yourself descending through layer after darkening layer of water. Only the pale skeletons of the fig trees stand out distinctly ; the waters gleam like eyes in the dark ground ; the ghost of a little marabout or chapel shows its domed silhouette, white and strangely

definite in the growing darkness through a gap in the trees. But looking up from the depths of this submarine twilight, one sees the bright pale sky of evening, and against it, still touched by the level, rosily-golden light, gleaming as though transmuted into sheets of precious metal, the highest leaves of the palm trees.

A little wind springs up; the palm leaves rattle together; it is suddenly cold. '*En avant,*' we call. Our little guides quicken their pace. We follow them through the darkening mazes of the palm forest, out into the open. The village lies high on the desert plateau above the oasis, desert-coloured, like an arid outcrop of the tawny rock. We mount to its nearest gate. Through passage-ways between blank walls, under long dark tunnels the children lead us—an obscure and tortuous way which we never succeeded in thoroughly mastering—back to the square market-place at the centre of the town. The windows of the inn glimmer invitingly. At the door we pay off the captains of industry and the little tourist-smasher; we enter. Within the hotel it is provincial France.

For longer expeditions entailing the use of mules or asses, we had to take grown-up guides. They knew almost as little French as the children, and their intelligence was wrapped impenetrably in the folds of fatalism. Talking to an Islamically educated Arab is like talking to a pious European of the fourteenth century. Every phenomenon is referred by them to its final cause—to God. About the immediate causes of things—precisely how they happen—they seem to feel not the slightest interest. Indeed, it is not even admitted that there are such things as immediate causes: God is directly responsible for everything.

‘Do you think it will rain?’ you ask, pointing to menacing clouds overhead.

‘If God wills,’ is the answer.

You pass the native hospital. ‘Are the doctors good?’ ‘In our country,’ the Arab gravely replies, in the tone of Solomon, ‘we say that doctors are of no avail. If Allah wills that a man shall die, he will die. If not, he will recover.’

All of which is profoundly true, so true, indeed, that it is not worth saying. To the Arab, however, it seems the last word in human wisdom. For him, God is the perfectly adequate explanation of everything; he leaves fate to do things unassisted, in its own way—that is to say, from the human point of view, the worst way.

It is difficult for us to realize nowadays that our fathers once thought much as the Arabs do now. As late as the seventeenth century, the chemist Boyle found it necessary to protest against what I may call this Arabian view of things.

‘For to explicate a phenomenon,’ he wrote, ‘it is not enough to ascribe it to one general efficient, but we must intelligibly show the particular manner, how that general cause produces the proposed effect. He must be a very dull inquirer who, demanding an account of the phenomena of a watch, shall rest satisfied with being told that it is an engine made by a watch-maker; though nothing be declared thereby of the structure and coaptation of the spring, wheels, balance, etc., and the manner how they act on one another so as to make the needle point out the true time of the day.’

The Arabs were once the continuators of the Greek tradition; they produced men of science. They have relapsed—all except those who are educated according

to Western methods—into pre-scientific fatalism, with its attendant incuriosity and apathy. They are the ‘dull inquirers who, demanding an account of the phenomena of a watch, rest satisfied with being told that it is an engine made by a watch-maker.’ The result of their satisfaction with this extremely unsatisfactory answer is that their villages look like the ruins of villages, that the blow-flies sit undisturbedly feeding on the eyelids of those whom Allah has predestined to blindness, that half their babies die, and that, politically, they are not their own masters.

[from *The Olive Tree*]

6. AN IDLE SPECULATION

Not long ago I attended a football match, in the company of one friend and thirty-nine thousand nine hundred or so strangers. Remarking the general enthusiasm, the eager way in which the thirty-nine thousand not only followed and commented upon the game they were watching but also discussed the prospects of the innumerable other matches that were being played elsewhere, remarking all this, my friend and I very naturally fell to talking of this national passion for football, and in particular for the association game as it is played by the professionals from Scotland. And then one of us, I forget which, wondered what would happen if by some whimsical chance the people of this country suddenly grew tired of football and developed a passion for some other human activity, such as literature. We thought of the vast sums that are expended every week, the almost universal interest that the game

arouses, the space that is given to it in the Press, the interminable discussions that take place in trains and trams and tap-rooms and barbers' shops all over the country, the photographs, the interviews, the special trips, the advertisements, the organizations, and so on and so forth; we thought of all these things that are only sustained by the widespread passionate interest in the game, and then began to tell each other what would happen if this interest were suddenly diverted to literature, if books and authors took the place of goals and players, if poets suddenly became more important than centre-forwards and critics better known than full-backs. It is an odd but not altogether unfruitful theme.

The free libraries would be suddenly besieged. Every evening and all Saturday afternoon, long queues would be discovered waiting patiently at the doors, until notices were hung out, saying, "Nothing but Bad Fiction left," when the crowds would turn sadly away. Suburban trains would be filled with rows of men reading poetry and *belles-lettres*. Every good bookshop would be entirely cleaned out of its stock during the first week. The literary periodicals, now leading a precarious existence, would suddenly find themselves printing edition after edition, and would be compelled to announce that they were unable to cope with the demand. Newspapers would give at least four full pages to poetry, literary articles and reviews, and their back pages would be decorated every day with photographs of authors. *The Athletic News* would become *The Literary News*. Perhaps *The Pink 'Un* would become the *Mauve One* and devote itself entirely to the Free Verse movement. Boys' papers would have long

serial stories with such titles as "The Boy Essayist" or "The Masked Critic, a Tale of Literary Life." Special editions would be rushed out every other night or so to give some exclusive piece of information about a book, a poem or an article: one would hear the newsboys crying: "Speshul! Smith's poems accepted" or "Jones' novel finished! Speshul." The whole nation would neglect its business, and breathlessly await the decision of the committee who annually award the Hawthornden Prize, and every newspaper would have a special leader on the subject. Idlers would loiter outside publishers' offices all day long to see who was going in and coming out and to try and catch any bit of news as to forthcoming books. A man who had just had a good sonnet printed in one of the weeklies would be recognized and cheered as he walked down the Strand. Mr. Puff, the bad critic, would be driven out of the country, and perhaps an attempt would be made by schoolgirls to assassinate Miss Saccharine, the erstwhile popular novelist.

There would be no end to the enthusiasm. Mr. Thomas Hardy would appear a demigod. Special excursions would be run from London to Bath so that enthusiasts might catch a glimpse of Mr. George Saintsbury. Mr. Walter de la Mare would be offered £600 a week merely to recite "Arabia" on the stage of the Coliseum. Every fine Saturday afternoon Messrs. Gosse and Squire would have to deliver lectures through megaphones at the Crystal Palace and Stamford Bridge grounds. Thirty thousand people would assemble at the ground of West Bromwich Albion to hear Mr. John Drinkwater explain, through a very large megaphone, how he came to be a great dramatist.

Mr. Arnold Bennett, terrified at such publicity, would retire to Chicago. Mr. H. G. Wells would publish his sociological treatises in penny parts. Mr. Bernard Shaw would write a long drama that was nothing but the history of Woolwich Arsenal Football Club, and would write to the papers pointing out that Steve Bloomer was a greater man than Shelley. A bill would be introduced into Parliament restraining publishers from offering more than a thousand pounds for a first book of verse. Conversation in the streets and public-houses would be on literary topics: everywhere one went, one would catch such phrases as "Bad anti-climax. . . . No construction. . . . 'E shouldn't have used no Italian form. . . . Wot d'you know abaht blenk verse. . . . When I ses faulty style, I means faulty style. . . . Call that a tragedy, where's the catharsis!" Barbers, bending over their victims, would be discovered declaring their belief that Matthew Arnold has been overpraised as a critic or that the English novel has had its day. Policemen on night duty would comfort themselves with lines of Wordsworth, and busmen would hurl Shakespearian quotations at each other in passing. There would be a Keats' Day at Harrods, and Selfridges would occasionally devote a whole window to the glory of Sir Thomas Browne. Literature, in short, would come into its own.

It would not be long, however, before football too would come into its own, not with the foolish, idle, clamouring masses, now devoted to poetry and *belles-lettres*, and what not, but with that superior cultured minority of people who can think for themselves, persons of taste. Pale and clever youths would meet together to discuss the former glories of the great game,

and to sneer at the crowd, the vulgar mob that cared for nothing but odes and essays, and would not know the difference between an inside-right and a centre-half. High prices would be paid by collectors for picture postcards of favourite football teams, now only a memory. Programmes of important cup-tie matches, sheets giving the names of the players and some scraps of information concerning them, would be put up for auction at regular intervals, and many of them would command such monstrous prices that only American collectors would be able to acquire them. The Tottenham Hotspur Society would meet every other Thursday at Lady Weathercock's, where little papers would be read on the more important events in the history of that astonishing organization. There, too, serious young persons, who have no desire to appear superior to the general run of their fellow creatures but having found happiness in their culture, having discovered beauty, simply wish to help the ignorant masses to find happiness too, would ask one another what could be done. "I passed a library the other day," one of them would declare, "and there must have been nearly a thousand people waiting to go in, women too and quite young children. Surely, we can do something to make those people realize how they were wasting their time." "It is not so much the waste of time," another would reply, "as the waste of money that disturbs me. Do you know how much was spent on books last year?" (And then he, or she, will name the appalling figure.) "How many really first class professional teams could be run on only a tenth of that sum! But no, not a player, not a goal, not a ball—the great game is dead. That's the tragedy

of it all." A third would intervene: "Yes, I was thinking only the other day that even that little knock-kneed shrimp, Lonlox, the poet, must make at least five times as much as any really first-class player ever did, such a great man as—say—Smith, the famous outside-right." At that point, some new member, who has done no research so far, would ask how much Smith was paid for his art. "How much!" would come the reply, "Why, Smith never made more than six pounds. Six pounds! In a country like this. But then Smith loved his art, and was ready to make sacrifices for it. It is not so much this writing business itself that I object to, literature is all right in its way, for occasional light amusement. But it's the beastly professionalism that has been introduced into it that sickens me." And then, putting their copies of the *Football Review* (a monthly periodical, heavily subsidized, with a very small but select circulation) into their pockets, perhaps they would all hurry off to attend a lecture on "The Short-Passing Game: The Last Phase," by Dr. G. J. Gregory-Jones; and as they passed through the streets, murmurous with the noise of sonnets read aloud, they would glance at each other and smile, half in disdain, half in pity, but well content to feed the flame of culture in the gathering darkness.

Finally, I make no doubt, some indolent young man, having an essay to write, would pretend that he had been with a friend to some crowded library or book-shop, that the two of them had remarked the popular enthusiasm, and had fallen to wondering what would happen if this enthusiasm were suddenly diverted from literature to football. Then he would proceed to waste his own and his readers' time by setting down a number of odd and trifling fancies.

7. THE BIRD SANCTUARY

I seldom failed to go to church on Easter Sunday, to take up my place at the door by the side of blind old Cecatiello, the official beggar of Anacapri. We both stretched out our hands to the church-goers, he for his *soldo* and I for the bird in the pockets of the men, in the folds of the black mantiglia of the women, in the palms of the hands of the children. It speaks a good deal for the exceptional position I enjoyed in those days among the villagers that they accepted without resentment my interfering with their way of celebrating the resurrection of Our Lord, consecrated by the tradition of nearly two thousand years and still encouraged by their priests. From the first day of the Holy Week the traps had been set in every vineyard, under every olive-tree. For days hundreds of small birds, a string tied round their wing, had been dragged about the streets by all the boys of the village. Now, mutilated symbols of the Holy Dove, they were to be set free in the church to play their role in the jubilant commemoration of Christ's return to Heaven. They never returned to their sky, they fluttered about for a while helpless and bewildered, breaking their wings against the windows before they fell down to die on the church floor. At daybreak I had been up on the church roof with Mastro Nicola holding the ladder as my unwilling assistant, in order to smash some of the window-panes, but only a very few of the doomed birds found their way to freedom.

The birds! The birds! How much happier would not my life on the beautiful island have been had I not loved them as I do! I loved to see them come every spring in thousands and thousands; it was a joy

to my ear to hear them sing in the garden of San Michele. But there came a time when I almost wished that they had not come, when I wished I could have signalled to them far out on the sea to fly on, fly on with the flock of wild geese high overhead, straight to my own country far in the North where they would be safe from man. For I knew that the fair island that was a paradise to me was hell to them, like that other hell that awaited them farther on on their Via Crucis—Heligoland. They came just before sunrise. All they asked for was to rest for a while after their long flight across the Mediterranean, the goal of the journey was so far away, the land where they were born and where they were to raise their young. They came in thousands: woodpigeons, thrushes, turtle-doves, waders, quails, golden orioles, skylarks, nightingales, wagtails, chaffinches, swallows, warblers, redbreasts and many other tiny artists on their way to give spring concerts to the silent forests and fields in the North. A couple of hours later they fluttered helplessly in the nets the cunning of man had stretched all over the island from the cliffs by the sea high up to the slopes of Monte Solaro and Monte Barbarossa. In the evening they were packed by hundreds in small wooden boxes without food and water and despatched by steamers to Marseilles to be eaten with delight in the smart restaurants of Paris. It was a lucrative trade, Capri was for centuries the seat of a bishop entirely financed by the sale of the netted birds. "Il vescovo delle quaglie," he was called in Rome. Do you know how they are caught in the nets? Hidden under the thickets, between the poles, are caged decoy birds who repeat incessantly, automatically, their monotonous call. They cannot

stop, they go on calling out night and day till they die. Long before science knew anything about the localization of the various nerve-centres in the human brain, the devil had revealed to his disciple man his ghastly discovery that by stinging out the eyes of a bird with a red-hot needle the bird would sing automatically. It is an old story, it was already known to the Greeks and the Romans, it is still done to-day all along the southern shores of Spain, Italy and Greece. Only a few birds in a hundred survive the operation, still it is good business; a blinded quail is worth twenty-five lire in Capri to-day. During six weeks of the spring and six weeks of the autumn, the whole slope of Monte Barbarossa was covered with nets from the ruined castle on the top down to the garden-wall of San Michele at the foot of the mountain. It was considered the best *caccia* on the whole island, as often as not over a thousand birds were netted there in a single day. The mountain was owned by a man from the mainland, an ex-butcher, a famous specialist in the blinding of birds, my only enemy in Anacapri except the doctor. Ever since I had begun building San Michele the war between him and me had been going on incessantly. I had appealed to the Prefect of Naples, I had appealed to the Government in Rome. I had been told there was nothing to be done, the mountain was his, the law was on his side. I had obtained an audience from the highest Lady in the land, she had smiled at me with her enchanting smile that had won her the heart of the whole of Italy, she had honoured me with an invitation to remain for luncheon; the first word I had read on the menu had been "Paté d'alouettes farcies." I had appealed to the Pope and had been told by a fat cardinal that the

Holy Father had been carried down in his portantina that very morning at daybreak to the Vatican gardens to watch the netting of the birds, the *caccia* had been good; over two hundred birds had been caught. I had scraped off the rust from the little two-pounder the English had abandoned in the garden in 1808 and started firing off a shot every five minutes from midnight till sunrise in the hope of frightening away the birds from the fatal mountain. The ex-butcher had sued me for interfering with the lawful exercise of his trade, I had been fined two hundred lire damages. I had trained all the dogs to bark the whole night at the cost of what little sleep remained for me. A few days later my big Maremma dog died suddenly, I found traces of arsenic in his stomach. I caught sight of the murderer the next night lurking behind the garden-wall and knocked him down. He sued me again, I was fined five hundred lire for assault. I had sold my beautiful Greek vase and my beloved Madonna by Desiderio di Settignano in order to raise the enormous sum he had asked for the mountain, several hundred times its value. When I came with the money he renewed his old tactics and grinned at me that the price had been doubled. He knew his man. My exasperation had reached a point when I might have parted with everything I possessed to become the owner of the mountain. The bird slaughter went on as before. I had lost my sleep, I could think of nothing else. In my despair I fled from San Michele and sailed for Monte Cristo to return when the last birds had passed over the island.

The first thing I heard when I came back was that the ex-butcher was lying on the point of death. Masses were read for his salvation twice a day in the

church at thirty lire apiece; he was one of the richest men in the village. Towards evening arrived the *parroco* asking me in the name of Christ to visit the dying man. The village doctor suspected pneumonia, the chemist was sure it was a stroke, the barber thought it was '*un colpo di sangue*,' the midwife thought it was *una paura*. The *parroco* himself, always on the look-out for the evil eye, inclined towards the *mal'occhio*. I refused to go. I said I had never been a doctor in Capri except for the poor and that the resident physicians on the island were quite capable of coping with any of these ailments. Only on one condition would I come, that the man would swear on the crucifix that if he pulled through he would never again sting out the eyes of a bird and that he would sell me the mountain at his exorbitant price of a month ago. The man refused. In the night he was given the last Sacraments. At day-break the *parroco* appeared again. My offer had been accepted, he had sworn on the crucifix. Two hours later I tapped a pint of pus from his left pleura to the consternation of the village doctor and to the glory of the village saint, for, contrary to my expectations, the man recovered. *Miracolo! Miracolo!*

The mountain of Barbarossa is now a bird sanctuary. Thousands of tired birds of passage are resting on its slopes every spring and autumn, safe from man and beast. The dogs of San Michele are forbidden to bark while the birds are resting on the mountain. The cats are never let out of the kitchen except with a little alarm-bell tied round their necks, Billy the vagabond is shut up in the monkey-house, one never knows what a monkey or a school-boy is up to.

So far I have never said a word to belittle the last miracle of Sant' Antonio, which at a low estimate saved for many years the lives of at least fifteen thousand birds a year. But when all is over for me, I mean just to whisper to the nearest angel that with all due respect to Sant' Antonio, it was I and not he who tapped the pus out of the butcher's left pleura and to implore the angel to put in a kind word for me if nobody else will. I am sure Almighty God loves the birds or He would not have given them the same pair of wings as He has given to His own angels.

8. FIND YOURSELVES!

You have conferred upon me the greatest honour which it is in your power to bestow, and the value of that honour has been enhanced by the generous terms in which my name was submitted and approved. Believe me, I value your confidence and I am grateful to you beyond power of expression.

It is not for me to wonder why you have crossed the Border for your Chancellor. Yet by coming to England, you have, shall I say, balanced an appointment which you made when George II was king. So far as your leading men were concerned, you were reluctant to change your allegiance after the revolution of 1688, but fifty-seven years later you presented to this high office the victor of Culloden.

It seems only characteristic of the impartiality of an intellectual corporation that you should now, when victor and vanquished are alike dust, place the Duke of Cumberland's robe on the shoulders of a descendant of one of those humble clansmen who withstood the

might of England on that fatal moor, and who sacrificed his home, as he would have yielded up his life, for those unhappy Stuarts who never called on Highland loyalty in vain.

Loyalties to far-off times, to systems that have passed away, and passed away for ever, are not inconsistent with loyalty to what is best in the present. Sprung from the loins of the Mediæval Church—as are the colleges of our ancient universities, their appeal to us in the twentieth century touches our hearts and our imagination in ways undreamt of by their founders.

Guided by a profound natural instinct, they regarded the university as an oasis in the desert of the workaday world, a retreat for scholarship and collegiate life. Hence the foundations were remote from crowded cities or formed of themselves a *rus in urbe*. Cambridge rose amongst the inhospitable fens, St. Andrews on the rocky coast of Fife, Oxford among her meadows and sedgy streams, whose very names are music and make our hearts ache for the green England which Chaucer loved.

You may remember how Cardinal Newman, when a youth of eighteen, was leaving Oxford for the Long Vacation and entered into casual conversation with an elderly stranger who was his fellow-traveller on the coach. The stranger—for it was only later that he knew him as the greatest academical luminary of the day—urged that it was worth the consideration of the Government whether Oxford should not stand in a domain of its own.

“An ample range,” he continued, “should be turned into wood and meadow, and the university should be approached on all sides by a magnificent park with fine trees in groups and groves and avenues and with

glimpses and views of the fair city as the traveller drew near it. There is nothing surely absurd in the idea, for what has a better claim to the purest and fairest possessions of Nature than the seat of wisdom?" And Newman adds that his companion did but express the tradition of ages and the instinct of mankind.

The dream of the Oxford scholar may never literally be realized, but the spirit is found in each mediæval foundation. As our ancestors looked to right learning to assuage the asperities of life in their time, so we are turning with new hope to our universities to provide men who will guide us through the troublous days to come.

It was Walter Scott who said, "When Scotland was torn with convulsions and the battle-brand was yet red, our forefathers had sat down to devise the means of spreading the blessings of knowledge among their posterity as the most effective means of preventing those dark and bloody times from recurring."

Scott and Newman alike saw the university ideal, the light that shines through the darkness, draws men to it and fills them with the spirit of the torch-bearer. It was during the rude, cruel years of what we call the Middle Ages that the universities came into being, carrying on traditions which were already old when the barbarians swept through Europe. Was it not of Marseilles that Tacitus said, "It is a school in which Greek politeness is happily blended and tempered with provincial strictness?" Who would not wish to say that of his own university to-day? Possibly Gilbert had something of the sort in his mind when he spoke of Robin Oakapple combining the manners of a marquis with the morals of a Methodist.

The years of stark horror through which we passed a little more than ten years ago have created an ardent desire for learning through all classes of our people; as though they, too, felt instinctively that "spreading the blessings of knowledge among their posterity may be the most effective means of preventing those dark and bloody times from recurring."

We find a like motive at work on the Continent, for Villari tells us how the Signory of Florence founded their university at the time of the grievous visitation of the Black Death. They hoped to increase their population by drawing residents from other cities and other countries, and they believed that the demoralization of all classes, the dreadful aftermath of plague as of war, might be cured by devotion to study and learning.

Now why should men desire a university education? I think the answer is clear, and it is in itself a tribute of the highest kind to our universities and to their traditions. It is because the best knowledge is there, and it can be ours if we choose to work for it.

Whatever standards may have been debased in our country, the university standards are as high as ever, and the only class distinctions which exist in the examination lists are those of quality. The universities are drawing the pupils by their learning and their power of imparting it, and there is hardly a city in Great Britain that would not have its own university if it could.

Nor is learning all. In the collegiate universities—those I mean, where the students live together or are at all events conscious of a common life—there is the constant clash of personality, the interchange of ideas, the questionings, the testing of opinion, the growth of

knowledge of human nature, all those things that no books can give and that can only be obtained by that free intercourse which is most natural and most easy in the elastic formative years of undergraduate life.

From his own studies, and from such intercourse as I have endeavoured to describe, a man should find himself. And what pilgrimages some of us have to undergo before that essential knowledge is revealed! He should learn to think. He should become "*capax*." By that I mean he should know the tool needed for the job, where to look for it, and how to use it.

Yet, though I have laid much stress, and rightly, on such words as learning and knowledge, there is one which I value more highly, which, if not inborn, it should be your chief endeavour to acquire; and that is wisdom. And I would pause here merely to suggest one or two lines of thought to be pursued at your leisure, lest you fail to remember that the acquisition of knowledge is not the whole duty of man.

It is worth remembering that the first bribe offered to our first parents was, "Ye shall be as gods; knowing good and evil," or, in other words, a promise to gratify curiosity. This playing, as the devil would, on the weak side of what may be a perfectly honourable motive, gives you an interesting sidelight on that presumptuousness of mere knowledge of which innumerable instances will readily occur to your mind.

Can we not say that knowledge is relative in this respect, that alleged facts tend to be displaced and disproved by the emergence of new facts, whereas wisdom, which is of the spirit, and is indeed itself the spirit in which knowledge is applied, is absolute?

Knowledge is the acquisition of the **Hows** and **Whys** of things, and therefore is apt to be unrelated.

Wisdom in herself is continuity. As so often happens, you have an eternal truth in an old saw, "Knowledge comes, but Wisdom lingers."

You may have vast knowledge but little wisdom, as you may have much wisdom but little knowledge. Wisdom is hard to define, but you are always aware of it when you find it, and you instinctively stand hat in hand before it. Knowledge and cleverness (I am never very clear as to the meaning of that word) interest and amuse. But who does not know the thrill with which he may chance from time to time on one or two lines, perhaps some half-dozen words, by some singer three thousand years ago, how they strike back across the ages with all the wisdom of mankind learned by sweat and blood when Earth was young?

Pray above all things to be delivered from the surfeit of mere knowledge which in the conduct of affairs entrusted to us, and in the ordering of our inner lives, brings unfaith and confusion. Let us correct the irreverence of mere knowledge by the innate decency of wisdom.

But before I was led away by that great word Wisdom, I said that in my opinion one of the most valuable results of life in a university was that it enabled a man to find himself. There is one lifelong possession we ought to carry with us from a university, though I am not sure it is esteemed a virtue in these days. That is a proper sense of perspective, with a corresponding sense of values and the modesty appropriate thereto. The lonely student is apt to think too much of his own peculiar department of learning, to over-estimate his own capacity to appreciate other departments of learning.

In a university, as in the House of Commons, we find our level; each one is but a unit in a great company; we realize that the truths we know are but fragments of a great whole; we visualize the march of knowledge as the march of a great army.

In boyhood the world seems so vast, and time eternal, that it is only by degrees it is borne in on us that our own field is limited, and that there will be a term to our usefulness. And it may be only later that we realize what need there is for the best that we can give, and how important it is that we should see how and where we can give it. So many men drift into their life work with no careful examination of themselves and their own qualities, and of their fitness for the environment in which they find themselves. Happy are those who have sufficient imagination to consecrate themselves in their youth to the work wherein their own powers and character will have the best chance of developing and proving of service to the world. But most of us are ordinary men; and, after all, a nation lives by the quality of her ordinary men. What can we ordinary men do to prepare ourselves for our manhood? What can we learn in our university?

I suppose it is natural that, when an elderly man attempts to point out the road to those who come after, he is apt to urge on them the practice of those virtues in which he himself is most conscious of his own deficiency. The essential virtue, if you are to make anything of your life, is diligence; it does not matter what word you choose if you understand what you mean by it. Concentration, industry, hard work, are all synonymous; or if you like to draw on the vocabulary of the street, "plugging" or "sticking it"

will give you the essential meaning with less elegance but more vigour.

Diligence seems so commonplace that when we see a great accomplishment of learning, of discovery, in statesmanship, in what you will, we are always inclined to attribute it to genius, to good fortune, to anything and everything except that very power of concentration and continuous work which is its very foundation. And this belief is sometimes fostered by a human weakness not unknown amongst those who have dazzled the eyes of their own contemporaries.

There is a temptation to make men believe that your success is due less to that capacity for work which is to be found in every position of life than to some innate superiority which has predestined you from the beginning to do (in a fit of absence of mind, as it were) what can only be accomplished by others—if, indeed, it can be accomplished at all—by the unceasing labour of a lifetime. But the greatest men claim the least. And it was Newton who said that he was conscious of nothing else but a habit of patient thinking which could at all distinguish him from other men.

There is one unfailing source to which we can go when we want truth, commonsense, wisdom. Let me remind you of Dr. Johnson's answer to Boswell on the subject we are considering. They were speaking of literary composition, and Boswell asked him very naturally whether one should wait for the favourable moment, for the *afflatus*, before beginning to write. "No, sir," said Johnson, "he should sit down doggedly." And that is how all the work best worth doing has been and will be done. There are no short cuts. No one has emphasized this point more, or striven harder to drive it home to his students, than that great

man who was both a student and a teacher in this university, Dr. Chalmers.

And, indeed, to make a man stand on his own feet is the greatest gift which your profession can bestow. The true teacher teaches with authority; but in so far as he understands his work, the ultimate test of his teaching is that the pupil, having received it in the first place by faith, should assimilate it by the testimony of his own investigation and proof. The life of the mind is a search for truth and a conflict with error. Error is external, but also—and this is more dangerous—internal. In the acquisition of truth, error has to be discovered and expelled.

The difference between the trained and the untrained mind should show itself in the capacity to discover error in however specious a guise it may present itself, to look for it in the least suspected lurking places and to find truth independently by the use of our own faculties. This is the straight and narrow way to wisdom, which many seek but not all find.

I have tried in these desultory thoughts to express to you what a university stands for in my mind. You are happy in your material, for your material is the Scot. It was an English poet of our own time who said :

“ The spirit perfervid of the heroic Scot,
Its fire unlulled, and hardly in earth allayed,
The ancient native prowess unforgot,
Valour undrooped, and manhood undecayed.”

Was it chance that brought these first seekers after truth to the Eastern kingdom and to the sea? Was it not rather a profound instinct that sought the harsher East and the cold light of the morning? The West of

blue distances and mysterious islands, rising out of the unplumbed, salt, estranging sea, that ocean full of marvel and boundless—what wonder that the Little People made their last home with the Gael, in the land of the setting sun, and the long afterglow, where all the forces of nature join to turn the mind of man to the beauty of departing light and to the eternal miracle of mystery?

But to you the sea was the highway to other lands; the sea whose short waves were threshed by the oars of the long boats which brought the Danes to Fife what time Macbeth and Banquo drove them hence with blood and iron; the sea in which Sir Patrick Spens, the best sailor that ever sailed the sea, lies fifty fathoms deep, “Wi’ the Scots lords at his feet”; a restless, shallow ocean, so dreaded, however, that it was enacted by a Scottish Act of Parliament that no ship should be freighted out of the kingdom with any staple good betwixt the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude and Candlemas.

Such were the waters over which the bell of the Inchcape Rock tolled through the ages her warning note; the sea across which Queen Mary passed twice in her troubled life, leaving her home as a child one July day when the French galleys bore her to her beloved France, and returning thirteen years later on an August evening to reign over a turbulent people through the most turbulent years of their long history.

Across your seas the link of centuries was maintained first with Norway then with France, seas illuminated by the rising sun and stirred by the East wind.

What an environment for a university! To face the rising sun is a daily incitement to work, to search, to,

find. It creates an atmosphere of expectation; the mind looks forward rather than back. And under that sun the East wind blows. You cannot dream in the East wind: it wakes you, it stimulates you, it brings with it energy and purpose. To enjoy it you need difficulties to face, enemies to defeat.

You remember Sir Walter Scott's confession of faith? "I was born a Scotsman and a bare one, therefore I was born to fight my way in the world—with my left hand if my right failed me and with my teeth if both were cut off." May the generations go forth into the world from this hallowed spot, equipped with knowledge, full-filled with wisdom, warriors for truth.

[from *Essays and Addresses.*]

9. THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

Some hundreds of miles westward of the Malabar Hills, Professor Narayan Godbole stands in the presence of God. God is not born yet—that will occur at midnight—but He has also been born centuries ago, nor can He ever be born, because He is the Lord of the Universe, who transcends human processes. He is, was not, is not, was. He and Professor Godbole stood at oppsite ends of the same strip of carpet.

"Tukaram, Tukaram,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.
Tukaram, Tukaram,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.
Tukaram, Tukaram,

Thou art my father and mother and everybody.
Tukaram, Tukaram,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.
Tukaram”

This corridor in the palace at Mau opened through other corridors into a courtyard. It was of beautiful hard white stucco but its pillars and vaulting could scarcely be seen behind coloured rags, iridescent balls, chandeliers of opaque pink glass, and murky photographs framed crookedly. At the end was the small but famous shrine of the dynastic cult, and the God to be born was largely a silver image the size of a teaspoon. Hindus sat on either side of the carpet where they could find room, or overflowed into the adjoining corridors and the courtyard—Hindus, Hindus only, mild-featured men, mostly villagers, for whom anything outside their villages passed in a dream. They were the toiling *ryot*, whom some call the real India. Mixed with them sat a few tradesmen out of the little town, officials, courtiers, scions of the ruling house. Schoolboys kept inefficient order. The assembly was in a tender, happy state unknown to an English crowd, it seethed like a beneficent potion. When the villagers broke cordon for a glimpse of the silver image, a most beautiful and radiant expression came into their faces, a beauty in which there was nothing personal, for it caused them all to resemble one another during the moment of its indwelling, and only when it was withdrawn did they revert to individual clods. And so with the music. Music there was, but from so many sources that the sum-total was untrammelled. The braying banging crooning melted into a single mass

which trailed round the palace before joining the thunder. Rain fell at intervals throughout the night.

It was the turn of Professor Godbole's choir. As Minister of Education, he gained this special honour. When the previous group of singers dispersed into the crowd, he pressed forward from the back, already in full voice, that the chain of sacred sounds might be uninterrupted. He was barefooted and in white, he wore a pale blue turban; his gold pince-nez had caught in a jasmine garland, and lay sideways down his nose. He and the six colleagues who supported him clashed their cymbals, hit small drums, droned upon a portable harmonium, and sang :

“Tukaram, Tukaram,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.
Tukaram, Tukaram,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.
Tukaram, Tukaram”

They sang not even to the God who confronted them, but to a saint; they did not one thing which the non-Hindu would feel dramatically correct; this approaching triumph of India was a muddle (as we call it), a frustration of reason and form. Where was the God Himself, in whose honour the congregation had gathered? Indistinguishable in the jumble of His own altar, huddled out of sight amid images of inferior descent, smothered under rose-leaves, overhung by oleographs, outblazed by golden tablets representing the Rajah's ancestors, and entirely obscured, when the wind blew, by the tattered foliage of a banana. Hundreds of electric lights had been lit in His honour (worked by an engine whose thumps destroyed the rhythm of the hymn). Yet His face could not be seen.

Hundreds of His silver dishes were piled around Him with the minimum of effect. The inscriptions which the poets of the State had composed were hung where they could not be read, or had twitched their drawing-pins out of the stucco, and one of them (composed in English to indicate His universality) consisted, by an unfortunate slip of the draughtsman, of the words, "God si Love."

God si Love. Is this the final message of India?

"Tukaram, Tukaram. . . ."

continued the choir, reinforced by a squabble behind the purdah curtain, where two mothers tried to push their children at the same moment to the front. A little girl's leg shot out like an eel. In the courtyard, drenched by the rain, the small Europeanized band stumbled off into a waltz. "*Nights of Gladness*" they were playing. The singers were not perturbed by this rival, they lived beyond competition. It was long before the tiny fragment of Professor Godbole which attended to outside things decided that his pince-nez was in trouble, and that until it was adjusted he could not choose a new hymn. He laid down one cymbal, with the other he clashed the air, with his free hand he fumbled at the flowers round his neck. A colleague assisted him. Singing into one another's grey moustaches, they disentangled the chain from the tinsel into which it had sunk. Godbole consulted the music-book, said a word to the drummer, who broke rhythm, made a thick little blur of sound, and produced a new rhythm. This was more exciting, the inner images it evoked more definite, and the singers' expressions became fatuous and languid. They loved all men, the whole universe, and scraps of their past, tiny splinters of detail, emerged for a moment to melt into the

universal warmth. Thus Godbole, though she was not important to him, remembered an old woman he had met in Chandrapore days. Chance brought her into his mind while it was in this heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. His senses grew thinner, he remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the wasp equally, he impelled it likewise, he was imitating God. And the stone where the wasp clung—could he . . . no, he could not, he had been wrong to attempt the stone, logic and conscious effort had seduced, he came back to the strip of red carpet and discovered that he was dancing upon it. Up and down, a third of the way to the altar and back again, clashing his cymbals, his little legs twinkling, his companions dancing with him and each other. Noise, noise, the Europeanized band louder, incense on the altar, sweat, the blaze of lights, wind in the bananas, noise, thunder, eleven-fifty by his wrist-watch, seen as he threw up his hands and detached the tiny reverberation that was his soul. Louder shouts in the crowd. He danced on. The boys and men who were squatting in the aisles were lifted forcibly and dropped without changing their shapes into the laps of their neighbours. Down the path thus cleared advanced a litter. It was the aged ruler of the state, brought against the advice of his physicians to witness the Birth ceremony. No one greeted the Rajah, nor did he wish it; this was no moment for human glory. Nor could the litter be set down, lest it defiled the temple by becoming a throne. He was lifted out of it while its feet remained in air, and

deposited on the carpet close to the altar, his immense beard was straightened, his legs tucked under him, a paper containing red powder was placed in his hand. There he sat, leaning against a pillar, exhausted with illness, his eyes magnified by many unshed tears.

He had not to wait long. In a land where all else was unpunctual, the hour of the birth was chronometrically observed. Three minutes before it was due, a Brahman brought forth a model of the village of Gokul (the Bethlehem in that nebulous story) and placed it in front of the altar. The model was on a wooden tray about a yard square; it was of clay and was gaily blue and white with streamers and paint. Here, upon a chair too small for him and with a head too large, sat King Kansa, who is Herod, directing the murder of some Innocents; and in a corner, similarly proportioned, stood the father and mother of the Lord, warned to depart in decoration, for it diverted men from the actual image of the God, and increased their sacred bewilderment. Some of the villagers thought the Birth had occurred, saying with truth that the Lord must have been born, or they could not see Him. But the clock struck midnight, and simultaneously the rending note of the conch broke forth, followed by the trumpeting of elephants; all who had packets of powder threw them at the altar, and in the rosy dust and incense, and clanging and shouts, Infinite Love took upon itself the form of SHRI KRISHNA, and saved the world. All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars; all became joy, all laughter, there had never been disease nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear. Some jumped in the air, others flung themselves prone and embraced the bare feet of the universal lover; the

women behind the purdah slapped and shrieked; the little girl slipped out and danced by herself, her black pigtailed flying. Not an orgy of the body; the tradition of that shrine forbade it. But the human spirit had tried by a desperate contortion to ravish the unknown, flinging down science and history in the struggle, yes, beauty herself. Did it succeed? Books written afterwards say "Yes". But how, if there is such an event, can it be remembered afterwards? How can it be expressed in anything but itself? Not only from the unbeliever are mysteries hidden, but the adept himself cannot retain them. He may think if he chooses, that he has been with God, but as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rules of time.

A cobra of *papier-maché* now appeared on the carpet, also a wooden cradle swinging from a frame. Professor Godbole approached the latter with a red silk napkin in his arms. The napkin was God, not that it was, and the image remained in the blur of the altar. It was just a napkin, folded into a shape which indicated a baby's. The Professor dandled it and gave it to the Rajah, who, making a great effort, said, "I name this child Shri Krishna," and tumbled it into the cradle. Tears poured from his eyes, because he had seen the Lord's salvation. He was too weak to exhibit the silk baby to his people, his privilege in former years. His attendants lifted him up, a new path was cleared through the crowd, and he was carried away to a less sacred part of the palace. There, in a room accessible to Western science by an outer staircase, his physician, Dr. Aziz, awaited him. His Hindu physician, who had accompanied him to the shrine, briefly reported his symptoms. As the ecstasy receded, the invalid grew

fretful. The bumping of the steam-engine that worked the dynamo disturbed him, and he asked for what reason it had been introduced into his home. They replied that they would enquire, and administered a sedative.

Down in the sacred corridors, joy had seethed to jollity. It was their duty to play various games to amuse the newly-born God, and to simulate his sports with the wanton dairy-maids of Brindaban. Butter played a prominent part in these. When the cradle had been removed, the principal nobles of the state gathered together for an innocent frolic. They removed their turbans, and one put a lump of butter on his forehead, and waited for it to slide down his nose into his mouth. Before it could arrive another stole up behind him, snatched the melting morsel, and swallowed it himself. All laughed exultantly at discovering that the divine sense of humour coincided with their own. "God si love!" There is fun in heaven. God can play practical jokes upon Himself, draw chairs away from beneath His own posteriors, set His own turbans on fire, and steal His own petticoats when He bathes. By sacrificing good taste, this worship achieved what Christianity has shirked: the inclusion of merriment. All spirit as well as all matter must participate in salvation, and if practical jokes are banned, the circle is incomplete. Having swallowed the butter, they played another game which chanced to be graceful; the fondling of Shri Krishna under the similitude of a child. A pretty red and gold ball is thrown, and he who catches it chooses a child from the crowd, raises it in his arms, and carries it round to be caressed. All stroke the darling creature for the Creator's sake, and murmur happy words. The child

is restored to his parents, the ball thrown on, and another child becomes for a moment the World's Desire. And the Lord bounds hither and thither through the aisles, chance, and the sport of chance, irradiating little mortals with His immortality. . . . When they had played this long enough—and being exempt from boredom, they played it again and again—they took many sticks and hit them together, whack smack, as though they fought the Pandava wars, and threshed and churned with them, and later on they hung from the roof of the temple, in a net, a great black earthenware jar, which was painted here and there with red, and wreathed with dried figs. Now came a rousing sport. Springing up, they struck at the jar with their sticks. It cracked, broke, and a mass of greasy rice and milk poured on to their faces. They ate and smeared one another's mouths, and dived between each other's legs for what had been pushed upon the carpet. This way and that spread the divine mess, until the line of school-boys, who had somewhat fended off the crowd, broke for their share. The corridors, the courtyard, were filled with benign confusion. Also the flies awoke and claimed their share of God's bounty. There was no quarrelling, owing to the nature of the gift, for blessed is the man who confers it on another, he imitates God. And those "imitations" those "substitutions," continued to flicker through the assembly for many hours, awaking in each man according to his capacity an emotion that he would not have had otherwise. No definite image survived; at the Birth it was questionable whether a silver doll or a mud village, or a silk napkin, or an intangible spirit, or a pious resolution, had been born. Perhaps all these things! Perhaps none! Perhaps all birth is an

allegory! Still, it was the main event of the religious year. It caused strange thoughts. Covered with grease and dust, Professor Godbole had once more developed the life of his spirit. He had, with increasing vividness, again seen Mrs. Moore, and round her faintly clinging forms of trouble. He was Brahman, she Christian, but it made no difference whether she was a trick of her memory or a telepathic appeal.

It was his duty, as it was his desire, to place himself in the position of the God and to love her, and to place himself in her position and to say to the God, "Come, come, come, come." This was all he could do. How inadequate! But each according to his own capacities, and he knew that his own were small. "One old English woman and one little, little wasp," he thought, as he stepped out of the temple into the grey of a pouring wet morning. "It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself."

[from *A Passage to India*.]

10. WAR IN THE AIR

The squadron sets out eleven strong on the evening patrol. Eleven chocolate-coloured, lean, noisy bullets, lifting, swaying, turning, rising into formation—two fours and a three—circling and climbing away steadily towards the lines. They are off to deal with Richthofen and his circus of Red Albatrosses.

The May evening is heavy with threatening masses of cumulus cloud, majestic skylscapes, solid-looking as snow mountains, fraught with caves and valleys, rifts and ravines—strange and secret pathways in the chartless continents of the sky. Below, the land

becomes an ordnance map, dim green and yellow, and across it go the Lines, drawn anyhow, as a child might scrawl with a double pencil. The grim dividing Lines! From the air robbed of all significance.

Steadily the body of scouts rises higher and higher, threading its way between the cloud precipices. Sometimes, below, the streets of a village, the corner of a wood, a few dark figures moving, glides into view like a slide into a lantern and then is hidden again.

But the fighting pilot's eyes are not on the ground, but roving endlessly through the lower and higher reaches of the sky, peering anxiously through fur goggles to spot those black slow-moving specks against land or cloud which mean full throttle, tense muscles, held breath, and the headlong plunge with screaming wires—a Hun in the sights, and the tracers flashing.

A red light curls up from the leader's cockpit and falls away. Action! He alters direction slightly, and the patrol, shifting throttle and rudder, keep close like a pack of hounds on the scent. He has seen, and they see soon, six scouts three thousand feet below. Black crosses! It seems interminable till the eleven come within diving distance. The pilots nurse their engines, hard-minded and set, test their guns and watch their indicators. At last the leader sways sideways, as a signal that each should take his man, and suddenly drops.

Machines fall scattering, the earth races up, the enemy patrol, startled, wheels and breaks. Each his man! The chocolate thunderbolts take sights, steady their screaming planes, and fire. A burst, fifty rounds—it is over. They have overshot, and the enemy, hit or missed, is lost for the moment. The pilot steadies

his stampeding mount, pulls her out with a firm hand, twisting his head right and left, trying to follow his man, to sight another, to back up a friend in danger, to note another in flames.

But the squadron plunging into action had not seen, far off, approaching from the east, the rescue flight of Red Albatrosses patrolling above the body of machines on which they had dived, to guard their tails and second them in the battle. These, seeing the maze of wheeling machines, plunge down to join them. The British scouts, engaging and disengaging like flies circling at midday in a summer room, soon find the newcomers upon them. Then, as if attracted by some mysterious power, as vultures will draw to a corpse in the desert, other bodies of machines swoop down from the peaks of the cloud mountains. More enemy scouts, and, by good fortune, a flight of Naval Triplanes.

But, nevertheless, the enemy, double in number, greater in power and fighting with skill and courage, gradually overpower the British, whose machines scatter, driven down beneath the scarlet German fighters.

It would be impossible to describe the action of such a battle. A pilot, in the second between his own engagements, might see a Hun diving vertically, an SE5 on his tail, on the tail of the SE another Hun, and above him again another British scout. These four, plunging headlong at two hundred miles an hour, guns crackling, tracers streaming, suddenly break up. The lowest Hun plunges flaming to his death, if death has not taken him already. His victor seems to stagger, suddenly pulls out in a great leap, as a trout leaps on the end of a line, and then, turning over on his belly,

swoops and spins in a dizzy falling spiral with the earth to end it. The third German zooms veering, and the last of that meteoric quartet follows bursting. . . . But such a glimpse, lasting perhaps ten seconds, is broken by the sharp rattle of another attack. Two machines approach head-on at breakneck speed, firing at each other, tracers whistling through each other's planes, each slipping sideways on his rudder to trick the other's gun fire. Who will hold longest? Two hundred yards, a hundred, fifty, and then, neither hit, with one accord they fling their machines sideways, bank and circle, each striving to bring his gun on to the other's trail, each glaring through goggle eyes, calculating, straining, wheeling, grim, bent only on death or dying.

But, from above, this strange tormented circling is seen by another Hun. He drops. His gun speaks. The British machine, distracted by the sudden unseen enemy, pulls up, takes a burst through the engine, tank and body, and falls bottom uppermost down through the clouds and the deep unending desolation of the twilight sky.

The game of noughts and crosses, starting at fifteen thousand feet above the clouds, drops in altitude engagement by engagement. Friends and foes are scattered. A last SE, pressed by two Huns, plunges and wheels, gun-jammed, like a snipe over marshes, darts lower, finds refuge in the ground mist, and disappears.

Now lowering clouds darken the evening. Below, flashes of gunfire stab the veil of the gathering dusk. The fight is over! The battlefield shows no sign. In the pellucid sky, serene cloud mountains mass and

move unceasingly. Here where guns rattled and death plucked the spirits of the valiant, this thing is now as if it had never been! The sky is busy with night, passive, superb, unheeding.

[from *Sagittarius Rising*.]

11. THE FUTURE OF JAPAN

The culture of China is a culture of expression, the culture of Japan one of attitude: it is difficult to conceive a more violent contrast; whereas the one has its root in profundity, the other exhausts itself on the surface. There is no doubt that the Japanese is unsubstantial: where attitude is the last premise, there inner content must be lacking. But it is precisely on this fact the importance of Japan is based: it shows how far one can get without being substantial. One can get incredibly far. The Japanese have given values to the world which would never have been realized without them, they have created a superficial culture more charming than any other on earth. For this reason it is unjust to tarry longer with their insufficiencies. Substantiality is not a frequent phenomenon anywhere; even among Indians there are Japanese, in so far as they are to be defined by their negative qualities; but the unsubstantial non-Japanese do not possess the advantages of the Japanese. No being is responsible for his natural disposition; there are creatures whose minds can give expression to supreme being, there are others in whom their attitude is the ultimate fact. They are all equal before God in so far as they are perfect after their kind. But we human beings should learn at last to value every creature

according to his own nature, and only demand from him what he is capable of.

The Japanese may become Westernized without apprehension; whereas the Indians and the Chinese may not do so, because, in the case of the Japanese, it is not a question of a real change, but only of assuming a new attitude as a fighter does. The problem, however, is not exhausted by this recognition; the Japanese possesses a soul in spite of all his adaptability, and even if his soul seems exposed to less danger than would be the case with other peoples who submit to alien influences, his soul is nevertheless not exempt by some special charm; if the Japanese becomes contaminated at all, then his case is worse than that of anyone else. There are two fundamental feelings which must never be infringed if Japan is not to decay; one is their feeling for nature, the other their specific patriotism.

I have already given my views concerning both these points; I only need to summarize what I have said, and to apply it to my present purpose. The feeling for nature in the Japanese corresponds to the metaphysical feeling for the world of the Indian, and the consciousness of harmony of the Chinese; it is the same synthesis *en miniature*, and has the same profound reason. If it disappeared from his consciousness he would lose thereby the connection with his deepest self. Everything by means of which he might attempt to replace this fundamental quality would remain a superficial attainment, without direct connection with his soul. Suppose an Indian tried to change himself into a Greek: he would undoubtedly become superficial; not because his original tendency to see man as part of nature is objectively more profound, compared with

the Greek view, to whom she remains something external and pictorial, but because he would not be capable of relating the Greek outlook on the world to what is profoundest in himself. In the case of the Japanese the same typical danger is considerably greater, because his field of vision is much more limited, because incomparably fewer phenomena are capable of a relationship with his soul. Thus, naturalism would not only lower Japanese art, as in our case, but it would literally kill it; and in the same way, lack of politeness makes the Japanese not merely unpleasant, as it does every one else, but superficial. If Japan does not cherish its feeling for nature proportionately more as it emulates us more intensively in other directions, it may happen that one day its organism will be without a soul. The other feeling which Japan must not lose at any price is its patriotism; that peculiar synthesis of feeling which has died out in Europe, and is only revived for short periods during wars, I mean the synthesis of the individual, the group, the country and the ruling family. The Japanese are not yet individuals in our sense; their centre still lies in the group; for this reason Westernization will suit them only as long as the new organization can be related to the old basis. Whereas progress in our case was a result of individualization, in Japan it is until to-day an expression, amongst other things, of the non-individualized group-consciousness, and it might lead to stagnation or decomposition if the individual did become conscious of himself in the Western sense. The latter is already beginning; and it is beginning too soon. The younger generation gives its leaders much food for anxious thought, for it is

betraying a questionable inclination to deny their old basis. If this process cannot be stopped or restricted, then it can happen that the admirable structure of Mutsuhito and his ministers may collapse. It must therefore be arrested at any price. This is what Nogi intended to do when he disembowelled himself—he hoped that his action might cause the inherited Samurai-feeling to flame up again in the younger generation; this is what the Government is doing in trying to bring about, by all the means in its power, a renaissance of Shinto. Let us hope that it will be successful; I am concerned for the future of Japan. The more inevitably it appears that the old basis will collapse, the more must every possible effort be made that new living relations be established between the body and the soul, so that a new structure has at any rate been started when the old house crumbles into dust. . .

Yes, Japan may become Westernized. But after I have been strictly objective for such a long time, I feel impelled to give vent to my personal feelings, and I must then say: personally, I regret deeply that this country is Westernizing itself; modernized Japan is entirely devoid of charm; the atmosphere of Tokyo in particular is oppressively trivial. Normal development unfortunately does not necessarily lead upward. Just as some individuals are themselves in the best sense when children, others when grown-ups, and again others when octogenarians, there is a stage of development for every people which is best suited to them; if it grows beyond this stage, even in the most desirable direction, it loses its charm, importance and value. In this sense, Frenchmen have declined since the eighteenth century, although there cannot be any ques-

tion of degeneration even to-day; in the same way, England, whose height was attained in the nineteenth century, will lose henceforth in cultural significance. Every specific condition gives the soul definite means of expression, of which only a few correspond to it in that sense, as specific ability corresponds to a specific spirit. The moment or the epoch in which inner temperament and opportunities correspond to each other, signifies the zenith of a nation; it is then that the national genius manifests itself. Later on the nation resembles more or less a Raphael without hands.

The Japanese show surprising attainments in their new course. As far as their achievements are concerned there is no reason to suppose why one day they should not rival us. But these achievements signify nothing. Here they work with intellect alone, or, put more generally, with the tools of their soul, their inner being is left out of account; and I cannot imagine that time will bring any real improvement. The Japanese soul will never learn to express itself directly or completely in the language of Occidental ability; at best it will stutter in this language, and it is not impossible that it will become dumb; the most exquisite and most artistic type of man may yet become dry-as-dust. Judged from the point of view of his substance, the Japanese is wrong to pursue problems which are all too serious: he realizes himself best in play; everything really original lies along the line of *α'γόν*, sport, of cheerful artistry. Here the profundities of his soul are revealed. But where he strives after important things in the worldly sense, he appears abstract.

[from *Travel Diary of a Philosopher.*]

12. THE SECOND NANDA DEVI VENTURE

On the morning of September 10th we were greeted by a warm sun. As it was the first we had experienced for nearly two months we were tempted to bask in its kindly rays for some time before embarking upon the more serious work of the day. We decided to go up the great glacier which we had seen coming in from the south, at the head of which we suspected the Sunderdhunga Col must lie. We intended to camp near the head of the glacier, push a camp on to the crest of the col if that were possible and spend some days examining the ice-cliffs on the southern side in the hope of being able to find a way down. If we were successful we could return to continue our work in the basin for as long as our food lasted, in the comfortable knowledge that an escape over the rampart was possible. If we failed we would have to make an attempt on the great ice-gulley leading up to Longstaff's col. We started, carrying heavy loads, and were content to take things gently. By the time we got into a position which would command a view of the glacier the clouds had come up from the south and we could get no idea of the type of country for which we were making. The going was good on the dry ice of the glacier and we made steady progress, passing one or two remarkably fine specimens of "glacier tables." These somewhat surprising phenomena are caused by a large slab of rock falling on to the surface of the glacier and protecting the section of ice on which it has fallen from the rays of the sun, so that as the rest of the glacier melts the slab is left perched upon a pedestal of ice which it has protected. In the case of smaller rocks the process is reversed, the stone becoming heated by

the sun and sinking into the ice instead of being left perched above it.

Soon after midday a bitter wind blew up from the south and sweeping across the glacier drove hail and sleet into our faces. This caused us to put on a spurt and before we camped we were a great deal farther up the glacier than we had expected to go that day. With difficulty we erected the tents and got the Primus going. The wind dropped towards sunset, and chancing to look out of the tent I saw that the clouds had retreated down the valley, leaving the peaks to the south clear. We saw that we were near the head of a very wide glacier-filled valley from which gentle ice-slopes rose to a broad saddle which we knew must be the Sunderdhunga Col. To its right was a massive ice-peak. This we concluded must be the triangulated peak, 22,360 feet, which is such a conspicuous landmark when seen from the south, and which is known by the Survey of India as East Trisul. The delicious purity of the summit snows, tinged as they were by delicate rays of the setting sun, filled me with desire for a closer acquaintance with the peak. Moreover, unlike most of the peaks in the vicinity, there was an obviously practicable route to the summit, and the prospect of a view from such an elevated point in this wonderland was irresistible. Arguments against the present plan were not difficult to find. The col was easily accessible from this side and in order to find out whether a descent on the south was practicable or not, one would have to go down several thousand feet of very difficult ice, and once one had done that, one would probably be disinclined to climb back again. So it was decided to cut out the reconnaissance, and make a full-dress

attempt when our work in the basin had been completed.

We passed a very cold night and in consequence did not emerge from our tents until the sun was well up. Carrying one tent, bedding for three and food and fuel enough for three days, we started in the direction of the ice-peak. The weather remained fine all day, and as hour after hour we threaded our way laboriously through a badly-crevassed area which stretched for a long way up the mountain side, the heat and the glare from the newly-fallen snow were almost unbearable. We aimed at getting our camp up to 20,000 feet. Tilman had been feeling very unfit all day, and in the afternoon when we were at an altitude of about 19,000 feet he decided not to go any farther, and suggested, most unselfishly, that Kusang should stay up at the camp in his place and attempt the peak with Angtharkay and myself, while he went down with Passing. I, too, was not feeling in very good form, and was suffering from a bad attack of that mysterious complaint loosely known as "glacier lassitude," so that I was glad when some five hundred feet higher up we came upon an excellent camping site in a crevasse.

With three of us crammed into a two-man tent, we settled down to a most uncomfortable night. Lack of space did not permit independent movement and when one man wished to turn over the others had to turn too, in order that each should fit spoon-wise into the curves of the other. The Sherpas thought this a tremendous joke and as far as I could make out simply laughed themselves to sleep. I suppose I must lack much of that priceless gift—a sense of humour—for I could see in the situation very little to laugh at, with the consequence that I lay long into the night hiding

my head and trying to decide which of my companions snored the loudest.

I roused them at 4 a.m. and after a great deal of struggling we contrived to melt ourselves a drink and wrap our shivering bodies in all the clothing which we could extract from the tangled mess inside the tent. Boots then had to be thawed out and forced after a frightful struggle on to feet which had apparently swollen overnight. Soon after 5 o'clock we issued reluctantly out into the bitter morning air.

It is curious how the Sherpas, when they have no loads to carry, seem to lose all power of controlled, rhythmic movement which is such a vital necessity in mountaineering and particularly at considerable altitudes. Their steps become jerky and impulsive, they rush along for a few minutes and then sit down, with the result that they soon become exhausted. All that their life of mountain wandering has taught them about the best methods of walking uphill seems to be lost and they are like raw novices who are amongst the mountains for the first time in their lives.

To-day this was very evident and before we had been climbing an hour the party was feeling very sorry for itself. Higher up, too, the snow conditions became bad and the work of kicking steps extremely laborious. We began to feel as we had felt at a considerably higher altitude on Everest the year before. We started off by going for an hour without a halt, then the hour was shortened to half an hour, half an hour to twenty minutes, twenty minutes to a quarter of an hour, and at length we would subside gasping into the soft bed of snow after only ten minutes' struggle. But the morning was fine and as we lay there, we gazed out over a scene of ever-increasing grandeur until even the

gigantic southern face of Nanda Devi became dwarfed by the mere extent of the panorama.

I can never hope to see a finer mountain view : the Badrinath peaks, Kamet, the Kosa group, Dunagiri and the great peaks of the northern part of the Nanda Devi Basin—all mountains amongst which we had been travelling for the past four months—served merely as a foil to set off the stupendous ranges lying beyond Milam and across the borders of western Nepal. What a field of exploration lay there—the heritage of some future generation !

Only one frame of mind is possible when working one's way up bad snow at high altitudes. One must shut out from one's mind all but the immediate task of making the next step.

To start fretting about the slowness of one's progress or about the time it is going to take to reach the goal would render the whole business unbearable. On a larger scale, this frame of mind, the firm concentration on immediate necessities, made possible those terrible months of sledging through the blizzards of the Antarctic.

As we approached the summit the wind, which had been unpleasant in the early morning, now became very strong indeed and it was the fear of frost-bite which spurred what little energy we had left. My hope of seeing something of the southern side of the watershed was disappointed, for when we reached the summit ridge we looked down into a boiling cauldron of cloud a few feet below us. This was rising rapidly and soon enveloped us. However, we did get one brief glimpse down to the little Simm Saga range which lay at our feet ; and also into the head of the Sunderdhunga Valley which we were so hoping to reach. What we saw went

a long way to quenching that hope, for there seemed to be very little break in the 10,000 feet of precipice which lay between us and the grassy floor of the valley below. I had refrained from taking any photographs on the way up in order to preserve the exposures for the summit. But before my numbed fingers would open and set the camera we were wrapped in a dense cloak of cloud, and we passed the remainder of our stay on the top clapping our hands and banging our feet about in an attempt to restore rapidly diminishing circulation. Then we hustled off the summit and embarked upon a descent which proved to be almost as trying as the ascent. On reaching the camp we packed up the tent and sleeping-bags, and in spite of the loads we had now to carry, we shot down over the lower ice-slopes at a tremendous speed, paying little respect to the crevasses which had caused us so much trouble on the previous day. Tilman greeted us with apparently unlimited tea. He had put in a useful day's work with the plane-table and had succeeded in fixing several important points about the glacier.

On the following day we went down to our base and, leaving a dump of flour there, just sufficient to enable us to beat a retreat down the Rishi Ganga in the event of our failing to escape from the basin to the east or south, we carried the remainder of our stuff to a pleasant little alp a couple of miles up the left bank of the main glacier. By now we had been able to make a fairly lengthy examination of the southern aspect of Nanda Devi. We had seen a curious diagonal spur running down in a south-easterly direction from about half-way up the main south ridge. This appeared to be accessible in its lower section and it seemed to us that we might be able to work our way for some distance

along it. We decided to attempt to do this in order to get a comprehensive view of the southern section of the basin, though it did not even occur to me that we might also find a practicable route to the summit of the peak.

The morning of September 14th was brilliantly fine, and we started early carrying with us the usual light camp and enough food for Tilman (who was now recovered) and myself for two or three days. We crossed the main glacier and made our way again along the valley which lay at the foot of the great black buttresses of the southern ridge, fixing our position on the plane-table as we went and taking shots to distant landmarks. We camped that night by a pool of crystal clear water, on a lawn of close-cropped grass over which snowy eidelweiss grew in profusion.

It was an hour after dawn the following morning before we got away. It seemed as if the last remnants of the monsoon had departed. The glacier was silent, bound under the iron grip of frost; and we joyously sped over its desolate stony surface. Forty minutes of hard going took us to the foot of the black precipices which girdle the base of the great southern ridge. Here we found that the rock was well broken but firm and that the strata sloped in our favour, which made the climbing a great deal easier than we had anticipated. Within an hour of leaving the glacier we had reached the crest of the diagonal spur which we had seen from a distance. This was as far as we expected to get and we sat down contentedly in the warm sunlight and gazed lazily at our unique surroundings.

We saw that the spur we were on, coming down from the main southern ridge of Nanda Devi, formed a gigantic glacier cirque. In front of us across a deep

valley rose a stupendous ice-wall which formed the southern face of the twin peaks. We were too close and, for all our 18,500 feet, far too low to get anything but a very fore-shortened view of the face and it was a long while before the colossal scale began to impress itself upon my imagination. The ice-wall was fringed on top by a band of rock forming the actual summits of the twin peaks and the two mile ridge connecting them. By now the sun had been shining on this band for some hours and had already started to dislodge masses of rock, which set up an almost continuous moan as they hurtled through the air towards us, yet so great was the distance of the peaks above us that throughout the day we did not detect a single visible sign of these avalanches which must have involved several hundreds of tons of rock. The whole effect was very uncanny.

As it was such a brilliantly fine day and as yet quite early we decided that we would investigate the possibilities of climbing farther up the spur. A virtual tower rising straight out of the ridge blocked a way along the crest, but we soon found that we could traverse along under the tower on its eastern side and climb diagonally towards a gap in the ridge beyond. This we reached in a couple of hours without much difficulty, and were surprised to find that here again the inward sloping strata made progress comparatively easy. By now we were about nineteen thousand feet high and beginning to get really excited. We had already overcome the apparently inaccessible lower part of the ridge and were still going strong. Was it possible that we had discovered the one key to the innermost defences of this amazing mountain? Of course, we would not be in a position to make an

attempt on the summit, but to have discovered the way was sufficient to work us into quite a frenzy of excitement. Up and up we went without finding any place which gave us more than a moment's hesitation. Our pace was slow by reason of the fact that the rocks were still under a deep covering of monsoon snow, but our progress was steady enough. The higher we got the more fully could we appreciate the immensity of the glacier cirque on the rim of which we were climbing.

We climbed on until about 2-30 p.m. when we had come far enough. We estimated our height at close on twenty-one thousand feet. The ridge was certainly showing signs of becoming more difficult but for the next few hundred feet there did not appear to be any insuperable obstacle and we came to the definite conclusion that if a well equipped party were to spend a couple of weeks over the job there was a good chance that the ridge could be followed to the summit. It would be no easy task and the party would have to be supremely fit and competent. Prolonged siege tactics (which are so much the fashion in the Himalayas nowadays) would be too dangerous to be justifiable, since this method would involve too many men in the upper camps, and if it were overtaken by bad weather high up such a party would be in a very serious plight. In high mountains, mobility is the keynote of efficiency and safety, and it is primarily for this reason that I find it hard to believe that a large, heavily organized expedition will ever achieve success on Everest.

We were now sufficiently high to get a true idea of the immensity of our surroundings, and even though I had been living for months amid perpendicularity on a huge scale I suffered from a feeling of panic which resembled the delirium of a fevered mind.

Our slow rate of descent was evidence that we had climbed too fast earlier in the day and night was falling as we made our way back across the glacier after yet another unforgettable day.

The morning of September 16th was spent mainly in plane-tableing of the slopes above the camp, and in making further examination of "Longstaff's Col." This more detailed study confirmed our first impressions that an ascent of the couloir with heavy loads would be too difficult and dangerous a job. We could not, however, tell for certain as so much depended upon whether the gulley was composed of snow or ice. By now we had become really worked up about our chances of being able to force an exit over one of these gaps. In doing so, we would make a complete crossing of the range, thus linking up with the exploration of those who had attacked the rampart from the south and east; we would see for ourselves those valleys, which though unexplored, we knew to be of surpassing loveliness; and the last phase of our quest would be through country new to us. If we were to fail we would be forced to retreat once more down the Rishi Nala, and from Joshimath to journey back by the way we had come, thus missing a rare and glorious climax to our little season of perfect happiness.

When we returned to camp early in the afternoon we found that the Sherpas had come up and were busily engaged in their hobby of building cairns. Packing up, we ran off down the glacier, reaching our little green alp before sun-down, here to spend one more night lying in the open, dozing in the light of the half moon and waking to watch the rosy light of dawn steal gently down the east-turned face of the "Blessed Goddess."

The week which followed has left with me a richer and more varied stock of impressions than any other I can recall. We started up the glacier to the south that morning, staggering under the weight of very heavy loads. I was feeling lazy and lagged behind the others, sitting down often to gaze at each new aspect of the peaks around me. Once I found myself by a deep pool in the ice of the glacier, and stayed as if hypnotized by the reflections on the placid blue surface of the water. It was irresistible. I threw off my clothes, plunged in and swam for some seconds under water along the glistening walls of ice. The day ended in a camp far up the glacier, under the icy cirque standing at its head.

A frigid night was followed by an even colder dawn and we were hurried along in spite of our cruel loads by the bitter morning breeze. The snow was iron hard, and as the slope steepened the already burdened shoulders of the leader would ache painfully as he chipped steps, while those behind were frozen with inaction. The arrival of the sun changed all this and we were soon stamping a way, and sinking up to our knees at every step, while a fierce glare scorched our faces unbearably. Several large crevasses caused us some trouble, but we worked at full pressure and at 11-15 a.m. we reached the crest of the "col." We found that this consisted of an extensive snow plateau which sloped gently towards the south, so that we were obliged to descend some five hundred feet before we could get any view of the southern precipices on which all our thoughts were concentrated. From the edge of the plateau we could look down into the cloud-filled

Sunderdhunga Valley up which, as I mentioned earlier, Hugh Ruttledge and his guide, Emile Rey, had come in 1932 to attempt to gain access into the Nanda Devi Basin. In order to save the reader the trouble of referring back to that incident it may not be out of place to requote here Mr. Ruttledge's description published in *The Times* of August 22, 1932, of the obstacle which now faced us:

“In a mood of hopeful anticipation our party, on May 25th, trudged up the narrow glacier which leads from Sunderdhunga itself to the base of the wall, of which the greater part had been invisible from a distance. The Sherpas cheered derisively as a little avalanche had an ineffective shot at us from the cliffs above; and raced round the last corner. One step round it, and we were brought up all standing by a sight which almost took our remaining breath away. Six thousand feet of the steepest rock and ice. ‘Nom de nom,’ said Emile, while Nima exclaimed that this looked as bad as the north-west face of Kanchenjunga in 1930. However, we had come a long way to see this, so we advanced across the stony slopes to a point from which we hoped, by detailed examination, to reduce terrific appearance to milder reality. But the first impressions were accurate. Near the top of the wall, for about a mile and a half, runs a terrace of ice some two hundred feet thick; in fact, the lower edge of a hanging glacier. Under the pull of gravity large masses constantly break off from this terrace and thunder down to the valley below, polishing in their fall the successive bands of limestone precipice of which the face is composed. Even supposing the precipice to be climbable, an intelligent mountaineer may be acquitted of a charge of lack of enterprise if he declines

to spend at least three days and two nights under fire from this artillery. An alternative is the choice of three knife-edged aretes, excessively steep, sometimes overhanging in their middle and lower sections, on which even the eye of faith, assisted by binoculars, fails to see a single platform large enough to accommodate the most modest of climbing tents."

We dumped our loads in the snow and set about our task immediately. Remembering Ruttledge's description we decided that our best chance of success was to get on to one of the three rock aretes or ridges, for though they were referred to as being "excessively steep," at least their crests would be safe from the bombardment of ice-avalanches. The clouds had now come up from below and our view was very restricted. After working over to the left for some distance, however, we came to the edge of a tremendously steep gulley from which came an incessant rattle of stone-falls. Beyond we could make out a dark mass which we concluded was the first of the rock aretes. After hunting about for some time we found that in order to reach the arete we would be forced to run the gauntlet of the rock-falls in the gulley. As these were coming down at very short intervals the chances of our getting across without some member of the party being killed was very small, and the risk was quite unjustifiable. So that was that.

The ice-fall below us plunged out of sight. We returned to our loads and worked over to the right. In about twenty minutes we were brought up short and found that we were standing in the edge of the ice-terrace overhanging six thousand feet of polished limestone. It was a wonderful sight. Every now and then enormous masses of ice would break away from the

cliffs we were standing on and crash with a fearful roar into the cloudy depths below. After satisfying ourselves that there was not the slightest hope in this direction we waited for some while to watch this unusual scene. It is not often that one gets a chance of watching a display of ice-avalanches from so close, and rarer still to see them breaking away from the very cliffs on which one is standing.

We returned disconsolately to our loads for a meal at 2-30 p.m. A cup of tea and satu put new heart into the party and we set off to tackle the last line of possibility. This was the ice-fall which lay immediately below us and which separated the ice-terrace from the rock aretes. A few feet of twisted and riven ice was all that we could see: beyond this the ice-fall plunged out of sight into the whirling mists which filled the depths below. It was useless to attempt to work out a line of attack from above and all we could do was to go straight at it and worry our way down by the tedious processes of trial and error. We had plenty of food with us, however, and we could afford to take our time. As long as we kept fairly well out of the line of bombardment from the ice-cliffs of the terrace and avoided a slip we could carry on for several days if necessary.

Soon we found ourselves on ice more torn and complicated and more frighteningly steep even than that which we had tackled six weeks before on the southern side of our Satopanth Pass. It was exceedingly strenuous work trying line after line without success, but as the evening wore on our energy seemed to increase, probably from a growing feeling of desperation. A series of slender ice-ledges suspended over space by

some conjuring trick of Nature would lead us downwards to the brink of an impassable chasm. Then a wearisome retreat back by the way we had come to try a new and perhaps equally futile chance. The farther we went the more involved became the precipitous maze we were in, until my head began to whirl and I began to think we should neither find our way on nor back. By dark, however, we had managed to get some hundreds of feet down and we crept into our sleeping-bags in a slightly more hopeful frame of mind.

The night was an extremely cold one and we decided not to start before the sun was up on the following morning as our clothes had become sodden in the soft snow of the previous day and an early start would almost certainly have resulted in frost-bite. This decision gave us a moment of leisure in which to watch a sunrise whose beauty far surpassed any I had seen before. In the right and left foreground were the ice walls, steep-sided and grim, enclosing the head of the Maiktoli Valley; in front beyond the brink of the ice-ledge on which we were camped, and immensely far below was a lake of vivid colour at the bottom of which we could see the Sunderdhunga River coiling like a silver water snake, flowing away into the placid cloud-sea which stretched without a break over the plains of India.

The day was one of heavy toil, over-packed with thrills. Hour after hour we puzzled and hacked our way down; sometimes lowering our loads and ourselves on the rope down an ice-cliff, at others chipping laboriously across the steep face of a tower or along a knife-edged crest, always in constant dread of finding ourselves completely cut off. The bitter cold of the early morning changed towards midday to a fierce heat

and glare which robbed us of much of our strength and energy. Our heavy loads hindered every movement and threatened to throw us off our balance. But we were all completely absorbed in our task, and worked on throughout the day without pause.

Evening found us working on dry ice three thousand feet down. Beside us to our right was a prominent rock ridge, which, though lying immediately below the higher line of hanging glaciers, offered us a heaven-sent alternative if only we could reach it. We cut steps to the edge of the glacier and from there we looked down a sixty-foot ice-cliff into a steep slabby gulley.

The gulley was evidently a path for ice-avalanches, but it was narrow and once in it we could run across in a couple of minutes. By chipping away the ice in a large circle we soon fashioned a bollard. Round this we fastened a rope, down which we slid, recovering the rope from the ice-bollard without difficulty. A short race across the gulley with our heart in our mouths took us to a little ledge under the overhanging walls of the ridge, which offered a convenient and well-protected site for a camp. No sooner had we got the tents pitched than there came a fearful roar from above and for fully a minute a cascade of huge ice-blocks crashed down the gulley, sending up a spray of ice-dust while a number of ice-splinters landed harmlessly on the tents.

The day begun with the sight of a dawn fair beyond description and crowded with so much vivid life, closed with us stretched luxuriously on our ledge, perched high up amongst the precipitous glaciers of one of the grandest of mountain cirques. Lightning flickered somewhere to the east; the distant thunder was almost

indistinguishable from the growl of the avalanches. Mists floated stealthily in and out of the corries about us, forming and dissolving as if at will. Far to the south the placid sea of monsoon cloud still stretched over the plains, and the silvery light of a full moon lent to the scene an appearance of infinite depth.

Three thousand feet of precipice still remained to be descended and this took us nearly the whole of the following day. Frequently we had to rope down the more difficult sections; on one of these occasions one of the sacks came open; most of the contents fell out, bounced once and hummed out of sight. In the afternoon we were enveloped in mist and had considerable difficulty in groping our way downwards; but Angtharkay distinguished himself by a really brilliant piece of route-finding and in the evening we reached a collection of rude stone shelters, used by shepherds, and known as Maiktoli. The shepherds had departed some weeks before.

The high mountains were now showing signs of approaching winter, a sharp reminder that our season of freedom and perfect happiness was at an end. But the marches which followed have left their quota of memories. A struggle to find an exit from the grim gorge in the upper Sunderdhunga Valley into which we had blundered in a heavy mist; our last encounter with a swollen mountain river; an enormous feast on wild raspberries and Himalayan blackberries lower down the valley; the generous hospitality of the first villagers we met, and the sweetness of their honey; the sparkling sunlit mornings, as one lay, sleepily watching the smoke of a distant wood fire mounting straight up into the clear air; a dawn on the distant ice-clad giants, whose presence we had just left.

Return to civilization was hard, but, in the sanctuary of the Blessed Goddess we had found the lasting peace which is the reward of those who seek to know high mountain places.

13. CRANKS

A Crank is defined by my dictionary as "an eccentric person." I feel that there is something wrong here. Surely we ought to be able to make a distinction between the crank and the eccentric. That the two are not the same is obvious when we remember how we commonly use the terms. Once we call a man "a crank," it is certain that we are prepared to dislike him, whereas, unless we are raging pretorians of convention, we feel a sort of tenderness for the eccentric. The latter is a person of whims and crotchets, one who makes experiments in living, whose life overflows the strict pattern of the crowd, whose corners remain unrubbed; one who simply asks to be left alone. England has always been a country of eccentrics; they jostle one another throughout our older literature, where their presence is an unfailing source of comic relief. Even the eighteenth century, for all its trim and razored formality, was a period when the eccentric flourished mightily. To borrow Mrs. Meynell's happy phrase—the century stuck straws in its periwig. Walpole's letters provide us with a feast of whims and crotchets; they hum with the rumours of this and that eccentric. And the writer himself, with his lean and querulous foppery, his enthusiasm for the toy Gothic, his pastry-cook's castle of Strawberry Hill, seems to us now a notable eccentric. But then a great many of

our authors have been eccentrics, and our literature itself, with no academy to clip its wings, is odd, whimsical, assertive, individualistic. Our older fiction is crammed with queer characters because our older novelists found themselves surrounded with such queer personages. There is no oddity in all Lamb's essays so odd as the writer himself. All this is as it should be. There are people who would have human nature like a Dutch garden and hate to see it going its own way, now gnarled and stunted, now ripe and luxuriant, but we, I trust, are not of their company. We who demand variety and do not pretend to have a pattern of our own so perfect that it should be imposed on the rest of humanity, we not only do not dislike the eccentric, we applaud him, and regret, with salt bitterness, that he is fast disappearing. His place is being taken, if it has not already been taken, by the crank. It is a bad exchange.

The eccentric was usually an old gentleman who went his own way and only asked to be left alone; the crank is commonly a youngish person who demands that everybody should go one way, that is, the crank's way, and will not leave anybody alone. The eccentric merely discovered a mode of life that suited him; the crank has found a way for everybody; he possesses a panacea and is aggressive, militant, proselytizing. The mark of the crank is his unshakable belief that his own particular crotchet will save the world. If we laugh at him, it is not merely because he is a faddist and, like Don Adriano de Armado in the play, "too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate," but because he displays a ludicrous want of any sense of proportion and so tickles the comic spirit, which is very delicate in its appreciation of values, its

sense of balance and proportion. There is nothing peculiarly laughable about persons who want to save the world; prophets and reformers on the grand scale may inspire either hatred or admiration and love, but they do not awaken our laughter and contempt because their means are at least more or less commensurate with the end they would achieve. The crank, however, who believes that humanity has but to take some curious little step to arrive at perfection, who would bring back the Golden Age with one wave of his diminutive wand, is simply a little reformer with the air and manner of a great reformer, a prophet.

This is the age of the crank; and little reformers multiply. Seeing that there are now so many well-meaning and energetic persons in the world, persons with a brave public spirit, intent upon reform, many people wonder why so little is done. They forget that there are so many cranks among us, all pulling in different directions, all ready to make us perfect, but each proffering his own foolish little remedy. Our streets are paved with Philosopher's Stones and the Elixir Vitae may be had for the asking. The male crank was bad enough, but now that the awful citadel of feminine commonsense has fallen, we have the female crank, a devastating figure. I am sorry to say that the medical profession (which is called upon to talk more often than it should be) is responsible for some of the worst cranks. The people who believe that we can solve all our problems by making a change in diet or clothing are perhaps the most insufferable. Some merely believe in living simply, that is, wearing special clothes, sleeping in a special kind of room, eating a special kind of food cooked in a special way; and they like to show the rest of us, who can probably live

almost anywhere and eat and drink almost anything, what an artificial, complicated sort of life we lead. Others believe that something of man's primal innocence can be restored by the continuous sipping of unlimited quantities of hot water. Others again hope to get back to Eden by way of vegetarian potted-meat (yes, Vegetarian Potted-Meat—I have had some). There are some who would go further and have nothing but sun-cooked foods. One enthusiastic group is convinced that man will never enter the Land of Beulah unless he is wearing porous underclothing. There are societies that "cultivate rhythm and pose by leisurely mastication," which is, it must be admitted, a small price to pay for the possession of rhythm and pose. (As for this word "rhythm," I have noticed that a frequent use of it in unlikely and dubious contexts is a sure sign of the pretentious but half-baked thinker: the wilder sort of crank loves it.) A few cranks here and there are certain that the higher thought can only be cultivated by deep breathing, and I, for one, should not be surprised if they were right. Some of them tilt at greater marks. There are those who think that nothing but a dense cloud of tobacco smoke hides from our sight the gates of Paradise; and the other day one of them cried: "Don't preach political liberty if you are a slave to tobacco"; to which we, victims of this kindly self-imposed slavery, can only make answer, in a drowsy murmur, "Don't preach at all if you are the slave of false analogies." Then there are those who have discovered that a raging sea of beer and whisky stands between man and his true destiny, and invite us to cross it in the good ship Lime-Juice. And when we come to education and the relation of the sexes. . . . But we do not

come to education and the relation of the sexes, at least, not willingly. We will admit that the cranks are there, myriads of them, and have done with it.

Let us confess that these things, porous underclothing, sun-cooked foods, and the rest, are all (except vegetarian potted-meat) very well in their way; a case can be made out for them; we might be better off if we did take to eating or wearing them. But obviously they should not be made the central point of a complete social philosophy, the hinge on which turns the whole social system, and this is just what the crank does make them. That is why he amuses us for a time, and then finally leaves us bored or irritated: his universe is not ours. Why he should flourish in our time is a question not lightly answered. Nothing is more certain than that the cranks, unlike the poor, are not always with us; many ages seem to have been entirely free from them, particularly those ages which show us a clear-cut social system, a philosophy known to and accepted by almost every one, a universal religion. At such times, everything is in its place; there is neatness, order, a sense of proportion, an appreciation of values, and there is no room for the crank, with his ill-balanced views. But as soon as we come to an age of transition, to a time when the one great light is broken up into a hundred flickering many-hued lights, when the social system, philosophy, religion have been split into fragments, the crank makes his appearance. We have seen more and more of him these last hundred and fifty years; he is the scientific crank. Probably we should have to go back at least sixteen hundred years to find his match, and then we should find that the magical, the superstitious crank, his ancestor, was flourishing in that other age of transition. It is in these times of

spiritual twilight, when trees walk and distant hills tremble and fade, that the crank can be discovered, waving his long, thin arms, crying "Ducdame" and mistaking every fire-fly for the rising sun. And when the age is at an end, when the sun has risen and the world is flooded with clear light and all the spectres have vanished, when the fine edges have been restored and hill and tree and stream come back to the sight, when men and women go walking in the fields, and turn their faces to the level light, careless of the long trembling shadows they cast behind them, when the world is seemingly re-made and given to man with the dew upon it, then you will find everything again in its place. But you will not find the crank. He has fluttered away with the moths.

[from *I For One.*]

14. WALKING TOURS

It must not be imagined that a walking tour, as some would have us fancy, is merely a better or worse way of seeing the country. There are many ways of seeing landscape quite as good; and none more vivid, in spite of canting dilettantes, than from a railway train. But landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who indeed is of the brotherhood does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours—of the hope and spirit with which the march begins at morning, and the peace and spiritual repletion of the evening's rest. He cannot tell whether he puts his knapsack on, or takes it off, with more delight. The excitement of the departure puts him in key for that of

the arrival. Whatever he does is not only a reward in itself, but will be further rewarded in the sequel; and so pleasure leads on to pleasure in an endless chain. It is this that so few can understand; they will either be always lounging or always at five miles an hour; they do not play off the one against the other, prepare all day for the evening, and all evening for the next day. And, above all, it is here that your overwalker fails of comprehension. His heart rises against those who drink their curacao in liqueur glasses, when he himself can swill it in a brown john. He will not believe that the flavour is more delicate in the smaller dose. He will not believe that to walk this unconscionable distance is merely to stupefy and brutalize himself, and come to his inn, at night, with a sort of frost on his five wits, and a starless night of darkness in his spirit. Not for him the mild luminous evening of the temperate walker! He has nothing left of man but a physical need for bedtime and a double nightcap; and even his pipe, if he be a smoker, will be savourless and disenchanted. It is the fate of such an one to take twice as much trouble as is needed to obtain happiness, and miss the happiness in the end; he is the man of the proverb, in short, who goes further and fares worse.

Now, to be properly enjoyed, a walking tour should be gone upon alone. If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name; it is something else and more in the nature of picnic. A walking tour should be gone upon alone, because freedom is of the essence; because you should be able to stop and go on, and follow this way or that, as the freak takes you;

and because you must have your own pace, and neither trot alongside a champion walker, nor mince in time with a girl. And then you must be open to all impressions and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon. "I cannot see the wit," says Hazlitt, "of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate, like the country"—which is the gist of all that can be said upon the matter. There should be no cackle of voices at your elbow, to jar on the meditative silence of the morning. And so long as a man is reasoning he cannot surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in a sort of dazzle and sluggishness of the brain, and ends in a peace that passes comprehension.

During the first day or so of any tour there are moments of bitterness, when the traveller feels more than coldly toward his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge, and, like Christian on a similar occasion, "give three leaps and go on singing." And yet it soon acquires a property of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you, you pull yourself together with a shake, and fall at once into your stride. And surely, of all possible moods, this, in which a man takes the road, is the best. Of course, if he *will* keep thinking of his anxieties, if he *will* open the merchant Abudah's chest and walk arm-in-arm with the hag—why wherever he is, and whether he walk fast or slow, the chances are that he will not be happy. And so much the more shame to himself! There are perhaps thirty men setting forth

at that same hour, and I would lay a large wager there is not another dull face among the thirty. It would be a fine thing to follow, in a coat of darkness, one after **another** of these wayfarers, some summer morning, for the first few miles **upon the road**. This one, who walks fast, with a keen look in his eyes is all concentrated in his own mind; he is up at his loom, weaving and weaving, to set the landscape to words. This one peers about, as he goes, among the grasses; he waits by the canal to watch the dragon-flies; he leans on the gate of the pasture, and cannot look enough upon the complacent kine. And here comes another, talking, laughing, and gesticulating to himself. His face changes from time to time, as indignation flashes from his eyes or anger clouds his forehead. He is composing articles, delivering orations, and conducting the most impassioned interviews, by the way. A little farther on, and it is as like as not he will begin to sing. And well for him, supposing him to be no great master in that art, if he stumble across no stolid peasant at a corner; for on such occasion, I scarcely know which is the more troubled, or whether it is worse to suffer the confusion of your troubadour, or the unfeigned alarm of your clown. A sedentary population, accustomed, besides, to the strange mechanical bearing of the common tramp, can in no wise explain to itself the gaiety of these passers-by. I knew one man who was arrested as a runaway lunatic, because, although a full-grown person with a red beard, he skipped as he went like a child. And you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads who have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang—and sang very ill—and had a pair of red ears when, as described above, the inauspicious peasant

plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay *On Going a Journey*, which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it.

"Give me the clear blue sky over my head," says he, "and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy."

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day; three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure!

Yet there is one thing I object to in these words of his, one thing in the great master's practice that seems to me not wholly wise. I do not approve of that leaping and running. Both of these hurry the respiration; they both shake up the brain out of its glorious open-air confusion; and they both break the pace. Uneven walking is not so agreeable to the body, and it distracts and irritates the mind. Whereas, when once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, it gradually

neutralizes and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind. We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we think in a morning doze; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a thousand ways with words and rhymes; but when it comes to honest work, when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we may sound the trumpet as loud and long as we please; the great barons of the mind will not rally to the standard, but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire and brooding on his own private thought!

In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood. From the exhilaration of the start, to the happy phlegm of the arrival, the change is certainly great. As the day goes on, the traveller moves from one extreme toward the other. He becomes more and more incorporated with the material landscape and the open-air drunkenness grows upon him with great strides, until he posts along the road, and sees everything about him, as in a cheerful dream. The first is certainly brighter, but the second stage is more peaceful. A man does not make so many articles towards the end, nor does he laugh aloud; but the purely animal pleasures, the sense of physical wellbeing, the delight of every inhalation, of every time the muscles tighten down the thigh, console him for the absence of the others and bring him to his destination still content.

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees; and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself, and the birds come round and look at

you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the housetop, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea, unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day, that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on Sundays, and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads, and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket. It is to be noticed, there were no clocks and watches in the much-vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. "Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure," says Milton, "he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness." And so I would say of a modern man

of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir of life—he has still a flaw at heart, he still has his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

But it is at night, and after dinner, that the best hour comes. There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march; the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine. If you wind up the evening with grog, you will own there was never such grog; at every sip a jocund tranquillity spreads about your limbs, and sits easily in your heart. If you read a book—and you will never do so save by fits and starts—you find the language strangely racy and harmonious; words take a new meaning; single sentences possess the ear for half an hour together; and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the nicest coincidence of sentiment. It seems as if it were a book you had written yourself in a dream. To all we have read on such occasions we look with special favour. "It was on the 10th of April, 1798," says Hazlitt, with amorous precision, "that I sat down to a volume of the *New Héloïse*, at the Inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken." I should wish to quote more, for though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays, we cannot write like Hazlitt. And, talking of that, a volume of Hazlitt's essays would be a capital pocket-book on such a journey; so would a volume of Heine's songs; and for *Tristram Shandy* I can pledge a fair experience.

If the evening be fine and warm, there is nothing better in life than to lounge before the inn door in the

sunset, or lean over the parapet of the bridge, to watch the weeds and the quick fishes. It is then, if ever, that you taste Joviality to the full significance of that audacious word. Your muscles are so agreeably slack, you feel so clean and so strong and so idle, that whether you move or sit still, whatever you do is done with pride and a kingly sort of pleasure. You fall in talk with anyone, wise or foolish, drunk or sober. And it seems as if a hot walk purged you, more than of anything else, of all narrowness and pride, and left curiosity to play its part freely, as in a child or a man of science. You lay aside all your hobbies, to watch provincial humours develop themselves before you, now as a laughable farce, and now grave and beautiful like an old tale.

Or perhaps you are left to your own company for the night, and surly weather imprisons you by the fire. You may remember how Burns, numbering past pleasures, dwells upon the hours when he had been "happy thinking." It is a phrase that may well perplex a poor modern, girt about on every side by clocks and chimes, and haunted, even at night, by flaming dial-plates. For we are all so busy, and have so many far-off projects to realize, and castles in the fire to turn into solid habitable mansions on a gravel soil, that we can find no time for pleasure trips into the Land of Thought and among the Hills of Vanity. Changed times, indeed, when we must sit all night, beside the fire, with folded hands; and a changed world for most of us, when we find we can pass the hours without discontent, and be happy thinking. We are in such a haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that one

thing, of which these are but the parts—namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home, and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate—to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere, in sympathy, and yet content to remain where and what you are—is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession. And once you are at that, you are in the very humour of all social heresy. It is no time for shuffling, or for big, empty words. If you ask yourself what you mean by fame, riches, or learning, the answer is far to seek; and you go back into that kingdom of light imaginations, which seem so vain in the eyes of Philistines perspiring after wealth, and so momentous to those who are stricken with the disproportions of the world, and, in the face of the gigantic stars, cannot stop to split differences between two degrees of the infinitesimally small, such as a tobacco pipe or the Roman Empire, a million of money or a fiddlestick's end.

You lean from the window, your last pipe reeking whitely into the darkness, your body full of delicious pains, your mind enthroned in the seventh circle of content; when suddenly the mood changes, the weather-cock goes about, and you ask yourself one question more: whether for the interval, you have been the wisest philosopher or the most egregious of donkeys? Human experience is not yet able to reply;

but at least you have had a fine moment, and looked down upon all the kingdoms of the earth. And whether it was wise or foolish, to-morrow's travel will carry you, body and mind, into some different parish of the infinite.

15. ON KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

Edward Lear has a rhyme about
an old man of Thermopylae,
Who never did anything properly.

To the Westerner all Indians seem old men of Thermopylae. In the ordinary affairs of life I am a bit of a Thermopylean myself. But even I am puzzled, disquieted, and rather exasperated by the Indians. To a thoroughly neat-minded and efficient man, with a taste for tidiness and strong views about respectability and the keeping up of appearances, Indians must be literally maddening.

It would be possible to compile a long and varied list of what I may call Indian Thermopylisms. But I prefer to confine my attention to the Thermopylean behaviour of Indians in a single sphere of activity—that of ceremonial. For it is, I think, in matters of ceremonial and the keeping up of appearances that Indians most conspicuously fail, in our Western opinion, 'to do anything properly.' Nobody who has looked into a temple or witnessed the ceremonial of an Indian marriage can fail to have been struck by the extraordinary 'sloppiness' and inefficiency of the symbolical performances. The sublime is constantly alternated with the ridiculous and trivial, and the most monstrous incongruities are freely mingled. The old

man of Thermopylae is as busy in the palace as in the temple; and the abodes of Indian potentates are an incredible mixture of the magnificent and the cheap, the grandiose and the ludicrously homely. Cows bask on the front steps; the anteroom is filthy with the droppings of pigeons; beggars doze under the gates, or search one another's heads for lice; in one of the inner courts fifty courtesans from the city are singing interminable songs in honour of the birth of the Maharaja's eleventh grandchild; in the throne room, nobody quite knows why, there stands a brass bedstead with a sham mahogany wardrobe from the Tottenham Court Road beside it; framed colour prints from the Christmas number of the Graphic of 1907 alternate along the walls with the most exquisite Rajput and Persian miniatures; in the unswept jewel room, five million pounds' worth of precious stones lie indiscriminately heaped; the paintings are peeling off the walls of the private apartments, a leprosy has attacked the stucco, there is a hole in the carpet; the marble hall of audience is furnished with bamboo chairs, and the Rolls Royces are driven by ragged chauffeurs who blow their noses on the long and wind-blown end of their turbans. As an Englishman belonging to that impecunious but dignified section of the upper middle-class which is in the habit of putting on dress-clothes to eat—with the most studied decorum and out of procelain and burnished silver—a dinner of dishwater and codfish, mock duck and cabbage, I was always amazed, I was pained and shocked by this failure on the part of Eastern monarchs to keep up appearances, and do what is owing to their position.

I was even more helplessly bewildered by the Thermopylean behaviour of the delegates at the Cawnpore

Congress during Mr. Gandhi's speech on the position of Indians in South Africa. The applause when he ascended the rostrum was loud—though rather less loud than a Western observer might have expected. Indian audiences are not much given to yelling or hand-clapping, and it is not possible, when one is sitting on the floor, to stamp one's feet. But though the noise was small, the enthusiasm was evidently very great. And yet, when the Mahatma began to speak, there was more talking and fidgeting, more general inattention than during any other speech of the day. True, it was late in the afternoon when Mr. Gandhi made his speech. The delegates had spent a long and hungry day sitting on a floor that certainly grew no softer with the passage of the hours. There was every reason for their feeling the need to relax their minds and stretch their cramped legs. But however acute its weariness had become, a Western audience would surely have postponed the moment of relaxation until the great man had finished speaking. Even if it had found the speech boring, it would have felt itself bound to listen silently and with attention, to a great and admired national hero. It would have considered that chattering and fidgeting were signs of disrespect. Not so, evidently, the Indian audience. To show disrespect for the Mahatma was probably the last thing in the world that the Cawnpore delegates desired. Nevertheless they talked all through the speech, they stretched their stiff legs, they called for water, they went out for little strolls in the Congress grounds and came back, noisily. Knowing how Englishmen could comport themselves during a speech by a national hero, combining in his single person the sanctity of the Archbishop of Canterbury with the popularity of the

Prince of Wales, I was astonished, I was profoundly puzzled.

In an earlier entry in this diary I attributed the Thermopylism of the Indians to a certain emotional agility (shared, to some extent, by the natives of Southern Europe), to a capacity for feeling two things at once or, at least, in very rapid succession. Indians and Neapolitans, I pointed out, can reverence their gods even while spitting, jesting, and picking their noses. But this explanation does not go far enough; it requires itself to be explained. How is it that, while we are brought up to practise consistency of behaviour, the children of other races are educated so as to be emotionally agile? Why are we so carefully taught to keep up the appearances which to others seem so negligible?

Reflecting on my observations in Italy and in India, I am led to believe that these questions must be answered in one way for the Southern Europeans, in another for the Indians. The emotional agility of the Italians is due to the profound 'realism' of their outlook, coupled with their ingrained habit of judging things in terms of aesthetics. Thus, the Southern European may admire a religious service or a royal procession as works of art, while holding strong aesthetical and anti-monarchical opinions; he will be able to mock and to admire simultaneously. And perhaps he is not an atheist or a republican at all. But however ardently a Christian or a monarchist, he will always find himself able to reflect—while he kneels before the elevated Host or cheers the royal barouche—that the priest and the king make a very good thing out of their business, and that they are, after all, only human, like himself—probably all too human. As for

the shabbinesses and absurdities of the performance, he will ignore them in his appreciation of the grandiose intention, the artistic general effect. And he will regard the Northerner who wants the performance to be perfect in every detail as a laborious and unimaginative fool. Nor will he understand the Northerner's passion for keeping up appearances in ordinary daily life. The Southerner has a liking for display; but his display is different from ours. When we go in for keeping up appearances, we do the job, not showily, but thoroughly, and at every point. We want all the rooms in our house to look 'nice,' we want everything in it to be 'good;' we train our servants to behave as nearly as possible like automatons, and we put on special clothes to eat even the worst of dinners. The Southerner, on the other hand, concentrates his display into a single splendid flourish. He likes to get something spectacular for his money, and his aim is to achieve, not respectability, but a work of art. He gives his house a splendid facade, trusting that every lover of the grandiose will be content to contemplate the marble front, without peering too closely at the brick and rubble behind. He will furnish one drawing-room in style, for state occasions. To keep up appearances at every point—for oneself and one's servants, as well as for the outside world seems to him a folly and a waste of spirit. Life is meant to be enjoyed, and occasional grandiosities are part of the fun. But on ordinary days of the week it is best enjoyed in shirt sleeves.

The Indian's Thermopylisms are due, it seems to me, to entirely different causes. He is careless about keeping up appearances, because appearances seem to him as nothing in comparison with 'spiritual reality.'

He is slack in the performance of anything in the nature of symbolic ceremonial, because the invisible thing symbolized seems to him so much more important than the symbol. He is a Thermopylean, not through excess of 'realism' and the aesthetic sense, but through excess of 'spirituality.' Thus the Maharaja does not trouble to make his surroundings look princely, because he feels that princeliness lies within him, not without. Marriages are made in heaven; therefore it is unnecessary to take trouble about mere marriage ceremonies on earth. And if the soul of every Indian is overflowing with love and respect for Mahatma Gandhi, why should Congress delegates trouble to give that respect the merely physical form of silence and motionlessness?

Such arguments, of course, are never consciously put. But the training of Indians is such that they act as though in obedience to them. They have been taught that this present world is more or less illusory, that the aim of every man should be to break out of the cycle of recurrent birth, that the 'soul' is everything and that the highest values are purely 'spiritual.' Owing to their early inculcation, such beliefs have tended to become almost instinctive, even in the minds of those whose consciously formulated philosophy of life is of an entirely different character. It is obvious that people holding such beliefs will attach the smallest importance to the keeping up of appearances.

In these matters we Northerners behave like Behaviourists—as though the visible or audible expression of an idea were the idea itself, as though the symbol in some sort created the notion symbolized. Our religious rites, our acts of 'natural piety,' are solemnly performed, and with an almost military precision. The

impressive service, we have found, actually manufactures God; the memorial ceremony creates and conserves our interest in the dead. Our royal pageantry is no less rich, no less consistently effective; for the pageant is the king; our judges are wigged and magnificently robed. Absurd survival! But no; the majesty of the law consists in the wigs and the ermine. The gentry keeps up appearances to the limit of its financial means and beyond. It is a folly, protests the believer in 'spiritual' realities. On the contrary, it is profound wisdom, based on the instinctive recognition of a great historical truth. History shows us that there were rites before there were dogmas, that there were conventions of behaviour before there was morality. Dogmas, indeed, have often been the children of rites—systems of thought called into existence to explain gestures. Morality is the theory of pre-existing social habits. (In the same way some of the greatest advances in mathematics have been due to the invention of symbols, which it afterwards became necessary to explain; from the minus sign proceeded the whole theory of negative quantities.) To sceptics desirous of believing, catholic directors of conscience prescribe the outward and visible practice of religion; practice, they know, brings forth faith; the formal appearance of religion creates its 'spiritual' essence. It is the same with civilization; men who practise the conventional ritual of civilization become civilized. Appearing to be civilized, they really are so. For civilization is nothing but a series of conventions; being civilized is obeying those conventions, is keeping up the appearances of culture, prosperity, and good manners. The more widely and the more efficiently such

appearances are kept up, the better the civilization. There can never be a civilization that ignores appearances and is wholly 'spiritual.' A civilization based on Quaker principles could not come into existence; Quakerism in all its forms is the product, by reaction, of a civilization already highly developed. Before one can ignore appearances and conventions, there must be, it is obvious, conventions and appearances to ignore. The Simple Life is simple only in comparison with some existing life of complicated convention. If Quaker principles ceased to be the luxury of a refined few, and were accepted by the world at large, civilization would soon cease to exist; freed from the necessity of keeping up the appearance of being civilized, the majority of human beings would rapidly become barbarous.

Admirers of India are unanimous in praising Hindu 'spirituality.' I cannot agree with them. To my mind 'spirituality' (ultimately, I suppose, the product of the climate) is the primal curse of India and the cause of all her misfortunes. It is this preoccupation with 'spiritual' realities, different from the actual historical realities of common life, that has kept millions upon millions of men and women content, through centuries, with a lot unworthy of human beings. A little less spirituality, and the Indians would now be free—free from foreign dominion and from the tyranny of their own prejudices and traditions. There would be less dirt and more food. There would be fewer Maharajas with Rolls Royces and more schools. The women would be out of their prisons, and there would be some kind of polite and conventional social life—one of those despised appearances of civilization which are yet the very stuff and essence

of civilized existence. At a safe distance and from the midst of a network of sanitary plumbing, Western observers, disgusted, not unjustifiably, with their own civilization, express their admiration for the 'spirituality' of the Indians, and for the immemorial contentment which is the fruit of it. Sometimes, such is their enthusiasm, this admiration actually survives a visit to India.

It is for its 'materialism' that our Western civilization is generally blamed. Wrongly, I think. For materialism—if materialism means a preoccupation with the actual world in which we live—is something wholly admirable. If Western civilization is unsatisfactory, that is not because we are interested in the actual world; it is because the majority of us are interested in such an absurdly small part of it. Our world is wide, incredibly varied and more fantastic than any product of the imagination. And yet the lives of the vast majority of men and women among the Western peoples are narrow, monotonous, and dull. We are not materialistic enough; that is the trouble. We do not interest ourselves in a sufficiency of this marvellous world of ours. Travel is cheap and rapid; the immense accumulations of modern knowledge lie heaped up on every side. Every man with a little leisure and enough money for railway tickets, every man, indeed, who knows how to read, has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant, and interesting. And yet, for some inexplicable reason, most of us prefer to spend our leisure and our surplus energies in elaborately, brainlessly, and expensively murdering time. Our lives are consequently barren and uninteresting, and we are, in general, only too acutely conscious

of the fact. The remedy is more materialism and not, as false prophets from the East assert, more 'spirituality'—more interest in this world, not in the other. The Other World—the world of metaphysics and religion—can never possibly be as interesting as this world, and for an obvious reason. The Other World is an invention of the human fancy and shares the limitations of its creator. This world, on the other hand, the world of the materialists, is the fantastic and incredible invention of—well, not in any case of Mrs. Annie Besant.

[from *Jesting Pilate*.]

16. THE GREAT THAMES FROST

The Great Frost was, historians tell us, the most severe that has ever visited these islands. Birds froze in mid-air and fell like stones to the ground. At Norwich a young countrywoman started to cross the road in her usual robust health, and was seen by the onlookers to turn visibly to powder and be blown in a puff of dust over the roofs as the icy blast struck her at the street corner. The mortality among sheep and cattle was enormous. Corpses froze and could not be drawn from the sheets. It was no uncommon sight to come upon a whole herd of swine frozen immovable upon the road. The fields were full of shepherds, ploughmen, teams of horses, and little bird-scaring boys all struck stark in the act of the moment, one with his hand to his nose, another with the bottle to his lips, a third with a stone raised to throw at the raven who sat, as if stuffed, upon the hedge within a yard of him. The severity of the frost was so extraordinary that a kind of petrification sometimes ensued; and it was

commonly supposed that the great increase of rocks in some parts of Derbyshire was due to no eruption, for there was none, but to the solidification of unfortunate wayfarers who had been turned literally to stone where they stood. The church could give little help in the matter, and though some landowners had these relics blessed, the most part preferred to use them either as landmarks, scratching posts for sheep, or, when the form of the stone allowed, drinking-troughs for cattle, which purposes they serve, admirably for the most part, to this day.

But while the country people suffered the extremity of want, and the trade of the country was at a stand-still, London enjoyed a carnival of the utmost brilliancy. The Court was at Greenwich, and the new King seized the opportunity that his coronation gave him to carry favour with the citizens. He directed that the river, which was frozen to a depth of twenty feet and more for six or seven miles on either side, should be swept, decorated, and given all the semblance of a park or pleasure ground, with arbours, mazes, alleys, drinking booths, etc., at his expense. For himself and the courtiers, he reserved a certain space immediately opposite the Palace gates; which, railed off from the public only by a silken rope, became at once the centre of the most brilliant society in England. Great statesmen, in their beards and ruffs, despatched affairs of state under the crimson awning of the Royal Pagoda. Soldiers planned the conquest of the Moor and the downfall of the Turk in striped arbours surmounted by plumes of ostrich feathers. Admirals strode up and down the narrow pathways, glass in hand, sweeping the horizon and telling stories of the north-west passage and the Spanish Armada. Frozen roses fell in showers

when the queen and her ladies walked abroad. Coloured balloons hovered motionless in the air. Here and there burnt vast bonfires of cedar and oak wood, lavishly salted, so that the flames were of green, orange, and purple fire. But however fiercely they burnt, the heat was not enough to melt the ice which, though of singular transparency, was yet of the hardness of steel. So clear indeed was it that there could be seen, congealed at a depth of several feet, here a porpoise, there a flounder. Shoals of eels lay motionless in a trance, but whether their state was one of death or merely of suspended animation which the warmth would revive puzzled the philosophers. Near London Bridge, where the river had frozen to a depth of some twenty fathoms, a wrecked wherry boat was plainly visible, lying on the bed of the river where it had sunk last autumn, overlaid with apples. The old bumboat woman, who was carrying her fruit to market on the Surrey side, sat there in her plaids and farthingales with her lap full of apples, for all the world as if she were about to serve a customer, though a certain blueness about the lips hinted the truth. 'Twas a sight King James specially liked to look upon, and he would bring a troupe of courtiers to gaze with him. In short, nothing could exceed the brilliancy and gaiety of the scene by day. But it was at night that the carnival was at its merriest. For the frost continued unbroken; the nights were of perfect stillness; the moon and stars blazed with the hard fixity of diamonds, and to the fine music of flute and trumpet the courtiers danced. . .

It was an evening of astonishing beauty. As the sun sank, all the domes, spires, turrets, and pinnacles of London rose in inky blackness against the furious red sunset clouds. Here was the fretted cross at Charing;

there the dome of St. Paul's; there the massy square of the Tower buildings; there, like a grove of trees stripped of all leaves save a knob at the end, were the heads on the pikes at Temple Bar. Now the Abbey windows were lit up, and burnt like a heavenly, many-coloured shield (in Orlando's fancy); now all the west seemed a golden window, with troops of angels (in Orlando's fancy again) passing up and down the heavenly stairs perpetually. All the time they seemed to be skating on fathomless depths of air, so blue the ice had become; and so glassy smooth was it that they sped quicker and quicker to the city with the white gulls circling about them, and cutting in the air with their wings the very same sweeps that they cut on the ice with their skates.

All the colour, save the red of Orlando's cheeks, soon faded. Night came on. As the orange light of sunset vanished, it was succeeded by an astonishing white glare from the torches, bonfires, flaming cressets, and other devices by which the river was lit up, and the strangest transformation took place. Various churches and noblemen's palaces, whose fronts were of white stone, showed in streaks and patches as if floating on the air. Of St. Paul's in particular, nothing was left but a gilt cross. The Abbey appeared like the grey skeleton of a leaf. Everything suffered emaciation and transformation. As they approached the carnival they heard a deep note like that struck on a tuningfork, which boomed louder and louder until it became an uproar. Every now and then a great shout followed a rocket into the air: flowering rockets, crescents, serpents, a crown. At one moment the woods and distant hills showed green as on a summer's day; the next all was winter and blackness again.

By this time Orlando and the Russian Princess were close to the Royal enclosure; and found their way barred by a great crowd of the common people, who were pressing as near to the silken rope as they dared. The couple lingered there, shouldered by apprentices, tailors, fishwives, horse dealers, coney catchers, starving scholars, maid-servants in their wimples, orange girls, ostlers, sober citizens, bawdy tapsters, and a crowd of little ragamuffins such as always haunt the outskirts of a crowd, screaming and scrambling among people's feet—all the riff-raff of the London streets indeed was there, jesting and jostling, here casting dice, telling fortunes, shoving, tickling, pinching; here uproarious, there glum; some of them with mouths gaping a yard wide; others as little reverent as daws on a housetop; all as variously rigged out as their purse or stations allowed.

It grew dark. With a burst of passion he snatched Sasha to him and hissed in her ear, "*Jour de ma vie!*" It was their signal. At midnight they would meet at an inn near Blackfriars. Horses waited there. Everything was in readiness for their flight. So they parted—she to her tent, he to his. It still wanted an hour of the time.

Long before midnight Orlando was in waiting. The night was of so inky a blackness that a man was on you before he could be seen, which was all to the good; but it was also of the most solemn stillness, so that a horse's hoof, or a child's cry, could be heard at a distance of half a mile. The street lanterns in these purlieus were few at most, and the negligence of the night watchman often suffered them to expire long before dawn. The darkness then became even deeper than before. Orlando looked to the wicks of his

lantern, saw to the saddle-girths, primed his pistols; examined his holsters. He listened to every footfall; speculated on every sound. Yet he had no fear for Sasha. Her courage made nothing of the adventure. She would come alone, in her cloak and trousers, booted like a man. Light as her foot-fall was, it would hardly be heard, even in this silence.

So he waited in the darkness. Suddenly he was struck in the face by a blow, soft yet heavy, on the side of his cheek. So struck with expectation was he that he started and put his hand to his sword. The blow was repeated a dozen times on forehead and cheek. The dry frost had lasted so long that it took him a minute to realize that these were raindrops falling; the blows were the blows of the rain. At first they fell slowly, deliberately, one by one. But soon the six drops became sixty; then six hundred; then ran themselves together in a steady spout of water. It was as if the hard and consolidated sky poured itself forth in one profuse fountain. In the space of five minutes Orlando was soaked to the skin.

• Hastily putting the horses under cover, he sought shelter beneath the lintel of the door, whence he could still observe the courtyard. The air was thicker now than ever, and such a steaming and droning rose from the downpour that no footfall of man or beast could be heard above it. The roads, pitted as they were with great holes, would be under water, and perhaps impassable. But of what effect this would have upon their flight he scarcely thought. Suddenly, with an awful and ominous noise, a voice full of horror and alarm, which raised every hair of anguish in Orlando's soul, St. Paul's struck the first stroke of midnight. Four times more it struck remorselessly. With the

superstition of a lover Orlando had made out that it was on the sixth stroke that she would come. But the sixth stroke echoed away, and the seventh came, and the eighth and to his apprehensive mind they seemed notes first heralding and then proclaiming death and disaster. When the twelfth struck he knew that his doom was sealed. Other clocks struck, jangling one after another. The whole world seemed to ring with the news of her deceit and his derision. He was bitten by a swarm of snakes, each more poisonous than the last. He stood on the doorway in the tremendous rain without moving. The downpour rushed on. In the thick of the storm great guns seemed to boom. Huge noises, as of the tearing and rending of the oak trees, could be heard. There were also wild cries and terrible inhuman groanings. But Orlando stood there immovable till Paul's clock struck two, and then, crying aloud with an awful irony, and all his teeth showing, "*Jour de ma vie;*" he dashed the lantern to the ground, mounted his horse, and galloped he knew not where.

Some blind instinct, for he was past reasoning, must have driven him to take the river bank in the direction of the sea, for when the dawn broke, which it did with unusual suddenness, the sky turning a pale yellow and the rain almost ceasing, he found himself on the banks of the Thames off Wapping. Now a sight of the most extraordinary nature met his eyes. Where, for three months and more, there had been solid ice of such thickness that it seemed permanent as stone, and a whole gay city had stood on its pavement, was now a race of turbulent yellow waters. The river had gained its freedom in the night. It was as if a sulphur spring (to which view many philosophers inclined) had risen from the volcanic regions beneath and burst the ice

asunder with such vehemence that it swept the huge and massy fragments furiously apart. The mere look of the water was enough to turn one giddy. All was riot and confusion. The river was strewn with icebergs. Some of these were as broad as a bowling-green and as high as a house; others no bigger than a man's hat but most fantastically twisted. Now would come down a whole convoy of ice blocks, sinking everything that stood in their way. Now, eddying and swirling like a tortured serpent, the river would seem to be hurtling itself between the fragments and tossing them from bank to bank, so that they could be heard smashing against the piers and pillars. But what was the most awful and inspiring of terror was the sight of the human creatures who had been trapped in the night and now paced their twisting and precarious islands in the utmost agony of spirit. Whether they jumped into the flood or stayed on the ice their doom was certain. Sometimes quite a cluster of these poor creatures would come down together, some on their knees, others sucking their babies. One old man seemed to be reading aloud from a holy book. At other times, and his fate perhaps was the most dreadful, a solitary wretch would stride his narrow tenement alone. As they swept out to sea some could be heard crying vainly for help, making wild promises to amend their ways, confessing their sins, and vowing altars and wealth if God would hear their prayers. Others were so dazed with terror that they sat immovable and silent, looking steadfastly before them. One crew of young watermen or post-boys, to judge by their liveries, roared and shouted the lewdest tavern songs, as if in bravado and were dashed against a tree and sunk with blasphemies on their lips. An old nobleman—for such his furred gown and golden

chain proclaimed him—went down not far from where Orlando stood, calling vengeance upon the Irish rebels, who, he cried with his last breath, had plotted this devilry. Many perished clasping some silver pot or other treasure to their breasts, and at least a score of poor wretches were drowned by their own cupidity, hurling themselves from the bank into the flood rather than let a gold goblet escape them, or see before their eyes the disappearance of some furred gown. For furniture, valuables, possessions of all sorts were carried away on the icebergs. Among other strange sights was to be seen a cat suckling its young; a table laid sumptuously for a supper of twenty; a couple in bed; together with an extraordinary number of cooking utensils.

Dazed and astounded, Orlando could do nothing for some time but watch the appalling race of waters as it hurled itself past him. At last, seeming to recollect himself, he clapped spurs to his horse and galloped hard along the river bank in the direction of the sea. Rounding a bend of the river, he came opposite that reach where, not two days ago, the ships of the Ambassadors had seemed immovably frozen. Hastily he made count of them all—the French, the Spanish, the Austrian, the Turk. All still floated, though the French ship had broken loose from her moorings, and the Turkish vessel had taken a great rent in her side and was fast filling with water. But the Russian ship was nowhere to be seen. For one moment Orlando thought it must have foundered; but, raising himself in his stirrups and shading his eyes, which had the sight of a hawk's, he could just make out the shape of a ship on the horizon. The flag was flying from the masthead. The ship of the Muscovite Embassy was standing out to sea.

Flinging himself from his horse, he made, in his rage, as if he would breast the flood. Standing knee-deep in water, he hurled at the faithless woman the insults that have ever been the lot of her sex. Faithless, mutable, fickle, he called her; devil, deceiver; and the swirling waters took his words and tossed at his feet a broken pot and a little straw.

[from *Orlando*]

17. ENCHANTMENT IN POETRY

What, then, is the first thing which we require of all poetry—not merely in order to be great, but to exist at all? It has already been indicated. I will call it, compendiously, “incantation”: the power of using words so as to produce in us a sort of enchantment; and by that I mean a power not merely to charm and delight, but to kindle our minds into unusual vitality, exquisitely aware both of things and of the connections of things. This, of course, cannot be taken as a detachable craftsmanship; try to do so and, like chipping varnish off woodwork, it flies to pieces: we can make nothing of it. Nevertheless, the exceptional way words in poetry will command our minds is the first thing criticism can lay hold of; the first thing we come to know distinctly, as soon as we begin to study our delight. We do not require an absolute enchantment in every phrase we read, even in the finest poetry. The poets have an art of making us expect the magical phrase; and when it comes, it casts its enchantment over the whole surrounding texture of language. But unless it does come, and come often enough to keep our minds invigorated by its release, even from common words, of uncommon energy of meaning, we begin to

murmur, " This may be very sincere and painstaking, but it is not *poetry*."

When Theseus, in *The Knight's Tale*, cuts down a whole wood for a funeral pyre, Chaucer disclaims, very minutely, any intention to describe the business. And no wonder! Who wants description when he can have incantation? Every detail which Chaucer mentions as something he will not describe, is mentioned in such magical words that it flashes out at us like the light of a diamond. Let a single instance suffice. The dense wood has been all cut down, and the havoc cleared away; and Chaucer says he will not tell us how the nymphs and the fawns, the beasts and the birds, fled away in fear:

" Ne how the ground agast was of the light!"

Well might he disclaim *description*! And if we wish to account to ourselves for our delighted astonishment in that line, surely the first thing we should lay hold of would be the astonishing and delightful efficacy of that one word *agast*. Why, with that word, the line becomes such an incantation, that we feel what the very ground itself was feeling: the ground has become alive and sentient in our minds. Words have not *described* a fact, they have re-created in our minds the very fact itself.

Where was this fact originally? In Chaucer's mind: but he found the words which could transfer, perfect and unimpaired, this piece of his mind into ours. So did Herrick, when his gliding Julia passed, sumptuously languishing, before his admiration:

" Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes."

Herrick's Julia, after that, is every one's Julia. And it is not Herrick *describing* what he loves to admire: our minds have become a moment of Herrick himself, admiring and making harmless love. As with Herrick and his Julia, so with Casca and his lion: it is a unique moment of life that enters our minds when Casca tells us how, during the night of prodigies in Rome, he met the lion,

“ Who gazed upon me and went surly by.”

There was never any other lion quite like that. And the sight of its mysterious demeanour has been made over to us in perpetuity. The very sense of Casca's appalled encounter is absolute in us; Shakespeare's art has so enchanted us, that we become for a moment, what he became.

There are, naturally, infinite occasions for the poet's incantation; but its purpose is always the same. It may be giving us simply a moment of sensation; but it will make the moment individual, exquisite, unique. If I told you I had seen a scatter of rose leaves floating on water, you might guess the sight had pleased me; and you would no doubt call up in your minds some vision fairly corresponding with mine. But when the poet writes:

“ And on the water, like to burning coals,
On liquid silver, leaves of roses lay :”

it is a quite special vision of floating rose leaves that is imposed on us. Such delicate extravagance of diction gives personal distinction to the image; and chiefly by distinctly charging it with the poet's vivid and singular delight. The distinction of the moment will, no doubt, be even more noticeable, if the sensation

comes to us not merely alive with appropriate feeling, but complicated with some unusual peculiarity of mood and allusion : something quaint and fantastic, perhaps, as when the same poet—Giles Fletcher—sees the first light of dawn strike the pines on the mountain-side and says of it that the trees

“ Dandled the morning’s childhood in their arms.”

Or it may be something remote and mysterious, like the obscure sympathy which Keats divined in the very stones of his landscape, when

“ Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seemed
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns.”

Whatever it be, the poet’s words not only make the whole fact start alive in our minds; they are electric with the subtle distinction of the moment in which the fact occurs stored with those delicate and profound reverberations which make the fact unique. For the facts we are speaking of are experience; and experiences are always unique: they occur in some particular person’s mind, in some particular sequence of other experiences. Now poetry is the translation of experience into language; and the translation has not properly been made at all, unless, along with the stuff of the experience, goes a rendering of its peculiar moment, instinct with the moods, implications, references, influences, which make the moment unique. My instances have been mainly visual—whether actual or imaginary makes, of course, no difference. But whatever the nature of the topic, the poet’s business is always the same. He must, out of the subtly adjusted sound and sense of words, contrive such a

texture of intensities and complexities of meaning of unsuspected filaments of fine allusion and suggestion, as will enable these gossamers to capture and convey into our minds just those fleeting, gleaming qualities of experience which elude the hold of everyday straightforward language. For these are the very qualities which give to each moment of experience its unique distinction; and the words that can securely convey them are magical words, for they are truly creative. They have that incantation in them which can create in us, over and over again, the complete and many-coloured sense of a notably individual experience: the poet's experience. It is, indeed, *our* sense of it; and in becoming *our* sense of it, it no doubt undergoes inevitable modulation. But that does not lessen its individuality as an experience.

I have been speaking so far of the momentary phrases of enchantment: the phrases on which the spirits of imagination assemble as incalculably as the scholastic angels on the point of a needle. But when poetry is a continuous creation in us of the poet's habit of mind and its peculiar commerce with the world, then that poet, we say, has achieved *style*: that is, *his own style*, the habit of language nicely corresponding with the characteristic mode of his life. In any case, the magical infection of our minds with the poet's mind by means of language is the first thing poetry must be capable of, in order to exist at all; and to accept the incantation—the re-creation in us of another man's experience,—is to make our first acknowledgement of the presence of poetry.

[from *The Idea of Great Poetry.*]

NOTES

1. THE HIMALAYA HERITAGE

Sir Francis Edward Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., who had so distinguished and adventurous a career, was both a soldier and a diplomat. Born at Murree, in the Himalayan hills behind Rawalpindi, in the year 1863, he became a Captain in the Dragoon Guards, but transferred later to the Indian Political Department. He conducted a Government mission to Manchuria; journeyed from Peking to India *via* Turkestan; explored the Pamirs; was Resident in Chitral and took part in the Chitral Relief Expedition; saw service in Indore, Tibet, and was ultimately Resident in Kashmir. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, he has written extensively of travel:—*The Heart of a Continent: The Relief of Chitral: Kashmir: Wonders of the Himalaya: The Epic of Everest: Dawn in India: Everest, the Challenge*. Devoted to religion and works of human fellowship, he returned to India as recently as 1936 in order to preside over the Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations; and his works of meditation include a *Venture of Faith*.

The student will find in this passage ample evidence of a straightforward and sincere mind. The author is genuinely interested in his subject; and the simple, unadorned, plain, business-like style reflects the spirit of the writer. One is everywhere impressed by his thoughtfulness, his lofty and spiritual outlook, his simple piety, and his interest in the philosophy, beliefs, culture, and amelioration of the Indians amongst whom he spent his life.

General Bruce : leader of the first Everest expedition.

Born in the Himalaya : i.e. at Murree in 1863.

Dean Inge : the outspoken Church of England Dean who, in his sermons and writings, criticizes without fear or favour present-day culture, and has been called the 'gloomy Dean,' because of his pessimistic outlook.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe generally the Himalaya mountains.
2. Summarize, after the writer, the influences of the Himalaya on the human race.
3. Quote some examples to prove the statement that "the most spiritual of them(*i.e.* Indians) have been inspired by the Himalaya."
4. Describe a pilgrimage to some sacred Himalayan shrine.
5. Explain the following:—*the Indians are no real lovers of mountains: the contemplation of any great mountain has an elevating effect upon a man: there is a deep affinity between the European mountain-lover and the Indian pilgrim to the Himalaya.*
6. "I to the hills will lift mine eyes
From whence doth come mine aid."
Explain why this should be so.
7. Describe one of the attempts to climb a great Himalayan peak.
8. Write an account of the vegetation of the Himalayas.
9. What important lessons are taught us by the author in this essay? What do we learn about him?
10. Compare the Indian outlook upon the Himalaya with that of the European.
11. Write an essay on *Pilgrimage*.
12. Can you indicate briefly the influence of mountains upon a poet, say Wordsworth?
13. The poet Burns wrote, "I have been happy thinking."
The author has something to say about *Reflection*.
Write down your own conclusions on the need for reflection in life.
14. Compare the impressions produced by the Himalaya mountains upon this author and upon the author of No. 12.
15. Explain the following:—*in a peculiarly receptive mood: an insight into the deepest nature of things.*

2. MY FIRST FLIGHT

Mr. H. G. Wells was born in 1866. Developing a scientific bent he achieved great popularity with his

fantastic romances of the type of *The War of the Worlds*. Subsequently he wrote on modern conditions and sociological problems, with a keen desire to effect some improvement. His best known social novels, all of which possess humour and the gift of characterization, include *Mr. Polly*, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps*, *The New Machiavelli*, and *Tono-Bungay*.

This essay reflects the author's interest in scientific matters. It conveys to us very clearly and convincingly the exhilaration of one's first flight and the feeling of exaltation which it conduces. There is no simpler and clearer writer than Mr. Wells; but his style is inclined to be journalistic, and lacks the dignity and purity of the great essayists. The student should examine the simple plan and structure of this essay:—firstly, the thoughts before the flight: secondly, the actual experiences during the flight: thirdly, thoughts and reflections inspired by the flight.

NOTES

Out to sea : at Eastbourne on the English Channel.

Langley : an early American pioneer in aviation.

Lilianthal : an early German experimenter with gliders.

Grahame-White : an English aviator in the early days of flying.

Belvedere : a high building providing an extensive panoramic view.

White City : the home of Exhibitions in London.

Farman : a sea-plane invented by the Farman Brothers, early experimenters in aviation.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe the author's (a) thoughts about flying before his trip;
(b) actual experiences in the air;
and (c) after-thoughts.
2. Illustrate from this essay the writer's love of Simile.
3. How far is Wells a true prophet of flying, and where does he go wrong?

4. Give some examples of the writer's colloquial English style.
5. Compare the feelings of the aviator with those of the mountaineer.
6. Enumerate the "psychological and physiological effects of flying."
7. Describe the improvements in aviation since 1912.
8. Attempt an essay on *Your First flight*.
9. Write an essay on *The Mood of Exaltation*, illustrating from this passage and the previous one.
10. Explain the following:—*flights of imagination : like Noah's dove : down went its tail : ten million years of evolution : undertow of funk : chasms and cataracts of air.*

3. THE TRANS-SIBERIAN EXPRESS

Peter Fleming, born 1907, is a traveller and author. Educated at Eton and Oxford he journeyed first to Guatemala: thence to China in 1932 by the Trans-Siberian Express; and he has emulated Sir Francis Younghusband by his journey from Peking to India, but came through the Forbidden land of Tibet to Calcutta. He has been on the staff of *The Times* since 1936. His matter is invariably interesting, while his style is clear, if occasionally (and perhaps deliberately) flamboyant.

Shanghai Express : there have been famous pictures and plays written round railway trains.

Wagons Lits : sleeping berths on European trains are controlled by a Company with this name (it is French for 'bed-carriages').

Oppenheim : a well-known English novelist who specializes in adventures while in Continental trains.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe in your own words the dining-car of the express.
2. Explain the following: *the arrogance of the hand-bitten : shoddy suburbs : the elixir of life : trilingual menu : in huddled cabal : played on his abacus : old fetishes : going native.*

3. Explain, after the author, the difference between ship and train travel.
4. Explain: "The aeroplane is the agent of superficiality."
5. Describe the various train attendants.
6. Give a picture of the scenery on the Trans-Siberian Railway.
7. Write essays on (i) Travel, (ii) Romanticism.
8. Pick out the figures of speech in this essay.
9. "What shall I do?" Indicate what *you* would do on a long railway journey.
10. Compare Fleming and H. G. Wells as stylists and writers generally. Which in your opinion is the better?

4. ALONE IN THE WONDERFUL SKIES

Cecil Day Lewis, born 1904, educated at Oxford. A poet of rising reputation. His publications include: *Country Comets: a Time to Dance: a Hope for Poetry: The Friendly Tree*.

His unconventional phrases raise new pictures before our eyes, and he begets in us his own love of freedom and exhilaration of mind. His style is forceful, vigorous, and yet abundantly attractive. In his *A Hope for Poetry* he has clarified the modern attitude towards poetry.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Compare the feelings of the aviator in this passage with (1) those of H. G. Wells, and (2) with those of any mountaineer.
2. Explain the following: *all the modern gadgets: a pea-soup fog: in a dither: the four horizons: the long savannahs of the blue: yanked the stick: a pavement of pearl: got my bearings.*
3. Illustrate the obvious delight of the author in *colour*.
4. Describe in your own words what the airman saw.
5. Indicate the contrast referred to between earth and sky.
6. Write an essay on *The Sun and Sun-worshippers*.

7. What appears to be the lesson of this passage?
8. Compare if you can, the thrill of air conquest with that of mountain conquest.

5. ISLANDS AMID THE SANDS

Aldous Leonard Huxley, born 1894, was educated like Peter Fleming at Eton and Oxford. He is an author and critic. Among his works are : *The Burning Wheel : Limbo : Leda : Along the Roads : Jestling Pilate : Brave New World : Eyeless in Gaza, The Olive Tree*, etc. He has also edited the letters of D. H. Lawrence.

The style is clear, if somewhat lacking in sparkle, and the author is a keen observer and an outspoken critic.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Discuss the influence of the weather upon the mind.
2. Describe the background of Tunisian landscape.
3. Pick out examples of the writer's (1) Irony, and (2) Humour.
4. " No nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt
Among Arabian sands."

These lines are by the poet Wordsworth. Write an essay upon An Oasis in the Desert.

5. What do you learn from this sketch about the Arabs?
6. Write an essay on Fatalism.
7. Enumerate some of the characteristics of the tourists referred to by the author.
8. Describe Arab children.
9. Illustrate the author's delight in colour, and compare him in this respect with the writer of No. 4.
10. What lessons are brought home to us by this sketch?
11. Compare Huxley as an observer of life with Fleming.
12. Explain: *the Spice Islands: the most appalling meteorological calamities : in flapping nightshirts :*

NOTES

“In the Tunisian Oasis,” *Islands amid the Sands* is an extract from his latest volume of essays “The Olive Tree.”

Tunisia—a country of North Africa under the French Protectorate, bounded on the west by Algeria and on the north by the Mediterranean.

Tozeur—in Tunisia.

Fujiyama—The famous mountain of Japan.

Palermo—A port of Sicily.

Sousse—A harbour town of Tunisia.

Briques—bricks.

(The natives of Tunisia, especially those who look after tourists, are fairly well versed in French).

Viande—meat.

Tres bon—Very good.

Tres plaisant—very pleasant.

Island of the Lotus Eaters—see Tennyson’s famous poem of that name. The original reference is to be found in Homer’s *Odyssey*. The companions of Ulysses discovered an earthly paradise where people lived on lotuses and did nothing but sleep and dream.

Nefta—The loveliest oasis of Sahara.

Tchad—world-renowned lake.

Samuel Smiles—author of “Self-help” and other books dealing with conduct. Once very popular, Smiles’ fame has steadily deteriorated with the passing of time. Men and women of the present century realize that imagination and creative work have got to do more with positive achievement in life than a mere observance of a few cut and dried rules. Consequently, Smiles is regarded a philosopher for shop-keepers.

Roosevelt—President of U.S.A.

Fatalism—Absolute belief in destiny which naturally leads men to minimize the importance of personal effort.

Oiseau—bird.

pidgin French—Base French in which words from native dialects spoil the purity of the language.

Lache la . . . dia sous—Let it be. I shall give you ten sous.

Aquarium shadow—A sort of massive Zoo for deep-sea animals. They are not accustomed to strong light. Consequently the aquarium has to be plunged in semi-darkness with dim electric bulbs giving a faint flow for the guidance of visitors. The most famous aquariums of the world are in Naples and Monte Carlo.

En avant—Forward.

Explain :

quite the little Paris : to come to a compromise : the apathetically courteous aloofness : a disciple of Samuel Smiles : importunate fidelity : the menacing pantomime : laid golden eggs : shared the loot : the captains of industry.

6. AN IDLE SPECULATION

John Boynton Priestley, D. Litt., was born in 1894 at Bradford, and was educated at Cambridge. He saw service during the Great War, and has now a deservedly high reputation among present-day writers. Among his critical works are *George Meredith* and *Peacock* for the English men of letters series : *The English Comic Characters* : *The English Novel* : *The English Humour* : and his novels and plays include *The Good Companions* : *Angel Pavement* : *Laburnum Grove* : and *Midnight in the Desert*.

Priestley's style is clear; he builds up his sentences skilfully; he has a light humour, and an imagination which is sometimes just a little sad, and less often a trifle cynical.

NOTES

The professionals from Scotland : many skilful Scottish football players are employed by English professional clubs.

Saturday afternoon : the weekly half-holiday in Great Britain, when football matches take place.

Pink 'Un : a rather racy and humorous newspaper.

Speshul : i.e., Special ; extra edition of a newspaper with the results of the football matches.

Miss Saccharine : obviously very sweet and sugary.

Thomas Hardy : the creator of the Wessex novels, poet and dramatist.

George Saintsbury : a celebrated critic of literature. He was Professor of English literature at Edinburgh University.

Walter de la Mare : delightful present-day poet.

Gosse : Sir Edmund Gosse : literary critic of the day.

Squire : Sir James Squire : author and critic. He is the editor of the *London Mercury*.

West Bromwich Albion : a famous football team from Birmingham.

John Drinkwater : famous present-day poet.

Arnold Bennett : celebrated novelist of the *Five Towns*.

Bernard Shaw : the most famous figure in present-day literature ; has written many fine plays.

Woolwich Arsenal : well-known football team in north London.

Steve Bloomer : celebrated football player before the Great War. He played for *Derby County*.

Harrod's : a large store in Knightsbridge, London.

Selfridge's : a very up-to-date store in Oxford Street.

Tottenham Hotspur : a popular football team in north London.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Examine carefully the final paragraph of this essay, and explain clearly what it means.
2. Pick out some examples of Humour from this essay.
3. Summarize the various points raised by the writer.
4. Compare Priestley's style with Huxley's.
5. Do you discern anything cynical in the author's outlook on life ?
6. Can you account for the almost universal popularity of the game of Football.
7. Write an essay on *The Love of Spectacle*.

7. THE BIRD SANCTUARY

Axel Munthe, born in Sweden, was physician to the Queen of Sweden. After travelling through most of the countries of Europe he settled down in the island of Capri in the Mediterranean. The story of *San Michele* (from which this passage is taken) describes his life on the island. His other publications include *Red Cross and Iron Cross : Memories and Vagaries : Letters from a Mourning City*.

This author has a pleasing, intimate style, and his overwhelming love of birds endears him to all.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Give a description of the religious ceremonies of Easter Sunday.
2. Explain the presence of the birds on the island of Capri.
3. Write an essay on *A Bird Sanctuary*.
4. Explain the following: *mutilated symbols of the Holy Dove : my own country far to the north : on their Via Crucis : to give spring concerts : are caged decoy birds: pate d' alouettes farcies: renewed his old tactics: he knew his man : on the look-out for the evil eye : given the last sacraments: sworn on the crucifix.*
5. Give some examples of the author's Irony.
6. How did the author save the bird's lives? To whom had he appealed in vain? What plans had he adopted without success?
7. Write an essay on the lines from Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* :
 " He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all."

8. FIND YOURSELVES !

Stanley Baldwin, K.G., P.C., Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, was born in 1867, and educated at Harrow and Cambridge. He became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1922, and Prime

Minister the following year. A typical English country gentleman, with an unpretentious love for the English countryside, the English tradition, and its culture and literature. His writings include : *The Classics and the Plain Man : This Torch of Freedom : Service of our Lives : On England : Our Inheritance.*

His vocabulary is chaste and carefully chosen: his sentences simple in construction: and his strong and human personality shines clearly through all he writes.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain the following : *crossed the Border : the victor of Culloden : unhappy Stuarts : the years of stark horror : the presumptuousness of mere knowledge : there are no short cuts : to make a man stand on his own feet : the strait and narrow way to wisdom : the west of blue distances : the little people made their last home with the Gael.*
2. Discuss the idea of the university as "a retreat for scholarship."
3. The university ideal. What is it?
4. Enumerate the advantages of a "Collegiate University." Can you suggest its disadvantages?
5. Explain: "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers."
6. Illustrate the writer's use of figurative language.
7. What do we learn of the author himself?
8. Indicate the signs that this passage is a spoken address.
9. Compare Earl Baldwin and Sir Francis Younghusband as moral teachers.
10. Give a summary of the thoughts of the author in their sequence.
11. What evidence is there of the author's being a great popular orator?
12. Prove that Baldwin has a deep love of England.

9. THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

Edward Morgan Forster was educated at Cambridge, and he is a Fellow of King's College. He has not written very much; but his restricted output has been of good quality.

He shows himself jealous of the old tradition in English writing, and not unduly led away by modern tendencies; modelling his style upon the English classics; achieving frequently the prose and balance of Addison and Goldsmith. His publications include: *The Celestial Omnibus: The Longest Journey: The Eternal Moment: Aspects of the Novel: A Passage to India* (which won for him the *Prix Femina Vie Heureuse* and from which this extract is taken): *Introduction to Crabbe: Abinger Harvest*.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Give a summary in your own words of the various incidents narrated by the author.
2. Describe (a) the altar in the courtyard; (b) the background of buildings and landscape; (c) the various persons in the assembly; and (d) the Rajah, and the part played by him in the ceremonies.
3. Give an account of the merrymaking after the Birth.
4. Attempt a character sketch of Professor Godbole.
5. Give a general analysis of the sentence:—"This way and that . . . share."
6. Explain the meaning of:—"the inner images evoked by Music;" and write an essay on *The Power of Music*.
7. Explain what the author means when he writes:—"in a land where all else was unpunctual."
8. Write a note on *Incongruity*, illustrating from the text.
9. Write an essay on *The Importance of Religion in Life*, and indicate what appear to be the points in common between the Hindu and the Christian religions.

NOTES

Malabar Hills: in the south of India.

Professor Narayan Godbole—An important character in the novel 'A Passage to India' from which this extract has been taken.

Tukaram.—The most famous saint of the *Maharashtra*.

Murky.—Faded, dark.

Scions.—Members of the ruling family.

Oleographs.—Prints in oil-colours.

Waltz.—Popular European dance.

Pince-nez.—Spectacles fixed firmly on the nose.

The birth-ceremony.—Of Lord Krishna, which is celebrated every year in the month of *Bhadra* (August).

Bethlehem.—The birth-place of King David and Jesus, is now an inwalled village of white stone houses, about six miles south of Jerusalem. It is famous for its Church of the Nativity, where Christ is said to have been born.

Gokul.—The birth-place of Lord Krishna. It is a sacred place of pilgrimage for Hindus.

King Kansa.—The legendary king of Mathura.

Herod.—The tyrannical king of Judea in whose reign Christ was born.

The murder of the Innocents.—The slaughter of whom in Bethlehem was ordered by King Herod.

The father and mother of the Lord.—Basudeo and Deoki, the sister of King Kansa, were the parents of Krishna.

Dr. Aziz.—Another important character in the novel “A Passage to India.”

Sedative.—A drug that soothes the patient.

Dairy maids of Brindaban.—Milkmaids of Brindaban with whom Lord Krishna played and danced.

The Pandava wars.—The wars which were fought between the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* and which are celebrated in the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharat*.

Mrs. Moore.—A minor character in the novel.

Telepathic appeal.—Appeal which one mind makes on another at a distance through emotional influence without communication through senses.

10. WAR IN THE AIR

Cecil Day Lewis (for biographical details consult No. 4). The two extracts (No. 4 and 10) are from *Sagittarius Rising*.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain the following:—*circus of Red Albatrosses*;
the land becomes an ordnance map; *a Hun in the*

sights : black crosses : wheels and breaks : zooms veering : the game of noughts and crosses : like a snipe over marshes : death plucked the spirits of the valiant.

2. Illustrate the author's fondness for *Alliteration*.
3. Collect from this passage and from No. 4 examples of colloquial English.
4. Describe the battle in the air, using your own words.
5. Make a list of the examples of *Simile* in this extract, and write a note on the reasons why a writer uses *Simile*.
6. Attempt a description of the landscape of the sky.
7. Write an essay on *The Cruel Waste of War*.

11. THE FUTURE OF JAPAN

Count Hermann Keyserling was born in Estonia in 1880, and educated in Geneva, Heidelberg and Vienna. He inherited estates in Russia, and lived there until the Revolution of 1918. Thereafter he founded the School of Wisdom at Darmstadt, and travelled widely, becoming celebrated as an interesting lecturer and deep thinker, fearless of public ridicule. His publications include:—*The Travel Diary of a Philosopher : Europe : America Set Free : The World in the Making : Problems of Personal Life : The Art of Life*.

His style is characterized by dignity and decorum, and is a proof that long words do not necessarily obscure the meaning. His wit is at times caustic, but it wounds to heal.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain the difference between Chinese and Japanese culture.
2. What has the author to say about Japanese and European patriotism? Write an essay upon patriotism.
3. Discuss the westernization of (a) *India*, (b) *China*, and (c) *Japan*. What are the dangers in Japan's becoming westernized?
4. Interpret the feeling for Nature of the Japanese.

5. What has the author to say about the Greek, the Frenchman, and the Englishman?
6. Explain the following:—*the moment or the epoch in which inner temperament and opportunities correspond to each other signifies the zenith of a nation : the inherited Samurai feeling : a renaissance of Shinto : a Raphael without hands.*
7. ‘His wit wounds to heal.’ Explain and illustrate.
8. Is there any difference between the English style of foreign writers like Count Keyserling and Dr. Axel Munthe on the one hand, and native English writers like J. B. Priestley and Peter Fleming on the other?
9. Write a note on the place of Japan among the nations.

12. THE SECOND ASCENT ON NANDA DEVI

Eric Earle Shipton, born in 1907, is a planter in Kenya, and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He was a member of the 1933 Everest Expedition, and his recreation is mountaineering.

He writes a simple and clear style, suitable for a straightforward narrative. The effect upon his mind and spirit of life among the high places is only too evident.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write an essay on *The Kindly Rays of the Sun*.
2. Describe the landscape of Nanda Devi.
3. Give some examples of the special vocabulary for mountaineering descriptions.
4. Explain the following:—*glacier tables : got the Primus going : cut out the reconnaissance : make a full-dress attempt : glacier lassitude : feeling very sorry for itself : the great black buttresses : taking shots to distant landmarks : still going strong : mobility is the keynote of efficiency and safety : we had become worked up : brought up all standing : so that was that : brought up short : the tedious processes of trial and error : their quota of memories.*
5. Trace the effect upon the mind of “the purity of the summit snows.”

6. Explain why the author speaks of a "wonderland."
7. Describe an avalanche.
8. Pick out some examples of colloquial English in the passage.
9. What is the mood of the true mountaineer?
10. Reproduce the descriptions of mountain sunrise and sunset.
11. Explain why "return to civilization was hard."

13. CRANKS

J. B. Priestley (for biographical details see No. 6). This essay is from *I for One*.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Distinguish clearly the *crank* from the *eccentric*, and give examples of each type.
2. Explain when and where there is no place for the crank.
3. Write an essay on each of the following subjects:—
(a) *food*, (b) *clothes*, (c) *Reformers*.
4. Write a note on temperance in food and drink.
5. Quote some examples of the author's humour. How does it compare with Huxley's?
6. Pick out some examples of figurative language in this essay.
7. Compare Priestley's style with Count Keyserling's.
8. Explain the following:—*raging pretorians of convention : whose corners remain unrubbed : comic relief : trim and razored formality : he possesses a panacea : reformers on the large scale : philosopher's stones : man's primal innocence : back to Eden : the land of Beulah : half-baked thinker : tilt at greater marks : times of spiritual twilight : crying Ducdame : he has fluttered away with the moths.*

14. WALKING TOURS

Robert Louis Stevenson was born at Edinburgh in 1850, and read Law at the University there. For reasons of health, however, he spent most of his comparatively short

life abroad, ultimately settling in Samoa, where he died in 1894. His works include *An Inland Voyage : Travels with a Donkey : Virginibus Puerisque : Memories and Portraits : A Child's Garden of Verses : Underwoods* : and the famous stories:—*Treasure Island : The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde : Kidnapped : The Master of Ballantirae : Catriona* : and the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*.

Stevenson delighted in the simple life, the open air, the sounds, colours, and sights of Nature. He loved the stars and the ever-changing skies: dawn and sunset: mountains and rivers and trees: the song of the birds and the ripple of the streams. In this connection readers will recall his two little poems, *The Vagabond*, and *I will make thee Brooches*. To the end of his days Stevenson retained a boyishness of spirit, and his writings reflect his optimism, friendliness, and easy camaraderie.

This essay stands out from the others in respect of style, and the quality of the expression. Stevenson had read widely in literature: he was familiar with the best prose models, such as Hazlitt's: and he was steeped in the language of these two magnificent specimens of perfect English expression—the *Pilgrims Progress* and the *Bible*. He had studied closely the whole problem of style, and by steady and constant practice and severe criticism of his efforts he made himself one of the greatest writers of English. There are few writers whose work has the sparkle and distinction of Stevenson's.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. How would you prefer to see the country—from cycle, motor car, or train, or from the road as you went 'hiking'?
2. Explain the following:—*the peace and spiritual reflection of the evening's rest : a sort of frost on his five wits : a double night-cap : mince in time with a girl : I wish to vegetate : like Christian : the lees of sleep : a coat of darkness : set the landscape to words : the confusion of your troubadour : he must have a winding road, the epicure : the great barons of the mind : the happy phlegm of the arrival : the*

much vaunted days before the flood : put him in Eden : the sincerest coincidence of sentiment : you taste Joviality : castles in the fire : pleasure trips into the Land of Thought and among the Hills of Vanity : in the eyes of the Philistine : your mind enthroned in the seventh circle of content.

3. What are the disadvantages of over-walking?
4. Give the arguments for and against going on a walking tour alone.
5. Examine the author's use of figures of speech.
6. Describe, after Stevenson, some different types of walker.
7. Illustrate the balance of Stevenson's sentences.
8. What does one mean by 'sparkle' in expression? Pick out some examples from this essay.
9. Compare Stevenson and Sir Francis Younghusband as stylists.
10. Illustrate the author's freshness and variety of expression.
11. Describe, after Stevenson, the feeling experienced at the end of a day's walk.
12. What are bivouacs, and what has the author to say about them?
13. Describe 'the best hour' of the walking tour.
14. Give some examples of Stevenson's love of nature.
15. "I have been happy thinking." Set down your own thoughts on this subject.
16. What do we learn about Stevenson himself from this essay?
17. Pick out some examples of Stevenson's gift of happy phrase-making.

15. ON KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

Aldous Leonard Huxley (for biographical details see No. 5). He is one of the most brilliant of living writers, combining in his work scientific precision and poetic insight. He has a vast knowledge of many subjects, and has been called "the encyclopædist of modern times." His scientific predilections may have dehumanized him slightly, which would explain his occasional ferocious satire. Huxley

appears to lead his readers to the conclusion that human emotion is a frailty rather than a virtue. The late G. K. Chesterton wrote of him:—

“ He is a very rare specimen, a real realist; in the sense that he is a realist at the expense of new things as well as old and ready to testify against revolt as well as against tyranny. In truth he is ready to testify against anything. . . . There return with Aldous Huxley something of the spirit of Jonathan Swift; the rocky sincerity, the splendid scorn of snobbery, especially intellectual snobbery, the virile impatience with unworthy praise; but, with the rest, something of that strange self-torturing itch of the sensitive man to insist on ugliness because of his love of beauty.”

This extract is from *Jesting Pilate*.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What do we learn here about the author's views?
2. Write a note on *Incongruity*, illustrating from this extract and from *The Birth of Krishna*.
3. Compare the outlook on Indian matters of Forster and Huxley.
4. What has the writer to say about an Indian audience?
5. What is said about “emotional agility,” and what does it mean?
6. Discuss ‘keeping up appearances’ in the West and East.
7. What does the author mean by the ‘spirituality’ of Indians? What does he say about it?
8. Explain and discuss:—“dogmas have often been the children of rites.”
9. Can you show that civilization is nothing but a series of conventions?
10. Illustrate from this essay the use of Satire in writing.
11. What does the author say about materialism?
12. Explain the following:—*Christmas number of the Graphic : a leprosy has attacked the stucco : enjoyed in shirt sleeves : Quaker principles : a network of sanitary plumbing : murdering time.*

16. THE GREAT THAMES FROST

Mrs. Virginia Woolf is the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen and one of the best-known novelists of to-day. Among her works are:—*The Voyage Out : Night and Day : The Common Reader : The Waves : The Years : Mrs. Dalloway : A Room of One's own : and Orlando*, from which the extract is taken.

Mrs. Woolf is a picturesque writer, with a style at times violent and overcharged. There is in her work a dry humour, as when in this extract she retails the most extravagant contemporary legends about the Great Frost in the most matter-of-fact way, giving them indeed an air of authenticity. She lacks tenderness, and is perhaps more concerned with decorative effect than human interest. Yet her sentences are full of colour; richly and fastidiously fashioned; with biblical breadth and simplicity; marked by sonorousness and the occasional paradox and hyperbole.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain the following:—*all struck stark : a kind of petrification : suffered the extremity of want : to curry favours : of singular transparency : suspended animation : the superstition of a lover : his apprehensive mind : his doom was sealed : some blind instinct : the river had gained its freedom : a table laid sumptuously : standing out to sea : the lot of her sex.*
2. Put into your own words the various extraordinary legends about the Great Frost. Compare them, if you can, with the equally extraordinary rumours about the Great Bihar Earth-quake.
3. Illustrate the 'wealth' of the writer's style, and compare it with Stevenson's.
4. Give some instances of 'dry humour.'
5. Enumerate some of the actual physical effects of the frost.
6. Describe in your own words the appearance of London at sunset during the frost.
7. Give some illustrations of the writer's love of colour.

8. Describe in your own words some of the gay events during the frost.
9. Give a brief description of the coming of the rain.
10. What were the results of the thaw?
11. Summarize the story of Orlando and the princes as it appears from the extract.
12. Write an essay on *Man's helplessness in the face of nature's fury*.
13. What lessons do you derive from this sketch?

17. ENCHANTMENT IN POETRY

Lascelles Abercrombie was born in the year 1881 and educated at Manchester. After a period as Professor of English Literature at London University he became Reader in English at Oxford, and he resides in Merton College. His literary works include *Thomas Hardy : The Epic*, *Principles of English Prosody : Theory of Art : Theory of Poetry : Progress in Literature* : and *The Idea of Great Poetry*, from which the extract is taken.

His attitude towards literature is that of the inspired critic. Always his style is polished, with everywhere a conscious brilliance of epigram and balance. One might fairly describe him as a romantic alike in his criticism and in his style.

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QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain clearly in your own words (1) incantation in poetry: (2) the magical phrase: and (3) extravagance of diction.
2. Quote briefly the author's examples of *incantation*.
3. "Poetry is the translation of experience into language." Examine this definition of poetry.
4. What, in the essayist's opinion, is "the poet's business?"
5. Examine the writer's definition of style.
6. Give some examples from this essay of the use of figurative language.

