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# CONTENTS

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## REMINISCENCES

|  |                     |    |
|--|---------------------|----|
| 'THIS MOST REMARKABLE<br>HUMAN FIGURE' | THE EARL OF HALIFAX | 3  |
| I FOLLOW AFTER                         | LAKSHMIBAI TILAK    | 10 |

## NATIONAL PROBLEMS

|   |                       |    |
|---|-----------------------|----|
| THE IMPORTANCE OF<br>TOMORROW               | JAWAHARLAL NEHRU      | 27 |
| THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF<br>A RURAL SOCIETY | J. R. D. TATA         | 34 |
| THE BHOODAN MOVEMENT                        | THE TIMES             | 52 |
| EVOLUTION IN INDIA                          | VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT | 57 |

## ESSAYS

|           |                |    |
|-----------|----------------|----|
| VULGARITY | ALDOUS HUXLEY  | 65 |
| ROYALTY   | VIRGINIA WOOLF | 70 |

## THE SCIENTIFIC QUEST

|  |                     |    |
|--|---------------------|----|
| THE TRAGIC NUPTIALS                          | MAURICE MAETERLINCK | 79 |
| THE PRESENT CONCEPT OF<br>THE PHYSICAL WORLD | H. J. BHABHA        | 86 |

## SHORT STORIES

|                        |               |     |
|------------------------|---------------|-----|
| THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE  | HENRY JAMES   | 101 |
| THE STORY OF THE SIREN | E. M. FORSTER | 120 |

*HIGHER JOURNALISM*

|                     |                   |     |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----|
| AGAINST ALL ODDS    | ADIB              | 133 |
| LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR | P. M. S. BLACKETT | 138 |

*ON POETS AND POETRY*

|                      |                  |     |
|----------------------|------------------|-----|
| IQBAL-DAY MUSHAIRA   | S. RADHAKRISHNAN | 151 |
| THE REST WAS SILENCE | BORIS FORD       | 155 |
| NOTES                |                  | 175 |

## REMINISCENCES

Oh that my words were written! oh that they  
were printed in a book. From *Job*

\*

He chose to work to the end as he had worked  
through life, serving the Community which was  
to him second family and home, and giving  
without stint from a rich store of simple good-  
ness and love to the numbers who turned to him  
for guidance and help.

From *Fulness of Days*—The Earl of Halifax

\*

Is there no play  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour  
From *The Midsummer Night's Dream*  
—William Shakespeare

\*

Well, here's my comfort.  
From *The Tempest*—William Shakespeare



*'THIS MOST REMARKABLE  
HUMAN FIGURE'*

*THE EARL OF HALIFAX*

---

I DO not recall any outstanding feature or event in this phase of the civil disobedience struggle that has not been adequately treated in the official records. It lasted for nearly a year, and was finally closed by the conversations that I had with Mr Gandhi in February 1931, culminating in our agreement of 4 March. Apart from the conclusions reached, which received full publicity at the time, these conversations gave me an opportunity such as I could never otherwise have had, and for which I shall always be thankful, of knowing Mr Gandhi. Since the tragedy of his assassination so much has been spoken and written of the qualities in him which seemed to the particular observer to be pre-eminent, that every country of the world has become to a great extent familiar with this most remarkable human figure. As with all great men, different aspects stand out for different people. That which gave him his exceptional position in India was something different from that which won for him the admiration of friends in Western countries, which is another way of saying that the man himself was larger than any of the attempts made to paint his portrait. There was a directness about him which was singularly winning, but this could be accompanied by a subtlety of intellectual process which could sometimes be disconcerting. To appreciate what was passing in his mind it was necessary, if not to start from the same point, at least to understand very clearly what was the starting point for him; and this was nearly always very human and very simple.

I remember when I first went to India talking about him to C. F. Andrews who, I imagine, was closer to him than any other European. He said, as indeed was clear when it came to the Round Table Conference, that Mr Gandhi cared little for constitutions and constitutional forms. What he was concerned with was the human problem of how the Indian poor lived. Constitutional reform was important and necessary for the development of India's personality and self-respect; but what really mattered were the things that affected the daily lives of the millions of his fellow countrymen—salt, opium, cottage industries, and the like. I have no doubt this was true, and though it was easy to smile at the devotion of Mr Gandhi to the spinning wheel, while Congress was largely dependent for its funds upon the generosity of wealthy Indian mill-owners, the wheel none-the-less stood for something fundamental in his philosophy of life. He was the natural knight-errant, fighting always the battle of the weak against suffering and what he judged injustice. The claims of Indians in South Africa, the treatment of Indian labourers in the indigo fields of India, the thousands rendered homeless by the floods of Orissa, and above everything the suffering arising from communal hatreds—all these were in turn a battlefield on which he fought with all his strength for what to him was the cause of humanity and right.

As I look back upon the talks that I had with him in Delhi in the spring of 1931, two or three things in our conversations stand out in my recollection. They have always seemed to me a better interpretation of his mind and method than anything else, as showing the way that idealist and realist could meet. About the second day of our meeting, I asked him whether it would be agreeable to him if I asked Mr Emerson, the Secretary in the Home Department, to sit in with us. I pointed out that he would know the answers to a good many of the detailed queries

that Mr Gandhi might be raising, and that we should therefore get on more quickly than if I took notes and could only get the answers for him at a later meeting. He quickly concurred, saying, 'I shall be glad to meet Mr Emerson. He must be a very cruel man to the poor people'. This was because Emerson's signature as Home Secretary appeared on the various ordinances that I as Governor-General had been obliged to issue in connexion with the campaign of civil disobedience. So Emerson duly sat in, and the contrast between the broad-shouldered, robust, Briton and the small, fragile, Mr Gandhi was sharp. Soon however confidence was established, and after Mr Gandhi and I had been arguing about the wording of some agreement we had reached, he would say, 'I think we might leave this to Mr Emerson. He is a very fair man.' The Indian Civil Service can seldom have received a more signal or unexpected testimonial.

On another occasion he was demanding, as part of the arrangement to be made on the cessation of civil disobedience, an inquiry into the actions of the police over the last twelve months. I resisted this on various grounds, pointing out to him among other arguments that I had no doubt the police, like everybody else, had made mistakes, and I was very sorry about it, but that it was quite futile to attempt twelve months later to get accurate information of what might have passed in some local brawl or minor riot. Everybody would produce evidence in support of what they were setting out to prove; there would be no conceivable means of testing its accuracy; and all that we should achieve would be to exacerbate tempers on both sides. This did not satisfy him at all, and we argued the point for two or three days. Finally, I said that I would tell him the main reason why I could not give him what he wanted. I had no guarantee that he might not start civil disobedience again, and if and when he did, I

wanted the police to have their tails up and not down. Whereupon his face lit up and he said, 'Ah, now Your Excellency treats me like General Smuts treated me in South Africa. You do not deny that I have an equitable claim, but you advance unanswerable reasons from the point of view of Government why you cannot meet it. I drop the demand.'

The third incident was of the same date, and illustrates, if I was correctly informed, the quality both of Mr Gandhi's courage and of his sense of honour. After we had made our so-called Irwin-Gandhi pact, he came to me the next morning and said that he wished to talk about another matter. He was just going off to the meeting of the Congress at Karachi, which he hoped would ratify our agreement, and he wished to appeal for the life of a young man called Bhagat Singh, who had been recently condemned to death for various terrorist crimes. He was himself opposed to capital punishment, but that was not now in debate. If the young man was hanged, said Mr Gandhi, there was a likelihood that he would become a national martyr and the general atmosphere would be seriously prejudiced. I told him that, while I quite appreciated his feeling in the matter, I also was not concerned with the merits or demerits of capital punishment, since my only duty was to work the law as I understood it. On that basis, I could not conceive anyone who had more thoroughly deserved capital punishment than Bhagat Singh. Moreover, Mr Gandhi's plea for him was made at a particularly unfortunate moment, for it so happened that on the previous evening I had received his appeal for a reprieve, which I had felt bound to reject, and he was accordingly due to be hanged on Saturday morning (the day of our conversation being, if I remember rightly, Thursday). Mr Gandhi would be getting to Karachi for the meeting of Congress in the afternoon or evening of

Saturday after the news would have come through, and the coincidence of date from his point of view could therefore hardly be more difficult.

Mr Gandhi said that he greatly feared, unless I could do something about it, the effect would be to destroy our pact. I said I should regret that no less than he, but it would be clear to him there were only three possible courses. The first was to do nothing and let the execution proceed, the second was to change the order and grant Bhagat Singh a reprieve, the third was to hold up any decision till after the Congress meeting was well over. I told him that I thought he would agree that it was impossible for me from my point of view to grant him his reprieve, and that merely to postpone decision and encourage people to think that there was such a chance of remission was not straightforward or honest. The first course alone, therefore, was possible in spite of all its attendant difficulties. Mr Gandhi thought for a moment, and then said, 'Would Your Excellency see any objection to my saying that I pleaded for the young man's life?' I said that I saw none, if he would also add that from my point of view he did not see what other course I could have taken. He thought for a moment, then finally agreed, and on that basis went off to Karachi. There it happened much as anticipated; the news had come through, many of the crowd were in a highly emotional state, and I was told afterwards that he was quite roughly received. But when he had opportunity he spoke in the sense agreed between us.

The episodes I have quoted will suffice to show on the personal side what reason I had to value his friendship, and I can think of no person whose undertaking to respect a confidence I should ever have been more ready to accept than his. Measured by human standards, the abrupt

cutting short of his life was a tragic deprivation for the country that he loved.

I may add one other recollection to the record of some dramatic days. A few hours after we had reached our agreement, he came back, rather depressed, saying that Jawaharlal Nehru was unhappy about it, and thought that he (Mr Gandhi) had unwittingly sold India. I exhorted him not to let this worry him unduly, as I had no doubt that very soon I should be getting cables from England, telling me that in Churchill's opinion I had sold Great Britain. Such double criticism would suggest that what we had done was about right. This cheered him, and so in fact it turned out. The critics indeed were lonely voices, and both in India and Great Britain judgement was almost unanimous in the other sense. Dimly, inarticulately, unconsciously, the instinct of the British people was as usual guiding them wisely. Though they might not have been able to put it into words, they realized that the choice lay between power, which had served us well from the days of Clive, and influence which, if we could use it aright in the changed conditions of the twentieth century, would serve us better. And they knew that, of the two, influence was the more securely founded and the more enduring.

A few weeks later we left India; after receiving innumerable kindly messages of farewell, which showed us, if we had not realized it before, how many and how warm-hearted were our friends in every part of that great land. But by no one of them were we more deeply touched than by a letter from over a hundred young British residents, who described themselves as 'the younger generation of non-official Europeans in Bombay' and were typical of the British community, which would be called upon to face the new conditions of the future in India. I quote a few sentences of their communication, '. . . Some of us may

have twenty or even thirty years' service to India before us. To us falls the duty of co-operating with Indians in building up a new India. We shall live in an atmosphere foreign to that in which the older generation of Europeans have done their work. The Europeans who are soon to offer a helping hand are men like ourselves who have not yet reached the age of thirty-five. We believe that the burden which your patient statecraft places upon our shoulders is one which no adventurous Englishman would wish to cast down . . .'

It is that spirit which has enabled, and will continue to enable, the British race to give service to the world.

\*

# I FOLLOW AFTER

LAKSHMIBAI TILAK

---

I DESIRED to learn something. Not that I would be a learned scholar as Tilak wished, but I wanted to learn something which would be useful in an emergency.

Dr Julia Bissell was a most kindly doctor, her Marathi was exactly like our own. One would have thought a Brahman woman was speaking. We were great friends, and with her encouragement I decided to learn nursing. I did a little under her, and then her leave to America fell due. She left but in her place came two young, enthusiastic doctors, Dr Beals and Dr Harding.

As soon as Dr Harding arrived in Nagar, he started a class for nurses. I could not read or write even plain Marathi; what, then, of English? My courage however was great. I went and requested Dr Harding to give me a nurse's training. I was Tilak's wife. I must be clever. In this belief the doctor consented at once. The class was in full swing. Taking my pencil and note-book I entered. Because one has a pencil and note-book in hand, will they of themselves begin to move? By the time I had with difficulty written two letters, he had finished two lines. My two lines being finished, he had covered two paragraphs. Gradually I began to write up all the lectures with the help of another student after the class. Dr Harding taught in English. To say this is as good as to say my studies were in a truly happy state! The ways of God are fathomless. A three-monthly examination was held and I passed? Or perhaps the doctor just passed me!

From the first I had a passion for nursing. I always had a large store of Indian medicines by me, and did I ever

meet a fellow enthusiast we always exchanged prescriptions. In this way my knowledge of quack medicines had grown; my knowledge of country medicines was of the slightest. To these was now added English medical teaching, and not merely that of books. My knowledge was never bound in a volume, but was for ever emerging to take the air. In this way I experimented one day on Tara's eyes.

We had with us then a woman saved from the famine, Sagunabai by name, and just like her name she was in temperament also virtuous. We were supporting and clothing her and her eight-year-old daughter. Beyond that we gave her eight annas a month pay for her work.

Tara had conjunctivitis. She was always complaining about it. I was a nurse who had passed the first examination. Making Sagunabai hold back the lids of her eyes I rubbed them vigorously with copper sulphate. Tara roared and made a terrible commotion. Tilak came home. He extolled my wisdom!

'Were you a doctor? If the child loses her sight will you lead her about by the hand?'

I thought, 'God strike me blind, but may the child's eyes be saved!' It was eight o'clock in the morning when I applied my medical science, and at five o'clock in the evening Tara still could not open her eyes. Now indeed my heart sank. Tilak was out, but on his return, he tried to open her eyes and look at them. A drop of blood welled up. Tilak had spoken the truth, and her sight was gone! Now what could be done?

Getting some cotton wool I forced open her eyes, and began to wash them with boric lotion. Lo, something like a tamarind seed fell out. That had done it! Her eye had fallen out! Thinking I had better at least see the other eye, I began to wash it, when lo, something fell out of it too. The dish rattled. Tara opened her eyes, and looked in that direction. My happiness could not be con-

tained in heaven itself. Her eyes were all right; the granulations had loosened and come away.

Tilak was overjoyed, but Tara was not yet well, and for many days she had low fever.

There was a second outbreak of plague in Nagar. The appearance of rats was like a written proclamation and inoculations were begun at once. A young man, Peter Vitthal Hiwale, who was staying with us, returned to his own village. People began to leave Nagar. Tilak took Dattu away to a man in Rahuri.

Tara was still ill and Dr Harding was brought to see her. Examining her he said there was no cause for anxiety as the fever was an ordinary one.

I said, 'But Doctor what are these lumps?' He looked at them and 'Children always have them,' he said.

'It is not plague?'

'No', he replied, 'but all of you should be inoculated.'

Tilak had gone to Rahuri to see Dattu. He disapproved of inoculation. He had been asked three or four times, and always replied, that he would not be done. That was the reason why I sent Dattu away. Before setting off for Rahuri, Tilak said to me, 'I purposely took Dattu to Rahuri. The Baby is not to be inoculated in my absence, and I will not be. If you yourself like to be done, I do not object.'

Daya had come to Nagar for a few days. A letter came from Sant Kaka, a Brahman who had recently become Christian, saying he had plague, and we were to send him twenty-five rupees the moment the letter arrived.

Tilak was away, and as usual I had no money by me. I put the letter aside, and Daya, Sagunabai, her daughter and I all went to Dr Harding and were inoculated in Tilak's absence. Having finished the inoculations, Dr Harding left for Vadala to do some operation. Tilak returned from Rahuri and found Sant Kaka's letter. At

once he sold Tara's ornaments and sent the money by wire.

While operating at Vadala, Dr Harding got blood poisoning, and the news spread in a flash all round Nagar. Inoculation was new. The people were not used to it. All our arms were swollen and we all had fever, even Tara who had not been done. She was living amongst us and having all her meals with us.

One day a plague rat ran over her bed and died there beside her pillow. Everyone in the house was ill and Tara but a baby. The servant engaged to help was new. It was a fine state of affairs. At this very moment a message came from Dr Harding saying he had called all the students in his class to see him. I could not leave Tara to go, yet my heart was drawn to this doctor who was so dangerously ill. In the end, leaving Tara to the care of Daya and Sagunabai I set off. It was our last meeting with Dr Harding and seeing us all gathered together he was filled with joy and said, 'I am about to leave you. My race is finished. Do not give up your studies. This is great work. You have all done well and in the future will continue to do so.' He had high fever, so finally he said, 'Good-bye.' Not one of us answered his 'Good-bye.' We said, 'Sahib what shall we do?'

'Pray.'

So saying he turned his back to us. His wife was at hand, but there was no one else. She was quite young and soon to have a baby.

'If you have need of anything,' we said to her, 'call us.' From there we went to the Church and prayed before going home.

As soon as I reached home, Sagunabai said, 'Tara is most restless. She says, "Put on my best clothes and take me to Church".'

I looked at her and found she had high fever, and she could not reply to a question. Tilak began to scold

Sagunabai, 'You are always taking her out. That is why she has got fever. If anything happens now, can you give my daughter back to me?'

Poor Sagunabai sat still with never a word. She knew his ways.

Our next door neighbour was Nanaji Bhonsle, so we sent for him and administered the Indian remedy he suggested. All night long we sat with the unconscious child on our knees. In the morning we sent a servant for Dr Sorabji and he, standing at a distance said, 'There is no need to be afraid. I shall send some medicine.'

Then came the news that Dr Harding had died. Within six months how dear he had become to all the people of the town of every caste and religion could be seen from the huge crowd that attended his funeral.

All day long it was difficult to secure tongas in the town. Tilak had gone to the funeral. I too was most anxious to go but Tara began to scream so wildly it was not possible for me to go out. The doctor had examined the patient as described. All were suffering from sore arms. The servant sent for the medicine had betaken himself off, and there was absolutely no money in the house. Sending for Nanaji Bhonsle from next door I gave him a gold ring to sell. He came back and said, 'All the shops are shut.'

Anyone he had asked had replied, 'Are we to buy gold or care for our own lives of gold?' I did not know what to do next. 'The lizard's race to the wall was finished.'

The boys came from the boarding school to do the grinding, and we did the cooking as best as we could with one hand. We did not know exactly what was wrong with Tara.

Just then Dr Umrao arrived, and as soon as he saw her he said, 'It is plague.' When Tilak came in at twelve o'clock and heard the news, he said, 'We had better leave before anyone tells us to go.' We prayed, then Tilak said,

‘God must have some special plan.’ We were consumed with anxiety. There was neither money in the house nor was it possible to borrow from Dr Hume that day.

Tilak went over to Dr Harding’s bungalow again. We were all ill. Tara’s shrieks rose without limit. No money to hire a conveyance, and no one to send to look for one! At that moment a man appeared walking smartly past the gate. Everyone had heard that Tara had plague so no one came near us. I had lent this man three rupees at one time. I ran to the wall of the compound and stopped him. I did not ask him in, because he did not want to come; that was obvious from his behaviour. When I asked for my three rupees like a flash he presented me with a five-rupee note and vanished. What else did I desire? People were terrified of plague in those days.

I vacated our house like someone going to another town for a change of air. I filled the cart with everything, from baskets to grinding stone, and sent it off to the segregation camp. By the time this was accomplished it was four o’clock. Sagunabai was sent to fetch a tonga but could not get one. They were all held up at Dr Harding’s funeral. To add to this the cart with all our things still in it returned to us. No one was allowed to have so much stuff in the camp. Taking out as little as possible I sent the remainder back again, but everything had had to be unpacked, rearranged and packed again. Night fell. Tilak having gone on ahead had lit a lamp and was sitting writing something. We were waiting for the carts.

‘The servant has run away,’ I said to Sagunabai. ‘If you are afraid you can go too.’

‘Bai,’ she said, ‘no one escapes death. I cannot forget you who gave me and my daughter refuge during the famine. How can I desert you?’ How great a faith had this unlettered woman!

When the boys we had looked after heard of our diffi-

culty, they said, 'We must run and help them in their trouble. During the famine they gave us the food out of their very mouths.'

Having so decided they went to their housemaster for permission. He replied, 'What you want to do is right. There is no doubt about that. But in such circumstances I cannot give you leave to go. Ask your Principal tomorrow.'

'Their need is today,' the boys replied. 'What use is there in asking him tomorrow?'

'Do as you like,' said the master, 'only I do not give you permission.'

'It does not matter even if we are not taken back into school,' the boys retorted, 'we are going.' And so saying they set out to render us assistance.

'Hallo boys! Why have you come?'

'To help you.'

'And if you are turned out of school tomorrow?'

'God is with us.'

'Very well then, go and bring us a tonga, or a cart.'

One brought a bullock cart, having promised that no one with plague should sit in it.

With the cool air Tara began to speak. The driver believed that the plague patient had gone on ahead. She conversed with all the boys calling them by name. I began to think we were taking her away unnecessarily, she was chattering so sensibly. She would say something and the boys would reply; and in this way we proceeded.

It was a pitch-dark night and we had no lantern. The bumping of the cart, the babbling of the child, and the beating of my heart furnished the accompaniment for our journey, till out of the humps and hollows, by the aid of the light of a lamp before us, we reached the camp. Tilak, in the act of writing arose out of a hut, and came forward to greet us.

‘We have been allocated three huts, one for cooking, one for Tara and one where I can sit and write,’ he said.

The doctor came and examined Tara. She had a temperature of 105 degrees.

‘You must not stay near the child,’ he said. ‘You will get plague. This woman will sit beside her.’

‘Why?’ I said. ‘Who was Tara sitting near when she got plague? And even though I sit elsewhere, why should I not get it? And if I am to leave her and sit elsewhere, why should this paid woman stay with her?’ The doctor remained silent.

The boys and Daya left. In one hut were myself, Sagunabai and Tara. Tilak brought us all something to eat, but what meat and drink! It was the month of November and bitterly cold. We were given left over *jowari* bread from the morning and water cold as ice from an earthen pitcher. My mind was filled with every kind of anxiety. Two rupees had been paid for the cart. There was not a farthing left.

Both at the top and bottom of the walls of the hut there was a hand’s breadth left open. Why? For ventilation! The huts were all built of corrugated iron. At night they were so cold that everyone inside was likely to be frozen to death. On three sides were ill people. They groaned, the corrugated iron rattled, then some delirious patient would climb over the iron walls, and drop with a thud into the adjoining room. There were no floors; one’s feet were bruised with stones and gravel; there was no food for one’s stomach, and no sleep for one’s eyes.

Tara was still crying out. I thought to myself, if there were a Hades anywhere it was here. The place was frightful, the night was frightful, the conditions all round about were frightful, and the state of one’s mind became frightful. With the patients their relatives too were crying and quarrelling. ‘Hi you! Your man is making too

much noise. Keep him quiet. Our patient has just closed his eyes now.' Some were really ill, and some just shouting in terror.

The next day when the Doctor came round I said to him, 'Doctor, at night you go home and sleep soundly, but have you any conception of what goes on here?' I described the whole scene to him, and suggested he should issue some sleeping mixtures. From that day, he made some change in the medicine, and the nights began to pass more quietly. The dispensary was on the spot. The medicine was Belladonna. The medicine, the thermometer and the medicine glass were common to all, and only I kept separate ones for Tara, and would go myself to bring the medicine. There was a charcoal brazier in the hut which enabled me to foment her with warm clothes. Either Sagunabai or I sat all the time with her on our knees. The patients and their relatives with them received rations for ten days. We got uncooked rice and fuel, and Daya did the cooking. There were no less than ten of us, and she did the cooking for the whole group all by herself. No one was allowed to come and see us, but the boys, watching that there was no one about would quietly come and go through the wire-fence to meet us.

Tilak's reading, writing and prayers were continued as usual. He used to say, 'Oh God, I do not as yet see why Thou hast brought this calamity upon us. I only know that there must be some purpose of Thine in it. Give me the wisdom to understand Thy will. If Thou didst not have some plan, then why should not one of us have had plague rather than this little child.'

Tilak had not been inoculated, but the Doctor now forced him to be done. It went very hardly with him and he endured considerable pain.

At first there were no proper arrangements in the camp at all. Ten per cent of the patients survived. On the

fourteenth day the Civil Surgeon and another doctor came, and examining Tara said there was no hope.

Tilak burst out with, 'God gave us a daughter. We hoped she would be educated like Anandibai Joshi and God took her away. Now this!' Sagunabai went apart and sat and cried. She was very attached to Tara, and for all these days she had helped me to nurse her.

It was always my way to provide in plenty. Were clothes to be made, I made them for a growing body. Did I set out to hunt a jackal, I prepared to slay a tiger. When we left home I brought with us fully two pounds of flour of linseed, castor oil, charcoal and many other such things as might be useful. Now I abandoned hope. For ten to fifteen days the child had never touched the floor. Today I laid her down. She had become very quiet. The brazier was alight. I boiled the linseed flour and applied a poultice over her throat, chest and abdomen. Warming some castor oil, milk and sugar together I poured it somehow down her throat. I placed the brazier near her feet. I wrapped her up well in a blanket, and then said to her, 'Now die if you like. Let me not think that I have left anything undone.'

Leaving her alone and closing the door behind me, I went far out into the country. When I was quite alone I knelt down, and cried aloud to God in prayer, 'Oh God, our Father, let the child live. She is not mine; she is Thine. Thou gavest her to me, and I have cared for her. If it be Thy will take her away. If she recovers I shall nurse the plague patients here.'

So saying I lifted up my voice and wept my heart out. After a little while I returned. I had no courage to open the door of the room. I had never before knelt and prayed as I had just done. My heart was quivering. With a great effort I opened the door and the moment it was open, Tara called to me, 'Mama, where were you?'

Where is Papa?' I was so relieved, I felt like taking her up, but reminding myself at once that it might have a bad effect on her heart, I closed the door and fled to Tilak's hut.

Tilak and a group of other people were sitting praying. When he saw me, he thought I had come to bring the news of her end. I said to him, laughing, 'Baby is asking for you.' He could not believe it. He thought my laughter and speech were madness. I was laughing hysterically, and saying over and over again, 'Baby is asking for you.' At last we went together to Tara's hut. As soon as she saw him she said, 'Why did you go and leave me, Papa? Bring me some mangoes.'

Tilak gave the boys a rupee, and sent them to the market for some oranges. There was absolutely nothing to be had there. With the greatest difficulty they found five or six wizened little runts. When the Doctor came the next day he was most astonished. We left the hut eighteen days after our arrival.

The answer Tilak received to his question, 'Why has God allowed Tara to have plague?' was as follows:

In the plague camp one day, there was an argument about the milk. Hearing voices raised Tilak went over to the spot. 'Let me see the note-book,' he said. He received the reply, 'Saheb, you would not understand it.' Therewith Tilak snatched the book, and began to examine it. The figure entered was large, and the milk before him but little. Tilak returned to me to say he had received the answer to his prayer. He now understood why Tara had got plague. There were not enough trustworthy men in the place. It was a case of one man being set over another to watch him from the lowest paid to the highest. An excellent arrangement for the patients! Were the food and drink not of the worst, how then were they to

be exterminated? The milk entered in the account was three times the amount delivered.

‘I have made a resolution,’ said Tilak, ‘that I shall stay here, and render whatever service I can to those patients. Are you ready?’

‘Yes, I am ready.’ I replied.

God on that occasion gave us very great courage and big hearts. He gave us the mind of one who fears no disease, who cares not what filthy work he does, the very mind of a sweeper! That which even a mother will tire of doing, a sweeper will do, daily for us his ungrateful brethren.

With all our heart we two set to work.

A hut was built for us near the camp, but now the ration of uncooked rice and fuel was stopped. Water had to be brought by the water-carrier. The boys were taken back by the Principal of the school, and Sagunabai went to see her daughter at her own village. When she left, Tilak gave her a sari and a blouse, and four rupees for her expenses. Her salary of eight annas was raised to two rupees, and four months’ leave granted on full pay.

There were only four of us left in our family now, but, all against my will, I took in two children. The mothers of both of them had succumbed to plague in the camp. Tilak and I did whatever work fell to be done for the plague patients. We looked after their food and drink and medicines. We washed their faces and gave them sponge baths, and when the time came we also played scavenger. People of every religion and every caste were there, and on hearing that we were working among them, the fear of the camp became less, and more and more plague patients began to come. Shidikshet made and sent us warm clothes. We had not asked for these. He sent them of his own accord.

In the camp there was a man of *Teli* caste, who was

put under lock and key. No one had courage so much as to go and give him a drink of water. As soon as we undertook the responsibility we introduced a new nurse. She was a Christian, and put her whole heart into the work. On the first day after she arrived, Jaibai and I began to go towards the *Teli's* hut, only to find a guard at the door.

'Do not go in Bai,' he said, 'this man is positively dangerous.'

'Let him be dangerous or anything else,' we said, 'it is our duty to give him milk and medicine. Unlock the door.'

'Be careful, won't you? He may attack you.'

And truly, as soon as the door was opened he leaped upon us. As he approached I struck him violently in the face. Who knows what happened to him, for he immediately bowed himself at my feet, and being ordered to take his milk he took it without a word. He drank his medicine up at once too.

There was another man, Nana, the goldsmith. He used to say, 'Mother only let me get better and I shall clothe you in gold. We are born and bred goldsmiths. Our one hand is of gold and the other of silver.'

'All right, my son,' I would reply, 'array me in gold; but in the meantime you only make me wash down the walls you have painted with another kind of gold.'

In time of need servants can take advantage. One day all the sweepers suddenly struck work for higher pay. They sat with folded hands. For two days Tilak and I did all the scavenger's work. It was the goldsmith who had trained us up for it. On the third day corpses had to be removed. Tilak girded up his loins. I tucked in the loose end of my sari. We lifted two and placed them in the cart. At last the sweepers were abashed. They

came running and said, 'Saheb, flog our backs, but not our stomachs.'

'I have never said you should receive no more salary!' said Tilak, 'only that in such a crisis it does not do credit to your humanity for you to put such people into a predicament. We shall certainly endeavour to procure a rise in salary for you. It is not right that you should cause obstruction when these, your brothers, are dying. I shall now do what I can about your pay, but if ever afterwards you should repeat this, understand that you get no more help from me.'

When Tilak first undertook the service of the plague-stricken patients, some people said that his daughter's plague had proved a profitable thing for him, that he was raking in easy money. Others said, 'See how he labours for the poor.' Tilak himself said:

The world's a game,  
With praise and blame  
To bait the trap  
On Folly's lap  
The trap touch not;  
For praise laugh not;  
Weep not for blame;  
Weep not for blame.

The plague-stricken inmates began to get better. The death-rate came down to ten per cent. Everyone's photograph was taken. The Civil Surgeon gave Tilak a certificate, whereupon he said, 'What do I want with a certificate?' But the Civil Surgeon forced it upon him, expressing at the same time great gratitude. Tilak put it into a file for letters, but it ended its days somewhere among the waste papers.

After two months it was decided to go to Mahabaleshwar for Tara's sake. Dattu was at Rahuri so we told him to meet us at Nagar station. Houshi and Daya we would see in Poona. We set off taking with us Anand, one of our twenty-two boys, and also Peter. Of the two new

babies we had taken in, one was returned to her father when we left the camp, and God took the other. Though Tilak had cared for so many children it was for one purpose only—that they might be saved from destitution, and brought up properly. He never made the children a pretext for making money out of anyone, nor ever kept anyone's child against their will. He used to say, 'If we take the children we must support them. It is no use ruining their career.'

In all Tilak's life I found one constant factor, he cared neither for praise nor blame in the pursuit of his duty; he thought absolutely nothing of fame. Saying, 'Write my life as it has been,' he would add 'in no wise cover up my faults.' One thing more was, that his life, so filled with high ideals, had an immediate effect upon other people; otherwise it would have been impossible for Narayanrao Gokhale's daughter to be ready to undertake cheerfully and enthusiastically the work of a sweeper. Had not my father for a whole life-time scrubbed and washed himself and all his household, because he imagined a mere drop of water from a low-caste Mahar's mouth had touched his body. Would I, this father's daughter, ever eat food from the sweeper's house at Wai, or in a plague hospital run to do work esteemed of the lowest?

If there be anything in that to be praised, then it is Tilak who must be praised. He was in these things my teacher. He led the way, and my part was only to run boldly along it with my eyes shut. If any portion of the credit be due to me, it is merely in that without wavering I went forward fearlessly in the trail he had blazed. So!

## NATIONAL PROBLEMS

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and  
puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong  
man after sleep, and shaking her invincible  
locks.

From *Aeropagitica*—John Milton

\*

A Nation spoke to a Nation.

From *Our Lady of the Snows*

—Rudyard Kipling

\*

They shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks; nation  
shall not lift sword against nation, neither  
shall they learn war any more.

From *Isaiah*



# THE IMPORTANCE OF TOMORROW

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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IN the course of the last few months<sup>1</sup>, the Planning Commission has been specially charged with considering various problems, not the details of administration but rather the basic problems, including economic problems and anything that goes towards the building up of a nation's economy. The Planning Commission, with which I have the honour of being associated, has come up, in the course of its discussions, against many basic difficulties. . . . What I wish the House to consider at the moment is that the kinds of problems we have to face here are, *mutatis mutandis*, problems common to many countries in the world today. Whether you call these countries capitalist or socialist or communist, the problem is the same: the world has to face certain difficulties due to certain basic causes. I imagine there are several ways of solving them. It is not enough for this House or for this Government to dispose of the solution of the problem by saying that we shall follow the capitalist way or the way of private enterprise or the socialist or the communist way. If you say that, all that you mean is that you shall adopt a certain attitude in understanding and in trying to find a solution to that problem. That is all you mean. You do not solve the problem by passing a decree or a law to the effect that we should have socialism or nationalization or the taxation of the rich. By all means, tax anybody who can bear it; tax him as hard as you like. Certainly, let us have a socialist outlook; let

<sup>1</sup> Speech in Parliament, New Delhi, 14 March 1951.

us go towards the socialization of our means of production, etc. We can do that but it is not a solution; nor is it a constructive suggestion as to how the solution can be reached. Therefore, a mere attitude is not enough. You have to do much more and find out what precisely are the steps that should be taken. That is the way the Planning Commission is trying to work and that is the way, I hope, when its report comes before it, this House will consider it.

A government is apt to go wrong, because it is overburdened with pressing problems and has little time to think in a co-ordinated and integrated way. It tries to, of course. But, generally, every department of the Government is overburdened and that again is a difficulty common to all Governments the wide world over. We are facing crisis after crisis—domestic and international—and just cannot think calmly of the future. Therefore, it is quite necessary that there should be people who are not overburdened by the problems of the day and who can think in an integrated way of the steps that should be taken. That is what the Planning Commission is for; it is working in close co-operation with the Government, thinking of these problems in this manner, offering suggestions, proposals and recommendations which the Government and the Legislature can consider and give effect to, if they so choose. Both in this House and outside, I have often been criticized for my doings and those of my Government. I think it is always good to try and discover one's failings. And, obviously, there are failings. It is quite absurd for any one to say that this Government has not made mistakes and will not make mistakes. We must be careful and introspective, we must correct our errors and welcome healthy criticism. But if you want a complete picture of what is happening, you have to see both the credit side and the debit side. You have to remember

how far both these sides are governed by factors beyond our control. They are big factors that affect the whole world. If there is a world war, it may be that this Government, this House and this country are not responsible for it; it may be that we have tried to avoid it, yet we will be affected by it. We won't be able to escape the consequences of that war, even though we may try to keep out of it, as I hope we will. Similarly, there may be so many other factors that affect us and our achievements and failures, that detract from our achievements and exaggerate our failures. The thought of these factors has often distressed me but at no time have I had a feeling of frustration. I do not personally like the word frustration to be used as often as it is. A person, who sees frustration in another, usually has it in his own mind and heart and he conveys that sense to the other person, too. When I begin to experience that feeling of sheer frustration in my work, I shall cease to have any value for this Government, because the spirit that makes one work, the vision that draws one on would cease and vanish. Then I would become a mere head and I do not think I could be of much use to this Government or to the House then.

There is another thing I should like the House to think about. Shall we not also think of our tomorrows sometimes? Or must we invariably lose ourselves in our todays? I cannot ignore today, obviously. But so far as I am concerned, I must confess to you that the morrow is slightly more important to me than today. If we are thinking in terms of progress, we have to build for a tomorrow that will make progress possible; and we have to build on a firm foundation, even though the laying of that foundation may create some difficulties today. That is the correct attitude. One may, of course, make a mistake in doing that; but that is a different matter.

. . . I have had occasion to meet eminent people from

other countries who had come to India. They have seen what we have done and what we have failed to do. I am thinking, at the moment, of those who are experts in their fields and know a great deal about the world and about what has been done in other countries today. These people have not been great admirers of India by any means, they have had no great love for India but they have, nevertheless, been struck by the achievement of India in the last few years. They were not blind to our failings but they could also see the achievements. Many of the Hon. Members must have seen the Engineering Exhibition that has been here for the last two months. It is a wonderful record of the basic things that have been done in India. It is a record that you cannot fail to recognize, whether you are an Indian or not. I was filled with a certain pride in our achievements and in what is being done. The foreign experts I was talking about also felt with some surprise that this country, in spite of the troubles it has had to face, is still achieving big things.

Take our National Laboratories. Today, they may not produce engines. But these laboratories are something that greatly impresses people from abroad. And they are impressed because of the fine work that is being done there by a thousand or more enthusiastic young scientists of India. One takes pride in them and in their work and India can build her future on that basis if they are given the chance and if we do not lose ourselves in trivialities, in the small things of life. I can mention many basic things that are being done and, I hope, will be done in the future.

The other day I was in Bombay and I visited the Aarey Milk Scheme which the Bombay Government has started. It is a magnificent project. We sometimes talk in this House about preserving cattle, about Vanaspati ghee and other matters and, no doubt, what we say is worth while;

but we always talk negatively. I know we want milk in this country; but nobody makes any constructive proposals as to how it can be obtained. To come back to the Aarey Milk Scheme, its object is to provide pure, fine milk to millions and millions of people in Bombay. } Now, that is the sort of thing I should like the whole country to emulate, not only in the provision of good and cheap milk but also in the preservation of cattle. The Aarey Milk Scheme is an example of what the Government has done with the help of the country and this House. Of course, there are also other things which are in the process of being done and which will not yield immediate results. Obviously, we cannot expect our river-valley schemes to give us immediate dividends. You have to wait two or three years—perhaps ten years. Do you wish us to carry on with these schemes, even though they do not yield results at once or do you think it is more important to please the people today by lessening their immediate burdens somehow? We can do that to some extent but tomorrow the people will have no chance of further progress. In order to progress, you must save money for progress every year, whether you are a communist State or a socialist or a capitalist State; you must produce more than you can consume as a State. If you consume more than you produce, you will have bankruptcy. If you consume just enough, then you remain where you are and do not go ahead. Remember always the fact that if our production goes up a little, so does our population and you have, therefore, to reckon that too and produce more or take some measures to put a check on the growth of the population. Certainly, it is not our policy to put a premium on the increase of population of every kind of animal in this country or to allow the old and lame animals to grow in number; and we wish to do everything to prevent wild animals from spoiling our fields and eating up our crops.

But some of our traditions and customs come in the way of our food production and our economy. Has any Hon. Member ever calculated how much wastage there is on this score? There is an enormous wastage, because we follow certain old customs and traditions, which have no place in the modern world. In fact, they might well crush us in spite of any economy we might adopt. This is the context in which I should like to consider this Budget. I submit to this House that India, undoubtedly has tremendous potential resources. India has skilful men and women to utilize these resources. We have to yoke the men and women and the natural resources together. We are trying to do so in some small measure but we have to do this more effectively. In the measure we do so, in the measure that people work hard, we produce wealth. There is no other way. A piece of legislation will not solve this problem unless we become a hard-working nation. With all respect to many people, I am compelled to say that we are not a hard-working nation. I travel abroad a good deal and often have opportunities of seeing how other nations are facing their problems and how hard they work in Europe, China and Japan. Whether their policy is communist or socialist or some other, they work hard and suffer privations more than most of us do. I am not talking about the poor peasant or the poor worker in India but of those who are somewhat better off. I wish we could find some solution because I think it is a painful and hateful thing for people to go about feasting when there is such terrible scarcity and when there is privation and suffering all over the country.

It is now a fairly long time since I occupied this place as Prime Minister. It seems even longer than it has been, because it has been a difficult time, because there has been crisis after crisis and because all the things that one in-

tended to do—most of them, at any rate—could not be done. Often, there were doubts; nevertheless, some part of the whole vision persisted, some faith in the people of India persisted and I tried to do my best. Whether this Government has succeeded or not is for some dispassionate historian of the future to say. Certainly, we wanted to succeed. What I am concerned with and what my colleagues, who are more or less of my age and with whom I have laboured for these thirty years or more, are concerned with is that in the afternoon of our lives, in these remaining years, we should devote all the energy that we have in realizing the ideals which we have held: we are anxious to see that we do not forsake them. Yet, it is painful to feel all the time that while you hold the ideals, something comes in the way and you cannot go forward as you want to. There are so many factors in the world that you cannot control. The human material that you work with is not always good and there are your own failings to reckon with. Nevertheless, it is something to hold them and to try one's utmost to realize them and to give all one's strength and energy in that process till one is exhausted and is thrown aside.

# THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF A RURAL SOCIETY

J. R. D. TATA

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YOUR Royal Highness, Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: may I say at the outset how much I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to deliver one of the Overseas talks at this Conference. And also how very deeply honoured I am that His Royal Highness, to whose distinguished support and labours this Conference owes so much of its success, has graciously taken the Chair this evening.

Of all the tasks confronting the world today perhaps the most formidable one is the industrialization of the under-developed areas of the world and none, I think, offers greater potential rewards for humanity as a whole. In India, as in most of Asia, the process is today well under way. It is the source for millions of people of hope of deliverance, at long last, from their age-old poverty and misery and also amongst some, of misgivings as to the human aspects of the task and the evils and sufferings which might accompany the process as they did in its early stages in the West. I shall endeavour tonight to share with you some of the thoughts which I have evolved on the subject. You will appreciate, of course, that my remarks tonight can only cover a small part of the subject. They are, furthermore, meant to apply only to India, of which country alone I have some first-hand knowledge and experience.

The first question one might ask is whether the problems involved in the industrialization of a country like India today are likely to be different from those

experienced in the West in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. I think not. For the process, in both cases, will have been one of transforming the environment and the working and living habits of a large proportion of the people from life on the farm and in small artisan and trading communities to life in factories and urban areas. Human nature being fundamentally the same everywhere and at all times, it may be expected to react to such a change in generally the same way.

The main differences, as I see them, are likely to be of degree and form rather than of substance. The fact, for instance, that India's civilization goes back five thousand years or so and that life in much of the Indian countryside is still as it was in the tenth century, may be expected to render the process of modernization more difficult. Illiteracy, climatic conditions and low vitality are also disadvantages to be overcome. Finally, the speed and continuity of change in this revolutionary age in which we live themselves will add to our problems and difficulties.

On the other hand, our task should be made easier by such factors as the opportunity to benefit from the accumulated experience of the industrially advanced countries, the inherent skill and patience of our people, and the inspiration they will be able to draw from a past rich in craftsmanship and productive achievement. To them industrialization will, to some extent, be a revival as well as an extension of something that already exists.

It may perhaps sound strange to some of you to hear me speak of an industrial revival in a country which, judged by the astonishing standards of the West, would seem still to be at the very beginning of industrialization. If, however, we consider productive industry not merely in terms of modern machines, processes and techniques but of the materials and products made, then it may be

truly said that for twenty centuries or more and upto the eighteenth century, India was one of the most advanced industrial countries of the world particularly in the fields of metallurgy, textiles, dyes and drugs. Even today modern steel-makers wonder how the famous Iron Pillar in Delhi, about twenty-six feet high and weighing six or seven tons, was forged in one piece with the very primitive equipment available in those days. There is evidence that the cotton textile industry of India goes back as much as 5,000 years, because Indian muslins have been found wrapped around mummies in tombs going back five thousand years in Egypt.

While it is true that some of the skills and creative spirit of Indian artisans have died during the last two centuries, enough, I am sure, remains to play some part in the industrial revival of the country.

The Indian people, however, have not only distant memories to draw upon. Modern forms of industry already exist to a considerable extent in India today, and extensive developments are contemplated in the Second Five-Year Plan under the dynamic leadership of our Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Millions of Indians are already employed in modern industries and services and some of them are second or third generation workers. Work in factories and life in industrial cities is, therefore, not something new or strange to Indians and to some extent the initial problems created by the impact of modern industry have already been met.

As in other countries, the human aspects of industrialization in India have been a mixture of good and evil, and for very much the same reasons. The failures have mainly taken place in the older industries established many years ago in or near large cities and in poorly organized small industries. With few exceptions, modern concepts of social welfare were unknown or unheeded in

those days. Few employers considered themselves responsible for anything more than production and profit and little or no provision was made either by industry or by Government for the housing, health and happiness of workers.

Conditions were from the start much better in large industrial communities and particularly in those created in virgin areas by enlightened pioneers like Jamsetjee Tata who, it may be said, laid the foundations of India's industrial development. He sought not only to provide good wages, working conditions and housing but also to integrate the working and social life of his employees into healthy and well-adjusted communities. Jamsetjee Tata's vision of a prosperous industrial community lives today in the city of Jamshedpur. Although he died over fifty years ago, he visualized from the start the tree-lined avenues, the modern quarters, the schools and the medical and other services which still today make Jamshedpur one of the better industrial towns to live in.

Since it is good to get away from abstractions and generalities, it might interest you to share with me a little of the experience that we in Tatas have acquired about the lives of those who have migrated from the countryside to the factory towns which have grown around some of the industrial plants we have established in India—the Steel City of Jamshedpur in Bihar; the Chemical township of Mithapur in Kathiawar, and Tatapuram, which has grown around a soap and oil factory in the State of Travancore-Cochin. We have recently had the occasion to undertake at these three places a social survey amongst the families of employees working and living in them and some of the results may be of interest to you.

As was to be expected, an adverse consequence of migration to urban areas for industrial pursuits has been a weakening of family ties as a unifying and stabilizing

influence. While such weakening may be attributed in some measure to the shortage of industrial housing which makes it difficult for employees to bring their families to live with them, some of it is undoubtedly due to the change of vocation and to the great economic and social differences between their old and new environments.

As against this adverse factor, the position of women in the group has undoubtedly improved. In Tatapuram, the Tata Oil Mills Company was one of the pioneers in employing women in the laboratories and in the administrative offices. At the outset there was considerable resistance to this development and on the day the first woman employee was appointed as a clerk in the main office, the poor girl was harassed by the incessant ringing of call bells by her fellow male-clerks as a sign of protest and sabotage! Today, the employment of women is taken as a matter of course.

Equally beneficial has been the influence of industrialization on the social structure and particularly on the caste system. This effect is specially marked in regard to the survival of untouchability. In Jamshedpur, caste Hindus formerly used to refuse even bottled water if supplied by Muslims or Christians, while separate kitchens had to be maintained for different communities. When, years later, a decision was taken, with the consent of the Trade Union but not without trepidation, to abolish this system, the Company and the Union were both agreeably surprised to find that there was hardly any protest or resistance.

A similar metamorphosis has been observed in Mithapur where the population is traditionally orthodox by origin. Persons of any caste, including untouchables, now do any type of work and there are no separate residential areas earmarked for any section of the population. Three-quarters of those recently interviewed there

expressed themselves as openly sceptical about untouchability and the caste system itself.

The people of Mithapur are mainly Waghirs, who were in the British days considered a criminal tribe. I believe they had colourful piratical antecedents. When we built this plant, land had to be acquired largely from the local Waghirs. Though this land is very unproductive and barren, still, when it was acquired compulsorily by Government and although very adequate compensation was paid, naturally it created some disturbances. I remember the case of an old gentleman who felt that this was an insult both to himself and his ancestors, and that it could only be washed away in blood. Now, apparently in order to reward the peaceful ones, the old Government of India used to grant arms licences to some of them and this gentleman had an arms licence and toted a rather formidable muzzle-loading rifle. Well, as the General Manager of the factory was the representative of the institution that had acquired his land, he considered that the blood with which the insult was to be atoned was his blood; so he began to stalk him, until the Manager who normally wasn't easily troubled, went to the police and said this was becoming a nuisance. The police said: 'What can we do until he shoots you? Come again when that happens!' Well, the General Manager found a solution, a rather intelligent one; he employed the old gentleman as his personal bodyguard! This is a true story. After that there was no more trouble, for the Manager, but a few other characters in town found themselves in danger and I seem to remember that ultimately the old gentleman had to be moved to a somewhat less lethal occupation.

A gratifying feature of migration to these factory towns has been a noticeable improvement in health standards. The average expectation of life has gone up materially;

the mortality rate amongst infants and mothers in child-birth has fallen and is today well below the national average. Epidemics have been wiped out and full use is being made of the extensive medical facilities offered; sometimes I think a little too full a use! If I may be a little reminiscent again, I remember, on one of my fairly regular visits to the Jamshedpur Hospital, I found a very resplendent gentleman in a gold and velvet brocade jacket, recovering from a gunshot wound. Now I knew that steel workers all over the world were pretty tough customers, but the people of Jamshedpur had been up to then reasonably peaceful and not addicted to settling their disputes with fire-arms; so I made inquiries and it turned out that this gentleman had been shot in the shoulder in the North-West Frontier Province, some 1400 miles from Jamshedpur, and his brother, who happened to be a worker in the Works, had gone all the way there to fetch him, apparently touchingly convinced that nowhere else would his brother have a better chance of recovery.

Another bright spot in the picture is that provided by literacy and education. In Mithapur and Jamshedpur the growth of school attendance is much more rapid than the increase in the Town's population. In Tatapuram, literacy among the employees of the Company is ninety per cent and the majority of workers regularly read one or other daily newspaper in the local language. Some of them are regular contributors to newspapers and journals.

But even more significant than these trends has been the marked change in general outlook. People previously used to the simple and austere life of the Indian village have eagerly availed themselves of opportunities to better their standard of living and to rid themselves of the ignorance, inertia and inhibitions of life in village communities. They have responded to the stimulation

of their new environment and the wider horizon opening before them. The younger element has grasped such opportunities with both hands but even those amongst the older ones who have preferred to retain their erst-while orthodox living-habits have sought to improve the lot of their children by providing them with the education which was denied to themselves and by encouraging them to adopt a more modern way of life.

No less marked has been the impact of these new industrial townships on the surrounding country-side. Opportunities for employment, the creation of a market for village products, medical treatment and a fuller social and cultural life were amongst the benefits listed by those who polled on the subject at Mithapur. In order to foster and accelerate this process we have, with the assistance of one of the Tata philanthropic trusts, undertaken in villages adjacent to some of our industrial establishments rural development projects designed to mobilize the available organization, leadership, and desire to serve, for the promotion of social and economic progress through self-reliance.

The pattern seems to have been similar in other places and other industries in India where similar conditions and standards prevail. Thus, it may, I think, be generally agreed that where new industrial enterprises have been brought into being, away from over-crowded cities and where housing and all the required civic services and amenities have been provided, the transition from the village to the factory and industrial townships has been reasonably smooth and has resulted in economic and social betterment.

At this stage I should like to digress a little from the main topic of my talk to discuss a question which may seem strange to some of you. This is whether large-scale industrialization is desirable at all. India is perhaps the

only country in the world where such a question is, and could be, raised but, in view of the quality and status of the men and women who raise it, it cannot be ignored, and I propose to devote a small part of my talk to a discussion of their ideas.

If the happiness of the greatest number of people is the purpose of economic activity, what proof is there that the people of highly industrialized and urbanized societies are happier than those who live in simple rural communities? Are happiness and peace of mind merely a matter of material prosperity and the possession of an abundance of money and goods? It is urged that the uprooting of men and women from their natural environment in the country-side, where they lived close to the soil and enjoyed a simple life, causes them to lose their identity, breaks up family ties and leads to maladjustment, emotional and psychological stresses, selfishness and many other evils.

The Gandhians, as, for want of a better word, I venture to call them, therefore advocate that the efforts of the nation should be directed wholly at the villages. Usefully employed in simple tasks, in small and well-integrated communities, the people of India, they claim, will find a truer happiness than they would with all the complications, the scramble for wealth and power and the conflicts inherent in industrialized societies.

While it cannot be denied that there is some truth in this philosophy, the basic weakness of the thesis seems to me to lie in a number of incorrect assumptions. First, it assumes that any large-scale industrialization of India will result in a deterioration of conditions in the villages and in the loss to the people of all that is good in the way of life on the land.

It is obvious that, however rapid and substantial the pace of industrialization, India will remain for many generations to come a predominantly agricultural country.

Even if the percentage of the agricultural population were to be reduced in time from the present 70 per cent to, say, 50 per cent, agriculture would still remain by far the largest industry of the country, and, far from withering, the rural community would derive added vitality from the transfer of the surplus population which today bears so heavily on the land. Part of the increased earnings of the people so transferred would be remitted back to the villages and would help in improving living conditions in them.

Again, it is assumed that the masses of India will share the view that a simple life means a happy life and will willingly forgo the material comforts, the amenities and the security enjoyed by their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. There is already more than enough evidence to invalidate this assumption. As the world shrinks through improved communications and as knowledge grows of better conditions elsewhere, the people of India and similarly placed countries will reject the idea to content themselves with the status of 'The Man with the Hoe'. They would not for long accept for themselves and their children a permanently inferior place in the world society and would surely resist any attempt, on spiritual or other grounds, to impose upon them the privation, boredom and drudgery inevitable in a primitive rural existence particularly under the conditions of overpopulation and under-employment which prevail in India.

Finally, it does not seem to have been adequately appreciated that, in the context of the size of the country and of the acreage available for cultivation, a reasonable degree of rural prosperity is impossible without an aggregate industrial establishment of considerable magnitude to support it. For instance, electric power cannot be produced without generating equipment; the transport of people and goods without railroad and automotive

vehicles; an increase in the food supply without the engineering and chemical industries to provide irrigation, tractors, agricultural machinery and fertilisers. Bridges, roads and houses cannot be built without steel and cement. And so on. If it is suggested that the country could import these products, where are the products it could export to pay for them?

Thus, on all practical counts, the concept of a simple yet prosperous village life vanishes as a dream does when the dreamer awakens to practical realities. The reality, I believe, is that the prosperity and happiness of the people can be achieved only on the basis of a balanced economy in which industry and services, in addition to agriculture, contribute their appropriate share to the total wealth produced. In a country like India, the achievement of such a balanced economy requires that measures be taken, simultaneously with the process of rapid industrialization, to reduce the wide disparity in living standards and amenities between urban and rural communities. Undue concentration on industrial development to the exclusion of rural development would merely widen the gap still further and result in a chaotic migration to over-crowded industrial and urban areas. Furthermore, all efforts at industrialization in a country such as India would flounder if the structure were not raised on the foundation of a prosperous peasantry whose purchasing power would provide a market for manufactured goods. In that context the efforts at present being made in India, through community projects and extension services to rehabilitate and develop rural areas, are of great significance and to be welcomed; so are the efforts to take industry to the country-side in the form of cottage- and small-scale enterprises. This programme will provide a partial solution to the problem of unemployment or under-employment in the rural areas, which is of special importance and

urgency in a country which seeks to achieve its economic regeneration under a democratic regime based on adult franchise; for the persistence of unemployment during the transition from manual labour to mechanization would threaten the stability of Government at a crucial stage of the country's economic regeneration. The development of cottage industries will also afford opportunities for reviving the artistic and creative skills of the Indian village craftsman, particularly if an active export market can be created, as I sincerely hope it will, with the support of foreign consumers. Having made this passing reference to the role of the village in India's future, I shall now revert to the main subject of my talk which deals with the human problems involved in the industrialization of rural societies.

While I do not wish to over-simplify what from my own experience I know to be a most complex subject, the task in India and similarly placed countries would seem to consist in meeting three main requirements. The first, which is now universally accepted, is to provide for the basic material needs of the workers: good working conditions, adequate wages, job security, retirement benefits, housing, medical care and educational facilities for the worker and his family.

The second is to provide, within and outside the factory, the means of satisfying the more intangible but equally strong human desire for self-expression and fulfilment and other urges characteristic of human life in the group: the recognition of individual worth, opportunities for promotion and leadership, the feeling that one *belongs*. The loss of personal contact, the remoteness of individual work from the end-product and the lack of a personal stake in the enterprise are aspects of large-scale industry which must be dealt with in countries like India perhaps even more than elsewhere.

The third is to cope with the special problems of the worker recently transplanted from a village to a modern industrial-urban community. For him the stresses of transition are obviously likely to be greater than for one already accustomed to, and hardened by, city life. To the former, the family and the small village community in which he previously lived provided all the elements of social life and human intercourse. Previously associated closely with the life of the village to which he himself contributed, too often in the past did he find himself adrift in an impersonal and, to him, hostile environment in which he sought in vain to replace the family and social contacts, the personal prestige, the friendliness, trust and compassion which he had left behind. Bewildered, unhappy and resentful, he suffered acutely from the disintegration of his previous background and spiritual values and from the loss of his individuality.

One of the first requirements is to provide enough housing to ensure that workers drawn from the distant country-side can bring their families to live with them so that family ties and influence are retained unimpaired. This cannot be left to chance but requires that management at all levels is made conscious of the human problems involved and is specifically trained in the management of men as well as machines and processes. Countries like India have upto now lagged behind the West in this important field, but we are learning fast and the realization of the human responsibilities of management, apart from their technical and operational functions, is growing and beginning to pay dividends. In our own organization the human problems of management are being stressed at conferences for managers and personnel officers, our staff college for executives and our company information courses for supervisory personnel.

Then, in order to ensure the fulfilment of individual

and collective life within the industrial society, I feel an effort must be made to render it possible for industry to be not only a source of employment but also a way of life. Considerable significance attaches, in my view, to the concept of the autonomous plant- or factory-community developed by Peter Drucker in his book *The New Society*. There is no time for me here to dilate on this fascinating subject, but I do feel that sincere and careful thought will have to be increasingly devoted to it in our country. What appeals to me about this concept is the distinction drawn, within the industrial community, between the functions and activities of community life on the one hand and job functions and activities on the other. Among the former would be included welfare, education, recreation, allotment and management of housing, sports, transportation and canteens. It seems to me there is much to be said for the idea that the members of the plant community, which is made up of all those who work in it, should be given some say and freedom to participate in the management of these matters. This would provide an effective extension of the democratic principle to the industrial community and also a partial substitute for the sense of belonging and participation which are important elements of life in the village community.

I would not, however, like this to be construed as a plea for surrendering any of the basic functions of management. I am firmly in agreement with the proposition that management's duty is to manage. The important thing, however, to be clear about is: What is management to manage? Where the social organization of the society within the factory does *not* impinge directly on the economic performance of the enterprise, but is *only* incidental to it, the assumption of exclusive responsibility by management appears to be unnecessary and a source of avoidable irritation and resentment.

Some thought must also be given to the social and emotional attitudes of Asians which in many ways materially differ from those of their brothers in the West. In India the relationship between employer and employee is often still unconsciously perceived by the worker as a relationship between child and father. Whatever the merit of this thesis, it is certainly true that in India people are still inclined to be sentimental and to regard persons in authority, be it Government or industrial management, as their *ma-bap*. This reminds me of an incident which took place many many years ago in Jamshedpur when we had an American General Manager who, beneath a ferocious exterior and a frightening voice backed by lurid language, concealed a very soft heart. Well, in so far as he was concerned, there was no nonsense about modern concepts of democracy within industry. To him, the right to hire and fire and lay down the law was a God-given right, and that's all there was to it, and he did fire and hire, in fact usually in that order! Fortunately, as was well known, a fired employee had only to haunt him at his office or his house to be re-hired after a while. Well, there was a worker called Mohammed Din in the steel melting shop who had been fired and re-hired thrice; but once too often he was found peacefully asleep on the job, and so he was fired once again. To his pained surprise, Mohammed Din found that his appeals to Mr Tutwiler both at the office and at his house produced no results. So he was driven to writing him a letter. At the end of this pathetic and heart-rending letter which is still on our files and in which he detailed all the misery which had overtaken him since he was fired for the fourth time, he mentioned the fact that he was an orphan and the closing sentence was: 'And you Sir are my Father and my Mother, and I am a poor S.O.B.'

Finally, we have in India the special problem, largely

unknown in the West, of integrating some twenty million primitive tribal people who live in our hills and jungles. Largely, and perhaps fortunately, untouched by modern civilization, they are, by and large, a happy, innocent and childlike people with special virtues as well as deficiencies. Their poverty is immense, their economic life cruelly uncertain. Their integration into the industrial community will obviously need special care and sympathetic understanding.

We can see therefore that in countries like India, perhaps even more than elsewhere, one of the main tasks of industrial management is to develop an adequate understanding of the relationship between man, his environment and his technology. At the present time, there is, I think, a lack of balance between the development of technical skills and social skills, the consequences of which have often been disastrous.

In considering the human problems involved in the rapid industrialization of a country like India, there is a valuable lesson to be learned from the Indian Army which seems to have developed social skills well in advance of those of civilian organizations, particularly in the fields of selection, training, human management and welfare. Although it is true that the transition which military recruits have to undergo is of a different character from that which we have been discussing, it is still a fact that, over the years, millions of Indians, mostly ignorant and miserably poor, drawn from villages, jungles and hills and from all kinds of religious communities, professions and castes, have been smoothly and happily moulded into a form of community entirely different from that to which they were accustomed and where the regiment has proved a satisfying substitute for the family and the village. As a piece of social engineering, this has, to my mind, been an outstanding achievement. Those who have participated

in this process as officers of the Indian Army and the gallant record of the Indian soldier in many wars can testify to his magnificent morale, a morale which could not possibly be attributed exclusively to rigidly imposed army discipline. I believe it is due in large part to the leadership, the stress on human relations and concern for the men's personal life and welfare which form an integral part of the officers' duties in the Indian Army and which are worthy of emulation.

I do not of course suggest that regimentation or a military type of organization should be applied to industry. This would be unthinkable at least in a democracy and I should like to emphasize that all the thoughts I have expressed today on the industrialization of under-developed economies have been on the basis that the process is implemented by democratic means, as it is sought to be done in my own country. And here may I be permitted in passing to express the belief that a society in which freedom, individuality and initiative can flower requires not only the existence of political democracy—as exemplified by freely elected parliaments and governments and a free press but also a large measure of economic democracy—that is Free Enterprise which alone can ensure freedom of choice and decision to the citizen.

Those of us who believe, as I do, that the Indian transition will be all the easier and happier for being achieved by free men in a free society are strengthened in our faith by the view which was expressed by Mahatma Gandhi when he said: 'I look upon an increase of the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.' And if I may say so, Mr Chairman, I was particularly heartened to find that a similar view was expressed by you in your opening remarks at this very

Conference when you said that you saw no advantage in a powerful and prosperous state created at the expense of individual freedom.

In this context the divergent developments in India and China will, I am convinced, be of tremendous significance to the world as a whole. If, in the years to come, India succeeds in building, by democratic means, the prosperity of her people, she will have made a decisive contribution to the survival and continued progress of the democratic way of life. But if she fails while China, employing totalitarian methods, succeeds, then millions of people in the still under-developed areas of the world may judge by the results achieved rather than the means employed and the cause of human freedom will have suffered a grievous setback.

In this shrinking world of ours, the challenge that the hovels of Asia and Africa present is a real and an immediate one to all of us, however far away from them we might be. If the industrialized nations of the world, possessed as they are of the necessary technology and capital, recognize the overwhelming importance of this challenge and help India and similarly placed countries to meet it then we shall together have the resources, the knowledge and the skills to usher in an era of abundance and happiness for all the peoples of the world.

# *THE BHOODAN MOVEMENT*

*THE TIMES*

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THERE cannot be many men who, like Vinoba Bhave, have stumbled upon their life's vocation at the late age of 55. It was early in 1951 that the previously obscure and retiring disciple of Mahatma Gandhi went to the Telangana area of Hyderabad, then in the grip of Communist-inspired disturbances, on a one-man mission to preach the Gandhian message of non-violence. In a remote village a group of landless peasants came to him to complain of the hardship of their lot; and, almost upon impulse, Vinoba appealed to the better-off villagers to give sufficient land to settle each landless family upon a small holding. A single villager came forward with the offer of 100 acres; and out of this gesture Vinoba conceived the idea of the Bhoodan movement which was to collect similar gifts of land for the relief of the landless poor throughout India.

The response to his appeal exceeded all expectations. In Telangana during the first months he collected more than 12,000 acres. Other political and religious leaders, attracted by the new movement, hastened to place themselves under his guidance and were sent off to lead Bhoodan marches of their own. To the Indian Government, its land reform programme bogged down (then as now) in a morass of legislative delays, the Movement seemed an answer to a prayer; Vinoba was invited to Delhi for consultations—as a matter of principle, he insisted on covering the 800 miles on foot—and assured of official patronage and encouragement. By the end of 1956 he and his followers had collected more than four million acres in land gifts all over India.

As the movement spread there were a number of cases in which whole villages jointly offered Vinoba their entire lands; for the earlier ideal of the richer land-owner giving of his surplus for the relief of the landless was substituted the more revolutionary concept of Gramdan, in which every land-owner, whatever the size of his holding, would surrender the whole to the community and receive back only so much as he personally needed for himself and his family.

Once again Vinoba's new concept chimed in opportunely with the Indian Government's own increasing leaning towards co-operative farming. In 1955, when Vinoba toured the highlands of Koraput district, in Orissa 600 tribal villages were reported to have spontaneously embraced Gramdan; elsewhere progress was slower, but by mid-1957 the new movement claimed over 1,800 villages in Orissa and another 1,100 in other regions.

One senior Congress party official, returning from a visit to Vinoba in 1956, went so far as to describe Gramdan as 'one of the greatest revolutions in the world's history'; European admirers likened Vinoba's progress to the journeyings of Jesus and his disciples in Galilee; while the common people acclaimed him as the reincarnation of Mahatma Gandhi. For a time even the most sceptical observers were tempted to believe that India might solve its whole agrarian problem upon a wave of moral and religious revival—an apotheosis of Gandhism such as even the Mahatma could scarce have dreamed of.

The passage of years have not borne out those first high hopes. Out of the four million acres collected, fewer than 600,000 acres had by the end of 1956 been redistributed to new owners. For this there is no lack of reasons. On examination, many of the plots given proved to be unfit for cultivation, or minute scraps of scattered land incapable of forming a manageable holding; in some areas as

much as five-sixths of the land given has had to be thus written off. Elsewhere, disputes between rival claimants held up the distribution.

Nearly everywhere, in spite of assurances of Government support, Indian bureaucracy interposed its own interminable delays in registering new titles, and in some cases refused outright to recognize them. But after making every allowance for circumstances, it is plain that Bhoodan workers in the first enthusiasm of collecting land gifts failed to appreciate what a quantity of humdrum detail would be involved in their redistribution.

With Gramdan the position is similar; out of some 3,000 villages offered by their inhabitants, only a handful are today functioning as co-operative communities on the lines Vinoba has envisaged; perhaps a few hundreds have begun slowly and hesitantly to feel their way towards that ideal.

To record this is not to disparage the work either of Vinoba or his followers. Vinoba himself has remained unperturbed by either panegyrists or detractors. The simple routine of his pilgrimage has never changed. He still rises with his followers before dawn; sets out after prayers across the fields to the next halting place (though his daily 12 miles has now been cut down by ill-health to six); and there preaches and discourses with the village folk until it is time, after a brief night's rest, to set forth again. His mission, as he sees it, is a simple one; to preach to simple people a gospel of mutual help and charity, an ideal of a property-less, non-violent society; and to what extent his hearers put his teachings into practice he leaves to each man's own conscience.

His followers too, by any standards set an example of perseverance and self-sacrifice; their chief handicap has been their lack of numbers. In Koraput nearly 300 of them have volunteered to live and work, on minute salaries, among the poorest of India's poor. A million Adivasi

tribes-people, descendants of India's Aboriginal inhabitants, scratch a living from the thin soil of its barren hills, a primitive and docile race still living much as they did in the dawn of history. Their improvidence and credulity make them easy game for the extortions of usurers and petty landlords who for centuries have kept them in a state of perpetual indebtedness and subjection.

Today, in this district, 40 rural centres have been set up for welfare work in the surrounding villages. The Gramdan workers have solicited gifts of land for the landless, brought pressure on usurers to waive their bonds (seldom of a character to stand scrutiny in court), set up their own credit societies and established co-operative stores to sell necessities at fair prices. They have experimented with an astonishing variety of small-scale industries—from spinning and weaving to sealing-wax and string—to create extra employment. They have organized soil conservation work and experimented with new crops. But only in one or two places have they come anywhere near their goal of a total redistribution of lands or co-operative village management.

They are a surprisingly various band, united only by a sense of vocation. Often having little previous training or experience, each does his best with whatever talents he brought with him. The son of a smallholder discloses a latent genius for village leadership; an Oxford graduate grapples with the intricacies of rural credit; a German nurse, defying the taboos attaching to her sex, leads an adventurous existence in a remote jungle village, running a dispensary and organizing forays against marauding elephants.

Their determined championship of the underdog has more than once brought them into conflict with landlords and moneylenders, sometimes even with the civil authorities and police; but their experience has helped to prompt a

rethinking of the Indian Government's own vast rural development programme and to guide towards those whose need is greatest much Government aid which formerly reached only those most articulate in demanding it.

Yet when one looks back upon the high hopes of seven years ago, the lesson surely is that in India, as in other countries, miracles do not happen. Land reform will only be achieved through the slow and toilsome process of legislation, rural poverty ended only through the painstaking effort of field workers over a long period. For that legislation and that effort Vinoba and his movement may be an inspiration, but they can never be a substitute.

# EVOLUTION IN INDIA

VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT

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INDIA is described as a land of paradoxes. It has a vast area and a large population. Every seventh human being in the world is an Indian. Much of the country's resources are undeveloped, and the people lag behind other advanced nations in material prosperity and industrial power. Nevertheless, India, since she became independent a decade ago, has exercised a singular influence in world affairs. She is an important member of the international community and a vital factor in the preservation of world peace. What is the secret of this influence, and why has India's voice assumed such importance in international affairs? The answer does not lie in the statistics of her national income, or in her industrial production, or in her military equipment, none of which is impressive. But it can be found in the deeply rooted culture and traditions that have nourished her people through millennia of recorded history and given them a unique outlook on life. I shall try to recapture for you glimpses of the historic process that has moulded our civilization and given it a universal character.

The history of evolution is the development of a particular attitude of mind. India, therefore, is not a mere geographical expression but a cultural concept and a distinctive way of life. The distinguishing feature is continuity. The pattern of life which emerged five thousand years ago still endures. While ancient civilizations like Egypt, Babylon, and Persia have long ceased to exist and their history only evokes an academic interest, Indian history and institutions form an unbroken chain which links the past with the present. The icons discovered at

Mohenjo-daro (c. 2500 B.C.) are those of gods and goddesses who are still worshipped in India. The Hindus from the Himalayan mountains to Cape Comorin repeat, even today, the Vedic hymns which were chanted by the ancient Aryans on the banks of the river Indus centuries ago. Because of this, ~~the past is a living reality to all classes of~~ the Indian people, and cultural continuity is a prominent feature of their lives.

It is not easy to define the Indian way of life. Like a prism, it has many facets which glow with varied colours and represent different pictures according to the angle from which they are viewed. One of these facets is the effort of countless generations to transform external diversities into an inner harmony. This attitude was responsible for the evolution of a composite culture which transcended the diversities of race and religion and became a living unity. It was achieved by a continuous process of assimilation and synthesis of the many thought-patterns which, from time to time, were brought into the country. The spiritual and moral values which motivated the sages and philosophers of India through the long period of her recorded history, have stood the test of time and have survived many social and political upheavals. Among the relics excavated at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa there is an image of a prototype of the god Shiva seated on a lotus throne with closed eyes, in a posture of meditation. The animal creation is all round him. This illustrates the fundamental outlook which has dominated the spiritual landscape. India has always regarded the conqueror of battles as less than the man who has conquered his appetites and emotions. In other words, self-conquest is more important than world-conquest. This idea recurs in the Vedas, in the Upanishads, and again in the literature of Buddhism. The emphasis on the unity of Man and the unity of the Universe has been ever present in the long

march of the Indian people. The life of the Emperor Ashoka is an illustration on another plane—of him H. G. Wells has said 'amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, the name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone—a star'. Ashoka reigned in India in 268 B.C. He was powerful and his empire included the whole of north and central India extending right up to central Asia. Wishing to bring the remaining parts of India into his empire he started the conquest of Kalinga on the east coast of India. He conquered after a terrible slaughter, but was so deeply affected by what he had seen that he renounced war. To quote Wells again, 'he is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory.'

But Ashoka did more than renounce war. In numerous edicts carved in rocks and on metal all over India, he made his ideas known to his countrymen and to posterity. In these he speaks of the conquest of men's minds by love and the rejection of conquest by superior physical strength—he talks about his desire 'that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind and happiness'. These edicts, in fact, reflect the thoughts that the statesmen of our day have incorporated in the Charter of the United Nations. He was an ardent Buddhist and did much to spread the Buddhist faith. For every Indian Ashoka is the symbol of true greatness, for in an age when religious persecution and religious wars were a common feature, this great son of India, head of a powerful empire, sought to convert men by winning their hearts. It is our privilege today to use Ashoka's emblem of the four lions as the official crest of the Government of India. The most recent and most vibrant symbol of the identity of these values with the Indian way of life was Mahatma Gandhi.

The well-known Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, has called India 'the seashore of humanity'. Here many

races, with their singular treasures, came to seek wealth and exchange gifts, but few went back. The vast expanse of continental India gave shelter to each one that wished to stay. Dravidians, Indo-Aryans, Greeks, Scythians, Arabs, Moghuls, and Polynesians settled in this land at one period or another, and as time went on lost their exclusive racial identity in a richer and all-pervading Indian-ness. This intermingling and mutual adjustment was achieved without much strife. There was no organized attempt by one group to exterminate the other and some of the earliest communities that exist today still preserve their own religious beliefs, languages, and social customs. Tribal communities like the Mundas, Santhals, Todas, and Bhils could not have survived if the successive foreign migrations into India had sought to impose a homogeneous culture on the entire country.

The linguistic picture conforms to the same pattern. The Constitution of India recognizes fourteen major languages. Of these, ten belong to the north and four to the south. The ten northern languages are descended from Sanskrit and the four languages of the south are of indigenous origin. Even in the heyday of Sanskrit literature there were in existence a number of dialects spoken by various communities. These folk languages flourished simultaneously with Sanskrit, in which the classical literature of India was written. A significant fact about the development of Sanskrit was its ability to absorb the richness of these dialects, which led to its simplification and, ultimately, to the development of the modern languages of northern India. The Sanskrit of the Vedas (c. 1500 B.C.) gave place to a more classical form used in the Upanishads and in the two great epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (1000-500 B.C.). The renaissance in Sanskrit literature characterized by the works of Kalidasa and other poets and playwrights of the period (A.D. 300-700) took place

at a time when some of the modern north Indian languages had already been born. Contemporaneous with the development of classical Sanskrit was the development of Pali, a regional language spoken by the people of India and in which Buddhist texts and treatises were written. Another regional language spoken by the people was Ardhamagadhi in which the Jain literature found expression. Later, Arabic, Persian, and European languages added a valuable contribution to the richness and vitality of the Indian languages. Hindi, which is now recognized as the national language, bears the impress of what might be called this linguistic evolution.]



## ESSAYS

The battle of Waterloo was certainly fought on a certain day; but is *Hamlet* a better play than *Lear*? Nobody can say. Each must decide that question for himself.

From *The Common Reader*—Virginia Woolf

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I put into thy hands what has been the diversion of some of my idle hours; if it has the good luck to prove so of any of thine, and thou hast half so much pleasure in reading as I had in writing it, thou wilt as little think thy money, as I do my pains, ill bestowed.

From *The Essay on Human Understanding*  
—John Locke



# VULGARITY

ALDOUS HUXLEY

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THE difficulty, when one is using words of appraisal, the difficulty of knowing what one means!

Then why, if it is so hard, make any attempt to know? Would it not be wiser to follow the example of that Geneva Conference convened, not long ago, to consider means for the suppression of the traffic in obscene publications? For when the Greek delegate (too Socratic by half) suggested that it might be a good thing to establish a preliminary definition of the word 'obscene', Sir Archibald Bodkin sprang to his feet with a protest. 'There is no definition of indecent or obscene in English Statute Law.' The law of other countries being, apparently, no more explicit, it was unanimously decided that no definition was possible. After which, having triumphantly asserted that they did not know what they were talking about, the members of the Congress settled down to their discussion.

My business is not with the obscene, but with the vulgar. When I call something or somebody 'vulgar', what *precisely* (as Mr T. S. Eliot would critically ask) am I saying? Rushing in where Sir Archibald and his colleagues so wisely feared to tread, I shall try to discover.

To begin with, then, I find that there are many occasions when, strictly speaking, I *mean* nothing at all, but am using the word merely to express a dislike—as a term of abuse, a politer synonym, shall we say, of 'bloody'. On such occasions 'vulgar' is no more than a vaguely pejorative noise. More often, however, I find that I intend to

say something when I employ the word, not merely to snarl.

In certain circumstances, for example, I use the word in its strict etymological sense. When I say that a man has a vulgar accent or vulgar table manners, I mean that his accent and his manners remind me of those current in the lower ranks of society—of the particular society in which I happen to live. For vulgar here is not necessarily vulgar there. *Eruclavit cor meum*. East of Constantinople, the action is said to be polite. Here, Sir Toby Belch, though a knight, can never have moved in the highest circles. Or, yes; on second thoughts, he conceivably might have. For the standards of vulgarity are seen to change as you move vertically upwards through the strata of a single society, just as they change before the eyes of a spectator moving horizontally from one society to another. What is vulgar on high level A may have ceased to be vulgar on the yet higher level B. There are refinements beyond refinements, almost *ad infinitum*. Like Paradise, the *Monde* itself has its high and low. Proust is the Dante of these high mundane spheres; but while it took several centuries to reduce Dante's guide-book to out-of-dateness, Proust's is already, in its factual details (though not, of course, in its spirit), as hopelessly behind the times as a pre-war Baedekar. The social heavens are for ever changing.

But these relativities are too obvious to be very interesting. The Absolute chimerically beckons; and, though we can never hope to come up with it, the chase may be amusing in itself and, who knows? by the way we may actually catch a hare or two, smaller indeed and less noble than the quarry we are after, but having at least the merit of solidly existing, of being visibly there.

We have considered, so far, two cases: the case in which the word 'vulgar' says, 'I don't like this', and the case in

which it says. 'This reminds me of what are, to me, the lower classes'. In the case we are about to consider now, 'vulgar' says something less easily definable. For instance, I can assert that 'this man is vulgar. The fact that he is of good family and was educated at the right places makes no difference. He is vulgar, intrinsically.' What *precisely* do I mean here?

Etymology is helpful even in this case. The vulgar man of good family is not, indeed, a member of the lower classes in our actual society. But there is an ideal society, in which, we feel, he and his like belong to some very squalid caste.

No values, except perhaps the most rudimentary biological values, are accepted by all human beings. Only the tendency to evaluate is universal. In other words, the machinery for creating values is given, but the values themselves must be manufactured. The process has not yet been rationalized; value-making is still a village industry. Among the educated classes in the West, however, values are sufficiently nearly standardized for us to be able to speak about the ideal society as though it were an absolute.

The extremes of vulgarity are as rare as the extremes of goodness, wickedness, or genius; but it happens occasionally that we meet a nature's non-gentleman who is obviously one of the pariahs of our ideal society. Such people are, intrinsically, what those wretched Indians who sweep the floor and empty the slops are by accident—untouchable. In India, when you leave your hotel and want to tip the sweeper, you must not hold out the coin, expecting him to take it. His immediate reaction to your gesture will be to shrink away; for if your fingers were to touch his receiving palm you would be defiled. He is considerably sparing you the trouble of having to take a bath, fumigate yourself, and change your underclothing. The tipping of sweepers has its own special technique; you must halt

several yards away from your expectant beneficiary and throw your gift on to the ground at his feet. Commercial transactions during the Black Death must have been carried on in much the same style.

Training has taught the accidentally untouchable Indian to realize his own defiling lowness and to act accordingly. Would that nature had done the same for the intrinsic outcastes of our ideal society! But, alas, she hasn't. You find yourself at dinner sitting next to X, the eminent politician; the journalist, Y, is at large and invites you to his favourite public house. Unlike the sweepers of India, these intrinsic outcastes do not play their untouchable's part. So far are they from knowing their places, that they actually think they are doing you an honour by sitting at your table, a kindness by offering you, before lunch and in some stinking bar parlour, a double whisky or a noggin of glutinous port. As for shrinking, they do not dream of it: on the contrary, they push themselves forward. Indeed, a certain loud self-satisfaction (which renders it impossible for one to feel much sympathy with the intrinsic untouchable in his affliction), a certain thrusting and pretentious vanity is one of the essential elements of vulgarity. Vulgarity is a lowness that proclaims itself—and the self-proclamation is also intrinsically a lowness. For pretentiousness in whatever field, unless more than justified by native capacity and demonstrable achievement, is low in itself. Moreover, it underlines all other deficiencies and, as a suitable chemical will reveal words written in invisible ink, calls out the latent lownesses in a character, so that they manifest themselves in the form of open vulgarities.

There is a vulgarity in the sphere of morals, a vulgarity of emotions and intellect, a vulgarity even of the spirit. A man can be wicked, or stupid, or passionate without being vulgar. He can also be vulgarly good, vulgarly intelligent,

vulgarly emotional or unemotional, vulgarly spiritual. Moreover, he can belong to the highest class in one sphere of activity and yet be low in another. I have known men of the greatest intellectual refinement, whose emotional life was repugantly vulgar. Each one of us is like the population of a town built on the slope of a hill: we exist simultaneously at many different levels.

# ROYALTY

VIRGINIA WOOLF

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MANY important autobiographies have appeared this autumn, but none stranger or in certain respects more interesting than *The Story of My Life*, by Marie, Queen of Roumania. The reasons seem to be that she is royal; that she can write; that no royal person has ever been able to write before; and that the consequences may well be extremely serious.

Royalty to begin with, merely as an experiment in the breeding of human nature, is of great psychological interest. For centuries a certain family has been segregated; bred with a care only lavished upon a race horse; splendidly housed, clothed and fed; abnormally stimulated in some ways, suppressed in others; worshipped, stared at, and kept shut up, as lions and tigers are kept, in a beautifully brightly-lit room behind bars. The psychological effect upon them must be profound; and the effect upon us is as remarkable. Sane men and women as we are, we cannot rid ourselves of the superstition that there is something miraculous about these people shut up in their cage. Common sense may deny it; but take common sense for a walk through the streets of London on the Duke of Kent's wedding day. Not only will he find himself in a minority, but as the gold coach passes and the bride bows, his hand will rise to his head; off will come his hat, or on the contrary it will be rammed firmly on his head. In either case he will recognize the divinity of royalty.

Now one of these royal animals, Queen Marie of Roumania, has done what had never been done before; she has opened the door of the cage and sauntered out, into

the street. Queen Marie can write; in a second, therefore, the bars are down. Instead of the expected suavities and sweetnesses we come upon sharp little words; Uncle Bertie laughs, 'his laugh was a sort of cackle', Kitty Renwick kept the medicine chest; 'the castor oil pills looked like transparent white grapes with the oil moving about inside'; there were 'little squares of burnt skin' on the pudding at Windsor; Queen Victoria's teeth were 'small like those of a mouse'; she had a way of shrugging her shoulders when she laughed; when they rode on the sands at evening 'the shadows became so long that it is as though our horses were walking on stilts'; there was a marvellous stone in the museum, like a large piece of shortbread, that 'swayed slightly up and down when held at one end'. This little girl, in short, smelt, touched and saw as other children do; but she had an unusual power of following her feeling until she had coined the word for it. That is to say, she can write.

If we want an example of the difference between writing and non-writing we have only to compare a page of Queen Marie with a page of Queen Victoria. 'The old Queen was, of course, an author. She was forced by the exigencies of her profession to fill an immense number of pages, and some of these have been printed and bound between covers. But between the old Queen and the English language lay an abyss which no depth of passion and no strength of character could cross. Her works make very painful reading on that account. She has to express herself in words; but words will not come to her call. When she feels strongly and tries to say so, it is like hearing an old savage beating with a wooden spoon on a drum. '... this last refusal of Servia . . . almost forces us to SEE that there is no false play.' Rhythm is broken, the few poverty-stricken words are bruised and battered; now hooked together with hyphens, now desperately distended

with italics and capital letters—it is all no good. In the same way her descriptions of celebrated people slip through the fingers like water. ‘I waited a moment in the drawing-room to speak to Irving and Ellen Terry. He is very gentleman-like, and she, very pleasing and handsome.’ This primitive little machine is all that she has with which to register some of the most extraordinary experiences that ever fell to a woman’s lot. But probably she owed much of her prestige to her inability to express herself. The majority of her subjects, knowing her through her writing, came to feel that only a woman immune from the usual frailties and passions of human nature could write as Queen Victoria wrote. It added to her royalty.

But now by some freak of fate, which Queen Victoria would have been the first to deplore, her granddaughter, the eldest child of the late Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, has been born with a pen in her hand. Words do her bidding. Her own account of it is illuminating; ‘Even as a child,’ she says, ‘I possessed a vivid imagination and I liked telling stories to my sisters. . . . Then one of my children said to me: “Mama, you ought to write all this down, it is a pity to allow so many beautiful pictures to fade away . . .” I knew nothing whatever about writing, about style or composition, or about the ‘rules of the game’, but I did know how to conjure up beauty, also at times, emotion. I also had a vast store of words.’ It is true; she knows nothing about ‘the rules of the game’; words descend and bury whole cities under them; sights that should have been seen once and for all are distracted and dissipated; she ruins her effects and muffs her chances; but still because she feels abundantly, because she rides after her emotion fearlessly and takes her fences without caring for falls, she conjures up beauty and conveys emotion. Nor is it merely that by a happy fluke she is able to hit off a moment’s impression, a vivid detail; she

has the rarer power of sweeping these figures along in a torrent of language; lives grow and change beneath our eyes; scenes form themselves; details arrange themselves; all the actors come alive. Her most remarkable achievement in this way is her portrait of 'Aunty'—that Queen Elizabeth of Roumania who called herself Carmen Sylva. As it happened, Queen Victoria also tried her hand at a portrait of this lady. 'The dear charming Queen (she writes) came to luncheon. . . . She spoke with resignation and courage of her many trials and difficulties . . . I gave her a Celtic brooch and Balmoral shawl, also some books . . . the Queen read to us one of her plays, an ancient Greek story, very tragic. She read it to us most wonderfully and beautifully, and had quite an inspired look as she did so. . . . Many could, of course, not understand, as she read it in German, but all were interested.'

In Queen Marie's hands this 'dear charming Queen' develops out of all recognition. She becomes a complex, contradictory human being, wearing floating veils and a motoring cap, at once 'splendid and absurd'. We see her posing in bed under a top light; dramatizing herself melodramatically; luxuriating in the flattery of sycophants; declaiming poetry through a megaphone to ships at sea; waving a napkin to grazing cows whom she mistakes for loyal subjects—deluded and fantastic, but at the same time generous and sincere. So the picture shapes itself, until all the different elements are shown in action. Two scenes stand out with genuine vitality—one where the romantic impulsive old lady seeks to enchant an ancient flame—the late Duke of Edinburgh—by dragging him to a hill-top where hidden minstrels spring out from behind rocks and bawl native melodies into his disgusted ears; the other where Queen Elizabeth of Roumania and Queen Emma of Holland sit at their needlework while the Italian secretary reads aloud. He chose Maeterlinck, and as he declaimed

the famous passage where the Queen bee soars higher and higher in her nuptial ecstasy till at last the male insect, ravaged by passion, drops dismembered to the ground. Carmen Sylva raised her beautiful white hands in rapture. But Queen Emma gave one look at the reader and went on hemming her duster.

Vivid as it all is, nobody is going to claim that Queen Marie ranks with Saint Simon or with Proust. Yet it would be equally absurd to deny that by virtue of her pen she has won her freedom. She is no longer a royal queen in a cage. She ranges the world, free like any other human being to laugh, to scold, to say what she likes, to be what she is. And if she has escaped, so too thanks to her, have we. Royalty is no longer quite so royal. Uncle Bertie, Onkel, Aunty, Nando, and the rest are not mere effigies bowing and smiling, opening bazaars, expressing exalted sentiments and remembering faces always with the same sweet smile. They are violent and eccentric; charming and ill-tempered; some have bloodshot eyes; others handle flowers with a peculiar tenderness. In short, they are very like ourselves. They live as we do. And the effect is surprising. A month or two ago, the late Duke of Edinburgh was as dead as the Dodo. Now, thanks to his daughter, we know that he liked beer; that he liked to sip it while he read his paper; that he hated music; that he loathed Roumanian melodies; and that he sat on a rock in a rage.

But what will be the consequences if this familiarity between them and us increases? Can we go on bowing and curtsying to people who are just like ourselves? Are we not already a little ashamed of the pushing and the staring now that we know from these two stout volumes that one at least of the animals can talk? We begin to wish that the Zoo should be abolished; that the royal animals should be given the run of some wider pasturage—a royal Whipsnade. And another question suggests itself.

When a gift for writing lodges in a family, it often persists and improves; and if Queen Marie's descendants improve upon her gift as much as she has improved upon Queen Victoria's is it not quite possible that a real poet will be King of England in a hundred years time? And suppose that among the autumn books of 2034 is *Prometheus Unbound*, by George the Sixth, or *Wuthering Heights*, by Elizabeth the Second, what will be the effect upon their royal subjects? Will the British Empire survive? Words are dangerous things let us remember. A republic might be brought into being by a poem.



## THE SCIENTIFIC QUEST

From the first deduction of radio-activity to its first subjection to human purposes measures little more than a quarter century.

From *The World Set Free*—H. G. Wells

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I should like to express my very warm appreciation of the address delivered by Dr Bhabha. He has discussed some very fascinating subjects and I am trying to correlate what he has said to the kind of problems we have to face.

Jawaharlal Nehru

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The white man drew a small circle in the sand and told the red man, 'That is what the Indian knows', and drawing a big circle around the small one, 'This is what the white man knows'. The Indian took the stick and swept an immense ring round both the circles, 'This is where the white man and the red man knows nothing.'

From *The People, Yes*—Carl Sandburg



# THE TRAGIC NUPTIALS

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

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WE will now consider the manner in which the impregnation of the queen-bee comes to pass. Here again nature has taken extraordinary measures to favour the union of males with females of a different stock; a strange law, whereto nothing would seem to compel her; a caprice, or initial inadvertence, perhaps, whose reparation calls for the most marvellous forces her activity knows.

If she had devoted half the genius she lavishes on crossed fertilization and other arbitrary desires to making life more certain, to alleviating pain, to softening death and warding off horrible accidents, the universe would probably have presented an enigma less incomprehensible, less pitiable, than the one we are striving to solve. But our consciousness, and the interest we take in existence, must grapple, not with what might have been, but with what is.

Around the virgin queen, and dwelling with her in the hive, are hundreds of exuberant males, forever drunk on honey; the sole reason for their existence being one act of love. But, notwithstanding the incessant contact of two desires that elsewhere invariably triumph over every obstacle, the union never takes place in the hive, nor has it been possible to bring about the impregnation of a captive queen. While she lives in their midst the lovers about her know not what she is. They seek her in space, in the remote depths of the horizon, never suspecting that they have but this moment quitted her, have shared the same comb with her, have brushed against her, perhaps, in the eagerness of their departure. One might almost believe that those wonderful eyes of theirs, that cover their

head as though with a glittering helmet, do not recognize or desire her save when she soars in the blue. Each day, from noon till three, when the sun shines resplendent, this plumed horde sallies forth in search of the bride, who is indeed more royal, more difficult of conquest, than the most inaccessible princess of fairy legend; for twenty or thirty tribes will hasten from all the neighbouring cities, her court thus consisting of more than ten thousand suitors; and from these ten thousand one alone will be chosen for the unique kiss of an instant that shall wed him to death no less than to happiness; while the others will fly helplessly round the intertwined pair, and soon will perish without ever again beholding this prodigious and fatal apparition. . . .

Very few, I imagine, have profaned the secret of the queen-bee's wedding, which comes to pass in the infinite, radiant circles of a beautiful sky. But we are able to witness the hesitating departure of the bride-elect and the murderous return of the bride.

However great her impatience, she will yet choose her day and her hour, and linger in the shadow of the portal till a marvellous morning fling open wide the nuptial spaces in the depths of the great azure vault. She loves the moment when drops of dew still moisten the leaves and the flowers, when the last fragrance of dying dawn still wrestles with burning day, like a maiden caught in the arms of a heavy warrior; when through the silence of approaching noon is heard, once and again, a transparent cry that has lingered from sunrise.

Then she appears on the threshold—in the midst of indifferent foragers, if she have left sisters in the hive, or surrounded by a delirious throng of workers, should it be impossible to fill her place.

She starts her flight backwards, returns twice or thrice to the alighting-board; and then, having definitely fixed in

her mind the exact situation and aspect of the kingdom she has never yet seen from without, she departs like an arrow to the zenith of the blue. She soars to a height, a luminous zone, that other bees attain at no period of their life. Far away, caressing their idleness in the midst of the flowers, the males have beheld the apparition, have breathed the magnetic perfume that spreads from group to group till every apiary near is instinct with it. Immediately crowds collect, and follow her into the sea of gladness, whose limpid boundaries ever recede. She, drunk with her wings, obeying the magnificent law of the race that chooses her lover, and enacts that the strongest alone shall attain her in the solitude of the ether, she rises still; and, for the first time in her life, the blue morning air rushes into her stigmata singing its song, like the blood of heaven, in the myriad tubes of the tracheal sacs, nourished on space, that fill the centre of her body. She rises still. A region must be found unhaunted by birds, that else might profane the mystery. She rises still; and already the ill-assorted troop below are dwindling and falling asunder. The feeble, infirm, the aged, unwelcome, ill-fed, who have flown from inactive or impoverished cities, these renounce the pursuit and disappear in the void. Only a small, indefatigable cluster remain, suspended in infinite opal. She summons her wings for one final effort; and now the chosen of incomprehensible forces has reached her, has seized her, and bounding aloft with united impetus, the ascending spiral of their intertwined flight whirls for one second in the hostile madness of love. . . .

Let us return to the tragic nuptials of the queen. Here it is evidently nature's wish, in the interests of crossed fertilization, that the union of the drone and the queen-bee should be possible only in the open sky. But her desires blend network-fashion, and her most valued laws have to pass through the meshes of other laws, which, in

their turn, the moment after, are compelled to pass through the first.

In the sky she has planted so many dangers—cold winds, storm-currents, birds, insects, drops of water, all of which also obey invincible laws—that she must of necessity arrange for this union to be as brief as possible. It is so, thanks to the startlingly sudden death of the male. One embrace suffices; the rest all enacts itself in the very flanks of the bride.

She descends from the azure heights and returns to the hive, trailing behind her, like an oriflamme, the unfolded entrails of her lover. Some writers pretend that the bees manifest great joy at this return so big with promise—Buchner, among others, giving a detailed account of it. I have many a time lain in wait for the queen-bee's return, and I confess that I have never noticed any unusual emotion except in the case of a young queen who had gone forth at the head of a swarm, and represented the unique hope of a newly founded and still empty city. In that instance the workers were all wildly excited, and rushed to meet her. But as a rule they appear to forget her, even though the future of their city will often be no less imperiled. They act with consistent prudence in all things, till the moment when they authorize the massacre of the rival queens. That point reached, their instinct halts; and there is, as it were, a gap in their foresight. They appear to be wholly indifferent. They raise their heads; recognize, probably, the murderous tokens of impregnation; but, still mistrustful, manifest none of the gladness our expectation had pictured. Being positive in their ways, and slow at illusion, they probably need further proofs before permitting themselves to rejoice. Why endeavour to render too logical, or too human, the feelings of little creatures so different from ourselves? Neither among the bees nor among any other animals

that have a ray of our intellect, do things happen with the precision our books record. Too many circumstances remain unknown to us. Why try to depict the bees as more perfect than they are, by saying that which is not? Those who would deem them more interesting did they resemble ourselves, have not yet truly realized what it is that should awaken the interest of a sincere mind. The aim of the observer is not to surprise, but to comprehend; and to point out the gaps existing in an intellect, and the signs of a cerebral organization different from our own, is more curious by far than the relating of mere marvels concerning it.

But this indifference is not shared by all; and when the breathless queen has reached the alighting-board, some groups will form and accompany her into the hive; where the sun, hero of every festivity in which the bees take part, is entering with little timid steps, and bathing in azure and shadow the waxen walls and curtains of honey. Nor does the new bride, indeed, show more concern than her people, there being not room for many emotions in her narrow, barbarous, practical brain. She has but one thought, which is to rid herself as quickly as possible of the embarrassing souvenirs her consort has left her, whereby her movements are hampered. She seats herself on the threshold, and carefully strips off the useless organs, that are borne far away by the workers; for the male has given her all he possessed, and much more than she requires. She retains only, in her spermatheca, the seminal liquid where millions of germs are floating, which, until her last day, will issue one by one, as the eggs pass by, and in the obscurity of her body accomplish the mysterious union of the male and female element, whence the worker-bees are born. Through a curious inversion, it is she who furnishes the male principle, and the drone who provides the female. Two days after the union she lays her first eggs,

and her people immediately surround her with the most particular care. From that moment, possessed of a dual sex, having within her inexhaustible male, she begins her veritable life; she will never again leave the hive, unless to accompany a swarm; and her fecundity will cease only at the approach of death.

Prodigious nuptials these, the most fairy-like that can be conceived, azure and tragic, raised high above life by the impetus of desire: imperishable and terrible, unique and bewildering, solitary and infinite. An admirable ecstasy, wherein death supervening in all that our sphere has of most limpid and loveliest, in virginal, limitless space, stamps the instant of happiness in the sublime transparence of the great sky; purifying in that immaculate light the something of wretchedness that always hovers around love, rendering the kiss one that can never be forgotten; and, content this time with moderate tithe, proceeding herself, with hands that are almost maternal, to introduce and unite, in one body, for a long and inseparable future, two little fragile lives.

Profound truth has not this poetry, but possesses another that we are less apt to grasp, which, however, we should end, perhaps, by understanding and loving. Nature has not gone out of her way to provide these two 'abbreviated atoms', as Pascal would call them, with a resplendent marriage, or an ideal moment of love. . .

'But must we always, then,' the poet will wonder, 'rejoice in regions that are loftier than the truth?'

Yes, in all things, at all times, let us rejoice, not in regions loftier than the truth, for that were impossible, but in regions higher than the little truths that our eyes can seize. Should a chance, a recollection, an illusion, a passion,—in a word, should any motive whatever cause an object to reveal itself to us in a more beautiful light than to others, let that motive be first of all dear to us. It may

only be error, perhaps; but this error will not prevent the moment wherein we are likeliest to perceive its real beauty. The beauty we lend it directs our attention to its veritable beauty and grandeur, which, derived as they are from the relation wherein every object must of necessity stand to general, eternal forces and laws, might otherwise escape observation. The faculty of admiring which an illusion may have created within us will serve for the truth that must come, be it sooner or later. It is with the words, the feelings, and ardour created by ancient and imaginary beauties, that humanity welcomes today truths which perhaps would have never been born, which might not have been able to find so propitious a home, had these sacrificed illusions not first of all dwelt in, and kindled, the heart and the reason whereinto these truths should descend. Happy the eyes that need no illusion to see that the spectacle is great! It is illusion that teaches the others to look, to admire, and rejoice. And look as high as they will, they never can look too high. Truth rises as they draw nearer; they draw nearer when they admire. And whatever the heights may be whercon they rejoice, this rejoicing can never take place in the void, or above the unknown and eternal truth that rests over all things like beauty in suspense.

# *THE PRESENT CONCEPT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD*

*H. J. BHABHA*

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I wish to express on behalf of all of you, and myself our great appreciation of the fact that our Prime Minister has decided to be present with us on this occasion. That he flew to Bangalore yesterday, and will fly immediately after this meeting to Bombay and thence to England on a mission of prime importance, is a measure of his great personal interest in the development of science in India. Were it not for this, scientific development would receive much less encouragement and support than it does, in spite of the fact that only science and technology can solve the immense problems facing the country, the problems of food shortage, low standard of living and illiteracy.

The multitude and variety of the phenomena of Nature, which still fill us with astonishment, must have bewildered and awed primitive man. It is not strange that he should have sought, on the one hand, to gain some control over them by investing them with anthropomorphic personality which could be influenced by entreaty and prayer, and on the other to alter his immediate physical environment so as to provide some little shelter or margin of safety against the more hostile acts of nature. This urge eventually led to the early civilizations and the later developments following from them. These civilizations depended on a considerable body of practical knowledge acquired empirically, and some highly developed arts and crafts. A few crucial inventions such as that of the horse harness in China, or of the zero in mathematics in India, had a profound influence on their historical development.

But with a few notable exceptions, scientific activity in the modern sense did not begin till the Italian renaissance.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century Leonardo da Vinci wrote in one of his manuscripts:

‘There is no certainty where one can neither apply any of the mathematical sciences nor any of those which are based on the mathematical sciences.’

This was not the mere expression of a specialist extolling his own subject, and I quote this sentence because it was written by one who is recognized as perhaps the most versatile genius the world has known, one who had a greater mastery of all the various arts and sciences of his time than anyone since. It expresses the new spirit of the times, a spirit which was to lead eventually to that vast development which is modern science and technology. ‘The mathematical sciences’ for Leonardo consisted of what had been handed down of Greek mathematics, while by the sciences based on the mathematical sciences he understood the applications of geometry to optics and mechanics. What Leonardo wished to emphasize, I feel, was that as long as an observation of a natural phenomenon remained couched in qualitative terms it would not be definite enough to build on, and only by introducing accurate measurement and quantitative relations into it could one be certain that it was right or wrong within the limits of accuracy of the measurements. Some four centuries later Lord Kelvin was to say:

‘When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it, but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind.’

Once this general approach received fairly wide acceptance, the development of science in the modern sense was inevitable.

It was found quite soon that certain properties, which could be stated in terms of exact measurement, were common to many objects. In certain cases, therefore, it became possible to state a general property without specifying the particular object to which it belonged. Such general properties could then be regarded as laws or regularities of nature which all objects of a certain type satisfy. One such regularity or law of nature was the one discovered by Archimedes, that the loss in weight of a body immersed in water is equal to the weight of the water displaced. Archimedes was indeed one of the shining forerunners of modern science. It is nevertheless interesting to note that his law is a law in statics. Laws involving the motions of objects were to come much later. An example of a dynamical law is the regularity discovered by Galileo, that all heavy bodies fall the same distance under gravity in a given interval of time irrespective of their weight. Other regularities of the same type, but which involve more complicated relations between the objects, are the three laws of Kepler on the motion of the planets.

It is important to note that laws or regularities of nature of the type just mentioned are merely empirical statements of properties observed to be common to a large number of objects. They are all unconnected with each other. In order to connect up such regularities with each other it may be necessary to formulate certain more abstract principles or postulates from which the various observed regularities can be deduced.

Newton's fundamental laws of motion exemplify this new approach. Consider his first law:

'Every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless it is compelled to change that state by a force impressed upon it.'

Assuming that we understand intuitively what is meant by

rest or uniform motion in a right line, we may well ask ourselves what is meant by an impressed force. If we turn to the definitions which Newton has placed a few pages earlier at the beginning of his *Principia*, we find the answer in Definition IV:

‘An impressed force is an action exerted upon a body, in order to change its state, either of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line.’

Expressed in this way Newton’s first law would appear to be a tautology: One states that a condition A exists unless interfered with by the existence of B. While B is defined to be present when the condition A is interfered with. It is not the purpose of this discussion to minimize in any way Newton’s achievement which is one of the greatest monuments in the history of science, but to understand the real nature of his laws. Let us assume that force can be defined in some other way than in the above definition so as not to make the first law a tautology. One might then imagine the first law to be a statement which we arrive at from direct observation through some process of induction. For example, in commenting on his first law Newton writes:

‘Projectiles continue in their motions, so far as they are not retarded by the resistance of the air, or impelled downwards by the force of gravity. A top, whose parts by their cohesion are continually drawn aside from rectilinear motions, does not cease its rotation, otherwise than as it is retarded by the air. The greater bodies of the planets and comets, meeting with less resistance in freer spaces, preserve their motions both progressive and circular for a much longer time.’

The inference is that one may conclude by induction that if we could take a body into space to a very great distance from all other material bodies then it would either remain

at rest or move in uniform motion in a straight line. We know today that such an induction cannot be made, and may indeed not even be true for the actual world. While it is possible mathematically to assume a world in which Newton's laws are strictly true, it is equally possible mathematically to think of worlds in which they are not. This analysis shows us that strictly speaking *Newton's laws of motion and gravitation are abstract mathematical statements which he quite rightly calls axioms*. And if they came to be regarded as objectively true it is because the behaviour of objects which could be deduced from them by mathematical reasoning agreed with our direct observations. For example, one could deduce from Newton's laws the regularity observed by Galileo concerning the fall of bodies, the three regularities observed by Kepler on the motion of the planets, and a host of other phenomena. Quite appropriately, his epoch-making work was called *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*.

The great importance of the contribution of Newton to the development of physics is that it introduced a new approach into science. It led to the acceptance of the position that the ideas which are to be regarded as fundamental for the understanding of nature are certain abstract concepts or postulates which cannot be proved directly, and not the directly observable regularities of nature which can be deduced from them. This position was accepted because it allows one to order different empirically found regularities of nature into a unified logical scheme which would not otherwise be possible.

A consequence of this approach is that any newly discovered fact of nature which does not fit into the existing scheme of physics may necessitate a complete change of the fundamental postulates. Since, however, the old postulates were such that a very large body of observed facts about nature could be deduced from them, it follows

that they must still have a restricted validity under certain circumstances, and be deducible as approximations from the new postulates. Although, therefore, every new discovery which does not fit into the old scheme necessitates a complete change of the fundamental postulates, the change is always from a certain set of concepts to a set of more general concepts. As one goes deeper and deeper into the understanding of nature by co-ordinating all the known facts into one scheme by the use of wider concepts as the basic postulates, the old fundamental postulates become, in a sense, a part of the super-structure, taking a place in between the new fundamental concepts and the directly observed regularities of nature.

As an example of this process of generalization of the basic concepts, one may recapitulate the well-known development from the pre-relativity concepts of an absolute space and an absolute time to the more general concept of the unified space-time of the theory of relativity. In pre-relativity physics, in recognition of the arbitrariness of the orientation of the three axes of the frame of reference, the natural laws were formulated so as to be invariant for all rotations of the space axes. Time, on the other hand, was assumed to be absolute and the same for all observers. However, in consequence of the observation that the velocity of light  $c$  is the same for all observers in uniform motion relative to each other, the idea of absolute rest has had to be discarded leading to the principle of relativity, which demands that the laws of nature should be so formulated as to have the same form for all observers moving relative to each other with uniform velocity. Stated mathematically, the special theory requires that the fundamental equations shall be invariant for all transformations of the Lorentz group, whereas in pre-relativity physics the laws were only invariant for all transformations

of the three dimensional rotation group, which is a subgroup of the Lorentz group.

The above example also serves to show how the basic concepts of a theory may be radically changed, while still retaining most of the notions of the earlier theory, but recognizing them to be of limited validity, true not universally but only in certain circumstances. Thus, the absolute distinction between a time-interval and a space-interval in pre-relativity physics is replaced in relativity theory by the absolute distinction between time-like and space-like intervals, while the notion of the absoluteness of time of the earlier theory is seen to be approximately correct in the new theory for a group of observers moving relative to each other with velocities small compared with that of light.

A widening of the basic concepts automatically reduces the amount of arbitrariness in the theory. For example, in pre-relativity theory the force between two bodies could be taken to be entirely arbitrary. In relativity theory, on the contrary, the force has necessarily to be conveyed through the medium of a field. The basic differential equations which any field has to satisfy in relativistic theory are drastically restricted in their variety by the same requirement of relativistic invariance, so that there is a very limited freedom in the choice of the form of the force which can be exerted between two particles.

When a science reaches an advanced stage, as physics undoubtedly has today, the facts which can be discovered by direct observation become more and more meagre. We may expect, for example, to be able to discover by experiment the masses of the various types of elementary particles, the different processes which they undergo, their general behaviour in passing through substances of different types and so on. It is, however, inconceivable that an equation like the Dirac equation could be deduced by

direct observation in some such way as Maxwell deduced the equations of the electro-magnetic field. There is, therefore, no other path open to us but to proceed along the lines I have indicated above. In such an advanced stage however we have certain compensating advantages. We have a number of theories to fall back upon with the knowledge that each correctly describes a large body of experimental evidence in certain circumstances. We can, therefore, attempt to proceed by evolving new theories which reduce to the previously known ones in the circumstances in which the latter are known to be correct. As I have stated on a previous occasion then 'The aim of theoretical physics must be to find a complete set of mutually consistent mathematical postulates or axioms from which the properties of nature, meaning thereby the result of every conceivable experiment, can be deduced in the form of a series of theorems. It is, however, necessary in order to achieve the last step of comparing the mathematical statements of the theorems with the results of observation that the basic mathematical postulates must be supplemented by a set of prescriptions about the interpretation of the mathematical formalism. It is clearly not sufficient that the postulates should be consistent and their correctness from the point of view of physics can only be demonstrated by an agreement between the deductions and the results of experiment.'

It is most important to distinguish this approach from the one which assumes that one can arrive at the laws of nature by pure thought and epistemological reasoning. The latter approach has neither met with much success, nor proved particularly fruitful in promoting an understanding of the physical world. In our approach, on the contrary, we recognized that it may be possible to build many logically consistent theories which have nevertheless nothing to do with the actual structure of the physical

world. Theories in pure mathematics provide many such examples. If any set of axioms or postulates can claim to correspond to reality it is because the deductions from them stand the test of agreeing with the results of experiment.

We must turn now to review the development of our picture of the physical world resulting from recent discoveries. It had already been established by the end of the last century that the multitude of substances in nature are all made up by the chemical combinations of a certain number of basic substances called the chemical elements. The smallest unit of a given chemical element was called an atom. The combinations of these atoms, either of the same element or of different elements gives rise to chemical compounds, which compose the body of all the substances that we meet in nature.

Investigation on the conduction of electricity through gases led Thomson towards the end of the last century to the discovery of the fact that this conduction could be attributed to a particle of negative charge having always the same ratio of charge to mass irrespective of the substance under investigation. . . . Subsequent researches have . . . established that there was a type of particle, called an electron, which always possessed the same negative charge  $e$  and the same mass  $m$ , which was somehow contained in atoms, and whose behaviour was responsible for the phenomenon of electricity.

Since an atom is an electrically neutral body, it follows that if electrons are contained in it, then it must also contain an equal amount of positive charge. It was not clear at the time how the electrons and the positive charges of electricity were distributed in an atom. For example, were the electrons embedded in a uniform medium of positive electricity, rather like plums in a cake? Or were they like planets revolving round a sun of positive charge?

The answer to this important question was furnished by Rutherford in 1911. He showed by a study of the scattering of  $\alpha$  particles that the true picture of the atom was to consider it like a solar system in which the electrons move like planets round a heavy centre called the nucleus in which all the positive charge and most of the mass of the atom is concentrated. Since the negative charge inside the atom depended on the number of electrons in it. . . . It was soon established that the number of units of positive charge on the nucleus determined the chemical properties of the atom, and that there were 92 such chemical elements ranging from the lightest, hydrogen, to the heaviest, uranium, with 1 to 92 positive units of charge on the nucleus respectively.

The mass of the nucleus of the lightest element, hydrogen, containing just one unit of positive electricity, was found to be always precisely the same, and some 1840 times the mass of the electron. Since this nucleus of hydrogen never broke up into smaller fragments, it became convenient to regard it as a new type of fundamental entity, a new elementary particle, called a proton.

Further researches showed that the mass of any atom was always almost precisely an integral multiple of the mass of the proton, while its charge was a smaller integral multiple of the charge of the proton. These facts led one at the time to accept a picture of the nucleus which made it appear to be made up of protons and electrons only. The number of protons was sufficient to make up the mass of the nucleus, while a certain number of electrons were added inside the nucleus to neutralize the charge of some of the protons and make the total positive charge equal to the actual charge of the particular nucleus. Thus round about 1930, our picture of the physical world appeared to be remarkably simple. The whole material world was thought of as made up of just two types of ele-

mentary particles, protons and electrons. By suitable arrangements of these one built up the atoms of the chemical elements. And from suitable arrangements of the latter every other material thing that was found in nature. Light, or in more general terms, electro-magnetic radiation, or photons, and gravitation, were the only two other physical entities found in nature.

A scientist at that time could have thought, as many did think, that when one knew the mathematical laws governing the behaviour of these four elementary types of physical entities, the protons, electrons, photons and gravitation, one would know everything of a fundamental nature that there was to know of the physical world, and physics in principle would be a subject which had reached its destination. The subsequent development of the last twenty years shows us how far this belief was from the truth. It shows in a striking manner that however great the successes of a theory, unless this success is complete and total, it is always possible that something very important may have slipped through the net. The apparently small but persistent difficulties or inconsistencies in a theory, or small discrepancies between theory and observation, may be essentially unbridgeable within the framework of the basic concepts of that theory and yield the clue to new ideas.

What were these difficulties of which I have spoken? . . .

We see now that at least nine different types of elementary physical entities exist in nature, while the existence of two more is almost certain. While experiments may give us information about the masses of these particles, their mutual interactions and the processes in which they take part, it seems inconceivable that an experiment would enable us to deduce directly the mathematical equation describing the behaviour of any such particle. We can only hope to set up the mathematical

equations governing the behaviour of these particles by taking as our guides certain well-known principles, as for example the principle of relativity and the ideas underlying quantum mechanics. Even such a clearly defined property as the spin of an elementary particle is not something we can hope to measure directly in the case of particles like the meson but must infer it from considerations of the processes in which they take part, by comparing the behaviour of particles of different spins as predicted by theory with the experimental observations.

The circumstance that there are a dozen different types of elementary particles in nature would lead us to expect that there may be many more, and indeed with our present knowledge we cannot exclude the possibility that there may be an infinite number of them. This does not mean, however, that we shall never be able to obtain a complete description of them all. There are, for example, an infinity of lines in the spectrum of hydrogen and yet we possess today not only a formula which in one neat expression contains the energies of all these lines but also a mathematical theory which allows us to calculate all the stable states of the hydrogen atom, other properties such as the scattering of electrons by atoms, their creation by photons, and even more complicated properties like the nature of the chemical bond between two hydrogen atoms. It is, therefore, quite possible that with increasing knowledge we may be able to find the formula which gives us the masses of all the elementary particles and the general principles which will allow us to deduce the equation satisfied by a particle of any particular mass. . . .

It is clear that we are now penetrating into a new level of nature which was practically unknown some twenty years ago. I have pointed out earlier that although there may be an infinite number of types of elementary particles nevertheless this fact in itself does not necessarily force the

conclusion that we will never be able to describe nature fully or to explain the physical world exhaustively. On the other hand we cannot be certain with our present knowledge that a complete mathematical theory of the physical world can be based upon a finite number of postulates, and if this were not so we would be faced with a situation in which we could never hope to give an exhaustive description of everything there is in nature, but only to extend with the flow of time the region which we had explored and understood.

## SHORT STORIES

Each one of these stories represents—for me, at least—a part of the world; a world that I can share with the author.

From the Preface to *Great English Short Stories*  
—Christopher Isherwood

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The further analysis is for that matter almost always the torch of rapture and victory, as the artist's firm hand grasps and plays it—I mean, naturally, of the smothered rapture and the obscure victory, enjoyed and celebrated not in the street but before some innermost shrine; the odds being a hundred to one, in almost any connexion, that it doesn't arrive by any easy first process at the *best* residuum of truth.

From the Preface to *What Maisie Knew*  
—Henry James



# THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

HENRY JAMES

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(i)

It was one of the secret opinions, such as we all have, of Peter Brench that his main success in life would have consisted in his never having committed himself about the work, as it was called, of his friend Morgan Mallow. This was a subject on which it was, to the best of his belief, impossible with veracity to quote him, and it was nowhere on record that he had, in the connexion, on any occasion and in any embarrassment, either lied or spoken the truth. Such a triumph had its honour even for a man of other triumphs—a man who had reached fifty, who had escaped marriage, who had lived within his means, who had been in love with Mrs Mallow for years without breathing it, and who, last but not least, had judged himself once for all. He had so judged himself in fact that he felt an extreme and general humility to be his proper portion; yet there was nothing that made him think so well of his parts as the course he had steered so often through the shallows just mentioned. It became thus a real wonder that the friends in whom he had most confidence were just those with whom he had most reserves. He couldn't tell Mrs Mallow—or at least he supposed, excellent man, he couldn't—that she was the one beautiful reason he had never married; any more than he could tell her husband that the sight of the multiplied marbles in that gentleman's studio was an affliction of which even time had never blunted the edge. His victory, however, as I have intimated, in regard to these productions, was not simply in his not having let it out that he deplored

them; it was, remarkably, in his not having kept it in by anything else.

The whole situation, among these good people, was verily a marvel, and there was probably not such another for a long way from the spot that engages us—the point at which the soft declivity of Hampstead began at that time to confess in broken accents to Saint John's Wood. He despised Mallow's statues and adored Mallow's wife, and yet was distinctly fond of Mallow, to whom, in turn, he was equally dear. Mrs Mallow rejoiced in the statues—though she preferred, when pressed, the busts; and if she was visibly attached to Peter Brench it was because of his affection for Morgan. Each loved the other moreover for the love borne in each case to Lancelot, whom the Mallows respectively cherished as their only child and whom the friend of their fireside identified as the third—but decidedly the handsomest—of his godsons. Already in the old years it had come to that—that no one, for such a relation, could possibly have occurred to any of them, even to the baby itself, but Peter. There was luckily a certain independence, of the pecuniary sort, all round; the Master could never otherwise have spent his solemn *Wanderjahre* in Florence and Rome, and continued by the Thames as well as by the Arno and the Tiber to add unpurchased group to group and model, for what was too apt to prove in the event mere love, fancy-heads of celebrities either too busy or too buried—too much of the age or too little of it—to sit. Neither could Peter, lounging in almost daily, have found time to keep the whole complicated tradition so alive by his presence. He was massive but mild, the depositary of these mysteries—large and loose and ruddy and curly, with deep tones, deep eyes, deep pockets, to say nothing of the habit of long pipes, soft hats and brownish greyish weather-faded clothes, apparently always the same.

He had 'written', it was known, but had never spoken, never spoken in particular of that; and he had the air (since, as was believed, he continued to write) of keeping it up in order to have something more—as if he hadn't at the worst enough—to be silent about. Whatever his air, at any rate, Peter's occasional unmentioned prose and verse were quite truly the result of an impulse to maintain the purity of his taste by establishing still more firmly the right relation of fame to feebleness. The little green door of his domain was in a garden-wall on which the discoloured stucco made patches, and in the small detached villa behind it everything was old, the furniture, the servants, the books, the prints, the immemorial habits and the new improvements. The Mallows, at Carrara Lodge, were within ten minutes, and the studio there was on their little land to which they had added, in their happy faith, for building it. This was the good fortune, if it was not the ill, of her having brought him in marriage a portion that put them in a manner at their ease and enabled them thus, on their side, to keep it up. And they did keep it up—they always had—the infatuated sculptor and his wife, for whom nature had refined on the impossible by relieving them of the sense of the difficult. Morgan had at all events everything of the sculptor but the spirit of Phidias—the brown velvet, the becoming *beretto*, the 'plastic' presence, the fine fingers, the beautiful accent in Italian and the old Italian factotum. He seemed to make up for everything when he addressed Egidio with the *tu* and waved him to turn one of the rotary pedestals of which the place was full. They were tremendous Italians at Carrara Lodge, and the secret of the part played by this fact in Peter's life was in a large degree that it gave him, sturdy Briton as he was, just the amount of 'going abroad' he could bear. The Mallows were all his Italy, but it was in a measure for Italy he

liked them. His one worry was that Lance—to which they had shortened his godson—was, in spite of a public school, perhaps a shade too Italian. Morgan meanwhile looked like somebody's flattering idea of somebody's own person as expressed in the great room provided at the Uffizi Museum for the general illustration of that idea by eminent hands. The Master's sole regret that he hadn't been born rather to the brush than to the chisel sprang from his wish that he might have contributed to that collection.

It appeared with time at any rate to be to the brush that Lance had been born; for Mrs Mallow, one day when the boy was turning twenty, broke it to their friend, who shared, to the last delicate morsel, their problems and pains, that it seemed as if nothing would really do but that he should embrace the career. It had been impossible longer to remain blind to the fact that he was gaining no glory at Cambridge, where Brench's own college had for a year tempered its tone to him as for Brench's own sake. Therefore why renew the vain form of preparing him for the impossible? The impossible—it had become clear—was that he should be anything but an artist.

'Oh dear, dear!' said poor Peter.

'Don't you believe in it?' asked Mrs Mallow, who still at more than forty, had her violet velvet eyes, her creamy satin skin and her silken chestnut hair.

'Believe in what?'

'Why in Lance's passion.'

'I don't know what you mean by "believing in it". I've never been unaware, certainly, of his disposition, from his earliest time, to daub and draw; but I confess I've hoped it would burn out.'

'But why should it,' she sweetly smiled, 'with his wonderful heredity? Passion is passion—though of course

indeed *you*, dear Peter, know nothing of that. Has the Master's ever burned out?'

Peter looked off a little and, in his familiar formless way, kept up for a moment, a sound between a smothered whistle and a subdued hum. 'Do you think he's going to be another Master?'

She seemed scarce prepared to go that length, yet she had on the whole a marvellous trust. 'I know what you mean by that. Will it be a career to incur the jealousies and provoke the machinations that have been at times almost too much for his father? Well—say it may be, since nothing but clap-trap, in these dreadful days, *can*, it would seem, make its way, and since, with the curse of refinement and distinction, one may easily find one's self begging one's bread. Put it at the worst—say he *has* the misfortune to wing his flight further than the vulgar taste of his stupid countrymen, can follow. Think, all the same, of the happiness—the same the Master has had. He'll *know*.'

Peter looked rueful. 'Ah but *what* will he know?'

'Quiet joy!' cried Mrs Mallow, quite impatient and turning away.

(ii)

He had of course before long to meet the boy himself on it and to hear that practically everything was settled. Lance was not to go up again, but to go instead to Paris where, since the die was cast, he would find the best advantages. Peter had always felt he must be taken as he was, but had never perhaps found him so much of that pattern as on this occasion. 'You chuck Cambridge then altogether? Doesn't that seem rather a pity?'

Lance would have been like his father, to his friend's sense, had he had less humour, and like his mother had

he had more beauty. Yet it was a good middle way for Peter that, in the modern manner, he was, to the eye, rather the young stockbroker than the young artist. The youth reasoned that it was a question of time—there was such a mill to go through, such an awful lot to learn. He had talked with fellows and had judged. ‘One has got, today,’ he said, ‘don’t you see? to know.’

His interlocutor, at this, gave a groan. ‘Oh hang it, *don’t* know!’

Lance wondered. ‘“Don’t”? Then what’s the use—?’  
‘The use of what?’

‘Why of anything. Don’t you think I’ve talent?’

Peter smoked away for a little in silence; then went on: ‘It isn’t knowledge, it’s ignorance that—as we’ve been beautifully told—is bliss.’

‘Don’t you think I’ve talent?’ Lance repeated.

Peter, with his trick of queer kind demonstrations, passed his arm round his godson and held him a moment. ‘How do I know?’

‘Oh,’ said the boy, ‘if it’s your own ignorance you’re defending——!’

Again, for a pause, on the sofa, his godfather smoked. ‘It isn’t. I’ve the misfortune to be omniscient.’

‘Oh well,’ Lance laughed again, ‘if you know *too* much——!’

‘That’s what I do, and it’s why I’m so wretched.’

Lance’s gaiety grew. ‘Wretched? Come, I say!’

‘But I forgot,’ his companion went on—‘you’re not to know about that. It would indeed for you too make the too much. Only I’ll tell you what I’ll do.’ And Peter got up from the sofa. ‘If you’ll go up again I’ll pay your way at Cambridge.’

Lance stared, a little rueful in spite of being still more amused. ‘Oh Peter! You disapprove so of Paris?’

‘Well, I’m afraid of it.’

‘Ah I see!’

‘No, you don’t see—yet. But you will—that is you would. And you mustn’t.’

The young man thought more gravely. ‘But one’s innocence, already——!’

‘Is considerably damaged? Ah that won’t matter,’ Peter persisted—‘we’ll patch it up here.’

‘Here? Then you want me to stay at home?’

Peter almost confessed to it. ‘Well, we’re so right—we four together—just as we are. We’re so safe. Come, don’t spoil it.’

The boy, who had turned to gravity, turned from this, on the real pressure in his friend’s tone, to consternation. ‘Then what’s a fellow to be?’

‘My particular care. Come, old man’—and Peter now fairly pleaded—‘*I’ll* look out for you.’

Lance, who had remained on the sofa with his legs out and his hands in his pockets, watched him with eyes that showed suspicion. Then he got up. ‘You think there’s something the matter with me—that I can’t make a success.’

‘Well, what do you call a success?’

Lance thought again, ‘Why the best sort, I suppose, is to please one’s self. Isn’t that the sort that, in spite of cabals and things, is—in his own peculiar line—the Master’s?’

There were so much too many things in this question to be answered at once that they practically checked the discussion, which became particularly difficult in the light of such renewed proof that, though the young man’s innocence might, in the course of his studies, as he contended, somewhat have shrunken, the finer essence of it still remained. That was indeed exactly what Peter had assumed and what above all he desired; yet perversely enough it gave him a chill. The boy believed in the

cabals and things, believed in the peculiar line, believed, to be brief, in the Master. What happened a month or two later wasn't that he went up again at the expense of his godfather, but that a fortnight after he had got settled in Paris this personage sent him fifty pounds.

He had meanwhile at home, this personage, made up his mind to the worst; and what that might be had never yet grown quite so vivid to him as when on his presenting himself one Sunday night, as he never failed to do, for supper, the mistress of Carrara Lodge met him with an appeal as to—of all things in the world—the wealth of the Canadians. She was earnest, she was even excited. 'Are many of them *really* rich?'

He had to confess he knew nothing about them, but he often thought afterwards of that evening. The room in which they sat was adorned with sundry specimens of the Master's genius, which had the merit of being, as Mrs Mallow herself frequently suggested, of an unusually convenient size. They were indeed of dimensions not customary in the products of the chisel, and they had the singularity that, if the objects and features intended to be small looked too large, the objects and features intended to be large looked too small. The Master's idea, either in respect to this matter or to any other, had in almost any case, even after years, remained undiscoverable to Peter Brench. The creations that so failed to reveal it stood about on pedestals and brackets, on tables and shelves, a little staring white population, heroic, idyllic, allegoric, mythic, symbolic, in which 'scale' had so strayed and lost itself that the public square and the chimney-piece seemed to have changed places, the monumental being all diminutive and the diminutive all monumental; branches at any rate, markedly, of a family in which stature was rather oddly irrespective of function, age and sex. They formed, like the Mallows themselves,

poor Brench's own family—having at least to such a degree the note of familiarity. The occasion was one of those he had long ago learnt to know and to name—short flickers of the faint flame, soft gusts of a kinder air. Twice a year regularly the Master believed in his fortune, in addition to believing all the year round in his genius. This time it was to be made by a bereaved couple from Toronto, who had given him the handsomest order for a tomb to three lost children, each of whom they desired to see, in the composition, emblematically and characteristically represented.

Such was naturally the moral of Mrs Mallow's question: if their wealth was to be assumed, it was clear, from the nature of their admiration, as well as from mysterious hints thrown out (they were a little odd!) as to other possibilities of the same mortuary sort, that their further patronage might be; and not less evident that should the Master become at all known in those climes nothing would be more inevitable than a run of Canadian custom. Peter had been present before at runs of custom, colonial and domestic—present at each of those of which the aggregation had left so few gaps in the marble company round him; but it was his habit never at these junctures to prick the bubble in advance. The fond illusion, while it lasted, eased the wound of elections never won, the long ache of medals and diplomas carried off, on every chance, by every one but the Master; it moreover lighted the lamp that would glimmer through the next eclipse. They lived, however, after all—as it was always beautiful to see—at a height scarce susceptible of ups and downs. They strained a point at times charmingly, strained it to admit that the public was here and there not too bad to buy; but they would have been nowhere without their attitude that the Master was always too good to sell. They were at all events deliciously formed, Peter often said to him-

self, for their fate; the Master had a vanity, his wife had a loyalty, of which success, depriving these things of innocence, would have diminished the merit and the grace. Any one could be charming under a charm, and as he looked about him at a world of prosperity more void of proportion even than the Master's museum he wondered if he knew another pair that so completely escaped vulgarity.

'What a pity Lance isn't with us to rejoice!' Mrs Mallow on this occasion sighed at supper.

'We'll drink to the health of the absent,' her husband replied, filling his friend's glass and his own and giving a drop to their companion; 'but we must hope he's preparing himself for a happiness much less like this of ours this evening—excusable as I grant it to be!—than like the comfort we have always (whatever has happened or has not happened) been able to trust ourselves to enjoy. The comfort,' the Master explained, leaning back in the pleasant lamplight and firelight, holding up his glass and looking round at his marble family, quartered more or less, a monstrous brood, in every room—'the comfort of art in itself!'

Peter looked a little shyly at his wine. 'Well—I don't care what you may call it when a fellow doesn't—but Lance must learn to *sell*, you know. I drink to his acquisition of the secret of a base popularity!'

'Oh, yes, *he* must sell,' the boy's mother, who was still more, however, this seemed to give out, the Master's wife, rather artlessly allowed.

'Ah,' the sculptor after a moment confidently pronounced, 'Lance *will*. Don't be afraid. He'll have learnt.'

'Which is exactly what Peter,' Mrs Mallow gaily returned—'why in the world were you so perverse, Peter?—wouldn't when he told him hear of.'

Peter, when this lady looked at him with accusatory affection—a grace on her part not infrequent—could never find a word; but the Master, who was always all amenity and tact, helped him out now as he had often helped him before. ‘That’s his old idea, you know—on which we have so often differed; his theory that the artist should be all impulse and instinct. I go in of course for a certain amount of school. Not too much—but a due proportion. There’s where his protest came in,’ he continued to explain to his wife, ‘as against what *might*, don’t you see? be in question for Lance.’

‘Ah well’—and Mrs Mallow turned the violet eyes across the table at the subject of this discourse—‘he’s sure to have meant of course nothing but good. Only that wouldn’t have prevented him, if Lance *had* taken his advice, from being in effect horribly cruel.’

They had a sociable way of talking of him to his face as if he had been in the clay or—at most—in the plaster, and the Master was unfailingly generous. He might have been waving Egidio to make him revolve. ‘Ah but poor Peter wasn’t so wrong as to what it may after all come to that he *will* learn.’

‘Oh but nothing artistically bad,’ she urged—still, for poor Peter, arch and dewy.

‘Why just the little French tricks,’ said the Master: on which their friend had to pretend to admit, when pressed by Mrs Mallow, that these aesthetic vices had been the objects of his dread.

(iii)

‘I know now,’ Lance said to him the next year, ‘why you were so much against it.’ He had come back supposedly for a mere interval and was looking about him at Carrara Lodge, where indeed he had already on two or

three occasions since his expatriation briefly re-appeared. This had the air of a longer holiday. 'Something rather awful has happened to me. It *isn't* so very good to know.'

'I'm bound to say high spirits don't show in your face,' Peter was rather ruefully forced to confess. 'Still, are you very sure you do know?'

'Well, I at least know about as much as I can bear.' These remarks were exchanged in Peter's den, and the young man, smoking cigarettes, stood before the fire with his back against the mantel. Something of his bloom seemed really to have left him.

Poor Peter wondered. 'You're clear then as to what in particular I wanted you not to go for?'

'In particular?' Lance thought. 'It seems to me that in particular there can have been only one thing.'

They stood for a little sounding each other. 'Are you quite sure?'

'Quite sure I'm a beastly duffer? Quite—by this time.'

'Oh!'—and Peter turned away as if almost with relief.

'It's *that* that isn't pleasant to find out.'

'Oh I don't care for "that",' said Peter, presently coming round again. 'I mean I personally don't.'

'Yet I hope you can understand a little that I myself should!'

'Well, what do you mean by it?' Peter sceptically asked.

And on this Lance had to explain—how the upshot of his studies in Paris had inexorably proved a mere deep doubt of his means. These studies had so waked him up that a new light was in his eyes; but what the new light did was really to show him too much. 'Do you know what's the matter with me? I'm too horribly intelligent. Paris was really the last place for me. I've learnt what I can't do.'

Poor Peter stared—it was a staggerer; but even after they had had, on the subject, a longish talk in which the

boy brought out to the full the hard truth of his lesson, his friend betrayed less pleasure than usually breaks into a face to the happy tune of 'I told you so!' Poor Peter himself made now indeed so little a point of having told him so that Lance broke ground in a different place a day or two after. 'What was it then that—before I went—you were afraid I should find out?' This, however, Peter refused to tell him—on the ground that if he hadn't yet guessed perhaps he never would, and that in any case nothing at all for either of them was to be gained by giving the thing a name. Lance eyed him on this an instant with the bold curiosity of youth—with the air indeed of having in his mind two or three names, of which one or other would be right. Peter nevertheless, turning his back again, offered no encouragement, and when they parted afresh it was with some show of impatience on the side of the boy. Accordingly on their next encounter Peter saw at a glance that he had now, in the interval, divined and that to sound his note, he was only waiting till they should find themselves alone. This he had soon arranged and he then broke straight out. 'Do you know your conundrum has been keeping me awake? But in the watches of the night the answer came over me—so that, upon my honour, I quite laughed out. Had you been supposing I had to go to Paris to learn *that*?' Even now, to see him still so sublimely on his guard, Peter's young friend had to laugh afresh. 'You won't give a sign till you're sure? Beautiful old Peter!' But Lance at last produced it. 'Why, hang it, the truth about the Master.'

It made between them for some minutes a lively passage, full of wonder for each at the wonder of the other. 'Then how long have you understood——'

'The true value of his work? I understood it,' Lance

recalled, 'as soon as I began to understand anything. But I didn't begin fully to do that, I admit, till I got la-bas.'

'Dear, dear!'—Peter gasped with retrospective dread.

'But for what have you taken me? I'm a hopeless muff—that I *had* to have rubbed in. But I'm not such a muff as the Master!' Lance declared.

'Then why did you never tell me——?'

'That I hadn't, after all'—the boy took him up—'remained such an idiot? Just because I never dreamed *you* knew. But I beg your pardon. I only wanted to spare you. And what I don't now understand is how the deuce then for so long you've managed to keep bottled.'

Peter produced his explanation, but only after some delay and with a gravity not void of embarrassment. 'It was for your mother.'

'Oh!' said Lance.

'And that's the great thing now—since the murder is out. I want a promise from you. I mean'—and Peter almost feverishly followed it up—'a vow from you, solemn and such as you owe me here on the spot, that you'll sacrifice anything rather than let her ever guess—'

'That I've guessed?'—Lance took it in. 'I see.' He evidently after a moment had taken in much. 'But what is it you have in mind that I may have a chance to sacrifice?'

'Oh one has always something.'

Lance looked at him hard. 'Do you mean that *you've* had—?' The look he received back, however, so put the question by that he found soon enough another. 'Are you really sure my mother doesn't know?'

Peter, after renewed reflexion, was really sure. 'If she does she's too wonderful.'

'But aren't we all too wonderful?'

'Yes,' Peter granted—'but in different ways. The thing's so desperately important because your father's little

public consists only, as you know then,' Peter developed—  
'well, of how many?'

'First of all,' the Master's son risked, 'of himself. And last of all too. I don't quite see of whom else.'

Peter had an approach to impatience. 'Of your mother, I say—*always*.'

Lance cast it all up. 'You absolutely feel that?'

'Absolutely.'

'Well then with yourself that makes three.'

'Oh *me!*'—and Peter, with a wag of his kind old head, modestly excused himself. 'The number's at any rate small enough for any individual dropping out to be too dreadfully missed. Therefore, to put it in a nutshell, take care, my boy—that's all—that *you're* not!'

'I've got to keep on humbugging?' Lance wailed.

'It's just to warn you of the danger of your failing of that that I've seized this opportunity.'

'And what do you regard in particular,' the young man asked, 'as the danger?'

'Why this certainty: that the moment your mother, who feels so strongly, should suspect your secret—well,' said Peter desperately, 'the fat would be on the fire.'

Lance for a moment seemed to stare at the blaze. 'She'd throw me over?'

'She'd throw *him* over.'

'And come round to us?'

Peter, before he answered, turned away. 'Come round to *you*.' But he had said enough to indicate—and, as he evidently trusted, to avert—the horrid contingency.

(iv)

Within six months again, none the less, his fear was on more occasions than one all before him. Lance had returned to Paris for another trial; then had reappeared

at home and had had, with his father, for the first time in his life, one of the scenes that strike sparks. He described it with much expression to Peter, touching whom (since they had never done so before) it was the sign of a new reserve on the part of the pair at Carrara Lodge that they at present failed, on a matter of intimate interest, to open themselves—if not in joy then in sorrow—to their good friend. This produced perhaps practically between the parties a shade of alienation and a slight intermission of commerce—marked mainly indeed by the fact that to talk at his ease with his old playmate Lance had in general to come to see him. The closest if not quite the gayest relation they had yet known together was thus ushered in. The difficulty for poor Lance was a tension at home—begotten by the fact that his father wished him to be at least the sort of success he himself had been. He hadn't 'chucked' Paris—though nothing appeared more vivid to him than that Paris had chucked him: he would go back again because of the fascination in trying, in seeing, in sounding the depths—in learning one's lesson, briefly, even if the lesson were simply that of one's impotence in the presence of one's larger vision. But what did the Master, all aloft in his senseless fluency, know of impotence, and what vision—to be called such—had he in all his blind life ever had? Lance, heated and indignant, frankly appealed to his godparent on this score.

His father, it appeared, had come down on him for having, after so long, nothing to show, and hoped that on his next return this deficiency would be repaired. The thing, the Master complacently set forth was—for any artist, however inferior to himself—at least to 'do' something. 'What can you do? That's all I ask!' He had certainly done enough, and there was no mistake about what he had to show. Lance had tears in his eyes when it came thus to letting his old friend know how great the

strain might be on the 'sacrifice' asked of him. It wasn't so easy to continue humbugging—as from son to parent—after feeling one's self despised for not grovelling in mediocrity. Yet a noble duplicity was what, as they intimately faced the situation, Peter went on requiring; and it was still for a time what his young friend, bitter and sore, managed loyally to comfort him with. Fifty pounds more than once again, it was true, rewarded both in London and in Paris the young friend's loyalty; none the less sensibly, doubtless, at the moment, that the money was a direct advance on a decent sum for which Peter had long since privately pre-arranged an ultimate function. Whether by these arts or others, at all events, Lance's just resentment was kept for a season—but only for a season—at bay. The day arrived when he warned his companion that he could hold out—or hold in—no longer. Carrara Lodge had had to listen to another lecture delivered from a great height—an infliction really heavier at last than, without striking back or in some way letting the Master have the truth, flesh and blood could bear.

'And what I don't see is,' Lance observed with a certain irritated eye for what was after all, if it came to that, owing to himself too; 'what I don't see is, upon my honour, how *you*, as things are going, can keep the game up.'

'Oh the game for me is only to hold my tongue,' said placid Peter. 'And I have my reason.'

'Still my mother?'

Peter showed a queer face as he had often shown it before—that is by turning it straight away. 'What will you have? I haven't ceased to like her.'

'She's beautiful—she's a dear of course,' Lance allowed; 'but what is she to you, after all, and what is it to you that, as to anything whatever, she should or she shouldn't?'

Peter, who had turned red, hung fire a little. 'Well—it's all simply what I make of it.'

There was now, however, in his young friend a strange, an adopted insistence. 'What are you after all to *her*?'

'Oh nothing. But that's another matter.'

'She cares only for my father,' said Lance the Parisian.

'Naturally—and that's just why.'

'Why you've wished to spare her?'

'Because she cares so tremendously much.'

Lance took a turn about the room, but with his eyes still on his host. 'How awfully—always—you must have liked her!'

'Awfully. Always,' said Peter Brench.

The young man continued for a moment to muse—then stopped again in front of him. 'Do you know how much she cares?' Their eyes met on it, but Peter, as if his own found something new in Lance's, appeared to hesitate, for the first time in an age, to say he did know. '*I've* only just found out,' said Lance. 'She came to my room last night, after being present, in silence and only with her eyes on me, at what I had had to take from him; she came—and she was with me an extraordinary hour.'

He had paused again and they had again for a while sounded each other. Then something—and it made him suddenly turn pale—came to Peter. 'She *does* know?'

'She does know. She let it all out to me—so as to demand of me no more than "that", as she said, of which she herself had been capable. She has always, always known,' said Lance without pity.

Peter was silent a long time; during which his companion might have heard him gently breathe, and on touching him might have felt within him the vibration of a long low sound suppressed. By the time he spoke at last he had taken everything in. 'Then I do see how tremendously much.'

'Isn't it wonderful?' Lance asked.

'Wonderful,' Peter mused.

‘So that if your original effort to keep me from Paris was to keep me from knowledge—!’ Lance exclaimed as if with a sufficient indication of this futility.

It might have been at the futility. Peter appeared for a little to gaze. ‘I think it must have been—without my quite at the time knowing it—to keep *me!*’ he replied at last as he turned away.

# THE STORY OF THE SIREN

E. M. FORSTER

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FEW things have been more beautiful than my notebook on the Deist Controversy as it fell downward through the waters of the Mediterranean. It dived, like a piece of black slate, but opened soon, disclosing leaves of pale green, which quivered into blue. Now it had vanished, now it was a piece of magical india-rubber stretching out to infinity, now it was a book again, but bigger than the book of all knowledge. It grew more fantastic as it reached the bottom, where a puff of sand welcomed it and obscured it from view. But it reappeared, quite sane though a little tremulous, lying decently open on its back, while unseen fingers fidgeted among its leaves.

‘It is such pity,’ said my aunt, ‘that you will not finish your work in the hotel. Then you would be free to enjoy yourself and this would never have happened.’

‘Nothing of it but will change into something rich and strange,’ warbled the chaplain, while his sister said, ‘Why it’s gone in the water!’ As for the boatmen, one of them laughed, while the other, without a word of warning, stood up and began to take his clothes off.

‘Holy Moses,’ cried the Colonel. ‘Is the fellow mad?’

‘Yes, thank him, dear,’ said my aunt: ‘that is to say, tell him he is very kind, but perhaps another time.’

‘All the same I do want my book back,’ I complained. ‘It’s for my Fellowship Dissertation. There won’t be much left of it by another time.’

‘I have an idea,’ said some woman or other through her parasol. ‘Let us leave this child of nature to dive for the book while we go on to the other grotto. We can land

him either on this rock or on the ledge inside, and he will be ready when we return.'

The idea seemed good; and I improved it by saying I would be left behind too, to lighten the boat. So the two of us were deposited outside the little grotto on a great sunlit rock that guarded the harmonies within. Let us call them blue, though they suggest rather the spirit of what is clean—cleanliness passed from the domestic to the sublime, the cleanliness of all the sea gathered together and radiating light. The Blue Grotto at Capri contains only more blue water, not bluer water. That colour and that spirit are the heritage of every cave in the Mediterranean into which the sun can shine and the sea flow.

As soon as the boat left I realized how imprudent I had been to trust myself on a sloping rock with an unknown Sicilian. With a jerk he became alive, seizing my arm and saying, 'Go to the end of the grotto, and I will show you something beautiful.'

He made me jump off the rock on to the ledge over a dazzling crack of sea; he drew me away from the light till I was standing on the tiny beach of sand which emerged like powdered turquoise at the farther end. There he left me with his clothes, and returned swiftly to the summit of the entrance rock. For a moment he stood naked in the brilliant sun, looking down at the spot where the book lay. Then he crossed himself, raised his hands above his head, and dived.

If the book was wonderful, the man is past all description. His effect was that of a silver statue, alive beneath the sea, through whom life throbbed in blue and green. Something infinitely happy, infinitely wise—but it was impossible that it should emerge from the depths sun-burned and dripping, holding the notebook on the Deist Controversy between his teeth.

A gratuity is generally expected by those who bathe.

Whatever I offered, he was sure to want more, and I was disinclined for an argument in a place so beautiful and also so solitary. It was a relief that he should say in conversational tones, 'In a place like this one might see the Siren.'

I was delighted with him for thus falling into the key of his surroundings. We had been left together in a magic world, apart from all the commonplaces that are called reality, a world of blue whose floor was the sea and whose walls and roof of rock trembled with the sea's reflections. Here only the fantastic would be tolerable, and it was in that spirit I echoed his words, 'One might easily see the Siren.'

He watched me curiously while he dressed. I was parting the sticky leaves of the notebook as I sat on the sand.

'Ah,' he said at last. 'You may have read the little book that was printed last year. Who would have thought that our Siren would have given the foreigners pleasure!'

(I read it afterwards. Its account is, not unnaturally, incomplete, in spite of there being a wood-cut of the young person, and the words of her song.)

'She comes out of this blue water, doesn't she,' I suggested, 'and sits on the rock at the entrance, combing her hair.'

I wanted to draw him out, for I was interested in his sudden gravity, and there was a suggestion of irony in his last remark that puzzled me.

'Have you ever seen her?' he asked.

'Often and often.'

'I, never.'

'But you have heard her sing?'

He put on his coat and said impatiently, 'How can she sing under the water? Who could? She sometimes tries, but nothing comes from her but great bubbles.'

'She should climb on to the rock.'

‘How can she?’ he cried again, quite angry. ‘The priests have blessed the air, so she cannot breathe it, and blessed the rocks, so that she cannot sit on them. But the sea no man can bless, because it is too big, and always changing. So she lives in the sea.’

I was silent.

At this his face took a gentler expression. He looked at me as though something was on his mind, and going out to the entrance rock gazed at the external blue. Then returning into our twilight he said, ‘As a rule only good people see the Siren.’

I made no comment. There was a pause, and he continued. ‘That is a very strange thing, and the priests do not know how to account for it; for she of course is wicked. Not only those who fast and go to Mass are in danger, but even those who are merely good in daily life. No one in the village had seen her for two generations. I am not surprised. We all cross ourselves before we enter the water, but it is unnecessary. Giuseppe, we thought, was safer than most. We loved him, and many of us he loved: but that is a different thing from being good.’

I asked who Giuseppe was.

‘That day—I was seventeen and my brother was twenty and a great deal stronger than I was, and it was the year when the visitors, who have brought such prosperity and so many alterations into the village, first began to come. One English lady in particular, of very high birth, came, and has written a book about the place, and it was through her that the Improvement Syndicate was formed, which is about to connect the hotels with the station by a funicular railway.’

‘Don’t tell me about that lady in here,’ I observed.

‘That day we took her and her friends to see the grottoes. As we rowed close under the cliffs I put out my hand, as one does, and caught a little crab, and having

pulled off its claws offered it as a curiosity. The ladies groaned, but a gentleman was pleased, and held out money. Being inexperienced, I refused it, saying that his pleasure was sufficient reward! Giuseppe, who was rowing behind, was very angry with me and reached out with his hand and hit me on the side of the mouth, so that a tooth cut my lip, and I bled. I tried to hit him back, but he always was too quick for me, and as I stretched round he kicked me under the armpit, so that for a moment I could not even row. There was a great noise among the ladies, and I heard afterward that they were planning to take me away from my brother and train me as a waiter. That, at all events, never came to pass.

‘When we reached the grotto—not here, but a larger one—the gentleman was very anxious that one of us should dive for money, and the ladies consented, as they sometimes do. Giuseppe, who had discovered how much pleasure it gives foreigners to see us in the water, refused to dive for anything but silver, and the gentleman threw in a two-lira piece.

‘Just before my brother sprang off he caught sight of me holding my bruise, and crying, for I could not help it. He laughed and said, “This time, at all events, I shall not see the Siren!” and went into the water without crossing himself. But he saw her.’

He broke off and accepted a cigarette. I watched the golden entrance rock and the quivering walls and the magic water through which great bubbles constantly rose.

At last he dropped his hot ash into the ripples and turned his head away, and said, ‘He came up without the coin. We pulled him into the boat, and he was so large that he seemed to fill it, and so wet that we could not dress him. I have never seen a man so wet. I and the gentleman rowed back, and we covered Giuseppe with sacking and propped him up in the stern.’

‘He was drowned, then?’ I murmured supposing that to be the point.

‘He was not,’ he cried angrily. ‘He saw the Siren. I told you.’

I was silenced again.

‘We put him to bed, though he was not ill. The doctor came, and took money, and the priest came and spattered him with holy water. But it was no good. He was too big—like a piece of the sea. He kissed the thumb-bones of San Biagio and they never dried till evening.’

‘What did he look like?’ I ventured.

‘Like any one who has seen the Siren. If you have seen her “often and often” how is it you do not know? Unhappy, unhappy because he knew everything. Every living thing made him unhappy because he knew it would die. And all he cared to do was sleep.’

I bent over my notebook.

‘He did not work, he forgot to eat, he forgot whether he had his clothes on. All the work fell on me, and my sister had to go out to service. We tried to make him into a beggar, but he was too robust to inspire pity, and as for an idiot, he had not the right look in his eyes. He would stand in the street looking at people, and the more he looked at them the more unhappy he became. When a child was born he would cover his face with his hands. If any one was married—he was terrible then, and would frighten them as they came out of church. Who would have believed he would marry himself! I caused that, I, I was reading out of the paper how a girl at Ragusa had “gone mad through bathing in the sea”. Giuseppe got up, and in a week he and that girl came in.

‘He never told me anything, but it seems that he went straight to her house, broke into her room, and carried her off. She was the daughter of a rich mine-owner, so you may imagine our peril. Her father came down, with

a clever lawyer, but they could do no more than I. They argued and they threatened, but at last they had to go back and we lost nothing—that is to say, no money. We took Giuseppe and Maria to the church and had them married. Ugh! that wedding! The priest made no jokes afterward, and coming out the children threw stones. . . . I think I would have died to make her happy; but as always happens, one could do nothing.'

'Were they unhappy together then?'

'They loved each other, but love is not happiness. We can all get love. Love is nothing. I had two people to work for now, for she was like him in everything—one never knew which of them was speaking. I had to sell our own boat and work under the bad old man you have today. Worst of all, people began to hate us. The children first—everything begins with them—and then the women and last of all the men. For the cause of every misfortune was—You will not betray me?'

I promised good faith, and immediately he burst into the frantic blasphemy of one who has escaped from supervision, cursing the priests, who had ruined his life, he said. 'Thus are we tricked!' was his cry, and he stood up and kicked at the azure ripples with his feet, till he had obscured them with a cloud of sand.

I too was moved. The story of Giuseppe, for all its absurdity and superstition, came nearer to reality than anything I had known before. I don't know why, but it filled me with desire to help others—the greatest of all our desires, I suppose, and the most fruitless. The desire soon passed.

'She was about to have a child. That was the end of everything. People said to me, "When will your charming nephew be born? What a cheerful, attractive child he will be, with such a father and mother?" I kept my face steady and replied, "I think he may be. Out of sadness shall come

gladness"—it is one of our proverbs. And my answer frightened them very much, and they told the priests, who were frightened too. Then the whisper started that the child would be Antichrist. You need not be afraid: he was never born.

'An old witch began to prophesy, and no one stopped her. Giuseppe and the girl, she said, had silent devils, who could do little harm. But the child would always be speaking and laughing and perverting, and last of all he would go into the sea and fetch up the Siren into the air and all the world would see her and hear her sing. As soon as she sang, the Seven Vials would be opened and the Pope would die and Mongibello flame, and the veil of Santa Agata would be burned. Then the boy and the Siren would marry, and together they would rule the world, for ever and ever.

'The whole village was in tumult, and the hotel-keepers became alarmed, for the tourist season was just beginning. They met together and decided that Giuseppe and the girl must be sent inland until the child was born, and they subscribed the money. The night before they were to start there was a full moon and wind from the east, and all along the coast the sea shot up over the cliffs in silver clouds. It is a wonderful sight, and Maria said she must see it once more.

'“Do not go,” I said. ‘I saw the priest go by, and some one with him. And the hotel-keepers do not like you to be seen, and if we displease them also we shall starve.’

'“I want to go,” she replied. ‘The sea is stormy, and I may never feel it again.’

'“No, he is right,” said Giuseppe. ‘Do not go—or let one of us go with you.’

'“I want to go alone,” she said; and she went alone.

'I tied up their luggage in a piece of cloth, and then I was so unhappy at thinking I should lose them that I

went and sat down by my brother and put my arm round his neck, and he put his arm round me, which he had not done for more than a year, and we remained thus I don't remember how long.

'Suddenly the door flew open and moonlight and wind came in together, and a child's voice said laughing, "They have pushed her over the cliffs into the sea."

'I stepped to the drawer where I keep my knives.

"Sit down again," said Giuseppe—Giuseppe of all people! "If she is dead, why should others die too?"

"I guess who it is," I cried, "and I will kill him."

'I was almost out of the door, and he tripped me up and, kneeling upon me, took hold of both my hands and sprained my wrists; first my right one, then my left. No one but Giuseppe would have thought of such a thing. It hurt more than you would suppose, and I fainted. When I woke up, he was gone, and I never saw him again.'

But Giuseppe disgusted me.

'I told you he was wicked,' he said. 'No one would have expected him to see the Siren.'

'How do you know he did see her?'

'Because he did not see her "often and often", but once.'

'Why do you love him if he is wicked?'

He laughed for the first time. That was his only reply.

'Is that the end?' I asked.

'I never killed her murderer, for by the time my wrists were well he was in America; and one cannot kill a priest. As for Giuseppe, he went all over the world too, looking for some one else who had seen the Siren—either a man, or, better still, a woman, for then the child might still have been born. At last he came to Liverpool—is the district probable?—and there he began to cough, and spat blood until he died.

'I do not suppose there is any one living now who has

seen her. There has seldom been more than one in a generation, and never in my life will there be both a man and a woman from whom that child can be born, who will fetch up the Siren from the sea, and destroy silence, and save the world!’

‘Save the world?’ I cried. ‘Did the prophecy end like that?’

He leaned back against the rock, breathing deep. Through all the blue-green reflections I saw him colour. I heard him say: ‘Silence and loneliness cannot last for ever. It may be a hundred or a thousand years, but the sea lasts longer, and she shall come out of it and sing.’ I would have asked him more, but at that moment the whole cave darkened, and there rode in through its narrow entrance the returning boat.



## HIGHER JOURNALISM

. . . the other harmony of prose. John Dryden

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Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary.

From *Aeropagitica*—John Milton



# AGAINST ALL ODDS

ADIB

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DEAR Cocteau

A poet can be a punk and a bore. But you are an anti-bore. Many of the things you say in your *Journal D'un Inconnu*<sup>1</sup> excite my spleen. But this is because you have something to say. I can bite into you. I cannot put my teeth into a jellyfish. So let's have it out.

I see you smile. I know, dear Cocteau, you have fought many a duel and everytime left your adversary fighting with a dummy, burning your effigy, sticking pins into what is only a wax model of Jean Cocteau. But I am not out, I can assure you, to cut your throat or stick pins into your haunches. I only want to ply you with questions. I know that asking questions is a game at which two can play, that to every question there is a counter-question. But you have had your say in 180 pages. I do not have even three pages in which to say what I want to. So you must be fair.

But mind you, I will not be taken in by any of your stock tricks. I know you can produce new ideas like rabbits out of your hat to distract attention. But I will not be distracted. You must stick to one idea at a time. I know you can cycle on a tight rope, jump from one running horse on to another and double, treble and quadruple your body. But all this is amusing only in a circus. This is a bar. I don't mind your coming in your pink tights but let's sit down in a quiet corner with our

<sup>1</sup> *The Hand of a Stranger* by Jean Cocteau (Elek Books, London, 17s. 6d.)

glasses of . . . what will you have? Gin and vermouth? That's fine. Let's sit down and talk.

You say you are game but that you can't stick to a point for too long. I understand. I know yours is a mind that flies in all directions at the same time. But then I don't want you to stick to any point for too long. Only don't be too impatient. And don't be too irrelevant. We don't have much time. You say 'the more science bangs its head against the figure 3 and the figure 7, the more it respects 0 and the more the figure 1 astonishes it.' We won't go into this for it is pure nonsense. But there is a question here. Was it a joke? Or was it a fit of madness? You must consult an analyst, dear Cocteau. Freud is not the petty pilferer you think he is. He may have burgled a few slum tenements for odd pieces of soiled linen, but he has done more. He has cleaned up many a festering slum right inside the mind. A cleansing job is a dirty job at the same time.

No, my dear Cocteau, don't take these fits of yours lightly. The disease can get worse. You detest Freud. But as you know better than any other poet, hate is only the other side of love. The two go together. The demon of curiosity seems to trouble you as much as it ever troubled Freud. Freud made his patients relax in the arm-chair or on the sofa, and looked into the dark depths of their minds. You keep your ears open while your actresses get a permanent wave. The heat is on. They steam. They smoke. And there you are with a notebook in your hand, taking down on the sly what they say to one another. 'Poor pet, her mother gives her an allowance of a million francs a month, how ever do you think she can manage within that?' Or 'I tell you, I am only sensitive to little things. Big ones I can bear with fortitude. You know how little my son's death upset me. But I couldn't bear to be without my butter. Isn't that queer? That's my

nature.' That's human nature. Some cannot bear to share their bathroom with their children. Some cannot manage on less than two million a month. Some crack up under the strain of their own psyche. Aren't you curious about the slithering serpents in men's minds? Why get angry with Freud?

The trouble with you, my dear Cocteau, is that you are too squeamish. You say you couldn't bear to see the slaughter of the pigs and the sheep you eat. You tell us that when you go into a forest with your gun you shoot not foxes or birds but pine cones. The slightest danger signal and your nerves are on edge like the spines of a porcupine. I am not surprised that you took to opium. I can appreciate why you don't like Andre Gide. He is never restless, never a fish out of water. 'He confesses little things to hide big ones.' You for your part want 'to tell all, spread out all, live naked.' But are you quite sure you have taken off all your clothes? Are you quite sure you don't carry a mask on your face?

I can understand why you detest Francois Mauriac and you are quite right in telling him 'look here, God is not your opposite number, your fellow citizen, your buddy, and if he has revealed himself in any way at all to you, he did not do so to put you in control of his might.' But don't we all suffer in some degree from the kind of pride for which you castigate Mauriac? Don't we all mistake the voice of our reason and our conscience for the voice of universal reason and universal conscience? Aren't we all vain, or more or less so? 'Pull down thy vanity, man.'

You are far more careful with Jean-Paul Sartre. You admit that he 'improvises a monstrous thesis such as not one of his fellow-writers dare tackle,' and that 'he moves his chess pieces so ruthlessly over the chequers of our time that he stalemates.' I see it is the cutting edge of your irony. But are you sure it is always a stalemate? And are

you sure it is no more than a game of chess? Can't you see that Sartre carries a machine-gun with him all the time? That he is not shooting pine cones? Can't you hear the rat-tat-tat of the machine-gun? Sartre is always at the barricades. I know that's not a nice place to be in. But then you seem to be uncomfortable even in your study. Your irony is only a cover for your discomfort. I do not grudge you the cover.

I do not for a moment imply that you have the worst of all these encounters. How can you, dear Cocteau, when you fly off to perch on a new tree even before the bullet has come out of the gun? In any case, it is easy for you to have the better of Jacques Maritain, for as he himself says, he 'is a man turned inside out like a glove, with all the seams on the outside.' But you are cruel to dismiss him as 'a deep-sea fish—luminous and blind.' It is true that Maritain's element is prayer and that outside he runs into everything. But so has everyone his element. It may be slightly different with you, dear Cocteau, for you are a poet, a playwright and a maker of films. But there are times when you, too, are no better than a deep-sea fish. There are moments when you, too, are a mystic and take a plunge into the invisible. And when you come to the surface you, too, run into all sorts of things. What is more, you get upset in the most unmystical way.

But I have strayed away from the questions I wanted to put to you. Perhaps you already see my questions dropping like autumn leaves and there is nothing, you think, you can do to autumn leaves but to allow them to fall to the ground. You prefer to take refuge in ambiguity. But there you have my questions. Why this ambiguity? Why this search for a point where the invisible and the visible meet, where silence and speech look into each other's eyes, where time and eternity shake hands and life and death embrace each other? I know you feel the pulls in opposite

directions. You like to hear the talk of smart women when they are under steam, getting a permanent wave, but you also want solitude. You want to live in moments when time is at its densest and you also want to go beyond time where there will be no morning newspapers and no polemics with your detractors. You want to live naked with your mind exposed to the vulgar gaze and you want not to be seen by anyone. You ask for the impossible. You must choose.

It is all right on the screen or on the stage, my dear Cocteau, where your poet journeys between life and death with the ease of a caterpillar going from leaf to leaf. But life is not a stage or a screen. You have to decide which side of the mirror you want to stay. It may be that 'man is less and less ready to accept his limits' but, whatever he does, he cannot jump out of his skin. Don't take amiss what I say, my dear Cocteau, for though I am a stranger to you I have the most friendly feelings towards you and I enjoy the way you try to jump out of your skin against all odds.

Yours  
ADIB

# LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR

P. M. S. BLACKETT

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IN view of the millions of words which have been written on all aspects of nuclear weapons, some justification is required for adding more. When I hear the words Great Deterrent, Massive Retaliation, Graduated Deterrence, Limited Nuclear War, and so on, I share the feelings of Eliza Doolittle: 'Never let me hear another word again. There isn't one that I haven't heard. Say one more word and I'll scream.' We had better remember, however, that sometimes, as another great lady, the White Queen, knew so well, it is better to scream before one is hurt than after: with atomic weapons one is unlikely to scream afterwards.

In discussing the problem of limited nuclear war, I am assuming the factual background of the real world as it is today, with vast strategic nuclear power in the hands of the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union—and to lesser extent of Britain—and with tactical atomic weapons available for both Nato and the Soviet land forces. The problem I am going to examine is how we should use, or not use, the weapons we already have. The doctrine of total war includes little or no provision for any threat less than that of pure aggression. Since the U.S.A. has for some years based its defence policy on this doctrine, it is almost powerless to use its huge military power in any less vital circumstances. Consider, for example, the case of the Korean war. The U.S.A. was forced to fight a war limited in terrain, limited in weapons and limited in aims, and to accept an armistice which fell far short of even local victory, without ever bringing into use her nuclear power. Never was there a greater contrast between the humdrum

exigencies of the real world and the dream world of American military thought. In fact, as Dr Henry A. Kissinger and a number of other serious writers on defence problems have now realized, the acceptance of total war as an instrument of policy paralyses the will on any occasion except the remote one of total aggression, invites nibbling and indirect attack, deters local defence and resistance, and plays straight into the hands of an enemy commanding more flexible military power. This is why Kissinger himself, in his important book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, attaches so much importance to the achievement of an understandable doctrine of limited war.

When the tactical use of nuclear weapons in land warfare was first seriously canvassed in the United States in about 1950, it represented, in my view, a militarily feasible policy and an advance on the previous doctrine. It was feasible for the West because the Soviet Union then had very few atomic bombs to use in reply; and it could be argued that it was sensible because it was at least one step away from the rigidity and horror of all-out war. Ignoring its political disadvantages, it remained perhaps a possible military policy for a few years more—so long in fact as the West had a big numerical preponderance of nuclear weapons. It could be argued then that the threat of massive retaliation by the US Strategic Air Command was adequate to make the USSR conform to the West's own set of rules for waging limited atomic war. Some years ago, however, I myself came more and more to the conclusion that the power of the SAC to compel Soviet compliance with our rules for limited war was probably a thing of the past, and would certainly soon be so. Now, with effective parity for planning purposes of mutual destructive power, I am sure it has vanished. Furthermore, I believe that the Soviet superiority in land forces, combined with atomic parity, may even put them in a position to try to force

the West to comply with their rules for limited war; and those, in some circumstances, might well exclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

In the US the doctrine of limited nuclear war clearly commands wide support. One reason is that it seems to offer a course of action which might restore to the US the possibility of exercising its military power flexibly, while at the same time avoiding the twin horrors that America might be atom-bombed or have to submit to the pain of raising bigger armies. Europeans naturally look on the matter rather differently. The doctrine of limited nuclear war might conceivably deflect the bombs from both the US and the USSR, but it would undoubtedly bring them down on Europe. In spite of this, tactical nuclear weapons have become accepted in Nato, even though there is no rational theory of their use.

For the West to derive advantage from starting a limited war in Europe with tactical atomic weapons, these two conditions would have to be fulfilled: first, and most obviously, the West must be convinced that the war could be kept on a limited scale, and that the chance of its spreading to the destruction of the European cities must be negligibly small. Secondly, there is no point in initiating the use of tactical nuclear weapons unless they are likely to give some military advantage to the West.

Kissinger argues—indeed it is one of his main theses—that the West should use tactical nuclear weapons in limited wars, even if the enemy did not. His set of ‘rules’ proposes that, for limited atomic wars in Europe, American and Soviet cities would be excluded as targets, but that nearly all European cities would be fair game unless declared ‘open’ and subject to inspection. He believes that the West has a reasonable chance of inducing the enemy to conform to such rules because the West holds the ultimate sanction of all-out nuclear war. This, as I have

explained, I do not accept. I believe it would be extremely dangerous for the West to initiate the use of tactical nuclear weapons, at least in any vital area such as Europe, because of the danger that their use would soon develop into all-out nuclear attack on cities.

Let us consider now what might happen if tactical atomic weapons were used in Europe by both sides. It is generally assumed that their use would favour the strategic defence—that is, the West. This argument has always seemed to me a weak one, particularly where, as in Europe or for that matter in Korea, the western military effort must be supplied through a few ports, which could hardly be excluded as targets for tactical nuclear weapons. The use, for instance, in Korea of tactical nuclear weapons by both sides would probably have been fatal to the West because of the vulnerability of its ports. On the battlefield itself atomic weapons might sometimes favour the side which is tactically on the defensive, since they would make too dangerous the massing of large numbers of troops for a conventional type of attack. It is by no means clear, however, that tactical atomic weapons could not be integrated effectively into a tactical offensive: according to reports from neutral observers this is being done in the Red Army. And no doubt also in the Nato forces.

Kissinger in his advocacy of limited war is logical enough not to rely on the argument that the use of tactical nuclear weapons would favour the defence. He envisages limited nuclear war as a fast-moving affair of small independent units, acting largely on their own initiative. In such a war, of course, units on the side which is strategically defensive will as often as not take the tactical offensive. He is led, therefore, to look for some other factor which will make the use of tactical atomic weapons of more value to the West than to the East. He finds this in the belief that western soldiers will be much better at tactical nuclear

warfare than Soviet soldiers. He contrasts the flexibility and self-reliance of the American officer-corps with the rigidity of Soviet military organization. I think this argument is plain poppycock. First we rely on our atomic monopoly to offset the greater number of Soviet soldiers. When the atomic monopoly is lost, we rely on having more bombs. When numbers become unimportant, we rely on better bombs. When this technical superiority is lost, we rely on the supposed superior quality of the few individual soldiers we do have. Superiority in character, as in weapons, is something to be trained and worked for; but it should not be counted upon in planning.

I conclude from this analysis that if tactical nuclear weapons were used by both sides in Europe, it is by no means certain they would favour the West. I would go further and hold that the Nato forces, even in their present state, would probably put up a better defence if neither side used nuclear weapons than if both did. But this must remain a matter of conjecture. We see, therefore, that neither of the two conditions which must be satisfied if the West is to gain by the initiation of limited nuclear war can be proved true: it cannot be shown that the war could be kept limited, and it cannot be shown that the use of tactical atomic weapons would favour the West. Thus the initiation by the West of tactical nuclear war might either hasten military defeat, or lead to the destruction of Europe by H-bombs—or both.

Something must be said of the probable destructive effects of using tactical nuclear weapons on the battlefield. Since they have never been used in real war, reliance must be placed on exercises, of which two have been reported in the press, both in 1955. In Operation Sage Brush in Louisiana, 275 tactical nuclear weapons of from two to 40 kilotons (one-tenth to twice that of the Hiroshima bomb) were exploded in a limited military operation. The

assessors reported that the destruction was so great that no such thing as limited or purely tactical nuclear war was possible in such an area. In a similar exercise, *Carte Blanche*, in western Europe, 335 bombs were used in 48 hours, and the estimated civilian and military casualties were 1.7 million Germans killed and 3.5 million wounded. One reported conclusion was that, given military equality in all fields between opponents in atomic war, an attacker could always defeat a defender.

We see, therefore, that, even if limited nuclear war in Europe could be kept limited, and even if it did militarily favour the West, the reluctance of continental people, especially West Germans, who live in the area where the battle would be fought to entrust their safety to such destructive methods is easily understandable.

It is clear that there are a number of perfectly possible and even likely disturbances, for instance, in eastern Europe which might be the starting point of a limited war, in which the land forces of Nato would engage probably superior Soviet forces. Current western doctrine suggests that SHAPE would at once use tactical nuclear weapons. If there were any serious intention of keeping the war limited, it would certainly be necessary to make some announcement to the enemy of just what the West intended to do. Since no one has agreed what ought to be announced on such occasions, there would be endless wrangling and confusion. By the time agreement has been reached, the enemy might well have achieved their limited objective.

For such reasons as these I am convinced that it is on the whole unlikely that Britain or America would, in fact, initiate the use of tactical nuclear weapons if a limited war broke out in Europe. At the last minute they would have to leave the land forces to fight without nuclear weapons. I believe this in spite of the official statements to the con-

trary, in spite of the conventional status which tactical nuclear weapons have achieved in SHAPE, and in spite of the fact that the training of the troops is being largely based on their use. I think that they would not be used for much the same set of reasons which led to their not being used in Korea, Indo-China and Suez. In these three campaigns, stalemate, partial defeat and complete withdrawal respectively were accepted by nuclear powers without nuclear weapons being used.

It seems to me impossible to imagine a limited nuclear war in progress in Europe without the overwhelming British concern being not what happened in the battle, but to prevent Britain being destroyed. In such a tactical nuclear war, there would be many western aircraft with nuclear bombs in the air and in the sole control of individual men who might mistake their targets, misread their orders, or deliberately ignore them. If one such man attacked an important Soviet city, it would appear to the USSR as deliberate aggression and a violation of the assumed rules of limited nuclear war. Could a British government leave London at the mercy of one such man? It seems clear enough that the US government is extremely unlikely, in fact, to use the threat of all-out war by the SAC in order to assist Nato to keep a limited war in Europe limited. This is because of the risk of Soviet nuclear attack on the US. It has been estimated by an American writer that in the first two days of an all-out war between America and Russia about 100 million Russians might be killed—but also about 20 million Americans! Another recent estimate is that 250 Soviet H-bombs reasonably placed on their targets would kill 70 million Americans. The figures may well be quite phoney; but the effect of their publication, failing effective refutation, can only be to prevent the threat of total war being used effectively by America to keep a limited nuclear war limited.

All this leads me to conclude that the inhibition which Britain must have against authorizing the use of tactical atomic weapons in Europe is nearly, if not quite, as strong as are its inhibitions about launching a strategic attack on the Soviet Union. It can never be quite certain that a tactical nuclear war would, in fact, turn into a strategic one; but the likelihood is sufficiently high to make it absolutely necessary to plan for the probability that it would.

So far, I have discussed the situation as it is today, with the main Nato forces beginning to be trained in the use of tactical atomic weapons, but with the nuclear warheads remaining under American and British control. But the policy which is likely to be carried out is to train the land forces of all the 14 nations of Nato in the use of tactical nuclear weapons. This implies that the warheads will have eventually to be put under the control of the local national commanders. As soon as this has happened, all the strong inhibitions against their use will be greatly magnified. For now the possibility of maintaining any set of 'rules' for limited nuclear war will be much reduced, since there will be an increased likelihood of the cities of the contestants being attacked, either by mistake or deliberately. Britain, for instance, might find her national survival hazarded by any one of many fanatical fingers of many nationalities on hundreds of nuclear triggers. As the tactical nuclear armament of Nato forces progresses, I am convinced that the increasing concern of each member-state at a time of international tension will become less and less with the military intention of the Soviet bloc and more and more with the dangerous consequences of possible individual action by other Nato countries. When this happens, Nato ceases to exist as a unified military force and becomes an uneasy agglomeration of nuclear states relapsing into frightened isolation.

The military logic of all this is that tactical nuclear

weapons provide little hope, at any rate in Europe, of compensating for the West's disinclination to mobilize its superior man-power to produce adequate land forces. Both George F. Kennan, in his book *Russia, the Atom and the West*, and Sir Stephen King-Hall, in *Defence in the Nuclear Age*, have emphasized that in certain circumstances, therefore, western countries may have to accept military defeat and thereafter possible occupation. It is well to remember that this is a problem which concerns not only Britain, but the other Nato countries. Some Britons may well prefer to contemplate now the thought of British national suicide rather than that Britain should be occupied. Far fewer will be found to prefer British national suicide, rather than, shall we say, that Turkey should be occupied. And the Turks might well reciprocate these feelings.

This examination of the inherent dangers of tactical nuclear weapons, of the inhibitions which will in the event impede their use, and of the unreality of the concept of a limited nuclear war, seems to me to expose some of the fallacies on which current western strategic thought is based. But there is much further study and hard work to be done. I am convinced that unless we face realistically the possible situations which we may encounter, Britain may find herself led by events beyond her control into political and military fiascos, compared with which Munich will appear to future historians as a monument of courage and Suez as a triumph of military planning.

When grappling with these important but intricate arguments, it is useful to keep in mind a few numerical facts and certain deductions from them. Remember that the main argument for spreading tactical nuclear weapons among the nations of Nato is that they would enable the West to use its superior technology to defeat the hordes of Soviet soldiers. On the other hand, the actual population of the Nato countries is some 430 million, which is

over 50 per cent higher than the 280 million in the USSR and her European satellites. Thus the role of the assumed superior technology, which certainly existed ten years ago, was to compensate not for a deficiency of man-power but for the disinclination of western peoples to serve as soldiers. Today no important degree of military technological superiority can safely be planned for, and military planners must revert to the traditional practice of assuming technological parity. Indeed unless present tendencies are changed, technological superiority may well pass to the USSR, since they are training more engineers and applied scientists than the whole western world, and have shown a marked ability to concentrate their efforts on to a limited number of important technological targets. So future military planners may (taking an optimistic view, which I share, that the world is rather unlikely to blow itself up) be faced with the problem of how the West can mobilize its superior manpower to offset the achievements of the hordes of Soviet technologists.



ON POETS AND POETRY

The air is delicate.

From *Macbeth*—William Shakespeare

\*

Show me, dear Christ, thy spouse, so bright and  
clear.            From *Holy Sonnets*—John Donne

\*

The poetry of earth is never dead.

From *The Grasshopper and Cricket*  
—John Keats



# IQBAL-DAY MUSHAIRA

27 April 1956

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

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I DO not think I am the right man to inaugurate this Mushaira. I do not know Persian or Urdu nor am I a poet by any stretch of imagination. If I still am here, it is because I have read some of Iqbal's works in English and have a great admiration for his work.

In the year 1937 at the Golden Jubilee of the Allahabad University he and I were recipients of honorary degrees, and there was another thing in common between us, that we felt the need of a rational and spiritual religion when superstition and obscurantism were rampant.

Today we have almost unlimited power of self-annihilation in our hands, and if wisdom and humanity do not help us to divert this power to human advantage, the future of the human race will be in peril. If technical power is accompanied by moral failure, we will enter another dark age. Our world is filled with fear and suspicion; it has developed so much animosity that though there is no war, there is no peace. For the new world which is emerging we need a new type of man, with a liberal mind and a humane outlook. To build tolerance and charity in the minds of men is the task not of engineers and technicians but of poets and artists.

Iqbal rightly stressed the discipline of religion as our great need. 'It is pure dogmatism,' says Iqbal, 'on the part of science to claim that the aspects of reality selected by it are the only aspects to be studied.' There is another dimension to man's existence. God, for Iqbal, is a

Supreme Person who is not a mere idea or abstraction, who is not an absolute principle or a rational ordainer of the universe. He is a Real Presence with whom we can get into communion. He whose life is centred in God creates new and unforeseeable realities. The aim of religion is to make the human being a free spirit. Iqbal quotes the verse of the Qurān: 'Verily we proposed to the heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive the trust but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it.'<sup>1</sup> Iqbal comments on it: 'Man is the trustee of a free personality which he accepted at his peril.' The free individuals are those whose consciousness reaches the highest point of intensity. Such a free spirit is a co-creator with God. Iqbal quotes the Qurānic verse: 'Blessed be God, the best of creators.' Not man as he is now, but man purified through obedience, self-control and detachment can reach the high status of the viceregent of God. Iqbal wrote to Nicholson. 'Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the complete person. The ego attains to freedom by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partly free, partly determinate, and reaches full freedom by approaching the individual who is most free—God.'<sup>2</sup> Like all great religions, Islam insists on self-effacement for divine union. We must detach ourselves from the worldly life to devote ourselves to the service of God. All people are prophets, are capable of this spiritual attainment.

The function of poetry is the communication of vision. Great poetry is the result of great vision. It gives to

<sup>1</sup> XXXIII, 72

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. XV

men a new outlook. It has the power to heal a nation's wounds.

Iqbal's poems set before us a classless social order without distinction of rich and poor, high and low. The true human being should identify himself with the poor and the lowly. We should not oppress the innocent. This is the meaning of democracy. The same spirit of democracy requires us to look upon all whether they are Muslims or Hindus, Christians or Jews, as children of one Father.

In these dark and threatening times we have to re-discover the vital truths, those great patterns of thought and behaviours, those great moral and spiritual values, the oneness of God and the brotherhood of man which are associated with Islam. Unfortunately, in the course of centuries these central truths are obscured, and rites and rituals, creeds and dogmas have covered up the simplicity of the message of Islam. It is the duty of thinkers in each generation to recapture the original purity and dynamic vigour of the ancient message and re-express it in the idiom of their age. This task of re-interpretation Iqbal undertook in his book on *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. He defended religion against the attacks of Marxist materialism and Existentialism. 'Marxism', said Iqbal, 'had a believing heart and an atheist brain.' He loved greatly the spirit of this country and said on an important occasion: 'I am sprung from the same stock. India is older than Hinduism and Islam and will remain when we and our creeds have become one with yesterday's seven thousand years.' He loved India, he loved Islam and more than all he loved humanity. He looked forward to a period when we might be able to co-operate freely for the welfare of the whole world, in a spirit of universal goodwill.

Iqbal was greatly inspired by Rūmi's teachings and echoed his sentiments. Rūmi said: 'There are many

lamps but the light is one.' Iqbal said: 'There is only one religion but there are many versions of it.' It is a commentary on the Rig Veda statement *ekam sat viprāh bahudhā vadanti* and the Quran says there is not a nation to whom a warner has not been sent by God.

I hope that this Mushaira will be both instructive and entertaining.

# THE REST WAS SILENCE

BORIS FORD

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SHORTLY after his eighty-third birthday I wrote to Walter de la Mare to ask if I might visit him and have a discussion about his stories and verse for children. I explained that the August issue of the *Journal of Education* was to be devoted to the subject of children's reading and writing, and that I would suggest taking a tape-recording of our talk, so that I could reproduce our exact words rather than write up my subsequent impressions of what we said. His reply came within a few days, typed on bright blue paper:

Dear Mr Ford,

My recent eighty-third birthday has overflowed into a large pond of correspondence; variegated with water-lilies! And I hope you will forgive so many days' delay in thanking you for your letter of the 24th and for the two copies of the *Journal of Education*, which I have not yet read, but have read *in* with great interest. I can hardly believe that any writer to whom you might suggest an interview for the *Journal* could know less about education than I do. But because one *knows* less about education than I actually do, it by no means follows that one doesn't delight in discoursing about it; and my absurd and possibly favourite heresy is that we arrive in this world completely—potentially—well educated, and that the rest of our lives should be spent in discovering, by hook or by crook, what that implies.

Needless to say, then, I should be delighted to have a

talk with you on the subject if you can accept an ignoramus more or less gladly. It might not be convenient to you to come soon, and alas, I have a good many visitors and engagements to face. Do you think we might arrange a provisional afternoon for tea in good time for August. I cannot get out myself, but should be delighted if you could come to me.

Thank you very much again for your proposal.

Yours sincerely,

WALTER DE LA MARE

Later I wrote again to arrange a date for our meeting and, in view of his remarks about discoursing on education, repeated that 'I do not suppose we need talk overmuch about education unless you feel inclined. I rather thought we might keep to your own writings for children'. He replied:

Dear Mr Ford,

Thank you very much for your letter. I think perhaps the sooner the better for our talk—if it's all one to you. I've plenty of free days. . . . Would *you* suggest a day. . . . Any such arrangement, alas, depends on how I am; and that condition is rather variable. However, I shall look forward very much to seeing you; and if perhaps you could suggest any particular subjects that we can talk about (within my narrow orbit), I should be the better prepared.

Yours sincerely,

WALTER DE LA MARE

P.S.: I have what seems to me to be two very remarkable poems written by children of fourteen and under, but they are still in strict copyright, though you might like to share

them. I still recall the image-memory of one of the pages of my first spelling book—C-A-T: D-O-G. But pictures of the same period are far easier to recall. There are a good many examples of 'youthful' and childhood poems in *Early One Morning*. One, I remember, by Charles Kingsley, dictated, I think, when he was about five, seems to surpass the whole of his later work. I wonder if 'Crossing the Bar' came nearer to surpassing the whole of Tennyson's earlier work. The difficulty seems to me to discover the essential difference that age usually implies; and this is also curiously true of handwriting. Forgive my rambling on like this.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

W. DE LA MARE

So a meeting was arranged in June. Once again I outlined the agenda for our talk: 'The one particular subject I have in mind is *your own* writings for children, poetry, and prose. And I would be very happy, if it were possible, to discuss this quite autobiographically: how did you come to write for children, what kind of poetry and stories do you believe children like (this might well raise the question of what kind of poems and stories you yourself remember having liked as a child), and which poem and story of yours do you feel to be your most successful? I am sure we will not keep to this limited agenda, but at least I hope that it may provide the skeleton of what we talk about.'

Somewhat doubtful, by now, that I would get anything strictly relevant to the August issue of the *Journal of Education*, or how to deal with the matter if I didn't, I set off to my appointment. I had to pick up the tape-recorder on the way, and the assistant in the shop assembled it and

packed it away so slowly that I already began to concoct implausible excuses for arriving late. However, I caught my train, and as we ran out towards the western suburbs and two sincere young men discussed whether they would be eligible to join their local golf club as country members, I sat re-reading de la Mare's continuation of the story of Jack the Giant Killer, which he calls *Dick and the Beanstalk*, and which tells how Dick, who lived in Gloucestershire alone with his father, was brought up on the tales an old working woman used to tell him 'on dark windy nights in the winter'. These tales not only stayed in Dick's head, but *lived* there, so much so that he came to explore them further and had his own conclusions about which finger Aladdin wore his ring on, and the colour of his uncle the Magician's eyes, and 'if he found out that Old Mother Hubbard had a cat he could tell you the cat's name. And he could describe the crown that Molly Whuppie was crowned with when she became queen, even to the last emerald'. For Dick, as de la Mare puts it, 'was what is called a *lively* reader'. I wondered whether Walter de la Mare had also been a *lively* reader when he was Dick's age, and I remember thinking at the same time that his own tales, many of them fairy tales retold or continued beyond their original endings, would probably not appeal very much to the children of our comics and T.V. age, for they seem to demand unusually *lively* readers. At any rate, Dick went out one day and found himself at the foot of a giant beanstalk, and so he climbed up it into the sky until 'low in the heavens hung the red globe of the sun, and beneath him lay the vast saucer of the world', and he 'found himself in a country of low, smooth, but very wide hills and of wide, gentle valleys'. Dick eventually reaches a castle, and the gate is opened to him by a 'leaden-faced woman—her head and shoulders muffled up in a shawl, and, to Dick's astonishment, only about nine

feet high'. He finds out that Jack's Giant was her great-grandfather (though 'he himself would have guessed a round dozen of *greats* at least'), and with that discovery he knows for certain that he has left Gloucestershire and entered the world of his tales.

It was at about this point in the story that we reached Twickenham. The taxi-driver said he had no great idea where the house could be, and even when we reached Montpelier Row, that most handsome terrace of Georgian houses running at right angles to the main road, No. 4, South End House still escaped us, as if refusing to materialize out of one of Dick's tales. At the end of Montpelier Row, however, a pair of tall gates, grown over with creeper, led into the courtyard of a tall brick house, and by its front door, though I couldn't find the name South End House, I found the name Walter de la Mare—Floors three and four. The door stood open and the bells by each name were vacant, having, no doubt, lost their push-buttons when the house lost its liveried men-servants some generations back.

On Floor three the door was opened by an informal and companionable lady who led me up a narrow staircase lined with pictures to Floor four. 'You've brought a beautiful day with you', she said. 'So I've got him up in his chair and he's sitting by the window in his little room. Will you have your talk first—or perhaps you'd rather begin with tea?' she went on easily.

I said that I was happy to do as she recommended. And when she asked if I had to hurry away, I answered with surprise that I was fortunately not engaged on the kind of paper that took me from one place to another at a great rate. 'That's good,' she replied; 'He's a little slow at getting going sometimes with a strange person, so give him a few moments to get used to you.'

We walked into a room that seemed to be a sitting-room,

though something about its appearance, about its arrangement rather than the look of the individual pieces, gave it an air of being sat in only by people waiting to move on elsewhere; and so through to a minute little room that was all windows, being on the corner of the house. It contained a tall cupboard full of books, an occasional table or two, a gramophone on the floor, and finally, seated in a wheel-chair that occupied what was left of the floor space, Mr Walter de la Mare.

‘So we’re going to talk about education, are we?’ he said, getting going at once. ‘I don’t know anything about education, but that’s all to the good, *you* can talk into your machine instead. I’ll listen.’

He spoke in a deep, flowing voice, whereas I had an impression of having heard him over the radio speaking in a high voice, much more like E. M. Forster’s. How had I got this wrong, I wondered? But then, I also had expected to find him small and bird-like, and here he was, appearing, as he sat in his chair, to be large-built and with a big head on wide shoulders. I remembered that I had once seen Mr Forster in a bathing costume and dressing-gown on the beach at Aldeburgh, and that I had been quite unable to admit that it was he because he seemed altogether on too big a scale.

Miss Saxton, in the meantime, had been testing a table lamp into which I plugged the tape-recorder. It didn’t work, but to my relief a bulb didn’t work either, so the recorder was exonerated, and Miss Saxton crawled down on to the floor behind the wheel-chair and plugged it into an inaccessible floor-socket. I had hoped, one always hopes, to avoid these elaborate mechanical preparations, and I feared Walter de la Mare would be put out of humour before we began. But Miss Saxton chatted easily about the faulty plug and having had it mended not long

since, and he answered her mildly, trying to turn in his chair, and then went on:

‘We had a lady here recently from . . . oh, what’s that body, it’s got branches in all the main countries abroad? Yes, that’s it, the British Council, of course. She was such a nice person, and she came with one of those tape-recorders and it refused to work, it wouldn’t even start—perhaps you fixed it into that dud lamp, my dear. She was so upset, the poor girl, and they had tested it before she came, but it was no good. We were so sorry for her, but she couldn’t be consoled.’

I found this an uneasy story until my own machine winked into life and the reel began to turn steadily. I sat the microphone on the table between us and tried to forget it. De la Mare didn’t appear to have noticed it. He sat looking gently out of the open window in front of us.

‘Those trees are a wonderful sight on a day like this, aren’t they?’ he said, without any trace of ecstasy. From our fourth-floor window we looked out at their dark upper branches and the mixed greens of their spring leaves. ‘Do you imagine trees can communicate with each other? It seems incredible, as we watch them rooted there by each other, that they shouldn’t be able to communicate some kind of sympathetic life.’

He seemed to expect me to reply, but I was too little prepared for so calm an eccentricity as this to feel able to go with him as yet. So I asked him if he knew the names of trees from growing up among them as a child, for he seemed very familiar with them in his writing. But he said no, he had no natural inheritance of this kind, though he had lived a good deal from one time to another in the country. I mentioned how Lawrence had seemingly always known, as if by untutored instinct, the names of flowers and plants and trees, and de la Mare at once

envied him his intimacy, though for all his words I couldn't detect any envy in his tone. He sat, we both sat, looking out at the branches and at the park below, and I asked him about his encounters with Lawrence.

'It's most extraordinary,' he replied, without answering; 'the other day I found that I had two or three of his letters tucked away, and I had entirely forgotten them. You'd hardly believe it, would you, that one could forget about letters from Lawrence.'

I said I was indeed surprised, because Lawrence's letters were so unmistakably his own, even the most trivial of them conveying a feeling of the man.

'These weren't in the least revealing in themselves,' de la Mare checked me. 'I was a reader for a publisher and these were purely business letters, about some poems he was submitting to us. But I kept them and forgot about them, though now that seems hard to believe because you can't forget Lawrence, even if it was only a slight contact like that.'

Perhaps because of having to change the tape, or perhaps because such was his mood, we drifted away to another topic, to my regret, because as he was speaking I vaguely remembered references to de la Mare among Lawrence's early letters, references that were friendly and appreciative. Later I looked them up and found that Lawrence had been writing to him about a book of his poems that de la Mare had selected—'It won't be a big book—rather a smallish one—a bit exquisite, the collection—*à la* de la Mare—to convince the critics I was well brought up, so to speak.' Lawrence seemed to expect rather more than was reasonable, for after de la Mare's selection had been published, Lawrence wrote to Edward Garnett from Italy: 'I am anxious down to my vitals about the poems. I thought my friends in the field—de la Mare and so on—would review them decently for us.'

God help us.' Still, in the same month he himself wrote, in a review, of 'Mr de la Mare's perfect appreciation of life at still moments'. Certainly de la Mare seemed to have retained, after forty-four years, a feeling of deep respect for Lawrence—even though, as Lawrence wrote, he once 'took me to task for my unbusinesslike reply'.

Lawrence and de la Mare are not names one would have spontaneously brought together. And yet de la Mare's conversation every now and then took on a Lawrentian idiom. For instance, we were talking about his stories (it had taken me much time and ingenuity to get him to this topic), and he observed that 'I've got quantities of stories in my head that I've never found the occasion to write down'. He paused, and sat looking over towards the trees; and then asked, in a half-rhetorical tone of voice: 'Now, why did I say they were in my *head*? Really, that's a most unlikely place for them, isn't it? They are much more likely to be in the solar plexus, I should think. Come to that, I wonder if they are anywhere at all? It may be quite an illusion that I could bring forth all these stories.'

So I suggested his trying to bring one forth into the microphone, and he took to the proposal with a certain jocular enthusiasm and said I should come back with my machine one day and we would try. 'But will you let me prepare it beforehand? or must I do it straight out—impromptu?' He was quite anxious about it, as if we were discussing a game with fixed rules. 'Still, I don't suppose it would be too hard,' he continued more easily. 'Once you get started, you can't stop. We are on a landing together, a rather long, shaded landing. At one end there's a great dark door, and it looks as if it would have to be an important occasion for anyone to go up and open it. But on this early summer evening we are walking down the landing . . . oh, it's all too easy, isn't it?

When my children were small they used to make me tell them stories, and they went on night after night—you couldn't credit the tangles we got into by the end of an evening. But somehow they unravelled themselves by the next day. Not that they were very good stories, but the children seemed to like them. Or perhaps they just liked them better than going to bed. I suppose your children go to bed like clockwork?' he asked, for sooner or later he was always asking me into the topic, as it were.

But I contrived to shift him back by saying that I had often wondered whether children who were read to aloud, or who had stories recited to them, came to develop different attitudes and reading habits from the children who from a young age tended to read to themselves silently. De la Mare thought it over briefly and remarked that he couldn't say anything about that. The main thing was to get them reading as naturally as breathing.

*Myself*: 'Perhaps what one wants is for them to become like Dick, who was "what is called a *lively* reader"?'

*De la Mare* (eagerly): 'Yes, that's right. He was a *very* lively reader, wasn't he?'

*F.*: 'I think *Dick and the Beanstalk* is one of your most delightful stories.'

*De la M.*: 'Really! I'm so glad you've read it; it's one of the ones I like best. And that fearful old woman—she's a wonderful character, isn't she? Terrifying! I always like her.'

*F.*: 'Did you ever notice that you'd made her only half the height of that feeble husband of hers—nine feet to his eighteen?'

*De la M.*: 'Is that so? Are you sure?'

*F.*: 'Yes, I am. But I don't think it's important. I'm more intrigued to find her so real a creation for you.'

*De la M.:* 'One's characters become quite frightening, often, certainly very real.'

I asked if he saw them as real before starting to write.

*De la M.:* 'I suppose it varies. But usually not, I'd say. Often one begins without seeing anything much, and then whatever it is, wherever it comes from, grows shapely before your eyes. Henry James, when he'd been writing a story for a bit, became on intimate terms with his characters, more so, I'm sure, than with most of the people around him.'

*F.:* 'Though often his characters stemmed directly from the people around him, didn't they?'

*De la M.:* 'Yes, they did indeed. But would you say that Dicken's characters were people he'd seen before, and lived among?'

*F.:* 'I think one assumes so. But they've become much more living by the time he's created them, though of course it's a different kind of life, just as they have become something more than characters.'

*De la M.:* 'I don't know about this business of characters, now I come to think about it. Shakespeare, people are for ever saying, created a whole world of characters. But I don't find them very convincing in that respect. You can't call Macbeth a character. He's more like a walking shadow. . . .

It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury  
Signifying nothing.

What does that mean? I don't think an idiot could tell a tale, could he? And yet "signifying nothing" doesn't mean that it didn't signify anything; it means that it signifies *nothing, nothingness*, a world of nothingness.'

During these remarks, which were said tentatively and as if he were thinking over them for the first time, Miss Saxton came to the door, and she now asked us if we

would care to go to tea—she had originally proposed tea after half an hour. But de la Mare was clearly in no mood to break off, so she brought him brandy and me whisky instead. I pulled down the blind, for the sun had moved round to the side-window and seemed to worry him. After these interruptions, I said something about the apparent popularity of his poetry, and asked him whether this ever surprised him.

*De la M.:* ‘I don’t really know. People do seem to like “The Listeners”, don’t they? At least I suppose they like it, because they are always writing to ask what it means. But what can one answer to that sort of question?’

*F.:* ‘Do you know what it means?’

*De la M.:* ‘Yes, I know what it means. But I’m not going to start giving you or anyone else a prose meaning, because that wouldn’t be what the *poem* means. The meaning’s in the poem itself, or it’s nowhere. And if it’s not in the poem, then it’s certainly not worth bothering about.’

*F.:* ‘If you will allow me to say it, I don’t think “The Listeners” is one of your best poems. It’s a pity that the ambiguity in the poem has done so much to put it into every anthology, because it must have given people a rather lop-sided view of your poetry.’

*De la M.:* ‘So that’s what you think, is it?’

These words were said genially enough, but with the finality of a door closed. So I made as if to leave the subject of his poetry, but of his own accord he suddenly returned to it, and recounted with amusement how he had recently been invited to contribute a poem on William Blake for some collection designed to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of his birth next year. ‘I dug among my papers and, sure enough, I came upon a poem I had written a long time ago—it seems almost like two

hundred years ago—about an imaginary genius, so I sent that along with an appropriate title. I really couldn't produce a new poem on Blake, and anyway this one might have been done specially. For would you believe it? I had said something in the poem about the man's age when he died, and it was quite correct, or near enough. So there's my poem on Blake for you!' he ended with almost a flourish.

*F.:* 'And what about your poems for children? That's really what we're supposed to be talking about.'

*De la M.:* 'Well, you go on and talk about them, then. Or better still, talk about what *you* write. You do write, don't you?' [I contrived to avoid this diversion.] 'Anyway, what d'you call my poems for children? They are all just poems, as far as I'm concerned. If children like them, then I'm happy, for they are much one's best public, aren't they?'

*F.:* 'That's an interesting remark, because I have felt that many of your children's poems (at any rate, the poems publishers print as if for children) are not at all easy, they demand a considerable verbal understanding.'

*De la M.:* 'Yes, I know they do. And some asinine people try to simplify them. I gave someone a poem recently and she wanted to change some word, because, she said, the children wouldn't understand it. Can you believe it? I *was* cross. How will children get to know words or anything else, I asked her, if they never meet them for the first time? I suppose she had her modern theories, but I can't say I thought much of them.'

We talked a little about 'modern theories' of teaching children to read, and then he was off again, almost vehemently: 'What are we really talking about? It's just impudence to suppose we can *teach* children in any important sense: they already know far better than we how to feel and respond; they look about them with astonish-

ment. Look at these two pictures'; and he indicated two small-framed water-colours that I had been looking at off and on ever since we began, for they were resting on the window-seat immediately in front of us. One of them was of a face entwined with vine branches and bunches of grapes, like a detail from a stone carving; the other was a flatly-painted horizontal landscape. 'They are by the same person—would you believe that? She's an American friend of mine. This one of the child was done when she was only a child herself: it's not just alive, but there's something mysterious in that face, in those eyes, isn't there? It's a lovely face. As for the other one, it's all right, very competent, I like it in its way. But something has disappeared, something that teaching may have banished, for all we can tell. Now, you can teach *dogs*, I know that. Perhaps that's why I don't really like dogs.'

This last remark was prompted, I imagine, by two dogs playing below in the fields, well-groomed, well-modulated dogs, but just at present thoroughly dog-like too. Our conversation remained unhurried; indeed, it rambled a good deal more than I have indicated, but with such an unusual sense of moving as it wished that I was unable, even reluctant, to hold it up and develop some single point. Repeatedly de la Mare seemed to return to children and to enjoy talking about them, about my children and his own grandchildren. But he seemed to have no particular enthusiasm for discussing his writings or his biography, and I was unwilling to press him because I had a feeling that his reluctance to talk about himself was simply a natural reticence with a stranger. At one point, though, he did say something about himself as an old man: 'When you get to my sort of age—how old are you, by the way?' he asked, interrupting himself. 'How old would you say?' I replied. He looked surprised; and then, after a moment, said, 'D'you know, I wouldn't have

any idea, really! At any rate,' he went back to his first words, 'it's when you get to my age that you realize how much time you've wasted, hurrying and worrying. It's wonderfully restful not to be able to hurry any more, and also to have given up worrying.' He sat in his wheelchair, in pyjamas and dressing-gown, having come to rest, as it were, and with a visible 'appreciation of life at still moments' as he spoke towards the open window.

'We all need far more silence than we get,' he went on; 'we need to learn how to *listen* to silence. . . . Still, I don't know at all what I do when it's silent. I'm sure I don't *think*!'

*F.:* 'It's rare to be able to think silently, in a clear, logical way, as distinct from letting ideas ramble through one's head.'

*De la M.:* 'There's nothing wrong with that. I always think my main skill is to have a talent for digression'—a comment that seemed at once to amuse him.

'What's that bird—there, among that cluster of darker leaves?' he asked, after we had sat recording silence for a number of minutes. I, of course, had no idea, but de la Mare didn't really seem interested to know, for without bothering to pursue the matter he remarked that 'the old king was a wonderful shot, I believe. At the end of a day's shooting he would have bagged hundreds of birds and his party thousands of them. Oh, what fun!' And he went on to say (rather than recite) the words of his short poem:

Hi! handsome hunting man,

Fire your little gun.

Bang! Now the animal

Is dead and dumb and done.

Nevermore to peep again, creep again, leap again,

Eat or sleep or drink again. Oh, what fun!

'Oh, what fun!' he repeated again, flatly and calmly and

without passion. 'Can you conceive of it? Not that hundreds or dozens alter the case; one is just the same. But equally I don't suppose the king would have been able to conceive what the poem's about. I'm sure he wasn't much good at spotting irony. He'd probably simply have agreed: Yes, it was; first-rate fun.'

This became quite a protracted conversation about myxomatosis and de la Mare clearly found the whole business incomprehensibly cruel, just as he found himself unable to think of children's literature without its rabbits. (During this discussion, the last of the four tapes wound itself on to its final spool, and I prayed he would not now say his most profound saying and it be unrecorded.) Suddenly, he switched the topic, though the link was too close for this to be a digression, and asked if I were opposed to capital punishment. He sounded unexpectedly challenging. I said that I was indeed an abolitionist, and had even campaigned for abolition. 'Are you, now?' de la Mare said, unsurprised. 'I suppose you'll think it more than odd, after me going on about killing birds and rabbits, but I'm not against capital punishment, not at all. Why are you for abolition?'

I suspect the discussion would have become gently passionate, but Miss Saxton came in at this moment and said we must eat tea—it was now 6.30, at least. 'So you're on to capital punishment again, are you?' she said lightly. And later, at tea, de la Mare himself came back to the topic and said we ought to get some other people to join us—'not that we'll settle the matter by numbers, I don't suppose'.

Tea was taken in a large, white, corner-room beyond the untenanted sitting-room, and it proved a most genial occasion. Miss Saxton pushed the wheel-chair up to the table and de la Mare sat with a piece of bread and butter in front of him—'He won't eat it,' Miss Saxton said,

‘though he always thinks he may.’ He smiled towards her and promised to eat a piece of her cake at least. The talk, which, as I remember it, was predominantly on domestic matters, was animated and even jolly. De la Mare seemed to live easily and without restraint in the present, in a milieu of growing children and foreign girls living *au pair*, of cake and tea, of moving to this house in Twickenham, of the difficulty of finding a pair of slippers tight enough to stay on and yet sufficiently loose to be comfortable—humdrum topics, I suppose, yet neither trivial nor perfunctory. De la Mare’s conversation seemed to have the knack of ‘bringing to life’, and his participation was immediate and unrestrained. And above all, it had nothing of the ‘old man’ about it, let alone of the ‘grand old man’. ‘The difficulty seems to me to discover the essential difference that age usually implies’, he had written in his letter, and in his own case the difference seemed likely (at least to a stranger who had not known him younger) to be a matter of having come to a physical halt and to have found it possible to concentrate his life into the upper floor of this tall house in a park. Inevitably, this placed him at the centre of his life and of all that it involved, just as his individuality of outlook and reflection, his talent for the digression, made the conversation very largely *his* conversation. Yet he remained unassuming, undominating, as if simply one among others.

He had eaten his promised piece of cake and tea was finished—it was about 7.15 p.m.—when he said, ‘I’m tired, my dear; I think I must go to bed before long.’

‘I’m sure you must be tired after all that talking,’ Miss Saxton replied. ‘Still, it’s better for you sitting up in your chair, isn’t it? It’s easier than trying to talk sitting up in bed, I’m sure.’

‘Is it?’ He seemed unconvinced. Miss Saxton asked me to help her and we moved the chair to the day-bed.

She put de la Mare's legs up on the bed in front of him and we helped him change his position—'It's his legs that have gone,' she remarked in a matter-of-fact way. I had an uneasy sense of having stayed far too long, of having kept him up, though I could not imagine how I could have left earlier without discourtesy. De la Mare, however, was apparently not inclined to bring our conversation to an end. He made some singularly unenthusiastic comment on a recent book of Aldous Huxley's that was lying on the bed, and some wholly gratified comments on a manuscript anthology of his poems that he had received for his birthday from a form of children in a primary school—as it happened, I knew the school, and, sure enough, the italic writing of all the children.

He asked me to tell him about F. R. Leavis, and inquired if there were an account of his work, perhaps one or two of his essays, that would convey the outlook and quality of his criticism. He told a story about a storm that had struck one of the trees outside the window, and yet had left it standing and alive. And of a sudden he asked me if I wouldn't like to hear a record of one of Bach's organ toccatas. I replied that this must really await my next visit, when I came to record his stories.

'Ah, yes, I'll have to think about that, it's an amusing idea,' he said. 'And what are you going to do with the present recording of our talk? I suppose you couldn't make it into a gramophone record? It would go well with the Bach.'

I said this would indeed be possible, though it remained to be seen if our talk would merit being reproduced in any way. Moreover, I added, I found it hard to imagine him playing his way through the 100 minutes of a dead conversation.

'Who says it's dead? Conversations don't die, they are

far less mortal than the likes of us,' he replied in his jocular way.

I said my thanks and farewells once again and, promising to return, left him with his legs up, gazing out of the window at the evening light and waiting, without any impatience, to be helped to his bed. Miss Saxton showed me out. 'I think he seems to have enjoyed himself, doesn't he? He oughtn't to talk so much, but you simply can't stop him at times. And who would want to, anyway? He's wonderful, isn't he?' she said, in her straightforward fashion.

Two hours later, at home, I unpacked the recorder, plugged it in, and played our 'immortal' conversation over to my wife. The tape unwound itself steadily, and we sat listening . . . to silence. At first I thought the play-back mechanism was faulty and that we were simply unable, for the moment, to extract the conversation from the tape. We fiddled and switched on and off, but very uneasily, in case we wiped the tape clean. And then we sat and listened once more. We were not very lively listeners. At the shop the next day they found that the machine had been switched on for recording telephone conversation. To ordinary conversation it was dead.

A day or two later I wrote to Walter de la Mare telling him of the fiasco and expressing my apologies as best I could. No article: no gramophone record: none the less, I only hoped that it was not a wholly wasted meeting and conversation. After a short delay he wrote back:

Dear Mr Ford,

Many thanks for your letter of June 4th. I am not sure that in some respects 'the rest was silence' is not an advantage, and especially to the *Journal*. However, we took a long time to talk the silence, and a lot of that was my reward.

The only practical disadvantage of the blank tape is that even talking nowadays, alas, makes me rather tired, and it is not easy to fit things in. I will keep the suggestion that I made to you in mind, but I fancy it would be very difficult to carry out.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

WALTER DE LA MARE

And so it proved, for within a few days he had died, and all that remained of this encounter was a silent tape and the memory of a conversation 'less mortal than the likes of us'.

## NOTES

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### ‘ THIS MOST REMARKABLE HUMAN FIGURE ’

The Earl of Halifax (1881- ): Governor-General and Viceroy of India 1925-31. Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and British Ambassador at Washington; a member of the War Cabinet; now Chancellor of Oxford University.

This is a bare summary of the public life of the distinguished figure who played a vital role in the political development of our country. His viceroyalty is a landmark in India's development towards full independence. As Viceroy he was called upon to face Gandhiji's civil disobedience movement in 1930 (in one sense the Earl of Halifax, then Lord Irwin, and Gandhiji were political adversaries). Any other man of a smaller stature or a narrower point of view might have avoided the tribute that he pays to Gandhiji. And for that his Lordship rouses our admiration and earns our undying respect.

The Earl of Halifax represents all that is refined and gracious in English life. I suggest you read his remarkable autobiography entitled *Fullness of Life*. What will strike you most is his humility, his dignity, his integrity. He is an aristocrat in the best sense of the term.

*p. 3, a subtlety . . . disconcerting*: Fine intellectual distinction liable to cause confusion.

*p. 4, C. F. Andrews*: A great Christian missionary who was Gandhiji's friend and co-worker.

*fundamental . . . life*: The spinning wheel or the *charkha* represented for Gandhiji a way of life—rural life as opposed to urban life.

*p. 6, General Smuts (1870-1950)*: The South African leader who fought against the British in the Boer War. Later he played a distinguished part as a soldier and a statesman during World Wars I and II and was trusted and respected by his former adversaries, viz. the British.

Gandhiji formulated his technique of satyagraha or passive resistance in South Africa to improve the lot of Indians settled in that country. As such, he came in conflict with the South African Government. In the subsequent negotiations, General Smuts and Gandhiji worked together and admired one another.

### I FOLLOW AFTER

Lakshmibai Tilak was the wife of Narayan Waman Tilak, teacher, poet and Christian missionary, an exasperating but a lovable man.

This extract is taken from her autobiography, *I Follow After*, which is an English translation of the well-known Marathi classic *Smriti Chitra* (published in 4 parts between 1934-7). According to

the publishers of the English translation, this autobiography is 'perhaps unique in Indian literature'. It is undoubtedly so. It is a great autobiography of a great woman. It is simply told and carries conviction. The spirit of the original is not lost in the English translation by Miss Josephine Inkster.

This extract is terrific in its emotional and dramatic intensity and yet, note how simply and effortlessly the writer conveys her thoughts. She is of the earth, earth-born. There is no moral humbug—a political disease of our time—in her approach to life.

*p. 10, Nagar:* Abbreviation for Ahmadnagar, near Poona in Bombay State. The various other small towns mentioned in the extract are within the same radius.

*p. 15, people . . . days:* As a schoolboy I remember what a scourge plague could be. The epidemic was an annual visitation. We had to be inoculated. Schools were closed and the terrifying spectacle of funerals was nerve-wracking.

*segregation camp:* Where infected people were kept apart. Plague came in winter and cholera in summer. Living in huts on a cold winter night must have been an ordeal for the unfortunate victims.

*Unlettered woman:* Notice the language of dignity here. Sagunabai did not know how to read or write, nor did she demonstrate how saintly or pious she was by constant references to our ancient texts. She was the salt of the earth. She did not desert Lakshmibai in her great trial.

*p. 16, God is with us:* If you believe in this idea, the world is yours.

*p. 17, Hades:* From Greek mythology—the underworld for sinners. I am sure you are familiar with our great books such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. But there are equally great and greater books in European literature. Do not neglect them; do not bottle yourself up in your own myths and legends. As students you must read and relax. Read everything. 'The Splendour that was Ind' is a good slogan but it will carry you nowhere. Think of today and think of tomorrow. Empty slogans or romantic flashbacks are all right for the professional politician but not for students who have to face the world of tomorrow.

*p. 24, high ideals:* There is so much empty chatter about high ideals in the air that I am afraid to recommend it. However, as students your ideals must reach the sky. Have great ideals by all means but for goodness sake do something to realize them. Do not make use of high ideals as stepping stones to political adventurism. Think of tomorrow. Good thoughts, good words, good deeds was the cardinal faith of Lakshmibai. Follow them and you will be a better man.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TOMORROW

Jawaharlal Nehru: When we were students we recited: *Voh lal Jawahar, voh lal Motilal kaa, voh lal Jawahar, voh lal Bharat kaa.*

Here is the one man of our country who speaks with dignity and authority. He does not fall back upon ancient texts for his inspiration. He respects them. That is all. But he looks ahead and never looks backwards. The day the curtain descends on the Nehru era, there will be darkness in our land.

He is the one man you must follow. He has no axe to grind. Wealth does not interest him. Power he enjoys but does not abuse and in his greatest moments he is peerless. Even Gandhiji in the international context dwindles before him. Gandhiji did not possess the international outlook or the knowledge of modern problems of scientific thinking and scientific planning which Jawaharlal Nehru possesses. Jawaharlal is Everyman. He is simple and innocent as a child, and also as profound and sincere as any seer can be. He is a patriot proud of his country and he is steeped in its traditions but he does not bottle himself up in the small world of Bharat. The universe is his landscape.

You know perfectly well that he is your Prime Minister, that he has spent a greater part of his life in and out of jails, that he is a writer of international status. All that you must have been taught at school.

What you have not been told I shall tell you now. Jawaharlal and his ideals are a symbol of light, of advance, of progress. Remove him from the scene or overwhelm him and you will envelop yourself in darkness. Nothing will save you, not even the slogan: 'The Splendour that was Ind'.

*p. 28, a mere attitude is not enough:* The Prime Minister is being polite to members of Parliament. What he is actually telling them is to think and plan for tomorrow and not to chatter empty slogans.

*p. 29, at no time . . . frustration:* The feeling of frustration, of defeat, is the lot of those who do not plan, who do not look ahead, who are bankrupt, and to cover up their bankruptcy fall back on the past as an escape from reality. Do not fall back on the past. You must think, you must plan in a scientific and disciplined way and not indulge in emotional revivalism.

*p. 32, Old customs and traditions . . . work:* In other words our distinguished Prime Minister is telling us that we must forget the bullock-cart and the *charkha*. We want tractors, we want textile mills, we want river-valley schemes, we want modern methods of communication on land, sea and air. If we neglect any of these modern developments then we shall not be able to face tomorrow. What we do not want is emotional revivalism wrapped up in ancient myths and legends.

## THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF RURAL SOCIETY

J. R. D. Tata (1904- ): He is the well-known industrialist of the famous House of Tatas, the like of which does not exist in Bharat. He is the Chairman of the Tata organization.

As a young man he was the first Indian to qualify as a pilot. In

1930 he was one of the first Indians to make a solo flight to England. Mr Tata has done something constructive and lasting in the field of industrial management, thereby evoking international admiration and respect.

Read his address very carefully. There is no frustration, no sense of defeat about him. He does not shut himself up in empty slogans. He gives you a broad picture of our industrial development in accents and idioms which the common man or the expert can understand. His picture of industrial India is fact-accurate. There is no emotional chatter about the hoary past in his gentle, lucid discourse.

*p. 42, Gandhians:* These gentlemen are the followers of Gandhiji. At least they claim to be so. But they seem to forget that Gandhiji was alive and experimenting with ideas all his life. His was a dynamic life which was swift and ever-changing. The same cannot be said of many Gandhians, who live in the static world of yesterday.

*p. 43, far from withering, the rural community:* Mr Tata has borrowed the phrase from the Marxists about the withering away of the state, i.e. the disappearance of the State and the appearance of a classless society. As things exist today, far from withering away, the State is assuming menacing proportions. That is one danger that we have to guard against tomorrow.

*pp. 45-6:* Here you have Mr Tata's enunciation or declaration of faith in his capacity as an industrialist. Study these pages very carefully for they will help you in your problems of tomorrow.

## THE BHOODAN MOVEMENT

*The Times:* One of the world's most influential dailies published from London. Although it does not have a large circulation yet its influence on the political life of the country is enormous.

This extract has been taken from its issue of 28 April 1958.

I have read several accounts of the Bhoodan Movement, both for and against it, and I cannot recommend a better estimate of the picture than that given in this extract.

Its facts are accurate, its reasoning is objective and it takes a balanced view of the situation as it exists. It leaves the reader to draw his own conclusion.

*p. 52, obscure and retiring disciple:* Acharya Vinoba Bhave is neither obscure nor retiring. As Gandhiji's favourite disciple he was selected during World War II to carry out individual satyagraha and after that his influence has steadily increased. Today he commands the respect of every individual, whether one agrees or disagrees with his outlook on life.

*p. 53, Agrarian problem:* The problem of agriculture or land, its production and distribution. Such economic problems have never been solved either by an appeal to good sense or religion. If this were possible then we would have a paradise on earth. We are human beings with all the weakness of our tribe. What we

need is not a religious approach but a planned and scientific approach where one can argue and, if necessary, differ.

*apotheosis of Gandhism*: The deification or exaltation to the rank of a deity. This is something which we have to guard against. As far as Acharya Saheb is concerned there can be no two opinions about his sincerity and integrity.

*p. 56, movement . . . substitute*: Here is the essence of the problem. The Bhoodan Movement is certainly well-meaning but whether it can solve the land problem of India is another matter.

## EVOLUTION IN INDIA

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: The sister of our Prime Minister. Daughter of the great Motilal Nehru, she need not have sacrificed the aristocratic pleasures of her home and taken part in the political struggle of our country. But she is a part and parcel of the Nehru family which is a gift to our country.

She was the first woman to be appointed as Minister in the first Congress Ministry of 1937 in Uttar Pradesh. For the last 10 years she has been a distinguished diplomat. Among her many achievements, it may be recorded that she was the first woman to be elected President of the United Nations Organization.

In simple language she draws a picture of our great ancient past without being in any way either partisan or narrow-minded. We would have no hesitation in identifying ourselves with the India of her past.

*p. 57, distinguishing . . . continuity*: Herein lies the greatness of our country. The pattern which is constantly changing, modifying and becoming richer, without disengaging itself from all that is rich in the past.

*p. 58, composite culture*: By this she means a culture which comprises all kinds of thought, viz. Hindu thought, Muslim thought, Christian thought, and so forth. Indian thought is not confined to one race or creed. It is a combination of various thoughts and influences which have permeated into our country.

*p. 59, Charter of the United Nations*: You should ask your librarian to let you have a copy of this charter and you must read it very carefully. The aims of the United Nations are declared in this Charter 'To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights . . . to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law . . . to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all people.'

## VULGARITY

Aldous Huxley (1894- ): Grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, Essayist, novelist and biographer. I suggest you read his *Jesting*

*Pilate*. In that book he has written critically about India but in spite of it, it is a book worth reading for a young man of tomorrow.

*p. 66, Eructavit cor meum*: (Latin) What affects me need not affect you.

*Sir Toby Belch*: A delightful character in Shakespeare's greatest comedy *Twelfth Night or What You Will*. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch sums him up: 'a derelict of decaying feudal times, a gentleman who, by course of time and change reduced to the employ of a hanger-on, has lost neither the ways of a past age, nor its joviality, nor its manner'.

*Monde*: French for 'world'.

*Proust* (1871-1922): French novelist known for his great psychological analysis of human characters.

*Dante* (1265-1321): The great Italian poet known for his well-known epic the *Divine Comedy*.

*Baedekar*: This is the popular name given to the well-known tourist guide books of European towns.

## ROYALTY

Virginia Woolf (1881-1941): She was the youngest daughter of the great English scholar Sir Leslie Stephen. She married Mr Leonard Woolf in 1912. A great English novelist, she was always experimenting. Among her most successful novels are *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. 'Royalty' was a review written by her for a periodical called *Time and Tide*.

The gentle fun which Virginia Woolf is making of the Royal Family of the 1930s and earlier is far more relevant than the personal attacks which were made against the young Queen of England in 1957.

*p. 70, experimenting . . . nature*: It was not customary amongst Royalty to marry outside their community.

*Royal animal*: Notice the irony.

*p. 71, The English language . . . cross*: Here she points out the inability of Queen Victoria to express her thoughts and emotions.

*p. 72, Irwing and Ellen Terry*: Sir Henry Irwing was a great Shakespearean actor on the English stage at the beginning of this century. Ellen Terry was the great English actress of the same time.

*p. 73, Luxuriating . . . sycophants*: A sycophant is a person who flatters rich and powerful men for his own advancement.

*p. 74, Queen Bee*: See the next extract entitled 'The Tragic Nuptials'.

*Saint Simon* (1760-1825): A Frenchman of the early 19th century. Eccentric; thinker; writer; one of the founders of French socialism.

*Proust*: See above.

*a royal Whipsnade*: (whipsnade is the extension of the London Zoological Gardens—here the wild animals are not confined in cages but are allowed to move in surroundings very similar to their natural haunts). The author suggests that the Royal Family should

not be restricted to the Palace circles but should come out and move freely like normal human beings.

*p. 75, Prometheus Unbound*: The well-known poem by Shelley.  
*Wuthering Heights*: Great 19th century novel by Emily Bronte.

## THE TRAGIC NUPTIALS

Maurice Maeterinck (1862-1949): The Belgian poet and dramatist, awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1911. His writings are noted for their imaginative and mystical qualities.

In this extract we note the powers of observation of this distinguished writer who dramatizes a situation which takes place in the life of the Queen Bee.

*p. 84, Pascal* (1623-62): The famous French mathematician, physicist and moralist.

## THE PRESENT CONCEPT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

H. J. Bhabha (1909- ): Dr Homi Bhabha, F.R.S., is a distinguished physicist. At Cambridge his academic record was brilliant. He was awarded several scholarships and he is one of the three Indians who was the recipient of the Sir Isaac Newton Scholarship. The other two Indians who preceded him were Dr Raghunath Paranjpye and the late C. B. N. Cama, I.C.S., the brilliant wrangler and linguist of St John's College, Cambridge.

Dr Bhabha was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society on 21 March 1941. The 21st of March is a very auspicious day for the Parsees, it being their New Year's day. As you probably know Dr Bhabha is a Parsee. At present he is the Director of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research; Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India, and Secretary to the Government of India, Atomic Energy Department. Like Leonardo, Dr Bhabha is versatile in his tastes, habits and way of thinking. He is not the recluse scholar who sits under the banyan tree and contemplates about the absolutes of life. He is very much of the earth, earthy and after serious research of 8 to 10 hours a day, he is equally at home in the best clubs and ballrooms of Bombay. He is totally 'Western' in his outlook on life and commands the complete confidence of our Prime Minister. He is a painter, ballroom dancer, musician and a brilliant mathematician. He does not believe in the puritan way of life. He likes good food, the theatre, art-galleries, music, books and travel. We need more Bhabhas and I hope some of you at least will carry on his tradition—the keynote of which is breaking fresh ground while conserving the old.

*p. 87, Italian Renaissance*: The great revival of art and literature, under the classical models which began in Italy in the 14th century and continued for the next 200 years.

*Leonardo da Vinci* (1452-1519): The great Italian painter, sculptor

and scientist—a universal genius. His wall-painting called 'The Last Supper' is unique in the history of art.

*Lord Kelvin* (1824-1907): William Thompson; Scottish scientist and inventor. An infant prodigy. A great pioneer in scientific theories. Responsible for laying the trans-Atlantic cable in 1857. Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow University.

*p. 88, Archimedes*: the ancient Greek thinker.

*Galileo* (1564-1642): Italian pioneer in science and astronomy. Professor of Mathematics at Pisa University. He had to resign his post because his ideas were in advance of his times and as such aroused the opposition and the anger of the professional *deshbhaktas* of his time. The professional *deshbhaktas* of his time persecuted him and even compelled him to state in public that the sun went round the earth. Galileo lives in history, the professional *deshbhaktas* are gone and forgotten. He is one of the world's master-thinkers.

*laws of Kepler*: John Kepler (1571-1630) was a German astronomer famous for his three laws of planetary motion (describing the movements of planets). These formed the basis on which Newton formed his theory of universal gravitation.

*Newton's fundamental laws*: Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727). Before he was 24 years of age, he made three great discoveries: (a) the differential calculus, (b) the nature of white light, (c) the laws governing the forces of Gravitation.

These tremendous discoveries revolutionized the course of human thought. His greatest work is *Principia*. In 1703 he became the President of the Royal Society of which Sir C. V. Raman today is a distinguished fellow. His last words were: 'I don't know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.'

*p. 91, Lorentz group*: Connected with the theory of relativity.

*p. 92, relativity theory*: This great theory was formulated by Albert Einstein (1879-1954). A German Jew, he had to leave Germany when Hitler started the persecution of the great Jewish race. His theory has altered people's ideas of the Universe, of Time and of Space. The Oxford Junior Encyclopedia (you must consult it constantly) describes him: 'He has made the philosopher take an interest in physics; he has awakened the physicist into an awareness of philosophical and moral problems'.

*Dirac*: a contemporary mathematician and thinker; Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.

*p. 93, Maxwell* (1831-79): James Clark Maxwell was an outstanding Scottish physicist of the nineteenth century.

*p. 95, Rutherford* (1871-1937): Lord Rutherford was Professor of Physics at Cambridge; he succeeded Professor J. J. Thomson at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge; he predicted the discovery of the particle called neutron; his investigations into the nature of matter and energy ultimately led to atomic fission and to the atom-bomb

of 1945. He was a New Zealander by birth and was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

Henry James (1843-1916): This great American is one of the greatest novelists of all time. In my opinion his great novel *Portrait of a Lady* will remain a major classic in the history of the novel.

Long before George Bernard Shaw devised the use of a Preface to a play as an instrument for propaganda and elucidation, Henry James used the Preface as a medium not only to explain his own art and technique but also to clarify and enunciate the art and philosophy of fiction.

In all his novels and short stories, Henry James is concerned with the following subjects, which again and again, form the centre and approach to his study: (1) The relation of Art and the Artist. (2) The relation of Art and Life. (3) The relation of Art and Morals. (4) The relation of Art, Life and the Ideal. (5) Art as a salvation for its characters.

According to Mr R. P. Blackmur: 'Art was serious, he believed, and required of the artist every ounce of his care. The subject of art was life, or more particularly, some one's apprehension of the experience of it and in striving truly to represent it art removed the waste and muddlement and bewilderment in which it is lived and gave it a lucid, intelligible form. By insisting on intelligence and lucidity something like an ideal vision was secured; not an idea in the air but an ideal in the informed imagination, an ideal in fact, actually of life, limited only by the depth of the artist's sensibility of it.'

*p. 102, Hampstead, St John's Wood*: districts in London.

*p. 103, Spirit of Phidias*: One of the greatest of Greek sculptors, appointed by Pericles to superintend the building of the Parthenon, which for its conception and beauty is unparalleled. Phidias' statue of the Goddess Athena is one of the outstanding masterpieces of Greek art.

*p. 104, Uffizi Museum*: In Florence, Italy. It is one of the finest of its kind in the world. It is filled with masterpieces—by Raphael, Botticelli and many other Florentine, Venetian, Dutch and Flemish artists.

## THE STORY OF THE SIREN

E. M. Forster (1879- ): Novelist and critic; his major works are *A Passage to India*, which you must read, and *Aspects of the Novel*. Mr Forster is not a prolific writer but what he has written has the stamp of permanence, his own personality and sincerity.

Mr Christopher Isherwood explains the symbolism of this superb story thus: 'What is the Siren? I don't think it is important to interpret Forster's symbolism exactly. But his general statement seems quite clear: the man who obtains an unusual insight into the

nature of things will be unable to fit himself back into the everyday world (just as Guiseppe was unable to fit into his boat) and he is quite likely to be destroyed by the jealous guardians of orthodoxy—those who have a vested interest in keeping the Siren silent under water. Nevertheless, the search for the Siren will and must go on; by no other means can the world be saved.'

*p. 121, Deist Controversy:* Deism is the rationalistic theological thought. The deists of the late 17th and early 18th century were thinkers who set out to establish the certainty of the natural religion as opposed to revealed religion, i.e. they had no faith or belief in the teachings of the Christian Scriptures. Deism is a metaphysical doctrine which states that the first cause of the universe is a personal God, who is not only distinct but apart from it and its concerns.

## AGAINST ALL ODDS

*Adib:* It is the pen-name of a journalist who contributes a weekly feature in the well-known Bombay daily, *The Times of India*. His feature goes under the caption 'Life and Letters', which has appeared regularly for almost a decade now.

*Adib* does not write for the masses. His approach is to the intellectual, analytical mind. He writes with precision, clarity and terseness. There is nothing in Indian journalism comparable to his weekly feature. He is no respecter of orthodoxy. He is at his best when he is most destructive. His analytical mind would find Paradise a dull place to live in.

*p. 133, Cocteau:* One of the most versatile French writers, poet, playwright, novelist, painter and film-maker.

*p. 134, an analyst:* A psycho-analyst to find out whether Cocteau needs mental treatment.

*Freud (1856-1939):* The originator of the science of psycho-analysis. His study of human behaviour laid the foundation for the treatment of those who were mentally ill. This Jewish thinker—the Jews have contributed far more to human thought and culture than all their enemies such as the Spanish Inquisitors, Hitler, and in our own time, Nasser—was forced to flee from his native Vienna and seek refuge in London when Hitler's reign of terror began.

*p. 135, Andre Gide:* French novelist and thinker who was fascinated for some time by the great Soviet experiment. Later, he recanted his position. The intellectual wants free air to breathe, to speak freely, to discuss ideas. If that freedom is missing, life is not worth living. Three months ago I was flying via Prague, one of the most civilized of pre-war European capitals. What did I find there? The Red Star in all its hugeness, the human beings dumb, silent animals sipping beer without even whispering to one another. Freedom of thought is the basis of all civilized societies. Its absence is a menace to progress.

*Francois Mauriac:* French novelist, a Catholic.

*Jean-Paul Sartre:* French novelist, playwright and philosopher.

*p. 136, Jacques Maritain*: Catholic philosopher. There was an exchange of letters between Jean Cocteau and Jacques Maritain on the meaning of art and faith.

*p. 137, 'where your poet : . . death'*: the lines are from *Orphei*, a film produced by Jean Cocteau.

## LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR

P. M. S. Blackett (1897- ): The celebrated English physicist who discovered the positron in 1932. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1933 and was awarded the Nobel prize in 1948 for his work on atomic physics.

*p. 138, Eliza Doolittle*: A character in Bernard Shaw's play entitled *Pygmalion*.

*White Queen*: Refer to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*.  
*Nato*: North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

*p. 139, SAC*: U.S. Strategic Air Command.

*p. 143, SHAPE*: Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe. (The military committee of Nato.)

## IQBAL-DAY MUSHAIRA

S. Radhakrishnan (1888- ): Dr Radhakrishnan is one of the most outstanding scholars of our time. His interpretation of Hindu and Buddhist thought has left a permanent stamp on the scholarship of the world.

Since Independence, Dr Radhakrishnan has lent his talents and genius to the affairs of the State and as such has demonstrated that he is also our most valued statesman. To borrow a phrase from Plato's *Republic*, Dr Radhakrishnan is our 'philosopher-king'. If Bharat elects him as its President, it will honour itself.

Study this essay carefully. Note the wealth of knowledge and the magnanimous outlook. Here is no professional politician making pompous pronouncements on issues he is totally ignorant of. This essay is a very good example of one intellectual giant saluting his colleague across the border. The tribute paid to Sir Muhammad Iqbal is typical of a scholar who was once the Spaldings Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford and is now our distinguished Vice-President.

*p. 151, Mushaira*: This is a typical Muslim gathering. It has the characteristics which would have gladdened Plato's heart, for it has all the qualities of Plato's symposium. It consists of a gathering of poets and verse-writers—particularly Persian and Urdu. They meet and recite their own latest compositions or fall back on the classics.

*Iqbal (1873-1940)*: Sir Muhammad Iqbal was a philosopher, thinker and one of the greatest contemporary poets in all literature. He wrote in Persian and in Urdu. Towards the end of his life, he influenced the thought of the late Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

*p. 153, Marxist materialism:* Karl Marx, a German Jew, was one of the greatest philosophers of the nineteenth century. His celebrated work, *Das Kapital*, is a classic of all time. There are two basic ideas running through his philosophy (*a*) materialism (*b*) value. On the basis of these two concepts, he develops his theory of dialectical materialism. (Materialism i.e. matter alone is real; the supernatural does not exist.)

*Existentialism:* 'Existential philosophy determines the worth of knowledge not in relation to truth but according to its biological value contained in the pure data of consciousness when unaffected by emotion, volitions and social prejudices.'

*Rūmi (1207-73):* One of the greatest mystic poets of ancient Persia.

*p. 154, ekam . . . vedanti:* There is one eternal principle underlying the universe which is explained in various ways by learned men.

## THE REST WAS SILENCE

Boris Ford (1917- ): One of the most brilliant products of the pre-war English School at Cambridge. Pupil of the distinguished lecturer and literary critic Dr F. R. Leavis, Mr Boris Ford has played an important part in the adult-educational policies of the British Army and also for adult education in Great Britain. He is also an expert on the use of Television for schools and is now the Education Secretary to the Cambridge University Press. Among his other writings is the well-known Pelican Guide to English Literature—seven volumes of this remarkable series have been produced under his guidance by his contemporaries at Cambridge, chiefly the pupils of Dr F. R. Leavis.

*p. 155, Walter de la Mare (1873-1956):* Walter de la Mare entered the profession of publishing as a young man and remained in it for virtually the whole of his life. But essentially de la Mare was a writer, rather than a publisher, of books. He wrote a great deal of poetry, much of it especially for children and all of it associated with the moods and fancies of childhood. His exquisite romantic poetry reminds one of the fairy-tale, and he also wrote a considerable quantity of fairy-stories for children. It was as if de la Mare was anxious to turn inward from the unsympathetic modern world of science and technology, 'to seek shelter in the warmth of his own familiar thicket of dream', as one critic has written. A person of great charm and wisdom, and yet of strong individuality, de la Mare died at the age of 83, a few weeks after the interview described in this article.

*Journal of Education:* One of the leading educational periodicals in Great Britain, founded in 1831. Its editor was Boris Ford, author of this article.

*p. 157, Early One Morning:* A book by de la Mare on the subject of childhood.

*Charles Kingsley (1819-75):* A Christian Socialist. Wrote novels (*Alton Locke, Westward Ho!*), poetry, pamphlets, sermons.

*Alfred Tennyson* (1809-92): A prolific Victorian poet of great popularity. He wrote his poem 'Crossing the Bar' at the age of 80.

*Tape-recorder*: A portable apparatus which records sound electrically on a thin metal tape. Each reel of tape runs for 20-30 minutes and then a new one has to be inserted into the machine. Afterwards the tapes can be played back through a loud-speaker on the same machine.

*p. 158, Jack the Giant Killer* (or Jack and the Beanstalk): A children's fairy-story about Jack who plants some beans which grow up to the sky, and how he kills the giant living at the top by cutting down the beanstalk.

*Molly Whuppie*: The country-girl in the fairy-story, who becomes Queen of the May.

*comics*: Magazines, of American origin, for adults and children, in which the stories are usually of a violent and crude character and are told in series of pictures.

*T.V*: Television. It seems that television and comics do a great deal to discourage reading.

*p. 161, British Council*: An official body responsible for promoting an understanding of British culture and social life abroad. Has Representatives and Institutes throughout the Commonwealth and in many foreign countries.

*Lawrence* (1885-1930): Son of miner, became leading English novelist and writer of short stories of twentieth century (*Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love*). A profound analyst of social ills, travelled with his wife throughout the world seeking after a civilization of moral sanity and health. Had deep feeling for nature. Also a poet, one of whose earliest collections was made and published by de la Mare. His *Letters* is a book of remarkable force and vitality.

*p. 162, Edward Garnett*: Born 1892. Novelist, man of letters, one-time friend of Lawrence.

*Henry James*—See p. 183.

*p. 165, Charles Dickens* (1812-70): One of the greatest and most prolific English novelists (*Oliver Twist, Dombey and Son, Great Expectations, Bleak House*). Created a teeming world of people and characters: fantastic and realistic, humorous and sentimental, old and young, rich and poor, a world of black and white contrasts, of caricature and yet of realism.

*Shakespeare's Macbeth*: These lines, from the final scenes of the play, are spoken by Macbeth himself as he realizes that defeat is very close and that his record of murder, of 'sound and fury', has been fruitless as well as evil.

*p. 166, The Listeners*: One of de la Mare's best-known poems.

*William Blake* (1757-1827): Engraver and poet (*Songs of Innocence and Experience, 'Prophetic Books'*). A writer of disturbing imagination and sense of prophecy.

*p. 170, myxamatois*: A virus disease of rabbits. It spread naturally (through mosquitoes), but without being checked by man,

throughout the rabbit population in Great Britain in 1955-6, and all but eliminated the rabbit altogether. Though the rabbit in its millions was a serious menace to crops, many people felt uneasy at myxamatosis being allowed to spread, as it causes a horrible lingering death.

*p. 171, Au pair*: French, meaning 'on equal terms'. Used of foreign visitors living, for a small payment, as members of the family in order to learn the language.

*Aldous Huxley*—See *p. 179*.

*p. 172, F. R. Leavis*: Born 1895. Leading literary critic and lecturer in English at Cambridge University (*New Bearings in English Literature* included pages on de la Mare, *Revaluation*, *D. H. Lawrence*).

*Bach* (1685-1750): John Sebastian Bach—one of the very greatest European (German) composers, of religious and secular vocal, instrumental and keyboard music. The Organ is a large keyboard church instrument, whose sound is produced by wind being blown through pipes. *Tocatta*: a display-piece of music, having the air of improvisation.











