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Box 10, Folder 02 - "The Unconscious Christianity of Europe" (E.M.S.) (2 drafts)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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THE UNCONSCIOUS CHRISTIANITY OF EUROPE

A Study in Contrast between Europe and Asia.

There is a saying by Sir Oliver Lodge that "the last thing a deep-sea fish would discover would be water." He uses it in connection with the discovery of the universal medium - the ether - whose very omnipresence makes it so hard for us realise its existence. The well known proverb "it is hard to see the wood for the trees," and the phrase, "What do they know of England who only England know?" - these embody a similar principle, which is this - that to become fully conscious of an environment one must be able in some sort of way to get beyond it.

What is true with regard to national characteristics is even more strikingly so in the case of different civilizations. It is, we believe almost practically impossible for any one to get a vivid realisation of the essential elements in European civilization without in some way or other getting outside it - i.e. by living, either actually or in imagination, in some wholly alien civilization, as for instance that of Asia.

It was the present writer's lot to live for a time in the East - as private tutor - and in such a manner that he was very largely cut off from any European Society.

After an intimate contact with Indian social life , and an unusual opportunity of observing the various contrasts between East and West, there gradually, grew up and presented itself to the writer's mind one fundamental and all inclusive difference. It is not easy to express it in one sentence; but if the attempt had to be made it would run something like this: "The fundamental difference between the civilization of the former has the Christian Middle Ages behind it, while that of the Latter has not."

By this assertion of course it is not meant that the Eastern races did not exist throughout the Middle Ages, nor does it deny them a history of their own during that time. It means rather this, that, in speaking of "The Middle Ages", we refer to a very definite influence, unique of its kind - a "Zeit-Geist" if you like - not to be found in any other part of the world.

Without particularising further we may say that for a thousand years the spirit of Europe was moulded by organised Christianity.

When the Ancient World broke up with the fall of the Roman Empire and the old-established landmarks seemed to be swept away by the inflowing tide of barbarism, the Christian Church remained intact. It had gathered into itself all that was of imperishable moral value in that ancient order of things - the philosophy of Greece, from the religion of the Jews and in the order and unity of the Roman Empire; and now, safely stored within itself, it

carried these priceless elements forward into the age that was just beginning - an age in which it was to be the dominant factor.

As the magnet has power to draw towards itself in a definite pattern the loosely scattered particles of iron, so the Church, acting on the disorderly elements that entered Europe from beyond the Rhine and the Danube, created a new order and a new civilisation which endured for a thousand years.

The moulding influence of the Church during this period was so stupendous, so complete, so ~~an~~ enduring, so omni-present in its effects that for the most part we are unconscious of it; nor can we ever properly realise it until we pass beyond its borders into a pagan world which has never been under its sway.

On going out to the East one does not at first realise this profound difference, so deep-rooted in the Past. One is more likely to be impressed with a bewildering variety of external differences, at once interesting and picturesque.

As the European wanders for the first time through the crowded medley of an Eastern bazaar, his attention is drawn to a thousand and one strange details - to vividly coloured dresses and headgears, the quaint shops, the strange merchandise, the stranger gesticulations of those that buy and sell:- in short - to an infinite congeries of men, women, children, dogs, goats, camels, birds, even monkeys,

all mixed up together in one inextricable confusion of colour sound, smell and dust. "How thoroughly Eastern!", he says to himself, "how different from us!" Yet these are not the essential matters.

"These are actions that a man might play,
There is that within which passes show."

The real difference is something spiritual. It is the presence or absence of a peculiar moral pressure, which has been transmitted down to the present from generations that have passed away many centuries ago. But, as we have said the realisation of this truth may come slowly, and it may come in the following way.

Let all these external differences disappear. Let an Indian become outwardly westernised. Let him dress in English clothes, speak in the English tongue, live in a European house with all its modern conveniences; let him read his morning paper at breakfast time, and go down to his office in his motor-car, there to do business in the markets of the world - let him do all this and more - yet, in spite of all these external resemblances, the essential cleavage is still there. The East is still the East, and the West, the West.

We would not, however, go so far as to say that "never the twain shall meet"; but it is certain that only by an inner revolution of the most fundamental kind, by a transformation of his whole spiritual being, by a conversion

that swings the individual as it were, centuries ahead of his race, can any Asiatic come to understand and appreciate the essentials of European civilisation.

At this point an explanation is necessary to avoid a misunderstanding. We do not deny, for instance, that there are hundreds of thousands of Indians who are more pleasing in the sight of God than hundreds of thousands of Europeans. For many Hindus and Mahomedans are much nobler characters - taken as individuals - than many who call themselves Christians. (One has only to think of Kipling's "Gunga Dhin", or the Lama in "Kim"). But our point is that - taken collectively - the moral tone of Europe, as expressed in our institutions, conventions and ethics, is vastly superior to that of the Orient. Hence the average European - through no merit of his own - is born into a loftier vision of life with its ideals and obligations than the average Oriental - just as a child, born and bred on the slopes of a mountain range, inherits (physically) a loftier and broader vision than a child of the plains. It is the contention of this article that it is largely the Christian Middle Ages behind us that has pushed our civilisation up the slope of the mountain.

In discussing this question with Englishmen in the East - in particular with Army and Civil Service men - I have often been surprised at the attitude of some of them. Not infrequently I have heard such men deny the statement that it is Christianity which has made the essential cleavage between the East and the West. "My own belief", they will tell you, "is that in the long run, it doesn't make any difference what religion a man belongs to - or if he has any at all. Let him be Buddhist, Hindu, Mahomedan, Christian, Pharasee, or even an Atheist, it makes no real difference, so long as he is "straight" and "Plays the Game".

Sometimes they will go on to assure you that it is a great mistake to try and convert the "heathen", as you contemptuously call them to another religion. It is best to leave them to their own mode of worship, as this is best suited to their manner of life, and the peculiarities of their environment. Anyhow, all that really matters is that they should "Play the Game".

Now to my mind it is a curious thing that these people should speak in this way - army officers, civil surgeons, magistrates up and down the great empire of India: - for they are just the men who, by their lives, exemplify the doctrine they deny.

Such men, even when they have ceased to believe in Christianity, reveal as it were in spite of themselves their Christian origin.

Their creed may have whittled itself down to the simple maxim "Play the Game": Yet take any such Englishmen, with no pretensions to being an orthodox Christian (but brought up in a Christian country) and compare their notion of "Playing the Game" with that of an Educated Indian (who has not come under the influence of English Society) - and you will find how great is the difference. And looking still deeper, you will find that this difference can only be accounted for by the fact that the European carries round with him, as part of his ethical outfit, part of his very self in fact, certain traditional moral values, which are the subconscious deposit upon his soul of centuries of Christianity, of the whole of the Middle Ages and even before.

All this may seem an exaggeration; but a few examples will make it clear. An Englishman, new to India, stands on the verandah of his bungalow, and there heaves in sight a fat and oily Bunya (merchant) coming to display his wares. There is nothing unusual in this:- there are sleek and oily commercial travellers in England but what does strike the Englishman as unusual, and unusually wrong, is that while The Bunya ambles easily along carrying nothing but his well fed body, behind him and bearing the burden of his

GOODs there staggers a half - naked woman. She is merely a beast of burden, and he regards her as such. And no one, except the Englishman, seems to have any misgivings that this is not a very right and proper arrangement - - not even a westernised Indian with his B.A. Degree at Bombay University.

The Englishman's first natural impulse is to knock the man down, and ask him what the devil he means by making a poor woman cart his luggage round for him like that. Doubtless the merchant would strongly resent such treatment; but his resentment would not exceed his surprise. He would be surprised, because from his point of view, he would no doubt think he was treating the woman very handsomely.

I will now give another example, taken from my own experience. I had been dining at a wealthy Indian's house. After dinner we sat out under a brilliant electric arc light and coffee was served on the lawn. The warm night air, odorous with the scent of jasmine, was suddenly rent by the sounds of a woman screaming most dreadfully. The host ordered a servant to go and find out what was the matter. The man returned after a few minutes and said "It's only the horse-boy beating his wife." Upon the suggestion that he should go and tell him to desist, the servant - who had been with the family sometime - smiled rather incredulously, and answered "But, Sir, they have

only been recently married" - referring to the proverb that a man is not properly married until he has beaten his wife!

This rather cynical treatment of the subject stirred me to make some caustic comments on the Oriental treatment of women generally.

"I don't see why you should make such a fuss", replied my host, "there are plenty of husbands in England who beat their wives; you have only to read the law court reports in your Newspapers" (He himself had been in England several times)

"It may be so", I replied, "but they do not do so, openly and unashamed, before an indifferent public." Then I related to him an unforgettable incident I had witnessed not long before from the carriage of a railway train that had stopped at a crowded railway station.

In the midst of the usual surging throng of humanity that is usually to be found in any large Indian railway station, my attention happen to fall on a man who was furiously beating a woman with a stick, driving her along with a s little compunction as one would drive a cow. The look on her face was a terrible mixture of hatred ~~an~~ and fear - a blind unreasoning fear like that of a tortured animal. Every few seconds she made as if she would return and go in the opposite direction, and then he would redouble his efforts.

What was, to my mind, one of the most appalling circumstances about the whole incident, was the fact that not one of the persons in the crowd - they were all Indians - seemed to be in the least perturbed by this distressing scene: only a few seemed to think it worth more than a second glance, and they only looked on with a sort of mild, spectacular interest. "There are indeed men in England who beat their wives", I went on, after having related this incident to my host, "but no man would be allowed to do it like that, unchallenged, on a crowded railway platform in England".

"Ah well", replied my host in the tone of a man who is making a good excuse, that is only because you have a more definite public opinion on the matter in England".

"Exactly," I replied, "but where did that public opinion come from?" And then suddenly, in a flash I realized again, that it was the influence of Christianity, coming down through the Middle Ages, through the Age of Chivalry.

This attitude towards the weaker sex - exemplified by the proverb ^{above} quoted ^{in the} ~~by the possibility and the incident~~ ^{above} just described - is not confined to the lower classes. While on a holiday in one of the Hill Stations I happened to become intimately acquainted with the work of a retired officer in the police service. It had been his lot to undertake service of a rather intimate nature in the courts of certain of the native Rajahs; and he could tell many tales of intrigue and cruelty.

One incident particularly impressed me - though it was only one amongst many - and it bears directly on the point we are considering. There was a young Rajah of his acquaintance, who was accustomed to hold a sort of levee of his Ranis at a particular hour every day. One of his wives, the youngest - who was scarcely more than a girl - received by wire one morning the news of the death of her favorite uncle. She was so overwhelmed by the news that, when it was time for her to appear before the king, she realised that she had forgotten to put on her royal apparel. She went, however, as she was, and pleaded the excuse of her bereavement. Her Lord, notwithstanding, was so incensed at what he was pleased to regard as her lack of respect that, there and then, he flogged the poor girl almost to death. This was only the beginning of his displeasure with this particular wife, which increased so much that a few months afterwards he shot her dead. It was officially reported that she had died of heart failure.

If the life of an Indian wife may contain such humiliations, that of the Indian widow is often a more unrelieved tragedy. For, though the practice of "Suttee" has been put down by the Government, anyone who knows anything about the social customs in India knows how often the lot of the widow in India is often one of continuous humiliation and quiet despair - and this is especially true of the child widow.

Of course there are many exceptions. I have met several widows whose life was tolerable enough; but these were mostly persons who belonged to a semi-westernised society. I even met one lady whom one could almost describe as a "Merry Widow". But then she was an exceptional personality altogether, and would have been unconventional in any part of the world. She was an ardent Tolstyan, ran a labour Beureau, was a keen politician, and used even to engineer strikes.

But to return to our theme and our examples. It was my privilege to become intimately acquainted with a most refined Indian gentleman and his wife, and their whole troop of most delightful children, (whom they were endeavouring to bring up on Montessori Principles). Both husband and wife were very advanced in their ideas. They had altogether given up the practice of Purdah (i.e. the segregation of the women folk entirely apart from all male visitors), and they were surprisingly broad minded in matters of religion, politics and education.

One day we were discussing the question as to what was the best kind of education for the modern Indian girl. In particular the point was raised as to how far it was advisable to depart from the immemorial oriental restrictions on the liberty of women. "It is very hard for you to realise", went on this lady, "how great are the risks we run in allowing our daughters, not only to give up Purdah, but also to mix as freely as they do in England with members of the opposite sex".

"Your social life is surrounded by so ~~may~~ many unwritten laws and conventions, which serve as safe-guards to young people when they mix together freely in each other's society. But with us it is different. These conventions for the most part are not there, and therefore it is fatally easy for the emancipated young woman of India, ^{to} to be carried away beyond all bounds as soon as she breaks away from the customary moorings, (I will not vouch for the exact words, but that was the gist of what she said)

This discussion, by-the-way, had arisen ~~in~~ an interesting manner, which throws a further light on the question we are considering.

I had been present at the birthday-party of one of her children, and had been in fact the only European in the company. To liven things up a little as the guests seemed rather shy with each other and their hosts -(as they often are even at the beginning of a children's party in England). I suggested that we should go down to the tennis court and play some games, which we did, ~~and~~ ^{and} before long I had introduced them to some of the good old English games like "Nuts and May", "Oranges and Lemons", "Cross Tig" and so on. In these games of course it is necessary for those playing to join hands, or chase after and catch one another. As boys and girls, and youths and maidens, were all playing together, this form of amusement seemed - to the parents of some of the children - a most shocking innovation.

One must remember that Eastern people do not even touch hands when they are saluting each other. Even my hostess a most liberally minded lady - thought it was an inadvisable procedure as it might serve as "the thin edge of the wedge"; and would, in any case, lead to scandalous gossip amongst the orthodox Hindus.

I was quite taken aback at this criticism, and assured her that we always played these, and similar games in England at children's parties without any serious results.

"Ah, but you must remember", she replied, "how many habits traditions and customs you have in your country that safe-guard your young people at every turn."

Again I experienced a strange feeling, as though my eyes had suddenly been opened; and I was made aware of a subtle and sustaining influence in our civilisation, almost like an invisible and pervading presence. I had come across, in my own experience, exactly what I read about, later, in one of Chesterton's books, where he speaks of the Church as making a ring-fence round the innocent pleasures of paganism.

And in this connexion, too, (i.e. with regard to the veneration for the sanctity of womanhood) even Protestants must recognise the tremendous influence which the cult of The Virgin Mother of God must have exercised on the mind of Europe. What sober historians would deny that the countless prayers offered up to the Blessed Virgin in the Middle Ages - at innumerable shrines in every part of Europe - have helped, beyond all

estimation, to raise the general conscience of the people to a loftier conception of womanhood?

It is difficult to live in India these days without taking an interest in Politics. When I went out first, I confess that it seemed to me that the only fair and logical course that England could take was to grant India Self-Government.

But, in coming into closer contact with the actual conditions, I began to see things in a very different light, and to realise how dangerous and futile was this talk of granting India the same kind of self-government as a country like Canada. And it was dangerous for the same reason as "Oranges and Lemons" had appeared dangerous to my Indian Lady friend whom I have just quoted.

The practice of Self-Government can only be safely introduced to a people which already possesses - embedded, as it were, in the very texture of its mind - certain fundamental notions as to the nature of mankind.

These notions were acquired by the peoples of Europe during the Middle Ages. We are still too apt to speak of those ages as "The Dark Ages", and forget that it was during these centuries that there came about, imperceptibly, the greatest revolution in History - the abolition of slavery as the recognised basis of Society (as had been the case in the Ancient World) Furthermore it was during these same "Dark Ages" that the idea of a representative Government was worked out into practice, and the method of "Trial by Jury" became the basis of our judicial system.

Centuries before the doctrine of the Equality of Man became a political catchword in the eighteenth century, the mind of Europe had been schooled to the idea that all men were of equal value, in the sight of God. For a thousand years the Church had persistently taught the doctrine, driving it home through the labours of millions of priests in every corner of Europe; and driving it home so completely that men found nothing extraordinary in a peasant being raised to the Papacy ~~or~~ or a King being flogged, barefoot and bareheaded, through the streets as a penitent.

It was the work of the Catholic Church that abolished slavery. Such an institution was, by its very nature, incompatible with the spirit of the doctrine that all men are of equal and infinite value in the eyes of God. It was this teaching too which prepared the way for, and made possible, the practice of a true democracy.

This is why it is ~~absurd~~ ^{a *dangerful* move} to try and graft a political system like Democracy on to a civilisation that is not ready for it; that ^{is} lacks the deep-rooted instincts on which it must rest; that has never known the long period of gestation and the spiritual travail ^{which} ~~that~~ must precede so glorious a birth.

And this is the reason, too, why nearly all the vitality that there is in the Swaraj movement in India to day is derived either directly or indirectly from the presence of the very Government it describes as so repressive.

I happened to be present once at a large house-party in which there were some forty guests, most of whom were leaders in the Indian National, or Swaraj Movement. They who had come together to attend at the Annual National Congress. I had many opportunities of discussing matters with them and - what was perhaps even more instructive - of hearing their discussions amongst themselves. Naturally, the burden of their talk was the necessity of obtaining Self-Government, and the means of attaining it, together with many comments on the injustice of the British Raj.

At the same time, however, I could not help being struck with the fact that, but for the British Raj, these probably would not have been able to come together at all. For it was the British Government that had laid down, and was still managing the wonderful system of railways that had enabled them to come together so easily from the remotest corners of India.

Furthermore these delegates, having come from different parts of India, spoke different languages: and the only language they all had in common was English. They were, in fact, indebted to the British Government for the privilege of being able to understand one another's tirades against it.

The very terms so constantly on their lips - "committee", "representative", "agenda", "Bill of Parliament", "franchise" were, many of them, phrases that had nothing in common with spirit of Asiatic Governments, and were copied directly from the West .

For Mahatma Grandhi their leader I have the greatest personal respect and affection, but it is ^{at times} hard to understand his attitude. He preaches the gospel of the simple life, the iniquity of trains, hospitals and all the modern amenities of life, and yet the first time I had the pleasure of meeting him, he arrived at the house in a gigantic Daimler Limousine, which had been lent him by a Hindu friend.

? If anyone doubts as to whether the ideals of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, and the practice of Self-Government are ~~alien~~ to the mentality of the Indian, and incompatible with his traditions, let him become acquainted at first hand with the Caste System of that country.

It is sometimes said that in Europe we also have a Caste System, and reference is made to the social cleavages in European Society. But it is a mistake to imagine that there is any real parallel here; for the differences between the various social ranks are not marked by any hard and fast rules. The gulf between one grade of society and another is constantly being bridged by genius, beauty, education and other circumstances: and these differences disappear almost entirely in the presence of any great emergency, as war or pestilence or sudden danger.

An English gentleman for instance would risk his life by jumping into water to save the son of a cottager as unhesitatingly as would the son of a Duke because, at such moments he acts on the instinctive belief - which is our European heritage - that, in the sight of God, all men are of equal value.

But it is different in India where the rigidity of the Caste System makes the prevalence of any such idea impossible, at any rate in practice.

The following incident - which could be paralleled by ~~k~~ many others - illustrates the point in question. An Irish lady of my acquaintance, who lived in one of the Hill Stations in the Himalayas, heard a man calling for help by the side of the road one evening as night was falling. The three Indians in succession came along the road and heard his cries from where ~~x~~ he lay under the bushes by the side of the road. They enquired his caste. He had none: he was an out-caste. One of the natives, as he heard the man tell him he was dying called back in a nanchalant voice. "Well, die then", and the two others also "passed by on the other side" without feeling it was any concern of theirs. The man would certainly have succumbed, had not the lady herself gone back nearly a mile out of her way to procure assistance. The contrast struck me as being the more remarkable ~~as~~ the lady in question, had to my knowledge, an almost unconquerable natural antipathy to coloured races of any sort.

"Our Indian philosophy" said an Indian scholar, "explains why it was right for the priest and the Levite to ["]pass by on the other side, leaving the man who fell among thieves to his own "Karma".

I once rather annoyed an Indian gentleman of my acquaintance by commenting on the fact that there were no phrases corresponding to "if you please" and "thank you" in the language in which he addressed his servants. He tried to excuse it by saying that

where we use such phrases they express the same thing by tone of voice and gesture; but the bald fact remained that he never said "please" or "Thank you" to his servants. It is not easy for anyone living in Europe to realise how completely the caste system prevents, even the most willing, from regarding their fellow-man as their brother, and helping him as such. One occasion, when I had had some guests in to dinner, I suggested to one of the servants that he should help my table-servant with the washing up of dishes. The former was a very good natured fellow, and would have done anything to oblige, but on this occasion he begged very volubly to be excused, the chief grounds of his refusal being that his daughter was going to be married the following week. On being further questioned it appeared that if he had touched the dishes I had used he would have lost caste. He would then have had to pay a heavy fine to regain it; and would thus have deprived his daughter of her wedding dowry.

It is not, however, simply the barriers of caste that makes it harder for Indians to work together than it is for Europeans. We believe there is another reason, which will be seen by turning to another aspect of our subject.

In the Middle Ages - and before that, in the Roman Empire men in Europe became accustomed to the idea of a vast, centralised social organism, which included within itself peoples and nations of different languages and customs - an all-embracing Community which lasted on unchangingly through the centuries, while generation after generation of individuals came and went like waves in the sea.

There has been no such experience for the races of the India. It is true that under this or that great conqueror, something like a cosmopolitan state came into existence for a while, as various nations were called together by the might of some towering individual. But it was never for long. The mighty Empires of Aurangzeb and Akbar broke under their own weight, as having, as it were, no enduring mortar within their composition to hold together their component parts.

But the genius of Rome provided that mortar for Europe, bequeathing it as a spiritualised legacy, to the Church of the Middle Ages. This circumstance has endowed the peoples of Europe with a power of working together with a collective efficiency unknown in the East. It has resulted in long-standing institutions, stable governments, national debts, good roads and means of communication generally; in a sense of the continuity of history, and (what is really the same thing) the power to distinguish history, ~~and what is~~ from myth. More than this, it has given to European civilisation a unity so profound that, when any danger threatens what is fundamental in it, the various elements in Europe that most embody it, are welded together into a fiery whole, which acts with a wisdom and determination beyond that of any individual or state. Thus the Crusades were a movement of the collective consciousness of Europe against the Mahomedan peril; and of late we have seen a similar phenomenon, when all that was truest to our European tradition rose as one man against the anti-Christian doctrine of Nietche embodied in the Prussian

state.

This power of combining diverse elements, and making them work together voluntarily and harmoniously and on a vast scale towards a common end is practically unknown in the East. Indeed it is hard enough to get Orientals of different creeds and temperaments to work together on a small scale. "The trouble with our Indian politics - said a prominent Hindu gentleman to me one day, "is that we never seem able to differ strongly on any matter without it tending to become a personal quarrel."

And of course, as everybody knows, the chief difficulty that "Mahatma Gandhi" has had to cope with, in his Swaraj movement, is that of trying to get Hindus and Mussulmans to work smoothly together for a common end.

It would seem almost that the very idea of a multiplicity or diversity which is caught up into a higher unity is ^{alien} ~~alien~~ to the Eastern way of thinking; and can be exemplified in other spheres beside politics. ~~If one compares~~ Eastern and Western music, for instance. Almost the first thing that strikes the Westerner is that Eastern music is devoid of harmony. It is, in fact, that you might call one dimensional music. It has produced a great variety of melodies - many of them perhaps too subtle for the Western ear to appreciate - but it has no conception of the beauty that can be obtained by playing two or more notes together so that their individual values are enhanced by their reciprocal contributions to a common chord. Still less

does it understand the meaning of Counterpoint or the weaving together of even different melodies in a higher unity.

On several occasions I have asked Indians if they could play the piano, and they have replied in the affirmative. On being asked to perform they have (to my astonishment, the first time at any rate) seated themselves solemnly at the piano and proceeded to play a tune with one finger only. One gentleman, indeed played with two fingers, but he played the tune in octaves from beginning to end. There was no sign of any accompaniment to the air, nor any harmony of any kind, nor apparently the slightest desire for it, nor the sense that anything was missing. The other Indians present applauded these strange recitals as though they were very meritorious performances, as doubtless they were from their point of view. It is practically impossible even for an educated Indian - who has never been to Europe - to understand even the idea of modern orchestral music in which so many diverse sounds are caught up into a higher unity.

It is possible to see in this striking difference between the music of East and West the symbol of a still deeper divergence. It illustrates exactly the difference between the Christian and Oriental ideas of heaven. In the Christian heaven the individual personalities survive - eternally separate and distinct. ~~Yet~~ ^A at the same time, without losing anything of their individuality, they are caught up into a higher unity, like the component parts of a mighty orchestra. There are innumerable separate saints and angels in Heaven, but (as Shakespeare says in one of his sonnets) "Number there in love is slain." Or as Dante describes it in his Paradise, -

"In fashion as a snow-white rose, lay there
Before my view the saintly multitude
Which in His own blood Christ espoused"

In nothing does what we have called the subconscious influence of Christianity in Europe manifest itself more clearly - as in contrast to pagan civilisations - than in its reverence for and appreciation of the Child.

While in India I became intimately acquainted with an Indian gentleman who, very rightly, had come to the conclusion that the best investment he could make for his children was to give them the best education possible. He was ~~an exceedingly~~ a wealthy man, and was prepared to pay very liberally for what he wanted. He did not send his children to Europe because he said he did not want them to become "de-nationalised". So he ransacked India to try and find suitable tutors and suitable Indian books for his children. But he found, after a while, that even his fabulous wealth could not procure what he sought. "It is a strange thing", he remarked, "that none of our great Pundits and philosophers seem able to write books specially suitable for children, whereas in England you have hundreds of such books on all conceivable subjects, and even have special magazines and newspapers for the little ones. Not only that, but your great authors, of their own accord, very often write books specially for children, and do not think it ^{beneath their dignity} to do so". (He was referring to authors like Sir James Barrie, Lewis Carroll, Chesterton, R. L. Stevenson) "I have tried", he went on, "To get some of our learned scholars to write such books for Indian

Children

CHILDREN, with an Indian setting to them, and have offered to pay them well for doing so, but they do not seem able to do it, — though why I don't know."

In reply, I told my friend that I thought that it was probably due to the fact that our religion has always inculcated a profound reverence for childhood, ^{It has} ~~had~~ opened our eyes to its compelling beauty; and is continually urging us to emulate the child-like spirit in its simple trust, its grateful acceptance of the ^{good} ~~god~~ things of life, and above all in its innocence and purity. Furthermore it teaches us that we are all equally loveable and equally stupid in the presence of the infinite and charitable wisdom of the Almighty Father, that we are all children of the same Father. Only that is so happens that some of His children — like Mr. Chesterton for instance — happen to be physically bigger, but by no means therefore better or wiser than his smaller brothers and sisters in the nursery (for whom, I am quite sure, he would turn himself into an elephant at a moment's notice — which is more than most Indian Pundits would do, though they see them every day of their lives).

Western readers may be interested to know — by the way — that Peter Pan, Long John Silver, The White Rabbit, Alice in Wonderland and many other of their old friends, became regular habitues of our Indian nursery, easily supplanting by their robust and energetic personalities the vague and shadowy forms of Ram and Arjuna and the other figures of the Hindu mythology).

Another point of difference, and one which - to some extent at any rate - comes as a result of the influences we have been discussing, is the Oriental's well-known indifference to Time. Christian theology has it that "Man is born and dies once, and after comes the judgement." Hence it follows that our ^{brief} sojourn here on earth is fraught with momentous issues, both for ourselves and others. It brings with it opportunities, individual and national, which can never recur. Furthermore in the tradition of European philosophy Evil is no shadowy negation of good: it is a living personal principle, terrible with all the subtlety and strength of the angelic mind, though fallen. Human life is therefore full of conflicting loyalties, prodigious efforts, irrecoverable destinies, in short with all the high elements of a drama that rolls onwards with gathering forces to a great and terrible Day of Doom.

Not so with the Oriental. He believes in an endless succession of births and re-births; and Time is not any great matter. Time is for him simply the warp across which the shuttle of our Ego passes and repasses, as it weaves through countless incarnations the pattern of our Existence. Since one will have to live again on this earth so many thousands of times, why work oneself up ^{into} ~~to~~ uncomfortable enthusiasms, and exacting philanthropies, or depart on dangerous crusades! Action binds you as firmly to the "Wheel of Existence" as does inaction, - and both are an illusion. It is all "Maya", an illusion, - a predestined flickering of lights and shadows across the interminable screen of Existence. One may as well make the illusion as comfortable as

possible; and anyhow it is all pre-arranged - Kismet!

There are of course many other points, which could be mentioned, that bear upon the subject of this article - such as the custom of keeping Purdah, child marriages, the licentious rights, of certain Hindu temples - but enough has been said to ~~wh~~ show how profound is the cleavage between a Christian and a non-Christian civilisation. And furthermore it has been our aim to emphasise those points of difference which are not so much the direct results of Christian teaching as their indirect consequence, operating as it were subconsciously, as that religion, has little by little, leavened the ~~h~~whole structure of the society.

Before we draw this essay to a close, there is one aspect of it which calls urgently to be considered. The writer can imagine that many an Eastern reader - and others besides - after perusing the above comparisons, to express himself indignantly as follows) -

"Your treatment of the subject is grossly unfair. You have taken the best out of your civilisation and compared it with the worst in ours. Any one could make out a case like that.

But what about your Western cities? Do they impress the Eastern visitor as being full of heroic efforts and momentous issues; or rather are they not full of music-halls, night-clubs and - generally speaking - a mad, unceasing, whirling race after pleasure.

You talk to us of the sanctity of marriage; and your divorce

courts are full to overflowing. You hold up holy hands of horror at the rites of some of our temples, yet one of the foremost Anglican divines of the day has openly spoken of the practice of birth-control as the lesser of two evils.

"You would have us emulate the order and stability of your governments, and we see the streets running red with revolution in the first European state we enter from across our borders.

"You tell us we have no reverence for the child; but has your modern European child any reverence for its parents?" And so on.

These - and there are more that could be mentioned - are serious charges indeed; and unfortunately it is impossible to deny them. For there are, in point of fact, powerful disruptive forces in European Society, which are rapidly tending towards the disintegration of the Christian civilisation which we inherited from the Middle Ages. And these forces are making themselves more evident every year. (X)

Left to themselves they would inevitably reduce Europe to the same level - or rather to a much lower level of morality than any pagan civilisation at present existing.

But they are not left to themselves. As the tide of Modernism sweeps onwards with gathering force, carrying away on its restless bosom one after another of our conventional moralities, one institution - amidst the general confusion and flux - is being visibly laid bare to all the world, fixed and immutable as ever - even as a great rock is left standing

(O) See Appendix.

by the outgoing tide, which sweeps away to destruction the surrounding litter of rubbish and shifting sand.

That institution is the Catholic Church, founded in the beginning on the Rock that can never be shaken. The Catholic Church, as G.K. Chesterton wittily observes, is the only institution in Europe to-day which is of Pagan origin. Or as Macaulay says, in his well known passage, "The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human & civilisation. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when cameleopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre..."

It is the contineud presence of this institution, and this alone, which has given and still gives to European Society (and its derivative offshoots - America and the European colonies) ^(though a few unrealized) ~~its~~ ^{their} permanence and continuity, and supplies it with those elements which mark it off from every other civilisation that has ever & existed.

To bring home this statement, which any wealth of detail, would be as far beyond the scope of this essay as it would be beyond the ability of the present writer. (~~Names of Books?~~)

But even without turning our attention to past ages and burying ourselves deep in historical treatises - indeed without reading anything at all except the signs of the ^{times}, this truth is brought home to any impartial observer, as one circumstance after another draws his & attention the omnipresent leaven of the Catholic Church in Europe at the present day.

Many of us in this generation (the present writer included) were brought up to think of the Catholic Church as a cumbersome and lethargic Body, bereft of all vitality, a mere worn-out relic of a bye-gone age, an antique survival - not of the fittest. We looked upon Catholics with a patronising mixture of pity and scorn, as we wondered how any intelligent beings could subscribe to a creed so mixed with superstition, so hopeless at variance with science, which hung such heavy and insupportable weights upon the soaring spirit of man. It never occurred to us - even in our dreams - that this great mechanical institution, moving so slowly, merely with the residual impetus left in it by a spirit which had long since departed (as a chicken will run for a while with its head cut off) that an institution so moribund as this could have any vital connexion with the Spirit of our Age.

And then came the great discovery. By the Grace of God our eyes were opened, and we saw that all this apparent stillness and immobility was simply the results of its perfect balance - even as a gigantic fly-wheel, revolving with incredible rapidity appears the more motionless the more perfect is its poise. We realised that every part of this colossal institution - every rite, every ceremony, every minute vestment - was throbbing with an incredible vitality - was in fact "afire with the Holy Spirit".

And now as we look around us - not merely to individuals - but right across the events of our time, we discern in all manner of different ways the leavening influence of the Catholic Church, supporting and defending what is best in our civilisation. At one moment the observer witnesses the astonishing spectacle

of a "decadent," Catholic country casting out from itself the devils of sloth and disorder and returning to an economic stability and well-being which is the wonder and envy of other nations; the next he sees the Catholic Church, by its heroic opposition, revealing to all Europe - like a sudden and searching light, the sinister outlines of Bolshevism.

Or turning to the sphere of morals. Amidst the confused babel of opinions, uncertain questioning, hesitating authorities on such matters as divorce, and birth control - as they are discussed by other religious denominations - he hears the voice of the Catholic Church sounding above the tumult, clear as a trumpet, and, as a trumpet, calling to battle.

Or it may be he has been caught in the subtle meshes of Theosophy or some other of the many forms of Orientalism, which, under the cover of a reinterpreted Christianity, try - as they have ever tried all down the centuries, to undermine the faith of Europe. And what does he find. He finds without exception that all these heresies are able to form a sort of spiritual alloy with one or more of the various Christian Sects of Europe; but that they all stop dead at the gates of that "City which is set on a Hill". In short he will find that ultimately he will have to choose - as so many have done - between his Theosophy, Spiritualism, Christian Science or whatever it is and the Catholic Church. For as it was the chivalry of Europe, inspired by the Catholic Church that drove back the hordes of Mahomedans, so it is Catholic thinkers, and only they - inspired by that same Church - who are able to drive back from the minds of man

the pagan hordes of to-day, who with pen in hand instead of lance, besiege his troubled spirit.

Nor has the Church forgotten to wield the sword as well as the pen. When that nation, which in the pride of its heart had rebelled more completely than any other against the spiritual dominion of Rome, leagued itself after a lapse of three centuries, with the hereditary enemies of Christianity, in an attempt to overwhelm European civilisation and set up in its place a blasphemous Kultur of its own, it was the Catholic countries of the Continent which rose to withstand it. Then it was that England - Catholics still at heart though she does not yet realise it - broke through the "filthy cobwebs" which had so long obscured her vision; and, seeing that nation as it really was, threw in her lot with the Catholics tradition of Europe.

It would be possible to multiply examples almost indefinitely, and show how in Literature, Art, Music, Science, Political Economy, the presence of the Catholic Church acts as a conserving influence, driving out what is undisciplined, morbid and exotic supplying instead proposition and balance, sanity and humour, and above all an indefinable atmosphere of wholesomeness and purity which is peculiarly its own. But enough has already been said to show that there is a valid reply to the Oriental's supposed objection to our main thesis.

One word more in conclusion. The best proof that our main contention in this essay is a correct one is that fact that

wherever Catholicism has taken a hold amongst the Orientals.

One finds the same qualities springing up like flowers in the desert. Indeed wherever the influence of Christianity is brought to bear - through any denomination - the Christian virtues will begin to appear (I knew an English Colonel, a Civil Surgeon, not much of a Church-goer himself by the way, who used to say, "Line me up 50 native women and dress them all the same, and I will make a good shot at picking out all the Christians by the expression of their faces.") But too often, in the case of the Sects, these virtues are only skin deep or evanescent; and the term "Rice-Christian" is a reproach which has, alas, too often a solid foundation.

On the other hand the expression "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic" holds true, on the whole, in the East as in the West and it is generally admitted that Catholicism takes a deeper hold on the Indian than any other form of Christianity.

"I think there must be something different about the Catholics from the other Christian bodies.," said a Hindu friend of mine to me one day, who was himself something of a sceptic on all religions, including his own. I asked him the reason why he thought this and replied to the effect that he had often had Catholics in his employment and had been struck with the fact that they were usually reliable. Also he said there seemed to be a certain matter - of - factness about their religion which appealed to him. It seemed to fit them naturally like a well-made garment; and they never seemed to put on airs or get other peoples backs up by making out they were much better than other people - or words

to that effect. And yet, he went on, at the same time they seem to take their religion quite seriously, for they always go to Church on Sundays.

Unfortunately I was not able to tell him what there was about Catholicism which had this peculiar effect on its devotees, for the simple reason that I was not a Catholic.

But as a matter of fact I had observed the same thing myself; and for this and other reasons had dropped into the habit of attending Catholic Churches in whatever part of India (and later in Africa) that I happened to be in. And always, wherever I went, I got the same impression. And I cannot describe this impression better than by saying that amongst these people I felt somehow that great gulf that I have been speaking of between East and West had vanished.

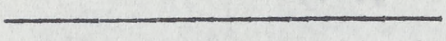
For over a year I used to attend a Catholic Church where important English officials and their families and the poorest and most uneducated Indians (who preferred to sit and kneel on the floor through the service in Oriental fashion) used to receive, at the same altar rails, the Body of Our Blessed Lord, administered by the brown hands of a Genoese Priest.

From this Feast - in spite of my being a European and inheriting the European traditions of which I have been speaking - I was excluded, while the poorest native, living on a few rapees a month, in a house the size of a small stable, was a welcome guest.

Here was matter for another discovery, more important than that of the 'Subconscious Christianity of Europe'; but this was a discovery concerning individuals, as that had to do with societ-

ies as a whole.

For to that celestial banquet many are invited who do not go, and many are brought in from the highways and hedges; and all who go - of whatever rank or colour - must do their Wedding Garment before they can be admitted.



33a

THE UNCONSCIOUS CHRISTIANITY OF EUROPE.

A Study in Contrast between Europe and Asia

There is a saying by Sir Oliver Lodge ~~to the effect~~ that "the last thing a deep-sea fish would discover would be water". He uses it in connection with the discovery of the universal medium - ~~the~~ ether - whose very omnipresence makes it so hard for us ^{to be aware of} ~~realise~~ its existence. The well known proverb, "It is hard to see the wood for the trees", and the phrase "What do they know of England who only Englan know", ~~both these~~ embody a similar principle, which is this - that, to become fully conscious of an environment one must be able, in some sort of way, to get beyond it.

What is true with regard to national characteristics is even more strikingly so in the case of different civilizations. It is practically impossible for any one to get a vivid realisation of the essential elements in European civilization without in some way or other getting outside it -- i.e. by living, either actually or in imagination, in some wholly alien civilization, as for instance, that of Asia.

It was the present writer's lot to live for some time in the East (as private tutor); and in such a manner that he was very largely cut off from any European Society.

After a ⁿ ~~very~~ intimate contact with Indian social life, and a ⁿ ~~most~~ unusual opportunity of observing the various contrasts between East and West, there gradually grew up, ~~and presented itself~~ ~~to~~ the writer's mind one fundamental and all inclusive difference.

It is not easy to express it in one sentence; but if ~~one had to~~ ^{make the attempt}

^{had to be made} it would run something like this: "The fundamental difference between the civilisations of Europe and Asia lies in the fact that civilisation of Europe has the Middle Ages behind it, while that of Asia has ^{the former} ~~the latter~~ behind it."

~~By~~ This assertion, of course, ^{Does} ~~it is~~ not mean that the Eastern races did not exist throughout the Middle Ages, nor does it deny them a history of their own during that time. It means rather ~~that~~, that in speaking of "The Middle Ages" we refer to a very definite influence, unique of its kind, - a "Zeit-Geist", if you like, - not to be found in any other part of the world.

Without going into details we may say that for a thousand years the spirit of Europe was moulded by organised Christianity.

When the Ancient World broke up with the fall of the Roman Empire, and the old-established landmarks seemed to be swept away by the inflowing tide of barbarism, the Christian Church remained intact. It had gathered into itself all that was of imperishable moral value in that ancient order of things - the philosophy of Greece, ~~from~~ the religion of the Jews and in the order and unity of the Roman Empire - and now, safely stored within itself, it carried these priceless elements forward into the age that was just beginning - an age in which it was to be the dominant factor.

As the magnet has power to draw towards itself, in a definite pattern, the loosely scattered particles of iron, so the Church, acting on the disorderly elements that entered Europe from beyond the Rhine and the Danube, created a new order, a new civilisation which endured for a thousand years.

The moulding influence of the Church during this period was so stupendous, so complete, so enduring, so omnipresent in its effects, that for the most part we are unconscious of it; nor can we ever properly realise it until we pass beyond its borders, into a pagan ^{world} ~~civilisation~~ which has never been under its sway.

On going out to the East one does not at first realise this profound difference, so deep-rooted in the Past. One is more likely to be impressed with a bewildering variety of external differences, at once interesting and picturesque.

As the European wanders for the first time through the crowded medley of an Eastern bazaar, his attention is drawn to a thousand and one strange details ^{to} the vividly coloured dresses and headgears, the quaint shops, the strange merchandise, the ^{wild} gesticulations of those that buy and sell; — in short ^{to}, an infinite congeries of men, women, children, dogs, goats, camels, birds even monkeys, all mixed up together in one inextricable confusion of colour, sound, smell and dust. "How thoroughly Eastern!", he says to himself, "how different from us!"; And yet these are not the essential matters;

"These are actions that a man might play,
There is that within which passes show".

The real difference, then, is something spiritual. It is the presence or absence of a peculiar moral pressure, which has been transmitted down to the present from generations that have passed away many centuries ago. But, as we have said, the realisation of this truth may come slowly, and it may come in the following way.

Let all these external differences disappear. Let an Indian become outwardly westernised. Let him dress in English clothes, speak ^{in the} English ^{tongue}, live in a European house with all its modern conveniences; let him read his morning paper at breakfast time, and go down to his office in his motor-car, ~~there~~ ^{to} do business in the markets of the world -- let him do all this and more -- yet, in spite of all these external resemblances, the essential cleavage ^{will} ^{remain} ~~is~~ still there. The East is still the East, and the West ~~is~~ the West.

We would not, however, go so far as to say that "never the twain shall meet"; but it is certain that only by an inner revolution of the most fundamental kind, by a transformation of his whole spiritual being, by a conversion that swings the individual, as it were, centuries ahead of his race, can any Asiatic come to understand and appreciate the essential of European civilisation.

At this point an explanation is necessary to avoid a misunderstanding . We do not deny , for instance , that there are hundreds of thousands of Indians who are more pleasing in the sight of God than hundreds of thousands of Europeans . For many Hindus and Mahomedans are much nobler characters - taken as individuals - than many who call themselves Christians . (One has only to think of Kipling's "Gunga Dhin " , or the Lama in "Kim") But our point is, that -taken collectively - the moral tone of Europe , as expressed in our institutions , conventions and ethics , is vastly superior to that of the Orient . Hence the average European -through no merit of his own - is born into a loftier vision of life with its ideals and obligations than the average Oriental — just as a child born ^{and bred} on the slopes of a mountain range inherits (physically) a loftier and broader vision than a child of the plains . It is the contention of this article that it is largely the Christian Middle Ages behind us that has pushed our civilization up the slope of the mountain .

In discussing this question with Englishmen in the East - in particular with Army and Civil Service men- I have often been surprised at the attitude ^{not untroubled by} of some of them . Not infrequently I have heard such men deny ~~the statement~~ that ~~it is~~ Christianity which has made the essential cleavage between ~~the~~ East and ~~the~~ West . "My own belief " , they will tell you , "is that , in the long run , it doesn't make any difference what religion a man belongs to - or if he has any at all- . Let~~h~~ him be a Buddhist , Hindu , Mahomedan , Christian , Parsee, or even an Atheist , it makes ^{real} no difference, so long as he is "straight" and "Plays the Game" .

Sometimes they will go on to assure you that it is a great mistake to try and convert the "heathen ~~as you contemptuously~~ ~~by call them~~ " to another religion . It is best to leave them to their own mode of worship as ~~this is~~ best suited to their manner of life and the peculiarities of their environment . Anyhow , all that really matters is that they should "Play the Game " .

~~New to my mind~~ It is a curious thing that these people should speak in this way - army officers , civil surgeons , magistrates up and down the great empire of India — for they are just the men who, by their lives, exemplify the doctrine they deny . Such men , even when they have ceased to believe in Christianity , reveal as it were in spite of themselves their Christian origin .

Their creed may have whittled itself down to the simple maxim "Play the Game " . Yet take any such Englishman , with no pretensions to being an orthodox Christian (but brought up in a Christian country) and compare his notion of "Playing the Game" with that of an ~~Educated~~ ^d Inian , who has not come under the influence of English Society — and you will find ^{how how} great is the difference. And looking still deeper you will find that this difference can only be accounted for by the fact that the Englishman carries round with him, as part of his ethical outfit , as part of his very self in fact , certain traditional moral values, which are the subconscious deposit upon his soul of centuries of Christianity — of the whole of ~~the~~ Middle Ages and even before .

This may seem an exaggeration , but a few examples will make it clear . An Englishman , new to India , stands on the verandah of his bungalow, and there heaves in sight a fat and oily Bunya (merchant) coming to display his wares . There is nothing unusual in this - there are sleek and oily commercial travellers in England- but what does strike the Englishman as unusual , and unusually wrong , is that while the Bunya ambles easily along, carrying nothing but his wellfed body , behind him and bearing the burden of his goods there staggers a half-naked woman . She is merely a beast of burden , and he regards her as such . And no one , except the Englishman , seems to have any misgivings that this is not a very right and proper arrangement — not even the westernised ^d Inian with his B.A. Degree at Bombay University .

The Englishman's first natural impulse is to knock the man down , and ask him what the devil he means by making a poor ^{woman} _^

cart his luggage round for him like that . Doubtless the merchant would strongly resent such treatment ; but his resentment would not exceed his surprise . He would be surprised , because from his point of view , he ~~would~~ no doubt think^s he was treating the woman very handsomely .

~~I will now give~~ ^{Here is} another example , taken from my own experience . I had been dining at a wealthy Indian's house . After dinner we sat out under a brilliant electric arc light and coffee was served on the lawn . The warm night air , odorous with the scent of jasmine ^{mogra} , was suddenly rent by the sounds of a woman screaming ~~most~~ dreadfully . The host ordered a servant to go and find out what was the ~~matter~~ . The man returned after a few minutes and said "It's only the Sizar (horse-boy) beating his wife " . Upon the suggestion that he should go and tell him to desist , the servant - who had been with the family ^{a long} ~~some~~ time - smiled rather incredulously , and answered " But, Sir, they have only been recently married " -- referring to the proverb that a man is not properly married until he has beaten his wife .

This rather cynical treatment of the subject stirred me to make some caustic comments on the Oriental treatment of women generally .

"I don't see why you should make such a fuss " , replied my host , " there are plenty of husbands in England who beat their wives ; you have only to read the law court reports in your newspapers " (He had been to England several times)

"It may be so", I replied , " but they do not do it openly and unashamed before an indifferent public " . Then I related an unforgettable incident I had witnessed not long before from the carriage of a railway train that had stopped at a crowded railway station .

In the midst of the usual surging throng of humanity, that is usually to be found in any large Indian railway station, my attention happen to fall on a man who was furiously beating

a woman with a stick . He was driving her along with as little compunction as one would drive a cow . The look on her face was a terrible mixture of hatred and fear - a blind unreasoning fear like that of a tortured animal . ~~Every few seconds she made as if she would return and go in the opposite direction , and then he would redouble his efforts.~~ What was , to my mind , one of the most appalling circumstances about the whole incident was the fact that not one of the persons in the crowd - they were all natives - seemed to be in the least perturbed by this distressing ~~scen~~ scene ; only a few seemed to think it worth more than a second glance , and they only looked on with a sort of mild spectacular interest . "There are indeed men in England who beat their wives " , I went on , after having related this incident to my host , " but no man would be allowed to do it like that , unchallenged , on a crowded railway platform in England" .

"Ah, well", replied my host in the tone of a man who is making a good excuse , " that is only because you have a more definite public opinion on the matter in England " .

"Exactly," I retorted , " but where did that public opinion come from ? " And then, suddenly, in a flash, ^{I realized} that it was the influence of Christianity , coming down through the Middle Ages , ~~through~~ the Age of Chivalry .

This attitude to the weaker sex - exemplified by the proverb quoted by the sizar and the incident just described - is not confined to the lower classes . While on a holiday in one of the Hill Stations I happened to become intimately acquaint-
-ed with the work of a retired officer in the police service. It had been his lot to ~~undertake~~ ^{undertake} service of a rather intimate nature in the courts of certain ~~of the~~ native Rajahs ; and he could tell many tales of intrigue and cruelty .

One incident particularly impressed me - though it was only one amongst many - and it bears directly on the point we are considering . There was a young Rajah of his acquaintance , who was accustomed to hold a sort of levee of his Ranis at a partic-

ular hour every day . One of his wives ,the youngest - who was scarcely more than a girl -received by wire one morning the news of the death of her favorite uncle . She was so overwhelmed by the news that ,when it was time for her to appear before the king , she realised that she had forgotten to put on her royal apparel . She went , however ,as she was ,and pleaded the excuse of her bereavement . Her Lord,notwithstanding , was so incensed at what he was pleased to regard as her lack of respect that , there and then , he flogged the poor girl almost to death .This was only the beginning of his displeasure ~~with this particular wife~~ ,which increased so much that a few months afterwards he shot her dead. It was officially reported that she had died of heart failure .

If the life of an Indian wife may contain such humiliations ,that of the Indian widow is often a more unrelieved tragedy . For , though the practice of "Suttee" has been put down by the Government ,anyone who knows anything about the social customs in India knows how often the lot of the widow in India is ^{often} one of continuous humiliation ~~and quiet despair~~ and this is especially true of the child widow .

Of course there are many exceptions . I have met not a few widows whose life was tolerable enough ; but these were mostly persons who belonged to a semi-westernised society. (I even met one ~~lady~~ whom one could almost describe as a "Merry Widow " . But then she was a very exceptional personality altogether and would have been unconventional in any part of the world .She was ^{by the way} an ardent Tolstoyan ,~~ran~~ a Labour Bureau , ^{was} a keen politician , and used even to engineer strikes).

But to return to our theme and our examples . It was my privilege to become intimately acquainted with a most refined Indian gentleman and his wife ,and their whole troop of most delightful children(whom they were endeavouring to bring up ~~and~~ on Montessori Principles) .Both husband and wife were very advanced in their ideas . They had altogether given up

the practice of Purdah (i.e. the segregation of the women folk ~~entirely~~ apart from all male visitors), and they were surprisingly broad minded in matters of religion, politics and education

One day we were discussing the question as to what was the best kind of education for the modern Indian girl. In particular the point was raised as to how far it was advisable to depart from the immemorial oriental restrictions on the liberty of women. "It is very hard for you to ^arelax", ^{Said the} ~~went on this~~ lady, "how great are the risks we run in allowing our daughters, not only to give up Purdah, but also to mix as freely as they do in England with members of the opposite sex"

"Your social life is surrounded by so many unwritten laws and conventions which serve as safe-guards to young people, when they mix together ^{in this way.} ~~freely in each other's society~~. But with us it is different. These conventions for the most part are not ^{for us} there; and therefore it is fatally easy for the "emancipated young woman of India" to be carried away beyond all bounds, as soon as she breaks away from the customary moorings" (I will not vouch for ^{his} ~~the~~ exact words, but that was the gist of what she said)

This discussion, by-the-way, had cropped up in ~~a very~~ ^{and one} an interesting manner, which throws a further light on the question we are considering.

I had been present at the birthday party of one of her children, ~~and~~ had been in fact the only European in the company. To liven things up a bit-as the guests seemed rather shy with each other and their hosts - (^{just} as they ~~often~~ are ~~even~~ at the beginning of a children's party in England) I suggested that we should go down to the tennis court and play some games. So we went ^{off} ~~what we did~~; and before long I had introduced them to some of the good old English games like "Nuts and May", "Oranges and Lemons", "Cross Tig" and so on. In these games, ^{as everyone knows} ~~of course~~ it is necessary for those playing to join hands, or chase after and catch ^{one an} ~~each~~ other. As boys and girls, and youths and maidens

were all playing together, this form of amusement seemed - to the parents of some of the children - a most shocking innovation (One must remember that Eastern people do not even shake hands when they ~~are~~ ^{one an} salute ~~each other~~). Even my hostess - a most liberally minded lady- ~~was~~ thought it was an inadvisable procedure, ~~one~~ ^{that} ~~as it~~ might serve as "the thin edged of the wedge" ; and would in any case lead to scandalous gossip amongst the orthodox Hindus .

I was quite taken aback at ~~her~~ ^{this} criticism, and assured her that we always played these and similar games in England at children's parties without any serious results.

"Ah, but you must remember", she replied, "how many habits, traditions and customs you have in your country that ~~safe-guard~~ ^{we have not} ~~your young people at every turn~~".

And again I experienced that strange feeling, as though my eyes had suddenly been opened; and I was made aware of a subtle and ~~sustaining~~ ^{pervading} influence in our civilisation, almost like an invisible and ~~pervading~~ ^{sustaining} presence. I had come across in my own experience exactly what I read about later in one of Chesterton's books where he speaks of the Church as making a ring-fence round the innocent pleasures of paganism.

~~And~~ In this connexion, too, (i.e. with regard to the veneration for the sanctity of womanhood) even Protestants must recognise the tremendous influence which the cult of The Virgin Mother of God must have exercised on the mind of Europe. What sober historian would deny that the countless prayers offered up to The Blessed Virgin in the Middle Ages - at innumerable shrines in every ~~part of Europe~~ ^{country} - ~~have~~ ^{must} helped, beyond all estimation, to raise the general conscience of the people to a loftier conception of womanhood? .

It is difficult to live in India these days without taking an interest in ^{politics - especially the Swaraj Movement} ~~Politics~~. (When I went out first, I confess that it seemed to me that the only fair and logical ~~king~~ course that England could take was to grant India Self-Government.

But, in coming into closer contact with the actual conditions, I began to see things in a very different light, and to realise how dangerous and futile was this talk of granting ~~India~~ the same kind of Self-government as a country like Canada.

to this unwieldy collection of different religions, races,

^{I saw it was} And dangerous for the same reason as "Oranges and Lemons" had appeared dangerous to ~~the~~ ^{my} Indian lady ^{friend} whom I have just quoted.

The practice of Self-government can only be safely introduced to a people which already possesses - embedded, as it were, in the very texture of its mind - certain fundamental notions as to the nature of mankind.

These notions were acquired by the peoples of Europe during the Middle Ages. We are still too apt to speak of those ages as "The Dark Ages"; ^{and} ^{try} forget that it was during these centuries ~~that~~ ^{almost} there came about, imperceptibly, the greatest revolution in History - the abolition of slavery as the recognised basis of Society (as had been the case in the Ancient World) Furthermore it was during these same "Dark Ages" that the idea of a representative Government was worked out into practice, and the method of "Trial by Jury" became the basis of our judicial system.

Centuries before the doctrine of the Equality of Man became a political catchword in the eighteenth century, the mind of Europe had been schooled to the idea that all men were equal in the sight of God. For a thousand years the Church had ^{persistently} taught this doctrine, driving it home through the labours of millions of priests in every corner of Europe; and driving it home so completely that people found nothing extraordinary in a peasant being raised to the Papacy or a King being flogged, barefoot and bareheaded through the streets as a penitent.

It was the work of the Church that abolished slavery. For such an institution was, by its very nature, incompatible

with the spirit of the doctrine that all men are of equal and infinite value in the eyes of God . It was this teaching too which prepared the way for ,and made possible, the practice of a true democracy .

But this slow maturing of the common mind ,~~this~~ gradual raising of it to a new conception of the nature of mankind by the pressure of a unified and omnipresent Church - ~~which~~ India has never known .

This is why it is absurd to try and graft a political system like Democracy on to a civilisation that is not ready for it ,~~that~~ that lacks the deep-rooted instincts on which it must rest ; that has never known the long period of gestation and the spiritual travail ^{which} ~~that~~ must precede so glorious a birth .

And this is the reason, too, why nearly all the vitality that there is in the Swaraj movement in India is derived, either directly or indirectly, from the presence of the ~~very~~ ^{sheath of a being} Government ~~they imagine~~ so repressive .

I happened to be present once at a large house-party in which there were some forty guests , most of them were leaders in the Indian National or Swaraj Movement . ~~and~~ They had come together to attend at the Annual National Congress . I had many opportunities of discussing matters with them , and what was perhaps even more instructive , ~~in~~ ^{of} hearing their discussions amongst themselves . Naturally the burden of their talk was the necessity of obtaining Self-government and the means of attaining it , together with many comments on the injustice of the British Raj .

All the time , however , I could not help being struck with the fact that , but for ^{this same} ~~the~~ British Raj , they probably would not have been able to come together at all . For it was the British Government that had laid down , and was still managing , the wonderful system of railways that had enabled them to come together , so easily , from the remotest corners of India .

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"Class Discipline and the Group Spirit"

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Furthermore these delegates , having come from different parts of India ,spoke different languages ; and the only language they all had in common was English . They were, in fact , indebted to the British Government for the privilege of being able to understand one another's tirades against it.

The very terms ~~so~~ constantly on their lips - " committee "representative" , "agenda" , "Bill of Parliament " , "franchise" - were ~~many of these~~ phrases that ^{for the most part} had nothing in common with spirit of Asiatic Governments ; and were copied directly from the West .

For Mahatma Gandhi I have the greatest personal respect and affection ; but it is hard to understand his attitude . He preaches the gospel of the simple life , the iniquity of trains , hospitals , and all the modern amenities of life ; and yet , the first time I had the pleasure of meeting him , he arrived at the house in a gigantic Daimler limousine , which had been lent him by a Hindu friend .

IV. P. space

If any one doubts as to whether the ideals of Liberty, Fraternity ,and Equality ,and the practice of Self-Government are alien to the mentality of the ~~Mixdm~~ Indian , and incompatible with their traditions , let him become acquainted at first hand with the Caste System of India .

It is sometimes said that in Europe we also have a Caste System ,and refernce is made to the social cleavages in European Society . But it is a mistake to imaginethat there is any real parallel here ; for the differences between the ^{in the West} various social ranks , are not marked by any hard and fast rules. The gulch between one grade of society and another is constantly being bridged by genius , beauty , education , and other circumstances ; and these differences disappear almost entirely in the presence of any great emergency , as war , pestilence or sudden danger .

An English gentleman would risk his life by jumping into the water to save the son of a cottager as unhesitatingly as would the son of a Duke ; because , at such moments he acts

on the instinctive belief - which is our European heritage - that ,in the sight of God , all men are of equal value .

But it is different in India where the rigidity of the Caste System makes the prevalence of any such idea impossible, at any rate in practice .

The following incident - which could be paralleled by many others - illustrates the point in question . An Irish lady of my acquaintance ,who lived in one of the Hill Stations in the Himalayas ,heard a man calling for help by the side of the road one evening as night was falling . Three Indians in succession came along the road and heard ^{his cries from where} ~~him call~~ from under some bushes by the side of the road . They enquired his caste . He had none ; he was an out-caste . One of the natives , ^{as he heard this information coupled with the statement that} ~~as he heard~~ the man ~~tell him he was dying~~, called back in a nanchalant voice , "Well, die then" ; and the two others also "passed by on the other side" without feeling it was any concern of theirs . The man would certainly have succumbed, had not the lady herself gone back ^{- she was on foot -} nearly a mile out of her way to procure assistance . The contrast struck me as being the more remarkable as the lady in question ,had to my knowledge, an almost unconquerable natural antipathy to coloured races of any sort.

the lady

as he heard

" Our Indian philosophy " said an Indian scholar , "explains why it was right for the priest and the Levite to pass by on the other side, leaving the man who fell among thieves to his own "Karma " " .

I once rather annoyed an Indian gentleman of my acquaintance by commenting on the fact that there were no phrases corresponding to "if you please" and "thank you" in the language in which he addressed his servants . He tried to excuse it by saying that where we use such phrases they express the same thing by tone of voice and gesture ; but the bald fact remained that he never said "please " or "Thank you" to his servants .

It is not easy for anyone living in Europe to realise how completely the caste system prevents ^{those who observe it} even the most willing, from regarding ^{then} his fellow-man as ^{them} his brother, and helping him as such. On ~~an~~ one occasion, when I had had some guests in to dinner, I suggested to one of the ^{other} servants that he should help my table-servant with the washing up of ~~the~~ dishes. The former was a very good natured fellow, and would have done anything to oblige; but on this occasion he begged very volubly to be excused, the chief grounds of his refusal being that his daughter was going to be married the following week. On being further questioned it appeared that if he had touched the dishes I had been using he would have lost caste. He would then have had to pay a heavy fine to regain it, and would thus have deprived his daughter of her wedding dowry.

It is not, however, simply the barriers of caste that makes it harder for Indians to work together than it is for Europeans. We believe there is another reason, which will be seen by turning to another aspect of our subject.

(next page - see over)

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~~Let us turn now to another aspect of the subject~~ . In the Middle Ages - and before that, in The Roman Empire - men in Europe became accustomed to the idea of a vast, centralised social organism, which included within itself peoples and nations of different languages and customs -- an all-embracing Community which lasted on unchangingly through the centuries, while generation after generation of individuals came and went like waves in the sea.

There has been no such experience for the races of the ~~East~~ India . It is true that, under this or that great conqueror, something like a cosmopolitan state came into existence for a while, as various nations were welded together by the might of some towering individual . But it was never for long . The mighty Empires of *Aurangzeb?* and Akbar broke under their own weight, ~~as~~ having, as it were, no enduring mortar within their composition to hold together their component parts .

But the genius of Rome provided that mortar for Europe, bequeathing it as a ^{physical} spiritualised legacy, to the Church of the Middle Ages . This circumstance has endowed the peoples of Europe with a power of working together with a collective efficiency unknown in the East . It has resulted in long-standing institutions, stable governments, national debts, good roads and means of communication generally, ^{Furthermore it has given them} ~~is~~ a sense of the continuity of history, and (what ^{perhaps} is really the same thing) the power to distinguish history from myth . More than this, it has given to European civilisation a unity so profound that, when any danger threatens what is fundamental in it, the various elements in Europe that most embody it, are welded together into a fiery whole, which acts with a wisdom and determination beyond that of any individual or state . Thus the Crusades were a movement of the collective consciousness of Europe against the Mahomedan peril; and of late we have seen a similar phenomenon, when all that was truest to our European tradition rose as one man against the anti-Christian doctrine of Nietche embodied in the Prussian state.

This power of combining diverse elements, and making them

and on a vast scale work together voluntarily and harmoniously towards a common end is practically unknown in the East. Indeed it is hard enough to get Orientals of different creeds and temperaments to work together on a small scale. "The trouble with our Indian politics said a prominent Hindu gentleman to me one day, "is that we Hindus never seem able to differ strongly on any matter without it tending to become a personal quarrel".

And of course, as everybody knows, the chief difficulty that "Mahatma" Gandhi has had to cope with in his Swaraj movement, is that of trying to get Hindus and Mussulmans to work together smoothly for a common end.

Space } It would seem almost that the very idea of a multiplicity or diversity which is caught up into a higher unity is alien to the Eastern way of thinking; ^{and} as can be exemplified in other spheres beside politics. If one compares Eastern and Western music, for instance, almost the first thing that strikes the Westerner is that Eastern music is devoid of harmony. It is, ~~in fact~~, what you might call one dimensional music. It has produced a great variety of melodies - many of them perhaps too subtle for the Western ear to appreciate - but it has no conception of the beauty that can be obtained by playing two or more notes together so that their individual values are enhanced by their reciprocal contributions to a ^{common} chord.

On several occasions I have asked Indians if they could play the piano, and they have replied in the affirmative. On being asked to perform they have (to my great astonishment - the first time at any rate) seated themselves solemnly at the piano and proceeded to play a tune with one finger only. One gentleman, indeed, played with two ^{fingers}, but he played the tune in octaves from beginning to end. There was no sign of any accompaniment to the air, nor any harmony of any kind, nor apparently the slightest desire for it, nor the sense that anything was missing. ^{without it} The other Indians present applauded these strange ~~pianoforte~~ recitals as though they were very meritorious performances, as doubtless they were from their point of view.

It is practically impossible, even for an educated Indian - who has never been to Europe - to understand even the idea of modern orchestral music in which so many diverse sounds are caught up into a higher unity.

It is possible to see in this striking difference between the music of East and West, the symbol of a still deeper divergence. It illustrates exactly the difference between the Christian and Oriental ideas of heaven. In the Christian heaven the individual personalities survive - eternally separate and distinct. Yet at the same time, without losing anything of their individuality, they are caught up into a higher unity, like the component parts of a mighty orchestra ^{or the petals of a flower}. There are innumerable ^{separate} saints and angels in Heaven, but (as Shakespeare says in one ^{though in a different connexion} of his sonnets) "Number there in love is slain". Or as Dante describes it in his Paradiso, X

(Hahan?)

("In fashion as a snow-white rose, lay there
Before my view the saintly multitude
Which in His own blood Christ espoused")

Space

In nothing does what we have called the subconscious influence of Christianity in Europe manifest itself more clearly - as in contrast to pagan civilisations - than in its reverence for and appreciation of the Child.

While in India I became intimately acquainted with an India gentleman who, very rightly, had come to the conclusion that the best investment he could make for his children was to give them the best education possible. He was an exceedingly wealthy man, and was prepared to pay very liberally for what he wanted. He did not send his children to Europe because he said he did not want them to become "de-nationalised". So he ransacked India to try and find suitable ^t tuors and ~~will~~ suitable Indian books for his children. But he found, after a while,

that even his fabulous wealth could not procure what he sought "It is a strange thing", he ~~remarked to me one day~~ ^{remarked}, "that none of our great Pundits and philosophers seem able to write books specially suitable for children, whereas in England you have hundreds of such books on all conceivable subjects, and even have special magazines and newspapers for the little ones. Not only that, but your great authors, of their own accord, very often write books specially for children, and do not think it infra dig. to do so" (~~He was referring to authors like Sir James Barrie, Lewis Carroll, Chesterton, R.L. Stevenson~~) "I have tried", he went on, "to get some of our learned scholars to write such books for Indian children, with Indian setting to them, and have offered to pay them well for doing so; but they do not seem able to do it, though why I don't know".

In reply, I told my friend that I thought that it was probably due to the fact that our religion has always inculcated a profound reverence for childhood, — has opened our eyes to its compelling beauty, and is continually urging us to emulate the child-like spirit in its simple trust, its grateful acceptance of the good things of life, and above all in its innocence and purity. Furthermore it teaches us that we are all equally loveable and equally stupid in the presence of the infinite and charitable wisdom of the Almighty ~~Father~~; that we are all children of the same Father. ^{that} Only it so happens that some of His children — like Mr Chesterton for instance — happen to be physically bigger, but by no means therefore better or wiser than his smaller brothers and sisters in the nursery (for whom, I am quite sure, he would ~~turn~~ ^{himself} into an elephant at a moment's notice — which is more than most Indian Pundits would do, though they see them every ^{day of their lives})

[Western readers may be interested to know — by the way — that Peter Pan, Long John Silver, The White Rabbit, Alice in Wonderland and many other of their old friends, became

regular habitues of our Indian nursery, easily supplanting by their robust and energetic personalities the vague and shadowy forms of Ram and Arjuna and the other figures of the Hindu mythology.]

Another point of divergence, and one which - to some extent at any rate - comes ~~understand~~ as a result of the influences we have been discussing, is the Oriental's well-known indifference to Time. Christian theology has it that "Man is born and dies once, and after comes the judgement". Hence it follows that our sojourn here on earth is fraught with momentous issues, both for ourselves and others. It brings with it opportunities, individual and national, which can never recur. Furthermore in the tradition of European philosophy ^{theology?} Evil is no ~~mere~~ shadowy negation of good; it is a living personal principle, terrible with all the subtlety and strength of the angelic mind, though fallen. Human life is therefore full of conflicting loyalties, prodigious efforts, irrecoverable destinies ^{in short}, with all the high elements of a drama that rolls onwards with gathering forces to a great and terrible Day of Doom.

Not so with the Oriental. He believes in an endless succession of births and re-births; and Time is no great matter. Time is for him simply the ~~time~~ warp across which the shuttle of our Ego passes and repasses, as it weaves through countless incarnations the pattern of our Existence. Since one will have to live again on this earth so many thousands of times, why work oneself up to uncomfortable enthusiasms, and exacting philanthropies, or depart on dangerous crusades? Action binds you as firmly to the "Wheel of Existence" as does inaction, - and both are an illusion. It is all "Maya", an illusion, - a predestined flickering of lights and shadows across the interminable screen of Existence. One may as well make the illusion as comfortable as possible; and anyhow it is all pre-arranged -- Kismet!

There are of course many other points ,which could be mentioned ,that bear upon the subject of this article - such as the custom of ^e keeping Purdah , child marriages ,the licentious rights of certain Hindu temples - but enough has been said to show how profound is the cleavage between a Christian and a non-Christian civilisation . And furthermore it has been our aim to emphasise these points of difference which are not so much the direct results of Christian teaching as their indirect consequence, operating as it were subconsciously , ~~because that~~ ^{as that} religion has, little by little, leavened the whole structure of ~~our~~ society .

Start article with this attach

Before we draw this essay to a close ,there is one aspect of it which calls urgently to be considered . The writer can imagine that many an Eastern reader - and others besides - after perusing the above ~~comparisons~~ ^{will} comparisons, to express himself indignantly as follows ,-

"Your treatment of the subject is grossly unfair . You have taken the best out of your civilisation and compared it with the worst in ours . Any one could make out a case like that .
 "But what about your Western cities ? Do they impress the Eastern visitor as being full of heroic efforts and momentous issues ; or rather are they not full of music-halls , night-clubs and -generally speaking - a mad ,unceasing,whirling race after pleasure .
 "You talk to us of the sanctity of womanhood ; but we have seen the way so many of your Mem-Sahibs live ^{city} in Anglo-Indian society ,and we know of the night traffic in your streets .
 "You preach to us of the sanctity of marriage ; and your divorce courts are full to overflowing . You hold up holy hands of horror at the rites of some of our temples ,yet one of the foremost Anglican divines of the day has openly spoken of the practice of birth-controll as the lesser of two evils .
 "You would have us emulate the order and stability of your governments ,and we see the streets running red with revolution in the first European state we enter from across our borders .
 "You tell us we have no reverence for the child ; but has your modern European child any reverence for its parents ?"
 And so on .

These - and there are more that could be mentioned - ~~are serious charges indeed~~ ^{and} are serious charges indeed ; ~~but it~~ unfortunately it is impossible to deny them . For there are ,in point of fact , powerful disruptive forces in European Society , which are rapidly tending towards the disintegration of the Christian civilisation which we inherited from the Middle Ages . And these forces

are making themselves more evident every year .

Left to themselves they would inevitably reduce Europe to the same level - or rather to a much lower level of morality than any pagan civilisation at present existing .

But they are not left to themselves . As the tide of Modernism sweeps onwa^rs with gathering force , carrying away on its restless bosom one after another of our conventional moralities , one institution - amidst the general confusion and flux - is being visibly laid bare to all the world , fixed and immutable as ever — even as a great rock is left standing by the outgoing tide which sweeps away to destruction the surrounding litter of rubbish and shifting sand .

That institution is the Catholic Church, founded in the beginning on the Rock that can never be shaken . The Catholic Church , as G.K.Chesterton wittily observes , is the only institution in Europe today which is of Pagan origin . Or as Macaulay says , in his well known passage , "The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilisation . No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when cameleopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre ..".

It is the continued presence of this institution , and this alone , which has given and still gives to European Society (and its derivative offshoots - America and the European colonies) its permanence and continuity , and supplies it with those elements which mark it off from every other civilisation that has ever existed .

To bring home this statement , with any wealth of detail, would be as far beyond the scope of this essay as it would be beyond the ability of the present writer . (Names of Books ?)

But even without turning our attention to past ages and burying ourselves deep in historical treatises - indeed without reading anything at all except the signs of the times , this truth is brought home to any impartial observer , as one circumstance after another ^{draw} ~~brings home~~ to his attention the omnipresent leaven of the Catholic Church in Europe at the present day .

Many of us in this generation (~~the~~ ^{included} the present writer) were brought up to think of the Catholic Church as a cumbersome and lethargic Body , bereft of all vitality , ~~It was~~ a mere worn-out relic of a bye-gone age , an antique survival — not of the fittest . We looked upon Catholics with a patronising mixture of pity and scorn , as we wondered how any intelligent beings could subscribe to a creed so mixed with superstition , so hopeless ^{by} at variance with science , which hung such heavy and insupportable weights upon the soaring spirit of man . It never occurred to us - even in our dreams - that this great mechanical institution , moving ^{so} slowly , ~~+~~ merely with the residual impetus left in it by a spirit which had long since departed (~~as~~ as a chicken will run for a while with its head cut off) — that an institution so moribund as this could have any vital connexion with the Spirit of our Age .

And then came the great discovery . By the Grace of God our eyes were opened , and we saw that all this apparent stillness and immobility ^{is} was simply the ^{is} result of its perfect balance - even as a gigantic fly-wheel , revolving with incredible rapidity , appears the more motionless the more perfect is its poise . We realised that every part of this colossal institution - every rite , every ceremony , every minute vestment - was throbbing with an incredible vitality - was in fact " aflame with the Holy Spirit" .

And now as we look around us - not merely to individuals - but right across the events of our time , we discern in all manner of different ways the leavening influence of the Catholic Church , supporting and defending what is best in our civilisation .

At one moment the observer ~~is~~ witnesses the astonishing spectacle of a "decadent," Catholic country casting out from itself the devils of sloth and disorder and returning to an economic stability and well-being which is the wonder and envy of other nations ; the next he sees the the Catholic Church ,by its heroic opposition ,revealing to all Europe - like a sudden and searching light - the sinister outlines of Bolshevism .

Or turning to the sphere of morals . Amidst the confused babel of opinions ,uncertain questionings ,hesitating authorities on such matters as divorce ,and birth control - as they are discussed by other religious denominations - he hears the voice of the Catholic Church sounding above the tumult ,clear as a trumpet , and,as a trumpet,calling to battle .

Or it may be he has been caught in the subtle meshes of Theosophy or some other of the many forms of Orientalism ,which , under the cover of a reinterpreted Christianity ,try - as they have ever tried ~~all~~ all down the centuries , to undermine the faith of Europe . And what does he find . He finds without exception that all these heresies are able to form a sort of spiritual alley with one or more of the various Christian Sects of Europe ; but that they all stop dead at the gates of that "City which is set on a Hill " .In short he will find that ultimately he will have to choose -as so many have done - between his Theosophy , Spiritualism ,Christian Science or whatever it is and the Catholic Church . For ~~even~~ as it was the chivalry of Europe , inspired by the Catholic Church that drove back the hordes of Mahomedans ,so it is Catholic thinkers ,and only they - inspired by that same Church-who are able to drive back from the minds of men ~~the~~ the pagan hordes of today ,who with pen in hand instead of lance ,,besiege his troubled spirit.

Nor has the Church forgotten to wield the sword as well as the pen .. When that nation ,which in the pride of its heart had ~~rebelled more completely~~ rebelled more completely than any other against the spiritual dominion of Rome ,leagued itself after a lapse of three

centuries ,with the hereditary enemies of Christianity ,in an attempt to overwhelm European civilisation and set up in its place a blasphemous Kultur of its own ,it was the Catholic countries of the Continent which rose to withstand it . Then it was that England - Catholic still at heart ^h though she does not yet realise it - broke through the "filthy cobwebs" which had so long obscured her vision ; and ,seeing that nation as it really was ,^{through} in her lot with the Catholic tradition of Europe .

It would be possible to multiply examples almost indefinitely ,and show how in Literature , Art , Music, Science , Political Economy, the presence of the Catholic Church acts as a conserving influence ,driving out what is undisciplined ,morbid and exotic ,supplying instead proportion and balance ,sanity and humour ,and above all an indefinable atmosphere of wholesomeness and purity which is peculiarly its own . But enough has already been said to show that there is a valid reply to the Oriental's supposed objection to our main thesis .

One word more in conclusion . The best proof that our main contention in this essay is a correct one is that fact that wherever Catholicism has taken a hold amongst the Orientals

one finds the same qualities springing up like flowers in the desert . Indeed wherever the influence of Christianity is brought to bear - through any denomination-the Christian virtues will begin to appear (I knew ~~some~~ an English Colonel ,a Civil Surgeon ,~~and~~ not much of a Church-geer himself ^{by the way} who used to say , "Line me up 50 native women and dress them all the same ,and I will make a good shot at picking out all the Christians by ^{the expression} their faces ".) . But too often ,in the case of the Sects , ~~the~~ these virtues are only skin deep or evanescent ; and the term "Rice-Christian " is a reproach which has ,alas , too often a solid foundation .

On the other hand the expression "Once a Catholic ,always a Catholic " holds true ,on the whole ,in the East as in the West ; and it is generally admitted that Catholicism takes a deeper

hold on the Indian than any other form of Christianity .

"I think there must be something different about the Catholics from the other Christian bodies ", said a Hindu friend of mine to me one day ,who was himself something of a sceptic on all religions ,including his own .I asked him the reason why he thought this and replied to the effect that he had often had Catholics in his employ ,and had been struck with the fact that they were ~~very~~ ^{unusually} reliable . Also he said there seemed to be a certain matter-of-factness about their religion which appealed to him . It seemed to fit them naturally like a well-made garment ; and they never seemed to put on airs or get other peoples backs up by making out they were much better than other people -- or words to that effect . And yet , he went on , at the same time they seem to take their religion quite seriously, for they always go to Church on Sundays .

Unfortunately I was not able to tell him what there was about Catholicism which had this peculiar effect on its devotees , for the simple reason that I was not a Catholic .

But as a matter of fact I had observed the same thing myself ; and for this and other reasons had dropped into the habit of attending Catholic Churches in whatever part of India (and later in Africa) that I happened to be in . And always , wherever I went , I get the same impression . And I cannot describe this impression better than by saying that amongst these people I felt somehow that that great gulf that I have been speaking of between East and West had vanished .

For ever a year I used to attend a Catholic Church where important English officials and their families and ~~amongst~~ the poorest and most uneducated ~~the~~ Indians (who preferred to sit and kneel on the floor through the service in Oriental fashion) used to receive, at the same altar rails, the Body of Our Blessed Lord ,administered by the brown hands of a ^eGenoise Priest .

From this Feast - in spite of my being a European and inheriting the European traditions of which I have been speaking - I was excluded ,while the poorest native ,living on a few rupees

