

DARKNESS

AND

THE LIGHT

OLAF STAPLEDON

Title: Darkness and the Light

Author: Olaf Stapledon

* A Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook *

eBook No.: 0601311h.html

Edition: 1

Language: English

Character set encoding: Latin-1(ISO-8859-1)-8 bit

Date first posted: June 2006

Date most recently updated: June 2006

This eBook was produced by: Richard Scott

Project Gutenberg of Australia eBooks are created from printed editions which are in the public domain in Australia, unless a copyright notice is included. We do NOT keep any eBooks in compliance with a particular paper edition.

Copyright laws are changing all over the world. Be sure to check the copyright laws for your country before downloading or redistributing this file.

This eBook is made available at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg of Australia License which may be viewed online at <http://gutenberg.net.au/licence.html>

To contact Project Gutenberg of Australia go to <http://gutenberg.net.au>

Darkness and the Light

by

Olaf Stapledon

PREFACE

A REVIEWER OF an earlier book of mine said that it was difficult to see why such a book should ever have been written. From his point of view the remark was reasonable enough, for the aim of the book happened to fall outside the spot-light of his consciousness. All the same, the fact that the great majority of books ought never to have been written must give the writer pause. To-day, what with the paper shortage and the urgency of war work, the question whether a book is worth writing, let alone publishing, is more pertinent than ever. Whether this book has enough significance to justify its appearance must be left to the judgment of readers and reviewers; but perhaps they will not take it amiss if I offer a word of explanation.

This book is, of course, not meant to be regarded as prophecy. Neither of the two futures which I here imagine for mankind is in the least likely to happen. Historical prediction is doomed always to fail. The most sophisticated sociologist, let alone a writer of fiction, is scarcely a more trustworthy prophet than Old Moore. Certainly I, who entirely failed to foresee the advent of Fascism, cannot lay claim to describe the next phase of European change.

But this book is not concerned to prophesy. It seeks merely to give a symbolic expression to two dispositions now in conflict in the world.

For lack of better words I call them the will for darkness and the will for the light. I present in concrete form, but rather as caricature than with photographic accuracy, two kinds of possibility that lie before the human race. The justification for writing such a book depends on the answers to three questions. Is there such a conflict? Is it important? Is the caricature that I have drawn of it well enough drawn to clear the mind and stir the heart?

OLAF STAPLEDON

October 1941

Part I - CRISIS

1 - MAN'S TWO FUTURES

IS IT credible that our world should have two futures? I have seen them. Two entirely distinct futures lie before mankind, one dark, one bright; one the defeat of all man's hopes, the betrayal of all his ideals, the other their hard-won triumph.

At some date within the age that we call modern, some date not precisely known to me, for I looked back towards it from the distant futures as though searching in my remote past, the single torrent of terrestrial events is split, as though by a projecting promontory, so that it becomes thenceforth two wholly distinct and mutually exclusive surging floods of intricate existence, each one a coherent and actual history, in which the lives of countless generations succeed one another along separate ravines of time.

How can this be? It cannot! Yet I have seen it happen. I have watched those two divergent futures. I have lived through them. In any world, as on our planet, it needs must happen, when the will for the light and the will for the darkness are so delicately balanced in the ordinary half-lucid spirits of the world that neither can for long prevail over the other. Out of their age-long stress and fluctuating battle must spring at last a thing seemingly impossible, seemingly irrational, something more stupendously miraculous than any orthodox miracle. For how can time itself be divided into two streams? And if our planet has two futures, which of them has place in the future of the solar system, and what of the other? Or does man's vacillation create not only two future Earths but two future universes of stars and galaxies?

Reader, affirm if you will that only one of the two futures that I have watched is the real future, knit into the real cosmos, while the other is mere fantasy. Then which, I ask in terror, is real, the bright or the dark? For to me, who have seen both, neither is less real than the other, but one is infinitely more to be desired. Perhaps, reader, you will contend that both are figments of my crazy mind, and that the real future is inaccessible and inconceivable. Believe what you will, but to me both are real, both are somehow close-knit into the dread and lovely pattern of the universe. Nay more! My heart demands them both. For the light is more brilliant when the dark offsets it. Though pity implores that all horror should turn out to have been a dream, yet for the light's own sake some sterner passion demands that evil may have its triumph.

As I write this book my own death must lie somewhere in the near future. When, I cannot tell; for so minute an event could not imprint itself on the vision that has possessed me. Seemingly it is at the time of my death that the strange experience begins, obscurely and intermittently at first. For this reason the earlier part of the twofold story is fragmentary and chaotic, like the experiences of childhood remembered in maturity.

Moreover the twin streams of history are in their upper reaches so similar as to be indistinguishable, like the almost identical views which a man has through his two eyes. Not till the two futures begin to differ strikingly can they be distinguished and known to be inconsistent themes. Thenceforth whoever witnesses them, as I did, must become a divided personality, living not merely two lives but in two universes.

As I write this book, immersed once more in the passions and savage deeds of contemporary mankind, hearing each day of horror and brutality, fearing that very soon some hideous disaster may fall

upon my people and on the whole human race, and on those few who, being most dear to me, are for me the living presence of humanity, it is impossible for me to recapture fully the serene and intelligent mood of my post-mortal experience. For throughout that age-long future I must, I think, have been strengthened by the felt presence of other and superhuman spectators. Was it that the more lucid populations of the cosmos, in their scattered worlds, up and down the constellations, here and there among the galaxies, had sent observers to witness the terrestrial miracle; or had focused their attention and their presence from afar on our little orb, so forlorn, so inconsiderable, where man, poised between the light and the dark on the knife-edge of choice, fought out his destiny. It was as though, under their influence, I was able to put off to some extent my human pettiness; as though, haltingly and with celestial aid, I could see man's double fate through the eyes of those superhuman but not divine intelligences. Their presence is now withdrawn. But in memory of them I shall do my utmost to tell the twofold story at once with intimate human sympathy and with something of that calm insight which was lent to me.

2 - THE MODERN AGE

AT SOME DATE which to readers of this book is far off in the future I became aware that I had long been dreamily witnessing a flux of human events. Peering back into my post-mortal memory as though into a second infancy, I came upon fragments of what must have been a long age of turmoil. Within that age must have lain, or must lie, the period that readers of this book call modern, a moment within a longer period during which the struggle between the light and the darkness remained inconclusive.

On the one side was the sluggish reptilian will for ease and sleep and death, rising sometimes to active hate and destructiveness; on the other side the still blindfold and blundering will for the lucid and coherent spirit. Each generation, it seemed, set out with courage and hope, and with some real aptitude for the life of love and wisdom, but also with the fatal human frailty, and in circumstances hostile to the generous development of the spirit. Each in turn, in the upshot of innumerable solitary ephemeral struggles, sank into middle age, disillusioned or fanatical, inert or obsessively greedy for personal power.

The world was a chrysalis world, but the chrysalis was damaged. Under the stress of science and mechanization the old order had become effete, the old patterns of life could no longer be healthily lived; yet the new order and the new mentality could not be born. The swarms of human creatures whose minds had been moulded to the old patterns were plunged from security into insecurity and bewilderment. Creatures specialized by circumstance to knit themselves into the existing but disintegrating social texture found themselves adrift in dreadful chaos, their talents useless, their minds out-moded, their values falsified. And so, like bees in a queenless hive, they floundered into primitive ways. They became marauding gangsters, or clamoured for some new, strong, ruthless and barbaric tribal order, into which they might once more themselves. In this nadir of civilization, this wide-craving for the savage and the stark, this night of spirit, there rose to power the basest and hitherto despised of human types, the hooligan and the gun-man, who recognized no values but personal dominance, whose vengeful aim was to trample the civilization that spurned them, and to rule for brigandage alone a new gangster society.

Thus, wherever the breakdown of the old order was far gone, a new order did indeed begin to emerge, ruthless, barbaric, but armed with science and intricately fashioned for war. And war in that age, though

not perpetual, was never far away. In one region or another of the planet there was nearly always war. No sooner had one war ended than another began elsewhere. And where there was no actual war, there was the constant fear of wars to come.

The crux for this unfinished human species, half animal but potentially humane, had always been the inconclusive effort to will true community, true and integrated union of individual spirits, personal, diverse, but mutually comprehending and mutually cherishing. And always the groping impulse for community had been frustrated by the failure to distinguish between true community and the savage unity of the pack; and on the other hand between a man's duty to the innermost spirit and mere subtle self-pride, and again between love and mere possessiveness.

And now, in this final balance of the strife between light and darkness, the newly won Aladdin's lamp, science, had given men such power for good and evil that they inevitably must either win speedily through to true community or set foot upon a steepening slope leading to annihilation. In the immediate contacts of man with man, and in the affairs of cities, provinces, states and social classes, and further (newest and most dangerous necessity) in the ordering of the planet as a whole, there must now begin some glimmer of a new spirit; or else, failing in the great test, man must slide into a new and irrevocable savagery. And in a world close-knit by science savagery brings death.

In the new world, made one by trains, ships, aeroplanes and radio there was room for one society only. But a world-wide society must inevitably be planned and organized in every detail. Not otherwise can freedom and fulfilment be secured for all individuals. The old haphazard order so favourable to the fortunate and cunning self-seeker, was everywhere vanishing. Inevitably men's lives were bound to be more and more regulated by authority. But what authority, and in

what spirit? A great planned state, controlled without insight into true community, must turn to tyranny. And, armed with science for oppression and propaganda, it must inevitably destroy the humanity of its citizens. Only the insight and the will of true community can wield rightly a state's authority, let alone a world's.

Lacking that insight and that will, the states of the world in the age of balanced light and darkness bore very heavily on their citizens and on one another. For national safety men's actions were increasingly controlled by the state, their minds increasingly moulded to the formal pattern that the state required of them. All men were disciplined and standardized. Everyone had an official place and task in the huge common work of defence and attack. Anyone who protested or was lukewarm must be destroyed. The state was always in danger, and every nerve was constantly at strain. And because each state carefully sowed treason among the citizens of other states, no man could trust his neighbour. Husbands and wives suspected one another. Children proudly informed against their parents. Under the strain even of peace-time life all minds were damaged. Lunacy spread like a plague. The most sane, though in their own view their judgment was unwarped, were in fact fear-tortured neurotics. And so the race, as a whole, teased by its obscure vision of the spirit, its frail loyalty to love and reason, surrendered itself in the main to its baser nature.

3 - MANKIND AT THE CROSS ROADS

- i. RISE AND FALL OF A GERMAN REICH
- ii. NORTH AMERICA
- iii. RUSSIA AND CHINA

I. RISE AND FALL OF A GERMAN REICH

OF THE detailed historical events of this age of fluctuation I cannot recover much. Of the war which is present to me as I write this book I remember almost nothing. A few shreds of recollection suggest that it resulted in a British victory of sorts, but I place no reliance on this surmise. If it is correct, the great opportunity afforded by this victory, the opportunity of a generous peace and a federal order in Europe, must have been missed; for rival imperialisms continued to exist after that war and real peace was not established. Subsequent wars and upheavals come rather more clearly into my mind. For instance, I seem to remember a defeat of the democratic peoples, led at first by the British, but later by the North Americans, against a totalitarian Europe. For a while the struggle was between Britain alone and the whole of Europe, martialled once more by Germany. Not till the remnant of the British forces had been driven into Scotland, and were desperately holding a line roughly equivalent to the Roman Wall, did the American power begin to make itself felt, and then only for a while; for in America, as elsewhere, the old order was failing, its leaders had neither the imagination nor the courage to adjust themselves to the new world-conditions. Consequently, when at last their turn came they were quite incapable of organizing their haphazard capitalism for war. The American people began to realize that they were the victims of incompetence and treachery, and the population of the Atlantic seaboard demanded a new regime. In this state of affairs resistance became impossible. Britain was abandoned, and North America reverted to a precarious isolationism knowing that the struggle would very soon begin again.

This Euro-American war was certainly not the war which is being waged while I write this book, in spite of obvious similarities. At this

time the Germans had recovered from that extravagant hooliganism which had turned the world against them in an earlier period. They had in a manner reverted from Nazism to the more respectable Prussianism. Other facts also show that this was not our present war. Both India and South Africa had left the British Empire and were already well-established independent states. Moreover, weapons were now of a much more lethal kind, and the American coast was frequently and extensively bombarded by fleets of European planes. In this war Scotland had evidently become the economic centre of gravity of Britain. The Lowlands were completely industrialized, and huge tidal electric generators crowded the western sounds. Tidal electricity had become the basis of Britain's power. But the British, under their effete financial oligarchy, had not developed this new asset efficiently before the German attack began.

After the defeat of the democracies it seemed that the cause of freedom had been lost for ever. The Russians, whose initial revolutionary passion had long since been corrupted by the constant danger of attack and a consequent reversion to nationalism, now sacrificed all their hard-won social achievements for a desperate defence against the attempt of the German ruling class to dominate the planet. China, after her victory over Japan, had split on the rock of class strife. Between the Communist North and the Capitalist South there was no harmony. North America became a swarm of 'independent' states which Germany controlled almost as easily as the Latin South. India, freed from British rule, maintained a precarious unity in face of the German danger.

But the Totalitarian world was not to be. The end of the German power came in an unexpected manner, and through a strange mixture of psychological and economic causes. Perhaps the main cause was the decline of German intelligence. Ever since the industrial revolution the average intelligence of the European and American peoples had been slowly decreasing. Contraception had

produced not only a decline of population but also a tendency of the more intelligent strains in the population to breed less than the dullards and half-wits. For in the competition for the means of comfort and luxury the more intelligent tended in the long run to rise into the comfortable classes. There they were able to avail themselves of contraceptive methods which the poorer classes could less easily practise. And because they took more forethought than the dullards for their personal comfort and security, they were more reluctant to burden themselves with children. The upshot was that, while the population as a whole tended to decline, the more intelligent strains declined more rapidly than the less intelligent; and the European and American peoples, and later the Asiatics, began to suffer from a serious shortage of able leaders in politics, industry, science, and general culture.

In Germany the process had been intensified by the persecution of free intelligences by the former Hitlerian Third Reich, and by the subsequent Fourth Reich, which had defeated America not by superior intelligence but superior vitality and the resources of an empire which included all Europe and most of Africa.

The Fourth Reich had persecuted and destroyed the free intelligences in all its subject lands, save one, namely Norway, where it had been necessary to allow a large measure of autonomy.

The Norwegians, who many centuries earlier had been the terror of the European coastal peoples, had in recent times earned a reputation for peaceable common sense. Like several others of the former small democracies, they of had attained a higher level of social development than their mightier neighbours. In particular they had fostered intelligence. After their Conquest by the Fourth Reich their remarkable fund of superior minds had stood them in good stead. They had successfully forced their conquerors into allowing them a sort of 'dominion status'. In this condition they had been able

to carry on much of their former social life while fulfilling the functions which the conquerors demanded of them. Two influences, however gradually combined to change their docility into energy and berserk fury. One was the cumulative effect of their experience of German domination. Contact with their foreign masters filled them with contempt and indignation. The other influence was the knowledge that under German exploitation their country had become the world's greatest generator of tidal power, and that this power was being used for imperial, not human, ends.

The German dictatorship had, indeed, treated the Norwegians in a very special manner. Other conquered peoples had been simply enslaved or actually exterminated. The British, for instance, had been reduced to serfdom under a German landed aristocracy. The Poles and Czechs and most of the French had been persecuted, prevented from mating and procreating, and finally even sterilized, until their stock had been completely destroyed. But the Scandinavian peoples were in a class apart. The Nordic myth had a strong hold on the German people. It was impossible to pretend that the Norwegians were not Nordic, more Nordic than the Germans, who were in fact of very mixed stock. Moreover Norwegian maritime prowess was necessary to the German rulers; and many Norwegian sailors were given responsible positions for the training of Germans and even the control of German ships. Finally, the exploitation of tidal power in the fjords had produced a large class of Norwegian technicians with highly specialized skill. Thus little by little the small Norwegian people attained for itself a privileged position in the German Empire. Prosperity and relative immunity from German tyranny had not brought acceptance of foreign domination. The Norwegians had preserved their independent spirit while other subject peoples had been utterly cowed by torture.

The initial fervour of the old Hitlerian faith had long since spent itself. Gone was the crazy zeal which had led millions of carefully

indoctrinated young Germans to welcome death for the fatherland to drive their tanks not only over the fleeing refugees but over their own wounded, and to support a cruel tyranny throughout Europe. The German ruling minority was by now merely a highly organized, mechanically efficient, ruthless, but rather dull-witted and rather tired and cynical bureaucracy. The German people, who claimed to have taken over from the British the coveted 'white man's' burden, were in fact the docile serfs of a harsh and uninspired tyranny.

There came a time when the Reich was seriously divided over the question of succession to the semi-divine post of Fuhrer. (The original Fuhrer, of course, was by now a mythical figure in the past, and the empire was sprinkled with gigantic monuments to his memory.) Suddenly the Norwegians, seizing the opportunity afforded by dissension in the German aristocracy, set in action a long-prepared system of conspiracy. They seized the tidal generators and military centres, and declared Norway's independence. They also issued a call to all freedom-loving peoples to rise against their tyrants. The Norwegians themselves were in a very strong position. Not only did they control the Reich's main source of power, but also a large part of the mercantile marine and Imperial Navy. The huge sea-plane force was also mainly on their side. Though at first the rebellion seemed a forlorn hope, it soon spread to Britain and Northern France. Insurrection then broke out in Switzerland, Austria, and southern Germany. The decisive factors were the revived passion for freedom and for human kindness, and also the new, extremely efficient and marvellously light accumulator, which enabled not only ships but planes to be driven electrically. The new accumulator had been secretly invented in Norway and secretly manufactured in large quantities in Spitsbergen. Even before the insurrection many ships and planes had been secretly fitted with it. After the outbreak of war a great fleet of electric planes, far more agile than the old petrol planes, soon broke the nerve of the imperial force. Within a few

weeks the rebels were completely victorious.

With the fall of the German Reich the human race was once more given an opportunity to turn the corner from barbarism to real civilization. Once more the opportunity was lost. The free Federation of Europe, which was expected to bring lasting peace, was in fact no free federation at all. Germany was divided into the old minor states, and these were disarmed. This would have been reasonable enough if the victorious Norwegians, realizing the precariousness of the new order, had not insisted on retaining control of their own tidal generators and their air fleet, which, though disarmed, could very easily be turned into bombers. Thus, they hoped, they would be able to control and guide the Federation during its delicate infancy. Inevitably the demand for 'the disarmament of Norway' was used by the secret enemies of the light in their effort to dominate the Federation. After a period of uncertain peace, full of suspicion and intrigue, came the great European Civil War between the Scandinavian peoples and the rest of the European Federation. When the federated peoples had reduced one another to exhaustion, Russia intervened, and presently the Russian Empire stretched from the Behring Straits to the Blasket Islands.

During the first, confused phase of my post-mortal experience I failed to gain any clear vision of events in Russia. I have an impression of alternating periods of light and darkness. Sometimes the truly socialistic and democratic forces dominated, sometimes the totalitarian and despotic. In spite of the grave perversion of the original generous revolutionary impulse, so much of solid worth had been achieved that the Soviet system of states was never in serious danger of disintegration. During the long peril from the German Fourth Reich the Russian dictator, who was now known as the 'Chief Comrade', enforced a very strict military discipline on the whole people. When Germany had fallen, a wave of militant communist imperialism swept over the vast Russian territories. Hosts of 'Young

Communists' demanded that 'the spirit of Lenin' should now be spread by tank and aeroplane throughout the world. The conquest of Europe was the first great expression of this mood. But other forces were also at work in Russia. After the destruction of German power, true socialistic, liberal, and even reformed Christian tendencies once more appeared throughout European Russia and in Western Europe. The Western peoples had by now begun to sicken of the sham religion of ruthless power. Christian sects, experimental religious movements, liberal-socialist and 'reformed communist' conspiracies were everywhere leading a vigorous underground life. It seemed to me that I must be witnessing the turning-point of human history, that the species had at last learnt its lesson. But in this I was mistaken. What I was observing was but one of the many abortive upward fluctuations in the long age of inconclusive struggle between the will for the light and the will for darkness. For, though men utterly loathed the hardships of war, their moral energy remained slight. Their loyalty to the common human enterprise, to the spiritual task of the race, had not been strengthened.

Thus it was that the movement which had seemed to promise a regeneration of Russia succeeded only in creating an under-current of more lucid feeling and action. The power of the dictatorship remained intact and harsh; and was able, moreover, to inspire the majority, and particularly the young, with superb energy and devotion in the spreading of the Marxian ideals which the regime still claimed to embody, but had in fact sadly perverted.

ii. NORTH AMERICA

I shall not pause to recount all the wars and social tumults of this age. I could not, if I would, give a clear report on them. I can remember only that waves of fruitless agony spread hither and thither over the whole planet like seismic waves in the planet's crust. Fruitless the

agony seemed to me because time after time hope was disappointed. The door to a new world was thrust ajar, then slammed.

Thus in India, when freedom had at last been gained, and under the stress of external danger Hindus and Mohammedans had sunk their differences, it seemed for a while that out of these dark Aryan peoples the truth was coming which could save mankind. For the ancient Indian wisdom, which permeated all the faiths, now came more clearly into view, stripped of the irrelevances of particular creeds. The new India, it seemed, while armed with European science and European resolution, would teach mankind a quietude and detachment which Europe lacked. But somehow the movement went awry, corrupted by the surviving power of the Indian princes and capitalists. The wealthy controlled the new state for their own ends. Public servants were venal and inefficient. And the ancient wisdom, though much advertised, became merely an excuse for tolerating gross social evils. When at last the armies of the Russian Empire poured through the Himalayan passes, the rulers of India could not cope with the attack, and the peoples of India were on the whole indifferent to a mere change of masters. Not until much later were the Indians to make their great contribution to human history.

There were other hopeful movements of regeneration. Obscurely I can remember a great and promising renaissance in North America. Adversity had purged Americans of their romantic commercialism. No longer could the millionaire, the demi-god of money power, command admiration and flattering imitation from the humble masses. Millionaires no longer existed. And the population was becoming conscious that personal money power had been the main cause of the perversion of the old civilization. For a while the Americans refused to admit to themselves that their 'hundred per cent Americanism' had been a failure; but suddenly the mental barrier against this realization collapsed. Within a couple of years

the whole mental climate of the American people was changed. Up and down the continent men began to re-examine the principles on which American civilization had been based, and to sort out the essential values from the false accretions. Their cherished formulation of the Rights of Man was now supplemented by an emphatic statement of man's duties. Their insistence on freedom was balanced by a new stress on discipline in service of the community. At the same time, in the school of adversity the former tendency to extravagance in ideas, either in the direction of hard-baked materialism or towards sentimental new-fangled religion, was largely overcome. The Society of Friends, who had always been a powerful sect in North America, now came into their own. They had been prominent long ago during the earliest phase of colonization from England, and had stood not only for gentleness and reasonableness towards the natives but also for individual courage, devotion, and initiative in all practical affairs. At their best they had always combined hard-headed business capacity with mystical quietism. At their worst, undoubtedly, this combination resulted in self-deception of a particularly odious kind. A ruthless though 'paternal' tyranny over employees was practised on weekdays, and on Sundays compensation and self-indulgence was found in a dream-world of religious quietism. But changed times had now brought about a revival and a purging. The undoctinal mysticism of the Young Friends and their practical devotion to good works became a notable example to a people who were by now keenly aware of the need for this very combination.

Under the influence of the Friends and the growing danger from Russia, four North American states, Canada, the Atlantic Republic, the Mississippi Republic, and the Pacific Republic, were once more unified. North America became once more a great, though not the greatest, power. For a while, moreover, it looked as though North America would become the model community, destined to save

mankind by example and by leadership. Here at last, it seemed, was the true though inarticulate and un-doctrinal faith in the spirit. Here was the true liberalism of self-disciplined free citizens, the true communism of mutually respecting individuals. Rumour of this new happy society began to spread even in conquered Europe in spite of the Russian imperial censorship, and to hearten the many secret opponents of the dictatorship. Between the new North America and the new India there was close contact and interchange of ideas. From the Indian wisdom the Friends learned much, and they gave in return much American practical skill.

But it became clear that the American renaissance somehow lacked vitality. Somehow the old American forcefulness and drive had waned. On the surface all seemed well, and indeed Utopian. The population lived in security and frugal comfort. Class differences had almost wholly vanished. Education was consciously directed towards the creation of responsible citizens. European classical and Christian culture was studied afresh, with a new zeal and a new critical judgment; for it was realized that in the European tradition lay the true antidote to the new-fangled barbarism. Yet in spite of all this manifestation of sanity and good will, something was lacking. The American example appealed only to those who were already well-disposed. The great mass of mankind remained unimpressed. Many observers conceded that North America was a comfortable and amiable society; but it was stagnant, they said, and mediocre. It was incapable of giving a lead to a troubled world. No doubt this general ineffectiveness was partly due to the decline of average intelligence which North America shared with Europe. There was a lack of able leaders and men of far-reaching vision; and the average citizen, though well trained in citizenship, was mentally sluggish and incapable of clear-headed devotion to the ideals of his state. The new Russian imperialism, on the other hand, in spite of all its faults, combined the crusading and at heart mystical fervour of the short-

lived German Fourth Reich with some measure at least of the fundamental rightness the original Russian revolution. In competition with the vigour and glamour of Russia the American example had little power to attract 'men. Even in the South American continent the lead given by the North Americans proved after all ineffective. One by one the Southern states turned increasingly to Russia for guidance, or were forcibly annexed.

In the Northern Continent itself disheartenment was spreading. One of its causes, and one of its effects, was an increasingly rapid decline of population. Every inducement was made to encourage procreation, but in vain. The state granted high maternity subsidies, and honorific titles were offered to parents of large families. Contraception, though not illegal, was morally condemned. In spite of all this, the birth rate continued to decline, and the average age of the population to increase. Labour became a most precious commodity. Labour-saving devices were developed to a pitch hitherto unknown on the planet. Domestic service was completely eliminated by electrical contraptions. Transport over the whole country was carried out mainly by self-regulating railways. The predominantly middle-aged population felt more at home on the ground than in the air. There was no shortage of power, for the deeply indented north western coast-line afforded vast resources of tidal electricity. But in spite of this wealth of power and other physical resources North American society began to fall into disorder simply through its mediocre intelligence and increasing shortage of young people. Every child was brought up under the anxious care of the National Fertility Department. Every device of education and technical training was lavished upon him, or her. Every young man and every young woman was assured of prosperity and of a career of skilled work in service of the community. But the increasing preponderance of the middle-aged gave an increasingly conservative tilt to the whole social policy. In spite of lip-service to the old pioneering spirit and the

old ideal of endless progress, the effective aim of this society was merely to maintain itself in stability and comfort. This was no satisfying ideal for the young. Those young people who were not cowed by the authority of their elders were flung into violent opposition to the whole social order and ideology of the Republic. They were thus very susceptible to the propaganda of Russian imperial communism, which under the old heart-stirring slogans of the Revolution was now making its supreme effort to dominate the world, and was able to offer great opportunities of enterprise and courage to its swarms of vigorous but uncritical young.

The fall of India dismayed the middle-aged North American community. When at last the Soviet dictatorship picked a quarrel with it, internal dissensions made resistance impossible. The regime of the middle-aged collapsed. The youthful minority seized power and welcomed the Russian aerial armada. The Hammer and Sickle, formerly the most heartening emblem of the will for the light, but now sadly debased, was displayed on the Capitol.

The whole double American continent now fell under the control of Russia, and with it Australia and New Zealand. In Southern and Central Africa, meanwhile, the Black populations, after a series of abortive and bloody rebellions, had at last overthrown their white masters, avenging themselves for centuries of oppression by perpetrating the greatest massacre of history. If the Negroes had been politically experienced they might now have become one of the most formidable states in the world, for the inland water power of their continent was immense. Even under European domination this had been to a large extent exploited, but vast resources remained to be tapped. Unfortunately the Black populations had been so long inservitude that they were incapable of organizing themselves and their country efficiently. The Negro states which emerged in Africa were soon at loggerheads with one another. When foreign oppression had been abolished, unity of purpose ceased; and the

condition of Africa was one of constant petty wars and civil wars. Little by little however, Russian imperialism, profiting by Negro disunity, annexed the whole of Africa.

iii. RUSSIA AND CHINA

One power alone in all the world now remained to be brought within the Russian grasp, and this was potentially the greatest power of all, namely China. It was in the relations between Russia and China that the discrepancy in my experience first became evident, and the two parallel histories of mankind emerged. Since these two great peoples bulk so largely in my story, I shall dwell for a while on the forces which had moulded them.

The first Russian revolution, under Lenin, had been mainly a groping but sincere expression of the will for true community, and also an act of vengeance against a cruel and inefficient master class. When the leaders of the Revolution had established their power they proceeded to remake the whole economy of Russia for the benefit of the workers. Foreign hostility, however, forced them to sacrifice much to military necessity. Not only the physical but also the mental prosperity of the population suffered. What should have become a population of freely inquiring, critical, and responsible minds became instead a mentally-regimented population, prone to mob enthusiasm and contempt for unorthodoxy. Danger favoured the dictatorship of one man and the dominance of a disciplined and militarized party. The will for true community tended more and more to degenerate into the passion for conformity within the herd and for triumph over the herd's enemies.

For a long while, for many decades or possibly a few centuries, the struggle between the light and the darkness in Russia fluctuated. There were periods when it seemed that discipline would be relaxed

for the sake of liberal advancement in education. But presently foreign danger, real or fictitious, or else some threat of internal conflict would become an excuse for the intensification of tyranny. Thousands of officials would be shot, the army and the factories purged of disaffected persons. Education would be cleansed of all tendency to foster critical thought.

The two military regimes which now vied with one another for control of the planet were in many respects alike. In each of them a minority held effective power over the whole society, and in each a single individual was at once the instrument and the wielder of that power. Each dictatorship imposed upon its subjects a strict discipline and a stereotyped ideology which, in spite of its much emphasized idiosyncracies, was in one respect at least identical with the ideology of its opponent; for both insisted on the absolute subordination of the individual to the state, yet in both peoples there was still a popular conviction that the aim of social planning should be fullness of life for all individuals.

Between the two world powers there were great differences. Russia had been first in the field, and had triumphed largely through the mental bankruptcy of European civilization. Though the Russian culture was itself an expression of that civilization, the Russians were relatively an uncivilized race which had found no great difficulty in breaking away from a lightly imposed alien ideology. China, on the other hand, boasted the oldest civilization of the planet, and one which was more conservative than any other. Moreover, while the Russians had asserted themselves against a decadent but partially civilized Europe, and had always been secretly overawed by Europe's cultural achievement, the Chinese had asserted themselves against a people whom they regarded as upstarts and barbarians, the Japanese. More consciously than the Russians they had fought not only for social justice but for civilization, for culture, and the continuity of their tradition.

Whatever the defects of the Chinese tradition, in one respect it had been indirectly of immense value. Among both rich and poor the cult of the family had persisted throughout Chinese history, and had survived even the modern revolutionary period. In many ways this cult, this obsession, had been a reactionary influence, but in two respects it had been beneficial. It had prevented decline of population; and, more important, it had prevented a decline of intelligence. In China as elsewhere the more intelligent had tended to rise into the more comfortable circumstances. But whereas in Europe and America the more prosperous classes had failed to breed adequately, in China the inveterate cult of family ensured that they should do so. In post-revolutionary China the old love of family was a useful stock on which to graft a new biologically-justified respect not merely for family as such but for those stocks which showed superior intelligence or superior social feeling. Unfortunately, though public opinion did for a while move in this direction, the old financial ruling families, seeing their dominance threatened by upstart strains, used all their power of propaganda and oppression to stamp out this new and heretical version of the old tradition. Thus, though on the whole the Chinese Empire was richer in intelligence than the Russian, it seriously squandered its resources in this most precious social asset. And later, as I shall tell, the reactionary policy of the ruling caste threatened this great people with complete bankruptcy of mental capacity.

In social organization there were differences between imperial Russia and imperial China. In Russia the heroic attempt to create a communist state had finally gone astray through the moral deterioration of the Communist Party. What had started as a devoted revolutionary corps had developed as a bureaucracy which in effect owned the whole wealth of the empire. Common ownership theoretically existed, but in effect it was confined to the Party, which

thus became a sort of fabulously wealthy monastic order. In its earlier phase the Party was recruited by strict social and moral testing, but latterly the hereditary principle had crept in, so that the Party became an exclusive ruling caste. In China, under the influence partly of Russian communism, partly of European capitalism, a similar system evolved, but one in which the common ownership of the ruling caste as a whole was complicated by the fact that the great families of the caste secured a large measure of economic autonomy. As in Japan at an earlier stage, but more completely and definitely, each great department of production became the perquisite of a particular aristocratic, or rather plutocratic, family. Within each family, common ownership was strictly maintained.

There was a deep difference of temper between the two peoples. Though the Russian revolutionaries had prided themselves on their materialism, the Russian people retained a strong though unacknowledged tendency towards mysticism. Their veneration of Lenin, which centred round his embalmed body in the Kremlin, was originally simple respect for the founder of the new order; but little by little it acquired a character which would have called from Lenin himself condemnation and ridicule. The phraseology of dialectical materialism came to be fantastically reinterpreted in such a way as to enable the populace to think of 'matter' as a kind of deity, with Marx as the supreme prophet and Lenin as the terrestrial incarnation of the God himself. Marx's system was scientific in intention, and it claimed to be an expression of intelligence operating freely on the data of social life. But the early Marxists had insisted, quite rightly, that reason was no infallible guide, that it was an expression of social causes working through the individual's emotional needs. This sound psychological principle became in time a sacred dogma, and during the height of Russian imperial power the rejection of reason was as complete and as superstitious as it had been in Nazi Germany. Men were able, while accepting all the social and

philosophical theories of Marx, to indulge in all kinds of mystical fantasies.

In this matter the Chinese were very different from the Russians. Whatever the truth about ancient China, the China that had freed itself from Japan was little interested in the mystical aspect of experience. For the Chinese of this period common sense was absolute. Even in regard to science, which for so many Russians had become almost a religion, the Chinese maintained their common-sense attitude. Science for them was not a gospel but an extremely useful collection of precepts for gaining comfort or power. When the educated Russian spoke of the far-reaching philosophical significance of materialistic science, the educated Chinese would generally smile and shrug his shoulders. Strange that the fanatical materialist was more addicted to metaphysical speculation and mystical fantasy, and the unspeculative adherent of common sense was in this respect capable of greater piety towards the occult depth of reality.

The culture of the new China was often regarded as 'Eighteenth Century' in spirit, but at its best it included also a tacit intuitive reverence for the mystery which encloses human existence. Even after the bitter struggle against the Japanese there remained something eighteenth century about the educated Chinese, something of the old urbanity and liking for decency and order. The old respect for learning, too, remained, though the kind of learning which was now necessary to the aspiring government official was very different from that which was required in an earlier age. Then, all that was demanded was familiarity with classical texts; now, the candidate had to show an equally minute acquaintance with the lore of physics, biology, psychology, economics, and social science. In the new China as in old, the supreme interest of the intellectuals was not theoretical, as it had been with the Greeks, nor religious, as with the Jews, nor mystical, as with the Indians, nor scientific and

industrial, as with the Europeans, but social. For them, as for their still-revered ancestors, the all absorbing problem was to discover and practise the right way of living together.

To understand the Chinese social ideas of this period with their emphasis at once on freedom and self-discipline for the common task, one must bear in mind the effects of the Japanese wars. At the outset the Chinese had been hopelessly divided against themselves, and the Japanese had profited by their discord. But invasion united them, and to the surprise of the World they showed great skill and devotion in reorganizing their whole economy to resist the ruthless enemy. Though their armies were driven inland, they contrived to create a new China in the West. There, great factories sprang up, great universities were founded. There, the young men and women of the new China learned to believe in their people's mission to free the world from tyranny and to found a world-civilization which should combine the virtues of the ancient and the Modern.

During the first phase of the resistance against Japan, during the emergence of the new national consciousness which was also a new consciousness of mankind, the whole resources of the state and the whole energy of the people were concentrated on defence. Arms had to be bought or made, armies raised. And the new soldiers had to be politically trained so that each of them should be not merely an efficient fighter but also a radiating centre of the new ideas. Education, military and civilian, was one of the state's main cares. Under the influence of a number of brilliant minds there appeared the outline of the old new culture. Based on the ethics of the ancient China, but influenced also by Christianity, by European democracy, by European science, by Russian communism, it was at the same time novel through and through.

Unfortunately, though the ideas that inspired the new China included common service, common sacrifice, and common ownership, the

structure of Chinese society was still in part capitalist. Though under the stress of War the commercial and financial oligarchy sacrificed much, freely or under compulsion, it managed to retain its position as the effective power behind the throne of the people's representatives, and later behind the dictator. In the period of acute danger this power had been exercised secretly, and had effected intrigues with the similar power in Japan. Later, when the tide had turned, when the Japanese armies were either surrounded or in flight to the coast, the plea of national danger was no longer sufficiently urgent to subdue or disguise the efforts of finance to re-establish itself. A period of violent internal strain was followed by a civil war. Once more the rice plains were overrun by troops and tanks, railways were destroyed, cities bombed, savage massacres perpetrated in the name of freedom or justice or security.

The result of the war was that Communism triumphed in the North, Capitalism in the South. For a while the two states maintained their independence, constantly intriguing against one another. The North, of course, depended largely on Russian support, and as Russia was at this time triumphantly expanding over Europe, it looked as though South China must soon succumb. But Russia, though by now the greatest military power in the world, was no longer a revolutionary and inspiring influence. The jargon of communism was still officially used, but its spirit had vanished; much as, in an earlier age, the jargon of liberal democracy was used in support of capitalist exploitation. Consequently the leaders of the South were able to defeat communist propaganda both in their own country and in the North by ardent appeals to Chinese nationalism. The result was that after a while the nationalists seized power in the North. There followed a solemn act of union between the North and South Chinese states. And thus was created the formidable Chinese financial-military dictatorship.

While the Russian Empire was busy digesting America and Africa,

the Chinese would-be empire was consolidating itself throughout eastern Asia. In the north, Japan, Korea, Manchuria and Mongolia, in the south, Assam, Siam, Burma and the East Indies, were one by one brought within the new empire. Tibet, which had formerly been part of the ancient Chinese Empire, was able to maintain a precarious independence by playing off each of its formidable neighbours against the other.

The period of human history that I have been describing may seem to have been one in which the will for darkness triumphed, but in fact it was not. It was merely as I have said, a phase in the long age of balance between the light and the dark. Neither of the two empires that now competed for mastery over the planet was wholly reactionary. In each great group of peoples a large part of the population, perhaps the majority, still believed in friendliness and reasonableness, and tried to practice them. When the sacrifice was not too great, they even succeeded. In personal contacts the form and often the spirit of Christian behaviour or of the ancient Chinese morality were still evident. Even in indirect social relations liberal impulses sometimes triumphed. Moreover in, both empires an active minority worked vigorously for the light, urging humane conduct and propagating the idea of a just social order in which all might find fulfilment. In fact on both sides the more intelligent of the adherents of the light confidently looked forward to a great and glorious Change, if not in the near future, at least in the lifetime of their children. Even the rulers themselves, the military-political groups which controlled the two empires, believed sincerely not indeed in radical change, but in their mission to rule the world and lead it to a vaguely conceived Utopia of discipline and martial virtue. In neither empire was there at this time the ruthless lust for power and delight in cruelty which had for a while dominated Germany. Between the rulers of the two empires there was an ambiguous relationship. Though each desired to conquer the other by diplomacy or war, and though to each the

social ideas and the forms of social behaviour propagated by the other were repugnant, yet, both agreed in regarding something else as more repugnant, namely the overthrow of their own state by their own progressive minority. Consequently their policy was guided not only by fluctuations in their power in relation to the enemy but also by the strength or weakness of their own progressives. Sincerely, and sometimes even with sincere reluctance, they used the plea of external danger to enforce stricter discipline at home. Yet at times when social upheaval seemed imminent they would not scruple to ask the external enemy to ease his pressure for a while. And invariably the request was granted; for neither of the ruling groups wished to see its opponents overthrown in revolution.

iv. THE RISE OF TIBET

The life and death struggle which at last broke out between the empires of Russia and China centred upon Tibet. More important, it was seemingly in Tibet that the balance between the will for darkness and the will for the light was finally destroyed. It is necessary therefore to examine the fortunes of the Tibetans in some detail.

Although their lofty, secluded, and mainly arid land had formerly been an outpost of the ancient Chinese Empire, it had always maintained a measure of independence. During China's long struggle with Japan this independence had become absolute, and henceforth the clerical oligarchy of Tibet maintained its freedom by playing off Russia and China against one another. Within the Tibetan frontiers there was a constant struggle between the secret propagandists of Russia and those of China, but the Tibetan government put up a strong resistance against both. Ever since the age of the commercial expansion of Europe Tibet had fought for the preservation of native culture. Foreigners had been excluded from the country. Foreign

loans for exploitation of Tibet's natural resources had been refused. Little by little, however, the barriers had broken down. European and American, and subsequently Russian and Chinese, goods and ideas had found their way into the high valleys and plains. Modern aids to agriculture, modern methods of transport, the cinema, the radio, seemed to threaten to destroy the individuality of this last stronghold of unmechanized culture.

But in the case of Tibet, forewarned was indeed forearmed. After a period of internal conflict an economically progressive, but culturally conservative, party was able to seize power and effect a revolution in the economic life of the country. The new rulers, the new advisers of the Grand Lama, wisely distinguished between the material achievements of modernism and its social and moral absurdities. They undertook to modernize their country materially and even to some extent mentally, while preserving the essentials of the native cultural life. In this they were but following in the footsteps of the Japanese, but with the tragic example of that upstart modern society ever before them. Moreover in the Tibetan culture there was something far deeper, more spiritual and more hardy than in the culture of Japan. The natural poverty of the country, too, had proved a blessing. Powerful neighbours regarded Tibet as not worth systematic exploitation or conquest; and the belated native attempt to develop the country without foreign aid could not produce, even if it had been intended to do so, anything like the flood of luxury and the insane lust for commercial power which had enervated the dominant class in Europe. Physically Tibetan resources were indeed negligible. Save for certain remaining deposits of gold, mostly in the eastern part of the country, there was little mineral wealth, and agriculture was hobbled by severe shortage of water. Even pasture was at first desperately meagre. Sheep and cattle, however, and particularly the hardy native yak, formed the mainstay of the population. The government undertook a great irrigation scheme;

with the willing and even heroic co-operation of the people. Within a few decades, it was hoped, much of the country would be capable of intensive cultivation.

But the main resources of Tibet were the people themselves. A pacific, industrious, and sturdy folk, they had been encouraged to regard themselves not as a backward race doomed to succumb to foreign powers, but as the custodians of the ancient wisdom in a period of worldwide darkness. Some of their recent leaders had suggested also that the Tibetan people must now become the pioneers of a new and comprehensive wisdom in which ancient and modern should be combined more significantly than was possible, for instance, in the depraved communities of Russia and China.

The leaders of the first Tibetan revolution, though they saw vaguely the need to modify the native culture, were not in practice able to carry forward the great process of development which they had started. There had to be a second revolution, which was led by the forward-looking section of the Lama class, with the backing of the people. This new class of leaders had come into being through the first revolution. A measure of frugal prosperity had increased the people's leisure and thoughtfulness. Though they were eager for certain physical improvements to their country, they had escaped the dangerous spell of modern industrialism, for that simple faith had by now been discredited among thoughtful people throughout the world. Though these 'servants of the light', as they called themselves, welcomed the scientific education which the government offered them, they also welcomed its insistence on the ancient wisdom. Indeed the young began flocking into the monasteries, and particularly to the houses of the reformed, modernistic monastic orders. The leaders of this new Lama class were persons who, after being well grounded in the principles of Buddhism, had in their maturity been greatly influenced by modern ideas without being false to the essence of the native culture. Most of them had spent a year or

two in China or India, many in Russia, some in America, where they had been impressed by the Friends. Foreign contacts had made them realize fully the superstition and hypocrisy of the worst type of Lamas and the shallow pretentiousness of much of the orthodox learning. But this disillusionment had merely brought out more clearly the truth which had been perverted. This, they affirmed, was a truth not of intellect but of intuition. It was a feeling or apprehension of something which put all things into their true perspective. The whole intellectual edifice of Buddhism, they said, was an attempt, sometimes sound sometimes false, to elucidate this inarticulate discovery. And the discovery itself was to be won not at a stroke but progressively, through a long discipline of actual life. In modernism also they found a truth of feeling. The real achievement of modern culture, apart from science, they summarized under three headings; first, its insistence on action, individual and social, as opposed to Eastern quietism; second, its demand for equality of opportunity for all human beings; and, finally, its understanding of the primitive unconscious sources of all human thought and feeling.

The new monastic orders were at first tolerated and even encouraged by the Lhasa oligarchy, but presently they were reprimanded for stirring up unrest. For though each had its headquarters in some craggy monastery, the inmates travelled periodically, exhorting the people. They were in fact something between monks, friars, and revolutionaries. They preached a sort of religious communism, and demanded the abdication of the ruling class, the wealthy monastic orders. The crisis came when the new Lamas renounced the celibacy which for centuries had been accepted by the monastic class. The motive of this change was a thoroughly modernistic motive. It was realized in the new monasteries that the two most precious innate social capacities were the disposition for genuine community and the capacity for intelligent action. It was realized also that, although the average level

of intelligence had not sunk so far in Tibet as in more advanced countries, there was a steady drain of the more intelligent into the celibate monastic orders. This, said the servants of the light, must stop. Recognizing the importance of self-denial for spiritual discipline, they recognized also the importance of propagating intelligence. They therefore boldly affirmed their intention of striving for complete spiritual discipline and insight though 'unsupported by the prop of celibacy'. Biological responsibility, they said, must not be shirked by the servants of the light, even though they must assume other weighty responsibilities. Not only so, but the experience of family life, with all its trials and all its mental enrichment, must not be shirked by those who undertook to lead and govern the people. They recognized that family life must not be allowed to absorb too much attention, but to avoid this they advocated that the state should assume the final responsibility for the upbringing of all children.

The renunciation of celibacy and the attack on the ruling class inevitably caused a serious conflict between the old and the new monastic orders. Inevitably the Grand Lama excommunicated the servants of the light, and finally outlawed them. Civil war followed. Since the Young Lamas, the servants of the light, were strongly supported by the people, their victory was decisive. It happened that at this critical moment of Tibetan history neither Russia nor China was in a position to interfere effectively, because a move by either would have precipitated an attack by the other; and since internal unrest in both empires was grave, war would have turned into civil war. So the second Tibetan revolution was successfully accomplished, and a new Tibet was founded, a society which to all earlier statesmen would have seemed a fantastic dream.

While modest economic development was continued, the main work of the new government was to educate the people in citizenship and in the new, purged version of the ancient culture. At the same time equality of opportunity for the rising generation, opportunity both

economic and educational, was made absolute. In the new constitution ultimate power lay with the whole adult population. The constitution could be altered only by their elected assembly, which also could depose the government or withhold supplies. Current legislation, however, was carried out not by the general assembly but by a body elected by a section of the population known as the Active Citizens. These were men and women who had qualified by undertaking certain kinds of social service and by passing certain intelligence tests and academic examinations. The Active Citizens elected representatives from among themselves, but only those who had completed a rigorous political training, practical and theoretical, could stand for election. Parallel with this system there was a kind of Soviet system, based on occupation. All important legislation had to be sanctioned both by the representatives of the Active Citizens and by the body which formed the elected apex of this occupational system. This constitution could never have been put into action had there not already existed throughout the country a high standard of political education and a body of trusted leaders, proved in the revolution.

The new government at once passed a mass of progressive legislation. Ownership of all means of production was vested in the state, but delegated, with suitable checks, to the occupations themselves. In particular, the peasants were assured of ownership of their land. For some purposes their control was individualistic, and for other purposes co-operative. The government also issued 'an appeal to all persons of goodwill throughout the world' to work with new courage to found a new and unified world order, 'to establish freedom and the rule of the spirit'. The Tibetans, it declared, dedicated themselves absolutely to this end.

It is to this point of the history of man that I shall return when I begin to tell of the triumph of the will for light. Meanwhile I must from this point

pursue the story of increasing darkness; for at this very moment, when seemingly the will for the light had gained unprecedented power, the will for darkness gathered its strength for final triumph.

The actual bifurcation of history may have begun long before this date. It may have begun in China, in Russia, in America, in Britain, or in all these countries at different dates. But equally it may well be that Tibet was the crucial point. Whatever the truth about the actual bifurcation, the relations of the new Tibet with its two mighty neighbours constituted the occasion on which the great duplication became unmistakable and irrevocable. Henceforth my experience was dual. On the one hand I witnessed the failure of the Tibetan renaissance, and the destruction of the Tibetan people. This was followed by the final Russo-Chinese war which unified the human race but also undermined its capacity. On the other hand I saw the Tibetans create, seemingly in the very jaws of destruction, a community such as man had never before achieved. And this community, I saw, so fortified the forces of the light in the rival empires that the war developed into a revolutionary war which spread over the whole planet, and did not end until the will for the light had gained victory everywhere.

Part II - DARKNESS

4 - THE QUENCHING OF THE LIGHT

- i. REPERCUSSIONS IN BRITAIN
- ii. A SYNTHETIC FAITH
- iii. THE TIBETANS DEFEND THEMSELVES
- iv. THE DESTRUCTION OF TIBET

i. REPERCUSSIONS IN BRITAIN

THE AWAKENING of the Tibetans caused a stir throughout the world. For a while it seemed that at last the light would win. Bold young Tibetans, 'itinerant servants of the light', left their frugal and crag-bound 'incipient Utopia' to spread the gospel across the high passes of the Karakorum Range into Sinkiang and far into the Russian plain. Others, still more daring, penetrated eastward to the upper reaches of the Hwang Ho. Evading the efficient Chinese police, they carried the word even to Shanghai, and thence to Japan. Yet others, crossing the more difficult and neglected of the Himalayan passes, percolated like an invisible ferment into the peoples of India; while others again crept along the gorges of Kashmir, seeking Europe. Thousands were caught, and tortured with all the cunning of medical and psychological science. In China these tortures were often carried out in public to entertain the people and warn those who had any leanings towards the light. But few of the missionaries were extirpated before they had infected with their message many who were ripe to receive it. Meanwhile in Lhasa and

the other great centres of the new-old truth swarms of young men and women were being trained to carry on the great task.

In every land the servants of the light were heartened. The servants of darkness were bewildered and anxious. Here and there throughout the two great empires brave attempts were made to copy the Tibetan experiment. Here and there, notably in Britain, the party of the light organized an armed rebellion.

The three peoples of Britain, the English, the Scotch, and the Welsh, had long ago ceased to count politically in the world. Enslaved first by Germany and then by Russia, they had adapted themselves to their servile condition. Nevertheless they retained a precious memory not only of their ancient national splendour but also of that humane and liberal spirit for which, in spite of heinous faults, they had once been famous. Whenever in any part of the world a stand was made for freedom and individual integrity the three British peoples, and often the Irish too, were ready to cause trouble for their masters. Rumour soon told them that the new Tibetan state was not the Gilbert and Sullivan fantasy which Russian propaganda reported. Presently the secret emissaries of Tibet were at work in London and the North-west. The gospel spread. But the British, imperfectly schooled in the life of the spirit, never clearly grasped it. Only the political aspect of it was fully intelligible to them. Politically they were still gifted with a certain tact, forbearance, and inventiveness; and they were not incapable of making a bold stand against tyranny. But this was not enough. To break the mechanized power of the foreign dictatorship they needed to have, as a whole people, that outstanding fortitude and integrity which are possible only to those who have endured a long and intelligent discipline under the light. The British rebellion failed because the spirit behind it was confused and uncertain, and therefore incapable of that fantastic and universal heroism which alone can triumph over odds that are obviously impossible. The young Russian air-police quickly obliterated the few

towns which the rebels were able to seize.

ii. A SYNTHETIC FAITH

This little episode on the fringe of the Russian Empire was of no general significance. The focus of interest was always Tibet itself. The two imperial powers had, of course tried to frustrate the Tibetan revolution, but at first each had regarded the strange commotion on 'the Roof of the World' as a comic side-show. Each had been concerned to gain a diplomatic victory over its rival in the Tibetan no-man's- land rather than to preserve the old Tibetan régime. But when the revolution was actually accomplished, the Russian and Chinese oligarchs began to be alarmed. And when it became evident that the insignificant Tibetan state was fomenting the subversive forces beyond its frontiers and planning a world-wide revolution, both the imperial governments began to take serious action. The campaign of terrorism which each undertook within its own frontiers was not as successful as had been hoped. The progressive minority, disciplined by Tibetan leaders, showed fanatical courage. Moreover each imperial government at first made the mistake of fostering the subversive movement in its rival's territory. Not till matters had become very grave was this policy abandoned by a tacit agreement between the two great powers to postpone all action against one another till the epidemic of sedition had been crushed. Even so, neither could trust the other not to use the crushing of the Tibetan experiment as a pretext for annexing the country. Whenever one of the two powers threatened invasion if Tibetan propaganda did not cease, the government at Lhasa was able to count on diplomatic or even military intervention by the other.

There came a time, however, when fear of Tibetan ideas overcame imperial rivalry. Both oligarchies were finding it impossible to cope with the rising tide of religious fanaticism within their own frontiers.

Though every city had now its own congested concentration camp, though time after time these camps were emptied to provide a public holocaust in which, before the eyes of a howling and ecstatic mob, thousands were roasted alive or vivisected by machinery devised to produce maximal pain, the movement continued to spread. It even infected the troops. In these circumstances the two oligarchies were forced to put aside their rivalry. Their leaders met in conference in the newest and wealthiest suburb of Irkutsk, on the forest-clad shores of Lake Baikal. There they worked out a common policy. The conference was dominated by a young Chinese official psychologist who claimed to have an infallible cure for the world's madness.

To appreciate his contentions it is necessary to understand the mentality of the oligarchs. They were in the main sincere believers in their respective empires, and in imperialism itself. Their conscious minds were those of devoted, meticulously accurate civil servants who felt that their society was in danger of disintegration through an enthusiasm beyond their comprehension. On the whole they disliked the orgy of torture with which it was hoped to break the movement, but they believed it necessary; Moreover most of them unwittingly derived satisfaction from it, for most were frustrated spirits, teased by an unrecognized itch of resentment against those who had maintained spiritual liberty and integrity by rebelling against the established barbarism. Moreover in the Russian and the Chinese cultures there were elements which favoured cruelty. The Russians were a kindly not a cruel people, but in the pseudo-mysticism of degenerate Russia there was in some respects a return to pre-revolutionary ideas. Suffering was conceived of as the supreme purifier and the supreme source of illumination. Consequently the infliction of suffering on others might sometimes be laudable. The Chinese, on the other hand, though so fastidious and so friendly, had always been liable both to cold cruelty and to passionate vindictiveness. The Chinaman who had 'run amok' did but manifest

an impulse which was latent in all his race, and indeed in all mankind, though with less dramatic expression.

The argument of the young psychologist was briefly this. Tibet had become obsessed with an idea, and was infecting every people. To resist such an emotional and dynamic idea it was necessary to have another idea, contrary and even more potent. It was necessary to give the people something to live for, die for, and kill for. The Tibetan idea was the incredible ideal of a world in which men would fulfil their powers in joyful service of the common weal. To counter this insidious doctrine it was necessary to preach sacrifice, self-immolation, enlightenment in suffering, obedience to the divine and ruthless Will, embodied, of course, in the fiat of the state. Two ideas, the psychologist insisted, must be reiterated on all possible occasions and given some kind of concrete symbolization. In the first place it must be constantly pointed out that though the Tibetans themselves insisted on submission to the divine will, their conception of that will was effeminate. Moreover the Tibetan emphasis on submission was incompatible with the contrary exhortation to strive for revolutionary change. Submission must be absolute, fervent, ecstatic. Only at the command of the state must it give place to struggle, and then struggle itself must spring from utter submission to the divine state. Of course if the state was palpably not divine, if it was, for instance, the utterly perverted Tibetan state, struggle must be constant and resolute until the true state was founded. But under the divine state the supreme virtue was obedience. For the state in its wisdom would decide what was the right function of everyone. As for the right to education, there was no such thing. In its place must be set the right and duty of ignorance. Let each man know merely whatever was needed for the fulfilling of his function. To know more was wicked, and to the truly spiritual mind repugnant. Obedience involved also the pious acceptance of suffering, one's own and one's neighbour's. But indeed suffering was not only to be reluctantly

accepted; it must be welcomed. For the second great idea which the psychologist stressed was the excellence both of suffering and of cruelty. In praising kindness and mutual respect the Tibetans had overlooked another important value. No doubt there was a place for kindness. Between members of one family, and between loyal members of the divine state, kindness was necessary so long as it did not infringe against loyalty. But from the spiritual point of view there was a virtue more important and more illuminating than kindness, namely cruelty. For cruelty, he said, was complementary to suffering. In torture, both victim and agent should experience an ineffable illumination. Like the union of love, and in a far more vivid manner, the union of victim and torturer was a creative synthesis in which a new and splendid reality was brought into being. The proof of this was in the experience itself. The torturer knew well that ecstasy. The victim, if he was spiritually disciplined beforehand, should experience an even more exquisite, excruciating joy.

The psychologist urged that the two governments should secretly select and train the future prophets of this faith, and launch them out as spontaneous religious enthusiasts throughout the two empires. It would be well that these agitators should be critical of the existing imperial governments, condemning them as but feeble embodiments of the truth. Indeed these state-aided revolutionaries should be encouraged to demand a new regime. Let them go so far as to incur persecution by the existing governments. Some of them would then have to be sacrificed, but the survivors must be heavily financed to rouse a revolutionary fervour among the populace, the object of which would be not the milk-sop liberal-socialist Utopia achieved by Tibet but the fulfilment of the potentialities of the existing order. Only when the true divine state had been established would the virtue of absolute acquiescence be possible.

Such a movement, the psychologist prophesied, would sweep the world. It would appeal both to the universal impulse to 'pass by on the

other side' when help was demanded and to the no less 'widespread need for destruction and cruelty. He suggested that, in consonance with the two national temperaments, acquiescence should be stressed in Russia, cruelty in China. This difference, he added, could be used as a basis on which to build Russo-Chinese national hatred when the time came (as it surely would) for the world-wide ruling class to tighten its grip on the people by means of a world war. It was never clear whether the young man believed in the faith that he was preaching or whether he advocated it merely as a piece of necessary statecraft. It was as statecraft that the conference accepted the policy.

Presently the Tibetan missionaries found themselves confronted by a rival missionary movement, with which they could not cope. The instigators of this new movement were a kind of wild dervish. They lashed their audiences into fury, preaching sacred cruelty and demanding a revitalization of the imperial state. After their meetings there was always a lynching, sometimes a mass sacrifice of captive servants of the light. The movement spread from Canton to Leningrad. The two governments bowed before the storm. Their personnel was somewhat changed, their policy clarified and brought into line with the new faith. National differences were for the time submerged under the common will to destroy Tibet.

iii. THE TIBETANS DEFEND THEMSELVES

It was obvious that the Tibetans, few, relatively poor, and unequipped for war, could not resist the combined forces of the two empires that covered the world. There was only one hope, namely that the servants of the light in all countries would be able to carry out so great a campaign of passive resistance and active sabotage that the attack would never be launched.

The Tibetan renaissance had been strongly pacifist in temper, though never pledged to absolute non-violence. The Indian influence had been complicated by the influence of China. In the new crisis a vociferous party urged that, since resistance was anyhow hopeless, the time had come for heroic non-resistance to invasion; and that sabotage in the two empires must not be encouraged. Against this view it was pointed out that non-resistance was doomed to fail against invaders schooled to despise gentleness, and that no policy could succeed but one which combined total revolutionary action in the imperial territories, desperate resistance to invasion, and absolute loyalty to the spirit.

This became the official policy, but as the war proceeded the pure pacifists became strong enough to blunt the edge of resolution. In relation to Russian and Chinese propaganda in Tibet the strength of pure pacifism in the country had an unfortunate influence. Large numbers of the less intelligent Tibetans, seeing clearly enough that pure pacifism would not work against the ruthless enemy, conceived suspicion and disgust against all those who were in any way sympathetic to pacifism. They thus laid themselves open to the propaganda of the servants of darkness, who soon discovered that their efforts to undermine Tibetan faith were not wholly unsuccessful.

But the battle was not yet lost. The servants of light throughout the empires did succeed in rousing many peoples to organize strikes and rebellions in defence of Tibet. In parts of Western China, in Sinkiang, and in Kashmir, all of which had been greatly influenced by the new Tibet, the imperial governments were defeated, and governments of the light were created. Even in far Europe and in farther America the Russian power was seriously threatened. Everywhere the rebels knew that they were fighting in a desperate cause, and that if they were defeated the vengeance of the tyrants would be diabolic. But Tibet had become for millions throughout the world a holy land, and its people the chosen people who must be

preserved at all costs. For Tibet was thought of as the germ from which a new world-organism would in due season develop. If the germ was destroyed, all hope would be for ever lost. .

While these rebellions were in progress, and while throughout Asia munition factories were mysteriously blowing up and aeroplanes showing a strange inability to leave the ground, the Tibetans were hastily organizing a forlorn defence. Rebellions beyond their northern frontiers made it possible to work unhindered to turn the Karakorum and Dangla Ranges into a continuous fortress. To the south the Himalayas were a natural barrier. To the west the successful Kashmiri rebels would defend them to the death. Eastward the Chwanben gorges were still being held.

But the main defence against invasion, though not against attack from the air, was a device recently invented by geneticists and biochemists in one of the great reformed Lamasseries. The character of this invention shows how strangely science was developing under the influence of will for the light. Some miles in front of the fortifications the new defences formed a belt about two miles wide and completely surrounding Tibetan territory, save for the exits and entrances of rivers. Throughout this belt the ground was impregnated to a depth of several feet with a micro-organism which had been artificially bred from a natural virus. It had a strange property. Though in one stage of its life-cycle this ultra-microscopic object remained deep underground in chemical reaction with certain products of vegetable decomposition, in another stage it gradually percolated towards the surface and finally drifted off into the air, to reproduce and take part in other chemical reactions before settling once more on the ground and sinking into the subsoil. In the air this virus formed an ultra-microscopic dust which would inevitably be inhaled by all animals in the infected area. From the respiratory organs it travelled to the brain. It had a startling effect on the higher

brain centres. It produced a complete but temporary loss of memory and of nearly all acquired skills. Even those habits that were most long-established and familiar were seriously disturbed. Speech and walking became infantile, perception largely meaningless. Intelligence remained; but, shorn of all its acquired experience, it was like the intelligence of a bright and ignorant child. But the most striking aspect of the virus was that its influence could be almost completely resisted by minds of high intelligence and integrity that had undergone a thorough spiritual discipline. Many Tibetans, therefore, could cross the defence belt in safety so long as they kept their minds occupied with meditation, while on the journey and resisted the oppressive drowsiness which was the first symptom of disintegration.

When at last the dull-witted armies of Russia and China with their irresistible war machines attempted to cross the belt, their personnel was mysteriously reduced to infantilism. Many accidentally killed themselves with their own machinery. The army became a stumbling, helpless mob. They were shepherded back into their own territory by Tibetan police. Many were then slaughtered by their Russian or Chinese compatriots as worthless goods. Some were preserved for observation, and after a few weeks they completely recovered. Fresh attempts at invasion met with the same fate. Respirators were of no avail, for the ultra-microscopic spores could pass through any filter, and nothing would poison them that was not also poisonous to human beings.

But though on the ground the frontier was inviolate, the virus provided no defence against attack by air. The Tibetans had a small but brilliant air force. It had been assumed that in any attack by one of the two empires the other would be eager to check aggression by its rival. In such circumstances such an air force as Tibet possessed might prove invaluable. But against the combined air forces of Russia and China, it must surely (thought the leaders of those

empires) prove impotent. This calculation omitted the spiritual factor. Not only had the Tibetan airmen been trained to the highest technical proficiency. They were also, one and all, conscious servants of the light. Boys though they were, and therefore as yet incapable of the deeper spiritual insight, they had been brought up to experience without perversion the fundamental values for which Tibet was standing. Full well they knew that the Tibetan community was the one sane and joyful community in a crazy world, and indeed the first terrestrial society to be consciously planned for the full expression of the spirit. They also knew that if they allowed Tibet to be conquered they would doom the human race to servitude under the will for darkness. They knew that henceforth all human loveliness would wither and vanish. And they were convinced that for themselves fulfilment must lie in perfect service in the air. With a calm and absolute courage more formidable than any fanaticism these young men soared against the invading bombers, and brought them down in thousands.

In passing I record one unusual qualification which the Tibetan government exacted of its young airmen. They must be married men. Further, none might go into action against the enemy unless he had a child, or his wife was pregnant. It even became a point of honour with these strange 'aces' not to take extreme risks until they had at least three children to their credit.

So effective was the defence put up by the Tibetan air force that the repeated waves of attack became more and more infrequent and finally ceased for several years. During this period the Tibetans maintained themselves in complete isolation from the rest of the world, save by radio and occasional daring excursions by planes to foment revolution or seize some much needed commodity. Meanwhile the imperialists were preparing so great an air-fleet and so numerous a population of pilots that effective resistance by the

shrunk Tibetan air force would be impossible.

When the great attack was launched, the sky over Tibet was darkened by the invading bombers. Every town and village and all the great isolated monasteries were very soon destroyed. Lhasa, the spiritual heart of the country, was completely obliterated.

Watching these events from my look-out in the remote future, with superhuman intelligences as my fellow spectators, I might surely have been immune from human pity. But in fact compassion and admiration overwhelmed me. For here was a people most sensitive, most aware, the heirs and upholders of a most rare and glorious social fabric, a people rightly believing themselves to be the sole effective champions of the light in a darkened world. And all that they had built was being destroyed. Not only the loved temples of their faith, not only their precious houses of learning and all their instruments of economic production, were now being sacrificed, but also, and far more precious, their young people, the perfect fruit of all their past endeavour. Homes were broken up for ever, parents bereft, children orphaned, and lovers, seizing delight even under the wings of death, were suddenly mingled in a hideous and undesired union. By night the high clouds were lit up continuously by the flashes of guns and bombs and the sinister but lovely glow of the great fires. By night and by day the bombs still screamed and crashed, while men searched the wreckage for their companions. The Tibetans did not give way to self-pity. The prevailing temper was a devoted patriotism, which, like so many earlier patriotisms, but this time with justice, regarded the preservation of this nation and its culture as urgent for the well-being of humanity. At this stage of the war the population went about its work in a state of exaltation tempered by humour; with a sense that this was the supreme moment of mankind and a battle infinitely worth fighting, yet with surprisingly detached relish of the irony of Tibet's plight.

The people now set about adapting themselves to their new conditions.

The country was large, and the population small. Agriculture, which had been so carefully fostered by the new régime, now ceased to be possible, for the homesteads were bombed and machine-gunned, and the dams of the great reservoirs were destroyed. But the yak remained; the population reverted to a nomad pastoral life. Wandering in small groups, pitching their camouflaged tents in fresh places every night, they offered a poor target to the enemy. Fortunately the imperialists at first made no attempt to land troops by plane, for they believed that the whole country was infected with the strange disease that had frustrated the first land attacks. The Tibetans, meanwhile, were hastily spreading the precious virus throughout their territory. Its effect was to eliminate all who did not attain the necessary standard of lucidity to resist infection. Only a small minority were thus put out of action. These were cared for in special homes. A much larger number, but still only a minority, suffered from temporary mild attacks of the disease. The virus was now also spreading itself beyond the frontiers. There, of course, its effects were incomparably worse. Organization in the infected areas completely vanished.

iv. THE DESTRUCTION OF TIBET

For long the Tibetans remained in good heart, sending constant radio encouragement to the tormented servants of the light throughout the world. But the bombing increased. The whole strength of the two empires was concentrated on the destruction of the heroic nomads. According to a current jest Tibet had bombs instead of raindrops. The enemy air forces succeeded in infecting the reservoirs with disease-germs. Disease spread like fire through the population. Prolonged freedom from infection had deprived it of the

normal powers of resistance. Meanwhile the pure pacifists, and also the secret believers in the synthetic faith which was propagated from the empires, were urging the government to surrender. From the point of view of the 'fifth-columnists' peace was indeed earnestly to be desired; for the gradual impregnation of the whole land with the virus of defence was already reducing them to imbeciles. Many whose faith in the light had been strong were now so physically enfeebled by the strains of war that even they could no longer resist the virus. It soon became evident that in time the great mass of the population would succumb.

The obliteration of Lhasa had destroyed the educational and spiritual nerve-centre of the state. For a while the great provincial religious institutions successfully carried on the task of maintaining the spiritual discipline of the population. But one by one these were destroyed. The older generation were still fortified by their past schooling, but the education of the young, formerly the state's most urgent task, had now perforce to be neglected in favour of the insistent demands of defence. Consequently it became increasingly difficult for adolescents to resist the virus. Even at the height of Tibet's prosperity the population had been small. Warfare had now greatly reduced it. Under the progressive regime the Tibetans had been the world's healthiest people. Native toughness had co-operated with a magnificent health service. Those days were gone, for war had not only introduced disease germs but destroyed the health service. Moreover there had been heavy casualties among the herds of yak. Famine was still further weakening the stamina of the people. Worst of all, the water supply, always meagre, had been greatly reduced by the constant bombing of the dams.

Already the weaker brethren were openly demanding surrender and even plotting betrayal. But betrayal turned out to be impossible because it involved spiritual disintegration, and therefore surrender to the all-pervading virus.

Beyond the frontiers the rebellions organized by the servants of the light had long since been crushed. Tibet now faced the world alone. The only hope was that, since the victory of the imperial powers seemed now certain, they would begin to quarrel with one another and use their armaments for mutual destruction. But the Russian and Chinese ruling classes now regarded Tibet with unreasoning, obsessive terror and hate. Consciously believing in their own righteousness and their social usefulness, they were at the same time unconsciously tormented by a guilt which they dared not confess to themselves, a guilt which was both social and spiritual. Against a community which had purged itself of that guilt, and demanded a world-wide purge, they felt bitter resentment and loathing. Moreover the Tibetan community had manifested strange powers which the imperialists in their own hearts knew to be the powers of light, but which consciously they condemned as diabolical. Thus their action against Tibet showed all the persistence of one who, discovering on his body the first minute pustule of some frightful disease, believes it to be the fruit of his own sin, and resolves to cut out the infected part.

For the Tibetans the crisis came when a party within the government itself declared that further resistance was not only futile but wrong, since it involved the useless sacrifice of lives. The advocates of surrender were clearly not guilty of treason against the spirit, for they showed no signs of succumbing to the virus. The disagreement was between persons of equal integrity. In the end the peace party triumphed. Those who were still determined to maintain their freedom at all costs withdrew into the wild country on the northern slopes of the Himalayas.

Tibet surrendered; and, under the shock of this recognition of defeat, practically the whole population succumbed to the virus.. Those who retained their sanity strove in vain to protect the hosts of their childish compatriots from coming to hurt; but these, unable to cope with

ordinary situations, were killed off in thousands. Their decaying bodies littered the plains and added to the pestilence. The sane were helpless, and their numbers constantly decreased. Meanwhile surrender had not brought peace. The victors dared not enter the conquered country, lest they should succumb to the virus. They therefore continued their efforts to exterminate the Tibetan people from the air. In this policy in due season they succeeded. For a few years the Himalayan remnant miserably survived, but in the end these last servants of the spirit were discovered by the Russian airmen. Henceforth their high valleys and gorges were systematically bombed until all trace of habitation had vanished.

The imperialists still dared not enter the country, for fear of the virus. They first undertook what must have been the greatest of all decontamination operations. Aeroplanes systematically sprayed the whole vast area with a strong disinfectant which destroyed not only the virus but every trace of animal and vegetable life. The home of the world's most developed community was thus turned into a desert.

5 - THE REIGN OF DARKNESS

- i. THE JAPANESE REVOLUTION
- ii. A SYNTHETIC WAR
- iii. DIABOLIC WORLD EMPIRE

i. THE JAPANESE REVOLUTION

THE WAR against Tibet had enabled the ruling classes of Russia and China to impose a conveniently strict discipline upon their respective peoples. When the war was over, the excuse for this discipline vanished. Inevitably the change from war to peace brought

hardship to many. The transition was not simply haphazard, as it would have been under individualism; it was controlled by the supreme capitalist, the state. And it was controlled in such a way as to strengthen the ruling class, not to increase general prosperity. Further, it was clumsily controlled. Skilled workers were put to unskilled work for which they had neither the ability nor the temper. Whole populations, deprived of their livelihood by the exigencies of peace, were left to starve. Other populations, meanwhile, were over-worked mercilessly, and in bad conditions.

Among the worst sufferers were the Japanese. In an earlier phase of the industrialization of the East this swarming island people had played a vigorous but unhappy part. The old feudal ruling class, wisely refusing to allow European finance to exploit the country, had itself undertaken the westernization of Japan. Unfortunately the Japanese were far more successful in imitating the worst features of European commercialism than in absorbing the best spirit of European civilization. Ruthless industrialism and ruthless imperialism landed them in the long and disastrous attack on China. Their ultimate defeat brought loss of markets, unemployment, and constant social turmoil. Henceforth China, not Japan, was the economic master of the East. Japan's feverishly accumulated machinery fell out of use, and its human adjuncts were starved. The crowded population could not possibly be kept alive on home-grown food. The standard of living, never high, sank to famine level. The communists, though repeatedly exterminated, repeatedly reappeared, and with increasing strength. Meanwhile the military and financial oligarchy could think of nothing better to do than copy the notorious 'two hundred families' of France, as it had formerly copied the pioneering industrial families of Britain. It preached an anti-bolshevik crusade, made overtures to the Chinese Empire, and finally surrendered Japan's independence. Like the men of Vichy before them, the Japanese rulers hoped that at least a few crumbs of

power would thus be secured to them. This, of course, did not happen. The only result was that the Chinese police took charge of the country, and 'made an example of' all those who caused trouble, whether on the left or the right. Through the combination of famine, torture, and profound disillusionment the population of the Japanese islands was greatly reduced, while immense numbers of Chinese officials were settled in the country to reorganize the whole economy of Japan as a slave state for the benefit of the Chinese Empire in its crusade against Tibet.

After the fall of Tibet and the end of war-time economy, the Japanese, like the rest of the world, eagerly awaited the promised improvement of conditions and relaxation of discipline. But like the rest of the world they were disappointed. Very soon desperation in Japan reached the pitch at which suicide becomes the commonest form of death. The population seemed to be so completely cowed that the Chinese army of occupation was reduced to a skeleton. At this point the will for the light in Japan blunderingly reasserted itself. Once more the Japanese copied the West, with their accustomed thoroughness and lack of understanding. The Communist leaders, skilfully using Russian gold, succeeded in persuading large numbers in Tokio and elsewhere that it was better to die for the Revolution than meekly commit suicide. They declared, moreover, that revolution was by no means doomed to failure. The fall of Tibet, they said, had been due to contamination from sentimental bourgeois ideas derived from the ecclesiastical oligarchy. That mistake must not be made again. The basis of the Japanese revolution must be strictly materialistic, and its emotional drive must come from hate of the oppressor, not from metaphysical delusions.

Entirely careless of their lives, the revolutionaries advanced in thousands on the machine-guns of their masters. Before effective help could come from China the régime was broken, and a people's government was in command. The rulers of China were at this time

much occupied with the danger from Russia. They refrained from sending an expeditionary force against Japan, and contented themselves with a very strict blockade. The new Japanese government set about slaughtering all who were suspected of implication in the former regime, and all who disobeyed its orders. Food was the supreme problem. The more people were killed, the more hope for the survivors. The death penalty was therefore inflicted for the most venial offences, and whenever guilt seemed at all plausible. Everything feasible was done to stimulate agriculture. The peasants were forced, under threat of death, to cultivate vast tracts of poor land, for which, owing to the blockade, fertilizer were lacking. It was promised, however, that though in the coming year famine was inevitable, next season would see a plentiful harvest. Loyalty towards the future of Japan and the human race, it was said, demanded the utmost sacrifice from the present generation. But the new land produced a miserable crop; and the people, enfeebled by famine and disease, harassed by brutal treatment, and utterly without the religious stiffening that had fortified Tibet, became incapable of effort, and too physically weak for hard agricultural work. The regime was impotent. The more desperate its plight, the more it killed and tortured. The new rulers knew well that any relaxation of discipline would have brought immediate destruction to themselves; and most of them still sincerely believed that their survival was necessary to the state. In the end the Chinese government, choosing its own time, quietly recovered possession of the Japanese islands.

ii. A SYNTHETIC WAR

Both the Chinese and the Russian Empires, had been harassed by social disorders. It was clear that nothing short of another major war could restore discipline. The leaders of the two ruling classes therefore secretly conferred with one another and agreed to institute a worldwide war between the two empires. They agreed also on the

rules of this lethal game. Certain districts were to remain inviolate. Trade intercourse between the two empires was to be maintained through certain demilitarized ports and frontier towns. Each side was to refrain from blotting out the other's main centres of production, while seeming to attempt to do so. On the other hand, whenever there was any awkward social disturbance in any locality in one of the empires, the government of the other, if requested by its rival, was to launch a violent air attack on the infected area. Steps would be taken secretly by the inviting government to see that its defending air-force was unable to put up serious resistance.

There was no lack of a casus belli. The two industrial oligarchies had long been manreuvring against one another to secure the large unworked gold des posits of Eastern Tibet. There had been a time when the rivers of Tibet were rich with gold-dust, brought down from the hills. Gold had also been profitably mined within a few feet of the surface. That time had long since passed. The new Tibetan state had been aware of deeper and vaster gold deposits, but had not troubled to exploit them. To the rival empires this bright treasure was a perennial lure. China, plausibly stealing a march on her accomplice and rival, now seized this territory. With an indignation that was by no means feigned, the Russian government protested, and attacked.

For some years all went according to plan. On the plea of danger, discipline was restored. The synthetic faith which had been so effectively used to create unity against Tibet was now with equal effect used to rouse a savage hate between the two great groups of people ruled by the Russian and Chinese oligarchies. This time the differences between the Russian and the Chinese versions of the faith were duly emphasized. In Russia it was said that the Chinese heresy, which glorified cruelty, was perverse and diabolic; in China, that the Russian heresy, which exaggerated acquiescence and irresponsibility, sprang simply from lethargy, and was insincere and base.

Under the stress of violent warfare social conditions throughout the two empires inevitably grew worse. On the plea of military necessity legislation to protect labour was repealed, hours were lengthened, wages reduced, food adulterated, and rationed in such a way as to leave the rich the chance of buying substitutes which the poor could not-afford. In China, for instance, rice was rationed to a bare subsistence minimum, but a new and more nutritious grain, which was rapidly supplanting rice, was left unrationed. Its price mounted far beyond the poor man's means. The whole crop was available for the rich. Personal liberty was of course, so far as possible, destroyed. The military could move anyone to any part of the empire, could imprison, kill, or torture at their own pleasure. They did not hesitate to do so. Education was wholly concerned with producing efficient machine-tenders who could be trusted to carry out orders without question. The synthetic faith was inculcated from childhood onwards. Nearly all accepted it outwardly; most people thoughtlessly believed it; a few secretly doubted while they outwardly conformed; still fewer tried to rally the forces of light, and were promptly destroyed; a fairly large minority believed the faith with some degree of conviction; and of these a small number practised it with passion.

These were the active servants of darkness, and increasingly the rulers of the planet. Of many psychological types and all social classes, they had at least one thing in common. All were frustrated spirits. Many were innately of low-grade sensibility, incapable of appreciating any values but physical gratification, personal dominance, and sadistic passion. These were frustrated in that civilization had hitherto restrained them from the only kind of self-expression that they could conceive. Many more were innately normal, but they had been permanently warped in infancy through untoward relations with their elders. Some, though their homes had been fairly wholesome, had been damaged by their schools. Others

had suffered distortion in youth or early maturity through economic failure or the lethal sense that society was against them. All alike, though in differing manners, had been forced by the disease of their society to regress into primitive behaviour. The whole population, of course, suffered in some degree from the prevailing social neurosis, but these active servants of darkness had suffered excessively. In them neurosis bred the positive will for darkness, the satanic will. In them, for one reason or another, the natural impulse of spiritual growth had been thwarted and turned into a perverse craving for power, for destruction, for cruelty. These unhappy souls did indeed experience in the act of cruelty a kind of ecstasy of release and self-expression, which all too easily they mistook for an ecstasy of illumination.

But these servants of darkness had no lasting joy in their service. In all of them the will for darkness was a perversion of the will for the light. In all but a few maniacs the satisfaction of the will for darkness was at all times countered by a revulsion which the unhappy spirit either dared not confess even to itself, or else rejected as cowardly and evil. In all, darkness appeared in the guise of light, so that they believed themselves to be the true and faithful servants not of darkness but of light, heroically denying in themselves the subtly disguised temptations of the dark power.

Such were the servants of darkness. The great majority in the two empires consisted of minds in which the darkness and the light were still equally balanced, but upon which the impact of circumstance overwhelmingly favoured darkness. For from childhood onwards they were conditioned to inhuman behaviour and to an evil faith. Though not themselves inherently perverse, but merely weak and obtuse, they were wholly incapable of resisting the climate of their age, in which darkness was persistently presented in the guise of light. Many of them indeed might reasonably be called true servants of the light, true to the flickering light in their own hearts, but utterly bewildered by

the prevalent ideas which they had neither the wit nor the courage to reject. In personal relations with their children, wives, husbands, friends, and workmates they were still intermittently and timorously faithful to the ancient light which had entered them from a more lucid age. But in public affairs they meekly accepted the perverse conventions of their society, either withdrawing their attention and making a virtue of acquiescence, or surrendering themselves to the tribal passion of hate and cruelty against unfortunate individuals whom they dared not recognize as indeed their fellows.

Though for some years the policy of 'synthetic war' instituted by the Russian and Chinese rulers was very successful, it was bound sooner or later to fail. For its success, the two imperial powers had to be approximately equal in strength. So long as this condition held, each party respected the other's interests and relied on the other's co-operation. Thus a serious rebellion against the Russian authorities in Capetown was crushed by a vigorous Chinese air raid. South Africans were persuaded to believe that defence against Chinese aggression was at the time more important than the assertion of local rights against the Russian government, which after all was far less methodically ruthless than its rival. On the other hand when, in the course of a successful Russian offensive in Manchuria, the power of the local Chinese authorities began to break, and a progressive anti-war party attempted to make an independent peace so as to found a new, independent, and socialistic state, the Chinese government telephoned to Moscow to stop the offensive until the rebels had been crushed. The request was complied with, and all military action against the Chinese forces ceased. Only in the region of the Khingan Mountains, where the rebels had set up their government, did the Russians continue hostilities, attacking from the west while the Chinese pressed forward from the east.

Gradually, however, the balance of power in the world altered in

favour of the Chinese Empire. This was due at bottom to the greater efficiency and colder intelligence of the Chinese ruling class. The world's most ancient and most phlegmatic civilization, though by now so grievously perverted, had an advantage in this respect against the world's newest, immature, and equally perverted civilization. Moreover though Chinese imperialism was handicapped by a late start, it was better organized, more wealthy, and more united than the Russian variety. After the trouble in Manchuria the Chinese government tightened its hold on all its outlying provinces, moving whole populations hither and thither so as to create a homogeneous people stretching from the Altai Mountains to the Timor Sea. Thus the rulers contrived that, although in every region there was servitude and frustration, in none was there a sufficient local tradition and consciousness to form the focus of a serious uprising. In the huge, straggling Russian Empire, on the other hand, the ancient Soviet tradition had maintained a great deal of local autonomy. Further, the personnel of the Russian imperial service, if it lacked the tyrannical meddlesomeness of the Chinese, lacked also its cunning in propaganda and oppression. The Russian provinces were therefore in a constant state of unrest, which frequently broke out into turmoil, now in North America, now in Britain, now in India. Indeed every country had its history of revolt, alternating between secret sedition and open rebellion. The consequence was that throughout the latter part of the Russo-Chinese war Russia appealed to China for help far more often than China to Russia.

There came a time when the Chinese imperialists began to make excuses for not carrying out the suggestions of their Russian colleagues and rivals. At last, so far from helping the Russian government, they actually sided with the rebels. This first occurred in India, where clumsy oppression had produced widespread revolt. Instead of bombing the progressive centres, the Chinese dropped leaflets offering help and protesting their own progressive and

liberalizing intentions. At the same time they launched a great attack by means of giant mountain- crossing tanks through Burma and Assam, while their navy seized the main Indian ports. The misguided Indians welcomed them with enthusiasm. Throughout India the Russian ruling class was massacred, and the regime collapsed. An independent Indian state was founded, under Chinese supervision, and within a few years the Indians were completely assimilated to the Chinese Empire.

The Russo-Chinese war now became frankly a struggle by the Russian oligarchy to retain its territories against the attack of its more efficient rival. Man's powers of destruction were being constantly improved. There was at this time little or no research for the improvement of health, nutrition, psychological adjustment, or social organization, but vast state-financed researches into military technique, and psychological methods of discipline. Tidal electricity, which formerly had been the world's main form of industrial power, was by now subordinate to volcanic sources. The great natural volcanic regions of South America, the East Indies, and Japan were immensely developed by artificial borings to tap the planet's subterranean energies. The light accumulator and the greatly improved methods of electrical transmission made it possible to distribute electricity economically into every region of the world. In respect of volcanic power, the two empires were at first equally well fortified, but the Chinese gradually outstripped their rivals by their more resolute development of their resources.

There is no need to tell in any detail of the course of the final phase of the forty-years war between Russia and China. Like all wars it was of absorbing, even obsessive, interest to those whom it directly affected, but to the developed mind its battles and campaigns and ultimate massacre are more depressing than significant. One or two striking features of the war may be mentioned. Throughout, the Chinese were greatly helped by the rebelliousness of the Russian

dependencies. One by one they asserted their independence or succumbed to Chinese attack. The Russian imperialists were by now fully engaged in defending the heart of their empire, and could do nothing to maintain their authority in Africa, America, or Western Europe. In the decisive campaign the Chinese used two new inventions against which the orthodox methods of Russia were powerless. One was the giant tank, the other the legged aeroplane. The new Chinese tank was so large that to call it a land-battleship was to disparage it. This new engine was indeed a moving fortified town, complete with its own workshops, and food stores for its thousand men for three weeks. It could crush and trample modern sky-scraper cities. On good ground it moved at a hundred miles an hour. It could travel over mountainous country by using its great clawed mechanical arms or legs. The legged aeroplane had the great advantage that it could land anywhere and take off anywhere. It was indeed a giant mechanical fly which could cling to precipitous places or suddenly leap from the ground by kicking with its prodigious thighs. Some hundreds of the new tanks, each attended by its own swarm of the new aeroplanes, advanced through central Asia. Russian bombers attacked in successive waves of a thousand planes, but their bombs could not harm these armour-plated monsters, whose artillery swept them from the sky. Unchecked, these greatest of all man's engines streamed across the prairies and deserts of Outer Mongolia, flattened out the forest, crossed the mountain barriers, turned aside here and there to grind a town to rubble, took the Urals in their stride, and headed for Moscow. The Russian government fled. The city surrendered. But the enemy, obsessed with the worship of cruelty and ecstatic with slaughter, hurried on to catch the city before it could be evacuated. Arrived, the monsters steam-rolled the whole urban area into a flat waste of rubble. The sacred mummy of Lenin was pulverized in the general ruin. The invaders then amused themselves by overtaking and squashing the hosts of refugees as a man may crush a swarm of

ants under his boot. Leningrad and other cities were similarly treated.

iii. DIABOLIC WORLD EMPIRE

Thus ended the Second Russian Empire, the evil offspring of man's first great though ill-starred attempt to organize society for the well-being of the many rather than for the power of the few. Some of the former Russian provinces hastily made peace, others declared their independence of both empires, only to be speedily crushed. America alone resisted for two years, but was finally overcome and treated to a very special punishment for its contumacy. The whole child population was transported to various parts of the world as slaves.

With the fall of America the human race had succeeded for the first time in establishing the political unity of the whole planet. The imperial Chinese government now assumed the title 'The Celestial Government of the World', and ordered celebrations in every town and every household of the planet. Everywhere desperate efforts were made to produce tolerable specimens of the ancient Chinese dragon flag, which had been revived by the second empire and was henceforth to be the dreaded emblem of the world-government. Everywhere, even on the blood-stained Russian plains, this emblem, or some crude approximation to it, was now anxiously flaunted. It was affirmed that at last the green Chinese dragon had devoured the red orb that had for so long hung tantalizingly before him in the golden sky. The red orb was no longer interpreted as the sun of Japan but as the red world of Russian imperialism. It was added in a whisper that, with luck the dragon might soon die of indigestion.

World-unity had been attained! But what a unity! Nowhere throughout the world was there any considerable group who were at peace with

the world, save the governing class and its jackals. Everywhere the peasants were enslaved to the universal imperial landlord. Everywhere they toiled to produce the world's food. Everywhere they starved and were harshly regimented. Miners and factory hands were in the same condition. The world-government, instead of organizing a great and universal movement of social reconstruction, thereby keeping the workers and the soldiers in employment, dismissed half its armies and kept the rest in idleness. The workers it treated with utter contempt, confident in its power to coerce them. The great class of technicians who had been persuaded to support the war in the hope that under world-unity they would be given the chance to build universal prosperity, found themselves used either for strengthening the oligarchy or for producing its luxuries; or else dismissed and maintained by the state in a sort of half-life of penury and despond.

Although individualistic capitalism had long since vanished, the universal decadent state-capitalism was in many ways subject to the same disorders. Though the power for social planning was in the hands of the world-government, the will was lacking. The rulers were concerned only to maintain their position. Vast economic powers, at first the perquisites of the great ruling Chinese families, were now farmed out to irresponsible state-servants, who turned themselves into dictators of the industries under their control. And since there was little co-ordination of their actions, and, anyhow, they were mainly concerned to feather their own nests, chaos followed. Unemployment increased, and brought with it its attendant evils. Desperate populations became difficult to handle. Punitive massacres were very frequent.

At last a new invention, one of the very few which the declining species managed to achieve, brought temporary aid. A biochemist produced a method of putting human beings into a state of suspended animation from which, he said, they could be easily

wakened, 'fresh and young', after a sleep of many years. The world-government, believing that unemployment was a passing phase, and that later on there would be a great need of labour, set about building in every country a system of cold-storage warehouses where unwanted human beings could be deposited until the times changed. The unemployed and their families were forcibly stored in these warehouses. The struggling creatures were chained down, lying shoulder to shoulder on tiers of shelves inside huge tanks, which were then filled first with a succession of gases and finally with a preserving liquid. Millions of men, women, and children in almost every country were thus stored for future use. Though the lives of the workers were almost intolerably arid and distressful, they did all in their power to avoid being sent to the cold-storage houses. The will for the light expressed itself in them as a blind will for active life, however abject. But a few welcomed this opportunity of escape, without irrevocable extinction; believing that in their next phase of active life they would have better opportunities of expressing themselves. In most of these, the acquiescence in suspended animation was at bottom an expression of the will for darkness, though rationalized to satisfy the still smouldering will for light. For the individual in whom the will for the light is strong and clear finds his heart inextricably bound up with the struggle of the forces of light in his native place and time. Much as he may long for the opportunity of fuller self-expression in a happier world, he knows that for him self-expression is impossible save in the world in which his mind is rooted. The individual in whom the will for the light is weak soon persuades himself that his opportunity lies elsewhere. And so, as the spirit of the race was progressively undermined through ever deteriorating physical and psychological conditions, acquiescence in 'the deep sleep' became more and more widespread.

One of the main factors in the waning of the will for the light in this period was the attitude of the intellectuals. The academics,

musicians, painters, cinema-artists, and, above all, the writers flagrantly betrayed their trust. In all these groups there were persons of four types. Many were paid servants of the government, engaged on propaganda through work which was ostensibly independent. These were concerned chiefly to put a good complexion on the regime, and to praise the fundamental principles of the synthetic faith, in particular the virtues of acquiescence and obedience, and the ecstasy of cruelty. Still more numerous were the independent but futile intellectual ostriches who shut their eyes to the horror of their time and won adulation and power by spinning fantasies of self-aggrandizement and sexual delight, distracting men's attention from contemporary evils with seductive romances of other ages and other worlds, or with exalted and meaningless jargon about a life after death. There were also large numbers of progressive intellectuals. These saw clearly enough that contemporary society was mortally sick, and in a dream-like, unearnest way they expounded their tenuous Utopias, in which there was often much common sense and even wisdom; but they preached without that fury of conviction which alone can rouse men to desperate action. And they themselves lived comfortably upon the existing system, in their flats and suburban houses. Vaguely they knew that they ought to give up all for the revolution; but being what they were, they could not. The fourth type were the very few sincere and impotent rebels, who flung away their lives in vain and crazy attempts to be great prophets.

Crucial to the fate of the human race at this time was the attitude of the class of technicians, the host of highly trained engineers, electricians, aeronautical experts, agricultural experts, and scientific workers in industry. These, if they could have formed a clear idea of the plight of the race, might have saved it. But they were experts who had been carefully trained in the tradition that the expert should not meddle in politics. In times of great stress, of course, they did meddle; but, because they had consistently held themselves aloof,

their pronouncements were childish, and their attempts at political action disastrous. A few had, indeed, taken the trouble to study society, and had come to understand its present ills. These fought constantly to enlighten their fellows and unite them in a great effort to control the course of events. Undoubtedly, if the will for the light had been strong in this great class, which controlled throughout the world all the innumerable levers and switches and press- buttons of the material life of society, it could have overthrown the world-oligarchy in a few days, and set about organizing a sane order. But the appeal to the technicians met with a half-hearted response. Most of them shrugged their shoulders and went on with their work. A few took timid action and were promptly seized and put to torture by the rulers. The movement failed.

It seemed to me very strange that a class which included nearly all the best intelligence of the world and very much of the world's good will should be incapable of ousting a set of tyrants who were both insensitive and stupid. The explanation, seemingly, was twofold. First, the rulers found themselves in possession of a vast and highly mechanized system of oppression. If anyone did anything obnoxious to the régime, immediately and automatically he was put out of action. Some colleague would certainly inform against him, and the police would do the rest. For the whole population, it must be remembered, was now tormented by neurotic jealousy and fear. The infliction of pain on a fellow mortal could afford a crazy satisfaction. Informers were, of course, well rewarded, but it was the joy of persecution that inspired them. Secondly, the mechanization of propaganda had been developed to an extent hitherto unknown. Psychology, the youngest of the sciences, had by now attained a thorough knowledge of the primitive and the morbid in man without reaching to any real understanding of the distinctively human reaches of human personality. Government psychologists had worked out a subtle technique of suggestion by reiterated symbolic appeals to

suppressed motives. This method, applied from infancy onwards, had ensured that all the unwitting cravings of a neurotic population, all their unacknowledged fear, hate, energy, cruelty, lechery, selfishness, and mob-passion, should depend both for stimulation and assuagement on the existing social order, and should issue consciously in a jealous and vengeful loyalty to the oligarchy. Thus did a group of scientists who should have used their skill for the purgation and elucidation of men's minds help to deepen the general darkness and misery. The power of propaganda was greatly increased by the prevailing educational principles. The free intelligence, which criticizes fearlessly and without prejudice, was ridiculed, condemned, and carefully suppressed. Bound intelligence, acting within the universe of discourse of the established culture, was encouraged; but it was man clear to every pupil that intelligence was rather a necessary evil than a thing to prize for its own sake. What was intrinsically good was orthodoxy, unison with the tradition. To strengthen the passion for orthodoxy it was ordained that school classes should be as large as possible, and that the main method of teaching should be by organizing mass chanting of the traditional truths. Had the will for the light been less feeble, this procedure might well have induced in some pupils a revulsion in favour of free intelligence; but in this latter day of the human race, such rebellion was very rare.

The government's control over its subjects was greatly increased by a new invention which would have been a eause of increased social well-being had it occurred in a more wholesome society. This was the product of advances in physiology and electrical engineering. The mechanism of the human brain was by now fairly well known; and by means of a vast mesh of minute photoelectric cells, inserted by a brilliant surgical technique between the cerebral cortex and the skull, it was possible to record very accurately the ever-changing pattern of activity in the cortical nerve-fibres. Advances in the

technique of radio made it easy to transmit this record over great distances, and to decode it automatically in such a way that the thoughts and impulses of the observed person could be accurately 'read' by observers in far-away government offices. The immense knowledge and skill which went to these inventions might have caused untold benefits to mankind; but through the treason of the technologists and the power-lust of the rulers they were combined to form a diabolical instrument of tyranny.

A law was passed by which everyone suspected of harbouring dangerous thoughts was condemned to have his brain made available for constant observation. This involved an operation for the insertion of the photoelectric mesh under his skull and the attachment of the necessary miniature accumulators to his crown by screws driven into the skull itself. If any attempt was made to tamper with the instrument, or if the accumulator was allowed to run down beyond a certain point, the unfortunate individual was automatically subjected to the most excruciating pain, which, if prolonged for more than an hour so so, culminated in permanent insanity. In addition to this transmission- instrument there was a minute radio telephone receiver driven into the mastoid bone. Thus not only were the subject's thoughts and feelings open to inspection at every moment of his life by some remote official but also instructions, threats, or repetitive gramophone propaganda could be inflicted on him morning, noon, and night.

At first this technique was applied only to those under suspicion, but little by little it was extended to all classes of society, save the oligarchs themselves and their most favoured servants. Immense offices were set up in all the main centres, where hosts of inspectors were constantly at work taking sample readings of the world's two thousand million minds. Every ordinary man, woman, and adolescent knew that at any moment he might be under inspection. At any moment a voice might interrupt his thoughts with some propaganda

commentary on them, or with a rough warning or the imposition of a penalty. While he was going to sleep he might be invaded by music and incantations calculated to mould his mind into the temper approved by the government. Those who were brought up from childhood to be accustomed to this treatment accepted it cheerfully. The very young were sometimes even impatient to receive what they foolishly regarded as this certificate of maturity. Under the constant influence of official scrutiny the minds of adolescents became almost perfectly correct. Dangerous thoughts, even of the mildest type, were for them unthinkable. Those who received the treatment as grown men or women suffered prolonged mental agony, and many committed suicide.

The policy of those who controlled this vast system of espionage was simply to ensure that all minds should be orthodox. As time went on, the inquisitors themselves came to be chosen solely from the ranks of those who were products of the system itself. So amazingly correct were these minds that they suffered nothing from the publicity of all their mental processes.

The strangest aspect of the system was this. Those who controlled it were themselves enslaved to it; they used their power not to emancipate themselves but to support the ruling caste. In the earlier phase of the Chinese world-empire the caste, or rather the non-hereditary class from which the caste later developed, had maintained its position by superior cunning and resolution; but in its later phase, when cunning and resolution had given place to stupidity and self-indulgence, the position of the ruling caste was maintained automatically by the mechanical functioning of the established social system. The rulers had immense privileges and great arbitrary powers. For them the workers piled up luxuries. In accordance with the vagaries of their fickle taste, fashions changed, whole working populations were suddenly worked to death or flung aside into the

cold-storage warehouses. When the rulers said 'do this' or 'do that', the world obeyed. But their power lay wholly in the fact that the technicians were hypnotized in their service, hypnotized, not through the cunning and resolution of the rulers themselves, but through the vast momentum of traditional culture. Thus little by little the ruling caste became at once helpless and absolutely secure. In the same manner the slave-owning ants depend wholly on the ministrations of devoted slaves who have all the skill but not the wit to rebel.

The perfection of the system of social control was reached by means of a further triumph of inventive genius. After much laborious experiment a method was devised by which the impulses and desires of the individual could be either stimulated or suppressed by radio. Thus it was possible for the officials in a distant government office to force upon a man an irresistible craving to carry out a prescribed course of action. Like one under hypnotic influence, but with full consciousness of the enormity of his action, he might find himself compelled to betray his friend, to murder his wife, to torture his child or himself, to work himself to death, to fight against impossible odds.

Little by little the whole subject population of the world was fitted with the instruments of volitional control. The government was now practically omnipotent.

Once more, the strangest aspect of the new invention was that those who controlled it were themselves under its control. For the operators themselves were fitted with the instruments. Operators in each department were controlled by their superiors, and these by their superiors. These again were controlled by the supreme council of the locality, which was composed of all heads of departments. The supreme council of the locality was in turn controlled by the council of the province or state; and the state councils by the World Imperial Council. Members of this body were automatically controlled.

Automatic machinery ensured that any incipient desire inconsistent with the orthodox system of desires should automatically be obliterated, while certain desires fundamental to orthodoxy were automatically maintained.

This ingenious system, it must be noted, had not been devised by the rulers themselves but by the technologists, by physiologists, psychologists, and electrical engineers. They had done it partly out of blind professional enthusiasm, partly because they felt the need of such a system to fortify their orthodoxy against the unorthodox impulses which occasionally distressed them.

As for the rulers themselves, these sacred beings, these sacred animals, were not controlled. They were free to think and act according to their nature, which by now had degenerated into a mess of stupidity, selfishness, and malice. Their stupidity was the stupidity of beasts. Though they were free, they were powerless. Of degenerate stock, they were conditioned by upbringing to a life of fantastic luxury and desolating self-indulgence. So long as they behaved according to the orthodox pattern, they were preserved and revered. If any showed some sign of individuality he was at once de-classed and operated upon for radio control. But this was very rare. Nearly all were content to live at ease on the fat of the land and the adulation of the masses. They were kept busy with the innumerable ceremonies and pageants without which, it was thought, the state would collapse, and in which the representative members of the ruling caste always played the central part. Those who obscurely felt the barrenness of their lives sought notoriety in the fields of sport or aeronautics. But, as the generations passed and their capacity deteriorated, they were forced to seek less exacting forms of self-display. Of these, one of the chief was the infliction of torture. The subject population, though conditioned to believe in the mystical virtue of cruelty, and though capable up to a point of relishing the spectacle of torture inflicted on strangers, were prone to

lapse into squeamishness or even compassion. Not so the rulers. Unconsciously poisoned by their own futility and baseness, they were obsessed by hatred of the masses, the technicians, their own peers, and themselves. Without any radio control, therefore, they could inflict the most disgusting tortures with equanimity, and even unfeigned relish. When one of them had to perform the office of tearing out the eyes or bowels or genitals of the sacrificial victim, he did so without a qualm. To the fascinated and nauseated spectators this callousness appeared as aristocratic virtue. When humble people came to be subject to radio control of volition they often welcomed the artificial reinforcement to their ruthlessness. On the other hand when an erring member of the ruling caste had to be de-classed and put to torture, he invariably showed less than the average fortitude. It never occurred to the public, while they howled with glee at his discomfiture, that the aristocrats, even before de-classing, were after all no better than themselves; for the ceremony of de-classing was supposed to have deprived the culprit of his native virtue.

One of the causes of this admiration of cruelty in the world-culture of this period was the widespread respect for 'the unconscious'. The distinction between the conscious and unconscious motives, which had played such a beneficial part in an earlier psychology, had by now led to absurdities. The unconscious was now said to be the divine will working in us. The unconscious sources of action were therefore sacred. In a race in which, through unwholesome conditioning, the 'unconscious' was a tissue of perverted cravings, this meant that the perverse was deified.

Another curious aspect of this degenerate culture was that, along with 'the unconscious', reason was deified; and this in spite of the bitter condemnation of the exercise of free intelligence. But sacred reason was nothing whatever like ordinary human reasoning. It was the occult rationality of the universe, forever inaccessible to man.

Everything, it was said, had in the divine view its reason. Everything followed necessarily from the divine reason. In the human sphere free intelligence was an impious attempt to probe the divine reason. The true scope for man's own divine spark of reason was not in the free exercise of intelligence but in the pious and unquestioning study of the metaphysical arguments of the inspired scriptures.

One branch of the cult of reason was a fantastic use of mathematics. But again, what was admired was not the free exercise of mathematical intelligence. This, indeed, was heartily condemned. A number of complex and valid mathematical operations were, of course, performed by the technicians for practical purposes; but they were all well-established operations, handed down from a more intelligent generation. Mathematical innovation was deemed wicked.

Further, the actual symbols of mathematics were gradually acquiring mystical virtue. As intelligence deteriorated, the time-honoured operations continued to be used both in industrial research and in religious ritual, but they were performed with ever-dwindling insight. In the final phase mathematical understanding had vanished altogether. The operations were still called rational, but their rationality was said to be patent only to the divine reason. This was proved by the fact that the whole of physical nature 'obeyed' mathematical laws. Human reason, however, could not possibly detect the occult necessity of the higher mathematical processes. Any attempt to do so was sacrilegious.

6 - THE TRIUMPH OF THE RATS

- i. ECONOMIC DECLINE
- ii. DECLINE OF POPULATION
- iii. DISINTEGRATION OF THE WORLD EMPIRE
- iv. FINAL DEGENERACY
- v. THE END OF MAN

i. ECONOMIC DECLINE

I CANNOT BE sure how long the Celestial World Empire endured. Its life must certainly be counted in centuries, and possibly it lasted for a couple of thousand years. Though the world empire was at heart a diseased society and bound to disintegrate, it inherited from earlier societies a certain toughness of fibre, and its structure was such that it could carry on in a sort of living death so long as conditions remained unchanged. While its material resources were unimpaired it functioned automatically and without change.

The human race had in fact attained the kind of stability which insect species have maintained for many million years. Its whole economy had been worked out in intricate detail by the technicians of an earlier age through a period of many decades, and had at last become absolutely stereotyped. Raw materials, produced in appropriate regions and in regular annual quantities, were assigned to manufacturing districts according to a time-honoured plan, to be distributed in time-honoured proportions to the various nations and social classes. The whole industrial technique had acquired a kind of religious sanctity. No variations were to be tolerated, except the seasonal variations which were themselves sanctified.

In these circumstances the function of the technicians, the unacknowledged but effective rulers of the planet, was radically altered. From being primarily inventors of new processes and new adjustments they became simply orthodox vehicles of the sacred lore. Intelligence, therefore, even bound intelligence, came to have

an increasingly restricted function. Before the onset of decline, planning had been becoming more and more comprehensive and far-seeing. Men had planned for centuries ahead and for great societies, even tentatively for the future of the species. But after the world empire had become firmly established and stereotyped, large planning was no longer necessary. Only in the ordering of individual lives was there any scope for intelligence. Even here, as individual lives became more and more dominated by the regularities imposed by the state, the office of intelligence became more restricted. Whenever any daring spirit did try to improve upon the orthodox procedure, his intelligence proved feeble and his action misguided. His failure merely strengthened the general distrust of innovation.

For a very long while the material resources and the biological condition of the race did remain in effect constant. To the subjects of the world empire it seemed certain that the existing order was eternal. The idea of progress, material or mental, had long since ceased to seem plausible, for society was universally regarded as perfect. On the other hand the idea of racial decline was never contemplated. But behind the appearance of stability great changes were already at work, both in the physical environment and in the constitution of the human race itself.

Though volcanic power was inexhaustible, certain essential raw materials were not. Coal and oil had long ago been superseded as sources of power, but as raw materials for many synthetic products they were valuable, and becoming ever more difficult to procure. The world's phosphate deposits, so necessary for agriculture, were being steadily reduced. Guano, long ago abandoned, was once more assiduously collected. Potash deposits had been heavily worked and were seriously depleted. An earlier age had known that an unlimited supply of potash could, when necessary, be obtained from sea water, but there had been no need to work out a technique for isolating it. Now, when potash was scarce, there was no longer the

inventive capacity to tackle so difficult a task. Nitrogen had for long been derived from the air for use in fertilizers and high explosives. In this case, however, the technique was well established, and so there was no immediate danger of its loss. Iron, though one of the commonest of all elements, was becoming steadily more difficult to reach. All ordinarily accessible deposits were seriously depleted, and the skill for much deeper mining was by now lacking.

The condition of forestry in the latter days of the world-empire throws a strange light on the mental decay of the race. Wood-pulp had been the main raw material for many synthetic products. In early days, when the intelligence of the technicians was still effective, afforestation schemes had been organized so as to keep the balance of production and consumption. But latterly planting had seriously lagged behind felling. This may seem surprising, since the balance of planting and felling was part of the rigid and sacred technique of social organization. The cause of the ever-increasing discrepancy was very simple but completely hidden from the sluggish minds of the latter-day empire controllers. The original scheme had been calculated on the assumption that the art of forestry would continue to be practised with quick intelligence. Some margin had been allowed for accidents and errors, but not a fool-proof margin. When intelligence had declined, mistakes became more frequent, and less successfully repaired. Consequently the old sacred formulae failed. The forests slowly but surely dwindled. But according to the sacred scriptures of afforestation this was impossible, if the formulae had indeed been followed. Therefore it was impious to suggest that the forests were dwindling. Therefore anyone who began to suspect that this was happening turned a blind eye on the facts. Thus the rot continued without any attempt being made to stop it.

The same disastrous decay took place in agriculture. The original

organizers of the empire's tillage had worked out a delicately balanced agricultural system which should yield an adequate crop of food-stuffs without impoverishing the land. But this system had depended on intelligent adjustment. It was not fool-proof. When sluggish minds took charge, there was a far greater wastage at every point in the system. The old formulae therefore became inadequate. But since any alteration would have been impious, the upshot was that century by century rather less was put into the ground than was taken from it. Thus there set in a steady process of denudation. Slowly but surely all the great agricultural districts became less productive. The corn-bearing plains of North America and Russia, the rice plains of China and India, the great scattered areas that had provided the world's greens, the fruit lands of California, Australia, South Africa, one and all deteriorated. Little by little they turned into wastes of sand, like the once fertile Sahara. The process was made all the worse by climatic changes caused by the shrinking of the forests.

The gradual failure of agriculture was of course a very slow process. Ordinary citizens of the empire did not notice it. True, there were great desert tracts in which the ruins of former farmsteads might be observed; but the slow-witted populace never dreamed that this was a symptom of an ever-spreading disaster. Only by comparing the present output with past records could the trouble be realized. But the records and the sacred proportions of agricultural production were known only to the 'mystery' of agriculture, in fact to the heads of the world agricultural system. These magnates knew vaguely that something was wrong; but since for sundry reasons it was unlikely that there would be trouble in their day, they held their tongues. The decline was in fact easily concealed, because, while supplies were dwindling, the population of the world was also rapidly decreasing.

ii. DECLINE OF POPULATION

The decline of world-population had started long ago after the period of rapid increase which took place in the early phase of industrialization. It was due partly to the widespread use of efficient contraceptive methods, partly to anxiety about economic insecurity, partly to a vague sense of the futility and falsity of civilization. In the rather tired Utopia of North America, where the decline was first seriously felt, insecurity cannot have been a cause, for prosperity was universal. But disillusionment about a curiously aimless Utopia was a serious factor in American life. The early totalitarian states had always feared decline of population, and had done their utmost to check it, but without much success. The newer totalitarian states, the Russian and Chinese Empires, and the World Empire in its early phase, had attacked the problem with characteristic ruthlessness.

The most obvious way to increase population was waken the hundreds of millions whom past governments had from time to time put into cold storage all over the world in order to solve the unemployment problem. There was at first great reluctance to do this, for a reason which reveals the incredible stupidity and superstition of the human race in this period. Declining population, far from solving the unemployment problem, had increased it. Demand was constantly declining. Mass- productive machinery could less easily be worked at a profit. Though the rulers saw clearly enough with one side of their minds that an increase in population was needed, on the other side they were painfully aware of the unemployment problem, and reluctant to add to the stagnant pool of potential labour. Consequently, though there was much discussion about the cold-storage houses, nothing was done. Meanwhile population continued to decline.

The governments tried to compel the peoples to reproduce. Women were educated to believe that their sole function was reproduction. Mothers were honoured in relation to the number of their offspring.

Those produced fifteen or more babies were given the title 'Prolific Mother'. Any who succeeded in launching twenty human beings were deified. Contraception was made illegal and condemned as immoral. In spite of all these measures the fertility-rate declined. In desperation the World Government tightened its grip on the women. Every girl was compelled to have intercourse with a man as soon as she was certified as mature. A month after certification she appeared before her medical board again and was examined to prove that she was no longer a virgin. If after three months she had not conceived, she was sent to an institution that combined the characters of a brothel and a stud-farm. If after another three months she still failed to conceive, she was subjected to medical and surgical treatment to cure her barrenness. If this also failed, she was publicly disgraced, appropriately tortured, and gradually killed.

After helplessly watching the decline of population for many decades, perhaps centuries, the World Government decided to take the obvious step, which, moreover, was sanctioned by scripture. For it was part of the sacred canon that some day, when there was great need of workers, the sleepers must be awakened. The rulers now declared that the time had come. In panic and without proper preparation it ordered the physiologists to thaw out the whole refrigerated multitude. The process was a delicate one, and the instructions left by an earlier and brighter generation were at first badly bungled. Millions were killed, or woke up to a brief period of misery and bewilderment, speedily followed by death. Millions more survived only for a life of permanent invalidism or insanity. The majority, however, though seriously damaged by their rough awakening, were fit for active life of a sort. But they had slept through much history. Their minds had been formed by a world long vanished. Their speech and thought were often so archaic that modern individuals could not understand them. Their limbs, and their minds too, moved at first with painful sluggishness. Their procreative

impulses were apparently quenched. Moreover they gradually discovered that their new world was even less propitious than the old one. Some of them, when they had entirely thrown off the miasma of their age-long sleep and had painfully adjusted themselves to the new environment, proved to be rather more quick-witted than their normal neighbours in the new world. And, as they had not been brought up to accept the recent and more extravagant prejudices of the new world, they were generally very critical of the modern customs and institutions. In fact they soon became a grave nuisance to the authorities. The Government hastened to order that all the 'reawakened' should at once be fitted with radio control. This obvious precaution had been delayed less through fear of putting them to too great a strain before they had recovered from the effects of refrigeration, than out of an amazingly stupid reluctance to raise them to the rank of citizens. Millions were now subjected to the operation. Half of these died under the anaesthetic. Millions more put up a desperate resistance and had to be destroyed. Here and there, where there was a large concentration of the 'reawakened', they were able to seize power and set up a rebel state. The spectacle of human beings resisting authority was utterly bewildering to the robot citizens of the world-state. In many minds there arose an agonizing conflict between the orthodox radio-generated will and a shocking impulse to rebel. This would probably not have occurred had not the technique of radio-control seriously degenerated, owing to the general decline of intelligence. Many of the unfortunate sub-humans (for men were no longer human) went mad or died under the stress of this conflict. Some succeeded in resisting the control and joined the rebels. It almost appeared that an era of new hope was to begin for the human race. Unfortunately the 'reawakened' could not stand the strain. While their cause prospered, all was well with them, but every passing misfortune was accompanied by a great crop of suicides. So little heart had they for life. One by one the rebel centres collapsed, till none was left.

The population problem remained unsolved. One other method of coping with it had been tried, at first with some success.

In the early middle period of the world empire, while innovation was still possible, a group of physiologists and surgeons had devised a method which, it was hoped, would settle the matter for ever. The new technique was a half-way stage towards true ectogenesis. The womb and other necessary organs were removed from a young woman and kept alive artificially. The mutilated donor of these precious organs was then destroyed, but part of her blood-stream was put into artificial circulation through the excised organs and used as the medium for supplying them with necessary chemicals. The womb could then be inseminated, and would produce an infant. By various technical methods the process could be made far more rapid than normal reproduction. Moreover quintuplets could be procured from every conception. Unfortunately the excised organs could not be kept alive for more than ten years, so it was necessary to have a constant supply of young women. The government therefore imposed the death penalty on women for the most trivial offences, and used them up for artificial reproduction. At the same time it tried to educate female children in such a way that when they reached maturity many would actually desire the supreme glory of sacrificing their lives so that their wombs might live on with enhanced fertility. The response to this propaganda was disappointing. In fear of a really catastrophic decline of population the government passed a law that every woman, except members of the sacred governing class, must 'give her life for her children's sake' at the age of twenty-five.

Unfortunately the method of artificial reproduction involved a very delicate surgical technique, and it did not come into general use until first-class manipulative intelligence was already in decline. Increasingly, therefore, the excised wombs failed to survive the

operation, or, if they did survive, failed to produce viable infants. Presently it became clear to the few free intelligences of the race that the method, far from increasing the population, was actually hastening its decline. But already the method had become part of the sacred tradition and could not be abandoned. For decades, therefore, it continued to be practised with increasingly disastrous results. There came a time, however, when even the dull and enslaved wits of the Celestial Empire could not but realize that if the decline of population was not quickly stopped civilization would disintegrate. A great struggle ensued between the orthodox and the protestants, until at last a compromise was agreed upon. At the age of twenty-five every young woman must receive a ceremonial cut on the abdomen, accompanied by suitable ritual and incantations. This, it was believed, would increase the fertility of her reproductive organs without the necessity of excising them.

In spite of everything, population continued to decline. I was not able to discover the cause of this universal process. Perhaps the root of the trouble was physiological. Some chemical deficiency may have affected the germ cells. Or again some subtle mutation of the human stock may have rendered conception less ready. Or perhaps the neurotic condition of the population had produced hormones unfavourable to conception. I am inclined to believe that the real cause, through whatever physical mechanism it took effect, was the profound disheartenment and spiritual desolation which oppressed the whole race.

Whatever the cause, the world-population continued to shrink, and in the process it became a predominantly middle-aged population. The small company of the young, though cherished and venerated, counted for nothing in decisions of policy. An ice-age of feebleness and conservatism gripped the world with increasing force.

iii. DISINTEGRATION OF THE WORLD EMPIRE

Presently there came a time when the sacred customs could no longer be even superficially maintained. There was neither the labour nor the degree of vigour and intelligence to maintain the sacred stereotyped functions of society. The first serious breakdown was connected with volcanic power. Whenever great volcanic eruptions occurred, the machinery for harnessing and using the submerged titan was likely to be thrown out of gear or destroyed. When the tumult had subsided the local system had to be reconstructed, probably in new conditions. Great eruptions are rare, but over the centuries they occur in every active volcano. So long as intelligence was strong, the damage was quickly repaired. Long after the extinction of the fully free intelligence the limited, bound intelligence which functioned only within the orthodox system of ideas and values was still capable of great practical inventiveness. When a volcanic power station was destroyed and the volcano changed its whole configuration, even the bound intelligence was able to reconstruct the generating system. But when the actual innate capacity for intelligence had seriously declined, when even the best surviving intelligence was not only bound but feeble, such great problems of engineering could seldom be successfully tackled. In due season they became completely insoluble. Inevitably the great volcanic power stations fell one by one into disuse. The world's supply of power steadily diminished. Since the needs of the declining population were also shrinking, this might not have mattered, had it not been for the effect on communications. After a while it became impossible to maintain the world's transport system. Little by little the continents, and then the regions within a single continent, failed to maintain the orthodox trade-intercourse with one another. This obvious breakdown in the sacred system caused not only grave economic disorder but also a severe psychological disturbance in men's minds. It should be mentioned that radio-control of thought and

volition had by now broken down completely. The delicate surgical operation and the delicate mechanism which it involved were far beyond the compass of latter-day man. Relieved of this tyranny, men were once more independent individuals; or at least they would have been, had not the tyranny of mob-feeling and suggestion still controlled them. Generally mob-feeling and suggestion favoured the government; but the increasing gap between the official version of events and the state of affairs that men perceived around them sometimes inclined even the degenerate latter-day mobs to criticism. For at last it became impossible even for the average dullard of the race not to recognize that the Celestial World Empire, for which he had been taught to sacrifice himself body and soul, was disintegrating. This knowledge produced a kind of religious terror. The very universe, it seemed, was crumbling about men's heads.

The process of disintegration must have lasted for several centuries at least. During this period, until the isolation of the provinces was complete and all clear memory of the past age had been lost, there was a phase of violent social unrest. The race, it seemed, was on the verge of waking from the neurotic trance which had so long gripped it. It might at any moment insist on revolutionary changes. But such was the strength of the old culture, and such the stupidity and aimlessness of the revolutionaries, that the crisis was weathered. Instead of waking into sanity the rare somnambulistically adjusted itself to its new circumstances without sacrificing its cherished delusions.

The transition from a very complex and close-knit world-economy to a medley of isolated societies was very significant of the condition of the species. So long as some meagre communication persisted, it was impossible for people not to realize that foreign countries existed, and to be perturbed by the failure of the empire. When mechanical transport had collapsed altogether, attempts were made to maintain contact by sailing-ships and caravans. But both these

occupations depended on techniques long since abandoned. The half-wit populations could not effectively recover them. The radio still for a while maintained contact between peoples, for this technique, though fairly complex, was preserved in the tradition. Radio communication with foreign lands, however, came to seem very objectionable to the provincial governments, which, of course, controlled the whole of each provincial radio system. Radio news kept reminding people of the existence of a world which, from the government's point of view, they should forget; since the recollection of it filled them with restlessness and awkward questioning. One by one the governments therefore broke off all radio communication with foreign countries. Any attempt to make contact by radio with 'imaginary other lands' was henceforth punished by death. This state of affairs lasted until the final loss of radio through the further deterioration of intelligence.

When contact with the outside world had been completely severed, each isolated people was able to readjust itself mentally by accepting the fiction that it was in fact the whole of mankind and that its state was the world empire. The sacred formulae for production and consumption could not, of course, any longer be literally applied; but they were 'symbolically interpreted' to mean something very different from their original intention, something adapted to the reduced life of the 'world empire'. It was interesting to observe the stages by which this reinterpretation established itself.

The slow breakdown of communications had, of course, involved a constantly increasing infringement of the sacred formulae for international trade. In the heyday of the empire the provinces had been highly specialized for particular forms of agriculture, mining, and manufacture. Specialization had been encouraged by the early world-governments, for individuals, social classes, and peoples. Everything must be done to increase dependence on the imperial

organization and the government. No region must be self-sufficient, no individual a person of all-round development. No one must ever be more than a cog in the great machine or a specialized cell in the great body politic. But now the failure of communications forced the peoples to change their whole economy or be extinguished. The great change was of course unplanned or misguided. The paucity of intelligence and the sanctity of the traditional economy made conscious planning impossible. New industries had to sprout in every region; but lack of inventiveness and organizing talent, and the universal condemnation of novelty, forced the pioneers to flounder along under a heavy cloak of subterfuge and self-deception. Inevitably the standard of living in each province deteriorated. Little by little the flood of mass-produced machine-made goods gave place to a miserable trickle of the crudest hand-made makeshifts produced by local craftsmen who were hampered not only by innate obtuseness, but by lack of all traditional technique, and also by the enervating sense that their occupation was sinful.

In agricultural regions, though food was for a while plentiful, comfort vanished; and presently, through the failure to procure new agricultural machines, tillage itself degenerated into a kind of half-wit caricature of primitive methods. In manufacturing regions there was for a while a huge surplus of certain goods and a complete absence of others, while food became ever more difficult to obtain. Populations were slowly starved, their numbers shrinking, catastrophically. The remnant, generation by generation, turned more and more to tillage of a wretchedly inefficient type.

In the old industrial regions the sacred tradition of industrialism remained as a cult wholly divorced from practical life. The ruins of the great factories were treated as temples, where, once every seven days and on the many sanctified 'bankolidays', everyone repaired to carry out rituals which were corruptions of the forgotten techniques of the ancient industry. The fields would not bear, it was believed,

unless these rituals were meticulously performed. Throughout the week men guiltily scratched the surface of the earth with home-made implements of stone or bone, implements which the ancient Stone Age men would have been ashamed to use. On the sabbath the whole population implored the gods of industrialism to forgive men their impious infringement of the sacred law, and to refrain from blasting the fields. One or two of the great machines in some of the former industrial regions were successfully maintained by a caste of priestly engineers, and put in action on holy days. When possible, appropriate raw materials were procured for them, so that they were able to produce a small and erratic stream of the ancient goods. These were considered far too sacred to use. Since in the old days the products of the local industry had mainly been exported, these ritual products were, if possible, carried to the sea by a great procession of the faithful. They were then loaded into a sacred ship which was taken out to sea and over the horizon, there to be ceremonially sunk.

iv. FINAL DEGENERACY

I hoped that when the power of the Celestial World Empire had been thoroughly broken and the culture on which it was based had been reduced to absurdity, the human race might be able to develop a much less specialized economy, so that the distinctively human capacities would at last reassert themselves, and history begin again. But this was not to be. The rot had already gone much too far. Superficially the isolated human communities had still the appearance of civilization, though a severely damaged civilization. To a slight extent mechanical power was still used. Electric lighting, the telephone, water and sewage services remained in the more fortunate states, though they were all extremely inefficient, and a serious breakdown was apt to defeat all efforts at repair. Here and there, even railways remained, connecting a metropolis with some

specially important provincial town. But accidents were so frequent that many people preferred to sacrifice speed for safety in the resuscitated stage-coach. The ancient main-line continental railways 'I could still be traced by their cuttings and embankments, but the tracks had long since vanished. In the wars which frequently broke out between states with common frontiers explosives were still used, though tanks and aeroplanes were no longer available.

The cultures of the states, though both crude and crazy, were such as could not have existed save as products of a past civilization. In most regions the average intelligence had sunk almost to the bushman level, and in the more degenerate populations far below it. Even outstandingly brilliant individuals were mostly mere dullards according to early standards. And these dullards were grievously hampered by their faulty upbringing. The languages of this age, mostly corruptions of the ancient English, Russian, or Chinese, were rich in fossil remains of ancient thought. Language was much cherished. It was the vehicle through which the sacred wisdom was handed down. Two dead languages, ancient English and ancient I Chinese, were taught to the children of the wealthy, and proficiency in these languages was demanded of every aspirant to posts of responsibility. Ancient literature and historical records were very carefully studied, and subtly interpreted so as to accord with local mythology about the World Empire. Much of the ancient thought, particularly the great scientific and philosophical inquiries of the past, were by now far beyond the understanding of even the brightest individuals. Nevertheless immense labour was devoted to criticism of the ancient texts, which were given symbolical or magical meanings adapted to the degenerate modern mentality. Meanwhile the great mass of scientific knowledge accumulated by earlier ages was reduced to a few well-tried practical precepts, of use in manufacture and electrical engineering of a very crude kind. In physics and astronomy certain sensational mysteries were still

handed down in the sacred tradition, but they were accepted without any attempt at understanding, and in general they were gross perversions of the original discovery. For instance, the theory of relativity was completely lost, but it was affirmed that if a man were to walk far enough in a straight line he would reach his starting-point. This true statement was not derived from the roundness of the earth, for the earth was assumed to be flat; it was regarded simply as a sacred mystery. Men also believed that the universe was very big; but since astronomy was a lost science, they assumed that the universe itself was a sphere, half of which was solid ground and the other half sky. Sun, moon, and stars were supposed to emerge from the eastern rim of the ground to be blown across the sky, and finally to settle down once more in the west.

In consequence of the decline of intelligence all complex organization tended to disintegrate. The great national states, the former provinces of the world-empire, fell into hopeless disorder. One by one they crumbled into small quarrelling principalities. These were ever rising and collapsing, coalescing into petty empires, splitting into a score of fragments, passing from the hands of one tyrant to another. Little by little even these small social units decayed into mere tribal territories, each occupying its own valley or plain.

Meanwhile the manner of life of the degenerate tribes of men steadily decayed. Agriculture was less and less efficient. In district after district, through lack of fertilizers and intelligent rotation of crops, it was gradually abandoned. The miserable remnant of mankind now sank to collecting wild vegetable foods and hunting the swarms of wild animals which had greatly increased with the decline of man. Wild cattle were abundant in many regions, but only the hardiest and most cunning of the half-wit hunters dared attack such large and dangerous beasts. For the most part the populations lived on the swarms of rabbits and other small rodents that thrived in a world in which the large carnivora had long since been exterminated.

In some regions the starving tribes were reduced to eating mice, toads, and beetles.

Once more it seemed to me possible that from this utter debasement man might now once more take the first step on the long journey towards lucidity. The whole lethal social order which had hitherto frustrated it had now vanished. Reduced once more to the primitive family, surely men would rediscover their essential humanity. But this could not be. The dead hand of the past still gripped even their most intimate relationships. Debased intelligence, debased self-consciousness, debased sensibility towards others made it impossible for the new sub-men to realize the folly and cruelty that they were constantly perpetrating. No individual was ever treated with respect even for such rudiments of personality as he might possess. Every man and woman was merely the node of a number of formal social relations. Everyone was either a chieftain or a slave or a free hunter, either a husband or bachelor, a wife or a virgin, and so on. And for each relationship there was an intricate pattern of conventional conduct, which must never be infringed. These patterns were in the main not expressions of existing circumstances but confused survivals of a past culture, in many cases cruelly frustrating to the individual. This state of affairs was damaging to everyone, not only because of the discrepancy between his actual circumstances and the behaviour imposed by convention, but also because in everyone there still lurked a tortured and bewildered germ of that spirit which in the past had flowered as Jesus, Socrates, Gautama, and the hosts of the wise and the good.

Though the degenerate species was no longer capable of revival, it did at last attain a condition of equilibrium. The scanty world-population, scattered throughout the continents in little isolated groups persisted probably for half a million years. Floods, climatic changes, volcanic eruptions, land subsidence, plagues, might now

and again wipe out whole tribes, but their place would sooner or later be taken by others. Man had found his appropriate niche in the natural system of the planet's fauna. Generation after generation he survived. His sluggish wits were wholly occupied in the tasks of food-gathering, the maintenance of crude shelters, reproduction, and the performing of traditional rites.

v. THE END OF MAN

This prolonged equilibrium was insecure. Sooner or later some more than usually widespread scourge would extinguish the species. The end came in a manner that I had not expected. The rat had accompanied man through all his adventures. Indeed, long before man appeared on the earth, the rat was well-established. And it was destined to survive him. A considerable part of the energy of the human race had always been devoted to defence against the rat. Even at the height of material civilization this ubiquitous rodent devoured much of man's food stores and infected him with plagues. With the decline of human intelligence the rat became a much more serious menace. It exacted a far heavier toll on his food stores. It multiplied extravagantly. In the last long phase of human degeneracy the rat-catcher was the most honoured profession. Only the most intelligent of men could cope with the limited but adequate native cunning of the inferior species. Century by century man held his own against this formidable enemy, but only by a narrow margin and at great cost.

At last there came a crisis. Some climatic change covering the whole planet seems to have made life rather suddenly more difficult for man, and therefore for his parasite. Driven by starvation, the rats began to change their habits. Not content with ravaging man's food stores, they attacked men themselves. They began by devouring the babies whenever they were left for a while unguarded. Sleeping

adults were also attacked. Sometimes a host of hungry rodents would waylay a lonely hunter, seize his legs, clamber up his body, hang on to his flesh with their incisors, bite at his throat, drag him to the ground and devour him alive. It seems probable that some mutation in the rat had increased its efficiency as a carnivorous beast, for attack on large mammals and particularly on men became increasingly common. Men were by now much reduced in stature, rats increased in weight. There came a time when the rats no longer confined their attention to stealthy attacks on children and sleeping adults or to persons isolated from their fellows. They gathered in great armies and invaded the scattered settlements, exterminating their inhabitants. Century by century men fought a losing battle. Tribe after tribe was exterminated, country after country depopulated, until only in the most favoured region a few hard-pressed families lurked in the woods, feeding on roots and worms, meeting at the full moon in solemn conclave to chant their spells against the rodent enemy, and assert with stupid pride their superiority over all beasts. The almost meaningless jargon which issued from these baying mouths was their one remaining title to humanity. In it there still lurked fantastic corruptions of civilized speech, relics which had lived in the times of Shakespeare, Plato, Con-fu-tsze. For a few decades, perhaps centuries, these ultimate remnants of mankind hung on to life, attacked not only by the rats but many other pests and plagues, and by the weather. In this constant warfare their frail human physique combined with their sub-human mentality to make extinction inevitable. At some time or other, unmourned and unnoticed, the last human being was destroyed.

The planet which had once and again haltingly attained the lucid mentality sank now for ever into torpor. For no species remained on earth capable of evolving to the human level. The torch which had fallen from the hand of man could never be picked up and carried forward by a fresh runner. For incalculable aeons, for a period

immeasurably longer than the whole career of mankind, the terrestrial globe spun and circled, its surface possessed by a host of lowly creatures.

Meanwhile the sun, like all stars of his age and size, was growing hotter, through the increasingly rapid release of energy in his interior. The more highly specialized biological types on the Earth were gradually destroyed. The lowlier kinds became adapted to an ever more torrid climate. More and still more of the ocean vaporized into the atmosphere, shutting out the heavens with perennial cloud. Little by little conditions on the earth passed beyond the limit of adaptability of any terrestrial species. The ocean began to boil, the sands to melt, the atmosphere to vanish into outer space. The increasing heat of the sun, however, had favoured the evolution of life on Uranus. Slowly, as on Earth, there appeared a multitude of species. And as on Earth these one by one reached a climax of specialization beyond which no further evolution was possible to them. At last, as on Earth, one single type, specialized only for versatility, stood at the threshold of lucidity. But then the sun, as so many stars before him, exploded into the nova state, fusing all his planets.

These remote events I did not witness. They seem to have been obscurely borne in upon my mind through contact with the minds of my superhuman fellow explorers.

My personal experience was confined to terrestrial events. And as soon as earth's brief flicker of lucidity had ended, my attention was withdrawn from this whole sad stream of time, in which the will for darkness had prevailed. For other scarcely less agonizing but glorious events were all the while unfolding before me.

Part III - THE LIGHT

7 - THE SPARK SURVIVES

- i. HARKING BACK TO THE TIBETAN
- ii. A WAR AGAINST THE EMPIRES
- iii. ARMED PEACE
- iv. WAR AGAIN, AND A NEW ORDER

i. HARKING BACK TO THE TIBETAN REVOLUTION

READER, WE have followed the sorry tale through to its end. We have seen one of the two great streams of history lose itself in a swamp of misery and abject brutishness. We may now return to that point where I first realized an inconsistency in my experience of man's career, where, in fact, the torrent of history was already dividing. This was the point at which the Tibetan revolution had been successfully brought off by the Young Lamas. Under their guidance the new Tibetan state was already becoming a thing of splendid achievement and more splendid promise.

I had already noticed among the Tibetans two very different tempers. Sometimes the one had dominated, sometimes the other. In the one mood the leaders of the new society faced their task with sober fortitude and a clear understanding that only by a miracle could they preserve the new order against the hostility of the two great empires. In the other mood these same leaders, though they fully realized the difficulties and dangers, were buoyed up by a seemingly irrational and almost boisterous hopefulness, nay a certainty of victory. Though they recognized that only a miracle could save Tibet and perhaps the

whole species, they also knew, so long as the mood of exaltation was on them, that the miracle had already happened in themselves, and that it could be made to happen in the whole Tibetan people. By now the Tibetan people had supreme confidence in their leaders. Even the dullards, who could not appreciate at all clearly the aim of the new society, felt vaguely that they were sharing in a glorious enterprise.

The first sign of inconsistency in my experience was a strange sense that this miraculous hopefulness both dominated and did not dominate the whole life of the people. Then inconsistencies of external events began to appear, so that little by little my torn mind was forced to live in two mutually exclusive worlds.

This duality of temper, followed by a duality of external events, soon made itself evident beyond the frontiers of Tibet. The progressive minority in all lands was dominated and was not dominated by a new, defiant, and gay confidence. Each mood produced everywhere its effect on action; but it was in Tibet that hope first triumphed, and it was Tibet's miraculous success that inspired the rest of the world.

It was in connection with the synthetic faith propagated in Russia and China that the Tibetans gained their first important success. The calculated appeal to man's baser nature, it will be remembered, had been propagated in order to defeat the Tibetan missionaries. In the story that I have already told it succeeded; in the story that I shall now tell it failed. The Tibetan missionaries in their mood of bright confidence disconcerted the imperial governments by laughing the new movement into frustration. For a sham faith cannot stand ridicule. The symbols and slogans of the religion of pain were ridiculed and parodied on every wall. By skilful heckling the meetings organized by the dervishes were given a tilt towards farce. But this was not all. Many a missionary bore witness to his own faith by unflinching behaviour under torture. For the governments were at first

eager to 'make an exhibition' of them, until it was clear that every public martyrdom merely spread the Tibetan faith. The missionaries were trained both in spiritual discipline and in the technique of advertisement. The symbols and slogans of their faith were made to appear in every public place, often superimposed on the emblems of the synthetic faith. The propaganda meetings organized by the dervishes were often frustrated by some obscure member of the audience who challenged the speaker to compete with him in an ordeal by torture. According to the synthetic faith, it will be remembered, the supreme ecstasy was to be experienced under torture. The challenger would suggest to the dervish that they should both, in public and at once, inflict severe pain on themselves, or be tortured by a third party. The mere challenge was often enough to expose the impostor. But when dervishes who had been specially chosen and handsomely paid for their ability to endure pain undertook to prove their faith under torture, it soon appeared that the missionaries could draw upon some source of strength inaccessible to hired martyrs. The missionary could allow his flesh to be torn or crushed to a far greater extent, and in doing so he made no false claim that he enjoyed it. Though he rejoiced in the opportunity to bear witness to his faith through pain, he took no delight, he said, in pain itself. The dervish, on the other hand, would make agonized protestations of delight, until suddenly, and sooner than his rival, he called out for release. The governments did, indeed, gain a temporary success by sending out dervishes who had been specially prepared for the inevitable ordeal by having an arm permanently anaesthetized. But it was not long before the trick was exposed. The next move by the imperialists was to organize 'spontaneous' lynchings of those who dared to challenge the dervishes. But this policy also was defeated, partly by the courage of the missionaries, partly by highly trained crowd-controllers who by shrewd interjections often succeeded in turning the temper of the mob from sadism to kindness.

The source of the courage of the missionaries was, of course, their faith in the spirit. But courage alone might not have achieved so swift and complete a discomfiture of the synthetic faith had it not been reinforced by a sly and friendly ridicule. There was nothing new in the method of the missionaries; but never before had it been used on such a scale and with such expert psychological understanding. And never before had those who used these methods been the emissaries of an established Utopian society preparing to fight for its life.

The success of the missionaries certainly did not depend wholly on their powers of enduring pain. They constituted a great army of 'fifth-columnists' disseminated throughout the imperial territories, secretly inspiring the people with dangerous political and social thoughts. The original Tibetan missionaries were reinforced by a great company of native missionaries in every country. Altogether there were millions of them, and each one was a travelling spark of the new fire. Under this influence men's desiccated hearts were tinder. Most of the missionaries worked at some trade in the lower or middle reaches of society, and were at pains to earn the respect and love of their fellow workers for their efficiency, integrity, and loyal comradeship. Armed with this personal prestige, they were able to capture the allegiance and fire the imagination of all who were not yet hopelessly perverted; and to build up little by little a great body of servants of the light in every land. Their method combined that of the religious missionary with that of the social revolutionary. On the one hand, though they showed no insistence on any metaphysical doctrine, they preached the inner light, and manifested it in action. On the other, though they avoided the subtle Machiavellian intrigues which had been used by so many revolutionaries in the past, they entered into political disputes and declared, often at the cost of their lives, that the time had come to withhold from Caesar the things that were Caesar's. Of the universe, as a whole, they said, man knows

next to nothing; but in our hearts we find that in right personal relation man fulfils himself. Love, they said, and wisdom are right absolutely. True community of mutually respecting individuals, and also fearless free intelligence and imagination, are right absolutely. And we all knew it. There is one intrinsic good, they said, and one only, the awakened life, the life of love and wisdom. This is the sacred thing which all developed beings throughout the universe cannot but will, unless they have been blinded. This spirit, they said, is in the long run all-powerful in the affairs of conscious beings. But the run may be very long. And what the scope of that spirit is in the whole of things no man can know, nor needs to know.

The world-wide missionary effort would have been far less effective if the missionaries had not been able to point to the example of Tibet's actual achievement. 'In Tibet the police are few and unarmed,' they said. 'In Tibet no doors need be locked. In Tibet no one feels any need of the debauch of cruelty. We have neither rich nor poor. Our prisons have been destroyed or turned into laboratories and art galleries. We know how to live, and we have the means.' Visitors to Tibet were welcomed and could see for themselves that these claims were true. At last the imperial governments adopted drastic measures. Realizing that 'the roof of the world' was becoming a Mecca where the seditious gathered to study and plan revolution, they forbade all travel to Tibet, and made a great effort to round up and destroy all the missionaries. But intercourse with Tibet continued. In spite of all restrictions, hosts of daring enthusiasts managed to slip through into 'the fortunate country' for mental and spiritual fortification; and to slip out again to spread the gospel. And the stream of native Tibetan missionaries was restricted not by the imperial attempt to put an end to it but by the needs of the home country to organize a desperate military defence.

ii. WAR AGAINST THE EMPIRES

At last war came. I have told how, in the theme of darkness it resulted in the destruction of man's most promising society. In the theme of light the issue was far otherwise. Not only had the empires been effectively undermined by the missionaries, so that rebellions were frequent; more important was the fact that the servants of the light in all countries, and specially in Tibet, were armed with an inner certainty of victory. As in the darker theme, the Tibetan frontier was defended by microbes which reduced the invaders to infantilism. But whereas in the dark theme the respite thus secured was used merely for strengthening the defence, in the theme of the triumphing light it was turned into an opportunity for attack. Against all probability, the small but highly trained and highly mechanized Tibetan army, supported by its small but well-appointed air force, pushed forward into the imperial territory of Kashmir. There it attacked before the Russians had had time to recover from the effects of the microbe, and it gained a surprising victory. The Russian imperialists hastily concentrated vast new armies and air forces upon the invaders; but owing to a combination of inefficiency, corruption, and above all half-heartedness and positive disloyalty the imperial armies put up a feeble resistance, and were presently retreating in disorder, closely pursued by the Tibetans, and constantly attacked by the natives themselves. Organized revolt had of course broken out in Kashmir, and the imperialists' defeat ensured its success. The whole of this mountainous land was soon freed. A temporary government was set up by the Kashmiri servants of the light, and the new state formed a close alliance with Tibet.

The moral effect of this surprising victory was immense. In Russia itself, particularly in Moscow, there was serious disorder. An army which was ordered to proceed to the recovery of the lost territory, was incapacitated by mutiny. Meanwhile the whole mountainous tract stretching from Kashmir through Afghanistan, Persia, and Turkey to the Aegean Sea rose against the oppressors. In Greece, in Britain,

and in Scandinavia isolated rebellions were started. To the north of Tibet, Sinkiang and the more mountainous part of Outer Mongolia overcame the local imperial forces. Meanwhile the main Tibetan land and air armament, far from resting on their success, were hurried from the western to the eastern end of the country where the Chinese, a much more formidable enemy, were heavily bombing Lhasa and the whole comparatively rich eastern part of Tibet.

It was desperately important for the Tibetans to secure at once some positive and spectacular success against the Chinese Empire, so as to start in China also that process of galloping decay which was already at work in the rival empire. The people of eastern Tibet were able to retire to their deep shelters, prepared long before the war, and to escape the destruction which now fell upon their cities, their herds, their precious irrigation system. It now appeared that the government, convinced many years ago of the inevitability of war, had established a great number of underground munition factories. But the attack was too heavy to be endured for long without the crippling of the Tibetan resistance. The method of surprise, which had succeeded so well in Kashmir, was impossible against the Chinese imperialists, for they had concentrated an immense force in Chwanben. The efficiency of this army was beyond question. Its loyalty to its imperial master had never been tested. After much discussion the Tibetan leaders decided that there was nothing for it but to court disaster and hope for a miracle. Or rather, divinely confident of victory, they saw that the only way to it was the way of inspired foolhardiness. The Tibetan air force, though heavily outnumbered, proved far more resourceful and skilful than the Chinese, and their courage was fanatical. They did their utmost to destroy the enemy aerodromes. They dropped bombs and the microbes of infantilism on the advancing army in Chwanben. They scattered leaflets on the great industrial centres. At the same time the Tibetan land forces put up a desperate defence upon the frontier.

There is no need to give details of the fighting. At one time it seemed that resistance had broken, yet the Tibetan leaders and fighters maintained their irrational confidence. 'Hang on, hang on,' it was said. 'The tide will turn.' And sure enough it did. The enemy's attack began to weaken, both in the air and on land. Deserters, who came over in large numbers to the Tibetan side, told that the population of Chwanben had sacrificed itself in thousands so as to create confusion behind the lines. The spirit of the imperial army was changing from bored acceptance of this tiresome frontier war to whispering complaint and doubt. The air force was suffering from badly damaged professional pride. The Tibetan leaders judged that the moment had come for the great gamble. Instead of using the lull to recuperate and prepare to withstand the next blow, they threw the whole Tibetan strength into an attack which violated all the accepted principles of warfare. Though they were the weaker side, they flooded the whole of Chwanben with parachute troops, leaving Tibet almost undefended. The effect was as spectacular as the result of peppering a forest with incendiary bombs. Bewildered by the multitude of the parachutists, and never imagining that this move was the last effort of a beaten enemy, the Chinese troops fell into disorder. Some, of course, obeyed their officers and rounded up the aerial invaders, but many others rallied to the parachutists themselves. The whole of Chwanben fell into chaos. The minute remnant of the Tibetan land army advanced into Chwanben without meeting serious opposition. From the eastern heights of the province they looked down upon the hilly lowlands of Szechwan, amazed at their own success. Disorder now broke out all along the Yangtze Valley and spread to most of the great cities of China.

But the Chinese Empire was tougher than the Russian. The imperial air force bombed many of the revolting cities into submission. The routed imperial armies in the Yangtze Valley were rallied and stiffened with fresh troops. The rebels in the eastern part of

Szechwan were overcome and massacred. The fantastic Tibetan advance was checked before Ichang.

The leaders of Tibet knew well that the peoples of China could not be freed unless the imperialists were everywhere attacked by their own subject population. This seemed at first likely to happen; but Chinese nationalism was a strong sentiment, and the rulers were able to make good use of it. The Tibetan leaders, though daring and even foolhardy when their daemon urged them forward, were also realists. Instead of trying to press on into the heart of China, they consolidated the positions they had gained, and waited. They also broadcast to the people of China, saying in effect, 'We are not conquerors. We desire no empire. If you want freedom, rebel, and we will press on to help you. Otherwise we shall leave you alone. We shall merely defend those peoples whom we have already freed, and only if they wish us to help them.' All this they said knowing that the Chinese rulers had an exaggerated idea of the Tibetan power, that they feared the complete destruction of their empire, and that they were in the mood to arrange a peace.

The imperialists believed that if they could stave off the immediate disintegration of their empire they could later gather all the resources of both empires to crush Tibet for ever. They therefore proposed a peace conference. The final settlement was one which left China itself almost intact. The Tibetans held plebiscites in their conquered territories, and respected the wish of the majority in Szechwan to remain within the imperial system. Chwanben, however, along with the rest of the great plateau of southern central Asia, including Afghanistan, chose to be free from the rule of the imperialists. The rebellions in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey had been crushed by the Russian forces. The freed peoples of Central Asia now formed a Mountain Federation, which was dominated by the Tibetans in virtue of their civilization and military prestige.

The effect of the war was from the political point of view by no means spectacular. It might even be represented as a kind of victory for the empires, since they recovered much territory that had at first been lost to the rebels. Moreover Tibet had been very seriously crippled from the air. Lhasa was destroyed. Most of the surface factories had been put out of action. A large proportion of Tibetan adult males had been killed in the fighting. On the imperial side the damage was very small in proportion to total population and resources. But psychologically the effect of the war was far-reaching. The empires, in spite of their traditional and inveterate hostility, had thought it worth while to combine to crush weak and 'barbarian' state which, it had seemed, could easily have been destroyed by either of them alone. Yet the mountain people had not only successfully defended themselves but had counter-attacked, and in the end it was the empires that sued for peace. In every country the imperialists, in spite of their loud rejoicing over their 'victory', were secretly dismayed; while their enemies gradually came to realize that the war had opened a new and hopeful chapter in the history of man. At the peace conference the Tibetans had firmly refused to agree to refrain from propaganda in imperial territories. Indeed they declared that they would do all in their power to support the struggle for freedom in every country, and that whenever opportunity offered they would assist rebellion so long as its aims seemed to them to spring from the will for the light. The mere fact that the empires were unable to alter these provisions showed how far their authority had been damaged.

iii. ARMED PEACE

The human race now settled down to a long period of armed peace, in which the Mountain Federation developed its defences, propagated its gospel, and strove to make its own social order a model for the future order of the world. The imperialists meanwhile prepared for the war in which Tibet and its satellites and their

dangerous ideas must be extirpated. Peace, however, revived the rivalry of the imperial tyrannies. When a sudden rebellion broke out in the remote British Isles, and Was supported by an attack by the Mountain Peoples against Russian forces in Iran, the Chinese government refrained from helping Russia by attacking Tibet from the east. This was a grave error, for Britain gained its independence, and Iran, Iraq, and Turkey joined the Federation. The economic resources of the Federation were still ridiculously small compared with those of the empires, whose sway covered all the rest of the earth save isolated Britain; but the prestige and moral authority of the Federation were ever increasing. The Russian Empire's territories were now constantly in revolt. Chief offenders Were India, so near to Tibet, and America, so remote from Moscow. It was clear to the Chinese rulers that the whole Russian system would soon collapse, if nothing was done to save it; and that its fragments would coalesce with the hated Federation. They therefore determined to seize what they could before it was too late. India was the obvious starting-point. They 'proposed to police the turbulent subcontinent for the Russian government, and they reinforced the offer with threats. Russia had no choice but to agree. The Chinese imperialists then flooded India with police, commercial agents, and propagandists. Rapidly they gained complete power, so that Russia's relationship became one of theoretical and impotent suzerainty.

Further details need not be given of the process by which the whole Russian Empire was gradually annexed to China. The world now consisted of a mighty imperial system and a small federation of free peoples occupying a tract which was very largely mountain. Britain had failed to maintain itself against the more efficient imperial power.

In the imperial system the great majority of human beings were practically serfs, while in the free system all shared equally in the frugal prosperity of the whole federation, and there was ample

individual freedom. The one was a gigantic police state, the other a co-operative venture of free men. In the one there was strict censorship, in the other complete freedom of expression. In the one the dominant mood was apathy, mutual suspicion, and neurotic vindictiveness; in the other buoyant confidence and unfailing mutual friendliness prevailed in spite of the constant external danger. It might have been expected that the need for watchfulness and unity would have forced the Tibetans to sacrifice freedom to military dictatorship, and would set up the kind of deterioration which external danger had long ago caused in revolutionary Russia. But the Tibetans were by now too sure of themselves and of each other to feel the need to restrict freedom. Their discipline was at bottom a thorough self-discipline, which, though it permitted unlimited discussion and criticism, freely and fervently accepted in the last resort the decision of the government. And treason was by now unthinkable.

The contrast between the two systems must not be overdrawn. Within the Empire was much that was good, much right personal relationship, much of true culture, much honest search for the way to a better world. But all this was crippled by the system and poisoned by the false assumptions on which the system was based. On the other hand in the Federation there was much that was thoroughly bad. The individual human beings who made up the freed peoples were themselves mostly products of the bad old system. They could not at a stroke wipe out the mental damage that had been done to them. Save in Tibet, where the new order was by now well established, there was probably in men's daily lives almost as much sheer self-seeking, downright meanness, insensitivity, cruelty, and stupidity as there was in the rest of the world. Sometimes the forces of darkness gained considerable power in some region of the Federation, and might threaten to dominate. In Turkey, for instance, a movement was started to gain special privilege for this wealthiest of

the newly federated countries. There was a dangerous recrudescence of nationalism within the Federation. The 'fifth column' of the Empire did its best to use this opportunity for weakening its enemies. The imperial government even suggested secretly that imperial gold and armaments might help the Turks to gain their point. But this danger was turned to a new strength by the forbearance and tact of the federal government. By an overwhelming majority the Turks reaffirmed their loyalty.

The great difference between the Empire and the Federation was that, while in the one case human decency was damped down by a false social system and moral tradition, in the other it was immensely strengthened by the new institutions and the steady dominance of the will for the light. In the one case the average frail but potentially humane individual was nearly always corrupted by a debasing environment, while in the other he was constantly supported in a higher range of integrity and intelligence than would otherwise have been possible to him.

For several decades the world remained divided between the Empire and the Federation. More than once in this period the Empire made ready to crush the Federation; but, as zero hour approached, unrest within the Empire itself strangely increased to such a pitch that at the critical moment serious rebellions, generally in Britain or America or China itself, made attack impossible. Throughout these decades the government of the Federation concentrated on defence and social development. For defence it relied partly on its mountains, but mainly on a great air force, built at heavy cost of luxury and comfort. Economic resources were meagre. A modest supply of oil was still produced in the western territory of the Federation. Water-power was developed to the utmost. Gold was assiduously sifted from the river-beds and mined in the mountains for the purchase of urgently needed foreign goods. Agriculture and pasture were the main occupations throughout the

territory, apart from the manufacture of munitions and planes. The manner of life of the Free Peoples had perforce to be very simple, but it was adequate to health and fullness of mentality, and the standard was the same for all.

Throughout these decades the Mountain government continued its propaganda in every part of the Empire, and kept its frontiers open to all political refugees who were able to pass an expert psychological examination for sincerity. After a month of this careful observation they were given citizenship. Many fugitives from imperial tyranny were caught before they reached the 'frontier, but a steady trickle of immigration from every part of the world crept in through the coastal cities of Asia Minor, the passes of the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, from far-eastern Nan Shan, along the valleys of Chwanben, over the Himalayan passes, and through the ports on the Persian Gulf. Thus little by little the Federated Peoples were impregnated with new blood, new skills, and new elements of culture. This influx of refugees caused a serious food problem, but in spite of protests from short-sighted critics the Federal Government insisted on welcoming the new-comers. Intensive cultivation and new development of earthless agriculture alleviated the problem.

iv. WAR AGAIN, AND A NEW ORDER

At last the long period of armed peace came to an end. Propaganda for the light was rapidly gaining ground throughout the Empire. The imperialists decided that at all costs they must destroy their enemy at once. For some years they prepared in secret, while trying to persuade the Free Peoples of their increasing friendliness. Then suddenly they flung their whole armament into a double attack, from north to south, to cut the Federation in two between Afghanistan and Kashmir. With clouds of planes and swarms of mountain tanks the imperial armament pressed up among the hills. Behind the attacking

forces came 'supporting' forces whose office it was to bombard the attackers should they show any signs of wavering. The Federation defended itself desperately, but the pincer movement of the enemy succeeded in cutting the Federal territory in two. Not long afterwards the richer and more vulnerable western half of the Federation collapsed. Tibet, with Kashmir and Chwanben, was once more alone against the world, a world more effectively organized than that which they had formerly opposed. Moreover their own economy was gravely mutilated by the loss of the western lands, which had been well integrated with the eastern districts. Tibet had become largely dependent on the more industrial West. But once more the Tibetans rose to strange irrational and almost hilarious confidence. Aided by their mountains and their microbes, they held the frontiers intact. Air bombardment once more blasted their homes and factories and reservoirs. Yet Tibetan life continued. Still the yak browsed, the crops were tended, save where lack of water had ruined them. Food was strictly rationed. No one had enough, but none actually starved. The whole population of Tibet, Kashmir, and Chwanben was united in the will to resist. 'If we hang on long enough,' they said, 'the tide will surely turn.' They were right.

Throughout the world the rumour spread that the whole strength of the World Empire could not subdue these mountain peoples. Their example encouraged the servants of the light in every land to organize a crop of well-correlated rebellions, of which the most important was in China itself. With surprising suddenness the imperial power throughout Asia and Europe collapsed, giving place to a medley of unstable independent local states, some genuinely of the light, some merely ostensibly so, some frankly nationalist and blind. For a while the imperialists retained their hold on China, America, and South Africa, but in time these also were lost to them.

The world was in chaos. Already minor wars were breaking out in China and Europe. Already little leaders were seeking a foothold on

the ladder to power. The Mountain Federation was at once reformed, and the Federal Government issued an appeal to the peoples of the world, urging a world-wide federation. The forces of the light in every country worked strongly for the new order. There was a short period of civil wars and interstate wars. But behind the backs of these struggles, so to speak, the new world order was steadily ramifying. World-wide commissions for transport, health, postal services, the regulation of industrial disputes, and so on, were gradually forming into a vast network of cosmopolitan organization. Even states at war generally respected this incipient supranational organization, and it was common for enemies to co-operate with one another in the spheres of health, industrial, and agricultural organization. But mere commissions could not prevent wars from occurring. Potentially hostile states would not surrender to any mere committee their control of aeroplanes and tanks. And because they would not do this, and because in many of the new states the new ruling class, though ostensibly loyal to the light, was in fact a power-seeking oligarchy, predatory towards other states and its own subject population, economic rivalry often produced the bitter fruit of war.

But though it seemed at first that in breaking the World Empire mankind had merely exchanged one evil condition for another, the period of chaos was brief. One by one the peoples of the world joined the new 'Federation of the Light'. Within a couple of decades the whole planet was brought within the new order, which then was solemnly renamed the Federation of Mankind.

The preamble to the constitution of the new world organization became one of the most cherished scriptures of the human race. It was based on the appeal which the Tibetans had issued after the downfall of the world empire, and it had been developed little by little in subsequent years by the best minds of all countries; so that in its

final form it was truly co-operative and anonymous. I now remember and will quote some garbled fragments of it.

'We, inhabitants of every land, intelligences of the planet Earth, having overthrown a world-wide tyranny, having abolished a world-wide darkness of the spirit, now, through our chosen representatives, pledge ourselves to the light. We acknowledge that the high goal of all the lives of men is to awaken themselves and one another to love and wisdom and creative power, in service of the spirit. Of the universe we know very little; but in our hearts we know certainly that for all beings of human stature this is the way of life. In service of the spirit, therefore, we the human inhabitants of this planet, unite in a new order, in which every human being, no matter how lowly his nature, shall be treated with respect as a vessel of the spirit, shall be given every possible aid from infancy onwards to express whatever power is in him for bodily and mental prowess, for his own delight and for service of the common life. We resolve that in future none shall be crippled in body or perverted in mind by unwholesome conditions. 'For this end we declare that in future no powerful individual or class or nation shall have the means, economic or military, to control the lives of men for private gain.'

8 - PRECARIOUS ADVANCE

- i. DIFFICULTIES OVER AMERICA
- ii. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE BUREAUCRATS
- iii. PROGRESS
- iv. THE POPULATION PROBLEM
- v. ARISTOCRATS AND DEMOCRATS

i. DIFFICULTIES OVER AMERICA

THE TROUBLES of mankind were by no means over. Nor will they ever be. But with the founding of the new world-order the species entered on a new phase of its career, in which the balance of the forces of the light and the forces of darkness, already slightly favourable to the light, was tipped still farther by a much improved social structure. To many of the generation which founded the new world it seemed not only that a new age had started, which was true, but that henceforth there could be no serious troubles. In this they were mistaken. Masses of human beings who were not ready for the new order were included in it against their wills. In their hearts they still clung to the old values. They still desired a disorderly world so that they could continue to practise brigandage of one kind or another. They still cared mainly for personal dominance or for tribal glory. In the new world, therefore, they set out to make trouble. They tried to undermine the federal authority and the people's confidence in the new order. They exaggerated its failures, disparaged its successes, fomented the differences between the peoples and between social classes.

Two great conflicts had to be solved before the new order could be so firmly established that no large group within it would ever dare to take arms against it. The one was a conflict between the eastern and western hemispheres, the other between the leaders and the led.

In the conflict of hemispheres, Australia and New Zealand must be counted in the American hemisphere, as they had long ago come under the American influence. During the struggle between the free peoples and the empires the Americans had been relatively untouched. The North Americans had greatly changed since their tired Utopia had been annexed by the Russian Empire. Under the not very efficient tyranny which followed they discovered a new aim, namely to free themselves. A new generation of young people, sons and daughters of those earlier young who had welcomed the

Russians, began to rediscover the virtue of the great American tradition. The heroes of the first American republic, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, were once more, though secretly, studied and praised. A new but vigorous and underground current of individualism began to flow through North America. Once more the state, even in the Utopian form that had once existed in America, began to seem merely an unpleasant necessity. The Russian state was an unmitigated curse. Men lauded once more the virtues of individual enterprise and ingenuity, liberty and personal integrity.

During the decline of the Russian power the movement of individualism generated a sort of submerged individual capitalism, a Robin Hood capitalism, one might say; for the outstanding American intelligences, copying in this respect the Jews of the medieval world, found means of wresting wealth from their conquerors and transferring much of it to their own oppressed people. Under the subsequent and more efficient Chinese rule this system of illicit capitalism in America was methodically destroyed, but it left a spirit of passionate individualism. With the fall of China the Americans reverted to a more or less benevolent and restrained capitalism. There followed a great wave of material reconstruction under the influence of the new aristocrats of wealth. The new capitalism was strikingly different from the old. It was much more like what the old capitalism had claimed to be but never was. No doubt the higher standard of the new capitalism was a symptom of the slightly increased power of the will for the light in the minds of ordinary people.

Imperial tyranny had never impinged on the peoples of America, Australia, and New Zealand with quite the same searching brutality as on the rest of the world. And so, confident in their own spirit of responsible individualism, they did not easily recognize the urgency of bringing the private enterprise of individuals, social classes and nations under the control of a common world authority.

Trouble arose over the disposal of American tidal power. The World Federal Government declared that all the great resources of production must henceforth be controlled exclusively by the World Government, which alone could organize them effectively for the immense task of raising the standard of life of all peoples to the level needed for full psychological development. The American capitalists replied that, having constructed their great tidal system by their own enterprise, having watched it for so long being exploited and misused by the late imperial government of the world, they intended to retain control of it themselves. They agreed, of course, that the system ought to be used strictly for the benefit of the human race as a whole. They had no intention of using it to benefit America exclusively, still less to strengthen their own capitalist class. 'But since we,' they said, 'by fostering private enterprise in our country, have become the world's greatest inventors and organizers, we claim the right, nay the duty, of managing our own unique generating system and disposing of its power as seems fit to us for the full economic development of the world. Who else could do it? Not the Tibetan revolutionary leaders. Splendid as their record is, their experience of economic organization is far too restricted. Not the Indians, for they are neither organizers nor engineers. Not the Chinese, for they are for the present too soaked in the tradition of their recent imperialism. It is the Americans alone who must take charge in the field of organization, leaving to the Tibetans the great task of educational and spiritual leadership.' In reply it was urgently pointed out that no one people and no one class should be assigned leadership in any sphere. Those individuals who were capable of leadership would rise to positions of responsibility in whatever fields were suited to them. Privilege and vested interest must never more be allowed to appear on the earth. Moreover the American social system, though it had usefully built up American prosperity behind the backs of the alien tyrants, was quite unsuited to the new world-order,

in which there must be fully co-ordinated planning of the world as a whole.

The American capitalists refused to give way. Though unarmed they were confident in their strength, because they were confident in the rightness of their cause. The American national government announced its withdrawal from the World Federation. To this direct challenge the World Government, including its American members, appealed to the Americans in the most friendly terms to reconsider this momentous step, and reminded them of the ancient American 'War of Secession'. They added, reluctantly but firmly, that, if necessary, force would be used to prevent the secession from the new and greater Federation. The human race had declared its unity and would no longer tolerate local sovereign powers. In answer the American capitalists cut the great cables by which their surplus current was transmitted to Europe. The World Government ordered the world police in America to occupy all the generating stations and see that the cables were repaired.

The Americans, of course, like all other peoples, had agreed to the abolition of national armaments. They had their own unarmed police; and a contingent of the armed World Police, drawn from all peoples, was stationed at key points throughout the two continents. The seizing of the generators was carried out without opposition; but the American Government organized a general strike in protest, and there were great demonstrations in all the cities. In several parts of the continent rioters attacked the offices of the World Government. The native police did not intervene. Thereupon the World Police took control of the whole of the two American continents, along with Australia and New Zealand. Democratic government in the American hemisphere ceased. Rioting became widespread. But the American, Australian, and New Zealand governments, recognizing the futility of mere rioting, organized a vast campaign of civil disobedience and non-co-operation.

Throughout these troubles the World Government showed great forbearance. There were many arrests, but the prisoners found themselves treated almost as honoured guests. Many of them were not even retained in captivity at all but put on parole on condition that they left the American hemisphere and spent their time, until further notice, in touring the rest of the world, at the expense of the World Government. Thus, it was hoped, they would see the system at work and be impressed by it. Special facilities were given them for interviewing high officials in charge of industrial organization.

Meanwhile a great war of words was resounding throughout the world. The Americans were allowed complete freedom of expression. Floods of radio propaganda issued from both sides. It became increasingly difficult to keep order in the Americas. There were many attacks on foreigners. Sheer nationalistic passion grew from day to day.

At last the President of the World, at this time a Zulu, decided to make a great gesture to end the dispute. He offered to tour the Americas, along with two American members of the World Government, and to meet all the leaders of American capitalism for intimate discussion. Before leaving the hemisphere he would make fresh proposals. The offer was accepted. It is hard to say which member of the party needed the greater courage, the President, whose race was still distasteful to the Americans, or the two American 'traitors'. Unescorted and unarmed, they travelled in the hemisphere for four months, then called all the American leaders to a conference. The President reminded his hearers of the epic struggle of the Tibetans, and the founding of the Federation of Mankind.

He then paid a generous tribute to the achievement of America and the ideals for which the rebels (he did not shrink from the word) were now (he recognized) making a sincere stand. He himself had learnt

much from his tour, and he now had a proposal to make. He recognized that in the world's present transitional state, a state of rapid and bewildering economic enrichment, there was much to be said for allowing a good deal of scope to private enterprise in industry. He recognized also that the motives of most of the American capitalists were generous social motives, and that the American peoples on the whole supported them. On the other hand the World Government could not tolerate any attempt to flout its authority; otherwise the whole new order, so painfully created and on the whole so beneficial, would soon break down. Authority, however, had been unhesitatingly asserted. The World Government could now afford to be generous. He therefore proposed, with his Government's full assent, a temporary arrangement allowing the Americas economic autonomy within the Federation. The World Government reserved the power of constant inspection of American industry and would not permit any infringement of the rights of the workers, as laid down in the preamble to the constitution of the Federation. Certain kinds of industry were excluded from capitalist enterprise entirely, such as armaments and the great means of expression. These, and education, were to be nationalized under the American state, subject to final control by the World Government. It also reserved a power of veto on any industry which it regarded as undesirable from the point of view of the world, and it might order American industry to produce some particular kind of goods needed by the world. Such work might be subsidized by the World Government. The American capitalists, then, must regard themselves as civil servants under the World Government, liable to dismissal and confiscation of their property if they broke the agreement, though paid for their services through the open market. The American peoples, of course, would regain the right to abolish the whole system of local capitalism at any time.

Such was the compromise of 'capitalism within socialism' that was finally established. The conflict could never have been successfully

solved by such a precarious arrangement had not both sides been convinced of the fundamental goodwill of the other. The World Government came out of its first great crisis with increased authority. On the whole the compromise worked.

In South America, however, it lasted only for a decade. There the worse elements of the capitalist class gained power and indulged in secret violations of the agreements. The peoples of South America came to realize that they were being exploited, not flagrantly, as in former times, but at least annoyingly. The movement for socialism rapidly gained ground. The World Government, foreseeing the end, refrained from action, preferring that the change to a socialistic local economy should be brought about by local effort. The bosses of South American capitalism appealed to their colleagues in the northern continent, but in vain. Without trouble the South Americans went over to socialism.

A few years later Australia and New Zealand followed suit. And within a couple of decades the North Americans themselves, not without heated discussion, decided to enter fully into the world economic system.

ii. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE BUREAUCRATS

The other serious conflict which troubled the early World State did not come to a head until a couple of centuries after the solution of the American trouble. This was a new kind of class war, a worldwide struggle between the bureaucracy and the mass of ordinary citizens.

The world bureaucracy was selected by psychological tests for organizing ability and moral integrity. It was known that superior organizing ability ran mainly in certain families or biological strains. Consequently there began to emerge strong traces of an aristocracy

of birth, rather in the manner of the loose network of crystals which appears in water in the act of freezing. The ranks of the bureaucracy were never closed to suitable candidates from outside the great bureaucratic families, but in subtle ways scions of the well-tried stocks had the advantage. Certain family names became labels promising bureaucratic ability. The prouder families guarded their names very jealously. Members who failed to come up to the family's high standard of ability were deprived of the family name. Able children of female members of the family who married into humbler stocks were granted the name of the maternal family. Newcomers into the bureaucracy were subtly influenced by the prestige of the old families, imitating their manners and ideas, and seeking to gather similar prestige for their own family names.

Thus, little by little, the new aristocracy crystallized upon the surface of the world-society. It was an aristocracy not of mere birth, nor of wealth, but of genuine ability; but of a special kind of ability, namely the aptitude for organization and for managing human beings. It did its work well; and superior intelligences of other kinds, such as the scientific and the literary, were well content to leave the born organizers in power. But there came a time when people began to murmur that the bureaucrats were becoming rather self-important and meddlesome. No one denied that their rule was in the main efficient and honest, but there was a growing suspicion that they were growing too fond of power, and that their loyalty to the world community was increasingly tempered by unwitting preoccupation with their own prestige, not as individuals but as a class. They held their position, of course, under the will of the federal and national assemblies. Unfortunately the politicians were themselves members of the bureaucratic class, and would seldom take action against officials who exceeded their powers. Thus, little by little, the strength of the bureaucrats broadened out from precedent to precedent. Increasingly they resented criticism. Increasingly they hung together,

developing little by little the beginnings of a distinctive way of life and a distinctive moral code.

Matters came to a head when a great physical research-laboratory in Russia was ordered by the World Research Ministry to give up its inquiry into the condition of matter in the interior of stars and to concentrate on the practical problem of applying sub-atomic energy to industry. The eminent Russian physicists protested, refused, appealed to the World President, and were arrested. There was great indignation in scientific circles throughout the world. Many research workers went out on strike in defence of their arrested colleagues. Industrial workers, though their pay was good and their hours were short, took this opportunity of complaining of excessive discipline in the factories and of interference in their home life. The small but well-established class of pioneering industrial capitalists (incorporated in the World State as a result of the American experiment) complained that factory inspectors used every means to hamper their work and destroy their profession. Certain writers affirmed that they could not get their books published because the national or federal ministry of publication disliked them. This, they said, was a violation of the original function of the ministries, which had been founded not to censor but to foster matter critical of the regime. Similar charges were made against the ministries of radio.

The movement of protest began in the British Isles, and, though it spread throughout the world, the British and Irish peoples were its most vigorous upholders. The islanders expressed their discontent in mass meetings, processions, broadcasts, letters to the press, letters to members of parliament and cabinet ministers, and above all in hearty resistance to particular instances of bureaucratic tyranny. The most popular slogans were, 'Less efficiency, more freedom', and 'Less producing, more living', and above all 'We won't be robots'. I could not but smile when I compared the grievances of my countrymen of this period with the disheartening inroads into civil

liberty which had occurred in my own time and had been far less indignantly resisted. The dominant note of this movement was the insistence on individuality. Comic relief was given by processions of 'typical Englishmen'. The marchers, or rather the disorderly stragglers, were persons made up to represent 'unstereotyped types' and odd individuals in the present world and in all ages. Nineteenth-century tramps, and vagabonds of every period were the most popular figures. They were represented as unshaven, ragged, filthy, drunk, and friendly. Each was got up to be as unlike as possible to every other. These jostled with medieval minstrels, friars, and fools, scatter-brained philosophers, artists, research scientists entangled in electric wires and test-tubes. This motley host of ancient and modern eccentrics strayed along the street in studied disorder, singing songs of freedom, blithely recalcitrant to the efforts of the comic 'officials' who fussed beside them, trying to get them into regular formation. In contrast with this rabble might come a batch of well-drilled robots, made up to look like machinery and linked together by red tape or electric cables. All this buffoonery the real bureaucrats regarded with contempt and indignation. In their view it was a symptom of a sinister weakening of social morale, a neurotic craving for anarchy, a denial of the dignity of the human species.

The agitation and the comic relief welled up in every country. The governments were forced to promise certain immediate reforms, and the World Government set up an independent commission to investigate the whole matter. It was characteristic of the improved condition of the human race that the commission's report was issued within three months, and that, although it firmly condemned the bureaucrats for their unnecessary officialism, it also won their respect by its insight into their point of view. But its proposals for reform they strongly condemned. There was to be a vast system of special courts of appeal to deal with cases of alleged officialism and interference with liberty. The most notorious bureaucrats in every

country were to be dismissed. Worst of all, in future no family should have more than three members in the bureaucracy at any time. After much debate the World Government decided to accept the plan, with a few modifications. Thereupon the bureaucrats, honestly convinced of their own importance and the rightness of their ideals, announced that they alone, who were carefully selected and carefully educated for their task, could possibly know what was needed in the life of the world society. They frankly claimed to be a true aristocracy; and in this emergency they were forced, they said, to suspend the constitution and resume dictatorial power. The World Parliament and the swarm of national parliaments, composed almost entirely of members of the bureaucratic class, and secretly in sympathy with their claims, put up only a half-hearted resistance. In all the states except Britain, Ireland, and Tibet, the oldest and the newest homes of freedom, the coup d'etat was at once successful, for the chiefs of the World Police were of course members of the bureaucracy. In Ireland the local government split, and the country boiled up in disorder. The British and Tibetan governments made a stand for freedom. Guarding themselves with their unarmed police, they arrested the local bureaucratic leaders and appealed to the local World Police to defend the constitution. But the World Police carried out the instructions of its Chief Constable. Armed forces appeared at the two 'rebel' parliaments. Much to the distress of the police, the rebels made an effort to resist, and fire-arms had to be used against them. Several members of the two parliaments were slightly damaged by shots fired at their legs. The governments were duly arrested, along with their supporters.

But the peoples of the earth were by now far too spirited to accept dictatorship, even a dictatorship which was manifestly benevolent according to its lights. A general strike started in Britain, was taken up in Tibet, Iceland, America, New Zealand, and developed into a universal campaign of civil disobedience. From the point of view of

the bureaucrats the human race had gone quite mad. For these hosts of civil servants and politicians were very conscious of their own integrity and fundamental human loyalty. They were not Nazis or 'wicked capitalists' but conscientious servants of mankind, and, moreover, demonstrably superior members of it. Their only fault was that they had served not wisely but too well. This one fault, however, they could not recognize. They attributed the whole agitation to 'subversive elements', to ne'er-do-weels who could do nothing but stir up trouble. But the agitation increased. Only minimum services were maintained. In a world of limitless wealth people settled down to a life of penury till liberty could be restored. Meanwhile there was still complete freedom of expression. There were great demonstrations and protest meetings, and many serious clashes between rioters and police. Yet, though feeling was now very strong, there was practically no bloodshed, for the temper of mankind had indeed improved. But the new spirit was still frail.

As the conflict developed, both sides became more exasperated and harsh. Matters came to a head in London. Huge crowds converged on Whitehall and broke the windows of the World Government Building. The Chief World Emissary himself appeared on a balcony to appease the crowd, but as luck had it some one threw a bottle which hit him in the face and covered him with blood. Suddenly the repressed brutishness of both sides surged up and broke away all restraint. Anyone dressed as a bureaucrat was roughly handled. The authorities were forced to make a display of their fire-arms. This merely roused the mob to fury. They charged the building. The guards fired at their legs, but the majority rushed on, overwhelmed the guards, broke into the building, and set fire to it. The officials were badly knocked about, but even at this stage no serious hurt was committed. A fresh force of the World Police was brought to the spot. Not realizing that they were confronted by a brawl rather than a bloody revolution, the new-comers used machine guns.

Owing to the practise of low firing there were very few serious casualties, but the crowd, far from being quelled, rushed forward, regardless of further casualties. There was a massacre. But thousands upon thousands of furious citizens now poured in from all directions. The police, now completely surrounded and fighting for their lives, fired indiscriminately. Walls of dead and dying surrounded them. But the people of London were by now possessed by savage and reckless hate. All the barbarous impulses that had been so thoroughly tamed during the last three centuries suddenly took charge. As the wall of dead rose, new attackers climbed over it, only to add their own dead bodies to its height. Presently ammunition ran out. The mob broke in and murdered everyone of the defenders. By now large reinforcements of World Police were converging on London. Desperate struggles took place in the suburbs.

At this stage the Lord Mayor of London made a radio appeal by loud speakers in the streets, urging the World Police to retire, and the people to go home. Meanwhile the metropolitan unarmed police, who were popular with the London crowds, were sent out to all the danger spots and coolly took charge of their rather weary fellow citizens. Seeing that the mobs were now well in hand, the armed police retired.

The news of London's orgy spread by radio over the world. Other cities flared up in rage, and one by one were persuaded into quietness again. At last a statement was broadcast by a large section of the World Police in every country saying that they would no longer carry out the orders of their bureaucratic chiefs. It was now clear to the bureaucrats that the game was up. The World Government resigned, and many national governments followed its example. In Japan the ministers committed hara-kiri. Many of the chiefs of the great public services, national and international, surrendered their offices. Most of them reaffirmed their ideals but recognized that mankind was not yet ready to live up to so high an

aim. Others recanted. For a whole month there was scarcely any public authority anywhere in the world except the local governments of Tibet, Britain, and Iceland. There was no world government. The police and the civil services were without their administrative heads. Yet there was no disorder. Everything functioned normally, in the spirit of benevolent anarchy. This condition could not last indefinitely, but no one had any authority to alter it. Earnest discussion took place by radio; and from this, as in a world- wide Friends' Meeting, it emerged that the 'feeling of the meeting' was in favour of reinstating the old governments and the old bureaucratic class in general, and charging them with the task of putting the world on its feet again. Meanwhile the new political and social constitution could be thought out in detail. Thus for the time being the old governing class, chastened by its experience, retained its position, save for a small number of fanatics and adventurers who were dismissed. It is impossible that a revolution should end in this manner in any community that had not already far surpassed our present level of integrity and intelligence.

Thus the human race successfully avoided the danger of taking the first step towards reviving class dominance. With the warning of the recent troubles constantly in mind mankind gradually acquired a new temper and tradition of morality in public life. It was but an extension of the new temper and tradition of personal relations which had resulted in the slight but general increase in the will for the light. Once it had become firmly rooted, this new temper grew with surprising vigour. Whereas formerly honesty and generosity had been regarded as ideals difficult to attain, and men had on the whole expected their neighbours to treat them scurvily and their rulers to be tyrannical and corrupt, now honesty and generosity were increasingly 'in the air'. Both in private and in public affairs men confidently expected to be treated decently.

iii. PROGRESS

The human race was now able to carry on without distraction enterprises that had been started as soon as world unity had been attained. Industrial production and distribution had to be fully developed in such a way as to afford security, comfort, and full growth of body and mind to every human being between the poles. Resources of tidal and volcanic power had to be exploited to their full extent. For the needs of the race would soon be a thousandfold what they had been. New and better synthetic materials must be invented, and some old materials must be produced in far larger quantities. There must be new and plentiful building materials and standardized parts of buildings, more durable plastics for articles of domestic use, better and far more plentiful fabrics for clothing, better food, better transport, far more lavish educational equipment.

All this production must be done in such a way that 'sub-human' work could be carried on solely by machines. Of course, so long as the standard of human capacity remained what it was, many world-citizens would be content with low-grade work; but no human being must ever have to spend his life on work below his capacity, and none must ever be tied to a kind of work for which his special aptitudes were unsuited. There must be a great advance in vocational psychology, and therefore much research.

Psychology, indeed, now came into its own. Human culture in the scientific age had at first been dominated by physics and chemistry, then by biology; and now finally it was largely influenced by psychology. As the understanding of human nature increased, great advances were made in educational method. Crippling neuroses gradually disappeared. A composite photograph of mankind would have shown an expression of frankness, confidence, and friendliness such as in an earlier age was to be seen only in those who were

outstandingly fortunate in their genes and their nurture.

By now it was universally realized that fullness of life, though it involved ample material means, was not to be measured simply in terms of luxury, but rather in terms of bodily well-being and the higher ranges of bodily and mental skill. A rather sharp distinction was made in the new order between articles of mere luxury and articles needed for the development of body or mind. Industry was planned so as to make the former difficult to procure, the latter easy. Luxury was by no means condemned, but the unlimited power of the world-society to produce luxury articles was deliberately restricted, so that though every one could procure a certain amount of pure luxury with his 'luxury allowance', no one could gather to himself masses of choice articles which it was beyond his power to use or appreciate. Thus the more flamboyant kinds of clothing, though not banned, were produced in very small quantities; while simpler materials and patterns were plentiful and various. Essential foods were obtainable everywhere in lavish amounts. Luxury foods and the more precious kinds of wine were difficult to come by. Serviceable motor cars and aeroplanes were available for every citizen. Luxury cars and planes were to be obtained only by the fanatic who was willing to stint himself in all other respects. Choice jewellery was almost unobtainable, and was used mainly for communal rather than individual display, but simple trinkets, hand-made by craftsmen steeped in some local tradition or venturing upon new forms, were available for all who wanted them. In general the aim was to use the vast mechanical resources of the race not to complicate but to simplify life, and to bring all that was needed within the reach of all. Full use was to be made of machinery while ensuring that machinery should not dominate. In the old days the needs of ordinary people were catered for incidentally by enterprises undertaken for private profit. The result was a constant appeal to the more primitive and more insistent impulses of men, and a gross degradation of

sensibility and integrity. But now that public need was the first claim it was necessary to decide what the public need really was, and which needs were most to be fostered. Industry had to be planned accordingly.

The world which now began to emerge was of very different type from the old one. While nearly everyone was in some style a worker, the 'working class' was rapidly vanishing. No longer did the bulk of the population work for long hours and for insufficient pay, living more or less in squalor, and failing to secure that small amount of self-expression without which mental health is impossible. The general frustration and misery of the past had produced a characteristic mentality, now vanished. In politics, for instance, frustration had expressed itself in a gnawing vindictiveness which later on seemed merely silly. At each end of the political spectrum, and indeed to a great extent throughout it, fear, jealousy, hatred, and a frustrated itch for self-display, were dominant motives, though often appearing under the guise of righteous indignation. Hence Fascism, Nazism, and the baser sort of Communism. By now, Fascism and Nazism had of course long ago vanished. Communism, which at one time had made so great a contribution to thought and feeling and institutions, was no longer a fanatical creed. In a sense all sane men were communists, since all accepted much of the Marxian social analysis; but the militant Communist Party had long since vanished, and the Marxian attempt to do without the primacy of the fundamental values, love and wisdom, was recognized as a perversity due to the poisonous atmosphere of the machine age.

Instead of the 'working class' there were increasing millions of people whose standard of life we should call 'comfortable middle-class', but whose minds were very different from our middle-class minds, since they were no longer moulded by the desperate necessity of trying to get the better of their neighbours in the commercial dog-fight. Most men were now salaried servants of the

world state or some national state or local or vocational authority. Three classes alone received no salary, but drew, when necessary, the liberal maintenance allowance to which every citizen was entitled when he needed it. The small and curious class of private capitalists, whose function it was to provide society with the benefits of daring private enterprise in industrial pioneering, lived on profits, but were prevented by sumptuary laws and taxation from attaining more than the tolerated degree of affluence. Their employees were skilled workers of all kinds, attracted by the possibility of somewhat higher pay and shorter hours than were allowed in state service, and by a sense of adventure in a small common enterprise. Most of them were persons who had saved up their luxury allowances to contribute to the equipping of the factory. Thus they themselves were capitalists. The aim of the original capitalist or group of capitalists who founded the concern was always to build up a co-operative and self-governing society in which all the members were in some degree capitalists.

The second class of unsalaried persons were the artists and writers who started professional life in complete dependence on the maintenance allowance and such extra help as they could obtain from their parents or friends. They might also gain state 'subsidies of merit'; but in the main they hoped to live on the sale of their works, since in the new world the demand for books, pictures, musical performances, and so on, was far greater than in our own day.

The third unsalaried class was made up of the born idlers and tramps. These, a small minority, either supplemented their maintenance allowance with an occasional day's labour, or frankly depended wholly on the 'dole'. Although the great majority of these people were socially quite useless, the world society could easily afford to keep them in idleness for the sake of the few outstandingly creative or critical minds that now and then emerged from among

them. Many of these inveterate tramps were people with strong anti-social impulses. They regarded all social organization as a nuisance and as 'fair game' for the predatory wanderer. The fact that they were nevertheless tolerated and even fostered is a measure of the stability and the wisdom of the leaders of the new world. These ne'er-do-weels were very few, for improved education had greatly reduced the number of merely warped minds. These were apparently not warped but innately individualistic. Some were individualistic to such an extent that they refused to avail themselves of the dole, and lived almost entirely by pilfering, sometimes by audacious highway robbery. To me it seemed at first incredible that this sort of thing should be permitted in this almost Utopian society. But these 'outlaws' were a minute section of the individualist class, and anyone who suffered from their attentions could claim compensation from the state. There was therefore no attempt to eradicate them. When they were caught they were very leniently punished, except when they had done bodily hurt to their victims.

In the vocational representative system which ran parallel to the parliamentary system, the capitalists, writers, artists, and tramps had their own voting colleges, along with the salaried occupations, such as engineers and teachers. The tramps and outlaws, however, very seldom exercised their right to vote.

The lives of salaried persons of course varied very much. The aim was to provide that in boring occupations hours should be short, and in interesting work long. Exceptionally, some monotonous work involved rather long hours, but in such cases the workers were chosen from the psychological class who thrive best on monotonous occupations in which they can day-dream. On the other hand some enthralling work was restricted to short hours because of the strain which it involved.

One striking institution, first tried out in North America, but

immediately copied in China and soon adopted throughout the world, was the Corps of Emergency. This consisted of workers from almost every occupation chosen for their versatility and enterprise, and kept in training and on full pay, to be moved hither and thither as occasion required. Thus, if for some reason a river had to be deflected, a mountain removed, a sea drained, thousands of civil engineers were available without disturbance to existing enterprises. The Corps fulfilled the function of the unemployed in the old capitalist system, but with a very different temper.

The professed aim of the World Government was to secure a right balance of specialization and all-roundness. Thus the more specialized a man's trade, the more he was encouraged to take up outside activities. Every individual, of course, was educated primarily to be a developed personality and a responsible citizen. He was given an outline of world-history and of the modern world culture. He was also deliberately educated for breadth of sympathy and understanding. Whatever his special capacities, he was trained to some degree of insight into the activities of others. It was constantly urged upon him that his prime duty was twofold, both to develop his own special aptitude and to comprehend and foster so far as possible the special aptitudes of others.

The World Government jealously exercised its right to supervise all national educational systems so as to ensure that the essential principles of education for citizenship in the new world should not be violated; should in fact be vigorously practised. The aim was, not only to impart a clear outline of man's story, along with some detail of national and provincial history, but also to foster the two supremely important human impulses, the will for community and the will for intelligence. Not only as between individuals but also as between peoples specialization was carefully restricted. Inevitably at first some countries were predominantly industrial, others agricultural, but it was deliberately designed that this specialization should be based

on an underlying self-sufficiency. This surprised me, for the danger of war between the peoples had by now vanished. Why, then, this insistence on self-sufficiency? Partly, self-sufficiency was a result of natural economic development. With the great advance of physical and chemical technique, industry had become far less dependent on locality. Anything from food to typewriters could now be produced in almost any district, for the primary raw materials were vegetable tissues and the very common minerals.

But there was another reason for increasing self-sufficiency. At first sight it seemed a reason pointing in the opposite direction. The aim of the world government was the development of the world as a whole, not of any one people. Local cultural differences were therefore to be fostered, since it was realized that mental diversity was the breath of life. This, it might seem, would involve fostering economic specialization in each country, since economic diversity should produce mental diversity. But extreme psychological specialization was now recognized to be very dangerous. The highly specialized factory worker of the past had been but the caricature of a real man. The agricultural worker who knew of nothing but turnips had been equally limited. For a people to be capable of significant cultural variation it must have within its range a great diversity of activities. Persons in each walk of life must be open to the direct and constant influence of persons whose occupations, and therefore their mentalities, are different. A highly specialized national economy breeds a lop-sided mental culture. In a world of highly specialized nations this danger can be partly avoided by the insistence on foreign travel; but not effectively; for travel is either a holiday occupation, in which case its effect though valuable, is not far-reaching; or a way of life, in which case the traveller is mentally uprooted from his native culture.

The aim of the leaders of the new world was a high degree not only

of national but of provincial self-sufficiency. Thus in Britain, where economic organization centred on the tidal generators of the west coast of Scotland, industry was not allowed to concentrate in that district. Improved transmission made it possible to take the electric current into every part of the island, and to scatter the new bright factories and workers' dwellings throughout the agricultural regions. On the other hand much of the former congested industrial area of Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Midlands was once more largely agricultural. In consequence, not only the Scottish and Welsh nations but the new-old English provinces of Wessex, East Anglia, Northumbria, Mercia, and so on, developed each its own limited but vigorous autonomy, and made its own contribution to the English culture. England in turn was becoming far more self-sufficient than of old. Improved agriculture and reduced population made it possible for the three British peoples to feed themselves, though there was always a large import of luxury foods from abroad. Britain had long ago ceased to be 'the workshop of the world', since every country was in the main its Own workshop, but Britain's imports were 'paid for' by the export of the special lines of high-quality machinery and fabrics for which the British were becoming famous. Trade, in fact, was becoming more and more an exchange not of necessities, but of products which local genius produced for the amplification and embellishment of life throughout the world. Each people aimed at being basically self-sufficient but also at producing for the world economy some special class of goods which could be produced with unique success by its local tradition and skill. Each also prided itself both on its cosmopolitan and on its national culture, both on its insight into the common human tradition and on its peculiar contribution to that ever-exfoliating culture.

Thus the British, never a highly cultured race in the intellectual sense, claimed with some justice that they could still teach the world through the example of their political life, with its anomalous but effective

institutions and its temperate and forbearing spirit. And though the population of Britain remained relatively unresponsive to literature, English writers, and particularly English poets, wrote for the world and were read by the world more than the writers of any other land. This was partly due to the importance which the luck of history had given to the English language, for at this time it had become the 'second language' of all other peoples, and was being constantly enriched by extensive borrowings from other languages, to such an extent that the Englishman of that age considered the English of our day as archaic as Chaucer's English.

The Germans still gave the world great music, monumental works of philosophy (increasingly often written in English) and meticulous applications of science. Their organizing ability expressed itself throughout the world in the great preponderance of Germans in the control of cosmopolitan institutions such as the World Commissions for Health, Postage, Radio, Transport. Indeed there were those who murmured that the Germans had at last achieved their dream of world empire. The Russians, freed from their delusion of imperialism, rightly claimed the world's admiration for their powers of insight into personality and their spirit of comradeship. The Tibetans, ever-respected for the glorious victory that they had won against the forces of darkness through their spiritual discipline, were universally regarded as the main fastness of the spirit. The more subtle and more diverse Indians, however, were becoming the main interpreters of spiritual experience to the rest of the world. The North Americans, now the leading pioneers in industrial invention, and also in man's ever-increasing astronomical exploration, claimed in addition that they were leaders in the important task of digesting and co-ordinating the other cultures. The Chinese, who in virtue of sheer numbers and the continuity of their civilization played an immense part in forming the culture of the new world, ensured that the ordinary man should indeed within his powers be a cultured man, and

provided him with a subtle and humane pattern of personal conduct. Thus at the outset of the phase of Utopian development there was great cultural diversity among the peoples. Of course, to excel in any one cultural direction an individual had not necessarily to belong to the people which was its chief exponent. Indeed, in every cultural sphere outstanding contributions might be made by individuals of any nation. Moreover, some cultural activities were far more international than others. Most of the natural sciences, for instance, depended on many peoples equally. But on the whole, and in the long run, each people gained its special reputation, and to excel in any sphere a man must if possible start by absorbing the contribution of the people that had done most in that sphere. Not that the talent of a people remained fixed for ever. Reputations might be lost, and new ones made. Indeed each people was capable of surprising the world with achievement in directions hitherto unattempted by it. Few would have expected that the Russians, after an age of fanatical materialism, would develop a special aptitude for mystical experience; still fewer that the minute and storm-racked population of the Shetland Isles would come to excel in philosophy to such an extent that the new little university of Lerwick vied with the great German and Indian seats of learning in this respect.

Though everything possible was done to encourage each people to develop its special capacities, certain essential principles were ensured in all states, namely those customs, institutions, and values which were deemed necessary for the welfare of mankind as a whole and the further development of human capacity. Thus in education, while each people and each large minority within a people was permitted to arrange curricula and the temper of its schools and colleges in accord with its peculiar needs and tradition, all must conform to the fundamental principles of the new world, educating for personality and world-citizenship, and the full expression of the potentiality of man. Similarly in respect of law,

though each country preserved its legal system mainly intact, all must in respect of such vital matters as civil liberty, health, the prevention of economic exploitation, fulfil certain essential requirements. If in any respect its national legal system fell short of the common standard of mankind, changes, however drastic, had to be made. But indeed, in respect of law there was a strong tendency to abolish all national oddities and to work out a single uniform system of world law.

Now that the new world order was firmly established the main concern of the World Government was the detailed organization of human affairs so as to secure that future' generations should have the best possible conditions. In the economic field the aim was to strike such a balance between producer's goods and consumer's goods that, though present conditions should be as favourable as was necessary for physical and mental health, future conditions should be far better. This involved a great deal of research and bold planning by the World Economic Development Commission. At the same time the World Health Ministry was able to organize a well-coordinated attack on disease, and to secure that the rising generation should be more healthy than their predecessors.

iv. THE POPULATION PROBLEM

Of all the problems that confronted the World Government the most difficult was that of population. During the period of the Russian and Chinese Empires and subsequently under the World Empire, population in most countries had very seriously declined, and the average age had increased. The French had dwindled to a sprinkling of disheartened old people in a swarm of German and Russian invaders. Yet Germany and Russia themselves had suffered a startling decline' of population. China under the Empire was badly depleted. The Japanese, whose sufferings had been worse than

those of any other people, were almost exterminated. The Indians had multiplied after gaining their independence from Britain, but had declined heavily under the Russian and Chinese Empires. The British, reduced during the tyranny to a handful of semi-barbarians in a land of ruined factories, had later, under the influence of Tibetan missionaries, conceived a new national purpose even under the heel of the tyranny, and had concentrated on reproduction so effectively that the decline was stayed and these island peoples became sufficiently vigorous to undertake rebellion after rebellion. At the founding of the World Federation, Great Britain was inhabited by some eight million human beings.

The two Empires had tried to stem the downfall of world population by forbidding birth-control and persecuting the childless. These methods had little effect, for under the empires life was not worth living.

While numbers were declining, the average level of intelligence was declining also. The more intelligent were more reluctant than the dullards to burden themselves with children in a hostile world; or else, climbing into wealth and-comfort without any social or religious ideals to stimulate them into assuming the burden, they avoided it.

One of the first acts of the World Federal Government was to set up a Ministry of Parenthood, charged not only with stemming the general decline of population but also with securing that intelligent stocks should not dwindle while dull stocks increased. The first task was to make parenthood attractive to people of average and superior intelligence. This was done partly by heavy subsidies. Every intelligent child, far from being a burden to its parents, became a financial asset. Great efforts were made to free childbirth of its distress and danger, and to ensure that the upbringing of children should not demand the enslavement of the mother during the best years of her life. With the aid of communal meals, communal

nurseries and labour-saving devices within the home the mothers were freed and yet the home was preserved as the fundamental unit of social life. All girls were trained in mothercraft. The Ministry also undertook careful propaganda to persuade all young people that parenthood was at once their supreme privilege and their first obligation; the supreme privilege, because only through marriage and the rearing of a family could they know community in its most intimate form; the supreme obligation because in the present condition of the species the 'most urgent need was that the decline of population should be checked, and that there should be a lavish supply of vigorous and intelligent young. For this age of mankind's history, they said, was the true age of sunrise. The period from the origin of the species to the overthrow of the world tyranny had been merely the long-drawn-out dawn. But with the founding of the Federation of Mankind bright light had suddenly appeared over the horizon. At last the whole prospect was clear and golden. Not only must population cease to decline; the needs of the new world were such that the number of human beings must be increased to a hundred times their present number. The world-resources were ample, and for the fulfilment of man's potentiality it was necessary to have a world of many scores of great diversified peoples. But more important even than numbers was quality. It must be the task of each generation to secure that its successor should be more healthy, more intelligent, more generous, more sane, and more creative than earlier generations. Every young couple must surely desire this for its own children, and must covet the rarest of parental glories, namely to bring into the world some outstanding genius, whether in political action, science, art, or spiritual leadership.

Much was done in order to foster intelligence and integrity in the rising generation. Lavish research produced at last very reliable mental tests. Defectives and certain types prone to criminality were sterilized. Dullards were severely discouraged from having children.

Parents of good average intelligence were of course helped to have large families. Those of exceptionally high intelligence were handsomely subsidized. Outstanding children were treated as the world's most precious possession, and trained with the utmost care and skill to enable them to make full use of their powers.

v. ARISTOCRATS AND DEMOCRATS

Within a few generations this policy of fostering intelligence and integrity began to have surprising results. Society began to be stratified in ranks of ability. People tended to confine their mating within their own rank of capacity. Consequently the first signs of a new caste system appeared. Serious problems were thus raised, and two world-wide political parties, opposed to one another with increasing emphasis, advocated opposite policies. One party, the Aristocrats, favoured the acceptance of the caste tendency, and even the deliberate breeding of specialized human types for specialized functions, including a caste of world-organizers or rulers. The other party, the Democrats, insisted that, though inevitably there must be great differences between men in respect of mental and spiritual developments, and some differences were no doubt desirable, it was important to prevent such divergences from broadening into unbridgeable gulfs. The distinctive attribute of man, they said, was not specialism but versatility, not social organization of types alien to each other, but free community among mutually understanding and respecting persons. For man, the way of aristocracy was the way of insectification and of death.

Against this view it was insisted that society was like an organism composed of highly specialized cells. A man's body could not be made up wholly of brain cells; nor could a highly developed society consist wholly of the highest possible types of individuals. The Democrats agreed, but added that human society was far more like

a brain than a body. Its body was the material fabric of civilization. Itself was a cerebrum which, whatever the specialization of its cells, must act as a whole. Every unitary member must be at least able to appreciate the rhythm of the whole. In fact, human society must be human society, must be a genuine community. Just as in the body the cells must not be so different that they could not hold together in organic relation, so in a human community the members must not be so different that they could not hold together in the distinctively human relation of true community. Or rather, it did not matter how great the differences. The greater they were the better for mutual enrichment, so long as it remained possible for every member to recognize the humanity of every other whom he might encounter, to speak to him as man to man, to feel fundamentally at one with him, to welcome his differences for the sake of his essential kinship, nay to value them for their enriching power.

Some of the Aristocrats were inclined to agree with all this; but they held that in the time of transition from semi-humanity to full humanity the race must inevitably consist of an élite and a commonalty, and that the élite must be segregated and given special privileges and responsibilities. True, replied the Democrats. The élite clan must carry forward the advance of humanity, must do all the creative work. Their capacity to do this is in fact their supreme privilege. They need no other, save the special environment and instruments needed for their special occupations. But if they come to demand as of right that inferior types should exist beneath them to do the baser work of society, they are being false to their own humanity. Sub-normal individuals, of course, there will inevitably be in any society, and they must be cared for and if possible helped to serve in some humble capacity; but no society can be healthy, can be really human, if it requires that some of its members should fall short of that level of mentality needed for intelligent partnership in the common enterprise.

The Aristocrats argued that the urgent task was to improve the calibre of the creative intelligence which led the human advance, gradually specializing all the castes for their peculiar functions, the clerks for clerking, the manuals for hand-labour, and so on. The Democrats demanded that the main effort should be to raise the general level and blot out the incipient caste systems.

This great dispute was carried on for centuries, and became increasingly violent as its solution became more urgent. Successive world-governments adopted conflicting policies. Some peoples inclined more to one view, some to the other. The upshot of this confused and ineffective policy was that the caste structure gradually developed automatically. It became possible to tell a man's caste even by the appearance of his naked body. The heavy-limbed labourer, the brisk and bird-like clerk, the strong-armed, weak-legged mechanic, could be singled out in the swimming bath. Already there was a movement to provide special accommodation for each caste and to forbid intercourse.

Little by little, however, it became clear even to members of the Aristocratic Party that the world was once more falling sick, and that the source of trouble was the caste system. Sharp conflicts arose between the castes, and particularly between the more privileged and the less privileged. Official secretiveness and official meddlesomeness began to return. Fundamental human liberties were imperceptibly but ceaselessly curtailed, save for the élite. The sacred scriptures of the race began to echo reproachfully in men's ears. In spite of the improved intelligence and goodwill of the race, the bulk of the privileged class found reason for clinging to their privileges. It seemed that the world must sooner or later be torn once more by a bitter class conflict and a civil war. But once more the improvement in mentality, slight though it was, made the difference between disaster and precarious triumph. Many even of the

supporters of the incipient caste system could not shut their eyes to the fact that their party was drawn almost entirely from the élite alone, that the rest of the race was violently opposed to their policy, and that oppression, though tempered with decency, was once more appearing.

As so often before, a crisis was brought about by a change in the method of production. Through a long series of new discoveries and inventions a new and incomparably mightier source of mechanical power was at last brought into action. This source was sub-atomic; but whether it lay in the disintegration of atoms or in the actual conversion of the ultimate material particles into free energy, or some more obscure activity, I could never clearly understand. Its impact on society, anyhow, was obvious. Both tidal electricity and volcanic power were quickly superseded. Power could now be generated anywhere on the earth's surface, and to a limitless extent. The generators, however, though small were extremely complex and delicate. They were dangerous too, for mishandling might easily lead to the devastation of a whole province. Only a highly trained physicist of superior intelligence could control them. The adoption of the new process throughout the world was restricted by the lack of a supply of practical intelligence of sufficiently high grade; and also by the fact that the huge class of workers connected with the old sources of power were too specialized to be turned over to any other skilled work. Owing to the caste tendency they had become 'bound intelligences' of an exaggerated type, apt for the routine problems of their profession, but utterly incapable of versatility.

Thus the work of adapting the structure of society to the new means of production was very difficult. Physicists had to be trained in huge numbers; the old engineering profession had somehow to be transformed. But how? Some advocated pensioning off the whole population of them for life. Some few did not scruple to suggest the lethal chamber.

This state of affairs brought the caste problem to a head. Discussion was world-wide and heated. The radio sets of all the peoples resounded with earnest speeches from those who advocated the abolition of caste and a rapid change over, and on the other hand from those who urged a slow transformation both of the caste system and of the productive method. There were some who would have sacrificed sub-atomic power altogether in order to preserve the caste principle. But to common sense it had long ago become obvious that the caste principle was harmful anyhow. Many even of the Aristocrats were by now convinced at heart. In an earlier age this would not have prevented them from fighting to the death for their privileges, but the temper of men had indeed improved. By an overwhelming majority the Parliament of the World accepted the principle that henceforth everything possible should be done to raise the general level of intellectual and moral calibre rather than to produce a caste of cultural and social leaders supported by specialized castes of various types of bound intelligence. It was recognized that special aptitudes would always be needed and must be developed to the full, so far as they did not interfere with the fundamental human identity of all members of the species.

Certain principles of policy were laid down for the guidance of the World Government. The transition to sub-atomic power must be tempered to the needs of the old engineering caste. These unfortunate servants of the human species must be given the choice of either accepting a pension, or learning some new work, or continuing their present occupation in normal circumstances, even if this involved slowing down the rate of transition to sub-atomic power. Inter-marriage between castes must be encouraged. Social segregation of castes must be prevented. Individuals with extreme specialized characters must be forbidden to marry individuals of the same type. And so on.

The dissolution of the incipient caste system formed the end of an epoch. Hitherto the great conflicts which occurred in the human race had been in the main uncontrolled and gravely damaging. In tribal warfare, national warfare, and class struggles the organs of humanity tore at one another in blind fury, so that their common life was at all times crippled and abject, and every human being was to some extent warped. Not only were the types of cell within the great organism but feebly united but often by nature they were lethal to one another. Each was to the other an army of disease cells. Even during that long first phase of the career of the species some conflicts had of course been successfully integrated into the life of the whole, or at least into the life of a whole nation or class. But henceforth, conflicts were far better subordinated to the needs of the whole human race. They ceased to be desperate internecine life-and-death struggles, and became merely internal strains, needed to preserve the taut balance of the common life, like the tension between the antagonist muscles of a limb.

Two conditions, it seemed to me, assured this new sanity of the race. The first was a social order in which every individual who was not gravely sub-normal could count on a life of self-expression and co-operation. The second was the widespread, heartfelt, and not merely verbal acceptance of the fundamental religious aim of social life, namely the development of man's capacity for personality in service of the spirit.

9 - NEW WORLD

- i. A WORLD OF VILLAGES
- ii. VILLAGE CULTURE
- iii. THE FORWARDS

i. A WORLD OF VILLAGES

THE AGE that now dawned was one of almost explosive progress, explosive, yet controlled. Unlike the industrial revolution which is familiar to readers of this book, it was not dependent on licentious economic individualism. Its energy was derived, of course, very largely from the self-assertive itch of able individuals, but the means of satisfying this craving were now in the main centrally planned and socially useful.

Superficially at least I was able to grasp the material achievement of the race in this period, but its cultural life henceforth increasingly escaped me, outraging my comprehension.

Nevertheless it seems worth while to describe the main features of the new order, not only because it was characteristic of the human race for a very long time but also because of its novelty and its significance for our own age. At the outset the innate calibre of the average human being was not appreciably higher than our own. Men were on the whole no more intelligent, and had no more capacity for generosity than we have; but, owing to the world-wide victory of the will for the light and the founding of a new tradition of moral integrity and a more wholesome economy, average individuals behaved far better. They lived normally far nearer the upper limit of their capacity. Instead of being constantly degraded by their environment, they were constantly braced and humanized. The rulers of the new world were not content with this. The whole social organization was dominated by the aim of continuously raising the average human capacity far beyond its present level.

The social order of the new world was very different from any earlier form. It might be described as at once 'super-modern' and yet in a way medieval. At bottom it depended on the special characters of

the new source of mechanical power. Two contrary but harmonized tendencies were at work. On the one hand mechanization was being steadily pushed forward; on the other there was a surprising recovery of manual skill and versatility in the life of the ordinary human being. On the one hand came the fulfilment of social unity and harmony, on the other the development of the individual's self-sufficiency and all-roundness.

This balanced economy was greatly assisted by the fact that power came to be accessible almost anywhere and was derived from quite ordinary materials. In our own age, no doubt, such an order would be far more difficult to establish, since in our stage of industrial evolution, power and manufacture both demand far-reaching organization, and the reducing of individuals to specialized cogs in the great machine. But even we, had we clear sight and the will for change, could at least set our faces in this direction.

Though at first the generators had been exceedingly cumbersome and delicate, the method was later transformed by a series of brilliant inventions, resulting from world-wide co-operative research. The standard generator, which supported the new civilization as combustion engines of all sorts support our own, was a subtle little machine which could be housed in a small barn. All the skill of the most expert physicists was needed for the making of this instrument; but the finished article, if not fool-proof, was reliable, potent, and versatile. It could be used not only for the production of power but also for the transmutation of the elements, and the synthesizing of a vast range of materials for use. As a power-unit it demanded little more skill than we use in motoring; but as an instrument for the varied synthesizing of materials it could employ every range of ability. Some elements and compounds could be produced easily by any competent person, some demanded rather special aptitude and training, some could be attempted only by the most brilliant masters, and some had to be undertaken in the great electro-chemical

factories.

Little by little every village came to have its own power plant. Even isolated houses generated their own power and could produce the simpler materials. In the main, however, the village was the unit of the new social system. Its strength was due to the scope and limitations of the standard generator, which employed directly and indirectly in village industry and agriculture between fifty and five hundred persons. The population of the average village consisted of the electro-magnetic engineers who saw to the generating of power, a number of craftsmen specialized in the production of the different kinds of material needed by the village, and another set of craftsmen who worked up the materials into articles of use. The former class of craftsmen, who were called 'atomic weavers', used as their raw material ingredients in the local earth. These they bombarded with sub-atomic particles, fired out by their mighty power plant, and thus they produced a great range of elements and compounds. The process demanded the same kind of skill as that of the old-time hand-spinners and weavers, the craftsmen vying with each other to produce the subtlest and most serviceable compounds and mixtures free from all impurities. These products were then worked up by craftsmen of the other class into crockery, furniture, cutting tools, building materials, clothing, and so on. The village textile workers clothed their fellow villagers in a great variety of simple but pleasing fabrics. Even isolated households, with their smaller plant, could provide themselves with many of the simpler materials. On the other hand some villages excelled so much in a particular line of craftsmanship that their products were in demand throughout the countryside. Only the most difficult materials and articles had to be brought to the village from the local factory, itself but a large and highly specialized village or cluster of villages around a great power house and synthesis station.

The food of the village was not produced by the synthesis of organic compounds under sub-atomic power. Agriculture was still practised. But the old kind of agriculture was rapidly giving way to direct photosynthesis of the essential food factors under sunlight. The village was surrounded by its private gardens and communal fields. The earth was impregnated with appropriate chemicals and sprinkled with the spore of an artificial 'organic molecule', which absorbed light and propagated itself till it covered the field with a green exfoliation. It was then gathered by a tractor armed with a sort of vacuum cleaner, washed, and worked up with other materials (similarly produced) into a great variety of food-stuffs. Throughout the summer the fields were harvested at intervals of about a week. The advantage of this system over the old-fashioned agriculture was that the land produced nearly ten times its former yield in food value.

Certain luxury foods, and every villager demanded his share of luxury, had to be procured from the local or national factory, and some specially choice articles from foreign lands. But any village with any pretension to taste and local pride could produce characteristic local variants of the essential synthetic 'meats', 'breads', 'cheeses', 'fruits', and drinks. Many an isolated homestead, if its food-making was managed with intelligence and artistry, could produce a simple but elegant meal to delight the most fastidious traveller.

Little by little the new processes transformed the whole economy of the world. A miniature aeroplane, driven by sub-atomic power derived from one of the rarer elements in the air, made it possible for everyone to travel anywhere at a speed which we should regard as more than adequate. For very long fast journeys people had to resort to air-liners and stratosphere-liners; but enterprising young men, and young women also, often went to the farthest countries in their own miniature planes. These little vehicles, commonly called 'flies', were rather smaller than our smallest gliders. The flyer lay full length on his

stomach in the coffin-like fuselage, which was padded to form a sort of bed.

Towns such as we know were disappearing. It was no longer necessary for people to live in great warrens, and there was a general demand for spaciousness. Owing to the invaluable fly, this was no longer incompatible with constant social intercourse. Many of the old towns were being demolished or thinned out so as to display to better advantage their few but valued architectural treasures. Slums had long since been turned into parks or agricultural land, with here and there a village. Of the old towns, the great ports alone fulfilled their old function, but these too were transformed. Save where ground space was restricted, as in New York, the congested area gave place to a host of villages separated by parks, market gardens, orchards, and fields. The great increase of local self-sufficiency might have been expected to kill sea-borne trade, but though at first the ports declined, a new tendency soon appeared. Sub-atomic power had released so great a fund of human energy and skill that many of the peoples began to specialize once more, not indeed in the production of basic necessities, but in luxury foodstuffs, luxury handicrafts, superfine machines and tools. A new and fierce competition arose between peoples that vied with each other to produce the very best articles of some particular type, such as optical instruments, textiles, furniture, and so on. This competition was not of the capitalist sort. Its motive was sheer pride of workmanship and enlightened patriotism. In consequence of all this new industrial specialization, sea-borne and air-borne trade, and the transport of goods along the great arterial roads of the continents, were still important social services. Every village in this new and prosperous world demanded that, in addition to its self-sufficiency in essentials and its pride in local craftsmanship, it should have a share in the choicest products of the excess energy of all peoples.

The average individual in the new order, in whatever land he lived, was either a village craftsman in one of the specialized sub-atomic skills or a sort of glorified subsistence farmer. On his personal acre or in the communal village fields he produced enough food for his family or co-operated in the communal production of the village. Enough was left over for taxes, bartering, trade with foreign lands, and lavish hospitality. As he would not be fully occupied by the new agriculture, unless he specialized in some difficult luxury product, he might also be enough of a craftsman with the sub-atomic machinery to make many of his household goods. His wife, possibly aided by the daughters, would prepare the food and keep the house in order. With the new power and the new labour-saving devices this would occupy no more than a couple of hours a day. The women would therefore lend a hand on the farm and probably spend a good deal of time on the production of clothes for the household. The children also would help on the farm, chiefly for their education. They would learn crafts for future use. The difference between the village agriculturalists and the village craftsmen was only one of emphasis. Both classes practised both activities, but while the agriculturalists supplemented their main occupation with simple crafts, the craftsmen were tillers and gardeners in their spare time.

As in the period that we call the Middle Ages, the great majority of men were agriculturalists to some extent; though minorities specialized completely, working in the factories, laboratories, and so on. In some districts specialism was more common than elsewhere. The different countries retained much of their characteristic pattern of life, but native customs were transmuted to accord with the general pattern and spirit of the new world. In some lands the ordinary village included, along with the houses of the village craftsmen, those of the local agriculturalists, who went to the communal or private fields each day by fly. Elsewhere the villages were populated mainly by craftsmen. The agriculturalists lived in scattered farm-houses

throughout the countryside. In some countries there were few specialists, in others many. In some, agriculture was mainly individualistic, though subject to strict control by the state or the village; in others it was carried on by communal village enterprise. In some, where population was sparse, the grown sons would set up new farms in the untamed land. In others, densely populated, the sons might either decide among themselves who was to take over the paternal farm, or all might stay on in the old home with their wives and families, supplementing its produce by trade in handicrafts. Sometimes the individual homestead expanded into a clan village. Sometimes a dwelling-house would be little more than a dormitory, all social activity being centred upon the village. Sometimes the villages themselves tended to be mentally dominated by some neighbouring town or metropolis. But even the greatest cities of the world were now organic clusters of villages, each making its own special contribution to the city's life.

ii. VILLAGE CULTURE

One remarkable institution was almost universal, namely the village 'meeting', a gathering of all the villagers for the planning of their communal life. The 'meeting' took a great variety of forms in different lands; but nearly always it centred on a building which combined many of the characters of a village hall, a church, and a public house. By some freak of the evolution of language it was known in all countries as the 'poob'. In it the village met every evening to yarn, play games, sing, drink their synthetic elixirs, smoke their synthetic tobaccos. It was also the communal eating-house where friends could meet over a meal, where many of the more sociable villagers fed every day, where the guests of the village were entertained, where village banquets were held. In it also the villagers met for concerts and lectures. In it at regular intervals they held their formal 'meetings' to discuss communal business and settle disputes. There

they also held their sacred ceremonies, such as marriages, funerals, initiations into citizenship, commemorations of great events, local, national, or cosmopolitan.

The poob housed the village sports trophies, historical relics, and art treasures. It contained also, normally behind curtains, but displayed on great occasions, the village 'ark'. This was at once a safe where valuable documents were preserved, a mascot, a sacred symbol, and a shrine. The ark was a great carved chest, often surmounted by a symbolic statue or picture. Sometimes it was the work of local craftsmen, sometimes it was a much treasured import from the nearby city or some foreign land. These objects varied greatly in aesthetic value and in symbolic power. A few were visited by pilgrims from every part of the planet. Others, though dear and sacred to the hearts of their own villagers, drew no attention from elsewhere. These symbols sometimes represented in a stylized manner incidents of special significance in the life of the village or the nation or mankind. Sometimes they symbolized love or reason or family, or the unity of the human race, or man's relation to the cosmos. On any solemn occasion, such as a marriage or one of the regular 'days of contemplation', the ark would be unveiled, and the assembled villagers would sit in silence for a few minutes before it. Music would follow, choral or instrumental, and then the brief and simple ceremony would be performed by the village headman or some specially deputed villager or stranger, either with some well-established form of words or impromptu, or perhaps with silent gesture. When the ceremony was over the ark would be once more veiled, and the villagers would drink or feed together.

Often the poob was simply the ancient village church or temple. In cities it might be the cathedral or the city hall or some other historic building. Meetings of essentially the same type as the village meetings, but more ritualistic, took place in all the cities and in each national metropolis. Specially important meetings occurred in the

four great cultural world-centres, Peking, Benares, Moscow, and San Francisco. But most exalted of all were the annual commemorations in sacred Lhasa.

Now that the economic problem had been solved, public attention was more and more directed to the cultural life of the race. Education was no longer dominated by the need to equip the young for the individualistic economic 'battle of life', nor yet by the demand for efficient and docile robots. Vocational training was still an important element in education, but it no longer devoured the whole time and attention of the young people. All children were brought up mainly in their native village. There were no boarding schools, great swarms of young things living in monastic isolation from the life of the world. Normally every child lived at home, and grew up in the normal environment of farm life, acquiring the various skills which were demanded by the varied life of adults. The village schools, though some were severely criticized for inefficiency or laxity, were in the main inspired by the new tradition of the race. In every country the teachers were jealously selected, and carefully trained in the great residential universities. In some countries a group of a score or a hundred neighbouring villages might combine to set up a common school for the brighter children of the whole district. Elsewhere this principle was rejected as tending to create a class division between the bright and the dull. Instead, both types were kept in the village school, but those who showed superior capacity were allowed to absent themselves from classes so long as they kept pace with the class work. The time thus gained they spent on developing their special powers or interests. A searching system of vocational selection skimmed off from the village schools those children of leaving age who had superior aptitude for particular occupations, and those who, through high general intelligence were fitted to become teachers or research workers in some branch of science or in technical philosophy, and also those whose special talents for

organizing and social intercourse were needed for industrial management, large-scale economic planning, and political leadership.

Potential artists were also selected. These might either go into residence at one of the great art schools or universities; or else, living on the maintenance grant, they could allow their genius to pursue its own course, eking out their meagre grant by selling their works. Of set purpose, and not through mere niggardliness, the state allowed the young man or woman who chose to avoid all state-organized professions only a bare minimum of help, whether his field of adventure was art or science or philosophy. Thus it was hoped to weed out those who had not actually 'got it in them' to produce creative work. On the other hand, no matter how preposterous or shocking to the public his products might be, the adventurer was at least assured of his minimum grant. And if it had any real merit (unperceived by the majority), and indeed often if it had no real merit at all, he might well succeed in selling. For, unless his work was both technically feeble and quite extravagantly idiosyncratic, it was very likely to find some sort of market in the new culturally conscious world. For in this new world-society pictures, statues, music, and writing were in demand, in some cases by the national, in others by the world-wide public, and in yet others by one or other of the special publics, each interested in some particular sphere or genre of art. It was not uncommon for a neglected young painter to leap from penury to affluence and fame on the sale of a single work. Many artists, however, had no such luck, and were forced to live on the maintenance grant alone throughout their lives. Some of these, ahead of their time, became world-famous after death, but the great majority were merely untalented enthusiasts. No one dreamed of grudging them their futile but harmless careers, since the community could well afford to maintain them. Indeed, since most farms kept open house for any stray travellers, and all villages provided meals

and beds for a constant flow of visitors, these artistic failures could eat and sleep their way over the face of the earth and use their maintenance grant wholly for clothing and extra comforts.

iii. THE FORWARDS

One class of persons in the new world-order it is very difficult to describe. They cannot be fitted into any of our categories. Moreover their function gradually changed and increased in importance. In the earlier period of the continually developing world-Utopia they were merely tramps with a bent for self-observation, observation of their fellow men and speculation about the universe. Later, they became a recognize and increasingly respected profession. They were called by an Indian name which was translated into the English of that period as 'the forwards'. In some respects they were the equivalent of the ancient 'Servants of the Light' who had played so great a part in the overthrow of the Tyranny, but their function was not to overthrow a social order and found another. In some ways they were a religious body, but they had no common creed save their common loyalty to the spirit. Like the medieval friars they were under a vow of poverty. A forward's belongings were never to be more than such as could be carried easily in a moderate-sized rucksack. They spent much of their time wandering from village to village and from continent to continent, much also in retreat in the austere and beautiful hostels which they themselves had built with their own hands. There they occupied themselves with communal farming and craftsmanship, and also with meditation and discussion. They practised 'psychic exercise', a form of self-discipline leading to super-normal clarity and depth of experience and to profound personal integration. On their travels they often helped in harvesting or other emergency work, and they took part in the social and religious life of the villages where they stayed, absorbing the atmosphere of the local poob and in return giving whatever was communicable in their own life of contemplation

and discipline. They were under no vow of chastity, but marriage and domesticity were rare among them. A few married couples lived in the hostels or wandered together, gipsy-like, with their children. The celibate sometimes permitted themselves sexual love, either with colleagues of the opposite sex or with persons outside the order. Women who bore children from these unions were not disgraced but honoured. The extramarital sexual relationships of the forwards were mostly passionate and brief. Long before their fire was quenched the consecrated partner would hear the call to pass on. Then in grief but without rancour, and in thankfulness for the past, the lovers would part.

It was the aim of every member of the order to participate so far as possible in all the great emotional experiences of the awakened human life, while at the same time remaining in his innermost self detached from all save fundamental loyalty to the spirit. Thus sexual love, and even marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood, must be broken off at the first sign of enthrallment, and on the other hand before the deep and pure current of emotion was contaminated by disillusionment. Every partner who entered into relation with one of the forwards knew well that this was the stern condition of the union. But the agony of these separations could be a fruitful agony for both members. It was the claim of many of the forwards themselves that in the desolate recovery from these partings they sometimes rose to their states of clearest vision. On the other hand those few who lived in permanent marriage were apt to pity rather than admire the majority, saying, 'Well, for each there is an appropriate way; but for us the undying, the life-giving union.'

In addition to the duty of detachment from ordinary human experiences, the forwards laid upon themselves a complementary obligation. They must in a manner preserve detachment even from their supreme consecrated task of spiritual adventure. This too, if it should become enthralling to the hungry individual spirit, or lead to

any slightest withdrawal of active sympathy from the life of the world, or again if it should be poisoned by any faint breath of self-pride, must be at once abandoned. The penitent would then impose on himself some weeks or months or even years of mundane life, as a farm worker or craftsman, a factory-hand, organizer, or teacher.

The twofold aim of the forwards was to explore the highest capacities of the human spirit and to impart their findings to the world. They were very widely respected, but not universally. There were some intellectuals of sceptical temper and also some hard-headed men of affairs who regarded the whole enterprise of the forwards as futile. These critics pointed out that in the perfecting of society and the raising of average intelligence and the endless developing of intellectual culture the race would be able to occupy itself fully for centuries to come, and probably for ever. There was no need, they said, to peer into the black fog of mystery.

For hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years I seemed to watch the successful carrying out of this policy, the patient perfecting of the social organization, the amplification of human life, the slow but universal rise of intelligence, the proliferation of culture in a thousand novel directions. Throughout this long period the forwards played an unostentatious but valuable part. Their spiritual researches led to no striking discovery, but they formed mankind's permanent outposts towards the super-human; and their influence in keeping the daily lives of ordinary men and women sweet, and in preventing the temper of the race from becoming merely mundane, was probably very great. Of course there were fluctuations in their integrity and in their usefulness, phases of corruption and regeneration, of stagnation and of significant change; periods too when their presence was barely tolerated or even actively resented, and others when their influence was very great. But on the whole throughout this age their part was never central and dominant, as it was later to

become.

10 - REMOTE HORIZONS

- i. PEACEFUL GROWTH
- ii. BEHIND THE VEIL
- iii. A PHASE OF CONFUSION
- iv. PREPARATION FOR A GREAT TASK
- v. DESPAIR AND NEW HOPE
- vi. MAN PASSES ON

i. PEACEFUL GROWTH

I HAVE TOLD how, after the victory of the will for the light, there followed a period of explosive progress which gradually gave place to a much longer phase of Utopian stability. This phase, in which material civilization changed only in minor ways, must have lasted for many centuries. In the cultural life of the race also, though minor experiments and advances were constantly being made, no revolutionary changes occurred. The best minds of the race were busy exploring the new vistas which had been opened up for intellect and feeling by the founding of the new order. Of these cultural achievements naturally I can say no more than that achievement did occur. In the earlier part of this phase the new cultural ventures were not, I think, beyond the range of our contemporary human intelligence, but we have not the necessary background of experience to comprehend them. As well might a resuscitated ancient Egyptian understand modern science. Suffice it that throughout this period the growing point of culture kept shifting from one field to another. At one time it lay in pure science, at another in the application of science to industry or eugenics, at another in one or other of the arts, or in philosophy, or in the minutiae of concrete

personal relations, or in religious feeling. Cultural leadership would pass now to one people or one social class, now to another.

As the centuries passed, the various new vistas became more and more fully explored and exploited. The golden age gave place to a silver age devoted to minute intensive cultivation of the heavily cropped ground of human experience. Only the steady though slow rise in average and superior intelligence prevented stagnation by making it possible to dig more thoroughly into the familiar soil.

Occasionally some outstanding mind in peculiarly stimulating circumstances would cause a minor revolution in some branch of culture, the consequences of which might afford to less original workers decades of minuter exploration. But in the main, since social circumstances remained stable, culture became more and more traditional.

Throughout this period the main purport of cultural development was grasped by every member of the race. And though all kinds of strains and conflicts occurred between peoples, between classes, vocations, political parties, these conflicts were subordinated to the universal acceptance of world-community. Wars and revolutions were never contemplated. Similarly in the sphere of personal contacts, though rivalries and conflicts were no less common than with us, they were seldom permitted to interfere seriously with co-operation in the public cause. Vindictive persecution was almost unknown.

It is difficult for us, who live in an exceptionally tumultuous age, to conceive of the bland happiness and leisurely progress of this future world. All men were assured of personal expression, and all were blessed with a sense of responsibility within the great common enterprise, the development of the capacity of man, the perfecting of the human race to become an ever finer vessel of the spirit.

ii. BEHIND THE VEIL

But this age of peaceful development and confidence was not to last for ever. The first symptom was a crisis among the forwards. This crisis was at first kept secret, but in time it became clear that something grave was afoot. The forwards were evidently deeply disturbed. Those that were in the hostels and houses of contemplation came pouring out into the world. They travelled and took up work, but they lived in a state of anxious abstraction. There were endless private discussions during casual encounters, and many prearranged conferences, the subject of which was never disclosed. At last a world conference was arranged at Lhasa. For many months hosts of forwards from every city crowded the sacred city, and camped in the surrounding country. Several months were spent by the assembled forwards in discussing their secret problem and performing severe spiritual exercises in order to fit themselves for right judgment. During this period the rest of the world showed little curiosity. Life was far too full of more interesting matters. When at last the conference had ended and the forwards had returned to their home countries, a manifesto was issued to the peoples of the world. Its content was greeted by ordinary world-citizens with astonishment, varying from dismay among the friends of the forwards to hilarious incredulity among the sceptics.

It was not possible to me, a creature of an earlier age and a less developed culture, to understand save in the most superficial way the immense expansion of experience which the forwards had achieved, and the terrible choice which was now to be forced upon the human race. But the effect on the life of the race was far-reaching. Although the statement of the forwards was at first treated as merely remote sensationalism, their presence in every village, bearing witness to its truth and constantly directing men's attention to its dreadful

significance for the human race, gradually turned incredulity into heavy-hearted acceptance.

The new discovery, if such it was, carried human consciousness beyond the familiar physical actuality, and opened up in one stride a sphere of existence which was of an entirely different order.

Man's knowledge both of the physical cosmos and of mentality within the physical cosmos had for long been very far-reaching. It was known, for instance, that there were other intelligent races on planets belonging to other solar systems. Already the scientists of the earth had turned their attention to exploring our own sun's other planets, believing that in the exploitation of these globes lay the next great field of human enterprise. Some day, they said, it would be possible even to attempt the immense journey to the sun's nearest stellar neighbour, which was now known to have attendant planets. Indeed there was already a dispute between the romantic enthusiasts for 'human advancement' in the form of extraterrestrial ventures and the 'classicists' who insisted that any such enterprise would distract man from his proper task, since here on earth there was far more than enough to occupy the race. The endless refinement of sensibility and intelligence, they affirmed, offered a task far more worthy of the human spirit than the schoolboy's excitement of interplanetary travel, and the unnecessary attempt to tap the resources of remote worlds. By all means let telepathic communication be improved, if possible, so that man could communicate easily and profitably with remote intelligences, but the childish dream of interstellar travel must be abandoned.

Another great dispute was also coming to the fore, namely between the classical humanists and the eugenists, who urged that the time had come for man to 'take charge of his own evolution' and create a new and more highly developed human type. They believed that by genetic control the range of intelligence and sensibility could be

immensely increased. To this the classicists replied that any such rash adventure might undermine the constitution of the race and bring chaos into the well-tried order of the world. By all means let minor eugenical researches be carried out for increased health, longevity, and the prolongation of mental maturity, but the hope of transforming human nature into something superhuman must not be entertained.

At the time when these two great disputes were ceasing to be merely academic, and were actually appearing over the horizon of practical politics, the forwards stumbled upon the discovery, or seeming discovery, which, if true, must force the abandonment, not only of interstellar adventure and of eugenical improvement, but also of classical humanism itself. The announcement which they made, so far as I could comprehend it, was to this effect.

They had discovered, they said, that the universe of familiar space and time, though no mere illusion or dream, was but the surface of a deeper reality. The familiar natural laws, both physical and psychological, were not fundamental laws at all, but superficial descriptions of the 'local' incidence of deeper and hitherto unguessed laws. Plato's parable of the shadow figures cast by unseen persons and an unseen source of light was to this extent profoundly true. The whole universe of stars, of galaxies, though fully actual and no mere figment of man's mind, was but spindrift caught up by occult winds and driven along the surface of an occult ocean of existence. The laws of this spindrift universe, which science had so thoroughly explored, were up to a point coherent; but certain things could never be adequately described in terms of these laws alone, for instance mind, and good and evil. It was in the hope of gaining insight into these matters, but above all in order to have access to the occult reality, that the forwards had been working during the preceding centuries.

At last, they said, they had momentarily penetrated to the deeper truth. They had for the first time come face to face with the vaster real.

But the experience, far from being beatific, had been terrible. They had recoiled in horror from the unspeakable facts. Servants of the light, children of the light, they had discovered that the light itself in their own eyes was but a subjective figment, like the retinal lights that a man sees in the dark, or when his eyes are closed. For a moment they had succeeded in opening their eyes, but only to discover a deeper and more formidable darkness. Or was it something worse than darkness?

They had pressed forward thus far without any doubt that their venture would lead to a fortifying of the struggling human spirit by intercourse with a vaster but essentially kindred spiritual reality. Over a period of many generations many great saints and thousands of devoted followers, spurred by this hope, had passed through the testing fires of discipline, had ventured into strange and icy spheres of spiritual experience, had gathered signs and intimations of a glory still to be revealed, had borne witness to their fellow men. And now at last the heirs to all this great treasure and greater promise, having gathered all their strength for the final assault on the locked door of mystery, had prized it open only to glimpse an incomprehensible horror, and to fall back in dismay.

During the long conference in Lhasa the whole population of forwards, assembled under their spiritual leaders, dared once more to face the terrible truth, lest there should have been some mistake. But once more they encountered the seemingly ultimate horror. After long contemplation and discussion they came to a decision, and then dispersed to tell the little human race the truth, and to suggest a course of action.

Their discovery, they insisted, transcended the Powers of human language. It was ineffable. It could be described only in metaphor. They had been seeking, they said, evidence that man's struggle for the light was in harmony with the essential spirit of the universe. They had found instead a vast and obscure confusion of powers, careless not only of man's fate but of all that he had so painfully learned to hold sacred. To communicate their discovery they conceived a myth which, though fantastic and petty, did, they affirmed, convey the essence of the strange and desolate truth. This universe, they said, of galaxies and atoms, of loves and hates and strifes, is no more than a melting snowflake which at any moment may be trampled into the slush by indifferent and brawling titans. Not otherwise than in this far-fetched image, they said, could they express the truth that they had seen. It was an inadequate image; for these snowflakes, descending from the formless and impenetrable blackness of the night sky, were indeed not frozen but warm with the potentiality of life and of spirit, and their thawing was in truth a dying, a dissipation of their vital energy. Myriad upon myriad of these snowflakes, each one a great physical cosmos, faltered downwards and rested on the field of snow. The footmarks of the 'titans', the forwards affirmed, developing the strange myth, were areas where thousands of these universes had been crushed together into a muddy chaos. Every moment, as the meaningless brawl continued, new devastations were inflicted. The snowfield of universes was more and more closely trampled, like a city more and more bombed, month by month. At any moment the fundamental physical structure and substance of our own many-galaxied cosmos might be reduced to chaos, so that in a flash all its frail intelligent worlds would vanish. At any moment, they insisted, this might happen. Indeed, that it had not already happened, seemed to be a miracle.

The forwards affirmed that they had peered and peered upwards (so to speak) between the rioting titanic limbs in search of the celestial

light; but the only luminosity was on the ground. It was all through the flakes themselves, congested into a thawing snowfield, created in their constant dying a dim phosphorescence. Pursuing this strange metaphor, which (they reiterated) was almost wholly inadequate to the unspeakable facts, they declared that the faint, diffused glow emitted by each separate snowflake universe, resolved itself in closer, microscopic inspection, into a myriad instantaneous scintillations, each one a short-lived world's bright climax of spiritual lucidity. Overhead there was nothing but the blinding darkness, whence 'the flakes vacillated groundwards.

Such was the bleak image by which the forwards tried to express their new and dreadful vision. They also discussed the implications of the repugnant truth, and the policy which the human race should adopt towards it. One and all, they affirmed their continued loyalty to the spirit. 'Every man,' they said, 'knows in his own experience that the life of love and of intelligence is good absolutely, is the only satisfying life for awakened beings. No devastating discovery about the nature of the ultimate reality can shake that immediate perception. Therefore, whatever the prospect, the human race will continue the struggle for love and intelligence here on earth. But it would be foolish to pretend that our metaphysical discovery makes no difference. Formerly it seemed that man would soon make contact with the life-giving and enheartening source of all spirit. We have found only desolation.'

But the forwards did not leave matters thus. They suggested also a hope and a policy. The hope lay in the fact that, after all, the snowstorm of physical and potentially spiritual universes must come from somewhere. The 'titans' were not the whole ultimate reality. And so it might after all be that further discipline and contemplation might enable man to penetrate the utter blackness of the sky and come at last face to face with the true light.

Hope, they said, might even permit itself a higher though a precarious flight. For some of the most adept forwards had claimed that in their most lucid moments they had seen something more. They had seen that in spite of the precarious existence of the snowflake universes and of the conscious beings within them, these beings themselves, when they attained mature spiritual stature, acquired very formidable powers. The pioneering forwards claimed that, in terms of the inadequate image, they had sometimes seen a brief but dazzling effulgence blaze up within some snowflake, like the brilliance of a new star. So brilliant might this conflagration be that it illuminated the whole wide snowfield. When this happened, the 'titans', seemingly terrified by the sudden light, fled in all directions, away from its source. Some of them were even annihilated by the radiance, like the shades of night at sunrise. Clearly, then, the right course for every intelligent world was to strive for that brilliance of the spirit. Clearly this alone could overcome the 'titans'. Clearly what was most lovely and precious, though commonly so frail, was also, in the fullness of its growth, the mightiest power of all. But this power, intensified to such a pitch that it could destroy the 'titans', was not the power of a few individuals exploring in isolation; it was the power of a whole race, of a whole conscious world, perhaps of a whole cosmos, united in most intimate spiritual communion. And such power was not to be attained without the utmost racial dedication.

Hence arose the challenge which the forwards laid before mankind. It was a call to action. It was a call to all individuals throughout the world to live wholly for the common task, to give up everything but the spirit, to discard not only mundane ends but also the vanity of science and art and intellectual exploration, to detach themselves absolutely even from the gentle bondage of personal love, to refrain from procreation, to drain the whole energy of the race to the last drop for the supreme spiritual task.

Hitherto there had been two possible ventures open to the human

race. One was the romantic scientist's ideal of developing communication between the planetary systems, so as to create a galaxy-wide community of intelligent worlds. The other, which assumed that man's proper business must always be with man, was the classical aim of the intensive development of man's present home and culture.

A third and more revolutionary policy was now open. For the inhabitants of a snowflake among brawling 'titans', it was the sole reasonable policy. This was the heroic venture of sacrificing everything in the attempt to destroy the 'titans' with the lucidity of the human spirit.

iii. A PHASE OF CONFUSION

When the peoples of the earth first heard all this they were indeed incredulous. But little by little the new knowledge invaded their peace. There was endless discussion between the romantic scientists, the classical humanists, and the forwards. It was not claimed by the forwards that if their advice were not taken the universe would be annihilated certainly and soon. Possibly it would last for thousands of millions of years. Possibly, if the human race were to choose to remain in its present course of social and cultural advancement, it would be able to prosper for a very long age. But at any time it might be annihilated, and the whole cosmos with it. And, anyhow, it would always be haunted by the knowledge that its supreme test had been refused. In such a condition there could be no health.

The decision was postponed. Little by little, under the weight of the new knowledge and the continual indecision and uncertainty about the future, there appeared signs of mental strain. The texture of community throughout the world began to deteriorate. Men became

rather less conscientious, rather less considerate. Personal intercourse, formerly so bland and genial, showed symptoms of resentfulness and bitterness. Sadistic crime, formerly unknown in the new world, once more troubled society. A new note of perversion and diabolism appeared in the arts and in public affairs. Clearly the race had fallen into a gravely neurotic condition. Children suffered in a special manner. Their minds were poisoned by a suspicion of the insincerity of their elders. Unless something could be done to stop the rot, this glorious society, the achievements of age-long bitter experience, would be corrupted beyond hope of recovery.

As the plight of the race grew worse, feeling on both sides became more violent. The fundamental accord on which the world-community had for so long been founded began to fail. Matters reached such a pitch that civil war seemed once more possible. The scientific romantics and the classical humanists had settled their differences, but only to combine against the supporters of the forwards and their policy of ascetic dedication. Every village, every family was divided against itself, but in some countries one side was on the whole stronger, in some the other. Preparations were actually made for a war which would have had all the bitterness of the old wars of religion, but would have been waged with more formidable weapons than man had ever used before. For sub-atomic power could be easily directed to mass murder.

In this situation the forwards themselves were divided. One party single-mindedly preached the new policy. The other, dismayed at the prospect of war, realized that a race which could contemplate the use of violence to settle such a dispute could not yet be fit to undertake the destruction of the 'titans' by the power of the spirit. They therefore suggested a compromise. Let the life of the world be carried on much as before, but with a slowly increasing emphasis on the spirit and the great task which lay ahead. When the race had outgrown its present adolescent state, it would face that task with

singleness of purpose. Perhaps it would be destroyed before maturity was reached. No matter! Some other race in some other cosmos would perhaps accomplish the task.

This policy was in the end accepted by all the peoples of the world, expressing themselves through a special plebiscite.

iv. PREPARATION FOR A GREAT TASK

From this time forward my contact with the human race in the far future became more and more uncertain. It was of course something of a miracle that I had been able to keep in touch even thus far. Without the constant influence of the superhuman beings who were my fellow spectators even this would have been utterly impossible. But now even their presence could not sufficiently aid me. This was due, I think, to the fact that the mentality of human animals was beginning to outreach my mental range in a new manner. I had always been grievously hampered by the fact that I had not the cultural background of these future men, but the actual calibre of their minds had not hitherto been greatly superior to that of my own generation. Now, however, human affairs began to include themes which were wholly meaningless to me. And as events became less intelligible I was less able to maintain contact.

I did, nevertheless, receive certain general impressions of the course of history and of a few outstanding events. After the settlement of the great dispute mankind recovered its fundamental unity of purpose. The villages carried on their busy and varied lives and their worldwide intercourse. The scientists continued their patient explorations and inventions. The classicists pursued the development of human culture into endless exfoliation. The forwards persisted in their spiritual exploration. As the general level of thought and feeling was raised, new spheres of experience were constantly

explored. Generation succeeded generation with ever increasing capacity and opportunity. But also each generation came more surely into the knowledge that all this continuous Utopianism was in fact but a preparation for a great ordeal, and that before the race was ready to face that ordeal the very foundations of existence might crumble. The stars might suddenly be swept away like dust. Man's dear and beautiful home might be shattered, and man himself annihilated.

This knowledge did not seem to weigh heavily on men. Each generation faced it and accommodated themselves to it. But its presence in the background of every mind changed the temper of the race into something very different from that of the age before the forwards had made their strange discovery. Then, the prospect of limitless human advancement had bred a certain complacency; now, the expectation of endless progress was succeeded by the possibility of sudden destruction, and by the frail hope of utterly new horizons. The mental climate of the race therefore changed to an intenser appreciation of its ordinary mundane life, compact of personal joys and sorrows, and at the same time a more constant loyalty to the spirit. No doubt the ordinary man, intent on his private affairs, gave little conscious thought to the prospect of the race, which, he felt, would probably last out his time anyhow. But in his phases of contemplation the sense of fleetingness would enter deeply into his mind, so that at all times the physical features of the planet, the woods, the hills, the sea, affected him with an added poignancy. The customs of daily life, such as dressing and eating, the technique of his work, the little common acts of friendliness, the intonations of familiar voices, all these became more dear because more precarious, because balanced from day to day on the brink of the unknown. At the same time the standard of personal conduct was seemingly raised by the sense that the species as a whole had accepted the challenge to live beyond its normal nature.

I was able to realize that there was a gradual shift, so to speak, of the centre of gravity of culture. Metaphysics was absorbing more and more of human attention. The natural sciences tended to fall into a second place. Spiritual discipline was undertaken by every member of the race. The numbers of the forwards greatly increased, and their influence became more far-reaching.

All this I could realize, though vaguely and externally. What passed my comprehension was the changing detail of social and cultural life. It was natural in the circumstances that living should be greatly simplified. Luxuries were less and less in demand. The arts were shorn of their luxurious detail. On the other hand art of a stripped and purposeful kind played an increasing though an altered part in life. In words, in music, in colour and plastic form, men created a ceaseless flood of symbolic aids to the spirit, mostly in styles which I could not at all appreciate. Surprisingly, also, though living under the threat of annihilation, men were addicted to erecting great and durable temples, upon which they lavished all the skill and care which was ceasing to find an outlet in ordinary life. Sub-atomic technique, by its wealth of new materials, had made possible a far more daring, soaring, and colourful architecture than is known to us. Along with the new materials came new architectural canons, strange to me. The architecture of mundane life was simple and impermanent. The temples alone were built to last; yet they were often demolished to make room for finer structures.

One striking aspect of culture was a vast development of the technique of personal intercourse. Language blossomed into a great forest of terms for all the new subtleties of emotion and intuition, and all the types and shades of personality. The citizen of the new world could by the Use of this rich linguistic symbolism become intimately aware of a stranger's personality in an hour. There was also a subtle ideography of psychological and spiritual phenomena. By the careful

drawing of a number of Chinese-looking symbols an artist who was something between a novelist and an abstract painter could present the essential form of the intercourse of several human beings from birth to death. In comparison with these ideograms verbal language, though so greatly improved, was a cumbersome medium. A single meticulously inscribed page could convey a whole biography. Thus arose a new visual art, which, by means of highly abstract signs charged with the emotional and intellectual experience of the race, obtained the far-reaching effect of great poetry.

This ideographic art I could at least comprehend sufficiently to grasp its general nature, but it must also have symbolized ranges of experience beyond my reach. It played a great part in the decoration of the temples; and certain ideograms, which remained meaningless to me, seemed to have a mystical power over anyone that earnestly contemplated them.

My contact with future mankind became more and more vague and intermittent, until I received but random intimations of a few outstanding and often very strange events. Sometimes, for instance, I seemed to see that great companies of men and women had chosen to destroy themselves because they felt that they could no longer play a useful part. Sometimes the concord of the race was broken by a keen but never a vindictive dispute about some matter which lay beyond my understanding. It would then be found necessary to restore harmony by a world-wide penance.

At last, after how many centuries or millennia I know not, there arose a generation which felt itself fully equipped for the great task. A Sacred Year was appointed for the supreme effort, a quarter of a century ahead. Meanwhile procreation was to cease, and all forward-looking social and economic activity. Enough food must still be produced to keep the ascetic population alive, and the temples must be kept in good order. Apart from this necessary work, the energy of

the race must be concentrated wholly on the great task.

It was a strange and austere world in this period. No t babies were anywhere, then no children, then no adolescents; only young men and women and their elders. Population, of course, rapidly declined. Life was wholly dominated by the spiritual enterprise, which inevitably lay beyond my comprehension. It was not uncommon for people to be so abstracted from the physical world that they forgot to feed, and so would have starved to death, had not some neighbour recalled them. Most individuals, however, still carried on a normal life, though in a state of remote detachment.

A date was appointed, towards the end of the twenty-fifth year, after which no more food was to be eaten. Meanwhile feeding was to be progressively reduced throughout the world so as to leave the spirit unhampered by bodily vigour. When the time came for the complete cessation of feeding, all private houses were to be deserted. The population was to gather into the poobs and temples, to fast and contemplate, and create in themselves that extreme spiritual lucidity which, it was now confidently believed, would destroy the 'titans' and attain a clearer, brighter, truer view of all existence. Under the stress of this adventure the exhausted race would die. The earth would be given over once more to sub-human nature. Visitors from some other world might some day discover the ruins of the great temples, not suspecting, perhaps, that those who had built them and died in them had conquered the 'titans', and had thereby secured the salvation of all beings in all the snowflake universes; the salvation, it was surmised, not of external life for individuals, but of escape from premature racial extinction before the potentiality of the race was fulfilled by the attainment of spiritual maturity and the supreme beatific vision.

v. DESPAIR AND NEW HOPE

Such was the great plan, but an unforeseen event frustrated it. About a year before the appointed climax and the complete cessation of eating there appeared among the frail and ageing population a new and strange disease. I was never able to determine whether its source was wholly natural, wholly intrinsic to our physical cosmos, to our snowflake, or whether in some manner beyond my comprehension some obscure powers of darkness had somehow made incursion into our cosmos to stimulate or create this hideous epidemic. Its form and the time of its onset seemed nicely calculated to undermine the impending victory of the light.

The first symptom of the disease was violent vomiting and diarrhoea. So formidable were the spasms that the gullet and rectum might be torn and even forced outwards. Many patients succumbed in this initial phase. Those that recovered were left with terrible glandular disturbances which might result in any or several of a number of frightful symptoms. A very common trouble was galloping senescence, which turned the young man into a maundering and toothless gaffer in a few weeks. But infantilism of body and mind was almost as common. Another effect was an extravagant growth of the skeleton, such that the overstrained flesh and skin would split on every limb, revealing the bare bone. But a softening of the bony structure was also a frequent symptom, causing the limbs to bend in unnatural places and the head to turn as soft as an over-ripe orange. Or the skin might grow till it became a loose voluminous garment. Sufferers were often in danger of tripping on the folds of skin trailing from their own legs. Another frequent result was rapid confusion of sex. Men would visibly acquire female characters, women would turn mannish. Most distressing of all, perhaps, was the frequent and fantastic exaggeration of sexuality. The organs became grossly distended. The secondary sexual characters, such as the female breasts, were repulsively enlarged. The mind became so enslaved to the pressure of the body's superabundant sexuality that every

physical object and every concept became charged with sexual meaning, and even the most self-disciplined found themselves swept away in a continuous orgy of fornication and all kinds of perversion. Other consequences of glandular disorder were purely emotional. Some sufferers were obsessed by recurrent fits of objectless and frantic rage, others by irrational terror or equally irrational bravado. Sometimes a sudden access of hate would force the patient to kill or torture whoever was at hand. Sometimes a permanent and icy hatred would be concentrated on a wholly innocent victim. The disease might take the form of maudlin sentimentality, directed either on human persons or animals, or the human race as a whole, or some fictitious deity invented to suit the patient's peculiar needs. One common effect was a crazy dread of isolation. Another was such panic fear of the presence of other human beings that, when the patient was surprised by a visitor, he might leap out of an upper window or dash himself against the wall like a terrified bird. Yet another effect was a reduction of sensibility. Blind and deaf, without taste and smell, almost without touch, the wretched creature would snatch a morbid pleasure from the only sense that remained to rouse him to some faint interest, namely pain. With fumbling eagerness he would tear back his finger-nails, crush his eyes, bite his tongue to bloody pulp.

Some of these symptoms were permanent, some passed off in a few weeks. But in every case the final emotional state was identical and permanent. The patient emerged into profound apathy. In extreme cases he cared for nothing but the satisfaction of bodily needs of nutrition and excretion. Even these might cease to interest him, so that, if left to himself, he might lie inert from morning till night. Such extreme cases were uncommon, but on the average the damage caused by the disease, though less obvious, was scarcely less disastrous. Most people recovered so far as to behave in a normal manner in respect of all simple animal impulses, but they no

longer found any satisfaction whatever in the activities which are distinctively human. Thus an impulsive animal affection might be within their reach, but persistent and genuinely other-conscious human love was beyond them. Impossible also were all the other, less intimate forms of true community. Old habits of community-behaviour would persist and might at first carry the sufferers through the familiar social situations without any manifest change; but the fire was quenched. Little by little even the forms of decent social behaviour were abandoned. Abstract thought, even when their intelligence was still capable of it, they found unutterably boring. Art had no longer any meaning for them. Or rather, though intellectually they might still understand its technique, it could no longer stir them. The life of the spirit was wholly fatuous to them. The great common discipline and adventure, which they formerly accepted with enthusiasm, now stimulated them only to yawn and shrug their shoulders. Intellectually they understood it, but they had no feeling for it.

Different types of mind reacted differently to this deep change in themselves. All suffered from a severe conflict between their established mental habit and their new disposition. Many put up a half-hearted struggle to feel in the old way, and were bewildered and oppressed by their failure. Some, though the inner light was extinguished, listlessly carried on all the old forms of behaviour, but with increasing slovenliness. Others became well-bred cynics. Others gradually conceived a cold and spiteful hatred of all that was once so precious to them and now escaped them, and a relentless vindictiveness against those who had not been affected by the disease. Hate sometimes seemed even to provide them with a new intensity of feeling, and become the dominant motive of their lives, leading them to do all in their power to distress and defeat those who were still faithful to the light.

One serious aspect of the disease was not at first realized. It

emerged into view as data accumulated. On the whole the emotionally most developed individuals, though rather less susceptible, were also, when the microbe secured a hold on them, far more gravely damaged. Their initial resistance was greater, but once it had been broken down, they were specially liable to die in the early phase. At the other end of the scale the lowest emotional types, though very liable to contract the disease, recovered easily and suffered only mild after-effects. The young were specially susceptible, though if they succeeded in surmounting the first phase of the disease, they tended to make a good recovery, escaping serious after-effects, and sometimes even the final apathy.

In preparation for the sacred year the medical services had been greatly reduced. Both cure and research into the causes of the plague were seriously hampered. It seems to have begun in Malaya during the wet season. Thence it soon spread into Asia, and into every continent. Within a few months millions had died and more millions had recovered only to live on as helpless invalids or cripples. Whole populations, though their bodily health was restored, were emotionally reduced to apathy or cynicism. Research proved that the disease was caused by a micro-organism which infested rain-drops, rivers, lakes. A cloudy atmosphere and a heavy rainfall were peculiarly favourable to the spread of the plague. The microbe entered the human body by the mouth, multiplied in the digestive organs, and spread thence by way of the blood into the glands. If it was detected early enough it could be destroyed, and the patient cured by a very simple method, namely the drinking of large quantities of alcohol. Thus it came about that a generation which had consecrated itself to the most exalted life was forced to drown its troubles in drink.

The sacred year had to be postponed. This was a very grave step, for the population was ageing, and there were no children. But no

other course was possible. The ban on procreation was removed, and the peoples were urged to have as many children as possible. The apathetic populations made little response to this appeal.

Meanwhile the disease continued to spread, though less rapidly, and with decreasing virulence. One strange aspect of the scourge suggested that the real enemy was not the micro-organism itself but some devilish intelligence which was directing its attack. It was noticed, for instance, that when a district had been cleared of the disease, a spell of bad weather was apt to occur. Contaminated rain drenched the ground and filled the reservoirs. Moreover, maps plotting the incidence of the disease from month to month had revealed a startlingly purposive movement in the advance of the microbe. Not only was the plague mysteriously attracted to populous districts, but in order to reach a great centre of population it might extend a vast pseudopodium of wet weather and infection, even across an arid desert. This was particularly striking in its advance from Asia to South Africa. While Iran was in the throes, a great tongue of drenching weather was protruded across the Arabian Desert and Abyssinia into moist Central Africa. Thence the bad weather extended southwards till it reached the crowded areas in South Africa. In order to reach America it appeared to make several attempts to bridge the Atlantic from Britain, but its 'artificial' east winds were overcome by the prevailing westerlies. Finally, however, it stretched out an arm of cloud from West Mica to the Amazon, whence it spread throughout the Americas. Australia it invaded from its original foothold in the East Indies. New Zealand it failed to discover.

This seeming purposiveness may have been illusory. Some natural cause may very well have produced it. But when it is taken in conjunction with the fact that the disease attacked the human race just when its physical resistance was weakest owing to universal under-nourishment, and when its spiritual power was not yet fully

developed, some occult evil purpose seems plausible.

The plague was not finally stamped out until a majority of the world population had been reduced to apathy. In most countries not more than about three in a hundred persons retained their full human calibre, and these became generally so disheartened by their neighbours apathy that they too sank into lethargy. Two regions alone were unaffected, namely Tibet, through the fortunate combination of its exceptionally dry climate, its altitude, and the high development of its population and New Zealand, which the plague had not 'discovered'.

Lhasa wisely abandoned all hope of restoring the sacred year, and called upon mankind to devote itself for the present mainly to reproduction and the re-establishment of material civilization. New Zealand responded eagerly. Elsewhere small groups and isolated individuals answered the call in full sincerity. The rest either professed agreement and did nothing, or ignored the appeal.

Owing to the prevailing lethargy, village life in most countries gravely deteriorated. Sub-atomic agriculture and handicrafts were still carried on, but in a slipshod manner. The life of the poobs degenerated into something like the life of the pubs in our own day, often into something far less wholesome. Many persons who had been cured by alcohol had contracted an addiction to this habit-forming drug, and made no effort to restrain themselves. Fornication of a lazy, unenterprising sort, was general, but procreation was prevented by birth-control. The surviving forwards indolently carried on the outward forms of their old life, but its spirit was lost. Sluggishness inevitably produced a rapid deterioration in all social behaviour and institutions. The old vices of self-seeking and mob mentality reappeared, but without the old vigour and passion. Population steadily declined, for very few children were born; save in Tibet and New Zealand, where every woman of child-bearing age

was devotedly producing a child every year. Presently research discovered a method of securing triplets, and the birth-rate was promptly trebled. Under the strain, and in spite of all the care and skill and honour that was lavished on them, the mothers were heavily overstrained. They clung to their task, however, and though maternal mortality was high, population increased rapidly. The children were of course given every possible advantage, under state supervision. The whole social organization of the two peoples was arranged for their benefit.

There came a time when emigrants from Tibet and New Zealand were flooding into other countries to intermarry with the remnants of the native populations, and to reorganize their moribund society. Gradually village life was revitalized. All the familiar activities of the civilized world were once more afoot. The forwards once more explored; though for the present there was no question of reviving the abandoned spiritual venture. The main task of the race was to recover its strength and to find out how to prevent any recurrence of the plague. For there were occasional incipient epidemics. They occurred whenever and wherever the work of the forwards was most active. It was as though the pioneers of spiritual activity contracted the disease through the very success of their adventure. Even if they happened to be individuals of so developed a type that they were immune, they apparently became carriers (or actual generators?) of the microbe, infecting the atmosphere through their breath.

vi. MAN PASSES ON

From this time forward my intimations of humanity's future became too vague to be worth reporting at length. I have a fairly clear impression of the recovery of material and cultural civilization, and the re-peopling of the planet. Dimly I saw, or I vaguely sensed, the world-wide preparation for a fresh attack on the occult 'titanic' forces.

But dimly also I felt that with the advance of knowledge and spiritual insight the problem must have taken on an entirely new form; for there seems to have come a time, remotely future to us, when, after earnest debate, the main energy of the race was diverted from the occult back to the scientific, and particularly to the eugenical problem of producing a superior human type. But whether this new type was to be specially equipped for spiritual activities or for natural life on the earth or perhaps for migration to another planet I cannot determine.

All I know is that the enterprise was cut short, almost before it had begun, by the need to concentrate all human energy upon a purely terrestrial problem. For at this time the surface of the planet began to suffer from immense upheavals and subsidences, buckling and cracking like the skin of a roasting apple. Prodigious volcanic eruptions calcined whole countries. The seas poured torrentially into new depressions, drowning the populations; or retreated from newly upheaved continents; or was sucked down, in gigantic maelstroms through fissures in the ocean bed, to issue again with explosive and devastating effect as spouts of superheated water and steam, tearing apart the solid crust of the earth, boiling the cities, and soaring to the stratosphere. Whether this disastrous activity was due to the accumulation of radioactivity in the planet's core or merely to the cooling and shrinking of the core, and the consequent collapse of the crust, or to some occult cause, I do not know.

The disturbance was brief. Within a few centuries it was over. There emerged a world the geography of which was largely unfamiliar and its climate temporarily moister; for much of the ocean had been boiled into the sky, and immense tracts of hot lava had appreciably raised the average temperature, so that the moisture in the air did not at all quickly condense. Mankind was reduced to a remnant living in the less devastated corners of the lands. Material civilization was destroyed, and men were forced to resort once more to primitive

agriculture. The factories for the making of sub-atomic machinery were all destroyed, and most of the generators themselves. Experts of all kinds were decimated. Precious skills were lost. Laboratories, libraries, the records of human culture, were nearly all burnt or submerged under the new seas or the floods, of lava.

But throughout the disaster the will for the light remained alive in men: Each generation handed onto its successor the essential wisdom of the developed mind, the essential loyalty to the spirit. When the earth's crust had settled down to its new form, recovery was carefully planned, and rapid. The main centre of henceforth was not China, which had been largely submerged, but the great new island of Atlantis, thrust up between America and Europe. At first a continent of mud, it soon became fertile beyond other lands, and in time was invaded by colonists from Europe and America, who crossed the narrow oceans in their sailing ships, and settled down to farm and rediscover the lost arts of civilization. Within a few centuries the planet was once more a well-ordered, flourishing, diversified, populous, human world.

Obscurely it seems to me that the dominant concern of that world was to produce a new human type, capable of greater powers of intelligence and sensibility, and also of spiritual insight. Obscurely I see that the new type was indeed produced; for I have a darkling vision of a prolonged and tense yet temperate divergence of will between the primary human race and the secondary, more developed race which the primaries had so lovingly conceived and patiently actualized. The disagreement was about the goal of human co-operative endeavour. The secondaries advocated some re-orientation of world policy which to the primaries was repugnant. The nature of this re-orientation I could not determine. I suspect that the whole primary population were incapable of comprehending it, and that they resisted it simply because it conflicted with their own world-

policy. But it seemed to me that in the end they were persuaded to accept this re-orientation, humbly acknowledging that if the secondaries willed it, it must be the way of the light. Thenceforth the primary human race gradually withdrew from active control of human destiny. For a while it continued to reproduce itself, though at a steadily decreasing rate, and continued to perform minor functions within the new world economy; but its status was something between that of the aged parent, the pensioned family-nurse, and the conquered 'aboriginals'. Its young people found themselves unable to keep pace with the young of the new type. They came into a world which could never be their own world, though they obscurely recognized it as a world ruled by the very same light that ruled in their own hearts. In these conditions the primary population inevitably dwindled into extinction. The secondaries possessed the earth and proceeded in the way that seemed good to them.

Beyond this point I see nothing. The life of those future men is wholly beyond my range. I emerged from my vision in weariness but also in peace and joy, for it seemed that those new men, though I could not keep pace with the movement of their minds, were loyal to the light and well equipped to serve it, loyal to that same light which my own generation so vaguely sees and falteringly serves.

THE END