ALDOUS HUXLEY

Beyond the Mexique Bay

A Traveller's Journal

Chatto & Windus
LONDON

PUBLISHED BY
Chatto & Windus
LONDON
*
Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd

FIRST PUBLISHED 1920
FIRST ISSUED IN THIS COLLECTED
EDITION 1949, REPRINTED 1934, 1950

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BEYOND THE MEXIQUE BAY

On the Ship

THE most remarkable thing about a winter cruise is always the preliminary advertising. What a jewelled prose! What images and metaphors! And the staggering gongorisms! Shall the ship be called just 'ship'? Perish the thought of such banality! *Oh eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears!* And oh liner, no liner, but 'yacht-like giantess,' but 'gay and exquisite hostess of the world's most front-page people.'

And then there are the astonishing places to which these giant hostesses transport you—places where you 'bathe in liquid opal,' where 'quaint native cities hearken far back into old-world history,' where (confronted by the *danse du ventre*) you can hear 'the dead echo of pagan laughter and savage prayer.' And, of course, you never just call at West Indian ports: you 'follow the old *conquistadores* into the glamorous romance of the Spanish Main.' You do not grossly visit the Mediterranean: you 'loll on the pale gold sands of the Riviera' (in the month of February, God help you!) 'watching the sapphire tide'—watching it, alas, in vain, because there is none;

and when that palls, you go and 'feel your Nordic Personality melt and expand in the riotously colourful *souks* of Tunis and Kairouan.'

As for the people you associate with on board the exquisite giantesses—they are all 'front-page,' 'sophisticated,' 'worth-while' or, at the very worst, 'a gay charming set who have found a cruise the perfect combination of smartness and thrift.'

It is a thousand pities that steamers have no eyes. Their eyelids, in this delicious literature, would be much more than just a *little* weary. And as for the rocks on which they sit . . . But perhaps in the nautical circumstances it would be more tactful not to mention the rocks.

On the Ship

LIQUID opal, the genuine antique, contemporary golf-courses (twenty of them in Hawaii alone), the last word in cocktail bars and peach-pink sanitary fittings—the blurb-writers promise to take you into the very heart of all these variegated delights. But what they fail to mention—and for me it seems one of the most significant things about the whole business—is the fact that a winter cruise takes you into the future as well. For when you board a giant hostess,

you find yourself in the world of your grandchildren. The five hundred inhabitants of a cruising liner are in no sense a typical sample of the contemporary population; no, they are a typical sample of the population as it will be, unless in the meantime we are all blown to pieces, fifty years hence. For the gay and charming front-pagers who go on winter cruises are, in the main, elderly people. Retired or merely tired business men and their wives; widows with competences and ageing spinsters, trying to escape from winter and loneliness in the well-advertised companionableness of deck life in the tropics; a sprinkling of the very old and infirm. The genuinely young are few; but, by way of compensation, the imitation youthfulness of early middle age is plentiful. Adolescents of five-and-forty abound. Such, then, are the front-pagers. By no means, I repeat, a characteristic sample of the contemporary population. But, according to the prophecies of all the experts, a completely typical bunch from the gay nineteen-eighties.

In 1980 the population of the Western world will probably be somewhat smaller than it is at present. It will also, which is more significant, be differently constituted. The birth-rate will have declined and the average age of death have risen. This means that there will be a considerable decrease in the numbers of children and young people, and a considerable increase in the numbers of the middle-aged and old. Little boys and girls will be relatively rare;

but men and especially women (since women tend to live longer than men) of sixty-five years old and upwards will be correspondingly more plentiful—as plentiful as they are on a cruising liner in 1933.

So all aboard the giant hostess and Westward Ho for a glamorous adventure into the future! But, frankly, I prefer the present. Little boys may be an intolerable nuisance; but when they are not there we regret them, we find ourselves homesick for their very intolerableness. After two or three weeks of a winter cruise (there are some, appalling thought! which last as much as four months), one would gladly exchange the widows, the bulging ex-stock-brokers, the smart but thrifty young kittens of forty, for a waggon-load of even the most diabolic children, for a wilderness of even the silliest undergraduates.

What a world our grandchildren will have to live in! Opinions, on the decks of a cruising liner, are unbelievably sound. It would seem impossible to find in any other area of equal size so large a number of right-thinking men and women. If similar causes continue to result in similar effects, our grandchildren's world will be a world of die-hards. As the young grow fewer and the old more numerous, the mistrust of all radical opinions will tend to increase, the desire for change to diminish. It will probably be safer than ours, the world of 1980; but it will certainly be less exciting. Go cruising and judge for yourself!

ON THE SHIP

On the Ship

PEERING through the window of the gymnasium, I was rewarded for my inquisitiveness by an astonishing spectacle. Mounted on the electric horse, a stout lady of mature middle-age was riding furiously, all out, as though she were bringing the good news from Ghent to Aix. The mechanical quadruped heaved its wooden loins and rhythmically all the superfluous adiposity of its rider lifted and with a jellied shuddering subsided, lifted once more and subsided, again and again, endlessly.

> At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see,
> At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be ;
> And from Mecheln church steeple we heard the half
> chime . . .

But no Joris broke the silence. Determined, her face grimly set—that is, as much set as it could be, seeing that it too was lifting and subsiding along with all the rest—the stout lady galloped on. I walked away, hoping that, when at last she got there, they would have the decency to pour down her throat their last measure of wine. She deserved it.

On the Ship

FUN, on our giant hostess, was organized. The amusement front had its duly appointed commissar —a very efficient professional from one of the tourist agencies. He saw to it that the games on deck were played systematically. He, no doubt, it was who decreed that our dinner, every third or fourth day, should be called a Gala Dinner, and that we should be given paper hats, balloons and cardboard trumpets. And his, finally, was the brilliant notion of the children's party. The invitation card has gone into my archives; it is a document for which future historians will be grateful. The wording of it ran as follows:

The Headmaster and Staff
of
Cruise School
Request the Pleasure of your Company
at a
Children's Party for Grown-Ups
In the School-Room
(Main Lounge, Promenade Deck)
9.15 P.M. Saturday, February 4th.

School or Nursery Dress *must* be worn.
Bring your toys and dollies with you.
Romps, Games, etc., at 9.30. Nannies at Midnight.
Parking for Perambulators provided.

Now, the most interesting thing about the Amusement-Commissar's idea is that it was not original. The Bright Young People had it first, in 1928, when, on a certain autumn night, the romping of the adult children was so uproariously merry that over a large area of Belgravia sleep became impossible. Some of the rompers, if I remember rightly, ended in the police station. And there, too, should have ended their idea. But no; there was something in its quaint peter-pannishness that made an irresistible appeal to the imagination of English ladies and gentlemen. The original rompers had mostly been inhabitants of those equivocal marches between Bohemia and the *Monde*. Five years later their idea was part of the stock-in-trade of a professional amuser, catering for as representative a collection of the elderly ***haute bourgeoisie*** as you could hope to find. And with what glee his invitation to the nursery was accepted! I never saw such romping among real children. It was clear that, far from being abnormal, the original inventors of the nursery party were, in this respect, perfectly representative of their economic class. It was the Bright Young who first thought of this particular manifestation of infantilism; but the Dim Old took to it as happily as ducks to water.

My objection to anthropologists is the same as my objection to missionaries. Why do these two classes of people waste their time converting heathens and studying the habits of blackamoors, when they can

find, in their own streets, men and women whose beliefs and behaviour are at least as strange as those of the M'pongos and, so far as we are concerned, painfully and dangerously more significant? Anthropology, like charity, should begin at home.

Barbados

BRIDGETOWN is not a large place; ten minutes of slow walking brought us to the suburbs. It was evening and the hot air was perfectly still. We walked through a vertical stratification of sewage smells and flowers, through minglings of tuberose and stale fish. Gigantically tall thin palms, bending with their own lankiness, had been drawn, so it seemed, by a very vulgar but extraordinarily accurate and laborious artist—drawn in Indian ink, on the pale orange expanses of the West. There was a yelling of frogs; and the insects were like an invisible but ubiquitous orchestra, incessantly engaged in tuning up.

It was six years since I had been in a hot country, and I had forgotten how unspeakably melancholy the tropics can be, how hopeless, somehow, and how completely resigned to hopelessness. The feet of the negroes shuffled along the pavements. Small black children played in the gutters, silently. Squatting on the kerb, their fathers were reading the local

newspaper by the light of the street lamps. And between the lamps, in the thickening night, every passing form was disquietingly without a face, and handless; blackness melted into blackness; men were as suits of clothes walking. Every now and then we passed a chapel—always lighted up and always full of people singing hymns. For half a minute, perhaps, the noise of 'Abide with Me' would drown the noises of the tropical night; then, as one moved further away, the frogs and the cicadas would reassert themselves, and one was aware of both noises vibrating with an equal hopelessness under the first stars.

Barbados

INDOORS and out of doors, by night as well as by day, all the women in Barbados were always and invariably in hats. The march of fashion in our colonial empire is slow, and the negresses of Bridgetown were wearing wide-brimmed hats with large, bulging crowns, such as were all the rage in the English provinces four or five years ago. Even when they were carrying burdens, they carried them on their hats. Squelched, those large crowns oozed out round the base of fish baskets and kerosene tins. Hats, I take it, are still in Barbados what they were till quite recently in Europe—emblems of respecta-

bility, badges of class. To doff the kerchief or the peasant's cap and put on the hat was to affirm symbolically the principles of the French Revolution. 'Liberty!' you tacitly proclaimed as you took the air in your new head-dress; 'society is no longer divided up into a class of hat-wearing mistresses and kerchief-wearing slaves. Likewise Equality and Fraternity! a hat's a hat for a' that; and my four-and-elevenpenny Marks and Spencer is of the same family as your Reboux.' Among the negroes, I suppose, it is still imperatively necessary to make these affirmations. The theory of their liberty and equality is still all too theoretical.

Barbados

Our fellow front-pagers had all gone to dine and dance at Hastings, where the fashionable life of the island is concentrated. Greatly to the distress of our taxi-driver, we insisted on feeding indigenously, in the town itself. Protesting, he took us at last to what looked and sounded, from the outside, like a thoroughly forbidding kind of eating-hell. But appearances were deceptive. The dining-room was clean, and the pandemonium of noise was all being produced by a single electric gramophone. Except for one other white diner and a couple of very decorous coffee-coloured billiard players, we had the place to ourselves. The

rum cocktail was excellent, so were the stewed flying-fishes and the grilled dolphin steaks ; and so, it turned out, was the company. For our fellow diner, with whom we very soon got into conversation, turned out to be a most remarkable personage.

'Do you often eat at this restaurant?' I asked.

He laughed delightedly. 'I own it!'

And it was not only the hotel that he owned. He had four shops—three in Bridgetown and one at the other end of the island ; he had a filling station, a pawnbroking business, a bus line. All his own creation, worked up out of nothing. It was Napoleonic. And the latest addition to his empire was an undertaking establishment.

'I feed them and clothe them, and then I bury them.' His laughter was infectious. 'Here's a little book on embalming I got the other day,' he added, producing it out of his pocket. But it seemed there was not much demand in Barbados for these refinements.

When we had finished our dinner, he offered to take us for a drive in his car. We accepted with alacrity. The chauffeur was waiting at the door. We drove off —circuitously, so that we might be shown all our new friend's various establishments. His name sprawled boldly across the shop fronts ; under it, in large letters was written, 'THE FRIEND OF THE POOR.'

The road to Speightstown—for that was where we were bound—followed the coast. Between trees, every now and then, we had glimpses of the sea

breaking snow-white, under the moon, on beaches almost as white as the foam on the waves. Every mile or so we passed through a village. The houses were tiny shanties of wood or corrugated iron. In chapels the inevitable hymn-singing was going on. Still hatted against the moonlight, women came and went among the houses; in the dust, outside the doors, squatted groups of men, faceless in the shadow.

Our Napoleonic friend had a shop at Speightstown. On the window was pasted a notice, which I read by the light of the moon as he was unlocking the door. 'Would it not be consoling,' the announcement ran, 'to inherit FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS from the dear departed? If you allow me to make the funeral arrangements, you will receive, free of all charge, a ticket for the Turf Club Sweepstake. This ticket may win you a first prize of FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS. Tickets are given subject to only one condition, which is that the funeral fees be paid before the drawing of the winning numbers.' I made no comment: I could only silently admire.

In a back room behind the shop, lit by a dim oil lamp, a very old negress was sitting, with her hat on, of course, cleaning flying-fish. Snick, snick—off went the long fins, the tail, the head; another snick, out came the guts and, with a little manipulation, the backbone. The fish was dropped into a basket. An incredibly beautiful, pale brown girl was sitting beside her, sewing. The door behind them was open on to

the sea. There was nothing specially curious or remarkable about the scene ; but for some reason it held, and in my memory still holds for me a quality of extraordinary alienness and unfamiliarity, of being immeasurably remote. Nothing I ever saw and—since our fantasies are *ours* and so are always nearer, however extravagant, than the intuitions that reach our minds from without—nothing certainly I ever imagined was so far away as that little room at Speightstown. And the girl, so beautiful, with her face shining in the lamplight, as though it were illumined from within, the old negress, under her battered hat, busy with black hands among the silvery fish—they were the inhabitants, it seemed, of another universe.

Trinidad

A ROPEWAY goes down from the pitch lake to the sea. Its buckets, at the moment, dangle idly ; as of everything else, the world has an excess of asphalt. No work is being done at the lake, and the telpher wires, stretched tightly across the sky, serve only as convenient perches for innumerable black pelicans. They sit there like a passage of semi-quavers on a mile-long expanse of ruled paper. We seemed to be landing at the foot of a gigantic page of Liszt.

Trinidad

My conception of the pitch lake of Trinidad was formed in childhood and had been modified by no subsequent accession of knowledge. I had only to shut my eyes and murmur the words, 'pitch lake of Trinidad,' to see a black tarn, boiling hot, and surrounded by appalling precipices. My private pitch lake looked, in fact, like one of Doré's illustrations to the *Inferno*. Imagine, then, my disappointment with the real, the public pitch lake. For the real pitch lake is simply about two hundred asphalt tennis courts, in very bad condition, set in the midst of some gently undulating green meadows. I felt inclined to ask for my money back.

Trinidad

The oranges that grow in these tropical islands are particularly juicy and aromatic; but they never appear on any European or North American market. As with so many of us, their faces are their misfortune; they have a complexion which nature has made, not orange,

but bright green, irregularly marbled with yellow. Nobody, therefore, outside their countries of origin, will buy them. For fruit, strangely enough, is sold on the strength of its appearance, not of its taste. Every grower knows that his product must appeal first to the eye and only secondarily to the palate. Immense pains have been taken to embellish the skin, but how little does any one ever trouble to improve the flavour, of our dessert!

The appeal of bright colours, symmetry and size is irresistible. The sawdust apple of the Middle West is wonderfully red and round; the Californian orange may have no flavour and a hide like a crocodile's—but it is a golden lamp; and the roundness, redness and goldenness are what the buyer first perceives on entering the shop. Moreover, both these fruits are large; and greed is so simple-minded that it always prefers food in large chunks to food in small chunks —prefers it even when the food is being bought by weight, and it makes no difference whether the individual portions are big or little.

But this is not the whole story. Man looks out on reality through an intervening and only partially transparent medium—his language. He sees real things overlaid by their verbal symbols. Thus, when he looks at oranges, it is as though he looked at them through a stained-glass window representing oranges. If the real oranges correspond with the *beau idéal* of oranges painted on the window, he feels that every-

thing is all right. But if they don't correspond, then he becomes suspicious; something must be wrong.

A vocabulary is a system of platonic ideas, to which we feel (illogically, no doubt, but strongly) that reality *ought* to correspond. Thanks to language, all our relations with the outside world are tinged with a certain ethical quality; before ever we start our observations, we think we know what it is the duty of reality to be like. For example, it is obviously the duty of all oranges to be orange; and if, in fact, they aren't orange, but, like the fruits of Trinidad, bright green, then we shall refuse even to taste these abnormal and immoral caricatures of oranges. Every language contains, by implications, a set of categorical imperatives.

Trinidad

At the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture the geneticists were busy on bananas. The problem was this: to produce a new variety that should combine all the virtues of the Gros Michel, large size, thick skin (for a banana must be its own travelling-trunk) and handsome appearance, with resistance to that insidious Panama Disease, which has ruined so many plantations throughout the Caribbean. The

fruit of their labours (which I ate and found, surprisingly enough, much better than the Gros Michel) has now to be tried out by the commercial growers. If the trial turns out to be successful, science will have given the producer yet another source of larger and securer harvests. If only it could give the consumer the means of buying these harvests! But before it can give him the means of buying, it must first persuade the consumer that being able to buy harvests and live in peace is better than being able to indulge in hatred for the foreigner, pride of race, national and class exclusiveness. Men do not live by bread or bananas alone: they also live by their passions—their good passions and, still more, their evil passions. Which sort of fun does this consumer like best—the fun of being at peace and so able to consume and to create? or else the fun of boasting, the fun of hating and despising, the fun of mob-intoxication and mob-irresponsibility, the fun of yelling *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, and of sobbing, in chorus, over the final scenes of *Cavalcade*? At present most consumers pay lip-service to peace and prosperity. But they behave as though they preferred the latter alternatives: which means that really, in the depths of their being, they do prefer them. It is the business of men of science to devise a technique for making prosperity and peace as satisfying, psychologically, as nationalistic hatreds and hysterias. It is, in most cases, only from motives of passion that people will

act reasonably. Very well, then, the science of applied anthropology must discover which are the safest passions to make use of. At present enlightened self-interest is not acceptable to the great majority of civilized men and women. It fails to satisfy them, because it is less exciting than the indulgence of those lusts and urges so richly gratified by nationalism. Moral: enlightened self-interest must somehow be made as thrilling as unenlightened animal impulse. To discover how this may be done is incomparably more important than to discover new varieties of the banana. Yet we have an Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, but no Imperial College of Applied Anthropology.

Trinidad

Our friends—and by the end of our single day in Trinidad we had the most charming friends—took us after dinner to a Calypso Tent. Now a Calypso Tent (as I think it almost goes without saying) is not a tent and has nothing to do with Calypso. It is a large shed without walls—a tin roof on posts—in which, during the weeks that precede Shrove Tuesday, the local talent assembles to rehearse certain songs specially composed against the coming of Carnival. The tune to which these songs are sung is always some

variant of an old Spanish air called Calypso ; the words are home-made and topical. (The singers, who are negroes and have the negro's more than Indian passion for grandiloquence, call themselves ' Calypsonians.' Calypsonians !—it is the sort of opulent word that Greene or Marlowe would have delighted in. Why is it that, to-day, only the vulgarest and most coarse-grained poetasters have the face to ride in triumph through Persepolis ? Good poets would as soon publicly break wind as let fly at their readers with a purple passage. The *Zeitgeist* is a most tyrannous spirit ; to evade its imperatives seems, for a sensitive artist, to be all but impossible. The Calypsonians of Trinidad live in another *Zeit* ; so the *Geist* they obey is not the same as ours. In that, it may be, they are fortunate.)

The singing was introduced and accompanied by an orchestra consisting of flute, clarinet (the instrument mainly responsible for tracing the melodic line), violoncello and guitar. The performers played by ear and, as the spirit moved them, improvised elaborations on their parts. The resultant sounds were simply astonishing. These four negroes produced music like nothing else I have ever listened to. The orchestral colour was virulently aniline ; in the end its very violence and intensity produced a kind of numb fatigue. But for the first minutes the ear was dazzled, as it were, and delightedly amazed.

There were four or five singers, all well known, it

seemed, to the audience, and each possessing a stage name in the grandest negro-Elizabethan style.

'The Duke of Normandy!' announced the master of ceremonies. Up climbed a coal-black youth, and with an expression on his face of the most touching seriousness began to sing a song, of which the opening lines ran as follows:

> Oh, wouldn't it be-ee
> A good thing if we-ee
> Supported lo-cull industree!

At the end of every stanza came a refrain in the form of a question:

> Why shouldn' de products of dis island
> Support de popula-ashun?

This appeal for Trinidadian autarchy was warmly applauded. The idiocies of the greater world have penetrated even into the recesses of the Caribbean.

When he had finished, it was the turn of the 'Lord Executor.' A gnarled, little old man, white-skinned but entirely negro, you felt, in spirit, made his bow, and, pulling his hat down at a very sinister angle over his right eye, began to sing a long ballad about a female burglar, called Ruby, whose trial had recently made a great impression on the public of Port of Spain. Unhappily, I can recall little more than the refrain:

> But when Rub-ee
> Pleaded guilt-ee
> She got two years in custod-ee.

One other passage, from a long catalogue of the things that Ruby stole, remains in my memory :

> She took boots and she took shoes
> And bloomers such as ladies use.

But the rest, alas, is silence.

Silence, too, is all but the chorus of another song by the Duke of Normandy about the rail-versus-road controversy. The duke was a modernist and all for the road.

'So what I say,' he sang, while the orchestra improvised an extraordinary accompaniment that ran up and down the scale like the laughter of a giant woodpecker :

> So what I say
> Is, wouldn't it pay
> Much better for all of us
> To travel by de r-omnibus ?

After that the Lord Adjudicator sang almost incomprehensibly (which was the more regrettable, as his song was evidently richly obscene) in that queer French patois which still lingers among the negroes of Trinidad. And when the laughter had died down, the Lord Executor went through a long Newgate Calendar of all the important crimes of the preceding year. Nothing of it remains with me, except the phrase 'lenient brutality' applied to a particularly savage murder.

The proceedings ended with a 'flyting.' Three of the singers got up on to the stage together and pro-

ceeded to improvise stanzas of derision at one another's expense, attack and counter-attack, to the unspeakable pleasure of all the listeners. The gigantic black matron sitting immediately in front of me heaved with such violent paroxysms of laughter, that I was afraid she would disintegrate. Happily I was wrong ; goodly and great, like a black female Og, she sailed out of the Calypso Tent and in the tropical darkness outside was lost, as though in her native element.

Caracas

THE most immediately conspicuous difference between the British Colonies of the Caribbean and the Spanish American republics is a difference in the women's clothes. Sartorially, the colonies are bits of the English provinces with their provinciality raised to the *n*th power. The negresses and mulattos have abandoned the eternity of traditional costume for a temporal world of fashions—but of fashions that are never less than four years old and, even in the palmiest days at home, were French only after the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe. The colonial *monde*—to judge at least by such glimpses as one had in the streets—is scarcely more modish than the commonalty. True, the fashions it affects are perhaps only three years old

and they have moved, in their march towards Paris, as far, shall we say, as Kensington High Street. But that is all.

How startlingly different is the feminine scene in Venezuela or Panama, in Guatemala or Mexico or Cuba ! At La Guayra I did not see a single heel less than four inches high. Powder was mauve on dark noses and a rich artificial colour mantled the brown cheeks. Against a negro or an Indian skin the buttery glossiness of acetate silk shone, yellow, or peppermint green, or more often tenderly pink—*pâle et rose, comme un coquillage marin.* And what frills, what flounces ! Little sweethearts of the world ; for the cut was a Hollywoodian adaptation from the French. La Guayra is only a provincial town. In Caracas, the capital, we had a sight of Venezuelan rank and fashion ; it looked like the paddock at Longchamps.

Caracas

At some moment in its history, no doubt, every palace is genuinely palatial. The gilding shines and the mirrors are untarnished, the damask is still fresh and the crimson plush not yet threadbare. None of the palaces I have ever visited has revealed to me its hypothetical state of bright virginity. And I am glad

of it; for, in my eyes, the greatest charm of palaces (and I have a passion for them) consists precisely in the mixture of impossible grandiosity with a kind of dim squalor which no well-brought-up bourgeois would tolerate for a moment. Nor, indeed, would he have to tolerate it. For in a small establishment one can afford periodically to renew and refurbish. But when it is a matter of laying down forty or fifty hectares of crimson carpet, of repainting by the square mile—well, even a king has to think twice about it. And while he is thinking, the squalor continues to creep yet deeper into the heart of the magnificence. Perhaps the place has been redecorated now; but I remember that when, as a boy, I went round Windsor Castle, the dark blue velvet on the chairs in what I suppose was the Chapter Room of the Knights of the Garter had been so much worn by a long succession of august posteriors that there were mange-spots in the pile and the stringy warp of the material showed through in naked indecency. In another palace, in Europe, I have seen moths rising from the sofa on which the royal personages habitually sat. And how dingy the paint-work invariably is! What accumulations of dark grey dirt have lodged in the undustable recesses of the gilding! Each hall and echoing saloon is shabbier than the last. The most improbable treasures meet the eye, whichever way it turns—amber busts of Queen Victoria; life-sized elephants in rock-crystal; the Tsar's lapis lazuli dining-table;

a solid platinum escritoire presented by the first Baron Rothschild. But the carpet is worn, like the linoleum in the corridors of a board school; the forty-foot damask curtains have not been replaced since the Crimean War; and as for the monumental clock on the porphyry mantelpiece—it stopped on the morning of the battle of Sadowa, and has never, from that day to this, marked anything but eleven minutes past nine.

The presidential palace at Caracas is a small but very choice specimen of its kind. The plush seems heavier than elsewhere, and more darkly crimson; the gilding more brassily yellow, the carving more ornate and in more strikingly bad taste. It is like a palace on the late nineteenth-century stage, and the properties are as shabby, when you look at them closely, as those of any theatre.

Behind the throne in the chief reception-room hung a gigantic portrait of the present ruler of Venezuela, prancing, on a white horse as god-like as himself. In another room his photograph, life-size, revealed a shrewd and almost too genial little old gentleman in goggles, bulging pronouncedly about the lower waist. 'Look here, upon this picture, and on this.' But it is not the mythological prancer, it is the bulging and begoggled old gentleman, who is the strong man of Venezuela, and who has been its strong man, almost uninterruptedly, for the last quarter of a century.

BEYOND THE MEXIQUE BAY

Colon

ENGLISH provincial dowdiness at Barbados and Trinidad; Franco-Californian smartness at Caracas. At Colon, the Country Club had completely prevailed over Paris; the negresses were all dressed in natty sports clothes and low-heeled shoes.

Prostitution and the sale of curios and antiques seem to be the two staple industries of this very depressing city. And since sailors cannot afford to be too particular, the first industry is, only too often, merely a branch of the second.

We rolled through the *quartier réservé* and the residential suburbs, very slowly, in a one-horse cab. 'I tink, sir,' said the negro driver, with an old-world courtesy that was most engaging, 'I tink, sir, dat we have de honour to be compatriots.'

I said that I was very glad to hear it; but privately I felt pretty sure that he was wrong. Many thousands of negroes have migrated from Jamaica and the other British islands to the shores of the neighbouring republics. They have had large families in their new homes. But in nine cases out of ten their children are not British subjects, for the simple reason that, in nine cases out of ten, the parents never took the trouble to marry. Britannia has a short way with bastards.

If you are born of British parents outside the Empire, but in wedlock, she will take you to her bosom ; but if you are born outside both the pales, then you stay outside ; and that's that.

The Central American governments have recently had this fact forced upon their attention. In good times they welcomed the influx of negro population from the islands. But now times are bad ; there is unemployment at the ports, in the banana plantations and sugar mills. The various governments would like to repatriate the now superfluous aliens. But to their dismay, they find that most of them are not aliens. If they are bastards—and they almost always are—they are true-born Panamanians, Nicaraguans, Honduraneans, or whatever it may be.

Times are bad in the islands as well as on the mainland ; any sudden accession to the labour reserves would be extremely unwelcome. Our ministers and consuls are proclaiming the sanctity of marriage with a truly missionary zeal.

Jamaica

At Kingston we said good-bye to our giant hostess. The other front-pagers had twenty-one more days of her. I did not greatly envy them their thrifty smart-

ness. The costly squalors of individual travelling have their compensations.

Jamaica

JAMAICA is the Pearl of the Caribbean—or is it the Clapham Junction of the West? I can never remember. But, anyhow, pearl or junction, it made us both feel extremely ill, and we were thankful to be off on a small Norwegian banana boat, bound for British Honduras and Guatemala.

On a clear night in the tropics, a slowly rolling ship has a private astronomy all its own. I used to lie sometimes for hours watching these novel celestial motions. The stars would go slanting up at an angle through the sky, pause at the top of their trajectory and, with a long rush, swoop down again; then very slowly, as though tentatively, as though reluctantly, would begin to curve sideways and upwards, exploring the darkness, until at last they seemed to have found the path they were looking for, and up they would slant again in strong undeviating flight—and the whole cycle of the movements had begun anew.

BRITISH HONDURAS

British Honduras

On either side of the ship coral islands began to appear, so exactly like the coral islands of childish imaginations that I was reluctant for a time to accept the evidence of my senses. However, there unquestionably they were—little atolls, sunk to the gunwale in blue water, each with its clump of palm trees and perhaps a tiny house or two and a boat drawn up on the white beach. A few hours later we were anchored off Belize.

Walking through the streets, one saw but little traces of the great calamity of 1930, when a hurricane blew the sea in a huge wall of water right across the town. A heap of bricks, it is true, was all that was left of the principal house of God ; but Mammon, Caesar and the Penates had risen fresh and shining from the ruins. Almost all the private residences and all the government offices, all the shops and warehouses, had been rebuilt or repaired. The town as a whole looked remarkably neat and tidy. Even a tidal wave may have something to be said for it. It does at least clear away the slums. Our governments and municipalities are less brutal ; but they are also, alas, a good deal less effective.

The sanitary arrangements at the new hotel were all that could be desired ; but the proprietor, who

was a Spanish-American, was evidently unacquainted, not only with English spelling, but also (which was worse) with our English euphemisms. At the top of the stairs I found myself confronted by a door, on which were written, in very large black letters, the words : FOR URIN.

Why not, after all ? Nevertheless, I was a little startled. We are all like Pavlov's dogs—so conditioned that, when the scatological bell rings, we automatically begin to frown or blush. It is absurd, it is even, if you like to think of yourself as a rational being, rather humiliating. But there it is ; that is how the machine happens to work. To know that there *is* a machine and that it *does* work in this particular way is to be, even though still subject to its control, in some sort superior to it. Not a very satisfying triumph, perhaps ; but still, I reflected, as I closed the door behind me, better than no triumph at all.

British Honduras

WHEN I was a boy there was hardly, in all my acquaintance, a single reputable family which did not eat off mahogany, sit on mahogany, sleep in mahogany. Mahogany was a symbol of economic solidity and moral worth. Just as in Barbados the hat proclaims

the emancipated and no longer inferior negress, so, in Victorian England, mahogany proclaimed the respectable man of substance. So loudly and unequivocally did it proclaim him, that those whose trade was in luxury could never be lavish enough with their mahogany. In Pullman cars, in liners—wherever, indeed, it was necessary to give clients the illusion that they were living like princes—mahogany fairly flowed like water.

Alas, how quickly such sacred symbols can lose their significance ! For us, to-day, the highest luxury is a perfect asepsis. The new casino at Monte Carlo Beach could be transformed at a moment's notice into a hospital. (Luxurious in the traditional manner, the old is almost infinitely unhygienic.) The Wagon-lit Company's latest coaches are simply very expensive steel nursing-homes on wheels. There is no place here for mahogany. There is hardly more place in the private house. I cannot think of a single modern high-bourgeois home, in which mahogany plays more than a casual and inconspicuous part. My friends eat off glass and metal, sit on metal and leather, sleep on beds that are almost innocent of enclosing bedsteads. If they use wood at all for their furniture, they use one of the light-coloured varieties, or else a cheap soft-wood painted to harmonize with the general colour-scheme of the room. Never mahogany. The dark rich wood, so much beloved by our fathers and grandfathers, has not only lost its symbolic

meaning; it is also (and the Marxians would say that this was directly due to the loss of prestige) regarded with aesthetic distaste. Mahogany, in a word, is now hopelessly out of fashion.

Here, so far as the historian of taste is concerned, the matter ends. For the social historian, however, it is only just beginning. British Honduras used to live on the export of mahogany. But we prefer the lighter woods, we prefer metal and glass and ripolin. Result: a falling off of Honduranean exports and a corresponding rise in the death-rate from tuberculosis. Increase of phthisis in Belize has a contributory cause in the decline of gum-chewing in Chicago and New York. Chicle, like mahogany, but on a smaller scale, is a British Honduras staple. Financial stringency, and perhaps also a change of fashion, cause American typists to chew less than they did. Therefore the chicle-hunters and their dependents—like the mahogany-cutters and theirs—have less money to buy food and so less resistance to disease. Tubercle takes its opportunity.

The inadequacy of man's imagination and his immense capacity for ignorance are notorious. We act habitually without knowing what the more distant results of our actions are likely to be—without even caring to know. And our ability to imagine how other people think and feel, or how we ourselves should think and feel in some hypothetical situation, is strictly limited. These are defects in our make-up as mental

beings. But they are defects which possess great biological advantages. Any considerable increase in our capacity for knowing and imagining would be likely to result in the paralysis of all our activities. ' Take, by way of example, this little matter of mahogany. If we knew precisely what were going to be the effects upon the British Honduraneans of our choice of metal instead of mahogany ; if we could vividly imagine what it feels like to be chronically underfed, to die slowly of consumption ; if our sympathy with them were what the word literally means, a genuine ' with-suffering '—should we then ever have the courage to buy anything but mahogany? And if we bought nothing but mahogany, what about the people who live by the sale of soft-woods, glass and stainless steel? Knowing the effects on them, imaginatively realizing their sufferings, how could we resist *their* appeal? The final result would be a hopeless neurasthenia.

What is true of mahogany is true of anything else. Excess of knowledge and imagination leads to a kind of paralysis. (The tragedy of this excess has been written in *Hamlet.*) The confident capacity to choose depends on ignorance or, if knowledge is unescapable, on insentience and lack of imagination. In practice we are able to do things with a light heart, because we never know very clearly what we are doing, and are happily incapable of imagining how our deeds will affect other people or our future selves. To rail against destiny because it has decreed that we shall

live in darkness and insensibility is foolish. We should rather be thankful that it has been made psychologically possible for us to choose and to act. If we find that our acts and choices result in damage to others, it is our duty, as human beings, to try to remedy the evil we have caused. It is certainly not our duty to refrain from choice and action because all choices and actions may—indeed must—result in some evil to somebody.

By remote delegation and proxy the English public is trying to make up for the miseries it has unwittingly inflicted on the negroes of Belize. The British Honduras government, for the existence of which we non-chewing despisers of mahogany are at least theoretically responsible, is making great efforts to induce the negro woodmen to go on the land. The task is not easy; for these woodmen have been brought up in a traditional contempt for agriculture. The material difficulties are also great. Still, there is plenty of fertile ground available, and the country, which is about equal in area to Wales, has a population hardly if at all larger than that of Nuneaton. The forests are filled with ruins, and in the palmy days of the Maya Old Empire this territory, which now supports, or rather does not support, forty-five thousand people, may easily have had a million inhabitants. Intensely cultivated, it might again become populous and prosperous. Our refusal to eat our dinners off mahogany is, for the moment, a disaster for the Honduraneans. If it com-

pels them to change their mode of life, it may perhaps some day turn out to have been the kindest thing that has ever been done to them.

British Honduras

If the world had any ends British Honduras would certainly be one of them. It is not on the way from anywhere to anywhere else. It has no strategic value. It is all but uninhabited, and when Prohibition is abolished, the last of its profitable enterprises—the re-export of alcohol by rum-runners, who use Belize as their base of operations—will have gone the way of its commerce in logwood, mahogany and chicle. Why then do we bother to keep this strange little fragment of the Empire? Certainly not from motives of self-interest. Hardly one Englishman in fifty thousand derives any profit from the Britishness of British Honduras. But *le cœur a ses raisons*. Of these mere force of habit is the strongest. British Honduras goes on being British because it has been British. But this, of course, is not the whole story. We have been educated to personify the country in which we live. A collection of incredibly diverse people living on an island in the North Sea is transformed by a simple mental conjuring trick into a young woman

inferiority by personal offensiveness towards foreigners —especially the nationals of powerful states. It is an intolerable bore; but, then, what else can you expect?

We got away at last, and walked down the long jetty rejoicing in our freedom. Rejoicing, it turned out, too soon. For at the pier-gates—an enormous bayonet fixed in his rifle—stood an Indian soldier, who demanded peremptorily to see our passports. These, of course, with the accompanying vaccination certificates, tourist's identity cards and all the rest, had been duly examined, stamped and countersigned. But we were foreigners and therefore the legitimate prey of any one in authority. They had given this poor little Indian a real gun and made him a sentry. He was a great man—but a great man who remembered the four hundred years of white oppression. If any one had a right to a bit of compensatory fun at our expense, it was he. We gave him the passports. He studied them very gravely for several minutes, upside down; then looked from our photographs to our faces and back again with ever-growing suspicion. In another moment he would have arrested us. Only just in time, I took the passports from him, and turning them right side up, showed him the official stamp of the Republic. He might not have learnt to read; but he ought at least be able to recognize a quetzal-bird when he saw one. The sight of the national emblem produced an immediate effect. Those quet-

zals proved that Higher Powers had already been at work upon our passports. From a position of exulting superiority, he was suddenly precipitated into abjection. A representative of the Republic of Guatemala, he was to us foreigners as a Brahmin to a pair of Untouchables. But in relation to the Higher Powers he was the most miserable of Outcastes. And now the Higher Powers had hall-marked us with their quetzal-bird as one of themselves. His brief moment of compensatory Brahmin-hood was over; the full weight of those four hundred years of oppression came heavily down once more upon his shoulders. He saluted and drew back to let us pass. We could afford, now, to feel sorry for him.

Quirigua

At Quirigua we spent three very pleasant days as the guests of Dr. MacPhail, the head of the United Fruit Company's hospital. The place was astonishingly beautiful, and our host one of the best and most charming of men. The doctor's professional reputation stands very high; but it is his kindness and his wisdom that have made of him the universal godfather of Guatemala. You cannot travel anywhere in the Republic without meeting people who will

talk to you—and talk invariably with affectionate gratitude and respect—of Dr. MacPhail. He is an institution, one of the best in the country.

The brand of malaria that you caught in the Valley of Quirigua was peculiarly virulent. The place was a regular death-trap. To-day, thanks to the work of Dr. MacPhail and his colleagues, Quirigua is almost healthy. The natives have been patiently educated into reporting at the hospital on the appearance of the first symptoms of the disease. Periodical blood-tests are made and the personally healthy, but socially dangerous carriers of infection are subjected to special treatment. Houses are screened and, wherever practicable, the land is drained. Life in the valley is now very nearly safe.

It seems still to be undecided whether malaria was indigenous to America, or whether it was brought from the Old World by the Conquistadores, as a slight return for the Redman's gift (if his gift it really were) of syphilis. Documentary evidence is lacking, and we can only speculate in the abstract.

Here, then, are two theoretical arguments against the indigenousness of the disease. First, endemic malaria tends to keep population low and civilization backward. But the Old Empire Mayas developed a culture that was, in many respects, astonishingly high ; and in the now pestilential regions round Lake Peten their population seems to have reached a density of nearly three hundred to the square mile. (Dr. Ricket-

son of the Carnegie Institution, arrived at this figure by counting the house mounds on sample clearings made in the jungle round the ruined city of Uaxactun.)

Secondly, there is the case of Cortes, who, in 1525, marched a force from Mexico through Guatemala into Honduras. Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras—names, when one sees them on the map, like any other names. But for those who have walked even a mile or two in the forests of the *tierra caliente*, or ridden up and down the sides of a few *barrancas*, this march must rank as one of the most astonishing of all the feats recorded in the almost unbelievable history of the conquests. Now, if the country had been poisonous with endemic malaria, could an army even of sixteenth-century Spaniards have come through alive?

Almost all history, up to the present, has been written in terms of politics and economics. The fundamentals of human existence—physiology and psychology—are everywhere ignored. It is a case of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

Quirigua

GREEN aisles, and the tattered leaves of the banana trees hung, sunlit or shadowed, like old flags in the chapel of some Order of Knighthood. The aisle

darkened to a narrow tunnel ; we were among forest trees. Then, glaringly, the sultry white sky was above us, and there, in the wide clearing, were the great carved monoliths and, at either end of the open space, the pyramid mounds on which the temples had stood. With growing astonishment and admiration, we moved from one magnificent stela to another. This forum had once been thronged. They had burnt copal incense on the altars, perhaps spilt human blood. And every five years, punctually, another of those sculptured stones had been dragged from the distant quarries and hoisted upright into its socket in the ground. And there they still stood, obscurely commemorating man's triumph over time and matter and the triumph of time and matter over man.

Striped like a gaudy convict—and for the same reasons, for he was a dangerous murderer—a large coral snake lay coiled near the foot of the tallest obelisk. At our approach, he woke and oozed slowly away, inch after tricoloured inch, into his hole. And while we were standing in front of the most extraordinary of the monuments—the huge mythological animal that lies at one corner of the southern pyramid—there was a sudden noise in the trees overhead. Looking up, we saw a flock of toucans hopping clumsily among the branches ; grotesque, like a ribald human invention ; and as they moved, their great bills would flash startlingly in the light, like drawn daggers.

QUIRIGUA

Quirigua

For an artist the material obstacles in the way of unrestricted self-expression are easier to surmount than the mental. Thus, the Maya sculptors had none but stone implements; nevertheless, they were as highly accomplished, manually, as the best-equipped statuaries of the age of steel. Skill and an inexhaustible patience had taught them to transcend the limitations of their neolithic technique; they were free to do whatever they liked with their material. 'Whatever they liked. . . .' But what did they like? The answer to that is that they liked only what they could like, only what they were psychologically capable of liking, only what, in a word, they had been conditioned to like. The *Zeitgeist* is just Professor Pavlov on a cosmic scale.

People who are born into an isolated and homogeneous community are liable to be conditioned much more strictly than the members of a society composed of many diverse elements and in contact with other societies, having traditions different from its own. An Eskimo never sees any one but other Eskimos; and as Eskimo society is classless and unspecialized, this means that he only sees people who have been brought up in exactly the same way as himself. Comparison

is the beginning of criticism, and he has nothing with which to compare the accepted conventions of his small world. With a contemporary European the case is different. He lives in a society divided into a great number of economic, professional and denominational classes ; two hours in an aeroplane will take him to places where people speak a different language, think different thoughts, obey other sexual taboos and have unfamiliar table manners. The circumambient Pavlov rings a great diversity of bells ; there is deconditioning and reconditioning ; there are the conflicts that arise when loyalties are divided and of equal strength. Our minds, in consequence, are much less closely circumscribed than those of the Eskimos. Nevertheless, sooner or later even the most highly civilized and emancipated person comes to a mental frontier which he cannot pass—comes to it, of course, unaware, and does not realize his inability to go further ; for it is of the essence of these inward barriers that they never reveal their presence, unless, as the result of some fortunate or unfortunate conjunction of circumstances, we are shaken out of our second nature and transported violently to the other side of what is thenceforward perceived to have been an arbitrary limitation of our freedom.

The Mayas occupied a position nearer to the Eskimos than to ourselves. The individual was born into a society not much differentiated (it was probably divided into only two classes, the ignorant laity and

the learned priest-rulers) and in contact with other communities not very different from itself. Conditioning was not quite so strict as it is within the polar circle ; but it was a good deal stricter than in modern Europe. Sculptors, as we have seen, could do what they liked with their materials. But there were certain things which they simply could not like. Perhaps the most conspicuous absence from Maya sculpture is that of the female form—*et tout ce qui s'ensuit.* True, there is, at the Peabody Museum, an incredibly beautiful terra-cotta figure from Campeche of a goddess with a worshipper resting like a tired child in her lap. It is a Maya version of the protective Madonna of Catholic Europe. Piero's at San Sepolcro is perhaps the finest example of the class—a monumental figure, spreading wide the folds of her cloak to give shelter to a group of poor mortals, whose helplessness and unhappiness have symbolically reduced their stature to that of children. This Maya goddess is a strong mother, and the artist's treatment of the figure and the draperies beautifully expresses her character. There is no hint here of Mylitta or Diana of the Ephesians. The Maya pantheon included no goddess of love, and the heavenly person who looked after the fertility of Central American fields had none of the female—the all too female—attributes generally assigned to this deity, but was a man holding an axe —for he was the god of the thunderbolt as well as of rain—and grotesquely fitted with the snout of a

tapir. The goddess represented in the Campeche statuette must have been one of the minor divinities, perhaps the object of a heretical cult.

No female principle was active in the Maya universe; and since Maya sculpture was a religious art, that concerned itself precisely with the divine Nature of Things, no representation of the female form appears among the ruins. I have seen a fair amount of Central American art and can recall only one reference to the act of generation. This was at Monte Alban, near Oaxaca, where there is a bas-relief of an ithyphallic man—the work, so far as I could make out, of the pre-Zapotec occupants of the site. There must, it is obvious, be other objects of the same kind; but they are certainly rare. Rare enough to justify us in saying that Maya sculptors were so conditioned by their environment that whatever might be their tastes in life, they found sex in art all but unthinkable.

Maya art is florid, but invariably austere; a more chaste luxuriance was never imagined. It is instructive, in this context, to compare the art of the Central Americans with that, no less richly ornamental, of the Indians. More than any other, Indian art is impregnated with sensuality. From Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, and for the last two thousand years, almost every Hindu artist seems to have been engaged in illustrating the works of Aretino. Even the most sacred persons tend to melt—and at the most solemn moment of their religious life—into suggestive postures.

Buddha among the women of his father's court—here is a theme that calls for a sensual treatment. But Buddha taking leave of the world, Buddha resisting temptation, Buddha preaching—these are another story. Yet the renderings of these scenes in Indian art are of the same kind as the renderings of life in the harem. It is as though a Christian artist were to paint the Agony in the Garden in terms of Renoir's *Baigneuses*, or Bronzino's *Love, Folly and Time.* Indian art is the same outside the Buddhist tradition as within it. The boneless limbs—dozens of them, very often to a single personage—ooze about the picture-space or the sculpture-volume like a voluptuous ectoplasm. The haunches jut to right or left ; the waists are tapered as though by a delicious process of suction ; even the men seem as though inflated about the chest ; and as for the women . . . But language fails. The very animals are symbols of sensuality. Elephants have the gracefully bulging appeal of Lakshmi or the girls in the seraglio of Gotama's father ; and I remember, in the Musée Guimet, a fourth-century marble of the school of Amaravati surmounted by a frieze of indeterminate quadrupeds, all kneeling, all with their bodies bent in the shape of the letter U, and the succession of their more than human posteriors raised in curve after luscious curve towards the sky. A very odd example of the pathetic fallacy.

Of all this treacly and ectoplasmic sensuality there is, in Maya art, not the smallest trace. The female

form, as we have seen, never appears, and the male body, when it is shown divested of its hieratic ornaments, is always uncompromisingly male and never takes on those hermaphroditic attributes which distinguish gods and saviours in Indian art. The nearest approach to the Indian spirit is to be found in the few statues in the round which have survived among the ruins of Copan. One of these—a beautiful head and torso of the maize god—may be studied in the British Museum. It is a wonderfully graceful and delicate piece of work : but its delicacy has none of the equivocal, epicene quality of Indian elegance, and its grace is wholly without lasciviousness.

In Indian art even the ornamental forms have a certain sensual quality. Head-dresses, bracelets, anklets tend to be conceived as a series of rolls of flesh. A thigh with two or three tourniquets round it—that is what the typical Indian tiara looks like. All the lines in a passage of Indian decoration are curved, all surfaces gently swell and retreat. The straight and the angular are of rare occurrence in ornament, and even by the architects they are avoided wherever possible. In such buildings as the Jambulinga temple at Pattadkal, the Lingaraja temple at Bhuvanesvara, or the later Kesava temple at Somnathpur (to name but a few characteristic specimens), the Indians perfected a kind of organic architecture, whose forms are those, not of an abstract solid geometry, but of living tissue. Many of these temples are, in their own way, extra-

ordinarily beautiful: but their way is an oppressive way: they give you a suffocating sense of animal heat, and their stone flesh seems as though turgid and pulsating with blood.

Maya decoration is luxuriant like a tropical forest; but it is a forest in which one can breathe freely of an air that is actually exhilarating. The life of the swarming ornaments—and they are all vehemently alive—is a life of the mind, of the imagination liberated from the obsessive warmth and heaviness of material bodies. Straight lines and angles, surfaces that are flat and perpendicular to one another—all the abstractions of pure geometry appear among the rich exuberance of the Mayas' symbolic decoration. Their sacred personages wear no Indian mitres of tight-laced and bulging meat. No, their head-dresses are sometimes pure geometrical abstractions, like those metal-smooth cones and cylinders worn by the people in Piero della Francesca's frescoes; sometimes, as on most of the stelae at Quirigua and Copan, they consist of fantastic combinations of decorative and symbolic motives; sometimes, best of all, they are representations of the feather tiaras worn by men of rank. These elaborate haloes of feather fireworks are decorations that are at once gracefully naturalistic and as austerely abstract in their formal arrangement as the most mathematical of cubist designs.

Among the most extravagant of the Mayas' ornamental combinations are the hieroglyphs. The fan-

tasies of Gothic decoration seem pedestrian by comparison. But however rich and strange, this extravagance is always rigidly disciplined. Each hieroglyph is contained by, and completely fills, its appointed square. The *mise en page* is almost always impeccable. These fantastic and often wildly grotesque symbols are subject to the severest intellectual discipline.

As for Maya architecture—its style is all that is most un-Indian, most abstractly inorganic. An affair of pyramids, of flat walls divided up into rectangular panels, of wide and regular flights of steps, it is an embodiment of man's most distinctively human, his most anti-natural imaginings.

Indian artists, then, liked to use their skill to express sensuality through plastic symbols, to render the emotion accompanying the immediate contact of flesh with living flesh in terms of pictorial, sculptural and even architectural forms. The Mayas, on the contrary, did not like to use their artistic skill in this way. Their decorative forms have no quality of sensuality, and they almost never made direct representations of erotic scenes or of what I may call erotically significant persons. There is no sex in the art of the Mayas ; but, by way of compensation, what a lot of death! From ten onwards, all the glyphs representing numerals in their vigesimal system are variations on the theme of the death's-head. Nine faces, each with its distinguishing character and emblems, but all with the same

fleshless lower jaw. The inscriptions on the monuments are mainly concerned with the recording of dates, so that emblems of death are as common among the Central American ruins as numerals upon the stones of a modern cemetery. But death among the ruins is by no means exclusively a by-product of Maya arithmetic. Copan, for example, is full of skulls, or rather of those magnificent skull-symbols, more gruesome than any realistic imitation—those decorative abstractions in stone, by means of which the Maya sculptors expressed the idea of death with a penetrative force only surpassed, in all the history of art, by the Aztecs.

To compare two widely different artistic traditions is to find oneself, inevitably, confronted by a question. Why are the traditions different? Of two artists, both capable, so far as technique is concerned, of doing what they like, why should the one who lives in India like, and the one from Central America dislike, expressing sensuality? Why should one find in death a congenial and stimulating theme, while the other is best inspired by, indeed can hardly escape from, thoughts of sexual pleasure?

In either case, as I have already pointed out, the immediate causal agent is the Local Pavlov—the spirit pervading each particular extent of time and place. But why should the Local Pavlov have chosen to ring just those particular bells which happen to be rung, and no others? The people who believe in a

determinism of Race will answer this question by saying that the Local Pavlov had to ring those particular bells, because every Local Pavlov is merely the expression of the fundamental character of the Local Race. Pavlov conditions, but has himself been conditioned by, his victims.

It is possible that there may be some small element of truth in this theory of racial determinism. Congenital differences in metabolism, nervous sensibility and, more doubtfully, intelligence have been observed as characteristics of the members of different races. Certain Melanesian, for example, seem to be, on the average, more sensitive to pain than we are ; Bushmen, Australian Blackfellows and perhaps some races of negroes are perhaps a little less bright in the head than Europeans and Asiatics. But it must be remembered that over large areas of the earth's surface pure races are unknown. In Europe, for example, all talk about the congenital difference of one race from another (let alone its congenital superiority or inferiority) is perfectly irrelevant, for the simple reason that it is only in the remotest recesses and blind alleys of the Continent that anything like a pure race can be discovered : and even here the purity of blood is certainly not untainted. Moreover, even when pure, the race is not, biologically speaking, a true race, but only one of several variations on a single racial theme, the European. Some cultures are, in certain respects, superior to others, but the

explanation of the fact must be sought in the nature of the cultural tradition, not in the congenital differences between the 'races,' brought up within these diverse traditions. We are back again with the Local Pavlov, and the question why one Local Pavlov should differ from another still remains unanswered.

It is possible that there are some slight congenital differences between Indians (whoever the Indians may be; for the geographical term connotes every possible combination of numerous races) and Central Americans. But I see no particular reason to suppose that the difference between the two artistic traditions is attributable to these congenital dissimilarities. Dr. Gann, it is true, has remarked several times on the apparent indifference to sexual matters displayed by the contemporary descendants of the Mayas. Can it be that the absence of all erotic themes from Maya art and its prevailing tone of austerity are due to the fact that the people were, as a whole, congenitally less interested in sex than the Indians or ourselves? It may be so, of course; but I think it improbable.

In his classical study of 'The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia,' Dr. Malinowski has recorded the fact that 'the nervous excitability of the natives is much less than ours, and their sexual imagination is relatively very sluggish.' So far as sex is concerned, the Trobriand Islanders are without

faith : only unequivocal contact has power to rouse them to a state of erotic excitement. Compared with ourselves they are congenitally undersexed. And yet, as Dr. Malinowski has shown, the preoccupation of these people with sexual matters surpasses even that of the contemporary European.

In the case of the Mayas, it should be remembered that Dr. Gann's observations were made among the wretched inhabitants of the Central American lowlands. Malaria and hookworm, raw alcohol and malnutrition have reduced these people to a very low ebb of vitality. It is difficult to make love on an empty stomach, and still more difficult to make it on a duodenum that is full of *ankylostoma.* The Ancient Mayas were masters of the jungle and had all the land under intensive cultivation. Food, in their time, must have been abundant, and ' full feasts,' as the poet has remarked, are ever the ' increasers of desire.' Properly fed, the Mayas were probably as amorous as any other people ; and even if their nervous excitability was not so great as ours, that would not, as Malinowski has shown, have prevented them from taking at least as much interest in sex as we do.

I think, then, that we must attribute the differences between the Maya and the Indian artistic traditions entirely, or at least mainly, to culture rather than racial heredity. If the Local Pavlov behaves in one way rather than in another, it is not because the

Local Race has such and such congenital idiosyncrasies ; it is rather because a number of accidents have conspired to make him what he is. According to Marxian theory, the accidents which determine the nature of the Local Pavlov are all of an economic kind. But this hypothesis fails completely to account for the frequently observed fact that two peoples, whose economic development is fundamentally the same, have dissimilar cultures. That economics have some influence on culture is obvious ; but it is surely no less obvious that their influence is not completely decisive.

It has been fashionable for some time past to attribute the formation and development of cultures exclusively to impersonal forces. Depersonalized, the story of mankind gains in majestic dignity of appearance, but loses, unfortunately, in scientific adequacy and veracity. This august astronomical kind of history just doesn't happen to be true. Direct observation shows that accidents of the most trivially personal kind may play a decisive part in modifying the thought and behaviour of entire communities. For example, the death of a medicine man during the absence of his appointed successor has been observed, in one of the tribes of Pueblo Indians, to lead to a radical change in the religious ceremonial and beliefs of the entire community. Knowledge of the rites was a trade secret reserved to a single man. The man died without having been able to pass on his knowledge to his

official heir; consequently the religion of a whole tribe was changed.

Socially important secrets are seldom in the hands of a single man; but there have been, there still are, very many communities in which knowledge and, in general, all the elements of higher culture have been the possession of a few. Consider the contemporary world. The very existence of an industrialized and urbanized society depends on the knowledge and skill of, at the most, one per cent. of its members. A selective massacre of three or four hundred thousand technicians—perhaps of a much smaller number—would bring the whole economic and social life of England to a standstill. True, it would be possible for us to make good this catastrophic loss. But it takes a long time to form a good technician, and while the new men were being trained, most of the population would have died of hunger and disease. Unspecialized agricultural societies are not so abjectly dependent on a class of technicians as are we. Accidents among the guardians of culture do not lead to the physical destruction of the community, but only to a modification of its psychological life.

Maya society consisted, in all probability, of a small ruling class of learned priests and a large, subservient and ignorant laity. In such a community (and even the most democratic and best-educated of modern societies are still fundamentally of this type) the fortuitous appearance among the rulers of an

individual possessed of some special congenital ability, or preoccupied for whatever reason with one particular class of ideas, may lead to the formation of a certain tradition of culture that will canalize the thought and behaviour of the whole people for generations. European history provides a striking example of this process. At the beginning of the seventeenth century European thought had broken the banks of its mediaeval conduits and was seething in confused and uncertain flood. The astonishing accident of Galileo reconverted this flood into a river. With ever-increasing impetus thought flowed along the new channels he had prepared for it.

Concerning the history of the Mayas we have no documents beyond the ruins, the dates and the traditions preserved by Landa and in the Popul Vuh and the books of Chilam Balam. One can only speculate about the causes which made their culture what it was. My own conviction is that its distinguishing peculiarities were due to such personal accidents as the birth, in a favoured social position, of exceptional individuals. To what cause, for example, must we attribute that obsessive preoccupation with time, which is such a striking feature of Central American culture? Other agricultural communities have not found it necessary to work out elaborate calendars or to devise an intellectual instrument for thinking back into remotest antiquity. There was nothing, therefore, in their economic development that made

it inevitable for the Mayas to invent the Great Cycle and establish dates many thousands of years removed from their own position in time. Personal accident offers the only plausible explanation of the fact. We must postulate the appearance among the Maya priesthood of one man, or a succession of men, haunted by the consciousness of the perpetual perishing of things and congenitally equipped to deal with this obsession in mathematical terms. (The god Itzamma is possibly the original inventor of the calendar, deified and worshipped by his compatriots). Once the practice of calendar-making became established, it would be as 'natural' for all succeeding Maya priests to bother their heads with problems of time as it was 'natural' for the Greeks of Herodotus' day not to bother theirs.

A similar explanation may be suggested to account for the absence of the female element from Maya theology and of sensuality from Maya art. The pantheon of the codices and the monuments is an elaborate affair, which looks as though it were the product of a selection and crystallization from some more primitive folk religion. Significant in this context is the fact that, in the Archaic Culture which preceded that of the Mayas, the principle of fertility is symbolized by a female figure. Why did the Mayas reject this symbol in favour of the less obviously appropriate man-with-a-nose-like-a-tapir's? The answer, I think, is that somebody, with an anti-

phallic turn of mind, rejected it for them. There was an editing of the old religion—*in usum serenissimi Delphini*. An edited cosmology must necessarily reflect the character of the editors, and this character will become, to a certain extent, the character of all those who accept the edited religion as their guide through life. Philosophy, according to Bradley, is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe by instinct. But most of what we believe by instinct turns out, on analysis, to be merely what we happen to have picked up in childhood. *Instinctively*, the Mayas believed that the god of fertility was a tapir-snouted man. Somebody had once said so and the assertion had been constantly repeated ; therefore they ' felt it in their bones.' In *their* bones, on the contrary, the Indians felt that the principle of fertility was a Yoni-Lingam ; and the Ephesians *knew* (and we may be sure that their intuition had a quality of irrefragable certainty) that the same deity was a woman with four rows of mango-shaped breasts and a swarm of miniature animals crawling up her arms.

The Mayas' preoccupation with the emblems of mortality may also have been due to an intellectual fashion set by a few people. Periods when death was all the rage recurred several times in European history. The fifteenth century, for example, was a time when corpses, skulls and skeletons were extravagantly popular. Painted, sculptured, written about and dramatically represented, the Danse Macabre

was everywhere. To the fifteenth-century artist a good death-appeal was as sure a key to popularity as a good sex-appeal is at the present time. The 'forties of the eighteenth century witnessed a revival of this fashionable interest in death. Blair and especially Young were instrumental in making the grave as popular, during a number of years, as the bed. The *Night Thoughts* had an international success comparable to that of the *Green Hat*. The Maya and the later Aztec preoccupation with the more gruesome aspects of death may have been the inevitable result of their economic development or of any other abstraction you like to mention. But it may, even more probably, I think, have been the result of a tradition inaugurated by a few individuals of a peculiar turn of mind. Similarly, the unspeakable horrors of the Aztec sacrifices were a logical outcome of the cosmological speculations of a few philosophers. The sun was alive and required nourishment; if it were not properly nourished it might die, or at least become angry; therefore, for the good of humanity at large, human victims had to be bent backwards over a stone and have their hearts ripped out with an obsidian knife. It is the sort of argument that a solitary theologian, brooding over the problems of the world, would first of all devise to account for the existence of sporadic sacrificial rites and then develop, abstractly, to the logical conclusion that, since the sun is large and more than human, solar appetite must be extra-

ordinarily hearty and the supply of victims therefore never sufficiently copious.

We are now in a position to suggest an answer to our original question. Why is one artistic tradition different from another? Geographical, climatic and economic factors play their part. So, perhaps, does racial idiosyncrasy. But the finally decisive element is accident—the accident of an unusual combination of chromosomes and the consequent birth of an unusually gifted person; the accident in an individual's peculiar upbringing or of his finding himself so favourably placed in society that he can exercise an influence on his fellows; the accident of the existence of royal or clerical patronage—and so on, indefinitely. If we care to risk a generalization, we may say that the main features of a culture are predictable by any one acquainted with the impersonal forces at work upon and within the community; but that the details are the result of accident and are therefore unpredictable. For example, we may predict that an agricultural people will have more highly developed arts than a hunting people. But we shall not be able to predict the nature of the traditional forms, nor their artistic quality. No amount of knowledge of the impersonal forces at work will allow us to prophesy that *this* agricultural people will represent the principle of fertility as a phallus or a yoni; *that*, as a man with an axe and the snout of a tapir. All the concrete peculiarities of

a cultural tradition are the fruit of accident and cannot be foreseen.

Accident determines not only the traditional themes and forms of a people's art, but also its quality. At first sight it might seem as though artistic ability were a matter of racial inheritance. But when we look more closely we find reason to doubt if this is so. There are no artistic or inartistic races; there are only, within each social group, certain sets of artistically fortunate or unfortunate accidents. Many facts point to this conclusion. Thus, in the course of its history, the same people may produce works of art of widely varying quality. Egyptian art was sometimes superb; but at other times (as the contents of Tutankhamen's tomb made only too clear) it could be deplorably cheap, theatrical and vulgar. Italian painting was very nearly non-existent after 1750. English music was once as fine as any in Europe; with the death of Purcell it evaporated. And yet the English were still the English and, so far from being a decadent race, were displaying immense energy and resourcefulness in almost every other field of human activity.

Again, it is often asserted that the different European races are distinguished by different artistic aptitudes: that the Italians excel in the plastic arts, the English in literature, the Germans in music, and so on. Now, first of all, none of these social entities is a race. The only objective test for difference of race

is the Precipitin-Test. Applied to the so-called races of Europe, it shows that 'Nordic,' 'Alpine,' 'Mediterranean' are the names of inconstant variations, and that all Europeans are fundamentally of the same stock. In the second place, such laudatory or disparaging epithets as 'musical,' 'inartistic,' and so on, do not apply permanently to any social group. The English have had their excellent composers and even one or two first-rate painters. For generations at a time, the Italians have been without decent literature or plastic arts. And so on. We are brought back once again to the accident.

Considered genetically, any given population is a vast roulette table. Every fertile conjunction of a man and a woman is a spin of the wheel. Sometimes there will be, so far as the arts are concerned, an extraordinary run of luck. The literary, or pictorial, or musical lucky number will turn up again and again; there will be a long succession of artists of genius, of patrons with good taste. Then, suddenly, the luck will turn, and for generations the winning colour or number will obstinately refuse to come out. These runs of luck and of mischance are enough to account for most of the differences in quality between one national art and another. But there is also another factor which must be taken into account. Once established (mainly as the result of personal accidents), an artistic tradition canalizes the activity of artists—and the more isolated and homogeneous the society,

the more strict, as we have seen, is their conditioning. Now, it is possible that some traditions are more propitious to artists than others. An extreme case of the unpropitious tradition may be found in Mohammedan India. Here, all representations of human and even of animal forms are against the rules. There is, consequently, no sculpture worthy of the name, and such bootleg miniature painting as exists is on a miserably small scale and qualitatively poor and unsubstantial.

More subtly unpropitious are certain purely formal traditions, such as the Middle Minoan or the recent and very similar Barcelona *art nouveau* traditions. Perhaps a very great artist might be able to surmount the obstacles which these put in his way. I do not know. Anyhow, the difficulty of making something satisfactory out of forms that are a mixture of the naturalistic and the slimily decorative is obviously very great.

In the Train

THE green luxuriance of the coastal belt gave place, as we rolled up the valley of the Motagua, to drought and dust. The river flowed between vast dry hills, golden-tawny except where the shadows of clouds had turned them to indigo. Here and there, the sky-

line was fledged with a brown scrub, bare or with the withered leaves still hanging on the branches. Under the blistering sun, the landscape was strangely wintry.

From the bare slopes immediately above the river huge candelabra cacti rose stiffly into the air. There was no shade: the dust whirled up as we passed. Near the villages the shrunken stream of the Motagua was alive with bathers—men lying in the water like buffaloes, with only their noses projecting out of the blessed coolness; brown children at play; women in their shifts squatting in the shallows and, with a half coconut shell, scooping up the water and pouring it languidly over their bodies. From our travelling oven, we watched them enviously.

The train began to climb, up and up interminably into the parched hills. The villages were few, miserable and far between. On the fringes of a particularly dismal collection of shanties a large Greek temple made of cement and corrugated iron dominated the landscape for miles around. As we steamed out of the station, I noticed that the place was called Progreso. The fact annoyed me; I can detect an irony without having it underlined for me. Progreso, the shanties and that tin-roofed temple—it was insultingly too obvious. Like something in the *Forsyte Saga*. Later, I was to see a great many more of these Guatemalteco parthenons. Temples of Minerva, they are called. Every fair-sized village has one of them. They were built by dictatorial command, and are the late Presi-

dent Cabrera's contribution to the national culture. He even established a Minerva Day, when such school children as there were marched out to give gymnastic displays and sing patriotic anthems under those tin roofs. But in 1920 Cabrera went the way of all Central American dictators, and since then, I gather, the cult of Minerva has declined.

Guatemala City

THE capital is a pleasant, if rather ugly town, about as populous as Norwich, but more extensive. Earthquakes are frequent, and it is therefore customary to build houses of only a single story. Defect of height has to be made up for by excess of length and breadth ; you can walk a surprisingly long way without coming to the end of this town of only a hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants. In area, at least, it is a metropolis.

The *monde* of Guatemala consists of the local Spanish-American aristocracy, with which, since it tends to keep itself to itself, the casual visitor makes very few contacts, and of the resident foreigners, circling planet-wise, at graded hierarchical distances, around their respective legations. Most of the familiar features of colonial life are reproduced in Guatemala with a

punctual fidelity. There are the usual clubs—American, Golf, Country and German—and, between six and eight every evening, in the covered *patios* of the two principal hotels, the usual whiskies-and-sodas. Happily, nobody feels it necessary to keep up prestige by means of ceremonial magic ; there is none of that wearisome ' dressing for dinner,' which is one of the curses of tropical existence under the Union Jack.

The civilized, non-Indian fraction of the Guatemalan community has suffered severely from the depression. Coffee does not sell, or sells at a loss ; and the same is true of bananas, of sugar, of cattle, of mahogany—of everything, indeed, which Guatemala ever exported.

In the streets of the capital you see but few traces of that flashing Parisian modishness which illuminates Caracas. Venezuelan oil, we must presume, is more profitable than Guatemalan coffee. Still, the Guatemalan ladies are not without elegance. They know, at any rate, how to set off becomingly their own peculiar style of beauty. And what lovely creatures some of them are ! A certain amount of Indian blood flows in the veins of practically every European family that has been long established in Central America. Not more than three hundred thousand Spaniards settled in New Spain during the whole colonial epoch —a thousand white immigrants a year, of whom the great majority were men. These men begot children ; but the only women they could beget them on were Indians, or part-Indians. Somewhere in the history

of almost all the white creole families there is, inevitably, a copper-coloured ancestress. This slight admixture of Indian blood results in a strange and very striking type of feminine beauty. The eyes are large and expressively Spanish, the cheek-bones Indian and high. Indian or Andalusian, the smooth opaque skin invites an artificial complexion. The shoulders are broad, like the Indians', the bosom deep ; but the arms are slender, the extremities small. A strange beauty, I repeat, and for some reason extraordinarily fragile-looking and precarious, as though it were on the verge of disappearing and to-morrow would no longer be there. And for all I know to the contrary, it probably won't be there. Tough and durable youthfulness is a product of the temperate zone, the modern beauty parlour and the culture of the abdomen. Some of our professional beauties are almost everlasting.

Et, chêne, elle a vécu ce que vivent les chênes. . . .

But here, near the Equator, it is still, as in Malherbe's day it was with us, a matter of roses.

Guatemala City

A NEW session of Congress was to begin that morning, and the President would open his parliament in state.

On our way to the market we were held up for more than an hour by the mere anticipation of his passage. The route was lined with troops and, even with the great man an hour away in his palace, nobody was allowed to pass. The soldiers were stumpy little men, not much more on an average than five foot three or four in their boots. They were all pure Indians from some village in the highlands ; but at a first glance one might have taken them for Japs, and, after a second, wondered if perhaps they weren't Eskimos. Whites and *ladinos* were conspicuously absent from the ranks. They can afford to buy their freedom from military service. Nor, I imagine, do the authorities greatly encourage them to enter the lower grades of the army. In a country liable to revolutionary disturbances, rulers have always preferred to surround themselves with foreign rather than with native troops. However good their discipline, you can never be quite sure that soldiers will obey when they are ordered to shoot their own people. With foreigners there will be little risk of such compunctious insubordination. A Sikh regiment would hardly have fired on the crowd in the Jalianwalabagh at Amritsar ; but when General Dyer gave his order, the Gurkhas blazed away with perfect equanimity. Every Central American nation is in reality two nations. These Quichés and Cakchiquels from the hills are as foreign in the white and *ladino* capital as Nepalese in the Punjab. They can be relied on to obey any orders. Whether the officers

can be relied on to give the right orders is another question which it would be vain in this land of *pronunciamientos* to discuss.

Cavalry at the trot and, in the midst, a top hat, gliding ; some cheers, some military trumpeting, out of tune. The President had passed. We were free at last to cross the road.

The covered market was as large as several cathedrals and crowded. Tiny Indian women, carrying their own weight in farm produce and always with a baby or two slung like haversacks over their shoulders, moved hither and thither silently on bare feet. Whole families of dark-skinned peasants squatted immovably in the fairway. *Ladino* housewives stood bargaining at the stalls. The tone of their voices when they spoke to the Indian vendors was either arrogant or, if meant to be kindly, condescending. Central American half-castes are brought up to be a good deal more Aryan than the Aryans. Their attitude towards those who, after all, are their mothers' people, is almost invariably offensive. They despise the Indians, take no interest in their customs, and feel it as a personal offence that the foreigner should pay so much attention to them. A sense of inferiority calls—with what dismal regularity !—for over-compensation. How much of every human being is an automaton ? Three-quarters ? Four-fifths ? Nine-tenths ? I do not know ; but in any case the proportion is depressingly high. In all our Central American wanderings we did not meet

a single *ladino* who was not over-compensating. The mechanism functioned infallibly, like a Rolls Royce.

Meanwhile, we had been slowly jostling our way down narrow aisles whose walls were banked-up flowers and vegetables and tropical fruits. The profusion was fabulous. The market at Guatemala is the only place where I have seen reality outdoing a Dutch still life. The meanest fruit stall was one in the eye for Snyder and the Van Heems. 'Put *that* in your pipe, Weenix,' it seemed to proclaim, 'and smoke it—if you can.'

The display of local handicrafts was meagre and of disappointingly poor quality. A few specimens of native weaving and embroidery were amusing enough in a crude, unsubtle way, and we found some hat bands made of plaited horse-hair which were really astonishingly pretty. But that was all. We consoled ourselves with the thought that there would probably be better stuff in the country plazas.

Outside in an overflow market we saw an old Indian woman selling iguanas. They were cheap; you could buy a miniature dragon with three feet of whip-lash tail, all alive, for twenty or thirty cents. Flayed and gutted, the dried carcasses of several more lay in a neat row on the pavement, a pale meat crusty with flies. Near them stood an enormous bowl, full of iguana eggs. Curiosity wrestled with prejudice and was at last defeated; we moved away, leaving the eggs untasted. That evening we happened to

pass again along the same street. Business in lizards had evidently been slack; the old woman's pitch was still crawling with monsters. While we were looking, she began to pack up her wares for the night. One by one, she took up the animals and dumped them into a circular basket. The tails projected, writhing. Angrily she shoved them back into place; but while one was being folded away, another would spring out, and then another. It was like a battle with the hydra. The abhorred tails were finally confined under a net. Then, hoisting the lizards on to her head, and with the bowl of their eggs under her arm, the old woman marched away, muttering as she went heaven knows what imprecations against all reptiles, and probably, since she shot a furious look in our direction, all foreigners as well.

Guatemala City

THE little Indian soldiers looked very smart in their khaki uniforms; their equipment was neat and new; the rifles they carried seemed the last word in scientific murder. The Guatemalan army is reputed to be efficient and, considering the size and resources of the country, it is certainly large. And what is it for? For police work within the country? But half a

dozen aeroplanes, a few light tanks and armoured cars and a small but highly disciplined force of mounted infantry would be amply sufficient to preserve order even in a land of *pronunciamientos*. No, these big battalions are not for domestic consumption ; they are for export—'for defence against foreign aggression,' as our statesmen more gracefully put it.

In the case of Guatemala the foreign aggression can only come from, and the export of battalions only proceed to, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica on the one side, and Mexico and British Honduras on the other. The Mexican state of Chiapas long was, and British Honduras still is, regarded by the Guatemalans as an *irredenta*. But Mexico and the British Empire are too formidable for any military export trade to be worth attempting. Before such manifest impossibilities, even passion counts costs, considers self-interest and finally sees reason. No, Guatemala's military exports and imports have been, and for all practical purposes can only be, to and from the other four Central American Republics.

Central America achieved its independence from Spain in 1821, and during the succeeding century the Five Republics into which the old Captaincy General of Guatemala was broken have been at war, in various permutations and combinations of alliance, four or five times, and on two other occasions have escaped war only as the result of foreign arbitration.

To understand European politics, one should read

the history of Central America. This is not paradox, but scientific method. It is by studying the simple that we learn to understand the more complex phenomena of the same kind. The behaviour of children and lunatics throws light on the more elaborate behaviour of adults and the sane. Pavlov's dogs have explained many hitherto inexplicable characteristics of human beings. Most of the little we know about the anthropology of civilized peoples is the fruit of enquiries into the nature of primitive societies. Central America, being just Europe in miniature and with the lid off, is the ideal laboratory in which to study the behaviour of the Great Powers.

The most striking facts about the wars of Central America is that none of them has had an origin which could possibly be interpreted as economic. There has never been any question of capturing markets, destroying dangerous commercial competitors, seizing provinces for the sake of their industrially valuable resources. The wars of the Five Republics have been wars between Conservatives and Liberals, between Clericals and Anti-Clericals, between those who desired a single federal republic and those who claimed sovereign independence for each state. They have not been wars of interest, but of ' political principle '—in other words, wars of pure passion. Wars are now generally attributed to the machinations of rival groups of capitalists. Owning as they do the instruments of propaganda, they first emotionally

involve the dumb deluded public (already prepared by all its education to be involved) in their private quarrels ; then, when the emotional temperature is high enough, proceed, in their capacity as rulers, or powers behind thrones, to give the order for mobilization and slaughter.

This description is probably true enough ; but it remains a mere description, requiring to be elucidated and explained. We want first of all to know why the exploiters quarrel ; and, in the second place, why the exploited allow themselves to be involved.

The theorists of the left proclaim it almost as an axiom that, where there is private profit-taking, there of necessity must also be periodical war. But this is clearly untrue. If capitalists were interested only in the efficient exploitation of their victims (as would to heaven they had had the sense to be !) they would not waste their resources in fighting one another ; they would combine to work out the most efficient scheme for squeezing profits out of the entire planet. That they do not do so—or do so only spasmodically and inadequately—is due to the fact that the exploiters are as much the slaves of the passions aroused by nationalism as the exploited. They own and use the instruments of propaganda, but are themselves the first to believe in, and to act upon, the nonsense they broadcast. These Machiavels are incapable of seeing their own best economic advantage. Peace, it is obvious, and internationalism pay ; war on its present

scale must, in the long run, inevitably harm the capitalists who bring it about. Nevertheless, they *do* bring it about—and believe, under the patriotic cant, that they are bringing it about in their own interests. They make war in order to increase the profits they derive from their particular system of nationalist economy at the expense of the profits derived by fellow capitalists from rival systems. (Nationalism is against the higher economic interests of the exploiters; but it creates certain particular interests of monopoly which to some extent justify the capitalists in their appeal to arms on business grounds.) They also make and threaten wars on the Machiavellian principle that foreign dangers give the ruler an opportunity for strengthening his position at home. It is for this reason that all the post-war dictators have been scare-mongers and sabre-rattlers. The fear of each people for its neighbours confirms the power of the rulers who happen to be in office. But what is this power compared with the power that would be wielded by an oligarchy of world-rulers? And compared with the profits to be derived from a world-system of economy, how poor are the profits earned under a mere nationalist system! Moreover, modern war is demonstrably ruinous to economic activity and disruptive of social order. So far from enriching and strengthening himself by war on the present scale, the capitalist ruler is likely to lose in the convulsion most of such money and power as

he possesses. In spite of which, our rulers insist that the political and economic system shall remain (to their own manifest disadvantage) nationalistic. Safe and profitable, internationalism is yet rejected. Why? Because all capitalist rulers are bound by a theology of passion that prevents them from rationally calculating their profits and losses. And so long as such a theology continues to be accepted by rulers, it makes no difference whether these are private profit-makers or bureaucrats representing 'the People.' The development of nationalistic state-socialism is not only possible; at the present moment, it actually seems a probability.

The truth is that our so-called wars of interest are really wars of passion, like those of Central America. To find a war of pure interest one must go far afield. The Opium War between England and China was one of the very few whose causes were purely and unadulteratedly economic. 'All for Hate,' is the title of every great international tragedy of modern times, 'or the World Well Lost.'

'*Les intérêts*,' writes the French philosopher, Alain, '*transigent toujours, les passions ne transigent jamais.*' Interests are always ready to compound, passions never. You can always discuss figures, haggle over prices, ask a hundred and accept eighty-five. But you cannot discuss hatred, nor haggle over contradictory vanities and prejudices, nor ask for blood and accept a soft answer. Neither can you argue away

the immediately experienced fact that boasting is delightful, that it is bliss to feel yourself superior to the other fellow, that 'righteous indignation' is wildly intoxicating, and that the thrill of being one of a mob that hates another mob can be as pleasurably exciting as a prolonged orgasm. The exploited who succumb to the nationalist propaganda of the exploiters are having the time of their lives. We have asked what they get out of being involved in their masters' quarrels. In the early stages of being involved they get the equivalent of free seats at a magnificent entertainment, combining a revival meeting with championship boxing and a pornographic cinema show. At the call of King and Country, they spring to arms. Can we be surprised?

La guerre naît des passions. But before we begin to elaborate this proposition, we must ask ourselves the very pertinent question: whose passions? The passions of the people as a whole? Or only of the rulers? *Of both*, I believe is the correct answer. It is the rulers, of course, who actually declare war; and they do so, first, because they are moved by passions that the theology of nationalism has taught them to regard as creditable; and, second, because they wish to defend interests which nationalism has either really created or which they themselves have invented to serve as a rational justification for their passions. But rulers cannot carry on a war unless the ruled are moved by the same passions or the same

rationalizations of passions as themselves. Before war can be waged, the mass of the people must be made to imagine that they want the war ; that the war is in their interests or at least unavoidable. This end is accomplished by a violent campaign of propaganda, launched at the time of the declaration of war. But such a campaign would not be effective if the people had not from earliest childhood been indoctrinated with the nationalist theology. Owing to this nationalistic conditioning of all their worst passions, the ruled are sometimes actually more warlike than their rulers, who find themselves reluctantly propelled towards a war which they would like to avoid. At other times, the ruled are less the slaves of nationalist passion and prejudice than the rulers. Thus, I think it would be true to say that, at present, the majority of French and English people are more pacific, less dangerously obsessed by the Moloch-theology of nationalism, readier to think of international politics in terms of reason, than are their governments. Rulers naturally tend to oppose the policy of the ruled. When the French populace was imbued with nationalism, the bourgeoisie was pacific. Now that it thinks of freedom, in terms not of nations, but classes, the rulers are nationalistic.

In the notes which follow, I shall discuss the war-producing passions in themselves, without specific references to those who feel them. In practice, it is obvious, everything depends on the rulers. They

can either encourage and systematize the expression of these passions ; or, alternatively, they can prevent the theology of nationalism from being taught in the schools or propagated by other means. Rulers who wished to do so could rid the world of its collective insanity within a generation. Revolution by persuasion can be nearly as swift and ' catastrophic ' as revolution by violence and, if carried out scientifically, promises to be incomparably more effective. The Jesuits and the Assassins have demonstrated what can be done by intelligent conditioning of the young. It is disastrous that the only people who have thoroughly learnt the lessons of Loyola and the Old Man of the Mountain should be the exponents of militant nationalism in Germany and Italy, and the exponents of militant collectivism in Russia. War is the common denominator of all the existing systems of scientific conditioning.

So much for the people who feel the passions. Now for the passions themselves—hatred, vanity and the nameless urge which men satisfy in the act of associating with other men in large unanimous droves.

It is reported of Alain that when, in the trenches, his fellow soldiers complained of the miseries of war, he would answer : ' *Mais vous avez eu assez de plaisir ; vous avez crié Vive l'Armée ou Vive l'Alsace-Lorraine. Il faut que cela se paye. Il faut mourir.*'

Hate is like lust in its irresistible urgency ; it is, however, more dangerous than lust, because it is a

passion less closely dependent on the body. The emission of a glandular secretion suffices to put an end to lust, at any rate for a time. But hate is a spiritual passion, which no merely physiological process can assuage. Hate, therefore, has what lust entirely lacks—persistence and continuity: the persistence and continuity of purposive spirit. Moreover, lust is 'perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,' only before action; hate, both before and during action. In the case of lust, the time of action is limited to a few minutes or seconds, and with the ending of the action coincides the temporary or permanent ending of that particular passion of lust. Very different is the case of hatred. Its action may continue for years; nor does the ending of any particular phase of the action necessarily entail the ending of the emotional state which was its justification.

Hate is not, of course, the only passion behind the theory and practice of nationalism. Vanity—the collective vanity manifested by each individual member of a group which he regards as superior to other groups and whose superiority he feels in himself—vanity is equally important; and both these passions are combined with, and derive an added strength from, that lust for sociability whose indulgence yields such enormous psychological dividends to the individual of a gregarious species. At ordinary times, indeed, vanity seems to be more important than hate. But it must not be forgotten that hate is the actual

or potential complement of vanity. Delusions of greatness are always accompanied by persecution mania. The paeans of self-praise with which the nationalists are perpetually gratifying themselves are always on the point of modulating into denunciations of other people. Hatred, even when not actually expressed, is always there just below the surface. One is therefore justified in speaking of this passion as fundamental in the contemporary theory and practice of nationalism.

So far as the physiology and psychology of individual human beings is concerned, there is nothing to prevent the pleasures of hatred from being as deliciously enduring as the pleasures of love in the Muslim paradise. Fortunately, however, hatred in action tends to be self-destructive. The intoxicating delight of being one of thousands bawling '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*,' or '*Marchons, marchons, qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons*,' is apt to be brought speedily to a close. Bawling in mobs is almost as good as copulation ; but the subsequent action generally leads to discomfort, extreme pain and death all round. *Il faut que cela se paye*, and the payment entails the transformation of hatred from a source of pleasure to a source of misery, and in many cases the transformation of the hater himself into a corpse. This, I repeat, is fortunate ; for if the gratification of hatred were always as delicious as it is sometimes, then there would obviously never be any interval of peace. As

it is, the world seems *well* lost only so long as the action dictated by hatred remains successful. When it ceases to be successful, the loss of the world is realized and regretted, and the haters become homesick once more for a quiet life on friendly terms with their neighbours. But once a war has been started, they are not allowed, and do not even allow themselves, to succumb to this natural homesickness. Nationalism is a set of passions rationalized in terms of a theology. When, in the natural course of events, the passions tend to lose their intensity, they can be revived artificially by an appeal to the theology. Moreover, 'tasks in hours of insight—or orgasm—willed can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.' A theology, with its accompanying principles and categorical imperatives, is a mechanism for making it possible to do in cold blood the things which, if nature were left to itself, it would be possible to do only in hot blood.

The commonest, one might call it the natural, rhythm of human life is routine punctuated by orgies. Routine supports men's weakness, makes the fatigue of thought unnecessary, and relieves them of the intolerable burden of responsibility. Orgies, whether sexual, religious, sporting or political, provide that periodical excitement which all of us crave, and which most of us are too insensitive to feel except under the most crudely violent stimulation. Hence (beside all the private and domestic orgies) such public stimulations as gladiatorial games, bull-fights,

boxing matches, gambling; hence patriotic demonstrations, hymns of hate, mass meetings and parades; hence saturnalia, carnivals, firsts of May, fourths and fourteenths of July; hence religious revivals, pilgrimages, miraculous grottoes and all the techniques for arousing what Professor Otto has called the 'numinous' emotions. Sensitive and civilized men can dispense with these crude, almost surgical methods for producing excitement. But sensitive and civilized men are rare—as rare as the Americans who, after ten years of prohibition, can enjoy a glass of good wine. The vast majority can only get their kick out of the equivalent of proof spirit. Consider in this context the adaptation to popular needs of the religion of Jesus. For Professor Otto, the essence of religion is the 'numinous' emotion in all its forms, from panic terror up to a rapturous awareness of the *mysterium tremendum fascinans* of the world. And so far as the religion of the ordinary, insensitive but excitement-loving person is concerned, this is probably true. Jesus, however, lays no stress on such emotions, nor prescribes any technique for arousing them. For him, it is clear, the surgical stimulation of deliberately induced ecstasy, of luscious ritual and corybantic revivalism were all entirely unnecessary. They were not unnecessary for his followers. These, in the course of a few hundred years, made Christianity almost as sensational and orgiastic as Hinduism. If they had not, there would have been no Christians.

The bearing of these facts on Central American wars, and international disputes in general, is obvious. Nationalistic theology is not only a substitute for passion ; it is also an excuse for it. It justifies those periodical orgies of emotion which are, for the great majority of men and women, a psychological necessity. So long as these orgies remain platonic, no harm is done. They are a bit undignified, that is all. But if people need to get drunk, if they cannot preserve their soul's health without occasional orgasms of hatred, self-love and group-frenzy, why, then, drunk they must get and orgasms they must have. The trouble is that the greatest *immediate* happiness of the greatest number too often leads to the greatest *ultimate* unhappiness. The orgies of nationalism are not platonic orgies-for-orgies'-sake. They lead to practical results—to the piling up of armaments, to senseless economic competition, to embargoes on foreign goods, and ultimately to war. *Il faut que cela se paye.* The fundamental problem of international politics is psychological. The economic problems are secondary and, but for the psychological problems, would not exist. The good intentions of such statesmen as desire peace —and many of them do not even desire it—are rendered ineffective by their consistent refusal to deal with the war-disease at its source. To attempt to cure symptoms, such as tariff-wars and armaments, without at the same time attacking the psychological causes of these symptoms, is a proceeding foredoomed

to failure. What is the use of a disarmament or a World Economic Conference so long as the people of each nation are deliberately encouraged by their leaders to indulge in orgies of group-solidarity based on, and combined with, self-congratulation and contemptuous hatred for foreigners? Our need is rather for a World Psychological Conference, at which propaganda experts should decide upon the emotional cultures to be permitted and encouraged in each state and the appropriate mythologies and philosophies to accompany these emotional cultures.

Before we enter into the possible activities of such a conference it is necessary to consider the psychoanalytic theory of international relations set forth in Dr. F. Vergin's book, *Sub-Conscious Europe*. Dr. Vergin's contention is that war is an escape from the restraints of civilization. 'It is quite useless to demand higher standards of Christian morality and at the same time to preach peace.' Ethical restraints exact their own revenge. It is no coincidence that, in France, the parties most closely associated with Catholicism should be the most violently chauvinistic. All European parties with a Christian orientation are fundamentally warlike, because the psychological pressure of Christian restraint necessarily urges them on to find emotional relief in hatred. Such, in brief, is Dr. Vergin's theory. It has the merit of being simple and the defect of being perhaps a bit too simple. Ours is not the only civilization that has imposed restraints

on the appetites of the individual. Every civilization imposes restraints: otherwise it would not exist. Again, not all restraints are felt to be restraints: people can be so conditioned as to accept certain artificial restraints as though they were part of the order of nature. The restraints which hedge in the individuals of a primitive society are more numerous and less escapable than those by which we are surrounded. In spite of which, many primitive and semi-primitive societies have been on the whole remarkably peaceable. For example, Mexico and Central America before their separation from Spain had enjoyed two centuries and a half of almost uninterrupted peace. And yet the population of these provinces laboured under restraints of all kinds—political restraints imposed from without, and psychological restraints imposed from within, as the result of stringent religious conditioning. According to Dr. Vergin's argument, the psychological pressure generated by such restraints should have driven the people into civil war. It did nothing of the kind, and for several good reasons. In the first place, all members of Spanish Colonial society were brought up in an emotional culture that made them regard submission to King and Church, and reasonably decent behaviour towards their fellow-subjects, as unquestionably right and 'natural.' In the second place, their life was so arranged that they could get all the orgiastic excitements—religious ceremonies, dances,

sports, public executions and private wife-beatings—for which they periodically craved. This being so, they had no urgent psychological need for the orgies of militant nationalism. The dangerous psychological pressure, described by Dr. Vergin, is worked up only among puritans who disapprove and suppress all exciting and pleasurable activities whatsoever. ' Righteous indignation ' is the only emotional orgasm these people allow themselves ; they therefore live in a chronic state of hatred, disapproval and uncharitableness. The rulers of Central America were not puritans and, while imposing socially valuable restraints upon their subjects, allowed them by way of compensation a plentiful choice of more or less harmless amusements. Furthermore, if any of them wanted to enjoy the pleasures of public hatred there were always Sir Francis Drake and Morgan and Dampier ; there were always, besides the buccaneers and pirates, all the home-country's official enemies ; there were always heretics, protestants, foreigners and heathens. Objects of collective detestation in rich variety—and most of them, very fortunately, a long way off, so that it was possible, the greater part of the time, to enjoy the pleasures of nationalism platonically, without having to suffer the smallest inconvenience.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century this vast and, for long generations, peaceable Spanish colony transformed itself into six independent states,

each in an almost chronic condition of civil war and each disliking all the rest so intensely that the civil war from time to time gave place to savage outbursts of fighting between state and state. The reasons for this strange and distressing metamorphosis are such as to deserve the most careful consideration by the delegates to our hypothetical World Psychological Conference.

From the very beginning, there had always been the best possible economic reasons why the Indians, the *mestizos* and the American-born white creoles should wish to revolt against the dominion of Spain. In varying degrees all were exploited by the distant government and, still more, by its lawless representatives on the spot. During the later seventeen-hundreds, as a result of Galvez's reforms, the economic condition of the country and its native-born inhabitants seems to have improved ; it is probably true to say that, at the turn of the new century, there were actually fewer economic reasons for revolt than there ever had been in the history of the colonies. These fewer reasons were still, of course, many and enormous. But they would not in themselves have been enough to initiate a war of independence. The victims of oppression had been so thoroughly conditioned to accept the existing situation that they found the idea of revolt unthinkable. It became thinkable only when Napoleon deposed the legitimate king of Spain and usurped the throne for Joseph Bonaparte. Spanish-

American loyalty had been, till then, astonishingly solid—a great arch, as it were, flung, in apparent defiance of all the laws of political physics, across a gulf of bottomless incompetence and iniquity. The millions of its component stones all centred upon, and were held together by, the key-stone of the legitimate king's divine right to rule ; and the art of the psychological engineers who raised it—the priests and the Spanish administrators—had consisted in suggesting the people into the conviction that this divine right was not only their key-stone, but their rock of ages as well, and that without its presence, there, at the crown and centre of everything, they would be lost, non-existent, eternally damned. Napoleon brutally removed the possessor of the divine right to rule the Spanish empire. Deprived of its key-stone, the arch disintegrated. The first symptoms of disintegration was the Indian revolt in Mexico headed by Hidalgo. This was an orthodox economic revolution of oppressed serfs—but an economic revolution made possible only by the removal of divine authority personified by Charles IV. Goya's old figure of fun was God's representative, and his deposition meant that, from being almost or completely unthinkable, revolution suddenly became not only thinkable but actable.

The most curious fact in the history of the Mexican and Central American revolt against Spain is that independence was actually proclaimed by the conservatives and catholics. More royalist than the

king, they were afraid of what would happen to them if they remained connected with the liberal, constitutional Spain of 1820. To preserve their loyalty to a non-existent king-by-divine-right, they rebelled against the actual king, who, at that moment, had been forced to become a constitutional monarch.

So much for the revolt from Spain. The subsequent history of the ex-colonials is the history of men with a traditional culture of the emotions suitable to one kind of political régime, trying to establish another régime borrowed from abroad, and failing, because the new system could not be worked except by people brought up in an entirely different emotional culture. The whites, near-whites and *mestizos*, who constituted the only politically conscious and politically active element in the population, had been brought up to accept the divine right of the king to rule them. At the same time they preserved the anarchic tradition of the Renaissance, regarding themselves as individuals, each having the right to do as well as he could for himself. Accordingly, we find reverence for the throne accompanied by evasion of its commands. The people were simultaneously convinced that the king had a divine right to make the laws, and that they, as individuals, had a divine right to disobey them whenever they could do so advantageously and without being found out. After the Bonapartist usurpation of 1808, the idea began to dawn upon them that they themselves might make the laws ; which, in due course, after the declaration of

independence, they proceeded to do. But unfortunately they had carried over from the *ancien régime* the idea that each man had also an inalienable right to break the laws. Such an idea was not too harmful under a monarchy, which provided a certain stability and continuity of rule. But it was fatal under a republic. Democratic institutions can only work where individuals have been conditioned to show public spirit and a sense of responsibility. The correct emotional culture for self-governing people is one that produces a feeling for honour and 'sportsmanship.' Battles may still be won on the playing-fields of Eton; but, what is perhaps more creditable to those elm-shadowed expanses of soggy turf, colonial empires are humanely lost there. That capacity to see the other fellow's point of view, that reluctance to exploit to the full his chronic weakness or momentary disadvantage, that scrupulosity which Tennyson was already denouncing as 'the craven fear of being great,' and which (in spite of numerous individual and official backslidings) has come more and more to be characteristic of the national policy towards subject races, are all the products of these playing-fields. Cricket and football prepared our administrators for the task of humanely ruling and for the more recent task of not ruling, and scepticism has finished off the job which games began. Of the newly invented Maxim gun, H. M. Stanley, the explorer, remarked: 'It is a fine weapon, and will be invaluable for subduing

the heathen.' Nobody could utter such words now, because nobody has the kind of faith professed by Stanley. Given the means of action, all strong faith must inevitably result in persecution and attempts at the domination of others. Scepticism makes for tolerance and peaceable behaviour. All Central Americans were brought up as unsporting believers. Hence, with the disappearance of monarchy, the chronic misgovernment of every Central American state.

The newly fashionable idea of nationalism was imported along with the idea of self-government. Applying the logic of this philosophy of hatred and division to their own immediate problems, the people of Central America tried to make each administrative district into an independent country. There were moments when single departments of provinces (such as the department of Quezaltenango in Guatemala) declared their independence. But such extravagances of folly were not permitted by the other departments, whose representatives insisted on the new countries being at least as large as the old colonial provinces. These, heaven knows, were small enough. The introduction of the nationalistic idea into Central America resulted in the dismemberment of a society which had hitherto been unquestionably one. Fellow-subjects of the same king, speaking the same language, professing the same religion and having every possible economic reason for remaining united, the Mexicans

and Central Americans were constrained by the emotional logic of an imported theology of hatred to renounce all their ties of blood and culture. Almost from one day to another this hitherto united society divided itself into six arbitrary groups of artificial enemies.

All enemies, except those fighting for the strictly limited food supply of a given territory, may be described as artificial enemies. But there are degrees of artificiality. The artificiality of the enmity between the Central Americans is of the highest order. Nationalism is the justificatory philosophy of unnecessary and artificial hatred. Under its influence, and in the absence of natural enemies, men will go out of their way to create artificial ones, so as to have objects on which to vent their hatred. Similarly, in the absence of women or of a subjective taste for women, men will imaginatively transform other men into artificial women, so as to have objects on which to vent their lusts. Like collective hatred, homosexuality has its justifying theology, adumbrated by Plato, and in recent years systematically worked out by M. André Gide. This author has done for the love of artificial women what Maurice Barrès did for the hatred of artificial enemies—moralized its pleasures and endowed them with a cosmic significance.

All enjoy the warmth that accompanies boasting, the fierce electric thrill of hatred. Some take pleasure in the act of fighting. But none enjoy (though it is

extraordinary how many are ready stoically to bear) starvation, wounds and violent death. That the Central Americans have derived intense satisfaction from the act of hating their new, artificial enemies is certain. But these moments of fun have been paid for by other moments of misery and pain. Would it not have been possible, the observer will ask, to invent a political system which would have given them all the emotional orgasms they needed at a smaller material and spiritual cost?

With this question upon our lips, we may now return to our hypothetical World Psychological Conference and, guided by the light which Central America has thrown on the problems of international relations, may profitably begin to enquire into the nature of its discussions.

The end proposed by our conference is international peace. The obstacle which it has to circumvent is nationalism. The material with which it has to deal is the psychology of very suggestible, rather insensitive, but emotional and excitement-loving people assembled in vast urban communities. The problem is to devise means for so treating this material that the obstacle may be avoided and the goal definitively reached.

The first thing our delegates would remark is that all governments deplore and carefully regulate the manifestations of lust, but deliberately encourage those of collective vanity and hatred. To boast men-

daciously about one's own gang and to slander and defame other gangs are acts everywhere officially regarded as creditable and even pious. It is as though our rulers, instead of merely tolerating prostitution, were to proclaim the brothel to be a place as sacred as the cathedral and as improving as the public library. Doctrines like that of race superiority are the spiritual equivalent of cantharides. Under the Nazis, for example, every German is made to take his daily dose of what I may call Nordic Fly. The Marquis de Sade was condemned to a long term of imprisonment for having distributed aphrodisiac candies to a few prostitutes in Marseilles. But nationalists who devise means for arousing in millions the disgraceful passions of hatred, envy and vanity are hailed as the saviours of their country.

One of the preliminary conditions of international peace is the inculcation of a new (or rather of a very old) scale of moral values. People must be taught to think hatred at least as discreditable as they now think lust; to find the more raucous manifestations of collective vanity as vulgar, low and ludicrous as those of individual vanity.

Nationalists and militarists have tried to defend their position on ethical as well as on political grounds. War and nationalism are good, they say, because they stimulate individuals to display the more heroic virtues. But the same argument could be brought forward in favour of prostitution. There is a whole

literature describing the devotion and tenderness, the benevolence and, positively, the saintliness of whores. But nobody regards this literature as justifying the wholesale encouragement of whoredom. Man's is a double nature and there is hardly any critical situation in which he will not display, simultaneously or alternately, the most repulsive characteristics of an animal and a heroism equal to that of the martyrs. Nationalism and war stimulate men to heroism, but also to bestiality. So far as individuals are concerned, the bad cancels out the good. And so far as society is concerned, the bad—that is to say the harmful—enormously predominates. War and nationalism are without any possible justification.

But ethical justifications are not what our hypothetical delegates have come together to discuss. They have come together to discuss the psychological conditions for international peace. Ethical justifications are mainly useful after the fact—to confirm individuals in certain types of socially useful behaviour.

I will assume—what, alas, is sadly improbable—that our delegates have agreed in principle on the need for all governments to discourage the manifestations by their subjects of collective hatred and hatred-producing vanity. Having done this, they find themselves immediately faced by the problem of Prohibition. The prohibition of any activity that gives people great psychological satisfactions is very difficult to carry out and, if carried out, may lead to

all kinds of unexpected and distressing consequences. Zeal to convert and civilize the Melanesians is leading to their extinction; deprived of all that, for them, made life worth living, they simply cease to live. The effort to make Americans more sober resulted in an increase of alcoholism and criminality. Puritanism carried to its logical conclusions notoriously leads to sadism. And so on; the dangers of untempered prohibition are everywhere apparent. Many activities are psychologically satisfying, but socially harmful. Suppression of these should always be accompanied by the offer of an alternative activity, as rewarding to the individuals engaged in it, but socially harmless or, if possible, beneficial. This is the principle behind all enlightened colonial administration at the present time. Thus, the head hunters in New Guinea have been persuaded to use for all ritual purposes the heads, not of human beings, but of wild boars; this modification accepted, they are at liberty to perform all the elaborate and psychologically rewarding ceremonies prescribed by their religion. Psychologically, the abolition of militant nationalism in Europe is the equivalent of the abolition of head hunting in Papua. Our imaginary delegates are depriving the people of a great many opportunities for emotional excitement. What alternatives do they propose to supply? This is a difficult problem, completely soluble, I imagine, only by an experimental process of trial, error and retrial. 'Hate,' as Dr. Vergin has justly remarked,

'pays a higher psychological dividend than can be obtained from international amity, sympathy and co-operation.' Benevolence is tepid; hatred and its complement, vanity, are stinging hot and high-flavoured. That is why National Socialism is so much easier to popularize than the League of Nations. It will be the task of the psychological engineers to see how far co-operation can be combined with socially harmless, but psychologically rewarding, competitions and rivalry. Rivalry, for example, in industry. (The Russians have exploited this kind of friendly competition in the attempt to get more work out of their factory hands.) Rivalry in sports. Rivalry—but this, alas, would probably arouse not the smallest popular enthusiasm—in scientific and artistic achievement. The substitutes for militant nationalism may be almost as exciting as the things they replace. Thus, at Constantinople, feeling at the chariot races ran so high that Greens and Blues were ready to kill one another by the thousand. It is clear that the homœopathic remedy for militant nationalism can be made as fatal as the disease.

In the course of their labours, our delegates will be called upon to answer a number of very difficult questions. Here are a few of them.

In what circumstances and by means of what technique can you persuade people into the placid acceptance of prohibitions? When and how can you condition them into regarding artificial restraints

as inevitable and 'natural' limitations of all human life?

Again, what sort of emotional compensations must be given in exchange for specific kinds of prohibition? And how much emotional excitement, how many orgies, do people need to keep them contented and in health?

Finally, can the benevolently intelligent ruler dispense altogether with collective hatred? Or is it a necessary and irreplaceable instrument for the welding of small societies into greater wholes?

To the first question our delegates would probably be unable to return a definite answer. They would observe that, as a matter of historical fact, the members of isolated and homogeneous communities have often been persuaded to accept the oddest and most arbitrary restraints as natural limitations. Members of heterogeneous communities in frequent contact with foreigners tend to lose unquestioning faith in the local mythology, and are therefore less amenable to the powerful instruments of persuasion provided by religion. There is a sense in which modern society can say with M. Valéry, '*la bêtise n'est pas mon fort.*' True, the intrinsic and congenital stupidity of the majority is as great as it ever was. But it is a stupidity which has been educated in the ideas invented by the relatively free intelligence of exceptional individuals. The result of this education is that stupid people are now no longer able to swallow the sort of theology

which their predecessors unquestioningly accepted. Universal education has created an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid, hungering for certainty, yet unable to find it in the traditional myths and their rationalizations. So urgent has been this need for certainty that in place of the dogmas of religion they have accepted (with what passionate gratitude !) the pseudo-religious dogmas of nationalism. These are more obviously false and mischievous than the dogmas of religion ; but they possess, for the New Stupid, the enormous merit of being concerned, not with invisible, but with visible entities. Nationalism is not the theory of a God whom nobody has seen. It is a theory of some actual country and its flesh-and-blood inhabitants. The theory is demonstrably untrue ; but that does not matter. What matters to the New Stupid is that the subject of the theory is real. The New Stupidity is positivistic. One of the tasks of our delegates will be the devising of a mythology and a world-view which shall be as acceptable to the New Stupid as nationalism and as beneficial as the best of the transcendental religions.

To the two questions in the second group no definite answer can be given, except on the basis of a specific research. The balance sheet of psychological equivalents has yet to be drawn up ; nevertheless, a rather vague, but useful, generalization is possible. Rulers can impose many prohibitions, provided that the

people on whom they are imposed have been given sufficiently lively and interesting orgies. The problem, obviously, is to define 'sufficiently.' But there is no one definition ; for what is sufficient for people in one set of circumstances is insufficient for people in another. Thus, the orgy-system of the Central Americans, simple and unpretentious as it was, seems to have been quite sufficient for their needs. The fact that they bore, almost without complaint, the enormous oppression of their rulers, is evidence that, psychologically, they were satisfied. To-day we have a choice of diversions incomparably wider than theirs. Nevertheless, our elaborate orgy-system is probably insufficient for our needs. Living as we do in an age of technological progress, and therefore of incessant change, we find that we cannot be amused except by novelties. The traditional orgies which, without undergoing the smallest modification, refreshed our ancestors during long centuries of history, now seem to us intolerably insipid. Nothing can be new enough for us. Even the most exciting and elaborate of our amusements cannot satisfy for long. Nor is this the only reason for the insufficiency of our orgy-system. The processions, dances and even the sports of the Central Americans were related to their mythology. It was to do honour to St. Joseph that one marched round the town with candles and a drum ; one fought cocks or baited bulls to celebrate the Assumption of the Mother of God ; one danced for St. Francis or, on the sly, for the

Feathered Serpent of the old dispensation : one did magic in the name of St. Peter and got drunk because it was All Souls' Day. What was, and still is, true of Central America used to be true, until quite recent times, of Europe. To-day all diversions have been laicized. This has happened partly as a result of the positivistic tendencies of the New Stupidity ; partly owing to the fact that all entertainments are in the hands of joint-stock companies, whose interest it is that people shall amuse themselves, not only on mythologically significant occasions, but every day and all the time. The result is that ' our laughter and our tears mean but themselves,' and, meaning but themselves, mean curiously little. Hence the prodigious success of the entertainments organized by up-to-date mob leaders in the name of nationalism. Mussolini and Hitler have restored to the New Stupid some of the substantial pleasures enjoyed by the Old Stupidity. Can these pleasures be restored in some other and less pernicious name than that of collective hatred and vanity ?

We have seen that people will put up with all kinds of prohibitions, provided that they are given psychologically ' sufficient ' compensations. Granted qualitative sufficiency, what is the amount of emotional stimulation necessary for health ? How many orgies —or rather, since it is the minimum that interests us, how few—do human beings require ? Only prolonged field-work would permit one to return a scien-

tifically accurate answer. At present, all one can say is that the appetite for emotional stimulation varies greatly from individual to individual, and that populations at large seem to be able now to support very large doses of emotional excitement, now to content themselves with very small doses.

Some people have a very powerful appetite for emotional excitement—or else, which is perhaps the same thing, are cursed with an insensitiveness that only surgical methods can awake to feeling. These, in a peaceable state, are apt to be a nuisance. In the past, most of them could be counted on to destroy themselves by crusading, duelling, piracy and, more recently, by exploring and colonial adventuring. Unhappily, the last of these overseas outlets for violence are being closed—in some cases have been closed already. Germany, for example, has no colonies as a safety-valve for her more ferocious young men. Perhaps that is why Hitler found such a rich supply of them in the streets of Munich and Berlin. The Jews and the Communists are paying for the annexation of Tanganyika and German South-West Africa. For the Nazi gunmen they provide, so to speak, a Colony in Every Home. Among the Indians of Central America, a good deal of what would otherwise have been dangerous political violence was probably absorbed in the domestic circle; wives, children and village delinquents were the 'Jews,' the 'Reds,' the 'Coloured Races,' on whom they vented their native brutality

and wreaked vengeance for the wrongs done them by their conquerors. With us, wives and children are pretty effectively protected by the law; that immemorial safety-valve is tightly screwed down. Moreover, darkest Africa is rapidly ceasing to be dark, and its inhabitants are beginning to be treated almost as though they were human beings—or, better, almost as though they were Our Dumb Friends. Soon the violent individuals of even the imperialistic nations will have to look elsewhere for their dangerous adventures and, lacking real Hottentots to bully, will be forced to transform the more helpless of their unpopular neighbours into artificial Hottentots. (In this context, it is not the colour of a posterior that counts; it is its kickableness.) One of the minor tasks of our conference will be to provide born adventurers and natural slave-drivers with harmless and unharmable blackamoor *Ersatzes*, with safe, humane but satisfying Putumayo-surrogates.

That communities have flourished for centuries without the stimuli of militant nationalism is certain. But the trouble is, that such peaceable societies (of whom the Old Empire Mayas seem to have been one) lived in circumstances very different from those of to-day and were composed of individuals, in whom consciousness had developed along other lines than those by which the modern European mind has advanced. So far as we are concerned, they are Utopias, admirable but fundamentally irrelevant. My

own conviction is that, in this matter of emotional stimulation, quantity is strictly a function of quality. If routine is easy, comfortable and secure, and if all the organized emotional stimulations are qualitatively satisfying, then the number and variety of orgies can safely be reduced. Nationalism flourishes among the New Stupid of our contemporary world for two reasons : first, because the common orgies of daily life are of such poor quality ; and, second, because the routine, which is the complement and necessary background of such orgies, has been disturbed. This disturbance is due in large measure to the practical application of nationalism to politics, and results in a state of mind that welcomes nationalism for the sake of the exciting distractions it creates and theoretically justifies. The movement is, as usual, circular and vicious. Routine and orgies. Or, as the Romans preferred to put it, bread and circuses. Still, as always, the universal demand. Men cannot live by bread alone. But neither can they live only by circuses. To some extent, however, a shortage of bread can be made up for by a surfeit of circuses. All the mob-leaders of the post-war years have pursued the same policy : they have organized political circuses in order to distract people's attention from their hunger and the prevailing social uncertainty. Unable to fill empty bellies with bread, they aim instead at filling empty heads with flags and verbiage and brass bands and collective hysteria. The Nazis are preparing, as

I write, to hold a hundred and fifty thousand political meetings in two months. We may parody the words of the old song and ask :

> Will the hate that you're so rich in
> Light a fire in the kitchen,
> And the little god of hate turn the spit, spit, spit?

Alas, he won't ; and one day the public for whom these political circuses are so lavishly organized will grasp the distressing truth and say, with Queen Victoria, ' We are not amused.'

This brings us to a very interesting point. The amount of emotional stimulation which a given society can tolerate varies within very wide limits. There are times when the whole, or at any rate a large part of, the community will tolerate violent emotional stimulations and even deliberately seek them out. Under the influence of this excitement, difficult tasks will be accomplished and heroic acts performed. But after a certain time fatigue seems to set in ; people cease to be moved by the old stimuli, cease even to wish to live heroically ; their highest ambition is a quiet life, well supplied with the creature comforts. This fatigue, it should be noticed, need not be experienced by the same people as originally cultivated the fatiguing emotions. One generation lives an intensely emotional life and the next generation is tired. The community behaves as though it were a living organism, in which individuals play the part of cells. It is the organism as a whole that feels fatigue ; and this

fatigue communicates itself to the new cells which, in the natural course of growth, replace those originally stimulated. 'The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge.' What is the mechanism of this curious process? There is no reason to suppose that it is physiological. The children are not born tired; they become tired by psychological reaction to their parents' enthusiasm. But why do they react? Why are they not conditioned to share the enthusiasm? And why is it that when enthusiasms are not too violent there is no reaction, but acceptance on the part of the children?

To answer these questions with any precision one would have to undertake a campaign of intensive field-work and specially directed historical research. Lacking precise data, one can risk a vague generalization and say that it is impossible so to condition people that they will permanently accept a state of things that imposes an unbearable strain on their psychology; and that where such an attempt is made, the reaction to conditioning will ultimately be negative, not positive. The image of the social organism once more imposes itself: the community is a creature that can survive only when its constituent parts are in a state of equilibrium. Excessive stimulation has to be compensated by repose. The stimulated cells are one set of individuals; the reposing cells another. Why and how do the individuals of the second generation realize that a negative reaction to parental condition-

ing is, socially speaking, necessary? It is impossible to guess. But the fact remains that they apparently do realize it.

Periods of intense general excitement never last very long. The social organism does not seem to be able to tolerate more than about twenty years of abnormal agitation. Thus, the thrilling, heroic period of the religious revival, set going by St. Francis of Assisi, was over in less than a quarter of a century. The great animal that was Europe could not stand the strain of sitting up on its hind legs and performing primitive-Christian tricks. Within a generation it had settled down once more to a comfortable doze. Every violently exciting religious or political movement of history has run much the same course. It will be interesting to see whether the revivalist enthusiasm worked up by Communists, Nazis and Fascists will last longer than the similar mass emotion aroused by the first Franciscans. True, the technique of propaganda is much more efficient now than it was in the Middle Ages. St. Francis had no printing press, no radio, no cinema, no loud-speakers. Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini have them by the thousand. Nevertheless, it may be doubted whether they will really do better than St. Francis. An orchestra can make louder music than a single fiddle. But if you are tired, and bored with dancing, the orchestra will not set you capering more effectively than the fiddle. On the contrary, the very insistence of its

appeal will anger you into an obstinate refusal to make the smallest answering gesture.

It should be the policy of every ruler never to allow the emotions of his subjects to be for any length of time systematically over-stimulated. Nor, if he is wise, will he ever make use of emotional over-stimulation to carry out any ambitious, long-range plan of his own. The finally negative reaction of the social organism to such over-stimulation is likely to stultify the plan and may lead at the same time to a temporary lowering of the vitality of the whole community, most undesirable and, in certain circumstances, even dangerous. The aim of the ruler should be to discover exactly the right dose of bread and circuses, and to administer just that, no more and no less. Where the dosage is correct, as it evidently was in Egypt, in Babylonia, in India, in China, a society can remain for centuries astonishingly stable, even under the stress of attack and actual conquest by alien peoples.

Ours is a world of rapidly changing techniques; education has tinged our congenital stupidity with positivism, and we are therefore impatient of faith in any kind of invisible transcendental entity. In such a world and for such a people what is the perfect dose of bread and circuses? It is hard indeed to say. But though perfection may be unattainable, it should be fairly easy to improve on the wildly incorrect and dangerous practice of the present time. The formula for permanent health is doubtless beyond us; but at

least the temporary avoidance of sudden death is within our power.

We come now to the last of our questions. Can hate be used for producing unification? Or, rather, can unification be produced without using hatred? Carrera, the Indian chieftain, who ruled Guatemala from 1840 to 1860, made his first entry into the capital under a banner inscribed with these words: *Viva la religión y muerte a los extranjeros.* Uneducated, he knew by mother-wit that the two most effective instruments for uniting men are a shared mythology and a shared hatred.

Carrera did not aim very high; he wanted, first of all, to unify the army of savage Indians under his command, and later, when he had achieved dictatorial power, to consolidate Guatemala into a sovereign state. His enemies, the Liberals of Salvador, were more ambitious. They aspired to unite all of Central America into a single federated republic. A more considerable task than Carrera's, for which they were equipped with less adequate instruments. For, being educated anti-clericals, they could not exploit the unificatory mythology of a religion they regarded as pernicious; and being believers in progress, they could not preach hatred of the foreigners whose capital and technical knowledge they hoped to use for the development of their country. Still, some sort of unifying hatred was urgently desirable; so an attempt was made to work up patriotic feeling against England, on the score that its government had ordered the occupa-

tion of the island of Roatun in the Gulf of Honduras and was secretly planning to annex the whole of Central America. Unfortunately perhaps for Central American unity England was not planning to occupy the country. Had such an attempt actually been made, it is quite possible that the Five Republics might have been fused together by hatred of the common enemy.

Europe possesses no shared mythology, and it will obviously take some time to fabricate such an instrument of unification. A shared hatred is also lacking, but could be worked up in next to no time. There is a possibility, for example, that dislike and fear of Hitlerian Germany may result in a movement towards the unification, or at least the rational co-operation, of the other national states. If this were to happen we should have to bless the Nazis for being the unintentional benefactors of suffering humanity.

But hatred for a near neighbour easily becomes unplatonic. Almost as effective as a unifier, shared loathing for people at a distance has this further merit : it need not involve the hater in any unpleasant practical consequences. It may be that our delegates will think it worth while to unify Europe by means of hatred for Asia. Such hatred would have excellent economic justifications. Combining efficiency with a lower-than-European standard of living, the Japanese can undersell us in every department ; directly or indirectly, they threaten to take the bread out of innumerable European mouths. Nothing would be