

MÁN AND NATURE

Two different schools of thought predominate over every other in the vast realm of literature. A race of writers has chosen to worship nature, while the subject of study of the second school is not nature but humanity. The members of the first school live in human society "as in it but not of it." The first is mostly idealistic and the second realistic.

To a member of the first school may be ascribed the following line—

"The fields his study, nature was his book."

They care very little to discover the unheard groan, the unseen tears, the unfelt sigh, "the covered and concealed arrow that is preying on the vitals" of their neighbour; they would cross to some "remote wave-flushed isle to inhale some healthy imaginings from the vivid face of nature." Hope, Faith and Love of human heart, full of colours more than seven, more creative, promising and beautiful than the opening rose, escape their attention. They lose themselves in the wizard twilight of the evening. And the poet confesses—

"I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought."

The inhabitants of this real world begin their lives of activity with all the buoyancy and optimism of youth but are drifted far away from their long cherished ideals and hopes by a single clash or jostle with the stern realities of life. What a burning desert is created in their bosom, no Shahara would be adequate to represent. When these wearied travellers of

the path, leading from birth to death, with heavy heart pine for the soothing oblivion of death, which they mistake to be the surest and safest portico of heaven, these poets feeling not the least sympathy for them go in their own way in search of some ethereal fairy land supported by the wings of fancy.

There is the other race, the idolators—the worshippers of men, the idols in the most exalted form. They are quite heedless of what is going on beyond the craggy mountain in the evening or what picture is painted on the distant horizon. They can brook to see the whole autumn fields being devastated or set fire to before their eyes, and with perfect good humour. Their vision is entirely fixed on a different object. They would amend, as it were, the text of the first school thus—
“The mind his study, ‘life’ was his book.”

Their eyes are intently gazing on a different treasure. They sing—

“The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As are the concealed comforts of a man
Locked up in woman’s love.”

“The field of human hearts is left uncared for, which, if cultured would yield the golden harvest.” This is their mourning.

Human nature is more than Nature. Mysterious and eternal is nature, the universe in its entirety is more so and capricious man ventures to capture this unbounded in the bounded receptacle of his mind ; so it is the most mysterious of all. And it has been finely said “the more I try to learn it the less I understand.” It is more deluding and mysterious than the Will o-the-wisp or shadowy phantoms. Shaking off all the narrowness, the heart, at times, fed by a divine fountain, swells up to touch heaven in ecstasy. All these paradoxes of human nature only confirm the truth of the greatest paradox

—nothing does not differ greatly from everything. Again human nature affords no less food for contemplation than what nature does. 'The heart is not a physiological organ of flesh and blood only. If we see deep into it, we shall find some place is the altar of God and some is hideously haunted by evil spirits.' Again, there are thousands of avenues in it. Some lead to the obnoxious swamp full of reptiles, some terminate in burning deserts, some to quick-sands and a few to heavenly bliss.

The students of the first school would be pinched to see the rose nipped in the bud and may go so far as to write an elegy on it. But more tragic scenes are frequent in human life

".....I never heard
Of any true affection but it was nipt
With care, that, like a caterpillar eats
The leaves of the spring's sweetest, book—rose."

All the four seasons come in succession to greet the outer world. Human mind is also not left out.....

"Four seasons fill the measure of the year
There are four seasons in the mind of man ?"

Our old age of "pale misfeature" is "poor as winter." The spring of mind is more beautiful than any spring of nature. During this human season thousands of nightingales and skylarks sing in perfect harmony at a time with "voice sweet as love."—

"Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass
Rain-awakened flowers
All that ever was

Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass."

Now, of these two fields of study which is more healthy ? Which should be cultured and which not ? The answer is

'each thing in its place is best.' We cannot afford to banish any one permanently. Love of man is our food and drink, our guide and light, our peace and happiness. Love of nature is our ornament, our luxury, our pleasure. So it is quite impolitic to run after ornament, luxury and pleasure when we have no food and drink, guide and light, and peace and happiness. It would be to seek superfluity leaving the essential. But there are times when men have no choice. When all hopes and prospects and consolation of life sink into eternal darkness, when friends forget and kins forsake, men try to derive consolation from mute nature. It is at this stage that men cry out—

"Wealth I ask not, hope nor love
Nor a friend to know me.
All I seek, is the heaven above
And the road below me."

We denounce love and friend only because we cannot get them if we want. We are then like so many jackals to whom "the grapes are sour." But it must be admitted on all hands that when the limbs of a nation are paralysed, its heart filled with despair, its vision hazy, its steps languid, it would be a crime to attempt to indulge in mental luxury and pleasure, viz. depicting the beauties of nature, sailing (in imagination) through the ethereal ocean for some 'sunny isle'. We should be then among the sufferers and soothe the broken hearts with the congenial messages of life.

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2nd year. (A)
