

LIFE AND LETTERS

Patching Up Holes

By ADIB

"IT doesn't help to pick new holes in a tattered argument. It is always more helpful to patch it up where the holes show", writes an angry correspondent. "To say this is bunk or that is tosh is sheer insolence. Why not hint at what is right? It may be that cultures do not blend like tobacco. But different cultures do get mixed up somehow. Why don't you try to find out how the mixing up has gone on in our case?"

SPORTING SPIRIT

I would have been only too glad to do some patching up. But as it was the holes in Dr. Abid Husain's argument were more than I could manage. Take the paragraph in his essay where the learned doctor speaks of English culture. "As the country is full of wild animals and birds, and hunting has always been the favourite hobby of Englishmen", he writes "they have developed hardness, patience, watchfulness, caution and that peculiar quality called the sporting spirit which consists in carrying on doggedly the fight against the adversary so long as there is the slightest chance of success, but when failure appears to be certain admitting defeat openly and bearing it with calm dignity."

Why don't we all take to hunting? We are certainly better off than the English so far as wild animals go. My correspondent will say I am being impudent. But there it is. The hole in Dr. Abid Husain's argument is bigger than I can patch up. Sir Anthony Eden alone can manage it. I hope he has killed enough wild foxes in his life to have developed the sporting courage to "admit failure openly and bear it with calm dignity."

Let's leave the wild foxes alone. It is not easy for us to know how far they are necessary to culture. But we can have no doubt that the fine arts are an essential part of culture. What has Dr. Abid Husain to say about these? Apparently he feels strongly on the subject of fine arts. "The most powerful force which binds Hindus and Muslims in a community of deepest feelings is today as it was during the Moghul period, that of the fine arts," he writes. "Though their philosophical concept of art (as Tagore and Iqbal have told us) are different the unity of the aesthetic experience, gushing forth from the depths of their hearts, washes away all intellectual differences. As soon as they enter into the realm of art all sons of Mother India, Hindus, Muslims and others feel that the common stream of their life flows with the same rhythm, is agitated by the same storms and soothed down by the same calm. Even people from different regions who do not know a word of one another's language understand the common language of the heart which uses tones and colours instead of words. In every branch of art, Hindu, Muslim,

lim artists show a spirit of real brotherhood which is the brightest sign of hope for the cultural unity of India."

It is a very patriotic sentiment, no doubt, but it is too overblown. It bursts before our very eyes. Amrita Sher-Gil understood the language of Cezanne and Gauguin better than she could ever grasp the language of Sarada Ukil. And it is not quite certain how far Nandalal Bose understands the language of Hossain and Raza. Who says their life flows in the same rhythm? The differences in their sensibilities indeed cut across communal and regional barriers. The hole in Dr. Abid Husain's argument is too big. No one can patch it up for him.

How shall we go about the business of blending such cultures as exist in the country today into one? Here we come up against the biggest hole of all in Dr. Abid Husain's argument. Before we can even think of blending disparate cultures we must know what they are. Dr. Husain doesn't tell us. He writes vaguely about Hindu culture and Muslim culture and Hindustani culture without pausing to define what they are. Take Hindu culture, for example. What is there in common between the tribal democracy of the early Aryan settlers and the despotism of the Gupta Kings? What is there in common between the preoccupation with the Absolute of Upanishadic thinkers and the complicated ritual of sensual joys detailed in Vatsyayana? Or take Muslim culture. What is there in common between the way of life preached by the Sufis and the lusts and cruelties which disfigure the record of Delhi Sultanate?

FIVE ANSWERS

In his book *Christ and Culture* Richard Niebuhr has pointed out that there is no such thing as a Christian culture and that the many-sided debate about the relations of Christianity with civilisation has yielded at least five different answers. There are those who, like Tolstoy, think that the only way of life for a true Christian is to withdraw from the institutions of society, for no society can ever be based on the gospel of turning the other cheek. A second group holds that there is a close relationship between Christianity and Western civilisation as it has developed. A third represented by Thomas Aquinas and his followers believes that Christ is "both continuous and discontinuous" with social life and its culture. A fourth represented by Martin Luther thinks that Christians must continuously suffer "the tension that accompanies obedience to two authorities—Christ and secular society—who do not agree and yet must be obeyed."

[And finally, a fifth group represented by St. Augustine thinks that though there is op-

position between Christ and all human institutions, "the antithesis does not lead either to Christian separation from the world as with the first group, or to mere endurance in the expectation of a trans-historical salvation, as with the fourth." And these five are only a few of the many possible answers. The religious label by itself gives no clue to the true nature of the society which professes that religion.

And yet Dr. Abid Husain insists on using religious labels. Having defined culture as "the sense of ultimate values possessed by a society" he takes the word "ultimate" too literally. He refuses to see that the pattern of a culture, even when it continues to bear the same religious label, continues to change out of recognition with the changes in social and economic institutions. What is even more damaging to his argument, he fails to see that economic and social differences cut across religious, communal and regional divisions. The values of the elite are seldom the values of the mass of the people. The way of life of one who does not know how to kill his time is different from the way of life of the person who cannot take his mind off the daily grind of making a living. The long discussion of the divergent philosophies of Tagore and Iqbal has little relevance to the prevailing patterns of culture in this country. Who is worried about the nature of infinity and whether it consists in intensity or extensity?

We can leave infinity alone. The cultural questions in this country are bound up with finite things. What values we want to develop? And how far our system, both social and educational, is designed to foster these? The cynical may say India is one body but not yet one consciousness—that she has yet to become aware of itself. But no country is aware of itself in the way that an individual is aware of himself. Under the press of circumstances even the individual today develops a split personality. How much more is a country, divided horizontally into linguistic and religious groups and vertically into classes, liable to develop a multiple personality?

FOND ILLUSION

The danger lies not in this multiplicity but in the fond illusion that allegiance to certain values by a few thinkers and poets will achieve the miracle of a cultural transformation in this country even though these values do not bear any relation to social practice. For, culture is the sense of values not as it is shared by a small elite but primarily as it is embodied in social institutions. So far we do not even seem to have made up our mind as to what values we prize most.

Widespread Rains In Orissa

ALL-INDIA REPORT

POONA, August 16: The Bay depression was centred at 8-30 a.m. about 100 miles east of Cuttack and is likely to move north-westwards. The monsoon is strengthening along and off the Malabar coast.

Rainfall has been widespread in Orissa, Vindhya Pradesh, and adjoining south-west Uttar Pradesh and along the west coast and fairly widespread in west Bengal, Chota Nagpur, the Punjab-Kumaon Hills and east Madhya Pradesh. It has occurred locally in the Bay Islands, Assam, Bihar, the plains of the Punjab (India), in west Madhya Pradesh, Deccan (Desh), south Hyderabad, Coastal Andhra Desa, Rayalaseema and Mysore and at a few places in Jammu-Kashmir, north Rajasthan, Gujarat, Saurashtra-Kutch, north Hyderabad and Tamil Nad.

The following is the daily chart recorded at 8-30 a.m. on Thursday:—

	Max.	Min.	Past 24 hours	Since June 1	Departure from normal
Abu	73	65	0.1	88.2	+48.5
Ahmedabad	87	77	..	35.1	+14.0
Ahmednagar	81	70	..	13.6	+3.4
Aurangabad	85	70	..	13.5	-1.0
Bangalore	80	67	0.5	9.7	+0.5
Baroda	89	75	..	38.1	+14.4
Bhub	82	74	..	14.1	+4.8
BOMBAY	85	76	0.3	71.1	+20.0
Calcutta					
(Alipore)	91	80	0.3	34.5	+3.4
Cherrapunji	77	63	1.4	296.5	+45.9
Cuttack	87	78	1.4	40.2	+10.3
Dehra Dun	86	74	0.1	55.1	+2.7
Hyderabad					
(Dn.)	80	72	T	16.8	+3.5
Indore	82	70	..	18.6	-2.8
Jaipur	84	75	T	25.9	+12.0
Kodalkanal	60	52	0.1	7.3	-5.1
Kolhapur	79	68	0.3	31.1	..
Kurnool	88	73	0.3	18.1	+8.2
Lucknow	91	82	..	14.4	-8.6
Madras	92	79	T	9.6	+1.9
Mahableshwar					
var	65	62	3.6	238.2	+44.6
Mussoorie	69	60	T	53.4	+1.6
Mysore	79	69	T	3.7	-2.5
Nagpur					
(Sonogaon)	88	75	0.5	30.7	+1.6
New Delhi	93	79	0.5	15.0	+0.6
Ootacamund	60	53	0.5	11.8	-6.9
Patna	95	78	T	14.7	-10.3
Pendra	86	70	1.1	49.6	+18.7
Poona	80	70	0.1	21.8	+8.5
Rajkot	88	73	..	40.1	+22.6
Ranchi	89	66	0.1	28.8	-3.3
Ratnagiri	83	74	1.5	81.4	+5.7
Simla	68	59	..	28.3	-4.5
Srinagar	84	65	..	8.7	+3.6
Surat	87	76	T	34.1	+3.8
Trivandrum	83	73	1.1	19.3	-4.1
T indicates rainfall upto four cents.—P.T.I.					

Sun, Moon And Tides

FRIDAY, August 17

Sunrise: 6h. 20m.; Sunset: 7h. 06m.

Moonrise: 16h. 07m.; Moonset: 02h. 41m.

High Tide: 10h. 10m. 11.9 ft.; 21h. 38m. 10.3 ft.

Low Tide: 02h. 46m. 5.1 ft.; 16h. 01m. 7.0 ft.

PHASES OF THE MOON

August 21. Full Moon 18h. 08m.

August 29. Last Quarter 09h. 43m.

LEGISLATURE SECRETARIAT

Madras Raises Status

Troops Drafted For Rescue Operations

VAST AREAS FLOODED IN FATEHPUR SIKRI

"The Times of India" News Service

AGRA, August 16.

TROOPS have been drafted for rescue operations in Fatehpur Sikri where the muddy waters of the Utangan river, gushing through a breach in the Khandwa Dam, have flooded about 25,000 acres of fertile land.

The flood waters have turned vast areas in this famed Moghul capital into artificial lakes.

The Agra-Bayana railway line has been breached between Fatehpur Sikri and Rupbas stations, as a result of which Bayana-bound trains could not leave Agra Fort station since last night.

Workers have been hurriedly sent to repair the breach.

Rescue operations in the affected areas had been rendered difficult by the absence of adequate number of boats.

A correspondent of *The Times of India* News Service, who visited the place last night, could find only three boats and one boatman. Authorities said that most of the available boats had been sent earlier to Bharatpur where the flood waters had caused heavy damage.

U.P. GOVT.'S HELP

Meanwhile, the District Magistrate, Mr. Harish Chandra Saxena, has approached the military authorities at Meerut, Kanpur and Gwalior to supply motor boats. It was reported that the Agra Brigade had agreed to take charge of the rescue operations.

The U.P. Government has advanced Rs. 15,000 to help the flood victims. The State Health Department has arranged free medical aid.

A special staff of the roadways has been commissioned to help rescue marooned villagers.

A five-man flood relief committee has been organised to help the flood victims.

Crops in the area have been completely damaged and several head of cattle have perished.

Although the authorities denied knowledge of any loss of lives, villagers reported that four or five persons had been washed away.

The rising waters pose a serious threat to the temporary earthen dams protecting the tehsil headquarters from floods.

Mirzapur: About 100 villages in Chunar tehsil of Mirzapur District and 70 villages in Mirzapur tehsil have been seriously affected by floods in the Ganga, according to the local authorities.

Hundreds of acres of crop fields have been submerged. The extent of loss is not yet known.

The District Magistrate at

Mirzapur, has decided to enforce flood measures immediately. Nine flood posts in Chunar and six in Mirzapur have been opened.

One hundred and forty boats in Chunar and 100 boats in Mirzapur are plying to rescue marooned people and animals.—P.T.I.

HOUSE COLLAPSES IN BELGAUM

Seven Persons Dead

"The Times of India" News Service

BELGAUM, August 16: Seven persons lost their lives in house collapses in Athani and Soundatti talukas, in Belgaum district, as a result of the recent heavy rains.

Mr. S. Y. Ranade, Collector, told a meeting of the District Development Board on Tuesday, that of the seven, four died in Ekkundi, Soundatti taluka, and one in Navali and two in Ainapur, Athani taluka.

Incessant rains and floods in rivers and rivulets had caused considerable damage to several more houses in Athani taluka and other talukas in the eastern part of the district, he said.

About 2,000 corrugated iron sheets were being rushed to the affected parts to provide temporary shelter to the sufferers. A sum of Rs. 3,000 had also been sent to these places for distribution as gratuitous relief, he added.

The Mamlatdars of these talukas had a sum of Rs. 8,000 collectively at their disposal to grant taccavi loans to affected agriculturists.

The Collector promised to consider individually the cases of those cultivators who had lost their kharif crops.

Bail For Editor

ALLAHABAD, August 16: Mr. Justice Mehrotra, of the Allahabad High Court, today ordered the release of Madanlal Jaggi, editor of Sadaqat, Delhi, on a "heavy bail to the satisfaction of the District Magistrate, Meerut."

Jaggi was arrested on June 8 last by the Meerut police in connection with the alleged murder of Sardar Arjun Singh, editor of Bande Matram, an Urdu daily of Delhi.—P.T.I.

She thought he