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Samson

MAN comes, at last, to his necessitous hour,
 A giant in chains, a blinded slave, a mock
 Walled by the circle of estate and creed;
 There in the poverty of his own power
 He finds a faith, as ultimate as rock,
 Which is the knowledge that he is life's need.

This is the strength by which he is sustained;
 The wisdom born from misery; the trust
 Which flowers upon the edge of nothingness;
 The recognition that he is self-chained,
 Self-mutilated, self-befooled, self-thrust
 Behind the walls of recreant duress:

Samson assured, at last, of his assay
 And that his darkness is the door to day.

WILLIAM SOUTAR

The Stars Come Back

DEPRIVED of mimic stars
 And empty moons that glow
 From shops and cinemas,
 We watch the real stars go

Serenely across space,
 Each imperceptibly
 Each night in ordered place;
 Each constellation free

From the encroaching glow
 Of earth's light-canopy.
 Not blinded by light now,
 We walk abroad, and see.

R. N. CURREY

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MARY NEAL

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THE BROKEN LAW

"Male and Female created He them" (Genesis I. 27.)

"Deep, deep as the Universe is my life, and I know it."

(Edward Carpenter.)

IT is only when one can get to the fundamentals of Being that a glimpse can be had of essential truth and one can begin to understand what is wrong with life to-day as it manifests itself in destruction and the horror of war.

Those who merely see the surface, and those who, like Freud and others of the same psychological school of thought, have only penetrated another stratum of consciousness, have not reached fundamentals. They have only visualised disharmony, have only traced Being through its groping after realities, and so have given only a warped, often ugly and certainly an incomplete picture of the human psyche.

It is not until we get to the uttermost reality that we know that man is one with the creative love of the Universe, and that the present day surface manifestations are only part of man's struggle to reach the essential harmony and rhythm of the Universe.

One essential truth, the ignoring of which has broken the rhythm of life to-day, is the truth that "Male and female created He them". The blind assumption that in the emancipation of women and their entry into full civil and political liberty they should be absorbed into the masculine rhythm, has had dire results. We have ignored the fact that only as the male and female are developed, each in their own rhythm, can creative love function and fulfil its purpose.

To-day the world is on a masculine rhythm; the feminine rhythm is stilled and submerged. The world marches to a military rhythm which is destructive. This is understood by those who give the order to break step to a regiment crossing a bridge. To keep the marching step is to endanger the bridge, which might collapse.

I learned many years ago, as I believe, the way in which the feminine rhythm of life has been submerged; and I learned it in deep and inspiring talks with that gifted woman, the late Mary Kingsley. She was working for the Empire, ostensibly,

by the study of trade conditions and entomology, and she had penetrated into the heart of Africa where no white woman had ever been before. One day when we were both guests of the late Countess of Pembroke at Ashridge, she suddenly told us that her real interest, her real reason for staying on in Africa was that she was trying to penetrate into the mysteries of the African natives, especially those relating to women. She told us that she had learned much about this, but that until she had learned all she was ever likely to learn she dare not speak of this knowledge. In a solemn voice she said, in that Berkshire drawing room, "I dare not tell you here what I know, *they would know I had told*, and I should never learn any more." She was returning to Africa shortly and intended eventually to publish her discoveries. Alas, she died before she could write a single word.

The ceremonial and mysteries of woman were lost, because in those days only men explorers had penetrated into the interior of Africa and no man was allowed near this ceremonial on pain of death. Male mysteries were known to men explorers and have come to us to-day through Freemasonry and Rosicrucian teaching; but the feminine has been lost or so deeply buried that it has little practical effect in the life of to-day. Now that women are explorers, and so can penetrate into places inaccessible to men, it is to be anticipated that once more the outward ceremonial and the inner meaning and experience of the woman's rhythm may again come to life in the world and enrich and modify its present masculine mode. For ceremonial, understood, can create experience, as those know who have with understanding taken part in the ceremonial of the Mass.

I touched the fringe of this mystery in an entirely unlooked for way. Some thirty years ago I began to investigate the origins and ceremonial of the Morris and Sword Dances still surviving in out of the way English villages. At the time when the first revived dance was danced on the floor of the Girls' Club of which I was honorary secretary, I knew nothing whatever of what I afterwards learned while collecting other dances.

We had been singing English folk songs collected by Cecil Sharp and we wanted dances that would not spoil the songs, so that we could give a little entertainment at our Christmas party. Cecil Sharp gave me the name of a man from whom he had taken down some Morris Dance tunes seven years before. I went to Oxfordshire and arranged for this traditional dancer

to come to London and teach these dances to the members of the Esperance Club.

From this began the revival of folk dancing which is now recognised as a national movement.

Almost at the same time as I was going to Oxford to arrange about the dances, the militant Suffrage Movement began, when two girls went to prison for interrupting a political meeting; and again from that incident came a national movement to give votes to women. I never took a very active part in this militant movement, but I was on the committee and associated with it. Cecil Sharp and Herbert MacIlwain, my colleagues in the folk song and dance revival, were bitterly opposed to the whole Votes for Women campaign.

The revival of the songs began, and there was perfect harmony between those of us who were working for their revival and practice; but we had not been practising the dances very long before a curious disharmony began to develop. This grew stronger and stronger and eventually ended in a complete severance between us, and I was left to carry on the revival with other helpers.

It was only after I began to investigate the origins of the dances and as I went from village to village and got to know the old dancers that I realised what had happened. I discovered that these dances were the remains of an ancient religious ceremonial older than Christianity. I found traces of the human sacrifice, the virgin sacrifice, then traces of the more humane substituted animal sacrifice, when a new-born lamb decorated with flowers and ribbons became the centre round which the dancers danced. And again I found traces of the ceremonial cake or wafer substituted for the living sacrifice, evidently connected with the ceremonial of the Mass. And the dates when the dances were performed corresponded with the dates of Christian ceremonial.

Then I realised, in a devastating moment, that these dances were the remains of a purely masculine ceremonial, and that they represented a ritual of discipline for war and sex expression. I realised that gesture and ritual can be creative and can bring about mental and spiritual experience, and I knew then, for the first time, that by putting women on to this masculine rhythm I had quite innocently and ignorantly broken a law of cosmic ritual and stirred up disharmony which became active as time went on. Anyone sensitive to rhythm who has seen the youth dance the Dirk dance at the Folk Dance

Festival at the Albert Hall will understand what I mean. I believe now that this misuse of the Morris Dance was the reason for the bitter estrangement between my colleagues and myself, the cause of which was as unknown to them as it was to me.

During the war of 1914-1918 I began, as I think, to understand that women were living on a masculine rhythm and had lost their own rhythm which, had it been in full use, would have prevented that war and any future wars. In confirmation of my belief that women were on a masculine rhythm, I noted that—the finer spirits having resigned from the Votes for Women movement—the movement became openly part of and ruled by the war machine.

The eternal feminine rhythm is a slow compelling force, as of the moon which draws all the waters of the planet at its bidding, unhindered by volcano, storm or earthquake. It draws plant life up to the life-giving force of the sun, as we now know that seeds grow best when planted in the waxing time of the moon. And women are beginning to realise to-day that they must get back to the depths of their being and re-discover the hidden springs of their life—that only as they are developed on their own rhythm can they meet the masculine rhythm, and that only as both sexes meet in complete harmony, neither ruling nor dominating the other, will there be peace and harmony in the world.

Gerald Heard in a recent book states it as a fact that man has now reached the limit of his progress on the physical plane, and that unless he can develop his spiritual life and gain a wider consciousness there is nothing but disaster before him. I think if I wanted to express this same idea I should say that all that will ever be achieved by the masculine power *working alone* has been accomplished, and that unless the feminine can now develop to a complete equality, nothing but destruction awaits the race. If, however, the rhythm of life can be completed by the union of the masculine and feminine, we shall achieve a new world, undreamed of in its beauty, harmony and creative love.

Pattern on Dark Background

I AM alone
 In the death of the darkness of night.
 Sometimes awake and thinking, or groping to thought.
 Sometimes dreaming, but deeply aware.

I am alone.
 And yet I know, I feel in my secret soul,
 That all creation is with me here and now
 In the narrow space of my room,
 Mysteriously me.

The silence holds all the sound there has ever been
 Or will be or is,
 Heard and unheard.
 And the dark holds light :
 All light encircled in shadow,
 Lapped round by the spacious darkness
 As an island by lake water.
 Light of the eyes, and light of the heart,
 And light of the mind and soul.

On the wall of the still, black night
 A pattern is traced,
 Half picture, half symbol.
 Stars showing through the darkness.

Birth and death lie close in the pattern,
 Linked together, embraced
 In the womb from which all things come.
 They stream forth like a river
 Dividing to meet again :
 Opposite sides of the wholeness
 That we call life.

And I am part of this endless procession of life ;
 A note in the tune !

In the land and the language of Time
 I am old.
 Finished and tired and grey.