

theoretically conceivable that all living human beings save one could be kept in a hypnotic trance, but this presupposes that at least one hypnotiser is in action; and, in order to hypnotise his fellow human beings, the hypnotiser himself must remain un hypnotised. But, if he is un hypnotised, he will be in the normal state of human freedom, and, if he is free, he cannot make himself proof against the possibility of his changing his mind one day and reversing his policy.

This comforting consideration has been set out by Sir Charles Darwin in *The Next Million Years*; but, long before we are driven back on this last line of defence against tyranny, we are likely to bring this arch-enemy of human freedom to a halt; for there is a wayward, contrary, ungovernable element in human nature—an element akin to the recalcitrancy of our cousins the camel, mule, and goat—which is the bane of dictators. No doubt we are, all of us, condi-

tioned, to some extent, by the traditional “culture-pattern” to which we have been moulded by the accident of the time and place of our birth; and different cultures differ widely in the degree of effectiveness of their schooling in submissiveness. Yet, in history up to date, there has been no schooling that has been able to guarantee to tyrants that their subjects will not revolt at last at some intolerable turn of the screw. The revolting-point may be reached sooner in Irishmen than in Germans, and sooner in Germans than in Russians or in Chinese; but in all human beings, hitherto, there has always been a point at which the worm has turned. Even when we have made all allowance for the application of new psychological techniques in the service of tyranny, past experience seems to make it unlikely that human tyrants will ever succeed in taking mankind right out of history, so long as human life—and, with it, Man’s mulish nature—continues to survive on Earth.

Tom Scott

## The Bride

I dreamed a luesome dream o ye yestreen.  
 Ye stuid in dawin fields agin a purpour luft,  
 And a tree o floueran starns rase frae your croun.  
 Lown\* as a simmer sea ye stuid, your breists  
 Keekan frae the lint-locks o your hair,  
 And ye were leaman § with a radiance eterne:  
 Ye, my evir-virgin, evir-breedan bride.

Your waddin kiss, the warld your bodie is,  
 Are brenned ayebydan in my benmaist hert,  
 As Psyche’s oil in Eros’ shouther brenned.

Wap your love-spells round me evirmair,  
 Bind me til ye with your daethless love  
 My queen, my queyn, the douchter o our God,  
 Lead me on throu evirgrouwan licht, and be  
 My love, my ain, the guid o the god in me.

In burns o immortal rain, baptise me love.

\* calm § glowing

## Shanta : India's Dancer

### 1. *The Splendour Unheeded*

I ENJOY ballet; so when I went to India I was naturally on the look-out for opportunities to see Indian dancing. But, in the end, it was infinitely more than a balletomane's pleasure that I got out of what I found: it was the revelation of a whole way of life. It was the discovery that I—a foreigner from another continent, with a different civilisation and scale of values, ignorant of any Indian language—had found a key to open a casement from which I could look into a world of astonishing beauty. And it was Shanta who gave me that key. It was through her art that I began to share, in part at least, the poetry, emotions, and outlook of a civilisation that is not easy for Europeans to penetrate.

The obstacles that impede a foreigner from acquiring an interest in, and an appreciation of, Indian culture are sizeable. Hitherto at least, he has had no incentive to learn an Indian language because virtually every Indian in the professional classes spoke English. Moreover, the European population of Delhi, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta runs into thousands, so that it is easy to fall into an exclusively European social round. And since caste rules make it difficult to eat with orthodox Hindus or to meet their women, intimate social intercourse is confined to those who are “Westernised,” and who, for the most part, have lost many points of contact with their own culture. Thus, the Westerner in India is faced with an alien culture difficult to understand, and whose more intrusive points seem positively repellant:

“unnatural” monkey, elephant, and many-armed gods; the messy festival of Holi when you are likely to get a nasty red liquid thrown over you in the streets; and all the unhygienic customs that Katherine Mayo dwelt upon at such loving length in *Mother India*.

My attempts to attune my Western self to Hindu ideas of God and worship met at first with only moderate success. There is a difference between acquiring theoretical knowledge through books, and watching and sharing in a living practice, making it part of your experience. To have read a dozen volumes about Catholicism is not the same as going to Mass, or celebrating Christmas and Easter. It was Shanta who brought the Mahabharata out of the study and gave me some first-hand acquaintance with Siva, Krishna, Arjuna, Ravana, Urvashi, the *asparas*, and so many other divinities and heroes. She made them real to me because they are real to her, as they are to few Indians today.

Educated Indians are, from several generations of experience of what to expect from foreigners, shy to talk of their religious beliefs. Most of them today are sceptics anyway, and spend as little time in reading their holy books as the present generation of Englishmen spend in reading the Bible. I am not suggesting that there are no devout people left in India (or in Britain); but they are normally found in strata of society not easily accessible in the leisure hours of the average European businessman in India. Outside the priesthood, scarcely any Indian can have made India's holy writ so much a part of her daily life as Shanta.