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Cher Ami -

Voici les quelques pages promises



Die Wacht am Rhein!

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## EQUILIBRISMUS - Vorworte

Before we attack the theory of Equilibrismus, let us  
 content ourselves with a simpler task, the enjoyment of the  
 gift of Equilibrium. It does not come with birth.

We have to learn it gradually, by tumbling to the  
 ground, our knees still perilously exposed to hard  
 parquet or rough carpet. Then, gradually, equilibrium  
 becomes automatic, at least in its physical form,  
 even if it is rarely appreciated in its moral form  
 during adolescence and youth. The intoxication of its  
 physical acquisition is especially memorable during  
 the first flash of consciousness. I, for one, will never

forget the sheer ecstasy of tumbling down the steep metal  
 stairs of South Kensington Underground Station in London  
 on my way <sup>to school,</sup> ~~there~~ a time once the craft was mastered. Later

such simple-minded accomplishments are forgotten, and  
 with the attainment of middle-age, three steps at a time  
 seem needlessly risky, and the eye even searches for a  
 moving staircase, so that energy can be saved. Once  
 old age takes possession of the body, all the uncertainties  
 of babyhood gradually return, but without ever being able  
 to fully eradicate the wonderful memory of  
 the equilibrism which had once been automatic, even  
 if now it is a thing of cautious <sup>and tentative</sup> application.

It follows logically that this pattern of behaviour  
 is the consequence of a growing appreciation of what is  
 natural in life. From birth we are showered with conditioned  
 reflexes, prejudices, which emanate from three estimate  
 sources, family, church, and school. ~~But~~ <sup>It takes many</sup> ~~years~~

years for the average person to realize how many options are inherited rather than formed naturally, and that the road path through the jungle prepared for the young person by the usage of previous generations is packed with scribbled signals and false information. Many surrender to the sheer weight of outside influences without even realizing the possibilities of ~~their~~ <sup>the</sup> internal universe of their minds. Finally, then, an important adjunct of longevity is that it gives the individual time to decide what he or she really thinks, without the need of snap decisions or thoughtless surrender to the burden of tradition. Naturally, a growing appreciation of the need for equilibrium is a considerable help, as well as a realization that the wealth of the world is retained. No advance of a standard of living ~~life~~ is, in the long run, valid, if it can only be achieved by a reduction of the standard of living elsewhere. Economic dreams of endless growth are based on the instincts of greed and negligence of vital needs in others. Nothing in nature grows endlessly. Morals gradually dwindle on the way to their final resting place.

The essays contained in this valuable book will, naturally, appeal more to those who have already liberated themselves from the constraints of conventional wisdom than to those who are grateful with what they have been given without taking the risks of self-discovery. Life is, in general, considerably richer than many of us think, and this volume is an excellent recognition of this fact.

It is doubtful that the answers to all the questions

posed by life on this planet will ever be totally discovered, for the simple reason that the more we discover, the more there is left to discover. But it is a considerable achievement to have the questions phrased with elegance and style, and with often more than a hint of a solution.

Perhaps you will allow me to end on a note of a personal credo. I have always felt instinctively that the truth, in general, lies in the centre of things, not on an extremity. The truth, being what it is, is invulnerable. Middle C on the piano is less dramatic than the dark notes on the left or the brilliant notes <sup>at</sup> the right. Gray is less immediately striking than black and white. By this then, the Centre is always open to aggression from both extremities. The extremes only risk a war, or at least, a debate, from one general direction. Is it for that reason that I tend to trust politicians of the Centre more than those of right or left? No doubt. If one can use the word trust in conjunction with those who must always appear to be ~~not~~ incapable of human errors. At all events, it is practically a guarantee of the integrity of a politician that he belongs to a small central party. It is hardly credible that personal ambition has left him to such an orientation.

Even if I have expressed a profound personal belief, this must never be interpreted as the outer shell of a dogma. Dogma is the business of left and right extremes, and has led to ultimate catastrophes of Nazism and Communism within living memory. No, there has to be an element of pragmatism

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even in political theory. We live, as has already  
 been stated, in a world subjected to the whims and  
 caprices of nature. Nothing is clearly predictable, the weather,  
 the duration of the seasons, the unforeseen natural  
 disasters. Like those who stay a ship in a storm,  
 we must be flexible in our thinking, veering momentarily  
 off ~~course~~ <sup>course</sup> in obedience to the ~~insistence~~ <sup>insistence</sup> of the  
 elements, only to return to our chosen direction when  
 conditions make it possible. In calm weather these  
 precautions need not exist, although it is ~~not~~  
 an <sup>advantage</sup> ~~advantage~~ that they always exist in our  
 consciousness. Why? Because doubt is a greater  
 spur to thought than any form of conviction. Also  
 because doubt tends to unite humanity, whereas  
 conviction divides it. And equilibrium enables us  
 to treat ~~doubt~~ <sup>doubt</sup> as a friend and ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> potential ally  
 rather than as the sworn ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> enemy of our favorite  
 dogma.