

A TRIBUTE TO ALDOUS HUXLEY

*Gerald Heard*

AFTER THIRTY-TWO years an intimate friendship with a remarkable man, possessed of a remarkable mind, comes to an end. Looking back over the landscape of that long relationship with Aldous Huxley, one sees that though it is crowded with books, just as a "built-up area" is thick with houses, the books, outstanding in themselves, appear as symptoms of a mind even more remarkable than the surface mind visible to his public. To use a more literary simile, his books were the illuminated initials in the Great Breviary of his intelligence.

For he was the last of a rare and transitory species that appeared briefly in the ultimate phase of Renaissance Man:—the scholar of style, the essayist of genius, the ultra-learned novelist who "galvanizes" his characters with the high charge of his strange knowledge and the crackling static of his wit: the amazingly informed amateur whose selfless desire for all information, and impartial love of any understanding, kept him perpetually seeking for insights in the Sciences and the Humanities, in the ancient esoteric tradition of mysticism and in the temerarious, empirical practices of the latest, most heterodox therapies.

Here was the rarest of alloys—taste combined with temerity, daring speculation delivered in a perfect rendition of lucid and elegant restraint.

This blend of opposites gave to Aldous Huxley's mind a temper that was perhaps unique. It is certainly hard to imagine that an intellect of this extraordinary, idiosyncratic cast will again emerge. For now has ended that brief climate of thought in which so rare a species could appear, let alone so advanced a specimen flower.

We will not then be uttering empty eulogy if, in taking farewell, we say, "such was he as 'a man, and, take him all in all, we shall not look upon his like again'."