

The merry-go-round, Aldous Huxley

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

THE machine is ready to start. The symbolic beasts grow resty, curveting where they stand at their places in the great blue circle of the year. The Showman's voice rings out. "Montez, mesdames et messieurs, montez. You, sir, must bestride the Ram. You will take the Scorpion. Yours, madame, is the Goat. As for you there, blackguard boy, you must be content with the Fishes. I have allotted you the Virgin, mademoiselle." . . . "Polisson!" "Pardon, pardon. Evidemment, c'est le Sagittaire qu'on demande. Ohé, les dards! The rest must take what comes. The Twins shall counterpoise one another in the Scales. So, so. Now away we go, away."

Ha, what keen air. Wind of the upper spaces. Snuff it deep, drink in the intoxication of our speed. Hark how the music swells and rings. . . . sphery music, music of every vagabond planet, every rooted star; sound of winds and seas and all the simmering millions of life. Moving, singing . . . so with a roar and a rush round we go and round, for ever whirling on a ceaseless Bank Holiday of drunken life and speed.

But I happened to look inwards among the machinery of our roundabout, and there I saw a slobbering cretin grinding at a wheel and sweating as he ground, and grinding eternally. And when I perceived that he was the author of all our speed and that the music was of his making, that everything depended on his grinding wheel, I thought I would like to get off. But we were going too fast.

The end