

AE in the Irish Theosophist eBook

AE in the Irish Theosophist by George William Russell

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Contents

AE in the Irish Theosophist eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	9
Page 1.....	12
Page 2.....	14
Page 3.....	16
Page 4.....	18
Page 5.....	19
Page 6.....	21
Page 7.....	23
Page 8.....	25
Page 9.....	26
Page 10.....	27
Page 11.....	29
Page 12.....	30
Page 13.....	32
Page 14.....	34
Page 15.....	35
Page 16.....	37
Page 17.....	38
Page 18.....	39
Page 19.....	41
Page 20.....	44
Page 21.....	46



[Page 22.....49](#)

[Page 23.....51](#)

[Page 24.....53](#)

[Page 25.....55](#)

[Page 26.....57](#)

[Page 27.....60](#)

[Page 28.....62](#)

[Page 29.....64](#)

[Page 30.....66](#)

[Page 31.....68](#)

[Page 32.....70](#)

[Page 33.....73](#)

[Page 34.....75](#)

[Page 35.....77](#)

[Page 36.....79](#)

[Page 37.....81](#)

[Page 38.....83](#)

[Page 39.....86](#)

[Page 40.....88](#)

[Page 41.....89](#)

[Page 42.....90](#)

[Page 43.....92](#)

[Page 44.....93](#)

[Page 45.....94](#)

[Page 46.....96](#)

[Page 47.....97](#)



[Page 48..... 98](#)

[Page 49..... 99](#)

[Page 50..... 100](#)

[Page 51..... 101](#)

[Page 52..... 103](#)

[Page 53..... 105](#)

[Page 54..... 106](#)

[Page 55..... 107](#)

[Page 56..... 109](#)

[Page 57..... 111](#)

[Page 58..... 113](#)

[Page 59..... 115](#)

[Page 60..... 116](#)

[Page 61..... 117](#)

[Page 62..... 119](#)

[Page 63..... 120](#)

[Page 64..... 121](#)

[Page 65..... 123](#)

[Page 66..... 124](#)

[Page 67..... 126](#)

[Page 68..... 127](#)

[Page 69..... 128](#)

[Page 70..... 129](#)

[Page 71..... 130](#)

[Page 72..... 131](#)

[Page 73..... 132](#)



[Page 74..... 134](#)

[Page 75..... 135](#)

[Page 76..... 136](#)

[Page 77..... 137](#)

[Page 78..... 138](#)

[Page 79..... 140](#)

[Page 80..... 142](#)

[Page 81..... 143](#)

[Page 82..... 144](#)

[Page 83..... 145](#)

[Page 84..... 146](#)

[Page 85..... 148](#)

[Page 86..... 149](#)

[Page 87..... 150](#)

[Page 88..... 151](#)

[Page 89..... 153](#)

[Page 90..... 155](#)

[Page 91..... 157](#)

[Page 92..... 158](#)

[Page 93..... 159](#)

[Page 94..... 161](#)

[Page 95..... 162](#)

[Page 96..... 164](#)

[Page 97..... 166](#)

[Page 98..... 167](#)

[Page 99..... 169](#)



[Page 100..... 170](#)

[Page 101..... 171](#)

[Page 102..... 172](#)

[Page 103..... 173](#)

[Page 104..... 174](#)

[Page 105..... 175](#)

[Page 106..... 176](#)

[Page 107..... 177](#)

[Page 108..... 179](#)

[Page 109..... 180](#)

[Page 110..... 181](#)

[Page 111..... 183](#)

[Page 112..... 184](#)

[Page 113..... 185](#)

[Page 114..... 187](#)

[Page 115..... 188](#)

[Page 116..... 190](#)

[Page 117..... 192](#)

[Page 118..... 194](#)

[Page 119..... 195](#)

[Page 120..... 197](#)

[Page 121..... 198](#)

[Page 122..... 200](#)

[Page 123..... 202](#)

[Page 124..... 204](#)

[Page 125..... 206](#)



[Page 126.....](#) 208

[Page 127.....](#) 210

[Page 128.....](#) 212

[Page 129.....](#) 213

[Page 130.....](#) 215

[Page 131.....](#) 217

[Page 132.....](#) 219

[Page 133.....](#) 221

[Page 134.....](#) 223

[Page 135.....](#) 224

[Page 136.....](#) 225

[Page 137.....](#) 226

[Page 138.....](#) 227

[Page 139.....](#) 228

[Page 140.....](#) 230

[Page 141.....](#) 231

[Page 142.....](#) 233

[Page 143.....](#) 235

[Page 144.....](#) 236

[Page 145.....](#) 238

[Page 146.....](#) 239

[Page 147.....](#) 240

[Page 148.....](#) 241

[Page 149.....](#) 242

[Page 150.....](#) 243

[Page 151.....](#) 245



[Page 152..... 246](#)

[Page 153..... 247](#)

[Page 154..... 249](#)

[Page 155..... 250](#)

[Page 156..... 251](#)

[Page 157..... 252](#)

[Page 158..... 253](#)

[Page 159..... 254](#)

[Page 160..... 255](#)

[Page 161..... 257](#)

[Page 162..... 258](#)

[Page 163..... 260](#)

[Page 164..... 261](#)

[Page 165..... 262](#)

[Page 166..... 263](#)

[Page 167..... 265](#)

[Page 168..... 267](#)

[Page 169..... 268](#)

[Page 170..... 270](#)

[Page 171..... 272](#)

[Page 172..... 274](#)

[Page 173..... 275](#)

[Page 174..... 277](#)



Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
A Word Upon the Objects of the Theosophical Society		1
The Hour of Twilight		2
The Mask of Apollo		5
The Secret of Power		7
The Priestess of the Woods		10
A Tragedy in the Temple		13
Jagrata, Svapna and Sushupti		15
Concentration		16
Contents:		18
Om		19
Krishna		19
Pain		19
Three Counselors		19
Dusk		20
Dawn		20
Desire		20
Deep Sleep		20
Day		21
To A Poet		21
The Place of Rest		21
Comfort		21
		22
By the Margin of the Great Deep		22
The Secret		23
Dust		23
		23
Immortality		23
—July 15, 1894		23
Brotherhood		25
In the Womb		25
In the Garden of God		25
The Breath of Light		26
The Free		26
Songs of Olden Magic—IV		26
W. Q. J. *		27
		30
		30
The Dream of the Children		31



The Chiefs of the Air	32
The Palaces of the Sidhe	33
The Voice of the Wise	34
A Dawn Song	35
—An Ancient Eden	35
	36
A New Earth	38
Duality	39
The Element Language	39
The Meditation of Parvati	53
A Talk by the Euphrates	55
The Cave of Lilith	57
A Strange Awakening	59
Chapter II.	62
Chapter III.	65
Chapter IV.	68
The Midnight Blossom	73
The Story of a Star	76
The Birth of a Planet	77
How Theosophy Affects One's View of Life	79
Comfort	85
The Ascending Cycle	86
The Mystic Nights' Entertainment	88
The Gardens of Twilight	89
Night The Second	96
The Northern Lights	96
On the Spur of the Moment	98
The Legends of Ancient Eire	100
II.	104
Content	110
	113
I. The Birds of Angus	113
II. Cuchullain's Dream	115
III.	119
The Slumber of Cuchullain, and the Message of Angus	119
IV. The Maidens of the Sidhe	122
V. The Mantle of Mannanan	127
The Shadow	132
The Glory	132
The Shadow	132
The Glory	132
—The End	133
Shadow and Substance	133
On W. Q. Judge's Passing	135



Self-Reliance	136
The Mountains	138
Works and Days	139
The Childhood of Apollo	141
The Awakening of the Fires	143
Our Secret Ties	150
The Age of the Spirit	160
A Thought Along the Road	162
The Fountains of Youth	166
Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)	169
(Three Pages)	171



Page 1

A Word Upon the Objects of the Theosophical Society

1st:—To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

2nd:—To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.

3rd:—To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

Started a little under a quarter of a century ago, in an age grown cold with unbelief and deadened by inexplicable dogmas, the Theosophical Society has found adherents numerous enough to make it widely known, and enthusiastic enough to give it momentum and make it a living force. The proclamation of its triple objects—brotherhood, wisdom and power, acted like a trumpet call, and many came forth to join it, emerging from other conflicts; and out of silence and retirement came many who had grown hopeless but who had still the old feeling at heart.

For the first object no explanation is necessary; but a word or two of comment upon the second and third may help to show how they do not weaken, by turning into other channels, the intellectual energies and will, which might serve to carry out the first. In these old philosophies of the East we find the stimulus to brotherly action which might not be needed in an ideal state, but which is a help to the many, who, born into the world with a coldness of heart as their heritage, still wish to do their duty. Now out duty alters according to our conception of nature, and in the East there has been put forward, by men whom we believe to be the wise and great of the earth, a noble philosophy, a science of life itself, and this, not as a hypothesis, but as truth which is certain, truth which has been verified by eyes which see deeper than ours, and proclaimed by the voices of those who have become the truth they speak of; for as Krishna teaches Arjuna in the Dayanishvari: "on this Path to whatever place one would go that place one's self becomes!" The last word of this wisdom is unity. Underneath all phenomena and surviving all changes, a great principle endures for ever. At the great white dawn of existence, from this principle stream spirit and primordial matter; as they flow away further from their divine source, they become broken up, the one life into countless lives, matter into countless forms, which enshrine these lives; spirit involves itself into matter and matter evolves, acted upon by this informing fire.

These lives wander on through many a cycle's ebb and flow, in separation and sorrow, with sometimes the joy of a momentary meeting. Only by the recognition of that unity, which spiritually is theirs, can they obtain freedom.

It is true in the experience of the race that devotion of any life to universal ends brings to that life a strange subtle richness and strength; by our mood we fasten ourselves into

the Eternal; hence these historic utterances, declarations of permanence and a spiritual state of consciousness, which have been the foundation of all great religious movements. Christ says, "I and my Father are one." "Before Abraham was I am." Paul says, "In him we live and move and have our being."



Page 2

In the sacred books of India it is the claim of many sages that they have recognised “the ancient constant and eternal which perishes not through the body be slain,” and there are not wanting to-day men who speak of a similar expansion of their consciousness, out of the gross and material, into more tender, wise and beautiful states of thought and being. Tennyson, in a famous letter published some time ago, mentioned that he had at different times experienced such a mood; the idea of death was laughable; it was not thought, but a state; “the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest.” It would be easy to do on multiplying instances.

Now in a nature where unity underlies all differences, where soul is bound to soul more than star to star; where if one falters or fails the order of all the rest is changed; the duty of any man who perceives this unity is clear, the call for brotherly action is imperative, selfishness cannot any longer wear the mask of wisdom, for isolation is folly and shuts us out from the eternal verities.

The third object of the society defined as “the study of the psychic powers latent in man” is pursued only by a portion of the members; those who wish to understand more clearly the working of certain laws of nature and who wish to give themselves up more completely to that life in which they live and move and have their being; and the outward expression of the occult life is also brotherhood.

—Nov. 15, 1892

The Hour of Twilight

For the future we intend that at this hour the Mystic shall be at home, less metaphysical and scientific than is his wont, but more really himself. It is customary at this hour, before the lamps are brought in, to give way a little and dream, letting all the tender fancies day suppresses rise up in our minds. Wherever it is spent, whether in the dusky room or walking home through the blue evening, all things grow strangely softened and united; the magic of the old world reappears. The commonplace streets take on something of the grandeur and solemnity of starlit avenues of Egyptian temples the public squares in the mingled glow and gloom grow beautiful as the Indian grove where Sakuntala wandered with her maidens; the children chase each other through the dusky shrubberies, as they flee past they look at us with long remembered glances: lulled by the silence, we forget a little while the hard edges of the material and remember that we are spirits.

Now is the hour for memory, the time to call in and make more securely our own all stray and beautiful ideas that visited us during the day, and which might otherwise be forgotten. We should draw them in from the region of things felt to the region of things understood; in a focus burning with beauty and pure with truth we should bind them, for from the thoughts thus gathered in something accrues to the consciousness; on the

morrow a change impalpable but real has taken place in our being, we see beauty and truth through everything.



Page 3

It is in like manner in Devachan, between the darkness of earth and the light of spiritual self-consciousness, that the Master in each of us draws in and absorbs the rarest and best of experiences, love, self-forgetfulness, aspiration, and out of these distills the subtle essence of wisdom, so that he who struggles in pain for his fellows, when he awakens again on earth is endowed with the tradition of that which we call self-sacrifice, but which is in reality the proclamation of our own universal nature. There are yet vaster correspondences, for so also we are told, when the seven worlds are withdrawn, the great calm Shepherd of the Ages draws his misty hordes together in the glimmering twilights of eternity, and as they are penned within the awful Fold, the rays long separate are bound into one, and life, and joy, and beauty disappear, to emerge again after rest unspeakable on the morning of a New Day.

Now if the aim of the mystic be to fuse into one all moods made separate by time, would not the daily harvesting of wisdom render unnecessary the long Devachanic years? No second harvest could be reaped from fields where the sheaves are already garnered. Thus disregarding the fruits of action, we could work like those who have made the Great Sacrifice, for whom even Nirvana is no resting place. Worlds may awaken in nebulous glory, pass through their phases of self-conscious existence and sink again to sleep, but these tireless workers continue their age-long task of help. Their motive we do not know, but in some secret depth of our being we feel that there could be nothing nobler, and thinking this we have devoted the twilight hour to the understanding of their nature.

—February 15, 1893

There are dreams which may be history or may be allegory. There is in them nothing grotesque, nothing which could mar the feeling of authenticity, the sense of the actual occurrence of the dream incident. The faces and figures perceived have the light shade and expression which seems quite proper to the wonderworld in which the eye of the inner man has vision; and yet the story may be read as a parable of spiritual truth like some myth of ancient scripture. Long ago I had many such dreams, and having lately become a student of such things, I have felt an interest in recalling the more curious and memorable of these early vision.

The nebulous mid-region between waking and unconsciousness was the haunt of many strange figures, reflections perhaps from that true life led during sleep by the immortal man. Among these figures two awoke the strangest feelings of interest. One was an old man with long grey hair and beard, whose grey-blue eyes had an expression of secret and inscrutable wisdom; I felt an instinctive reverence for this figure, so expressive of spiritual nobility, and it became associated in my mind with all aspiration and mystical thought. The other figure was that of a young girl. These two appeared again and again in my visions; the old man always as instructor, the girl always as companion. I have here written down one of these adventures, leaving it to the reader

to judge whether it is purely symbolical, or whether the incidents related actually took place, and were out-realized from latency by the power of the Master within.

Page 4

With the girl as my companion I left an inland valley and walked towards the sea. It was evening when we reached it and the tide was far out. The sands glimmered away for miles on each side of us; we walked outwards through the dim coloured twilight, I was silent; a strange ecstasy slowly took possession of me, as if drop by drop an unutterable life was falling within; the fever grew intense, then unbearable as it communicated itself to the body; with a wild cry I began to spin about, whirling round and round in ever increasing delirium; Some secretness was in the air; I was called forth by the powers of invisible nature and in a swoon I fell. I rose again with sudden memory, but my body was lying upon the sands; with a curious indifference I saw that the tide was on the turn and the child was unable to remove the insensible form beyond its reach; I saw her sit down beside it and place the head upon her lap; she sat there quietly waiting, while all about her little by little the wave of the Indian sea began to ripple inwards, and overhead the early stars began softly to glow.

After this I forgot completely the child and the peril of the waters, I began to be conscious of the presence of a new world. All around me currents were flowing, in whose waves dance innumerable lives; diaphanous forms glided about, a nebulous sparkle was everywhere apparent; faces as of men in dreams glimmered on me, or unconsciously their forms drifted past, and now and then a face looked sternly upon me with a questioning glance. I was not to remain long in this misty region, again I felt the internal impulse and internally I was translated into a sphere of more pervading beauty and light; and here with more majesty and clearness than I had observed before was the old man of my dreams.

I had thought of him as old but there was an indescribable youth pervading the face with its ancient beauty, and then I knew it was neither age nor youth, it was eternalness. The calm light of thought played over features clear cut as a statue's, and an inner luminousness shone through the rose of his face and his silver hair.

There were others about but of them I had no distinct vision.

He said, "You who have lived and wandered through our own peculiar valleys look backwards now and learn the alchemy of thought." He touched me with his hand and I became aware of the power of these strange beings. I felt how they had waited in patience, how they had worked and willed in silence; from them as from a fountain went forth peace; to them as to the stars rose up unconsciously the aspirations of men, the dumb animal cravings, the tendrils of the flowers. I saw how in the valley where I lived, where naught had hindered, their presence had drawn forth in luxuriance all dim and hidden beauty, a rarer and pure atmosphere recalled the radiant life of men in the golden dawn of the earth.



Page 5

With wider vision I saw how far withdrawn from strife they had stilled the tumults of nations; I saw how hearing far within the voices, spiritual, remote, which called, the mighty princes of the earth descended from their thrones becoming greater than princes; under this silent influence the terrible chieftains flung open the doors of their dungeons that they themselves might become free, and all these joined in that hymn which the quietude of earth makes to sound in the ears of the gods.—Overpowered I turned round, the eyes of light were fixed upon me.

“Do you now understand?”

“I do not understand,” I replied. I see that the light and the beauty and the power that enters the darkness of the world comes from these high regions; but I do not know how the light enters, no how beauty is born, I do not know the secret of power.”

“You must become as one of us,” he answered.

I bowed my head until it touched his breast; I felt my life was being drawn from me, but before consciousness utterly departed and was swallowed up in that larger life, I learned something of the secret of their being; I lived within the minds of men, but their thoughts were not my thoughts; I hung like a crown over everything, yet age was no nearer than childhood to the grasp of my sceptre and sorrow was far away when it wept for my going, and very far was joy when it woke at my light; yet I was the lure that led them on; I was at the end of all ways, and I was also in the sweet voice that cried “return;” and I had learned how spiritual life is one in all things, when infinite vistas and greater depths received me, and I went into that darkness out of which no memory can ever return.

—March 15, 1893

The Mask of Apollo

A tradition rises up within me of quiet, unrumoured years, ages before the demigods and heroes toiled at the making of Greece, long ages before the building of the temples and sparkling palaces of her day of glory. The land was pastoral, all over its woods hung a stillness as of dawn and of unawakened beauty deep-breathing in rest. Here and there little villages sent up their smoke and a dreamy people moved about; they grew up, toiled a little at their fields, followed their sheep and goats, they wedded and grey age overtook them, but they never ceased to be children. They worshiped the gods with ancient rites in little wooden temples and knew many things which were forgotten in later years.

Near one of these shrines lived a priest, an old man whose simple and reverend nature made him loved by all around. To him, sitting one summer evening before his hut, came



a stranger whom he invited to share his meal. The stranger sat down and began to tell him many wonderful things, stories of the magic of the sun and of the bright beings who moved at the gates of the day. The old priest grew drowsy in the warm sunlight and fell asleep. Then the stranger who was Apollo arose and in the guise of the old priest entered the little temple, and the people came in unto him one after the other.



Page 6

Agathon, the husbandman. "Father, as I bend over the fields or fasten up the vines, I sometimes remember how you said that the gods can be worshiped by doing these things as by sacrifice. How is it, father, that the pouring of cool water over roots, or training up the branches can nourish Zeus? How can the sacrifice appear before his throne when it is not carried up in the fire and vapour."

Apollo. "Agathon, the father omnipotent does not live only in the aether. He runs invisibly within the sun and stars, and as they whirl round and round, they break out into woods and flowers and streams, and the winds are shaken away from them like leaves from off the roses. Great, strange and bright, he busies himself within, and at the end of time his light shall shine through and men shall see it, moving in a world of flame.

Think then, as you bend over your fields, of what you nourish and what rises up within them. Know that every flower as it droops in the quiet of the woodland feels within and far away the approach of an unutterable life and is glad, they reflect that life even as the little pools take up the light of the stars. Agathon, Agathon, Zeus is no greater in the aether than he is in the leaf of grass, and the hymns of men are no sweeter to him than a little water poured over one of his flowers."

Agathon the husbandman went away and bent tenderly over his fruits and vines, and he loved each one of them more than before, and he grew wise in many things as he watched them and he was happy working for the gods.

Then spake Damon the shepherd, "Father, while the flocks are browsing dreams rise up within me; they make the heart sick with longing; the forests vanish, I hear no more the lamb's bleat or the rustling of the fleeces; voices from a thousand depths call me, they whisper, they beseech me, shadows lovelier than earth's children utter music, not for me though I faint while I listen. Father, why do I hear the things others hear not, voices calling to unknown hunters of wide fields, or to herdsmen, shepherds of the starry flocks"?

Apollo answered, "Damon, a song stole from the silence while the gods were not yet, and a thousand ages passed ere they came, called forth by the music, and a thousand ages they listened then joined in the song; then began the worlds to glimmer shadowy about them and bright beings to bow before them. These, their children, began in their turn to sing the song that calls forth and awakens life. He is master of all things who has learned their music. Damon, heed not the shadows, but the voices, the voices have a message to thee from beyond the gods. Learn their song and sing it over again to the people until their hearts too are sick with longing and they can hear the song within themselves. Oh, my son, I see far off how the nations shall join in it as in a chorus, and hearing it the rushing planets shall cease from their speed and be steadfast; men shall hold starry sway." The face of the god shone through the face of the old man, and filled with awe, it was so full of secretness. Damon the herdsman passed from his presence

and a strange fire was kindled in his heart. Then the two lovers, Dion and Neaera, came in and stood before Apollo.



Page 7

Dion spake, "Father, you who are so wise can tell us what love is, so that we shall never miss it. Old Tithonius nods his grey head at us as we pass; he says, 'only with the changeless gods has love endurance, for men the loving time is short and its sweetness is soon over.'"

Neaera added. "But it is not true, father, for his drowsy eyes light when he remembers the old days, when he was happy and proud in love as we are."

Apollo. "My children, I will tell you the legend how love came into the world and how it may endure. It was on high Olympus the gods held council at the making of man; each had brought a gift, they gave to man something of their own nature. Aphrodite, the loveliest and sweetest, paused and was about to add a new grace to his person, but Eros cried, "let them not be so lovely without, let them be lovelier within. Put you own soul in, O mother." The mighty mother smiled, and so it was; and now whenever love is like hers, which asks not return but shines on all because it must, within that love Aphrodite dwells and it becomes immortal by her presence."

Then Dion and Neaera went out, and as they walked homewards through the forest, purple and vaporous in the evening light, they drew closer together; and Dion looking into her eyes saw there a new gleam, violet, magical, shining, there was the presence of Aphrodite, there was her shrine.

Then came in unto Apollo the two grandchildren of old Thithonius and they cried, "See the flowers we have brought you, we gathered them for you down in the valley where they grow best." Then Apollo said, "What wisdom shall we give to children that they may remember? Our most beautiful for them!" As he stood and looked at them the mask of age and secretness vanished, he stood before them radiant in light; they laughed in joy at his beauty; he bent down and kissed them each upon the forehead then faded away into the light which was his home. As the sun sank down amid the blue hills the old priest awoke with a sigh and cried out, "Oh that we could talk wisely as we do in our dreams."

—April 15, 1893

The Secret of Power

It is not merely because it is extraordinary that I wish to tell you this story. I think mere weirdness, grotesque or unusual character, are not sufficient reasons for making public incidents in which there is an element of the superhuman. The world, in spite of its desire to understand the nature of the occult is sick of and refuses to listen to stories of apparitions which betray no spiritual character or reveal no spiritual law. The incident here related is burned into my mind and life, not because of its dramatic intensity or

personal character, but because it was a revelation of the secret of power, a secret which the wise in good and the wise in evil alike have knowledge of.



Page 8

My friend Felix was strangely disturbed; not only were his material affairs unsettled, but he was also passing through a crisis in his spiritual life. Two paths were open before him; On one side lay the dazzling mystery of passion; on the other "the small old path" held out its secret and spiritual allurements. I had hope that he would choose the latter, and as I was keenly interested in his decision. I invested the struggle going on in his mind with something of universal significance, seeing in it a symbol of the strife between "light and darkness which are the world's eternal ways." He came in late one evening. I saw at once by the dim light that there was something strange in his manner. I spoke to him in enquiry; he answered me in a harsh dry voice quite foreign to his usual manner. "Oh, I am not going to trouble myself any more, I will let things take their course." This seemed the one idea in his mind, the one thing he understood clearly was that things were to take their own course; he failed to grasp the significance of any other idea or its relative importance. He answered "Aye, indeed," with every appearance of interest and eagerness to some trivial remark about the weather, and was quite unconcerned about another and most important matter which should have interested him deeply. I soon saw what had happened; his mind, in which forces so evenly balanced had fought so strenuously, had become utterly wearied out and could work no longer. A flash of old intuition illumined it at last,— it was not wise to strive with such bitterness over life,— therefore he said to me in memory of this intuition, "I am going to let things take their course." A larger tribunal would decide; he had appealed unto Caesar. I sent him up to his room and tried to quiet his fever by magnetization with some success. He fell asleep, and as I was rather weary myself I retired soon after.

This was the vision of the night. It was surely in the room I was lying and on my bed, and yet space opened on every side with pale, clear light. A slight wavering figure caught my eye, a figure that swayed to and fro; I was struck with its utter feebleness, yet I understood it was its own will or some quality of its nature which determined that palpitating movement towards the poles between which it swung. What were they? I became silent as night and thought no more.

Two figures awful in their power opposed each other; the frail being wavering between them could by putting out its arms have touched them both. It alone wavered, for they were silent, resolute and knit in the conflict of will; they stirred not a hand nor a foot; there was only a still quivering now and then as of intense effort, but they made no other movement. Their heads were bent forward slightly, their arms folded, their bodies straight, rigid, and inclined slightly backwards from each other like two spokes of a gigantic wheel. What were they, these figures?



Page 9

I knew not, and yet gazing upon them, thought which took no words to clothe itself mutely read their meaning. Here were the culminations of the human, towering images of the good and evil man may aspire to. I looked at the face of the evil adept. His bright red-brown eyes burned with a strange radiance of power; I felt an answering emotion of pride, of personal intoxication, of psychic richness rise up within me gazing upon him. His face was archetypal; the abstract passion which eluded me in the features of many people I knew, was here declared, exultant, defiant, gigantesque; it seem to leap like fire, to be free. In this face I was close to the legendary past, to the hopeless worlds where men were martyred by stony kings, where prayer was hopeless, where pity was none. I traced a resemblance to many of the great Destroyers in history whose features have been preserved, Napoleon, Ramses and a hundred others, named and nameless, the long line of those who were crowned and sceptered in cruelty. His strength was in human weakness, I saw this, for space and the hearts of men were bare before me. Out of space there flowed to him a stream half invisible of red; it nourished that rich radiant energy of passion; it flowed from men as they walked and brooded in loneliness, or as they tossed in sleep. I withdrew my gaze from this face which awoke in me a lurid sense accompaniment, and turned it on the other. An aura of pale soft blue was around this figure through which gleamed an underlight as of universal gold. The vision was already dim and departing, but I caught a glimpse of a face godlike in its calm, terrible in the beauty of a life we know only in dreams, with strength which is the end of the hero's toil, which belongs to the many times martyred soul; yet not far away not in the past was its power, it was the might of life which exists eternally. I understood how easy it would have been for this one to have ended the conflict, to have gained a material victory by its power, but this would not have touched on or furthered its spiritual ends. Only its real being had force to attract that real being which was shrouded in the wavering figure. This truth the adept of darkness knew also and therefore he intensified within the sense of pride and passionate personality. Therefore they stirred not a hand nor a foot while under the stimulus of their presence culminated the good and evil in the life which had appealed to a higher tribunal to decide. Then this figure wavering between the two moved forward and touched with its hand the Son of Light. All at once the scene and actors vanished, and the eye that saw them was closed, I was alone with darkness and a hurricane of thoughts.

Strange and powerful figures! I knew your secret of strength, it is only to be, nature quickened by your presence leaps up in response. I knew no less the freedom of that human soul, for your power only revealed its unmanifest nature, it but precipitated experience. I knew that although the gods and cosmic powers may war over us for ever, it is we alone declare them victors or vanquished.



Page 10

For the rest the vision of that night was prophetic, and the feet of my friend are now set on that way which was the innermost impulse of his soul.

—May 15, 1893

The Priestess of the Woods

Here is a legend whispered to me, the land or time I cannot tell, it may have been in the old Atlantean days. There were vast woods and a young priestess ruled them; she presided at the festivals and sacrificed at the altar for the people, interceding with the spirits of fire, water air and earth, that the harvest might not be burned up, nor drenched with the floods, nor torn by storms and that the blight might not fall upon it, which things the elemental spirits sometimes brought about. This woodland sovereignty was her heritage from her father who was a mighty magician before her. Around her young days floated the faery presences; she knew them as other children know the flowers having neither fear nor wonder for them. She saw deeper things also; as a little child, wrapped up in her bearskin, she watched with awe her father engaged in mystic rites; when around him the airy legions gathered from the populous elements, the spirits he ruled and the spirits he bowed down before: fleeting nebulous things white as foam coming forth from the great deep who fled away at the waving of his hand; and rarer the great sons of fire, bright and transparent as glass, who though near seemed yet far away and were still and swift as the figures that glance in a crystal. So the child grew up full of mystery; her thoughts were not the thoughts of the people about her, nor their affections her affections. It seemed as if the elf-things or beings carved by the thought of the magician, pushed aside by his strong will and falling away from him, entering into the child became part of her, linking her to the elemental beings who live in the star-soul that glows within the earth. Her father told her such things as she asked, but he died while she was yet young and she knew not his aim, what man is, or what is his destiny; but she knew the ways of every order of spirit that goes about clad in a form, how some were to be dreaded and some to be loved; By reason of this knowledge she succeeded as priestess to the shrine, and held the sway of beauty and youth, of wisdom and mystery over the people dwelling in the woods.

It was the evening of the autumn festival, the open grassy space before the altar was crowded with figures, hunters with their feathered heads; shepherds, those who toil in the fields, the old and hoary were gathered around.

The young priestess stood up before them; she was pale from vigil, and the sunlight coming through the misty evening air fell upon her swaying arms and her dress with its curious embroidery of peacock's feathers; the dark hollows of her eyes were alight and as she spoke inspiration came to her; her voice rose and fell, commanding, warning, whispering, beseeching; its strange rich music flooded the woods and pierced through and through with awe the hearts of those who listened. She spoke of the mysteries of

that unseen nature; how man is watched and ringed round with hosts who war upon him, who wither up his joys by their breath; she spoke of the gnomes who rise up in the woodland paths with damp arms grasping from their earthy bed.



Page 11

“Dreadful” she said “are the elementals who live in the hidden waters: they rule the dreaming heart: their curse is forgetfulness; they lull man to fatal rest, with drowsy fingers feeling to put out his fire of life. But the most of all, dread the powers that move in air; their nature is desire unquenchable; their destiny is—never to be fulfilled—never to be at peace: they roam hither and thither like the winds they guide; they usurp dominion over the passionate and tender soul, but they love not in our way; where they dwell the heart is a madness and the feet are filled with a hurrying fever, and night has no sleep and day holds no joy in its sunlit cup. Listen not to their whisper; they wither and burn up the body with their fire; the beauty they offer is smitten through and through with unappeasable anguish.” She paused for a moment; here terrible breath had hardly ceased to thrill them, when another voice was heard singing; its note was gay and triumphant, it broke the spell of fear upon the people,

“I never heed by waste or wood
The cry of fay or faery thing
Who tell of their own solitude;
Above them all my soul is king.

The royal robe as king I wear
Trails all along the fields of light;
Its silent blue and silver bear
For gems the starry dust of night.

The breath of joy unceasingly
Waves to and fro its fold star-lit,
And far beyond earth’s misery
I live and breathe the joy of it.”

The priestess advanced from the altar, her eyes sought for the singer; when she came to the centre of the opening she paused and waited silently. Almost immediately a young man carrying a small lyre stepped out of the crowd and stood before her; he did not seem older than the priestess; he stood unconcerned though her dark eyes blazed at the intrusion; he met her gaze fearlessly; his eyes looked into hers—in this way all proud spirits do battle. Her eyes were black with almost a purple tinge, eyes that had looked into the dark ways of nature; his were bronze, and a golden tinge, a mystic opulence of vitality seemed to dance in their depths; they dazzled the young priestess with the secrecy of joy; her eyes fell for a moment. He turned round and cried out, “Your priestess speaks but half truths, her eyes have seen but her heart does not know. Life is not terrible but is full of joy. Listen to me. I passed by while she spake, and I saw that a fear lay upon every man, and you shivered thinking of your homeward path, fearful as rabbits of the unseen things, and forgetful how you have laughed at death facing the monsters who crush down the forests. Do you not know that you are greater than all these spirits before who you bow in dread; your life springs from a deeper source. Answer me, priestess, where go the fire-spirits when winter seizes the world?”



Page 12

“Into the Fire-King they go, they dream in his heart.” She half chanted, the passion of her speech not yet fallen away from her. “And where go the fires of men when they despair”? She was silent; then he continued half in scorn, “Your priestess is the priestess of ghouls and fays rather than a priestess of men; her wisdom is not for you; the spirits that haunt the elements are hostile because they see you full of fear; do not dread them and their hatred will vanish. The great heart of the earth is full of laughter; do not put yourselves apart from its joy, for its soul is your soul and its joy is your true being.”

He turned and passed through the crowd; the priestess made a motion as if she would have stayed him, then she drew herself up proudly and refrained. They heard his voice again singing as he passed into the darkening woods,

“The spirits to the fire-king throng
Each in the winter of his day:
And all who listen to their song
Follow them after in that way.

They seek the heart-hold of the king,
They build within his halls of fire,
Their dreams flash like the peacock’s wing,
They glow with sun-hues of desire.

I follow in no faery ways;
I heed no voice of fay or elf;
I in the winter of my days
Rest in the high ancestral self.”

The rites interrupted by the stranger did not continue much longer; the priestess concluded her words of warning; she did not try to remove the impression created by the poet’s song, she only said, “His wisdom may be truer. It is more beautiful than the knowledge we inherit.”

The days passed on; autumn died into winter, spring came again and summer, and the seasons which brought change to the earth brought change to the young priestess. She sought no longer to hold sway over the elemental tribes, and her empire over them departed: the song of the poet rang for ever in her ears; its proud assertion of kingship and joy in the radiance of a deeper life haunted her like truth; but such a life seemed unattainable by her and a deep sadness rested in her heart. The wood-people often saw her sitting in the evening where the sunlight fell along the pool, waving slowly its azure and amethyst, sparkling and flashing in crystal and gold, melting as if a phantom Bird of Paradise were fading away; her dark head was bowed in melancholy and all the great beauty flamed and died away unheeded. After a time she rose up and moved about, she spoke more frequently to the people who had not dared to question her, she



grew into a more human softness, they feared her less and loved her more; but she ceased not from her passionate vigils and her step faltered and her cheek paled, and her eager spirit took flight when the diamond glow of winter broke out over the world. The poet came again in the summer; they told him of the change they could not understand, but he fathomed the depths of this wild nature, and half in gladness, half in sorrow, he carved an epitaph over her tomb near the altar,



Page 13

Where is the priestess of this shrine,
And by what place does she adore?
The woodland haunt below the pine
Now hears her whisper nevermore.

Ah, wrapped in her own beauty now
She dreams a dream that shall not cease;
Priestess, to her own soul to bow
Is hers in everlasting peace.

—July 15, 1893

A Tragedy in the Temple

I have often thought with sadness over the fate of that comrade. That so ardent and heroic a spirit, so much chivalry and generosity should meet such a horrible fate, has often made me wonder if there is any purpose in this tangled being of ours; I have hated life and the gods as I thought of it. What brought him out of those great deserts where his youth was spent, where his soul grew vast knowing only of two changes, the blaze of day and night the purifier, blue, mysterious, ecstatic with starry being? Were not these enough for him? Could the fire of the altar inspire more? Could he be initiated deeper in the chambers of the temple than in those great and lonely places where God and man are alone together? This was my doing; resting in his tent when I crossed the desert, I had spoken to him of that old wisdom which the priests of the inner temple keep and hand down from one to the other; I blew to flame the mystic fire which already smouldered within him, and filled with the vast ambition of God, he left his tribe and entered the priesthood as neophyte in the Temple of Istar, below Ninevah.

I had sometimes to journey thither bearing messages from our high priest, and so as time passed my friendship with Asur grew deep. That last evening when I sat with him on the terrace that roofed the temple, he was more silent than I had known him before to be; we had generally so many things to speak of; for he told me all his dreams, such vague titanic impulses as the soul has in the fresh first years of its awakening, when no experience hinders with memory its flights of aspiration, and no anguish has made it wise. But that evening there was, I thought, something missing; a curious feverishness seemed to have replaced the cool and hardy purity of manner which was natural to him; his eyes had a strange glow, fitful and eager; I saw by the starlight how restless his fingers were, they intertwined, twisted, and writhed in and out.

We sat long in the rich night together; then he drew nearer to me and leaned his head near my shoulder; he began to whisper incoherently a wild and passionate tale; the man's soul was being tempted.



“Brother” he said, “I am haunted by a vision, by a child of the stars as lovely as Istar’s self; she visits my dreaming hours, she dazzles me with strange graces, she bewilders with unspeakable longing. Sometime, I know, I must go to her, though I perish. When I see her I forget all else and I have will to resist no longer. The vast and lonely inspiration of the desert departs from my thought, she and the jewel-light she lives in blot it out. The thought of her thrills me like fire. Brother give me help, ere I go mad or die; she draws me away from earth and I shall end my days amid strange things, a starry destiny amid starry races.”



Page 14

I was not then wise in these things, I did not know the terrible dangers that lurk in the hidden ways in which the soul travels. "This" I said "is some delusion. You have brooded over a fancy until it has become living; you have filled your creation with your own passion and it lingers and tempts you; even if it were real, it is folly to think of it, we must close our hearts to passion if we would attain the power and wisdom of Gods."

He shook his head, I could not realize or understand him. Perhaps if I had known all and could have warned him, it would have been in vain; perhaps the soul must work out its own purification in experience and learn truth and wisdom through being. Once more he became silent and restless. I had to bid him farewell as I was to depart on the morrow, but he was present in my thoughts and I could not sleep because of him; I felt oppressed with the weight of some doom about to fall. To escape from this feeling I rose in adoration to Hea; I tried to enter into the light of that Wisdom; a sudden heart-throb of warning drew me back; I thought of Asur instinctively, and thinking of him his image flashed on me. He moved as if in trance through the glassy waves of those cosmic waters which everywhere lave and permeate the worlds, and in which our earth is but a subaqueous mound. His head was bowed, his form dilated to heroic stature, as if he conceived of himself as some great thing or as moving to some high destiny; and this shadow which was the house of his dreaming soul grew brilliant with the passionate hues of his thought; some power beyond him drew him forth. I felt the fever and heat of this inner sphere like a delirious breath blow fiercely about me; there was a phosphorescence of hot and lurid colours. The form of Asur moved towards a light streaming from a grotto, I could see within it burning gigantic flowers. On one, as on a throne, a figure of weird and wonderful beauty was seated. I was thrilled with a dreadful horror, I thought of the race of Liliths, and some long forgotten and tragic legends rose up in my memory of these beings whose soul is but a single and terrible passion; whose love too fierce for feebler lives to endure, brings death or madness to men. I tried to warn, to awaken him from the spell; my will-call aroused him; he turned, recognized me and hesitated; then this figure that lured him rose to her full height; I saw her in all her plume of a peacock, it was spotted with gold and green and citron dyes, she raised her arms upwards, her robe, semi-transparent, purple and starred over with a jewel lustre, fell in vaporous folds to her feet like the drift over a waterfall. She turned her head with a sudden bird-like movement, her strange eyes looked into mine with a prolonged and snaky glance; I saw her move her arms hither and thither, and the waves of this inner ocean began to darken and gather about me, to ripple through me with feverish motion. I fell into a swoon and remembered nothing more.



Page 15

I was awakened before dawn, those with whom I was to cross the desert were about to start and I could remain no longer. I wrote hurriedly to Asur a message full of warning and entreaty and set out on my return journey full of evil forebodings. Some months after I had again to visit the temple; it was evening when I arrived; after I had delivered the message with which I was charged, I asked for Asur. The priest to whom I spoke did not answer me. He led me in silence up to the terrace that overlooked the desolate eastern desert. The moon was looming white upon the verge, the world was trembling with heat, the winged bulls along the walls shone with a dull glow through the sultry air. The priest pointed to the far end of the terrace. A figure was seated looking out over the desert, his robes were motionless as if their wrinkles were carved of stone, his hands lay on his knees, I walked up to him; I called his name; he did not stir. I came nearer and put my face close to his, it was as white as the moon, his eyes only reflected the light. I turned away from him sick to the very heart.

—September 15, 1893

Jagrata, Svapna and Sushupti

While the philosophical concepts of ancient India, concerning religion and cosmogony, are to some extent familiar and appreciated in these countries, its psychology, intimately related with its religion and metaphysics, is comparatively unknown. In Europe the greatest intellects have been occupied by speculations upon the laws and aspects of physical nature, while the more spiritual Hindus were absorbed in investigations as to the nature of life itself; by continual aspiration, devotion, introspection and self-analysis, they had acquired vast knowledge of the states of consciousness possible for man to enter upon; they had laid bare the anatomy of the mind, and described the many states that lay between the normal waking condition of man, and the final state of spiritual freedom and unity with *brahma*, which it was the aim alike of religion and science to bring about. Most interesting among their ideas, was their analysis of the states of consciousness upon which we enter during sleep. Roughly speaking, they may be divided into two, which together with the waking state, make a trinity of states through which every person passes, whether he be aware of it or not. These states are known as:—Jagrata, waking; Svapna, dreaming; and Sushupti, deep sleep. The English equivalents of these words give no idea of the states. Passing out of Jagrata, the Indians held that, beyond the chaotic borderland, we entered, in Svapna and Sushupti, upon real states of being. Sushupti, the highest, was accounted a spiritual state; here the soul touches vaster centres in the great life and has communion with celestial intelligences. The unification of these states into one is one of the results of Raj-Yoga; in this state the chela keeps memory of what occurred while his consciousness was in the planes of Svapna and Sushupti. Entrance upon these states should not I think be understood as meaning that the mind has deserted its fleshly tabernacle in search of such experience. Departure from the physical form is no more necessary for this than

for clairvoyance, but a transfer of the consciousness in us from one plane to another is necessary.



Page 16

Now as we generate Karma in the dreaming and deep sleep states which may either help or hinder the soul in its evolution, it is a matter of importance that we should take steps to promote the unification of these states, so that the knowledge and wisdom of any one state may be used to perfect the others. Our thoughts and actions in the waking state react upon the dreaming and deep sleep, and our experiences in the latter influence us in the waking state by suggestion and other means. The reason we do not remember what occurs in Svapna and Sushupti is because the astral matter which normally surrounds the thinking principle is not subtle enough to register in its fullness the experience of any one upon the more spiritual planes of consciousness. To increase the responsiveness upon the more spiritual planes of consciousness. To increase the responsiveness of this subtle matter we have to practise concentration, and so heighten the vibrations, or in other words to evolve or perfect the astral principle. Modern science is rapidly coming to the conclusion that the differences perceived in objects around us, are not differences in substance, but differences of vibration in one substance. Take a copper wire; pass electrical currents through it, gradually increasing their intensity, and phenomena of sound, heat and light will be manifest, the prismatic colours appearing one after the other. Similarly by an increased intensity in the performance of every action, the consciousness is gradually transferred from the lower to the higher planes. In order to give a point, or to direct the evolving faculties into their proper channel, continual aspiration is necessary. Take some idea—the spiritual unity of all things, for example—something which can only be realized by our complete absorption in spiritual nature; let every action be performed in the light of this idea, let it be the subject of reverent thought. If this is persisted in, we will gradually begin to become conscious upon the higher planes, the force of concentration carrying the mind beyond the waking into Svapna and Sushupti. The period between retiring to rest and awakening, formerly a blank, will begin to be spotted with bright lights of consciousness, or, as we walk about during the day such knowledge will visit us. “He who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself” say Krishna. Patanjali recommends dwelling on the knowledge that presents itself in dreams; if we think over any such experience, many things connected with it will be revealed, and so gradually the whole shadowy region will become familiar and attractive, and we will gain a knowledge of our own nature which will be invaluable and which cannot otherwise be acquired.

—January 15, 1893

Concentration



Page 17

Beyond waking, dreaming and deep sleep is Turya. Here there is a complete change of condition; the knowledge formerly sought in the external world is now present within the consciousness; the ideations of universal mind are manifest in spiritual intuitions. The entrance to this state is through Jagrata, Svapna, and Sushupti, and here that spiritual unity is realized, the longing for which draws the soul upwards through the shadowy worlds of dreaming and deep sleep. I have thought it necessary to supplement the brief statement made in the previous number by some further remarks upon concentration, for the term applied without reference to the Turya state is liable to be misunderstood and a false impression might arise that the spiritual is something to be sought for outside ourselves. The waking, dreaming and deep sleep states correspond to objective worlds, while Turya is subjective, including in itself all ideals. If this is so, we can never seek for the true beyond ourselves; the things we suppose we shall come sometime realize in spiritual consciousness must be present in it now, for to spirit all things are eternally present. Advance to this state is measured by the realization of moods: we are on the path when there surges up in the innermost recesses of our being the cry of the long imprisoned souls of men; we are then on our way to unity.

The Bhagavad-Gita which is a treatise on Raj Yoga, gives prominence to three aspects of concentration. Liberation is attained by means of action, by devotion, by spiritual discernment; these aspects correspond respectively to three qualities in man and nature, known as Tamas, Rajas and Satva. The Tamas is the gross, material or dark quality; Rajas is active and passionate; the attributes of Satva are light, peace, happiness, wisdom. No one while in the body can escape from the action of the three qualities, for they are brought about by nature which is compounded of them. We have to recognize this, and to continue action, aspiration and thought, impersonally or with some universal motive, in the manner nature accomplishes these things. Not one of these methods can be laid aside or ignored, for the Spirit moveth within all, these are its works, and we have to learn to identify ourselves with the moving forces of nature.

Having always this idea of brotherhood or unity in mind, by action— which we may interpret as service in some humanitarian movement— we purify the Tamas.

By a pure motive, which is the Philosopher's Stone, a potent force in the alchemy of nature, we change the gross into the subtle, we initiate that evolution which shall finally make the vesture of the soul of the rare, long-sought-for, primordial substance. Devotion is the highest possibility for the Rajas; that quality which is ever attracted and seduced by the beautiful mayas of fame, wealth and power, should be directed to that which it really seeks for, the eternal universal life; the channels through which



Page 18

it must flow outwards are the souls of other men, it reaches the One Life through the many. Spiritual discernment should be the aim of the Satva, “there is not anything, whether animate or inanimate which is without me,” says Krishna, and we should seek for the traces of *that* in all things, looking upon it as the cause of the alchemical changes in the Tamas, as that which widens the outflowing love of the Rajas. By a continued persistence of this subtle analytic faculty, we begin gradually to perceive that those things which we formerly thought were causes, are in reality not causes at all; that there is but one cause for everything, “The Atma by which this universe is pervaded. By reason of its proximity alone the body, the organs, Manas and Buddhi apply themselves to their proper objects as if applied (by some one else).” (The Crest Jewel of Wisdom). By uniting these three moods, action, devotion and spiritual discernment, into one mood, and keeping it continuously alight, we are accompanying the movements of spirit to some extent. This harmonious action of all the qualities of our nature, for universal purposes without personal motive, is in synchronous vibration with that higher state spoken of at the beginning of the paper; therefore we are at one with it. “When the wise man perceiveth that the only agents of action are these qualities, and comprehends that which is superior to the qualities of goodness, action and indifference—which are co-existent with the body, it is released from rebirth and death, old age and pain, and drinketh of the water of immortality.”

—February 15, 1893

Verse by AE in the “Irish Theosophist”

Contents:

1—“While the yellow constellations....” (untitled) 2—Om 3—Krishna 4—Pain 5—Three Councilors 6—Dusk 7—Dawn 8—Desire 9—Deep Sleep 10—Day 11—To A Poet 12—The Place of Rest 13—Comfort 14—H.P.B. (In Memoriam.) 15—By the Margin of the Great Deep 16—The Secret 17—Dust 18—Magic 19—Immortality 20—The Man to the Angel 21—The Robing of the King 22—Brotherhood 23—In the Womb 24—In the Garden of God 25—The Breath of Light 26—The Free 27—The Magi 28—W.Q.J. (?) 29—From the Book of the Eagle 30—The Protest of Love 31—The King Initiate 32—The Dream of the Children 33—The Chiefs of the Air 34—The Palaces of the Sidhe 35—The Voice of the Wise 36—A Dawn Song 37—The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty 38—A New Earth 39—Duality

While the yellow constellations shine with pale and tender glory,
 In the lilac-scented stillness, let us listen to Earth’s story.
 All the flow’rs like moths a-flutter glimmer rich with dusky hues,
 Everywhere around us seem to fall from nowhere the sweet dews.



Through the drowsy lull, the murmur, stir of leaf and sleep hum
We can feel a gay heart beating, hear a magic singing come.
Ah, I think that as we linger lighting at Earth's olden fire



Page 19

Fitful gleams in clay that perish, little sparks that soon expire,
So the mother brims her gladness from a life beyond her own,
From whose darkness as a fountain up the fiery days are thrown
Starry worlds which wheel in splendour, sunny systems, histories,
Vast and nebulous traditions told in the eternities:
And our list'ning mother whispers through her children all the story:
Come, the yellow constellations shine with pale and tender glory!

—October 15, 1892

Om

Faint grew the yellow buds of light
Far flickering beyond the snows,
As leaning o'er the shadowy white
Morn glimmered like a pale primrose.

Within an Indian vale below
A child said "Om" with tender heart,
Watching with loving eyes the glow
In dayshine fade and night depart.

The word which Brahma at his dawn
Outbreathes and endeth at his night;
Whose tide of sound so rolling on
Gives birth to orbs of golden light;

And beauty, wisdom, love, and youth,
By its enchantment, gathered grow
In age-long wandering to the truth,
Through many a cycle's ebb and flow.

And here all lower life was stilled,
The child was lifted to the Wise:
A strange delight his spirit filled,
And Brahm looked from his shining eyes.

—December 15, 1892



Krishna

The East was crowned with snow-cold bloom
And hung with veils of pearly fleece;
They died away into the gloom,
Vistas of peace, and deeper peace.

And earth and air and wave and fire
In awe and breathless silence stood,
For One who passed into their choir
Linked them in mystic brotherhood.

Twilight of amethyst, amid
The few strange stars that lit the heights,
Where was the secret spirit hid,
Where was Thy place, O Light of Lights?

The flame of Beauty far in space—
When rose the fire, in Thee? in Me?
Which bowed the elemental race
To adoration silently.

—February 15, 1893

Pain

Men have made them gods of love,
Sun gods, givers of the rain,
Deities of hill and grove,
I have made a god of Pain.

Of my god I know this much,
And in singing I repeat,
Though there's anguish in his touch
Yet his soul within is sweet.

—March 15, 1893

Three Counselors

It was the fairy of the place
Moving within a little light,
Who touched with dim and shadowy grace
The conflict at its fever height.



It seemed to whisper "quietness,"
 Then quietly itself was gone;
Yet echoes of its mute caress
 Still rippled as the years flowed on.



Page 20

It was the Warrior within
Who called "Awake! prepare for fight,
"Yet lose not memory in the din;
"Make of thy gentleness thy might.

"Make of thy silence words to shake
"The long-enthroned kings of earth;
"Make of thy will the force to break
"Their towers of wantonness and mirth."

It was the wise all-seeing soul
Who counseled neither war nor peace
"Only be thou thyself that goal
"In which the wars of time shall cease."

—April 15, 1893

Dusk

Dusk wraps the village in its dim caress;
Each chimney's vapour, like a thin grey rod,
Mounting aloft through miles of quietness,
Pillars the skies of God.

Far up they break or seem to break their line,
Mingling their nebulous crests that bow and nod
Under the light of those fierce stars that shine
Out of the house of God.

Only in clouds and dreams I felt those souls
In the abyss, each fire hid in its clod,
From which in clouds and dreams the spirit rolls
Into the vast of God.

—May 15, 1893

Dawn

Still as the holy of holies breathes the vast,
Within its crystal depths the stars grow dim,
Fire on the altar of the hills at last
Burns on the shadowy rim.



Moment that holds all moments, white upon
The verge it trembles; then like mists of flowers
Break from the fairy fountain of the dawn
 The hues of many hours.

Thrown downward from that high companionship
Of dreaming inmost heart with inmost heart,
Into the common daily ways I slip
 My fire from theirs apart.

—June 15, 1893

Desire

With Thee a moment! then what dreams have play!
Traditions of eternal toil arise,
Search for the high, austere and lonely way,
Where Brahma treads through the eternities.
Ah, in the soul what memories arise!

And with what yearning inexpressible,
Rising from long forgetfulness I turn
To Thee, invisible, unrumoured, still:
White for Thy whiteness all desires burn!
Ah, with what longing once again I turn!

—August 15, 1893

Deep Sleep

Heart-hidden from the outer things I rose,
The spirit woke anew in nightly birth
Into the vastness where forever glows
 The star-soul of the earth.

There all alone in primal ecstasy,
Within her depths where revels never tire,
The olden Beauty shines; each thought of me
 Is veined through with its fire.

And all my thoughts are throngs of living souls;
They breath in me, heart unto heart allied
With joy undimmed, though when the morning tolls
 The planets may divide.



Page 21

—September 15, 1893

Day

In day from some titanic past it seems
As if a thread divine of memory runs;
Born ere the Mighty One began his dreams,
Or yet were stars and suns.

But here an iron will has fixed the bars;
Forgetfulness falls on earth's myriad races,
No image of the proud and morning stars
Looks at us from their faces.

Yet yearning still to reach to those dim heights,
Each dream remembered is a burning-glass,
Where through to darkness from the light of lights
Its rays in splendour pass.

—September 15, 1893

To A Poet

Oh, be not led away.
Lured by the colour of the sun-rich day.
The gay romances of song
Unto the spirit-life doth not belong.
Though far-between the hours
In which the Master of Angelic Powers
Lightens the dusk within
The Holy of Holies; be it thine to win
Rare vistas of white light,
Half-parted lips, through which the Infinite
Murmurs her ancient story;
Harkening to whom the wandering planets hoary
Waken primeval fires,
With deeper rapture in celestial choirs
Breathe, and with fleeter motion
Wheel in their orbits through the surgeless ocean.
So, hearken thou like these,
Intent on her, mounting by slow degrees,



Until thy song's elation
Echoes her multitudinous meditation.

—November 15, 1893

The Place of Rest

—The soul is its own witness and its own refuge.

Unto the deep the deep heart goes.
It lays its sadness nigh the breast:
Only the mighty mother knows
The wounds that quiver unconfessed.

It seeks a deeper silence still;
It folds itself around with peace,
Where thoughts alike of good or ill
In quietness unfostered, cease.

It feels in the unwounding vast
For comfort for its hopes and fears:
The mighty mother bows at last;
She listens to her children's tears.

Where the last anguish deepens—there—
The fire of beauty smites through pain,
A glory moves amid despair,
The Mother takes her child again.

—December 15, 1893

Comfort

Dark head by the fireside brooding,
Sad upon your ears
Whirlwinds of the earth intruding
Sound in wrath and tears:

Tender-hearted, in your lonely
Sorrow I would fain
Comfort you, and say that only
Gods could feel such pain.

Only spirits know such longing
For the far away;

And the fiery fancies thronging
Rise not out of clay.



Page 22

Keep the secret sense celestial
Of the starry birth;
Though about you call the bestial
Voices of the earth.

If a thousand ages since
Hurled us from the throne:
Then a thousand ages wins
Back again our own.

Sad one, dry away your tears:
Sceptred you shall rise,
Equal mid the crystal spheres
With seraphs kingly wise.

—February, 1894

H. P. B. (In Memoriam.)

Though swift the days flow from her day,
No one has left her day unnamed:
We know what light broke from her ray
On us, who in the truth proclaimed

Grew brother with the stars and powers
That stretch away—away to light,
And fade within the primal hours,
And in the wondrous First unite.

We lose with her the right to scorn
The voices scornful of her truth:
With her a deeper love was born
For those who filled her days with ruth.

To her they were not sordid things:
In them sometimes—her wisdom said—
The Bird of Paradise had wings;
It only dreams, it is not dead.

We cannot for forgetfulness
Forego the reverence due to them,
Who wear at times they do not guess
The sceptre and the diadem.



With wisdom of the olden time
 She made the hearts of dust to flame;
And fired us with the hope sublime
 Our ancient heritage to claim;

That turning from the visible,
 By vastness unappalled nor stayed,
Our wills might rule beside that Will
 By which the tribal stars are swayed;

And entering the heroic strife,
 Tread in the way their feet have trod
Who move within a vaster life,
 Sparks in the Fire—Gods amid God.

—August 15, 1894

By the Margin of the Great Deep

When the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,
 All its vapourous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes;
 I am one with the twilight's dream.

When the trees and skies and fields are one in dusky mood,
 Every heart of man is rapt within the mother's breast:
Full of peace and sleep and dreams in the vasty quietude,
 I am one with their hearts at rest.

From our immemorial joys of hearth and home and love,
 Strayed away along the margin of the unknown tide,
All its reach of soundless calm can thrill me far above
 Word or touch from the lips beside.

Aye, and deep, and deep, and deeper let me drink and draw
 From the olden Fountain more than light or peace or dream,
Such primeval being as o'erfills the heart with awe,
 Growing one with its silent stream.



Page 23

—March 15, 1894

The Secret

One thing in all things have I seen:
One thought has haunted earth and air;
Clangour and silence both have been
Its palace chambers. Everywhere

I saw the mystic vision flow,
And live in men, and woods, and streams,
Until I could no longer know
The dream of life from my own dreams.

Sometimes it rose like fire in me,
Within the depths of my own mind,
And spreading to infinity,
It took the voices of the wind.

It scrawled the human mystery,
Dim heraldry—on light and air;
Wavering along the starry sea,
I saw the flying vision there.

Each fire that in God's temple lit
Burns fierce before the inner shrine,
Dimmed as my fire grew near to it,
And darkened at the light of mine.

At last, at last, the meaning caught:
When spirit wears its diadem,
It shakes its wondrous plumes of thought,
And trails the stars along with them.

—April 15, 1894

Dust

I heard them in their sadness say,
"The earth rebukes the thought of God:
We are but embers wrapt in clay
A little nobler than the sod."



But I have touched the lips of clay—
 Mother, thy rudest sod to me
Is thrilled with fire of hidden day,
 And haunted by all mystery.

—May 15, 1894

Magic —After reading the Upanishads

Out of the dusky chamber of the brain
Flows the imperial will through dream on dream;
The fires of life around it tempt and gleam;
The lights of earth behind it fade and wane.

Passed beyond beauty tempting dream on dream,
The pure will seeks the hearthold of the light;
Sounds the deep “*Om*,” the mystic word of might;
Forth from the hearthold breaks the living stream.

Passed out beyond the deep heart music-filled,
The kingly Will sits on the ancient throne,
Wielding the sceptre, fearless, free, alone,
Knowing in Brahma all it dared and willed.

—June 15, 1894

Immortality

We must pass like smoke, or live within the spirits' fire;
 For we can no more than smoke unto the flame return.
If our thought has changed to dream, or will into desire,
 As smoke we vanish o'er the fires that burn.

Lights of infinite pity star the grey dusk of our days;
 Surely here is soul; with it we have eternal breath;
In the fire of love we live or pass by many ways,
 By unnumbered ways of dream to death.

—July 15, 1894



Page 24

The Man to the Angel

I have wept a million tears;
Pure and proud one, where are thine?
What the gain of all your years
That undimmed in beauty shine?

All your beauty cannot win
Truth we learn in pain and sighs;
You can never enter in
To the Circle of the Wise.

They are but the slaves of light
Who have never known the gloom,
And between the dark and bright
Willed in freedom their own doom.

Think not in your pureness there
That our pain but follows sin;
There are fires for those who dare
Seek the Throne of Might to win.

Pure one, from your pride refrain;
Dark and lost amid the strife,
I am myriad years of pain
Nearer to the fount of life.

When defiance fierce is thrown
At the God to whom you bow,
Rest the lips of the Unknown
Tenderest upon the brow.

—September 15, 1894

Songs of Olden Magic—II.

The Robing of the King
—“His candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked
through darkness.”—Job, xxix. 3

On the bird of air blue-breasted
glint the rays of gold,
And a shadowy fleece above us
waves the forest old,
Far through rumorous leagues of midnight



stirred by breezes warm.
See the old ascetic yonder,
 Ah, poor withered form!
Where he crouches wrinkled over
 by unnumbered years
Through the leaves the flakes of moonfire
 fall like phantom tears.
At the dawn a kingly hunter
 passed proud disdain,
Like a rainbow-torrent scattered
 flashed his royal train.
Now the lonely one unheeded
 seeks earth's caverns dim,
Never king or princes will robe them
 radiantly as him.
Mid the deep enfolding darkness,
 follow him, oh seer,
While the arrow will is piercing
 fiery sphere on sphere.
Through the blackness leaps and sparkles
 gold and amethyst,
Curling, jetting and dissolving
 in a rainbow mist.
In the jewel glow and lunar
 radiance rise there
One, a morning star in beauty,
 young, immortal, fair.
Sealed in heavy sleep, the spirit
 leaves its faded dress,
Unto fiery youth returning
 out of weariness.
Music as for one departing,
 joy as for a king,
Sound and swell, and hark! above him
 cymbals triumphing.
Fire an aureole encircling
 suns his brow with gold
Like to one who hails the morning
 on the mountains old.
Open mightier vistas changing
 human loves to scorns,
And the spears of glory pierce him
 like a Crown of Thorns.
As the sparry rays dilating
 o'er his forehead climb



Page 25

Once again he knows the Dragon
 Wisdom of the prime.
High and yet more high to freedom
 as a bird he springs,
And the aureole outbreathing,
 gold and silver wings
Plume the brow and crown the seraph.
 Soon his journey done
He will pass our eyes that follow,
 sped beyond the sun.
None may know the darker radiance,
 King, will there be thine.
Rapt above the Light and hidden
 in the Dark Divine.

—September 15, 1895

Brotherhood

Twilight a blossom grey in shadowy valleys dwells:
Under the radiant dark the deep blue-tinted bells
In quietness reimage heaven within their blooms,
Sapphire and gold and mystery. What strange perfumes,
Out of what deeps arising, all the flower-bells fling,
Unknowing the enchanted odorous song they sing!
Oh, never was an eve so living yet: the wood
Stirs not but breathes enraptured quietude.
Here in these shades the Ancient knows itself, the Soul,
And out of slumber waking starts unto the goal.
What bright companions nod and go along with it!
Out of the teeming dark what dusky creatures flit,
That through the long leagues of the island night above
Come wandering by me, whispering and beseeching love,—
As in the twilight children gather close and press
Nigh and more nigh with shadowy tenderness,
Feeling they know not what, with noiseless footsteps glide
Seeking familiar lips or hearts to dream beside.
Oh, voices, I would go with you, with you, away,
Facing once more the radiant gateways of the day;



With you, with you, what memories arise, and nigh
Trampling the crowded figures of the dawn go by;
Dread deities, the giant powers that warred on men
Grow tender brothers and gay children once again;
Fades every hate away before the Mother's breast
Where all the exiles of the heart return to rest.

—July 15, 1895

In the Womb

Still rests the heavy share on the dark soil:
 Upon the dull black mould the dew-damp lies:
The horse waits patient: from his lonely toil
 The ploughboy to the morning lifts his eyes.

The unbudding hedgerows, dark against day's fires,
 Glitter with gold-lit crystals: on the rim
Over the unregarding city's spires
 The lonely beauty shines alone for him.

And day by day the dawn or dark enfolds,
 And feeds with beauty eyes that cannot see
How in her womb the Mighty Mother moulds
 The infant spirit for Eternity.

—January 15, 1895

In the Garden of God

Within the iron cities
 One walked unknown for years,
In his heart the pity of pitias
 That grew for human tears



Page 26

When love and grief were ended
The flower of pity grew;
By unseen hands 'twas tended
And fed with holy dew.

Though in his heart were barred in
The blooms of beauty blown;
Yet he who grew the garden
Could call no flower his own.

For by the hands that watered,
The blooms that opened fair
Through frost and pain were scattered
To sweeten the dull air.

—February 15, 1895

The Breath of Light

From the cool and dark-lipped furrows
breathes a dim delight
Aureoles of joy encircle
every blade of grass
Where the dew-fed creatures silent
and enraptured pass:
And the restless ploughman pauses,
turns, and wondering
Deep beneath his rustic habit
finds himself a king;
For a fiery moment looking
with the eyes of God
Over fields a slave at morning
bowed him to the sod.
Blind and dense with revelation
every moment flies,
And unto the Mighty Mother
gay, eternal, rise
All the hopes we hold, the gladness,
dreams of things to be.
One of all they generations,
Mother, hails to thee!
Hail! and hail! and hail for ever:
though I turn again



For they joy unto the human
vestures of pain.
I, thy child, who went forth radiant
in the golden prime
Find thee still the mother-hearted
through my night in time;
Find in thee the old enchantment,
there behind the veil
Where the Gods my brothers linger,
Hail! for ever, Hail!

—May 15, 1895

The Free

They bathed in the fire-flooded fountains;
Life girdled them round and about;
They slept in the clefts of the mountains:
The stars called them forth with a shout.

They prayed, but their worship was only
The wonder at nights and at days,
As still as the lips of the lonely
Though burning with dumbness of praise.

No sadness of earth ever captured
Their spirits who bowed at the shrine;
They fled to the Lonely enraptured
And hid in the Darkness Divine.

At twilight as children may gather
They met at the doorway of death,
The smile of the dark hidden Father
The Mother with magical breath.

Untold of in song or in story,
In days long forgotten of men,
Their eyes were yet blind with a glory
Time will not remember again.

—November 15, 1895

Songs of Olden Magic—IV

The Magi

“The mountain was filled with the hosts of the Tuatha de Dannan.”
—Old Celtic Poem



Page 27

See where the auras from the olden fountain
Starward aspire;
The sacred sign upon the holy mountain
Shines in white fire:
Waving and flaming yonder o'er the snows
The diamond light
Melts into silver or to sapphire glows
Night beyond night;
And from the heaven of heavens descends on earth
A dew divine.
Come, let us mingle in the starry mirth
Around the shrine!
Enchantress, mighty mother, to our home
In thee we press,
Thrilled by the fiery breath and wrapt in some
Vast tenderness
The homeward birds uncertain o'er their nest
Wheel in the dome,
Fraught with dim dreams of more enraptured rest,
Wheel in the dome,
But gather ye to whose undarkened eyes
The night is day:
Leap forth, Immortals, Birds of Paradise,
In bright array
Robed like the shining tresses of the sun;
And by his name
Call from his haunt divine the ancient one
Our Father Flame.
Aye, from the wonder-light that wraps the star,
Come now, come now;
Sun-breathing Dragon, ray thy lights afar,
Thy children bow;
Hush with more awe the breath; the bright-browed races
Are nothing worth
By those dread gods from out whose awful faces
The earth looks forth
Infinite pity, set in calm; their vision cast
Adown the years
Beholds how beauty burns away at last
Their children's tears.
Now while our hearts the ancient quietness
Floods with its tide,
The things of air and fire and height no less



In it abide;
And from their wanderings over sea and shore
 They rise as one
Unto the vastness and with us adore
 The midnight sun;
And enter the innumerable All,
 And shine like gold,
And starlike gleam in the immortals' hall,
 The heavenly fold,
And drink the sun-breaths from the mother's lips
 Awhile—and then
Fail from the light and drop in dark eclipse
 To earth again,
Roaming along by heaven-hid promontory
 And valley dim.
Weaving a phantom image of the glory
 They knew in Him.
Out of the fulness flow the winds, their son
 Is heard no more,
Or hardly breathes a mystic sound along
 The dreamy shore:
Blindly they move unknowing as in trance,
 Their wandering
Is half with us, and half an inner dance
 Led by the King.

—January 15, 1896

W. Q. J. *

O hero of the iron age,
Upon thy grave we will not weep,
Nor yet consume away in rage
For thee and thy untimely sleep.
Our hearts a burning silence keep.

O martyr, in these iron days
One fate was sure for soul like thine:
Well you foreknew but went your ways.
The crucifixion is the sign,
The meed of all the kingly line.



Page 28

We may not mourn—though such a night
Has fallen on our earthly spheres
Bereft of love and truth and light
As never since the dawn of years;—
For tears give birth alone to tears.

One wreath upon they grave we lay
(The silence of our bitter thought,
Words that would scorch their hearts of clay),
And turn to learn what thou has taught,
To shape our lives as thine was wrought.

—April 15, 1896

[* This is unsigned but is very possibly G.W. Russell's. It was a memorial to William Quan Judge (W.Q.J), the leader of the American and European Theosophical Societies at the time, one of the original founders of the Theosophical Society, and close co-worker with H.P. Blavatsky.]

From the Book of the Eagle
—[St. John, i. 1-33]

In the mighty Mother's bosom was the Wise
With the mystic Father in aeonian night;
Aye, for ever one with them though it arise
 Going forth to sound its hymn of light.

At its incantation rose the starry fane;
At its magic thronged the myriad race of men;
Life awoke that in the womb so long had lain
 To its cyclic labours once again.

'Tis the soul of fire within the heart of life;
From its fiery fountain spring the will and thought;
All the strength of man for deeds of love or strife,
 Though the darkness comprehend it not.

In the mystery written here
John is but the life, the seer;
Outcast from the life of light,
Inly with reverted sight
Still he scans with eager eyes
The celestial mysteries.
Poet of all far-seen things



At his word the soul has wings,
Revelations, symbols, dreams
Of the inmost light which gleams.

The winds, the stars, and the skies though wrought
By the one Fire-Self still know it not;
And man who moves in the twilight dim
Feels not the love that encircles him,
Though in heart, on bosom, and eyelids press
Lips of an infinite tenderness,
He turns away through the dark to roam
Nor heeds the fire in his hearth and home.

They whose wisdom everywhere
Sees as through a crystal air
The lamp by which the world is lit,
And themselves as one with it;
In whom the eye of vision swells,
Who have in entranced hours
Caught the word whose might compels
All the elemental powers;
They arise as Gods from men
Like the morning stars again.
They who seek the place of rest
Quench the blood-heat of the breast,
Grow ascetic, inward turning
Trample down the lust from burning,
Silence in the self the will
For a power diviner still;
To the fire-born Self alone
The ancestral spheres are known.

Unto the poor dead shadows came
Wisdom mantled about with flame;
We had eyes that could see the light
Born of the mystic Father's might.
Glory radiant with powers untold
And the breath of God around it rolled.



Page 29

Life that moved in the deeps below
Felt the fire in its bosom glow;
Life awoke with the Light allied,
Grew divinely stirred, and cried:
“This is the Ancient of Days within,
Light that is ere our days begin.

“Every power in the spirit’s ken
Springs anew in our lives again.
We had but dreams of the heart’s desire
Beauty thrilled with the mystic fire.
The white-fire breath whence springs the power
Flows alone in the spirit’s hour.”

Man arose the earth he trod,
Grew divine as he gazed on God:
Light in a fiery whirlwind broke
Out of the dark divine and spoke:
Man went forth through the vast to tread
By the spirit of wisdom charioted.

There came the learned of the schools
Who measure heavenly things by rules,
The sceptic, doubter, the logician,
Who in all sacred things precision,
Would mark the limit, fix the scope,
“Art thou the Christ for whom we hope?
Art thou a magian, or in thee
Has the divine eye power to see?”
He answered low to those who came,
“Not this, nor this, nor this I claim.
More than the yearning of the heart
I have no wisdom to impart.
I am the voice that cries in him
Whose heart is dead, whose eyes are dim,
'Make pure the paths where through may run
The light-streams from that golden one,
The Self who lives within the sun.'
As spake the seer of ancient days.”
The voices from the earthly ways
Questioned him still: “What dost thou here,
If neither prophet, king nor seer?
What power is kindled by they might?”
“I flow before the feet of Light:



I am the purifying stream.
But One of whom ye have no dream,
Whose footsteps move among you still,
Though dark, divine, invisible.
Impelled by Him, before His ways
I journey, though I dare not raise
Even from the ground these eyes so dim
Or look upon the feet of Him.”

When the dead or dreamy hours
Like a mantle fall away,
Wakes the eye of gnostic powers
To the light of hidden day,

And the yearning heart within
Seeks the true, the only friend,
He who burdened with our sin
Loves and loves unto the end.

Ah, the martyr of the world,
With a face of steadfast peace
Round whose brow the light is curled:
'Tis the Lamb with golden fleece.

So they called of old the shining,
Such a face the sons of men
See, and all its life divining
Wake primeval fires again.

Such a face and such a glory
Passed before the eyes of John,
With a breath of olden story
Blown from ages long ago



Page 30

Who would know the God in man.
Deeper still must be his glance.
Veil on veil his eye must scan
For the mystic signs which tell
If the fire electric fell
On the seer in his trance:
As his way he upward wings
From all time-encircled things,
Flames the glory round his head
Like a bird with wings outspread.
Gold and silver plumes at rest:
Such a shadowy shining crest
Round the hero's head reveals him
To the soul that would adore,
As the master-power that heals him
And the fount of secret lore.
Nature such a diadem
Places on her royal line,
Every eye that looks on them
Knows the Sons of the Divine.

—April 15, 1896

The Protest of Love “Those who there take refuge nevermore return.”—Bhagavad Gita

Ere I lose myself in the vastness and drowse myself with the peace,
While I gaze on the light and beauty afar from the dim homes of men,
May I still feel the heart-pang and pity, love-ties that I would
not release,
May the voices of sorrow appealing call me back to their succour again.

Ere I storm with the tempest of power the thrones and dominions
of old,
Ere the ancient enchantment allures me to roam through the star-
misty skies,
I would go forth as one who has reaped well what harvest the earth
may unfold:
May my heart be o'erbrimmed with compassion, on my brow be the
crown of the wise.

I would go as the dove from the ark sent forth with wishes and prayers
To return with the paradise-blossoms that bloom in the eden of light:
When the deep star-chant of the seraphs I hear in the mystical airs



May I capture one tone of their joy for the sad ones discrowned
in the night.

Not alone, not alone would I go to my rest in the Heart of the Love:
Were I tranced in the innermost beauty, the flame of its tenderest breath,
I would still hear the plaint of the fallen recalling me back from above
To go down to the side of the mourners who weep in the shadow of death.

—May 15, 1896

The King Initiate “They took Jesus and scourged him.”—St. John

Age after age the world has wept
 A joy supreme—I saw the hands
Whose fiery radiations swept
 And burned away his earthly bands:
And where they smote the living dyes
Flashed like the plumes of paradise.

Their joys the heavy nations hush—
 A form of purple glory rose
Crowned with such rays of light as flush
 The white peaks on their towering snows:
It held the magic wand that gave
Rule over earth, air, fire and wave.

What sorrow makes the white cheeks wet:
 The mystic cross looms shadowy dim—
There where the fourfold powers have met
 And poured their living tides through him,
The Son who hides his radiant crest
To the dark Father’s bosom pressed.



Page 31

—June 15, 1896

The Dream of the Children

The children awoke in their dreaming
While earth lay dewy and still:
They followed the rill in its gleaming
To the heart-light of the hill.

Its sounds and sights were forsaking
The world as they faded in sleep,
When they heard a music breaking
Out from the heart-light deep.

It ran where the rill in its flowing
Under the star-light gay
With wonderful colour was glowing
Like the bubbles they blew in their play.

From the misty mountain under
Shot gleams of an opal star:
Its pathways of rainbow wonder
Rayed to their feet from afar.

From their feet as they strayed in the meadow
It led through caverned aisles,
Filled with purple and green light and shadow
For mystic miles on miles.

The children were glad; it was lonely
To play on the hill-side by day.
“But now,” they said, “we have only
To go where the good people stray.”

For all the hill-side was haunted
By the faery folk come again;
And down in the heart-light enchanted
Were opal-coloured men.

They moved like kings unattended
Without a squire or dame,
But they wore tiaras splendid
With feathers of starlight flame.



They laughed at the children over
And called them into the heart:
“Come down here, each sleepless rover:
We will show you some of our art.”

And down through the cool of the mountain
The children sank at the call,
And stood in a blazing fountain
And never a mountain at all.

The lights were coming and going
In many a shining strand,
For the opal fire-kings were blowing
The darkness out of the land.

This golden breath was a madness
To set a poet on fire,
And this was a cure for sadness,
And that the ease of desire.

And all night long over Eri
They fought with the wand of light
And love that never grew weary
The evil things of night.

They said, as dawn glimmered hoary,
“We will show yourselves for an hour;”
And the children were changed to a glory
By the beautiful magic of power.

The fire-kings smiled on their faces
And called them by olden names,
Till they towered like the starry races
All plumed with the twilight flames.

They talked for a while together,
How the toil of ages oppressed;
And of how they best could weather
The ship of the world to its rest.

The dawn in the room was straying:
The children began to blink,
When they heard a far voice saying,
“You can grow like that if you think!”



Page 32

The sun came in yellow and gay light:
They tumbled out of the cot,
And half of the dream went with daylight
And half was never forgot.

—July 15, 1896

The Chiefs of the Air

Their wise little heads with scorning
They laid the covers between:
“Do they think we stay here till morning?”
Said Rory and Aileen.

When out their bright eyes came peeping
The room was no longer there,
And they fled from the dark world creeping
Up a twilight cave of air.

They wore each one a gay dress,
In sleep, if you understand,
When earth puts off its grey dress
To robe it in faeryland.

Then loud o’erhead was a humming
As clear as the wood wind rings;
And here were the air-boats coming
And here the airy kings.

The magic barks were gleaming
And swift as the feathered throng:
With wonder-lights out-streaming
They blew themselves along.

And up on the night-wind swimming,
With pose and dart and rise,
Away went the air fleet skimming
Through a haze of jewel skies.

One boat above them drifted
Apart from the flying bands,
And an air-chief bent and lifted
The children with mighty hands.



The children wondered greatly,
Three air-chiefs met them there,
They were tall and grave and stately
With bodies of purple air.

A pearl light with misty shimmer
Went dancing about them all,
As the dyes of the moonbow glimmer
On a trembling waterfall.

The trail of the fleet to the far lands
Was wavy along the night,
And on through the sapphire starlands
They followed the wake of light.

“Look down, Aileen,” said Rory,
“The earth’s as thin as a dream.”
It was lit by a sun-fire glory
Outraying gleam on gleam.

They saw through the dream-world under
Its heart of rainbow flame
Where the starry people wander;
Like gods they went and came.

The children looked without talking
Till Roray spoke again,
“Are those our folk who are walking
Like little shadow men?”

“They don’t see what is about them,
They look like pigmies small,
The world would be full without them
And they think themselves so tall!”

The magic bark went fleeting
Like an eagle on and on;
Till over its prow came beating
The foam-light of the dawn.

The children’s dream grew fainter,
Three air-chiefs still were there,
But the sun the shadow painter
Drew five on the misty air.

The dream-light whirled bewild’ring,
An air-chief said, “You know.

You are living now, my children,
Ten thousand years ago.”



Page 33

They looked at themselves in the old light,
And mourned the days of the new
Where naught is but darkness or cold light,
Till a bell came striking through.

“We must go,” said the wise young sages:
It was five at dawn by the chimes,
And they ran through a thousand ages
From the old De Danaan Times.

—August 15, 1896

The Palaces of the Sidhe

Two small sweet lives together
From dawn till the dew falls down,
They danced over rock and heather
Away from the dusty town.

Dark eyes like stars set in pansies,
Blue eyes like a hero's bold—
Their thoughts were all pearl-light fancies,
Their hearts in the age of gold.

They crooned o'er many a fable
And longed for the bright-capped elves,
The faery folk who are able
To make us faery ourselves.

A hush on the children stealing
They stood there hand in hand,
For the elfin chimes were pealing
Aloud in the underland.

And over the grey rock sliding,
A fiery colour ran,
And out of its thickness gliding
The twinkling mist of a man—

To-day for the children had fled to
An ancient yesterday,
And the rill from its tunnelled bed too
Had turned another way.



Then down through an open hollow
The old man led with a smile:
“Come, star-hearts, my children, follow
To the elfin land awhile.”

The bells above them were hanging,
Whenever the earth-breath blew
It made them go clanging, clanging,
The vasty mountain through.

But louder yet than the ringing
Came the chant of the elfin choir,
Till the mountain was mad with singing
And dense with the forms of fire.

The kings of the faery races
Sat high on the thrones of might,
And infinite years from their faces
Looked out through eyes of light.

And one in a diamond splendour
Shone brightest of all that hour,
More lofty and pure and tender,
They called him the Flower of Power.

The palace walls were glowing
Like stars together drawn,
And a fountain of air was flowing
The primrose colour of dawn.

“Ah, see!” said Aileen sighing,
With a bend of her saddened head
Where a mighty hero was lying,
He looked like one who was dead.

“He will wake,” said their guide, “’tis but seeming,
And, oh, what his eyes shall see
I will know of only in dreaming
Till I lie there still as he.”

They chanted the song of waking,
They breathed on him with fire,
Till the hero-spirit outbreaking,
Shot radiant above the choir.



Page 34

Like a pillar of opal glory
Lit through with many a gem—
“Why, look at him now,” said Rory,
“He has turned to a faery like them!”

The elfin kings ascending
Leaped up from the thrones of might,
And one with another blending
They vanished in air and light.

The rill to its bed came splashing
With rocks on the top of that:
The children awoke with a flashing
Of wonder, “What were we at?”

They groped through the reeds and clover—
“What funny old markings: look here,
They have scrawled the rocks all over:
It’s just where the door was: how queer!”

—September 15, 1896

The Voice of the Wise

They sat with hearts untroubled,
The clear sky sparkled above,
And an ancient wisdom bubbled
From the lips of a youthful love.

They read in a coloured history
Of Egypt and of the Nile,
And half it seemed a mystery,
Familiar, half, the while.

Till living out of the story
Grew old Egyptian men,
And a shadow looked forth Rory
And said, “We meet again!”

And over Aileen a maiden
Looked back through the ages dim:
She laughed, and her eyes were laden
With an old-time love for him.



In a mist came temples thronging
 With sphinxes seen in a row,
And the rest of the day was a longing
 For their homes of long ago.

“We’d go there if they’d let us,”
 They said with wounded pride:
“They never think when they pet us
 We are old like that inside.”

There was some one round them straying
 The whole of the long day through,
Who seemed to say, “I am playing
 At hide-and-seek with you.”

And one thing after another
 Was whispered out of the air,
How God was a big kind brother
 Whose home was in everywhere.

His light like a smile come glancing
 From the cool, cool winds as they pass;
From the flowers in heaven dancing
 And the stars that shine in the grass,

And the clouds in deep blue wreathing,
 And most from the mountains tall,
But God like a wind goes breathing
 A heart-light of gold in all.

It grows like a tree and pushes
 Its way through the inner gloom,
And flowers in quick little rushes
 Of love to a magic bloom.

And no one need sigh now or sorrow
 Whenever the heart-light flies,
For it comes again on some morrow
 And nobody ever dies.

The heart of the Wise was beating
 In the children’s heart that day,
And many a thought came fleeting,
 And fancies solemn and gay.



Page 35

They were grave in a way divining
How childhood was taking wings,
And the wonder world was shining
With vast eternal things.

The solemn twilight fluttered
Like the plumes of seraphim,
And they felt what things were uttered
In the sunset voice of Him.

They lingered long, for dearer
Than home were the mountain places
Where God from the stars dropt nearer
Their pale, dreamy faces.

Their very hearts from beating
They stilled in awed delight.
For Spirit and children were meeting
In the purple, ample night.

Dusk its ash-grey blossoms sheds on violet skies
Over twilight mountains where the heart-songs rise,
Rise and fall and fade again from earth to air:
Earth renews the music sweeter. Oh, come there.
Come, ma cushla, come, as in ancient times
Rings aloud and the underland with faery chimes.
Down the unseen ways as strays each tinkling fleece
Winding ever onward to a fold of peace,
So my dreams go straying in a land more fair;
Half I tread the dew-wet grasses, half wander there.
Fade your glimmering eyes in a world grown cold:
Come, ma cushla, with me to the mountain's fold,
Where the bright ones call us waving to and fro:
Come, my children, with me to the Ancient go.

—October 15, 1896

A Dawn Song

While the earth is dark and grey
How I laugh within: I know
In my breast what ardours gay
From the morning overflow.



Though the cheek be white and wet
In my heart no fear may fall:
There my chieftain leads, and yet
Ancient battle-trumpets call.

Bend on me no hasty frown
If my spirit slight your cares:
Sunlike still my joy looks down
Changing tears to beamy airs.

Think me not of fickle heart
If with joy my bosom swells
Though your ways from mine depart:
In the true are no farewells.

What I love in you I find
Everywhere. A friend I greet
In each flower and tree and wind—
Oh, but life is sweet, is sweet.

What to you are bolts and bars
Are to me the hands that guide
To the freedom of the stars
Where my golden kinsmen bide.

From my mountain top I view:
Twilight's purple flower is gone,
And I send my song to you
On the level light of dawn.

—November 15, 1896

—An Ancient Eden



Page 36

Our legends tell of aery fountains upspringing in Eri, and how the people of long ago saw them not but only the Tuatha de Danaan. Some deem it was the natural outflow of water at these places which was held to be sacred; but above fountain, rill and river rose up the enchanted froth and foam of invisible rills and rivers breaking forth from Tir-na-noge, the soul of the island, and glittering in the sunlight of its mystic day. What we see here is imaged forth from that invisible soul and is a path thereto. In the heroic Epic of Cuculain Standish O'Grady writes of such a fountain, and prefixes his chapter with the verse from Genesis, "And four rivers went forth from Eden to water the garden," and what follows in reference thereto.

The Fountain of Shadowy Beauty —A Dream

I would I could weave in
 The colour, the wonder,
The song I conceive in
 My heart while I ponder,

And show how it came like
 The magi of old
Whose chant was a flame like
 The dawn's voice of gold;

Who dreams followed near them
 A murmur of birds,
And ear still could hear them
 Uncharmed in words.

In words I can only
 Reveal thee my heart,
Oh, Light of the Lonely,
 The shining impart.

Between the twilight and the dark
The lights danced up before my eyes:
I found no sleep or peace or rest,
But dreams of stars and burning skies.

I knew the faces of the day—
Dream faces, pale, with cloudy hair,
I know you not nor yet your home,
The Fount of Shadowy Beauty, where?

I passed a dream of gloomy ways
Where ne'er did human feet intrude:



It was the border of a wood,
A dreadful forest solitude.

With wondrous red and fairy gold
The clouds were woven o'er the ocean;
The stars in fiery aether swung
And danced with gay and glittering motion.

A fire leaped up within my heart
When first I saw the old sea shine;
As if a god were there revealed
I bowed my head in awe divine;

And long beside the dim sea marge
I mused until the gathering haze
Veiled from me where the silver tide
Ran in its thousand shadowy ways.

The black night dropped upon the sea:
The silent awe came down with it:
I saw fantastic vapours flit
As o'er the darkness of the pit.

When, lo! from out the furthest night
A speck of rose and silver light
Above a boat shaped wondrously
Came floating swiftly o'er the sea.

It was no human will that bore
The boat so fleetly to the shore
Without a sail spread or an oar.

The Pilot stood erect thereon
And lifted up his ancient face,
(Ancient with glad eternal youth
Like one who was of starry race.)

His face was rich with dusky bloom;
His eyes a bronze and golden fire;
His hair in streams of silver light
Hung flamelike on his strange attire



Page 37

Which starred with many a mystic sign,
Fell as o'er sunlit ruby glowing:
His light flew o'er the waves afar
In ruddy ripples on each bar
Along the spiral pathways flowing.

It was a crystal boat that chased
The light along the watery waste,
Till caught amid the surges hoary
The Pilot stayed its jewelled glory.

Oh, never such a glory was:
The pale moon shot it through and through
With light of lilac, white and blue:
And there mid many a fairy hue
Of pearl and pink and amethyst,
Like lightning ran the rainbow gleams
And wove around a wonder-mist.

The Pilot lifted beckoning hands;
Silent I went with deep amaze
To know why came this Beam of Light
So far along the ocean ways
Out of the vast and shadowy night.

"Make haste, make haste!" he cried. "Away!
A thousand ages now are gone.
Yet thou and I ere night be sped
Will reck no more of eve or dawn."

Swift as the swallow to its nest
I leaped: my body dropt right down:
A silver star I rose and flew.
A flame burned golden at his breast:
I entered at the heart and knew
My Brother-Self who roams the deep,
Bird of the wonder-world of sleep.

The ruby body wrapped us round
As twain in one: we left behind
The league-long murmur of the shore
And fled swifter than the wind.



The distance rushed upon the bark:
We neared unto the mystic isles:
The heavenly city we could mark,
Its mountain light, its jewel dark,
Its pinnacles and starry piles.

The glory brightened: "Do not fear;
For we are real, though what seems
So proudly built above the waves
Is but one mighty spirit's dreams.

"Our Father's house hath many fanes;
Yet enter not and worship not,
For thought but follows after thought
Till last consuming self it wanes.

"The Fount of Shadowy Beauty flings
Its glamour o'er the light of day:
A music in the sunlight sings
To call the dreamy hearts away
Their mighty hopes to ease awhile:
We will not go the way of them:
The chant makes drowsy those who seek
The sceptre and the diadem.

"The Fount of Shadowy Beauty throws
Its magic round us all the night;
What things the heart would be, it sees
And chases them in endless flight.
Or coiled in phantom visions there
It builds within the halls of fire;
Its dreams flash like the peacock's wing
And glow with sun-hues of desire.
We will not follow in their ways
Nor heed the lure of fay or elf,
But in the ending of our days
Rest in the high Ancestral Self."

The boat of crystal touched the shore,
Then melted flamelike from our eyes,
As in the twilight drops the sun
Withdrawing rays of paradise.

We hurried under arched aisles
That far above in heaven withdrawn
With cloudy pillars stormed the night,
Rich as the opal shafts of dawn.



Page 38

I would have lingered then—but he—
“Oh, let us haste: the dream grows dim,
Another night, another day,
A thousand years will part from him

“Who is that Ancient One divine
From whom our phantom being born
Rolled with the wonder-light around
Had started in the fairy morn.

“A thousand of our years to him
Are but the night, are but the day,
Wherein he rests from cyclic toil
Or chants the song of starry sway.

“He falls asleep: the Shadowy Fount
Fills all our heart with dreams of light:
He wakes to ancient spheres, and we
Through iron ages mourn the night.
We will not wander in the night
But in a darkness more divine
Shall join the Father Light of Lights
And rule the long-descended line.”

Even then a vasty twilight fell:
Wavered in air the shadowy towers:
The city like a gleaming shell,
Its azures, opals, silvers, blues,
Were melting in more dreamy hues.
We feared the falling of the night
And hurried more our headlong flight.
In one long line the towers went by;
The trembling radiance dropt behind,
As when some swift and radiant one
Flits by and flings upon the wind
The rainbow tresses of the sun.

And then they vanished from our gaze
Faded the magic lights, and all
Into a Starry Radiance fell
As waters in their fountain fall.

We knew our time-long journey o'er
And knew the end of all desire,



And saw within the emerald glow
Our Father like the white sun-fire.

We could not say if age or youth
Were on his face: we only burned
To pass the gateways of the Day,
The exiles to the heart returned.

He rose to greet us and his breath,
The tempest music of the spheres,
Dissolved the memory of earth,
The cyclic labour and our tears.
In him our dream of sorrow passed,
The spirit once again was free
And heard the song the Morning-Stars
Chant in eternal revelry.

This was the close of human story;
We saw the deep unmeasured shine,
And sank within the mystic glory
They called of old the Dark Divine.

Well it is gone now,
The dream that I chanted:
On this side the dawn now
I sit fate-implanted.

But though of my dreaming
The dawn has bereft me,
It all was not seeming
For something has left me.

I fell in some other
World far from this cold light
The Dream Bird, my brother,
Is rayed with the gold light.

I too in the Father
Would hide me, and so,
Bright Bird, to foregather
With thee now I go.

—December 15, 1896

A New Earth

“Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims within his ken.”



Page 39

I who had sought afar from earth
The faery land to greet,
Now find content within its girth,
And wonder nigh my feet.

To-day a nearer love I choose
And seek no distant sphere,
For aureoled by faery dew
The dear brown breasts appear.

With rainbow radiance come and go
The airy breaths of day,
And eve is all a pearly glow
With moonlit winds a-play.

The lips of twilight burn my brow,
The arms of night caress:
Glimmer her white eyes drooping now
With grave old tenderness.

I close mine eyes from dream to be
The diamond-rayed again,
As in the ancient hours ere we
Forgot ourselves to men.

And all I thought of heaven before
I find in earth below,
A sunlight in the hidden core
To dim the noon-day glow.

And with the Earth my heart is glad,
I move as one of old,
With mists of silver I am clad
And bright with burning gold.

—February 1896

Duality

“From me spring good and evil.”
Who gave thee such a ruby flaming heart,
And such a pure cold spirit? Side by side
I know these must eternally abide
In intimate war, and each to each impart



Life from their pain, with every joy a dart
To wound with grief or death the self-allied.
Red life within the spirit crucified,
The eyes eternal pity thee, thou art
Fated with deathless powers at war to be,
Not less the martyr of the world than he
Whose thorn-crowned brow usurps the due of tears
We would pay to thee, ever ruddy life,
Whose passionate peace is still to be at strife,
O'erthrown but in the unconflicting spheres.

—March 15, 1896 (This is unsigned, but in AE's "Collected Poems")

The Element Language

In a chapter in the Secret Doctrine dealing with the origin of language, H.P. Blavatsky makes some statements which are quoted here and which should be borne well in mind in considering what follows. "The Second Race had a 'Sound Language,' to wit, chant-like sounds composed of vowels alone." From this developed "monosyllabic speech which was the vowel parent, so to speak, of the monosyllabic languages mixed with hard consonants still in use among the yellow races which are known to the anthropologist. The linguistic characteristics developed into the agglutinative languages.... The inflectional speech, the root of the Sanskrit, was the first language (now the mystery tongue of the Initiates) of the Fifth Race."



Page 40

The nature of that language has not been disclosed along with other teaching concerning the evolution of the race, but like many other secrets the details of which are still preserved by the Initiates, it is implied in what has already been revealed. The application to speech of the abstract formula of evolution which they have put forward should result in its discovery, for the clue lies in correspondences; know the nature of any one thing perfectly, learn its genesis, development and consummation, and you have the key to all the mysteries of nature. The microcosm mirrors the macrocosm. But, before applying this key, it is well to glean whatever hints have been given, so that there may be less chance of going astray in our application. First, we gather from the Secret Doctrine that the sounds of the human voice are correlated with the forces, colours, numbers and forms. "Every letter has its occult meaning, the vowels especially contain the most occult and formidable potencies." (S.D., I, 94) and again it is said "The magic of the ancient priests consisted in those days in addressing their gods in their own language. The speech of the men of earth cannot reach the Lords, each must be addressed in the language of his respective element"—is a sentence which will be shown pregnant with meaning. "The book of rules" cited adds as an explanation of the nature of that element-language: "It is composed of Sounds, not words; of sounds, numbers and figures. He who knows how to blend the three, will call forth the response of the superintending Power" (the regent-god of the specific element needed). Thus this "language is that of incantations or of Mantras, as they are called in India, sound being the most potent and effectual magic agent, and the first of the keys which opens the door of communication between mortals and immortals." (S.D. I, 464)

From these quotations it will be seen that the occult teachings as to speech are directly at variance with the theories of many philologists and evolutionists. A first speech which was like song— another and more developed speech which is held sacred—an esoteric side to speech in which the elements of our conventional languages (i.e. the letters) are so arranged that speech becomes potent enough to guide the elements, and human speech becomes the speech of the gods—there is no kinship between this ideal language and the ejaculations and mimicry which so many hold to be the root and beginning of it. Yet those who wish to defend their right to hold the occult teaching have little to fear from the champions of these theories; they need not at all possess any deep scholarship or linguistic attainment; the most cursory view of the roots of primitive speech, so far as they have been collected, will show that they contain few or no sounds of a character which would bear out either the onomatopoeic or interjectional theories. The vast majority of the roots of the Aryan language

Page 41

express abstract ideas, they rarely indicate the particular actions which would be capable of being suggested by any mimicry possible to the human voice. I have selected at random from a list of roots their English equivalents, in order to show the character of the roots and to make clearer the difficulty of holding such views. The abstract nature of the ideas, relating to actions and things which often have no attendant sound in nature, will indicate what I mean. What possible sounds could mimic the sense of "to move, to shine, to gain, to flow, to burn, to blow, to live, to possess, to cover, to fall, to praise, to think"? In fact the most abstract of all seem the most primitive for we find them most fruitful in combination to for other words. I hope to show this clearly later on. It is unnecessary to discuss the claims of the interjectional theory, as it is only a theory, and there are few roots for which we could infer even a remote origin of this nature. The great objection to the theory that speech was originally a matter of convention and mutual agreement, is the scarcity of words among the roots which express the wants of primitive man. As it is, a wisdom within or beyond the Aryan led him to construct in these roots with their abstract significance an ideal foundation from which a great language could be developed. However as the exponents of rival theories have demolished each other's arguments, without anyone having established a clear case for himself, it is not necessary here to do more than indicate these theories and how they may be met.

In putting forward a hypothesis more in accord with the doctrine of the spiritual origin of man, and in harmony with those occult ideas concerning speech already quoted, I stand in a rather unusual position, as I have to confess my ignorance of any of these primitive languages. I am rather inclined however, to regard this on the whole as an advantage for the following reasons. I think primitive man (the early Aryan) chose his words by a certain intuition which recognised an innate correspondence between the thought and the symbol. Para passu with the growing complexity of civilization language lost its spiritual character, "it fell into matter," to use H.P. Blavatsky's expression; as the conventional words necessary to define artificial products grew in number, in the memory of these words the spontaneity of speech was lost, and that faculty became atrophied which enable man to arrange with psychic rapidity ever new combinations of sounds to express emotion and thought. Believing then that speech was originally intuitive, and that it only need introspection and a careful analysis of the sounds of the human voice, to recover the faculty and correspondences between these sounds and forces, colours, forms, etc., it will be seen why I do not regard my ignorance of these languages as altogether a drawback. The correspondences necessarily had to be evolved out



Page 42

of my inner consciousness, and in doing this no aid could be derived from the Aryan roots as they now stand. In the meaning attached to each letter is to be found the key to the meaning and origin of roots; but the value of each sound separately could never be discovered by an examination of them in their combinations, though their value and purpose in combination to form words might be evident enough once the significance of the letters is shewn. Any lack of knowledge then is only a disadvantage in this, that it limits the area from which to choose illustrations. I have felt it necessary to preface what I have to say with this confession, to show exactly the position in which I stand. The correspondences between sounds and forces were first evolved, and an examination of the Aryan roots proved the key capable of application.

Note:—In an article which appeared in the Theosophist, Dec. 1887, I had attempted, with the assistance of my friend Mr. Chas. Johnston, to put forward some of the ideas which form the subject matter of this paper. Owing to the numerous misprints which rendered it unintelligible I have felt it necessary to altogether re-write it.

—G.W.R.

It is advisable at this point to consider how correspondences arose between things seeming so diverse as sounds, forms, colors and forces. It is evident that they could only come about through the existence of a common and primal cause reflecting itself everywhere in different elements and various forms of life. This primal unity lies at the root of all occult philosophy and science; the One becomes Many; the ideas latent in Universal Mind are thrown outwards into manifestation. In the Bhagavad-Gita (chap. IV) Krishna declares: “even though myself unborn, of changeless essence, and the lord of all existence, yet in presiding over nature—which is mine—I am born but through my own maya, the mystic power of self-ideation, the eternal thought in the eternal mind.” “I establish the universe with a single portion of myself and remain separate;” he says later on, and in so presiding he becomes the cause of the appearance of the different qualities. “I am in the taste in water, the light in the sun and moon, the mystic syllable *om* in all the Vedas, sound in space, the masculine essence in men, the sweet smell in the earth, the brightness in the fire” *etc.* Pouring forth then from one fountain we should expect to find correspondences running everywhere throughout nature; we should expect to find all these things capable of correlation. Coexistent with manifestation arise the ideas of time and space, and these qualities, attributes or forces, which are latent and unified in the germinal thought, undergo a dual transformation; they appear successively in time, and what we call evolution progresses through Kalpa after Kalpa and Manvantara after Manvantara: the moods which dominate these periods incarnate

in matter, which undergoes endless transformations and takes upon itself all forms in embodying these states of consciousness.



Page 43

The order in which these powers manifest is declared in the Puranas, Upanishads and Tantric works. It is that abstract formula of evolution which we can apply alike to the great and little things in nature. This may be stated in many ways, but to put it briefly, there is at first one divine Substance-Principle, Flame, Motion or the Great Breath; from this emanate the elements Akasa, ether, fire, air, water and earth; the spiritual quality becoming gradually lessened in these as they are further removed from their divine source; this is the descent into matter, the lowest rung of manifestation. "Having consolidated itself in its last principle as gross matter, it revolves around itself and informs with the seventh emanation of the last, the first and lowest element." (S.D. I, p. 297) This involution of the higher into the lower urges life upwards through the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, until it culminates in spiritually and self consciousness. It is not necessary here to go more into detail, it is enough to say that the elements in nature begin as passive qualities, their ethereal nature becomes gross, then positive and finally spiritual, and this abstract formula holds good for everything in nature. These changes which take place in the universe are repeated in man its microcosm, the cosmic force which acts upon matter and builds up systems of suns and planets, working in him repeats itself and builds up a complex organism which corresponds and is correlated with its cosmic counterpart. The individual spirit Purusha dwells in the heart of every creature, its powers ray forth everywhere; they pervade the different principles or vehicles; they act through the organs of sense; they play upon the different plexuses; every principle and organ being specialised as the vehicle for a particular force or state of consciousness. All the sounds we can utter have their significance; they express moods; they create forms; they arouse to active life within ourselves spiritual and psychic forces which are centered in various parts of the body. Hence the whole organism of man is woven through and through with such correspondences; our thoughts, emotions, sensations, the forces we use, colours and sounds acting on different planes are all correlated among themselves, and are also connected with the forces evolving present about us, in which we live and move. We find such correspondences form the subject matter of many Upanishads and other occult treatises; for example in Yajnavalkyasamhita, a treatise on Yoga philosophy, we find the sound "Ra" associated with the element of fire, Tejas Tatwa, with the God Rudra, with a centre in the body just below the heart. Other books add, as correspondences of Tejas Tatwa, that its colour is red, its taste is hot, its form is a triangle and its force is expansion. The correspondences given in different treatises often vary; but what we can gather with certainty is that there must have existed a complete science of the subject; the correlation of sound with such things, once understood, is the key which explains, not only the magic potency of sound, but also the constuction of those roots which remain as relics of the primitive Aryan speech.

Page 44

The thinking principle in man, having experiences of nature through its vehicles, the subtle, astral and gross physical bodies, translates these sensations into its own set of correspondences: this principle in man, called the Manas, is associated with the element of akasa, whose property is sound; the Manas moves about in akasa, and so all ideas which enter into the mind awaken their correspondences and are immediately mirrored in sound. Let us take as an instance the perception of the colour red; this communicated to the mind would set up a vibration, causing a sound to be thrown outwards in mental manifestation, and in this way the impulse would arise to utter the letter R, the correspondence of this colour. This Manasic principle in man, the real Ego, is eternal in its nature; it exists before and after the body, something accruing to it from each incarnation; and so, because there is present in the body of man this long-traveled soul, bearing with it traces of its eternal past, these letters which are the elements of its speech have impressed on them a correspondence, not only with the forces natural to its transitory surroundings, but also with that vaster evolution of nature in which it has taken part. These correspondences next claim our attention.

The correspondences here suggested do not I think at all exhaust the possible significance of any of the letters. Every sound ought to have a septenary relation to the planes of consciousness, and the differentiations of life, force and matter on each. Complete mastery of these would enable the knower to guide the various currents of force, and to control the elemental knower to guide the various currents of force, and to control the elemental beings who live on the astral planes, for these respond, we are told, "when the exact scale of being to which they belong is vibrated, whether it be that of colour, form, sound or whatever else," (Path, May, 1886) These higher interpretations I am unable to give; it requires the deeper being to know the deeper meaning. Those here appended may prove suggestive; I do not claim any finality or authority for them, but they may be interesting to students of the occult Upanishads where the mystic power of sound is continually dwelt upon.

The best method of arranging the letters is to begin with A and conclude with M or OO: between these lie all the other letters, and their successive order is determined by their spiritual or material quality. Following A we get letters with an ethereal or liquid sound, such as R, H, L or Y; they become gradually harsher as they pass from the A, following the order of nature in this. Half way we get letters like K, J, *Tchay*, S, or *Ish*; then they become softer, and the labials, like F, B and M, have something of the musical quality of the earlier sounds. If we arrange them in this manner, it will be found to approximate very closely to the actual order in which the sounds arise in the process of formation. We begin then with



Page 45

A—This represents God, creative force, the Self, the I, the beginning or first cause. “Among letters I am the vowel A,” says Krishna in the Bagavad. It is without colour, number or form.

R—This is motion, air, breath or spirit; it is also abstract desire, and here we find the teaching of the Rig-Veda in harmony. “Desire first arose in It which was the primal germ of mind, and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their hearts to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity.” The corresponding colour of this letter is Red.

H (hay) and L—Motion awakens Heat and Light which correspond respectively to H and L. That primordial ocean of being, says the book of Dzyan, was “fire and heat and motion:” which are explained as the noumenal essences of these material manifestations. The colour of H is Orange, of L yellow. L also conveys the sense of radiation.

Y (yea)—This letter signifies condensation, drawing together, the force of attraction, affinity. Matter at the stage of evolution to which this refers is gaseous, nebulous, or ethereal: the fire-mists in space gather together to become worlds. The colour Y is green.

W (way)—Water is the next element in manifestation: in cosmic evolution it is spoken of as chaos, the great Deep; its colour, I think, is indigo. After this stage the elements no longer manifest singly, but in pairs, or with a dual aspect.

G (gay) and K—Reflection and Hardness; matter becomes crystalline or metallic: the corresponding colour is blue.

S and Z—A further differentiation; matter is atomic: the abstract significance of number or seed is attached to these letters: their colour is violet.

J and Tchay—Earth and gross Substance: this is the lowest point in evolution; the worlds have now condensed into solid matter. The colour of these letters is orange.

N and Ng—Some new forces begin to work here; the corresponding sounds have, I think, the meaning of continuation and transformation or change: these new forces propel evolution in the upward or ascending arc: their colour is yellow.

D and T—The colour of these letters is red. The involution of the higher forces into the lower forms alluded to before now begins. D represents this infusion of life into matter; it is descent and involution, death or forgetfulness, perhaps, for a time to the incarnating power. T is evolution, the upward movement generating life; the imprisoned energies surge outwards and vegetation begins.



Ith and Ish—These correspond respectively to growth or expansion and vegetation; the earth, as Genesis puts it, “puts forth grass and herbs and trees yielding fruit.” The colour of these letters is green.

B and P—After the flora the fauna. B is Life or Being, animal and human. Humanity appears; B is masculine, P feminine. P has also a meaning of division, differentiation or production, which may refer to maternity. The colour here is blue.



Page 46

F and V—The colour is violet. Evolution moves still upwards, entering the ethereal planes once more. Lightness and vastness are the characteristics of this stage: we begin to permeate with part of our nature the higher spheres of being and reach the consummation in the last stage, represented by

M—which has many meanings; it is thought, it is the end or death to the personality, it is the Receiver into which all flows, it is also the Symbol of maternity in a universal sense, it has this meaning when the life impulse (which is always represented by a vowel) follows it, as in “ma.” It is the Pralaya of the worlds; the lips close as it is uttered. Its colour is indigo.

O—The last vowel sound symbolizes abstract space, the spirit assumes once more the garment of primordial matter; it is the Nirvana of eastern philosophy.

I will now try to show how the abstract significance of these sound reveals a deeper meaning in the roots of Aryan language than philologists generally allow. Prof. Max Muller says in the introduction to Biographies of Words. “Of ultimates in the sense of primary elements of language, we can never hope to know anything,” and he also asserts that the roots are incapable of further analysis. I will endeavour now to show that this further analysis can be made.

I should not be understood to say that all the so-called roots can be made to yield a secret meaning when analysed. Philologists are not all agreed as to what constitutes a root, or what words are roots, and in this general uncertainty it should not be expected that these correspondences, which as I have said are not complete, will apply in every instance. There are many other things which add to the difficulty; a root is often found to have very many different meanings; some of these may have arisen in the manner I suggest, and many more are derived from the primary meanings and are therefore not intuitive at all. The intuition will have to be exercised to discover what sensations would likely be awakened by the perception of an action or object; or if the root has an abstract significance, the thought must be analysed in order to discover its essential elements. I described previously the manner in which I thought a single sensation, the perception of the colour Red, would suggest its correspondence in sound, the letter R. Where the idea is more complex, a combination of two, three or four sounds are necessary to express it, but they all originate in the same way. The reader who desires to prove the truth of the theory here put forward can adopt either of two methods; he can apply the correspondences to the roots, or he may try for himself to create words expressing simple, elemental ideas by combining the necessary letters; and then, if he turns to the roots, he will probably find that many of the words he has created in this way were actually used long ago, and this practice will enable him more easily to understand in



Page 47

what sense, or on what plane, any particular letter should be taken. I think it probably that in the Sacred Language before mentioned, this could at once have been recognized by a difference in the intonation of the voice. This may have been a survival to some extent of the chanting which was the distinguishing characteristic of the speech of the Second Race. (Secret Doctrine, vol. II, p. 198) In the written language it is not easily possible to discover this without much thought, unless endeavour has previously been made to re-awaken the faculty of intuitive speech, which we formerly possessed and which became atrophied.

It is not possible here to go into the analysis of the roots at much length: I can only illustrate the method which will be found to apply more surely where the roots express most elemental conceptions. Let us take as example the root, Wal, to boil. Boiling is brought about by the action of fire upon water, and here we find the letters W, water, and L, light or fire, united. In War, to well up as a spring, the sounds for water and motion are combined. A similar idea is expressed in Wat, to well out; the abstract significance of T, which is to evolve, come forth or appear, being here applied to a special action. A good method to follow in order to understand how the pure abstract meaning of a letter may be applied in many different ways, is to take some of the roots in which any one letter is prominent and then compare them. Let us take D. It has an abstract relation to involution or infusion; it may be view in two ways, either as positive or negative; as the exertion of force or the reception of force. Now I think if we compare the following roots a similarity of action will be found to underlie them all. Id, to swell; Ad, to eat; Dhu, to put; Da, to bind; Ad, to smell; Du, to enter; Da, to suck.

I am not here going exhaustively to analyse the roots, as this is not an essay upon philology, but an attempt to make clear some of the mysteries of sound; those who wish to study this side of the subject more fully can study with this light the primitive languages. A few more examples must suffice. The root, Mar, to die, may be variously interpreted as the end of motion, the cessation of breath, or the withdrawal of spirit, R being expressive of what on various planes is motion, spirit, air and breath. In Bur, to be active, life and movement are combined; in Gla, to glow, reflection and light; the same idea is in Gol, a lake. We find combined in Kar, to grind, hardness and motion: in Thah, to generate, expansion and heat; in Pak, to comb, division and hardness, the suggestion being division with some hard object; the same idea is in Pik, to cut. In Pis, to pound, the letters for division and matter in its molecular state are combined: in Fath, to fly, lightness and expansion: in Yas, to gird, drawing together and number; in Rab, to be vehement, energy and life; in Rip, to break, energy



Page 48

and division. In Yudh, to fight, the meaning suggested may be, coming together to destroy. Without further analysis the reader will be able to detect the relation which the abstractions corresponding to each letter bear to the defined application in the following words. Ak, to be sharp; Ank, to bend; Idh, to kindle; Ar, to move; Al, to burn; Ka, to sharpen; Har, to burn; Ku, to hew; Sa, to produce; Gal, to be yellow or green; Ghar, to be yellow or green; Thak, to thaw; Tar, to go through; Thu, to swell; Dak, to bite; Nak, to perish; Pa, to nourish, to feed; Par, to spare; Pi, to swell, to be fat; Pu, to purify; Pu, to beget; pau, little; Put, to swell out; Flu, to fly, to float; Bar, to carry; Bhū, to be, to become; Bla, to blow as a flower; Ma, to think; Mak, to pound; Mi, to diminish; Mu, to shut up, to enclose; Yas, to seethe, to ferment; Ys, to bind together, to mix; Yuk, to yoke, to join; Ra, to love; Rik, to furrow; Luh, to shine; Rud, to redden, to be red; Lub, to lust [?]; Lu, to cast off from; Wag, to be moist; Wam, to spit out; So, to sow, to scatter; Sak, to cut, to cleave; Su, to generate; Swa, to toss; Swal, to boil up; Ska, to cut; Skap, to hew; Sniw, to snow; Spew, to spit out; Swid, to sweat; *etc.* An analysis of some sacred words and the names of Deities may now prove interesting.

It has been said that before we can properly understand the character of any deity we would have to know the meaning and the numbers attached to each letter in the name, for in this way the powers and functions of the various gods were indicated. If we take as examples names familiar to everyone, Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra, the three aspects of Parabrahm in manifestation, and analyse them in the same way as the roots, they will be found to yield up their essential meaning. Form the union of B, life, R, breath, and Ma, the producer, I would translate Brahma as “the creative breath of life.” Vishnu similarly analysed is the power that “pervades, expands, and preserves;” I infer this from the union of V, whose force is pervasion, Sh, expansion, and N, continuation. Rudra is “the breath that absorbs the breath.” Aum is the most sacred name of all names; it is held to symbolize the action of the Great breath from its dawn to its close: it is the beginning, A, the middle, U, and the close M. It is also an affirmation of the relation of our spiritual nature to the universal Deity whose aspects are Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra. I shall have more to say of the occult power of this word later on. Taken in conjunction with two other words, it is “the threefold designation of the Supreme Being.” Om Tat Sat has a significance referable to a still higher aspect of Deity than that other Trinity; the Om here signifies that it is the All; Tat that it is self-existent or self-evolved; I think the repetition of the T in Tat gives it this meaning: Sat would signify that in it are contained the seeds of all manifestation.



Page 49

H.P. Blavatsky translates this word as Be-ness, which seems to be another way of expressing the same idea. The mystic incantation familiar to all students of the Upanishads, Om, bhur, Om, Bhwar, Om, Svar," is an assertion of the existence of the Divine Self in all the three worlds or Lokas. Loka is generally translated as a place; the letters suggest to me that a place or world is only a hardening or crystalization of Fire or Light. In Bhur Loka the crystalization of the primordial element of Fire leaves only one principle active, the life principle generally called Prana. Bhur Loka then is the place where life is active; we have B, life, and R, movement, to suggest this. In the word Bhuvar a new letter, V, is inserted: this letter, as I have said, corresponds to the Astral world, so the Bhuvar Loka is the place where both the Astral and Life principles are active. It is more difficult to translate Svar Loka: there is some significance attached here to the letter S, which I cannot grasp. It might mean that this world contains the germs of Astral life; but this does not appear sufficiently distinctive, Svar Loka is generally known as Devachan, and the whole incantation would mean that the Deity is present throughout the Pranic, Astral and Devachanic worlds. It is interesting to note what is said in the Glossary by H.P.B., about these three words (p. 367): they are said to be "lit by and born of fire," and to possess creative powers. The repetition of them with the proper accent should awaken in the occultist the powers which correspond to the three worlds. I think by these examples that the student will be able to get closer to the true significance of incantation; those who understand the occult meaning of the colours attached to the letters will be able to penetrate deeper than others into these mysteries.

I may here say something about the general philosophy of incantation. There is said to be in nature a homogenous sound or tone which everywhere stirs up the molecules into activity. This is the "Word" which St. John says was in the beginning (the plane of causation); in another sense it is the Akasa of occult science, the element of sound, it is the Pythagorean "music of the spheres." The universe is built up, moulded and sustained by this element which is everywhere present, though inaudible by most men at this stage of evolution. It is not sound by the physical ears, but deep in the heart sometimes may be heard "the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights." The word Aum represents this homogeneous sound, it stirs up a power which is latent in it called the Yajna. The Glossary says that this "is one of the forms of Akasa within which the mystic word calls it into existence:" it is a bridge by means of which the soul can cross over to the world of the Immortals. It is this which is alluded to in the Nada-Bindu Upanishad. "The mind becoming insensible to the external impressions, becomes one with the sound, as milk with



Page 50

water, and then becomes rapidly absorbed in chidakas (the Akasa where consciousness pervades). The sound..... serves the purpose of a lure to the ocean waves of Chitta (mind), ...the serpent Chitta through listening to the Nada is entirely absorbed in it, and becoming unconscious of everything concentrates itself on the sound.” We may quote further from another Upanishad. “Having left behind the body, the organs and objects of sense, and having seized the bow whose stick is fortitude and whose string is asceticism, and having killed with the arrow of freedom from egoism the first guardian,he crosses by means of the boat Om to the other side of the ether within the heart, and when the ether is revealed he enters slowly, as a miner seeking minerals enters a mine, into the hall of Brahman. ...Thenceforth, pure, clean, tranquil, breathless, endless, imperishable, firm, unborn, and independent, he stands in his own greatness, and having seen the Self standing in his own greatness, he looks at the wheel of the world.”

Let no one think that this is all, and that the mere repetition of words will do anything except injure those who attempt the use of these methods without further knowledge. It has been said (Path, April, 1887) that Charity, Devotion, and the like virtues are structural necessities in the nature of the man who would make this attempt. We cannot, unless the whole nature has been purified by long services and sacrifice, and elevated into mood at once full of reverence and intense will, become sensitive to the subtle powers possessed by the spiritual soul.

What is here said about the Aum which is the name of our own God, and the way in which it draws forth the hidden power will serve to illustrate the method in using other words. The Thara-Sara Upanishad of Sukla-Yajur Veda says “Through Om is Brahm produced: through Na is Vishnu produced; through Ma is Rudra produced, *etc.*” All these are names of gods; they correspond to forces in man and nature, in their use the two are united, and the man mounts upwards to the Immortals.

I have been forced to compress what I had to say in these articles, I have only been able to suggest rather than put forward ideas, for my own knowledge of these correspondences is very incomplete. As far as I know the subject has been untouched hitherto, and this must be my excuse for the meagre nature of the information given. I hope later on to treat of the relation of sound and colour to form and to show how these correspondences will enable us to understand the language which the gods speak to us through flowers, trees, and natural forms. I hope also to be able to show that it was a knowledge of the relation of sound to form which dictated the form of the letters in many primaevial alphabets.

—5/15, 6/15, 7/15, 8/15, 9/15, 1893

At the Dawn of the Kaliyuga *



Page 51

Where we sat on the hillside together that evening the winds were low and the air was misty with light. The huge sunbrowned slope on which we were sitting was sprinkled over with rare spokes of grass; it ran down into the vagueness underneath where dimly the village could be seen veiled by its tresses of lazy smoke. Beyond was a bluer shade and a deeper depth, out of which, mountain beyond mountain, the sacred heights of Himalay rose up through star-sprinkled zones of silver and sapphire air. How gay were our hearts! The silent joy of the earth quickened their beating. What fairy fancies alternating with the sweetest laughter came from childish lips! In us the Golden Age whispered her last, and departed. Up came the white moon, her rays of dusty pearl slanting across the darkness from the old mountain to our feet. "A bridge!" we cried, "Primaveeta, who long to be a sky-walker, here is a bridge for you!"

Primaveeta only smiled; he was always silent; he looked along the gay leagues of pulsating light that lead out to the radiant mystery. We went on laughing and talking; then Primaveeta broke his silence.

"Vyassa," he said, "I went out in thought, I went into the light, but it was not that light. I felt like a fay; I sparkled with azure and lilac; I went on, and my heart beat with longing for I knew not what, and out and outward I sped till desire stayed and I paused, and the light looked into me full of meaning. I felt like a spark, and the dancing of the sea of joy bore me up, up, up!"

"Primaveeta, who can understand you?" said his little sister Vina, "you always talk of the things no one can see; Vyassa, sing for us."

"Yes! yes! let Vyassa sing!" they all cried; and they shouted and shouted until I began:

"Shadowy petalled, like the lotus, loom the mountains with their snows: Through the sapphire Soma rising, such a flood of glory throws As when the first in yellow splendour Brahma from the lotus rose.

"High above the darkening mounds where fade the fairy lights of day, All the tiny planet folk are waving us from far away; Thrilled by Brahma's breath they sparkle with the magic of the gay.

"Brahma, all alone in gladness, dreams the joys that throng in space, Shepherds all the whirling splendours onward to their resting place, Where at last in wondrous silence fade in One the starry race."

"Vyassa is just like Primaveeta, he is full of dreams to-night," said Vina. And indeed I was full of dreams; my laughter had all died away; a vague and indescribable unrest came over me; the universal air around seemed thrilled by the stirring of unknown

powers. We sat silent awhile; then Primaveeta cried out: “Oh, look, look, look, the Devas! the bright persons! they fill the air with their shining.”



Page 52

We saw them pass by and we were saddened, for they were full of solemn majesty; overhead a chant came from celestial singers full of the agony of farewell and departure, and we knew from their song that the gods were about to leave the earth which would nevermore or for ages witness their coming. The earth and the air around it seemed to tingle with anguish. Shuddering we drew closer together on the hillside while the brightness of the Devas passed onward and away; and clear cold and bright as ever, the eternal constellations, which change or weep not, shone out, and we were alone with our sorrow. To awe we were to speak, but we clung closer together and felt a comfort in each other; and so, crouched in silence; within me I heard as from far away a note of deeper anguish, like a horn blown out of the heart of the ancient Mother over a perished hero: in a dread moment I saw the death and the torment; he was her soul-point, the light she wished to shine among men. What would follow in the dark ages to come, rose up before me in shadowy, over-crowding pictures; like the surf of a giant ocean they fluctuated against the heavens, crested with dim, gigantesque and warring figures. I saw stony warriors rushing on to battle; I heard their fierce hard laughter as they rode over the trampled foe; I saw smoke arise from a horrible burning, and thicker and blacker grew the vistas, with here and there a glow from some hero-heart that kept the true light shining within. I turned to Primaveeta who was crouched beside me: he saw with me vision for vision, but, beyond the thick black ages that shut me out from hope, he saw the resurrection of the True, and the homecoming of the gods. All this he told me later, but now our tears were shed together. Then Primaveeta rose up and said, "Vyasa, where the lights were shining, where they fought for the True, there you and I must fight; for, from them spreads out the light of a new day that shall dawn behind the darkness." I saw that he was no longer a dreamer; his face was firm with a great resolve. I could not understand him, but I determined to follow him, to fight for the things he fought for, to work with him, to live with him, to die with him; and so, thinking and trying to understand, my thought drifted back to that sadness of the mother which I had first felt. I saw how we share joy or grief with her, and, seized with the inspiration of her sorrow, I sang about her loved one:—

"Does the earth grow grey with grief
For her hero darling fled?
Though her vales let fall no leaf,
In our hearts her tears are shed.

"Still the stars laugh on above,
Not to them her grief is said;
Mourning for her hero love
In our hearts her tears are shed.

"We her children mourn for him,
Mourn the elder hero dead;
In the twilight grey and dim
In our hearts the tears are shed."



“Vyassa,” they said, “you will break our hearts.” And we sat in silence and sorrow more complete till we heard weary voices calling up to us from the darkness below:

“Primaveeta! Vyassa! Chandra! Parvati! Vina! Vasudeva!” calling all our names. We went down to our homes in the valley; the breadth of glory had passed away from the world, and our hearts were full of the big grief that children hold.



Page 53

—October 15, 1893

* Note—Kaliyuga. The fourth, the black or iron age, our present period, the duration of which is 432,000 years. It began 3,102 years B.C. at the moment of Krishna's death, and the first cycle of 5,000 years will end between the years 1897 and 1898.

The Meditation of Parvati

Parvata rose up from his seat under the banyan tree. He passed his hand unsteadily over his brow. Throughout the day the young ascetic had been plunged in profound meditation, and now, returning from heaven to earth, he was dazed like one who awakens in darkness and knows not where he is. All day long before his inner eye burned the light of the Lokas, until he was wearied and exhausted with their splendours; space glowed like a diamond with intolerable lustre, and there was no end to the dazzling processions of figures. He had seen the fiery dreams of the dead in Swargam. He had been tormented by the sweet singing of the Gandharvas, whose choral song reflected in its ripples the rhythmic pulse of Being. He saw how the orbs, which held them, were set within luminous orbs still of wider circuit, and vaster and vaster grew the vistas, and smaller seemed the soul at gaze, until at last, a mere speck of life, he bore the burden of innumerable worlds. Seeking for Brahma, he found only the great illusion as infinite as Brahma's being.

If these things were shadows, the earth and the forests he returned to, viewed at evening, seemed still more unreal, the mere dusky flutter of a moth's wings in space. Filmly and evanescent, if he had sunk down as through a transparency into the void, it would not have been wonderful. Parvati turned homeward, still half in trance: as he threaded the dim alleys he noticed not the flaming eyes that regarded him from the gloom; the serpents rustling amid the undergrowths; the lizards, fire-flies, insects, the innumerable lives of which the Indian forest was rumourous; they also were but shadows. He paused half unconsciously at the village, hearing the sound of human voices, of children at play. He felt a throb of pity for these tiny being who struggled and shouted, rolling over each other in ecstasies of joy; the great illusion had indeed devoured them before whom the Devas once were worshipers. Then close beside him he heard a voice; its low tones, its reverence soothed him: there was something akin to his own nature in it; it awakened him fully. A little crowd of five or six people were listening silently to an old man who read from a palm-leaf manuscript. Parvati knew his order by the orange-coloured robes he wore; a Bhikshu of the new faith. What was his delusion?



Page 54

The old man lifted his head for a moment as the ascetic came closer, and then he continued as before. He was reading the "Legend of the Great King of Glory." Parvati listened to it, comprehending with the swift intuition and subtlety of a mystic the inner meaning of the Wonderful Wheel, the elephant Treasure, the Lake and palace of Righteousness. He followed the speaker, understanding all until he came to the meditation of the King: then he heard with vibrating heart, how "the Great King of Glory entered the golden chamber, and set himself down on the silver couch. And he let his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love: and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above below, around and everywhere, did he continue to pervade with heart of Love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure." When the old Bhikshu had ended, Parvati rose up, and went back again into the forest. He had found the secret of the True—to leave behind the vistas, and enter into the Being. Another legend rose up in his mind, a fairy legend of righteousness, expanding and filling the universe, a vision beautiful and full of old enchantment; his heart sang within him. He seated himself again under the banyan tree; he rose up in soul; he saw before him images, long-forgotten, of those who suffer in the sorrowful old earth; he saw the desolation and loneliness of old age, the insults to the captive, the misery of the leper and outcast, the chill horror and darkness of life in a dungeon. He drank in all their sorrow. For his heart he went out to them. Love, a fierce and tender flame arose; pity, a breath from the vast; sympathy, born of unity. This triple fire sent forth its rays; they surrounded those dark souls; they pervaded them; they beat down oppression.

While Parvati, with spiritual magic, sent forth the healing powers, far away at that moment, in his hall, a king sat enthroned. A captive was bound before him; bound, but proud, defiant, unconquerable of soul. There was silence in the hall until the king spake the doom, the torture, for this ancient enemy. The king spake: "I had thought to do some fierce thing to thee, and so end thy days, my enemy. But, I remember with sorrow, the great wrongs we have done to each other, and the hearts made sore by our hatred. I shall do no more wrong to thee. Thou art free to depart. Do what thou wilt. I will make restitution to thee as far as may be for thy ruined state." Then the soul no might could conquer was conquered, and the knees were bowed; his pride was overcome. "My brother!" he said, and could say no more.

To watch for years a little narrow slit high up in the dark cell, so high that he could not reach up and look out; and there to see daily a little change from blue to dark in the sky had withered that prisoner's soul. The bitter tears came no more; hardly even sorrow; only a dull, dead feeling. But that day a great groan burst from him: he heard outside the laugh of a child who was playing and gathering flowers under the high, grey walls: then it all came over him, the divine things missed, the light, the glory, and the beauty that the earth puts forth for her children. The narrow slit was darkened: half of a little bronze face appeared.



Page 55

“Who are you down there in the darkness who sigh so? Are you all alone there? For so many years! Ah, poor man! I would come down to you if I could, but I will sit here and talk to you for a while. Here are flowers for you,” and a little arm showered them in handfuls; the room was full of the intoxicating fragrance of summer. Day after day the child came, and the dull heart entered into human love once more.

At twilight, by a deep and wide river, sat an old woman alone, dreamy, and full of memories. The lights of the swift passing boats, and the lights of the stars, were just as in childhood and the old love-time. Old, feeble, it was time for her to hurry away from the place which changed not with her sorrow.

“Do you see our old neighbour there?” said Ayesha to her lover. “They say she once was as beautiful as you would make me think I am now. How lonely she must be! Let us come near and speak to her”; and the lover went gladly. Though they spoke to each other rather than to her, yet something of the past—which never dies when love, the immortal, has pervaded it—rose up again as she heard their voices. She smiled, thinking of years of burning beauty.

A teacher, accompanied by his chelas, was passing by the wayside where a leper was sitting. The teacher said, “Here is our brother whom we may not touch. But he need not be shut out from truth. We may sit down where he can listen.” He sat down on the wayside beside the leper, and his chelas stood around him. He spoke words full of love, kindness, and pity, the eternal truths which make the soul grow full of sweetness and youth. A small old spot began to glow in the heart of the leper, and the tears ran down his withered cheeks.

All these were the deeds of Parvati, the ascetic; and the Watcher who was over him from all eternity made a great stride towards that soul.

—November 15, 1893

A Talk by the Euphrates

Priest Merodach walked with me at evening along the banks of the great river.

“You feel despondent now,” he said, “but this was inevitable. You looked for a result equal to your inspiration. You must learn to be content with that alone. Finally an inspiration will come for every moment, and in every action a divine fire reveal itself.”

“I feel hopeless now. Why is this? Wish and will are not less strong than before.”

“Because you looked for a result beyond yourself, and, attached to external things, your mind drew to itself subtle essences of earth which clouded it. But there is more in it than that. Nature has a rhythm, and that part of us which is compounded of her

elements shares in it. You were taught that nature is for ever becoming: the first emanation in the great deep is wisdom: wisdom changes into desire, and an unutterable yearning to go outward darkens the primeval beauty. Lastly, the elements



Page 56

arise, blind, dark, troubled. Nature in them imagines herself into forgetfulness. This rhythm repeats itself in man: a moment of inspiration—wise and clear, we determine; then we are seized with a great desire which impels us to action; the hero, the poet, the lover, all alike listen to the music of life, and then endeavour to express its meaning in word or deed; coming in contact with nature, its lethal influence drowns them; so baffled and forgetful, they wonder where the God is. To these in some moment the old inspiration returns, the universe is as magical and sweet as ever, a new impulse is given, and so they revolve, perverting and using, each one in his own way, the cosmic rhythm.”

“Merodach, what you say seems truth, and leaving aside the cosmic rhythm, which I do not comprehend, define again for me the three states.”

“You cannot really understand the little apart from the great; but, applying this to your own case, you remember you had a strange experience, a God seemed to awaken within you. This passed away; you halted a little while, full of strange longing, eager for the great; yet you looked without on the hither side of that first moment, and in this second period, which is interchange and transition, your longing drew to you those subtle material essences I spoke of, which, like vapour surround, dull and bewilder the mind with strange phantasies of form and sensation. Every time we think with longing of any object, these essences flow to us out of the invisible spheres and steep us with the dew of matter: then we forget the great, we sleep, we are dead or despondent as you are despondent.”

I sighed as I listened. A watchfulness over momentary desires was the first step; I had thought of the tasks of the hero as leading upwards to the Gods, but this sleepless intensity of will working within itself demanded a still greater endurance. I neared my destination; I paused and looked round; a sudden temptation assailed me; the world was fair enough to live in. Why should I toil after the far-off glory? Babylon seemed full of mystery, its temples and palaces steeped in the jewel glow and gloom of evening. In far-up heights of misty magnificence the plates of gold on the temples rayed back the dying light: in the deepening vault a starry sparkle began: an immense hum arose from leagues of populous streets: the scents of many gardens by the river came over me: I was lulled by the splash of fountains. Closer I heard voices and a voice I loved: I listened as a song came

“Tell me, youthful lover, whether
Love is joy or woe?
Are they gay or sad together
On that way who go?”

A voice answered back



“Radiant as a sunlit feather,
Pure and proud they go;
With the lion look together
Glad their faces show.”

My sadness departed; I would be among them shortly, and would walk and whisper amid those rich gardens where beautiful idleness was always dreaming. Merodach looked at me.



Page 57

“You will find these thoughts will hinder you much,” he said.

“You mean—” I hesitated, half-bewildered, half-amazed. “I say that a thought such as that which flamed about you just now, driving your sadness away, will recur again when next you are despondent, and so you will accustom yourself to find relief on the great quest by returning to an old habit of the heart, renewing what should be laid aside. This desire of men and women for each other is the strongest tie among the many which bind us: it is the most difficult of all to overcome. The great ones of the earth have passed that way themselves with tears.”

“But surely, Merodach, you cannot condemn what I may say is so much a part of our nature—of all nature.”

“I did not condemn it, when I said it is the strongest tie that binds us here: it is sin only for those who seek for freedom.”

“Merodach, must we then give up love?”

“There are two kinds of love men know of. There is one which begins with a sudden sharp delight—it dies away into infinite tones of sorrow. There is a love which wakes up amid dead things: it is a chill at first, but it takes root, it warms, it expands, it lays hold of universal joys. So the man loves: so the God loves. Those who know this divine love are wise indeed. They love not one or another: they are love itself. Think well over this: power alone is not the attribute of the Gods; there are no such fearful spectres in that great companionship. And now, farewell, we shall meet again.”

I watched his departing figure, and then I went on my own way. I longed for that wisdom, which they only acquire who toil, and strive, and suffer; but I was full of a rich life which longed for excitement and fulfilment, and in that great Babylon sin did not declare itself in its true nature, but was still clouded over by the mantle of primeval beauty.

—December 15, 1893

The Cave of Lilith

Out of her cave came the ancient Lilith; Lilith the wise; Lilith the enchantress. There ran a little path outside her dwelling; it wound away among the mountains and glittering peaks, and before the door, one of the Wise Ones walked to and fro. Out of her cave came Lilith, scornful of his solitude, exultant in her wisdom, flaunting her shining and magical beauty.

“Still alone, star gazer! Is thy wisdom of no avail? Thou hast yet to learn that I am more powerful knowing the ways of error than you who know the ways of truth.”



The Wise One heeded her not, but walked to and fro. His eyes were turned to the distant peaks, the abode of his brothers. The starlight fell about him; a sweet air came down the mountain path, fluttering his white robe; he did not cease from his steady musing. Like a mist rising between rocks wavered Lilith in her cave. Violet, with silvery gleams her raiment; her face was dim; over her head rayed a shadowy diadem, the something a man imagines over the head of his beloved—looking closer at her face he would have seen that this was the crown he reached out to, that the eyes burnt with his own longing, that the lips were parted to yield to the secret wishes of his heart.



Page 58

“Tell me, for I would know, why do you wait so long? I, here in my cave between the valley and the height blind the eyes of all who would pass. Those who by chance go forth to you come back to me again, and but one in ten thousand passes on. My delusions are sweeter to them than truth. I offer every soul its own shadow; I pay them their own price. I have grown rich, though the simple shepards of old gave me birth. Men have made me; the mortals have made me immortal. I rose up like a vapour from their first dreams, and every sigh since then and every laugh remains with me. I am made up of hopes and fears. The subtle princes lay out their plans of conquest in my cave, and there the hero dreams, and there the lovers of all time write in flame their history. I am wise, holding all experience, to tempt, to blind, to terrify. None shall pass by. Why, therefore, dost thou wait?”

The Wise One looked at her and she shrank back a little, and a little her silver and violet faded, but out of her cave her voice still sounded:

“The stars and the starry crown are not yours alone to offer, and every promise you make, I make also. I offer the good and the bad indifferently. The lover, the poet, the mystic, and all who would drink of the first Fountain, I delude with my mirage. I was the Beatrice who led Dante upward: the gloom was in me, and the glory was mine also, and he went not out of my cave. The stars and the shining of heaven were delusions of the infinite I wove about him. I captured his soul with the shadow of space; a nutshell would have contained the film. I smote on the dim heart-chords the manifold music of being. God is sweeter in the human than the human in God: therefore he rested in me.”

She paused a little, and then went on.

“There is that fantastic fellow who slipped by me—could your wisdom not keep him? He returned to me full of anguish, and I wound my arms round him like a fair melancholy, and now his sadness is as sweet to him as hope was before his fall. Listen to his song.” She paused again. A voice came up from the depths chanting a sad knowledge

“What of all the will to do?
It has vanished long ago,
For a dream shaft pierced it through
From the unknown Archer’s bow.

What of all the soul to think?
Some one offered it a cup
Filled with a diviner drink,
And the flame has burned it up.



What of all the hope to climb?
Only in the self we grope
To the misty end of time;
Truth has put an end to hope.

What of all the heart to love?
Sadder than for will or soul,
No light lured it on above;
Love has found itself the whole.”

“Is it not pitiful? I pity only those who pity themselves. Yet he is mine more surely than ever. This is the end of human wisdom. How shall he now escape? What shall draw him up?”



Page 59

“His will shall awaken,” said the Wise One. “I do not sorrow over him, for long is the darkness before the spirit is born. He learns in your caves not to see, not to hear, not to think, for very anguish flying your delusions.”

“Sorrow is a great bond,” Lilith said.

“It is a bond to the object of sorrow. He weeps what thou can never give him, a life never breathed in thee. He shall come forth, and thou shalt not see him at the time of passing. When desire dies, will awakens, the swift, the invisible. He shall go forth, and one by one the dwellers in your caves will awaken and pass onwards; this small old path will be trodden by generation after generation. You, too, oh, shining Lilith, will follow, not as mistress, but as hand-maiden.”

“I shall weave spells,” Lilith cried. “They shall never pass me. With the sweetest poison I will drug them. They will rest drowsily and content as of old. Were they not giants long ago, mighty men and heroes? I overcame them with young enchantment. Will they pass by feeble and longing for bygone joys, for the sins of their proud exultant youth, while I have grown into a myriad wisdom?”

The Wise One walked to and fro as before, and there was silence, and I thought I saw that with steady will he pierced the tumultuous gloom of the cave, and a heart was touched here and there in its blindness. And I thought I saw that Sad Singer become filled with a new longing to be, and that the delusions of good and evil fell from him, and that he came at last to the knees of the Wise One to learn the supreme truth. In the misty midnight I hear these three voices, the Sad Singer, the Enchantress Lilith, and the Wise One. From the Sad Singer I learned that thought of itself leads nowhere, but blows the perfume from every flower, and cuts the flower from every tree, and hews down every tree from the valley, and in the end goes to and fro in waste places gnawing itself in a last hunger. I learned from Lilith that we weave our own enchantment, and bind ourselves with our own imagination; to think of the true as beyond us, or to love the symbol of being, is to darken the path to wisdom, and to debar us from eternal beauty. From the Wise One I learned that the truest wisdom is to wait, to work, and to will in secret; those who are voiceless today, tomorrow shall be eloquent, and the earth shall hear them, and her children salute them. Of these three truths the hardest to learn is the silent will. Let us seek for the highest truth.

—February 15, 1894

A Strange Awakening

Chapter I.



Page 60

That we are living in the Dark Age we all know, yet we do not realise half its darkness. We endure physical and moral suffering; but, fortunately or unfortunately, we are oblivious of the sorrow of all sorrows—the Spiritual Tragedy. Such a rust has come over the pure and ancient spirit of life, that the sceptre and the diadem and the starry sway we held are unremembered; and if anyone speaks of these things he is looked at strangely with blank eyes, or with eyes that suspect madness. I do not know whether to call him great, or pity him, who feels such anguish; for although it is the true agony of the crucifixion, it is only gods who are so martyred. With these rare souls memory is not born: life flows on, and they with it go on in dreams: they are lulled by lights, flowers, stars, colours, and sweet odours, and are sheltered awhile from heaven and hell; then in some moment the bubble bursts, and the god awakens and knows himself, and he rises again with giant strength to conquer; or else he succumbs, and the waves of Lethe, perhaps in mercy, blot out his brief knowledge.

I knew such an one many years ago, and I tell of him because I know of no deeper proof of the existence of a diviner nature than that man's story. Arthur Harvey, as I have heard people describe him, in his early years was gentle, shy, and given to much dreaming. He was taken from school early, came up from the country to the city, and was put to business. He possessed the apathy and unresisting nature characteristic of so many spiritual people, and which is found notably among the natives of India; so he took his daily confinement at first as a matter of course, though glad enough when it was over, and the keen sweet air blew about him in spring or summer evenings, and the earth looked visionary, steeped in dew and lovely colour, and his soul grew rich with strange memories and psychic sensations. And so day-by-day he might have gone on with the alternation of work and dream, and the soul in its imaginings might never have known of the labours of the mind, each working by habit in its accustomed hour, but for an incident which took place about two years after his going to business.

One morning his manager said: "Harvey, take this letter; deliver it, and wait for an answer." He started up eagerly, glad for the unwonted freedom from his desk. At the door, as he went out, the whole blinding glory of the sunlight was dashed on him. He looked up. Ah! what spaces illimitable of lustrous blue. How far off! How mighty! He felt suddenly faint, small, mean, and feeble. His limbs trembled under him: he shrank from the notice of men as he went on his way. Vastness, such as this, breaking in upon the eye that had followed the point of the pen, unnerved him: he felt a bitter self-contempt. What place had he amid these huge energies? The city deafened him as with one shout: the tread of the multitude; the mob of vehicles; glitter and shadow; rattle,

Page 61

roar, and dust; the black smoke curled in the air; higher up the snowy and brilliant clouds, which the tall winds bore along; all were but the intricate and wondrous workings of a single monstrous personality; a rival in the universe who had absorbed and wrested from him his own divine dower. Out of him; out of him, the power—the free, the fearless—whirled in play, and drove the suns and stars in their orbits, and sped the earth through light and shadow. Out of him; out of him; never to be reconquered; never to be regained. The exultant laugh of the day; the flame of summer; the gigantic winds careering over the city; the far-off divine things filled him with unutterable despair. What was he amid it all? A spark decaying in its socket; a little hot dust clinging together.

He found himself in a small square; he sat down on a bench; his brain burning, his eyes unseeing.

“Oh! my, what’s he piping over?” jeered a grotesque voice, and a small figure disappeared, turning somersaults among the bushes.

“Poor young man! Perhaps he is ill. Are you not well, sir?” asked a sympathetic nurse.

He started up, brought to himself, and muttering something unintelligible, continued his journey through the city. The terrible influence departed, and a new change came over him. The laugh of the urchin rankled in his mind: he hated notice: there must be something absurd or out of the common in his appearance to invoke it. He knew suddenly that there was a gulf between him and the people he lived among. They were vivid, actual, suited to their places. How he envied them! Then the whole superficies of his mind became filled with a desire to conceal this difference. He recalled the various characteristics of those who worked along with him. One knew all topical songs, slang and phrases; another affected a smartness in dress; a third discussed theatres with semi-professional knowledge. Harvey, however, could never have entered the world, or lived in it, if he had first to pass through the portals of such ideas! He delivered his letter; he was wearied out, and as he returned he noticed neither sky nor sunlight, and the hurrying multitudes were indifferent and without character. He passed through them; his mind dull like theirs; a mere machine to guide rapid footsteps.

That evening, a clerk named Whittaker, a little his senior in the office, was struck by Harvey’s curious and delicate face.

“I say, Harvey,” he said, “how do you spend your evenings?”

Harvey flushed a little at the unwonted interest.

“I take long walks,” he said.

“Do you read much?”



“A little.”

“Do you go to the theatre?”

“No.”

“Never?”

“Never.”

“Whew! what a queer fellow! No clubs, classes, music-halls— anything of the sort, eh?”

“No,” said Harvey, a little bitterly, “I know nothing, nobody; I am always alone.”



Page 62

“What an extraordinary life! Why, you are out of the universe completely. I say,” he added, “come along with me this evening. I will initiate you a little. You know you must learn your profession as a human being.”

His manner was very kindly; still Harvey was so shy that he would have found some excuse, but for that chance expression, “out of the universe.” Was not this apartness the very thing he had just been bitterly feeling? While he hesitated and stammered in his awkwardness, the other said: “There, no excuses! You need not go to your lodgings for tea. Come along with me.”

They went off together through the darkening streets. One cheerful and irreverent, brimful of remark or criticism; the other silent, his usual dreaminess was modified, but had not departed, and once, gazing up through the clear, dark blue, where the stars were shining, he had a momentary sense as if he were suspended from them by a fine invisible thread, as a spider hung from her roof; suspended from on high, where the pure and ancient aether flamed around the habitations of eternity; and below and about him, the thoughts of demons, the smoke, darkness, horror and anguish of the pit.

Chapter II.

I Cannot tell all the steps by which the young soul came forth from its clouds and dreams, but must hurry over the years. This single incident of his boyhood I have told to mark the character and tendency of his development; spirituality made self-conscious only in departing; life, a falling from ideals which grew greater, more beautiful and luminous as the possibility of realizing them died away. But this ebbtide of inner life was not regular and incessant, but rather after the fashion of waves which retreat surely indeed, but returning again and again, seem for moments to regain almost more than their past altitude. His life was a series of such falls and such awakenings. Every new experience which drew his soul from its quietude brought with it a revelation of a spiritual past, in which, as it now seemed, he had been living unconsciously. Every new experience which enriched his mind seemed to leave his soul more barren. The pathetic anguish of these moments had little of the moral element, which was dormant and uncultivated rather than perverted. He did not ponder over their moral aspect, for he shared the superficial dislike to the ethical, which we often see in purely artistic natures, who cannot endure the entrance of restraint or pain upon their beauty. His greatest lack was the companionship of fine men or noble women. He had shot up far beyond the reach of those whom he knew, and wanting this companionship he grew into a cynical or sensuous way of regarding them. He began to write: he had acquired the faculty of vigorous expression by means of such emotions as were tinged with a mystical voluptuousness which was the other pole to his inner, secret and spiritual



Page 63

being. The double strain upon his energies, which daily work and nightly study with mental productiveness involved, acted injuriously upon his health, and after a year he became so delicate that he could carry on neither one nor other of his avocations without an interval of complete rest. Obtaining leave from his employers, he went back for a period of six weeks to the village where he had been born. Here in the early summer and sunshine his health rapidly improved; his mind even more than his body drank deep draughts of life; and here, more than at any period in his life, did his imagination begin to deal with mighty things, and probe into the secret mysteries of life, and here passed into the long descended line by which the human spirit passed from empire; he began to comprehend dimly by what decadence from starry state the soul of man is ushered into the great visible life. These things came to him not clearly as ideas, but rather as shadowy and shining vision thrown across the air of dawn of twilight as he moved about.

Not alone did this opulence of spiritual life make him happy, another cause conspired with it to this end. He had met a nature somewhat akin to his own: Olive Rayne, the woman of his life.

As the days passed over he grew eager not to lose any chance of speech with her, and but two days before his departure he walked to the village hoping to see her. Down the quiet English lane in the evening he passed with the rapid feet that bear onward unquiet or feverish thought. The clear fresh air communicated delight to him; the fields grown dim, the voice of the cuckoo, the moon like a yellow globe cut in the blue, the cattle like great red shadows driven homeward with much unnecessary clamour by the children; all these flashed in upon him and became part of him: ready made accessories and backgrounds to his dreams, their quietness stilled and soothed the troubled beauty of passion. His pace lessened as he came near the village, half wondering what would serve as excuse for visits following one so soon upon the other. Chance served as excuse. He saw her grey dress, her firm upright figure coming out from among the lilac bushes at the gate of her father's house. She saw Harvey coming towards her and waited for him with a pleasant smile. Harvey, accustomed to introspect and ideal imaginings, here encountered no shock gazing upon the external. Some last light of day reflected upward from the white gate-post, irradiated her face, and touched with gold the delicate brown hair, the nostrils, lips, chin, and the lilac of her throat. Her features were clear-cut, flawless; the expression exquisitely grave and pure; the large grey eyes had that steady glow which shows a firm and undisturbed will. In some undefinable way he found himself thinking of the vague objects of his dreams, delicate and subtle things, dew, starlight, and transparencies rose up by some affinity. He rejected them—not those—then a strong warrior with a look of pity on his face appeared and disappeared: all this quick as a flash before she spoke.



Page 64

"I am going doctoring," she said. "Old nurse Winder is ill, and my father will not be back until late." Mr. Rayne was the country doctor.

"May I go with you?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, why not? But I have first to call at two or three places on the way."

He went with her. He was full of wonder at her. How could she come out of her own world of aspiration and mystic religion and show such perfect familiarity, ease and interest in dealing with these sordid village complaints, moral and physical? Harvey was a man who disliked things like these which did not touch his sense of beauty. He could not speak to these people as she did: he could not sympathize with them. The pain of the old woman made him shrink into himself almost with more disgust than pity. While Olive was bending over her tenderly and compassionately, he tried to imagine what it was inspired such actions and such self-forgetfulness. Almost it seemed for a moment to him as if some hidden will in the universe would not let beauty rest in its own sphere, but bowed it down among sorrows continually. He felt a feeling of relief as they came out again into the night.

It was a night of miracle and wonder. Withdrawn far aloft into fairy altitudes, the stars danced with a gaiety which was more tremendous and solemn than any repose. The night was wrought out of a profusion of delicate fires. The grass, trees, and fields glowed with the dusky colours of rich pottery. Everywhere silence; everywhere the exultant breathing of life, subtle, universal, penetrating. Into the charmed heart fell the enchantment we call ancient, though the days have no fellows, nor will ever have any. Harvey, filled up with this wonder, turned to his companion.

"See how the Magician of the Beautiful blows with his mystic breath upon the world! How tremulous the lights are; what stillness! How it banishes the memory of pain!"

"Can you forget pain so easily? I hardly noticed the night—it is wonderful indeed. But the anguish it covers and enfolds everywhere I cannot forget."

"I could not bear to think of pain at any time, still less while these miracles are over and around us. You seem to me almost to seek pain like a lover. I cannot understand you. How can you bear the ugly, the mean, the sordid—the anguish which you meet. You—so beautiful?"

"Can you not understand?" she said, almost impetuously. "Have you never felt pity as universal as the light that floods the world? To me a pity seems to come dropping, dropping, dropping from that old sky, upon the earth and its anguish. God is not indifferent. Love eternal encircles us. Its wishes are for our redemption. Its movements are like the ripples starting from the rim of a pond that overcome the outgoing ripples and restore all to peace."

“But what is pain if there is this love?” asked Harvey.

“Ah, how can I answer you? Yet I think it is the triumph of love pushing back sin and rebellion. The cry of this old nature being overcome is pain. And this is universal, and goes on everywhere, through we cannot comprehend it; and so, when we yield to this divine love, and accept the change, we find in pain a secret sweetness. It is the first thrill that heralds an immense dawn.”



Page 65

“But why do you say it is universal? Is not that a frightful thought?”

“If God is the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, then the life of Christ on earth was a symbol—must be a symbol—of what endures for ever: the Light and Darkness for ever in conflict: a crucifixion in eternity.”

This belief, so terrible, so pathetic, so strange, coming from this young girl affected Harvey profoundly. He did not reject it. The firmness and surety of her utterance, the moral purity of her character, appealed to him who felt his own lack of clear belief and heroic purpose. Like all spiritual people, he assimilated easily the spiritual moods of those whom he came into contact with. Coming from her, the moral, pathetic, and Christian doctrine had that element of beauty which made it blend with his ideal paganism. As he went homewards he pondered over her words, her life, her thoughts. He began to find an inexpressible beauty in her pity, as a feeling welling up from unknown depths, out of the ancient heart of things. Filled with this pity he could overcome his dislike of pain and go forth as the strong warrior of his momentary vision. He found himself repeating again and again her words: “We find in pain a secret sweetness—a secret sweetness—a secret sweetness.” If he could only find it, what might he not dare, to what might he not attain? And revolving all these things upon his restless pillow, there came over him one of those mystic moods I have spoken of: wandering among dim originals, half in dream and half in trance, there was unfolded within him this ancient legend of the soul:—

There was a great Gloom and a great Glory in nature, and the legions of darkness and the glorious hosts were at war perpetually with one another. Then the Ancient of Days, who holds all this within himself, moved the Gloom and the Glory together: the Sons of the Bright Fire he sent into the darkness, and the children of Darkness he brought unto the gates of the day. And in the new life formed out of the union of these two, pain, self-conscious, became touched with a spiritual beauty, and those who were of the Hosts of Beauty wore each one a Crown of Thorns upon the brow.

Chapter III.

Harvey rose up early; as he walked to and fro in the white dawn, he found the answers to every question in his mind: they rose up with a sweet and joyful spontaneity. Life became filled with happiest meaning: a light from behind the veil fell upon the things he had before disliked, and in this new light, pain, sorrow, and the old moralities were invested with a significance undreamt of before. In admitting into his own mind Olive Rayne's ideas, he removed something of their austerity: what he himself rejected, seen in her, added another and peculiar interest to the saintly ideal of her which he had formed. She had once said, peace and rest were



Page 66

inconceivable while there existed strife and suffering in nature. Nowhere could there be found refuge; drawing near unto the divine, this pain only became wider, more intense, almost insufferable, feeling and assimilating the vastness of divine sorrow brooding over the unreclaimed deep. This pity, this consciousness of pain, not her own, filling her own, filling her life, marked her out from everyone he knew. She seemed to him as one consecrated. Then this lover in his mystic passion passed in the contemplation of his well-beloved from the earthly to the invisible soul. He saw behind and around her a form unseen by others; a form, spiritual, pathetic, of unimaginable beauty, on which the eternal powers kept watch, which they nourished with their own life, and on which they inflicted their own pain. This form was crowned, but with a keen-pointed radiance from which there fell a shadowy dropping. As he walked to and fro in the white dawn he made for her a song, and inscribed it.

To One Consecrated

Your paths were all unknown to us:
We were so far away from you,
We mixed in thought your spirit thus—
With whiteness, stars of gold, and dew.

The mighty mother nourished you:
Her breath blew from her mystic bowers:
Their elfin glimmer floated through
The pureness of your shadowy hours.

The mighty mother made you wise;
Gave love that clears the hidden ways:
Her glooms were glory to your eyes;
Her darkness but the Fount of Days.

She made all gentleness in you,
And beauty radiant as the morn's:
She made our joy in yours, then threw
Upon your head a crown of thorns.

Your eyes are filled with tender light,
For those whose eyes are dim with tears;
They see your brow is crowned and bright,
But not its ring of wounding spears.

We can imagine no discomfiture while the heavenly light shines through us. Harvey, though he thought with humility of his past as impotent and ignoble in respect of action,



felt with his rich vivid consciousness that he was capable of entering into her subtlest emotions. He could not think of the future without her; he could not give up the hope of drawing nigh with her to those mysteries of life which haunted them both. His thought, companioned by her, went ranging down many a mystic year. He began to see strange possibilities, flashes as of old power, divine magic to which all the world responded, and so on till the thought trembled in vistas ending in a haze of flame. Meanwhile, around him was summer: gladness and youth were in his heart, and so he went on dreaming — forecasting for the earth and its people a future which belongs only to the spiritual soul—dreaming of happy years even as a child dreams.

Later on that evening, while Olive was sitting in her garden, Dr. Rayne came out and handed her a bundle of magazines.

“There are some things in these which may interest you, Olive,” he said: “Young Harvey writes for them, I understand. I looked over one or two. They are too mystical for me. You will hardly find them mystical enough.”



Page 67

She took the papers from him without much interest, and laid them beside her on the seat. After a time she took them up. As she read her brows began to knit, and her face grew cold. These verses were full of that mystical voluptuousness which I said characterised Harvey's earlier productions; all his rich imagination was employed to centre interest upon moments of half-sensual sensations; the imagery was used in such a way that nature seemed to aid and abet the emotion; out of the heart of things, out of wild enchantment and eternal revelry shot forth into the lives of men the fires of passion. Nothing could be more unlike the Christ-soul which she worshiped as underlying the universe and on which she had reliance.

"He does not feel pity; he does not understand love," she murmured. She felt a cold anger arise; she who had pity for most things felt that a lie had been uttered defiling the most sacred things in the Holy of Holies, the things upon which her life depended. She could never understand Harvey, although he had been included in the general kindness with which she treated all who came near her; but here he seemed revealed, almost vaunting an inspiration from the passionate powers who carry on their ancient war against the Most High.

The lights were now beginning to fade about her in the quiet garden when the gate opened, and someone came down the path. It was Harvey. In the gloom he did not notice that her usual smile was lacking, and besides he was too rapt in his own purpose. He hesitated for a moment, then spoke.

"Olive," he said tremulously, "as I came down the lanes to say good-bye to you my heart rebelled. I could not bear the thought: Olive, I have learned so many things from you; your words have meant so much to me that I have taken them as the words of God. Before I knew you I shrank from pain; I wandered in search of a false beauty. I see now the purpose of life—to carry on the old heroic battle for the true; to give the consolation of beauty to suffering; to become so pure that through us may pass that divine pity which I never knew until you spoke, and I then saw it was the root of all life, and there was nothing behind it—such magic your words have. My heart was glad this morning for you at this truth, and I saw in it the power which would transfigure the earth. Yet all this hope has come to me through you; I half hold it still through you. To part from you now—it seems to me would be like turning away from the guardian of the heavenly gateway. I know I have but little to bring you. I must make all my plea how much you are to me when I ask can you love me."

She had hardly heard a word of all he said. She was only conscious that he was speaking of love. What love? Had he not written of it? It would have emptied Heaven into the pit. She turned and faced him, speaking coldly and deliberately:



Page 68

“You could speak of love to me, and write and think of it like this!” She placed her hand on the unfortunate magazines. Harvey followed the movement of her arm. He took the papers up, then suddenly saw all as she turned and walked away,—what the passion of these poems must have seemed to her. What had he been in her presence that could teach her otherwise? Only a doubter and questioner. In a dreadful moment his past rose up before him, dreamy, weak, sensual. His conscience smote him through and through. He could find no word to say. Self-condemned, he moved blindly to the gate and went out. He hardly knew what he was doing. Before him the pale dry road wound its way into the twilight amid the hedges and cottages. Phantasmal children came and went. There seemed some madness in all they were doing. Why did he not hear their voices? They ran round and round; there should have been cries or laughter or some such thing. Then suddenly something seemed to push him forward, and he went on blankly and walked down the lane. In that tragic moment his soul seemed to have deserted him, leaving only a half-animal consciousness. With dull attention he wondered at the muffled sound of his feet upon the dusty road, and the little puffs of smoke that shot out before them. Every now and then something would throb fiercely for an instant and be subdued. He went on and on. His path lay across some fields. He stopped by force of habit and turned aside from the road. Again the same fierce throb. In a wild instant he struggled for recollection and self-mastery, and then the smothered soul rushed out of the clouds that oppressed it. Memories of hope and shame: the morning gladness of his heart: the brilliant and spiritual imaginations that inspired him: their sudden ending: the degradation and drudgery of the life he was to return to on the morrow: all rose up in tumultuous conflict. A feeling of anguish that was elemental and not of the moment filled him. Drifting and vacillating nature—he saw himself as in a boat borne along by currents that carried him, now near isles of beauty, and then whirled him away from their vanishing glory into gloomy gulfs and cataracts that went down into blackness. He was master neither of joy nor sorrow. Without will: unpractical; with sensitiveness which made joy a delirium and gloom a very hell; the days he went forward to stretched out iron hands to bind him to the deadly dull and commonplace. These vistas, intolerable and hopeless, overcame him. He threw himself down in his despair. Around his head pressed the cool grasses wet with dew. Strange and narrow, the boundary between heaven and hell! All around him primeval life innocent and unconscious was at play. All around him, stricken with the fever of life, that Power which made both light and darkness, inscrutable in its workings, was singing silently the lovely carol of the flowers.

Chapter IV.



Page 69

Little heaps of paper activities piled themselves up, were added to, diminished, and added to again, all the day long before Harvey at his desk. He had returned to his work: there was an unusual press of business, and night after night he was detained long beyond the usual hours. The iron hand which he had foreseen was laid upon him: it robbed him even of his right to sorrow, the time to grieve. But within him at moments stirred memories of the past, poignant anguish and fierce rebellion. With him everything transformed itself finally into ideal images and aspects, and it was not so much the memory of an incident which stung him as the elemental sense of pain in life itself. He felt that he was debarred from a heritage of spiritual life which he could not define even to himself. The rare rays of light that slanted through the dusty air of the office, mystic gold fallen through inconceivable distances from the pure primeval places, wakened in him an unutterable longing: he felt a choking in his throat as he looked. Often, at night, too, lifting his tired eyes from the pages flaring beneath the bright gas jet, he could see the blueness deepen rich with its ancient clouds of starry dust. What pain it was to him, immemorial quiet, passivity and peace, though over it a million tremors fled and chased each other throughout the shadowy night! What pain it was to let the eyes fall low and see about him the pale and feverish faces looking ghostly through the hot, fetid, animal, and flickering air!

His work over, out into the night he would drag himself wearily— out into the night anywhere; but there no more than within could he escape from that power which haunted him with mighty memories, the scourge which the Infinite wields. Nature has no refuge for those in whom the fire of spirit has been kindled: earth has no glory for which it does not know a greater glory. As Harvey passed down the long streets, twinkling with their myriad lights fading into blue and misty distances, there rose up before him in the visionary air solemn rows of sphinxes in serried array, and starlit pyramids and temples—greatness long dead, a dream that mocked the lives around him, hoarding the sad small generations of humanity dwindling away from beauty. Gone was the pure and pale splendour of the primeval skies and the lustre of the first-born of stars. But even this memory, which linked him in imagination to the ideal past, was not always his: he was weighted, like all his race, with an animal consciousness which cried out fiercely for its proper life, which thirsted for sensation, and was full of lust and anger. The darkness was not only about him, but in him, and struggled there for mastery. It threw up forms of meanness and horrible temptations which clouded over his soul; their promise was forgetfulness; they seemed to say: “Satisfy us, and your infinite longing shall die away: to be of clay is very dull and comfortable; it is the common lot.”



Page 70

One night, filled with this intolerable pain, as he passed through the streets he yielded to the temptation to kill out this torturing consciousness: he accosted one of the women of the streets and walked away with her. She was full of light prattle, and chattered on and on. Harvey answered her not a word; he was set on his stony purpose. Child of the Stars! what had he to do with these things? He sought only his soul's annihilation. Something in this terrible silence communicated itself to his companion. She looked at his face in the light of a lamp; it was white, locked, and rigid. Child of the Stars, no less, though long forgetful, she shuddered at this association. She recoiled from him crying out "You brute—you brute!" and then fled away. The unhappy man turned homeward and sat in his lonely room with stupid, staring eyes, fixed on darkness and vacancy until the pale green light of dawn began to creep in upon him.

Into this fevered and anguished existence no light had yet come. Drunken with wretchedness, Harvey could not or would not think; and the implacable spirit which followed him deepened and quickened still more the current of his being, and the *gloom* and the *glory* of his dream moved still nearer to each other. Mighty and mysterious spirit, thou who crownest pain with beauty, and by whom the mighty are bowed down from their seats, under thy guidance, for such a crowning and for such agony, were coiled together the living streams of evil and good, so that at last the man might know himself—the soul—not as other than Thee!

The ways by which he was brought to that moment were unremembered; the sensations and thoughts and moods which culminated in the fire of self-consciousness could be retraced but vaguely. He had gone out of the city one Sunday, and lying down in the fields under the trees, for a time he grew forgetful of misery. He went once more into the world of dreams. He, or the creature of his imagination, some shadow of himself, lived in and roamed through antique forests where the wonderful days were unbroken by sense of sorrow. Childhood shared in an all-pervading exultation; through the pulses of youth ran the fiery energy that quickened the world; and this shadow of the dreamer dwelling amid the forests grew gradually into a consciousness of a fiery life upon which the surface forms were but films: he entered this kingdom of fire; its life became his life; he knew the secret ways to the sun, and the sunny secrets living in the golden world. "It was I, myself," rushed into Harvey's mind: "It was I. Ah, how long ago!" Then for the first time, his visions, dreams and imaginations became real to him, as memories of a spirit traveling through time and space. Looking backwards, he could nowhere find in the small and commonplace surroundings of his life anything which could have suggested or given birth to these vivid pictures and ideas. They began to move about swiftly in his mind and



Page 71

arrange themselves in order. He seemed to himself to have fallen downwards through a long series of lines of ever-lessening beauty—fallen downwards from the mansions of eternity into this truckling and hideous life. As Harvey walked homewards through the streets, some power must have guided his steps, for he saw or knew nothing of what was about him. With the sense of the reality of his imaginations came an energy he had never before felt: his soul took complete possession of him: he knew, though degraded, that he was a spirit. Then, in that supreme moment, gathered about him the memories of light and darkness, and they became the lips through which eternal powers spake to him in a tongue unlike the speech of men. The spirit of light was behind the visions of mystical beauty: the spirit of darkness arrayed itself in the desires of clay. These powers began to war within him: he heard voices as of Titans talking.

The spirit of light spake within him and said—“Arouse now, and be thou my voice in this dead land. There are many things to be spoken and sung—of dead language the music and significance, old world philosophies; you will be the singer of the sweetest songs; stories wilder and stranger than any yet will I tell you—deeds forgotten of the vaporous and dreamy prime.

The voice came yet again closer, full of sweet promise, with magical utterance floating around him. He became old—inconceivably old and young together. He was astonished in the wonders of the primal world. Chaos with tremendous agencies, serpentine powers, strange men-beasts and men-birds, the crude first thought of awakening nature was before him; from inconceivable heights of starlike purity he surveyed it; he went forth from glory; he descended and did battle; he warred with behemeths, with the flying serpents and the monstrous creeping things. With the Lords of Air he descended and conquered; he dwelt in a new land, a world of light, where all things were of light, where the trees put forth leaves of living green, where the rose would blossom into a rose of light and lily into a white radiance, and over the vast of gleaming plains and through the depths of luminous forests, the dreaming rivers would roll in liquid and silver flame. Often he joined in the mad dance upon the highlands, whirling round and round until the dark grass awoke fiery with rings of green under the feet. And so, on and on through endless transformations he passed, and he saw how the first world of dark elements crept in upon the world of beauty, clothing it around with grossness and veiling its fires; and the dark spirits entered by subtle ways into the spheres of the spirits of light, and became as a mist over memory and a chain upon speed; the earth groaned with the anguish. Then this voice cried within him—“Come forth; come out of it; come out, oh king, to the ancestral spheres, to the untroubled spiritual life. Out of the furnace, for it leaves you dust. Come away, oh king, to old dominion and celestial sway; come out to the antique glory!”



Page 72

Then another voice from below laughed at the madness. Full of scorn it spake, "You, born of clay, a ruler of stars? Pitiful toiler with the pen, feeble and weary body, what shall make of you a spirit?" Harvey thrust away this hateful voice. From his soul came the impulse to go to other lands, to wander for ever and ever under the star-rich skies, to be a watcher of the dawn and eve, to live in forest places or on sun-nurtured plains, to merge himself once more in the fiery soul hidden within. But the mocking voice would not be stifled, showing him how absurd and ridiculous it was "to become a vagabond," so the voice said, and finally to die in the workhouse. So the eternal spirit in him, God's essence, conscious of its past brotherhood, with the morning stars, the White Aeons, in its prisonhouse writhed with the meanness, till at last he cried, "I will struggle no longer; it is only agony of spirit to aspire here at all; I will sit and wait till the deep darkness has vanished."

But the instruction was not yet complete; he had learned the primal place of spirit; he had yet to learn its nature. He began to think with strange sadness over the hopes of the world, the young children. He saw them in his vision grow up, bear the burden in silence or ignorance; he saw how they joined in dragging onward that huge sphinx which men call civilization; there was no time for loitering amid the beautiful, for if one paused it was but to be trampled by the feet of the many who could not stay or rest, and the wheels of the image ground that soul into nothingness. He felt every pain almost in an anguish of sympathy. Helpless to aid, to his lips came the cry to another which immemorial usage has made intuitive in men. But It is high and calm above all appeal; to It the cries from all the sorrowing stars sound but as one great music; lying in the infinite fields of heaven, from the united feelings of many universes It draws only a vast and passionless knowledge, without distinction of pleasure or pain. From the universal which moves not and aids not, Harvey in his agony turned away. He himself could fly from the struggle; thinking of what far place or state to find peace, he found it true in his own being that nowhere could the soul find rest while there was still pain or misery in the world. He could imagine no place or state where these cries of pain would not reach him: he could imagine no heaven where the sad memory would not haunt him and burn him. He knew then that the nature of the soul was love eternal; he knew that if he fled away a divine compassion would compel him to renew his brotherhood with the stricken and suffering; and what was best forever to do was to fight out the fight in the darkness. There was a long silence in Harvey's soul; then with almost a solemn joy he grew to realize at last the truth of he himself—the soul. The fight was over; the Gloom and the Glory were linked together, and one inseparably. Harvey was full



Page 73

of a sense of quietness, as if a dew fell from unseen places on him with soothing and healing power. He looked around. He was at the door of his lodgings. The tall narrow houses with their dull red hues rose up about him; from their chimneys went up still higher the dark smoke; but behind its nebulous wavering the stars were yet; they broke through the smoke with white lustre. Harvey looked at them for a moment, and went in strangely comforted.

The End

—March 15-June 15, 1894

The Midnight Blossom

--“Arhans are born at midnight hour..... together with the holy flower that opes and blooms in darkness.”—The Voice of the Silence

We stood together at the door of our hut: we could see through the gathering gloom where our sheep and goats were cropping the sweet grass on the side of the hill: we were full of drowsy content as they were. We had naught to mar our own happiness—neither memory nor unrest for the future. We lingered on while the vast twilight encircled us; we were one with its dewy stillness. The lustre of the early stars first broke in upon our dreaming: we looked up and around: the yellow constellations began to sing their choral hymn together. As the night deepened they came out swiftly from their hiding places in depths of still and unfathomable blue; they hung in burning clusters; they advanced in multitudes that dazzled: the shadowy shining of night was strewn all over with nebulous dust of silver, with long mists of gold with jewels of glittering green. We felt how fit a place the earth was to live on, with these nightly glories over us, with silence and coolness upon its lawns and lakes after the consuming day. Valmika, Kedar, I and Ananda watched together; through the rich gloom we could see far distant forests and lights—the lights of village and city in King Suddhodana’s realm.

“Brothers,” said Valmika, “How good it is to be here, and not yonder in the city where they know not peace, even in sleep.”

“Yonder and yonder,” said Kedar, “I saw the inner air full of a red glow where they were busy in toiling and strife. It seemed to reach up to me; I could not breathe. I climbed the hills at dawn to laugh where the snows were, and the sun is as white as they are white.”



“But, brothers, if we went down among them and told them how happy we were, and how the flowers grow on the hillside, and all about the flocks, they would surely come up and leave all sorrow. They cannot know or they would come.” Ananda was a mere child though so tall for his years.

“They would not come,” said Kedar. “All their joy is to haggle and hoard. When Siva blows upon them with his angry breath they will lament, or when the Prets in fierce hunger devour them.”

“It is good to be here,” repeated Valmika drowsily, “to mind the flocks and be at rest, and to hear the wise Varunna speak when he comes among us.”



Page 74

I was silent. I knew better than they that busy city which glowed beyond the dark forests. I had lived there until, grown sick and weary, I had gone back to my brothers on the hillside. I wondered would life, indeed, go on ceaselessly until it ended in the pain of the world. I said within myself—Oh, mighty Brahma, on the outermost verges of they dream are our lives; thou old invisible, how faintly through our hearts comes the sound of thy song, the light of thy glory! Full of yearning to rise and return, I strove to hear in the heart the music Anahata had spoken of in our sacred scrolls. There was silence, and then I thought I heard sounds, not glad, a myriad murmur. As I listen it deepened, it grew into passionate prayer and appeal and tears, as if the cry of the long-forgotten souls of men went echoing through empty chambers. My eyes filled with tears, for it seemed world-wide, and to sigh from out many ages, long ago, to be and yet to be.

“Ananda! Ananda! where is the boy running to?” cried Valmika. Ananda had vanished into the gloom. We heard his glad laugh below and then another voice speaking. Presently up loomed the tall figure of Varunna. Ananda held his hand and danced beside him. We could see by the starlight his simple robe of white. I could trace clearly every feature of the grave and beautiful face, the radiant eyes; not by the starlight I saw, but because a silvery shining rayed a little way into the blackness around the dark hair and face. Valmika, as elder, first spake.

“Holy sir, be welcome. Will you come in and rest?”

“I cannot stay now. I must pass over the mountain ere dawn; but you may come a little way with me—such of you as will.”

We assented gladly—Kedar and I; Valmika remained. Then Ananda prayed to go. We bade him stay, fearing for him the labour of climbing and the chill of the snows, but Varunna said: “Let the child come; he is hardy; he will not tire if he holds my hands.”

So we set out together and faced the highlands that rose and rose above us; we knew well the way even at night. We waited in silence for Varunna to speak, but for nigh two hours we mounted without words, save for Ananda’s shouts of delight and wonder at the heavens spread above us. But I was hungry for an answer to my thoughts, so I spake.

“Master, Valmika was saying, ere you came, how good it was to be here rather than in the city where they are full of strife, and Kedar thought their lives would flow on into fiery pain and no speech would avail. Ananda, speaking as a child indeed, said if one went down among them they would listen to his story of the happy life. But, Master, do not many speak and interpret the sacred writings, and how few they are who lay to heart the words of the gods! They seem, indeed, to go on through desire into pain, and even here upon our hills we are not free, for Kedar felt the hot glow of their passion and I heard in my heart their sobs of despair. Master, it was terrible, for they seemed to come from the wide earth over, and out of ages far away.”



Page 75

“There is more of the true in the child’s hope than in your despair, for it is of much avail to speak though but a few listen. Better is the life which aids, though in sorrow, than the life which withdraws from pain unto solitude. Yet it is not well to speak without power, for only the knower of Brahma can interpret the sacred writings truly. It is well to be free ere we speak of freedom; then we have power and many hearken.”

“But who would leave joy for sorrow, and who being one with Brahma may return to give council?”

“Brother,” said Varunna, “here is the hope of the world. Though many seek only for the eternal joy, yet the cry you heard has been heard by great ones who have turned backwards, called by these beseeching voices. The small old path stretching far away leads through many wonderful beings to the place of Brahma; there is the first fountain, the world of beautiful silence, the light that has been undimmed since the beginning of time—the joy where life fades into being; but turning backwards, the small old path winds away into the world of men, it enters every sorrowful heart, and the way of him who would tread therethro’ is stayed by its pain and barred by its delusion. This is the way the great ones go; they turn with the path from the door of Brahma the warriors and the strong ones: they move along its myriad ways; they overcome darkness with wisdom and pain with compassion. After many conquered worlds, after many races of men, purified and uplifted they go to greater than Brahma. In these, though few, is the hope of the world; these are the heroes for whom, returning, the earth puts forth her signal fires, and the Devas sing their hymns of welcome.”

We paused where the plateau widened out; there was scarce a ripple in the chill air; in quietness the snows glistened, a light reflected from the crores of stars that swung with gay and glittering motion above us. We could hear the immense heart-beat of the world in the stillness; we had thoughts that went ranging through the heavens, not sad, but full of solemn hope.

“Brothers! Master! Look, the wonderful thing! and another, and yet another!” We heard Ananda calling; we looked and saw the holy blossom—the midnight flower—oh, may the earth again put forth such beauty—it grew up from the snows with leaves of delicate crystal, a nimbus encircled each radiant bloom, a halo pale yet lustrous. I bowed down before it lost in awe. I heard Varunna say:—“The earth, indeed puts forth her signal fires, and the Devas sing their hymn; listen!” We heard a music as of beautiful thought moving along the high places of the earth, full of infinite love and hope and yearning.

“Brothers, be glad, for One is born who has chosen the greater way. Now I must pass onwards. Kedar, Narayan, Ananda, farewell! Nay, no further; it is long way to return, and the child will tire.”

He went on and passed from our sight. But we did not return; we remained long, long in silence, looking at the sacred flower.



Page 76

Vow, taken long ago, be strong in our hearts to-day. Here where the pain is fiercer, to rest is more sweet. Here where beauty dies away, it is more joy to be lulled in dreams. Here the good, the true, our hope, seem but a madness born of ancient pain. Out of rest, dream, or despair, let us arise. Let us go the way the Great Ones go.

—July, 1894

The Story of a Star

The emotion that haunted me in that little cathedral town would be most difficult to describe. After the hurry, rattle, and fever of the city, the rare weeks spent here were infinitely peaceful. They were full of a quaint sense of childhood, with sometimes a deeper chord touched—the giant and spiritual things childhood has dreams of. The little room I slept in had opposite its window the great grey cathedral wall; it was only in the evening that the sunlight crept round it and appeared in the room strained through the faded green blind. It must have been this silvery quietness of colour which in some subtle way affected me with the feeling of a continual Sabbath; and this was strengthened by the bells chiming hour after hour: the pathos, penitence, and hope expressed by the flying notes coloured the intervals with faint and delicate memories. They haunted my dreams, and I heard with unutterable longing the astral chimes pealing from some dim and vast cathedral of the cosmic memory, until the peace they tolled became almost a nightmare, and I longed for utter oblivion or forgetfulness of their reverberations.

More remarkable were the strange lapses into other worlds and times. Almost as frequent as the changing of the bells were the changes from state to state. I realised what is meant by the Indian philosophy of Maya. Truly my days were full of Mayas, and my work-a-day city life was no more real to me than one of those bright, brief glimpses of things long past. I talk of the past, and yet these moments taught me how false our ideas of time are. In the ever-living yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow are words of no meaning. I know I fell into what we call the past and the things I counted as dead for ever were the things I had yet to endure. Out of the old age of earth I stepped into its childhood, and received once more the primal blessing of youth, ecstasy, and beauty. But these things are too vast and vague to speak of; the words we use to-day cannot tell their story. Nearer to our time is the legend that follows.

I was, I thought, one of the Magi of old Persia, inheritor of its unforgotten lore, and using some of its powers. I tried to pierce through the great veil of nature, and feel the life that quickened it within. I tried to comprehend the birth and growth of planets, and to do this I rose spiritually and passed beyond earth's confines into that seeming void which is the matrix where they germinate. On one of these journeys I was struck by the phantasm, so it



Page 77

seemed, of a planet I had not observed before. I could not then observe closer, and coming again on another occasion it had disappeared. After the lapse of many months I saw it once more, brilliant with fiery beauty—its motion was slow, rotating around some invisible centre. I pondered over it, and seemed to know that the invisible centre was its primordial spiritual state, from which it emerged a little while and into which it then withdrew. Short was its day; its shining faded into a glimmer, and then into darkness in a few months. I learned its time and cycles; I made preparations and determined to await its coming.

The Birth of a Planet

At first silence and then an inner music, and then the sounds of song throughout the vastness of its orbit grew as many in number as there were stars at gaze. Avenues and vistas of sound! They reeled to and fro. They poured from a universal stillness quick with unheard things. They rushed forth and broke into a myriad voices gay with childhood. From age and the eternal they rushed forth into youth. They filled the void with reveling and exultation. In rebellion they then returned and entered the dreadful Fountain. Again they came forth, and the sounds faded into whispers; they rejoiced once again, and again died into silence.

And now all around glowed a vast twilight; it filled the cradle of the planet with colourless fire. I felt a rippling motion which impelled me away from the centre to the circumference. At that centre a still flame began to lighten; a new change took place, and space began to curdle, a milky and nebulous substance rocked to and fro. At every motion the pulsation of its rhythm carried it farther and farther away from the centre, it grew darker, and a great purple shadow covered it so that I could see it no longer. I was now on the outer verge, where the twilight still continued to encircle the planet with zones of clear transparent light.

As night after night I rose up to visit it they grew many-coloured and brighter. I saw the imagination of nature visibly at work. I wandered through shadowy immaterial forests, a titanic vegetation built up of light and colour; I saw it growing denser, hung with festoons and trailers of fire, and spotted with the light of myriad flowers such as earth never knew. Coincident with the appearance of these things I felt within myself, as if in harmonious movement, a sense of joyousness, an increase of self-consciousness; I felt full of gladness, youth, and the mystery of the new. I felt that greater powers were about to appear, those who had thrown outwards this world and erected it as a place in space.



Page 78

I could not tell half the wonder of this strange race. I could not myself comprehend more than a little of the mystery of their being. They recognised my presence there, and communicated with me in such a way that I can only describe it by saying that they seemed to enter into my soul breathing a fiery life; yet I knew that the highest I could reach to was but the outer verge of their spiritual nature, and to tell you but a little I have many times to translate it, for in the first unity with their thought I touched on an almost universal sphere of life, I peered into the ancient heart that beats throughout time; and this knowledge became change in me, first, into a vast and nebulous symbology, and so down through many degrees of human thought into words which hold not at all the pristine and magical beauty.

I stood before one of this race, and I thought, "What is the meaning and end of life here?" Within me I felt the answering ecstasy that illuminated with vistas of dawn and rest, it seemed to say:

"Our spring and our summer are unfolding into light and form, and our autumn and winter are a fading into the infinite soul."

I thought, "To what end is this life poured forth and withdrawn?"

He came nearer and touched me; once more I felt the thrill of being that changed itself into vision.

"The end is creation, and creation is joy: the One awakens out of quiescence as we come forth, and knows itself in us; as we return we enter it in gladness, knowing ourselves. After long cycles the world you live in will become like ours; it will be poured forth and withdrawn; a mystic breath, a mirror to glass your being."

He disappeared while I wondered what cyclic changes would transmute our ball of mud into the subtle substance of thought.

In that world I dared not stay during its period of withdrawal; having entered a little into its life, I became subject to its laws: the Power on its return would have dissolved my being utterly. I felt with a wild terror its clutch upon me, and I withdrew from the departing glory, from the greatness that was my destiny—but not yet.

From such dreams I would be aroused, perhaps by a gentle knock at my door, and my little cousin Margaret's quaint face would peep in with a "Cousin Robert, are you not coming down to supper?"

Of these visions in the light of after thought I would speak a little. All this was but symbol, requiring to be thrice sublimed in interpretation ere its true meaning can be grasped. I do not know whether worlds are heralded by such glad songs, or whether any have such a fleeting existence, for the mind that reflects truth is deluded with

strange phantasies of time and place in which seconds are rolled out into centuries and long cycles are reflected in an instant of time. There is within us a little space through which all the threads of the universe are drawn; and, surrounding that incomprehensible



Page 79

centre the mind of man sometimes catches glimpses of things which are true only in those glimpses; when we record them the true has vanished, and a shadowy story—such as this—alone remains. Yet, perhaps, the time is not altogether wasted in considering legends like these, for they reveal, though but in phantasy and symbol, a greatness we are heirs to, a destiny which is ours, though it be yet far away.

—August 15, 1894

How Theosophy Affects One's View of Life

—A Paper Read Before the Dublin Lodge.

In asking you to consider with me the influence of the system of thought called Theosophy upon one's view of all the things which are included in the term Life, I have to preface my remarks by the confession that I have not extracted my ideas from portly volumes, or indeed, engaged in any great research; and I have further to ask you to believe that what you will hear is the most unbiased statement, as far as possible, on the subjects which will necessarily come under notice.

The outlook of any individual mind is not a constant quantity; it is to some extent determined by education, environment, and the innate tendencies; but it is always subject to alteration; it is constantly feeling the influence of subtle forces and circumstances, and it changes with every fresh experience and every new sensation. Still these influences seldom evince their presence by a great reversal of the mental attitude, and we are best able to sense them by seeing how the actions of the individual, which are very largely the voluntary or involuntary expression of his standpoint, represent at different times changes in that standpoint. Indeed, one's own experience will supply plenty of material to work upon; for, I daresay no one will insist that his present attitude towards the rest of the universe is identical with that of ten or five years ago, or even one year. A little examination will show that the mental processes which precede some definite action are altered in some important manner from those of 1890. The question which is of importance is to find out how the change has come about, and whether one is to allow extraneous events to mast his mental conclusions, or one is to become, through wisdom acquired by effort, the conscious master of his destiny.

Theosophy has for its leading tenet the absolute unity in essence and correlation of all life, whether visible, invisible, material, intellectual, spiritual, and this affords at once a clue to the consideration of the present subject; for, according to the view which the individual thinker takes of the powers and relations of the mind itself will be his view of the duties and responsibilities which these powers and relations involve; in other words, Ethics or moral philosophy must be based upon metaphysics. Now, I wish to be as brief

as possible in pointing out the theosophic view of the mind, and soul, and their powers and relations; and were it not that it is necessary for the unity of my remarks, I would take refuge in referring to the numerous able, intellectual, and forcible expositions of this matter which you have heard in this room.



Page 80

Theosophy, to put it as concisely as possible, accepts the universe as “the unfolding of a Divine life, functioning in every form of living and nonliving thing.” Man is viewed as a compound being, a spark of this divine universal spirit being clothed with the body. The immortal indestructible part of man consists of this spark of universal spirit, its vehicle the human spirit, and the mind or intellectual faculties. It uses as a dwelling the body, with its animal life, its passions and appetites, to which mankind is so prone to attach tremendous importance. The connecting link is the mind, which, being full of agitation, strong, and obstinate, senses all the material existence, is moved by the hopes and fears, and the storm of existence. The lesson, ever insisted on as having to be learnt, is that the lower part of man, the body, and its attachments, have to be conquered and purified; and the only way to teach it its true functions is by suffering; and when this is done, we shall have got somewhere nearer the goal, when we shall identify our consciousness with our true self, not with the illusion. The powers of the mind to sense all existence, and its relations towards the rest of our being as the connecting link, bearing the contact with external things towards the soul, and at times being the vehicle of the Wisdom which is one of the attributes of that which has no attribute: I say, then, these powers and relations of the mind, which one finds everywhere treated of in Theosophical literature, are the determining factors in the formation of our Ethics. And since, from Socrates down, we are taught that self-knowledge is necessary for guidance of one’s conduct, the knowledge of the mind and its capacities is at once shadowed forth as of immense value. It has at least three elementary powers—viz., the power of knowing, the power of feeling, and the power of acting. These powers, though distinguishable, are not separable; but rather when we distinguish knowledge, feeling, and action, what we call by these names will be found, when accurately examined, to be combinations of the three elements, differing only in respect to the element which preponderates. Locke would have us suppose that when I say “I know,” it means that an object is inserted into my consciousness as into a bag. But no bag could produce the phenomenon of knowledge. To produce it requires the putting forth of an active power, which we call intelligence. The knowledge of an object always produces in the mind some emotion with regard to it: this emotion is normally pleasure. Sometimes the difficulties which beset the acquisition of knowledge are so great and cause such dissatisfaction and pain that the mind is tempted to banish them, together with the object which excites them, from its consciousness. Knowledge and the emotions to which it gives rise induce those actions which are the result of the inherent activity of the mind stimulated by them. Thus we see that the antecedents of all action include intelligence as an active power: and Ethics, more particularly Theosophical Ethics, are seen to have practical value, and not merely a speculative interest.



Page 81

Having digressed thus far from my subject, the point to which I proceed to address myself is, the working out on the individual of the system of which I have tried to shadow forth the greater truths. The first class I will deal with are the indifferent. To them, Theosophy presents the widest possible field of, and reasons for, activity that can be desired. It shows that no action is without its direct permanent result, and that consequently the position of the indifferent is absolutely untenable. No one who has studied Theosophical literature can ever find there a justification for mere laissez-faire. It points out the enormous value of what we call trifles, and the comparatively trifling value of what the indifferent would take most note. Theosophy always insists on action in some direction, preferably conscious, well-directed action, with pure motive.

The Agnostic is, as it were, Theosophy's special care—it shows him at once the directions in which further, fuller, and greater knowledge of every branch of science or philosophy can be gained. It says to him "pursue your previous method of inquiry, and remember, taking nothing for granted, do not accept other's authority. Seek for knowledge: we can only point the way we have ourselves gone. Investigate every nook and corner of your mind, and learn how to control it and your sense perceptions. Then you will no longer mistrust your results as possibly imperfect, but you will have attained to some closer contact with Truth." To both the Agnostic and the indifferent, the study of Theosophy will bring a consciousness of the responsibility towards others, which is the basis of our universal brotherhood. It will tend to remove the personal element which has hitherto done so much to cloud and obscure one's investigations; and it will gradually lead to the elimination of the anxiety as to results, which will bring us (by the removal of remorse or approval) to calmness of mind, in which condition great work can be achieved.

The appeal of theosophy to the scientific investigator is practically identical with the last. It will show him what so many of his confreres are more or less tacitly recognizing, that the hopeless and soul-deadening belief of the Materialist (that all the growth of the race, the struggling towards a higher life, the aspirations towards virtue shall absolutely vanish, and leave no trace), is a crushing mental burden which leads to absolute negation; it will show the spiritual nature of man in perfect consistence with the true theories, and as dependent on fundamental laws and causes.



Page 82

Coming from the region of unbelief to belief, to use these words in their narrowest sense, let us consider what way Theosophy will affect a believer in doctrines of some system of religious thought. To take the ordinary Protestant first; Theosophy is apparently likely to fail on account of its taking away the personality of the Deity, and the habit of prayer: for to both of these doctrines the earnest churchman is attached. But if it does do so, what does it substitute? It puts forward an atonement, not an atonement of 1,861 years ago, but a daily atonement to be carried out in each one's life, and having as great an influence on one's fellows; it suggests the possibilities are within each one of us, if we but seek the true path. Also, and this is a small point, it removes the horrible canker of church government, which ministers so powerfully to the idea of separateness and personality: and lastly, it offers, in place of mouthing prayers to a God whom one is taught to fear ten times to the once that love is insisted on, a union with that higher self which, if pursued, brings peace, wisdom, an infinite compassion, and an infinite love.

What has Theosophy to offer to the Roman Catholic? All that it offers to the Protestant; with this addition, that not merely one woman is exalted, but all womankind as being of the same essence and spirit of all nature. It shows that there is no superiority, but that by effort, by training, by aspiration, everyone, both man and woman, shall be found worthy of being taken into heaven, and joined again to the one source of life and being. It shows the whole doctrine of saintliness and blessedness to have a source in Truth, though overlaid and altered.

And what of the other sheep? What of that soul which, feeling compelled by its intuitions to recognise the essential divinity of man, yet find no expression in the churches which will fit into its emotional nature? What of him whom, for want of a better word, I shall call a Symbolist, who is always striving to express in some form of art or thought, that divine energy which is wisdom, consciousness, and energy all in one? Does not Theosophy afford the very best outlet for his soul force? Are not its ideas on a level with, if not higher than, what his most sublime moments of feeling can bring before him? Surely if anyone can find peace in its bosom, the symbolist, ever struggling to express his sense of the True, the Beautiful, which are, after all, but a second reflection of the Higher mind, with its knowledge of the essence of all life, can therein do his noblest work for Humanity in company with those who, having previously done all they could for the race through a sense of duty arising from intuitions they declined to recognise, have found in the doctrines of Theosophy the broadest possible field for such work, and the purest motive.



Page 83

And now, changing from particular types, how do we look upon Theosophy as a power in Ethics? We find the elimination of the selfish instinct insisted upon as necessary for the progress of the Ego through its material envelope to a full and complete knowledge of its higher self; we find the doctrine of Brotherhood put forward in its noblest aspects; we find as a necessary corollary that responsibility is increased and widened with an accompanying sense of power to accept and carry on that responsibility; with the growth of higher feeling within us comes a sense of added strength; we learn gradually to work without consideration or anxiety for results; we grow more tolerant of our neighbor's shortcomings, and less so of our own; we find that by disengaging ourselves from the objects of the senses, we become indifferent to small troubles, and more free to assist our neighbor when they press on him; with the knowledge of the causes of present conditions lying in past action, and our present actions going to be the causes of future conditions, we place ourselves in a position to work to the full extent of our powers to set in motion such causes as will bring about the happiest results for Humanity as a whole; we learn to look upon death, not as the opening of the spiritual life, but as a release from a weight which keeps under the spiritual life, which is always with us, now as well as before birth and after death; we learn to sense the methods by which the universe works out its destiny; we find every day growing stronger that sense of immortality, of absolute union with the universal soul, which at first merely manifested itself in strange feelings and emotions; we find the clues to the control of our physical and mental faculties, and are not surprised to discover the ten-thousand-fold increase in value these faculties then bear; we put ourselves more and more in harmony with what we feel to be the source of all Truth; we find ourselves gradually able to give expression to those dumb feelings which we could not find words for, of its grandeur and greatness; until finally we come, after many incarnations, after suffering, after despair sometimes, to a knowledge which transcends all human knowledge, to a bliss which is above our present ideas, to a peace which the world cannot give, which surpasseth all understanding, and are then ready to give up that bliss and peace, and to use that knowledge for the divine compassion towards our fellows who are following.

But how are we to hope for this progress? What are we to do to realize these ideas? Is it by wishing for it that this state will come about? Is there no everyday way of getting forward? These are some of the questions which will rise naturally to the lips of any here who are not thoroughly acquainted with Theosophical ideas: and what have we to say in reply? Are we to confess Theosophy is a doctrine only for the learned, the cultured, the wealthy? Are we to acknowledge that Christianity



Page 84

or Agnosticism is more practical, easier for the men in the street to grasp? Are we to say that Theosophy is not a gospel for to-day? No: a thousand times no! If there is one result of a study of Theosophy, it is the gaining of Hope, a sure and certain Hope, which soon becomes Trust, and later, knowledge. I affirm most strongly that there is no one to whom Theosophy in some of its myriad aspects does not appeal, and appeal strongly enough to cause it to be the ruling passion of his existence; but I do also affirm as strongly, that in Theosophy, as in all other things, what are necessary are, pure motive and perseverance. It costs no one anything to spend an hour a day in meditation on some aspect of life; in thinking of our eternal nature and striving to place ourselves en rapport with our highest ideals of purity, nobility, Truth. Then cannot we get the idea of universal brotherhood firmly fixed in our consciousness as an actual reality to be attained, and always act upon that basis. To me, the thought of the absolute unity of all life, affords as high an ideal for putting into practical shape as my deficient development allows me. Cannot we get this ideal or some other ideal so essential a part of our thought that it colours all our feelings, emotions and actions? We will then be doing our part in the struggle. We will not be of the Laodiceans, who were neither hot nor cold. Let us try this: let us see whether it will have such an effect, and if we, by our personal experience, have convinced ourselves of the reality of this, let us progress further, and by further trial find out the greater truths beyond. Reincarnation and Karma are essentially doctrines for the poor and needy; mental and physical. Intellectual subtleties are not needed in Theosophy: it is spiritual perception, and who will dare say to the poor that they have less of this than their fellows?

The only region where the "exclusiveness" argument can have even a momentary hold is with regard to Occultism. There is in most people's mind a distrust of anything secret. But remember, believe only in what your own test has shown you to be true: and learn not to condemn those who have found some irresistible impulse urging them forward to seek further. Besides, anyone who is not clear in his motive in studying Occultism had better pause before he pledges himself to anything, or undertakes that the result of which he does not know even dimly.

And before passing from this digression, let me insist strongly once again on the fact that true progress will come only to those who seek to attain it.

They who would be something more
Than those who feast and laugh and die, will hear
The voice of duty, as the note of war,
Nerving their spirit to great enterprise,
And knitting every sinew for the charge.

Again, get rid of indolence, or its synonym, indifference. The real hereditary sin of human nature is indolence. Conquer that, and you will conquer the rest. We cannot

afford to rest with what we have done; we must keep moving on. In this, indeed, to stand still is to go back—worse still, to keep others back.



Page 85

In conclusion I may, perhaps, be permitted to give you a few remarks as to the influence Theosophy has had upon myself. It has furnished me with satisfactory reasons for living and working; it has infused an earnestness in that work which I prize as one of the valuable things of my life's experience. It has ministered to that inmost sense of worship and aspiration which all of us possess; it has shown me that by expanding one's consciousness in that of the universe, one gains more knowledge and opportunity for helping on humanity; and it has pointed out where the materials for a scientific basis of ethics can be found, and also what will be the outlines of the future building; and finally it has shown that if the objects of our desires be changed, and many things we held dear are no longer prized, it is owing simply to the acquirement of larger and fuller interests.

—September 15, 1894

Comfort

We are continually called upon to give comfort, and it is a problem to many what to say. For there are people who can see no outlet from their pain other than this, that they shall obtain that which they desire. The lover longs for the one who is absent or cold; the poor demand wealth; the tortured cry out for relief from suffering; and so on through all phases of human life we continually meet such people. We, perhaps free from such afflictions, have schooled ourselves into a heroic mood. These are not things to sorrow over, we think; therefore, we are in a dilemma. We cannot aid them, for their ideals often seem ignoble to us—their wish accomplished would only bring on the renewal of old pain, and bind them closer to the weary wheel. Yet we cannot be cold, we who would identify ourselves with all life, for the soul must “lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.” In the many cases where the suffering is unavoidable, and cannot be otherwise received, what are we to do? Some, a little above the ignoble view that the only relief is in the satisfaction of desire, say reverently to those in pain: “It is God's will,” and some accept it as such with dull resignation. But with some the iron has entered the soul—the words are empty. “What have I to do with God, or He with me?” they demand in their hearts. They join in the immemorial appeal and fierce revolt which at all times the soul of man makes against any external restraint. We who are disciples of old wisdom may touch some chord in them which may awaken eternal endurance.

It is not, we say, a pain imposed upon us by any eternal power; but the path we tread is one which we ourselves very long ago determined. To the question, “What have we to do with God?” we make answer that we are the children of Deity—bright sparks born in the Divine flame, the spirit in its primal ecstasy reflected in itself the multitudinous powers that throng in space. It was nourished by divine



Page 86

love, and all that great beauty thrilled through it and quickened it. But from this vision which the spirit had, it passed to climb to still greater heights—it was spiritual, it might attain divinity. The change from the original transcendental state of vision to that other state of being, of all-pervading consciousness, could only be accomplished by what is known as the descent into matter where spirit identifies itself with every form of life, and assimilates their essences. This cyclic pilgrimage it undertook, foreseeing pain, but “preferring free will to passive slavery, intellectual, self-conscious pain, and even torture, ‘while myriad time shall flow,’ to inane, imbecile, instinctual beatitude,” foreseeing pain, but knowing that out of it all would come a nobler state of life, a divinity capable of rule, a power to assist in the general evolution of nature. It is true in the experience of many that going deep within themselves, an elemental consciousness whispers comfort; it says all will be well with us; it is our primal will which so orders. And so we justify the pain and hearts that break; and that old appeal and fierce revolt we make dies out in the inner light which shines from “the Goal, the Comforter, the Lord, the Witness, the resting-place, the Asylum, the Friend.” We can then once more go forth with the old, heroic, Titan will for mastery, seeking not to escape, but rather to meet, endure, and assimilate sorrow and joy alike; for so we can permeate all life—life which is in its essence one. This is the true centre on which all endurance must rest; this is the comfort the soul may take to itself; and beyond and after this we may say we struggle in a chaos indeed, but in a chaos whose very disorder is the result of law. That law is justice that cannot err. Out of confidence in this justice may spring up immortal hopes; our motives, our faith shall save us. We may dare more, give ourselves away more completely, for is not the root of this law declared to be beauty, harmony, compassion. We may trust that our acts shall have full fruition, and remain careless of the manner, nor seek for such results. We may look upon it if we will as the sweetest of the sweetest, the tenderest of the tenderest; and this is true, though still it is master of the fiery pain. Above all it is the law of our own being; it is at one with our ancestral self. In all this lies, I think, such consolation as we may take and offer for pain. Those who comprehend, in their resignation, shall become one with themselves; and out of this resignation shall arise will to go forth and fulfil our lofty destiny.

—May 15, 1894

The Ascending Cycle



Page 87

The teaching of the Secret Doctrine divides the period during which human evolution proceeds upon this globe into seven periods. During the first three-and-a-half of these, the ethereal humanity who appeared in the First Race gradually become material in form, and the psychic spirituality of the inner man is transformed into intellectuality. During the remaining three-and-a-half periods, there is a gradual dematerialization of form; the inner man by slow degrees rises from mere brain intellection to a more perfected spiritual consciousness. We are told that there are correspondences between the early and later periods of evolution; the old conditions are repeated, but upon higher planes; we re-achieve the old spirituality with added wisdom and intellectual power. Looked at in this way we shall find that the Seventh Race corresponds to the first; the Sixth to the Second; and the Fifth Race (which is ours) corresponds with the Third. "We are now approaching a time," says the Secret Doctrine, "when the pendulum of evolution will direct its swing decidedly upward, bringing humanity back on a parallel line with the primitive Third Root Race in spirituality." That is, there will be existing on the earth, about the close of Fifth Race, conditions in some way corresponding with those prevailing when the Third Race men began their evolution. Through this period may be yet distant hundreds of thousands of years, still it is of interest to forecast that future as far as may be, for the future is concealed in the present, and is the outcome of forces working to-day. We may find out from this enquiry the true nature of movements like the Theosophical Society.

One of the most interesting passages in the Secret Doctrine is that which describes the early Third Race. "It was not a Race, this progeny. It was at first a wondrous Being, called the 'Initiator,' and after him a group of semi-divine and semi-human beings." Without at all attempting to explain the real nature of this mysterious Being or Race, we may assume that one of the things hinted at is the consciousness of united being possessed by these ancient Adepts. Walking abroad over the earth as instructors of a less progressed humanity, their wisdom and power had a common root. They taught truth from a heart-perception of life, ever fresh and eternal, everywhere pervading nature and welling up in themselves. This heart-perception is the consciousness of unity of inner being. The pendulum of evolution which in its upward swing will bring humanity backwards on a parallel line with the primitive Third Root Race, should bring back something corresponding to this primeval hierarchy of divine sages. We should see at the end of the Kaliyuga a new brotherhood formed from those who have risen out of material life and aims, who have conquered self, who have been purified by suffering, who have acquired strength and wisdom, and who have wakened up to the old magical perception of their unity in true Being. "At the end of the Kali, our present age, Vishnu, or the "Everlasting King," will appear as Kalki, and establish righteousness upon earth. The minds of those who live at that time shall be awakened and become pellucid as crystal." —(Secret Doctrine, II, 483)

Page 88

Passing beyond the turning point of evolution, where the delusion of separateness is complete, and moving on to that future awaiting us in infinite distances, when the Great Breath shall cease its outward motion and we shall merge into the One—on this uphill journey in groups and clusters men will first draw closer together, entering in spirit their own parent rays before being united in the source of all light and life. Such a brotherhood of men and women we may expect will arise, conscious in unity, thinking from one mind and acting from one soul. All such great achievements of the race are heralded long before by signs which those who study the lives of men may know. There is a gestation in the darkness of the womb before the living being appears. Ideals first exist in thought, and from thought they are outrealized into objective existence. The Theosophical Society was started to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, and its trend is towards this ideal. May we not justifiably suppose that we are witnessing to-day in this movement the birth of a new race corresponding to the divine Initiators of the Third; a race which shall in its inner life be truly a “Wondrous Being.” I think we will perform our truest service to the Society by regarding it in this way as an actual entity whose baby years and mystical childhood we should foster. There are many people who know that it is possible by certain methods to participate in the soul-life of a co-worker, and if it is possible to do this even momentarily with one comrade, it is possible so to participate in the vaster life of great movements. There will come a time to all who have devoted themselves to this idea, as H.P. Blavatsky and some others have done, when they will enter into the inner life of this great Being, and share the hopes, the aspirations, the heroism, and the failures which must be brought about when so many men and women are working together. To achieve this we should continually keep in mind this sense of unity; striving also to rise in meditation until we sense in the vastness the beating of these innumerable hearts glowing with heroic purpose: we should try to humanize our mysticism; “We can only reach the Universal Mind through the minds of humanity,” and we can penetrate into their minds by continual concentration, endeavouring to realise their thoughts and feelings, until we carry always about with us in imagination, as [wrote] Walt Whitman, “those delicious burdens, men and women.”

—November 15, 1893

The Mystic Nights’ Entertainment

We went forth gay in the twilight’s cover;
The dragon Day with his ruddy crest
Blazed on the shadowy hills hung over
The still grey fields in their dewy rest.

We went forth gay, for all ancient stories
Were told again in our hearts as we trod;

Above were the mountain's dawn-white glories;
We climbed to it as the throne of God.



Page 89

We pitched our tents in a sheltered nook on the mountain side. We were great with glee during the day, forecasting happy holidays remote from the crowded city. But now as we sat round the camp fire at dusk silence fell upon us. What were we to do in the long evenings? I could see Willie's jolly face on the other side of the fire trying to smother a yawn as he refilled his pipe. Bryan was watching the stars dropping into their places one by one. I turned to Robert and directed the general attention to him as a proper object for scorn. He had drawn a pamphlet on some scientific subject from his breast-pocket and was trying to read it by the flickering light.

"Did you come up to the mountains for this," I asked, "to increase your knowledge of the Eocene age? Put it by, or—we will send it up as a burnt offering to the stars."

"Well," he said, looking rather ashamed, "one must do something, you know. Willie has his pipe, Bryan is holding some mysterious intercourse with the planets, and you have the fire to take care of. What is one to do?"

This went to the root of the matter. I pondered over it awhile, until an idea struck me.

"There is Bryan. Let him tell us a story. He was flung into life with a bundle of old legends. He knows all mystery and enchantment since the days of the Rishees, and has imagined more behind them. He has tales of a thousand incarnations hidden away in secretness. He believes that everything that happened lives still in the memory of Nature, and that he can call up out of the cycles of the past heroic figures and forgotten history, simply by his will, as a magician draws the elemental hordes together."

"Have a dragon and a princess in it," said Willie, settling himself into an attitude of listening.

"Or authentic information about Eocene man," suggested Robert.

"I could not tell a story that way," said Bryan simply. "I could never invent a story, though all the characters, heroes and princess, were to come and sit beside me so that I could describe them as they really were. My stories come like living creatures into my mind; and I can only tell them as they tell themselves to me. Today, as I lay in the sunlight with closed eyes, I saw a haze of golden light, then twilight trees appeared and moving figures and voices speaking; it shaped itself into what is hardly a story, but only an evening in some legendary existence."

We waited while Bryan tried to recall his misty figures. We were already in sympathy with his phantasmal world, for the valleys below us were dim-coloured and quiet, and we heard but rarely and far away the noises of the village; the creatures of the mountain moved about in secretness, seeking their own peculiar joys in stillness amid dews and darkness. After a little Bryan began.

The Gardens of Twilight



Page 90

I saw in my vision one of the heroes of the antique world. He rode for many, many days, yet saw no kindly human face. After long wanderings and toils he came to the Gardens of Twilight, the rich and rare gardens of the primeval world, known by rumour to the ancient Greeks as the Hesperides. He looked around with wonder; the place was all a misty dazzle with light, a level light as of evening that flowed everywhere about; the air was rich with the scent of many blossoms; from each flower rose an odour that hovered about it as a delicate vapour. While he gazed, one of the spirits of the garden came nigh him in the guise of a beautiful human child.

“How came you here?”

“I wandered for many years,” he said, “I fought with the dragons that lie coiled in citron scales on the highways; I warred against oppression; I made justice to prevail, and now that peace is on the land I might have rested with peace in mine own heart, but I could not yet. So I left behind the happy hearths and homes of men and rode onward, a secret fire burning ceaselessly within me; I know not in what strange home it will be still. But what gardens are these?”

“They are the Gardens of Twilight,” answered the child.

“How beautiful then must be the Gardens of Day! How like a faint fine dust of amethyst and gold the mist arises from the enchanted odorous flowers! Surely some spirit things must dwell within the air that breaks so perpetually into hues of pearl and shell!”

“They are the servants of Zeus,” the child said. “They live within these wandering airs; they go forth into the world and make mystery in the hearts of men.”

“Was it one such guided me thither?”

“I do not know; but this I know, whether led by the wandering spirits or guided by their own hearts, none can remain here safely and look upon the flowers save those who understand their mystery or those who can create an equal beauty. For all others deadly is the scent of the blossoms; stricken with madness, they are whirled away into the outer world in fever, passion and unending hunger and torment.”

“I do not care if I pass from them,” said the wanderer. “It is not here my heart could be still and its desire cease, but in the first Fount.”

They passed on and went deeper into the Gardens of Twilight, which were ever-changing, opalescent, ever-blushing with new and momentary beauty, ever-vanishing before the steady gaze to reveal beneath more silent worlds of mystic being. Like vapour, now gorgeous and now delicate, they wavered, or as the giant weeds are shadowing around the diver in the Indian wave sun-drenched through all its deeps of green. Sometimes a path would unfold, with a million shining flowers of blue, twinkling

like stars in the Wilky Way, beneath their feet, and would wind away delicately into the faery distances.



Page 91

"Let us rest," said the child, leaning against a tree. She began swaying a hand to and fro among the flowers; as her fingers touched the bell-like blooms of burning amethyst they became stained with the rich colour; she seemed to lose herself in dreams as one who toils not for delight, living ever amid rich joys. He wondered if she was as unreal as the gardens, and remembering her words, they seemed familiar as if they were but echoes of the unuttered thoughts that welled up as he moved about. While he watched the flitting phantasmagoria with a sense expectant of music which never came, phantasmagoria with a sense expectant of music which never came, there arose before him images of peace, vanishing faster than passion, and forms of steadfast purity came nigh, attired, priestess-like, in white and gold; they laid their heads against his breast; as he looked down, their eyes, eager and flamelike, grew passionate and full of desire. He stretched out his hand to pluck blossoms and twine wreaths for their beautiful heads.

"Do not! Do not!" cried the child. "See how every blossom has its guardian!"

There were serpents coiling about the roots of every flower, or amid the leaves, waiting with undulating head and forked tongue to strike the incautious hand. He shook off the drowsy influence of the scents and o'er-burdened air; the forms vanished. He remembered the child's words: "None can remain in safety an equal beauty." He began to ponder over the meaning of the gardens.

"While we sit here, late lingerers in the glory of twilight, I will tell you a story which my fancy brings me," he said. "I thought one came here long ago and built himself a mighty world in a dream of many hundred years."

"He had lived with kings and counselors; he had wrought in magical arts, and the great and wise of the earth were his fellows. When a time came for him to depart he turned away sadly from the towers of men. He passed, without knowing it, through the strange defiles which lead to these gardens; but the light did not break upon him in iridescent waves foamy with flowers and sparkling with vanishing forms; the light was hidden in the bosom of the twilight; it was all-pervading but invisible; the essence of the light bathed his soul; the light was living; the light was exhaustless; by it everything was born; touched by it everything went forth in ecstasy, blind, seeking for realization.

"The magician brought with him the seeds of human desire and wisdom and aspiration. The light broke into his moody forgetfulness and kindled long-forgotten fires. He awoke from his darkness and saw before him in happiest vistas the island city of his lounging. Around him were the men and women he knew; acting on his secret wishes the multitudes hailed him as king, they bowed before him as wise, they worshiped him as all-powerful.. It was not strange to him, and rapt in royal imaginations for



Page 92

countless years he held sway over the island city. He dreamed of it as a poet, and there was no more beautiful city than this city of his dream. There were places that shot up, pinnacle upon pinnacle, amid the jewel-light of the stars; there were courts and porticoes full of mysterious glory and gloom, magnificence and darkness; there were fountains that jetted their pearly mists into the light; around them with summer in their hearts lay the island inhabitants, each one an angel for beauty. As the dream of the magician deepened in rapture, the city wavered and changed more continually; its towers pierced more daringly into the way of the stars; for the darkness below he summoned birds of fire from the aerial deeps; they circled the palaces with flaming wings; they stained the air with richest dyes and rained forth emerald and blue and gold on the streets and sculptured walls and the inhabitants in their strange joys.

“His dream changed; he went forth no more but shut himself up in his palace with his wisest princes, and as he took counsel with them, the phantasmal and brilliant towers without faded and fell away as a butterfly droops its wings. For countless years he lived in the intoxication of thought; around him were sages who propounded wisest laws, and poets who sang of love, humanity and destiny. As his dream deepened still more in its rapture, they sang of mightier themes; there was continual music and light; there was no limit of glory or dominion which the human soul might not aspire to; his warriors stepped from star to star in dreams of conquest, and would have stayed the seraph princess of the wind and wave and fire, to make more radiant the retinue of this magician of the Beautiful.

“Again his desire changed. He sought to hold no further sway over these wide realms beyond him; he shut himself up in an inner chamber in lonely meditation, and as he entered into a deeper being the sages and poets, who were with him at his royal feasts, vanished and were no more. He, the wise mind, pondered within himself, finding joy in the continual inward birth of thought following thought, as in lonely seas wave rolls upon wave. From all things he had known or experienced he drew forth their essence and hidden meaning, and he found that he had been no less a king in his old unconsciousness than he now was, and that at all times nature had been obeisant and whatever had happened had still been by his own will. Through the light, thin fretted by the fire of his aspirations, he sometimes seemed to see the shining Law in all things and the movement through the thought-swept fields of heaven of the universal imagination. He saw that this, too, had been a minister to him. He drew nigh to himself—divinity. The last rapture of his soul was his radiant self-conception. Save for this vesture the light of illusion fell from him. He was now in a circle of whitest fire, that girdled and looked in upon the movements of worlds within its breast. He tried to expand and enter this flaming circle; myriads of beings on its verges watched him with pity; I felt their thought thrilling within me.



Page 93

“He will never attain it!”

“Ah, the Beautiful Bird, his plumage is stained!”

“His glory will drag him down!”

“Only in invisible whiteness can he pass!”

“How he floats upwards, the Beautiful Bird!”

“These voices of universal compassion did not reach him, rapt in aspiration and imperious will. For an instant—an eternity—the infinitudes thrilled him, those infinitudes which in that instant he knew he could never enter but as one with all on the days of the great return. All that longed, all that aspired and dared, all but the immortal were in that movement destroyed, and hurled downwards from the highest heaven of life, the pilgrim spark began once more as a child to live over again the round of human days.”

“The spirit of the place o’ermastered you,” said the child. “Here may come and dream; and their dream of joy ended, out of each dreaming sphere comes forth again in pain the infant spirit of man.”

“But beyond this illusive light and these ever-changing vistas— what lies? I am weary of their vanishing glories. I would not wish to mount up through dreams to behold the true and fall away powerlessly, but would rather return to earth, though in pain, still eager to take up and renew the cyclic labours.”

“I belong to the gardens,” said the child; “I do not know what lies beyond. But there are many paths leading far away.”

Before them where they stood branched out paths of rich flowers. Here a region of pinks lured on to vistas of delicate glory; there ideal violet hues led to a more solemn beauty; here the eyes were dazzled by avenues of rich, radiant, and sunny green; another in beautiful golden colours seemed to invite to the land of the sun, and yet another winded away through soft and shadowy blues to remote spiritual distances. There was one, a path of white flowers ending in light no eye could pierce.

“I will choose this—the path of white flower,” he said, waving farewell to the child. I watched the antique hero in my vision as he passed into the light; he seemed to shine, to grow larger; as he vanished from my eyes he was transfigured, entering as a god the region of gods.”

“Did you really dream all that?” said Willie. “How jolly it must be! It is like stepping from sphere to sphere. Before the night of one day you are in the morning of another. I suppose you have some theory about it all—as wonderful as your gardens?”

“Yes!” said our sceptic, “I had an uneasy consciousness it was not all pure story. I felt an allegory hiding its leanness somewhere beneath the glow and colour.”

“What I want to know is how these things enter the imagination at all!”

Page 94

“With what a dreadfully scientific spirit you dissect a fantasy! Perhaps you might understand if you recall what sometimes happens before sleep. At first you see pictures of things, landscapes, people you know; after a time people and places unknown before begin to mingle with them in an ever-widening circle of visions; the light on which these things are pictured is universal, though everyone has around himself his own special sphere of light; this is the mirror of himself—his memory; but as we go deeper into ourselves in introspection we see beyond our special sphere into the great of universal light, the memorial tablet of nature; there lie hidden the secrets of the past; and so, as Felix said a little while ago, we can call up and renew the life of legend and tradition. This is the Astral Light of the mystics. Its deeper and more living aspect seems to inflame the principle of desire in us. All the sweet, seductive, bewitching temptations of sense are inspired by it. After death the soul passing into this living light goes on thinking, thinking, goes on aspiring, aspiring, creating unconsciously around itself its own circumstance in which all sweetest desires are self-fulfilled. When this dream-power is exhausted the soul returns again to earth. With some this return is due to the thirst for existence; with some to a perception of the real needs of soul.”

“Do you really believe all that?”

“Oh, yes! But that is only a general statement.”

“I wonder at your capacity for believing in these invisible spheres. As for me I cannot go beyond the world I live in. When I think of these things some dreadful necessity seems heaped upon me to continue here—or, as you might put it, an angel with a flaming sword keeps everywhere the avenues to the Tree of Life.”

“Oh!” said Willie, “it seems to me a most reasonable theory. After all, what else could the soul do after death but think itself out? It has no body to move about in. I am going to dream over it now. Good-night!”

He turned into the tent and Robert followed him. “Well, I cannot rest yet,” said Bryan, “I am going up for a little to the top of the hill. Come, Felix, these drowsy fellows are going to hide themselves from the face of night.” We went up, and leaning on a boulder of rock looked out together. Away upon the dream-built margin of space a thousand tremors fled and chased each other all along the shadowy night. The human traditions, memories of pain, struggle, hope and desire floated away and melted in the quietude until at last only the elemental consciousness remained at gaze. I felt chilled by the vacancies. I wondered what this void was to Bryan. I wished to see with his eyes. His arm was around my shoulder. How I loved him—my nearest—my brother! The fierce and tender flame, comrade to his spirit, glowed in my heart. I felt a commingling of nature, something moved before my eyes.



Page 95

“Look, Bryan!” I whispered, “this is faery!” A slight upright figure, a child, stood a little apart shedding a delicate radiance upon the dusky air. Curiously innocent, primeval, she moved, withdrawn in a world only half-perceived of gorgeous blossoms and mystic shadows. Through her hair of feathery brown drifting about her the gleam of dust of gold and of rich colour seemed to come from her dress. She raised her finger-tips from the flowers and dashed the bright dew aside. I felt something vaguely familiar about the gesture. Then Bryan said, “It is one of the Children of Twilight.” It was a revelation of his mind. I had entered into the forms of his imagination.

“This is wonderful Bryan! If I can thus share in the thought of one, there can be no limit to the extension of this faculty. It seems at the moment as if I could hope to finally enter the mind of humanity and gaze upon soul, not substance.”

“It would be a great but terrible power. As often as not we imagine ourselves into demons. Space is thronged with these dragon-like forms, chimaeras of the fearful mind. Every thought is an entity. Some time or other I think we will have to slay this brood we have brought forth.”

But as we turned backwards I had no dread or thought of this future contest. I felt only gay hopes, saw only ever-widening vistas. The dreams of the Golden Age, of far-off happy times grew full of meaning. I people all the future with their splendour. The air was thronged with bright supernatural beings, they moved in air, in light; and they and we and all together were sustained and thrilled by the breath of the Unknown God.

As we drew nigh to the tent, the light of the fire still flickering revealed Robert's face within. He was sleeping. the warmth of the sun had not yet charmed away the signs of study and anxious thought.

“Do you know the old tradition that in the deepest sleep of the body the soul goes into itself. I believe he now knows the truth he feared to face. A little while ago he was here; he was in doubt; now he is gone unto all ancient things. He was in prison; now the Bird of Paradise has wings. We cannot call him by any name, for we do not know what he is. We might indeed cry aloud to his glory, as of old the Indian sage cried to a sleeper, 'Thou great one, clad in raiment; Soma: King!' But who thinking what he is would call back the titan to this strange and pitiful dream of life? Let us breath softly to do him reverence. It is now the Hour of the King,

“Who would think this quite breather
From the world had taken flight?
Yet within the form we see there
Wakes the Golden King to-night.



“Out upon the face of faces
 He looked forth before his sleep;
Now he knows the starry races
 Haunters of the ancient deep;

“On the Bird of Diamond Glory
 Floats in mystic floods of song;
As he lists, Time’s triple story
 Seems but as a day is long.



Page 96

“When he wakes—the dreamy-hearted—
He will know not whence he came,
And the light from which he parted
Be the seraph’s sword of flame;

“And behind its host supernal
Guarding the lost Paradise,
And the Tree of Life eternal
From the weeping human eyes.”

“You are an enchanter, Bryan. As you speak I half imagine the darkness sparkles with images, with heroes and ancient kings who pass, and jeweled seraphs who move in flame. I feel mad. The distance rushes at me. The night and stars are living, and—speak unknown things! You have made me so restless I will never sleep.”

I lay down. The burden of the wonder and mystery of existence was upon me. Through the opening of the tent the warm night air flowed in; the stars seemed to come near—nearer—full of kindly intent—with familiar whispering; until at last I sank back into the great deep of sleep with a mysterious radiance of dream showering all about me.

Night The Second

The skies were dim and vast and deep
Above the vales of rest;
They seemed to rock the stars asleep
Beyond the mountain’s crest.

Oh, vale and stars and rocks and trees,
He gives to you his rest,
But holds afar from you the peace
Whose home is in His breast!

The massy night, brilliant with golden lights enfolded us. All things were at rest. After a long day’s ramble among the hills, we sat down again before our fire. I felt, perhaps we all felt, a mystic unquiet rebelling against the slumbrous mood of nature rolled round her hills and valleys.

“You must explain to us, Bryan, why it is we can never attain a real quiet, even here where all things seem at peace.”

“We are aliens here, and do not know ourselves. We are always dreaming of some other life. These dreams, if we could only rightly interpret them, would be the doors through which we might pass into a real knowledge of ourselves.”



“I don’t think I would get much wisdom out of my dreams,” said Willie. “I had a dream last night; a lot of little goblin fellows dancing a jig on the plains of twilight. Perhaps you could tell us a real dream?”

“I remember one dream of a kind I mean, which I will tell you. It left a deep impression upon me. I will call it a dream of

The Northern Lights

I awoke from sleep with a cry. I was hurled up from the great deep and rejected of the darkness. But out of the clouds and dreams I built up a symbol of the going forth of the spirit—a symbol, not a memory—for if I could remember, I could return again at will and be free of the unknown land. But in slumber I was free. I sped forth like an arrow. I followed a secret hope, breasting the currents of life flowing all about me.

Page 97

I tracked these streams winding in secretness far away. I said, "I am going to myself. I will bathe in the Fountain of Life;" and so on and on I sped northwards, with dark waters flowing beneath me and stars companionship my flight. Then a radiance illumined the heavens, the icy peaks and caves, and I saw the Northern Lights. Out of the diamond breast of the air I looked forth. Below the dim world shone all with pale and wintry green; the icy crests flickered with a light reflect from the shadowy auras streaming over the horizon. Then these auras broke out in fire, and the plains of ice were illumined. The light flashed through the goblin caves, and lit up their frosty hearts and the fantastic minarets drooping above them. Light above in solemn array went forth and conquered the night. Light below with a myriad flashing spears pursued the gloom. Its dazzling lances shivered in the heart of the ice: they sped along the ghostly hollows; the hues of the orient seemed to laugh through winter; the peaks blossomed with starry and crystalline flowers, lilac and white and blue; they faded away, pearl, opal and pink in shimmering evanescence; then gleams of rose and amethyst traveled slowly from spar to spar, lightened and departed; there was silence before my eyes; the world once more was all a pale and wintry green. I thought of them no more, but of the mighty and unseen tides going by me with billowy motion. "Oh, Fountain I seek, thy waters are all about me, but where shall I find a path to Thee?" Something answered my cry, "Look in thy heart!" and, obeying the voice, the seer in me looked forth no more through the eyes of the shadowy form, but sank deep within itself. I knew then the nature of these mystic streams; they were life, joy, love, ardour, light. From these came the breath of life which the heart drew in with every beat, and from thence it was flashed up in illumination through the cloudy hollows of the brain. They poured forth unceasingly; they were life in everyone; they were joy in everyone; they stirred an incommunicable love which was fulfilled only in yielding to and adoration of the vast. But the Fountain I could not draw nigh unto; I was borne backwards from its unimaginable centre, then an arm seized me, and I was stayed. I could see no one, but I grew quiet, full of deep quiet, out of which memory breathes only shadowiest symbols, images of power and Holy Sages, their grand faces turned to the world, as if in the benediction of universal love, pity, sympathy, and peace, ordained by Buddha; the faces of the Fathers, ancient with eternal youth, looking forth as in the imagination of the mystic Blake, the Morning Stars looked forth and sang together. A sound as of an "Om" unceasing welled up and made an aureole of peace around them. I would have joined in the song, but could not attain to them. I knew if I had a deeper love I could have entered with them into unending labours amid



Page 98

peace; but I could only stand and gaze; in my heart a longing that was worship, in my thought a wonder that was praise. "Who are these?" I murmured? The Voice answered, "They are the servants of the Nameless One. They do his bidding among men. They awaken the old heroic fire of sacrifice in forgetful hearts." Then the forms of elder life appeared in my vision. I saw the old earth, a fairy shadow ere it yet had hardened, peopled with ethereal races unknowing of themselves or their destinies and lulled with inward dreams; above and far away I saw how many glittering hosts, their struggle ended, moved onward to the Sabbath of Eternity. Out of these hosts, one dropped as a star from their heart, and overshadowed the olden earth with its love. Where ever it rested I saw each man awakening from his dreams turned away with the thought of sacrifice in his heart, a fire that might be forgotten, but could never die. This was the continual secret whisper of the Fathers in the inmost being of humanity. "Why do they not listen?" I marveled. Then I heard another cry from the lower pole, the pit; a voice of old despair and protest, the appeal of passion seeking its own fulfilment. Alternate with the dawn of Light was the breath of the expanding Dark where powers of evil were gathered together. "It is the strife between light and darkness which are the world's eternal ways," said the Voice, "but the light shall overcome and the fire in the heart be rekindled; men shall regain their old angelic being, and though the dark powers may war upon them, the angels with their love shall slay them. Be thou ready for the battle, and see thou use only love in the fight. Then I was hurried backward with swift speed, and awoke. All I knew was but a symbol, but I had the peace of the mystic Fathers in my heart, and the jeweled glory of the Northern Lights all dazzling about my eyes.

"Well, after a dream like that," said Willie, "the only thing one can do is to try and dream another like it."

—Oct. 15, 1894-Jan. 15, 1895

On the Spur of the Moment

I am minded to put down some intuitions about brotherhood and trust in persons. A witty friend writes, "Now that I have made up my mind, I intend looking at the evidence." A position like that is not so absurd as at first it seems. It is folly only to those who regard reason alone and deny the value of a deep-seated intuition. The intuitive trust which so many members of the T.S. have in William Q. Judge, to my mind shows that he is a real teacher. In their deepest being they know him as such, and what is knowledge there becomes the intuition of waking hours. When a clamour of many voices arises making accusations, pointing to time, place and circumstance; to things which we cannot personally investigate, it is only the spirit within us can speak and decide. Others with more knowledge may give answering circumstances of time, place

and act; but, with or without these, I back up my intuition with the reason—where the light breaks through, there the soul is pure. Says a brother truly:



Page 99

“The list of his works is endless, monumental; it shows us an untiring soul, an immense and indomitable will, a total ignoring of himself for the benefit of his fellow-members. This is not the conduct of the charlatan, not of the self-seeker. It is that of one of those brave and long-tried souls who have fought their way down through the vistas of time so that they might have strength to battle now for those who may be weaker.”

Others may have been more eloquent and learned, but who has been so wise? Others may have written more beautifully, but who with such intimations of the Secret Spirit breathing within? Others have explained intellectually tattvas, principles and what not, but who like him has touched the heart of a hidden nobility? Has he not done it over and over again, as here?

“Do what you find to do. Desire ardently to do it, and even when you shall not have succeeded in carrying out anything but some small duties, some words of warning, your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon some other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of. Then rejoice that another has been so fortunate as to make such a meritorious Karma.”

Or he speaks as a hero:

“To fail would be nothing, but to stop working for Humanity and Brotherhood would be awful.”

Or as one who loves and justifies it to the end:

“We are not Karma, we are not the law, and it is a species of that hypocrisy so deeply condemned by it for us to condemn any man. That the law lets a man live is proof that he is not yet judged by that higher power.”

To know of these laws is to be them to some extent. “What a man thinks, that he is, that is the old secret.” The temple of Spirit is inviolate. It is not grasped by speech or by action. “Whom the Spirit chooses, by him it is gained. The Self chooses his body as its own.” When the personal tumult is silence, then arises the meditation of the Wise within. Whoever speaks out of that life has earned the right to be there. No cunning can stimulate its accents. No hypocrisy can voice its wisdom. Whose mind gives out light—it is the haunt of the Gods. Does this seem to slight a guarantee for sincerity, for trust reposed? I know of none weightier. Look back in memory; of the martyrdom of opposing passions, out of the last anguish came forth the light. It was no cheap accomplishment. If some one meets us and speaks knowing of that law, we say inwardly, “I know you have suffered, brother!” But here is one with a larger wisdom than ours. Here is one whose words today have the same clear ring. “The world knows him not.” His own disciples hardly know him: he has fallen like Lucifer. But I would take such teaching as he gives from Lucifer himself, and say, “His old divinity remains with him still.”



Page 100

“After all you may be mistaken,” someone says. “The feet of no one are set infallibly on the path.” It may be so. Let us take that alternative. Can we reject him or any other as comrades while they offer? Never. Were we not taught to show to those on whom came the reaction from fierce effort, not cold faces, but the face of friendship, waiting for the wave of sure return? If this was a right attitude for us in our lesser groups, it is then right for the whole body to adopt. The Theosophical Society as a whole should not have less than the generous spirit of its units. It must exercise the same brotherly spirit alike to those of good or evil fame. Alike on the just and the unjust shines the Light of It, the Father-Spirit. Deep down in our hearts have we not all longed, longed, for that divine love which rejects none? You who think he has erred, it is yours to give it now. There is an occult law that all things return to their source, their cycles accomplished. The forces we expend in love and anger come back again to us thrilled with the thought which accepted or rejected them. I tell you, if worse things were true of him than what are said, if we did our duty simply, giving back in gratitude and fearlessness the help we had received from him, his own past would overcome the darkness of the moment, would strengthen and bear him on to the light.

“But,” some push it further; “it is not of ourselves, but of this Society and its good name, we think. How can it accomplish its high mission in the world if we seem to ignore in our ranks the presence of the insincere person or fraud?”

I wish, my brothers, we could get rid of these old fears. Show, form, appearance and seeming, what force have they? A faulty face matters nothing. The deep inner attitude alone has power. The world’s opinion implicates none of us with the Law. Our action many precipitate Karma, may inconvenience us for an hour; but the end of life is not comfort but celestial being; it is not in the good voice of the world today we can have any hope: its evil voice may seem to break us for a little; but love, faith and gratitude shall write our history in flame on the shadowy aura of the world, and the Watchers shall record it. We can lose nothing; the Society can lose nothing. Our only right is in the action, and half the sweetness of life consists in loving much.

While I wrote, I thought I felt for a moment the true spirit of this pioneer body we belong to. Like a diver too long under seas, emerging I inhaled the purer air and saw the yellow sunlight. To think of it! what freedom! what freshness! to sail away from old report and fear and custom, the daring of the adventurer in our hearts, having a reliance only upon the laws of life to justify and sustain us.

—February 1895

The Legends of Ancient Eire



Page 101

A Reverend and learned professor in Trinity College, Dublin, a cynic and a humorist, is reported once to have wondered “why the old Irish, having a good religion of their own, did not stick to it?” Living in the “Celtic twilight,” and striving to pierce backward into the dawn, reading romance, tradition and history, I have endeavoured to solve something of the mystery of the vast “Celtic phantasmagoria,” I can but echoe the professor. In these legends, prodical of enchantment, where Gods, heroes and bright supernatural beings mingle, are at league or war together, I have found not misty but clear traces of that old wisdom-religion once universal. There are indeed no ancient Irish Scriptures I am aware of, but they were not needed. To those who read in the Book of Life, philosophy and scripture are but as blinds over the spiritual vision. But we today— lost children of the stars—but painfully and indirectly catch glimpses of the bright spheres once our habitations, where we freely came and went. So I will try to tell over again some of these old stories in the light of philosophy spoken later. What was this old wisdom-religion? It was the belief that life is one; that nature is not dead but living; the surface but a veil tremulous with light—lifting that veil hero and sage of old time went outwards into the vast and looked on the original. All that they beheld they once were, and it was again their heritage, for in essence they were one with it—children of Deity. The One gave birth to the many, imagining within itself the heaven of heavens, and the heavens, and spheres more shadowy and dim, growing distant from the light. Through these the Rays ran outward, falling down through many a starry dynasty to dwell in clay. Yet—once God or Angel— that past remains, and the Ray, returning on itself, may reassume its old vesture, remains, entering as a God into the Ancestral Self. Every real scripture and every ancient myth, to be understood truly, must be understood in this light. God, the angelic hierarchies, the powers divine and infernal, are but names for the mightier Adam in whose image man was made and who is the forgotten Self in humanity. Mystic symbolism is the same the world over, and applying it to the old Celtic romances, phantasy and faeryland are transformed into history and we are reading about the ancient Irish Adepts.

Ireland was known long ago as the Sacred Island. The Gods lived there: for the Tuatha De Dannans who settled in Eire after conquering the gigantic races of Firbolgs and Fomorians (Atlanteans) were called Gods, differing in this respect from the Gods of ancient Greece and India, that they were men who had made themselves Gods by magical or Druidical power. They were preeminently magi become immortal by strength of will and knowledge. Superhuman in power and beauty, they raised themselves above nature; they played with the elements; they moved with ease in the air. We read of one Angus Oge, the master



Page 102

magician of all, sailing invisibly “on the wings of the cool east wind”; the palace of that Angus remains to this day at New Grange, wrought over with symbols of the Astral Fire and the great Serpentine Power. The De Dannans lived in the heart of mountains (crypts for initiation), and today the peasant sometimes sees the enchanted glow from the green hills he believes they still inhabit. Perhaps he believes not foolishly, for, once truly occult, a place is preserved from pollution until the cycle returns, bringing back with it the ancient Gods again.

The cycles of the Gods is followed in Irish tradition by the cycle of the heroes. The Gods still mingled with them and presumably taught them, for many of these heroes are Druids. Fin, the hero of a hundred legends, Cuchullin, Dairmud, Oisín and others are wielders of magical powers. One of the most beautiful of these stories tells of Oisín in Tir-na-noge. Oisín with his companions journeys along by the water’s edge. He is singled out by Niam, daughter of Mannanan, king of Tir-na-noge, the land of the Gods. She comes on a white horse across the seas, and mounting with her Oisín travels across the ocean; after warring with a giant Fomor he passes into Tir-na-noge, where for a hundred years he lives with Niam and has all that heart could wish for. But desire for Eire arises within him and returning, he falls off the magic steed, and becomes an old man weary with years. It is purely occult. Oisín, Niam, her white steed, Tir-na-noge, the waters they pass over, are but names which define a little our forgotten being. Within Oisín, the magician, kindles the Ray, the hidden Beauty. Let us call it by what name we will, so that we spare the terms of academic mysticism or psychology. It is the Golden Bird of the Upanishads; the Light that lighteth every man; it is that which the old Hermetists knew as the Fair or the Beautiful—for Niam means beauty; it is the Presence, and when it is upon a man every other tie breaks; he goes alone with It, he is a dying regret, an ever-increasing joy. And so with Oisín, whose weeping companions behold him no more. He mounts the white horse with Niam. It is the same as the white horse of the Apocalypse, whereon one sits called Faithful and True. It is the power on which the Spirit rides. Who is there, thinking, has felt freed for a moment from his prison-house, and looking forth has been blinded by the foam of great seas, or has felt his imagination grow kingly in contemplation—he has known its impelling power; the white horse is impatient of restraint.

As they pass over the waters “they saw many wonderful things on their journey—*islands and cities, lime-white mansions, bright greenans and lofty palaces.*” It is the mirror of heaven and earth, the astral light, in whose glass a myriad illusions arise and fleet before the mystic adventures. Haunt of a false beauty—or rather a veil hung dazzling before the true beauty, only the odour or incense of her breath is blown through these alluring forms. The transition from this to a subtler sphere is indicated. A hornless deer, chased by a white hound with red ears, and a maiden tossing a golden lure, vanishes for ever before a phantom lover. The poet whose imagination has renewed for us the legend has caught the true significance of these hurrying forms:



Page 103

“The immortal desire of immortals we saw in their eyes and sighed.”

“Do not heed these forms!” cried Niam. Compare with this from another source: “Flee from the Hall of Learning, it is dangerous in its perfidious beauty. Beware, lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy Soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light. It shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnarer.” There are centres in man corresponding to these appearances. They give vision and entrance into a red and dreadful world, where unappeasable desire smites the soul—a dangerous clairvoyance. But in the sphere beyond their power has to be conquered, and here Oisín wars with the giant Fomor. De Dannan and Romorian passed from Eire wrestle still in the invisible world, say the legends. We, too— would-be mystics—are met on the threshold of diviner spheres by terrible forms embodying the sins of a living past when we misused our spiritual powers in old Atlantean days. These forms must be conquered and so Oisín battles with Fomor and releases the power— a princess in the story. This fight with the demon must be fought by everyone who would enter the land of the Gods, whether in conscious occult adventure or half-consciously after death, when the strange alchemist Nature separates the subtle from the gross in the soul in this region which Oisín passes through. Tir-na-noge, the land of Niam, is that region the soul lives in when its grosser energies and desires have been subdued, dominated and brought under the control of light; where the Ray of Beauty kindles and illuminates every form which the imagination conceives, and where every form tends to its archetype. It is a real region which has been approached and described by the poets and sages who, at all times, have endeavoured to express something of the higher realities. It is not distant, but exists in earth as the soul within the body, and may be perceived through and along with the surface forms. In a sense it corresponds with the Tibetan Devachan, and in this region Oisín lives for a hundred years, until desire to see Eire once more arises and he parts from Niam. Nor the details of his return, the drowsy land in which he slumbers; how he fell off the white horse and became an old man with the weariness of his hundreds of years upon him—I must refer the reader to the legends. He will read not alone of Oisín, but of many an old hero, who, hailed by the faery (divine) voice, went away to live in the heart of green hills (to be initiated) or to these strange worlds.

Dear children of Eire, not alone to the past but to today belong such destinies. For if we will we can enter the enchanted land. The Golden Age is all about us, and heroic forms and imperishable love. In that mystic light rolled round our hills and valleys hang deed and memories which yet live and inspire. The Gods have not deserted us. Hearing our call they will return. A new cycle is dawning and the sweetness of the morning twilight is in the air. We can breathe it if we will but awaken from our slumber.



Page 104

II.

In the recently published *Story of Early Gaelic Literature*, attention is directed to the curious eastern and pantheistic character of some archaic verse. Critics are for ever trying to show how some one particular antique race was the first begetter of religion and mystic symbolism. Perplexed by the identity between the myths and traditions of different countries, they look now here, now there, for the original. But it was not in any land but out of the Christ-Soul of the universe that true wisdom at all times was begotten. Some ignorant peasant, some Jacob Boehme, is pure and aspires, and lo! the God stirs within him and he knows the things that were taught in elder days and by unknown people. Our own land, long ago, had its Initiates in whom the eye of the seer was open. This eye, concealed in the hollow of the brain, is the straight gate and the narrow way through which alone the mortal may pass and behold the immortal. It is now closed in most men. Materialism, sensuality and dogmatic belief have so taken the crown and sceptre from their souls that they enter the golden world no more knowingly—they are outcast of Eden. But the Tuatha De Dannans were more than seers or visionaries. They were magicians—God and man in one. Not alone their thought went out into the vast, but the Power went along with it. This mystic Power is called the Serpentine Fire. It is spiritual, electric, creative. It develops spirally in the ascetic, mounting from centre to centre, from the navel to the heart;* [* “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters. This spake he of the Spirit.”—John, vii, 38] from thence it rises to the head. He is then no more a man but a God; his vision embraces infinitude.

The action of this Power was symbolized in many ways, notably by the passage of the sun through the zodiacal signs * (centres in the psychic body) [* “The twelve signs of the Zodiac are hidden in his body.”—*Secret Doctrine*, II, 619] A stone serpent was found a little while ago in Ireland marked with twelve divisions. The archaic verses alluded to have the same meaning:

“I am the point of the lance of battle. [The spinal cord, the
Sushumna nadi of Indian Psychology.]

I am the God who creates in the head of man the fire of the thought.

Who is it throws light into the meeting on the mountain? [The
meeting of the mortal and the immortal on Mount Meru, the
pineal gland.]

Who announces the ages of the moon? [The activity of the inner
astral man.]

Who teaches the place where courses the sun?” [Spirit.]



Page 105

The Serpentine Power is the couch of the sun, the casket of spirit. Hence the Druids or Magi who had mastered this power were called Serpents. Though St. Patrick is said to have driven the serpents out of Ireland, traces still remain of the serpent wisdom. Lest the interpretation given should seem arbitrary I will trace further explicit references to the third eye. Diarmuid, the hero and darling of so many story-tellers, whose flight with Grania forms one of the most mystic episodes in Celtic romance, is described as having a spot in the centre of his forehead which fascinated whoever gazed. He is called the "Son of the Monarch of Light." He is the Initiate, the twice-born. This divine parentage has the sense in which the words were spoken. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." In the same sense a Druid is described as "full of his God." From the mystic Father descends the Ray, the Child of Light. It is born in man as mind, not reasoning: earthly not sensual, but as the heaven-aspiring, thinking mind. In itself it is of the nature of fire. The man who knows it becomes filled with light, aye, he moves about in light within himself.

The following description of a giant, taken from the story of Diarmuid, refers to still another aspect of our occult nature.

"He has, but one eye only in the fair middle of his black forehead. He is, moreover, so skilled in magic that fire could not burn him, water could not drown him, and weapons would not wound him. He is fated not to die until there be struck upon him three blows of the iron club he has. He sleeps in the top of that Quicken tree by night, and he remains at its foot by day to watch it. The berries of the tree have the virtues of the trees of faeryland."

The Quicken tree is the network of nerves in the magnetic astral body. Readers of the Upanishads will remember the description of the arteries, thin as a hair split a thousand times, which proceed from the heart, and in which the Ego rests during deep sleep. It has just the same significance in the legend. The meaning will be still better understood by a comparison of the youthful Finn in his encounter with a similar one-eye Titan. There is a most interesting version of this in Curtin's Irish Myths and Folk-Tales. Too long to quote in its entirety, the story runs as follows. Finn meets a giant who carries a salmon in his hand. This Titan has "but one eye as large as the sun in the heavens." He gives the fish to Finn to cook. The moment the giant closed his eye he began to breathe heavily. "Every time he drew breath he dragged Finn, the spit, the salmon, and all the goats to his mouth, and every time drove a breath out of himself he threw them back to the places they were in before." While Finn is cooking the salmon he burns it, and in trying to hide the blister he burns his thumb. To ease the pain he put his thumb between his teeth, and chewed it through



Page 106

to the bone and marrow. He then received the knowledge of all things. He was drawn up the next minute to the giant's eye, and plunged the hot spit (a bar of red-hot iron, says another account) into the eye of the giant. He passes the infuriate giant at the door of the cave something after the fashion of Ulysses, by bringing the flocks out and himself escaping under the fleece of the largest goat or ram.

The meaning of this story, with all its quaint imagery, is not difficult. It is an allegory describing the loss of the third eye. The cave is the body. The fish is a phallic symbol, and the cooking of it refers to the fall of the early ethereal races into generation and eventually into gross sensuality. The synthetic action of the highest spiritual faculty, in which all the powers of man are present, is shown by the manner in which everything in the cave is dragged up to the giant's head. When Finn destroys the eye by plunging into it a bar of red-hot iron, it simply means that the currents started in the generative organs rose up through the spinal cord to the brain, and, acting upon the pineal gland, atrophied or petrified it. The principle of desire is literally the spirit of the metal iron, and a clairvoyant could see these red fires mounting up by the way of the spinal canal to the brain and there smothering any higher feelings. The escape of Finn under the fleece of the ram means that, having destroyed the spiritual eye, he could only use the organ of psychic clairvoyance, which is symbolized here, as in the mysticism of other countries, by the ram.

This symbolism, so grotesque and unmeaning today, was once perfectly lucid and was justified in its application. A clairvoyant could see in the aura of man around every centre the glow, colour and form which gave rise to the antique symbol. One of the Gods is described as "surrounded by a rainbow and fiery dews." Cuchullin, whose hair, dark (blue?) close to the skin, red beyond, and ending in brilliant gold, makes Professor Rhys elaborate him into a solar myth, is an adept who has assimilated the substance of the three worlds, the physical, the psychic and the heavenworld; therefore his hair (aura) shows the three colours. He has the sevenfold vision also, indicated by the seven pupils in his eyes. Volumes of unutterably dreary research, full of a false learning, have been written about these legends. Some try to show that much of the imagery arose from observation of the heavenly bodies and the procession of the seasons. But who of the old bards would have described nature other than as she is? The morning notes of Celtic song breathe the freshness of spring and are full of joy in nature. They could communicate this much better than most of their critics could do. It is only the world within which could not be rendered otherwise than by myth and symbol. We do not need scholarship so much as a little imagination to interpret them. We



Page 107

shall understand the divine initiators of our race by believing in our own divinity. As we nourish the mystic fire, we shall find many things of the early world, which now seem grotesque and unlovely to our eyes, growing full of shadowy and magnificent suggestion. Things that were distant and strange, things abhorrent, the blazing dragons, winged serpents and oceans of fire which affrighted us, are seen as the portals through which the imagination enters a more beautiful, radiant world. The powers we dared not raise our eyes to—heroes, dread deities and awful kings—grow as brothers and gay children around the spirit in its resurrection and ascension. For there is no pathway in the universe which does not pass through man, and no life which is not brother to our life.

—March-April, 1895

Review: "Lyrics" by R.H. Fitzpatrick [London: W. Stewart and Co.]

While one race sinks into night another renews its dawn. The Celtic Twilight is the morning-time and the singing of birds is prophetic of the new day. We have had to welcome of late years one sweet singer after another, and now comes a volume of lyrics which has that transcendental note which is peculiar to our younger writers. It is full of the mystery and commingling of the human and the divine soul:

"Hail, thou living spirit!
Whose deep organ blown
By lips that more inherit
Than all music known;
Art is but the echo of thy mysterious tone."

These lyrics, I imagine, have been wrought in solitary wanderings, in which the forms and shows of things and human hopes and fears have been brooded upon until the intensity of contemplation has allied them with that soul of Nature in which the poet finds the fulfilment of all dreams and ideals. And in this refining back to an Over-Soul there is no suggestion of the student of academic philosophy, no over-wrought intellectualism. Such references arise naturally out of his thought and illuminate it. One can imagine how such lyrics were engendered:

"I stood and twirled a feathered stalk,
Or drank the clover's honey sap,
Happiest without talk.

"The summer tidal waves of night
Slowly in silence rippled in:



They steeped the feet of blazing light,
And hushed day's harsher din."

This aloofness from conflict, it if has hindered him from fully accepting and justifying life, the highest wisdom of the poet, has still its compensations. He has felt the manifold meaning of the voices through whose unconsciousness Nature speaks, the songs of birds, the aerial romance and intermingling of light and shadow, and has vision of the true proportion of things in that conflict he has turned his back on:

"All things sip,
And sip at life; but Time for ever drains
The ever-filing cup in rivalry,
And wipes the generations from his lip,
While Art looks down from his serene domains."



Page 108

—June 15, 1895

—“Yes, *and hope.*”

They bring none to his or to her terminus or to be content and full, Whom they take they take into space to behold the birth of stars, to learn one of the meanings. To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the ceaseless rings and never be quiet again. — Whitman

Here is inspiration—the voice of the soul. And we, who professed to bring such wisdom, what have we to say? Have we uttered with equal confidence such hopes, or with such daring and amplitude of illustration? Let us confess we have not. There are one or two exceptions which will occur to everyone. Now, as we adventure afresh, let us see what it is has brought despondency and failure in our work upon us in the past. I think it is because we have been saying things we have never realized; we have been repeating without imagination the words of those few leaders. We have lowered their heroic tone because we thought we were speaking to a fallen people who could not respond to our highest. But it was not the way, it was not the way. It is not with the dust we have brotherhood, but with the ancient spirit it clouds over. To this spirit we must speak heart to heart as we know how. I would not willingly recognize aught in anyone but the divine. Often indeed the form or surface far removed from beauty makes us falter, and we speak to that form and so the soul is not stirred; it will not respond. But an equal temper arouses it. To whoever hails in it the lover, the hero, the magician, it will answer, but not to him who accosts it as Mr. So-and-So. Every word which really inspires is spoken as if the Golden Age had never passed. The great teachers ignore the personal identity and speak to the eternal pilgrim. Do we not treasure most their words which remind us of our divine origin? So we must in our turn speak. How often do we not long to break through the veils which divide us from some one, but custom, convention, or a fear of being misunderstood prevent us, and so the moment departs whose heat might have burned through every barrier. Out with it— out with it, the hidden heart, the love that is voiceless, the secret tender germ of an infinite forgiveness. That speaks to the heart. That pierces through many a vesture of the Soul. Our companion struggles in some labyrinth of passion. We help him, we think with ethics, with the moralities. Ah, very well they are; well to know and to keep, but wherefore? For their own sake? No, but that the King may arise in his beauty. We write that in letters, in books, but to the face of the fallen who brings back remembrance? Who calls him by his secret name? Let a man but feel for that is his battle, for that his cyclic labor, and a warrior who is invincible fights for him and he draws upon divine powers. Let us but get that way of looking at things which we call imaginative, and how everything alters.



Page 109

For our attitude to man and to nature, expressed or not, has something of the effect of ritual, of evocation. As our aspiration so is our inspiration. We believe in life universal, in a brotherhood which links the elements to man, and makes the glow-worm feel far off something of the rapture of the seraph hosts. Then we go out into the living world, and what influences pour through us! We are "at league with the stones of the field." The winds of the world blow radiantly upon us as in the early time. We feel wrapt about with love, with an infinite tenderness that caresses us. Alone in our rooms as we ponder, what sudden abysses of light open within us! The Gods are so much nearer than we dreamed. We rise up intoxicated with the thought, and reel out seeking an equal companionship under the great night and the stars.

Let us get near to realities. We read too much. We think of that which is "the goal, the Comforter, the Lord, the Witness, the resting-place, the asylum and the Friend." Is it by any of these dear and familiar names? Alas, our souls are becoming mere bundles of theories. We follow the trail of the Monad, but often it is only in the pages of The Secret Doctrine. And we talk much of Atma, Buddhi, and Manas. Could we not speak of them in our own tongue and the language of today will be as sacred as any of the past. No wonder that the Manasa do not incarnate. We cannot say we do pay reverence to these awful powers. We repulse the living truth by our doubts and reasonings. We would compel the Gods to fall in with our philosophy rather than trust in the heavenly guidance. We make diagrams of them. Ah, to think of it, those dread deities, the divine Fires, to be so enslaved! We have not comprehended the meaning of the voice which cried, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," or this, "Lift up your heads O y gates. Be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Nothing that we read is useful unless it calls up living things in the soul. To read a mystic book truly is to invoke the powers. If they do not rise up plumed and radiant, the apparitions of spiritual things, then is our labor barren. We only encumber the mind with useless symbols. They knew better ways long ago. "Master of the Green-waving Planisphere, Lord of the Azure Expanse, it is thus we invoke," cried the magicians of old.

And us, let us invoke them with joy, let us call upon them with love, the Light we hail, or the Divine Darkness we worship with silent breath, hymning it in our hearts with quietude and more enraptured awe. That silence cries aloud to the Gods. Then they will approach us. Then we may learn that speech of many colors, for they will not speak in our mortal tongue; they will not answer to the names of men. Their names are rainbow glories. Yet these are mysteries and they cannot be reasoned out or argued over. We cannot speak truly of them from report,



Page 110

or description, or from what another has written. A relation to the thing in itself alone is our warrant, and this means we must set aside our intellectual self-sufficiency and await guidance. It will surely come to those who wait in trust, a glow, a heat in the heart announcing the awakening of the Fire. And, as it blows with its mystic breath into the brain, there is a hurtling of visions, a brilliance of lights, a sound as of great waters vibrant and musical in their flowing, and murmurs from a single yet multitudinous being. In such a mood, when the far becomes near, the strange familiar, and the infinite possible, he wrote from whose words we get the inspiration:

“To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the ceaseless rings and never be quiet again.”

Such a faith and such an unrest be ours: faith which is mistrust of the visible; unrest which is full of a hidden surety and radiance. We, when we fall into pleasant places, rest and dream our strength away. Before every enterprise and adventure of the soul we calculate in fear our power to do. But remember, “Oh, disciple, in thy work for thy brother thou has many allies; in the winds, in the air, in all the voices of the silent shore.” These are the far-wandered powers of our own nature and they turn again home at our need. We came out of the Great Mother-Life for the purposes of soul. Are her darlings forgotten where they darkly wander and strive? Never. Are not the lives of all her heroes proof? Though they seem to stand alone the eternal Mother keeps watch on them, and voices far away and unknown to them before arise in passionate defence, and hearts beat warm to help them. Aye, if we could look within we would see vast nature stirred on their behalf, and institutions shaken, until the truth they fight for triumphs, and they pass, and a wake of glory ever widening behind them trails down the ocean of the years.

Thus the warrior within us works, or, if we choose to phrase it so, it is the action of the spiritual will. Shall we not, then, trust in it and face the unknown defiant and fearless of its dangers. Though we seem to go alone to the high, the lonely, the pure, we need not despair. Let no one bring to this task the mood of the martyr or of one who thinks he sacrifices something. Yet let all who will come. Let them enter the path, “Yes, and hope,” facing all things in life and death with a mood at once gay and reverent, as befits those who are immortal—who are children today, but whose hands tomorrow may grasp the sceptre, sitting down with the Gods as equal and companions.

—August 1895



Content

Who are exiles? as for me
 Where beneath the diamond dome
Lies the light on hill or tree
 There my palace is and home.



Page 111

We are outcasts from Deity; therefore we defame the place of our exile. But who is there may set apart his destiny from the earth which bore him? I am one of those who would bring back the old reverence for the Mother, the magic, the love. I think, metaphysician, you have gone astray. You would seek within yourself for the fountain of life. Yes, there is the true, the only light. But do not dream it will lead you further away from the earth, but rather deeper into its heart. By it you are nourished with those living waters you would drink. You are yet in the womb and unborn, and the Mother breathes for thee the diviner airs. Dart out thy furthest ray of thought to the original, and yet thou has not found a new path of thine own. Thy ray is still enclosed in the parent ray, and only on the sidereal streams are you borne to the freedom of the deep, to the sacred stars whose distance maddens, and to the lonely Light of Lights.

Let us, therefore, accept the conditions and address ourselves with wonder, with awe, with love, as we well may, to that being in whom we move. I abate no jot of those vaster hopes, yet I would pursue that ardent aspiration, content as to here and today. I do not believe in a nature red with tooth and claw. If indeed she appears so terrible to any it is because they themselves have armed her. Again, behind the anger of the Gods there is a love. Are the rocks barren? Lay thy brow against them and learn what memories they keep. Is the brown earth unbeautiful? Yet lie on the breast of the Mother and thou shalt be aureoled with the dews of faery. The earth is the entrance to the Halls of Twilight. What emanations are those that make radiant the dark woods of pine! Round every leaf and tree and over all the mountains wave the fiery tresses of that hidden sun which is the soul of the earth and parent of they soul. But we think of these things no longer. Like the prodigal we have wandered far from our home, but no more return. We idly pass or wait as strangers in the halls our spirit built.

Sad or fain no more to live?

I have pressed the lips of pain:

With the kisses lovers give

Ransomed ancient powers again.

I would raise this shrinking soul to a more universal acceptance. What! does it aspire to the All, and yet deny by its revolt and inner protest the justice of Law. From sorrow we shall take no less and no more than from our joys. For if the one reveals to the soul the mode by which the power overflows and fills it here, the other indicates to it the unalterable will which checks excess and leads it on to true proportion and its own ancestral ideal. Yet men seem for ever to fly from their destiny of inevitable beauty; because of delay the power invites and lures no longer but goes out into the highways with a hand of iron. We look back cheerfully enough upon those old trials out of which we have passed; but we have gleaned only an aftermath of wisdom and missed the full harvest if the will has not risen royally at the moment in unison with the will of the Immortal, even though it comes rolled round with terror and suffering and strikes at the heart of clay.



Page 112

Through all these things, in doubt, despair, poverty, sick feeble or baffled, we have yet to learn reliance. "I will not leave thee or forsake thee," are the words of the most ancient spirit to the spark wandering in the immensity of its own being. This high courage brings with it a vision. It sees the true intent in all circumstance out of which its own emerges to meet it. Before it the blackness melts into forms of beauty, and back of all illusions is seen the old enchanter tenderly smiling, the dark, hidden Father enveloping his children.

All things have their compensations. For what is absent here there is always, if we seek, a nobler presence about us.

Captive, see what stars give light
In the hidden heart of clay:
At their radiance dark and bright
Fades the dreamy King of Day.

We complain of conditions, but this very imperfection it is which urges us to arise and seek for the Isles of the Immortals. What we lack recalls the fulness. The soul has seen a brighter day than this and a sun which never sets. Hence the retrospect: "Thou has been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, the jasper, the sapphire, emerald Thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." We would point out these radiant avenues of return; but sometimes we feel in our hearts that we sound but cockney choices, as guides amid the ancient temples, the cyclopean crypts sanctified by the mysteries. To be intelligible we replace the opalescent shining by the terms of the anatomist, and we speak of the pineal gland and the pituitary body in the same breath with the Most High. Yet when the soul has the vision divine it knows not it has a body. Let it remember, and the breath of glory kindles it no more; it is once again a captive. After all, it does not make the mysteries clearer to speak in physical terms and do violence to our intuitions. If we ever use these centres, as fires we shall see them, or they shall well up within us as fountains of potent sound. We may satisfy people's minds with a sense correspondence, and their souls may yet hold aloof. We shall only inspire by the magic of a superior beauty. Yet this too has its dangers. "Thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness," continues the seer. If we follow too much the elusive beauty of form we will miss the spirit. The last secrets are for those who translate vision into being. Does the glory fade away before thee? Say truly in thy heart, "I care not. I will wear the robes I am endowed with today." Thou are already become beautiful, being beyond desire and free.

Night and day no more eclipse
Friendly eyes that on us shine,
Speech from old familiar lips,
Playmates of a youth divine.



Page 113

To childhood once again. We must regain the lost state. But it is to the giant and spiritual childhood of the young immortals we must return, when into their clear and translucent souls first fell the rays of the father-beings. The men of old were intimates of wind and wave and playmates of many a brightness long since forgotten. The rapture of the fire was their rest; their outgoing was still consciously through universal being. By darkened images we may figure something vaguely akin, as when in rare moments under the stars the big dreamy heart of childhood is pervaded with quiet and brimmed full with love. Dear children of the world so tired today— so weary seeking after the light. Would you recover strength and immortal vigor? Not one star alone, your star, shall shed its happy light upon you, but the All you must adore. Something intimate, secret, unspeakable, akin to thee will emerge silently, insensibly, and ally itself with thee as thou gatherest thyself from the four quarters of the earth. We shall go back to the world of the dawn, but to a brighter light than that which opened up this wondrous story of the cycles. The forms of elder years will reappear in our vision, the father-beings once again. So we shall grow at home amid these grandeurs, and with that All-Presence about us may cry in our hearts, "At last is our meeting, Immortal. Oh, starry one, now is our rest!"

Brothers weary, come away;
 We will quench the heart's desire
Past the gateways of the day
 In the rapture of the fire.

—October 15, 1895

The Enchantment of Cuchullain —By AE and Aretas (G.W. Russell and James M. Pryse)

While our vision, backward cast,
Ranged the everliving past,
Through a haze of misty things—
Luminous with quiverings
Musical as starry chimes—
Rose a hero of old times,
In whose breast the magic powers
Slumbering from primeval hours,
Woke at the enchantment wild
Of Aed Abrait's lovely child;
Still for all her Druid learning
With the wild-bird heart, whose yearning
Blinded at his strength and beauty,
Clung to love and laughed at duty.
Warrior chief, and mystic maid,
Through your stumbling footsteps strayed,



This at least in part atones—
Jewels were your stumbling-stones!

I. The Birds of Angus

The birds were a winging rapture in the twilight. White wings, grey wings, brown wings, fluttered around and over the pine trees that crowned the grassy dun. The highest wings flashed with a golden light. At the sound of voices they vanished.

“How then shall we go to the plains of Murthemney? We ought not to be known. Shall we go invisibly, or in other forms? We must also fly as swiftly as the birds go.”

“Fly! yes, yes, we shall—fly as the birds. But we shall choose fairer forms than these. I know where the Birds of Angus flock. Come, Liban, come!”



Page 114

The crypt beneath the dun was flooded with light, silvery and golden, a light which came not from the sun nor from the moon; a light not born from any parent luminary, and which knew nothing opaque. More free than the birds of the air were the shadowy forms of the two daughters of Aed Abrait, as they gazed out from that rock-built dun upon a place their mortal feet had never trod. Yet timidly Liban looked at her more adventurous sister. Fand floated to the centre of the cavern, erect and radiant. Her eyes followed the wavy tremulous motion of the light as it rolled by. They seemed to pierce through earth and rock, and search out the secret hollows of the star, to know the vastness, and to dominate and compel the motion of the light. Her sister watched her half curiously and half in admiration and wonder. As the floating form grew more intense the arms swayed about and the lips murmured. A sheen as of many jewels played beneath the pearly mist which enrobed her; over her head rose the crest of the Dragon; she seemed to become one with the shining, to draw it backwards into herself. Then from far away came a wondrous melody, a sound as of the ancient chiming of the stars. The sidereal rivers flowed by with more dazzling light, and the Birds of Angus were about them.

“Look, Liban, look!” cried the Enchantress. “These of old were the chariots of the children of men. On these the baby offspring of the Gods raced through the nights of diamond and sapphire. We are not less than they though a hundred ages set us apart. We will go forth royally as they did. Let us choose forms from among these. If the Hound should see us he will know we have power.”

With arms around each other they watched the starry flocks hurtling about them. The birds wheeled around, fled away, and again returned. There were winged serpents; might which would put to flight the degenerate eagle; plumage before which the birds of paradise would show dull as clay. These wings dipt in the dawn flashed ceaselessly. Ah, what plumage of white fire rayed out with pinions of opalescent glory! What feathered sprays of burning amethyst! What crests of scarlet and gold, of citron and wavy green! They floated by in countless multitudes; they swayed in starry clusters dripping with light, singing a melody caught from the spheres of the Gods, the song which of old called forth the earth from its slumber. The sound was entrancing. Oh, fiery birds who float in the purple rivers of the Twilight, ye who rest in the great caverns of the world, whoever listens to your song shall grow faint with longing, for he shall hear the great, deep call in his heart and his spirit shall yearn to go afar; whatever eyes see you shall grow suddenly blinded with tears for a glory that has passed away from the world, for an empire we no longer range.

“They bring back the air of the ancient days. Ah! now I have the heart of the child once again. Time has not known me. Let us away with them. We will sweep over Eri and lead the starry flocks as the queen birds.”



Page 115

“If we only dared. But think, Fand, we shall have every wizard eye spying upon us, and every body who can use his freedom will follow and thwart us. Not these forms, but others let us take. Ah, look at those who come in grey and white and brown! Send home the radiant ones. We will adventure with these.”

“Be it so. Back to your fountains, O purple rivers! King-Bird, Queen-Bird, to your home in the hollows lead your flock!” So she spoke, but her words were shining and her waving arms compelled the feathered monarchs with radiations of outstretched flame. To the others: “Rest here awhile, sweet singers. We shall not detain you captive for long.” So she spoke, but her hands that caressed laid to sleep the restless pulsations of the wings and lulled the ecstatic song.

Night, which to the eye of the magian shows more clearly all that the bright day conceals, overspread with a wizard twilight the vast hollow of the heavens. Numberless airy rivulets, each with its own peculiar shining, ran hither and thither like the iridescent currents streaming over a bubble. Out of still duskiest, more darkly glowing and phantasmal depths stared the great eyes of space, rimmed about with rainbow-dyes. As night moved on to dawn two birds shot forth from the dun, linked together by a cord of golden fire. They fled southwards and eastwards. As they went they sang a song which tingled the pulses of the air. In the dark fields the aureoles around the flowers grew momentarily brighter. Over the mountain homes of the Tuatha de Danaans rose up shadowy forms who watched, listened, and pondered awhile. The strayed wanderers amid the woods heard the enraptured notes and forgot their sorrows and life itself in a hurricane of divine remembrance. Where the late feast was breaking up the melody suddenly floated in and enwreathed the pillared halls, and revellers became silent where they stood, the mighty warriors in their hands bowed low their faces. Still on and on swept the strange birds flying southwards and eastwards.

Still in many a peasant cot
Lives the story unforgot,
While the faded parchments old
Still their rhyming tale unfold.
There is yet another book
Where thine eager eyes may look.
There within its shining pages
Lives the long romance of ages,
Liban, Fand, their glowing dreams,
Angus's birds, the magic streams
Flooding all the twilight crypt,
Runes and spells in starry script;
Secrets never whispered here
In the light are chanted clear.
Read in the tales of Eri
If the written word be weary.



Never is there day so gleaming
 But the dusk o'ertakes it;
Never night so dark and dreaming
 But the dawn awakes it:
And the soul has nights and days
In its own eternal ways.

II. Cuchullain's Dream



Page 116

The air was cool with the coming of winter; but with the outer cold came the inner warmth of the sun, full of subtile vitality and strength. And the Ultonians had assembled to light the yearly fire in honor of the Sun-God, at the seven-days' feast of Samhain. There the warriors of Ulster rested by the sacred fire, gazing with closed eyes upon the changing colors of the sun-breath, catching glimpses of visions, or anon performing feats of magic when they felt the power stirring within their breasts. They sang the songs of old times, of the lands of the West, where their forefathers live ere the earth-fires slew those lands, and the sea-waves buried them, leaving only the Eri, the isle where dwelt men so holy that the earth-fires dared not to assail it, and the ocean stood at bay. Lightly the warriors juggled with their great weapons of glittering bronze; and each told of his deeds in battle and in the chase; but woe to him who boasted or spoke falsely, magnifying his prowess, for then would his sword angrily turn of itself in its scabbard, convicting him of untruth.

Cuchullain, youngest but mightiest of all the warriors, sat moodily apart, his beardless chin resting in the palms of his hands, his eyes staring fixedly at the mirror-like surface of the lake upon whose sloping bank he rested. Laeg, his charioteer, lying at full length upon the greensward near by, watched him intently, a gloomy shadow darkening his unusually cheerful face.

"It's a woman's trick, that," he muttered to himself, "staring into the water when trying to see the country of the Sidhe, and unworthy of a warrior. And to think of him doing it, who used to have the clearest sight, and had more power for wonder-working than anyone else in the lands of the West! Besides, he isn't seeing anything now, for all the help of the water. When last I went to the dun some women of the Sidhe told me they had looked up Cuchullain and found he was getting too dim-eyed to see anything clearly now, even in his sleep. Its true enough, but to hear it said even by women!"

And the discontented charioteer glanced back contemptuously at a group of women a short distance away, who were following with their eyes a flock of wild birds circling over the plain.

"I suppose they want those birds," he continued, conversing familiarly with himself. "Its the way of women to want everything they see, especially if its something hard to catch, like those wild birds."

But Laeg's cynicism was not so deep as to keep his glance from lingering upon the bevy of graceful maidens and stately matrons. Their soft laughter reached his ear through the still evening air; and watching their animated gestures he idly speculated upon the plane he felt sure they were arranging.

"Yes; they want the birds. They wish to fasten the wings to their shoulders, to make themselves look like the women of the Sidhe. They know Cuchullain is the only man who can get the birds for them, but even Emer, his wife, is afraid to ask him. Of course



they will coax that patient Ethne to do it. If she succeeds, she'll get no thanks; and if she fails, she'll have all the blame, and go off by herself to cry over the harsh words spoken by Cuchullain in his bad temper. That's the way of Ethne, poor girl."



Page 117

He was right in his conjecture, for presently Ethne left the group and hesitatingly approached the giant warrior, who was still gazing vacantly at the glassy surface of the water. She touched him timidly on the shoulder. Slowly he raised his head, and still half dazed by his long staring, listened while she made her request. He rose to his feet sleepily, throwing out his brawny arms and expanding his chest as he cast a keen glance at the birds slowly circling near the ground.

“Those birds are not fit to eat,” he said, turning to her with a good-natured smile.

“But we want the wings to put on our shoulders. It would be so good of you to get them for us,” said Ethne in persuasive tones.

“If it’s flying you wish to try,” he said, with a laugh, “you’ll need better wings than those. However, you shall have them if I can get within throwing distance of them.”

He glanced around for Laeg. That far-seeing individual was already yoking the horses to the chariot. A moment later, Cuchullain and the charioteer were dashing across the plain behind the galloping steeds. As they neared the birds, Cuchullain sent missiles at them from his sling with such incredible rapidity and certainty of aim that not one of the flock escaped. Each of the women was given two of the birds; but when Ethne, who had modestly held back when the others hurried forward to meet the returning chariot, came to receive her share, not one remained.

“As usual,” said Laeg stolidly, “if anyone fails to get her portion of anything, its sure to be Ethne.”

“Too sure,” said Cuchullain, a look of compassion softening his stern features. He strode over to Ethne, and placing his hand gently on her head said: “Don’t take your disappointment to heart, little woman; when any more birds come to the plains of Murthemney, I promise to get for you the most beautiful of them all.”

“There’s a fine brace of them now, flying towards us,” exclaimed Laeg, pointing across the lake. “And I think I hear them singing. Queer birds, those; for I see a cord as of red gold between them.”

Nearer and nearer swept the strange beings of the air, and as their weird melody reached the many Ultonians at the Samhain fire, the stalwart warriors, slender maidens, the youthful and the time-worn, all felt the spell and became as statues, silent, motionless, entranced. Alone the three at the chariot felt not the binding influences of the spell. Cuchullain quietly fitted a smooth pebble into his sling. Ethne looked appealingly at Laeg, in whose sagacity she greatly trusted. A faint twinkle of the eye was the only sign that betrayed the thought of the charioteer as he tried to return her glance with a look of quiet unconcern. She hastened after Cuchullain, who had taken



his stand behind a great rock on the lake shore which concealed him from the approaching birds.

“Do not try to take them,” she entreated; “there is some strange power about them which your eyes do not see; I feel it, and my heart is filled with dread.”



Page 118

The young warrior made no reply, but whirling his sling above his head sent the missile with terrific force at the two swan-like voyagers of the air. It went far astray, and splashed harmlessly into the lake, throwing up a fountain of spray. Cuchullain's face grew dark. Never before in war or the chase had he missed so easy a mark. Angrily he caught a javelin from his belt and hurled it at the birds, which had swerved from their course and were now flying swiftly away. It was a mighty cast, even for the strong arm of the mightiest warrior of Eri; and the javelin, glittering in the sun, was well on the downward curve of its long flight, its force spent, when its point touched the wing of the nearest bird. A sphere of golden flame seemed to glitter about them as they turned downward and disappeared beneath the deep waters of the lake.

Cuchullain threw himself upon the ground, leaning his broad shoulders against the rock.

"Leave me," he said in sullen tones to Ethne; "my senses are dull with sleep from long watching at the Samhain fire. For the first time since I slew the hound of Culain my right arm has failed me. My eyes are clouded, and strange music murmurs in my heart."

His eyes closed, his heavy breathing was broken by sighs, and anguish distorted his features. Ethne watched him awhile, and then stole quietly back to where the warriors were and said to them:

"Cuchullain lies slumbering by yonder rock, and he moans in his sleep as if the people of the Sidhe were reproaching his soul for some misdeed. I fear those birds that had the power behind them. Should we not waken him?"

But while they held council, and some were about to go and awaken him. Fergus mac Roy, foster-father of Cuchullain, arose, and all drew back in awe, for they saw the light of the Sun-God shining from his eyes, and his voice had the Druid ring as he said in stern tones of command:

"Touch him not, for he sees a vision; the people of the Sidhe are with him; and from the far distant past, even from the days of the sunken lands of the West, I see the hand of Fate reach out and grasp the warrior of Eri, to place him on a throne where he shall rule the souls of men."

To Cuchullain it did not seem that he slept; for though his eyelids fell, his sight still rested on the calm surface of the lake, the shining sand on the shore, and the great brown rock against which he reclined. But whence came the two maidens who were walking toward him along the glistening sand? He gazed at them in speechless wonder; surely only in dreamland could so fair a vision be seen. In dreamland, yes; for a dim memory awoke in his breast that he had seen them before in the world of slumber. One wore a mantle of soft green, and her flaxen hair, strangely white but with a glint of gold, fell about her shoulders so thickly it seemed like a silken hood out of which looked a white face with gleaming violet



Page 119

eyes. The other maiden had dark brown eyes, very large, very luminous; her cheeks were rosy, with just a hint of bronzing by the sunshine, a dimple in her chin added to the effect of her pouting red lips; her dark brown hair was unbound and falling loosely over her deep crimson mantle, which reached from her waist in five heavy folds. The recumbent warrior felt a weird spell upon him. Powerless to move or speak, he saw the two maidens advance and stand beside him, the sunlight gleaming upon their bare arms and bosoms. They smiled upon him and uplifted their arms, and then from their fingers there rained down upon him blinding lightnings, filaments of flame that stung like whipcords, a hail of rainbow sparks that benumbed him, darting flames that pierced him like javelins; and as he gazed upward through that storm of fire, writhing in his agony, he saw still their white arms waving to and from, weaving a network of lightnings about him, their faces smiling upon him, serene and kindly; and in the eyes of her with the crimson mantle he read a tenderness all too human. Eyes that shone with tenderness; white arms that wove a rainbow-mesh of torturing fires about him; his anguish ever increasing, until he saw the arms stop waving, held for an instant aloft, and then swept downward with a torrent of flame and a mighty crash of sound like the spears of ten thousand warriors meeting in battle, and then—he was alone, staring with wide-open eyes at the blue, cloud-mirroring surface of the lakes and the white sand gleaming on the shore.

“Trouble me not with questions,” said Cuchullain to the warriors gathered about him. “My limbs are benumbed and refuse to obey me. Bear me to my sick-bed at Tete Brece.”

“Shall we not take you to Dun Imrish, or to Dun Delca, where you may be with Emer?” said they.

“No,” he replied, a shudder convulsing his strong frame; “bear me to Tete Brece.

And when they had done so, he dwelt there for a year, and on his face was always the look of a slumberer who is dreaming; not once did he smile, nor did he speak one word during that year.

When the soul has many lives
Fettered by Forgetfulness,
Hands that burst its long-worn gyves
Cruel seem and pitiless.
Yet they come all tenderly,
Loved companions of the past;
And the sword that sets us free
Turns our pain to peace at last.



III.

What shadows turn his eyes away
Who fain would scale the heavenly heights;
There shines the beauty of a day,
And there the ancient Light of Lights.

And while he broods on visions dim
And grows forgetful of his fate,
The chariot of the Sun for him
And all the tribal stars await.

The Slumber of Cuchullain, and the Message of Angus



Page 120

Within the door at Tete Brece, under the shadow of the thatch, the couch of Cuchullain was placed, so that if he willed he could gaze over the rich green fields to the distant rim of blue hills. Yet rarely opened he his eyes or gazed with outward understanding during that weary year. Often the watchers round his bed, looking on the white rigid face, wondered if he were indeed living. But they dared not awaken him, for the seers had found that his slumber was filled with mystic life, and that it was not lawful to call him forth. Was the gloom of the great warrior because he was but the shadow of his former self, or was that pale form indeed empty? So pondered Fergus, Conail, Lugard and Ethne, faithful companions. But he in himself was wrapped in a mist of visions appearing fast and vanishing faster. The fiery hands that smote him had done their work well, and his darkness had become bright with remembrance. The majesty of elder years swept by him with reproachful glance, and the hero cowered before the greatness of his own past. Born out of the womb of the earth long ago in the fulness of power—what shadow had dimmed his beauty? He tracked and retraced countless steps. Once more he held sceptred sway over races long since in oblivion. He passed beyond the common way until the powers of the vast knew and obeyed him. As he looked back there was one always with him. Lu, the Sun-God, who in the bright days of childhood had appeared to him as his little feet ran from home in search for adventures. Remote and dim, nigh and radiant, he was always there. In solemn initiations in crypts beneath the giant hills he rose up, gemmed and starred with living fires, and grew one with the God, and away, away with him he passed into the lands of the immortals, or waged wars more than human, when from the buried lands of the past first came the heroes eastward to Eri and found the terrible Fomorian enchanters dwelling in the sacred isle. In dream Cuchullain saw the earth-scorning warriors rise up and wage their battle in the bright aether, and the great Sun-Chieftain, shining like gold, lead his glittering hosts. In mountainous multitudes the gigantesque phantoms reeled to and from, their mighty forms wreathed in streams of flame, while the stars paled and shuddered as they fought.

There was yet another face, another form, often beside him; whispering, luring, calling him away to he knew not what wild freedom. It was the phantom form of the child of Aed Abrait, with dark flowing tresses, mystic eyes, her face breathing the sweetness of the sun, with all the old nobility of earth, but elate and apart, as one who had been in the crystal spheres of the unseen and bathed in its immortalizing rivers and drunk the starry dews.

Come, Cu. Come, O hero," she whispered. "There are fiery fountains of life which will renew thee. We will go where the Sidhe dwell, where the golden life-breath flows up from the mountains in a dazzling radiance to the ever-shining regions of azure and pearl under the stars. Glad is everything that lives in that place. Come, Cu, come away." And she passed from beside him with face half turned, calling, beckoning, till in his madness he forgot the bright Sun-God and the warriors of Eri awaiting his guidance.



Page 121

It was again the feast of Samhain. About twilight in the evening a shadow darkened the door. A man in blue mantle stood outside; he did not enter but looked around him a little while and then sat down, laughing softly to himself. Fergus, Conail and Lugard rose simultaneously, glad of the pretence of warning off the intruder as a relief from their monotonous watch.

“Do you not know,” said Conail sternly, “that one lies ill here who must not be disturbed?”

The stranger arose.

“I will tell you a tale,” he said. “As I was strolling through the trees I saw a radiance shining around the dun, and I saw one floating in that light like a mighty pillar of fire, or bronze ruddy and golden: a child of the Sun he seemed; the living fires curled about him and rayed from his head. He looked to the north and to the west, to the south and to the east, and over all Eri he shot his fiery breaths rainbow-colored, and the dark grew light before him where he gazed. Indeed if he who lies here were well he would be mightiest among your warriors. But I think that now he clasps hands with the heroes of the Sidhe as well, and with Druid power protects the Ultonians. I feel happy to be beside him.”

“It is Lu Lamfada guarding the hero. Now his destiny will draw nigh to him again,” thought Cu’s companions, and they welcomed the stranger.

“I see why he lies here so still,” he continued, his voice strange like one who is inspired while he speaks. “The Sidhe looked out from their mountains. They saw a hero asleep. They saw a God forgetful. They stirred him to shame by the hands of women. They showed him the past. They said to Fand and Libau, ‘Awake him. Bring him to us. Let him come on the night of Samhain.’ They showed the chosen one from afar, in a vision while hid in their mountains. The Tuatha de Danaans, the immortals, wish for Cuchullain to aid them. The daughters of Aed Abrait are their messengers. If Fand and Liban were here they would restore the hero.”

“Who are you?” asked Laeg, who had joined them.

“I am Angus, son of Aed Abrait.” While he spoke his form quivered like a smoke, twinkling in misty indistinctness in the blue twilight, and then vanished before their eyes.

“I wonder now,” muttered Laeg to himself, “if he was sent by the Sidhe, or by Liban and Fand only. When one has to deal with women everything is uncertain. Fand trusts more in her beauty to arouse him than in her message. I have seen her shadow twenty times cooing about him. It is all an excuse for love-making with her. It is just like a woman. Anything, however, would be better for him than to lie in bed.” He went off to



join the others. Cuchullain was sitting up and was telling the story of what happened last Samhain.

“What should I do?” he asked.

“Go to the wise King,” said Laeg, and so they all advised, for ever since the day when he was crowned, and the Druids had touched him with fire, a light of wisdom shone about Concoabar the King.



Page 122

"I think you should go to the rock where the women of the Sidhe appeared to you," said Concoibar when appealed to.

So Laeg made ready the chariot and drove to the tarn. Night came ere they reached it, but the moon showed full and brilliant. Laeg waited a little way apart, while Cuchullain sat himself in the black shadow of the rock. As the warrior gazed into the dark, star-speckled surface of the waters, a brightness and a mist gathered over them, and there, standing with her robe of green down—dropping to her feet and trailing on the wave, her pale flaxen hair blown around her head, was Liban. She smiled strangely as before, looking through him with her subtle eyes.

"I am one of the Sidhe," she said, and her voice sounded like a murmur of the water. "You also, O warrior, though forgetful, are one of us. We did not indeed come to injure you, but to awaken remembrance. For now the wild clouds of demons gathered from the neighboring isles and we wish your aid. Your strength will come back to you exultant as of old. Come with me, warrior. You will have great companions. Labraid, who wields the rapid fires as you the sword, and Fand, who has laid aside her Druid wisdom longing for you."

"Whither must I go with you, strange woman?" asked Cuchullain.

"To Mag-Mell."

"I will send Laeg with you," said Cuchullain. "I do not care to go to an unknown place while I have my duties here." He then went to Laeg, asking him to go with Liban.

"He is longing to go," thought Laeg, "but he mistrusts his power to get away. He has forgotten all he knew and did not wish to appear nothing before a woman. However, it can do no harm if I go and see what they do."

Oh, marvel not if in our tale
The gleaming figures come and go,
More mystic splendors shine and pale
Than in an age outworn we know.

Their ignorance to us were wise:
Their sins our virtue would outshine:
A glory passed before their eyes:
We hardly dream of the divine.

In world may come romance,
With all the lures of love and glamour;
And woesome tragedy will chance
To him whom fairy forms enamour.



There slain illusions live anew
 To stay the soul with coy caresses;
But he who only loves the True
 Slays them again, and onward presses.

For golden chains are yet but chains,
 Enchanted dreams are yet but dreaming;
And ere the soul its freedom gains
 It bursts all bonds, destroys all seeming.

IV. The Maidens of the Sidhe

“Yes, I’ll go with the maid in the green mantle,” muttered Laeg to himself; “but I’ll don the crimson mantle of five folds which it is my right to wear in the land of the Sidhe, even though my earthly occupation is only the driving of a war-chariot.”



Page 123

He began chanting softly; a golden gleam as of sunshine swept circling about him; then as the chant ceased a look of wild exultation came to his face, and he threw up his arms, so that for an instant he had the aspect he wore when guiding the great war-chariot of Cuchullain into the thick of battle. His swaying form fell softly upon the greensward, and above it floated a luminous figure clad in a crimson mantle, but whose face and bare arms were of the color of burnished bronze. So impassive and commanding was his face that even Liban faltered a little as she stole to his side. Cuchullain watched the two figures as they floated slowly over the dark expanse of the lake, till they suddenly disappeared, seemingly into its quiet surface. Then with his face buried in his hands he sat motionless, absorbed in deep thought, while he waited until the return of Laeg.

The recumbent form of Liban rose from the crouch where it had lain entranced. Before her stood the phantom figure of Laeg. All in the house save herself were asleep, but with the conscious sleep of the Sidhe, and their shades spoke welcome to Laeg, each saying to him in liquid tones such as come never from lips of clay:

“Welcome to you, Laeg; welcome because of her who brings you, of him who sent you, and of yourself.”

He saw about him only women of the Sidhe, and knew that he was in one of the schools established by the wise men of Eri for maidens who would devote their lives to holiness and Druid learning; maidens who should know no earthly love but fix their eyes ever on the light of the Sun-god. But not seeing Fand among them, he turned with an impatient gesture to Liban. She read his gesture aright, and said:

“My sister dwells apart; she has more knowledge, and presides over all of us.”

Leaving the room, she walked down a corridor, noiselessly save for the rustle of her long robe of green, which she drew closely about her, for the night was chill. An unaccustomed awe rested upon her, and to Laeg she whispered:

“The evil enchanters have power tonight, so that your life would be in danger if you had not the protection of a maiden of the Sun.”

But a smile wreathed for an instant the bronze-hue face of the shadowy charioteer, as he murmured in tones of kindness near to pity, softening his rude words:

“Till now nor Cuchullain nor I have ever felt the need of a woman’s protection, and I would much rather he were here now than I.”

Drawing aside a heavy curtain, Liban entered her sister’s room. They saw Fand seated at a little table. A scroll lay on it open before her, but her eyes were not fixed on it. With hands clasped under her chin she gazed into the vacancies with eyes of far-away



reflection and longing. There was something pathetic in the intensity and wistfulness of the lonely figures. She turned and rose to meet them, a smile of rare tenderness lighting up her face as she



Page 124

saw Liban. The dim glow of a single lamp but half revealed the youthful figure, the pale, beautiful face, out of which the sun-colours had faded. Her hair of raven hue was gathered in massy coils over her head and fastened there by a spiral torque of gleaming gold. Her mantle, entirely black, which fell to her feet, made her features seem more strangely young, more startlingly in contrast with the monastic severity of the room. It was draped round with some dark unfigured hangings. A couch with a coverlet of furs, single chair of carved oak, the little table, and a bronze censer from which a faint aromatic odor escaping filled the air and stole on the sense, completed the furniture of the room, which might rather have been the cell of some aged Druid than the chamber of one of the young maidens of Eri, who were not overgiven to ascetic habits. She welcomed Laeg with the same terms of triple welcome as did the mystic children of the sun who had first gathered round him. Her brilliant eyes seemed to read deep the soul of the charioteer.

Then Liban came softly up to her, saying:

“Oh, Fand, my soul is sad this night. The dark powers are gathering their strength to assail us, and we shall need to be pure and strong. Yet you have said that you feel no longer the Presence with you; that Mannanan, the Self of the Sun, shines not in your heart!”

Fan placed her hand upon her sister’s flaxen head, saying with a voice mingled joy and pathos:

“Peace, child; you, of us all, have least to fear, for though I, alas! am forsaken, yet He who is your Father and Yourself is even now here with you.”

Liban fell on her knees, with her hands clasped and her eyes uplifted in a rapture of adoration, for above her floated one whom she well knew. Yet unheeding her and stern of glance, with his right arm outstretched, from which leaped long tongues of flame, swordlike, into space, Labraid towered above gazing upon foes unseen by them. Slowly the arm fell and the stern look departed from the face. Ancient with the youth of the Gods, it was such a face and form the toilers in the shadowy world, mindful of their starry dynasties, sought to carve in images of upright and immovable calm amid the sphinxes of the Nile or the sculptured Gods of Chaldaeae. So upright and immovable in such sculptured repose appeared Labraid, his body like a bright ruby flame, sunlit from its golden heart. Beneath his brows his eyes looked full of secrecy. The air pulsing and heaving about him drove Laeg backward from the centre of the room. He appeared but a child before this potent spirit. Liban broke out into a wild chant of welcome:

“Oh see now how burning,
How radiant in might,



From battle returning
 The Dragon of Light!
Where wert thou, unsleeping
 Exile from the throne,
In watch o'er the weeping,
 The sad and the lone.
The sun-fires of Eri



Page 125

Burned low on the steep;
The watchers were weary
Or sunken in sleep;
And dread were the legions
Of demons who rose
From the uttermost regions
Of ice and of snows;
And on the red wind borne,
Unspeakable things
From wizard's dark mind borne
On shadowy wings.
The darkness was lighted
With whirlwinds of flame;
The demons affrighted
Fled back whence they came.
For thou wert unto them
The vision that slays:
Thy fires quivered through them
In arrowy rays.
Oh, light amethystine,
Thy shadow inspire,
And fill with the pristine
Vigor of fire.
Though thought like a fountain
Pours dream upon dream,
Unscaled is the mountain
Where thou still dost gleam,
And shinest afar like
The dawning of day,
Immortal and starlike
In rainbow array."

But he, the shining one, answered, and his voice had that melody which only those know whom the Sun-breath has wafted into worlds divine:

"Vaunt not, poor mortal one, nor claim knowledge when the Gods know not. He who is greatest among all the sons of evil now waits for the hour to strike when he may assail us and have with him all the hosts of the foes of light. What may be the issue of the combat cannot be foreseen by us. Yet mortals, unwise, ever claim to know when even



the Gods confess ignorance; for pride blinds all mortals, and arrogance is born of their feebleness.”

Unabashed she cried out:

“Then rejoice, for we have awakened Cu, the warrior-magician of old times, and his messenger is her.”

Then he answered gently, pityingly:

“We need the help of each strong soul, and you have done well to arouse that slumbering giant. If through his added strength we conquer, then will he be the saviour of Eri; beloved by the Gods, he will cease to be a wild warrior on earth, and become a leader of mortals, aiding them on the way to the immortals. Wisely have you awakened him, and yet—”

He smiled, and such was the pity in his smiling glance that Liban bowed her head in humiliation. When she raised it he was gone, and Laeg also had vanished. She arose, and with a half-sob threw herself into the arms of her sister. So they stood, silent, with tearless eyes; for they were too divine for tears, although, alas! too human.

Slowly the chariot rolled on its homeward way, for Laeg, seeing the weakness and weariness of Cuchullain, held the great steeds in check; their arched necks and snorting breath resenting the restraint, while the impatient stamping of their hoofs struck fire from the pebbly road.

“Well,” said Cuchullain moodily, “tell me what happened after you went away with that woman of the Sidhe.”

Briefly and without comment of his own Laeg stated what he had seen. Then long Cuchullain pondered; neither spoke, and the silence was broken only by the stamping of the steeds and the rumble of the chariot wheels. Dark clouds drifted athwart the moon, and the darkness gave more freedom of speech, for Cuchullain said in measured, expressionless tones:



Page 126

“And what do you think of all this?”

“What do I think?” burst forth Laeg with sudden fire; “I think you had better be leaving those women of the Sidhe alone, and they you. That Fand would lose her soul for love, and the spell they’ve cast over you is evil, or it wouldn’t make a warrior like you as helpless as a toddling babe.”

In letting loose his pent-up wrath Laeg had unconsciously loosened as well the reined-in steeds, who sprang forward impetuously, and the jolting of the car was all that Cuchullain could bear in his enfeebled state. Recovering himself, the charioteer drew them in check again, inwardly upbraiding himself for carelessness.

Sorrowful and broken was the voice of the warrior as he said:

“On the morrow, Laeg, you shall bear a message to Emer. Tell her the Sidhe have thrown a spell of helplessness upon me while deceiving me with false visions of my aiding them in their war with the evil enchanters. Ask Emer to come to me, for her presence may help to rouse me from this spell that benumbs my body and clouds my mind.”

Then Laeg sought to console him, saying:

“No, no; the Sidhe wrong no one. Their message to you was true; but their messengers were women, and you were a warrior. That is why the mischance came, for it is ever the way with a woman to become foolish over a warrior, and then there is always a muddle. And when Emer comes—,” he checked his indiscreet utterance by pretending to have a difficulty in restraining the horses, and then added confusedly: “Besides, I’d rather be in your plight than in Fand’s.”

“Has Emer come?” asked Cuchullain, drawing himself up on his couch and resting on his elbow.

“Yes,” said Laeg dejectedly; “I have brought her. She has been talking to me most of the journey. Now she’ll be after talking to you, but you needn’t mind; it isn’t her usual way, and she isn’t as unreasonable as might be expected. She puts most of the blame of your illness on me, though perhaps that is because it was me she was talking to. Insists that as I can go to the Plain of Fire where the Sidhe live I ought to be able to find a way of curing you. She has expressed that idea to me many times, with a fluency and wealth of illustration that would make a bard envious. Here she comes now. I’ll just slip out and see if the horses are being properly cared for.”

He had not overstated the case, for the sweet face of Emer was clouded with wrath as she approached the sick-bed of her husband. Bitterly she reproached him for what she claimed was only a feigned illness, and expressed her conviction that no theory would



account for his conduct save that, faithless to her his wife, he had fallen in love. But Cuchullain made no answer, for not only was he invincible in battle, but also wise in the matter of holding his tongue when a woman warred against him with words.

“You are looking stronger,” said Laeg, when next he saw him alone.



Page 127

"Yes," he returned, "the speech of Emer has roused me a little from my torpor. I have been thinking that possibly we were wrong in disregarding the message brought by the women of the Sidhe. They surely have power to break this spell, and doubtless would have done so had you not fled from them so inconsiderately."

"I was thinking the same when Emer was coming here with me," observed Laeg. "Her speech roused me a little too."

Cuchullain was silent awhile and then said reflectively:

"Do you think we could find Liban again?"

"There would be no difficulty about that," Laeg replied drily.

"Then," said Cuchullain with sudden energy, "let us go once more to the rock of the visions."

Our souls give battle when the host
Of lurid lives that lurk in Air,
And Ocean's regions nethermost,
Come forth from every loathsome lair:
For then are cloudland battles fought
With spears of lightning, swords of flame,
No quarter given, none besought,
Till to the darkness whence they came
The Sons of Night are hurled again.
Yet while the reddened skies resound
The wizard souls of evil men
Within the demon ranks are found,
While pure and strong the heroes go
To join the strife, and reck no odds,
For they who face the wizard foe
Clasp hands heroic with the gods.

What is the love of shadowy lips
That know not what they seek or press,
From whom the lure for ever slips
And fails their phantom tenderness?

The mystery and light of eyes
That near to mine grow dim and cold;
They move afar in ancient skies
Mid flame and mystic darkness rolled.



Oh, hero, as thy heart o'erflows
In tender yielding unto me,
A vast desire awakes and grows
Unto forgetfulness of thee.

V. The Mantle of Mannanan

Again Liban stood before them, and her eyes were full of reproach.

"You doubt the truth of my message," she said. "Come, then, to the Plain of Fire, and you shall see the one who sent me."

"I doubt you not," said Cuchullain quietly; "but it is not fitting that I should go when the message is brought by a woman, for such is the warning I have had in vision from Lu Lamfada. Laeg shall go with you, and if he brings back the same message, then I shall do the bidding of the Sidhe, and wage war against the evil enchanter, even as when a lad I vanquished the brook of wizards at Dun-mic-Nectan."

"Where did Liban take you this time, Laeg? Have you brought back a message from the Sidhe?"



Page 128

“I have seen the Chief,” said Laeg, whose doubts had vanished and whose whole manner had changed. “Cuchullain, you must go. You remember how we went together to Brusna by the Boyne, and what wonders they showed us in the sacred crypt. Yet this is a place more marvelous—thrice. Well indeed did Liban call it the Plain of Fire, for a breath of fire is in the air for leagues and leagues around. On the lake where the Sidhe dwell the fishers row by and see nothing, or, mayhap, a flicker of phantasmal trees around the dun. These trees are rooted in a buried star beneath the earth; when its heart pulsates they shine like gold, aye, and are fruited with ruby lights. Indeed this Labraid is one of the Gods. I saw him come through the flaming rivers of the underworld. He was filled with the radiance. I am not given to dread the Sidhe, but there was that in him which compelled awe: for oh, he came from the homes that were anciently ours—ours who are fallen, and whose garments once bright are stained by the lees of time. He greeted me kindly. He knew me by my crimson mantle with five folds. He asked for you; indeed they all wish to have you there.”

“Did he say aught further?”

“No, he spoke but little; but as I returned by Mag Luada I had a vision. I saw you standing under the sacred Tree of Victory. There were two mighty ones, one on each side of you, but they seemed no greater than you.”

“Was Fand there?” asked Cuchullain.

“Yes,” said Laeg reluctantly; “I saw her and spoke to her, although I did not wish to. I feared for myself. Ethne and Emer are beautiful women, but this woman is not like them. She is half divine. The holiest Druids might lose his reason over her.”

“Let us go thither,” said Cuchullain.

The night was clear, breathless, pure as diamond. The giant lights far above floated quietly in the streams of space. Below slept the lake mirroring the shadowy blue of the mountains. The great mounds, the homes of the Sidhe, were empty; but over them floated a watchful company, grave, majestic, silent, waiting. In stately procession their rich, gleaming figures moved to and fro in groups of twos and threes, emblazoning the dusky air with warm colors. A little apart, beyond the headland at the island’s edge, two more commanding than the rest communed together. The wavering water reflected head-long their shining figures in its dark depths; above them the ancient blue of the night rose as a crown. These two were Labraid and the warrior of Murthemney restored to all his Druid power. Terrible indeed in its beauty, its power, its calm, was this fiery phantasmal form beside the king of the Sidhe.



Page 129

“We came to Eri many, many ages ago,” said Labraid; “from a land the people of today hold no memory of. Mighty for good and for evil were the dwellers in that land, but its hour struck and the waters of the ocean entomb it. In this island, which the mighty Gods of Fire kept apart and sacred, we made our home. But after long years a day came when the wise ones must needs depart from this also. They went eastward. A few only remained to keep alive the tradition of what was, the hope of what will be again. For in this island, it is foretold, in future ages will arise a light which will renew the children of time. But now the world’s great darkness has come. See what exhalations arise! What demons would make Eri their home!”

Away at the eastern verge a thick darkness was gathering; a pitchy blackness out of which a blood—red aerial river rolled and shot its tides through the arteries of the night. It came nigher. It was dense with living creatures, larvae, horrible shapes with waving tendrils, white withered things restless and famished, hoglike faces, monstrosities. As it rolled along there was a shadowy dropping over hamlet and village and field.

“Can they not be stayed? Can they not be stayed?” rang the cry of Fand.

The stern look on Cuchullain’s face deepened.

“Is it these pitiful spectres we must wage war against? Labraid, it is enough. I will go—alone. Nay, my brother, one is enough for victory.”

Already he was oblivious of the Sidhe, the voices of Fand and Laeg calling him. A light like a wonder-mist broke dazzling about him. Through a mist of fire, an excess of light, they saw a transcendent form of intensest gold treading the air. Over the head of the god a lightning thread like a serpent undulated and darted. It shed a thousand dazzling rays; it chanted in a myriad tones as it went forward. Wider grew the radiant sphere and more triumphant the chant as he sped onward and encountered the overflow of hell. Afar off the watchers saw and heard the tumult, cries of a horrible conflict, agonies of writhing and burning demons scorched and annihilated, reeling away before the onset of light. On and still on he sped, now darkened and again blazing like the sun.

“Look! look!” cried Laeg, breathless with exultation as the dazzling phantom towered and waved its arms on the horizon.

“They lied who said he was powerless,” said Fand, no less exultant.

“Cu, my darling,” murmured the charioteer; “I know now why I loved you, what burned within you.”

“Shall we not go and welcome him when he returns?” said Liban.



“I should not advise it,” Laeg answered. “Is it to meet that fury of fire when he sinks back blind and oblivious? He would slay his dearest friend. I am going away from here as fast as I can.”

Through the dark forests at dawn the smoke began to curl up from dun and hamlet, and, all unconscious of the war waged over their destinies, children awoke to laugh and men and women went forth to breathe the sweet air of morning.



Page 130

Cuchullain started from a dream of more ancient battles, of wars in heaven. Through the darkness of the room he saw the shadowy forms of the two daughters of Aed Abrait; not as before, the mystic maidens armed with Druid power, but women, melting, tender, caressing. Violet eyes shining with gratitude; darker eyes burning with love, looked into his. Misty tresses fell over him.

"I know not how the battle went," he sighed. "I remember the fire awoke. Lu was with me. I fell back in a blinding mist of flame and forgot everything."

"Doubt it not. Victory went with thee, warrior," said Liban. "We saw thee: it was wonderful. How the seven splendors flashed and the fiery stars roved around you and scattered the demons!"

"Oh, do not let your powers sink in sleep again," broke forth Fand. "What are the triumphs of earthly battles to victories like these? What is rule over a thousand warriors to kingship over the skyey hosts? Of what power are spear and arrow beside the radiant sling of Lu? Do the war-songs of the Ultonians inspire thee ever like the terrible chant of fire? After freedom can you dwell in these gloomy duns? What are the princeliest of them beside the fiery halls of Tir-na-noge and the flame-built cities of the Gods? As for me, I would dwell where the great ones of ancient days have gone, and worship at the shrine of the silent and unutterable Awe."

"I would go indeed," said Cuchullain; "but still—but still—: it is hard to leave the green plains of Murthemney, and the Ultonians who have fought by my side, and Laeg, and—"

"Laeg can come with us. Nor need Conchobar, or Fergus or Conail be forgotten. Far better can you aid them with Druid power than with the right arm a blow may make powerless in battle. Go with Laeg to Iban-Cind-Trachta. Beside the yew-tree there is a dun. There you can live hidden from all. It is a place kept sacred by the might of the Sidhe. I will join you there."

A month passed. In a chamber of the Dun the Yew-tree, Fand, Cuchullain and Laeg were at night. The two latter sat by an oaken table and tried by divination to peer into the future. Fand, withdrawn in the dark shadow of a recess, lay on a couch and looked on. Many thoughts went passing through her mind. Now the old passion of love would rise in her heart to be quenched by a weary feeling of futility, and then a half-contempt would curl her lips as she saw the eagerness of her associates. Other memories surged up. "Oh, Mannanan, Father-Self, if thou hadst not left me and my heart had not turned away! It was not a dream when I met thee and we entered the Ocean of Fire together. Our beauty encompassed the world. Radiant as Lu thy brother of the Sun we were. Far away as the dawn seems the time. How beautiful, too, was that other whose image in the hero enslaves my heart. Oh, that he would but know himself, and learn that on this path the greatest is the only risk worth taking! And now he holds back the

charioteer also and does him wrong.” Just then something caused her to look up. She cried out, “Laeg, Laeg, do you see anything?”



Page 131

“What is it?” said Laeg. Then he also looked and started. “Gods!” he murmured. “Emer! I would rather face a tempest of Formorian enchanters.”

“Do you not see?” repeated Fand scornfully. “It is Emer the daughter of Forgall. Has she also become one of the Sidhe that she journeys thus?”

“She comes in dream,” said Laeg.

“Why do you intrude upon our seclusion here? You know my anger is no slight thing,” broke out Cuchullain, in ready wrath hiding his confusion. The shadow of Emer turned, throwing back the long, fair hair from her face the better to see him. There was no dread on it, but only outraged womanly dignity. She spake and her voice seemed to flow from a passionate heart far away brooding in sorrowful loneliness.

“Why do I come? Has thou not degraded me before all the maidens of Eri by forsaking me for a woman of the Sidhe without a cause? You ask why I come when every one of the Ultonians looks at me in questioning doubt and wonder! But I see you have found a more beautiful partner.”

“We came hither, Laeg and I, to learn the lore of the Sidhe. Why should you not leave me here for a time, Emer? This maiden is of wondrous magical power: she is a princess in her own land, and is as pure and chaste to this hour as you.”

“I see indeed she is more beautiful than I am. That is why you are drawn away. Her face has not grown familiar. Everything that is new or strange you follow. The passing cheeks are ruddier than the pale face which has shared your troubles. What you know is weariness, and you leave it to learn what you do not know. The Ultonians falter while you are absent from duty in battle and council, and I, whom you brought with sweet words when half a child from my home, am left alone. Oh, Cuchullain, beloved, I was once dear to thee, and if today or tomorrow were our first meeting I should be so again.”

A torrent of self-reproach and returning love overwhelmed him. “I swear to you,” he said brokenly, through fast-flowing tears, “you are immortally dear to me, Emer.”

“Then you leave me,” burst forth Fand, rising to her full height, her dark, bright eyes filled with a sudden fire, an image of mystic indignation and shame.

“If indeed,” said Emer softly, “joy and love and beauty are more among the Sidhe than where we dwell in Eri, then it were better for thee to remain.”

“No, he shall not now,” said Fand passionately. “It is I whom he shall leave. I long foresaw this moment, but ran against fate like a child. Go, warrior, Cu; tear this love out of thy heart as I out of mine. Go, Laeg, I will not forget thee. Thou alone hast thought about these things truly. But now—I cannot speak.” She flung herself upon the couch in the dark shadow and hid her face away from them.



The pale phantom wavered and faded away, going to one who awoke from sleep with a happiness she could not understand. Cuchullain and Laeg passed out silently into the night. At the door of the dun a voice they knew not spake:



Page 132

“So, warrior, you return. It is well. Not yet for thee is the brotherhood of the Sidhe, and thy destiny and Fand’s lie far apart. Thine is not so great but it will be greater, in ages yet to come, in other lands, among other peoples, when the battle fury in thee shall have turned to wisdom and anger to compassion. Nations that lie hidden in the womb of time shall hail thee as friend, deliverer and saviour. Go and forget what has passed. This also thou shalt forget. It will not linger in thy mind; but in thy heart shall remain the memory and it will urge thee to nobler deeds. Farewell, warrior, saviour that is to be!”

As the two went along the moon lit shore mighty forms followed, and there was a waving of awful hands over them to blot out memory.

In the room where Fand lay with mad beating heart tearing itself in remorse, there was one watching with divine pity. Mannanan, the Golden Glory, the Self of the Sun. “Weep not, O shadow; thy days of passion and pain are over.” breathed the Pity in her breast. “Rise up, O Ray, from thy sepulchre of forgetfulness. Spirit come forth to thy ancient and immemorial home.” She rose up and stood erect. As the Mantle of Mannanan enfolded her, no human words could tell the love, the exultation, the pathos, the wild passion of surrender, the music of divine and human life interblending. Faintly we echo—like this spake the Shadow and like this the Glory.

The Shadow

Who art thou, O Glory,
 In flame from the deep,
Where stars chant their story,
 Why trouble my sleep?

I hardly had rested,
 My dreams wither now:
Why comest thou crested
 And gemmed on they brow?

The Glory

Up, Shadow, and follow
 The way I will show;
The blue gleaming hollow
 To-night we will know,

And rise mid the vast to
 The fountain of days;



From whence we had pass to
The parting of ways.

The Shadow

I know thee, O Glory:
Thine eyes and thy brow
With white fire all hoary
Come back to me now.

Together we wandered
In ages agone;
Our thoughts as we pondered
Were stars at the dawn.

The glory has dwindled,
My azure and gold:
Yet you keep enkindled
The Sun-fire of old.

My footsteps are tied to
The heath and the stone;
My thoughts earth-allied-to—
Ah! leave me alone.

Go back, thou of gladness,
Nor wound me with pain,
Nor spite me with madness,
Nor come nigh again.

The Glory

Why tremble and weep now,
Whom stars once obeyed?
Come forth to the deep now
And be not afraid.



Page 133

The Dark One is calling,
I know, for his dreams
Around me are falling
In musical streams.

A diamond is burning
In depths of the Lone
Thy spirit returning
May claim for its throne.

In flame-fringed islands
Its sorrows shall cease,
Absorbed in the silence
And quenched in the peace.

Come lay thy poor head on
My breast where it glows
With love ruby-red on
Thy heart for its woes.

My power I surrender:
To thee it is due:
Come forth, for the splendor
Is waiting for you.

—The End

—November 15, 1895-March 15, 1896

Shadow and Substance

Many are the voices that entreat and warn those who would live the life of the Magi. It is well they should speak. They are voices of the wise. But after having listened and pondered, oh, that someone would arise and shout into our souls how much more fatal it is to refrain. For we miss to hear the fairy tale of time, the aeonian chant radiant with light and color which the spirit prolongs. The warnings are not for those who stay at home, but for those who adventure abroad. They constitute an invitation to enter the mysteries. We study and think these things were well in the happy prime and will be again the years to come. But not yesterday only or tomorrow—today, today burns in the heart the fire which made mighty the heroes of old. And in what future will be born the powers which are not quick in the present? It will never be a matter of greater ease to enter the path, though we may well have the stimulus of greater despair. For this and



that there are times and seasons, but for the highest it is always the hour. The eternal beauty does not pale because its shadow trails over slime and corruption. It is always present beneath the faded mould whereon our lives are spent. Still the old mysterious glimmer from mountain and cave allures, and the golden gleams divide and descend on us from the haunts of the Gods.

The dark age is our darkness and not the darkness of life. It is not well for us who in the beginning came forth with the wonder-light about us, that it should have turned in us to darkness, the song of life be dumb. We close our eyes from the many-coloured mirage of day, and are alone soundless and sightless in the unilluminated cell of the brain. But there are thoughts that shine, impulses born of fire. Still there are moments when the prison world reels away a distant shadow, and the inner chamber of clay fills full with fiery visions. We choose from the traditions of the past some symbol of our greatness, and seem again the Titans or Morning Stars of the prime. In this self-conception lies the secret of life, the way of escape and return. We have imagined ourselves into forgetfulness, into darkness, into feebleness. From this strange and pitiful dream of life, oh, that we may awaken and know ourselves once again.



Page 134

But the student too often turns to books, to the words sent back to him, forgetful that the best of scriptures do no more than stand as symbols. We hear too much of study, as if the wisdom of life and ethics could be learned like ritual, and of their application to this and that ephemeral pursuit. But from the Golden One, the child of the divine, comes a voice to its shadow. It is stranger to our world, aloof from our ambitions, with a destiny not here to be fulfilled. It says: "You are of dust while I am robed in opalescent airs. You dwell in houses of clay, I in a temple not made by hands. I will not go with thee, but thou must come with me." And not alone is the form of the divine aloof but the spirit behind the form. It is called the Goal truly, but it has no ending. It is the Comforter, but it waves away our joys and hopes like the angel with the flaming sword. Though it is the Resting-place, it stirs to all heroic strife, to outgoing, to conquest. It is the Friend indeed, but it will not yield to our desires. Is it this strange, unfathomable self we think to know, and awaken to, by what is written, or by study of it as so many planes of consciousness. But in vain we store the upper chambers of the mind with such quaint furniture of thought. No archangel makes his abode therein. They abide only in the shining. How different from academic psychology of the past, with its dry enumeration of faculties, reason, cognition and so forth, is the burning thing we know. We revolted from that, but we must take care lest we teach in another way a catalogue of things equally unliving to us. The plain truth is, that after having learned what is taught about the hierarchies and various spheres, many of us are still in this world exactly where we were before. If we speak our laboriously-acquired information we are listened to in amazement. It sounds so learned, so intellectual, there must need be applause. But by-and-by someone comes with quiet voice, who without pretence speaks of the "soul" and uses familiar words, and the listeners drink deep, and pay the applause of silence and long remembrance and sustained after-endeavor. Our failure lies in this, we would use the powers of soul and we have not yet become the soul. None but the wise one himself could bend the bow of Ulysses. We cannot communicate more of the true than we ourselves know. It is better to have a little knowledge and know that little than to have only hearsay of myriads of Gods. So I say, lay down your books for a while and try the magic of thought. "What a man thinks, that he is; that is the old secret." I utter, I know, but a partial voice of the soul with many needs. But I say, forget for a while that you are student, forget your name and time. Think of yourself within as the titan, the Demi-god, the flaming hero with the form of beauty, the heart of love. And of those divine spheres forget the nomenclature; think rather of them as the places



Page 135

of a great childhood you now return to, these homes no longer ours. In some moment of more complete imagination the thought-born may go forth and look on the olden Beauty. So it was in the mysteries long ago and may well be today. The poor dead shadow was laid to sleep in forgotten darkness, as the fiery power, mounting from heart to head, went forth in radiance. Not then did it rest, nor ought we. The dim worlds dropped behind it, the lights of earth disappeared as it neared the heights of the Immortals. There was One seated on a throne, One dark and bright with ethereal glory. I arose in greeting. The radiant figure laid its head against the breast which grew suddenly golden, and father and son vanished in that which has no place nor name.

—January 15, 1896

On W. Q. Judge's Passing

It is with no feeling of sadness that I think of this withdrawal. He would not have wished for that. But with a faltering hand I try to express one of many incommunicable thoughts about the hero who has departed. Long before I met him, before even written words of his had been read, his name like an incantation stirred and summoned forth some secret spiritual impulse in my heart. It was no surface tie which bound us to him. No one ever tried less than he to gain from men that adherence which comes from impressive manner. I hardly thought what he was while he spoke; but on departing I found my heart, wiser than my brain, had given itself away to him; an inner exaltation lasting for months witnessed his power. It was in that memorable convention in London two years ago that I first glimpsed his real greatness. As he sat there quietly, one among many, not speaking a word, I was overcome by a sense of spiritual dilation, of unconquerable will about him, and that one figure with the grey head became all the room to me. Shall I not say the truth I think? Here was a hero out of the remote, antique, giant ages come among us, wearing but on the surface the vesture of our little day. We, too, came out of that past, but in forgetfulness; he with memory and power soon regained. To him and to one other we owe an unspeakable gratitude for faith and hope and knowledge born again. We may say now, using words of his early years: "Even in hell I lift up my eyes to those who are beyond me and do not deny them." Ah, hero, we know you would have stayed with us if it were possible; but fires have been kindled that shall not soon fade, fires that shall be bright when you again return. I feel no sadness, knowing there are no farewells in the True: to whosoever has touched on that real being there is comradeship with all the great and wise of time. That he will again return we need not doubt. His ideals were those which are attained only by the Saviours and Deliverers of nations. When or where he may appear I know not, but I foresee the coming when our need invokes him. Light of the future aeons, I hail, I hail to thee!



Page 136

—April 15, 1896

Self-Reliance

Perhaps it is now while we are in a state of transition, when old leaders have gone out of sight and the new ones have not yet taken their place in the van, that we ought to consider what we are in ourselves. Some questions we ought to ask ourselves about this movement: where its foundations were laid? what the links are? where is the fountain of force? what are the doors? You answer the first and you say "America," or you say "India." But if that old doctrine of emanations be true it was not on earth but in the heavenworld where our minds immortal are linked together. There it was born and well born, and grew downwards into earth, and all our hopes and efforts and achievements here but vaguely reflect what was true and perfect in intent above, a compact of many hearts to save the generations wandering to their doom. Wiser, stronger, mightier than we were those who shielded us in the first years; who went about among us renewing memory, whispering in our hearts the message of the meaning of life, recalling the immemorial endeavor of the spirit for freedom, knowledge, mastery. But it is our movement and not the movement of the Masters only. It is our own work we are carrying on; our own primal will we are trying to give effect to. Well may the kingly sages depart from bodies which were torment and pain to them. They took them on for our sakes, and we may wave them a grateful farewell below and think of the spheres invisible as so much richer by their presence, more to be longed for, more to be attained. I think indeed they are nearer heart and mind there than here. What is real in us can lose no brotherhood with such as they through death. Still flash the lights from soul to soul in ceaseless radiance, in endless begetting of energy, thought and will, in endless return of joy and love and hope. I would rather hear one word of theirs in my heart than a thousand in my ears. I would rather think of my guide and captain as embodied in the flame than in the clay. Although we may gaze on the grave, kindly face living no more, there can be no cessation of the magic influence, the breath of fire, which flowed aforesaid from the soul to us. We feel in our profoundest hearts that he whom they call dead is living, is alive for evermore.

He has earned his rest, a deep rest, if indeed such as he cease from labor. As for us, we may go our ways assured that the links are unbroken. What did you think the links were? That you knew some one who knew the Masters? Such a presence and such a Companion would indeed be an aid, a link. But I think where ever there is belief in our transcendent being, in justice, our spiritual unity and destiny, wherever there is brotherhood, there are unseen ties, links, shining cords, influx from and unbroken communication with the divine. So much we have in our own natures, not enough to perfect us in the mysteries,



Page 137

but always enough to light our path, to show us our next step, to give us strength for duty. We should not always look outside for aid, remembering that some time we must be able to stand alone. Let us not deny our own deeper being, our obscured glory. That we accepted these truths, even as intuitions which we were unable intellectually to justify, is proof that there is that within us which has been initiated in the past, which lives in and knows well what in the shadowy world is but a hope. There is part of ourselves whose progress we do not comprehend. There are deeds done in unremembered dream, and a deeper meditation in the further unrecorded silences of slumber. Downward from sphere to sphere the Immortal works its way into the flesh, and the soul has adventures in dream whose resultant wisdom is not lost because memory is lacking here. Yet enough has been said to give us the hint, the clue to trace backwards the streams of force to their fount. We wake in some dawn and there is morning also in our hearts, a love, a fiery vigor, a magnetic sweetness in the blood. Could we track to its source this invigorating power, we might perhaps find that as we fell asleep some olden memory had awakened in the soul, or the Master had called it forth, or it was transformed by the wizard power of Self and went forth to seek the Holy Place. Whether we have here a guide, or whether we have not, one thing is certain, that behind and within the "Father worketh hitherto." A warrior fights for us. Our thoughts tip the arrows of his quiver. He wings them with flame and impels them with the Holy Breath. They will not fail if we think clear. What matters it if in the mist we do not see where they strike. Still they are of avail. After a time the mists will arise and show a clear field; the shining powers will salute us as victors.

I have no doubt about our future; no doubt but that we will have a guide and an unbroken succession of guides. But I think their task would be easier, our way be less clouded with dejection and doubt, if we placed our trust in no hierarchy of beings, however august, but in the Law of which they are ministers. Their power, though mighty, ebbs and flows with contracting and expanding nature. They, like us, are but children in the dense infinitudes. Something like this, I think, the Wise Ones would wish each one of us to speak: "O Brotherhood of Light, though I long to be with you, though it sustains me to think you are behind me, though your aid made sure my path, still, if the Law does not permit you to act for me today, I trust in the One whose love a fiery breath never ceases; I fall back on it with exultation: I rely upon it joyfully." Was it not to point to that greater life that the elder brothers sent forth their messengers, to tell us that it is on this we ought to rely, to point us to grander thrones than they are seated on? It is well to be prepared to face any chance with equal mind; to meet the darkness



Page 138

with gay and defiant thought as to salute the Light with reverence and love and joy. But I have it in my heart that we are not deserted. As the cycles went their upward way the heroic figures of the dawn reappear. Some have passed before us; others in the same spirit and power will follow: for the new day a rearsen sun and morning stars to herald it. When it comes let it find us, not drowsy after our night in time, but awake, prepared and ready to go forth from the house of sleep, to stretch hands to the light, to live and labor in joy, having the Gods for our guides and friends.

—May 15, 1896

The Mountains

While we live within four walls we half insensibly lose something of our naturalness and comport ourselves as creatures of the civilization we belong to. But we never really feel at home there, though childhood may have wreathed round with tender memories old rooms and the quaint garden-places of happy unthinking hours. There is a house, a temple not built with hands; perhaps we thought it a mere cabin when we first formed it, and laid aside humbly many of our royal possessions as we entered, for the heavens and the heaven of heavens could not contain all of our glory. But now it seems vast enough, and we feel more at home there, and we find places which seem nearer of access to our first life. Such are the mountains. As I lie here on the monstrous mould of the hillside covered with such delicate fringes of tiny green leaves, I understand something of his longing who said: "I lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my aid." Oh, but the air is sweet, is sweet. Earth-breath, what is it you whisper? As I listen, listen, I know it is no whisper but a chant from profoundest deeps, a voice hailing its great companions in the aether spaces, but whose innumerable tones in their infinite modulations speak clear to us also in our littleness. Our lips are stilled with awe; we dare not repeat what here we think. These mountains are sacred in our Celtic traditions. Haunt of the mysteries, here the Tuatha de Danaans once had their home. We sigh, thinking of the vanished glory, but look with hope for the fulfilment of the prophecy which the seer of another line left on record, that once more the Druid fires should blaze on these mountains. As the purple amplitude of night enfold them, already the dark mounds seem to throw up their sheeny illuminations; great shadowy forms, the shepherds of our race, to throng and gather; the many-coloured winds to roll their aerial tides hither and thither. Eri, hearth and home of so many mystic races, Isle of Destiny, there shall yet return to thee the spiritual magic that thrilled thee long ago. As we descend and go back to a life, not the life we would will, not the life we will have, we think with sorrow of the pain, the passion, the partings, through which our race will once more return to nature, spirit and freedom.



Page 139

We turned back mad from the mystic mountains
All foamed with red and with faery gold;
Up from the heart of the twilight's fountains
The fires enchanted were starward rolled.

We turned back mad—we thought of the morrow,
The iron clang of the far-away town:
We could not weep in our bitter sorrow
But joy as an arctic sun went down.

—May 15, 1896

Works and Days

When we were boys with what anxiety we watched for the rare smile on the master's face ere we preferred a request for some favor, a holiday or early release. There was wisdom in that. As we grow up we act more or less consciously upon intuitions as to time and place. My companion, I shall not invite you to a merrymaking when a bitter moment befalls you and the flame of life sinks into ashes in your heart; nor yet, however true and trusted, will I confide to you what inward revelations of the mysteries I may have while I sense in you a momentary outwardness. The gifts of the heart are too sacred to be laid before a closed door. Your mood, I know, will pass, and tomorrow we shall have this bond between us. I wait, for it can be said but once: I cannot commune magically twice on the same theme with you. I do not propose we should be opportunists, nor lay down a formula; but to be skillful in action we must work with and comprehend the ebb and flow of power. Mystery and gloom, dark blue and starshine, doubt and feebleness alternate with the clear and shining, opal skies and sunglow, heroic ardor and the exultation of power. Ever varying, prismatic and fleeting, the days go by and the secret of change eludes us here. I bend the bow of thought at a mark and it is already gone. I lay the shaft aside and while unprepared the quarry again fleets by. We have to seek elsewhere for the source of that power which momentarily overflows into our world and transforms it with its enchantment.

On the motions of an inner sphere, we are told, all things here depend; on spheres of the less evanescent which, in their turn, are enclosed in spheres of the real, whose solemn chariot movements again are guided by the inflexible will of Fire. In all of these we have part. This dim consciousness which burns in my brain is not all of myself. Behind me it widens out and upward into God. I feel in some other world it shines with purer light: in some sphere more divine than this it has a larger day and a deeper rest. That day of the inner self illuminates many of our mortal days; its night leaves many of them dark. And so the One Ray expanding lives in many vestures. It is last of all the King-Self who wakes at the dawn of ages, whose day is the day of Brahma, whose rest

is his rest. Here is the clue to cyclic change, to the individual feebleness and power, the gloom of one epoch and the glory of another. The Bright Fortnight, the Northern



Page 140

Sun, Light and Flame name the days of other spheres, and wandering on from day to day man may at last reach the end of his journey. You would pass from rapidly revolving day and night to where the mystical sunlight streams. The way lies through yourself and the portals open as the inner day expands. Who is there who has not felt in some way or other the rhythmic recurrence of light within? We were weary of life, baffled, ready to forswear endeavor, when half insensibly a change comes over us; we doubt no more but do joyfully our work; we renew the sweet magical affinities with nature: out of a heart more laden with love we think and act; our meditations prolong themselves into the shining wonderful life of soul; we tremble on the verge of the vast halls of the gods where their mighty speech may be heard, their message of radiant will be seen. They speak a universal language not for themselves only but for all. What is poetry but a mingling of some tone of theirs with the sounds that below we utter? What is love but a breath of their very being? Their every mood has colors beyond the rainbow; every thought rings in far-heard melody. So the gods speak to each other across the expanses of ethereal light, breaking the divine silences with words which are deeds. So, too, they speak to the soul. Mystics of all time have tried to express it, likening it to peals of faery bells, the singing of enchanted birds, the clanging of silver cymbals, the organ voices of wind and water bent together—but in vain, in vain. Perhaps in this there is a danger, for the true is realized in being and not in perception. The gods are ourselves beyond the changes of time which harass and vex us here. They do not demand adoration but an equal will to bind us consciously in unity with themselves. The heresy of separateness cuts us asunder in these enraptured moments; but when thrilled by the deepest breath, when the silent, unseen, uncomprehended takes possession of thee, think “Thou art That,” and something of thee will abide for ever in It. All thought not based on this is a weaving of new bonds, of illusions more difficult to break; it begets only more passionate longing and pain.

Still we must learn to know the hidden ways, to use the luminous rivers for the commerce of thought. Our Druid forefathers began their magical operations on the sixth day of the new moon, taking the Bright Fortnight at its flood-time. In these hours of expansion what we think has more force, more freedom, more electric and penetrating power. We find too, if we have co-workers, that we draw from a common fountain, the same impulse visits us and them. What one possess all become possessed of; and something of the same unity and harmony arises between us here as exists for all time between us in the worlds above. While the currents circulate we are to see to it that they part from us no less pure than they came. To this dawn of an inner day may in some measure be



Page 141

traced the sudden inspirations of movements, such as we lately feel, not all due to the abrupt descent into our midst of a new messenger, for the elder Brothers work with law and foresee when nature, time, and the awakening souls of men will aid them. Much may now be done. On whosoever accepts, acknowledges and does the will of the Light in these awakenings the die and image of divinity is more firmly set, his thought grows more consciously into the being of the presiding god. Yet not while seeking for ourselves can we lay hold of final truths, for then what we perceive we retain but in thought and memory. The Highest is a motion, a breath. We become it only in the imparting. It is in all, for all and goes out to all. It will not be restrained in a narrow basin, but through the free-giver it freely flows. There are throngs innumerable who await this gift. Can we let this most ancient light which again returns to us be felt by them only as a vague emotion, a little peace of uncertain duration, a passing sweetness of the heart? Can we not do something to allay the sorrow of the world? My brothers, the time of opportunity has come. One day in the long-marshaled line of endless days has dawned for our race, and the buried treasure-houses in the bosom of the deep have been opened to endow it with more light, to fill it with more power. The divine ascetics stand with torches lit before the temple of wisdom. Those who are nigh them have caught the fire and offer to us in turn to light the torch, the blazing torch of soul. Let us accept the gift and pass it on, pointing out the prime givers. We shall see in time the eager races of men starting on their pilgrimage of return and facing the light. So in the mystical past the call of light was seen on the sacred hills; the rays were spread and gathered; and returning with them the initiate-children were buried in the Father-Flame.

—June 15, 1896

The Childhood of Apollo

It was long ago, so long that only the spirit of earth remembers truly. The old shepherd Tithonius sat before the door of his hut waiting for his grandson to return. He watched with drowsy eyes the eve gather, and the woods and mountains grow dark over the isles — the isles of ancient Greece. It was Greece before its day of beauty, and day was never lovelier. The cloudy blossoms of smoke curling upward from the valley sparkled a while high up in the sunlit air, a vague memorial of the world of men below. From that too the colour vanished, and those other lights began to shine which to some are the only lights of day. The skies dropped close upon the mountains and the silver seas, like a vast face brooding with intentness; there was enchantment, mystery, and a living motion in its depths, the presence of all-pervading Zeus enfolding his starry children with the dark radiance of aether.

“Ah!” murmured the old man, looking upward, “once it was living; once it spoke to me. It speaks not now, but it speaks to others I know—to the child who looks and longs and



trembles in the dewy night. Why does he linger now? He is beyond his hour. Ah, there now are his footsteps!"



Page 142

A boy came up the valley driving the grey flocks which tumbled before him in the darkness. He lifted his young face for the shepherd to kiss. It was alight with ecstasy. Tithonius looked at him with wonder. A light golden and silvery rayed all about the him so that his delicate ethereal beauty seemed set in a star which followed his dancing footsteps.

“How bright your eyes!” the old man said, faltering with sudden awe. “Why do your white limbs shine with moonfire light?”

“Oh, father,” said the boy Apollo, “I am glad, for everything is living tonight. The evening is all a voice and many voices. While the flocks were browsing night gathered about me: I saw within it and it was living everywhere; and all together, the wind with dim-blown tresses, odour, incense and secret-falling dew, mingled in one warm breath. They whispered to me and called me ‘Child of the Stars,’ ‘Dew Heart,’ and ‘Soul of Fire.’ Oh, father, as I came up the valley the voices followed me with song; everything murmured love; even the daffodils, nodding in the olive gloom, grew golden at my feet, and a flower within my heart knew of the still sweet secret of the flowers. Listen, listen!”

There were voices in the night, voices as of star-rays descending.

“Now the roof-tree of the midnight spreading
Buds in citron, green, and blue:
From afar its mystic odors shedding,
Child, on you.”

Then other sweet speakers from beneath the earth, and from the distant waters and air followed in benediction, and a last voice like a murmur from universal Nature:

“Now the buried stars beneath the mountains
And the vales their life renew,
Jetting rainbow blooms from tiny fountains,
Child, for you.

“As within our quiet waters passing
Sun and moon and stars we view,
So the loveliness of life is glassing,
Child, in you.

“In the diamond air the sun-star glowing
Up its feathered radiance threw;
All the jewel glory there was flowing,
Child, for you.



“And the fire divine in all things burning
Yearns for home and rest anew,
From its wanderings far again returning,
Child, to you.”

“Oh, voices, voices,” cried the child, “what you say I know not, but I ray back love for love. Father, what is it they tell me? They embosom me in light and I am far away even though I hold your hand.”

“The gods are about us. Heaven mingles with the earth,” said Tithonius trembling. “Let us go to Diotima. She has grown wise brooding for many a year where the great caves lead to the underworld. She sees the bright ones as they pass by where she sits with shut eyes, her drowsy lips murmuring as nature’s self.”



Page 143

That night the island seemed no more earth set in sea, but a music encircled by the silence. The trees long rooted in antique slumber were throbbing with rich life; through glimmering bark and drooping leaf a light fell on the old man and boy as they passed, and vague figures nodded at them. These were the hamadryad souls of the wood. They were bathed in tender colours and shimmering lights draping them from root to leaf. A murmur came from the heart of every one, a low enchantment breathing joy and peace. It grew and swelled until at last it seemed as if through a myriad pipes that Pan the earth spirit was fluting his magical creative song.

They found the cave of Diotima covered by vines and tangled strainers at the end of the island where the dark-green woodland rose up from the waters. Tithonius paused, for he dreaded this mystic prophetess; but a voice from within called them: "Come in, child of light; come in, old shepherd, I know why you seek me!" They entered, Tithonius trembling with more fear than before. A fire was blazing in a recess of the cavern and by it sat a majestic figure robed in purple. She was bent forward, her hand supporting her face, her burning eyes turned on the intruders.

"Come hither, child," she said, taking the boy by the hands and gazing into his face. "So this frail form is to be the home of the god. The gods choose wisely. They take no warrior wild, no mighty hero to be their messenger to men, but crown this gentle head. Tell me—you dream—have you ever seen a light from the sun falling upon you in your slumber? No, but look now; look upward." As she spoke she waved her hands over him, and the cavern with its dusky roof seemed to melt away, and beyond the heavens the heaven of heavens lay dark in pure tranquillity, a quiet which was the very hush of being. In an instant it vanished and over the zenith broke a wonderful light. "See now," cried Diotima, "the Ancient Beauty! Look how its petals expand and what comes forth from its heart!" A vast and glowing breath, mutable and opalescent, spread itself between heaven and earth, and out of it slowly descended a radiant form like a god's. It drew nigh radiating lights, pure, beautiful, and starlike. It stood for a moment by the child and placed its hand on his head, and then it was gone. The old shepherd fell upon his face in awe, while the boy stood breathless and entranced.

"Go now," said the Sybil, "I can teach thee naught. Nature herself will adore you and sing through you her loveliest song. But, ah, the light you hail in joy you shall impart in tears. So from age to age the eternal Beauty bows itself down amid sorrows that the children of men may not forget it, that their anguish may be transformed smitten through by its fire."

—November 15, 1896

The Awakening of the Fires



Page 144

When twilight flutters the mountains over
The faery lights from the earth unfold,
And over the hills enchanted hover
The giant heroes and gods of old:
The bird of aether its flaming pinions
Waves over earth the whole night long:
The stars drop down in their blue dominions
To hymn together their choral song:
The child of earth in his heart grows burning
Mad for the night and the deep unknown;
His alien flame in a dream returning
Seats itself on the ancient throne.
When twilight over the mountains fluttered
And night with its starry millions came,
I too had dreams; the thoughts I have uttered.
Come from my heart that was touched by the flame

I thought over the attempts made time after time to gain our freedom; how failure had followed failure until at last it seemed that we must write over hero and chieftain of our cause the memorial spoken of the warriors of old, "They went forth to the battle but they always fell;" and it seemed to me that these efforts resulted in failure because the ideals put forward were not in the plan of nature for us; that it was not in our destiny that we should attempt a civilization like that of other lands. Though the cry of nationality rings for ever in our ears, the word here has embodied to most no other hope than this, that we should when free be able to enter with more energy upon pursuits already adopted by the people of other countries. Our leaders have erected no nobler standard than theirs, and we who, as a race, are the forlorn hope of idealism in Europe, sink day by day into apathy and forget what a past was ours and what a destiny awaits us if we will but rise responsive to it. Though so old in tradition this Ireland of today is a child among the nations of the world; and what a child, and with what a strain of genius in it! There is all the superstition, the timidity and lack of judgment, the unthought recklessness of childhood, but combined with what generosity and devotion, and what an unfathomable love for its heroes. Who can forget that memorable day when its last great chief was laid to rest? He was not the prophet of our spiritual future; he was not the hero of our highest ideals; but he was the only hero we knew. The very air was penetrated with the sobbing and passion of unutterable regret. Ah, Eri, in other lands there is strength and mind and the massive culmination of ordered power, but in thee alone is there such love as the big heart of childhood can feel. It is this which maketh all thy exiles turn with longing thoughts to thee.

Before trying her to indicate a direction for the future, guessed from brooding on the far past and by touching on the secret springs in the heart of the present, it may make that future seem easier of access if I point out what we have escaped and also show that we have already a freedom which, though but half recognized, is yet our most precious

heritage. We are not yet involved in a social knot which only red revolution can sever: our humanity, the ancient gift of nature to us, is still fresh in our veins: our force is not merely the reverberation of a past, an inevitable momentum started in the long ago, but is free for newer life to do what we will with in the coming time.



Page 145

I know there are some who regret this, who associate national greatness with the whirr and buzz of many wheels, the smoke of factories and with large dividends; and others, again, who wish that our simple minds were illuminated by the culture and wisdom of our neighbours. But I raise the standard of idealism, to try everything by it, every custom, every thought before we make it our own, and every sentiment before it finds a place in our hearts. Are these conditions, social and mental, which some would have us strive for really so admirable as we are assured they are? Are they worth having at all? What of the heroic best of man; how does that show? His spirituality, beauty and tenderness, are these fostered in the civilizations of today? I say if questions like these bearing upon that inner life wherein is the real greatness of nations cannot be answered satisfactorily, that it is our duty to maintain our struggle, to remain aloof, lest by accepting a delusive prosperity we shut ourselves from our primitive sources of power. For this spirit of the modern, with which we are so little in touch, is one which tends to lead man further and further from nature. She is no more to him the Great Mother so reverently named long ago, but merely an adjunct to his life, the distant supplier of his needs. What to the average dweller in cities are stars and skies and mountains? They pay no dividends to him, no wages. Why should he care about them indeed. And no longer concerning himself about nature what wonder is it that nature ebbs out of him. She has her revenge, for from whatever standpoint of idealism considered the average man shows but of pigmy stature. For him there is no before or after. In his material life he has forgotten or never heard of the heroic traditions of his race, their aspirations to godlike state. One wonders what will happen to him when death ushers him out from the great visible life to the loneliness amid the stars. To what hearth or home shall he flee who never raised the veil of nature while living, nor saw it waver tremulous with the hidden glory before his eyes? The Holy Breath from the past communes no more with him, and if he is oblivious of these things, though a thousand workman call him master, within he is bankrupt, his effects sequestered, a poor shadow, an outcast from the Kingdom of Light.

We see too, that as age after age passes and teems only with the commonplace, that those who are the poets and teachers falter and lose faith: they utter no more of man the divine things the poets said of old. Perhaps the sheer respectability of the people they address deters them from making statements which in some respects might be considered libelous. But from whatever cause, from lack of heart or lack of faith, they have no real inspiration. The literature of Europe has had but little influence on the Celt in this isle. Its philosophies and revolutionary ideas have stayed their waves at his



Page 146

coast: they had no message of interpretation for him, no potent electric thought to light up the mystery of his nature. For the mystery of the Celt is the mystery of Amergin the Druid. All nature speaks through him. He is her darling, the confidant of her secrets. Her mountains have been more to him than a feeling. She has revealed them to him as the home of her brighter children, her heroes become immortal. For him her streams ripple with magical life and the light of day was once filled with more aerial rainbow wonder. Though thousands of years have passed since this mysterious Druid land was at its noonday, and long centuries have rolled by since the weeping seers saw the lights vanish from mountain and valley, still this alliance of the soul of man and the soul of nature more or less manifestly characterizes the people of this isle. The thought produced in and for complex civilizations is not pregnant enough with the vast for them, is not enough thrilled through by that impalpable breathing from another nature. We have had but little native literature here worth the name until of late years, and that not yet popularized, but during all these centuries the Celt has kept in his heart some affinity with the mighty beings ruling in the unseen, once so evident to the heroic races who preceded him. His legends and faery tales have connected his soul with the inner lives of air and water and earth, and they in turn have kept his heart sweet with hidden influence. It would make one feel sad to think that all that beautiful folklore is fading slowly from the memory that held it so long, were it not for the belief that the watchful powers who fostered its continuance relax their care because the night with beautiful dreams and deeds done only in fancy is passing: the day is coming with the beautiful real, with heroes and heroic deeds.

It may not be well to prophecy, but it is always permissible to speak of our hopes. If day but copies day may we not hope for Ireland, after its long cycle of night, such another glory as lightened it of old, which tradition paints in such mystic colours? What was the mysterious glamour of the Druid age? What meant the fires on the mountains, the rainbow glow of air, the magic life in water and earth, but that the Radiance of Deity was shining through our shadowy world, that it mingled with and was perceived along with the forms we know. There it threw up its fountains of life-giving fire, the faery fountains of story, and the children of earth breathing that rich life felt the flush of an immortal vigour within them; and so nourished sprang into being the Danaan races, men who made themselves gods by will and that magical breath. Rulers of earth and air and fire, their memory looms titanic in the cloud stories of our dawn, and as we think of that splendid strength of the past something leaps up in the heart to confirm it true for all the wonder of it.



Page 147

This idea of man's expansion into divinity, which is in the highest teaching of every race, is one which shone like a star at the dawn of our Celtic history also. Hero after hero is called away by a voice ringing out of the land of eternal youth, which is but a name for the soul of earth, the enchantress and mother of all. There as guardians of the race they shed their influence on the isle; from them sprang all that was best and noblest in our past, and let no one think but that it was noble. Leaving aside that mystic sense of union with another world and looking only at the tales of battle, when we read of heroes whose knightly vows forbade the use of stratagem in war, and all but the equal strife with equals in opportunity; when we hear of the reverence for truth among the Fianna, "We the Fianna of Erin never lied, falsehood was never attributed to us"—a reverence for truth carried so far that they could not believe their foemen even could speak falsely—I say that in these days when our public life is filled with slander and unworthy imputation, we might do worse than turn back to that ideal Paganism of the past, and learn some lessons of noble trust, and this truth that greatness of soul alone insures final victory to us who live and move and have our being in the life of God.

In hoping for such another day I do not of course mean the renewal of the ancient order, but rather look for the return of the same light which was manifest in the past. For so the eternal Beauty brings itself to the memory of man from time to time brooding over nations, as in the early Aryan heart, suffusing life and thought with the sun-sense of pervading Deity, or as in Greece where its myriad rays, each an intuition of loveliness, descended and dwelt not only in poet, sage and sculptor, but in the general being of the people. What has been called the Celtic renaissance in literature is one of the least of the signs. Of far more significance is the number of strange, dreamy children one meets, whose hearts are in the elsewhere, and young people who love to brood on the past, I speak of which is all the world to them. The present has no voice to interpret their dreams and visions, the enraptured solitude by mountain or shore, or what they feel when they lie close pressed to the bosom of the earth, mad with the longing for old joys, the fiery communion of spirit with spirit, which was once the privilege of man. These some voice, not proclaiming an arid political propaganda, may recall into the actual: some ideal of heroic life may bring them to the service of their kind, and none can serve the world better than those who from mighty dreams turn exultant to their realisation: who bring to labour the love, the courage, the unfailing hope, which they only possess who have gone into the hidden nature and found it sweet at heart.



Page 148

So this Isle, once called the Sacred Isle and also the Isle of Destiny, may find a destiny worthy of fulfilment: not to be a petty peasant republic, nor a miniature duplicate in life and aims of great material empires, but that its children out of their faith, which has never failed may realise this imemorial truth of man's inmost divinity, and in expressing it may ray the light over every land. Now, although a great literature and great thought may be part of our future, it ought not to be the essential part of our ideal. As in our past the bards gave way before the heroes, so in any national ideal worthy the name, all must give way in its hopes, wealth, literature, art, everything before manhood itself. If our humanity fails us or become degraded, of what value are the rest? What use would it be to you or to me if our ships sailed on every sea and our wealth rivaled the antique Ind, if we ourselves were unchanged, had no more kingly consciousness of life, nor that overtopping grandeur of soul indifferent whether it dwells in a palace or a cottage?

If this be not clear to the intuition, there is the experience of the world and the example of many nations. Let us take the highest, and consider what have a thousand years of empire brought to England. Wealth without parallel, but at what expense! The lover of his kind must feel as if a knife were entering his heart when he looks at those black centres of boasted prosperity, at factory, smoke and mine, the arid life and spiritual death. Do you call those miserable myriads a humanity? We look at those people in despair and pity. Where is the ancient image of divinity in man's face: where in man's heart the prompting of the divine? There is nothing but a ceaseless energy without; a night terrible as hell within. Is this the only way for us as a people? Is nature to be lost; beauty to be swallowed up? The crown and sceptre were taken from us in the past, our path has been strewn with sorrows, but the spirit shall not be taken until it becomes as clay, and man forgets that he was born in the divine, and hears no more the call of the great deep in his heart as he bows himself to the dust in his bitter labours. It maddens to think it should be for ever thus, with us and with them, and that man the immortal, man the divine, should sink deeper and deeper into night and ignorance, and know no more of himself than glimmers upon him in the wearied intervals of long routine.

Here we have this hope that nature appeals with her old glamour to many, and there is still the ancient love for the hero. In a land where so many well nigh hopeless causes have found faithful adherents, where there has been so much devotion and sacrifice, where poverty has made itself poorer still for the sake of leader and cause, may we not hope that when an appeal is made to the people to follow still higher ideals, that they will set aside the lower for the higher, that they will not relegate idealism to the



Page 149

poets only, but that it will dwell in the public as the private heart and make impossible any nations' undertaking inconsistent with the dignity and beauty of life? To me it seems that here the task of teacher and writer is above all to present images and ideals of divine manhood to the people whose real gods have always been their heroes. These titan figures, Cuculain, Finn, Oscar, Oisin, Caolte, all a mixed gentleness and fire, have commanded for generations that spontaneous love which is the only true worship paid by men. It is because of this profound and long-enduring love for the heroes, which must be considered as forecasting the future, that I declare the true ideal and destiny of the Celt in this island to be the begetting of humanity whose desires and visions shall rise above earth illimitable into godlike nature, who shall renew for the world the hope, the beauty, the magic, the wonder which will draw the buried stars which are the souls of men to their native firmament of spiritual light and elemental power.

For the hero with us there is ample scope and need. There are the spectres of ignoble hopes, the lethal influences of a huge material civilisation wafted to us from over seas, which must be laid. Oh, that a protest might be made ere it becomes more difficult, ere this wild, beautiful land of ours be viewed only as a lure to draw money from the cockney tourist, and the immemorial traditions around our sacred hills be of value only to advertise the last hotel. Yet to avert the perils arising from external causes is but a slight task compared with the overcoming of obstacles already existent within. There is one which must be removed at whatever cost, though the hero may well become the martyr in the attempt. It is a difficulty which has its strength from one of the very virtues of the people, their reverence for religion. This in itself is altogether well. But it is not well when the nature of that religion enables its priests to sway men from their natural choice of hero and cause by the threat of spiritual terrors. I say that where this takes place to any great extent, as it has with us, it is not a land a freeman can think of with pride. It is not a place where the lover of freedom can rest, but he must spend sleepless nights, must brood, must scheme, must wait to strike a blow. To the thought of freedom it must be said to our shame none of the nobler meaning attaches here. Freedom to speak what hopes and ideals we may have; to act openly for what cause we will; to allow that freedom to others—that liberty is denied. There are but too many places where to differ openly from the priest in politics is to provoke a brawl, where to speak as here with the fearlessness of print would be to endanger life. With what scorn one hears the aspiration from public freedom from lips that are closed with the dread by their own hearthside! Let freedom arise where first it is possible in the hearts of men, in their



Page 150

thoughts, in speech between one and another, and then the gods may not deem us unworthy of the further sway of our national life. I would that some of the defiant spirit of the old warrior brood were here, not indeed to provoke strife between man and man, or race and race, but rather that we might be fearless in the spirit of one who said "I do not war against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers"—and against influences which fetter progress, against an iron materialism where the beauty of life perishes, let us revolt, let us war for ever.

But with all this I, like others who have narrowly watched the signs of awakening life, do not doubt but that these things will pass as greater potencies throng in and impel to action. Already the rush of the earth-breath begins to fill with elation our island race and uplift them with the sense of power; and through the power sometimes flashes the glory, the spiritual radiance which will be ours hereafter, if old prophecy can be trusted and our hearts prompt us true. Here and there some rapt dreamer more inward than the rest sees that Tir-na-noge was no fable, but is still around him with all its mystic beauty for ever. The green hills grow alive with the star-children fleeting, flashing on their twilight errands from gods to men. When the heart opens to receive them and the ties which bind us to unseen nature are felt our day will begin and the fires awaken, our isle will be the Sacred Island once again and our great ones the light-givers to humanity, not voicing new things, but only of the old, old truths one more affirmation; for what is all wisdom, wherever uttered, whether in time past or today, but the One Life, the One Breath, chanting its innumerable tones of thought and joy and love in the heart of man, one voice throughout myriad years whose message eterne is this—you are by your nature immortal, and you may be, if you will it, divine.

—Jan. 15, Feb. 15, 1897

Our Secret Ties

Our deepest life is when we are alone. We think most truly, love best, when isolated from the outer world in that mystic abyss we call soul. Nothing external can equal the fulness of these moments. We may sit in the blue twilight with a friend, or bend together by the hearth, half whispering, or in a silence populous with loving thoughts mutually understood; then we may feel happy and at peace, but it is only because we are lulled by a semblance to deeper intimacies. When we think of a friend, and the loved one draws nigh, we sometimes feel half-pained, for we touched something in our solitude which the living presence shut out; we seem more apart, and would fain cry out—"Only in my deep heart I love you, sweetest heart; call me not forth from this; I am no more a spirit if I leave my throne." But these moods, though lit up by intuitions of the true, are too partial, they belong too much to the twilight of the heart, they have too dreamy a temper to serve us well in life. We should wish rather for our thoughts a directness such

as belongs to the messengers of the gods, swift, beautiful, flashing presences bent on purposes well understood.



Page 151

What we need is that this interior tenderness shall be elevated into seership, that what in most is only yearning or blind love shall see clearly its way and hope and aim. To this end we have to observe more intently the nature of the interior life. We find, indeed, that it is not a solitude at all, but dense with multitudinous being: instead of being alone we are in the thronged highways of existence. For our guidance when entering here many words of warning have been uttered, laws have been outlined, and beings full of wonder, terror, and beauty described. Yet there is a spirit in us deeper than our intellectual being which I think of as the Hero in man, who feels the nobility of its place in the midst of all this, and who would fain equal the greatness of perception with deeds as great. The weariness and sense of futility which often falls upon the mystic after much thought is due, I think, to this, that here he has duties demanding a more sustained endurance just as the inner life is so much vaster and more intense than the life he has left behind.

Now, the duties which can be taken up by the soul are exactly those which it feels most inadequate to perform when acting as an embodied being. What shall be done to quiet the heart-cry of the world: how answer the dumb appeal for help we so often divine below eyes that laugh? It is sadder than sorrow to think that pity with no hands to heal, that love without a voice to speak, should helplessly heap their pain upon pain while earth shall endure. But there is a truth about sorrow which I think may make it seem not so hopeless. There are fewer barriers than we think: there is, in fact, an inner alliance between the soul who would fain give and the soul who is in need. Nature has well provided that not one golden ray of all our thoughts is sped ineffective through the dark; not one drop of the magical elixirs love distills is wasted. Let us consider how this may be. There is a habit we nearly all have indulged in: we often weave little stories in our minds expending love and pity upon the imaginary beings we have created. But I have been led to think that many of these are not imaginary, that somewhere in the world beings are thinking, loving, suffering just in that way, and we merely reform and live over again in our life the story of another life. Sometimes these faraway intimates assume so vivid a shape, they come so near with their appeal for sympathy that the pictures are unforgettable, and the more I ponder over them the more it seems to me that they often convey the actual need of some soul whose cry for comfort has gone out into the vast, perhaps to meet with an answer, perhaps to hear only silence. I will supply an instance. I see a child, a curious, delicate little thing, seated on the doorstep of a house. It is an alley in some great city; there is a gloom of evening and vapour over the sky; I see the child is bending over the path; he is



Page 152

picking cinders and arranging them, and, growing closer, as I ponder, I become aware that he is laying down in gritty lines the walls of a house, the mansion of his dream. Here spread along the pavement are large rooms, these for his friends, and a tiny room in the centre, that is his own. So his thought plays. Just then I catch a glimpse of the corduroy trousers of a passing workman, and a heavy boot crushes through the cinders. I feel the pain in the child's heart as he shrinks back, his little love-lit house of dreams all rudely shattered. Ah, poor child, building the City Beautiful out of a few cinders, yet nigher, truer in intent than many a stately, gold-rich palace reared by princes, thou wert not forgotten by that mighty spirit who lives through the falling of empires, whose home has been in many a ruined heart. Surely it was to bring comfort to hearts like thine that that most noble of all meditations was ordained by the Buddha. "He lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of Love far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure."

The love, though the very fairy breath of life, should by itself and so imparted have a sustaining power some may question, not those who have felt the sunlight fall from distant fiends who think of them; but, to make clearer how it seems to me to act, I say that love, Eros, is a being. It is more than a power of the soul, though it is that also; it has a universal life of its own, and just as the dark heaving waters do not know what jewel lights they reflect with blinding radiance, so the soul, partially absorbing and feeling the ray of Eros within it, does not know that often a part of its nature nearer to the sun of love shines with a brilliant light to other eyes than its own. Many people move unconscious of their won charm, unknowing of the beauty and power they seem to others to impart. It is some past attainment of the soul, a jewel won in some old battle which it may have forgotten, but none the less this gleams on its tiara and the star-flame inspires others to hope and victory.

If is true here than many exert a spiritual influence they are unconscious of, it is still truer of the spheres within. Once the soul has attained to any possession like love, or persistent will, or faith, or a power of thought, it comes into psychic contact with others who are struggling for these very powers. The attainment of any of these means that the soul is able to absorb and radiate some of the diviner elements of being. The soul may or may not be aware of the position it is placed in and its new duties, but yet that Living Light, having found a way into the being of any one person, does not rest there, but sends its rays and extends its influence on and on to illumine the darkness of another nature.



Page 153

So it comes that there are ties which bind us to people other than those whom we meet in our everyday life. I think they are more real ties, more important to understand, for if we let our lamp go out some far away who had reached out in the dark and felt a steady will, a persistent hope, a compassionate love, may reach out once again in an hour of need, and finding no support may give way and fold the hands in despair. Often indeed we allow gloom to overcome us and so hinder the bright rays in their passage; but would we do it so often if we thought that perhaps a sadness which besets us, we do not know why, was caused by some heart drawing nigh to ours for comfort, that our lethargy might make it feel still more its helplessness, while our courage, our faith, might cause "our light to shine in some other heart which as yet has no light of its own."

—March 15, 1897

Priest or Hero?

"I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained

I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,

They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,

No one kneels to another, nor to one of his kind that lived thousands of years ago." —Walt Whitman

I have prefixed some ideas about spiritual freedom addressed to the people of Ireland with these lines from the poet of another land, because national sentiment seems out of date here, the old heroism slumbers, alien thought and an exotic religion have supplanted our true ideals and our natural spirituality. I hope that the scornful words of one who breathed a freer air might sting to shame those who have not lost altogether the sentiment of human dignity, who have still some intuitions as to how far and how wisely a man may abase himself before another, whether that other claim divine authority or not. For this is the true problem which confronts us as a nation, and all else is insignificant beside. We have found out who are the real rulers here, who dictate politics and public action with no less authority than they speak upon religion and morals, It was only the other day that a priest, one of our rulers, declared that he would not permit a political meeting to be held in his diocese and this fiat was received with a submission which showed how accurately the politician gauged the strength opposed to him. And this has not been the only occasion when this power has been exerted: we all know how many national movements have been interfered with or thwarted; we know the shameful revelations connected with the elections a few years back; we know how a great leader fell; and those who are idealists, God's warriors battling for freedom of thought, whose hope for the world is that the intuitions of the true and good divinely

implanted in each man's breast shall supersede tradition and old authority, cannot but feel that their opinions, so much more dangerous to that authority



Page 154

than any political ideal, must, if advocated, bring them at last to clash with the priestly power. It is not a war with religion we would fain enter upon; but when those who claim that heaven and hell shut and open at their bidding for the spirit of man, use the influence which belief in that claim confers, as it has been here, to fetter free-will in action, it is time that the manhood of the nation awoke to sternly question that authority, to assert its immemorial right to freedom.

There live of old in Eri a heroic race whom the bards sang as fearless. There was then no craven dread of the hereafter, for the land of the immortals glimmered about them in dream and vision, and already before the decaying of the form the spirit of the hero had crossed the threshold and clasped hands with the gods. No demon nature affrighted them: from them wielding the flaming sword of will the demons fled away as before Cuculain vanished in terror shadowy embattled hosts. What, I wonder, would these antique heroes say coming back to a land which preserves indeed their memory but emulates their spirit no more? We know what the bards thought when heroic Ireland became only a tradition; when to darkened eyes the elf-lights ceased to gleam, luring no more to the rich radiant world within, the Druidic mysteries, and the secret of the ages. In the bardic tales their comrade Ossian voices to Patrick their scorn of the new. Ah, from the light and joy of the faery region, from that great companionship with a race half divine, come back to find that but one divine man had walked the earth, and as for the rest it was at prayer and fasting they ought to be! And why? Because, as Patrick explained to Ossian, if they did not they would go to hell. And this is the very thing the Patricks ever since have been persuading the Irish people to believe, adding an alien grief unto their many sorrows, foisting upon them a vulgar interpretation of the noble idea of divine justice to cow them to submission with the threat of flame. Ossian, chafing and fuming under the priestly restriction, declared his preference for hell with the Finians to paradise with Patrick. His simple heroic mind found it impossible to believe that the pure, gentle but indomitable spirits of his comrades could be anywhere quenched or quelled, but they must at last arise exultant even from torment. When Ossian rejects the bribe of paradise to share the darker world and the fate of his companions, there spake the true spirit of man; spark of illimitable deity; shrouded in form, yet radiating ceaselessly heroic thoughts, aspirations, deathless love; not to be daunted, rising again and again from sorrow with indestructible hope; emerging ever from defeat, its glooms smitten through and through with the light of visions vast and splendid as the heavens. Old bard, old bard, from Tir-na-noge where thou, perchance wrapt by that beauty which called thee from earth, singest immortal songs, would that one lightning of thy spirit could pierce the hearts now thronged with dread, might issue from lips which dare not speak.



Page 155

I do not question but that the heroic age had its imperfections, or that it was not well that its too warlike ardour was tempered by the beautiful, pathetic and ennobling teaching of Christ. The seed of new doctrines bore indeed many lovely but exotic blossoms in the saintly times, and also many a noxious weed. For religion must always be an exotic which makes a far-off land sacred rather than the earth underfoot: where the Great Spirit whose home is the vast seems no more a moving glamour in the heavens, a dropping tenderness at twilight, a visionary light on the hills, a voice in man's heart; when the way of life is sought in scrolls or is heard from another's lips. The noxious weed, the unendurable bitter which mingled with the sweet and true in this exotic religion was the terrible power it put into the hands of men somewhat more learned in their ignorance of God than those whom they taught: the power to inflict a deadly wrong upon the soul, to coerce the will by terror from the course conscience had marked out as true and good. That power has been used unsparingly and at times with unspeakable cruelty whenever those who had it thought their influence was being assailed, for power is sweet and its use is not lightly laid aside.

As we read our island history there seems a ruddy emblazonry on every page, a hue shed from behind the visible, the soul dropping its red tears of fire over hopes for ever dissolving, noble ambitions for ever foiled. Always on the eve of success starts up some fatal figure weaponed with the keys of the hereafter, brandishing more especially the key of the place of torment, warning most particularly those who regard that that key shall not get rusty from want of turning if they disobey. It has been so from the beginning, from the time of the cursing of Tara, where the growing unity of the nations was split into fractions, down to the present time. I often doubt if the barbarities in eastern lands which we shudder at are in reality half so cruel, if they mean so much anguish as this threat of after-torture does to those who believe in the power of another to inflict it. It wounds the spirit to the heart: its consciousness of its own immortality becomes entwined with the terror of as long enduring pain. It is a lie which the all-compassionate Father-Spirit never breathed into the ears of his children, a lie which has been told here century after century with such insistence that half the nation has the manhood cowed out of it. The offence of the dead chief whose followers were recently assailed weighed light as a feather in the balance when compared with the sin of these men and their shameful misuse of religious authority in Meath a little while ago. The scenes which took place there, testified and sworn to by witness in the after trials, were only a copy of what generally took place. They will take place again if the necessity arises. That is a bitter fact.



Page 156

A dim consciousness that their servitude is not to God's law but to man's ambition is creeping over the people here. That is a very hopeful sign. When a man first feels he is a slave he begins to grow grey inside, to get moody and irritable. The sore spot becomes more sensitive the more he broods. At last to touch it becomes dangerous. For, from such pent-up musing and wrath have sprung rebellions, revolutions, the overthrow of dynasties and the fall of religions, aye, thrice as mighty as this. That Thought of freedom lets loose the flood-gates of an illimitable fire into the soul; it emerges from its narrow prison-cell of thought and fear as the sky-reaching genie from the little copper vessel in the tale of Arabian enchantment; it lays hand on the powers of storm and commotion like a god. It would be politic not to press the despotism more; but it would be a pity perhaps if some further act did not take place, just to see a nation flinging aside the shackles of superstition; disdainful of threats, determined to seek its own good, resolutely to put aside all external tradition and rule; adhering to its own judgment, though priests falsely say the hosts of the everlasting are arrayed in battle against it, though they threaten the spirit with obscure torment for ever and ever: still to persist, still to defy, still to obey the orders of another captain, that Unknown Deity within whose trumpet-call sounds louder than all the cries of men. There is great comfort, my fellows, in flinging fear aside; an exultation and delight spring up welling from inexhaustible deeps, and a tranquil sweetness also ensues which shows that the powers ever watchful of human progress approve and applaud the act.

In all this I do not aim at individuals. It is not with them I would war but with tyranny. They who enslave are as much or more to be pitied than those whom they enslave. They too are wronged by being placed and accepted in a position of false authority. They too enshrine a ray of the divine spirit, which to liberate and express is the purpose of life. Whatever movement ignores the needs of a single unity, or breeds hate against it rather than compassion, is so far imperfect. But if we give these men, as we must, the credit of sincerity, still opposition is none the less a duty. The spirit of man must work out its own destiny, learning truth out of error and pain. It cannot be moral by proxy. A virtuous course into which it is whipt by fear will avail it nothing, and in that dread hour when it comes before the Mighty who sent it forth, neither will the plea avail it that its conscience was in another's keeping.



Page 157

The choice here lies between Priest and Hero as ideal, and I say that whatever is not heroic is not Irish, has not been nourished at the true fountain wherefrom our race and isle derive their mystic fame. There is a life behind the veil, another Eri which the bards knew, singing it as the Land of Immortal Youth. It is not hidden from us, though we have hidden ourselves from it, so that it has become only a fading memory in our hearts and a faery fable upon our lips. Yet there are still places in this isle, remote from the crowded cities where men and women eat and drink and wear out their lives and are lost in the lust for gold, where the shy peasant sees the enchanted lights in mountain and woody dell, and hears the faery bells pealing away, away, into that wondrous underland whither, as legends relate, the Danann gods withdrew. These things are not to be heard for the asking; but some, more reverent than the rest, more intuitive, who understand that the pure eyes of a peasant may see the things kings and princes, aye, and priests, have desired to see and have not seen; that for him may have been somewhat lifted the veil which hides from men the starry spheres where the Eternal Beauty abides in the shining—these have heard and have been filled with the hope that, if ever the mystic truths of life could be spoken here, there would be enough of the old Celtic fire remaining to bring back the magic into the isle. That direct relation, that vision, comes fully with spiritual freedom, when men no longer peer through another's eyes into the mysteries, when they will not endure that the light shall be darkened by transmission, but spirit speaks with spirit, drawing light from the boundless Light alone.

Leaving aside the question of interference with national movements, another charge, one of the weightiest which can be brought against the priestly influence in this island, is that it has hampered the expression of native genius in literature and thought. Now the country is alive with genius, flashing out everywhere, in the conversation even of the lowest; but we cannot point to imaginative work of any importance produced in Ireland which has owed its inspiration to the priestly teaching. The genius of the Gael could not find itself in their doctrines; though above all things mystical it could not pierce its way into the departments of super-nature where their theology pigeon-holes the souls of the damned and the blessed. It knew of the Eri behind the veil which I spoke of, the Tir-nanoge which as a lamp lights up our grassy plains, our haunted hills and valleys. The faery tales have ever lain nearer to the hearts of the people, and whatever there is of worth in song or story has woven into it the imagery handed down from the dim druidic ages. This is more especially true today, when our literature is beginning to manifest preeminent qualities of imagination, not the grey pieties of the cloister, but natural magic, beauty, and heroism. Our poets sing Ossian wandering the land of the immortals; or we read in vivid romance of the giant chivalry of the Ultonians, their untamable manhood, the exploits of Cuculain and the children of Rury, more admirable as types, more noble and inspiring than the hierarchy of little saints who came later on and cursed their memories.



Page 158

The genius of the Gael is awakening after a night of troubled dreams. I returns instinctively to the beliefs of its former day and finds again the old inspiration. It seeks the gods on the mountains, still enfolded by their mantle of multitudinous traditions, or sees them flash by in the sunlit diamond airs. How strange, but how natural is all this! It seems as if Ossian's was a premature return. Today he might find comrades come back from Tir-na-noge for the uplifting of their race. Perhaps to many a young spirit starting up among us Caolte might speak as to Mongan, saying: "I was with thee, with Finn." Hence, it may be, the delight with which we hear Standish O'Grady declaring that the bardic divinities will remain: "Nor, after centuries of obscuration, is their power to quicken, purify, and exalt, yet dead. Still they live and reign, and shall reign." After long centuries—the voice of a spirit ever youthful, yet older than all the gods, who with its breath of sunrise-coloured flame jewels with richest lights the visions of earth's dreamy-hearted children. Once more out of the Heart of the Mystery is heard the call of "Come away," and after that no other voice has power to lure: there remain only the long heroic labours which end in companionship with the gods.

These voices do not stand for themselves alone. They are heralds before a host. No man has ever spoken with potent utterance who did not feel the secret urging of dumb, longing multitudes, whose aspirations and wishes converge on and pour themselves into fearless heart. The thunder of the waves is deeper because the tide is rising. Those who are behind do not come only with song and tale, but with stern hearts bent on great issues, among which, not least, is the intellectual liberation of Ireland. That is an aim at which some of our rulers may well grow uneasy. Soon shall young men, fiery-hearted, children of Eri, a new race, roll our their thoughts on the hillsides, before your very doors, O priests, calling your flocks from your dark chapels and twilight sanctuaries to a temple not built with hands, sunlit, starlit, sweet with the odour and incense of earth, from your altars call them to the altars of the hills, soon to be lit up as of old, soon to be the blazing torches of God over the land. These heroes I see emerging. Have they not come forth in every land and race when there was need? Here, too, they will arise. Ah, my darlings, you will have to fight and suffer: you must endure loneliness, the coldness of friends, the alienation of love; warmed only by the bright interior hope of a future you must toil for but may never see, letting the deed be its own reward; laying in dark places the foundations of that high and holy Eri of prophecy, the isle of enchantment, burning with druidic splendours, bright with immortal presences, with the face of the everlasting Beauty looking in upon all its ways, divine with terrestrial mingling till God and the world are one.



Page 159

There waits brooding in this isle a great destiny, and to accomplish it we must have freedom of thought. That is the greatest of our needs, for thought is the lightning-conductor between the heaven-world and earth. We want fearless advocates who will not be turned aside from their course by laughter or by threats. Why is it that the spirit of daring, imaginative enquiry is so dead here? An incubus of spiritual fear seems to beset men women so that they think, if they turn from the beaten track seeking the true, they shall meet, not the divine with outstretched hands, but a demon; that the reward for their search will not be joy or power but enduring pain. How the old bard swept away such fears! "If thy God were good," said Ossian, "he would call Finn into his dun." Yes, the heroic heart is dear to the heroic heart. I would back the intuition of an honest soul for truth against piled-up centuries of theology. But this high spirit is stifled everywhere by a dull infallibility which is yet unsuccessful, on its own part, in awakening inspiration; and, in the absence of original thought, we pick over the bones of dead movements, we discuss the personalities of the past, but no one asks the secrets of life or of death. There are despotic hands in politics, in religion, in education, strangling any attempt at freedom. Of the one institution which might naturally be supposed to be the home of great ideas we can only say, reversing the famous eulogy on Oxford, it has never given itself to any national hero or cause, but always to the Philistine.

With the young men who throng the literary societies the intellectual future of Ireland rests. In them are our future leaders. Out of these as from a fountain will spring—what? Will we have another generation of Irishmen at the same level as today, with everything in a state of childhood, boyish patriotism, boyish ideals, boyish humour? Or will they assimilate the aged thought of the world and apply it to the needs of their own land? I remember reading somewhere a description by Turgenieff of his contemporaries as a young man; how they sat in garrets, drinking execrably bad coffee or tea. But what thoughts! They talked of God, of humanity, of Holy Russia; and out of such groups of young men, out of their discussions, emanated that vast unrest which has troubled Europe and will trouble it still more. Here no questions are asked and no answers are received. There is a pitiful, blind struggle for a nationality whose ideas are not definitely conceived. What is the ideal of Ireland as a nation? It drifts from mind to mind, a phantom thought lacking a spirit, but a spirit which will surely incarnate. Perhaps some of our old heroes may return. Already it seems as if one had been here; a sombre Titan earlier awakened than the rest who passed before us, and sounded the rallying note of our race before he staggered to his tragic close. Others of brighter thought



Page 160

will follow to awaken the fires which Brigid in her vision saw gleaming beyond dark centuries of night, and confessed between hope and tears to Patrick. Meanwhile we must fight for intellectual freedom; we must strive to formulate to ourselves what it is we really wish for here, until at last the ideal becomes no more phantasmal but living; until our voices in aspiration are heard in every land, and the nations become aware of a new presence amid their councils, a last and most beautiful figure, as one after the cross of pain, after the shadowy terrors, with thorn-marks on the brow from a crown flung aside, but now radiant, ennobled after suffering, Eri, the love of so many dreamers, priestess of the mysteries, with the chant of beauty on her lips and the heart of nature beating in her heart.

—April 15-May 15, 1897

The Age of the Spirit

I am a part of all that I have met:
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untraveled world
..... Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
—Ulysses

We are no longer children as we were in the beginning. The spirit which, prompted by some divine intent, flung itself long ago into a vague, nebulous, drifting nature, though it has endured through many periods of youth, maturity, and age, has yet had its own transformations. Its gay, wonderful childhood gave way, as cycle after cycle coiled itself into slumber, to more definite purposes, and now it is old and burdened with experiences. It is not an age that quenches its fire, but it will not renew again the activities which gave it wisdom. And so it comes that men pause with a feeling which they translate into weariness of life before the accustomed joys and purposes of their race. They wonder at the spell which induced their fathers to plot and execute deeds which seem to them to have no more meaning than a whirl of dust. But their fathers had this weariness also and concealed it from each other in fear, for it meant the laying aside of the sceptre, the toppling over empires, the chilling of the household warmth, and all for a voice whose inner significance revealed itself but to one or two among myriads.

The spirit has hardly emerged from the childhood with which nature clothes it afresh at every new birth, when the disparity between the garment and the wearer becomes manifest: the little tissue of joys and dreams woven about it found inadequate for shelter: it trembles exposed to the winds blowing out of the unknown. We linger at



twilight with some companion, still glad, contented, and in tune with the nature which fills the orchards with blossom and sprays the hedges with dewy blooms. The laughing lips give utterance to wishes—ours until that moment. Then the spirit, without warning, suddenly falls into immeasurable age: a sphynx-like regard is upon us: our lips answer, but far from the region



Page 161

of elemental being we inhabit, they syllable in shadowy sound, out of old usage, the response, speaking of a love and a hope which we know have vanished from us for evermore. So hour by hour the scourge of the infinite drives us out of every nook and corner of life we find pleasant. And this always takes place when all is fashioned to our liking: then into our dream strides the wielder of the lightning: we get glimpse of the great beyond thronged with mighty, exultant, radiant beings: our own deeds become infinitesimal to us: the colours of our imagination, once so shining, grow pale as the living lights of God glow upon them. We find a little honey in the heart which we make sweeter for some one, and then another lover, whose forms are legion, sighs to us out of its multitudinous being: we know that the old love is gone. There is a sweetness in song or in the cunning reimagining of the beauty we see; but the Magician of the Beautiful whispers to us of his art, how we were with him when he laid the foundations of the world, and the song is unfinished, the fingers grow listless. As we receive these intimations of age our very sins become negative: we are still pleased if a voice praises us, but we grow lethargic in enterprises where the spur to activity is fame or the acclamation of men. At some point in the past we struggled mightily for the sweet incense which men offer to a towering personality: but the infinite is for ever within man: we sighed for other worlds and found that to be saluted as victor by men did not mean acceptance by the gods.

But the placing of an invisible finger upon our lips when we would speak, the heart-throb of warning where we would love, that we grow contemptuous of the prizes of life, does not mean that the spirit has ceased from its labours, that the high-built beauty of the spheres is to topple mistily into chaos, as a mighty temple in the desert sinks into the sand, watched only by a few barbarians too feeble to renew its ancient pomp and the ritual of its once shining congregations. Before we, who were the bright children of the dawn, may return as the twilight race into the silence, our purpose must be achieved, we have to assume mastery over that nature which now overwhelms us, driving into the Fire-fold the flocks of stars and wandering fires. Does it seem very vast and far away? Do you sigh at the long, long time? Or does it appear hopeless to you who perhaps return with trembling feet evening after evening from a little labour? But it is back of all these things that the renewal takes place, when love and grief are dead; when they loosen their hold on the spirit and its sinks back into itself, looking out on the pitiful plight of those who, like it, are the weary inheritors of so great destinies: then a tenderness which is the most profound quality of its being springs up like the outraying of the dawn, and if in that mood it would plan or execute it knows no weariness, for



Page 162

it is nourished from the First Fountain. As for these feeble children of the once glorious spirits of the dawn, only a vast hope can arouse them from so vast a despair, for the fire will not invigorate them for the repetition of petty deeds but only for the eternal enterprise, the purpose of the immemorial battle waged through all the ages, the wars in heaven, the conflict between Titan and Divinity, which were part of the never-ending struggle of the human spirit to assert its supremacy over nature. Brotherhood, the declaration of ideals and philosophies, are but calls to the hosts, who lie crushed by this mountain nature piled above them, to arise again, to unite, to storm the heavens and sit on the seats of the mighty.

As the titan in man ponders on this old, old purpose wherefor all its experience was garnered, the lightnings will once more begin to play through him and animate his will. So like the archangel ruined let us arise from despair and weariness with inflexible resolution, pealing once more the old heroic shout to our fallen comrades, until those great powers who enfold us feel the stirring and the renewal, and the murmur runs along the spheres, "The buried Titan moves once again to tear the throne from Him."

—June 1897

A Thought Along the Road

They torture me also.—Krishna

The night was wet: and, as I was moving down the streets, my mind was also journeying on a way of its own, and the things which were bodily present before me were no less with me in my unseen traveling. Every now and then a transfer would take place, and some of the moving shadows in the street would begin walking about in the clear interior light. The children of the city, crouched in the doorways, or racing through the hurrying multitude and flashing lights, began their elfin play again in my heart; and that was because I had heard these tiny outcasts shouting with glee. I wondered if the glitter and shadow of such sordid things were thronged with magnificence and mystery for those who were unaware of a greater light and deeper shade which made up the romance and fascination of my own life. In imagination I narrowed myself to their ignorance, littleness, and youth, and seemed for a moment to flit amid great uncomprehended beings and a dim wonderful city of palaces.

Then another transfer took place and I was pondering anew, for a face I had seen flickering through the warm wet mist haunted me; it entered into the realm of the interpreter, and I was made aware by the pale cheeks, and by the close-shut lips of pain, and by some inward knowledge, that there the Tree of Life was beginning to grow, and I wondered why it is that it always springs up through a heart in ashes: I wondered



also if that which springs up, which in itself is an immortal joy, has knowledge that its shoots are piercing through such anguish; or again, if it was the piercing of the shoots which caused the pain, and if every throb of the beautiful flame darting upward to blossom meant the perishing of some more earthly growth which had kept the heart in shadow.



Page 163

Seeing to how so many thoughts spring up from such a simple thing, I questioned whether that which started the impulse had any share in the outcome, and if these musing of mine in any way affected their subject. I then began thinking about those secret ties on which I have speculated before, and in the darkness my heart grew suddenly warm and glowing, for I had chanced upon one of those shining imaginations which are the wealth of those who travel upon the hidden ways. In describing that which comes to us all at once, there is a difficulty in choosing between what is first and what is last to say: but, interpreting as best I can, I seemed to behold the onward movement of a Light, one among many Lights, all living, throbbing, now dim with perturbations, and now again clear, and all subtly woven together, outwardly in some more shadowy shining, and inwardly in a greater fire, which, though it was invisible, I knew to be the Lamp of the World. This Light which I beheld I felt to be a human soul, and these perturbations which dimmed it were its struggles and passionate longings for something, and that was for a more brilliant shining of the light within itself: it was in love with its own beauty, enraptured by its own lucidity; and I saw that as these things were more beloved they grew paler, for this light is the love which the Mighty Mother has in her heart for her children, and she means that it shall go through each one unto all, and whoever restrains it in himself is himself shut out; not that the great heart has ceased in its love for that soul, but that the soul has shut itself off from influx, for ever imagination of man is the opening or the closing of a door to the divine world: now he is solitary, cut off, and, seemingly to himself, on the desert and distant verge of things: and then his thought throws open the swift portals; he hears the chant of the seraphs in his heart, and he is made luminous by the lighting of a sudden aureole. This soul which I watched seemed to have learned at last the secret love: for, in the anguish begotten by its loss, it followed the departing glory in penitence to the inmost shrine where it ceased altogether; and because it seemed utterly lost and hopeless of attainment and capriciously denied to the seeker, a profound pit arose in the soul for those who, like it were seeking, but still in hope, for they had not come to the vain end of their endeavors. I understood that such pity is the last of the precious essences which make up the elixir of immortality, and when it is poured into the cup it is ready for drinking. And so it was with this soul which drew brilliant with the passage of eternal light through its new purity of self-oblivion, and joyful in the comprehension of the mystery of the secret love, which, though it has been declared many times by the greatest of teachers among men, is yet never known truly unless the Mighty Mother has herself breathed it in the heart.



Page 164

And now that the soul had divined this secret, the shadowy shining which was woven in bonds of union between it and its fellow-lights grew clearer; and a multitude of these strands were, so it seemed, strengthened and placed in its keeping: along these it was to send the message of the wisdom and the love which were the secret sweetness of its own being. Then a spiritual tragedy began, infinitely more pathetic than the old desolation, because it was brought about by the very nobility of the spirit. This soul, shedding its love like rays of glory, seemed itself the centre of a ring of wounding spears: it sent forth love and the arrowy response came hate-impelled: it whispered peace and was answered by the clash of rebellion: and to all this for defence it could only bare more openly its heart that a profounder love from the Mother Nature might pass through upon the rest. I knew this was what a teacher, who wrote long ago, meant when he said: "Put on the whole armour of god," which is love and endurance, for the truly divine children of the Flame are not armed otherwise: and of those protests, sent up in ignorance or rebellion against the whisper of the wisdom, I saw that some melted in the fierce and tender heat of the heart, and there came in their stead a golden response which made closer the ties, and drew these souls upward to an understanding and to share in the overshadowing nature: and this is part of the plan of the Great Alchemist, whereby the red ruby of the heart is transmuted into the tenderer light of the opal; for the beholding of love made bare acts like the flame of the furnace, and the dissolving passions, through an anguish of remorse, the lightnings of pain, and through an adoring pity, are changed into the image they contemplate and melt in the ecstasy of self-forgetful love, the spirit which lit the thorn-crowned brows, which perceived only in its last agony the retribution due to its tormentors, and cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Now although the love of the few may alleviate the hurt due to the ignorance of the mass, it is not in the power of anyone to withstand for ever this warfare; for by the perpetual wounding of the inner nature it is so wearied that the spirit must withdraw from a tabernacle grown too frail to support the increase of light within and the jarring of the demoniac nature without: and at length comes the call which means, for a while, release, and a deep rest in regions beyond the paradise of lesser souls. So, withdrawn into the Divine Darkness, vanished the Light of my dream. And now it seemed as if this wonderful weft of souls intertwining as one being must come to naught; and all those who through the gloom had nourished a longing for the light would stretch out hands in vain for guidance: but that I did not understand the love of the Mother, and that although few, there is no decaying of her heroic brood; for, as the seer of old caught at the mantle of him who went up in the fiery chariot, so another took up the burden and gathered the shining strands together: and to this sequence of spiritual guides there is no ending.



Page 165

Here I may say that the love of the Mother, which, acting through the burnished will of the hero, is wrought to highest uses, is in reality everywhere, and pervades with profoundest tenderness the homeliest circumstance of daily life; and there is not lacking, even among the humblest, an understanding of the spiritual tragedy which follows upon every effort of the divine nature bowing itself down in pity to our shadowy sphere; an understanding in which the nature of the love is gauged through the extent of the sacrifice and pain which is overcome. I recall the instance of an old Irish peasant, who, as he lay in hospital wakeful from a grinding pain in his leg, forgot himself in making drawings, rude yet reverently done, of incidents in the life of the Galilean teacher. One of these which he showed me was a crucifixion, where, amidst much grotesque symbolism, were some tracings which indicated a purely beautiful intuition; the heart of this crucified figure, no less than the brow, was wreathed about with thorns and radiant with light: "For that," said he, "was where he really suffered." When I think of this old man, bringing forgetfulness of his own bodily pain through contemplation of the spiritual suffering of his own, nobly undergone, had given him understanding, and he had laid his heart in love against the Heart of Many Sorrows, seeing it wounded by unnumbered spears yet burning with undying love.

Though much may be learned by observance of the superficial life and actions of a spiritual teacher, it is only in the deeper life of meditation and imagination that it can be truly realized; for the soul is a midnight blossom which opens its leaves in dream, and its perfect bloom is unfolded only where another sun shines in another heaven: there it feels what celestial dews descend on it, and what influences draw it up to its divine archetype: here in the shadow of earth root intercoils with root and the finer distinctions of the blossom are not perceived. If we knew also who they really are, who sometimes in silence, and sometimes with the eyes of the world at gaze, take upon them the mantle of teacher, an unutterable awe would prevail; for underneath a bodily presence not in any sense beautiful may burn the glory of some ancient divinity, some hero who laid aside his sceptre in the enchanted land to rescue old-time comrades fallen into oblivion: or again, if we had the insight of the simple old peasant into the nature of this enduring love, out of the exquisite and poignant emotions kindled would arise the flame of a passionate love which would endure long aeons of anguish that it might shield, though but for a little, the kingly hearts who may not shield themselves.

But I too, who write, have launched the rebellious spear, or in lethargy have oftentimes gone down the great drift numbering myself among those who not being with must needs be against: therefor I make no appeal; they only may call who stand upon the lofty mountains; but I reveal the thought which arose like a star in my soul with such bright and pathetic meaning, leaving it to you who read to approve and apply it.



Page 166

—July 15, 1897

The Fountains of Youth

I heard that a strange woman, dwelling on the western coast, who had the repute of healing by faery power, said a little before she died, "There's a cure for all things in the well at Ballykeele": and I know not why at first, but her words lingered with me and repeated themselves again and again, and by degrees to keep fellowship with the thought they enshrined came more antique memories, all I had heard or dreamed of the Fountains of Youth; for I could not doubt, having heard these fountains spoken of by people like herself, that her idea had a druid ancestry. Perhaps she had bent over the pool until its darkness grew wan and bright and troubled with the movements of a world within and the agitations of a tempestuous joy; or she had heard, as many still hear, the wild call to "Come away," from entreating lips and flame-encircled faces, or was touched by the star-tipped fingers, and her heart from the faery world came never back again to dwell as before at ease in this isle of grey mists and misty sunlight. These things are not fable only, for Ireland is still a land of the gods, and in out of the way places we often happen on wonderlands of romance and mystic beauty. I have spoken to people who have half parted from their love for the world in a longing for the pagan paradise of Tir-na-nog, and many who are outwardly obeisant to another religion are altogether pagan in their hearts, and Meave the Queen of the Western Host is more to them than Mary Queen of Heaven. I was told of this Meave that lately she was seen in vision by a peasant, who made a poem on her, calling her "The Beauty of all Beauty": and the man who told me this of his friend had himself seen the jetted fountains of fire-mist winding up in spiral whirls to the sky, and he too had heard of the Fountains of Youth.

The natural longing in every heart that its youth shall not perish makes one ponder and sigh over this magical past when youth, ecstasy, and beauty welled from a bountiful nature at the sung appeal of her druid children holding hand in hand around the sacred cairn. Our hearts remember:

A wind blows by us fleeting
 Along the reedy strand:
And sudden our hearts are beating
 Again in the druid-land.

All silver-pale, enchanted,
 The air-world lies on the hills,
And the fields of light are planted
 With the dawn-frail daffodils.

The yellow leaves are blowing
 The hour when the wind-god weaves,



And hides the stars and their glowing
In a mist of daffodil leaves.

We stand in glimmering whiteness,
Each face like the day-star fair,
And rayed about in its brightness
With a dawn of daffodil air.

And through each white robe gleaming,
And under each snow-white breast,
Is a golden dream-light streaming
Like eve through an opal west.



Page 167

One hand to the heart, another
 We raise to the dawn on high;
For the sun in the heart is brother
 To the sun-heart of the sky.

A light comes rising and falling,
 As ringed in the druid choir
We sing to the sun-god, calling
 By his name of yellow fire.

The touch of the dew-wet grasses,
 The breath of the dawn-cool wind,
With the dawn of the god-light passes
 And the world is left behind.

We drink of a fountain giving
 The joy of the gods, and then—
The Land of the Ever-living
 Has passed from us again.

Passed far beyond all saying,
 For memory only weaves
On a silver dawn outraying
 A cloud of daffodil leaves.

And not indirectly through remembrance only, but when touched from within by the living beauty, the soul, the ancient druid in man, renews its league with the elements; and sometimes as the twilight vanishes and night lays on the earth her tender brow, the woods, the mountains, the clouds that tinted like seraphim float in the vast, and the murmur of water, wind and trees, melt from the gaze and depart from the outward ear and become internal reveries and contemplations of the spirit, and are no more separate but are part of us. Yet these vanishings from us and movements in worlds not realized, leave us only more thirsty to drink of a deeper nature where all things are dissolved in ecstasy, and heaven and earth are lost in God. So we turn seeking for the traces of that earlier wisdom which guided man into the Land of Immortal Youth, and assuaged his thirst at a more brimming flood of the Feast of Age, the banquet which Manannan the Danann king instituted in the haunt of the Fire-god, and whoever partook knew thereafter neither weariness, decay, not death.

These mysteries, all that they led to, all that they promised for the spirit of man, are opening today for us in clear light, their fabulous distance lessens, and we hail these kingly ideals with as intense a trust and with more joy, perhaps, than they did who were born in those purple hours, because we are emerging from centuries indescribably meagre and squalid in their thought, and every new revelation has for us the sweetness



of sunlight to one after the tears and sorrow of a prison-house. The well at Ballykeele is, perhaps, a humble starting-point for the contemplation of such mighty mysteries; but here where the enchanted world lies so close it is never safe to say what narrow path may not lead through a visionary door into Moy Argatnel, the silver Cloudland of Manannan, where

“Feet of white bronze
Glitter through beautiful ages.”

The Danann king with a quaint particularity tells Bran in the poem from which these lines are quoted, that

“There is a wood of beautiful fruit
Under the prow of thy little skiff.”

What to Bran was a space of pale light was to the eye of the god a land of pure glory, Ildathach the Many-coloured Land, rolling with rivers of golden light and dropping with dews of silver flame. In another poem the Brugh by the Boyne, outwardly a little hillock, is thus described:



Page 168

“Look, and you will see it is the palace of a god.”

Perhaps the mystic warriors of the Red Branch saw supernatural pillars blazoned like the sunset, and entered through great doors and walked in lofty halls with sunset-tinted beings speaking a more beautiful wisdom than earth's. And they there may have seen those famous gods who had withdrawn generations before from visible Eire: Manannan the dark blue king, Lu Lamfada with the sunrise on his brow and his sling, a wreath of rainbow flame, coiled around him, the Goddess Dana in ruby brilliance, Nuada silver-handed, the Dagda with floating locks of light shaking from him radiance and song, Angus Oge, around whose head the ever-winged birds made music, and others in whose company these antique heroes must have felt the deep joy of old companionship renewed, for were not the Danann hosts men of more primeval cycles become divine and movers in a divine world. In the Brugh too was a fountain, to what uses applied the mystical imagination working on other legends may make clearer.

The Well of Connla, the parent fountain of many streams visible and invisible, was the most sacred well known in ancient Ireland. It lay itself below deep waters at the source of the Shannon, and these waters which hid it were also mystical, for they lay between earth and the Land of the Gods. Here, when stricken suddenly by an internal fire, the sacred hazels of wisdom and inspiration unfolded at once their leaves and blossoms and their scarlet fruit, which falling upon the waters dyed them of a royal purple; the nuts were then devoured by Fintann the Salmon of Knowledge, and the wisest of the druids partook also. This was perhaps the greatest of the mysteries known to the ancient Gael, and in the bright phantasmagoria conjured up there is a wild beauty which belongs to all their tales. The suddenly arising dreams of a remote divinity, the scarlet nuts tossing on the purple flood, the bright immortals glancing hither and thither, are pictures left of some mystery we may not now uncover, thought tomorrow may reveal it, for the dawn-lights are glittering everywhere in Ireland. Perhaps the strange woman who spoke of the well at Ballykeele, and the others like her, may know more about these fountains than the legend-seekers who so learnedly annotated their tales. They may have drunken in dreams of the waters at Connla's well, for many go to the Tir-nanog in sleep, and some are said to have remained there, and only a vacant form is left behind without the light in the eyes which marks the presence of a soul. I make no pretence of knowledge concerning the things which underlie their simple speech, but to me there seems to be for ever escaping from legend and folk-tale, from word and custom, some breath of a world of beauty I sigh for but am not nigh to as these are. I think if that strange woman could have found a voice for what was in her heart she would have completed her vague oracle somewhat as I have done:



Page 169

There's a cure for all things in the well at Ballykeele,
Where the scarlet cressets o'erhang from the rowan trees;
There's a joy-breath blowing from the Land of Youth I feel,
And earth with its heart at ease.

Many and many a sun-bright maiden saw the enchanted land
With star-faces glimmer up from the druid wave:
Many and many a pain of love was soothed by a faery hand
Or lost in the love it gave.

When the quiet with a ring of pearl shall wed the earth
And the scarlet berries burn dark by the stars in the pool,
Oh, its lost and deep I'll be in the joy-breath and the mirth,
My heart in the star-heart cool.

—September 15, 1897

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