The Crest-Wave of Evolution eBook

The Crest-Wave of Evolution by Kenneth Morris

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Page 1

I. INTRODUCTORY

These lectures will not be concerned with history as a record of wars and political changes; they will have little to tell of battles, murders, and sudden deaths. Instead, we shall try to discover and throw light on the cyclic movements of the Human Spirit. Back of all phenomena, or the outward show of things, there is always a noumenon in the unseen. Behind the phenomena of human history, the noumenon is the Human Spirit, moving in accordance with its own necessities and cyclic laws. We may, if we go to it intelligently, gain some inkling of knowledge as to what those laws are; and I think that would be, in its way, a real wisdom, and worth getting. But for the most part historical study seeks knowledge only; and how it attains its aim, is shown by the falseness of what passes for history. In most textbooks you shall find, probably, a round dozen of lies on as many pages. And these in themselves are fruitful seeds of evil; they by no means end with the telling, but go on producing harvests of wrong life; which indeed is only the Lie incarnate on the plane of action. The Eternal *Right Thing* is what is called in Sanskrit *sat*, the True; it opposite is the Lie, in one fashion or another, always; and what we have to do, our mission and *raison d'etre* as students of Theosophy, is to put down the Lie at every turn, and chase it, as far as we may, out of the field of life.

For example, there is the Superior-Race Lie: I do not know where it shall not be found. Races A, B, C, and D go on preaching it for centuries; each with an eye to its sublime self. In all countries, perhaps, history is taught with that lie for mental background. Then we wonder that there are wars. But Theosophy is called onto provide a true mental background for historical study; and it alone can do so. It is the mission of Point Loma, among many other things, to float a true philosophy of history on to the currents of world-thought: and for this end it is our business to be thinkers, using the divine Manasic light within us to some purpose. H.P. Blavatsky supplied something much greater than a dogma: she—like Plato —gave the world a method and a spur to thought: pointed for it a direction, which following, it might solve all problems and heal the wounds of the ages.

A false and foolish notion in the western world has been, tacitly to accept the Greeks and Hebrews of old for the two fountains of all culture since; the one in secular matter, the other in religion and morality. Of the Hebrews nothing need be said here; but that true religion and morality have their source in the ever-living Human Spirit, not in any sect, creed, race, age, or bible. I doubt there has been any new discovery in ethics since man was man; or rather, all discoveries have been made by individuals for themselves; and each, having discovered anything, has found that that same principle was discovered

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a thousand times before, and written a thousand times. There is no platitude so platitudinous, but it remains to burst upon the perceptions of all who have not yet perceived it, as a new and burning truth; and on the other hand, there is no startling command to purity or compassion, that has not been given out by Teachers since the world began.—As for Greece, there was a brilliant flaming up of the Spirit there in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries B.C.; and its intensity, like the lights of an approaching automobile, rather obscures what lies beyond. It is the first of which we have much knowledge; so we think it was the first of all. But in fact civilization has been traveling its cyclic path all the time, all these millions of years; and there have been hundreds of ancient great empires and cultural epochs even in Europe of which we know nothing.

I had intended to begin with Greece; but these unexplored eras of old Europe are too attractive, and this first lecture must go to them, or some of them. Not to the antecedents of Greece, in Crete and elsewhere; but to the undiscovered North; and in particular to the Celtic peoples; who may serve us as an example by means of which light may be thrown on the question of racial growth, and on the racial cycles generally.

The Celtic Empire of old Europe affects us like some mysterious undiscovered planet. We know it was there by its effects on other peoples. Also, like many other forgotten histories, it has left indications of its achievement in a certain spirit, an uplift, the breath of an old traditional grandeur that has come down. But to give any historical account of it—to get a telescope that will reach and reveal it—we have not to come to that point yet.

Still, it may be allowed us to experiment with all sorts of glasses. To penetrate that gloom of ancient Europe may be quite beyond us; but guessing is permitted. Now the true art of guessing lies in an intuition for guiding indications. There is something in us that knows things directly; and it may deign at times to give hints, to direct the researches, to flash some little light on that part of us which works and is conscious in this world, and which we call our brain-minds. So although most or all of what I am going to say would be called by the scientific strictly empirical, fantastic and foolish, yet I shall venture; aware that their Aristotelio-Baconian method quite breaks down when it comes to such a search into the unknown; and that this guessing, guided by what seems to be a law, would not, perhaps, have been sneered at by Plato.

Guided by what seems to be a law;—guided, at any rate, by the knowledge that there are laws; that “God geometrizes,” as Plato says: that which is within flows outward upon a design; that life precipitates itself through human affairs as it does through the forms of the crystals; that there is nothing more haphazard about the sequence of empires and civilizations, than there is about the unfolding of petals of a flower. In both cases it is the eternal rhythm, the Poetry of the Infinite, that manifests; our business is to listen so carefully as to hear, and apprehend the fact that what we hear is a poetry, a

vast music, not a chaotic cacophony: catch the rhythms—perceive that there is a design—even if it takes us long to discover what the design may be.

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You know Plato's idea that the world is a dodecahedron or twelve-sided figure. Now in Plato's day, much that every schoolboy knows now, was esoteric—known only to the initiated. So I think Plato would have known well enough that this physical earth is round; and that what he meant when he spoke of the dodecahedron, was something else. This, for example: that on the plane of causes—this outer plane being that of effects —there are twelve (geographical) centers, aspects, foci, facets, or what you like to call them: twelve *laya centers,* as I think the Secret Doctrine would say: through which the forces from within play on the world without. You have read, too, in *The Secret Doctrine,* Professor Crooke's theory, endorsed by H.P. Blavatsky, as to how the chemical elements were deposited by a spiral evolutive force, a creative impulse working outward in the form of a caduceus or lemniscate, or figure '8.' Now suppose we should discover that just as that force deposited in space, in its spiral down-working, what Crookes calls the seeds of potassium, beryllium, boron, and the rest—so such another creative force, at work on the planes of geographical space and time, rouses up or deposits in these, according to a definite pattern, this nation and that in its turn, this great age of culture after that one; and that there is nothing hap-hazard about the configuration of continents and islands, national boundaries, or racial migrations?

H.P. Blavatsky tells us that the whole past history of the race is known to the Guardians of the Secret Wisdom; that it is all recorded, nothing lost; down to the story of every tribe since the Lords of Mind incarnated. And that these records are in the form of a few symbols; but symbols which, to those who can interpret or disintegrate them, can yield the whole story. What if the amount of the burden of history, which seems so vast to us who know so very little of it, were in reality, if we could know it all, a thing that would put but slight tax on the memory; a thing we might carry with us in a few slight formulae, a few simple symbols? I believe that it is so; and that we may make a beginning, and go some little way towards guessing what these formulae are.

As thus: A given race flowered and passed; it had so many centuries of history before its flowering; it died, and left something behind. Greece, for example. We may know very little —you and I may know very little—of the details of Greek history. We cannot, perhaps, remember the date of Aegospotami, or what happened at Plataea: we may have the vaguest notion of the import of Aeschylus, or Sophocles, or Plato. But still there is a certain color in our conscious perceptions which comes from Greece: the 'glory that was Greece' means something, is a certain light within the consciousness, to everyone of us. The Greeks added something to the wealth of the human spirit, which we all may share in, and do. An atmosphere is left, which surrounds and adheres to the many tangible memorials; just as an atmosphere is left by the glories of the Cinquecento in Italy, with its many tangible memorials.

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But indeed, we may go further, and say that an atmosphere is left, and that we can feel it, by many ages and cultures which have left no tangible memorials at all; or but few and uninterpretable ones, like the Celtic. And that each has developed some mood, some indefinable inward color—which we perceive and inherit. Each different: you cannot mistake the Chinese or the Celtic color for the Greek; thought it might be hard to define your perception of either, or of their difference. It would be hard to say, for instance, that this one was crimson, the other blue; not quite so hard to say that this one affects us as crimson does, that other as blue does. And yet we can see, I think, that by chasing our impressions to their source, there might be some way of presenting them in symbolic form. There might be some way of reducing what we feel from the Greeks, or Chinese, or Celts, into a word, a sentence; of writing it down even in a single hieroglyph, of which the elements would be such as should convey to something in us behind the intellect just the indefinable feeling either of these people give us.

In the Chinese writing, with all its difficulty, there is something superior to our alphabets: an element that appeals to the soul directly, or to the imagination directly, I think. Suppose you found a Chinese ideogram—of course there is no such a one—to express the forgotten Celtic culture; and it proved in analysis, to be composed of the signs for twilight, wind, and pine trees; or wind, night, and wild waters; with certain other elements which not the brain-mind, but the creative soul, would have to supply. In such a symbol there would be an appeal to the imagination—that great Wizard within us—to rise up and supply us with quantities of knowledge left unsaid. Indeed, I am but trying to illustrate an idea, possibilities.... I think there is a power within the human soul to trace back all growths, the most profuse and complex, to the simple seed from which they sprung; or, just as a single rose or pansy bloom is the resultant, the expression, of the interaction and interplay of innumerable forces—so the innumerable forces whose interaction makes the history of one race, one culture, could find their ultimate expression in a symbol as simple as a pansy or rose bloom—color, form and fragrance. So each national great age would be a flower evolved in the garden of the eternal; and once evolved, once bloomed, it should never pass away; the actual blossom withers and falls; but the color, the form, the fragrance,—these remain in the world of causes. And just as you might press a flower in an album, or make a painting of it, and preserve its scent by chemical distillation or what not—and thereby preserve the whole story of all the forces that went to the production of that bloom—and they are, I suppose, in number beyond human computation—so you might express the history of a race in a symbol as simple as a bloom... And that there is a power,

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an unfolding faculty, in the soul, which, seeing such a symbol, could unravel from it, by meditation, the whole achievement of the race; its whole history, down to details; yes, even down to the lives of every soul that incarnated in it: their personal lives, with all successes, failures, attempts, everything. Because, for example, the light which comes down to us as that of ancient Greece is the resultant, the remainder of all the forces in all the lives of all individual Greeks, as these were played on by the conditions of place and time. Time:—at such and such a period, the Mood of the Oversoul is such and such. Place:—the temporal mood of the Oversoul, playing through that particular facet of the dodecahedron, which is Greece. The combinations and interplay of these two, plus the energies for good or evil of the souls there incarnate, give as their resultant the whole life of the race. There is perhaps a high Algebra of the Soul by which, if we understood its laws, we could revive the history of any past epoch, discover its thought and modes of living, as we discover the value of the unknown factor in an equation. Pythagoras must have his pupils understand music and geometry; and by music he intended, all the arts, every department of life that came under the sway of the Nine Muses. Why?—Because, as he taught, God is Poet and Geometer. Chaos is only on the outer rim of existence; as you get nearer the heart of thing, order and rhythm, geometry and poetry, are more and more found. Chaos is only in our own chaotic minds and perceptions: train these aright, and you shall hear the music of the spheres, perceive the reign of everlasting Law. These impulses from the Oversoul, that create the great epochs, raising one race after another, have perfect rhythm and rhyme. God sits harping in the Cycle of Infinity, and human history is the far faint echo of the tune he plays. Why can we not listen, till we hear and apprehend the tune? Or History is the sound heard from far, of the marching hosts of angels and archangels; the cyclic tread of their battalions; the thrill and rumble and splendor of their drums and fifes:—why should we not listen till the whole order of their cohorts and squadrons is revealed?—I mean to suggest that there are laws, undiscovered, but discoverable—discoverable from the fragments of history we possess—by knowing which we might gain knowledge, even without further material discoveries, of the lost history of man. Without moving from Point Loma, or digging up anything more important that hard-pan, we may yet make the most important finds, and throw floods of light on the whole dark problem of the past. H.P. Blavatsky gave us the clews; we owe it to her to use them.

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Now I want to suggest a few ideas along these lines that may throw light on ancient Europe; of which orthodox history tells us of nothing but the few centuries of Greece and Rome. As if the people of three thousand years hence should know, of the history of Christendom, only that of Italy from Garibaldi onward, and that of Greece beginning, say, at the Second Balkan War. That is the position we are in with regard to old Europe. Very like Spain, France, Britain, Germany and Scandinavia played as great parts in the millennia B.C., as they have done in the times we know about. All analogy from the other seats of civilization is for it; all racial memories and traditions—tradition is racial memory—are for it; and I venture to say, all reason and common sense are for it too.

Now I have to remind you of certain conclusions worked out in an article 'Cyclic Law in History,' which appeared some time back in *The Theosophical Path:*—that there are, for example, three great centers of historical activity in the Old World: China and her surroundings; West Asia and Egypt; Europe. Perhaps these are major facets of the dodecahedron. Perhaps again, were the facts in our knowledge not so desperately incomplete, we should find, as in the notes and colors, a set of octaves: that each of these centers was a complete octave, and each phase or nation a note. Do you see where these leads? Supposing the note *China* is struck in the Far Eastern Octave; would there not be a vibration of some corresponding note in the octave Europe? Supposing the Octave *West Asia* were under the fingers of the Great Player, would not the corresponding note in Europe vibrate?

Now let us look at history. Right on the eastern rim of the Old World is the Chino-Japanese field of civilization. It has been, until lately, under pralaya, in a night or inactive period of its existence, for something over six centuries: a beautiful pralaya in the case of Japan; a rather ugly one, recently, in the case of China. Right on the western rim of the Old World are the remnants of the once great Celtic people. Europe at large has been very much in manvantara, a day or waking period, for a little over six hundred years. Yet of the four racial roots or stocks of Europe, the Greco-Latin, Teutonic, Slavic, and Celtic, the last-named alone has been under pralaya, sound asleep, during the whole of this time. Let me interject here the warning that it is no complete scheme that is to be offered; only a few facts that suggest that such a scheme may exist, could we find it. Before Europe awoke to her present cycle of civilization and progress, before the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the Chinese had been in manvantara, very much awake, for about fifteen hundred years. When they went to sleep, the Celts did also.

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I pass by with a mere note of recognition the two dragons, the one on the Chinese, the other on the Welsh flag; just saying that national symbols are not chose haphazard, but are an expression of inner things; and proceed to give you the dates of all the important events in Chinese and Celtic, chiefly Welsh, history during the last two thousand years. In 1911 the Chinese threw off the Manchu yoke and established a native republic. In 1910 the British Government first recognized Wales as a separate nationality, when the heir to the throne was invested as Prince of Wales at Carnarvon. Within a few years a bill was passed giving Home Rule to Ireland; and national parliaments at Dublin and at Cardiff are said to be among the likelihoods of the near future. The eighteenth century, for manvantara, was a singularly dead time in Europe; but in China, for pralaya, it was a singularly living time, being filled with the glorious reigns of the Manchu emperors Kanghu and Kien Lung. In Wales it saw the religious revival which put a stop to the utter Anglicization of the country, saved the language from rapid extinction, and awakened for the first time for centuries a sort of national consciousness. Going back, the first great emperor we come to in China before the Manchu conquest, was Ming Yunglo, conqueror of half Asia. His contemporary in Wales was Owen Glyndwr, who succeeded in holding the country against the English for a number of years; there had been no Welsh history between Glyndwr and the religious revival. In 1260 or thereabouts the Mongols completed the conquest of China, and dealt her then flourishing civilization a blow from which it never really recovered. About twenty years later the English completed the conquest of Wales, and dealt her highly promising literary culture a blow from which it is only now perhaps beginning to recover. In the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries the great Sung artists of China were painting infinity or their square feet of silk: painting Natural Magic as it has never been painted or revealed since. In those same centuries the Welsh bards were writing the Natural Magic of the Mabinogion, one of the chief European repositories of Natural Magic; and filling a remarkable poetical literature with the same quality:—and that before the rest of Europe had, for the most part, awakened to the spiritual impulses that lead to civilization. In the seventh and eighth centuries, when continental Europe was in the dead vast and middle of pralaya, Chinese poetry, under Tang Hsuan-tsong and his great predecessors, was in its Golden Age—a Golden Age comparable to that of Pericles in Athens. In the seventh and eighth centuries, Ireland was sending out scholars and thinkers as missionaries to all parts of benighted Europe: Ireland in her golden age, the one highly cultured country in Christendom, was producing a glorious prose and poetry in the many universities that starred that then by no means distressful island. In 420, China, after a couple of centuries of anarchy, began to re-establish her civilization on the banks of the Yangtse. In 410, the Britons finally threw off the Roman yoke, and the first age of Welsh poetry, the epoch of Arthur and Taliesin, which has been the light of romantic Europe ever since, began.

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Does it not seem as if that great Far Eastern note could not be struck without this little far western note vibrating in sympathy? Very faintly; not in a manner to be heard clearly by the world; because in historical times the Celtic note has been as it were far up on the keyboard, and never directly under the Master-Musician's fingers. And when you add to it all that this Celtic note has come in the minds of literary critics rather to stand as the synonym for Natural Magic—you all know what is meant by that term;—and that now, as we are discovering the old Chinese poetry and painting, we are finding that Natural Magic is really far more Chinese than Celtic—that where we Celts have vibrated to it minorly, the great Chinese gave it out fully and grandly—does it not add to the piquancy of the 'coincidence?'

Now there is no particular reason for doubting the figures of Chinese chronology as far back as 2350 B.C. Our Western authorities do doubt all before about 750; but it is hard to see why, except that 'it is their nature to.' The Chinese give the year 2356 as the date of the accession of the Emperor Yao, first of the three canonized rulers who have been the patriarchs, saints, sages, and examples for all ages since. In that decade a manvantara of the race would seem to have begun, which lasted through the dynasties of Hia and Shang, and halfway through the Chow, ending about 850. During this period, then, I think presently we shall come to place the chief activities and civilization of the Celts. From 850 to 240—all these figures are of course approximations: there was pralaya in China; on the other side of the world, it was the period of Celtic eruptions—-and probably, disruption. While Tsin Shi Hwangti, from 246 to 213, was establishing the modern Chinese Empire, the Gauls made their last incursion into Italy. The culmination of the age Shi Hwangti inaugurated came in the reign of Han Wuti, traditionally the most glorious in the Chines annals. It lasted from 140 to 86 B.C.; nor was there any decline under his successor, who reigned until 63. In the middle of that time—the last decade of the second century—the Cimbri, allied with the Teutones, made their incursion down into Spain. Opinion is divided as to whether this people was Celtic or Teutonic; but probably the old view is the true one, that the word is akin to Cimerii, Crimea, and Cymry, and that they were Welshmen in their day. When Caesar was in Gaul, the people he conquered had much to say about their last great king. Diviciacos, whose dominions included Gaul and Britain; they looked back to his reign as a period of great splendor and national strength. He lived, they said, about a hundred years before Caesar's coming—or was contemporary with Han Wuti.

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But the empire of the Celtic Kings was already far fallen, before it was confined to Gaul, Britain, and perhaps Ireland. When first we see this people they were winning a name for fickleness of purpose: making conquests and throwing them away; which things are the marks of a race declining from a high eminence it had won of old through hard work and sound policy. We shall come to see that personal or outward characteristics can never be posited as inherent in any race. Such things belong to ages and stages in the race's growth. Whatever you can say of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, now, has been totally untrue of them at some other period. We think of the Italians as passionate, subtle of intellect, above all things artistic and beauty-loving. Now look at them as they were three centuries B.C.: plodding, self-contained and self-mastered, square-dealing and unsubtle, above all things contemning beauty, wholly inartistic. But a race may retain the same traits for a very long time, if it remains in a back-water, and is unaffected by the currents of evolution.

So we may safely say of the Celts that the fickleness for which they were famed in Roman times was not a racial, but a temporal or epochal defect. They were not fickle when they held out (in Wales) for eight centuries against the barbarian onslaughts which brought the rest of the Roman empire down in two or three; or when they resisted for two hundred years those Normans who had conquered the Anglo-Saxons in a decade. This very quality, in old Welsh literature, is more than once given as a characteristic of extreme age; "I am old, bent double; I am fickly rash." says Llywarch Hen. I think that gives the clew to the whole position. The race was at the end of its manvantaric period; the Race Soul had lost control of the forces that bound its organism together; centrifugalism had taken the place of the centripetal impulse that marks the cycles of youth and growth. It had eaten into individual character; whence the tendency to fly off at tangents. We see the same thing in any decadent people; by which I mean, any people at the end of one of its manvantaras, and on the verge of a pralaya. And remember that a pralaya, like a night's rest or the Devachanic sleep between two lives, is simply a means for restoring strength and youth.

How great the Celtic nations had been in their day, and what settled and civilized centuries lay behind them, one may gather from two not much noticed facts. First: Caesar, conqueror of the Roman world and of Pompey, the greatest Roman general of the day, landed twice in Britain, and spent a few weeks there without accomplishing anything in particular. But it was the central seat and last stronghold of the Celts; and his greatest triumph was accorded him for this feat; and he was prouder of it than anything else he ever did. He set it above his victories over Pompey. Second: the Gauls, in the first century B.C., were able to put in the field

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against him three million men: not so far short of the number France has been able to put in the field in the recent war. Napoleon could hardly, I suppose, have raised such an army—in France. Caesar is said to have killed some five million Gauls before he conquered them. By ordinary computations, that would argue a population of some thirty millions in the Gaulish half of the kingdom of Diviciacos a century after the latter's death; and even if that computation is too high, it leaves the fact irrefutable that there was a very large population; and a large population means always a long and settled civilization.

Diviciacos ruled only Gaul and Britain; possible Ireland as well; he may have been a Gaul, a Briton, or an Irishman; very likely there was not much difference in those days. It will be said I am leaving out of account much that recent scholarship has divulged; I certainly am leaving out of account a great many of the theories of recent scholarship, which for the most part make confusion worse confounded. But we know that the lands held by the Celts—let us boldly say, with many of the most learned, the Celtic empire—was vastly larger in its prime than the British Isles and France. Its eastern outpost was Galatia in Asia Minor. You may have read in *The Outlook* some months ago an article by a learned Serbian, in which he claims that the Jugo-Slavs of the Balkans, his countrymen, are about half Celtic; the product of the fusion of Slavic in-comers, perhaps conquerors, with an original Celtic population. Bohemia was once the land of the Celtic Boii; and we may take it as an axiom, that no conquest, no racial incursion, ever succeeds in wiping out the conquered people; unless there is such wide disparity, racial and cultural, as existed, for example, between the white settlers in America and the Indians. There are forces in human nature itself which make this absolute. The conquerors may quite silence the conquered; may treat them with infinite cruelty; may blot out all their records and destroy the memory of their race; but the blood of the conquered will go on flowing through all the generation of the children of the conquerors, and even, it seems probable, tend ever more and more to be the prevalent element.

The Celts, then, at one time or another, have held the following lands: Britain and Ireland, of course; Gaul and Spain; Switzerland and Italy north of the Po; Germany, except perhaps some parts of Prussia; Denmark probably, which as you know was called the Cimbric Chersonese; the Austrian empire, with the Balkan Peninsula north of Macedonia, Epirus and Thrace, and much of southern Russia and the lands bordering the Black Sea. Further back, it seems probable that they and the Italic people were one race; whose name survives in that of the province of Liguria, and in the Welsh name for England, which is Lloegr. So that in the reign of Diviciacos their empire had already shrunk to the meerest fragment of its former

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self. It had broken and shrunk before we get the first historical glimpses of them; before they sacked Delphi in 279 B.C.: before their ambassadors made a treaty with Alexander; and replied to his question as to what they feared: "Nothing except that the skies should fall." Before they sacked Rome in 390. All these historic eruptions were the mere sporadic outburst of a race long past its prime and querulous with old age, I think Two thousand years of severe pralaya, almost complete extinction, utter insignificance and terrible karma awaited them; and we only see them, pardon the expression, kicking up their heels in a final plunge as a preparation for that long silence.

Some time back I discussed these historical questions, particularly the correspondence between Celtic and Chinese dates, with Dr. Siren and Professor Fernholm; and they pointed out to me a similar correspondence between the dates of Scandinavian and West Asian history. I can remember but one example now: Gustavus Vasa, father of modern Sweden, founder of the present monarchy, came to the throne in 1523 and died in 1560. The last great epoch of the West Asian Cycle coincides, in the west, and reign of Suleyman the Magnificent in Turkey, from 1520 to 1566. At its eastern extremity, Babar founded the Mogul Empire in India in 1526; he reigned until 1556. On the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Moguls ceased to be a great power; the Battle of Pultowa, in 1709, put an end to Sweden's military greatness.

It is interesting to compare the earliest Celtic literature we have, with the earliest literature of the race which was to be the main instrument of Celtic bad karma in historical times—the Teutons. Here, as usual, common impressions are false. It is the latter, the Teutonic, that is in the minor key, and full of wistful sadness. There is an earnestness about it: a recognition of, and rather mournful acquiescence in, the mightiness of Fate, which is imagined almost always adverse. I quote these lines from William Morris, who, a Celt himself by mere blood and race, lived in and interpreted the old Teutonic spirit as no other English writer has attempted to do, mush less succeeded in doing: he is the one Teuton of English literature. He speaks of the "haunting melancholy" of the northern races—the "Thought of the Otherwhere" that

> "Waileth weirdly along through all music and song
> From a Teuton's voice or string: ..."

Withal it was a brave melancholy that possessed them; they were equal to great deeds, and not easily to be discouraged; they could make merry, too; but in the midst of their merriment, they could not forget grim and hostile Fate:—

> "There dwelt men merry-hearted and in hope exceeding great,
> Met the good days and the evil as they went the ways of fate."

It is literature that reveals the heart of a people who had suffered long, and learnt from their suffering the lessons of patience, humility, continuity of effort: those qualities which enable them, in their coming manvantaric period, to dominate large portions of the world.

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But when we turn to the Celtic remains, the picture we find is altogether different. Their literature tells of a people, in the Biblical phrase, “with a proud look and a high stomach.” It is full of flashing colors, gaiety, titanic pride. There was no grayness, no mournful twilight hue on the horizon of their mind; their ‘Other-World’ was only more dawn-lit, more noon-illumined, than this one; Ireland of the living was sun-bright and sparkling and glorious; but the ‘Great Plain’ of the dead was far more sun-bright and sparkling than Ireland. It is the literature of a people accustomed to victory and predominance. When they began to meet defeat they by no means acquiesced in it. They regarded adverse fate, not with reverence, but with contempt. They saw in sorrow no friend and instructress of the human soul; were at pains to learn no lesson from her; instead, they pitted what was their pride, but what they would have called the glory of their own souls, against her; they made no terms, asked no truce; but went on believing the human—or perhaps I should say the Celtic—soul more glorious than fate, stronger to endure and defy than she to humiliate and torment. In many sense it was a fatal attitude, and they reaped the misery of it; but they gained some wealth for the human spirit from it too. The aged Oisin has returned from Fairyland to find the old glorious order in Ireland fallen and passed during the three centuries of his absence. High Paganism has gone, and a religion meek, inglorious, and Unceltic has taken its mission thereto: tells him the gods are conquered and dead, and that the omnipotent God of the Christians reigns alone now.—“I would thy God were set on yonder hill to fight with my son Oscar!” replies Oisin. Patrick paints for him the hell to which he is destined unless he accepts Christianity; and Oisin answers:

“Put the staff in my hands! for I go to the Fenians, thou
cleric, to chant
The warsongs that roused them of old; they will rise,
making clouds with their breath.
Innumerable, singing, exultant; and hell underneath them
shall pant,
And demons be broken in pieces, and trampled beneath them
in death.”

“No,” says Patrick; “none war on the masters of hell, who could break up the world in their rage”; and bids him weep and kneel in prayer for his lost soul. But that will not do for the old Celtic warrior bard; no tame heaven for him. He will go to hell; he will not surrender the pride and glory of his soul to the mere meanness of fate. He will

“Go to Caolte and Conan, and Bran, Sgeolan, Lomair
And dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in flames or
at feast.”

So with Llywarch Hen, Prince of Cumberland, in his old age and desolation. His kingdom has been conquered; he is in exile in Wales; his four and twenty sons, “wearers of golden torques, proud rulers of princes,” have been slain; he is considerably

over a hundred years old, and homeless, and sick; but no whit of his pride is gone. He has learnt no lesson from life excepts this One: that fate and Karma and sorrow are not so proud, not so skillful to persecute, as the human soul is capable of bitter resentful endurance. He is titanically angry with destiny; but never meek or acquiescent.

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Then if you look at their laws of war, you come to know very well how this people came to be almost blotted out. If they had a true spiritual purpose, instead of mere personal pride, I should say the world would be Celtic-speaking and Celtic-governed now. Yet still their reliance was all on what we must call spiritual qualities. The first notice we get in classical literature of Celts and Teutons—I think from Strabo—is this: "The Celts fight for glory, the Teutons for plunder." Instead of plunder, let us say material advantage; they knew why they were fighting, and went to get it. But the Celtic military laws—Don Quixote in a fit of extravagance framed them! There must be no defensive armor; the warrior must go bare-breasted into battle. There are a thousand things he must fear more than defeat or death—all that would make the glory of his soul seem less to him. He must make fighting his business, because in his folly it seemed to him that in it he could best nourish that glory; not for what material ends he could gain. Pitted against a people—with a definite policy, he was bound to lose in the long run. But still he endowed the human spirit with a certain wealth; still his folly had been a true spiritual wisdom at one time. The French at Fontenoy, who cried to their English enemies, when both were about to open fire: *"Apres vous, messieurs! "* were simply practicing the principles of their Gaulish forefathers; the thrill of honor, of *'Pundonor'* as the Spaniard says, was much more in their eyes than the chance of victory.

Now, in what condition does a race gain such qualities? Not in sorrow; not in defeat, political dependence or humiliation. The virtues which these teach are of an opposite kind; they are what we may call the plebeian virtues which lead to success. But the others, the old Celtic qualities, are essentially patrician. You find them in the Turks; accustomed to sway subject races, and utterly ruthless in their dealings with them; but famed as clean and chivalrous fighters in a war with foreign peoples. See how the Samurai, the patricians of never yet defeated Japan, developed them. They are the qualities the Law teaches us through centuries of domination and aristocratic life. They are developed in a race accustomed to rule other races; a race that does not engage in commerce; in an aristocratic race, or in an aristocratic caste within a race. Here is the point: the Law designs periods of ascendency for each people in its turn, that it may acquire these qualities; and it appoints for each people in its turn Periods of subordination, poverty and sorrow, that it may develop the opposite qualities of patience, humility, and orderly effort.

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Would it not appear then, that in those first centuries B. C. when Celts and Teutons were emerging into historical notice, the Teutons were coming out of a long period of subordination, in which they had learnt strength—the Celts out of a long period of ascendency, in which they had learnt other things? The Teuton, fresh from his pralayic sleep, was unconquerable by Rome. The Celt, old, and intoxicated with the triumphs of a long manvantara, could not repel Roman persistence and order. Rome. too, was rising, or in her prime; had patience, and followed her material plans every inch of the way to success. Where she conquered, she imposed her rule. But whatever material plan were set before the Celt, some spiritual red-herring, some notion in his mind, was sure to sidetrack him before he had come half way to its accomplishment. He had enough of empire-building; and thirsted only after dreams. Brennus turned from a burnt Rome, his pride satisfied. Vercingetorix, decked in all his gold, rode seven times—was it seven times?—round the camp of Caesar: defeat had come to him; death was coming; but he would bathe his soul in a little pomp and glory first. Whether you threw your sword in the scales, or surrendered to infamous Caesar, the main thing was that you should kindle the pride in your eye, and puff up the highness of your stomach. . . . So the practical Roman despised him, and presently conquered him.

Here is another curious fact: the greater number, if not all, of the words in the Teutonic languages denoting social order and the machinery of government, are of Celtic derivation. Words such as *Reich* and *Amt,* to give two examples I happen to remember out of a list quoted by Mr. T. W. Rollestone in one of his books.

And now I think we have material before us wherewith to reconstruct a sketch or plan of ancient European history. Let me remind you again that our object is simply the discovery of Laws. That, in the eyes of the Law, there are no most favored nations. That there are no such things as permanent racial characteristics; but that each race adopts the characteristics appropriate to its stage of growth.

It is a case of the pendulum swing, of ebb and flow. For two thousand years the Teutons have been pressing on and, dominating the Celts. They started at the beginning of that time with the plebeian qualities—and have evolved, generally speaking, a large measure of the patrician qualities. The Celts, meanwhile, have been pushed to the extremities of the world; their history has been a long record of disasters. But in the preceding period the case was just the reverse. Then the Celts held the empire. They ruled over large Teutonic populations. Holding all the machinery of government in their hands, they imposed on the languages of their Teuton subjects the words concerned with that machinery; just as in Welsh now our words of that kind are mostly straight from the English. It does not follow that there

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was any sudden rising of Teutons against dominant Celts; more probably the former grew gradually stronger as the latter grew gradually weaker, until the forces were equalized. We find the Cimbri and Teutones allied on equal terms against Rome. According to an old Welsh history, the *Brut Tyssilio,* there were Anglo-Saxons in Britain before Caesar's invasion; invited there by the Celts, and living in peace under the Celtic kings. To quote the *Brut Tyssilio* a short time ago would have been to ensure being scoffed at on all sides; but recently professor Flinders Petrie has vindicated it as against both the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Caesar himself. English Teutonic was first spoken in Britain probably, some two or three centuries B.C.; and it survived there, probably, in remote places, through the whole of the Roman occupation; then, under the influence of the rising star of the Teutons, and reinforced by new incursions from the Continent, finally extinguished the Latin of the roman province, and drove Celtic into the west.

But go back from those first centuries B.C. and you come at last to a time when the Celtic star was right at the zenith, the Teutonic very low. Free Teutons you should hardly have found except in Scandinavia; probably only in southern Sweden: for further north, and in most of Norway, you soon came to ice and the Lapps and *terra incognita.* And even Sweden may have been under Celtic influence—for the Celtic words survive there —but hardly so as to affect racial individuality; just as Wales and Ireland are under English rule now, yet retain their Celtic individuality.

And then go back a few more thousand years again, and you would probably find the case again reversed; and Teutons lording it over Celts, and our present conditions restored. It is by suffering these poles of experience, now pride and domination, now humiliation and adversity, that the races of mankind learn. Europe is not a new sort of continent. Man, says one of the Teachers, has been much what he is any time these million years. History has been much what it is now, ebbing and flowing. Knowledge, geographical and other, has receded, and again expanded. Europe has been the seat of empires and civilizations, all Europe, probably, for not so far short of a million years; there has been plenty of time for it to multiply terrible karma— which takes the occasion to expend itself sometimes—as now. I mistrust the theory of recent Aryan in-pourings from Asia. The Huns came in when the Chinese drove them; and the Turks and Mongols have come in since; but there is nothing to show that the Slavs, for example, when they first appear in history, had come in from beyond the Urals and the Caspian. Slavs and Greco-Latins, Teutons and Celts, I think they were probably in Europe any time these many hundreds of thousands of years.

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Or rather, I think there were Europeans—Indo-Europeans, Aryans, call them what you will—where they are now at any time during such a period. Because race is a thing that will not bear close investigation. It is a phase; an illusion; a temporary appearance taken on by sections of humanity. There is nothing in it to fight about or get the least hot over. It is a camouflage; there you have the very word for it. What we call Celts and Teutons are simply portions of the one race, humanity, camouflaged up upon their different patterns. So far as flood and ultimate physical heredity are concerned, I doubt there is sixpenny-worth of difference between any two of the lot. "Oi mesilf," said Mr. Dooley, speaking as a good American citizen, "am the thruest and purest Anglo-Saxon that iver came out of Anglo-Saxony." We call ourselves Anglo-Saxons because we speak English (a language more than half Latin); when in reality we are probably Jews, Turks, infidels or heretics, if all were known. What is a Spaniard? A Latin, you answer pat. Yes; he speaks a Latin-derived language; and has certain qualities of temperament which seem to mark him as more akin to the French and Italians, than to those whom we, just as wisely, dub 'Teutonic' or 'Slavic.' But in fact he may have in his veins not a drop of blood that is not Celtic, or not a drop that is not Teutonic, or Moorish, or Roman, or Phoenician, or Iberian, or God knows what.

Suppose you have four laya centers in Europe: four Foci through which psychic impulses from the Oversoul pour through into this world. A Mediterranean point, perhaps in Italy; a Teutonic point in Sweden; a Celtic point in Wales-Ireland (formerly a single island, before England rose out of the sea); and a Slavic point, probably in Russia. The moment comes for such and such a 'race' to expand; the Mediterranean, for example. The Italian laya center, Rome, quickens into life. Rome conquers Italy, Gaul, Spain, Britain, the East; becomes *Caput Mundi.* Countries that shortly before were Celtic in blood, become, through no material change in that blood, Latin; by language, and, as we say, by race. The moment comes for a Teutonic expansion. The laya center in Sweden quickens; there is a Swedish or Gothic invasion of Celtic lands south of the Baltic; the continental Teutons presently are freed. It is the expansion of a spirit, of a psychic something. People that were before Celts (just as Mr. Dooley is an Anglo-Saxon) become somehow Teutons. The language expands, and carries a tradition with it. Head measurements show that neither Southern Germany nor England differs very much towards Teutonicism from the Mediterranean type; yet the one is thoroughly Teutonic, the other Anglo-Saxon. Sometimes the blood may be changed materially; often, I suppose, it is changed to some extent; but the main change takes place in the language and tradition; sometimes in tradition alone. There was a minor Celtic quickening

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in the twelfth century A. D.; then Wales was in a fervor of national life. She had not the resources, or perhaps the will, for outside conquest. But her Authurian legend went forth, and drove Beowulf and Child Horn out of the memory of the English, Charlemagne out of the memory of the French; invaded Germany, Italy, even Spain: absolutely installed Welsh King Arthur as the national hero of the people his people were fighting; and infused chivalry with a certain uplift and mysticism through-out western Europe. Or again, in the Cinquecento and earlier, the Italian center quickened; and learning and culture flowed up from Italy through France and England; and these countries, with Spain, become the leaders in power and civilization.

England since that Teutonic expansion which made her English was spent, has grown less and less Teutonic, more and more Latin; the Italian impulse of the Renaissance drove her far along that path. In the middle of the eleventh century, her language was purely Teutonic; you could count on the fingers of your hand the words derived from Latin or Celtic. And now? Sixty percent of all English words are Latin. At the beginning of the fifth century, after nearly three hundred years of Roman occupation, one can hardly doubt that Latin was the language of what is now England. Celtic, even then I imagine, was mainly to be heard among the mountains. See how that situation is slowly coming back. And the tendency is all in the same direction. You have taken, indeed, a good few words from Dutch; and some two dozen from German, in all these centuries; but a Latin word has only to knock, to be admitted and made welcome. Teachers of composition must sweat blood and tears for it, alas, to get their pupils to write English and shun Latin. In a thousand years' time, will English be as much a Latin language as French is? Quite likely. The Saxon words grow obsolete; French ones come pouring in. And Americans are even more prone to Latinisms than Englishmen are: they 'locate' at such and such a place, where an English man would just go and live there.

Before Latin, Celtic was the language of Britain. Finally, says W.Q. Judge, Sanskrit will become the universal language. That would mean simply that the Fifth Root Race will swing back slowly through all the linguistic changes that it has known in the past, till it reaches its primitive language condition. Then the descendants of Latins, Slavs, Celts, and Teutons will proudly boast their unadulterated Aryan-Sanscrit heredity, and exult over their racial superiority to those barbarous Teutons, Celts, Slavs, and Latins of old, of whom their histories will lie profusely.

II. Homer

When the Law designs to get tremendous things out of a race of men, it goes to work this way and that, making straight the road for an inrush of important and awakened souls. Having in mind to get from Greece a startling harvest presently, it called one Homer, surnamed Maeonides, into incarnation, and endowed him with high poetic

genius. Or he had in many past lives so endowed himself; and therefore the Law called him in. This evening I shall work up to him, and try to tell you a few things about him, some of which you may know already, but some of which may be new to you.

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What we may call a European manvantara or major cycle of activity—the one that preceded this present one—should have begun about 870 B. C. Its first age of splendor, *of which we know anything,* began in Greece about 390 years afterwards; we may conveniently take 478, the year Athens attained the hegemony, as the date of its inception. Our present European manvantara began while Frederick II was forcing a road for civilization up from the Moslem countries through Italy; we may take 1240 as a central and convenient date. The first 390 years of it—from 1240 to 1632—saw Dante and all the glories of the Cinquecento in Italy; Camoens and the era of the great navigators in Portugal; Cervantes and his age in Spain; Elizabeth and Shakespeare in England. That will suggest to us that the Periclean was not the first age of splendor in Europe in that former manvantara; it will suggest how much we may have lost through the loss of all records of cultural effort in northern and western Europe during the four centuries that preceded Pericles. Of course we cannot certainly say that there were such ages of splendor. But we shall see presently that during every century since Pericles—during the whole historical period—there has been an age of splendor somewhere; and that these have followed each other with such regularity, upon such a definite geographical and chronological plan, that unless we accept the outworn conclusion that at a certain time—about 500 B. C.—the nature of man and the laws of nature and history underwent radical change, we shall have to believe that the same thing had been going on—the recurrence of ages of splendor—back into the unknown night of time. And that geographical and chronological plan will show us that such ages were going on in unknown Europe during the period we are speaking of. In the manvantara 2980 to 1480 B.C., did the Western Laya Center play the part in Europe, that the Southern one did in the manvantara 870 B.C. to 630 A.D.? Was the Celtic Empire then, what the roman Empire became in the later time? If so, their history after the pralaya 1480 to 870 may have been akin to that of the Latin, in this present cycle; no longer a united empire, they may have achieved something comparable to the achievements of France, Spain, and Italy in the later Middle Ages. At least we hear the rumblings of their marches and the far shoutings of their aimless victories until within a century or two of the Christian era. Then, what was Italy like in the heyday of the Etruscans, or under the Roman kings? The fall of Tarquin—an Etruscan—was much more epochal, much more disastrous, than Livy guessed. There were more than seven kings of Rome; and their era was longer than from 753 to 716; and Rome—or perhaps the Etruscan state of which it formed a part—was a much greater power then, than for several centuries after their fall. The great works they left are an indication. But only the vaguest traditions of that time came down to Livy. The Celts sacked

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Rome in 390 B.C., and all the records of the past were lost; years of confusion followed; and a century and a half and more before Roman history began to be written by Ennius in his epic *Annales.* It was a break in history and blotting out of the past; such as happened in China in 214 B.C., when the ancient literature was burnt. Such things take place under the Law. Race-memory may not go back beyond a certain time; there is a law in Nature that keeps ancient history esoteric. As we go forward, the horizon behind follows us. In the ages of materialism and the low places of racial consciousness, that horizon probably lies near to us; as you see least far on a level plain. But as we draw nearer to esotericism, and attain elevations nearer the spirit, it may recede; as the higher you stand, the farther you see. Not so long ago, the world was but six thousand years old in European estimation. But ever since Theosophy has been making its fight to spiritualize human consciousness, *pari passu* the horizon of the past has been pushed back by new and new discoveries.

What comes down to us from old Europe between its waking and the age of Pericles? Some poetry, legends, and unimportant history from Greece; some legends from Rome; the spirit or substance of the Norse sagas; the spirit or substance of the Welsh Mabinogi and the Arthurian atmosphere; and of the Irish tales of the Red Branch and Fenian cycles. The actual tales as we get them were no doubt retold in much later times; and it is these late recensions that we have. What will remain of England in the memory of three or four thousand years hence? Unless this Theosophical Movement shall have lifted human standards to the point where that which has hitherto been esoteric may safely be kept public, this much:—an echo only of what England has produced of eternal truth;—something from Shakespeare; something from Milton; and as much else in prose and poetry from the rest. But all the literature of this and all past ages is and will then still be in being; in the hidden libraries of the Guardians of Esoteric Science, from which they loose fragments and hints on the outer world as the occasion cyclically recurs, and as their wisdom directs.

How do they loose such fragments of old inspiration? It may be by putting some manuscript in the way of discovery; it may be by raising up some man of genius who can read the old records on inner planes, and reproduce in epic or drama something of a long past splendor to kindle the minds of men anew. In that way Greece was kindled. Troy fell, says H. P. Blavatsky, nearly five thousand years ago. Now you will note that a European manvantara began in 2980 B. C.; which is very nearly five thousand years ago. And that this present European manvantara or major cycle was lit up from a West Asian Cycle; from the Moors in Spain; from Egypt through Sicily and Italy; and, in its greatest splendor; when Constantinople fell, and refugees therefrom came to light the Cinquecento in Italy. Now Constantinople is no great way from Troy; and, by tradition, refugees came to Italy from Troy, once. Was it they in part, who lit up that ancient European cycle of from 2980 to 1480 B. C.?

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In the Homeric poems a somewhat vague tradition seems to come down of the achievements of one of the European peoples in that ancient cycle. Sometime then Greece had her last Pre-periclean age of greatness. What form it took, the details of it, were probably as much lost to the historic Greeks as the details of the Celtic Age are to us. But Homer caught an echo and preserved the atmosphere of it. As the Celtic Age bequeaths to us, in the Irish and Welsh stories, a sense of style—which thing is the impress of the human spirit triumphant over all hindrances to its expression;—so that long past period bequeathed through Homer a sense of style to the later Greeks. It rings majestically through his lines. His history is perhaps not actual history in any recognizable shape.

Legends of a long lost glory drifted down to a poet of mightiest genius; and he embodied them, amplified them, told his message through them; perhaps reinvented half of them. Even so Geoffrey of Monmouth (without genius, however) did with the rumors that came down to him anent the ancient story of his own people; and Spenser followed him in the *Faery Queen,* Malory in his book, and Tennyson in the *Idylls of the King.* Even in that last, from the one poem *Morte D'Arthur* we should get a sense of the old stylish magnificence of the Celtic epoch; for the sake of a score of lines in it, we can forgive Tennyson the rest of the Idylls. But Tennyson was no Celt himself; only, like Spenser and Malory, an anglicizer of things Celtic. How much more of the true spirit would have come down to Homer, a Greek of genius, writing of traditional Greek glory, and thrilled with racial uplift.

Where did he live? Oh, Goodness knows! When? Goodness knows again. (Though we others may guess a little, I hope.) We have Herodotus for it, that Homer lived about four hundred years before his own time; that is to say, to give a date, in 850; and I like the figure well; for if Dante came in as soon as possible after the opening of this present manvantara, why not Homer as soon as possible after the opening of the last one? At such times great souls do come in; or a little before or a little after; because they have a work of preparation to do; and between Dante and Homer there is much parallelism in aims and aspirations: what the one sought to do for Italy, the other sought to do for Greece. But this is to treat Homer as if he had been one real man; whereas everybody knows 'it has been proved' (a) that there was no such person; (b) that there were dozens of him; (c) that black is white, man an ape, and the soul a fiction. Admitted. A school of critics has cleaned poor old blind Maeonides up very tidily, and left not a vestige of him on God's earth—just as they have, or their like have, cleaned up the Human Soul. But there is another school, who have preserved for him some shreds at least of identity. Briefly put, you can 'prove up what may be classed as brain-mind evidence—grammar,

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microscopic examination of text and forms and so on—that Homer is a mere airy myth; but to do so you must be totally oblivious of the spiritual facts of style and poetry. Take these into account, and he rises with wonderful individuality from the grave and nothingness into which you have relegated him. The Illiad does not read like a single poem; there are incompatibilities between its parts. On the other hand, there is, generally speaking, the impress of a single creative genius. One master made the Homeric style. The Iliad, as we know it, may contain passages not his; but—*he wrote the Iliad.*

What does not follow is, that he ever sat down and said: "Now let us write an epic." Conditions would be against it. A wandering minstrel makes ballads, not epics; for him Poe's law applies: that is a poem which can be read or recited at a single sitting. The unity of the Iliad is one not of structure, but of spirit; and the chances are that the complete works of any great poet will be a unity of spirit.

Why should we not suppose that in the course of a long life a great poet—whose name may not have been Homer—that may have been only *what he was called*—his real name may have been (if the critics will have it so) the Greek for Smith, or Jones, or Brown, or Robinson—but he was *called* Homer anyhow—why should we not suppose that he, filled and fascinated always with one great traditionary subject, wrote now one incident as a complete poem; ten years later another incident; and again, after an interval, another? Each time with the intention to make a complete and separate poem; each time going to it influenced by the natural changes of his mood; now preoccupied with one hero or god, now with another. The Tennyson in his twenties, who wrote the fairylike *Lady of Shalott,* was a very different man in mood and outlook from the Mid-Victorian Tennyson who wrote the execrable *Merlin and Vivien;* but both were possessed with the Arthurian legend. At thirty and at fifty you may easily take different views of the same men and incidents. The Iliad, I suggest, may be explained as the imperfect fusion of many poems and many moods and periods of life of a single poet. It was not until the time of Pisistratus, remember, that it was edited into a single epic.

Now these many poems, before Pisistratus took them in hand, had been in the keeping for perhaps three centuries of wandering minstrels—Rhapsodoi, Aoidoi, Citharaedi and Homeridae, as they were called—who drifted about the Isles of Greece and Asiatic mainland during the long period of Greek insignificance and unculture. The first three orders were doubtless in existence long before Homer was born; they were the bards, trouveurs and minnesingers of their time; their like are the instruments of culture in any race during its pralayas. So you find the professional story-tellers in the East today. But the Homeridae

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may well have been—as De Quincey suggests—an order specially trained in the chanting of Homeric poems; perhaps a single school founded in some single island by or for the sake of Homer. We hear that Lycurgus was the first who brought Homer—the works, not the man—into continental Greece; importing them from Crete. That means, probably, that he induced Homeridae to settle in Sparta. European continental Greece would in any case have been much behind the rest of the Greek world in culture; because furthest from and the least in touch with West Asian civilization. Crete was nearer to Egypt; the Greeks of Asia Minor to Lydia; as for the islanders of the Cyclades and Sporades, the necessity of gadding about would have brought them into contact with their betters to the south and east, and so awakened them, much sooner than their fellow Greeks of Attica, Boeotia, and the Peloponnese.

Where did Homer live? Naturally, as a wandering bard, all over the place. We know of the seven cities that claimed to be his birthplace:

Smyrna, Chias, Colophon, Salamis, Rhodos, Argos, Athenae
Orbis de patria certat, Homere, Tua.

Of these Smyrna probably has the best chance of it; for he was Maeonides, the son of Maeon, and Maeon was the son of Meles; and the Maeon and the Meles are rivers by Smyrna. But De Quincey makes out an excellent case for supposing he knew Crete better than any other part of the world. Many of the legends he records; many of the superstitions—to call them that;—many of the customs he describes: have been, and are still, peculiar to Crete. Neither the smaller islands, nor continental Greece, were very suitable countries for horse-breeding; and the horse does not figure greatly in their legends. But in Crete the friendship of horse and man was traditional; in Cretan folk-lore, horses still foresee the doom of their masters, and weep. So they do in Homer.

There is a certain wild goat found only in Crete, of which he give a detailed description; down the measurement of its horns; exact, as sportsmen have found in modern times. He mentions the *Kubizeteres,* Cretan tumblers, who indulge in a ‘stunt’ unknown elsewhere. They perform in couples; and when he mentions them, it is in the dual number. Preternatural voices are an Homeric tradition: Stentor “spoke loud as fifty other men”; when Achilles roared at the Trojans, their whole army was frightened. In Crete such voices are said to be still common: shepherds carry on conversations at incredible distances—speak to, and are answered by, men not yet in sight.—Dequincey gives several other such coincidences; none of them, by itself, might be very convincing; but taken all together, they rather incline one to the belief that Smith, or Brown, or Jones, *alias* Homer, must have spent a good deal of his time in Crete;—say, was brought up there.

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Now Crete is much nearer Egypt than the rest of Greece is; and may very likely have shared in a measure of Egyptian culture at the very beginning of the European manvantara, and even before. Of course, in past cycles it had been a great center of culture itself; but that was long ago, and I am not speaking of it. In the tenth century A.D., three hundred years before civilization, in our own cycle, had made its way from the West Asian Moslem world into Christendom, Sicily belonged to Egypt and shared in its refinement—was Moslem and highly civilized, while Europe was Christian and barbarous; later it became a main channel through which Europe received enlightenment. May not Crete have played a like part in ancient times? I mean, is it not highly probable? May it not have been—as Sicily was to be—a mainly European country under Egyptian influence, and a seat of Egyptianized culture?

Let us, then, suppose Homer a Greek, born early in the ninth century B.C., taken in childhood to Crete, and brought up there in contact with cultural conditions higher than any that obtained elsewhere among his own people.

But genius stirs in him, and he is Greek altogether in the deep enthusiasms proper to genius: so presently he leaves Crete and culture, to wander forth among the islands singing.—

> *En delo tote Proton ego Kai Homeros aoidoi*
> *Melpomen,*

says Hesiod: "Then first in Delos did I and Homer, two Aoidoi, perform as musical reciters." Delos, of course, is a small island in the Cyclades.

He would have had some training, it is likely, as an Aoidos: a good founding in the old stories which were their stock in trade, and which all pointed to the past glory of his race. In Crete he had seen the culture of the Egyptians; in Asia Minor, the strength and culture of the Lydians; now in his wanderings through the isles he saw the disunion and rudeness of the Greeks. But the old traditions told him of a time when Greeks acted together and were glorious: when they went against, and overthrew, a great West Asian Power strong and cultured like the Lydians and Egyptians. Why should not he create again the glory that once was Greece?

> *Menin aeide, Thea, Peleiadeo Achileos!*

—Goddess, aid me to sing the wrath (and grandeur) of a Greek hero!—Let the Muses help him, and he will remind his people of an ancient greatness of their own: of a time when they were united, and triumphed over these now so much stronger peoples! So Dante, remembering ancient Rome, evoked out of the past and future a vision of United Italy; so in the twelfth century a hundred Welsh bards sand of Arthur.

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I think he would have created out of his own imagination the life he pictures for his brazen-coated Achaeans. It does not follow, with any great poet, that he is bothering much with historical or other accuracies, or sticking very closely even to tradition. Enough that the latter should give him a direction; as Poet-creator, he can make the details for himself. Homer's imagination would have been guided, I take it, by two conditions: what he saw of the life of his semi-barbarous Greek country men; and what he knew of civilization in Egyptianized Crete. He was consciously picturing the life of Greeks; but Greeks in an age traditionally more cultured than his own. Floating legends would tell him much of their heroic deed, but little of their ways of living. Such details he would naturally have to supply for himself. How would he go to work? In this way, I think. The Greeks, says he, were in those old ages, civilized and strong, not, as now, weak, disunited and half barbarous. Now what is strength like, and civilization? Why, I have them before me here to observe, here in Crete. But Crete is Egyptianized; I want a Greek civilization; culture as it would appear if home-grown among Greeks.—I do not mean that he consciously set this plan before himself; but that naturally it would be the course that he, or anyone, would follow. Civilization would have meant for him Cretan civilization: the civilization he knew: that part of the proposition would inhere in his subconsciousness. But in his conscious mind, in his intent and purpose, would inhere a desire to differentiate the Greek culture he wanted to paint, from the Egyptianized culture he knew. So I think that the conditions of life he depicts were largely the creation of his own imagination, working in the material of Greek character, as he knew it, and Cretan-Egyptian culture as he knew that. He made his people essentially Greeks, but ascribed to them also non-Greek features drawn from civilized life.

One sees the same thing in the old Welsh Romances: tales from of old retold by men fired with immense racial hopes, with a view to fostering such hopes in the minds of their hearers. The bards saw about them the rude life and disunion of the Welsh, and the far greater outward culture of the Normans; and their stock in trade was a tradition of ancient and half-magical Welsh grandeur. When they wrote of Cai—Sir Kay the Seneschal—that so subtle was his nature that when it pleased him he could make himself as tall as the tallest tree in the forest, they were dealing in a purely celtic element: the tradition of the greatness of, and the magical powers inherent in, the human spirit; but when they set him on horseback, to ride tilts in the tourney ring, they were simply borrowing from, to out do, the Normans. Material culture, as they saw it, included those things; therefore they ascribed them to the old culture they were trying to paint.

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Lying was traditionally a Greek vice. The Greek lied as naturally as the Persian told the truth. Homer wishes to set forth Ulysses, one of his heroes, adorned with all heroic perfections. He was so far Greek as not to think of lying as a quality to detract; he proudly makes Ulysses a “lord of lies.” Perhaps nothing in Crete itself would have taught him better; if we may believe Epimenides and Saint Paul. On the other hand, he was a great-hearted and compassionate man; compassionate as Shakespeare was. Now the position of women in historical Greece was very low indeed; the position of women in Egypt, as we know, was very high indeed. This was a question to touch such a man to the quick; the position he gives women is very high: very much higher than it was in Periclean Athens, with all the advance that had been made by that time in general culture. Andromache, in Homer, is the worthy companion and helpmeet of Hector; not a Greek, but Egyptian idea.

Homer’s contemporary, Hesiod, tells in his *Works and Days* of the plebeian and peasant life of his time. Hesiod had not the grace of mind or imagination to idealize anything; he sets down the life of the lower orders with a realism comparable to that of the English Crabbe. It is an ugly and piteous picture he gives. Homer, confining himself in the main to the patrician side of things, does indeed give hints that the lot of the peasant and slave was miserable; he does not quite escape some touches from the background of his own day. Nor did Shakespeare, trying to paint the life of ancient Athens, escape an English Elizabethan Background; Bully Bottom and his colleagues are straight from the wilds of Warwickshire; the Roman mob is made up of London prentices, cobblers and the like. Learned Ben, on the other hand, contrives in his *Sejanus* and his *Catiline,* by dint and sheer intellect and erudition, to give us correct waxwork and clockwork Romans; there are no anachronisms in Ben Johnson; never a pterodactyl walks down *his* Piccadilly. But Shakespeare rather liked to have them in his; with his small Latin and less Greek, he had to create his human beings—draw them from the life, and from the life he saw about him. The deeper you see into life, the less the costumes and academic exactitudes matter; you keep your imagination for the great things, and let the externals worry about themselves. Now Homer was a deal more like Shakespeare than Ben; but there was this difference: he was trying to create Greeks of a nobler order than his contemporaries. Men in those days, he says, were of huger stature than they are now. And yet, when his imagination is not actually at work to heighten and ennoble the portrait of a hero, real Greek life of his own times does not fail sometimes—to obtrude on him. So he lets in bits now and again that belong to the state of things Hesiod describes, and confirm the truth of Hesiod’s dismal picture.

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Well, he wandered the islands, singing; “laying the nexus of his songs,” as Hesiod says in the passage from which I quoted just now, “in the ancient sacred hymns.” As Shakespeare was first an actor, then a tinkerer of other men’s plays, then a playwright on his own account; so perhaps Homer, from a singer of the old hymns, became an improver and restorer of them, then a maker of new ones. He saw the wretched condition of his people, contrasted it with the traditions he found in the old days, and was spurred up to create a glory for them in his imagination. His feelings were hugely wrought upon by compassion working as yoke-fellow with race-pride. You shall see presently how the intensity of his pity made him bitter; how there must have been something Dantesque of grim sadness in his expression: he had seen suffering, not I think all his own, till he could allow to fate no quality but cruelty. Impassioned by what we may call patriotism, he attacked again and again the natural theme for Greek epic: the story of a Greek contest with and victory over West Asians; but he was too great not to handle even his West Asians with pity, and moves us to sympathy with Hector and Andromache often, because against them too was stretched forth the hand of the great enemy, fate. In different moods and at different times, never thinking to make an epic, he produced a large number of different poems about the siege of Troy.

And the Odyssey? Well, the tradition was that he wrote it in his old age. Its mood is very different from that of the Iliad; and many words used in it are used with a different meaning; and there are words that are not used in the Iliad at all. Someone says, it comes from the old age of the Greek epic, rather than from that of Homer. I do not know. It is a better story than the Iliad; as if more nearly cast at one throe of a mind. Yet it, too, must be said not to hang together; here also are discrepant and incompatible parts.

There is all tradition for it that the Homeric poems were handed down unwritten for several centuries. Well; I can imagine the Aoidoi and Citharaoidoi and the rest learning poems from the verbal instruction of other Aoidoi and Citharaoidoi, and so preserving them from generation to generation to generation. But I cannot imagine, and I do think it is past the wit of man to imagine, long poems being composed by memory; it seems to me Homer must have written or dictated them at first. Writing in Greece may have been an esoteric science in those times. It is now, anywhere, to illiterates. In Caesar’s day, as he tells us, it was an esoteric science among the Druids; they used it, but the people did not. It seems probable that writing was not in general use among the Greeks until long after Homer; but, to me, certain that Homer used it himself, or could command the services to those who did. But there was writing in Crete long before the Greco-Phoenician alphabet was invented; from the time of the first

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Egyptian Dynasties, for example. And here is a point to remember: alphabets are invented; systems of writing are lost and reintroduced; but it is idle to talk of the invention of writing. Humanity has been writing, in one way or another, since Lemurian days. When the Manasaputra incarnated, Man became a poetizing animal; and before the Fourth Race began, his divine Teachers had taught him to set his poems down on whatever he chanced at the time to be using as we use paper.

Now, what more can we learn about the inner and real Homer? What can I tell you in the way of literary criticism, to fill out the picture I have attempted to make? Very little; yet perhaps something. I think his historical importance is greater, for us now, than his literary importance. I doubt you shall find in him as great and true thinking, as much Theosophy or Light upon the hidden things, as there is in Virgil for example. I doubt he was an initiate, to understand in that life and with his conscious mind the truths that make men free. Plato did not altogether approve of him; and where Plato dared lead, we others need not fear to follow. I think the great Master-Poets of the world have been such because, with supreme insight into the hidden, they presented a great Master-Symbol of the Human Soul. I believe that in the Iliad Homer gives us nothing of that sort; and that therefore, in a certain sense, he is constantly over-rated. He pays the penalty of his over-whelming reputation: his fame is chiefly in the mouths of those who know him not at all, and use their hats for speaking-trumpets. We have in English no approximately decent translation of him. Someone said that Pope served him as Puck served Bully Bottom, what time Peter Quince was moved to cry: “Bless thee Bottom, how thou art translated!” It is not so; to call Pope an ass would be to wrong a faithful and patient quadruped; than which Pope was as much greater in intellect as he was less in all qualities that call for true respect. Yet often we applaud Homer, only upon a knowledge of Pope; and it is safe to say that if you love Pope you would loathe Homer. Pope held that water should manifest, so to say, through Kew or Versailles fountains; but it was essentially to be from the Kitchen-tap—or even from the sewer. Homer was more familiar with it thundering on the precipices, or lisping on the yellow sands of time-forgotten Mediterranean islands. Which pronunciation do you prefer for his often-recurring and famous sea-epithet: the thunder-on-the-precipices of

poluphloisboio thalasses,

or the lisping-on-the-sands of

_ poluphleesbeeo thalassace?_

(pardon the attempted phonetics).—For truly there are advocates of either; but neither I suppose would have appealed much to Mr. Pope.

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As to his style, his manner or movement: to summarize what Mathew Arnold says of it (the best I can do): it is as direct and rapid as Scott's; as lucid as Wordsworth's could be; but noble like Shakespeare's or Milton's. There is no Dantesque periphrasis, nor Miltonian agnostic struggle and inversion; but he calls spades, spades, and moves on to the next thing swiftly, clearly, and yet with exultation. (Yet there is retardation often by long similes.) And he either made a language for himself, or found one ready to his hand, as resonant and sonorous as the loll and slap of billows in the hollow caverns of the sea. As his lines swing in and roll and crash, they swell the soul in you, and you hear and grow great on the rhythm of the eternal. This though we really, I suppose, are quite uncertain as to the pronunciation. But give the vowels merely a plain English value, certain to be wrong, and you still have grand music. Perhaps some of you have read Mathew Arnold's great essay *On Translating Homer,* and know the arguments wherewith wise Matthew exalts him. A Mr. Newman had translated him so as considerably to out-Bottom Bottom; and Arnold took up the cudgels—to some effect. Newman had treated him as a barbarian, a primitive; Arnold argued that it was Homer, on the contrary, who might have so looked on us. There is, however, perhaps something to be said on Mr. Newman's side. Homer's huge and age-long fame, and his extraordinary virtues, were quite capable of blinding even a great critic to certain things about him which I shall, with great timidity, designate imperfections: therein following De Quincey, who read Greek from early childhood as easily as English, and who, as a critic, saw things sometimes. *Bonus dormitat Homerus,* says Horace; like the elder Gobbo, he "something smacked." He was the product of a great creative force; which did not however work in a great literary age: and all I am going to say is merely a bearing out of this.

First there is his poverty of epithets. He repeats the same ones over and over again. He can hardly mention Hector without calling him *megas koruthaiolos Hector,*—"great glittering-helmeted Hector"; or (in the genitive) *Hectoros hippodamoio*— "of Hector the tamer of war-steeds." Over and over again we have *anax andron Agamemnon;* or "swift-footed Achilles." Over and over again is the sea *poluphloisbois-terous,* as if he could say nothing new about it. Having discovered one resounding phrase that fits nicely into the hexameter, he seems to have been just content with the splendor of sound, and unwilling so to stir his imagination as to flash some new revelation on it. As if Hamlet should never be mentioned in the play, without some such epithet as "the hesitating Dane."..... But think how the Myriad-minded One positively tumbles over himself in hurling and fountaining up new revelatory figures and epithets about everything: how he could not afford to

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repeat himself, because there were not enough hours in the day, days in the year, nor years in one human lifetime, in which to ease his imagination of its tremendous burden. He had Golconda at the root of his tongue: let him but pass you the time of day, and it shall go hard but he will pour you out the wealth of Ormus or of Ind. A plethora, some have said: never mind; wealth was nothing to him, because he had it all. Or note how severe Milton, almost every time he alludes to Satan, throws some new light of majestic gloom, inner or outer, with a new epithet or synonym, upon his figure or his mind.

Even of mere ancillaries and colorless lines, Homer will make you a resounding glory. What means this most familiar one, think you:

Ten d'apameibomenos prosephe koruthaiolos Hector?

—Surely here some weighty splendid thing is being revealed? But no; it means: "Answering spake unto her great glittering-helmeted Hector;" or *tout simplement,* 'Hector answered.' And hardly can anyone open his lips, but it must be brought in with some variation of that sea-riding billow, or roll of drums:

Ton d'emeibet epeita anax andron Agamemnon.
Hos phato. Ten d'outi prosephe nephelegereta Zeus

—whereafter at seven lines down we get again:

Ten de meg' ochthesas prosephe nephelegereta Zeus;

—in all of which I think we do get something of primitivism and unskill. It is a preoccupation with sound where there is no adequate excuse for the sound; after the fashion of some orators, whom, to speak plainly, it is a weariness to hear. But you will remember how Shakespeare rises to his grandest music when he has fatefullest words to utter; and how Milton rolls in his supreme thunders each in its recurring cycle; leads you to wave-crest over wave-trough, and then recedes; and how the crest is always some tremendous thing in vision, or thought as well as sound. So he has everlasting variation; manages his storms and billows; and so I think his music is greater in effect than Homer's—would still be greater, could we be sure of Homer's tones and vowel-values; as I think his vision goes deeper into the realm of the Soul and the Eternal.

Yet is Homer majestic and beautiful abundantly. If it is true that his reputation gains on the principle of *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*—because he is unknown to most that praise him—let none imagine him less than a wonderful reservoir of poetry. His faults —to call them that—are such as you would expect from his age, race, and peculiar historic position; his virtues are drawn out of the grandeur of his own soul, and the current from the Unfathomable that flowed through him. He had the high serious

attitude towards the great things, and treated them highly, deeply and seriously. We may compare him to Dante: who also wrote, in an age and land not yet literary or cultured, with

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a huge racial inspiration. But Dante had something more: a purpose to reveal in symbol the tremendous world of the Soul. Matthew Arnold speaks of the Homeric poems as “the most important poetical monument existing.” Well; cultured Tom, Dick and Harry would say much the same thing; it is the orthodox thing to say. But with great deference to Matthew, I believe they are really a less important monument than the poems of Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, or Milton, or I suppose Goethe—to name only poets of the Western World; because each of these created a Soul-symbol; which I think the Iliad at any rate does not.

Here, to me, is another sign of primitivism. If there is paucity of imagination in his epithets, there is none whatever in his surgery. I do not know to what figure the casualty list in the Iliad amounts; but believe no wound or death of them all was dealt in the same bodily part or in the same way. Now Poetry essentially turns from these physical details; her preoccupations are with the Soul.

“From Homer and Polygnotus,” says Goethe, “I daily learn more and more that in our life here above the ground we have, properly speaking, to enact Hell.” A truth, so far as it goes: this Earth is hell; there is no hell, says H.P. Blavatsky, but a man-bearing planet. But we demand of the greatest, that they shall see beyond hell into Heaven. Homer achieves his grandeur oftenest through swift glimpses of the pangs and tragedy of human fate; and I do not think he saw through the gloom to the bright Reality. Watching the Greek host from the walls of Troy, Helen says:

“Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia;
Known to me well are the faces of all; their names I remember;
Two, two only remain whom I see not among the commanders,
Castor, fleet in the car, Polydeukes, brave with the cestus—
Own dear brethren of mine,—one parent loved us as infants.
Are they not here in the host, from the shores of loved
Lacedaimon?
Or, though they came with the rest in the ships that bound
through the waters,
Dare they not enter the fight, or stand in the council of heroes,
All for fear of the shame and the taunts my crime has awakened?”

And then:

Hos phato. Tous d’ede kalechen phusizoos aia,
En Lakedaimoni authi, phile en patridi gaie.

"—So spake she; but they long since under Earth were
reposing
There in their own dear land, their fatherland, Lacedaimon."

[From Dr. Hawtrey's translation, quoted by Matthew Arnold in *On Translating Homer.*]

There it is the sudden antithesis from her gentle womanly inquiry about her brothers to the sad reality she knows nothing, that strikes the magical blow, and makes the grand manner. Then there is that passage about Peleus and Cadmos:

"Not even Peleus Aiacides, nor godlike Cadmos, might know the happiness of a secure life; albeit the highest happiness known to mortals was granted them: the one on the mountain, the other in seven-gated Thebes, they heard the gold-snooded Muses sing."

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You hear the high pride and pathos in that. To be a poet, he says: to have heard the gold-snooded Muses sing: is the highest happiness a mortal can know; he is mindful of the soul, the Poet-creator in every man, and pays it magnificent tribute; he acknowledges what glory, what bliss, have been his own; but not the poet, he says, not even he, may enjoy the commonplace happiness of feeling secure against dark fate. It is the same feeling that I spoke of last week as so characteristic of the early Teutonic literature; but there it appears without the swift sense of tragedy, without the sudden pang, the grand manner. The pride is lacking quite: the intuition for a divinity within man. But Homer sets the glory of soul-hood and pet-hood against the sorrow of fate: even though he finds the sorrow weighs it down. Caedmon or Cynewulf might have said: "It is given to none of us to be secure against fate; but we have many recompenses." How different the note of Milton:

> "Those other two, equal with me in fate,
> So were I equal with them in renown—"

or:

> "Unchanged, though fallen on evil days;
> On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
> In darkness, and by dangers compassed round."

And Llywarch, or Oisin, would never have anticipated the blows of fate; when the blows fell, they would simply have been astonished at fate's presumption.

We might quote many instances of this proud pessimism in Homer:

> *Kai se, geron, to prin men, akouomen, olbion einai—*
>
> "Thou to, we hear, old man, e'en thou was at once time happy;"
>
> *Hos gar epeklosanto theoi deiloisi brotoisin*
> *Zoein achnumenous. Autoi de l'akedees eisin—*
>
> "The Gods have allotted to us to live thus mortal and mournful,
> Mournful; but they themselves live ever untouched by mourning."

Proud—no; it is not quite proud; not in an active sense; there is a resignation in it; and yet it is a kind of haughty resignation. As if he said: We are miserable; there is nothing else to be but miserable; let us be silent, and make no fuss about.—It is the restraint—a very Greek quality—the depth hinted at, but never wailed over or paraded at all—that make in these cases his grand manner. His attitude is, I think, nearer the Teutonic than the Celtic:—his countrymen, like the Teutons, were accustomed to the pralaya, the long racial night. But he and the Celts achieved the grand manner, which the Teutons did not. His eyes, like Llywarch's or Oisin's, were fixed on a past glory beyond the nightfall.

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But where does this Homeric mood lead us? To no height of truth, I think. Katherine Tingley gave us a keynote for the literature of the future and the grandest things it should utter,—for the life, the art, the poetry of a coming time that shall be Theosophical, that is, lit with the splendor and beauty of the Soul—when she spoke that high seeming paradox that “Life is Joy.” Let us uncover the real Life; all this sorrow is only the veil that hides it. God knows we see enough of the veil; but the poet’s business is to tear it down, rend it asunder, and show the brightness which it hides. If the personality were all, and a man’s whole history were bounded by his cradle and his grave; then you had done all, when you had presented personalities in all their complexity, and made your page teem with the likenesses of living men, and only shown the Beyond, the Governance, as something unknowable, adverse and aloof. But the Greater Part of a man is eternal, and each of his lives and deaths but little incidents in a vast and glorious pilgrimage; and when it is understood that this is the revelation to be made, this grandeur the thing to be shadowed forth, criticism will have entered upon its true path and mission.

I find no such Soul-symbol in the Iliad: the passion and spiritual concentration of whose author, I think, was only enough to let him see this outward world: personalities, with their motive-springs of action within themselves: his greatness, his sympathy, his compassion, revealed all that to him; but he lacked vision for the Meanings. I found him then less than Shakespeare: whose clear knowledge of human personalities— ability to draw living men—was but incidental and an instrument; who but took the tragedy of life by the way, as he went to set forth the whole story of the soul; never losing sight of Karma, and that man is his own adverse destiny; finishing all with the triumph of the soul, the Magician, in *The Tempest.* And I count him less than that Blind Titan in Bardism, who, setting out to justify the ways of God to men, did verily justify the ways of fate to the Soul; and showed the old, old truth, so dear to the Celtic bards, that in the very depths of hell the Soul has not yet lost all her original brightness; but is mightily superior to hell, death, fate, sorrow and the whole pack of them;—I count him less than the “Evening Dragon” of *Samson Agonistes,* whose last word to us is

> “Nothing is here for tears; nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness or contempt.”

And I found him less that One with the grand tragic visage, whose words so often quiver with unshed tears, who went forth upon his journey

> *.... pei dolci pomi*
> *Promessi a me per lo verace Duca;*
> *Ma fino al centro pria convien ch’io tomi:—*

“to obtain those sweet apples (of Paradise) promised me by my true Leader; but first is”—convien—how shall you translate the pride and resignation of that word?—“it

behoves," we must say, "it convenes"—"first it is convenient that I should fall as far as to the center (of hell);"—who must end the gloom and terror of that journey, that fall, with

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E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle,

"And then we came forth to behold again the Stars;" and who came from his ascent through purifying Purgatory with

Rifatto si, come piante novelle
Rinnovellate di novella fronda,
Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle—

"So made anew, like young plants in spring with fresh foliage, I was pure and disposed to come forth among the Stars;"—and who must end his *Paradiso* and his life-work announcing

L'amor che muove il sole e le altre stelle,

"The Love that moves the sun and the other Stars." Ah, glory to this Dante! Glory to the man who would end nothing but with the stars!

III. GREEKS AND PERSIANS

Now to consider what this Blind Maeonides did for Greece. Sometime last Century a Black Potentate from Africa visited England, and was duly amazed at all he saw. Being a very important person indeed, he was invited to pay his respects to Queen Victoria. he told her of the many wonders he had seen; and took occasion to ask her, as the supreme authority, how such things came to be. What was the secret of England's greatness? —She rose to it magnificently, and did precisely what a large section of her subjects would have expected of her. She solemnly handed him a copy of the Bible, and told him he should find his answer in that.

She was thinking, no doubt, of the influence of Christian teaching; if called on for the exact passage that had worked the wonder, very likely she would have turned to the Sermon on the Mount. Well; very few empires have founded their material greatness on such texts, as *The meek shall inherit the earth.* They take a shorter road to it. If a man ask of thee thy coat, and thou give him thy cloak also, thou dost not (generally) build thyself a world-wide commerce. When he smiteth thee on they left cheek, and thou turnest to him thy right for the complementary buffet, thou dost not (as a rule) become shortly possessed of his territories. Queen Victoria lived in an age when people did not notice these little discrepancies; so did Mr. Podsnap. And yet there was much more truth in her answer than you might think.

King James's Bible is a monument of mighty literary style; and one that generations of Englishmen have regarded as divine, a message from the Ruler of the Stars. They have been reading it, and hearing it read in the churches, for three hundred years. Its language has been far more familiar to them than that of any other book whatsoever;

more common quotations come from it, probably, than from all other sources combined. The Puritans of old, like the Nonconformists now, completely identified themselves with the folk it tells about: Cromwell's armies saw in the hands of their great captain "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." When the Roundhead went into battle, or when the Revivalist goes to prayer meeting, he heard and hears the command of Jehovah to "go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper"; to "smite Amalek hip and thigh." Phrases from the Old Testament are in the mouths of millions daily; and they are phrases couched in the grand literary style.

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Now the grand style is the breathing of a sense of greatness. When it occurs you sense a mysterious importance lurking behind the words. It is the accent of the eternal thing in man, the Soul; and one of the many proofs of the Soul's existence. So you cannot help being reminded by it of the greatness of the soul. There are periods when the soul draws near its racial vehicle, and the veils grow thin between it and us: through all the utterances of such times one is apt to hear the thunder from beyond. Although the soul have no word to say, or although it message suffer change in passing through the brain-mind, so that not high truth, but even a lie may emerge—it still comes, often, ringing with the grand accents. Such a period was that which gave us Shakespeare and Milton, and the Bible, and Brown, and Taylor, and all the mighty masters of English prose. Even when their thought is trivial or worse, you are reminded, by the march and mere order of their words, of the majesty of the Soul.

When Deborah sings of that treacherous murderess, Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, that before she slew her guest and ally Sisera, "He asked water and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish,"—you are aware that, to the singer, no question of ethics was implied. Nothing common, nothing of this human daily world, inheres in it; but sacrosanct destinies were involved, and the martialed might of the Invisible. It was part of a tremendous drama, in which Omnipotence itself was protagonist. Little Israel rose against the mighty of this world; but the Unseen is mightier than the mighty; and the Unseen was with little Israel. The application is false, unethical, abominable—as coming through brain-minds of that kind. But you must go back behind the application, behind the brain-mind, to find the secret of the air of greatness that pervades it. It is a far-off reflection of this eternal truth: that the Soul, thought it speak through but one human being, can turn the destinies and overturn the arrogance of the world. When David sang, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; yea, let all his enemies be scattered!" he, poor brain-mind, was thinking of his triumphs over Philistines and the like; with whom he had better have been finding a way to peace;—but the Soul behind him was thinking of its victories over him and his passions and his treacheries. So such psalms and stories, though their substance be vile enough, do by their language yet remind us somehow of the grandeur of the Spirit. That is what style achieves.

Undoubtedly this grand language of the Bible, as that of Milton and Shakespeare in a lesser degree—lesser in proportion as they have been less read—has fed in the English race an aptitude, an instinct, for action on a large imperial scale. It is not easy to explain the effect of great literature; but without doubt it molds the race. Now the ethic of the Old Testament, its moral import, is very mixed.

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There is much that is true and beautiful; much that is treacherous and savage. So that its moral and ethical effects have been very mixed too. But its style, a subtler thing than ethics, has nourished conceptions of a large and seeping sort, to play through what ethical ideas they might find. The more spiritual is any influence—that is, the less visible and easy to trace—the more potent it is; so style in literature may be counted one of the most potent forces of all. Through it, great creative minds mold the destinies of nations. Let Theosophy have expression as noble as that of the Bible—as it will—-and of that very impulse it will bite deep into the subconsciousness of the race, and be the nourishment of grand public action, immense conceptions, greater than any that have come of Bible reading, because pure and true. Our work is to purify the channels through which the Soul shall speak; the Teachers have devoted themselves to establishing the beginnings of this Movement in right thought and right life. But the great literary impulse will come, when we have learned and earned the right to use it.

Now, what the Bible became to the English, Homer became to the Greeks—and more also. They heard his grand manner, and were billed by it with echoes from the Supermundane. *Anax andron Agamemnon*—what Greek could hear a man so spoken of, and dream he compounded of common clay? Never mind what this king of men did or failed to do; do but breathe his name and titles, and you have affirmed immortality and the splendor of the Human Soul! The *human* Soul?

“Tush!” said they, “the Greek Soul! he was a Greek as we are!".... And so Tomides, Dickaion and Harryotatos, Athenian tinkers and cobblers, go swaggering back to their shops, and dream grand racial dreams. For this is a much more impressionable people than the English; any wind from the Spirit blows in upon their minds quickly and easily. Homer in Greece —once Solon, or Pisistratus, or Hopparchus, had edited and canonized him, and arranged for his orderly periodical public reading (as the Bible in the churches)—had an advantage even over the Bible in England. When Cromwell and his men grew mighty upon the deeds of the mighty men of Israel, they had to thrill to the grand rhythms until a sort of miracle had been accomplished, and they had come to see in themselves the successors and living representatives of Israel. But the Greek, rising on the swell of Homer’s roll and boom, had need of no such transformation. The uplift was all for him; his by hereditary right; and no pilfering necessary, from alien creed or race. We have seen in Homer an inspired Race-patriot, a mighty poet saddened and embittered by the conditions he saw and his own impotence to change them.—Yes, he had heard the golden-snooded sing; but Greeks were pygmies, compared with the giants who fought at Ilion! There was that eternal contrast between the glory he had within and the squalor he saw without. Yes, he could sing; he could launch great songs for love of the ancients and their magnificence. But what could a song do? Had it feet to travel Hellas; hands to flash a sword for her; a voice and kingly authority to command her sons into redemption?—Ah, poor blind old begging minstrel, it had vastly greater powers and organs than these!

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Lycurgus, it is said, brought singers or manuscripts of your poems into Sparta; because, blind minstrel, he had a mind to make Sparta great-souled; and he knew that you were the man to do it, if done it could be. Then for about two hundred and sixty years, without much fuss to come into history, you were having your way with your Greeks. Your music was ringing in the ears of mothers; their unborn children were being molded to the long roll of your hexameters. There came to be manuscripts of you in every city: corrupt enough, many of them, forgeries, many of them; lays fudged up and fathered on you by venal Rhapsodoi, to chant in princely houses whose ancestors it was a good speculation to praise. You were everywhere in Greece: a great and vague tradition, a formless mass of literature: by the time Solon was making laws for Athens, and Pisistratus was laying the foundations of her stable government and greatness.

And then you were officially canonized. Solon, Pisistratus, or one of the Pisistratidae, determined that you should be, not a vague tradition and wandering songs any longer, but the Bible of the Hellenes. From an obscure writer of the Alexandrian period we get a tale of Pisistratus sending to all the cities of Greece for copies of Homeric poems, paying for them well; collating them, editing them out of a vast confusion; and producing at last out of the matter thus obtained, a single more or less articulate Iliad. From Plato and others we get hints leading to the supposition that an authorized state copy was prepared; that it was ordained that the whole poem should be recited at the Panathenaic Festivals by relays of Rhapsodoi; this state copy being in the hands of a prompter whose business it was to see there should be no transgression by the chanters.* The wandering songs of the old blind minstrel have become the familiar Sacred Book of the brightest-minded people in Greece.

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* For a detailed account of all this see De Quincey's essay Homer and the Homeridae.

Some sixty years pass, and now look what happens. A mighty Power in Asia arranges a punitive expedition against turbulent islanders and coast-dwellers on its western border. But an old blind minstrel has been having his way with these: and the punitive expedition is to be of the kind not where you punish, but where you are punished;—has been suggesting to them, from the Olympus of his sacrosanct inspiration, the idea of great racial achievement, till it has become a familiar thing, ideally, in their hearts.—The huge armies and the fleets come on; Egypt has gone down; Lydia has gone down; the whole world must go down before them. But there is an old blind minstrel, long since grown Olympian in significance, and throned aloft beside Nephelegereta Zeus, chanting in every Greek ear and heart. Greeks rise in some sort to repel the Persian: Athens and Sparta, poles apart in every feeling and taste, find that under the urge of archaic hexameters

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and in the face of this common danger, they can co-operate after a fashion. The world is in a tumult and threatens to fall; but behind all the noise and ominous thunder, by heaven, you can hear the roll of hexameters, and an old blind sorrow-stricken bard chanting. The soul of a nation is rising, the beat of her wings keeping time to the music of olden proud resounding lines. Who led the Grecian fleet at Salamis?—Not Spartan Eurygiades, but an old blind man dead these centuries. Who led the victors at Marathon? Not sly Athenian Miltiades, but an old dead man who had only words for his wealth: blind Maeonides chanting; and with his chanting marshaling on the roll of his hexameters mightier heroes than ever a Persian eye could see: the host that fought at Ilion; the creatures of his brain; Polymechanos Odysseus, and Diomedes and Aias; Podargos Achilles; Anas andron Agamemnon.

The story of the Persian Wars comes to us only from the Greek side; so all succeeding ages have been enthusiastically Prohellene. We are to think that Europe since has been great and free and glorious, because free and cultured Greeks then held back a huge and barbarous Asian despotism. All of which is great nonsense. Europe since has not been great and free and glorious; very often she has been quite the reverse. She has, at odd times, been pottering around her ideal schemes of government; which Asia in large part satisfied herself that she had found long ago. As for culture and glory, the trumps have now been with the one, now with the other. And the Persians were not barbarians by any means. And when you talk of Asia, remember that it is as far a cry from Persia to China, as from Persian to England. Let us have not more of this preoccupation with externals, and blind eyes to the Spirit of Man. I suppose ballot-boxes and referenda and recalls and the like were specified, when it was said *Of such is the kingdom of Heaven?*...

But Persia would not have flowed out over Europe, if Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea had gone the other way. Empires wax and wane like the moon; they ebb and flow like the tides; and are governed by natural law as these are; and as little depend, ultimately, upon battle, murder, and sudden death; which are but effects that wisdom would evitate; we are wrong in taking them for causes. Two things you can posit about any empire: it will expand to its maximum; then ebb and fall away. Though the daily sun sets not on its boundaries, the sun of time will set on its decay; because all things born in time will die; and no elixer of life has been found, nor ever will be. There is an impulse from the inner planes; it strikes into the heart of a people; rises there, and carries them forward upon an outward sweep; then recedes, and leaves them to their fall. Its cycle may perhaps be longer or shorter; but in the main its story is always the same, and bound to be so; you cannot vote down the cycles of time. What hindered Rome from mastery of Europe; absolute mastery; and keeping it forever? Nothing—but the eternal Cyclic Law. So Persia.

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She was the last phase of that West Asian manvantara which began in 1890 and was due to end in 590 B. C. As such a phase, a splendor-day of thirteen decades should have been hers; that, we find, being always the length of a national illumination. She began under Cyrus in 558; flowed out under Cambyses and Darius to her maximum growth—for half the thirteen decades expanding steadily. Then she touched Greece, where a younger cycle was rising, and recoiled. She should have been at high tide precisely three years before-Marathon—a half-cycle after the accession of Cyrus, or in 493;—and was. Then the Law-pronounced its *Thus far and no further;* and enforced it with Homer's songs, and Greek valor, and Darius' death, and Xerxes' fickle childishness (he smacked the Hellespont because it was naughty). These things together brought to naught the might and ambition and bravery of Iran; but had they been lacking, the Law would have found other means. Though Xerxes and Themistocles had both sat at home doing nothing, Alexander would still have marched east in his time, and Rome conquered the world. So discount all talk of Greece's having saved Europe, which was never in danger. But you may say Persia saved Greece: that her impact kindled the fires—was used by the Law for that purpose—which so brilliantly have illumined Europe since.

Persia rose in the evening of that West Asian manvantara; the empires of its morning and noon, as Assyria chiefly, had been slower of growth, longer of life, smaller of expanse; and for her one, had several periods of glory. A long habit of empire -building had been formed there, which carried Persia rapidly and easily to her far limits. Assyria, the *piece de resistance* of the whole manvantara, with huge and long effort had created, so to say, an astral mold; of which Persia availed herself, and overflowed its boundaries, conquering regions east and west Assyria never knew. But if she found the mold and the habit there to aid her, she came too late for the initial energies of the morning, or the full forces of the manvantaric noon. Those had been wielded by the great Tiglath Pilesers and Assurbanipals of earlier centuries; fierce conquerors, splendid builders, ruthless patrons of the arts. What was left for the evening and Persia could not carry her outward her full thirteen decades, but only half of them: sixty-five years her tides were rising, and then she touched Greece. Thence-forward she remained stationary within her borders, not much troubled internally, until the four -twenties. To a modern eye, she seems on the decline since Marathon; to a Persian of the time, probably, that failure on the Greek frontier looked a small matter enough. A Pancho Villa to chase; if you failed to catch him, pooh, it was nothing! Xerxes is no Darius, true: Artaxerxes I, no Cyrus, nor nothing like. But through both their reigns there is in the main good government in most of the provinces; excellent law and order;

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and a belief still in the high civilizing mission of the Persians. Peace, instead of the old wars of conquest; but you would have seen no great falling off. Hystaspes himself had been less conqueror than consolidator; the Augustus of the Achaemenids, greater at peace than at war;—though great at that too, but not from land-frontiers; and indeed, had ample provocation, as those things go, for his punitive expedition that failed. For the rest, he had strewn the coast with fine harbors, and reclaimed vast deserts with reservoirs and dikes; had explored the Indus and the ocean, and linked Egypt and Persia by a canal from the Red Sea to the Nile. Well; and Xerxes carried it on; he too played the great Achaemenid game; did he not send ships to sail round Africa? If there was no more conquering, it was because there was really nothing left to conquer; who would bother about that Greece?—Darius Hystaspes was the last strong kind, yes; but Datius Nothus was the first gloomy tyrant, or at least his queen, bloodthirsty Parysatis, was; which was not til 434. So that Persia too had her good thirteen decades of comfortable, even glorious, years.

Whereafter we see her wobbling under conflicting cyclic impulses down to her final fall. For lack of another to take her place, she was still in many ways the foremost power; albeit here and there obstreperous satraps were always making trouble. When Lysander laid Athens low in 404, it was Persian financial backing enabled him to do it; but Cyrus might march in to her heart, and Xenophon out again, but two years later, and none to say them effectually nay. Had there been some other West Asian power, risen in 520 or thereabouts, to outlast Persia and finish its day with the end of the great cycle in 390, one supposes the Achaemenids would have fallen in the four-twenties, and left that other supreme during the remaining years. But there was none. The remains of Nineveh and Babylon slept securely in the Persian central provinces; there was nothing there to rise; they had their many days long since. Egypt would have done something, if she could; would have like to;—but her own cycles were against her. She had the last of her cyclic days under the XXVIth Dynasty. In 655 Psamtik I reunited and resurrected her while his overlord Assurbanipal was wrecking his—Assurbanipal's—empire elsewhere; thirteen decades afterwards, in 525, she fell before Cambyses. Thirteen decades, nearly, of Persian rule followed, with interruptions of revolt, before she regained her independence in 404;—stealing, you may say, the nine years short from the weakness of Persia. Then she was free for another half -cycle, less one year; a weak precarious freedom at best, lost to Artaxerxes Ochus in 340. All but the first fourteen years of it fell beyond the limits of the manvantara; the West Asian forces were spent. Egypt was merely waiting til the Greek cycle should have sunk low enough and on to the military plane; and had not long to wait. She paid back most of her nine years to Persia; then hailed Alexander as her savior; and was brought by him, to some extent, under the influence of European cycles; to share then in what uninteresting twilight remained to Greece, and presently in the pomps and crimsons of Rome.

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Persia, too, was waiting for that Greek military cycle; until it should rise, however, something had to be going on in West Asia. The Athenian first half-cycle—sixty-five years from the inception of the hegemony—ended in 413, when the Peloponnesian War entered its last, and for Athens, disastrous, phase. Another half-cycle brings us to the rise of Philip; who about that time became dominant in Greece. But not yet had a power consolidated, which could contest with Persia the hegemony of the world. Having enabled Sparta to put down Athens, the western satraps turned their attention to finding those who should put down Sparta. Corinth, Thebes, Argos and Athens were willing; and Pharnabazus financed them for war in 395. A year after, he and Conon destroyed the Spartan fleet. In 387 came the Peace of Antalicidas, by which Persia won what Xerxes had fought for of old; the suzerainty of Greece. But she was not strong; her cycle was long past; she stood upon the wealth and prestige of her better days, and the weakness of her contemporaries. Internally she was falling to pieces until Artaxerxes Ochus, between 362 and 338, wading through blood and cruelty, restored her unity, wore out her resources, and left her apparently as great as under Xerxes, but really ready to fall at a touch. He prepared the way for Alexander.

So ended an impulse that began, who knows when? on a high spiritual plane in the pure religion of the Teacher we call Zoroaster; a high system of ethics expressed in long generations of clean and noble lives. From that spirituality the impulse descending reached the planes of intellect and culture; with results we cannot measure now; nothing remains but the splendor of a few ruins in the wilderness—the course the lion and the lizard keep. It reached the plane of military power, and flowed over all the lands between the Indus and the Nile; covering them with a well-ordered, highly civilized and wisely governed empire. Then it began to ebb; meeting a counter-impulse arising in Eastern Europe.

Which, too, had it source on spiritual planes; in the heart and on the lyre of blind Maeonides; and worked downward and outward, till it had wrought on this plane a stable firmness in Sparta, an alertness in Athens. It contacted then the crest of the Persian wave, and received from the impact huge accession of vigor. It blossomed in the Age of Pericles on the plane of mind and creative imagination. It came down presently on to the plane of militarism, and swelled out under Alexander as far as to the eastern limits of the Persian Empire he overthrew. Where it met a tide beginning to rise in India; and receded or remained stationary before that. And at last it was spent, and itself overthrown by a new impulse arisen in Italy; which took on impetus from contact with Greece, as Greece had done from contact with Persia.

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The Greeks of Homer's and Hesiod's time, before the European manvantara, elsewhere begun, had reached or quickened them, were uncouth and barbarous enough; they may have stood, to their great West Asian neighbors, as the Moors of today to the nations of Europe; they may have stood, in things cultural, to the unknown nations of the north or west already at that time awakened, as the Chinese now and recently to the Japanese. Like Moors, like Chinese, they had behind them traditions of an ancient greatness; but pralaya, fall, adversity, squalor, had done their work on them, developing the plebeian qualities. Now that they have emerged into modern history, as then when they were emerging into ancient, we find them with many like characteristics; a turn for democracy, for example; the which they assuredly had not when they were passing into pralaya under the Byzantine Empire. A turn for democracy; plebeian qualities; these are the things one would expect after pralaya, if that pralaya had been at all disastrous. With the ancient Greeks, the plebeian qualities were not all virtues by any means; they retained through their great age many of the vices of plebeianism. They won their successes for the most part on sporadic impulses of heroism; shone by an extraordinary intellectual and artistic acumen. But taking them by and large, they were too apt to ineffectualize those successes, in the fields of national and political life, by extraordinary venality and instability of character. I shall draw here deeply on Professor Mahaffy, who very wisely sets out to restore the balance as between Greeks and Persians, and burst bubble-notions commonly held. Greek culture was extremely varied, and therein lay its strength; you can find all sorts of types there; and there are outstanding figures of the noblest. But on the whole, says Mahaffy—I think rightly—there was something sordid, grasping, and calculating: *noblesse oblige* made little appeal to them—was rather foreign to their nature. Patricianism did exist; in Sparta; perhaps in Thebes. Of the two Thebans we know best, Pindar was decidedly a patrician poet, and Epaminondas was a very great gentleman; now Thebes, certainly, must have been mighty in foregone manvantaras, as witness her five cycles of myths, the richest in Greece. In her isolation she had doubtless carried something of that old life down; and then, too, she had Pindar. Nor was Sparta any upstart;—of her we have only heard Athenians speak. But outside of these two, you hardly find a Greek *gentleman* in public life; hardly that combination of personal honor, contempt of commerce, class-pride, leisured and cultured living;—with, very often, ultra-conservatism, narrowness of outlook, political ineptitude and selfishness. The Spartans had many of these instincts, good and bad. They reached their cultural zenith in the seventh century or earlier; probably Lycurgus had an eye to holding off that degeneration which follows on super-refinement; and hence the severe life he brought in. My authority makes much of the adoration the other Greeks accorded them; who might hate and fight with Sparta, but took infinite pride in her nonetheless. Thus they told those tales of the Spartan mothers, and the Spartan boy the fox nibbled; thus their philosophers, painting an Utopia, took always most of its features from Lacedaemon.

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All of which I quote for the light's sake it throws on the past of Greece: the past of her past, and the ages before her history. Or really, on the whole history of the human race; for I think it is what you shall find always, or almost always. I spoke of the Celtic qualities as having been of old patrician; they are plebeian nowadays, after the long pralaya and renewal. As a pebble is worn smooth by the sea, so the patrician type, with its refinements and culture, is wrought out by the strong life currents that play through a race during its manvantaric periods. Pralaya comes, with conquest, the overturning of civilization, mixture of blood; all the precious results obtained hurled back into the vortex;—and then to be cast up anew with the new manvantara, a new uncouth formless form, to be played on, shaped and infused by the life-currents again. In Greece an old manvantara had evolved patricianism and culture; which the pralaya following swept all away, except some relics perhaps in Thebes the isolated and conservative, certainly in Sparta. Lycurgus was wise in his generation when he sought by a rigid system to impose the plebeian virtues on Spartan patricianism.

Wise in his generation, yes; but he could work no miracle. Spartan greatness, too, was ineffectual: there is that about pouring new wine into old bottles. Sparta was old and conservative; covered her patrician virtues with a rude uncultural exterior; was inept politically—as old aristocracies so commonly are; she shunned that love of the beautiful and the things of the mind which is the grace, as Bushido—to use the best name there is for it—is the virtue, of the patrician. You may say she was selfish and short-sighted; true; and yet she began the Peloponnesian War not without an eye to freeing the cities and islands from the soulless tyranny an Athenian democracy had imposed on them: when there is a war, some men will always be found, who go in with unselfish high motives.— Being the patrician state, and the admired of all, it was she naturally who assumed the hegemony when the Persian came. But she had foregone the graces of her position, and her wits, through lack of culture, were something dull. She lost that leadership presently to a young democratic Athens endowed with mental acumen and potential genius; who, too, gained immeasurably from Sparta, because she knew how to turn everything to the quickening of her wits—this having at her doors so contrasting a neighbor, for example.—Young? Well, yes; I suspect if there had ever been an Athenian glory before, it was ages before Troy fell. She plays no great part in the legends of the former manvantara; Homer has little to say about her. She had paid tribute at one time to Minos, king of Crete; her greatness belonged not to the past, but to the future.

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As all Greeks admired the Spartans—what we call a ‘sneaking’ admiration—so too they admired the Persians; who were gentleman in a great sense, and in most moral qualities their betters. Who was *Ho Basileus, The King* par excellence? Always ’the Great King, the King of the Persians.’ Others were mere kings of Sparta, or where it might be. And this Great King was a far-way, tremendous, golden figure, moving in a splendor as of fairy tales; palaced marvelously, so travelers told, in cities compared with which even Athens seemed mean. Greek drama sought its subjects naturally in the remote and grandiose; always in the myths of prehistory, save once—when Aeschylus found a kindred atmosphere, and the material he wanted, in the palace of the Great King. To whom, as a matter of history, not unrecorded by Herodotus, his great chivalrous barons accorded a splendid loyalty,—and loyalty is always a thing that lies very near the heart of Bushido. Most Greeks would cheerfully sell their native city upon an impulse of chagrin, revenge, or the like. Xerxes’ ships were overladen, and there was a storm; the Persian lords gaily jumped into the sea to lighten them. Such Samurai action might not have been impossible to Greeks,—Spartans especially; but in the main their eyes did not wander far from the main chance. You will think of many exceptions; but this comes as near truth, probably, as a generalization may. We should understand their temperament; quick and sensitive, capable of inspiration to high deeds; but, en masse, rarely founded on enduring principles. That jumping into the seas was nothing to the Persians; they were not sung to it; it was not done in defense of home, or upon a motive of sudden passion, as hate or the like; but permanent elements in their character moved them to it quietly, as to the natural thing to do. But if Greeks had done it, with what kudos, like Thermopylae, it would have come down!

They were great magnificoes, very lordly gentlemen, those Persian nobles; *hijosdalgo,* as they say in Spain; men of large lives, splendor and leisure, scorning trade; mighty huntsmen before the Lord. Of the Greeks, only the Spartans were sportsmen; but where the Spartans hunted foxes and such-like small fry, The Persians followed your true dangerous wild-fowl: lions, leopards, and tigers. A great satrap could buy up Greece almost at any time; could put the Greeks to war amongst themselves, and finance his favorite side out of his own pocket. On such a scale they lived; and travelers and mercenaries brought home news of it to Greece; and Greeks whose wealth might be fabulous strove to emulate the splendor they heard of. The Greeks made better heavy armor—one cause of the victories; but for the most part the Persian crafts and manufactures outshone the Greek by far. All these things I take from Mahaffy, who speaks of their culture as “an ancestral dignity for superior to, and different from, the somewhat mercantile refinement of the Greeks.”

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The secret of the difference is this: the West Asian manvantara, to which the Persians belonged, was more than a thousand years older than the European manvantara, to which the Greeks belonged; so the latter, beside the former, had an air of *parvenu.* The Greeks dwelt on the Persian's borders; and fought him when they must; intrigued with or against him when they might; called him barbarian for self-respect's sake—and admired and envied him always. Had he been really a barbarian, in contact with their superior civilization, he would have become degraded by the contact; in such cases it always happens that the inferior sops up the vices only of his betters. But Alexander found the Persians much the same courtly-mannered, lordly-living, mighty huntsmen they had been when Herodotus described them; and was ambitious that his Europeans should mix with them on equal terms and learn their virtues.

Where and when did this high tradition grow up? There was not time enough, I think, in that half cycle between the rise of Cyrus and Marathon. In truth we are to see in these regions vistas of empires receding back into the dimness, difficult to sort out and fix their chronology. Cyrus overthrew the Assyrian; from whose yoke his people had freed themselves some fifteen years or so before. The Medes had been rising since the earlier part of that seventh century; sometime then they brought the kindred race of Persians under their sway. Sometime then, too, I am inclined to think, lived the Teacher Zoroaster: about whose date there is more confusion than about that of any other World Reformer; authorities differ within a margin of 6000 years. But Taoism, Confucianism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Pythagoreanism all had their rise about this time; the age of religions began then; it was not a thing of chance, but marked a definite change in the spiritual climate of the world. The *Bundahish,* the Parsee account of it, says that he lived 258 years before Alexander; almost all scholars reject the figure—-once more, "it is their nature to." But you will note that 258 is about as much as to say 260, which is twice the cycle of thirteen decades; I think the probabilities are strong that the *Bundahish* is right. The chief grounds for putting him much earlier are these: Greek accounts say, six thousand years before the Greek time; and there are known to have been kings in those parts, long before Cyrus, by the name or title of Mazdaka,—which word is from Mazda, the name of the God-Principle in Zoroastrianism. The explanation is this: you shall find it in H.P. Blavatsky: there were many Zoroasters; this one we are speaking of was the last (as Gautama was the last of the Buddhas); and of course he invented nothing, taught no new truth; but simply organized as a religion ideas that had before belonged to the Mysteries. Where then did his predecessors teach?—Where Zal and Rustem thundered as they might; in the old Iran of

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the *Shah Nameh,* the land of Kaikobad the Great and Kaikhusru. Too remote for all scholars even to agree that it existed; set by those who do believe in it at about 1100 B.C.—we hear of a “Powerful empire in Bactria”— which is up towards Afghanistan; I take it that it was from this the Persian tradition came—last down to, and through, the period of the Achaemenidae. What arts, what literature, these latter may have had, are lost; nothing is known of their creative and mental culture; but, to quote Mahaffy once more, it is exceedingly unlikely they had none. Dio Chrysostom, in the first century B.C., says that “neither Homer nor Hesiod sang of the chariots and horses of Zeus so worthily as Zoroaster”; which may mean, perhaps, that a tradition still survived in his time of a great Achaemenian poetry. Why then is this culture lost, since if it existed, it was practically contemporary with that of the Greeks? Because contemporaneity is a most deceiving thing; there is nothing in it. Persia now is not contemporary with Japan; nor modern China with Europe or America. The Achaemenians are separated from us by two pralayas; while between us and the Greeks there is but one. When our present Europe has gone down, and a new barbarism and Middle Ages have passed over France, Britain and Italy, and given place in turn to a new growth of civilization—what shall we know of this Paris, and Florence, and London? As much and as little as we know now of Greece and Rome. We shall dig them up and reconstruct them; found our culture on theirs, and think them very wonderful for mere centers of (Christian) paganism; we shall marvel at their genius, as shown in the fragments that go under the names of those totally mythological poets, Dante and Milton; and at their foul cruelty, as shown by their capital punishment and their wars. And what shall we know of ancient Athens and Rome? Our scholars will sneer at the superstition that they ever existed; our theologians will say the world was created somewhat later.

Or indeed, no; I think it will not be so. I think we shall have established an abiding perception of truth: Theosophy will have smashed the backbone of this foolish Kali-Yuga as a little, before then.

So that Creasy is all out in his estimate of the importance of Marathon and the other victories. Wars are only straws to show which way the current flows; and they do that only indifferently. They are not the current themselves, and they do not direct it; and were men wise enough to avoid them, better than the best that was ever won out of war would be won by other means that the Law would provide. And yet the Human Spirit will win something out of all eventualities, even war, if Kama and the Cycles permit. In a non-political sense the Persian Wars bore huge harvest for Greece; the Law used them to that end. The great effort brought out all the latent resources of the Athenian mind: the successes heightened

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Greek racial feeling to a pitch. —What! we could stand against huge Persia?—then we are not unworthy of the men that fought at Ilion, our fathers; the race and spirit of *anax andron Agamemnon* is not dead! Ha, we can do anything; there are no victories we may not win! And here is the dead weight and terror of the war lifted from us; and there is no anxiety now to hold our minds. We may go forth conquering and to conquer; we may launch our triremes on immaterial seas, and subdue unknown empires of the spirit! —And here is Athens the quick-witted, hegemon of Greece; her ships everywhere on the wine-dark seas; her citizens everywhere; her natural genius swelled by an enormous sense of achievement; her soul, grown great under a great stress, now freed from the stress and at leisure to explore:—in contact with opposite-minded Sparta; in contact with conservative and somewhat luxuriously-living slow Thebes;—with a hundred other cities;—in contact with proud Persia; with Egypt, fallen, but retaining a measure of her old profound sense of the Mysteries and the reality of the Unseen; —-from all these contacts and sources a spirit is born in Athens that is to astonish and illumine the world. And Egypt is now in revolt from the Persian; and intercourse with her is easier than ever before in historical times; and the triremes, besides what spiritual cargoes they may be bringing in from her, are bringing in cargoes of honest material papyrus to tempt men to write down their thoughts.—So the flowering of Greece became inevitable; the Law intended it, and brought about all the conditions.

IV—AESCHYLUS AND HIS ATHENS

Greece holds such an eminence in history because the Crest-Wave rolled in there when it did. She was tenant of an epochal time; whoever was great then, was to be remembered forever. But the truth is, Greece served the future badly enough.

The sixth and fifth centuries B. C. were an age of transition, in which the world took a definite step downward. There had been present among men a great force to keep the life of the nations sweet: that which we call the Mysteries of Antiquity. Whether they had been active continuously since this Fifth Root Race began, who can say? Very possibly not; for in a million years cycles would repeat themselves, and I dare say conditions as desolate as our own have obtained. There may have been withdrawals, and again expansions outward. But certainly they were there at the dawn of history, and for a long time before. What their full effect may have been, we can only guess; for when the history that we know begins, they were already declining:—we get no definite news, except of the Iron Age. The Mysteries were not closed at Eleusis until late in the days of the Roman Empire; and we know that such a great man as Julian did not disdain to be initiated. But they were only a remnant then, an ever-indrawing source of inspiration; already a good century before

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Pericles they must have ceased to rule life. Pythagoras—born, probably, in the five-eighties—had found it necessary, to obtain that with which spirituality might be reawakened, to travel and learn what he could in India, Egypt, Chaldaea, and, according to Porphyry and tradition, among the Druids in Gaul—and very likely Britain, their acredited headquarters. From these countries he brought home Theosophy to Greek Italy; and all this suggests that he—and the race—needed something that Eleusis could no longer give. About the same time Buddha and the founder of Jainism in India, Laotse and Confucius in China, and as we have seen, probably also Zoroaster in Persia, all broke away from the Official Mysteries, more or less, to found Theosophical Movements of their own; —which would indicate that, at least from the Tyrrhenian to the Yellow Sea, the Mysteries had, in that sixth century, ceased to be the efficient instrument of the White Lodge. The substance of the Ancient Wisdom might remain in them; the energy was largely gone.

Pisistratus did marvels for Athens; lifting her out of obscurity to a position which should invite great souls to seek birth in her. He died in 527; two years later a son was born to the Eupatrid Euphorion at Eleusis; and I have no doubt there was some such stir over the event, on Olympus or on Parnassus, as happened over a birth at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, and one in Florence in the May of 1265. In 510, Hippias, grown cruel since the assassination of his brother, was driven out from an Athens already fomenting with the yeast of new things. About that time this young Eleusinian Eupatrid was set to watch grapes ripening for the vintage, and fell asleep. In his dream Dionysos, God of the Mysteries, appeared to him and bade him write tragedies for the Dionysian Festival. On waking, he found himself endowed with genius: beset inwardly with tremendous thoughts, and words to clothe them in; so that the work became as easy to him as if he had been trained to it for years.

He competed first in 499—against Choerilos and Pratinas, older poets—and was defeated; and soon afterwards sailed for Sicily, where he remained for seven years. The dates of Pythagoras are surmised, not known; Plumptre, with a query, gives 497 for his death. I wonder whether, in the last years of his life, that great Teacher met this young Aeschylus from Athens; whether the years the latter spent in Sicily on this his first visit there, were the due seven years of his Pythagorean probation and initiation? “Veniat Aeschylus,” says Cicero, “non poeta solum, sed etiam Pythagoreus: sic enim accepimus “;—and we may accept it too; for that was the Theosophical Movement of the age; and he above all others, Pythagoras having died, was the great Theosophist. They had the Eleusinian Mysteries at Athens, and Most of the prominent Athenians must have been initiated into them—since that was the State Religion; but Aeschylus alone in Athens went through life clothed in the living power of Theosophy.

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Go to the life of such a man, if you want big clues as to the inner history of his age;—the life of Aeschylus, I think, can interpret for us that of Athens. There are times when the movement of the cycles is accelerated, and you can see the great wheel turning; this was one. Aeschylus had proudly distinguished himself at Marathon; and Athens, as the highest honor she could do him for that, must have his portrait appear in the battle-picture painted for a memorial of the victory. He fought, too, at Artemisium and Salamis; with equal distinction. In 484 he won the first of thirteen annual successes in the dramatic competitions. These were the years during which Athens was really playing the hero; the years of Aristides' ascendency. In 480 Xerxes burned the city; but the people fought on, great in faith. In 479 came Plataea, Aeschylus again fighting. Throughout this time, he, the Esotericist and Messenger of the Gods, was wholly at one with his Athens—an Athens alive enough then to the higher things to recognize the voice of the highest when it spoke to her—to award Aeschylus, year after year, the chief dramatic prize. Then in 478 or 477 she found herself in a new position: her heroism and intelligence had won their reward, and she was set at the head of Greece. Six years later Aeschylus produced *The Persians,* the first of the seven extant out of the seventy or eighty plays he wrote; in it he is still absolutely the patriotic Athenian. In 471 came the *Seven against Thebes;* from which drama, I think, we get a main current of light on the whole future history of Athens.

Two men, representing two forces, had guided the city during those decades. On the one hand there was Aristides, called the Just—inflexible, incorruptible, impersonal and generous; on the other, Themistocles—precocious and wild as a boy; profligate as a youth and young man; ambitious, unscrupulous and cruel; a genius; a patriot; without moral sense. The policy of Aristides, despite his so-called democratic reforms, was conservative; he persuaded Greece, by sound arguments, to the side of Athens: he was for Athens doing her duty by Greece, and remaining content. That of Themistocles was that she should aim at empire by any means: should make herself a sea-power with a view to dominating the Greek world. Oh, to begin with, doubtless with a view to holding back the Persians; and so far his policy was sane enough; but his was not the kind of mind in which an ambitious idea fails to develop in ambitious and greedy directions; and that of mastery of the seas was an idea that could not help developing fatally. He had been banished for his corruption in 471; but he had set Athens on blue water, and bequeathed to her his policy. Henceforward she was to make for supremacy, never counting the moral cost. She attacked the islands at her pleasure, conquered them, and often treated the conquered with vile cruelty. The *Seven against Thebes* was directed by Aeschylus against the Themistoclean, and in support of the Aristidean, policy. Imperialistic ambitions, fast ripening in that third decade of the fifth century, were opposed by the Messenger of the Gods.

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His valor in four battles had set him among the national heroes; he had been, in *The Persians,* the laureate of Salamis; by the sheer grandeur of his poetry he had won the prize thirteen times in succession.—And by the bye, it is to the eternal credit of Athenian intelligence that Athens, at one hearing of those obscure, lofty and tremendous poems, should have appreciated them, and with enthusiasm. Try to imagine *Samson Agonistes* put on the stage today; with no academical enthusiasts or eclat of classicism to back it; but just put on before thirty thousand sight-seers, learned and vulgar, statesman and cobbler, tinker and poet; the mob all there; the groundlings far out-numbering the elite: —and all not merely sitting out the play, but roused to a frenzy of enthusiasm; and Milton himself, present and acting, the hero of the day. That, despite Mr. Whistler and the *Ten O'Clock*—seems really to have been the kind of thing that happened in Athens. Tomides was there, with his companions— little Tomides, the mender of bad soles—and intoxicated by the grand poetry; understanding it, and never finding it tedious;— poetry they had had no opportunity to study in advance, they understood and appreciated wildly at first hearing. One cannot imagine it among moderns.—And Milton is clear as daylight beside remote and difficult Aeschylus. To catch the latter's thought, we need the quiet of the study, close attention, reading and re-reading; and though of course time has made him more difficult; and we should have understood him better, with no more than our present limited intelligence, had we been his countrymen and contemporaries; yet it remains a standing marvel, and witness to the far higher general intelligence of the men of Athens. The human spirit was immensely nearer this plane; they were far more civilized, in respect to mental culture, than we are. Why?—The cycles have traveled downward; our triumphs are on a more brutal plane; we are much farther from the light of the Mysteries than they were.

And yet they were going wrong: the great cycle had begun its down-trend; they were already preparing the way for our fool-headed materialism. In the *Seven against Thebes* Aeschylus protested against the current of the age. Three years later, Athens, impatient of criticism, turned on him.

He is acting in one of his own plays—one that been lost. He gives utterance, down there in the arena, to certain words— tremendous words, as always, we must suppose: words hurled out of the heights of an angry eternity—

> *"Aeschylus' bronze-throat eagle-bark for blood,"*

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—and Athens, that used to thrill and go mad to such tones when they proclaimed the godlike in her own soul and encouraged her to grand aspirations—goes mad now in another sense. She has grown used to hear warning in them, and something in alliance with her own stifled conscience protesting against her wrong courses; and such habituation rarely means acquiescence or soothed complacency. Now she is smitten and stung to the quick. A yell from the mob; uproar; from the tiers above tiers they butt, lurch, lunge, pour forward and down: the tinkers and cobblers, demagogs and demagoged: intent—yes—to kill. But he, having yet something to say, takes refuge at the altar; and there even a maddened mob dare not molest him. But the prize goes to a rising star, young Sophocles; and presently the Gods' Messenger is formally accused and tried for "Profanation of the Mysteries."

Revealing secrets pertaining to them, in fact. And now note this: his defense is that he did not know that his lines revealed any secret—was unaware that what he had said pertained to the Mysteries. Could he have urged such a plea, had it not been known he was uninitiated? Could he have known the teachings, had he not been instructed in a school where they were known? He, then, was an initiate of the Pythagoreans, the new Theosophical Movement upon the new method; not of Orthodox Eleusis, that had grown old and comatose rather, and had ceased to count.—Well, the judges were something saner than the mob; memory turned again to what he had done at Marathon, what at Arternisium and Plataea; to his thirteen solid years of victory (national heroism on poetico-dramatic fields); and to that song of his that "saved at Salamis":

"O Sons of Greeks, go set your country free!"

—and he was acquitted: Athens had not yet fallen so low as to prepare a hemlock cup for her teacher. But meanwhile he would do much better among his old comrades in Sicily than at home; and thither he went.

He returned in 458, to find the Age of Pericles in full swing; with all made anew, or in the making; and the time definitely set on its downward course. 'Reform' was busy at abolishing institutions once held sacred; was the rage;—that funeral speech of Pericles, with its tactless vaunting of Athenian superiority to all other possible men and nations, should tell us something. When folk get to feel like that, God pity and forgive them!—it is hard enough for mere men to. Aeschylus smote at imperialism in the *Agamemnon*—-the first play of this last of his trilogies; and at the mania for reforming away sacred institutions in the *Eumenides*—where he asserts the divine origin of the threatened Areopagus. Popular feeling rose once more against him, and he returned to Sicily to die.

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Like so many another of his royal line, apparently a failure. And indeed, a failure he was, so far as his Athens was concerned. True, Athenian artistic judgment triumphed presently over the Athenian spite. Though it was the rule that no successful play should be performed more than once, they decreed that ‘revivals’ of Aeschylus should always be in order. And Aristophanes testifies to his lasting popularity—when he shows little Tomides with a bad grouch over seeing a play by Theognis, when he had gone to the theater “expecting Aeschylus";—and when he shows Aeschylus and Euripides winning, because his poetry had died with him, and so he had it there for a weapon—whereas Aeschylus’s was still alive and on earth. Yes; Athens took him again, and permanently, into favor: took the poet, but not the Messenger and his message. For she had gone on the wrong road in spite of him: she had let the divine force, the influx of the human spirit which had come to her as her priceless cyclic opportunity, flow down from the high planes proper to it, on to the plane of imperialism and vulgar ambition; and his word had been spoken to the Greeks in vain—as all Greek history and Karma since has been proclaiming. But in sooth he was not merely for an age, but for all time; and his message, unlike Pindar’s whom all Greece worshiped, and far more than Homer’s or that of Sophocles—is vital today. Aeschylus, and Plato, and Socrates who speaks through Plato, and Pythagoras who speaks through all of them, are the Greeks whose voices are lifted forever for the Soul.

Even the political aspect of his message—the only one I have touched on—is vital. It proclaims a truth that underlies all history: one, I suspect, that remains for our Theosophical Movement to impress on the general world-consciousness so that wars may end: namely, that the impulse of Nationalism is a holy thing, foundationed upon the human spirit: a means designed by the Law for humanity’s salvation. But like all spiritual forces, it must be kept pure and spiritual, or instead of saving, it will damn. In its inception, it is vision of the Soul: of the Racial or National Soul—which is a divine light to lure us away from the plane of personality, to obliterate our distressing and private moods; to evoke the divine actor in us, and merge us in a consciousness vastly greater than out own. But add to that saving truth this damning corolary: *I am better than thou; my race than thine; we have harvests to reap at your expense, and our rights may be your wrongs:*—and you have, though it appear not for awhile, fouled that stream from godhood:—you have debased your nationalism and made it hellish. Upon your ambitions and your strength, now in the time of your national flowering, you may win to your desire, if you *will;* because now the spirit is quickening the whole fiber of your national self; and the national will must become, under that pressure, almost irresistibly

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victorious. The Peoples of the earth shall kneel before your throne; you shall get your vulgar empire;—but you shall get it presently, as they say, “where the chicken got the axe”: *Vengeance is mine, saith the Law; I will repay.* The cycle, on the plane to which you have dragged it down, will run its course; your high throne will go down with it, and yourself shall kneel to races you now sniff at for ‘inferior.’ You have brought it on to the material plane, and are now going upward on its upward trend there gaily—
“Ah, let no evil lust attack the host
Conquered by greed, to plunder what they ought not;
For yet they need return in safety home,
Doubling the goal to run their backward race”

[*Agamemnon,* Plumtre’s translation]

The downtrend of the cycle awaits you—the other half—just as the runner in the foot-races to win, must round the pillar at the far end of the course, and return to the starting-place.—That is among the warnings Aeschylus spoke in the *Agamemnon* to an Athens that was barefacedly conquering and enslaving the Isles of Greece to no end but her own wealth and power and glory. The obvious reference is of course to the conquerors of Troy.

I have spoken of this Oresteian Trilogy as his *Hamlet;* with the *Prometheus Bound*—-another tremendous Soul-Symbol—it is what puts him in equal rank with the four supreme Masters of later Western Literature. I suppose it is pretty certain that Shakespeare knew nothing of him, and had never heard of the plot of his *Agamemnon.* But look here:—

There was one Hamlet King of Denmark, absent from control of his kingdom because sleeping within his orchard (his custom always of an afternoon). And there was one Agamemnon King of Men, absent from control of his kingdom because leading those same Men at the siege of Troy. Hamlet had a wife Gertrude; Agamemnon had a wife Clytemnestra. Hamlet had a brother Claudius; who became the lover of Gertrude. Agamemnon had a cousin Aegisthos, who became the paramour of Clytemnestra. Claudius murdered Hamlet, and thereby came by his throne and queen. Clytemnestra and Aegisthos murdered Agamemnon, and Aegisthos thereby became possessed of his throne and queen. Hamlet and Gertrude had a son Hamlet, who avenged his father’s murder. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra had a son Orestes, who avenged his father’s murder.

There, however, the parallel ends. Shakespeare had to paint the human soul at a certain stage of its evolution: the ’moment of choice,’ the entering on the path: and brought all his genius to bear on revealing that. He had, here, to teach Karma only incidentally; in *Macbeth,* when the voice cried ’Sleep no more!’ he is more Aeschylean in

spirit. That dreadful voice rings through Aeschylus; who was altogether obsessed with the majesty and awfulness of Karma. It is what he cried to Athens then, and to all ages since, reiterating *Karma* with terrible sleep-forbidding insistency from dark heights.—I have quoted the wonderful line in which Browning, using similes borrowed from Aeschylus himself, sums up the effect of his style:

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‘Aeschylus’ bronze-throat eagle-bark for blood,’

which compensates for the more than Greek—unintelligibility of Browning’s version of the *Agamemnon:* it gives you some color, some adumbration of the being and import of the man. How shall we compare him with those others, his great compeers on the Mountain of Song? Shakespeare—as I think—throned upon a peak where are storms often, but where the sun shines mostly; surveying all this life, and with an eye to the eternal behind: Dante—a prophet, stern, proud, glad and sorrowful; ever in a great pride of pain or agony of bliss; surveying the life without,—only to correlate it with and interpret it by the vaster life within that he knew better;—this Universe for him but the crust and excoriata of the Universe of the Soul. Milton—a Titan Soul hurled down from heaven, struggling with all chaos and the deep to enunciate—just to proclaim and put on everlasting record— those two profound significant words, *Titan* and *Soul,* for a memorial to Man of the real nature of Man. Aeschylus—the barking of an eagle—of Zeus the Thunderer’s own eagle out of ominous skies above the mountains: a thing unseen as Karma, mysterious and mighty as Fate, as Disaster, as the final Triumph of the Soul; sublime as death; a throat of bronze, superhumanly impersonal; a far metallic clangor of sound, hoarse or harsh, perhaps, if your delicate ears must call him so; but grand; immeasurably grand; majestically, ominously and terribly grand;— ancestral voices prophesying war, and doom, and all dark tremendous destinies;—and yet he too with serenity and the Prophecy of Peace and bliss for his last word to us: he will not leave his avenging Erinyes until by Pallas’ wand and will they are transformed into Eumenides, bringers of good fortune.

Something like that, perhaps, is the impression Aeschylus leaves on the minds of those who know him. They bear testimony to the fact that, however grand his style—like a Milton Carlylized in poetry—thought still seems to overtop it and to be struggling for expression through a vehicle less than itself.

Says Lytton, not unwisely perhaps: “His genius is so near the verge of bombast, that to approach his sublime is to rush into the ridiculous”; and he goes on to say that you might find the nearest echo of his diction in Shelley’s *Prometheus;* but of his diction alone; for “his power is in concentration—that of Shelley in diffuseness.” “The intellectuality of Shelley,” he says, “destroyed; that of Aeschylus only increased his command over the passions. The interest he excites is startling, terrible, intense.” Browning tried to bring over the style; but left the thought, in an English *Double-Dutched,* far remoter than he found it from our understanding. The thought demands in English a vehicle crystal-clear; but Aeschylus in the Greek is not crystal-clear: so close-packed and vast are the ideas that there are lines on lines

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of which the best scholars can only conjecture the meaning.—In all this criticism, let me say, one is but saying what has been said before; echoing Professor Mahaffy; echoing Professor Gilbert Murray; but there is a need to give you the best picture possible of this man speaking from the eternal.—Unless Milton and Carlyle had co-operated to make it, I think, any translation of the *Agamemnon*—which so many have tried to translate—-would be fatiguing and a great bore to read. It may not be amiss to quote three lines from George Peel's *David and Bethsabe,* which have been often called Aeschylean in audacity:—

> "At him the thunder shall discharge his bolt,
> And his fair spouse, with bright and fiery wings,
> Sit ever burning on his hateful wings;"

His—the thunder's—fair spouse is the lightning. Imagine images as swift, vivid and daring as that, hurled and flashed out in language terse, sudden, lofty—and you may get an idea of what this eagle's bark was like. And the word that came rasping and resounding on it out of storm-skies high over Olympus, for Athens then and the world since to hear, was KARMA.

He took that theme, and drove it home, and drove it home, and drove it home. Athens disregarded the rights and sufferings of others; was in fact abominably cruel. Well; she should hear about Karma; and in such a way that she should—no, but she *should*—give ear. Karma punished wrong-doing. It was wrong-doing that Karma punished. You could not do wrong with impunity.—The common thought was that any extreme of good fortune was apt to rouse the jealousy of the Gods, and so bring on disaster. This was what Pindar taught—all-worshiped prosperous Pindar, Aeschylus' contemporary, the darling poet of the Greeks. The idea is illustrated by Herodotus' story of the Ring of Polycrates.

You remember how the latter, being tyrant of Samos, applied to Amasis of Egypt for an alliance. But wary Amasis, noting his invariable good luck, advised him to sacrifice something, lest the Gods should grow jealous: so Polycrates threw a ring into the sea, with the thought thus to appease Nemesis cheaply; but an obliging fish allowed itself to be caught and served up for his supper with the ring in its internal economy; on hearing of which, wary Amasis foresaw trouble, and declined the alliance with thanks. Such views or feelings had come to be Greek orthodoxy; you may take it that whatever Pindar said was not far from the orthodoxies—hence his extreme popularity: we dearly love a man who tells us grandly what we think ourselves, and think it right to think. But such a position would not do for Aeschylus. He noted his doctrine only to condemn it.

> "There live an old saw framed in ancient days
> In memories of men, that high estate,

Full grown, brings forth its young, nor childless dies,
But that from good success
Springs to the

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race a woe insatiable.
But I, apart from all,
Hold this my creed alone:
Ill deeds along bring forth offspring of ill
Like to their parent stock."

Needless to say the translation—Dean Plumptre's in the main— fails to bring out the force of the original.

We must remember that for his audiences the story he had to tell was not the important thing. They knew it in advance; it was one of their familiar legends. What they went to hear was Aeschylus' treatment of it; his art, his poetry, his preaching. That was what was new to them: the thing for which their eyes and ears were open. We go to the theater, as we read novels, for amusement; the Athenians went for aesthetic and religious ends. So Aechylus had ready for him an efficient pulpit; and was not suspect for using it. We like Movies shows because they are entertaining and exciting; the Athenian would have damned them because they are inartistic.

I said, he had a pulpit ready for him; yet, as nearly as such a statement can come to truth, it was he himself who invented the drama. It was, remember, an age of transition: things were passing out from the inner planes: the Mysteries were losing their virtue. The Egyptian Mysteries had been dramatic in character; the Eleusinian, which were very likely borrowed or copied or introduced from Egypt, were no doubt dramatic too. Then there had been festivals among the rustics, chiefly in honor of Dionysos not altogether in his higher aspects, with rudimentary plays of a coarse buffoonish character. By 499, in Athens, these had grown to something more important; in that year the wooden scaffolding of the theater in which they were given broke down under the spectators; and this led to the building of a new theater in stone. It was in 499 Aeschylus first competed; the show was still very rudimentary in character. Then he went off to Sicily; and came back with the idea conceived of Greek Tragedy as an artistic vehicle or expression—and something more. He taught the men who had at first defeated him, how to do their later and better work; and opened the way for all who came after, from Sophocles to Racine. He took to sailing this new ship of the drama as near as he might to the shore-line of the Mysteries themselves;—indeed, he did much more than this; for he infused into his plays that wine of divine life then to be found in its purity and vigor only or chiefly in the Pythagorean Brotherhood.—And now as to this new art-form of his.

De Quincey, accepting the common idea that the Dionysian Theater was built to seat between thirty and forty thousand spectators (every free Athenian citizen), argues that the formative elements that made Greek Tragedy what it was were derived from these huge dimensions. In such a vast building (he asks) how could you produce such a play

as *Hamlet?*—where the art of the actor shows itself in momentary changes of expression, small byplay that would be lost, and

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the like. The figures would be dwarfed by the distances; stage whispers and the common inflexions of the speaking voice would be lost. So none of these things belonged to Greek Tragedy. The mere physical scale necessitated a different theory of art. The stature of the actors had to be increased, or they would have looked like pygmies; their figures had to be draped and muffled, to hide the unnatural proportions thus given them. A mask had to be worn, if only to make the head proportionate to the body; and the mask had to contain an arrangement for multiplying the voice, that it might carry to the whole audience. That implied that the lines should be chanted, not spoken;—though in any case, chanted they would be, for they were verse, not prose; and the Greeks had not forgotten, as we have, that verse is meant to be chanted. So here, to begin with, the whole scheme implied something as unlike actual life as it well could be. And then, too, there was the solemnity of the occasion—the religious nature of the whole festival.

Thus, in substance De Quincey; who makes too little, perhaps, of the matter of that last sentence; and too much of what goes before. We may say that it was rather the grand impersonal theory of the art that created the outward condition; not the conditions that created the theory. Mahaffy went to Athens and measured the theater; and found it not so big by any means. They could have worked out our theories and practice in it, had they wanted to, so far as that goes. Coarse buffoonish country festivals do not of themselves evolve into grand art or solemn occasions; you must seek a cause for that evolution, and find it in an impulse arisen in some human mind. Or minds indeed; for such impulses are very mysterious. The Gods sow their seed in season; we do not see the sowing, but presently mark the greening of the brown earth. The method of the Mysteries—drama serious and religious—had been drifting outwards: things had been growing to a point where a great creative Soul could take hold of them and mold them to his wish. If Aeschylus was not an Initiate of Eleusis, he had learnt, with the Pythagoreans, the method of the Mysteries of all lands. He knew more, not less, than the common pillars of the Athenian Church and State. I imagine it was he, in those thirteen consecutive years of his victories, who in part created, in part drew from his Pythagorean knowledge, those conventions and circumstances for Tragedy which suited him—rather than that conventions already existing imposed formative limits on him. His genius was aloof, impersonal, severe, and of the substance of the Eternal; such as would need precisely those conventions, and must have created them had they not been there. Briefly, I believe that this is what happened. Sent by Pythagoras to do what he could for Athens and Greece, he forged this mighty bolt of tragedy to be his weapon.

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The theory of modern drama is imitation of life. It has nothing else and higher to offer; so, when it fails to imitate, we call it trash. But the theory of Aeschylean Tragedy is the illumination of life. Illumination of life, through a medium quite unlike life. Art begins on a spiritual plane, and works down to realism in its decadence; then it ceases to be art at all, and becomes merely copying what we imagine to be nature,—nature, often, as seen through a diseased liver and well-atrophied pineal gland.

True art imitates nature only in a very selective and limited way. It chooses carefully what it shall imitate, and all to the end of illumination. It paints a flower, or a sunset, not to reproduce the thing seen with the eyes, but to declare and set forth that mood of the Oversoul which the flower or the sunset expressed. Flower-colors or sunset-colors cannot be reproduced in pigments; but you can do things with pigments and a brush that can tell the same story. Or it can be done in words, in a poem; or with the notes of music;—in both of which cases the medium used is still more, and totally, unlike the medium through which the Oversoul said its say in the sky or the blossom.

Nature is always expressing these moods of the Oversoul; but we get no news of them, as a rule, from our own sight and hearing; we must wait for the poets and artists to interpret them. Life is always at work to teach us life; but we miss the grand lessons, usually, until some human Teacher enforces them. His methods are the same as those of the artists: between whose office and his there was at first no difference;—*Bard* means only, originally, an Adept Teacher. Such a one selects experiences out of life for his pupils, and illumines them through the circumstances under which they are applied; just as the true artist selects objects from nature, and by his manner of treating them, interprets the greatness that lies beyond.

So the drama-theory of Aeschylus. He took fragments of possible experience, and let them be seen through a heightened and interpretative medium; with a light at once intense and somber-portentous thrown on them; and this not to reproduce the externalia and appearance of life, but to illumine its inner recesses; to enforce, in plays lasting an hour or so, the lessons life may take many incarnations to teach. This cannot be done by realism, imitation or reproduction of the actual; than which life itself is always better.

What keeps us from seeing the meanings of life? Personality. Not only our own, but in all those about us. Personality dodges and flickers always between our eyes and the solemn motions, the adumbrations of the augustness beyond. We demand lots of personality in our drama; we call it character-drawing. We want to see fellows like ourselves lounging or bustling about, and hear them chattering as we do;—fellows with motives (like our own) all springing from the

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personality. Human life is what interests us: we desire to drink deep of it, and drink again and again. The music that we wish to hear is the “still, sad music of humanity";—-that is, taking our theory at its best, and before you come down to sheer ‘jazz’ and ragtime. But what interested Aeschylus was that which lies beyond and within life. He said: ’You can get life in the Agora, on the Acropolis, any day of the week; when you come to the theater you shall have something else, and greater.’

So he set his scenes, either in a vast, remote, and mysterious antiquity, or—in *The Persians*—at Susa before the palace of the Great King: a setting as remote, splendid, vast, and mysterious, to the Greek mind of the day, as the other. Things should not be as like life, but as unlike life, as possible. The plays themselves, as acted, were a combination of poetry, dance, statuesque poses and motions and groupings; there was no action. All the action was done off the scenes. They did not portray the evolution of character; they hardly portrayed character—in the personal sense—at all. The *dramatis personae* are types, symbols, the expression of natural forces, or principles in man. In our drama you have a line, an extension forward in time; a progression from this to that point in time;—in Greek Tragedy you have a cross-section of time—a cutting through the atom of time that glimpses may be caught of eternity. There was no unfoldment of a story; but the presentation of a single mood. In the chanted poetry and the solemn dance-movements a situation was set forth; what led up to it being explained retrospectively. The audience knew what was coming as well as the author did: that Agamemnon, for instance, was to be murdered. So all was written to play on their expectations, not on their surprise. There was a succession of perfect pictures; these and the poetry were to hold the interest, to work it up: to seize upon the people, and lead them by ever-heightening accessions of feeling into forgetfulness of their personal lives, and absorption in the impersonal harmony, the spiritual receptivity, from which the grand truths are visible. The actors’ masks allowed only the facial expression of a single mood; and it was a single mood the dramatist aimed to produce: a unity; one great word. There could be no grave-diggers; no quizzing of Polonious; no clouds very like a whale. The whole drama is the unfoldment of a single moment: that, say, in which Hamlet turns on Caudius and kills him—rather, leads him out to kill him. To that you are led by a little sparse dialog, ominous enough, and pregnant with dire significance, between two or three actors; many long speeches in which the story is told in retrospect; much chanting by the chorus—Horatio multiplied by a dozen or so—to make you feel Hamlet’s long indecision, and to allow you no escape from the knowledge that Claudius’ crime would bring about its karmic punishment. It is a unity: one thunderbolt from Zeus;—first the growl and rumbling of the thunders; then the whirr of the dread missile,—and lo, the man dead that was to die. And through the bolt so hurled, so effective, and with it—the eagle-bark—Aeschylus crying *Karma!* to the Athenians.

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So it has been said that Aeschylean Tragedy is more nearly allied to sculpture; Shakespearean Tragedy to the Epic.

Think how that unchanging mask, that frozen moment of expression, would develop the quality of tragic irony. In it Clytemnestra comes out to greet the returning Agamemnon. She has her handmaids carpet the road for him with purple tapestries; she makes her speeches of welcome; she alludes to the old sacrifice of Iphigenia; she tells him how she has waited for his return;— and all the while the audience knows she is about to kill him. They listen to her doubtful words, in which she reveals to them, who know both already, her faithlessness and dire purpose; but to her husband, seems to reveal something different altogether. With Agamemnon comes Cassandra from fallen Troy: whose fate was to foresee all woes and horror, and to forthtell what she saw— and never to be believed; so now when she raises her dreadful cry, foreseeing what is about to happen, and uttering warning— none believe her but the audience, who know it all in advance. And then there are the chantings of the chorus, a group of Argive elders. They know or guess how things stand between the queen and her lover; they express their misgiving, gathering as the play goes on; they recount the deeds of violence of which the House of Atreus has been the scene, and are haunted by the foreshadowings of Karma. But they many not understand or give credence to the warnings of Cassandra: Karma disallows fore-fending against the fall of its bolts. Troy has fallen, they say: and that was Karma; because Paris, and Troy in supporting him, had sinned against Zeus the patron of hospitality,—to whom the offense rose like vultures with rifled nest, wheeling in mid-heaven on strong oars of wings, screaming for retribution. —You may not that Aeschylus' freedom from the bonds of outer religion is like Shakespeare's own: here Zeus figures as symbol of the Lords of Karma; from him flow the severe readjustments of the Law;—but in the *Prometheus Bound* he stands for the lower nature that crucifies the Higher.

Troy, then, had sinned, and has fallen; but (says the Chorus) let the conquerors look to it that they do not overstep the mark; let there be no dishonoring the native Gods of Troy; (the Athenians had been very considerably overstepping the mark in some of their own conquests recently;)—let there be no plundering or useless cruelty; (the Athenians had been hideously greedy and cruel;)—or Karma would overtake it own agents, the Greeks, who were not yet out of the wood, as we say—who had not yet returned home. This was when the beacons had announced the fall of Troy, and before the entry of Agamemnon.

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Clytemnestra is not like Gertrude, but a much grander and more tragical figure. Shakespeare leaves you in no doubt as to his queen's relation to Claudius; he enlarges on their guilty passion *ad lib.* Aeschylus never mentions love at all in any of his extant plays; only barely hints at it here. It may be supposed to exist; it is an accessory motive; it lends irony to Clytemnestra's welcome to Agamemnon—in which only the audience and the Chorus are aware that the lady does protest too much. But she stands forth in her own eyes as an agent of Karma-Nemesis; there is something very terrible and unhuman about her. Early in the play she reminds the Chorus how Agamemnon, is setting out for Troy, sacrificed his and her daughter Iphigenia to get a fair wind: a deed of blood whose consequences must be feared—something to add to the Chorus's misgivings, as they chant their doubtful hope that the king may safely return. In reality Artemis had saved Igphigenia; and though Clytemnestra did not know this, in assuming the position of her daughter's avenger she put herself under the karmic ban. And Agamemnon did not know it: he had intended the sacrifice: and was therefore, and for his supposed ruthlessness at Troy, under the same ban himself. Hence the fate that awaited him on his return; and hence because of Clytemnestra's useless crime—when she and Aegisthos come out from murdering him, and announce what they have done, the Chorus's dark foretellings—to come true presently —of the Karma that is to follow upon it.

And here we must guard ourselves against the error—as I think it is that Aeschylus set himself to create the perfect and final art-form as such. I think he was just intent on announcing Karma to the Athenians in the most effective way possible: bent all his energies to making that—and that the natural result of that high issue clear and unescapable; purpose was this marvelous art-form—which Sophocles took up later, and in some external ways perhaps perfected. Then came Aristotle after a hundred years, and defining the results achieved, tried to make Shakespeare impossible. The truth is that when you put yourself to do the Soul's work, and have the great forces of the Soul to back you therein, you create an art-form; and it only remains for the Aristotelian critic to define it. Then back comes the Soul after a thousand years, makes a new one, and laughs at the Aristotles. The grand business is done by following the Soul—not by conforming to rules or imitating models. But it must be the Soul; rules and models are much better than personal whims; they are a discipline good to be followed as long as one can.— You will note how Aeschylus stood above the possibilities of actualism with which we so much concern ourselves; in the course of some sixteen hundred lines, and without interval or change of act or scene, he introduces the watchman on the house-top who first sees the beacons that announce the fall of Troy, on the very night that Troy fell,—and the return of Agamemnon in his chariot to Argos.

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In the *Choephori* or *Libation-Pourers,* the second play of the trilogy, Orestes returns from his Wittenberg, sent by Apollo to avenge his father. The scene again is in front of the house of Atreus. Having killed Aegistlios within, Orestes comes out to the Chorus; then Clytemnestra enters; he tells her what he has done, and what he intends to do; and despite her pleadings, leads her in to die beside her paramour. He comes out again, bearing (for his justification) the blood-stained robe of Agamemnon;—but he comes out distraught and with the guilt of matricide weighing on his soul. The Chorus bids him be of good cheer, reminding him upon what high suggestion he has acted; but in the background he, and he alone, sees the Furies swarming to haunt him, “like Gorgons, dark-robed, and all their tresses hang entwined with many serpents; and from their eyes is dropping loathsome blood.” He must wander the world seeking purification. In the *Eumenides* we find him in the temple of Loxias (the Apollo) at Delphi, there seeking refuge with the god who had prompted him to the deed. But even there the Furies haunt him— though for weariness—or really because it is the shrine of Loxias—they have fallen asleep. From them even Loxias may not free him; only perhaps Pallas at Athens may do that; Loxias announces this to him and bids him go to Athens, and assures him meanwhile of his protection.

To Athens then the scene changes, where Orestes’ case is tried: Apollo defends him; Pallas is the judge; the Furies the accusers; the Court of the Areopagus the jury. The votes of these are equally divided; but Athene gives her casting vote in his favor; and to compensate the Erinyes, turns them into Eumenides—from Furies to goddesses of good omen and fortune. Orestes is free, and the end is happy.

No doubt very pretty and feeble of the bronze-throated Eagle-barker to make it so. What! clap on an exit to these piled-up miseries?—he should have plunged us deeper in woe, and left us to stew in our juices; he Should have shunned this detestable effeminacy, worthy only of the Dantes and Shakespeares. But unfortunately he was an Esotericist, with the business of helping, not plaguing, mankind: he must follow the grand symbolism of the story of the Soul, recording and emphasizing and showing the way to its victories, not its defeats. He had the eye to see deep into realities, and was not to be led from the path of truth eternal by the cheap effective expedients of realism. He must tell the whole truth: building up, not merely destroying; and truth, at the end, is not bitter, but bright and glorious. It is the triumph and purification of the soul; and to that happy consummation all sorrow and darkness and the dread Furies themselves, whom he paints with all the dark flame-pigments of sheerest terror, are but incidental and a means.

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And the meaning of it all? Well, the meaning is as vast as the scheme of evolution itself, I suppose. It is *Hamlet* over again, and treated differently; that which wrote *Hamlet* through Shakespeare, wrote this Trilogy through Aeschylus. I imagine you are to find in the *Agamemnon* the symbol of the Spirit's fall into matter—of the incarnation (and obscuration) of the Lords of Mind—driven thereto by ancient Karma, and the result —of the life of past universes. Shakespeare deals with this retrospectively, in the Ghost's words to Hamlet on the terrace. The 'death' of the Spirit is its fall into matter.

And just as the ghost urges Hamlet to revenge, so Apollo urges Orestes; it is the influx, stir, or impingement of the Supreme Self, that rouses a man, at a certain stage in his evolution, to lift himself above his common manhood. This is the most interesting and momentous event in the long career of the soul: it takes the place, in that drama of incarnations, that the marriage does in the modern novel. Shakespeare, whose mental tendencies were the precise opposite of Aeschylus's—they ran to infinite multiplicity and complexity, where the other's ran to stern unity and simplicity (of plot)—made two characters of Polonius and Gertrude: Polonius,—the objective lower world, with its shallow wisdom and conventions; Gertrude,—Nature, the lower world in it subjective or inner relation to the soul incarnate in it. Aeschylus made no separate symbol for the former. Shakespeare makes the killing of Polonius a turning-point; thenceforth Hamlet must, will he nill he, in some dawdling sort sweep to his revenge. Aeschylus makes that same turning-point in the killing of Clytemnestra, whereafter the Furies are let loose on Orestes. If you think well what it means, it is that "leap" spoken of in *Light on the Path,* by which a man raises himself "on to the path of individual accomplishment instead of mere obedience to the genii which rule our earth." He can no longer walk secure like a sheep in the flock; he has come out, and is separate; he has chosen a captain within, and must follow the Soul, and not outer convention. That step taken, and the face set towards the Spirit-Sun—the life of the world forgone, that a way may be fought into the Life of the Soul:—all his past lives and their errors rise against him; his passions are roused to fight for their lives, and easy living is no longer possible. He must fly then for refuge to Loxias the Sun-God, the Supreme Self, who can protect him from these Erinyes—but it is Pallas, Goddess of the Inner Wisdom, of the true method of life, that can alone set him free. And it is thus that Apollo pleads before her for Orestes who killed his mother (Nature) to avenge his Father (Spirit):—a man, says he, is in reality the child of his father, not of his mother:—this lower world in which we are incarnate is not in truth our parent or originator at all, but only the seed-plot in which we, sons of the Eternal, are sown, the nursery in which we grow to the point of birth;—but we ourselves are in our essence flame of the Flame of God. So Pallas—and you must think of all she implied—Theosophy, right living, right thought and action, true wisdom—judges Orestes guiltless, sets him free, and transforms his passions into his powers.

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V. SOME PERICLEAN FIGURES

Yoshio Markino (that ever-delightful Japanese) makes an illuminating comparison between the modern western and the ancient eastern civilizations. What he says amounts to this: the one is of Science, the other of the Human Spirit; the one of intellect, the other of intuition; the one has learnt rules for carrying all things through in some shape that will serve—the other worked its wonders by what may be called a Transcendental Rule of Thumb. But in fact it was a reliance on the Human Spirit, which invited the presence thereof;—and hence results were attained quite unachievable by modern scientific methods. What Yoshio says of the Chinese and Japanese is also true of all the great western ages of the past. We can do a number of things,— that is, have invented machinery to do a number of things for us,—but with all our resources we could not build a Parthenon: could not even reproduce it, with the model there before our eyes to imitate.*

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* I quote Prof. Mahaffy in his *Problems of Greek History.* He also points out that it is beyond the powers of modern science in naval architecture to construct a workable model of a Greek trireme.

It stands as a monument of the Human Spirit: as an age-long witness to the presence and keen activity of that during the Age of Pericles in Athens. It was built at almost break-neck speed, yet remains a thing of permanent inimitable beauty, defying time and the deliberate efforts of men and gunpowder to destroy it. The work in it which no eye could see was as delicate, as exquisite, as that which was most in evidence publicly; every detail bore the deliberate impress of the Spirit, a direct spiritual creation. There is no straight line in it; no two measurements are the same; but by a divine and direct intuition, every difference is inevitable, and an essential factor in the perfection of the whole. As if the same creative force had made it, as makes of the sea and mountains an inescapable perfection of beauty.

It is one of the many mighty works wherewith Pericles and his right-hand man Pheidias, and his architects Ictinus and Callicrates, adorned Athens. It would serve no purpose to make a list of the great names of the age; which you know well enough already. The simple fact to note is this: that at a certain period in the fifth and fourth centuries B. C. the Crest-Wave of Evolution was, so far as we can see, flowing through a very narrow channel. The Far Eastern seats of civilization were under pralaya; the life-forces in West Asia were running towards exhaustion, or already exhausted; India, it is true, is hidden from us; we cannot judge well what was going on there; and so was most of Europe. Any scheme of cycles that we can put forward as yet must necessarily be

tentative and hypothetical; what we do not know is, to what we do know, as a million to one; I may

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be quite wrong in giving Europe as long a period for its manvantaras as China; possibly there were no manvantaric activities in Europe, in that period, before the rise of Greece. But whether or no, this particular time belongs, of all European countries, to Greece: the genius of the world, the energy of the human spirit, was mainly concentrated there; and of Greece, in the single not too large city of Athens. It is true I am rather enamored of the cycle of a hundred and thirty years; prejudiced, if you like, in its favor; it is also true that genius was speaking through at least one world-important Athenian voice— that of Aeschylus—before the age of Pericles began. Still, these dates are significant: 477, in which year Athens attained the hegemony of Greece, and 347, in which Plato died. It was after 477 that Aeschylus eagle-barked the grandest part of his message from the Soul, and that the great Periclean figures appeared; and though Athenians of genius out-lived Plato, he was the last world-figure and great Soul-Prophet; the last Athenian equal in standing to Aeschylus. When those thirteen decades had passed, the Soul had little more to say through Athens.— Aristotle?—I said, *the Soul* had little more to say. . . .

About midway through that cycle came Aegospotami, and the destruction of the Long Walls and of the Empire; but these did not put an end to Athenian significance. Mahaffy very wisely goes to work to dethrone the Peloponnesian War—as he does, too, the Persian—from the eminence it has been given in the textbooks ever since. As usual, we get a lopsided view from the historians: in this case from Thucydides, who slurred through a sort of synopsis of the far more important and world-interesting mid-fifth century, and then dealt microscopically with these twenty-five years or so of trumpery raidings, petty excursions and small alarms. That naval battle at Syracuse, which Creasy puts with Marathon in his famous fifteen, was utterly unimportant: tardy Nicias might have won all through, and still Athens would have fallen. Her political foundations were on the sand. Under Persia you stood a much better chance of enjoying good government and freedom: Persian rule was far less oppressive and cruel. The states and islands subject to Athens had no self-government, no representation; they were at the mercy of the Athenian mob, to be taxed, bullied, and pommeled about as that fickle irresponsible tyranny might elect or be swayed to pommel, tax, and bully them. Thucydides was a great master of prose style, and so could invest with an air of importance all the matter of his tale. Besides, he was the only contemporary historian, or the only one that survives. So the world ever since has been tricked into thinking this Peloponnesian War momentous; whereas really it was a petty family squabble among that most family-squabblesome of peoples, the Greeks.—In most of which I am only quoting Mahaffy; who, whether intentionally or not, deals with Greek history in such a way as to show the utter unimportance, irrelevance, futility, of war.

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Greek history is merely a phase of human history. We have looked for its significance exclusively in political and cultural regions; but this is altogether a mistake. The Greeks did not invent culture; there had been greater cultures before, only they are forgotten. All that about the "evolution of Political freedom," of the city state, republicanism, *etc*., is just nonsense. As far as I can see, the importance of Greece lies in this: human history, the main part of it, flowing in that age through the narrow channel of Greece, came down from sacred to secular; from the last remnants of a state of affairs in which the Lodge, through the Mysteries, had controlled life and events, to the beginnings of one in which things were to muddle through under the sweet guidance of brain-minds and ordinary men. The old order had become impossible; the world had drifted too far from the Gods. So the Gods tried a new method: let loose a new great force in the world; sent Teachers to preach openly (sow broadcast, and let the seed take its chances) what had before been concealed and revealed systematically within the Established Mysteries. What Athens did with that new force has affected the whole history of Europe since; apparently mostly for weal; really, nearly altogether for woe.

Aristides, with convincing logic, had been able to persuade all Greece to act against a common danger under an Athens then morally great, and feeling this new force from the God-world as a wine in the air, a mental ozone, an inspiration from the subliminal to heroic endeavor. But his policy perished when the visible need for it subsided; it gave way to the Themistoclean, which passed into the Periclean policy; and that, says Mahaffy, "was so dangerous and difficult that no cautious and provident thinker could have called it secure." Which also was Plato's view of it; who went so far as to say that Pericles had made the Athenians lazy, sensual, and frivolous. When we find Aeschylus at the start at odds with it, and Plato at the end condemning it wholesale,—for my part I think we hardly need bother to argue about it further. Both were men who saw from a standpoint above the enlightenment of the common brain-mind.

It is not the present purpose to treat history as a matter of wars and politics; details of which you can get from any textbook; our concern is with the motions of the human spirit, and the laws that work from behind. As to these motions, and the grand influxes, there is this much we can rely on: they come by law, in their regular cycles; and we can invite their coming, and insure their stability when they do come. The more I study history, the more the significance of my present surroundings impresses me. We stand here upon a marvelous isthmus in time; behind us lies a world of dreary commonplaces called the civilization of Christendom; before us—who knows what possibilities? Nothing is certain about the future—even the near future;—except

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that it will be immensely unlike the past. Whatever we have learned or failed to learn, large opportunities are given us daily for discovering those inward regions whence all light shines down into the world. Genius is one method of the Soul's action; one aspect of its glory made manifest. We are given opportunities to learn what invites and what hinders its outflow. To all common thinking, it is a thing absolutely beyond control of the will; that cannot be called down, nor its coming in anywise foretold. But we know that the Divine Self would act, were the obstructions to its action removed; and that the obstructions are all in the lower nature of man.

Worship the Soul in all thoughts and deeds, and sooner or later the Soul will pour down through the channel thus made for it; and its inflow will not be fitful and treacherous, but sure, stable, equable and redeeming.

This is where all past ages of brilliance have failed. Cyclically they were bound to come: the fields ripened in due season; but the wealth of the harvest depended on the reapers. The Elizabethan Age, with all its splendid quickening of the English mind, was coarse and wicked to a degree. All through the wonderful Cinquecento, when each of a dozen or more little Italian city-states was producing genius enough to furnish forth a good average century in modern Europe or America, Italy was also a hotbed of unnatural vices, lurid crimes, wickedness to stock the nine circles of Malebolge. So too Athens at the top of her glory became selfish, grasping, conscienceless and cruel; and those nameless vices grew up and grew common in her which probably account for the long dark night that has spread itself over Greece ever since. It is a strange situation, that looks like an anomaly: that wherever the Human Spirit presses in most, and raises up most splendor of genius, there, and then the dark forces that undermine life are most at work. But we should have no difficulty in understanding it. At such times, by such influxes, the whole inner kingdom of man is roused and illumined; and not only the intellect and all noble qualities are quickened, but the passions also. The race, and the individual, are stirred to the deepest depths, and no part of you may have rest. What then will happen, unless you have the surest moral training for foundation? The force which rouses up the highest in you, rouses up also the lowest; and there must be battle-royal and victory at last, or surrender to hell. Through lack of training, and ignorance of the laws of the inner life, the Higher will be handicapped; the lower will have advantage through its own natural impulse downward, increased by every success it is allowed to gain. And so all these ages of creative achievement exhaust themselves; every victory of the passions drawing down the creative force from the higher planes, to waste it on the lower; till at last what had been an attempt of the Spirit to lift humanity up on to

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nobler lines of evolution, and to open a new order of ages, expires in debauchery, weakness, degeneracy, physical and moral death. The worst fate you could wish a man is genius without moral strength. It wrecks individuals, and it wrecks nations. I said we stand now on an isthmus of time; fifth-century Greece stood on such another. For reasons that we have seen, there was to be a radical difference between the ages that preceded, and the ages that followed it; its influence was not to wear out, in the west, for twenty-five hundred years. It was to give a keynote, in cultural effort, to a very long future. So all western ages since have suffered because of its descent from lofty ideals to vulgar greed and ambition; from Aristides to Themistocles and Pericles. We shall see this Athenian descent in literature, in art, in philosophy. If Athens had gone up, not down, European history would have been a long record of the triumphs of the spirit:—-not, as it has been in the main, one of sorrow and disaster.

At the beginning of the Greek age in literature, we find the stupendous figure of Aeschylus. For any such a force as he was, there is—how shall I say?—a twofold lineage or ancestry to be traced: there are no sudden creations. Take Shakespeare, for example. There was what he found read to his hand in English literature; and what he brought into England out of the Unknown. In his outwardness, the fabric of his art—we can trace this broad river back to a thinnish stream by the name of Chaucer; or he was growth, recognizably, of the national tree of which Chaucer was the root, or lay at the root. The unity called English poetry had grown naturally from that root to this glorious flower: the sparkle, with, brightness, and above all large hold upon the other life that one finds in Shakespeare—one finds at least the rudiments of them in Chaucer also. But there is another, an exoteric element in him which one finds nowhere in English literature before him: the Grandeur from within, the high Soul Symbol. In him suddenly that portentous thing appears, like a great broad river emerging from the earth.—Of which we do not say, however, that they have had no antecedent rills and fountain; we know that they have traveled long beneath the mountains, unseen; they sank under the earth-surface somewhere, and are not special new creations. Looking back behind Shakespeare, from this our eminence in time, we can see beyond the intervening heights this broad water shine again over the plain in Dante; and beyond him some glimmer of it in Virgil; until at last we see the far-off sheen of it in Aeschylus, very near the backward horizon of time. We can catch no glimpse of it farther, because that horizon is there.

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We can trace Aeschylus' outward descent—as Shakespeare's from Chaucer—from the nascent Greek drama and the rudimentary plays at the rustic festivals; but the grand river of his esotericism —there it shines, as large and majestic, at least, as in Shakespeare; and it was, no more than his, a special creation or new thing. Our horizon lies there, to prevent our vision going further; but from some higher time-eminence in the future, we shall see it emerge again in the backward vastnesses of pre-history; again and again. The grandeur of Aeschylus his no parent in Greek, or in western extant literature; or if we say that it has a parent in Homer (which I doubt, because not seeing the Soul Symbols in Homer), it is only putting matters one step further back.... But behind Greece, there were the lost literatures of Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, of which we know nothing; aye, and for a guess, lost and mighty literatures from all parts of Europe too. If I could imagine it otherwise, I would say so.

Almost suddenly, during Aeschylus' lifetime, another Greek Art came into being. When he was a boy, sculpture was still a very crude affair; or perhaps just beginning to emerge from that condition. The images that come down to us, say from Pisistratus' time and earlier, are not greatly different from the 'primitive' carvings of many so-called savage peoples of our own day. That statement is loose and general; but near enough the mark to serve our purpose. You may characterize them as rude imitations of the human form, without any troublesome realism, and with a strong element of the grotesque. Says the *Encyclopeadia Britannica* (from which the illustration is taken):

"The statues of the gods began either with stiff and ungainly figures roughly cut out of the trunk of a tree, or with the monstrous and symbolical representations of Oriental art.... In early decorations of vases and vessels one may find Greek deities represented with wings, carrying in their hands lions or griffins, bearing on their heads lofty crowns. But as Greek art progressed it grew out of this crude symbolism... What the artists of Babylonia and Egypt express in the character of the gods by added attribute or symbol, swiftness by wings, control of storms by the thunderbolt, traits of character by animal heads, the artists of Greece work more and more fully into the scultptural type; modifying the human subject by the constant addition of something which is above the ordinary levels of humanity, until we reach the Zeus of Pheidias or the Dimeter of Cnidus. When the decay of the high ethical art of Greece sets in, the Gods become more and more warped to the merely human level. They lose their dignity, but they never lose their charm."

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In which, I think, much light is once more thrown on the inner history of the race, and the curious and fatal position Greece holds in it. For here we see Art emerging from its old Position as a hand-maid to the Mysteries and recognized instrument of the Gods or the Soul; from sacred becoming secular; from impersonal, personal. There is, perhaps, little enough in pre-Pheidian Greek sculpture that belongs to the history of Art at all (I do not speak of old cycles and manvantaras, the ages of Troy and Mycenae, but of historical times; I cast no glance now behind the year 870 B. C.). For the real art that came next before the Pheidian Greek, we have to look to Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Take Egypt first. There the sculptor thinks of himself far less as artist than as priest and servant of the Mysteries: that is, of the great Divine heart of Existence behind this manifested world, and the official channel which connected It with the latter. The Gods, for him, are frankly unhuman—superhuman— unlike humanity. We call them 'forces of Nature'; and think ourselves mighty wise for having camouflaged our ignorance with this perfectly meaningless term. We have dealt so wisely with our thinking organs, that do but give us a sop of words, and things in themselves we shall never bother about:—like the Grave-digger, who solved the whole problem of Ophelia's death and burial with his three branches of an act. But the Egyptian, with mental faculties unrotted by creedal fatuities like our own, would not so feed 'of the chameleon's dish,'—needed something more than words, words, and words. He knew also that there were elements in their being quite unlike any we are conscious of in ours. So he gave them purely symbolic forms: a human body, for that which he could posit as common to themselves and humanity; and an animal mask, to say that the face, the expression of their consciousness, was hidden, and not to be expressed in terms of human personality. While affirming that they were conscious entities, he stopped short of personalizing them. What was beneath the mask or symbol belonged to the Mysteries, and was not to be publicly declared.

But when he came to portraying men, especially great kings, he used a different method. The king's statue was to remain through long ages, when the king himself was dead and Osirified. The artist knew—it was the tradition of his school—what the Osirified dead looked like. Not an individual sculptor, but a traditional wisdom, was to find expression. What sculptor's name is known? Who wrought the Vocal Memnon?—-Not any man; but the Soul and wisdom and genius of Egypt. The last things bothered about were realism and personality. There were a very few conventional poses; the object was not to make a portrait, but to declare the Universal Human Soul;—it was hardly artistic, in any modern acceptation of the word; but rather religious. Artistic it was, in the highest and truest sense:

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to create, in the medium of stone, the likeness or impression of the Human Soul in its grandeur and majesty; to make hard granite or syenite proclaim the eternal peace and aloofness of the Soul.—Plato speaks of those glimpses of “the other side of the sky” which the soul catches before it comes into the flesh;—the Egyptian artist was preoccupied with the other side of the sky. How wonderfully he succeeded, you have only to drop into the British Museum to see. There is a colossal head there, hung high on the wall facing the stairs at the end of the Egyptian Gallery; you may view it from the ground, or from any point on the stairs; but from whatever place you look at it, if you have any quality of the Soul in you, you go away having caught large glimpses of the other side of the sky. You are convinced, perhaps unconsciously, of the grandeur and reality of the Soul. Having watched Eternity on that face many times, I rejoiced to find this description of it in De Quincey;—if he was not speaking of this, what he says fits it admirably:

“That other object which for four and twenty years in the British Museum struck me as simply the sublimest sight which in this sight-seeing world I had seen. It was the memnon’s head, then recently brought from Egypt. I looked at it, as the reader must suppose in order to understand the depth which I have here ascribed to the impression, not as a human but as a symbolic head; and what it symbolized to me were: (1) the peace which passeth understanding. (2) The eternity which baffles and confounds all faculty of computation—the eternity which had been, the eternity which was to be. (3) The diffusive love, not such as rises and falls upon waves of life and mortality, not such as sinks and swells by undulations of time, but a procession, an emanation, from some mystery of endless dawn. You durst not call it a smile that radiated from those lips; the radiation was too awful to clothe itself in adumbrations of memorials of flesh.”

Art can never reach higher than that,—if we think of it as a factor in human evolution. What else you may say of Egyptian sculpture is of minor importance: as, that it was stiff, conventional, or what not; that each figure is portrayed sitting bolt upright, hands out straight, palms down, upon the knees, and eyes gazing into eternity. Ultimately we must regard Art in this Egyptian way: as a thing sacred, a servant of the Mysteries; the revealer of the Soul and the other side of the sky. You may have enormous facility in playing with your medium; may be able to make your marble quite fluidic, and flow into innumerable graceful forms; you may be past master of every intricacy, multiplying your skill to the power of n;—but you will still in reality have made no progress beyond that unknown carver who shaped his syenite, or his basalt, into the “peace which passeth understanding”—“the eternity which baffles and confounds all faculty of computation.”

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If we turn to Assyria, we find much the same thing. This was a people far less spiritual than the Egyptians: a cruel, splendid, luxurious civilization deifying material power. But you cannot look at the great Winged Bulls without knowing that there, too, the motive was religious. There is an eternity and inexhaustible power in those huge carvings; the sculptors were bent on one end:—to make the stone speak out of superhuman heights, and proclaim the majesty of the Everlasting.—In the Babylonian sculptures we see the kings going into battle weaponless, but calm and invincible; and behind and standing over, to protect and fight for them, terrific monsters, armed and tiger-headed or leopard-headed—the 'divinity that hedges a king' treated symbolically. As always in those days, though many veils might hide from the consciousness of Assyria and later Babylon the beautiful reality of the Soul of Things, the endeavor, the *raison d'etre,* of Art was to declare the Might, Power, Majesty, and dominion which abide beyond our common levels of thought.

Now then: that great Memnon's head comes from behind the horizon of time and the sunset of the Mysteries; and in it we sample the kind of consciousness produced by the Teaching of the Mysteries. Go back step by step, from Shakespeare's

"Glamis hath murdered Sleep, and therefore Cawdor Shall sleep
no more.";

to Dante's

"The love that moves the Sun and the other Stars";

to Talesin's

"My original country is the Region of the Summer Stars";

to Aeschylus's bronze-throat eagle-bark at blood;—and the next step you come to beyond (in the West)—the next expression of the Human Soul—marked with the same kind of feeling—the same spiritual and divine hauteur—is, for lack of literary remains, this Egyptian sculpture. The Grand Manner, the majestic note of Esotericism, the highest in art and literature, is a stream flowing down to us from the Sacred Mysteries of Antiquity.

It is curious that a crude primtivism in sculpture—and in architecture too—should have gone on side by side, in Greece, during the seventh and sixth centuries B. C., with the very finished art of the Lyricists from Sappho to Pindar; but apparently it did. (They had wooden temples, painted in bright reds and greens; I understand without pillared facades.) I imagine the explanation to be something like this: You are to think of an influx of the Human Spirit, proceeding downward from its own realms towards these, until it strikes some civilization —the Greek, in this case. Now poetry, because its medium is less material, lies much nearer than do the plastic arts to the Spirit on its

descending course; and therefore receives the impulse of its descent much sooner. Perhaps music lies higher again; which is why music was the first of the arts to blossom at all in this nascent civilization of ours at Point Loma. Let me diverge a little, and take a glance round.—At

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any such time, the seeds of music may not be present in strength or in a form to be quickenable into a separately manifesting art; and this may be true of poetry too; yet where poetry is, you may say music has been; for every real poem is born out of a pre-existing music of its own, and is the *inverbation* of it. The Greek Melic poets (the lyricists) were all musicians first, with an intricate musical science, on the forms of which they arranged their language; I do not know whether they wrote their music apart from the words. After the Greek, the Italian illumination was the greatest in western history; there the influx, beginning in the thirteenth century, produced first its chief poetic splendor in Dante before that century had passed; not raising an equal greatness in painting and sculpture until the fifteenth. In England, the Breath that kindled Shakespeare never blew down so far as to light up a great moment in the plastic arts: there were some few figures of the second rank in painting presently; in sculpture, nothing at all (to speak of). Painting, you see, works in a little less material medium than sculpture does. Dante's Italy had not quite plunged into that orgy of vice, characteristic of the great creative ages, which we find in the Italy of the Cinquecento. But England, even in Shakespeare's day, was admiring and tending to imitate Italian wickedness. James I's reign was as corrupt as may be; and though the Puritan reaction followed, the creative force had already been largely wasted: notice had been served to the Spirit to keep off. Puritanism raised itself as a barrier against the creative force both in its higher and lower aspects: against art, and against vice;—probably the best thing that could happen under the circumstances; and the reason why England recovered so much sooner than did Italy.—On the other hand, when the influx came to Holland, it would seem to have found, then, no opportunities for action in the non-material arts: to have skipped any grand manifestation in music or poetry: and at once to have hit the Dutchman 'where he lived' (as they say),—in his paintbox.—But to return:-

Sculpture, then, came later than poetry to Greece; and in some ways it was a more sudden and astounding birth. Unluckily nothing remains—I speak on tenterhooks—of its grandest moment. Progress in architecture seems to have begun in the reign of Pisistratus; some time in the next sixty years or so the Soul first impressed its likeness on carved stone. I once saw a picture—in a lantern lecture in London—of a pre-Pheidian statue of Athene; dating, I suppose, from the end of the sixth century B. C. She is advancing with upraised arm to protect—someone or something. The figure is, perhaps, stiff and conventional; and you have no doubt it is the likeness of a Goddess. She is not merely a very fine and dignified woman; she is a Goddess, with something of Egyptian sublimity. The artist, if he had not attained perfect mastery

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of the human form—if his medium was not quite plastic to him—knew well what the Soul is like.—The Greek had no feeling, as the Egyptian had, for the *mystery* of the Gods; at his very best (once he had begun to be artistic) he personalized them; he tried to put into his representations of them, what the Egyptian had tried to put into his representations of men; and in that sense this Athene is, after all, only a woman;—but one in whom the Soul is quite manifest. I have never been able to trace this statue since; and my recollections are rather hazy. But it stands, for me, holding up a torch in the inner recesses of history. It was the time when Pythagoras was teaching; it was that momentous time when (as hardly since) the doors of the Spiritual were flung open, and the impulse of the six Great Teachers was let loose on the world. Hithertoo Greek carvers had been making images of the Gods, symbolic indeed—with wings, thunderbolts and other appurtenances;—but trivially symbolic; mere imitation of the symbolism, without the dignity or religious feeling, of the Egyptians and Babylonians; as if their gods and worship had been mere conventions, about which they had felt nothing deep;—now, upon this urge from the God-world, a sense of the grandeur of the within comes on them; they seek a means of expressing it: throw off the old conventions; will carve the Gods as men; do so, their aspiration leading them on to perfect mastery: for a moment achieve Egyptian sublimity; but—have personalized the Gods; and dear knows what that may lead to presently.

The came Pheidias, born about 496. Nothing of his work remains for us; the Elgin Marbles themselves, from the Parthenon, are pretty certainly only the work of his pupils. But there are two things that tell us something about his standing: (1) all antiquity bears witness to the prevailing quality of his conceptions; their sublimity. (2) He was thrown into prison on a charge of impiety, and died there, in 442.

Here you will note the progress downward. Aeschylus had been so charged, and tried—but acquitted. Pheidias, so charged, was imprisoned. Forty-three years later Socrates, so charged, was condemned to drink the hemlock. Of Aeschylus and Socrates we can speak with certainty: they were the Soul's elect men. Was Pheidias too? Athens certainly was turning away from the Soul; and his fate is a kind of half-way point between the fates of the others. He appears in good company. And that note of sublimity in his work bears witness somewhat.

We have the work of his pupils, and know that in their hands the marble—Pheidias himself worked mostly in gold and ivory—had become docile and obedient, to flow into whatever forms they designed for it. We know what strength, what beauty, what tremendous energy, are in those Elgin marbles. All the figures are real, but idealized: beautiful men and horses, in fullest most vigorous action, suddenly

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frozen into stone. The men are more beautiful than human; but they are human. They are splendid unspoiled human beings, reared for utmost bodily perfection; athletes whose whole training had been, you may say, to music: they are music expressed in terms of the human body. Yes; but already the beauty of the body outshone the majesty of the Soul. It was the beauty of the body the artists aimed at expressing: a perfect body—and a sound mind in it: a perfectly healthy mind in it, no doubt (be cause you cannot have a really sound and beautiful body without a sound healthy mind)—was the ideal they sought and saw. Very well, so far; but, you see, Art has ceased to be sacred, and the handmaid of the Mysteries; it bothers itself no longer with the other side of the sky.

In Pheidias' own work we might have seen the influx at that moment when, shining through the soul plane, its rays fell full on the physical, to impress and impregnate that with the splendor of the Soul. We might have seen that it was still the Soul that held his attention, although the body was known thoroughly and mastered: that it was the light he aimed to express, not the thing it illumined. In the work of his pupils, the preoccupation is with the latter; we see the physical grown beautiful under the illumination of the Soul; not the Soul that illumines it. The men of the Egyptian sculptors had been Gods. The Gods of these Greek sculptors were men. Perfect, glorious, beautiful men —so far as externals were concerned. But men—to excite personal feeling, not to quell it into nothingness and awe. The perfection, even at that early stage and in the work of the disciples of Pheidias, was a quality of the personality.

It was indeed marvelously near the point of equilibrium: the moment when Spirit enters conquered matter, and stands there enthroned. In Pheidias himself I cannot but think we should have found that moment as we find it in Aeschylus. But you see, it is when that has occurred: when Spirit has entered matter, and made the form, the body, supremely beautiful; it is precisely then that the moment of peril comes—if there is not the wisdom present that knows how to avoid the peril. The next and threatening step downward is preoccupation with, then worship of, the body.

The Age of Pericles came to worship the body: that was the danger into which it fell; that was what brought about the ruin of Greece. That huge revelation of material beauty; and that absence of control from above; the lost adequacy of the Mysteries, and the failure of the Pythagorean Movement;—the impatience of spiritual criticism, heedlessness of spiritual warning;—well, we can see what a turning-point the time was in history. On the side of politics, selfishness and ambition were growing; on the side of personal life, vice. . . . It is a thing to be pondered on, that what has kept Greece sterile these last two thousand years or so is, I believe, the malaria; which is a thing that

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depends for its efficacy on mosquitos. Great men simply will not incarnate in malarial territory; because they would have no chance whatever of doing anything, with that oppression and enervation sapping them. Greece has been malarial; Rome, too, to some extent; the Roman Campagna terribly; as if the disease were (as no doubt it is) a Karma fallen on the sites of old-time tremendous cultural energies; where the energies were presently wrecked, drowned and sodden in vice. Here then is a pretty little problem in the workings of Karma: on what plane, through what superphysical links or channels, do the vices of an effete civilization transform themselves into that poor familiar singer in the night-time, the mosquito? Greece and Rome, in their heyday, were not malarial; if they had been, no genius and no power would have shone in them.

In the Middle Ages, before people knew much about sanitary science and antiseptics and the like, a great war quickly translated itself into a great pestilence. Then we made advances and discovered Listerian remedies and things, and said: Come now; we shall fight this one; we shall have slaughtered millions lying about as we please, and get no plague out of it; we are wise and mighty, and Karma is a fool to us; we are the children of MODERN CIVILIZATION; what have Nature and its laws to do with us? Our inventions and discoveries have certainly put them out of commission.—And sure enough, the mere foulness of the battlefield, the stench of decay, bred no pest; our Science had circumvented the old methods through which Natural Law (which is only another way of saying Karma) worked; we had cut the physical links, and blocked the material channels through which wrong-doing flowed into its own punishment.—-Whereupon Nature, wrathful, withdrew a little; took thought for her astral and inner planes; found new links and channels there; passed through these the causes we had provided, and emptied them out again on the physical plane in the guise of a new thing, Spanish Influenza;—and spread it over three continents, with greater scope and reach than had ever her old-fashioned stench-bred plagues that served her well enough when we were less scientific. Whereof the moral is: *He laughs loudest who laughs last;* and just now, and for some time to come, the laugh is with Karma. Say until the end of the Maha-Manvantara; until the end of manifested Time. When shall we stop imagining that any possible inventions or discoveries will enable us to circumvent the fundamental laws of Nature? Not the printing-press, nor steam, nor electricity, nor aerial navigation, nor *vril* itself when we come to it, will serve to keep civilizations alive that have worn themselves out by wrong-doing—or even that have come to old age and the natural time when they must die. But their passings need not be ghastly and disastrous, or anything but honorable and beneficial, if in the prime and vigor of their lifetimes they would learn decently to live.

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But to return to our muttons, which is Greece; and now to the literature again:—

After Aeschylus, Sophocles. The former, a Messenger of the Gods, come to cry their message of *Karma* to the world; and in doing so, incidentally to create a supreme art-form;—the latter, a "good easy soul who lives and lets live, founds no anti-school, upsets no faith."—thus Browning sums him up. A "faultless" artist enamored of his art; in which, thinks he (and most academic critics with him) he can improve something on old Aeschylus; a man bothered with no message; a beautiful youth; a genial companion, well-loved by his friends—and who is not his friend?—all through his long life; twenty times first-prize winner, and never once less than second.—Why, solely on the strength of his *Antigone,* the Athenians appointed him a strategos in the expedition against Samos; with the thought that one so splendidly victorious in the field of drama, could not fail of victory in mere war. But don't lose hope!—upon an after-thought (perhaps) they appointed Pericles too; who suggested to his poet-colleague that though master of them all in his own line, he had better on the whole leave the sordid details of command to himself, Pericles, who had more experience of that sort. What more shall we say of Sophocles?—A charming brilliant fellow in his cups—of which, as of some other more questionable pleasures, report is he was too fond; a man worshiped during his life, and on his death made a hero with semi-divine honors;—does that sound like the story of a Messenger of the Gods?

He was born at Colonos in Attica, in 496; of his hundred or so of dramas, seven come down to us. His age saw in him the very ideal of a tragic poet; Aristotle thought so too; so did the Alexandrian critics, and most moderns with them. "Indeed," says Mahaffy, "it is no unusual practice to exhibit the defects of both Aeschylus and Euripides by comparison with their more successful rival." Without trying to give you conclusions of my own, I shall read you a longish passage from Gilbert Murray, who is not only a great Greek scholar, but a fine critic as well, and a poet with the best translations we have of Greek tragedy to his credit; he has made Euripides read like good English poetry. Comparing the *Choephori* of Aeschylus, the second play in the Oreseian Trilogy, with the *Electra* of Sophocles, which deals with the same matter, he says:

"Aeschylus... had felt vividly the horror of his plot; he carries his characters to the deed of blood on a storm of confused, torturing, half-religious emotion; the climax is of course, the mother-murder, and Orestes falls into madness after it. In the *Electra* this element is practically ignored. Electra has no qualms; Orestes shows no signs of madness; the climax is formed not by the culminating horror, the matricide, but by the hardest bit of work, the slaying of Aegisthos! Aeschylus has kept Electra

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and Clytemnestra apart; here we see them freely in the hard unloveliness of their daily wrangles. Above all, in place of the cry of bewilderment that closes the *Choephori*—-’What is the end of all this spilling of blood for blood?’—the *Electra* closes with an expression of entire satisfaction... Aeschylus takes the old bloody saga in an earnest and troubled spirit, very different from Homer’s, but quite as grand. His Orestes speaks and feels as Aechylus himself would... Sophocles... takes the saga exactly as he finds it. He knows that those ancient chiefs did not trouble about their consciences; they killed in the fine old ruthless way. He does not try to make them real to himself at the cost of making them false to the spirit of the epos...

“The various bits of criticism ascribed to him—’I draw men as they ought to be drawn; Euripides draws them as they are’; ’Aeschylus did the right thing, but without knowing it’—all imply the academic standpoint... Even his exquisite diction, which is such a marked advance on the stiff magnificence of his predecessor, betrays the lesser man in the greater artist. Aeschylus’s superhuman speech seems like natural superhuman speech. It is just the language that Prometheus would talk, that an ideal Agamemnon or Atossa might talk in the great moments. But neither Prometheus nor Oedipus nor Electra, nor anyone but an Attic poet of the highest culture, would talk as Sophocles makes them. It is this which has established Sophocles as the perfect model, not only for Aristotle, but in general for critics and grammarians; while the poets have been left to admire Aeschylus, who ‘wrote in a state of intoxication,’ and Euripedes, who broke himself against the bars of life and poetry.”

You must, of course, always allow for a personal equation in the viewpoint of any critic: you must here weight the “natural superhuman diction” against the “stiff magnificence” Professor Murray attributes to Aeschylus; and get a wise and general view of your own. What I want you to see clearly is, the descent of the influx from plane to plane, as shown in these two tragedians. The aim of the first is to express a spiritual message, grand thought. That of the second is to produce a work of flawless beauty, without regard to its spiritual import. What was to Aeschylus a secondary object; the purely artistic—was to Sophocles the whole thing. Aeschylus was capable of wonderful psychological insight. Clytemnestra’s speech to the Chorus, just before Agamemnon’s return, is a perfect marvel in that way. But the tremendous movement, the August impersonal atmosphere as

> “.... gorgeous Tragedy
> In sceptered pall comes sweeping by.”

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—divests it of the personal, and robes it in a universal symbolic significance: because he has built like a titan, you do not at first glance note that he has labored like a goldsmith, as someone has said. But in Sophocles the goldsmithry is plain to see. His character-painting is exquisite: pathetic often; just and beautiful almost always. I put in the almost in view of that about the “hard unloveliness” of Electra’s “daily wrangles” with her mother. The mantle of the religious Egyptians had fallen on Aeschylus: but Sophocles’ garb was the true fashionable Athenian chiton of his day. He was personal, where the other had been impersonal; faultless, where the other had been sublime; conventionally orthodox, where through Aeschylus had surged the super-credal spirit of universal prophecy.

And then we come to third of the trio: Euripides, born in 480. “He was,” says Professor Murray, “essentially representative of his age, yet apparently in hostility to it; almost a failure of the stage—he won only four prizes in fifty years of production— yet far the most celebrated poet in Greece.” Athens hated, jeered at, and flouted him just as much as she honored and adored Sophocles; yet you know what happened to those Athenian captives at Syracuse who could recite Euripides. Where, in later Greek writings, we come on quotations from the other two once or twice, we come on quotations from Euripides dozens of times. The very fact that eighteen of his plays survive, to seven each of Aeschylus’ and Sophocles’, is proof of his larger and longer popularity.

He had no certain message from the Gods, as Aeschylus had; his intensely human heart and his mighty intellect kept him from being the ‘flawless artist’ that Sophocles was. He questioned all conventional ideas, and would not let the people rest in comfortable fat acquiescence. He came to make men ’sit up and think.’ He did not solve problems, but raised them, and flung them at the head of the world. He must stir and probe things to the bottom; and his recurrent unease, perhaps, mars the perfection of his poetry. Admetus is to die, unless someone will die for him; recollect that for the Greekish mob, death was the worst of all possible happenings. Alcestis his wife will die for him; and he accepts her sacrifice. Now, that was the old saga; and in Greek conventional eyes, it was all right. Woman was an inferior being, anyhow; there was nothing more fitting that Alcestis should die for her lord.—Here let me make a point plain: you cannot look back through Greece to a Golden Age in Greece; it is not like Egypt, where the farther you go into the past, the greater things you come to;—although in Egypt, too, there would have been rises and falls of civilization. In Homer’s days, in Euripides’, they had these barbarous ideas about women; and these foolish exoteric ideas about death; historic Greece, like modern Europe from the Middle Ages, rises from a state

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of comparative barbarism, lightlessness; behind which, indeed, there were rumors of a much higher Past. These great Greeks, Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato, brought in ideas which were as old as the hills in Egypt, or in India; but which were new to the Greece of their time—of historic times; they were, I think, as far as their own country was concerned, innovators and revealers; not voicers of a traditional wisdom; it may have been traditional once, but that time was much too far back for memory. I think we should have to travel over long, long ages, to get to a time when Eleusis was a really effective link with the Lodge—to a period long before Homer, long before Troy fell.—But to return to the story of Alcestis:—

You might take it on some lofty impersonal plane, and find a symbol in it; Aeschylus would have done so, somehow; though I do not quite see how. Sophocles would have been aware of nothing wrong in it; he would have taken it quite as a matter of course. Euripides saw clearly that Admetus was a selfish poltroon, and rubbed it in for all he was worth. And he could not leave it at that, either; but for pity's sake must bring in Hercules at the end to win back Alcestis from death. So the play is great-hearted and tender, and a covert lash for conventional callousness; and somehow does not quite hang together:—leaves you just a little uncomfortable. Browning calls him, in *Balaustion's Adventure,*

> ".... Euripides
> The human, with his droppings of warms tears";

—it is a just verdict, perhaps. Without Aeschylus' Divine Wisdom, or Sophocles' worldly wisdom, he groped perpetually after some means to stay the downward progress of things; he could not thunder like the one, nor live easily and let live, like the other.—I do not give you these scraps of criticism (which are not my own, but borrowed always I think), for the sake of criticism; but for the sake of history;—understand them, and you have the story of the age illumined. You can read the inner Athens here, in the aspirations and in the limitations of Euripides, and in the contempt in which Athens held him; as you can read it in the grandeur of Aeschylus, and the Athenian acceptance of, and then reaction against, him; and in the character of Sophocles and his easy relations with his age. When Euripides came, the light of the Gods had gone. He was blindish; he would not accept the Gods without question. Yet was he on the side of the Gods whom he could not see or understand; we must count him on their side, and loved by them. He was not panoplied, like Aeschylus or Milton, in their grim and shining armor; yet what armor he wore bore kindred proud dints from the hellions' batterings. Or perhaps mostly he wore such marks as wounds upon his own flesh. . . . Not even a total lack of humor, which I suppose must be attributed to him, can make him appear less than a most sympathetic, an heroic figure. He was the child and fruitage

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and outcast of his age, belonging as much to an Athens declining and inwardly hopeless, as did Aeschylus (at first) to Athens in her early glory. He was not so much bothered (like Sophocles) with no message, as bothered with the fact that he had no clear and saving message. His realism—for compared with the other two, he was a sort of realist—was the child of his despair; and his despair, of the atmosphere of his age.

He was, or had been, in close touch with Socrates (you might expect it); lived a recluse somewhat, taking no part in affairs; married twice, unfortunately both times; and his family troubles were among the points on which gentlemanly Athens sneered at him. A lovely lyricist, a restless thinker; tender-hearted; sublime in pity of all things weak and helpless and defeated:—women especially, and conquered nations. Prof. Murray says:

“In the last plays dying Athens is not mentioned, but her death-struggle and her sins are constantly haunting us; the Joy of battle is mostly gone; the horror of war is left. Well might old Aeschylus pray, ‘God grant that I may sack no city!’ if the reality of conquest is what it appears in the last plays of Euripides. The conquerors there are as miserable as the conquered; only more cunning, and perhaps more wicked.”

He died the year before Aegospotami, at the court of Archelaus of Macedon. One is glad to think he found peace and honor at last. Athens heard with a laugh that some courtier there had insulted him; and with astonishment that the good barbarous Archelaus had handed said courtier over to Euripides to be scourged for his freshness. I don’t imagine that Euripides scourged him though-to amount to anything.

VI. SOCRATES AND PLATO

By this time you should have seen, rather than any picture of Greece and Athens in their heyday, an indication of certain universal historical laws. As thus (to go back a little): an influx of the Spirit is approaching, and a cycle of high activities is about to begin. A great war has cleared off what karmic weight has been hanging over Athens;—Xerxes, you will remember, burnt the town. Hence there is a clearness in the inner atmosphere; through which a great spiritual voice may, and does, speak a great spiritual message. But human activities proceed, ever increasing their momentum, until the atmosphere is no longer clear, but heavy with the effluvia of by no means righteous thought and action. The Spirit is no more visibly present, but must manifest if at all through a thicker medium; and who speaks now, speaks as artist only,—not as poet—or artist-prophet. Time goes on, and the inner air grows still thicker; till men live in a cloud, through which truths are hardly to be seen. Then those who search for the light are apt to cry out in despair; they become realists struggling to break the terrible molds of thought:—and if you can hear the Spiritual in them at all, it is not in a positive message they have for

men, but in the greatness of their heart and compassion. They do not build; they seek only to destroy. There seems nothing else for them to do.

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So in England, Wordsworth opened this last cycle of poetry; coming when there was a clear atmosphere, and speaking more or less clearly through it his message from the Gods. You hear a like radiant note of hope in Shelley; and something of it in Keats, who stood on the line that divides the Poet-Prophet from the Poet-Artist. Then you come to the ascendency of Tennyson, whose business in life was to be the latter. He tried the role of prophet; he lived up to the highest he could: strove towards the light much more gallantly than did Sophocles, his Athenian paradigm. But the atmosphere of his age made him something of a failure at it: no clear light was there for him to find, such as could manifest through poetry. Then you got men like Matthew Arnold with his cry of despair, and William Morris with his longing for escape; then the influence of Realism. So many poets recently have an element of Euripides in them; a will to do well, but a despair of the light; a tendency to question everything, but little power to find answers to their questions. Then there were some few who, influenced (consciously or not) by H.P. Blavatsky, that great dawn-herald, caught glimpses of the splendor of a dawn—-which yet we wait for.

Euripides, with the Soul stirring within and behind him, “broke himself on the bars of life and poetry,” as Professor Murray says. He was so hemmed in by the emanations of the time that he could never clearly enunciate the Soul. Not, at any rate, in an unmixed way, and with his whole energies. Perhaps his favorite device of a *Deus ex Machina*—-like Hercultes in the *Alcestis* —is a symbolical enunciation of it, and intended so to be. Perhaps the cause of the unrest he makes us feel is this: he knew that the highest artistic method was the old Aeschylean symbolic one, and tried to use it; but at the same time was compelled by the gross emanations of the age, which he was not quite strong enough to rise above, to treat his matter not symbolically, but realistically. He could not help saying: “Here is the epos you Athenians want me to treat,—that my artist soul forces me to treat; here are the ideas that make up your conventional religion;—-now look at them!” And forth-with he showed them, in there exoteric side, sordid, ugly and bloody;— and then, on the top of that showing, tried to twist them round to the symbolic impersonal plane again; and so left a discord not properly solved, an imperfect harmony; a sense of loss rather than gain; of much torn down, and nothing built up to take its place. The truth was that the creative forces had flowed downward until the organs of spiritual vision were no longer open; and poetry and art, the proper vehicles of the higher teaching in any age approximately golden, could no longer act as efficient channels for the light.

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To turn to England again: Tennyson was, generally speaking, most successful when most he was content to be merely the artist in words, and least so when he assumed the office of Teacher; because almost all he found to teach was brain-mind scientific stuff; which was what the age called for, and the desired diet of Mid-Victorian England. Carlyle, who was a far greater poet essentially, and a far greater teacher actually, fitted himself to an age when materialism had made unpoetic; and eschewed poetry and had no use for it; and would have had others eschew it also. In our own time we have realists like Mr. Masefield. They are called realists because they work on the plane which has come, in the absence of anything spiritual, to seem that of the realities; the region of outside happenings, of the passions in all their ugly nakedness, of sorrow, misery, and despair. Such men may be essentially noble; we may read in them, under all the ugliness and misery they write down, just one quality of the Soul;—its unrest in and distaste for those conditions; but the mischief of it is that they make the sordidness seem the reality; and the truth about them is that their outlook and way of writing are simply the result of the blindness of the Soul;—its temporary blindness, not its essential glory. But the true business of Poetry never changes; it is to open paths into the inner, the beautiful, the spiritual world.

Just when things were coming to this pass H. P. Blavatsky went to England; and though she did not touch the field of creative literature herself, brought back as you know a gleam of light and beauty into poetry that may yet broaden out and redeem it. She was born when the century was thirty-one years old; and, curiously enough, there was a man born in Attica about 469, or when *his* century was thirty-one years old, who, though he did not himself touch the field of literature, was the cause why that light rose to shine in it which has shone most brilliantly since all down the ages; that light which we could not afford to exchange even for the light of Aeschylus. If one of the two were about to be taken from us, and we had our choice which it should be, we should have to cry, *Take Aeschylus, but leave us this!* —Ay, and take all other Greek literature into the bargain!—But to return to the man born in 469.

He was the son of humble people; his father was a stone-cutter in a small way of business; his mother a midwife. He himself began life as a sculptor,—a calling, in its lower reaches, not so far above that of his father. A group of the Graces carved by him was still to be seen on the road to the Acropolis two hundred years after; and they did not adorn Athens with mean work, one may guess; the Athens of Pericles and Pheidias. But, successful or not, he seems soon to have given it up. Of his youth we know very little. Spintharus, one of the few that knew him then and also when he had become famous, said that he was a man of terrible passions: anger hardly to be governed, and vehement desires; “though,” he added, “he never did anything unfair.” * By ‘unfair’ you may understand ’not fitting’—a transgression of right action. He set out to master himself: a tremendous and difficult realm to master.

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* Gilbert Murray: *Ancient Greek Literature*

We hardly begin to know him till he was growing old; and then he was absolute monarch of that realm. We do not know when he abandoned his art; or how long it was before he had won some fame as a public teacher. We catch glimpse of him as a soldier: from 432 to 429 he served at the siege of Potidaea; at Delium in 424; and at Amphipolis in 422. Thus to do the hoplite, carrying a great weight of arms, at forty-seven, he needed to have some constitution; and indeed he had;—furthermore, he played the part with distinguished bravery—though wont to fall at times into inconvenient fits of abstraction. Beyond all this, for the outside of the man, we may say that he was of fascinating, extreme and satyr-like ugliness and enormous sense of humor; that he was a perpetual joke to the comic poets, and to himself; an old fellow of many and lovable eccentricities; and that you cannot pick one little hole in his character, or find any respect in which he does not call for love.

And men did love him; and he them. He saw in the youth of Athens, whose lives so often were being wasted, Souls with all the beautiful possibilities of Souls; and loved them as such, and drew them towards their soulhood. Such love and insight is the first and strongest weapon of the Teacher: who sees divinity within the rough-hewn personalities of men as the sculptor sees the God within the marble; and calls it forth. He was wont to joke over his calling; his mother, said he, had been a midwife, assisting at the birth of men's bodies; he himself was a midwife of souls. How he drew men to him—of the power he had—let Alcibiades bear witness. "As for myself," says Alcibiades, "were I not afraid you would think me more drunk than I am, I would tell you on oath how his words have moved me—ay, and how they move me still. When I listen to him my heart beats with a more than Corybantic excitement; he has only to speak and my tears flow. Orators, such as Pericles, never moved me in this way— never roused my soul to the thought of my servile condition: but this man makes me think that life is not worth living so long as I am what I am. Even now, if I were to listen, I could not resist. So there is nothing for me but to stop my ears against this siren's song and fly for my life, that I may not grow old sitting at his feet. No one would ever think that I had shame in me; but I am ashamed in the presence of Socrates."

Poor Alciabes! whom Socrates loved so well, and tried so hard to save; and who could only preserve his lower nature for its own and for his city's destruction by stopping his ears against his Teacher! Alcibiades, whose genius might have saved Athens... only Athens would not be saved... and he could not have saved her, because he had stopped his ears against the man who made him ashamed; and because his treacherous lower nature was always there to thwart and overturn the efficacy of his genius;—what a picture of duality it is!

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Socrates gave up his art; because art was no longer useful as an immediate lever for the age. He knew poetry well, but insisted, as Professor Murray I think says, on always treating it as the baldest of prose. There was poetry about, galore; and men did not profit by it: something else was needed. His mission was to the Athens of his day; he was going to save Athens if he could. So he went into the marketplace, the agora, and loafed about (so to say), and drew groups of young men and old about him, and talked to them. The Delphic Oracle had made pronouncement: *Sophocles is wise; Euripides is wiser; but Socrates is the wisest of mankind.* Sometimes, you see, the Delphic Oracle could get off a distinctly good thing. But Socrates, with his usual sense of humor, had never considered himself in that light at all; oldish, yes; and funny, and ugly, by all means;—but wise! He thought at first, he used to say, that the Oracle must be mistaken, or joking; for Athens was full of reputed wise men, sophists and teachers of philosophy like Prodicus and Protagoras; whereas he himself, heaven knew—. Well, he would go out and make a trial of it. So he went, and talked, and probed the wisdom of his fellow-citizens; and slowly came round to the belief that after all the Delphic Oracle might not have been such a fool. For he knew his ignorance; but the rest were ignorant without knowing it. This was his own way of telling the story; and you can never be sure how much camouflage was in it;—and yet, too, he was a giant humorist. Anyhow, he did show men their ignorance; and you all know his solemn way of doing it. He drew them on with sly questionings to see what idiots they were; and then drew them on with more sly questionings to perceive at least a few sound ethical truths.

He took that humble patient means of saving Athens: by breaking down false opinions and instilling true ones. It was beginning quite at the bottom of things. Where we advertise a public lecture, he button-holed a passer-by; and by the great power of his soul won a following presently. To rouse up a desire for right living in the youth of Athens: if he could do that, thought he, he might save Athens for the world. I wonder what the cycles of national glory would come to, how long they might last, if only the Teachers that invade to save them could have their way. Always we see the same picture: the tremendous effort of the Gods to redeem these nations in the times of their creative greatness; to lift them on to a spiritual plane, that the greatness may not wane and become ineffective. There is the figure that stands before the world, about whose perfection or whose qualities you may wrangle if you will; he is great; he is wonderful; he stirs up love and animosity;—but behind him are the Depths, the Hierarchies, the Pantheons. Socrates' warning Voice, the Daimon that counseled him in every crisis, has always been a hard nut for critics to

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crack. He was an impostor, was he? Away with you for a double fool! His life meets you so squarely at every point; there was no atom in his being that knew how to fear or lie.... Well, no; but he was deluded; he mistook—. Man, there is more value in the light word of Socrates affirming, than in a whole world full of evidence denying, of such maunderers as you! See here; he was the most sensible of men; balanced; keeping his head always;—a mind no mood or circumstances could deflect from rational self-control, either towards passion or ecstasy. One explanation remains—as in the case of Joan, or of H.P. Blavatsky;—he was neither deceiving nor deceived, but what he claimed to hear, he did hear; and it was the voice of One that stood behind him, and might not appear in history at all, or in the outer world at all: a greater than he, and his Teacher; whose bodily presence might have been in Greece the while, or anywhere else. How dare we pretend, because we can do a few things with a piston or a crucible, that we know the limits of natural and spiritual law?

It is a strange figure to find in Greece; drawn thither, one would say, by the attraction of opposites. He must have owed some of his power to his being such a contrast to all things familiar. Personal beauty was extremely common, and he was comically ugly. The Athenians were one of the best-educated populations of ancient or modern times —far ahead of ourselves; and he was ill-educated, and acted as a public teacher. He was hen-pecked at home, in an age when the place of woman was a very subordinate and submissive one; and he was the butt of all joke-lovers abroad, and himself enjoyed the joke most of all. And he quietly stood alone, against the mob and his fellow-judges, for the hapless victors of Arginusae in 406; and he quietly stood alone against the Thirty Tyrants during their reign of terror in 404, disobeying them at peril of his life. But Strip him of the “thing of sinews and muscles,” as he called his outer self; forget the queer old personality that appears in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, or for that matter in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon—and what kind of picture of Socrates should we see? The humor would not go, for it is a universal quality; it has been said no Adept was ever without it; could you draw aside the veil of Mother Isis herself, and draw it suddenly, I suspect you should surprise a laugh vanishing from her face. So the humor would remain; and with it there would be ... something calm, aloof, unshakable, yet vitally affectioned towards Athens, the Athenians, humanity; something unsurprised at, far less hoping or fearing anything from, life or death; in possession of “the peace which passeth understanding”; native to “the eternity that baffles all faculty of computation";—-something that drew all sorts and conditions of Athenians to him, good and bad, Plato and Alcibiades, by “that diffusive love, not such as rises and falls upon waves

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of life and mortality, not such as sinks and swells by undulations of time, but a procession, an emanation, from some mystery of endless dawn."—In point of fact, to get a true portrait of Socrates you have to look at the Memnon's head. The Egyptian artists carved it to be the likeness of the Perfect Man, the Soul, always in itself sublime, absolute master of its flesh and personality. That was what Socrates was.

Well; the century ended, with that last quarter of it in which the Lodge makes always its outward effort. Socrates for the Lodge had left no stone unturned; he had made his utmost effort dally. The democracy had been reinstated, and he was understood to be a moderate in politics. And the democracy was conventional-minded in religion; and he was understood to be irreligious, a disturber and innovator. And the democracy was still smarting from the wound; imposed on it by Critias and Charmides, understood to have been his disciples; and could not forget the treacheries of Alcibiades, another. And there were vicious youths besides, whom he had tried and failed to save; they had ruined themselves, and their reputable parents blamed and hated him for the ruin, not understanding the position. And he himself had seen so many of his efforts come to nothing: Alcibiades play the traitor; Critias and Charmides, the bloody tyrant;—he had seen many he had labored for frustrate his labors; he had seen Athens fallen. He had done all he could, quietly, unfailingly and without any fuss; now it was time for him to go. But going, he might yet strike one more great blow for the Light.

So with quiet zest and humor he entered upon the plans of his adversaries, accepting his trial and sentence like—*like Socrates;* for there is no simile for him, outside himself. He turned it all masterfully to the advantage of the Light he loved. You all know how he cracked his grand solemn joke when the death sentence was passed on him. By Athenian law, he might suggest an alternative sentence; as, to pay a fine, or banishment. Well, said he; death was not certainly an evil; it might be a very good thing; whereas banishment was certainly an evil, and so was paying a fine. And besides, he had no money to pay it. So the only alternative he could suggest was that Athens should support him for the rest of his life in the Prytaneum as a public benefactor. Not a smile from him; not a tremor. He elected deliberately; he chose death; knowing well that, as things stood, he could serve humanity in no other way so well. So he put aside Crito's very feasible plan for his escape, and at the last gathered his friends around him, and discoursed to them.

On Reincarnation. It was an old tradition, said he; and what could be more reasonable than that the soul, departing to Hades, should return again in its season:—the living born from the dead, as the dead are from the living? Did not experience show that opposites proceed from opposites? Then life must proceed from, and follow, death. If the dead came from the living, and not the living from the dead, the universe would at last be consumed in death. Then, too, there was the doctrine that knowledge comes

from recollection; what is recollected must have been previously known. Our souls must have existed then, before birth. . . .

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Why did he talk like that: thus *reasoning* about reincarnation, and not stating it as a positive teaching? Well; there would be nothing new and startling about it, to the Greeks. They knew of it as a teaching both of Pythagoras and of the Orphic Mysteries: that is, those did who were initiates or Pythagoreans. But it was not public teaching, known to the multitude; and except among the Pythagoreans, sophistry and speculation had impaired its vitality as a matter of faith or knowledge. (So scientific discovery and the spread of education have impaired the vitality now of Christian presentations of ethics.) So that to have announced it positively, at that time, would have served his purpose but little: men would have said, “We have heard all that before; had he nothing better to give us than stale ideas from the Mysteries or Pythagoras?” What he wanted to do was to take it out of the region of religion, where familiarity with it had bread an approach to contempt; and restate it robbed of that familiarity, and clothed anew in a garb of sweet reasonableness. So once more, and as ususal, he assumed ignorance, and approached the whole subject in a quiet and rational way, thus: I do not say that this is positively so; I do not announce it as a dogma. Dogmas long since have lost their efficacy, and you must stand or fall now by the perceptions of your own souls, not by what I or any authority may tell you. But as reasoning human beings, does it not appeal to you?

And the very spirit in which he approached it and approached his death was precisely the one to engrave his last spoken ideas on the souls of his hearers as nothing else could. No excitement; no uplift or ecstasy of the martyr; quiet reasoning only; full, serene, and, for him, common-place command of the faculties of his mind. The shadow of death made no change in Socrates; how then should they misunderstand or magnify the power of the shadow of death?—“How shall we bury you?” asks Crito. Socrates turns to the others present, and says: “I cannot persuade Crito that I here am Socrates —I who am now reasoning and ordering discourse. He imagines Socrates to be that other, whom he will see by and by, a corpse.”—So the scene went on until the last moment, when “Phaedo veiled his face, and Crito started to his feet, and Apollodorus, who had never ceased weeping all the time, burst out into a loud and angry cry which broke down everyone but Socrates.”

Someone has said that there is nothing in tragedy or history so moving as this death of Socrates, as Plato tells it. And yet its tragic interest, its beauty, is less important, to my thinking, than the insight it gives us into the methods and mental workings of an Adept. Put ourselves into the mind of Socrates. He is going to his death; which to him is about the same as, to us, going to South Ranch or San Diego. You say I am taking the beauty and nobility out of it; but no; I am only trying to

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see what beauty and nobility look like from within. To him, then, his death is in itself a matter of no personal moment. But the habit of his lifetime has been to turn every moment into a blow struck for the Soul, for the Light, for the Cause of Sublime Perfection. And here now is the chance to strike the most memorable blow of all. With infinite calmness he arranges every detail, and proceeds to strike it. He continues to play the high part of Socrates,—that is all. You might go to death like a poet, in love with Death's solemn beauty, you might go to her like a martyr, forgetting the awe of her in forevision of the splendor that lies beyond. But this man broadly and publicly goes to her like Socrates. He will allow her no fascination, no mystery; not even, nor by any means, equality with the Soul of Man. . . . And Apollodorus might weep then, and burst into an angry cry; and Crito and Phaedo and the rest might all break down—*then;* but what were they to think afterwards? When they remembered how they had seen Death and Socrates, those two great ones, meet; and how the meeting had been as simple, as unaffected, as any meeting between themselves and Socrates, any morning in the past, in the Athenian *agora?* And when Death should come to them, what should they say but this: 'There is nothing about you that can impress me; formerly I conversed with one greater than you are, and I saw you pay your respects to Socrates.'

Could he, could any man have proclaimed the Divinity in Man, its real and eternal existence, in any drama, in any poem, in any glorious splendor of rhetoric with what fervor soever of mystical ecstasy endued—with such deadly effectiveness, such inevitable success, as in this simple way he elected? There are men whose actions seem to spring from a source super-ethical: it is cheap to speak of them as good, great, beautiful or sublime: these are but the appearances they assume as we look upwards at them. What they are in themselves is: (1) Compassionate;—it is the law of their being to draw men upwards towards the Spirit; (2) Impersonal;—there is a non-being or vacuity in them where we have our passions, likings, preferences, dislikes and desires. They are, in the Chinese phrase, "the equals of Heaven and Earth";

> "Earth, heaven, and time, death, life and they
> Endure while they shall be to be."

So Socrates, having failed in his life-attempt to save Athens, entered with some gusto on that great *coup de main* of his death: to make it a thing which first a small group of his friends should see; then that Greece should see; then that thirty coming centuries and more should see; presented it royally to posterity, for what, as a manifestation of the Divine in man, it might be worth.

And look! what is the result? Scarcely is the 'thing of muscles and sinews' cold: scarcely has high Socrates forgone his queer satyr-like embodiment: when a new luminary has risen into the firmament,—one to shine through thirty centuries certainly,

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> “Brighter than Jupiter—a blazing star
> Brighter than Hesper shining out to sea”

—one that is still to be splendid in the heavens wherever in Europe, wherever in America, wherever in the whole vast realm of the future men are to arise and make question and peer up into the beautiful skies of the Soul. A Phoenix in time has arisen from the ashes of Socrates: from the glory and solemnity of his death a Voice is mystically created that shall go on whispering *The Soul* wherever men think and strive towards spirituality. —Ah indeed, you were no failure, Socrates—you who were disappointed of your Critias, your Charmides, your Alcibiades, your whole Athens; you were not anything in the very least like a failure; for there was yet one among your disciples—

He says, that one, that he was absent through illness during that last scene of his Teacher’s life. I do not know; it has been thought that may have been merely a pretense, an artistic convention, to give a heightened value of impersonality to his marvelous prose:—for it was he who wrote down the account of the death of Socrates for us: that tragedy so transcendent in its beauty and lofty calm. But this much is certain: that day he was born again: became, from a gilded youth of Athens, an eternal luminary in the heavens, and that which he has remained these three-and-twenty hundred years: the Poet-Philosopher of the Soul, the Beacon of the Spirit for the western world....

He had been a brilliant young aristocrat among the crowd that loved to talk with Socrates: the very best thing that Athens could produce in the way of birth, charm, talent, and attainments;—it is a marvel to see one so worshiped of Fortune in this world, turn so easily to become her best adored in the heaven of the Soul. On his father’s side he was descended from Codrus, last king of Athens; on his mother’s, from Solon: you could get nothing higher in the way of family and descent. In himself, he was an accomplished athlete; a brilliant writer of light prose; a poet of high promise when the mood struck him— and he had ideas of doing the great thing in tragedy presently; trained unusually well in music, and in mathematics; deeply read; with a taste for the philosophies; a man, in short, of culture as deep and balanced as his social standing was high. But it seemed as though the Law had brought all these excellencies together mainly to give the fashionable Athenian world assurance of a man; for here he was in his thirty-first year with nothing much achieved beyond—his favorite pursuit—the writing of *mimes* for the delectation of his set: “close studies of little social scenes and conversations, seen mostly in the humorous aspect.” * He had consorted much with Socrates; at the trial, when it was suggested that a fine might be paid, and the hemlock evitated, it was he who had first subscribed and gone about to raise a sum. But now the death of his friend and Teacher struck him like a great gale amidships; and he was transformed, another man; and the great Star Plato rose, that shines still; the great Voice Plato was lifted to speak for the Soul and to be unequaled in that speaking, in the west, until H.P. Blavatsky came.

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* Murray: *Ancient Greek Literature:*—whence all this as to Plato's youth.

But note what a change had taken place with the ending of the fifth century. Hitherto all the great Athenians had been great Athenians. Aeschylus, witness of eternity, had cried his message down to Athens and to his fellow-citizens; he had poured the waters of eternity into the vial of his own age and place. I speak not of Sophocles, who was well enough rewarded with the prizes Athens had to give him. Euripides again was profoundly concerned with his Athens; and though he was contemned by and held aloof from her, it was the problems of Athens and the time that ate into his soul. Socrates came to save Athens; he did not seek political advancement, but would hold office when it came his way; was enough concerned in politics to be considered a moderate-one cause of his condemnation; but above all devoted himself to raising the moral tone of the Athenian youth and clearing their minds of falsity. Finally, he gave loyalty to his city and its laws as one reason for rejecting Crito's plan for his escape. What he hoped and lived for was, to save Athens; and he was the more content to die, when he saw that this was no longer possible.

But Plato had no part nor lot in Athens. He loathed her doctrine of democracy, as knowing it could come to no good. He had affiliations, like Aeschylus, in Sicily, whither he made certain journeys; and might have stayed there among his fellow Pythagoreans, but for the irascible temper of Dionysius. But much more, and most of all, his affiliations were in the wide Cosmos and all time: as if he foresaw that on him mainly would devolve the task of upholding spiritual ideas in Europe through the millenniums to come. He dwelt apart, and taught in the Groves of Academe outside the walls. Let Athens' foolish politics go forward as they might, or backward—he would meddle with nothing. It has been brought against him that he did nothing to help his city 'in her old age and dotage'; well, he had the business of thousands of coming years and peoples to attend to, and had no time to be accused, condemned, and executed by a parcel of obstreperous cobblers and tinkers hot-headed over the petty politics of their day. The Gods had done with Athens, and were to think now of the great age of darkness that was to come. He was mindful of a light that should arise in Egypt, after some five hundred years; and must prepare wick and oil for the Neo-Platonists. He was mindful that there should be a thing called the Renaissance in Italy; and must attend to what claims Pico di Mirandola and others should make on him for spiritual food. He must consider Holland of the seventeenth century, and England: the Platonists of Cambridge and Amsterdam;—must think of Van Helmont; and of a Vaughan who 'saw eternity the other night'; of a Traherne, who should never enjoy the world aright without some illumination from his star; of a young Milton, *penseroso,* out watching the Bear in some high lonely tower with thrice-great Hermes, who should unsphere his spirit,

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"..... to unfold
What worlds and what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshy nook";

—no, but he must think of all times coming; and how, whenever there should be any restlessness against the tyranny of materialism and dogma, a cry should go up for *Plato.*—So let Isocrates, the 'old man eloquent,'—let a many-worded not unpeculant patriotic Demosthenes who knew nothing of the God-world—attend to an Athens wherein the Gods were no longer greatly interested;—the great Star Plato should rise up into mid-heaven, and shine not in, but high over Athens and quite apart from her; drawing from her indeed the external elements of his culture, but the light and substance from that which was potent in her no longer.

I said Greece served the future badly enough. Consider what might have been. The pivot of the Mediterranean world, in the sixth century, was not Athens, but in Magna Graecia: at Croton, where Pythagoras had built his school. But the mob wrecked Croton, and smashed the Pythagorean Movement as an organization; and that, I take it, and one other which we shall come to in time, were the most disastrous happenings in European history. Yes; the causes why Classical civilization went down; why the Dark Ages were dark; why the God in Man his been dethroned, and suffered all this crucifixion and ignominy the last two thousand years. Aeschylus, truly, received some needed backing from the relics of the Movement which he found still existent in Sicily; but what might he not have written, and what of his writings might not have come down to us, preserved there in the archives, had he had the peace and elevation of a Croton, organized, to retire to? Whither, too, Socrates might have gone, and not to death, when Athens became impossible; where Plato might have dwelt and taught; revealing, to disciples already well-trained, much more than ever he did reveal; and engraving, oh so deeply! on the stuff of time, the truths that make men free. And there he should have had successors and successors and successors; a line to last perhaps a thousand or two thousand years; who never should have let European humanity forget such simple facts as Karma and Reincarnation. But only at certain times are such great possibilities presented to mankind; and a seed-time once passed, there can be no sowing again until the next season comes. It is no good arguing with the Law of Cycles. Plato may not have been less than Pythagoras; yet, under the Law, he might not attempt— it would have been folly for him to have attempted—that which Pythagoras had attempted. So he had to take another line altogether; to choose another method; not to try to prevent the deluge, which was certain now to come; not even to build an ark, in which something should be saved; but, so to say, to strew the world with tokens which, when the great waters had subsided, should still remain to remind men of those things it is of most importance they should know.

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This is the way he did it. He advanced no dogma, formulated no system; but what he gave out, he gave rather as hypotheses. His aim was to set in motion a method of thinking which should lead always back to the Spirit and Divine Truth. He started no world-religion; founded no church—not even such a quite unchurchly church as that which came to exist on the teachings of Confucius. He never had the masses practicing their superstitions, nor a priesthood venting its lust of power, in his name. Instead, he arranged things so, that wherever fine minds have aspired to the light of the Spirit, Plato has been there to guide them on their way. So you are to see Star-Plato shining, you are to hear that voice from the Spheres at song, when Shelley, reaching his topmost note, sang:

“The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven’s light forever shines, Earth’s shadows fly;
Life like a dome of many-coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of Eternity";—

and when Swinburne sings of Time and change that:

“Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
But the Stars keep their ageless rhyme;
Flowers they can slay that Spring thought sweet,
But the Stars keep their Spring sublime,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the Soul.”

In a poetic age—in the time of Aeschylus, for example—Plato would have been a poet; and then perhaps we should have had to invent another class of poets, one above the present highest; and reserve it solely for the splendor of Plato. Because Platonism is the very Theosophic Soul of Poetry. But he came, living when he did, to loathe the very name of poetry: as who should say: “God pity you! I give you the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and you make answer, ’Charming Plato, how exquisitely poetic is your prose!’” So his bitterness against poetry is very natural. Poetry is the inevitable vehicle of the highest truth; spiritual truth is poetry. But the world in general does not know this. Like Bacon, it looks on poetry as a kind of pleasurable lying. Plato went through the skies Mercury to the Sun of Truth, its nearest attendant planet; and therefore was, and could not help being, Very-Poet of very-poets. But Homer and others had lied loudly about the Gods; and, thought Plato, the Gods forbid that the truth he had to declare—a vital matter— should be classed with their loud lying.

He masked the batteries of his Theosophy; camouflaged his great Theosophical guns; but fired them off no less effectively, landing his splendid shells at every ganglionic point in the history of European thought since. Let a man soak his soul in Plato; and it shall go hard but the fair flower Theosophy shall spring up there presently and bloom. He

prepares the soil: suggesting the way to, rather than precisely formulating, the high teachings. The

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advantage of the grand Platonic camouflage has been twofold: on the one hand you could hardly dwarf your soul with dogmatic acceptation of Platonism, because he gave all his teachings—even Reincarnation—as hypotheses,—and men do not as a rule crucify their mental freedom on an hypothesis. On the other hand, how was any Church eager to burn out heresy and heretics to deal with him? He was not to be stamped out; because his influence depended on no continuity of discipleship, no organization; because he survived merely as a tendency of thought. No churchly fulminations might silence his batteries; because he had camouflaged them, and they were not to be seen. Of course he did not invent his ideas; they are as old as Theosophy. The Lodge sent him to proclaim them in the way he did: the best way possible, since the Pythagorean effort had failed of its greatest success. What we owe to him—his genius and inestimable gift to the world—is precisely that matchless camouflage. It has been effective, in spite of efforts—

That, for instance, of a forward youth who came to Athens and studied under him for twenty years, and whom Plato called the intellect of the school, saying that he spurned his Teacher as colts do their mothers. A youth, it is said, who revered Plato always; and only gradually grew away from thinking of himself as a Platonist. But he never could have understood the inwardness of Plato or Platonism, for his mind turned as naturally to scientific or brain-mind methods, as Plato's did to mysticism and the illumination of the Soul. He adopted much of the teaching, but gave it a twist brain-mindwards; yet not such a twist, either, but that the Neo-Platonists in their day, and certain of the Arab and Turkish philosophers after them, could re-Platonize it to a degree and admit him thus re-Platonized into their canon. I am not going to trouble you much with Aristotle; let this from the Encyclopedia suffice: "Philosophic differences" it says "are best felt by their practical effects: philosophically, Platonism is a philosophy of universal forms, Aristotelianism is a philosophy of individual substances: practically, Plato makes us think first of the supernatural and the kingdom of heaven, Aristotle of the natural and the whole world."

Or briefly, Aristotle took what he could of Plato's inspiration, and turned it from the direction of the Soul to that of the Brain-mind. The most famous of Plato's disciples, he did what he could, or what he could not help doing, to spoil Plato's message. But Plato's method had guarded that, so that for mystics it should always be there, Aristotle or no. But for mere philosophers, seeming to improve on it, he had something tainted it. It descended, as said, through the Neo-Platonists—who turned it back Plato-ward—-to the Moslems: through Avicenna, who Aristotelianized, to Averroes, who Platonized it again; and from him to Europe; where Bacon presently gave it another twist to out-Aristotle Aristotle (as someone said) to stagger the Stagirite—and passed it on as the scientific method of today. According to Coleridge, every man is by nature either a Platonist or an Aristotelian; and there is some truth in it.

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And meanwhile, though the huge Greek illumination could die but slowly, Greece was growing uninteresting. For Pheidias of the earlier century, we have in Plato's time Praxiteles, whose carved gods are lounging and pretty nincom—— well, mortals; "they sink," says the Encyclopedia, "to the human level, or indeed, sometimes almost below it. They have grace and charm in a supreme degree, but the element of awe and reverence is wanting."—We have an Aphrodite at the bath, a 'sweet young thing' enough, no doubt; an Apollo Sauroctonos, "a youth leaning against a tree, and idly striking with an arrow at a lizard." A certain natural magic has been claimed for Praxiteles and his school and contemporaries; but if they had it, they mixed unholy elements with it.—And then came Alexander, and carried the dying impetus eastward with him, to touch India with it before it quite expired; and after that Hellenism became Hellenisticism, and what remained of the Crest-Wave in Greece was nothing to lose one little wink of sleep over.

VII. THE MAURYAS OF INDIA

"Some talk of Alexander" may be appropriate here; but not much. He was Aristotle's pupil; and apart from or beyond his terrific military genius, had ideas. Genius is sometimes, perhaps more often than we suspect, an ability to concentrate the mind into a kind of impersonality; almost non-existence, so that you have in it a channel for the great forces of nature to play through. We shall find that Mr. Judge's phrase 'the Crest-Wave of Evolution' is no empty one: words were things, with him and in fact, as he says; and it is so here. For this Crest-Wave is a force that actually rolls over the world as a wave over the face of the sea, raising up splendors in one nation after another in order *geographically,* and with no haphazard about it. Its first and largest movement is from East to West; producing (as far as I can see) the great manvantaric periods (fifteen hundred years apiece) in East Asia, West Asia, and Europe; each of these being governed by its own cycles. But it has a secondary movement as well; a smaller motion within the larger one; and this produces the brilliant days (thirteen decades long for the most part) that recur in the manvantaras. Thus: China seems to have been in manvantara from 2300 to 850 B. C.; West Asia, from 1890 to 390; Europe, from 870 B. C. to 630 A. D. So in the time of Alexander West Asia was newly dead, and China waiting to be reborn. The Crest-Wave, in so far as it concerned the European manvantara, had to roll westward from Greece (in its time) to awaken Italy; but in its universal aspect—in its strongest force—it had to roll eastward, that its impulse might touch more important China when her time for awaking should come. It is an impetus, of which sometimes we can see the physical links and lines along which it travels, and sometimes we cannot. The line from Greece to China lies

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through Persia and India. But Persia was dead, in pralaya; you could expect no splendor, no mark of the Crest-Wave's passing, there. So Alexander, rising by his genius and towering ideas to the plane where these great motions are felt, skips you lightly across dead Persia, knocks upon the doors of India to say that it is dawn and she must be up and doing; and subsides. I doubt he carried her any cultural impulse, in the ordinary sense; it is *our* Euro-American conceit to imagine the Greek was the highest thing in civilization in the world at that time. We may take it that Indian civilization was far higher and better in all esentials; certainly the Greeks who went there presently, and left a record, were impressed with that fact. You shall see; out of their own mouths we will convict them. It is the very burden of Megasthenes' song.

Alexander had certain larger than Greek conceptions, which one must admire in him. Though he overthrew the Persians, he never made the mistake of thinking them an inferior race. On the contrary, he respected them highly; and proposed to make of them and his Greeks and Mecedoinians one homogeneous people, in which the Persian qualities of aristocracy should supply a need he felt in Europeans. The Law made use of his intention, partially, and to the furtherance of its own designs.—His method of treating the conquered was (generally) far more Persian or Asiatic than Greek; that is to say, far more humane and decent than barbarous. He took a short cut to his broad ends, and married all his captains to Persian ladies, himself setting the example; whereas most Greeks would have dealt with the captive women very differently. So that it was a kind of enlightenment he set out with, and carried across Persia, through Afghanistan, and into the Punjab,—which, we may note, was but the outskirts of the real India, into which he never penetrated; and it may yet be found that he went by no means so far as is supposed; but let that be. So now, at any rate, enough of him; he has brought us where we are to spend this evening.

For a student of history, there is something mysterious and even —to use a very vile drudge of a word—'unique' about India. Go else where you will, and so long as you can posit certainly a high civilization, and know anything of its events, you can make some shift to arrange the history. None need boggle really at any Chinese date after about 2350 B.C.; Babylon is fairly settled back to about 4000; and if you cannot depend on assigned Egyptian dates, at least there is a reasonably know sequence of dynasties back through four or five millennia. But come to India, and alas, where are you? All out of it, chronologically speaking; enough; very likely, the flotsam and jetsam of several hundred thousand years. I have no doubt the Puranas are crowded with history; but how much of what is related is to be taken as plain fact; how much as 'blinds'; how much as symbolism—only the Adepts know.

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The three elements are mingled beyond the wit of man to unravel them; so that you can hardly tell whether any given thing happened in this or that millennium, Root-Race period, or Round of Worlds, or Day of Brahma. You are in the wild jungles of fairyland; where there are gorgeous blooms, and idylls, dreamlit, beautiful and fantastical, all in the deep midwood lonliness; and time is not, and the computations of chronology are an insult to the spirit of your surroundings. History, in India, was kept an esoteric science, and esoteric all the ancient records remain now; and I dare say any twice-born Brahmin not Oxfordized knows far more about it than the best Max Mullers of the west, and laughs at them quietly. Until someone will voluntarily lift that veil of esotericism, the speculations of western scholars will go for little. Why it should be kept esoteric, one can only guess; I think if it were known, the cycles and patterns of human history would cease to be so abstruse and hidden from us: we should know too much for our present moral or spiritual status. As usual, our own *savants* are avid to dwarf all dates, and bring everything within the scope of a few thousand years; as for the native authorities, they simply try confusions with us; if you should trust them too literally, or some of them, events such as the Moslem conquest will not take place for a few centuries yet. They do not choose that their ancient history should be known; so all things are in a hopeless muddle.

One thing to remember is this: it is a continent, like Europe; not a country, like France. The population is even more heterogeneous than that of Europe. Only one sovereign, Aurangzeb —at least for many thousands of years—was ever even nominally master of the whole of it. There are two main divisions, widely different: Hindustan or Aryavarta, north of the Vindhya Mountains and the River Nerbudda; and Dakshinapatha or the Deccan, the peninsular part to the south. The former is the land of the Aryans; the people of the latter are mainly non-Aryan—a race called the Dravidians whom, apparently, the Aryans conquered in Hindustan, and assimilated; but whom in the Deccan, though they have influenced them largely, and in part molded their religion, they never quite conquered or supplanted. Well; never is a long day; dear knows what may have happened in the long ages of pre-history.

The Aryans came down into India through its one open door—that in the northwest. But when?—Oh, from about 1400 to 1200 B.C., says western scholarship; which has spent too much ingenuity altogether over discovering the original seat of the Aryans, and their primal civilization. After Sir William Jones and others had introduce Sanskrit to western notice, and its affinity had been discovered to that whole chain of languages which is sometimes called Indo-European, the theory long held that Sanskrit was the parent of all these tongues, and that all their speakers

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had emigrated at different times from somewhere in Central Asia. But in the scientific orthodoxies fashion reigns and changes as incontinently as in dress. Scholars rose to launch a new name for the race: *Indogermanic;* and to prove Middle-Europe the Eden in which it was created. Then others, to dodge that Eden about through every corner of Europe; which at least must have the honor;—it could not be conceded to *inferior* Asia. All the languages of the group were examined and worried for evidence. Men said, 'By the names of trees we shall run it to earth'; and this was the doxy that was ortho-for some time. Light on a tree-name common to all the languages, and find in what territory that tree is indigenous: that will certainly be the place. As thus; I will work out for you a suggestion given in the encyclopaedia, that you may see what strictly scientific methods of reasoning may lead to:—

Perhaps the two plant names most universally met with in all Aryan languages, European or Asiatic, are *potato* and *tobacco.* 'From Greenland's icy mountains to Ceylon's sunny isle, Whereever prospect pleases, And only man is vile.'—you shall nearly always hear the vile ones calling the humble tuber of their mid-day meal by some term akin to *potato,* and the subtle weed that companions their meditations, by some word like *tobacco. Argal,* the Aryan race used these two words before their separation; and if the two words, the two plants also. You follow the reasoning?—Now then, seek out the land where these plants are indigenous; and if haply it shall be found they both have one original habitat, why, there beyond doubt you shall find the native seat of the primitive Aryans. And, glory be to Science! they do; both come from Virginia. Virginia, then, is the Aryan Garden of Eden.

Ah but, strangely enough, we do find one great branch of the race—the Teutons—-unacquainted with the word *potato.* You may argue that the French are too: but luckily, Science has the seeing eye; Science is not to be cheated by appearances. The French say *pomme de terre;* but this is evidently only a corruption—*potater, pomdeter*—twisted at some late period by false analogy into *pomme de terre,* ('apple of the earth'.) But the Teuton has *kartoffel,* utterly different; argal again, the Teutons must have separated from the parent stem before the Aryans had discovered that the thing was edible and worth naming. They, therefore, were the first to leave Virginia: paddle their own canoes off to far-away Deutschland before ever the mild Hindoo set out for Hindustan, the Greek for Greece, or the Anglo-Saxon for Anglo-Saxony. But even the Teutons have the word *tobacco.* Come now, what a light we have here thrown on the primitive civilization of our forefathers! They knew, it seems, the virtures of the weed or ever they had boiled or fried a single murphy; they smoked first,

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and only ate long afterwards: and the Germans who led that first expedition out from the fatherland of the race, must have gone with full tobacco-pouches and empty lunch-bags. What a life-like picture rises before our eyes! These first Aryans were a dreamy contemplative people; tobacco was the main item in their lives, the very basis of their civilization.—Then presently, after the Teutons had gone, someone must have let his pipe go out for a few minutes—long enought to discover that he was hungry, and that a fair green plant was growing at his door, with a succulent tuber at the root of it which one could EAT. Think of the joy, the wonder, of that momentous discovery! Did he hide it away, lest others should be as happy as himself? Were ditectives set to watch him, to spy out the cause of a habit of sleek rotundity that was growing upon him at last visibly? We shall never know. Or did he call in his neighbors at once and annouce it? Did someone ask: 'What shall we name this God-given thing?'—and did another reply: 'It looks to me like a *potato;* let's call it that!'? That at least must have been how it came by it name. They received the suggestion with acclamations: and all future out-going expeditions took sacks of it with them; and their descendants have continued to call it *potato* to this day. For you must not that being the only food with a name common to all the languages—or almost all —it must be supposed to have been the only food they knew of before their separation. Even the words for *father, mother, fire, water,* and the like, have a greater number of different roots in the Aryan languages than have these blessed two.

To say the truth, a dawning perception of the possibilities of this kind of reasoning chilled the enthusiasm of the Aryan-hunters a good deal; it was the bare bodkin that did quietus make for much philological pother and rout. No; if you are to prove racial superiority or exclusiveness, you had much better avail yourself of the simplicity of a stout bludgeon, than rely upon the subtleties of brain-mind argumentation; for time past is long, and mostly hidden; and lots of things have happened to account for your proofs in ways you would never suspect. The long and short of it is, that after pursuing the primitive Aryans up hill and down dale through all parts of Europe, Science is forced to pronouce her final judgement thus: *We really know nothing about it.*

The ancestors of this Fifth Root-Race emigrated to Central Asia to escape the fate of Atlantis; whither too went several Atlantean peoples, such as the forefathers of the Chinese,—who were not destined to be destroyed. It is a vast region, and there was room for them all. That emigration may have been as long a process as that of the Europeans in our own time to America; probably it was; or longer. But it happened, at any rate, a million years ago; and in a million years a deal of water will flow under

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the bridges. You may call English a universal language now; it might conceivably become so absolutely, after a few centuries. But history will go on and time, and the cyclic changes inherent in natural law. These are not to be dodged by railways, turbines, aeroplanes; you cannot evitate their action by inventing printing-presses;—-which, I suppose, have been invented and forgotten dozens of times 'since created man.' In a million years from now the world will have contracted and expanded often. We have seen, in our little period called historical, hardly anything but expansion; though there have been contractions, too. But contractions there will be, major ones; it is quite safe to foretell that; because action and reaction are equal and opposite: it is a fundamental law. Geography will re-become, what it was in the times we call ancient, an esoteric science; the races will be isolated, and there will be no liners on the seas, and Europe and Asia will be fabulous realms of faerie for our more or less remote descendants. Then what will have become of the once universal English language?—It will have split into a thousand fragment tongues, as unlike as Dutch and Sanskrit; and philology—the great expansion having happened again—will have as much confusion to unravel in the Brito-Yankish, as it has now in the Indo-European.—In a million years?—-Bless my soul, in a poor little hundred thousand!

The Aryan languages, since they began to be, have been spreading out and retreating, mixing and changing and interchanging; one imposed on another, hidden under another, and recrudescing through another; through ten or a hundred thousand years,—or however long it may be; just as they have been doing in historical times. You find Persian half Arabicized; Armenian come to be almost a dialect of Persian; Latin growing up through English; Greek almost totally submerged under Latin, Slavonic, and Turkish, and now with a tendency to grow back into Greek; Celtic preserving in itself an older than Aryan syntax, and conveying that in its turn to the English spoken by Celts. Language is, to say the truth, a shifting kaleidoscopic thing: a momentary aspect of racial expression. In a thousand years it becomes unintelligible; we are modifying ours every day, upon laws whose nature can be guessed. Yet ultimately all is a symphony and ordered progression, with regular rhythms recurring; it only seems a chaos, and unmusical, because we hear no more than the fragment of a bar.

You all know the teaching of *The Secret Doctrine* about the Root-Races of Humanity, of which this present one, generally called the Aryan, is the fifth; and how each is divided into seven sub-races; each sub-race into seven family-races; and each family-race into innumerable nations and tribes. According to that work, this Fifth Root-Race has existed a million years. The period of a sub-race is said to be about 210,000 years; and that of a family-race, about

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30,000. So then, four sub-races would have occupied the first 840,000 years of the Fifth Race's history; and our present fifth sub-race would have been in being during the last 160,000 years; in which time five family-races would have flourished and passed; and this present sixth family-race would be about ten millenniums old. Now, no single branch of the Aryans: by which term I mean the sixth family-race; I shall confine it to that, and not apply it to the Fifth Root-Race as a whole,—no single race among the Aryans has been universal, or dominant, or prominent even, during the whole of the last ten thousand years. The Teutons (including Anglo-Saxons), who loom so largely now, cut a very small figure in the days when Latin was, in its world, something more universal than English is in ours; and a few centuries before that, you should have heard Celtic, and little else, almost anywhere in Europe. This shows how fleeting a thing is the sovereignty of any language; within the three thousand years we know about, three at least of the Aryan language-groups have been 'universal'; within the last ten milleniums there has been time enough, and to spare, for a 'universality' each of Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Slavonic, Latin, Teutonic, and Celtic. So evidently none of these is the language of the family-race: we may speak of the Aryan Family-Race; not of the Celtic or Slavonic.

But it does not follow that the whole sub-race is not Aryan too. Mr. Judge says somewhere that Sanskrit will be the universal language again. Supposing that there were some such scheme of evolution here, as in the world-chain? You know the diagram in *The Secret Doctrine,* with the teaching as to the seven rounds. *As above, so below;* when H. P. Blavatsky seems to be giving you a sketch of cosmic evolution, often she is at the same time, if you can read it, telling you about the laws that govern your own and the race's history. I suspect some such arrangement as this: when the sub-race began, 160,000 years ago, Sanskrit was its 'universal' language; spoken by all the Aryans that moved out over Europe and into India. An unaccountable Sanskrit inscription has been found in Asia Minor;* and there is Lithuania, a little speech-island in northeastern Central Europe, where a nearly Sanskrit language, I believe, survives. Then Sanskrit changed imperceptibly (as American is changing from English) into the parent language of the Persian group, which became the general speech of the sub-race except in India, where Sanskrit survived as a *seed-speech* for future resurrection. Then, perhaps *pari passu* with further westward expansion, Persian changed into the parent of the Slavonic group, itself living on as a seed-speech in Iran; and so on through all the groups; in each case the type-language of a group remaining, to expand again after the passage of ages and when its cycle should return, in or about its corresponding psychic center on the geographical plane. Then this evolution, having reached its farthest limit, began to retrace its course; I would not attempt to say in what order the language groups come: which is globe A in the chain, which Globe D, and so on; but merely suggest that a 'family race' may represent one round from Sanskrit to Sanskrit; and the whole Fifth Sub-race, seven such complete rounds.

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* *Ancient India,* by E. J. Rapson

What came before? What was the Fourth Sub-race? Well: I imagine we may have the relic, the *sishta* or seed of it, in the Hamitic peoples and languages: the Libyans, Numidians, Egyptians, Iberians, and Pelasgians of old; the Somalis, Gallas, Copts, Berbers, and Abyssinians of today. We are almost able to discern a time—but have not guessed when it was—when this Iberian race, having perhaps its central seat in Egypt, held all or most lands as far as Ireland to the west, and Japan and New Zealand eastward; we find them surviving, mixed with, but by no means submerged under, Aryan Celts in Spain—which is Iberia; we find their name (I imagine) in that of Iverne, Ierine, Hibernia, or Ireland; we know that they gave the syntax of their language to that of the Celts of the British Isles; and that the Celtic races of today are mainly Iberian in blood—I daresay all Europe is about half Iberian in blood, as a matter of fact;—that the Greeks found them in Greece: I suspect that the main difference between Sparta and Athens lay in the fact that Sparta was pure Aryan, Athens mainly Iberian.—It seems to me then that we can almost get a glimpse of the sub-race preceding our own. Some have been puzzled by a seeming discrepancy between Katherine Tingley's statement that Egypt is older than India, and H. P. Blavatsky's, that Menes, founder of the Egyptian monarchy, went from India to Egypt to found it. But now suppose that something like this happened—would it not solve the problem?—In 158,000 B. C., or at the time this present Aryan Sub-race began, Egypt, one state in the huge Iberian series, was already a seat of civilization as old as the Iberian race. There may have been an Iberian Empire, almost world-wide; which again may have split into many kingdoms; and as the star of the whole race was declining, we may suppose Egypt in some degree of pralaya; or again, that it may have been an outlying and little-considered province *at that time.* In Central Asia the Sanskrit-speaking tribe begins to increase and multiply furiously. They pour down into Iberian Hindustan. They are strong, and the Gods are leading them; the Iberians have grown world-weary with the habit of long empire. The Iberian power goes down before them; the Iberians become a subject people. But there is one Menes among the latter, of the royal house perhaps, who will not endure subjection. He stands out as long as he may; then sails west with his followers for Iberian lands that the Aryans have not disturbed, and are not likely to. In their contests with the invaders of India, they have thrown off all world-weariness, and become strong; Prince Menes is hailed in Egypt (as the last of the Ommevads, driven out from the East by the Abbasids, was hailed in Spain); he wakens Egypt, and founds a new monarchy there.—I am telling the tale of very ancient and unknown conditions in terms of historic conditions we know about and can understand; it is only the skeleton of the story I would stand for.

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And to put Menes back at 160,000 years ago—what an amusing idea that will seem!—-But the truth is we must wage war against this mischievous foreshortening of history. I have no doubt there have been empires going, from time to time, in Egypt, since before Atlantis fell; people have the empire-building instinct, and it is an eminently convenient place for empire-building. I have no doubt there have been dozens of different Meneses—that is, founders of Egyptian monarchies,—with thousands of years between each two. But I think probably the one that came from India to do it, came about the time when the fifth sub-race rose to supplant the fourth as that section of humanity in which evolution was chiefly interested.

Which last phrase in itself is rank heresy, and smacks of the ‘white man’s burden,’ and all such nonsense as that. We might learn a lesson here. Think: since that time, during how many thousands of years, off and on, has not that old sub-race been the darling of evolution, the seat of the Crest-Wave, and place where all things were doing? All the Setis, the grand Rameseses and Thothmeses came since then; all the historic might and glory of Egypt. You never know rightly when to say that the life of a sub-race is ended; the two-hundred-and-ten-century period cannot, I imagine, include it from birth to death; but can only mark the time between the rise of one, and the rise of another.—But now to India.

We have no knowledge of the last time when Sanskrit was spoken: it has always been, in historic or quasi-historic ages, what it is now—literary language preserved by the high castes. In the days of the Buddha it had long given place to various vernaculars grown out of it: Pali, and what are called the Prakrits.—We have lost memory of what I may call the archetypal languages of Europe: the common ancestor of the Celtic group, for instance; or that Italian from which Latin and the lost Oscan and Savellian and the rest sprang. No matter; they remain in the ideal world, and I doubt not in the course of our cyclic evolution we shall return to them, take them up, and pass through them again. But it seems to me that in the land of Esoteric History, where Manu provided in advance against the main destructiveness of war, the archetypal language of the whole sub-race has been preserved. The Aryans went down into India, and there, at the extreme end of the Aryan world, enjoyed some of the advantages of isolation: they were in a backwater, over which the tides of the languages did not flow. By esotericizing their history, I imagine they have really kept it intact, continuous, and within human memory; as we have not done with ours. As if that which is to be preserved forever, must be preserved in secret; and silence were the only durable casket for truth.

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The Greeks, they say, were very gifted liars; but I do not see why we should suppose them lying, when they sang the superiorities of Indian things and people;—*as they did.* The Indians, says Megasthenes, were taller than other men, and of greater distinction and prouder bearing. The air and water of their land were the purest in the world; so you would expect in the people, the finest culture and skill in the arts. Almost always they gathered two harvests in the years; and *famine had never visited India.*—You see, railways, quick communications, and all the appliances of modern science and invention cannot do as much for India in pralaya, as her own native civilization could do for her in manvantara.—Then he goes on to show how that civilization guarded against famine and many other things; and incidentally to prove it not only much higher than the Greek, but much higher than our own. I said Manu provided in advance against the main destructiveness of war: here was the custom, which may have been dishonored in the breach sometimes, but still *was the custom.*—The whole continent was divided into any number of kingdoms; mutually antagonistic often, but with certain features of homogeneity that made the name Aryavarta more than a geographical expression. I am speaking of the India Megasthenes saw, and as it had been then for dear knows how long. It had made concessions to human weakness, yes; had fallen, as I think, from an ancient unity; it had not succeeded in abolishing war. It was open to any king to make himself a Chakravartin, or world-sovereign, if he disposed of the means for doing so: which means were military. As this was a well-recognised principle, wars were by no means rare. But with them all, what a Utopia it was, compared to Christendom! There was never a draft or conscription. Of the four castes, the Kshatriya or warrior alone did the fighting. While the conches brayed, and the war-cars thundered over Kurukshetra; while the pantheons held their breath, watching Arjun and mightiest Karna at battle—the peasants in the next field went on hoeing their rice; they knew no one was making war on them. They trusted Gandiva, the goodly bow, to send no arrows their way; their caste was inviolable, and sacred to the tilling of the soil. Megasthenes notes it with wonder. War implied no ravaging of the land, no destruction of crops, no battering down of buildings, no harm whatever to non-combatants.

Kshatriya fought Kshatriya. If you were a Brahmin: which is to say, a theological student, or a man of letters, a teacher or what not of the kind—you were not even called up for physical examination. If you were a merchant, you went on quietly with your ‘business as usual.’ A mere patch of garden, or a peddler’s tray, saved you from all the horrors of a questionnaire. Kshatriya fought Kshatriya, and no one else; and on the battlefield, and nowhere else. The victor became possessed of the territory of the vanquished; and there was no more fuss or botheration about it.

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And the vanquished king was not dispossessed, Saint Helenaed, or beheaded. Simply, he acknowledged his conqueror as his overlord, paid him tribute; perhaps put his own Kshatriya army at his disposal; and went on reigning as before. So Porus met Alexander without the least sense of fear, distrust, or humiliation at his defeat. "How shall I treat you?" said the Macedonian. Porus was surprised.—"I suppose," said he in effect, "as one king would treat another"; or, "like a gentleman." And Alexander rose to it; in the atmosphere of a civilization higher than anything he knew, he had the grace to conform to usage. Manu imposed his will on him. Porus acknowledged him for overlord, and received accretions of territory.—This explains why all the changes of dynasty, and the many conquests and invasions have made so little difference as hardly to be worth recording. They effected no change in the life of the people. Even the British Raj has been, to a great degree, molded to the will of Manu. Each strong native state is ruled by its own Maharaja, who acknowledges the Kaiser-i-Hind at London for his overlord, and lends him at need his Moslem or Kshatriya army.—All of which proves, I think, the extreme antiquity of the svstem: which is so firmly engraved in the prototypal world—the astral molds are so strong—that no outside force coming in has been able materially to change it. The Greek invasion goes wholy unnoticed in Indian literature.

Which brings us back to Alexander. If he got as far as to the Indus;—he got no farther. There were kingdoms up there in the northwest—perhaps no further east than Afghanistan and Baluchistan—which had formed part of the empire of Darius Hystaspes, and sent contingents to fight under Xerxes in Greece; and these now Alexander claimed as Darius Codomannus's successor. But even in these outlying regions, he found conditions very different from those in Persia: there was no "unquestionable superiority of the European to the Asiatic," nor nothing like. Had he gone further, and into the real India of the Ganges valley, his name, it is likely, would not have come down synonymous with victory; presentlv we will call Megasthenes to witness again as to the "unquestionable superiority of the Asiatic to the European." But thither the Macedonians refused to follow their king; and I suppose he wept rather over their insubordination, than for any overwhelmment with a sense of terrene limits. For he knew well that there was plenty more world to conquer, could one conquer it: rich and mighty kingdoms beyond that Thar Desert his soldiers are said to have refused to cross. He knew, because there were many to tell him: exiled princes and malcontents from this realm and that, each with his plan for self-advancement, and for using the Macedonia as a catspaw. Among them one in particular: as masterful a man as Alexander, and a potential world-conqueror himself. He was (probably) a more or less illegitimate scion of the

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House of Nanda, then reigning in Magadha; which country, now called Behar, had been growing at the expense of its Gangetic neighbors for some centuries. King Suddhodana, the Buddha's father, had reigned over the Sakyas in Nepaul as a tributary under the king of Magadha; which statement I let pass, well aware that the latest western scholarship has revolutionized the Sakyas into a republic—perhaps with soviets,—and King Suddhodana himself into a mere ward politician.

This Sandrakottos, as the Greeks called him, had many tales to tell of the wealth of his kinsman's kingdom, and of the extreme unpopularity of its ruler:-and therefore of the ease with which Alexander might conquer it and hand it over to him. But two of a trade seldom agree; both he and his host were born to rule empires; and presently he offended susceptibilities, and had to flee the camp. Whereupon he shortly sharked up a list of landless reprobates, Kshatriyas at a loose end, for food and diet; and the enterprise with a stomach in't was, as soon as Alexander's back was turned, to drive out the Macedonian garrisons. This done, he marched eastward as king of the Indus region, conquered Magadha, slew his old enemy the Nanda king with all male members of the family, and reigned in his stead as Chandragupta I, of the house of Maurya. That was in 321. Master then of a highly trained army of about 700,000, he spread his empire over all Hindustan. In 305, Seleucus Nicator, Alexander's successor in Asia, crossed the Indus with an army, and was defeated; and in the treaty which followed, gave up to Chandragupta all claim to the Indian provinces, together with the hand of his daughter in marriage.—and received by way of compensation 500 elephants that might come in useful in his wars elsewhere. Also he sent Megisthenes to be his ambassador at Pataliputra, Chandragupta's capital; and Megasthenes wrote; and in a few quotations from his lost book that remain, chiefly in Arrian,—we get a kind of window wherethrough to look into India: the first, and perhaps the only one until Chinese travelers went west discovering.

Here let me flash a green lantern. If at some future time it should be shown that the Chandragupta Maurya of the Sanskrit books was not the same person as the Sandacottos of Megasthenes; nor his son Bindusara Amitraghata, the Amitrochidas of the Greeks; nor his son and successor, Asoka, the Devanampiya Piadasi whose rock-cut inscriptions remain scattered over India; nor the Amtiyako Yonaraja—the "Ionian King Antiochus" apparently,—Atiochus Theos, Selecus Nicator's granson: as is supposed; nor yet the other four kings mentioned in the same instricption in a Sanskrit disguise as contemporaries, Ptolemy Philadelphos of Egypt (285-247); Magas of Cyrene (285-258); Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon (277-239), and Alexander of Epirus, who began to reign in 272;—if all these identifications should fall to the ground, let no one be surprised. There are passages

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in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky that seem to suggest there is nothing in them; and yet, after studying those passages, I do not find that she says so positively: her attitude seems rather one of withholding information for the time being; she supplies none of a contrary sort. The time may not have been ripe then for unveiling so much of Indian history; nor indeed, in those days, had the pictures of these kings, and particularly of Asoka, so clearly emerged: inscriptions have been deciphered since, which have gone to fill out the outline; and the story, as it his been pieced together now, has an air of verisimilitude, and hangs together. Without the Greek identifications, and the consequent possibility of assigning dates to Chandragupta and his son, we should know indeed that there was a great Maurya empire, which lasted a matter of thirteen decades and a few odd years; but we should hardly know when to place it. Accepting the Greek identifications, and placing the Mauryas where we do in time—you shall see how beautifully the epoch fits into the universal cycles, and confirms the teaching as to Cyclic Law. So, provisionally, I shall accept them, and tell the tale.

First a few more items from Megasthenes as to India under Chandragupta. There was no slavery, he notes; all Indians were free, and not even were there aliens enslaved. Crime of any kind was rare; the people were thoroughly law-abiding. Thievery was so little known, that doors went unlocked at all times; there was no usury, and a general absence of litigation. They told the truth: as a Greek, he could not help noticing that. The men were exceptionally brave; the women, chaste and virturous. But “in contrast to the general simplicity of their style, they loved finery and ornaments. Their robes were worked in gold, adorned with precious stones, and they wore flowered garments of the finest muslin. Attendants walking behind held umbrellas over them....”

The system of government was very highly and minutely evolved. “Of the great officers of state, some have charge of the markets, others of the city, others of the soldiers; others superintend the canals, and measure the land, or collect the taxes; some construct roads and set up pillars to show the by-roads and distances from place to place. Those who have charge of the city are divided into six boards of five members apiece: The first looks after industrial art. The second attends to the entertainment of strangers, taking care of them, sound or sick, and in the event of their death, burying them and sending their property to their relatives.” The third board registered births and deaths; the fourth, fifth and sixth had supervision of things commercial. Military affairs were as closely organized: there were Boards of Infantry, Cavalry, War Chariots, Elephants, Navy, and Bullock Transport. And behind all these stood Chandragupta himself, the superman, ruthless and terrifically efficient; and Chanakya, his Macchiavellian minister: a combination to hurry the world into greatness. And so indeed they did.

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Under Asoka, Chandragupta's grandson, the age culminated. H. P. Blavatsky says positively that he was born into Buddhism; this is not the general view; but one finds nothing in his edicts, really, to contradict it. His father Bindusara, of whom we know nothing, may have been a Buddhist. But it would appear that Asoka in his youth was the most capable, and also the most violent and passionate of Bindusara's sons. During his father's lifetime, he held one of the great vice-royalties into which the empire was divided; he succeeded to the throne in 271. His domains at that time included all Aryavarta, with Baluchistan, and as much of Afghanistan as lies south of the Hindoo Koosh; and how much of the Deccan it is difficult to determine. Nine years later he extended this realm still further, by the conquest of the Kalingas, whose country lay along the coast northward from Madras. At the end of that war he was master of all India north of a line drawn from Pondicherry to Cannanore in the south; while the tip of the Deccan and Ceylon lay at least within his sphere of influence.

He was easily the strongest monarch of his day. In China—between which country and India there was no communication: they had not discovered each other, or they had lost sight of each other for ages—an old order was breaking to pieces, and all was weakness and decay. In the West, Greek civilization was in decadence, with the successors of Alexander engaged in profitless squabbles. Rome, a power only in Italy, was about to begin her long struggle with Carthage; overseas nobody minded her. The Crest-Wave was in India, the strongest power and most vigorous civilization, so far as we can tell, in the world, and at the head of India stood this Chakravartin, victorious Asoka, flushed with conquest, and a whole world tempting him out to conquer.—

He never went to war again. For twenty-nine years after that conquest of the Kalingas, until his death in 233, he reigned in unbroken peace. He left his heart to posterity in many edicts and inscriptions cut on rocks and pillars; thirty-five of these remain, or have so far been discovered and read. In 257, or five years after the Kalinga War, he published this:

"Devanamipiya Piadasi"—

It means literally 'the Beloved of the Gods, the Beautiful of Countenance'; but it is really a title equivalent to "His Gracious Majesty,' and was borne by all the Maurya kings;—

"Devanampiya Piadasi feels remorse on account of the conquest of the Kalingas; because, during the subjugation of a preciously unconquered country slaughter, death, and taking away captives of the people necessarily occur; whereat His Majesty feels profound sorrow and regret..."

It would be in keeping with the Southern Buddhist tradition as to the ungovernable violence of Asoka's youth, that he should have introduced into war horrors quite contrary to Manu and Indian custom; but here I must say that H. P. Blavatsky, though she does not particularize, says that there were really two Asokas, two 'Devanampiya

Piadasis,' the first of whom was Chandragupta himself, from whose life the tradition of the youthful violence may have been drawn; and there remains the possibility that this Kalinga War was waged by Chandragupta, not Asoka; and that it was he who made this edict, felt the remorse, and became a Buddhist. However, to continue (tentatively):—

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“The loss of even the hundredth or the thousandth part of the persons who were then slain, carried away captive, or done to death in Kalinga would now be a matter of deep regret to His Majesty. Although a man should do him any injury, Devanampiya Piadasi holds that it must patiently be borne, so far as it possibly can be borne... for His Majesty desires for all animate beings security, control over the passions, peace of mind, and joyousness. And this is the chief of conquests, in His Majesty’s opinion: the Conquest of Duty.”

Some time later he took the vows of a Buddhist monk, ’entered the Path’; and, as he says, ‘exerted himself strenuously.’

He has been called the ‘Constantine of Buddhism’; there is much talk among the western learned, about his support of that movement having contributed to its decay. They draw analogy from Constantine; even hint that Asoka embraced Buddhism, as the latter did Christianity, from political motives. But the analogy is thoroughlv false. Constantine was a bad man, a very far-gone case; and there was little in the faith he adopted, or favored, as it had come to be at that time, to make him better;—even if he had really believed in it. And it was a defined religio-political body, highly antagonistic to the old state religion of Rome, that he linked his fortunes with. But no sovereign so mighty in compassion is recorded in history as having reigned, as this Asoka. He was the most unsectarian of men. Buddhism as it came to him, and as he left it, was not a sect, but a living spiritual movement. For what is a sect?—Something *cut off*— from the rest of humanity, and the sources of inner life. But for Asoka, as for the modern Theosophical Movement, there was no religion higher than—*Dharma*—which word may be translated, ‘the (higher) Law,’ or ‘truth.’ or ‘duty.’ He never ceased to protect the holy men of Brahminism. Edict after edict exhorts his people to honor them. He preached the Good Law; he could not insist too often that different men would have different conceptions as to this *Dharma.* Each, then, must follow his own conception, and utterly respect his neighbors’. The Good Law, the Doctrine of the Buddhas, was universal; because the objective of all religions was the conquest of the passions and of self. All religions must manifest on this plane as right action and life; and that was the evangel he proclaimed to the world. There was no such sharp antagonism of sects and creeds.

There is speculation as to how he managed, being a world-sovereign —and a highly efficient one—to carry out the vows of a Buddhist monk. As if the begging bowl would have been anything of consequence to such an one! It is a matter of the status of the soul; not of outward paraphernalia. He was a practical man; intensely so; and he showed that a Chakravartin could tread the Path of the Buddhas as well as a wandering monk. One can imagine no Tolstoyan playing at peasant in him. His business in life was momentous. “I am never satisfied with my exertions and my dispatch of business,” he says.

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“Work I must for the public benefit,—and the root of the matter is in exertion and dispatch of business, than which nothing is more efficacious for the public welfare. And for what end do I toil? For no other end than that I may discharge my debt to animate beings.”

And again:

“Devanampiya Piadasi desires that in all places men of all religions may abide, for they all desire purity of mind and mastery over the senses.”

Well; for nine and twenty years he held that vast empire warless; even though it included within its boundaries many restless and savage tribes. Certainly only the greatest, strongest, and wisest of rulers could do that; it has not been done since (though Akbar came near it). We know nothing as to how literature may have been enriched; some think that the great epics may have come from this time. If so, it would only have been recensions of them, I imagine. But in art and architecture his reign was everything. He built splendid cities, and strewed the land with wonderful buildings and monoliths. Patna, the capital, in Megasthenes’ time nine miles long by one and a half wide, and built of wood, he rebuilt in stone with walls intricately sculptured. Education was very widespread or universal. His edicts are sermons preached to the masses: simple ethical teachings touching on all points necessary to right living. He had them carved on rock, and set them up by the roadsides and in all much-frequented places, where the masses could read them; and this proves that the masses could read. They are all vibrant with his tender care, not alone for his human subjects, but for all sentient beings. “Work I must.... that I may discharge my debt to all things animate.” And how he did work without one private moment in the day or night, as his decrees show, in which he should be undisturbed by the calls of those who needed help. He specifies; he particularizes; there was no moment to be considered private, or his personal own.

And even then he was not content. There were foreign lands; and those, too, were entitled to his care. I said that the southern tip of India, with Ceylon, were within his sphere of influence: his sphere of influence was much wider than that, however. Saying that a king’s sphere of influence is wherever he can get his will done, Asoka’s extended westward over the whole Greek world. Here was a king whose will was benevolence; who sought no rights but the right to do good; whose politics were the service of mankind:—it is a sign of the Brotherhood of Man, that his writ ran, as you may say—the writ of his great compassion,—to the Mediterranean shore:—

“Everywhere in the dominions of Devanampiya Piadasi, and likewise in the neighboring realms, such as those of the Chola, Pandya, Satiyaputra and Keralaputra, in Ceylon, in the dominions of the Greek king Antiochus, and in those of the other kings subordinate to that Antiochus—everywhere, on behalf of His Majesty, have two kinds of hospitals been founded: hospitals for men, and hospitals for beasts. Healing herbs, medicinal for man and medicinal for beasts, wherever they were lacking, have been imported and

planted. On the roads, trees have been planted, and wells have been dug for the use of men and beasts."

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And everywhere, in all those foreign realms, he had his missionaries preaching the Good Law. And some of these came to Palestine, and founded there for him an order at Nazareth called the Essenes; in which, some century or two later, a man rose to teach the Good Law—by name, Jesus of Nazareth.—Now consider the prestige, the moral influence, of a king who might keep his agents, unmolested, carrying out his will, right across Asia, in Syria, Greece, Macedonia, and Egypt; the king of a great, free, and mighty people, who, if he had cared to, might have marched out world-conquering; but who preferred that his conquests should be the conquests of duty. Devanampiya Piadasi: the Gracious of Mien, the Beloved of the Gods: an Adept King like them of old time, strayed somehow into the scope and vision of history.

VIII. THE BLACK-HAIRED PEOPLE

Greece shone between 478 and 348,—to give the thirteen decades of her greatest spiritual brightness. Then came India in 321; we lose sight of her after the death of Asoka in the two-thirties, but know the Maurya Empire lasted its thirteen decades (and six years) until 185. Then China flamed up brilliantly under the Western House of Han from 194 to 64;—at which time, however, we shall not arrive for a few weeks yet.

Between these three national epochs there is this difference: the Greek Age came late in its manvantara; which opened (as I guess), roughly speaking, some three hundred and ninety years before:—three times thirteen decades, with room for three national flowerings in Europe—among what peoples, who can say?— We cannot tell where in its manvantara the Indian Age may have come: whether near the beginning, or at the middle. But in China we are on firm ground, and the firmest of all. A manvantara, a fifteen-century cycle, began in the two-forties B. C.; this Age of Han was its first blossom and splendid epoch; and we need feel no surprise that it was not followed by a night immediately, but only by a twilight and slight dimming of the glories for about thirteen decades again, and then the full brilliance of another day. Such things are proper to peoples new-born after their long pralaya; and can hardly happen, one would say, after the morning of the manvantara has passed. Thus in our own European cycle, Italy the first-born was in full creative energy from about 1240 to 1500: twenty-six decades;—-whereas the nations that have held hegemony since have had to be content each with its thirteen.

And now to take bird’s-eye views of China as a whole; and to be at pains to discover what relation she bears, historically, to ourselves and the rest of the globe.

Do you remernber how Abraham haggled with the Lord over the Cities of the Plain? Yahveh was for destroying them off hand for their manifold sins and iniquities; but Abraham argued and bargained and brought him down till if peradventure there should be found ten righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord promised he would spare

them. But ten righteous there were not, nor nothing near; so the Cities of the Plain went down.

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I suppose the Crest-Wave rarely passes from a race without leaving a wide trail of insanity in its wake. The life forces are strong; the human organisms through which they play are but—as we know them. Commonly these organisms are not directed by the Divine Soul, which has all too little of the direction of life in its hands; so the life-currents drift downward, instead of fountaining up; and exhaust these their vehicles, and leave them played out and mentally—because long since morally—deficient. So come the cataclysmic wars and reigns of terror that mark the end of racial manvantaras: it is a humanity gone collectively mad. On the other hand, none can tell what immense safeguarding work may be done by the smallest sane co-ordinated effort upwards. If peradventure the ten righteous shall be found—but they must be righteous, and know what they are doing—I will spare, and not destroy, saith the Lord.

(He said nothing about respectabilities. I dare say there was quite a percentage of respectable chapel-going Sabbath-observing folk in the Cities of the Plain.)

And yet there must be always that dreadful possibility—which perhaps has never become actual since the fall of Atlantis—that a whole large section of mankind should go quite mad, and become unfit to carry on the work of evolution. It is a matter of corrupting the streams of heredity; which is done by vice, excess, wrong living; and these come of ignorance. Heaven knows how near it we may be today; I do not think Christendom stands, or has stood, so very far, from the brink. And yet it is from the white race, we have supposed, that the coming races will be born; this is the main channel through which human evolution is intended to flow.—We are in kall-yuga; the Mysteries are dead, and the religions have taken their place: there has been no sure and certain link, organized on this plane, between the world and its Higher Self. Each succeeding civilization, under these circumstances, has run a greater risk.

Of what race are we? I say, of no race at all, but can view the matter as Human Souls, reincarnating egos, prepared to go where the Law bids us. Races are only temporary institutions set up for the convenience of the Host of Souls.

We see, I suppose, the results of such a breakdown in Africa. Atlanteans were segregated there; isolated; and for a million years degenerated in that isolation to what they are. But their ancestors, before that segregation began, had better airships than we have; were largely giants, in more respects than the physical, were we are pygmies. Now they are—whatever may be their potentialities, whatever they may become—-actually an inferior reace. And it is a racial stock that shows no signs of dying out. What then?—I suppose indeed there must be backward races, to house backward egos;—though for that matter you would think that our Londons and Chicagos and the rest, with their slums, would provide a good deal of accommodation.

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Or consider the Redskins, here and in South America: whether Atlanteans, or of some former subrace of the Fifth, at least not Aryans. Take the finest tribes among them, such as the Navajos. Here is a very small hereditary stream, kept pure and apart: of fine physique; potentially of fine mentality; unsullied with vices of any sort: a people as much nearer than the white man to natural spirituality, as to natural physical health. It is no use saying they are so few. Two millenniums ago, how many were the Anglo-Saxons? Three millenniums ago, how many were the Latins? Supposing the white race in America failed. The statistics of lunacy—of that alone—are a fearful *Mene, Tekel Upharsin* written on our walls, for any Daniel with vision to read. I think Naure must also take into account these possibilities. Does she keep in reserve hereditary streams and racial stocks other than her great and main ones, *in case of accidents?* Are the Redskins among these?

The Secret Doctrine seems to hint sometimes that the founders of our Fifth Root Race were of Lemurian rather than Atlantean descent. Nowhere is it actually said so; but there are a number of passages that read, to me, as if they were written with that idea, or theory, or fact, in mind. Is it, possibly, that a small pure stream of Lemurian heredity had been kept aloof through all the years of Atlantis, in reserve;—some stream that may have been, at one time, as narrow as the tribe of Navajos?—This may be a very bold conclusion to draw from what is said in *The Secret Doctrine;* it may have no truth in it whatever: other passages are to be found, perhaps, that would at least appear to contradict it. But if it is true, it would account for what seems like a racial anomaly—or more than one. Science leans to the conclusion that the Australian aborigines are Aryan: they are liker Aryans than anything else. But we know from *The Secret Doctrine* that they are among the few last remnants of the Lemurians. Again, the Ainos of Japan are very like Europeans: they have many physical features in common with the Caucasians, and none in common with the peoples of East Asia. Yet they are very low down in the scale of evolution:—not so low as the Australian Blackfellow, but without much occasion for giving themselves airs. A thousand years of contact with the much-washing Japanese have never suggested to them why God made soap and water. Like many other people, they have the legend of the flood: remember, as you may say, the fall of Atlantis; but unlike us upstarts of the Fourth and Fifth Races, they have also a legend of a destruction of the world by fire and earthquake—a cataclysm that lasted, they say, a hundred days. Is it a memory of the fate of Lemuria?

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Is a new Root-Race developed, not from the one immediately preceding it, but from the one before? Is Mercury's caduceus, here too, a symbol of the way evolution is done? Did the Law keep in reserve a Sishta or Seed-Race from Lemuria, holding it back from Atlantean development during the whole period of the Atlanteans;—holding it, all that while, in seclusion and purity —and therefore in a kind of pralaya;—at the right moment, to push its development, almost suddenly, along a new line, not parallel to the Atlantean, but *sui generis,* and to be Aryan Fifth presently?—Is the Law keeping in reserve a *Sishta* or Seed-Race of Atlantean stock, holding that in reserve and apart all through our Aryan time, to develop from it at last the beginnings of the Sixth, on the new continent that will appear? Or to do so, at any rate, should the main Aryan stock fail at one of the grand crises in its evolution, and become of too corrupt heredity to produce fitting vehicles for the egos of the Sixth to inhabit?

When we have evolved back to Sanskrit for the last time: when the forces of civilization have played through and exhausted for the last time the possibilities of each of the groups of Aryan languages, so that it would be impossible to do anything more with them—for languages do become exhausted: we cannot write English now as they could in the days of Milton and Jeremy Taylor; not necessarily because we are smaller men, but because the fabric of our speech is worn much thinner, and will no longer take the splendid dyes;—and when that final flowering of Sanskrit is exhausted too—will the new Sixth Race language, as a type, be a derivation from the Aryan? Then how?—Or will it, possibly, be as it were a new growth sprung out of the grave of Fourth Race Chinese, or of one of that Atlantean group through which, during all these millions of years, such great and main brain-energies have not on the whole been playing as they have been through the Aryans; and which might therefore, having lain so long fallow, then be fit for new strange developments and uses?

All of which may be, and very likely is, extremely wide of the mark. Such ideas may be merest wild speculation, and have no truth in them at all. And yet I think that if they were true, they would explain a thing to me otherwise inexplicable: China.

We are in the Fifth Root-Race, and the fifth sub-race thereof: that is, beyond the middle point. And yet one in every four of the inhabitants of the globe is a Fourth Race Chinaman; and I suppose that if you took all the races that are not Caucasian, or Fifth Race, you would find that about half the population of the world is Atlantean still.

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Take the languages. A Sanskrit word, or a Greek, or Old Gothic, or Latin, is a living organism, a little articulate being. There is his spine, the root; his body, the stem; his limbs and head, the formative elements, prefixes and suffixes, case-endings and what not. Let him loose in the sentence, and see how he wriggles gaily from state to state: with a flick of the tail from nominative to genitive, from singular to plural: declaring his meaning, not by means of what surroundings you put about him, but by motions, changes, volitions so to say, of his own. 'Now,' says he, 'I'm *pater,* and the subject; set me where you will, and I am still the subject, and you can make nothing else of me.' Or, 'Now,' says he, 'I'm *patrem,* and the object; go look for my lord the verb, and you shall know what's done to me; be he next door, or ten pages away, I am faithful to him.' *Patrem filius amat,* or *filius amat patrem,* or in whatever order it may be, there is no doubt who does, and who (as they say) *suffers* the loving.—But now take a word in English. You can still recognise him for the same creature that was once so gay and jumpy-jumpy: *father* is no such far cry from *pater:*—but oh what a change in sprightliness of habits is here! Time has worn away his head and limbs to almost unrecognisable blunt excrescences. Bid him move off into the oblique cases, and if he can help it, he will not budge; you must shove him with a verb; you must goad him with a little sharp preposition behind; and then he just *lumps* backward or forward, and there is no change for the better in him, as you may say. No longer will he declare his meaning of himself; it must depend on where you choose to put him in the sentence.—-Among the mountains of Europe, the grand Alps are the parvenus; the Pyrenees look down on them; and the Vosges on the Pyrenees; and—pardon me!—the little old time-rounded tiny Welsh mountains look down on them all from the heights of a much greater antiquity. They are the smallest of all, the least jagged and dramatic of all; time and the weather have done most to them. The storm, like the eagle of Gwern Abwy in the story, has lighted on their proud peaks so often, that that from which once she could peck at the stars in the evening, rises now but a few thousand feet from the level of the sea. Time and springs and summers have silenced and soothed away the startling crags and chasms, the threatening gestures of the earth at infinity, and clothed them over with a mantle of quietness and green fern and heather and dreams. When the Fifth Race was younger, its language was Alpine: in Gothic, in Sanskrit, in Latin, you can see the crags and chasms. French, Spanish and Italian are Pyrenean, much worn down. English is the Vosges. Chinese is hardly even the Welsh mountains. Every word is worn perfectly smooth and round. There is no sign left at all of prefix or suffix, root or stem. There are no parts of speech: any word without

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change can do duty for any part of speech. There is no sign of case or number: all has been reduced to an absolute simplicity, beyond which there is no going. Words can end with no consonant but the most rounded of all, the nasal liquids *n* and *ng.* There is about as much likeness to the Aryan and Semitic languages—you can trace about as much analogy between them—as you can between a centipede and a billiard-ball.

There are definite laws governing the changes of language. You know how the Latin *castrum* became in English *ciaster* and then *chester;* the change was governed by law. The same law makes our present-day vulgar say *cyar* for *car;* that word, in the American of the future, will be something like chair. The same law makes the same kind of people say *donchyer* for *don't you;* some day, alas! even that will be classical and refined American. Well; we know that that law has been at work in historic times even on the Chinese billiard-ball: where Confucius said *Ts'in* like a gentleman, the late Yuan Shi Kai used to say *Ch'in.* So did the Dowager Empress; it was eminently the refined thing to do. So we ourselves have turned *Ts'in* into *China.*—And that is the one little fact—or perhaps one of the two or three little facts—that remain to convince us that Chinese and its group of kindred languages grew up on the same planet, and among the same humankind, that produced Sanskrit and Latin.

But does not that suggest also the possibility that Alpine Aryan might some day—after millions of years—wear down or evolve back even into billiard-ball Chinese? That human language is *one thing;* and all the differences, the changes rung on that according to the stages of evolution?

In the Aryan group of languages, the bond of affinity is easily recognisable: the roots of the words are the same: *Pitri, pater, vater,* are clearly but varying pronunciations of the same word. In the Turanic group, however—Finnish, Hungarian, Turkish, Tatar, Mongol and Manchu—you must expect no such well-advertised first-cousinship. They are grouped together, not because of any likeness of roots: not because you could find one single consonant the same in the Lappish or Hungarian, say, and in the Mongol or Manchu words for *father*—you probably could not;—but because there may be syntactical likenesses, or the changes and assimilations of sounds may be governed by the same laws. Thus in Turkic—I draw upon the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*—there is a suffix z, preceded by a vowel, to mean your: *pederin* is 'father'; 'your father' becomes *pederiniz; dostun* means 'friend'; 'your friend' becomes not *dostuniz,* but *dostunus;* and this trick of assimilating the vowel of the suffix is the last one in the stem is an example of the kind of similarities which establish the relationship of

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the group. As for likeness of roots, here is a specimen: *gyordunus* is the Turkish for the Finnish *naikke.*—So here you see a degree of kinship much more remote than that you find in the Aryan. Where, say, Dutch and Gaelic are brothers—at least near relations and bosom friends,—Turkish and Mongol are about fifteenth cousins by marriage twice removed, and hardly even nod to each other in passing. And yet Turks and Mongols both claim descent from the sons of a common father: according to legends of both peoples, the ancestor of the Turks was the brother of the ancestor of the Mongols. (Always remember that in speaking of Turks thus scientifically, one does not mean the Ottomans, who inherit their language, but are almost purely Caucasian or even Aryan, in blood.)

Now take the Monosyllabic or South-Eastern Asiatic Group: Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, Annamese, and Tibetan. Here there are only negatives, you might say, to prove a relationship. They do not meet on the street; they pass by on the other side, noses high in the air; each sublimely unaware of the other's existence. They suppose they are akin—through Adam; but whould tell you that much has happened since then. Their kinship consists in this: the words are each are billiard-balls—and yet, if you will allow the paradox, of quite different shapes. Thus I should call a Tibetan name like *nGamri-srong-btsan* a good jagged angular sort of billiard-ball; and a Chinese one like *T'ang Tai-tsong* a perfectly round smooth one of the kind we know.—The languages are akin, because each say, where we should say 'the horse kicked the man,' *horse agent man kicking completion,* or words to that effect,—dapped out nearly in spherical or angular disconnected monosyllables. But the words for *horse* and *man,* in Chinese and Tibetan, have respectively as much phonetic likeness as *geegee* and *equus,* and *Smith* and *Jones.* As to the value and possibilities of such languages, I will quote you two pronouncements, both from writers in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* One says: "Chinese has the greatest capacity of any language ever invented"; the other, "The Chinese tongue is of unsurpass jejuneness."

In the whole language there are only about four or five hundred sounds you could differentiate by spelling, as to say, *shih,* pronounced like the first three letters in the word *shirt* in English. That vocable may mean: *history,* or *to employ,* or *a corpse, a market, a lion, to wait on, to rely upon, time, poetry, to bestow, to proclaim, a stone, a generation, to eat, a house,* and all such things as that;—I mention a few out of the list by way of example.* Now of course, were that all to be said about it, Chinamen would no doubt sometimes get confused: would think you meant a corpse, when you were really talking about poetry, and so on. But there is a way of throwing a little

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breathing in, a kind of hiatus: thus *Ts'in* meant one country, and *Tsin* another one altogether; and you ought not to mix them, for they were generally at war, and did not mix at all well. That would potentially extend the number of sounds, or words, or billiard-balls, from the four hundred and twenty in modern polite Pekinese, or the twelve hundred or so in the older and less cultured Cantonese, to twice as many in each case. Still that would be but a poor vocabulary for the language with the vastest literature in the world, as I suppose the Chinese is. Then you come to the four tones, as a further means of extending it. You pronounce *shih* one tone—you sing it on the right note, so to say, and it means *poetry;* you take that tone away, and give it another, the dead tone, and very naturally it becomes *a corpse:*—as, one way, and another I have often tried to impress on you it really does.—Of course the hieroglyphs, the written words, run into hundreds of thousands; for the literature, you have a vocabulary indeed. But you see that the spoken language depends, to express its meaning, upon a different kind of elements from those all our languages depend on. We have solid words that you can spell: articles built up with the bricks of sound-stuff we call letters: *c-a-t* cat, *d-o-g* dog, and so on;—but their words, no; nothing so tangible: all depends on little silences, small hiatuses in the vocalizition,—and above all, *musical tones.* Now then, which is the more primitive? Which is nearer the material or intellectual, and which, the spiritual, pole?

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* *Encyclopaedia Britannica:* article, China: Language.

More primitive—I do not know. Only I think when the Stars of Morning sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; when primeval humanity first felt stirring within it the Divine fire and essence of the Lords of Mind; when the Sons of the Fire mist came down, and found habitation for themselves in the bodies of our ancestors; when they saw the sky, how beautiful and kindly it was; and the wonder of the earth, and that blue jewel the sea; and felt the winds of heaven caress them, and were aware of the Spirit, the Great Dragon, immanent in the sunlight, quivering and scintillant in the dim blue diamond day;

> "They prayed, but their worship was only
> The wonder of nights and of days,"

—when they opened their lips to speak, and the first of all the poems of the earth was made:—it was song, it was tone, it was music they uttered, and not brute speech such as we use, it was intoned vowels, as I imagine, that composed their language: seven little vowels, and seven tones or notes to them perhaps: and with these they could sing and tell forth the whole of the Glory of God. And then—was it like this?—they grew material, and intellectual, and away from the child-state of the Spirit; and their

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tones grew into words; and consonants grew on to the vowels, to make the vast and varied distinctions the evolving intellect needed for its uses; and presently you had Atlantis with its complex civilization—its infinitely more complex civilization even than our own; and grammar came ever more into being, ever more wonderful and complex, to correspond with the growing curves and involutions of the ever more complex-growing human brain; and a thousand languages were formed—many of them to be found still among wild tribes in mid-Africa or America—as much more complex than Sanskrit, as Sanskrit is than Chinese: highly declensional, minutely syntactical, involved and worked up and filigreed beyond telling;—and that was at the midmost point and highest material civilization of Atlantis. And then the Fourth Race went on, and its languages evolved; back, in the seventh sub-race, to the tonalism, the chanted simplicity of the first sub-race;—till you had something in character not intellectual, but spiritual:—Chinese. And meanwhile—I am throwing out the ideas as they come, careless if the second appears to contradict the first: presently a unity may come of them;—meanwhile, for the purposes of the Fifth Root-Race, then nascent, a language-type had grown up, intellectual as any in Atlantis, because this Fifth Race was to be intellectual too,— but also spiritual: not without tonalistic elements: a thing to be chanted, and not dully spoken:—and there, when the time came for, it to be born, you had the Sanskrit.

But now for the Sixth Root-Race: is that to figure mainly on the plane of intellect? Or shall we then take intellectual things somewhat for granted, as having learnt them and passed on to something higher? Look at those diagrams of the planes and globes in *The Secret Doctrine,* and see how the last ones, the sixth and seventh, come to be on the same level as the first and second. Shall we be passing, then, to a time when, in the seventh, our languages will have no need for complexity: when our ideas, no longer personal but universal and creative, will flow easily from mind to mind, from heart to heart on a little tone, a chanted breath of music; when mere billiard-balls of syllables will serve us, so they be rightly sung:—until presently with but seven pure vowel sounds, and seven tones to sing them to, we shall be able to tell forth once more the whole of the Glory of God?

Now then, is Chinese primitive, or is it an evolution far away and ahead of us? Were there first of all billiard-balls; and did they acquire a trick of coalescing and running together; this one and that one, in the combination, becoming subordinate to another; until soon you had a little wriggling creature of a word, with his head of prefix, and his tail of suffix, to look or flicker this way or that according to the direction in which he wished to steer himself, the meaning to be expressed;—from monosyllabic becoming agglutinative, synthetic, declensional, complex—Alpine

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and super-Sanskrit in complexity;—then Pyrenean by the wearing down of the storms and seasons; then Vosges, with crags forest-covered; then green soft round Welsh mountains; and then, still more and more worn down by time and the phonetic laws which decree that men shall (in certain stages of their growth) be always molding their languages to an easier and easier pronunciation,—stem assimilating prefix and suffix, and growing intolerant of changes within itself;—fitting itself to the weather, rounding off its angles, coquetting with euphony;— dropping harsh consonants; tending to end words with a vowel, or with only the nasal liquids n and ng, softest and roundest sounds there are;—till what had evolved from a billiard-ball to an Alpine crag, had evolved back to a billiard-ball again, and was Chinese? Is it primitive, or ultimate? I am almost certain of this, at any rate: that as a language-type, it stands somewhere midway between ours and spiritual speech.

How should that be; when we are told that this people is of the Fourth, the most material of the Races; while we are on the proud upward arc of the Fifth? And how is it that H. P. Blavatsky speaks of the Chinese civilization as being younger than that of the Aryans of India, the Sanskrit speakers,—Fifth certainly? Is this, possibly, the explanation: that the ancestors of the Chinese, a colony from Atlantis some time perhaps long before the Atlantean degeneration and fall, were held under major pralaya apart from the world-currents for hundreds of thousands of years, until some time later than 160,000 years ago—the time of the beginning our our sub-race? A pralaya, like sleep, is a period of refreshment, spiritual and physical; it depends upon your mood as you enter it, to what degree you shall reap its benefits: whether it shall regenerate you; whether you shall arise from it spiritually cleansed and invigorated by contact with the bright Immortal Self within. Africa entered such a rest-period from an orgy of black magic, and her night was filled with evil dreams and sorceries, and her people became what they are. But if China entered it guided by white Atlantean Adepts, it would have been for her Fairyland; it would have been the Fortunate Islands; it would have been the Garden of Siwang Mu, the paradise of the West; and when she came forth it would have been—it might have been—with a bent not towards intellectual, but towards spiritual achievements.

Compare her civilization, in historic times, with that of the West. Historic times are very little to go by, but they are all we have at present.—She attained marvelous heights; but they were not the same kind of heights the West has attained. Through her most troublous, stirring, and perilous times, she carried whole provinces of Devachan with her. It was while she was falling to pieces, that Ssu-K'ung T'u wrote his divinely delicate meditations. When the iron most entered her soul, she would weep,

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but not tear her hair or rage and grow passionate; she would condescend to be heart-broken, but never vulgar. In her gayest moments, wine-flushed and Spring-flushed, she never forgot herself to give utterance to the unseemly. There is no line in her poetry to be excused or regretted on that score. She worshipped Beauty, as perhaps only Greece and France in the West have done; but unlike Greece or France, she sought her divinity only in the impersonal and dispassionate: never mistook for its voice, the voices of the flesh. She sinned much, no doubt; but not in her pursuit of the Beautiful; not in her worship of Art and Poetry. She was faithful to the high Gods there. She never produced a figure comparable to, nor in the least like, our Homers and Aeschyluses, Dantes and Miltons and Shakespeares. But then, the West has never, I imagine, produced a figure comparable to her Li Pos, Tu Fus, Po Chu-is or Ssu-k'ung T'us: giants in lyricism—one might name a hundred of them—beside whom our Hugos and Sapphos and Keatses were pygmies. Nor have we had any to compare with her masters of landscape-painting: even the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* comes down flat-footed with the statement that Chinese landscape-painting is the highest the world has seen.—And why?—Because it is based on a knowledge of the God-world; because her eyes were focused for the things 'on the other side of the sky'; because this world, for her, was a mere reflexion and thin concealment of the other, and the mists between her and the Divine 'defecate' constantly, in Coleridge's curious phrase, 'to a clear transparency.' Things seen were an open window into the Infinite; but with us, heaven knows, that window is so thick filthy with selfhood, so cobwebbed and begrimed with passion and egotism and individualism and all the smoke and soot of the brain-mind, that given an artist with a natural tendency to see through, he has to waste half his life first in cleaning it with picks and mattocks and charges of dynamite. So it becomes almost inevitable that when once you know Chinese painting, all western painting grows to look rather coarse and brutal and materialistic to you.

But, you say, no Aeschylus or Shakespeare? No Dante or Homer? No epic—no great drama! Pooh! you say, where is the great creative energy? Where is the sheer brain force?—

It is to us a matter of course that the type of our great ones is the highest possible type. Well; it may be: but the deeper you go into thinking it over, the less certain you are likely to become as to the absoluteness of standards. The time to award the prizes is not yet; all we can do is to look into the nature of the differences. Warily let us go to work here!

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Where, you asked, are the great creative energies? Well; in the West, certainly, they have flowed most where they can most be seen as *energies.* I think, through channels nearer this material plane: nearer the plane of intellect, at any rate.—No: there is no question where the sheer brain force has been: it has been in the West. But then, where was it more manifest, in Pope or in Keats? In Pope most emphatically. But off with your head if you say he gave the greater gift.—Or I will leave Pope, and go to his betters; and say that Keats, when he caught in his net of words the fleeting beauty of the world, was far nearer the Spirit than was Bacon when with tremendous intellectual energy he devised his philosophy: there was a much longer evolution behind the ease and effortless attainment of the one, than behind the other's titanic brain-effort. Yet, so far as the putting forth of brain energies is concerned, there is no question: Bacon was much the greater man.

So in all creative work, in all thought, we must call the West incomparably greater in brain energy. And I am not making such a foolish comparison as between modern or recent conditions in the two races. You see it if you set the greatest Eastern ages, the Han, the T'ang, the Sung, or the Fujiwara, against the Periclean, Augustan, Medicean, Elizabethan, or Louis Quatorze. In the West, the spiritual creative force came down and mingled itself more forcefully with the human intellect: had a much more vigorous basis in that, I think, to work in and upon. It has reached lower into the material, and played on matter more powerfully— and, be it said, on thought and intellection too.

We are so accustomed to thinking of spirituality as something that, outside the plane of conduct, can only play through thought and intellection, or perhaps religious emotion, that to speak of the high spirituality of China will sound, to most, absurd. On the whole, you must not go to China for thought or intellection. Least of all you must go there for what we commonly understand by religious emotion;—they don't readily gush over a personal god. It will seem entirely far-fetched to say that in China the creative forces have retained much more of their spirituality: have manifested perhaps not less greatly than in the West, but on planes less material, nearer their spiritual source. It will seem so the more because until very recently China has been constantly misrepresented to us. And yet I think it is pretty much the truth.

In all their creative art the Spirit has been busy suggesting itself, not through ideas, or the forms of intellection, but through the more subtle perceptions and emotions that lie behind. It gives us, if we are at all gifted or educated to see, pure vistas of Itself. Compare Michelangelo's Moses with the Dai Butsu at Kamakura:—as I think Dr. Siren does in one of his lectures. The former is a thing of titanic, even majestic energies; but

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they are energies physical and mental: a grand triumph on what is called in Sanskrit philosophy the Rajasic plane. The second suggests, not energy and struggle, but repose and infinite calm. In the Moses, we sense warfare, with victory, to attain and to hold its attainment; in the Dai Butsu, something that has passed through all that aeons ago. In which is the greater sum of energies included? In the Dai Butsu certainly; wherein we see no sign of what we commonly call energies at all. The one is human struggling up towards Godhood; the other, Godhood looking down with calm limitless compassion upon man. Such need no engines and dynamics to remove the mountains: they bid them rise up, and be cast into the sea; and are obeyed.

Or take a great Chinese landscape and a great Western one: a Ma Yuan, say, and a—-whom you please. To the uninstructed it seems ridiculous to compare them. This took a whole year to paint; it is large; there is an enormous amount of hard work in it; huge creative effort, force, exertion, went to make it. That—it was done perhaps in an hour. That mountain is but a flick of the brush; yonder lake but a wash and a ripple. It is painted on a little trumpery fan—a mere square foot of silk. Yes; but on that square foot, by the grace of the Everlasting Spirit, are 'a thousand miles of space': much more—-there is Infinity itself. Watch; and that faint gray or sepia shall become the boundless blue; and you shall see dim dragons wandering: you shall see Eternal Mystery brooding within her own limitless home. Far, far more than in the western work, there is an open window into the Infinite: that which shall remind us that we are not the poor clay and dying embers we seem, but a pat of the infinite Mystery. The Spirit is here; not involved in human flesh and intellection, but impersonal and universal. What do you want:—to be a great towering personality; or to remember that you are a flame of the Fire which is God? Oh, out upon these personal deities, and most ungodly personalities of the West! I thank China for reminding me that they are cheap and nasty nothingnesses at the best!

We rather demand of our art, at its highest, that it shall be a stimulant, and call to our minds the warfare in which we are engaged: the hopeless-heroic gay and ever mournful warfare of the soul against the senses. Well; that battle has to be fought; there is nothing better than fighting it—until it is won. Let us by all means hear the snarling of the trumpets; let us heed the battle-cries of the Soul. But let us not forget that somewhere also the Spirit is at peace: let us remember that there is Peace, beyond the victory. In Chinese art and poetry we do not hear the war-shouts and the trumpets: broken, there, are the arrow and the bow; the shield, the sword, the sword and the battle.—But—*the Day-Spring from on high hath visited us.*

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What element from the Divine is in it, does not concern itself with this earth-life; tells you nothing in criticism of life. There is naught in it of the Soul as Thinker, nor of the Soul as Warrior. But surely it is something for us, immersed here in these turbid Rajasika regions, to be reminded sometimes that the Sattvic planes exist; it is something for us to be given glimpses of the pure quietudes of the Spirit in its own place. I am the better, if I have been shown for an instant the delicate imperishable beauty of the Eternal.

"We are tired who follow after
Truth, a phantasy that flies;
You with only look and laughter
Stain our hearts with richest dyes."—

They do indeed; with look and laughter—or it may be tears.

Now, what does it all mean? Simply this, I think: that the West brings down what it can of the Spirit into the world of thought and passion; brings it down right here upon this bank and shoal of time; but China rises with you into the world of the Spirit. We do not as a rule allow the validity of the Chinese method. We sometimes dub Keats, at his best a thorough Chinaman, 'merely beautiful.'

I have rather put the case for China; because all our hereditary instincts will rise with a brief for the West. But the truth is that the Spirit elects its own methods and its own agents, and does this through the one, that through the other. When I read *Hamlet,* I have no doubt Shakespeare was the greatest poet that ever lived. When I read Li Po, I forget Shakespeare, and think that among those who sing none was ever so wonderful as this Banished Angel of the Hills of Tang. I forget the Voice that cried 'Sleep no more!' and Poetry seems to me to have spoken her final word in what you would perhaps call trivialities about the Cold Clear Spring or the White Foam Rapid: she seems to me to have accomplished all she can in such bits of childlike detachment and wonder as this:

"The song-birds, the pleasure-seekers, have flown long since; but this lonely cloud floats on, drifting round in a circle. He and Ching-ting Mountain gaze and gaze at each other, and never grow weary of gazing";

—the 'lonely cloud' being, of course, Li Po himself. He has shown me Man the brother of the Mountains, and I ask no more of him. The mountains can speak for themselves.

He had no moral purpose, this Banished Angel for whose sake the Hills of T'ang are a realm in the Spirit, inerasible, and a beautiful dream while the world endures. Po Chu-i, says Mr. Arthur Waley, blamed him for being deficient in *feng* and *ya,*—by which we may understand, for present purposes, much what Matthew Arnold meant by 'criticism of life.' But does it not serve a spiritual purpose that our consciousness should be lifted on to those levels where personality is forgotten: that we should be made to regain, while reading, the child-state we

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have lost? Li Po died a child at sixty: a magical child: always more or less naughty, if we are to believe all accounts, especially his own; but somehow never paying the penalty we pay for our naughtiness,—exile from the wonder-world, and submersion in these intolerable personalities. You read Milton, and are cleaned of your personality by the fierce exaltation of the Spirit beating through. You read Li Po-type of hundreds of others his compatriots—and you are also cleaned of your personality; but by gentle dews, by wonderment, by being carried up out of it into the diamond ether. It seems to me that both affirmed the Divine Spirit. Milton waged grand warfare in his affirmation. Li Po merely said what he saw.

So I think that among the Aryans the Spirit has been fighting in and into the great turbid current of evolution; and that among the Chinese it has not been so much concerned with that stream, but rather to sing its own untrammeled expression. A great drama or epic comes of the presence and energy of the Spirit working in a human mind. A great lyric comes of the escape of the consciousness from the mind, and into the Spirit. The West has produced all the great dramas and epics, and will persist in the view that the Spirit can have no other expression so high as in these forms. Very likely the West is right; but I shall not think so next time I am reading Li Po or Ssu-k'ung T'u—or Keats.

And I have seen small mild Japanese jujitsu men 'put it all over,' as they say, big burly English wrestlers without seeming to exert themselves in any way, or forgoing their gentle methods and manner; and if you think of jujitsu rightly, it is, to our wrestling and boxing, much what Wu Taotse and Ku Kai-chih are to Rembrandt and Michelangelo, or the Chinese poets to ours.

If we go into the field of philosophy, we find much the same thing. Take Confucianism. It is inappropriate, in some ways, to call Confucius a great thinker (but we shall see that he was something very much more than that). He taught no religion; illuminated in nowise the world of mind; though he enabled millions to illumine it for themselves. He made hardly a ripple in his own day; and yet, so far as I can see, only the Buddha and Mohammed, of the men whose names we know, have marshaled future ages as greatly as he did. *Flow his way!* said he to history; and, in the main, it did. He created an astral mold for about a quarter of humanity, which for twenty-four centuries has endured. He did it by formulating a series of rules for the conduct of personal and national life; or rather, by showing what kind of rules they should be, and leaving others to formulate them;—and so infused his doctrine with his will and example, that century after century flowed into the matrix he had made for them. To create such a stable matrix, the Aryan mind, in India, worked through long spiritual-intellectual exploration of the world of metaphysics: an

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intensive culture of all the possibilities of thought. We in the West have boggled towards the same end through centuries of crass political experiment. Confucius, following his ancient models, ignored metaphysics altogether: jumped the life to come, and made his be-all and his end-all here:—in what was necessary, in deeds and thought and speech, to make individual, social, and political life staid, sincere, orderly, quiet, decent, and happy. He died a broken-hearted failure; than whom perhaps no man except the Lord Buddha ever succeeded more highly.

Laotse is his complement. Laotse's aim is not the activity, but the quiescence of mind, self, intellect: "in the NO THING seeking the lonely Way." You forgo everything—-especially selfhood;—you give up everything; you enter upon the heritage of No Thing;—and you find yourself heir to the Universe, to wonder, to magic. You do with all your complicated egoity as the camel did with his cameltiness before he could enter the needle's eye; then—heigh presto!—it is the Elixir of Life you have drunk; it is freedom you have attained of the roaming-place of Dragons!—It amounts, truly, to the same thing as Aryan Theosophy; but where the latter travels through and illuminates immense realms of thought and metaphysic, Taoism slides gently into the Absolute; as who should laugh and say, *You see how easy it is!* And you do not hear of the Path of Sorrow, as with the Aryans; Tao is a path of sly laughter and delight.

Then from Japan we get Shinto; still less a system of metaphysics or dogma. The Shinto temple, empty but for air, is symbolic of the creed whose keynotes are purity and simplicity. Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto are the three great native creations, in religion, of what I shall call the Altaic mind. There have been, indeed, profound thinkers and metaphysicians both in Japan and China; but their mental activities have been for the most part fruitage from the Aryan seed of Buddhism.

A word here as to that phrase 'Altaic mind.' What business has one to class the Chinese and Japanese together, and to speak of them (as I shall) as 'Altaic'—the *Altaic Race?* In the first place this term, like 'Latin' or 'Anglo-Saxon,' has the virtue of being quite meaningless. It is utterly silly and inappropriate from every standpoint; but as I need a term to include China and all the peoples that have derived their historic culture from her, I shall beg leave to use it. Neither Japanese nor Corean belong to the billiard-ball group of languages. There is a syntactical likeness between these two, but none in vocabulary; where the Japanese vocabulary came from, Omniscience perhaps may know.—A syntax outlasts a vocabulary by many ages: you may hear Celts now talk English with a syntax that comes from the sub-race before our own: Iberian, and not Aryan. So we may guess here a race akin to the Coreans conquered at some time by a race whose vocables were Japanese—whence they came,

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God knows. Only one hears that in South America the Japanese pick up the Indian languages a deal more easily than white folk do, or than they do Spanish or English. But this is a divergence; we should be a little more forward, perhaps, if we knew who were the Coreans, or whence they came. But we do not. They are not Turanic—of the Finno-Turko-Mongol stock (by language); they are not speakers of billiard-balls, allied to the Chinese, Burmese, and Tibetans. But the fact is that neither blood-affinity nor speech-affinity is much to the purpose here; we have to do with affinities of culture. During the period 240 B. C.—1260 A. D. a great civilization rose, flowered, and waned in the Far East; it had its origin in China, and spread out to include in its scope Japan, Corea, and Tibet; probably also Annam and Tonquin, though we hear less of them;—-while Burma, Assam, and Siam, and those southerly regions, though akin to China in language, seem to have been always more satellite to India. Mongols and Manchus, though they look rather like Chinese, and have lived rather near China, belong by language and traditionally by race to another group altogether—to that, in fact, which includes the very Caucasian-looking Turks and Hungarians; as to what culture they have had, they got it from China after the Chinese manvantara had passed.

The Chinese themselves are only homogeneous in race in the sense that Europe might be if the Romans had conquered it all, and imposed their culture and language on the whole continent. The staid, grave, dignified, and rather stolid northern Chinaman differs from the restless and imaginative Cantonese not much less than the Japanese does from either. This much you can say: Chinese, Japanese, and Coreans have been molded into a kind of loose unity by a common culture; the peoples of China into a closer homogeneity by a common culture-language, written and spoken,—and by the fact that they have been, off and on during the last two thousand years, but most of the time, under the same government. As to Corea, though in the days of Confucius it was unknown to the Chinese, the legends of both countries ascribe the founding of its civilization and monarchy to a Chinese minister exiled there during the twelfth century B. C. Japanese legendary history goes back to 600 B. C.;—that is, to the closing of the Age of the Mysteries, and the opening of that of the Religions:— I imagine that means that about that time a break with history occurred, and the past was abolished: a thing we shall see happen in ancient China presently. But I suppose we may call Shotoku Daishi the Father of historical Japan;—he who, about the end of the sixth century A. D., brought in the culture impetus from the continent. About that time, too, Siam rose to power; and soon afterwards T’ang Taitsong imposed civilization on Tibet.—So there you have the ‘Altaic’ Race; Altaic, as Mr. Dooley is Anglo-Saxon. To speak of them as ‘Mongolian’ or ‘Mongoloid,’ as is often done, is about as sensible as to speak of Europeans and Americans as ‘Hunnoid,’ because the Huns once conquered part of Europe. It conveys derogation—which Altaic does not.

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I have compared their achievement with that of the West: we have one whole manvantara and a pralaya of theirs to judge by, as against two fragments of western manvantaras with the pralaya intervening. It is not much; and we should remember that there are cycles and epicycles; and that Japan, or old China herself, within our own lifetime, may give the lie to everything. But from the evidence at hand one is inclined to draw this conclusion: That in the Far East you have a great section of humanity in reserve;—in a sense, in a backwater of evolution: nearer the Spirit, farther from the hot press and conflict of the material world;—even in its times of highest activity, not in the van of the down-rush of Spirit into matter, as the western races have been in theirs;—but held apart to perform a different function. As if the Crest-Wave of Evolution needed what we might call Devachanic cycles of incarnation, and found them there during the Altaic manvantaras of manifestation. Not that their history has been empty of tragedies; it has been very full of them; and wars—some eight or nine Napoleons in their day have sat on the Dragon Throne. But still, the worlds of poetry, delight, wonder, have been nearer and more accessible to the Chinaman, in his great ages, than to us in ours; as they have been, and probably are now, nearer to the Japanese. And I do not know how that should be, unless the Law had taken those Atlanteans away, kept them apart from the main stream—not fighting the main battle, but in reserve—for purposes that the long millenniums of the future are to declare.

IX. THE DRAGON AND THE BLUE PEARL

The horizon of Chinese history lies near the middle of the third millennium B. C. The first date sinologists dare swear to is 776; in which year an eclipse of the sun is recorded, that actually did happen: it is set down, not as a thing interesting in itself, but as ominous of the fall of wicked kings. Here, then, in the one place where there is any testing the annals, it appears they are sound enough; which might be thought to speak well for them. But our scholars are so damnebly logical, as Mr. Mantalini would say, that to them it only proves this: you are to accept no date earlier. One general solar indorsement will not do; you must have an eclipse for everything you believe, and trust nothing unless the stars in their courses bear witness.

Well; we have fortunately Halley’s Comet in the Bayeux Tapestry for our familiar 1066; but beware! everything before that is to be taken as pure fudge!

The fact is there is no special reason for doubting either chronology or sequence of events up to about 2357 B. C., in which year the Patriarch Yao came to the throne. He was the first of those three, Yao, Shun, and Yu, who have been ever since the patterns for all Chinese rulers who have aspired to be Confucianly good. “Be like Yao, Shun, and Yu; do as they did";— there you have the word of Confucius to all emperors and governors of states.

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Yao, it is true, is said to have reigned a full century, or but one year short of it. This is perhaps the first improbability we come to; and even of this we may say that some people do live a long time. None of his successors repeated the indiscretion. Before him came a line of six sovereigns with little historic verisimilitude: they must be called faint memories of epochs, not actual men. The first of them, Fo-hi (2852-2738), was half man, half dragon; which is being interpreted, of course, an Adept King;—or say a line of Adept Kings. As for the dates given him, I suppose there is nothing exact about them; that was all too far back for memory; it belongs to reminiscence. Before Fo-hi came the periods of the Nest-Builders, of the Man-Kings, the Earth-Kings, and the Heaven-Kings; then P'an K'u, who built the worlds; then, at about two and a quarter million years before Confucius, the emanation of Duality from the Primal One. All this, of course, is merely the exoteric account; but it shows at least that—the Chinese never fell into such fatuity as we of the West, with our creation six trumpery millenniums ago.

This much we may say: about the time when Yao is said to have come to the throne a manvantara began, which would have finished its course of fifteen centuries in 850 or so B. C. It is a period we see only as through a glass darkly: what is told about it is, to recent and defined history, as a ghost to a living man. There is no reason why it should not have been an age of high civilization and cultural activities; but all is too shadowy to say what they were. To its first centuries are accredited works of engineering that would make our greatest modern achievements look small: common sense would say, probably the reminiscence of something actual. Certainly the Chinese emerged from it, and into daylight history, not primitive but effete: senile, not childlike. That may be only a racial peculiarity, a national prejudice, of course.

And where should you look, back of 850 B. C., to find actual history—human motives, speech and passions—or what to our eyes should appear such? As things near the time-horizon, they lose their keen outlines and grow blurred and dim. The Setis and Thothmeses are names to us, with no personality attaching; though we have discovered their mummies, and know the semblance of their features, our imagination cannot clothe them with life. We can hear a near Napoleon joking, but not a far-off Rameses. We can call Justinian from his grave, and traverse the desert with Mohammed; but can bold no converse with Manu or Hammurabi;— because these two dwell well this side of the time-horizon, but the epochs of those are far beyond it. The stars set: the summer evenings forget Orion, and the nights of winter the beauty of Fomalhaut: though there is a long slope between the zenith *Now* and the sea-rim, what has once gone down beyond the west of time we cannot recall or refashion. So that old Chinese manvantara is gone after the Dragon Fo-hi and the Yellow Emperor, after the Man-Kings and the Earth-Kings and the Heaven-Kings; and Yao, Shun, and Yu the Great, and the kings of Hia, and Shang, and even Chow, are but names and shadows,

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Quo pater, Aeneas, quo dires Tullus et Ancus,

—we cannot make them interestingly alive. But it does not follow that they did not live when they are supposed to have lived, or do the things attributed to them. Their architecture was ephemeral, and bears no witness to them; they built no pyramids to flout time; they raised no monument but a people, a culture, an idea, that still endures.

Then, too, we shall see that at the beginning of the last Chinese manvantara a conscious attempt was made to break wholly with the past,—to wipe it from human memory, and begin all anew. Such a thing happened in Babylon once; there had been a Sargon in remote antiquity with great deeds to his credit; thousands of years after, another Sargon arose, who envied his fame; and, being a kind, and absolute, decreed that all the years intervening should never have existed—merged his own in the personality of his remote predecessor, and so provided a good deal of muddlement for archaeologists to come. Indeed, such a thing almost happened in France at the Revolution. It is said that in some French schools now you find children with a vague idea that things more or less began with the taking of the Bastille: that there was a misty indefinable period between the 12th of October (or on whatever day it was Eve's apple ripened) and the glorious 14th of July:—an age of prehistory, wandered through by unimportant legendary figures such as Jeanne Darc, Henri Quatre, Louis Quatorze, which we may leave to the superstitious—and come quickly to the real flesh and blood of M. de Mirabeau and Citizen Danton.—Even so, in our own time, China herself, wearied with the astral molds and inner burdens of two millenniums, has been writhing in a fever of destruction: has burnt down the Hanlin College, symbol and center of a thousand years of culture; destroyed old and famous cities; sent up priceless encyclopaedias in smoke; replaced the Empire with a republic, and the Dragon of wisdom with five meaningless stripes;—breaking with all she was in her brilliant greatness, and all she has been since in her weakness and squalid decline.— We ask why history is not continuous; why there are these strange hiatuses and droppings out? —the answer is simple enough. It is because Karma, long piled up, must sometime break out upon the world. The inner realms become clogged with the detritus of ages and activity, till all power to think and do is gone: there is no room nor scope left for it. The weight of what has been thought and done, of old habit, presses down on men, obstructs and torments them, till they go mad and riot and destroy. The manvantara opens: the Crest-Wave, the great tide of life, rushes in. It finds the world of mind cluttered up and encumbered; there is an acute disparity between the future and the past, which produces a kind of psychic maelstrom. Blessed is that nation then, which has a man at its head who can guide

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things, so that the good may not go with the bad, the useful with the useless! The very facts that Ts'in Shi Hwangti, when the manvantara opened at the beginning of the third century B.C., was driven (you may say) to do what ruthless drastic things he did.— and that his action was followed by such wonderful results—are proof enough that a long manvantara crowded with cultureal and national activities had run it course in the past, and clogged the astral, and made progress impossible. But what he did do, throws the whole of that past manvantara, and to some extent the pralaya that followed it, into the realm of shadows.—He burnt the literature.

In a few paragraphs let me summarize the history of that past age whose remnants Ts'in Shi Hwangti thus sought to sweep away.—Yao adopted Shun for his successor; in whose reign for nine years China's Sorrow, that mad bull of waters, the Hoangho, raged incessantly, carrying the world down towards the sea. Then Ta Yu, who succeeded Shun on the throne presently, devised and carried through those great engineering works referred to above: —cut through mountains, yoked the mad bull, and saved the world from drowning. He was, says H. P. Blavatsky, an Adept; and had learnt his wisdom from the Teachers in the snowy Range of SiDzang or Tibet. His dynasty, called the Hia, kept the throne until 1766; ending with the downfall of a cruel weakling. Followed then the House of Shang until 1122; set up by a wise and merciful Tang the Completer, brought to ruin by a vicious tyrant Chousin. It was Ki-tse, a minister of this last, and a great sage himself, who, fleeing from the persecutions of his royal master, established monarchy, civilization, and social order in Corea.

Another great man of the time was Won Wang, Duke of the Palatinate of Chow, a state on the western frontier whose business was to protect China from the Huns. Really, those Huns were a thing to marvel at: we first hear of them in the reign of the Yellow emperor, two or three centuries before Yao; they were giving trouble then, a good three millenniums before Attila. Won Wang, fighting on the frontier, withstood these kindly souls; and all China looked to him with a love he deserved. Which of course roused King Chousin's jealousy; and when a protest came from the great soldier against the debaucheries and misgovernment at the capital, the king roused himself and did what he could; imprisoned the protestant, as he dared not kill him. During the three years of his imprisonment Won Wang compiled the mysterious I-King, of Book of Changes; of which Confucius said, that were another half century added to his life, he would spend them all in studying it. No western scholar, one may safely say, has ever found a glimmer of meaning in it; but all the ages of China have held it profounder than the profound.

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His two sons avenged Won Wang; they roused the people, recruited an army in their palatinate—perhaps enlisted Huns too—and swept away Chousin and his dynasty. They called their new royal house after their native land, Chow; Wu Wang, the elder of the two, becoming its first king, and his brother the Duke of Chow, his prime minister. I say *king;* for the title was now *Wang* merely; though there had been *Hwangtis* or Emperors of old. Won Wang and his two sons are the second Holy Trinity of China; Yao, Shun, and Ta Yu being the first. They figure enormously in the literature: are stars in the far past, to which all eyes, following the august example of Confucius, are turned. There is a little to be said about them: they are either too near the horizon, or too little of their history has been Englished, for us to see them in their habit as they lived; yet some luster of real greatness still seems to shine about them. It was the Duke of Chow, apparently, who devised or restored that whole Chinese religio-political system which Confucius revivified and impressed so strongly on the stuff of the ideal world—for he could get no ruler of his day to establish it in the actualities—that it lasted until the beginning of a new manvantara is shatter it now. That it was based on deep knowledge of the hidden laws of life there is this (among a host of other things) to prove: Music was an essential part of it. When, a few years ago, the tiny last of the Manchu emperors came to the throne, an edict was published decreeing that, to fit him to govern the empire, the greatest care should be taken with his education in music. A wisdom, truly, that the west has forgotten!

When William of Normandy conquered England, he rewarded his followers with fiefs: in England, while English land remained so to be parceled out; afterwards (he and his successors) with unconquered lands in Wales, and then in Ireland. they were to carve out baronies and earldoms for themselves; and the Celtic lands thus stolen became known as the Marches: their rulers, more or less independent, but doing homage to the king, as Lords Marchers. The kings of Chow adopted the same plan. Their old duchy palatinate became the model for scores of others. China itself—a very small country then—southern Shansi, northern Homan, western Shantung—was first divided up under the feudal system; the king retaining a domain, known as Chow, in Homan, for his own. Then princes and nobles—some of the blood royal, some of the old shang family, some risen from the ranks—were given warrant to conquer lands for themselves from the barbarians beyond the frontier: so you go rid of the ambitious, and provided Chow with comfortable buffers. They went out, taking a measure of Chinese civilization with them, and conquered or cajoled Huns, Turks, Tatars, Laos, shans, Annamese, and all that kind of people, into accepting them for their rulers. It was a work, as you may imagine, of centuries; with as

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much history going forward as during any centuries you might name. The states thus formed were young, compared to China; and as China grew old and weak, they grew into their vigorous prime. The infinity of human activities that has been! These Chow ages seem like the winking of an eye; but they were crowded with great men and small, great deeds and trivialities, like our own. The time will come when our 'Anglo-Saxon' history will be written thus: England sent out colonies, and presently the colonies grew stronger and more populous than England;—and it will be enough, without mention of the Pitts and Lincolns, the Washingtons and Gladstones, that now make it seem so full and important.

By 850 the balance of power had left or was leaving the Chow king at Honanfu. His own subjects had grown unwarlike, and he could hardly command even their allegiance; for each man's feudal duty was first to his own duke, marquis, earl, viscount, or baron;— strangely enough, there were those five degrees of nobility in ancient China as in modern England. Of these nobles, each with his court and feudal dominion, there were in what we may call China Proper some unascertainable number between thirteen and a hundred and fifty: mostly small and insignificant, but mostly, too, full of schemes and ambitions.

But it was the Lords Marchers that counted. One after another of them had wrested from the Chow the title of *Wang* or King; it was not enough for them to be dukes and marquises. Then came a time when a sort of Bretwalda-ship was established; to be wielded by whichever of them happened to be strongest—and generally to be fought for between whiles: a glorious and perpetual bone of contention. International law went by the board. The Chow domain, the duchies and marquisates, lay right in the path of the contestants—midmost of all, and most to be trampled. Was Tsin to march all round the world, when a mere scurry across neutral (and helpless) Chow would bring it at the desired throat of Ts'u?—A question not to be asked!—there at Honanfu sat the Chow king, head of the national religion, head of the state with its feudatories, receiving (when it suited them to pay it) the annual homage of all those loud and greedy potentates, who for the rest kicked him about as they pleased, and ordered each other to obey him,—for was he not still the son of Heaven, possessor of the Nine Tripods of sovereignty, the tripods of Ta Yu?—So the centuries passed, growing worse and worse ever, from the ninth to the sixth: an age of anarchy, bad government, disorder, crime and clash of ambitions: when there was a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world;—and we know what manner of incarnation, at such times, is likely to happen.

Conditions had outgrown the astral molds made for them in the last manvantara: the molds that had been made for a small homogeneous China. The world had expanded, and was no longer homogeneous: China herself was not homogeneous; and she found on all sides of her very heterogeneous Ts'ins, Tsins, Ts'is, Ts'us, Wus and Yuehs; each

of whom, like so many Great Powers of our own times, had the best of intentions to partake of her sacramental body when God's will so should be.—Indeed, the situation was very much as we have seen it.

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Then, as now (or recently), China was old, inert, tired, and unwarlike; must depend on her cunning, and chiefly on their divisions, for what protection she might get against the rapacious and strong. She was dull, sleepy and unimaginative, and wanted only to be left alone; yet teemed, too, with ambitious politicians, each with his sly wires to pull. Her culture, ancient and decrepit, was removed by aeons from all glamor of beginnings.—-For a good European parallel, in this respect, you might go to Constantinople in the Middle Ages, when it hung ripe on the bough, so to say, and waiting to fall into Latin, Turkish, Bulgar, or even Russian jaws, whichever at the psychic moment should be gaping and ready beneath. There too was the sense of old age and sterility; of disillusionment; of all fountains and inspirations run dry.—In ancient Grecce, it was no such far cry back from the essential modernity of Pericles' or of Plato's time to the antiquity of Homer's. In India, the faery light of an immemorial dawn mingles so with the facts of history that there is no disentangling myth from matter-of-fact; if you should prove almost any king to have reigned quite recently, his throne would still be somehow set in the mellow past and near the fountains of time. Augustan Rome, modern in all its phases, stands not so far in front of a background peopled with nymphs and Sibyls: a past in which the Great Twin Brothers might fight at Lake Regillus, and stern heroes make fantastic sacrifices for Rome. Even modern Europe is much less modern than Medieval Constantinople or Chow China. We can breathe still the mysterious atmosphere of the Middle Ages; you shall find still, and that not in remote countries only, fairy-haunted valleys; a few hours out from London, and you shall be in the heart of druidry, and among peoples whose life is very near to Poetry. But China, in those first pre-Confucian centuries, was desperately prosaic: not so much modern, as pertaining to an ugly not impossible future. Antiquity was far, far away. The dawn with its glow and graciousness; noon and the prime with their splendor, were as distant and unimaginable as from our Amercan selves the day when Charlemain with all his peers went down. If you can imagine an American several hundred years from now—one in which Point Loma had never been; several hundred years more unromantic than this one; an America fallen and grown haggard and toothless; with all impulse to progress and invention gone; with centrifugal tendencies always loosening the bond of union; advancing, and having steadily advanced, further from all religious sanctions, from anything she may retain of the atmosphere of mystery and folklore and the poetry of racial childhood; you may get a picture of the mental state of that China. A material civilization, with (except in war areas) reasonable security of life and goods, remained to her. Her people lived in good houses, wore good clothes, used chairs and tables, chopsticks,

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plates and dishes of pottery; had for transit boats, carts and chariots,* wheelbarrows I suppose, and “cany wagons light.” They had a system of writing, the origin of which was lost in remote antiquity; a large literature, of which fragments remain. They were home-loving, war-hating, quiet, stagnant, cunning perhaps, quite un-enterprising; they lived in the valley of the Hoangho, and had not discovered, or had forgotten, the Yangtse to the south of them, and the sea to the east. They might have their local loyalties and patriotism of the pork-barrel, and a certain arrogance of race: belief in the essential superiority of the Black-haired People to the barbarians on their borders; but no high feeling for Chu Hia— All the Chinas;—no dream of a possible national union and greatness. Some three hundred of their folk-ballads come down to us, which are as unlike the folk-ballads of Europe as may be. They do not touch on the supernatural; display no imagination; there are no ghosts or fairies; there is no glory or delight in war; there is no glory in anything;—but only an intense desirability in *home,*—in staying at home with your family, and doing your I work in the fields. And nothing of what we should call romance, even in this home-love: the chief tie is that between parents and children, not that between husband and wife, and still less that between lovers. There is much moralizing and wistful sadness.—Such was the life of the peasants; at the other pole was the life of the courts: intrigue and cunning, and what always goes with cunning—ineptitude; a good measure of debauchery; some finicking unimportant refinement; each man for self and party, and none for Gods and Men. We have to do, not with the bright colors of the childhood of a race, but with the grayness of its extreme old age. Those who will may argue that you can have old age with never a prime, youth, or childhood behind it. Some say that Laotse was born at sixty-one, or seventy, or eighty-two years old—a few decades more or less are not worth bothering about—-whence his name *lao tse,* the *old son* (but *tse* may also mean Teacher or Philosopher). But I misdoubt the accuracy of such accounts, myself. I think it likely he was a baby to begin with, like the majority of us. And I imagine his country had been young, too, before she grew old;—as young as America, and as vigorous.

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* *Chinese Literature:* Giles;—whence also much else in these articles.

Among such a people, how much should you expect to find of the Sacred Mysteries?—-There were the Nine Tripods of Ta Yu with the king at Honanfu, to say that his kinghood had behind it symbolic sanctions; there was the Book of Changes; there was the system of the Duke of Chow, more dishonored in the breach than honored in the observance.... For the rest, you might as well look for the Eleusinia in Chicago. Who could believe in religion, those days?—Well;

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it was the pride of some of the little duchies and marquisates to keep up a reputa-tion for orthodoxy: there was Lu in Shantung, for example,-very strict.* (As strictness went, we may say.) And if you wished to study ritual, you went up to Honanfu to do so; where, too, was the National or Royal Library, where profitable years might be spent. But who, except enthusiasts, was to treat religion seriously? —when one saw the doddering Head of Religion yearly flouted, kicked about and hustled in his own capital by his Barbarian Highness the 'King'—so he must now style himself and be styled, where in better days 'Count Palatine' or 'Lord Marcher' would have served his turn well enough —of Ts'in or Tsin or Ts'i or Ts'u, who would come thundering down with his chariots when he pleased, and without with-your-leave or by-your-leave, march past the very gates of Honanfu;—and lucky if he did march past, and not come in and stay awhile; —-on his way to attacking his Barbarian Highness the 'King' of somewhere else. The God that is to be sincerely worshiped must, as this world goes, be able now and then to do some little thing for his vicegerent on earth; and Heaven did precious little in those days for the weakling King-pontiff puppets at Honanfu. A mad world, my masters!

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* *Ancient China Simplified:* E. Harper Parker;—also much drawn on.

Wherein, too, we had our symbols:—the Dragon, the Sky-wanderer, with something heavenly to say; but alas! the Dragon had been little visible in our skies of Chu Hia these many years or centuries;—the Tiger, brute muscularity, lithe terrible limbs, fearful claws and teeth,—we knew him much better! This, heaven knew, was the day of the Tiger of earthly strength and passions; were there not those three great tigers up north, Ts'in, Tsin, and Ts'i; and as many more southward; and all hungry and strong?—And also, some little less thought of perhaps, the Phoenix, Secular Bird, that bums itself at the end of each cycle, and arises from its ashes young and dazzling again: the Phoenix —but little thought of, these days; for was not the world old and outworn, and toppling down towards a final crash? The days of Chu Hia were gone, its future all in the long past; no one dared dream of a time when there should be something better than Yen diddling Lu, or Ts'u beating Ts'i at a good set-to with these new sixty-warrior-holding chariots. Who should think of the Phoenix—and of a new age to come when there should be no more Yen and Lu and Chow and Tsin and Ts'in, but one broad and mighty realm, a Middle, a Celestial Kingdom,—such a Chu Hia as time had no memory of;—to whose throne the Hun himself should bow, or whose hosts should drive him out of Asia; —a Chu Hia to whom tribute should come from the uttermost ends of the earth? Who should dream of the Secular Bird now,— as improbable a creature, in these dark days of the Tiger, as that old long-lost Sky-wanderer the Dragon himself?

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Let be; let three little centuries pass; let the funeral pyre but be kindled, and quite burn itself out; and let the ashes grow cold—

And behold you now, this Phoenix of the World, bright and dazzling, rising up from them! Behold you now this same Black-haired People, young, strong, vigorous, gleaming with all the rainbow hues of romance and imagination; conquering and creative, and soon to strew the jewels of faerie over all the Eastern World. . . .

But this is to anticipate: to take you on to the second century B. C.; whereas I want you now in the sixth.—I said that you should find better chances for study in the Royal Library at Honanfu, could you get together the means for journeying thither, than anywhere else in Chu Hia. That was particularly true in the latter part of that sixth century: because there was a man by the name of Li Urh, chief librarian there, from whom, if you cared to, you might hear better things than were to be found in the books in his charge. His fame, it appears, has gone abroad through the world; although his chief aim seems to be to keep in the shadows and not be talked about. Scholars resort to him from far and near; one of them, the greatest of all, who came to him in the year 517 and was (if we are to believe accounts) treated without too much mercy, came out awestruck, and said: "Today I have seen the Dragon."—What! that little old man with the bald head and straggly lank Chirese beard?—Like enough, like enough! —they are not all, as you look at them with these physical eyes, to be seen winged and wandering the heavens. . . .

But wandering the heavens, this one, yes! He has the blue ether about him, even there in the Library among the books.—He has a way of putting things in little old quiet paradoxes that seem to solve all the problems,—to take you out of the dust and clatter of this world, into the serenity of the Dragon-world where all problems are solved, or non-existent. Chu Hia is all a fuss and turmoil, and running the headlong Gadarene road; but the Old Philosopher—as he has come to be called—has anchorage right outside of and above it, and speaks from the calmness of the peaks of heaven. A kind of school forms itself around him; his wisdom keeps provincials from returning home, and the young men of the capital from commonplace courses. Though he has been accredited with much authorship, I think he wrote nothing; living among books, he had rather a contempt for them,—as things at the best for patching up and cosseting life, new windings and wrappings for its cocoon;—whereas he would have had the whole cocoon stripped away, and the butterfly beautifully airing its wings. Be that as it may, there are, shall we say, stenographers among his disciples, and his sayings come down to us. They have to do with the Way, the Truth, and the Life; which things, and much else, are included in Chinese in the one word *Tao.*

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“The main purpose of his studies” says Ssema Tsien (the ’Father of Chinese History’), “was to keep himself concealed and unknown.” In this he succeeded admirably, so far as all future ages were to concerned; for Ssema himself, writing in the reign of Han Wuti some four centuries later, could be by no means sure of his identity. He tells us all we know, or think we know, about Laotse:—that he was born in a village in southern Honan; kept the Royal Library at Honanfu; met Confucius there in 517; and at last rode away on his ox into the west, leaving the *Tao Teh King* with the Keeper of the Pass on the frontier;—and then goes on to say that there were two other men “whom many regarded as having been the real Laotse”; one of the Lao Lai, a contemporary of Confucius, who wrote fifteen treatises on the practices of the school of Tao; the other, a “Grand Historiographer of Chow,” Tan by name, who lived some century and a quarter later. To me this is chiefly interesting as a suggestion that the ‘School of Tao’ was a thing existent and well-established at that time, and with more than one man writing about it.

It may we’ll have been. Taoists ascribe the foundation of their religion to the Yellow Emperor, twenty-eight centuries B. C.; but there never was time Tao was not; nor, I suppose, when there was quite no knowledge of it, even in China. In the old manvantara, past now these three hundred years, the Black-haired People had wandered far enough from such knowledge;—with the accumulation of complexities, with the piling up of encumberments of thought and deed during fifteen hundred busy years of intensive civilization. As long as that piling up had not entirely covered away Tao, the Supreme Simplicity, the Clear Air;—as long as men could find scope to think and act and accomplish things;—so long the manvantara lasted; when nothing more that was useful could be accomplished, and action could no longer bring about its expectable results (because all that old dead weight was there to interpose itself between new causes set in motion and their natural outcome)—then the pralaya set in. You see, that is why pralayas do set in; why they must;—why no nation can possibly go on at a pitch of greatness and high activity beyond a certain length of time.—And all that activity of the manvantara—all that fuss and bustle to achieve greatness and fortune—it had all been an obscuration of and moving away from Tao.

The Great Teachers come into this world out of the Unknown, bringing the essence of their Truth with them. We know well what they will teach: in some form or another it will be Theosophy; it will be the old self-evident truths about Karma and the two natures of man. But how they will teach it: what kind of sugar-coating or bitter aloes they will prescribe along with it: —that, I think, depends on reactions from the age they come in and the people whom they are to teach. It is almost certain, as I said, that Li Urh the Old

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Philosopher left no writings. "Who knows, does not tell," said he; and Po Chu-i quotes this, and pertinently adds: "What then of his own five thousand words and more.—the *Tao Teh King.*" That book was proved centuries ago, in China, not to have come, as it stands, even from Laotse's age; because there are characters in it that were invented long afterwards. The wisest thing to believe is that it is made up mostly of his sayings, taken down by his disciples in the Pitman of the time; and surviving, with accretions and losses perhaps, through the disquiet of the next two centuries, and the burning of the books, and everything. Because whatever vicissitudes may have befallen it, one does hear in its maxims the tones of a real voice: one man's voice, with a timbre in it that belongs to the Lords of Wisdom. And to me, despite Lao Lai and Tan the Grand Historiographer, it is the voice of an old man in the seclusion of the Royal Library: a happy little bald-headed straggly-bearded old man anxious to keep himself unknown and unapplauded; it is a voice attuned to quietness, and to mental reactions from the thunder of the armies, the drums and tramplings and fuss and insolence of his day. I thoroughly believe in the old man in the Royal Library, and the riding away on oxback at last into the west,—where was Si Wang Mu's Faery Garden, and the Gobi Desert, with sundry oases therein whereof we have heard. I can hear that voice, with childlike wonder in it, and Adept-like seriousness, and childlike and Adept-like laughter not far behind, in such sayings as these: "Tao is like the emptiness of a vessel; and the use of it, we may say, must be free from all self-sufficiency. How deep and mysterious it is, as if it were the author of all things! We should make our sharpness blunt, and unravel the complications of things. . . . How still and clear is Tao, a phantasm with the semblance of permanence! I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God."

We see in Christendom the effects of belief in a personal God, and also the inefficacy of mere ethics. Believers make their God in their own image, and nourish their personalities imitating an imitation of themselves. At the best of times they take their New Testament ethics, distil from these every virtue and excellent quality, and posit the result as the characteristics of their Deity:—the result, plus a selfhood; and therefore the great delusion and heresy, Separateness, is the link that binds the whole together. It is after all but a swollen personality; and whether you swell your personalitv with virtues or vices, the result is an offense. There is a bridge, razor-edged, between earth and heaven; and you can never carry that load across it. Laotse, supremely ethical in effect, had a cordial detestation— take this gingerly!—of un-re-enforced ethics. "When the great Tao is lost," says he, "men follow after charity and duty to one's neighbor."

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Again: “When Tao is lost, virtue takes its place. When virtue is lost, benevolence succeeds to it. When benevolence is lost, justice ensues. When justice is lost, then we have expediency.” He does not mean, of course, that these things are bad; but simply that they are the successive stages of best, things left when Tao is lost sight of; none of them in itself a high enough aim. They are all included in Tao, as the less in the greater. He describes to you the character of the man of Tao; but your conduct is to be the effect of following Tao; and you do not attain Tao by mere practice of virtue; though you naturally practise virtue, without being aware of it, while following Tao. It all throws wonderful light on the nature of the Adept; about whom you have said nothing at all when you have accredited him with all the virtues. Joan was blemishless; but not thereby did she save France;—she could do that because, as Laotse would have said, being one with Tao, she flowed out into her surroundings, accomplishing absolutely her part in the universal plan. No compilation of virtues would make a Teacher (such as we know): it is a case of the total absence of everything that should prevent the natural Divine Part of man from functioning in this world as freely and naturally as the sun shines or the winds blow. The sun and the stars and the tides and the wind and the rain —there is that perfect glowing simplicity in them all: the Original, the Root of all things, Tao. *Be like them,* says Laotse, impersonal and simple. “I hold fast to and cherish Three Precious Things,” he says: “Gentleness, Economy, Humility.” Why? So, you would say, do the ethics of the New Testament; such is the preaching of the Christian Churches. But (in the latter case) for reasons quite unlike Laotse’s. For we make of them too often virtues to be attained, that shall render us meek and godly, acceptable in the eyes of the Lord, and I know not what else: riches laid up in heaven; a pamperment of satisfaction; easily to become a cloak for self-righteousness and, if worse can be, worse. But *tut!* Laotse will not be bothered with riches here or elsewhere. With him these precious things are simply absences that come to be when obstructive presences are thrown off. No sanctimoniousness for the little Old Man in the Royal Library!

He would draw minds away to the silence of the Great Mystery, which is the fountain of laughter, of life, the unmarred; and he would have them abide there in absolute harmony. Understand him, and you understand what he did for China. It is from that Inner Thing, that Tao, that all nourishment comes and all greatness. You must go out with your eyes open to search for it: watch for Dragons in the sky; for the Laugher, the Golden Person, in the Sun: watch for Tao, ineffably sparkling and joyous—and quiet—in the trees; listen for it in the winds and in the sea-roar; and have nothing in your own heart but its presence and omnipresence and wonder-working

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joy. How can you flow out to the moments, and capture the treasure in them; how can you flow out to Tao, and inherit the stars, and have the sea itself flowing in your veins; —if you are blocked with a desire, or a passion for things mortal, or a grudge against someone, or a dislike? Beauty is Tao: it is Tao that shines in the flowers: the rose, the bluebell, the daffodil—the wistaria, the chrysanthemum, the peony—they are little avatars of Tao; they are little gateways into the Kingdom of God. How can you know them, how can you go in through them, how can you participate in the laughter of the planets and the angelic clans, through their ministration, if you are preoccupied with the interests or the wants of contemptible you, the personality? Laotse went lighting little stars for the Black-haired People: went pricking the opacity of heaven, that the Light of lights might filter through. If you call him a philosopher, you credit him with an intellectualism that really he did not bother to possess. Rather he stood by the Wells of Poetry, and was spiritual progenitor of thousands of poets. There is no way to Poetry but Laotse's Way. You think you must go abroad and see the world; you must not; that is only a hindrance: a giving the eyes too many new externals, to hinder them from looking for that which you may see, as he says, 'through your own window.' If you traverse the whole world seeking, you will never come nearer to the only thing that counts, which is Here, and Now. Seek to feed your imagination on outward things, on doings and events, and you will perhaps excite, but surely soon starve it. But at the other pole, the inner "How deep and mysterious is Tao, as if it were the author of all things!" And then I hear someone ask him whence it originated—someone fishing for a little metaphysics, some dose of philosophy. What! catch Laotse? "I know," said Confucius, "how birds fly, beasts run, fishes swim. But the runner may be snared, the swimmer hooked, the flyer shot with an arrow. But there is the Dragon; I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises into heaven." No; you cannot hook, snare, or shoot the Dragon. "I do not know whose son Tao is," says Laotse. "It might appear to have been before God."

So I adhere to the tale of the old man in the Royal Library, holding wonderful quiet conversations there; that "it might appear to have been before God" is enough to convince me. There was a man once*—I forget his name, but we may call him Cho Kung for our purposes; he was of affable demeanor, and an excellent flautist; and had an enormous disbelief in ghosts, bogies, goblins, and 'supernatural' beings of every kind. It seized him with the force of a narrow creed; and he went forth to missionarize, seeking disputants. He found one in the chief Librarian of some provincial library; who confessed to a credulousness along that line, and seemed willing to talk. Here then were grand opportunities—for

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a day's real enjoyment, with perchance a creditable convert to be won at the end of it. Behold them sitting down to the fray, in the shadows among the books: the young Cho Kung, affable (I like the word well), voluble and earnest; the old Librarian, mild, with little to say but *buts* and *ifs,* and courteous even beyond the wont in that "last refuge of good manners," China. All day long they sat; and affable Cho, like Sir Macklin in the poem,

> "Argued high and argued low,
> And likewise argued round about him";

—until by fall of dusk the Librarian was fairly beaten. So cogent were Cho's arguments, so loud and warm his eloquence, so entirely convincing his facts adduced—his modern instances, as you may say—that there really was nothing for the old man to answer. Ghosts were not; genii were ridiculously unthinkable; supernatural beings could not exist, and it was absurd to think they could. The Librarian had not a leg to stand on; that was flat. Accordingly he rose to his feet—and bowed.—"Sir," said he, with all prescribed honorifics, "undoubtedly you are victorious. The contemptible present speaker sees the error of his miserable ways. He is convinced. It remains for him only to add"—and here something occurred to make Cho rub his eyes—"that he is himself a supernatural being."—And with that his form and limbs distend, grow misty—and he vanishes in a cloud up through the ceiling.—You see, those old librarians in China had a way of doing things which was all their own.

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* The story is told in Dr. H. H. Giles' *Dictionary of Chinese Biography.*

So Li Urh responded to the confusions of his day. Arguments?— You could hardly call them so; there is very little arguing, where Tao is concerned. The Tiger was abroad, straining all those lithe tendons,—a tense fearful symmetry of destruction burning bright through the night-forests of that pralaya: grossest and wariest energies put forth to their utmost in a race between the cunning for existence, a struggle of the strong for power. —"It is the way of Tao to do difficult things when they are easy; to benefit and not to injure; to do and not to strive." Come out, says Laotse, from all this moil and topsey-turveydom; stop all this striving and botheration; give things a chance to right themselves. There is nothing flashy or to make a show about in Tao; it vies with no one. Let go; let be; find rest of the mind and senses; let us have no more of these fooleries, war, capital punishment, ambition; let us have self-emptiness. Just be quiet, and this great Chu Hia will come right without aid of governing, without politics and voting and canvassing and such.—*Here and Now* and *What comes by* were his

prescriptions. He was an advocate of the Small State. Aristotle would have had no government ruling more than ten thousand people; Laotse would have had his State of such a size

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that the inhabitants could all hear the cocks crowing in foreign lands; and he would have had them quite uneager to travel abroad. What he taught was a total *bouleversement* of the methods of his age. “It is the way of Tao not to act from personal motives, to conduct affairs—without feeling the trouble of them, to taste without being aware of the flavor, to account the great as the small and the small as the great, to recompense injury with kindness.”

The argument went all against him. Their majesties of Ts’in and Tsin and Ts’i and Ts’u were there with their drums and tramplings; the sixty warrior-carrying chariots were thundering past;—who should hear the voice of an old quiet man in the Royal Library? Minister This and Secretary That of Lu and Chao and Cheng were at it with their wire-pullings and lobbyings and petty diddlings and political cheateries—(it is all beautifully modern); what had the world to do with self-emptiness and Tao? The argument was all against him; he hadn’t a leg to stand on. There was no Tao; no simplicity; no magic; no Garden of Si Wang Mu in the West; no Azure Birds of Compassion to fly out from it into the world of men. Very well then; he, being one with that non-existent Tao, would ride away to that imaginary Garden; would go, and leave—

A strand torn out of the rainbow to be woven into the stuff of Chinese life. You could not tell it at the time; you never would have guessed it—but this old dull tired squalid China, cowering in her rice-fields and stopping her ears against the drums and tramplings, had had something—some seed of divinity, thrown down into her mind, that should grow there and be brooded on for three centuries or so, and then—

There is a Blue Pearl, Immortality; and the Dragon, wandering the heavens, is forever in pursuit or quest of it. You will see that on the old flag of China, that a foolish republicanism cast away as savoring too much of the Manchu. (But it was Laotse and Confucius, Han Wuti and Tang Taitsong, and Wu Taotse and the Banished Angel that it savored of really.) Well, it was this Blue Pearl that the Old Philosopher, riding up through the pass to the Western Gate of the world, there to vanish from the knowledge of men; —it was this Blue Pearl that, stopping and turning a moment there so high up and near heaven, he tossed back and out into the fields of China;—and the Dragon would come to seek it in his time.—You perhaps know the picture of Laotse riding away on his ox. I do not wonder that the beast is smiling.

For it really was the Blue Pearl: and the Lord knew what it was to do in China in its day. It fell down, you may say, from the clear ether of heaven into the thick atmosphere of this world; and amidst the mists of human personality took on all sorts of iridescences; lit up strange rainbow tints and fires to glow and glisten more and more wonderfully as the centuries should pass; and kindle the Chinese

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imagination into all sorts of opal glowings and divine bewilderments and wonderments;—and by and by the wonder-dyed mist-ripples floated out to Japan, and brought to pass there all sorts of nice Japanese cherry-blossomy and plum-blossomy and peonyish things, and Urashima-stories and Bushido-ish and Lafcadioish and badger-teakettle things:—reawakened, in fact, the whole of the faery glow of the Eastern World.

It is not to be thought that here among the mists and personalities the Pearl could quite retain all its pure blueness of the ether. It is not to be thought that Taoism, spread broadcast among the people, could remain, what it was at the beginning, an undiluted Theosophy. The lower the stratum of thought into which it fell, the less it could be Thought-Spiritual, the stuff unalloyed of Manas-Taijasi. Nevertheless, it was the Pearl Immortality, with a vigor and virtue of its own, and a competence for ages, on whatever plane it might be, to work wonders. Among thinking and spiritual minds it remained a true Way of Salvation. Among the masses it came to be thought of presently as personal immortality and the elixir of life. Regrettable, you may say; but this is the point: nothing was ever intended to last forever. You must judge Taoism by what it was in its day, not by what it may be now. Laotse had somehow flashed down into human consciousness a vision of Infinity: had confronted the Chinese mind with a conviction of the Great Mystery, the Divine Silence. It is simply a fact that that is the fountain whose waters feed the imagination and make it grow and bloom. Search for the Secret in chatter and outward sights and deeds, and you soon run to waste and nothingness; but seek here, and you shall find what seemed a void, teeming with lovely forms. He set the Chinese imagination, staggered and stupefied by the so long ages of manvantara, and then of ruin, into a glow of activity, of grace, of wonder; men became aware of the vast world of the Within; as if a thousand Americas had been discovered. It supplied the seed of creation for all the poets and artists to come. It made a new folklore; revivified the inner atmosphere of mountains and forests; set the fairies dancing; raised Yellow Crane Pagodas to mark the spot where Wang Tzu-chiao flew on the Crane to heaven in broad daylight. It sent out the ships of Ts'in Shi Hwangti presently to seek the Golden Islands of Peng-lai, where the Immortals give cups of the elixir to their votaries; in some degree it sent the armies of Han Wuti in search of the Garden of Si Wang Mu. The ships found (perhaps) only the Golden Islands of Japan; the armies found certainly Persia, India, and even the borders of Rome;—and withal, new currents, awakening and inter-national, to flow into China and make splendid the Golden Age of Han.

X. "SUCH A ONE"

"I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of Virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world: and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness."—*Bhagavad-Gita*

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“The world had fallen into decay, and right principles had perished. Perverse discourses and oppressive deeds had grown rife; ministers murdered their rulers and sons their fathers. Confucius was frightened at what he saw, and undertook the work of reformation.”—Mencius

Men were expecting an avatar in old Judaea; and, sure enough, one came. But they were looking for a national leader, a Messiah, to throw off for them the Roman yoke; or else for an ascetic like their prophets of old time: something, in any case, out of the way;—a personality wearing marks of avatarship easily recognisable. The one who came, however, so far from leading them against the Romans, seemed to have a good deal of sympathy with the Romans. He consorted with centurions and tax-gatherers, and advised the Jews to render unto Roman Caesar the things which were his: which meant, chiefly, the tribute. And he was not an ascetic, noticeably; bore no resemblance to their prophets of old time; but came, as he said, ‘eating and drinking’; even went to marriage-feasts, and that by no means to play killjoy;— and they said, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber!’ (which was a lie).—Instead of supporting the national religion, as anyone with half an eye to his interests would have done, he did surprising things in the temple with a whip of small cords.— “Here,” said they, “let us crucify this damned fellow!” And they did.

Aftertimes, however, recognised him as an avatar; and then so perverse is man!—as the one and only possible avatar. If ever another should appear, said our western world, it could but be this one come again; and, because the doctrine of avatars is a fundamental instinct in human nature, they expected that he would come again. So when the pressure of the times and the intuition of men warned them that a great incarnation was due, they began to look for his coming.

That was in our own day, say in the last half-century; during which time a mort of books have been written about a mysterious figure turning up in some modern city, whom you could not fail to recognise by certain infallible signs. Generally speaking, the chief of these were: long hair, and a tendency to make lugubrious remarks beginning with *Verily, verily I say unto you.* In actual life, too, lots of men did grow their hair long and cultivate the *verily-verily* habit; hoping that, despite their innate modesty, their fellow-men might not fail to take the hint and pierce the disguise afforded, often by a personal morality you might call *oblique.*

But if an avatar had come, it is fairly certain that he or she would have followed modern fashions in hair and speech; first, because real avatars have a sense of humor; and secondly, because his or her business would have been to reform, not the language or style of hair-dressing, but life.—’He or she’ is a very vile phrase; for the sake of novelty, let us make the feminine include the masculine,

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and say ‘she’ simply.—Her conversation, then, instead of being peppered with archaic *verilies* and *peradventures,* would have been in form much like that of the rest of us. It is quite unlikely she would have shone at Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, or Bazaars of the Young Women’s Christian Association; quite unlikely that she would have been in any sense whatever a pillar of the orthodoxies. As she would have come to preach *Truth,* you may suppose Truth needed, and therefore lacking; and so, that her teachings would have been at once dubbed vilest heterodoxy, and herself a charlatan.

“Below with eddy and flow the white tides creep
On the sands.”

Says Ssu-k’ung T’u,—

“….. in no one form may Tao abide.
But changes and shifts like the wide wing-shadows asweep
On the mountainside”;

—the sea is one, but the tides drift and eddy; the roc, or maybe the dragon, is one, but the shadow of his wings on the mountain sward shifts and changes and veers. When you think you have set up a standard for Tao: when you imagine you have grasped it in you hands:—how fleet it is to vanish! “The man of Tao,” said the fisherman of the Mi-lo to Ch’u Yuan, “does not quarrel with his surroundings, but adapts himself to them";—-and perhaps there you have the best possible explanation of the nature of those Great souls who come from time to time to save the world.

I think we take the Buddha as the type of them; and expect not only a life and character that *we can recognise* as flawless, but also a profundity of revelation in the philosophy and ethics. But if no two blades of grass are alike, much less are two human Souls; and in these Great Ones, it is the picture of Souls we are given. When we think that if all men were perfect, all would be alike, we err with a wide mistake. The nearer you get to the Soul, and the more perfect is the expression of it, the less is there monotony or similarity; and almost the one thing you may posit about any avatar is, that he will be a surprise. Tom and Dick and Harry are alike: ‘pipe and stick young men’; ’pint and steak young men’; they get born and marry and die, and the grass grows over them with wondrous alikeness; but when the Masters of Men come, all the elements are cast afresh.

Everyone has a place to fill in the universal scheme; he has a function to perform, that none else can perform; a *just what he can do,*—which commonly he falls far short of doing. When he does it, fully and perfectly, then he is on the road of progress; that road

opens up to him; and presently, still exercising the fulness of his being, he becomes a completeness, like Heaven and Earth; their ‘equal,’ in the Chinese phrase; or as we say, a Perfect Man or Adept. Does anyone know what place in history he is to fill? I cannot tell; I suppose an Adept, incarnated, would be too busy filling it to have time or will to question. But here perhaps we have

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the nearest thing possible to a standard for measuring them; and here the virtue of Taoism, and one greatest lesson we may learn from it. Are we to judge by the impressiveness of the personality? No; the Man of Tao is not a personality at all. He makes one to use, but is not identified with it; his personality will not be great or small, or enchanting or repellent, but simply adapted to the needs.—Is it the depth and fulness of the philosophv he gives out? No; it may be wiser and also more difficult to keep silent on main points, than to proclaim them broadcast; and for this end he may elect even not to know (with conscious brain-mind) too much;—not to have the deep things within his normal consciousness. But he comes into the world to meet a situation; to give the course of history a twist in a desired direction; and the sign and measure of his greatness is, it seems to me, his ability to meet the situation at all points, and to do just what is necessary for the giving of the twist,—no more and no less. And then, of course, it takes a thousand years or so before you can judge. One is not speaking of common statesmen, who effect quick changes that are no changes at all, but of the Men who shepherd the Host of Souls.

I like to imagine, before the birth of Such a One, a consultation of the Gods upon the Mountain of Heaven. A synod of the kind (for China) would have taken place in the sixth century B. C., no doubt; because in those days certainly there was a “decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world.” Transport yourselves then, say in the year 552, to the peaks of Tien Shan of Kuen Lun, or high Tai-hsing, or the grand South Mountain; and see the Pantheon assembled.

They look down over Chu Hia; they know that in three centuries or so a manvantara will be beginning there, and grow anxious lest anything has been left undone to insure its success. They note Laotse (whom they sent some fifty years earlier) at his labors; and consider, what those labors would achieve for the Black-haired People. He would bring light to the most excellent minds; the God of Light said, “I have seen to that.” He would in time waken the lute-strings of the Spirit, and set Chu Hia all a-song; the God of Music said, “I have seen to that.” They foresaw Wu Taotse and Ma Yuan; they foresaw Ssu-k’ung T’u and the Banished Angel; and asked “Is it not enough?” And the thought grew on them that it was not enough, till they sighed with the apprehensions that troubled them. Only a few minds among the millions, they foresaw, would have proper understanding of Tao.

Now, Gods of whatever land they may be, there are those three Bardic Brothers amongst them: He of Light, who awakens vision; He of Song, who rouses up the harmonies and ennobling vibrations; and He of Strength, whose gloves hold all things fast, and neither force nor slipperiness will avail against them. It was this third of them, Gwron, who propounded the plan that satisfied the Pantheon. I will send one among them, with the “Gloves for his treasure,” said he.

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They considered how it would be with Such a One: going among men as the Gods' Messenger, and with those two Gloves for his treasure.—"This way will it be," they said. "Not having the treasure of the God of Light, he will seem as one without vision of the God-world or remembrance whence he came. Not having the treasure of the God of Music, he will awaken little song with the Bards. But having the Gloves, he will hold the gates of hell shut, so far as shut they may be, through all the cycle that is coming."

With that the council ended. But Plenydd God of Light and Vision thought: "Though my treasure has gone with the Old Philosopher, and I cannot endow this man with it, I will make him Such a One as can be seen by all men; I will throw my light on him, that he may be an example through the age of ages." And Alawn God of Music thought: "Though my lute has gone with Laotse, I will confer boons on this one also. Such a One he shall be, as draws no breath but to tunes of my playing; the motions of his mind, to my music, shall be like the motions of the ordered stars."— And they both thought: "It will be easy for me to do as much as this, with his having the Gloves of Gwron on his hands."

At that time K'ung Shuhliang Heih, Commander of the district of Tsow, in the Marquisate of Lu in Shantung, determined to marry again.

Now China is a vast democracy: the most democratic country in the world. Perhaps I shall come to proving that presently; for the moment I must ask you to let it pass on the mere statement, satisfied that it is true. Despite this radical democracy, then, she has had two noble families. One is descended from a famous Patriot-Pirate of recent centuries, known to Westerners as Koxinga; with it we have no concern. The other is to be found in the town of K'iuh-fow in Shantung, in the ancient Marquisate of Lu. There are about fifty thousand members of it, all bearing the surname K'ung; its head has the title of 'Duke by Imperial Appointment and hereditary right'; and, much prouder still, 'Continuator of the Sage.'

Dukes of England sometimes trace their descent from men who came over with William the Conqueror: a poor eight centuries is a thing to be proud of. There may be older families in France, Italy, and elsewhere. Duke K'ung traces his, through a line of which every scion appears more of less in history, to the son of this K'ung Shuhliang Heih in the sixth century B.C.; who in turn traced his, through a line of which every scion appeared in history, and all, with one possible exception, very honorably, to a member of the Imperial House of Shang who, in 1122 B.C., on the fall of that house, was created Duke of Sung in Honan by the first of the Chows. The House of Shang held the throne for some five centuries, beginning with Tang the Comnpleter in 1766, who traced his descent from the Yellow Emperor in mythological times. Duke K'ung, then, is descended in direct male line from sovereigns who reigned beyond the horizon of history,—at the latest, near the beginning of the third millennium B.C. The family has been distinguished for nearly five thousand years.

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The matter is not unimportant; since we are to talk of a member of this family. We shall understand him better for remembering the kind of heredity that lay behind him: some seventy generations of nobility, all historic. Only one royal house in the world now is as old as his was then: that of Japan.

Some generations before, the K'ung family had lost their duchy of Sung and emigrated to Lu; where, in the early part of the sixth century, its head, this Shuhliang Heih, had made a great name for himself as a soldier. He was now a widower, and seventy years old; and saw himself compelled to make a second marriage, or the seventy illustrious generations of his ancestors would be deprived of a posterity to offer them sacrifices. So he approached a gentlman of the Yen family, who had three eligible daughters. To these Yen put the case, leaving to them to decide which should marry K'ung.—"Though old and austere," said he, "he is of the high descent, and you need have no fear of him." Chingtsai, the youngest, answered that it was for their father to choose.—"Then you shall marry him," said Yen. She did; and when her son was to be born, she was warned in a dream to make pilgrimage to a cave on Mount Ne. There the spirits of the mountain attended; there were signs and portents in the heavens at the nativity. The *k'e-lin,* a beast out of the mythologies, appeared to her; and she tied a white ribbon about its single horn. It is a creature that appears only when things of splendid import are to happen.

Three years after, the father died, leaving his family on the borders of poverty. At six, Ch'iu, the child, a boy of serious earnest demeanor, was teaching his companions to play at arranging, according to the rites, toy sacrificial vessels on a toy altar. Beyond this, and that they were poor, and that he doted on his mother—who would have deserved it,—we know little of his boyhood. "At fifteen," he tells us himself, "his mind was bent on learning." Nothing in the way of studies, seems to have come amiss to him; of history, and ritual, and poetry, he came to know all that was to be known. He loved music, theory and practice; held it to be sacred: "not merely one of the refinements of life, but a part of life itself." It is as well to remember this; and that often, in after life, he turned dangerous situations by breaking into song; and that his lute was his constant companion. He used to say that a proper study of poetry—he was not himself a poet, though he compiled a great anthology of folk-poems later—would leave the mind without a single depraved thought. Once he said to his son: "If you do not learn the Odes, you will not be fit to talk to." "Poetry rouses us," said he, "courtesy upholds us; music is our crown." You are, then, to see in him no puritan abhorring beauty, but a man with artistic perceptions developed. At what you might call the other pole of knowledge, he was held to know more about the science of war than any man living; and I have no doubt he did. If he had consented to use or speak about or let others use that knowledge, he might have been a great man in his day; but he never would.

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At nineteen, according to the custom, he married; and soon afterwards accepted minor official appointments: Keeper of the Granaries, then Superintendent of the Public Parks in his native district. He made a name for himself by the scrupulous discharge of his duties, that came even to the ears of the Marquis; who, when his son was born, sent the young father a complimentary present of a carp.—It would have been two or three years before the beginning of the last quarter of the century when he felt the time calling to him, and voices out of the Eternal; and threw up his superintendentship to open a school.

Not an ordinary school by any means. The Pupils were not children, but young men of promise and an inquiring mind; and what he had to teach them was not the ordinary curriculum, but right living, the right ordering of social life, and the right government of states. They were to pay; but to pay according to their means and wishes; and he demanded intelligence from them; —no swelling of the fees would serve instead.—"I do not open the truth," said he, "to one not eager after knowledge; nor do I teach those unanxious to explain themselves. When I have presented one corner of a subject, and the student cannot learn from it the other three for himself, I do not repeat the lesson." He lectured to them, we read, mainly on history and poetry, deducing his lessons in life from these.

His school was a great success. In five years he had acquired some two thousand pupils: seventy or eighty of them, as he said, "men of extraordinary ability." It was that the Doors of the Lodge had opened, and its force was flowing through him in Lu, as it was through the Old Philosopher in Honanfu.—By this time he had added archery to his own studies, and (like William Q. Judge) become proficient. Also he had taken a special course in music theory under a very famous teacher. "At thirty he stood firm."

Two of his disciples were members of the royal family; and Marquis Chao regarded him with favor, as the foremost educationist in the state. He had an ambition to visit the capital (of China); where, as no where else, ritual might be studied; where, too, was Laotse, with whom he longed to confer. Marquis Chao, hearing of this, provided him with the means; and he went up with a band of his pupils. There at Loyang, which is Honanfu, we see him wandering rapt through palaces and temples, examining the sacrificial vessels, marveling at the ancient art of Shang and Chow. But for a few vases, it is all lost.

He did interview Laotse; we cannot say whether only once or more often. Nor, I think, do we know what passed; the accounts we get are from the pen of honest *Ben Trovato; Vero,* the modest, had but little hand in them. We shall come to them later.

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And now that he stands before the world a Teacher, we may drop his personal name, K'ung Ch'iu, and call him by the title to which paeans of praise have been swelling through all the ages since: K'ung Futse, K'ung the Master; latinized, Confucius. It is a name that conveys to you, perhaps, some associations of priggishness and pedantry: almost whereever you see him written of you find suggestions of the sort. Forgo them at once: they are false utterly. Missionaries have interpreted him to the West; who have worked hard to show him something less than the Nazarene. They have set him in a peculiar light; and others have followed them. Perhaps no writer except and until Dr. Lionel Giles (whose interpretation, both of the man and his doctrine, I shall try to give you), has shown him to us as he was, so that we can understand why he has stood the Naional Hero, the Savior and Ideal Man of all those millions through all these centuries.

We have been told again and again that his teaching was wholly unspiritual; that he knew nothing of the inner worlds; never mentions the Soul, or 'God'; says no word to lighten for you the "dusk within the Holy of holies." He was all for outwardness, they say: a thorough externalist; a ritualist cold and unmagnetic.—It is much what his enemies said in his own day; who, and not himself, provide the false-interpreters with their weapons. But think of the times, and you may understand. How would the missionaries feel, were Jesus translated to the Chinese as a fine man in some respects —considering—but, unfortunately! too fond of the pleasures of the table; "a gluttonous man and a winebibber "?

They were stirring times, indeed; when all boundaries were in flux, and you needed a new atlas three times a year. Robbers would carve themselves new principalities overnight; kingdoms would arise, and vanish with the waning of a moon. What would this, or any other country, become, were law, order, the police and every restraining influence made absolutely inefficient? Were California one state today; a dozen next week; in July six or seven, and next December but a purlieu to Arizona?—Things, heaven knows, are bad enough as they are; there is no dearth of crime and cheatery. Still, the police and the legal system do stand between us and red riot and ruin. In China they did not; the restraints had been crumbling for two or three centuries. Human nature, broadly speaking, is much of a muchness in all lands and ages: I warrant if you took the center of this world's respectability, which I should on the whole put in some suburb of London;—I warrant that if you relieved Clapham,—whose crimes, says Kipling very wisely, are 'chaste in Martaban,'—of police and the Pax Britannica for a hundred years or so, lurid Martaban would have little pre-eminence left to brag about. The class that now goes up primly and plugly to business in the City day by day would be cutting throats a little; they would be making life quite interesting. Their descendants, I mean. It would take time; Mother Grundy would not be disthroned in a day. But it would come; because men follow the times, and not the Soul; and are good as sheep are, but not as heroes. So in Chow China.

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But the young Confucius knew his history. He looked back from that confusion to a wise Wu Wang and Duke of Chow; to a Tang the Completer, whose morning bath-tub was inscribed with this motto from *The New Way:* “If at any time in his life a man can make a new man of himself, why not every morning?” Most of all he looked back to the golden and sinless age of Yao and Shun and Yu, as far removed from him, nearly, as pre-Roman Britain is from us: he saw them ruling their kingdom as a strong benevolent father rules his house. In those days men had behaved themselves: natural virtue had expressed itself in the natural way. In good manners; in observation of the proprieties, for example.—In that wild Martaban of Chow China, would not a great gentleman of the old school (who happened also to be a Great Teacher) have seen a virtue in even quiet Claphamism, that we cannot? It was not the time for Such a One to slight the proprieties and ‘reasonable conventions of life.’ The truth is, the devotion of his disciples has left us minute pictures of the man, so that we see him ... particular as to the clothes he wore; and from this too the West gathers material for its charge of externalism. Well; and if he accepted the glossy top-hats and black Prince Albert coats; —only with him they were caps and robes of azure, carnation, yellow, black, or white; this new fashion of wearing red he would have none of:—I can see nothing in it but this: the Great Soul had chosen the personality it should incarnate in, with an eye to the completeness of the work it should do; and seventy generations of noble ancestry would protest, even in the matter of clothing, against red riot and ruin and Martaban.

He is made to cite the ‘Superior Man’ as the model of excellence; and that phrase sounds to us detestably priggish. In the *Harvard Classics* it is translated (as well as may be) ’true gentleman,’ or ‘princely man’; in which is no priggish ring at all. Again, he is made to address his disciples as “My Children,” at which, too, we naturally squirm a little: what he really called them was ‘My boys,’ which sounds natural and affectionate enough. Supposing the Gospels were translated into Chinese by someone with the gluttonous-man-and-winebibber bias; —what, I wonder, would he put for *Amen, amen lego humin?* Not “Verily, verily I say unto you”!

But I must go on with his life.

Things had gone ill in in Lu during his absence: threee great clan chieftains had stopped fighting among themselves to fight instead against their feudal superior, and Marquis Chao had been exiled to Ts’i. It touched Confucius directly; his teaching on such matters had been peremptory: he would ‘rectify names’: have the prince prince, and the people his subjects:—he would have law and order in the state, or the natural harmony of things was broken. As suggested above, he was very much a man of mark in Lu; and a protest from him,—which

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should be forth-coming— could hardly go unnoticed. With a band of disciples he followed his marquis into Ts'i: it is in Chihli, north of Lu, and was famous then for its national music. On the journey he heard Ts'i airs sung, and 'hurried forward.' One of the first things he did on arriving at the capital was to attend a concert (or something equivalent); and for three months thereafter, as a sign of thanksgiving, he ate no flesh. "I never dreamed," said he, "that music could be so wonderful."

The fame of his Raja-Yoga School (that was what it was) had gone abroad, and Duke Ching of Ts'i received him well;—offered him a city with its revenues; but the offer was declined. The Duke was impressed; half inclined to turn Confucianist; wished to retain him with a pension, to have him on hand in case of need;— but withal he was of doubtful hesitating mind about it, and allowed his prime minister to dissuade him. "These scholars," said the latter, "are impractical, and cannot be imitated. They are haughty and self-opinionated, and will never rest content with an inferior position. Confucius has a thousand peculiarities";—this is the gluttonous-man-and-winebibber saying, which the missionary interpreters have been echoing since;—"it would take ages to exhaust all he knows about the ceremonies of going up and down. This is not the time to examine into his rules of propriety; your people would say you were neglecting them."—When next Duke Ching was urged to follow Confucius, he answered: "I am too old to adopt his doctrines." The Master returned to Lu; lectured to his pupils, compiled the Books of Odes and of History; and waited for the disorders to pass.

Which in time they did, more or less. Marquis Ting came to the throne, and made him chief magistrate of the town of Chungtu.

Now was the time to prove his theories, and show whether he was the Man to the core, that he had been so assiduously showing himself, you may say, on the rind. Ah ha! now surely, with hard work before him, this scholar, theorist, conventional formalist, ritualist, and what else you may like to call him, will be put to shame,—shown up empty and foolish before the hard-headed men of action of his age. Who, indeed,—the hard-headed men of action— have succeeded in doing precisely nothing but to make confusion worse confounded; how much less, then, will this Impractical One do! Let us watch him, and have our laugh...—On the wrong side of your faces then; for lo now, miracles are happening! He takes control; and here at last is one city in great Chu Hia where crime has ceased to be. How does he manage it? The miracle looks but the more miraculous as you watch. He frames rules for everything; insists on the proprieties; morning, noon, and night holds up an example, and, says he, relies on the power of that.—Example? Tush, he must be beheading right and left!—Nothing of the sort; he is all against capital punishment,

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and will have none of it. But there is the fact: you can leave your full purse in the streets of Chung-tu, and pick it up unrifled when you pass next; you can pay your just price, and get your just measure for it, fearing no cheateries; High Cost of Living is gone; corners in this and that are no more; graft is a thing you must go elsewhere to look for;—there is none of it in Chung-tu. And graft, let me say, was a thing as proper to the towns of China then, as to the graftiest modern city you might mention. The thing is inexplicable—but perfectly attested. Not quite inexplicable, either: he came from the Gods, and had the Gloves of Gwron on his hands: he had the wisdom you cannot fathom, which meets all events and problems as they come, and finds their solution in its superhuman self, where the human brain-mind finds only dense impenetrability.—-Marquis Ting saw and wondered.—"Could you do this for the whole state?" he asked. —"Surely; and for the whole empire," said Confucius. The Marquis made him, first Assistant-Superintendent of Works, then Minister of Crime.

And now you shall hear Chapter X of the *Analects,* to show you the outer man. All these details were noted down by the love of his disciples, for whom nothing was too petty to be recorded; and if we cannot read them without smiling, there is this to remember: they have suffered sea-change on their way to us: sea-change and time-change. What you are to see really is: (1) a great Minister of State, utterly bent on reproving and correcting the laxity of his day, performing the ritual duties of his calling —as all other duties—with a high religious sense of their antiquity and dignity; both for their own sake, and to set an example. what would be thought of an English Archbishop of Canterbury who behaved familiarly or jocularly at a Coronation Service?—(2) A gentleman of the old school, who insists on dressing well and quietly, according to his station. That is what he would appear now, in any grade of society, and among men the least capable of recognising his inner greatness: 'race' is written in every feature of his being; set him in any modern court, and with half an eye you would see that his family was a thousand years or so older than that of anyone else present, and had held the throne at various times. Here is a touch of the great gentleman: he would never fish with a net, or shoot at a bird on the bough; it was unsportsmanlike. (3) A very natural jovial man, not above "changing countenance" when fine meats were set on his table: —a thing that directly contradicts the idea of a cold, ever play-acting Confucius. A parvenu must be very careful; but a scion of the House of Shang, a descendant of the Yellow Emperor, could unbend and be jolly without loss of dignity;—and, were he a Confucius, would. "A gentleman," said he, "is calm and spacious"; he was himself, according to the *Analects,* friendly, yet dignified; inspired awe, but not fear; was respectful, but easy. He divided mankind into three classes: Adepts or Sages; true Gentlemen; and the common run. He never claimed to belong to the first, though all China knows well that he did belong to it. He even considered that he fell short of the ideal of the second; but as to that, we need pay no attention to his opinion. Here, then, is Chapter X:

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“Amongst his own countryfolk Confucius wore a homely look, like one who has no word to say. In the ancestral temple and at court his speech was full, but cautious. At court he talked frankly to men of low rank, winningly to men of high rank. In the Marquis’s presence he looked intent and solemn.

“When the Marquis bade him receive guests, his face seemed to change, his knees to bend. He bowed left and right to those behind him, straightened his robes in front and behind, and sped forward, his elbows spread like wings. When the guest had left, he always reported it, saying: ’The guest has ceased to look back.’

“Entering the palace gate he stooped, as though it were too low for him. He did not stand in the middle of the gate, nor step on the threshold. Passing the throne, his face seemed to change, his knees to bend; and he spoke with bated breath. Mounting the royal dais, he lifted his robes, bowed his back and masked his breathing till it seemed to stop. Coming down, his face relaxed below the first step, and bore a pleased look. From the foot of the steps he sped forward, his elbows spread like wings; and when again in his seat, he looked intent as before. He held his hands not higher than in bowing, nor lower than in giving a present. He wore an awed look and dragged his feet, as though they were fettered.”

Which means that he felt the royal office to be sacred, as the seat of authority and government, the symbol and representative of heaven, the fountain of order: in its origin, divine. He treated Marquis Ting as if he had been Yao, Shun, or Yu; or rather, the Marquis’s throne and office as if one of these had held them. There is the long history of China to prove he was wise in the example he set.

“When presenting royal gifts his manner was formal; but he was cheerful at the private audience.—This gentleman was never arrayed in maroon or scarlet; even at home he would not wear red or purple. In hot weather he wore unlined linen clothes, but always over other garments. Over lambskin he wore black; over fawn he wore white; over fox-skin he wore yellow. At home he wore a long fur robe with the right sleeve short. He always had his night-gown half as long again as his body. In the house he wore fox- or badger-skin for warmth. When out of mourning there was nothing wanting from his girdle. Except for court-dress, he was sparing of stuff. He did not wear lamb’s wool, or a black cap, on a visit of condolence. On the first day of the moon he always went to court in court dress. On fast days he always donned clothes of pale hue, changed his food, and moved from his wonted seat. He did not dislike his rice cleaned with care, nor his hash copped small. He would not eat sour or mouldy rice, putrid fish, or tainted meat. Aught discolored or high, badly cooked, or out of season, he would not eat. He would not eat what was badly cut, or a dish with the wrong sauce. A choice of meats could not tempt him to eat more than he had a relish for. To wine alone he set no limit; but he never drunk more than enough. He did not drink brought wine, or eat ready-dried meat. He did not eat much. Ginger was never missing at his table.

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“After sacrifice at the palace he would not keep the meat over-night; at home, not more than three days. If kept longer, it was not eaten. He did not talk at meals, nor in bed. Though there were but coarse rice and vegetables, he made his offering with all reverence. If his mat were not straight, he would not sit down. When drinking with the villagers, when those with slaves left, he left too. At the village exorcisms he donned court dress, and stood on the eastern steps.

“When sending inquiries to another land, he bowed twice and saw his messenger out. On K’ang’s making him a present of medicine, he accepted it with a low bow, saying: ’I do not know; I dare not taste it.’ His stables having been burnt, the Master, on his return from court, said: ‘Is anyone hurt?’ He did not ask after the horses.”

Set down in perfect good faith to imply that his concern was for the sufferings of others, not for his personal loss: and without perception of the fact that it might imply callousness as to the suffering of the horses. We are to read the recorder’s mind, and not the Master’s, in that omission.—

“When the marquis sent him baked meat, he set his mat straight, and tasted it first. When the Marquis sent him raw meat, he had it cooked for sacrifice. When the Marquis sent him a living beast, he had it reared. When dining in attendance on the Marquis, the latter made the offering; Confucius ate of things first. On the Marquis coming to see him in sickness, he turned his face to the east and had his court dress spread across him, with the girdle over it. When summoned by the Marquis, he walked, without waiting for his carriage. On entering the Great Temple, he asked how each thing was done. When a friend died who had no home, he said: ‘It is for me to bury him.’ When a friend sent a gift, even of a carriage and horses, he did not bow. He only bowed for sacrificial meat. He would not lie in a bed like a corpse. At home he unbent.

“On meeting a mourner, were he a friend, his face changed. Even in every-day clothes, when he met anyone in full dress, or a blind man, his face grew staid. When he met men in mourning, he bowed over the cross-bar. Before choice meats he rose with a changed look. At sharp thunder or fierce wind, his countenance changed. In mounting his chariot he stood straight and grasped the cord. When in his chariot, he did not look round, speak fast, or point.”

There you have one side of the outer man; and the most has been made of it. “Always figuring, always posturing,” we hear. I merely point to the seventy noble generations, the personality made up of that courtly heredity, whose smallest quite spontaneous acts and habits seemed to men worth recording, as showing how the perfect gentleman behaved: a model. Another side is found in the lover of poetry, the devotee of music, the man of keen and intense affections. Surely, if a *poseur,*

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he might have posed when bereavement touched him; he might have assumed a high philosophic calm. But no; he never bothered to; even though reproached for inconsistency. His mother died when he was twenty-four; and he broke through all rites and customs by raising a mound over her grave; that, as he said, he might have a place to turn to and think of as his home whereever he might be on his wanderings. He mourned for her the orthodox twenty-seven months; then for five days longer would not touch his lute. On the sixth day he took it and began to play; but when he tried to sing, broke down and wept. One is surprised; but there is no posing about it. Yen Hui was his saint John, the Beloved disciple. "When Yen Hui died," we read, "the Master cried, 'Woe is me! I am undone of Heaven! I am undone of Heaven!' When Yen Hui died the Master gave way to grief. The disciples said: 'Sir, you are giving way.'—'Am I giving way?' said he. 'If for this man I do not give way, for whom shall I give way?... Hui treated me as a son his father; I have failed to treat him as a father his son.'" Confucius was old then, and near his own death... But what I think you will recognise in his speech, again and again, is the peculiarly spontaneous... indeed impetuous ... ring of it. He had that way of repeating a sentence twice that marks a naturally impetuous man. —Of his sense of humor I shall speak later.

He dearly loved his disciples, and was homesick when away from them.—"My batch of boys, ambitious and hasty—I must go home to them! I must go home to them!" said he. Once when he was very ill, Tse Lu "moved the disciples to act as ministers":—to behave to him as if he were a king and they his ministers.—"I know, I know!" said Confucius; "Tse Lu has been making believe. This show of ministers, when I have none,—whom will it deceive? Will it deceive Heaven? I had rather die in your arms, my boys, than be a king and die in the arms of my ministers."—"Seeing the disciple Min standing at his side in winning strength, Tse Lu with warlike front, Jan Yu and Tse Kung fresh and strong, the Master's heart was glad," we read. He considered what he calls 'love' the highest state,—the condition of the Adept or Sage; but that other thing that goes by the same name,—of that he would not speak;—nor of crime,—nor of feats of strength, —nor of doom,—nor of ghosts and spirits. Anything that implied a forsaking of middle lines, a losing of the balance, extravagance,—he abhorred.—And now back to that other side of him again: the Man of Action.

The task that lay before him was to reform the state of Lu. Something was rotten in it; it needed some reforming.—The rotten thing, to begin with, was Marquis Ting himself; who was of such stuff as Confucius referred to when he said: "You cannot carve rotten wood." But brittle and crumbling as it was, it would serve his turn for the moment; it would give him the chance to show twenty-five

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Chinese centuries the likeness of an Adept at the head of a state. So it should be proved to them that Such a One—they call him *Such a One* generally, I believe, to avoid the light repetition of a name grown sacred—is no impractical idealist merely, but a Master of Splendid Successes here in this world: that the Way of Heaven is the way that succeeds on earth—if only it be honestly tried.

Ting was by no means master in his own marquisate. As in England under Stephen, bold bad robber barons had fortified their castles everywhere, and from these strongholds defied the government. The mightiest magnate of all was the Chief of Clan Chi, who ordered things over his royal master's head, and was very much a power for the new Minister of Crime to reckon with. A clash came before long. Ex-marquis Chao—he that had been driven into exile—died in Ts'i; and his body was sent home for burial with his ancestors. Chi, who had been chief among those responsible for the dead man's exile, by way of insulting the corpse, gave orders that it should be buried outside the royal cemetery; and his orders were carried out. Confucius heard of it, and was indignant. To have had the corpse exhumed and reburied would have been a new indignity, I suppose; therefore he gave orders that the cemetery should be enlarged so as to include the grave; —and went down and saw it done.—"I have done this on your behalf," he informed Chi, "to hide the shame of your disloyalty. To insult the memory of a dead prince is against all decency." The great man gnashed his teeth; but the Minister of Crime's action stood.

He turned his attention to the robber-barons, and reduced them. I do not know how; he was entirely against war; but it is certain that in a very short time those castles were leveled with the ground, and the writ of the Marquis ran through Lu. He hated capital punishment; but signed the death warrant for the worst of the offenders;—and that despite the protest of some of his disciples, who would have had him consistent above all things. But his back was up, and the man was executed. One makes no excuse for it; except perhaps, to say that such an action, isolated, and ordained by Such a One, needs no excuse. He was in the habit of fulfilling his duty; and duty may at times present itself in strange shapes. It was a startling thing to do; and Lu straight-way, as they say, sat right up and began to take concentrated notice of a situation the like of which had not been seen for centuries.

He had the final decision in all legal cases. A father brought a charge against his son; relying on the bias of the Minister whose life had been so largely given to preaching filial piety. "If you had brought up your son properly," said Confucius, "this would not have happened"; and astounded plaintiff, defendant, and the world at large by putting both in prison for three months. In a year or so he had done for Lu what he had done for Chung-tu during his magistracy.

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By this time Ts'i and Sung and Wei and the whole empire were taking notice too. There was actually a state where crime was unknown; where law ruled and the government was strong, and yet, the people more than contented; a state—and such a state!—looming ahead as the probable seat of a Bretwalda. Lu with the hegemony! This old orthodox strict Lu!—this home of lost causes!—this back number, and quaint *chinoiserie* to be laughed at!—As if Morgan Shuster had carried on his work in Persia until Persia had become of a strength to threaten the world. Lu was growing strong; and Ts'i—-renowned military Ts'i—thought she ought to be doing something. Thus in our own time, whenever somnolent obsolete Turkey tried to clean her house, Russia, land-hungry and looking to a Thanksgiving Dinner presently, felt a call to send down emissaries, and—see that the cleaning should not be done.

Duke Ching of Ts'i, at the first attempt, bungled his plans badly. He would not strike at the root of things, Confucius; perhaps retained too much respect for him; perhaps simply did not understand; but at that harmless mutton Marquis Ting who Confucius had successfully camouflaged up to look like a lion. To that end he formally sought an alliance with Lu, and the Lu Minister of Crime concurred. He intended that there should be more of these alliances.

An altar was raised on the frontier, where the two princes were to meet and sign the treaty. Duke Ching had laid his plans; but they did not include the presence of Confucius at the altar as Master or the Ceremonies on the side of Lu. There he was, however; and after all, it could hardly make much difference. The preliminary rites went forward. Suddenly, a roll of drums; a rush of 'savages' out of ambush;—there were savage tribes in those parts;—confusion; the Marquis's guard, as the Duke's, is at some little distance; and clearly it is for the Marquis that these 'savages' are making. But Confucius is there. He steps between the kidnappers and his master, "with elbows spread like wings" hustles the latter off into safety; takes hold of the situation; issues sharp orders to the savages—who are of course Ts'i troops in disquise: *Attention! About face!—Double march!*—snaps out the words of command in right military style, right in the presence of their own duke, who stands by amazed and helpless;—and off they go. Then spaciously clears the matter up. Finds, no doubt, that it is all a mistake; supplies, very likely, an easy and acceptable explanation to save Ching's face; shortly has all things peaceably *in status quo.* Then brings back his marquis, and goes forward with the treaty; but now as Master of the Ceremonies and something more. There had been a land question between Lu and Ts'i: Lu territory seized some time since by her strong neighbor, and the cause of much soreness on the one hand and exultation on the other. By the time that treaty had been signed Duke Ching of Ts'i had ceded back the land to Marquis Ting of Lu,—a thing assuredly he had never dreamed of doing; and an alliance had been established between the two states. Since the Duke of Chow's time, Lu had never stood so high.

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Was our man a prig at all? Was he a pedant? have those who have sedulously spread that report of him in the West told the truth about him? Or—hath a pleasant little lie or twain served their turn?

Duke Ching went home and thought things over. He had learned his lesson: that ting was but a camouflage lion, and by no means the one to strike at, if business was to be done. He devised a plan, sweet in it simplicity, marvelous in its knowledge of what we are pleased to call 'human' nature. He ransacked his realm for beautiful singing and dancing girls, and sent the best eighty he could find to his dear friend and ally of Lu. Not to make the thing too pointed, he added a hundred and twenty fine horses— with their trappings. What could be more appropriate than such a gift?

It worked. Ting retired to his harem, and day after day passed over a Lu unlighted by his countenance. Government was at a standstill; the great Minister of Crime could get nothing done. The Annual Sacrifice was at hand; a solemnity Confucius hoped would remind Ting of realities and bring him to his right mind. According to the ritual, a portion of the offering should be sent to each high official of the state: none came to Confucius. Day after day he waited; but Ting's character was quite gone: the lion-skin had fallen off, and the native egregious muttonhood or worse stood revealed.—"Master," said Tse Lu, "it is time you went." But he was very loath to go. At last he gathered his disciples, and slowly went out from the city. He lingered much on the way, looking back often, still hoping for sight of the messenger who should recall him. But none came. That was in 497.

The old century had ended about the time he took office; and with it, of course, the last quarter in which, as always, the Doors of the Lodge were open, and the spiritual influx pouring into the world. So the effort of that age had its consummation and fine flower in the three years of his official life: to be considered a triumph. Now, Laotse had long since ridden away into the West; the Doors were shut; the tides were no longer flowing; and the God's great Confucius remained in a world that knew him not. As for holding office and governing states, he had done all that was necessary.

XI. CONFUCIUS THE HERO

He had done enough in the way of holding office and governing states. Laotse had taught that of old time, before Tao was lost, the Yellow Emperor sat on his throne and all the world was governed without knowing it. Confucius worked out the doctrine thus: True government is by example; given the true ruler, and he will have the means of ruling at his disposal, and they will be altogether different from physical force. 'Example' does not covey it either: his thought was much deeper. There is a word *li*—I get all this from Dr. Lionel Giles—which the egregious

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have been egregiously translating ‘the rules of propriety’; but which Confucius used primarily for a state of harmony within the soul, which should enable beneficent forces from the Infinite to flow through into the outer world;—whereof a result would also be, on the social plane, perfect courtesy and politeness, these the most outward expression of it. On these too Confucius insisted which is the very worst you can say about him.—-Now, the ruler stands between Gods and men; let his *li* be perfect—let the forces of heaven flow through him unimpeded,—and the people are regenerated day by day: the government is by regeneration. Here lies the secret of all his insistence on loyalty and filial piety: the regeneration of society is dependent on the maintenance of the natural relation between the Ruler who rules— that is, lets the *li* of heaven flow through him—-and his people. They are to maintain such an attitude towards him as will enable them to receive the *li.* In the family, he is the father; in the state, he is the king. In very truth, this is the Doctrine of the Golden Age, and proof of the profound occult wisdom of Confucius: even the (comparatively) little of it that was ever made practical lifted China to the grand height she has held. It is hinted at in the *Bhagavad-Gita:*—“whatsoever is practised by the most excellent men”; again, it is the Aryan doctrine of the Guruparampara Chain. The whole idea is so remote from modern practice and theory that it must seem to the west utopian, even absurd; but we have Asoka’s reign in India, and Confucius’s Ministry in Lu, to prove its basic truth. During that Ministry he had flashed the picture of such a ruler on to the screen of time: and it was enough. China could never forget.

But if, knowing it to have been enough,—knowing that the hour of the Open Door had passed, and that he should never see success again,—he had then and there retired into private life, content to teach his disciples and leave the stubborn world to save or damn itself:—enough it would not have been. He had flashed the picture on to the screen of time, but it would have faded. Twenty years of wandering, of indomitability, of disappointment and of ignoring defeat and failure, lay before him: in which to make his creation, not a momentary picture, but a carving in jade and granite and adamant. It is not the ever-victorious and successful that we take into the adyta of our hearts. It is the poignancy of heroism still heroism in defeat,—

> “unchanged, though fallen on evil years,”

—that wins admittance there. Someone sneered at Confucius, in his latter years, as the man who was always trying to do the impossible. He was; and the sneerer had no idea what high tribute he was paying him. It is because he was that: the hero, the flaming idealist: that his figure shines out so clear and splendidly. His outer attempts—to make a Man of Marquis This

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or Duke That, and a model state of Lu or Wei—these were but carvings in rotten wood, foredoomed to quick failure. All the material of the world was rotten wood: he might have learned that lesson;—only there are lessons that Such a One never learns. Well; we in turn may learn a lesson from him: applicable now. The rotten wood crumbled under his hands time and again: under his bodily hands;—but it made no difference to him. He went on and on, still hoping to begin his life's work, and never recognising failure; and by reason and virtue of that, the hands of his spirit were carving, not in rotten wood, but in precious jade and adamant spiritual, to endure forever. On those inner planes he was building up his Raja-Yoga; which time saw to it should materialize and redeem his race presently. Confucius in the brief moment of his victory illuminated the world indeed; but Confucius in the long years of his defeat has bowed the hearts of twenty-five centuries of the Black-haired People. We can see this now; I wonder did he see it then? I mean, had that certain knowledge and clear vision in his conscious mind, that was possessed in the divinity of his Soul—as it is in every Soul. I imagine not; for in his last days he—the personality— could give way and weep over the utter failure of his efforts. One loves him the more for it: one thinks his grandeur only the more grand. It is a very human and at last a very pathetic figure—this Man that did save his people.

Due west from Lu, and on the road thence to Honanfu the Chow capital, lay the Duchy of Wei; whither now he turned his steps. He had no narrow patriotism: if his own Lu rejected him, he might still save this foreign state, and through it, perhaps, All the Chinas. He was at this time one of the most famous men alive; and his first experience in Wei might have been thought to augur well. On the frontier he was met by messengers from a local Wei official, begging for their master an interview:— "Every illustrious stranger has granted me one; let me not ask it of you, Sir, in vain." Confucius complied; was conducted to the yamen, and went in, leaving his disciples outside. To these the magistrate came out, while the Master was still resting within.—"Sirs," said he, "never grieve for your Teacher's fall from office. His work is but now to begin. These many years the empire has been in perilous case; but now Heaven has raised up Confucius, its tocsin to call the people to awakenment."—A wise man, that Wei official!

At the capital, Duke Ling received him with all honor, and at once assigned him a pension equal to the salary he had been paid as Minister of Crime in Lu. He even consulted him now and again; but reserved to himself liberty to neglect the advice asked for. However, the courtiers intrigued; and before the year was out, Confucius had taken to his wanderings again: he would try the state of Ch'in now, in the far south-east. "If any prince would employ me," said he, "within a twelvemonth I should have done something considerable; in three years the government would be perfect."

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He was to pass through the town of Kwang, in Sung; it had lately been raided by a robber named Yang Hu, in face and figure resembling himself. Someone who saw him in the street put it abroad that Yang Hu was in the town, and followed him to the house he had taken for the night. Before long a mob had gathered, intent on vengeance. The situation was dangerous; the mob in no mood to hear reason;—and as to that, Yang Hu also would have said that he was not the man they took him for,—very likely would have claimed to be the renowned Confucius. The disciples, as well they might be, were alarmed: the prospect was, short shrift for the whole party.—"Boys," said the Master, "do you think Heaven entrusted the Cause of Truth to me, to let me be harmed by the towns-men of Kwang? "—The besiegers looked for protests, and then for a fight. What they did not look for was to hear someone inside singing to a lute;—it was that great musician Confucius. When he sang and played you stopped to listen; and so did the Kwang mob now. They listened, and wondered, and enjoyed their free concert; then made reasonable inquiries, and apologies,—and went their ways in peace.

In those South-eastern states there was no prospect for him, and after a while he returneci to Wei. He liked Duke Ling personally, and the liking was mutual; time and again he went back there, hoping against hope that something might be done,—or seeing no other horizon so hopeful. Now Ling had a consort of some irregular kind: Nantse, famed for her beauty and brilliance and wickedness. Perhaps *ennuyee,* and hoping for contact with a mind equal to her own, she was much stirred by the news of Confucius' return, and sent to him asking an interview. Such a request was a characteristic flouting of the conventions on her part; for him to grant it would be much more so on his. But he did grant it; and they conversed, after the custom of the time, with a screen between, neither seeing the other. Tse Lu was much disturbed; considering it all a very dangerous innovation, inconsistent in Confucius, and improper. So in the eyes of the world it would have seemed. But Nantse held the Duke, and Confucius might influence Nantse. He never let conventions stand in his way, when there was a chance of doing good work by breaking them.

One suspects that the lady wished to make her vices respectable by giving them a seeming backing by incarnate virtue; and that to this end she brought about the sequel. Duke Ling was to make a Progress through the city; and requested Confucius to follow his carriage in another. He did so; not knowing that Nantse had seen to it that she was to be sitting at the Duke's side. Her position and reputation even in those days needed some regularizing; and she had chosen this means to do it. But to the people, the spectacle was highly symbolic; and Confucius heard their jeers as he passed:—-Flaunting Vice in front, Slighted Virtue in the rear.—"I have met none," said he, "who loves virtue more than women." It was time for him to go; and now he would try the south again. In reality, perhaps, it matter little whither he went or where he stayed: there was no place for him anywhere. All that was important was, that he should keep up the effort.

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An official in Sung, one Hwan Tuy, held the roads against him, accusing him of “a proud air and many desires; an insinuating habit and a wild will.” From this time on he was subject to persecution. The “insinuating habit” reminds one of an old parrot-cry one has heard: “She hypnotizes them.” He turned westward from this opposition, and visited one state, and then another; in neither was there any disposition to use him. He had found no more likely material than Duke Ling of Wei, who at least was always glad to see and talk with him:—might not be jade to carve, but was the wood least rotten at hand. But at Wei, as usual, there was nothing but disappointment in store.

Pih Hsih, a rebel, was holding a town in Tsin, modern Shansi, against the king of that state; and now sent messengers inviting Confucius to visit him. Tse Lu protested: had he not always preached obedience to the Powers that Were, and that the True Gentleman did not associate with rebels?—“Am I a bitter gourd,” said Confucius, “to be hung up out of the way of being eaten?” He was always big enough to be inconsistent. He had come to see that the Powers that Were were hopeless, and was for catching at any straw. But something delayed his setting out; and when he reached the Yellow River, news came of the execution of Tsin of two men whom he admired. “How beautiful they were!” said he; “how beautiful they were! This river is not more majestic! And I was not there to save them!”

The truth seems to be that he would set out for any place where the smallest opening presented itself; and while that opening existed, would not be turned aside from his purpose; but if it vanished, or if something better came in sight, he would turn and follow that. Thus he did not go on into Tsin when he heard of these executions; but one, when he was on the road to Wei and a band of roughs waylaid him and made him promise never to go there again, he simply gave the promise and went straight on.

At Wei now Duke Ling was really inclined to use him;—but as his military adviser. It was the last straw; he left, and would not return in Ling’s lifetime. He was in Ch’in for awhile; and then for three years at Ts’ae, a new state built of the rebellion of certain subjects or vassals of the great sourthern kingdom of Ts’u. On hearing of his arrival, the Duke of Ts’ae had the idea to send for Tse Lu, who had a broad reputation of his own as a brave and practical man, and to inquire of him what kind of man the master really was. But Tse Lu, as we have seen, was rigid as to rebels, and vouchsafed no answer. —“You might have told him,” said Confucius, “that I am simply one who forgets his food in the pursuit of wisdom, and his sorrows in the joys of attaining it, and who does not perceive old age coming on.”

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Missionary writers have cast it at him, that were of old he had preached against rebellion, now he was willing enough to “have rebels for his patrons";—“adversity had not stiffened his back, but had made him pliable.” Which shows how blind such minds are to real greatness. “They have nothing to draw with, and this well is deep.” He sought no “patrons,” now or at another time; but tools with which to work for the redemption of China; and he was prepared to find them anywhere, and take what came to hand. His keynote was *duty.* The world went on snubbing, ignoring, insulting, traducing, and persecuting him; and he went on with the performance of his duty;—-rather, with the more difficult task of searching for the duty he was to perform. This resorting to rebels, like that conversing with Nantse, shows him clearly not the formalist and slave of conventions he has been called, but a man of highest moral courage. What he stood for was not forms, conventions, reules, proprieties, or anything of the sort; but the liens of least resistance in his high endeavor to lift the world: lines of least resistance; middle lines; common sense.—As ususal, there was nothing to be done with the Duke of Ts’ae.

Wandering from state to state, he came on recluses in a field by the river, and sent Tse Lu forward to ask one of them the way to the ford. Said the hermit:—“You follow one who withdraws from court to court; it would be better to withdraw from the world altogether.”—“What!” said Confucius when it was told him; “shall I not associate with mankind? If I do not associate with mankind, with whom shall I associate?”

In which answer lies a great key to Confucianism; turn it once or twice, and you get to the import of his real teaching. He never would follow the individual soul into its secrecies; he was concerned with man only as a fragment of humanity. He was concerned with man *as* humanity. All that the West calls (personal) religion he disliked intensely. Any desire or scheme to save your own soul; any right-doing for the sake of a reward, either here or hereafter, he would have bluntly called wrong-doing, anti-social and selfish. (I am quoting in substance from Dr. Lionel Giles.) He tempted no one with hopes of heaven; frightened none with threats of hell. It seemed to him that he could make a higher and nobler appeal,—could strike much more forcibly at the root of evil (which is selfishness), by saying nothing about rewards and punishments at all. The one inducement to virtue that he offered was this: By doing right, you lead the world into right-doing. He was justified in saying that Man is divine; because this divine appeal of his was effective; not like the West’s favorite appeal to fear, selfish desire, and the brutal side of our nature. “Do right to escape a whipping, or a hanging, or hell-fire,” says Christendom; and the nations reared on that doctrine have risen and fallen, risen and fallen; a mad riot

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of people struggling into life, and toppling back into death in a season; so that future ages and the far reaches of history will hardly remember their names, too lightly graven upon time. But China, nourished on this divine appeal, however far she may have fallen short of it, has stood, and stood, and stood. In the last resort, it is the only inducement worth anything; the only lever that lifts.—There is that *li,*—that inevitable rightness and harmony that begins in the innermost *when there is the balance* and duty is being done, and flows outward healing and preserving and making wholesome all the phases of being;—let that harmony of heaven play through you, and you are bringing mankind to virtue; you are pouting cleansing currents into the world. How little of the tortuosity of metaphysics is here;—but what grand efficacity of super-ethics! You remember what *Light on the Path* says about the man who is a link between the noise of the market-place and the silence of the snow-capped Himalayas; and what it says about the danger of seeking to sow good karma for oneself,—how the man that does so will only be sowing the giant weed of selfhood. In those two passages you find the essence of Confucianism and the wisdom and genius of Confucius. It is as simple as A B C; and yet behind it lie all the truths of metaphysics and philosophy. He seized upon the pearl of Theosophic thought, the cream of all metaphysics, where metaphysics passes into action,—and threw his strength into insisting on that: Pursue virtue because it is virtue, and that you may (as you will,—it is the only way you can) bring the world to virtue; or negatively, in the words of *Light on the Path:* “Abstain (from vice) because it is right to abstain—not that yourself shall be kept clean.” And now to travel back into the thought behind, that you may see if Confucius was a materialist; whether or not he believed in the Soul;—and that if he was not a great original thinker, at least he commanded the ends of all great, true and original thinking. Man, he says, is naturally good. That is, collectively. *Man* is divine and immortal; only *men* are mortal and erring. Were there a true brotherhood of mankind established, a proper relation of the parts to the whole and to each other,—you would have no difficulty with what is evil in yourself. The lower nature with its temptations would not appear; the world-old battle with the flesh would be won. But separate yourself in yourself,—consider yourself as a selfhood, not as a unit in society;—and you find, there where you have put yourself, evil to contend with a-plenty. Virtue inheres in the Brotherhood of Man; vice in the separate personal and individual units. Virtue is in That which is no man’s possession, but common to all: namely, the Soul—though he does not enlarge upon it as that; perhaps never mentions it as the Soul at all;—vice is in that which each has for himself alone: the personality.

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Hence his hatred of religiosity, of personal soul-saving. You were to guard against evil in the simplest way: by living wholly in humanity, finding all you motives and sources of action there. If you were, in the highest sense, simply a factor in human society, you were a good man. If you lived in yourself alone,—having all evil to meet there, you were likely to succumb to it; and you were on the wrong road anyway. Come out, then; think not of your soul to be saved, nor of what may befall you after death. You, as you, are of no account; all that matters is humanity as a whole, of which you are but a tiny part.—-Now, if you like, say that Confucius did not teach Theosophy, because, *so far as we know,* he said nothing about Karma or Reincarnation. I am inclined to think him one of the two or three supreme historical Teachers of Theosophy; and to say that his message, so infinitely simple, is one of the most wonderful presentations of it ever given.

It is this entire purity from all taint of personal religion; this distaste for prayer and unrelish for soul-salvation; this sweet clean impersonality of God and man, that makes the missionary writers find him so cold and lifeless. But when you look at him, it is a marvelously warm-hearted magnetic man you see: Such a One as wins hearts to endless devotion. Many of the disciples were men who commanded very much the respect of the world. The king of Ts'u proposed to give Confucius an independent duchy: to make a sovereign prince of him, with territories absolutely his own. But one of his ministers dissuaded him thus: "Has your majesty," said he, "any diplomatist in your service like Tse Kung? Or anyone so fitted to be prime minister as Yen Huy? Or a general to compare with Tse Lu? . . . If K'ung Ch'iu were to acquire territory, with such men as these to serve him, it would not be to the prosperity of Ts'u."—And yet those three brilliant men were content—no, proud—to follow him on his hopeless wanderings, sharing all his long sorrow; they were utterly devoted to him. Indeed, we read of none of his disciples turning against him;—which also speaks mighty well for the stuff that was to be found in Chinese humanity in those days.

Tse Kung was told that some prince or minister had said that he, Tse Kung, was a greater man than Confucius. He answered: "The wall of my house rises only to the height of a man's shoulders; anyone can look in and see whatever excellence is within. But the Master's wall is many fathoms in height; so that who fails to find the gateway cannot see the beauties of the temple within nor the rich apparel of the officiating priests. It may be that only a few will find the gate. Need we be surprised, then, at His Excellency's remark?" Yen Huy said:—"The Master knows how to draw us after him by regular steps. He broadens our outlook with polite learning, and restrains our impulses by teaching us self-control."

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Only once, I think, is he recorded to have spoken of prayer. He was very ill, and Tse Lu proposed to pray for his recovery. Said Confucius: "What precedent is there for that?"—There was great stuff in that Tse Lu: a bold warriorlike nature; not very pliable; not too easy to teach, I imagine, but wonderfully paying for any lesson taught and learned. He figures often as the one who clings to the letter, and misses vision of the spirit of the teaching; so now the Master plays him a little with this as to precedent,—-which weighed always more strongly with Tse Lu than with Confucius.—"In the *Eulogies,"* said Tse Lu, (it is a lost work), "it is written: 'We pray to you, O Spirits of Heaven and Earth."—"Ah!" said Confucius, "my prayers began long, long ago." But he never did pray, in the Western sense. His *life* was one great intercession and petition for his people.

As to his love of ritual: remember that there are ceremonies and ceremonies, some with deep power and meaning. Those that Confucius upheld came down to him from Adept Teachers of old; and he had an eye to them only as outward signs of a spiritual grace, and means to it. "Ceremonies indeed!" said he once; "do you think they are a mere matter of silken robes and jade omaments? Music forsooth! Can music be a mere thing of drums and bells?"—Or of harps, lutes, dulcimers, sackbuts, psalteries, and all kinds of instruments, he might have added; all of which, together with all rites, postures, pacings, and offerings, were nothing to him unless channels through which the divine *li* might be induced to flow. Yet on his wanderings, by the roadside, in lonely places, he would go through ceremonies with his disciples. Why?—Why is an army drilled? If you go to the root of the matter, it is to make *one* the consciousness of the individual soldiers. So Confucius, as I take it, in his ceremonies sought to unify the consciousness of his disciples, that the *li* might have passage through them. I say boldly it was a proof of that deep occult knowledge of his,—which he never talked about.

They asked him once if any single ideogram conveyed the whole law of life.—"Yes," he said; and gave them one compounded of two others, which means 'As heart':—the missionaries prefer to render it 'reciprocity.' His teaching—out of his own mouth we convict him—was the Doctrine of the Heart. He was for the glow in the heart always; not as against, but as the one true cause of, external right action. But the Heart doctrine cannot be defined in a set of rules and formulae; so he was always urging middle lines, common sense. That is the explanation of his famous answer when they asked him whether injuries should be repaid with kindness. What he said amounts to this: "For goodness sake, use common sense! I have given you 'as heart' for your rule."—We know Katherine Tingley's teaching: not one of us but has been helped and saved by it a thousand times. I can only say that, in the light of that, the more you study Confucius, the greater he seems; the more extraordinary the parallelisms you see between her method and his. Perhaps it is because his method has been so minutely recorded. We do not find here merely ethical precepts, or expositions of philosophic thought: what we see is a Teacher guiding and adjusting the lives of his disciples.

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When he had been three years at Ts'ae, the King of Ts'u invited him to his court. Ts'u, you will remember, lay southward towards the Yangtse, and was, most of the time, one of the six Great Powers.* Here at last was something hopeful; and Confucius set out. But Ts'ae and Ch'in, though they had neglected him, had not done so through ignorance of his value; and were not disposed to see his wisdom added to the strength of Ts'u. They sent out a force to waylay him; which surrounded him in the wilderness and held him besieged but unmolested for seven days. Food ran out, and the Confucianists were so enfeebled at last that they could hardly stand. We do not hear that terms were offereed, as that they should turn back or go elsewhere: the intention seems to have been to make an end of Confucius and Confucianism altogether,—without bloodshed. Even Tse Lu was shaken.—"Is it for the Princely Man," said he, "to suffer the pinch of privation?"—"Privation may come his way," Confucius answered; "but only the vulgar grow reckless and demoralized under it." So saying he took his lute and sang to them, and hearing him they forgot to fear. Meanwhile one of the party had won through the lines, and brought word to Ts'u of the Master's plight; whereat the king sent a force to his relief, and came out from the capital to receive him in state. The king's intentions were good; but we have seen how his ministers intrigued and diverted them. In the autumn of that year he died, having become somewhat estranged from the Master. His successor was one from whom no good could be expected, and Confucius returned to Wei.

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* *Ancient China Simplified:* by Prof. E. Harper Parker; from which book the account of the political condition and divisions of the empire given in these lectures is drawn.

Duke Ling was dead, and his grandson, Chuh, was on the throne. There had been a complication of family crimes plottings: Chuh had driven out his father, who in turn had attempted the life of his own mother, Nantse. Chuh wished to employ Confucius, but not to forgo his evil courses: it was a situation that could not be sanctioned. For six years the Master lived in retirement in Wei, watching events, and always sanguine that his chance would come. He was not sixty-nine years old; but hoped to begin his life's work presently.

Then suddenly he was in demand,—in two quarters. There was a sort of civil war in Wei, and the chief of one of the factions came to him for advice as to the best means of attacking the other. Confucius was disgusted. Meanwhile Lu had been at war with Ts'i; and Yen Yu, a Confucianist, put in command of the Lu troops, had been winning all the victories in sight. Marquis Ting now slept with his fathers, and Marquis Gae reigned in his stead; also there was a new Chief of Clan Chi to run things:— Gae to reign, Chi to rule. They asked Yen Yu where he had learned his so victorious

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generalship; and he answered, “from Confucius.”—If a mere disciple could do so much, they thought, surely the Master himself could do much more: as, perhaps, lead the Lu armies to universal victory. So they sent him a cordial invitation, with no words as to the warlike views that prompted it. High in hope, Confucius set out; these fourteen years his native country had been pulling at his heart-strings, and latterly, more insistently than ever. But on his arrival he saw how the land lay. Chi consulted him about putting down brigandage: Chi being, as you might say, the arch-brigand of Lu.—“If you, Sir, were not avaricious,” said Confucius, “though you offered men rewards for stealing, they would cleave to their honesty.” There was nothing to be done with such men as these; he went into retirement, having much literary work to finish. That was in 483.

In 482 his son Li died; and a year later Yen Huy, dearest of his disciples. We have seen how he gave way to grief. There is that strange mystery of the dual nature; even in Such a One. There is the human Personality that the Great Soul must work through. He had performed his function; he had fulfilled his duty; all that he owed to the coming ages he had paid in full. But the evidence goes to show that he was still looking forward for a chance to begin, and that every disappointmtnt hurt the outward man of him: that it was telling on him: that it was a sad, a disappointed, even a heart-broken old man that wept over Yen Huy.—In 481, we read, a servant of the Chief of Clan Chi caught a strange one-horned aninial, with a white ribbon tied to its horn. None had seen the like of it; and Confucius, being the most learned of men, was called in to make pronouncement. He recognised it at once from his mother’s description: it was the *k’e-lin,* the unicorn; that was the ribbon Chingtsai had decked it with in the cave on Mount Ne the night of his birth. He burst into tears. “For whom have you come?” he cried; “for whom have you come?” And then: “The course of my doctrine is run, and wisdom is still neglected, and success is still worshiped. My principles make no progress: how will it be in the after ages?” —Ah, could he have know!—I mean, that old weary mind and body; the Soul which was Confucius knew.

Yen Huy, Tse Lu, and Tse Kung: those were the three whom he had loved and trusted most. Yen Huy was dead; Tse Lu, with Tse Kao, another disciple, he had left behind in Wei holding office under the duke. Now news came that a revolution had broken out there. “Tse Kao will return,” said he; “but Tse Lu will die.” So it fell. Tse Kao, finding the duke’s cause hopeless, made his escape; but Tse Lu fought the forlorn hope to the end, and died like a hero. Only Tse Kung, of the three, was left to him. Who one morning, when he went to the Master’s house, found him walking to and fro before the door crooning over this verse:

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"The great mountain must crumble,
The strong beam must break.
The wise man must wither like a flower."

Heavy-hearted, Tse Kung followed him in.—"What makes you so late?" said Confucius; and then: "According to the rites of Hia, the dead lay in state at the top of the eastern steps, as if he were the host. Under the Shangs, it was between the two pillars he lay, as if he were both host and guest. The rite of the Chows is for him to lie at the top of the western steps, as if he were the guest. I am a man of Shang,"—it will be remembered that he was descended from that royal house; "and last night I dreamed that I was sitting between the pillars, with offerings set out before me. No intelligent monarch arises; no prince will make me his teacher. My time has come to die."—That day he took to his bed; his passing was a week later.

On the banks of the Sze his disciples buried him; and for three years mourned at his grave. But Tse Kung built himself a cabin at the graveside, and remained there three years longer. "All my life," said he, "I have had heaven above my head, but I do not know its height. I have had earth beneath my feet, but I have not known its magnitude. I served Confucius: I was like a thirsty man going with his pitcher to the river. I drank my fill, but I never knew the depth of the water."

And Tse Kung was right; and what he felt then, one feels now. You read Boswell, and have your Johnson in the hollow of your hand: body, soul, and spirit: higher triad and lower quaternary. Of Confucius we have a picture in some respects even more detailed than Boswell's of Johnson; but when we have said everything, we still feel that nothing has been said. Boswell lets you in through his master's church-door; shows you nave and aisle, vault and vestry; climbs with you to the belfry; stands with you at the altar and in the pulpit; till you have seen everything there is to see. But with Confucius as with every Adept the case is quite different. "The Master's wall is fathomless," said Tse Kung; but he and the other disciples took care that China at least should find the gate of entry; and it is still possible for us to go in, and "see the beauty of the temple, the richness of the robes of the officiating priests." You go through everything; see him under all sorts of circumstances; and ask at last: "Is this all?"—No, says your guide; "see here!" and flings one last door open. And that, like the door in Lord Dunsaney's play, opens on to the vastness of the stars. What is it that baffles us and remains undefined and undefinable? Just this: TAO: the Infinite Nature. You can survey the earth, and measure it with chains; but not Space, in which a billion leagues is nowise different from an inch or two, —it bears the same proportion to the whole.

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There was his infinite trust;—and his unbroken silence as to the Things he trusted in. Time and the world went proving to him year by year that his theories were all impracticable, all wrong; that he was a failure; that there was not anything for him to do, and never would be a chance for him to do it;—and all their arguments, all the sheer dreadful tyranny of fact, had no weight with him at all: he went on and on. What was his sword of strength? Where were the Allies in whom he trusted? How dared he pit K'ung Ch'iu of Lu against time and the world and me?—The Unseen was with him, and the Silence; and he (perhaps) lifted no veil from the Unseen, and kept silent as to the silence;—and yet maintained his Movement, and held his disciples together, and saved his people,—as if he himself had been the Unseen made visible, and the Silence given a voice to speak.

And with it all there was the human man who suffered. I think you will love him the more for this, from the *Analects:*

"The Minister said to Tse Lu, Tseng Hsi, Jan Yu, and Kung-hsi Hua as they sat beside him: 'I may be a day older than you are, but forget that. You are wont to say, "We are unknown." Well; had ye a name in the world, what would ye do?'"

"Tse Lu answered lightly: 'Give me charge of a land of a thousand chariots, crushed between great neighbors, overrun by soldiery and oppressed by famine; in three years' time I should have put courage and high purpose into the people.'"

"The Master smiled,—'What wouldst thou do, Ch'iu?' he said."

"Jan Yu answered: 'Had I charge of sixty or seventy square miles, or from fifty to sixty, in three years' time I would give the people plenty. As for courtesy, music and the like, they could wait for these for the rise of a Princely Man.'"

"'And what wouldst thou do, Chih?' said the Master."

"Kung-hsi Hua answered: 'I would speak of the things I fain would learn, not of what I can do. At service in the Ancestral Temple, or at the Grand Audience, clad in black robe and cap, I fain would fill a small part.'"

"'And thou, Tien?' said the Master."

"Tseng Hsi stopped playing, pushed away his still sounding lute, rose up, and made answer: 'My choice would be unlike those of the other three.'"

"'What harm in that?' said the Master. 'Each but speaks his mind.'"

"Tseng Hsi said: 'In the last days of Spring, and clad for the season, with five or six grown men and six or seven lads, I would bathe in the waters of Yi, all fanned by the breeze in the Rain God's Glade, and wander home with song.'"

“The Master sighed.—’I hold with Tien,’ said he.”

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Very, very human, I say; very Chinese. But here is that which was not human but divine: he never turned from his path to satisfy these so human and Chinese longings; the breeze in the Rain God's Glade never blew for him. It is just as well to remember, when you read of the ceremonies, the body bent under the load of the scepter, the carefully chosen (as it may seem) and habitually worn expression of face on passing or approaching the throne, the "elbows spread like wings":—all the formal round of proprieties;—that it was the last days of Spring, and the waters of Yi, and the breeze in the Rain God's Glade, that were calling to his Chinese heart.

Yes; he was very human; listen to this:—Yuan Jang awaited the Master squatting on the ground. "The Master said:—'Unruly when young, unmentioned as man, undying when old,—this spells *Good-for-nothing';* and hit him on the leg with his staff."

Which brings one naturally to his sense of humor.

Once he was passing through a by-street when a man of the district shouted:—"Great is Confucius the Philosopher! Yet for all his wide learning he has nothing which can bring him fame!" The Master turned to his disciples and said:—"What shall I take up? Shall I take up charioteering?—or archery?—I must certainly take up charioteering!"

His disciples once were expecting him at the city of Ch'ing; and Tse Kung asked a man who was coming from the east gate if he had seen him there.—"Well," said the man, "there is a man there with a forehead like Yao, a neck like Kao Yao, his shoulders on a level with those of Tse-ch'an, but wanting below the waist three inches of the height of Yu;—and altogether having the forsaken appearance of a stray dog." Tse Kung recognised the description and hurried off to meet the Master, to whom he reported it *verbatim.* Confucius was hugely delighted. "A stray dog!" said he; "fine! fine!" Unluckily, no contemporary photographs of Yao and Yu and the others have come down; so the description is not as enlightening now as it may have been then.

"Tse Kung," we read, "would compare one man with another." The Master said:—"What talents Tse has! Now I have no time for such things!"

I keep on hearing in his words accents that sound familiar.

When he was at Loyang—Honanfu—one of the things that struck him most was a bronze statue in the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors, with a triple, clasp on its mouth. One does not wonder. A Great Soul from the God World, he kept his eyes resolutely on the world of men; as if he remembered, nothing of the splendor, and nothing foresaw. . . . Indeed, I cannot tell; one would give much to know what really passed between him and Laotse. If you say that no word of his lightens, for you that 'dusk within the Holy of holies',—at least he gives you the keys, and leaves you to find and open the 'Holy of holies' for yourself if you can. There are lost chapters, that went

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at the Burning of the Books; and an old-fashioned Chinaman would often tell you of any Western idea or invention his countrymen may not have known, that you should have found all in the lost chapters of Confucius. It may be;—and that you should have found there better things, too, than Western ideas and inventions. There is a passage in the *Analects* that tells how the disciples thought he was 'keeping back from them some part of his doctrine: "No, no," he answered; "if I should not give it all to you, to whom should I give it?" Distinctly, then, this suggests that there was an esotericism, a side not made public; and there is no reason to suppose that it has been made public since. But it is recorded that he would lift no veils from the Other-worlds. "If you do not understand life," said he, "how can you understand death?"

Well; we who are stranded here, each on his desert island of selfhood, thrust out after knowledge: peer for signs at all the horizons;—are eager to inquire, and avid of the Unknown—which also we imagine to be something outside of our own being. But suppose a man, as they say one with Tao, in which all knowledge rests in solution: what knowledge would he desire? After what would he be inquisitive? And how much, desiring it, would he possess? What is the end of being, after all? To perform your function, your duty; what men and the world,—ay, and the far suns and stars,—are requiring of you:—that is all. Not to gain infinite knowledge; but to have at, every step what knowledge you need; that so you may fill your place in the Universe, meeting all contours and flowing into them; restoring and maintaining the Harmony of Things. So we hear much about this performance of duty. But in reality, to do one's duty is to sing with the singing spheres; to have the Top of Infinity for the roof of one's skull, and the bottom of the Great Deep for one's footsoles: to be a compendium, and the Equal, of Heaven and Earth. The password into the Tao of Laotse is Silence; Confucius kept the great Silence more wonderfully than Laotse did—or so it seems to me now. Laotse said: *Sing with the singing spheres, and behold, your duty is doing itself uder your hands.* The password into the Tao of Confucius is *Duty:* he said merely *Do that, and,*—-the rest is silence. He may have played that *rest* on his lute; we are not to hear it in his words. There was a knowledge that Laotse, enthroned in his silence, had no means of using; that Confucius riding the chariot of duty, had no occasion to possess.

Now whether you call Tao *duty,* or *silence,*—what should the Man of Tao desire beyond the fulness of it? All the light is there for him; all the suns are kindled for him;—why should he light wax candles? That is, for himself: he will light them fast enough where others may be in need. To us, a great poem may be a great thing: but to them who have the fulness of which the greatest poem is but a little glimpse—what should it matter to them? And of the infinite knowledge at his disposal, would the Man of Tao choose to burden himself with one little item of which there was no present need?

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So when they say, “Confucius was nobody; there is no evidence that he knew the great secrets”; answer them:—“Yes, there is. He knew that supreme secret, how to *teach,* which is the office of a Teacher: he knew how to build up the inner life of his disciples; to coax, train, lure the hidden god into manifestation in them.” And for evidence you can give them this: Tse Kung—who, you remember, was always comparing this man with that—asked which was the better, Shih or Shang. (They were two disciples.) Confucius answered: “Shih goes too far; Shang not far enough.” Said Tse Kung (just as you or I would have done):— “Then Shih is the better man?”—“Too far,” replied Confucius, “is not better than not far enough.”—To my ears there is more occultism in that than in a thousand ethical injunctions.—Or answered;—“Whilst thy father and they elder brother are alive, how canst thou do all thou art taught?” Jan Yu said:—“Shall I do all I am taught?” The Master said:—“Do all thou art taught.” Kung-hsi Hua said: “Yu asked, ‘Shall I do all I am taught?’ and you spoke, Sir, of father and elder brother. Ch’iu asked, ‘Shall I do all I am taught?’ and you answered: ’Do all thou art taught.’ I am puzzled, and make bold to ask you, Sir.” The Master said:—“Ch’iu is bashful, so I egged him on. Yu has the pluck of two, so I held him back.”

Think it over! Think it over!

This though occurs to me: Was that sadness of his last days caused by the knowledge that the School could not continue after his death; because the one man who might have succeeded him as the Teacher, Yen Huy, was dead? So far as I know, it did not go on; there was no one to succeed him. That supreme success, that grand capture of future ages for the Gods, was denied him; or I daresay our own civilization might have been Confucian—BALANCED —now. But short of that—how sublime a figure he stands! If he had known that for twenty-five centuries or so he was to shine within the vision of the great unthinking masses of his countrymen as their supreme example; their anchor against the tides of error, against abnormalities, extravagances, unbalance; a bulwark against invading time and decay; a check on every bad emperor, so far as check might be set at all; a central idea to mold the hundred races of Chu Hia into homogeneity; a stay, a prop, a warning against headlong courses at all times of cyclic downtrend;—if he had known all this, he would, I think, have ordered his life precisely as he did. Is there no strength implied, as of the Universal, and not of any personal, will, however titanic, in the fact that moment after moment, day after day, year after year, he built up this picture, gave the world this wonderful assurance of a man? In his omissions, no less than in his fulfilments. He taught,—so far as we know,—nothing but what the common mind might easily accept; nothing to miss the mark of the intelligence of dull Li or Ching toiling in

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the rice-field;—nor yet too paltry for the notice of the Hwangti on the Dragon Throne. Laotse had come in the spirit of Plenydd the Light-bringer; in the spirit of Alawn, to raise up presently sweet profusions of song. He illuminated the inner worlds; his was the urge that should again and again, especially later when reinforced by Buddhism, prick up the Black-haired People to heights of insight and spiritual achievement.—But the cycles of insight and spiritual achievement, these too, must always run their course and fall away; there is no year when it is always Spring. Dark moments and seasons come; and the Spirit becomes hidden; and what you need most is not illumination,—which you cannot get; or if you could, it would be hell, and not heaven, that would be illuminated for you; not a spur to action,—for as things are constituted, any spur at such a time would drive you to wrong and exorbitant action:—what you need is not these, but simply stability to hold on; simply the habit of propriety, the power to go on at least following harmless conventions and doing harmless things; not striking out new lines for yourself, which would certainly be wrong lines, but following as placidly as may be lines that were laid down for you, or that you yourself laid down, in more righteous and more luminous times. A strong government, however tyrannical, is better than an anarchy in which the fiend in every man is let loose to run amuck. Under the tyranny, yes, the aspiring man will find himself hindered and thwarted; but under the anarchy, since man is no less hell than heaven, the gates of hell will be opened, and the Soul, normally speaking, can only retire and wait for better times:—unless it be the Soul of a Confucius, it can but wait till Karma with ruthless hands has put down the anarchy and cleared things up. Unless it be the Soul of a Confucius; and even Such a One is bound to be a failure in his own day.

But see what he did. The gates of hell were swung wide, and for the time being, not the hosts of the Seraphim and Cherubim,—not the armed Bodhisatvas and Dhyanis,—could have forced them back on their hinges: “the ripple of effect,” we read, “thou shalt let run its course.” But in the ideal world he erected a barrier against them. He set up a colossal statue with arms outthrown to bar the egress; the statue of Confucius preaching the Balanced Life. With time it materialized, so to say, and fell into place. You can never certainly stop the gates of hell,—in this stage of our evolution. But perhaps as nearly as it can be done, he did it. Rome fell, and Christendom made a mess of things; it has never yet achieved that union which is the first condition of true civilization. But China, older than Rome, despite her sins and vicissitudes, has made a shift to stand. I shall come to comparing the two histories presently; then you will see. When the pralaya came on her, and the forces of life all went elsewhere—as they do and must

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from every civilization in their season,—China lost two of her treasures: Plenydd's vision, and Alawn's gift of song, were taken from her. But this stability; these Gloves of Gwron; this instinct for middle courses and the balance, this Doctrine of the Mean and love of plain sane doings: she has retained enough of this to keep her in being. And it was K'ung Ch'iu of Lu that gave it to her. Shall we not call him Such a One as only the Gods send?

Someone told me the other day what he had seen a couple of Chinamen do in a Californian garden. They had a flower-bed to plant, about forty feet long; and each a basket of seedlings to plant it with, and a slip of wood for a model, with mystic unintelligible signs inscribed thereon: WELCOME HOME in English capitals. One went to one end of the bed and the other to the other, and they began their planting. They made no measurements or calculations; used no rod or line; but just worked ahead till they met in the middle. When that happened, and the job was done, the bed was inscribed, in perfectly formed and proportioned English capitals made of young plants, WELCOME HOME. There was no crowding or omission. To account for it you have twenty-four centuries of Confucianism,—of Katherine Tingley's doctrine of Middle Lines, the Balanced Life.

It is a very small thing; but it may help us to understand.

XII. TALES FROM A TAOIST TEACHER

Confucius died in 478: the year, it may be noted, in which Athens attained her hegemony: or just when the Greek Cycle thirteen decades was opening. Looking backward thirteen decades from that, we come to 608 B.C.; four years after which date, according to the usually accepted tradition, Laotse was born. Thus we find the cycle preceding that of Greece mainly occupied, in China, by the lives of the two great Teachers.

We should have seen by this time that these two lives were, so to say, parts of a single whole: co-ordinated spiritually, if not in an organization on this plane. Laotse, like H.P. Blavatsky, brought the Teachings; he illuminated the inner worlds. That was his work. We can see little of him as he accomplished it: and only the smallest fragment of his doctrine remains:—five thousand words, out of his whole long life. But since we have had in our own time an example of how these things are done, we may judge him and his mission by this analogy; also by the results. Then came Confucius, like Katherine Tingley, to link this wisdom with individual and national life. The teachings were there; and he had no need to restate them: he might take the great principles as already enounced. But every Teacher has his own method, and his need to accentuate this or that: so time and history have had most to say about the differences between these

two. What Confucius had to do, and did, was to found his school, and show in the lives of his disciples, modeled under his hands, how the wisdom of the Ages (and of Laotse) can be made a living power in life and save the world.

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Contrasting the efforts of that age and this, we may say that then, organization, such as we have now, was lacking. Confucius did not come as the official successor of Laotse; Laotse, probably, had had no organized school that he could hand over to Confucius. He had taught, and his influence had gone far and wide, affecting the thought of the age; but he had had no trained and pledged body of students to whom he could say: 'Follow this man when I am gone; he is my worthy successor.'— All of which will be laughed at: I firmly believe, however, that it is an accurate estimate of things. When you come to think of it, it was by the narrowest margine that H. P. Blavatsky, through Mr. Judge—and his heroism and wisdom alone to be thanked for it!—had anything beyond the influence of her ideas and revelation to hand on to Katherine Tingley. In the way of an organization, I mean. Very few among her disciples had come to have any glimmering of what discipleship means, or were prepared to follow her accredited successors.

And Confucius, in his turn, had no established center for his school; it was a thing that wandered the world with him, and ceased, as in organization (however hazy) to exist when he died. Nothing remained, then, of either Teacher for posterity except the ideas and example. And yet I have hinted, and shall try to show, that tremendous results for good followed: that the whole course of history was turned in an upward direction. You may draw what inferences you will. The matter is profoundly significant.

Thirteen decades after the death of Confucius, Plato died in Greece; and about that time two men arose in China to carry forward, bring down, and be the expositors of, the work of the two great Teachers of the sixth and seventh centuries. These were Chwangtse for Taoism, and Mangtse or Mencius for Confucius: the one, the channel through which spiritual thought flowed to the quickening of the Chinese imagination; the other, the man who converted the spiritual thought of Confucius into the Chinese Constitution. Alas! they were at loggerheads: a wide breach between the two schools of thought had come to be by their time; or perhaps it was they who created it. We shall arrive at them next week; tonight, to introduce you to Liehtse, a Taoist teacher who came sometime between Laotse and Chwangtse;—perhaps in the last quarter of the fifth century, when Socrates was active in Greece.

Professor De Groot, of Holland, speaks boldly of Confucius as a Taoist; and though I dislike many of this learned Dutchman's ideas, this one is excellent. His thesis is that Laotse was no more an innovator than Confucius; that both but gave a new impulse to teachings as old as the race. Before Laotse there had been a Teacher Quan, a statesman-philosopher of the seventh century, who had also taught the Tao. The immemorial Chinese idea had been that the Universe is made of the interplay of two forces, *Yang*

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and *Yin,* positive and negative;—or simply the Higher and the Lower natures. To the Yang, the Higher, belong the *Shen* or gods,—all conscious beneficent forces within and without man. To the Yin or lower belong the *kwei,* the opposite of gods: *fan* means foreign; and *Fan Kwei* is the familiar Chinese term for white men. From Shen and Tao we get the term *Shentao,* which you know better as *Shinto,*—the Way of the Gods; or as well, the Wisdom of the Gods; as good an equivalent of our term *Theosophy* as you should find; perhaps indeed better than *Theosophy* itself; for it drives home the idea that the *Wisdom* is a practical *Way of Life.* Shentao, the Taoism of the Higher Nature, then, was the primeval religion of the Chinese;—Dr. De Groot arrives at this, though perhaps hardly sees how sensible a conclusion he has reached. In the sixth century B.C. it was in a fair way to becoming as obsolete as Neoplatonism or Gnosticism in the nineteenth A.D.; and Laotse and Confucius simply restated some aspects of it with a new force and sanction;—just as H.P. Blavatsky, in the *Key to Theosophy,* begins, you will remember, with an appeal to and restatement of the Theosophy of the Gnostics and Neoplatonists of Alexandria.

It may seem a kind of divergence from our stream of history, to turn aside and tell stories from the *Book of Liehtse;* but there are excuses. Chinese history, literature, thought— everything—have been such a closed book to the West, that those scholars who have opened a few of its pages are to be considered public benefactors; and there is room and to spare for any who will but hold such opened pages up;—we are not in the future to dwell so cut off from a third of mankind. Also it will do us good to look at Theosophy from the angle of vision of another race. I think Liehtse has much to show us as to the difference between the methods of the Chinese and Western minds: the latter that must bring most truths down through the brain-mind, and set them forth decked in the apparel of reason; the former that is, as it seems to me, often rather childlike as to the things of the brain-mind; but has a way of bringing the great truths down and past the brain-mind by some circuitous route; or it may be only by a route much more direct than ours. The West presents its illuminations so that they look big on the surface; you say, This is the work of a great mind. A writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* brought out the idea well, in comparing the two poetries. What he said was, in effect, as follows:—the Western poet, too often, dons his singing robe before he will sing; works himself up; expects to step out of current life into the Grand Manner;—-and unless the Soul happens to be there and vocal at the time, achieves mostly *pombundle.* The Chinaman presents his illumination as if it were nothing at all,—just the simplest childish-foolish

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thing; nothing in the world for the brain-mind to get excited about. You take very little notice at the time: more of their quaint punchinello *chinoiserie,* you say. Three weeks after, you find that it was a clear voice from the supermundane, a high revelation. The Chinese poet saunters along playing a common little tune on his Pan-pipes. Singing robes?— None in the world; just what he goes to work in. Grand Manner?— 'Sir,' says he, 'the contemptible present singer never heard of it; wait for that till the coming of a Superior Man.'—'Well,' you say, 'at least there is no danger of *pombundle';* and indeed there is not. But you rather like the little tune, and stop to listen . . . and then . . . Oh God! the Wonder of wonders has happened, and the Universe will never be quite the dull, fool, ditchwater thing it was to you before . . .

Liehtse gives one rather that kind of feeling. We know practically nothing about him.—I count three stages of growth among the sinologists: the first, with a missionary bias; the second, with only the natural bias of pure scholarship and critical intellectualism, broad and generous, but rather running at times towards tidying up the things of the Soul from off the face of the earth; the third, with scholarship plus sympathy, understanding, and a dash of mystical insight. The men of the first stage accepted Liehtse as a real person, and called him a degenerator of Taoism, a teacher of immoral doctrine;—in the *Book of Liehtse,* certainly, such doctrine is to be found. The men of the second stage effectually tidied Liehtse up: Dr. H. A. Giles says he was an invention of the fertile brain of Chwangtse, and his book a forgery of Han times. Well; people did forge ancient literature in those days, and were well paid for doing so; and you cannot be quite certain of the complete authenticity of any book purporting to have been written before Ts'in Shi Hwangti's time. Also Chwangtse's brain was fertile enough for anything;—so that there was much excuse for the men of the second stage. But then came Dr. Lionel Giles* who belongs to the third stage, and perhaps *is* the third stage. He shows that though there is in the *Book of Liehtse* a residue or scum of immoral teaching, it is quite in opposition to the tendency of the teaching that remains when this scum is removed; and deduces from this fact the sensible idea that the scum was a later forgery; the rest, the authentic work of a true philosopher with an original mind and a style of his own. Such a man, of course, might have lived later than Chwangtse, and taken his nom de plume of Liehtse from the latter's book; but against this there is the fact that Liehtse's teaching forms a natural link between Chtangtse's and that of their common Master Laotse; and above all—and herein lies the real importance of him—the real Liehtse treats Confucius as a Teacher and Man of Tao. But by Chwangtse's time the two schools had separated: Confucius was Chwangtse's butt;—we shall see why. And in the scum of Liehtse he is made fun of in Chwangtse's spirit, but without Changtse's wit and style.

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* Whose translation of parts of the *Book of Liehtse,* with an invaluable preface, appears in the *Wisdom of the East Series;* from which translation the passages quoted in this lecture are taken;—as also are many ideas from the preface.

So that whoever wrote this book,—whether it was the man referred to by Chwangtse when he says: "There was Liehtse again; he could ride upon the wind and go wheresoever he wished, staying away as long as thirteen days,"—or someone else of the same name, he did not take his non de plume from that passage in Chwangtse, because he was probably dead when Chwangtse wrote it. We may, then, safely call him a Taoist Teacher of the fifth century,—or at latest of the early fourth.

The book's own account of itself is, that it was not written by Liehtse, but compiled from his oral teaching by his disciples. Thus it begins:

"Our Master Liehtse live in the Cheng State for forty years, and no man knew him for what he was. The prince, his ministers, and the state officials looked upon him as one of the common herd. A time of dearth fell upon the state, and he was preparing to emigrate to Wei, when his disciples said to him: 'Now that our Master is going away without any prospect of returning, we have ventured to approach him, hoping for instruction. Are there no words from the lips of Hu-Ch'iu Tsu-lin that you can impart to us?'—Lieh the Master smiled and said: 'Do you suppose that Hu Tzu dealt in words? However, I will try to repeat to you what my Teacher said on one occasion to Po-hun Moujen. I was standing by and heard his words, which ran as follows.'"

Then come some rather severe metaphysics on cosmogony: really, a more systematic statement of the teaching thereon which Laotse referred to, but did not (in the *Tao Teh King*) define. 'More systematic,'—and yet by no means are the lines laid down and the plan marked out; there is no cartography of cosmogenesis; . . . but seeds of meditation are sown. Of course, it is meaningless nonsense for the mind to which all metaphysics and abstract thought are meaningless nonsense. Mystics, however, will see in it an attempt to put the Unutterable into words. One paragraph may be quoted:

"There is life, and That which produces life; form, and That which imparts form; sound, and That which causes color; taste, and That which causes taste. The source of life is death; but That which produces life never comes to an end."

Remember the dying Socrates: 'life comes from death, as death from life.' We appear, at birth, out of that Unseen into which we return at death, says Liehtse; but that which

produces life, —which is the cause of this manifestation (you can say, the Soul),—is eternal.

“The origin of form is matter; but That which imparts form has no material existence.”

No; because it is the down-breathing spirit entering into matter; matter being the medium through which it creates, or to which it imparts, form. “The form to which the clay is modeled is first united with”—or we may say, projected from—“the potter’s mind.”

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“The genesis of sound lies in the sense of hearing; but That which causes sound is never audible to the ear. The source of color”—for ‘source’ we might say, the ’issuing-point’—“is vision; but That which produces color never manifests to the eye. The origin of taste lies in the palate; but That which causes taste is never perceived by that sense. All these pehnomena are functions of the Principle of Inaction—the inert unchanging Tao.”

One is reminded of a passage in the *Talavakara-Upanishad:*

“That which does not speak by speech, but by which speech is expressed: That alone shalt thou know as Brahman, not that which they here adore.

“That which does not think by mind, but by which mind is itself thought: That alone shalt thou know as Brahman, not that which they here adore.”

And so it continues of each of the sense-functions.

After this, Liehtse for the most wanders from story to story; he taught in parables; and sometimes we have to listen hard to catch the meaning of them, he rarely insists on it, or drives it well home, or brings it down to levels of plain-spokenness at which it should declare itself to a westem mind. Here, again, is the Chinese characteristic: the touch is lighter; more is left to the intuition of the reader; the lines are less heavily drawn. They rely on a kind of intelligence in the readers, akin to the writers’, to see those points at a glance, which we must search for carefully. Where each word has to be drawn, a little picture taking time and care, you are in no danger of overlavishness; you do not spill and squander your words, “intoxicated,” as they say, “with the exuberance of your verbosity.” Style was forced on the Chinese; ideograms are a grand preventive against pombundle.—I shall follow Liehtse’s method, and go from story to story at random; perhaps interpreting a little by the way.

We saw how Confucius insisted on balance: egging on Jan Yu, who was bashful, and holding back Tse Lu, who had the pluck of two;— declaring that Shih was not a better man than Shang, because too far is not better than not far enough. The whole Chinese idea is that this balance of the faculties is the first and grand essential. Your lobsided man can make no progress really;—he must learn balance first. An outstanding virtue, talent, or aptitude, is a deterrent, unless the rest of the nature is evolved up to it;—that is why the Greatest Men are rarely the most striking men; why a Napoleon catches the eye much more quickly than a Confucius; something stands out in the one,—and compels attention; but all is even in the other. You had much better not have genius, if you are morally weak; or a very strong will, if you are a born fool. For the morally weak genius will end in moral wreck; and the strong-willed fool—a plague upon him! This is the truth, knowledge of which has made China so stable; and ignorance of which has kept

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the West so brilliant and fickle,—of duality such poles apart,—so lobsided and, I think, in a true sense, so little progressive. For see how many centuries we have had to wait while ignorance, bigotry, wrong ideas, and persecution, have prevented the establishment on any large scale of a Theosophical Movement—and be not too ready to accept a whirl of political changes, experiment after experiment,—and latterly a spurt of mechanical inventions,—for True Progress: which I take to mean, rightly considered, the growth of human egos, and freedom and an atmosphere in which they may grow. But these they had in China abundantly while China was in manvantara; do not think I am urging as our example the fallen China of these pralayic times. Balance was the truth Confucius impressed on the Chinese mentality: the saving Truth of truths, I may say; and it is perhaps the truth which most of all will stand connected with the name of Katherine Tingley in the ages to come:—the saving Truth of truths, which will make a new and better world for us. You must have it, if you are to build solidly; it is the foundation of any true social order; the bedrock on which alone a veritable civilization can be built. Oh, your unbalanced genius can produce things of startling beauty; and they have their value, heaven knows. The Soul watches for its chances, and leaps in at surprising moments: the arm clothed in white samite may reach forth out of the bosom of all sorts of curious quagmires; and when it does, should be held in reverence as still and always a proof of the underlying divinity of man. But—there where the basis of things is not firmly set: where that mystic, wonderful reaching out is not from the clear lake, but from turbidity and festering waters— where the grand balance has not been acquired:—You must look to come on tragedy. The world has gained something from the speech of the Soul there; but the man through whom It spoke;—it has proved too much for him. The vibrations were too strong, and shattered him. Think of Keats . . . and of thousands of others, poets, musicians, artists. Where you get the grand creations, the unfitful shining,—there you get evidence of a balance: with genius—the daimonic force—no greater than, perhaps not so keen as, that of those others, you find a strong moral will. Dante and Milton suffered no less than others from those perils to which all creative artists are subject: both complain bitterly of inner assailments and torment; but they had, to balance their genius, the strong moral urge to fight their weaknesses all through life. It could not save their personalities from suffering; but it gave the Soul in each of them a basis on which to build the grand steadfast creations. —All of which Chinese Liehtse tells you without comment, and with an air of being too childish-foolish for this world, in the following story:—

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Kung-hu and Chi-ying fell ill, and sought the services of the renowned doctor, Pien-chiao. He cured them with his drugs; then told them they were also suffering from diseases no drugs could reach, born with them at their birth, and that had grown up with them through life. "Would you have me grapple with these?" said he.—"Yes," said they; but wished first to hear the diagnosis.— "You," he said to kung-hu, "have strong mental powers, but are weak in character; so, though fruitful in plans, you are weak in decision." "You," he said to Chi-ying, "are stong of will, though stupid; so there is a narrowness in your aims and a want of foresight. Now if I can effect an exchange of hearts between you, the good will be equally balanced in both."

They agreed at once: Kung-hu, with the weaker will, was to get the smaller mental powers to match it; Chi-ying was to get a mentality equal to his firm will. We should think Kung-hu got very much the worst of the bargain; but he, and Dr. Pien-chiao, and Liehtse, and perhaps Chinamen generally, thought and would think nothing of the kind. To them, to have balanced faculties was far better than to have an intellect too big for one's will-power; because such balance would afford a firm basis from which will and intellect might go forward in progress harmoniously. So Pien-chiao put both under a strong anaesthetic, took out their hearts, and made the exchange (the heart being, with the Chinese, the seat of mentality); and after that the health of both was perfect.—You may laugh; but after all there is a grandeur in the recognition implied, that the intellect is not the man, but only one of his possessions. The story is profoundly characteristic: like Ah Sin's smile in the poem, "childlike and bland"; but hiding wonderful depths of philosophy beneath.

Laotse showed his deep Occult wisdom when he said that the Man of Tao "does difficult things while they are still easy." Liehtse tells you the story of the Assitant to the Keeper of the Wild Beasts at Loyang. His name was Lian yang, and his fame went abroad for having a wonderful way with the creatures in his charge. Hsuan Wang, the Chow king, heard of it; and sent orders to the Chief Keeper to get the secret from Liang, lest it should die with him.—"How is it," said the Keeper, "that when you feed them, the tigers, wolves, eagles, and ospreys all are tame and tractable? That they roam at large in the park, yet never claw and bite one another? That they propagate their species freely, as if they were wild? His Majesty bids you reveal to me the secret."

A touch of nature here: all zoologists know how difficult it is to get wild beasts to breed in captivity.

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Lian Yang answered: “I am only a humble servant, and have really no secret to tell. I fear the king has led you to expect something mysterious. As to the tigers: all I can say is that, like men, when yielded to they are pleased and when opposed they are angry. Nothing gives way either to pleasure or to anger without a cause; and anger, by reaction, will follow pleasure, and pleasure anger. I do not excite the tigers’ joy by giving them live creatures to kill, or whole carcasses to tear up. I neither rouse their anger by opposing them, nor humor them to make them pleased. I time their periods of hunger and anticipate them. It is my aim to be neither antagonistic nor compliant; so they look upon me as one of themselves. Hence they walk about the parks without regretting the tall forests and broad marshes, and rest in the enclosure without yearning for lonely mountain or dark vale. It is merely using common sense.”

And there Liehtse leaves it in all its simplicity; but I shall venture to put my spoke in, and add that he has really given you a perfect philosophy for the conduct of life: for the government of that other and inner tiger, the lower nature, especially; it is always that, you will remember, for which the Tiger stands in Chinese symbology;—and also for education, the government of nations—everything. Balance,—Middle lines,—-Avoidance of Extremes,—Lines of Least Resistance:—by whom are we hearing these things inculcated daily? Did they not teach Raja-Yoga in ancient China? Have not our school and its principles a Chinese smack about them? Well; it was these principles made China supremely great; and kept her alive and strong when all her contemporaries had long passed into death; and, I hope, have ingrained something into her soul and hidden being, which will make her rise to wonderful heights again.

You can hear Laotse in them; it is the practical application of Laotse’s doctrine. But can you not equally hear the voice of Confucius: “too far is not better than not far enough”? Western ethical teaching has tended towards inculcating imitation of the soul’s action: this Chinese teaching takes the Soul for granted; says very little about it; but shows you how to provide the soul with the conditions through and in which it may act. “Love your enemies;”—yes; that is fine; it is what the Soul, the Divine Part of us, does;—but we are not in the least likely to do it while suffering from the reaction from an outburst of emotion; ethics grow rather meaningless to us when, for example, we have toppled over from our balance into pleasure, eaten not wisely but too well, say; and then toppled back into the dumps with an indigestion. But where the balance is kept you need few ethical injunctions; the soul is there, and may speak; and sees to all that.

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Hu-Chiu Tzu-lin, we read, taught Liehtse these things. Said he: “You must familiarize yourself with the Theory of Consequents before you can talk of regulating conduct.” Liehtse said:—“Will you explain what you mean by the Theory of Consequents?” “Look at your shadow,” said his teacher; “and you will know.” Liehtse turned his head and looked at his shadow. When his body was bent the shadow was crooked; when upright, it was straight. Thus it appeared that the attributes of straightness and crookedness were not inherent in the shadow, but corresponded to certain positions in the body . . . . “Holding this Theory of Consequents,” says Liehtse, “is to be at home in the antecedent.” Now the antecedent of the personality is the Soul; the antecedent of the action is the motive; the antecedent of the conduct of life is the relation in which the component faculties of our being stand to each other and to the Soul. If the body is straight, so is the shadow; if the inner harmony or balance is attained and held to—well; you see the point. “The relative agrees with its antecedent,” say the grammar books, very wisely. It is karma again: the effect flowing from the cause. “You may consider the virtues of Shennung and Yuyen,” says Liehtse; “you may examine the books of Yu, Kia, Shang, and Chow,”—that is, the whole of history;—“you may weight the utterances of the great Teachers and Sages; but you will find no instance of preservation or destruction, fulness or decay, which has not obeyed this supreme Law of Causality.”

Where are you to say that Liehtse’s Confucianism ends, and his Taoism begins? It is very difficult to draw a line. Confucius, remember, gave *"As-the-heart"* for the single character that should express his whole doctrine. Liehtse is leading you inward, to see how the conduct of life depends upon Balance, which also is a word that may translate *Tao.* Where the balance is, there we come into relations with the great Tao. There is nothing supra-Confucian here; though soon we may see an insistence upon the Inner which, it may be supposed, later Confucianism, drifting toxards externalism, would hardly have enjoyed.—A man in Sung carved a mulberry-leaf in jade for his prince. It took three years to complete, and was so well done, so realistic in its down and glossiness, that if placed in a heap of real mulberry-leaves, it could not be distinguished from them. The State pensioned him as a reward; but Liehtse, hearing of it, said: “If God Almighty took three years to complete a leaf, there would be very few trees with leaves on them. The Sage will rely less on human skill and science, than on the evolution of Tao.”

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Lung Shu came to the great doctor Wen Chih, and said to him: "You are the master of cunning arts. I have a disease; can you cure it, Sir?" "So far," said Wen Chih, "you have only made known your desire. Please let me know the symptoms of your disease." They were, utter indifference to the things and events of the world. "I hold it no honor to be praised in my own village, nor disgrace to be decried in my native State. Gain brings me no joy, loss no sorrow. I dwell in my home as if it were a mere caravanserai, and regard my native district as though it were one of the barbarian kingdoms. Honors and rewards fail to rouse me, pains and penalties to overawe me, good or bad fortune to influence me; joy or grief to move me. What disease is this? What remedy will cure it?" *

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* I may say here that though I am quoting the speeches more or less directly from Dr. Lionel Giles' translation, too many liberties are being taken, verbally, with the narative parts of these stories, to allow quotation marks and small type. One contracts and expands (sparingly, the latter); but gives the story.

Wen Chih examined his heart under X-rays;—really and truly that is in effect what Liehtse says.—"Ah," said he, "I see that a good square inch of your heart is hollow; you are within a little of being a true Sage. Six of the orifices are open and clear, and only the seventh is blocked up. This last is doubtless due to the fact that you are mistaking for a disease what is in reality an approach to divine enlightenment. It is a case in which my shallow art is of no avail."

I tell this tale, as also that other about the exchange of hearts, partly to suggest that Liehtse's China may have had the actuality, or at least a reminiscence, of scientific knowledge since lost there, and only discovered in Europe recently. In the same way one finds references to automatic oxen, self-moving chariots, traveling by air, and a number of other things which, as we read of them, sound just like superstitious nonsense. There are old Chinese drawings of pterodactyls, and suchlike unchancey antediluvian wild fowl. *Argal,* (you would say) the Chinese knew of these once; although Ptero and his friends have been extinct quite a few million years, one supposes. Or was it superstition again? Then why was it not superstition in Professor So-and-so, who found the bones and reconstructed the beastie for holiday crowds to gaze upon at the Crystal Palace or the Metropolitan Museum? Knowledge does die away into reminiscence, and then into oblivion; and the chances are that Liehtse's time retained reminiscences which have since become oblivion-hidden;—then rediscovered in the West.—But I tell the tale also for a certain divergence marked in it, between Taoist and Confucian thought. Laotse would have chuckled over it, who brooded much on 'self-

emptiness' as the first step towards illumination. Confucius would have allowed it; but it would not have occurred to him, unsuggested.

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Now here is something still further from Confucianism; something prophetic of later Taoist developments, though it still contains Laotse's thought, and—be it said—deep wisdom.

Fan Tsu Hua was a bully and a charlatan, who by his trickery had won such hold over the king of Tsin that anyone he might recommend was surely advanced to office, and anyone he cried down would lose his all. So it was said he had magic to make the rich poor and the poor rich. He had many disciples, who were the terror of the peaceably disposed.

One day they saw an old weak man approaching, 'with weather-beaten face and clothes of no particular cut.' A chance for sport not to be neglected, they thought; and began to hustle him about in their usual fashion, 'slapping him on the back, and what not.' But he—Shang Ch'iu K'ai was his name—seemed only full of joy and serenity, and heeded nothing. Growing tired of their fun at last, they would make an end of it; and led him to the top of a high cliff. "Whoever dares throw himself over," said one of them, "will find a hundred ounces of silver," which certainly he had not had with him at the top, and none of them had put there.

It was a wonder; and still more a wonder his being unhurt; but you can make chance account for most things, and they meant to get rid of him. So they brought him to the banks of the river, saying: "A pearl of great price is here, to be had for the diving." In he went without a word, and disappeared duly; and so, thought they, their fun had come to a happy end. But no: as they turned to go, up he came, serene and smiling, and scrambled out. "Well; did you find the pearl?" they asked. "Oh yes," said Shang; "it was just as your honors said." He showed it to them; and it was indeed a pearl of great price.

Here was something beyond them; the old man, clearly, was a favorite of Fortune; Fan their master himself must deal with him. So they sent word ahead, and brought him to the palace of Fan. Who understood well the limitations of quack magic: if he was to be beaten at these tricks, where would his influence be? So he heaped up riches in the courtyard, and made a great fire all round.—"Anyone can have those things," he announced, "who will go in and get them." Shang quietly walked through the flames, and came out with his arms full; not a hair of his head was singed.

And now they were filled with consternation; they had been making a mock of Tao these years; and here evidently was a real Master of Tao, come to expose them.—"Sir," they said, "we did not know that you posessed the Secret, and were playing you tricks. We insulted you, unaware that you were a divine man. But you have leaped from the cliff, dived into the Yellow River, and walked through the flames without injury; you have shown us our stupidity, blindness, and deafness. We pray you to forgive us, and to reveal to us the Secret."

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He looked at them in blank amazement.—“What is this you are telling me?” said he. “I am only old Shang Ch’iu K’ai the peasant. I heard that you, Sir, by your magic could make the poor rich. I wanted to be rich, so I came to you. I believed in you absolutely, and in all your disciples said; and so my mind was made one; I forgot my body; I saw nothing of cliffs or fire or water. But now you say you were decieving me, my soul returns to its perplexity, and my eyes and ears to their sight and hearing. What terrible dangers I have escaped! My limbs freeze with horror to think of them.”

Tsai Wo, continues Liehtse, told this story to Confucius.—“Is this so strange to you?” said the latter. “The man of perfect faith can move heaven and earth, and fly to the six cardinal points without hindrance. His powers are not confined to walking in perilous places and passing through water and fire. If Shang Ch’iu K’ai, whose motive was greed and whose belief was false, found no obstacle in external things, how much more certainly will it be so when the motive is pure and both parties sincere?”

I will finish it with what is really another of Liehtse’s stories,—also dealing with a man who walked through fire uninjured, unconscious of it because of the one-pointedness of his mind.

The incident came to the ears of Marquis Wen of Wei, who spoke to Tsu Hsia, a disciple of Confucius, about it.—“From what I have heard the Master say,” said Tsu Hsia, “the man who achieves harmony with Tao enters into close relations with outer objects, and none of them has power to harm or hinder him.”—“Why, my friend,” said the Marquis, “cannot you do all these marvels?”—“I have not yet succeeded,” said Tsu Hsia, “in cleansing my heart from impurities and discarding brainmind wisdom.”—“And why,” said the Marquis, “cannot the Master himself” (Confucius, of course) “perform such feats?”—“The Master,” said Tsu Hsia, “is able to perform them; but *he is also able to refrain from performing them."*—which, again, he was. Here is another example:

Hui Yang went to visit Prince K’ang of Sung. The prince, however, stamped his foot, rasped his throat, and said angrily:— “The things I like are courage and strength. I am not fond of your good and virtuous people. What can a stranger like you have to teach me?”

“I have a secret,” said Hui Yang, “whereby my opponent, however brave or strong, can be prevented from harming me either by thrust or blow. Would not Your Highness care to know that secret?”

“Capital!” said the Prince; “that is certainly something I should like to hear about.”

“True,” said Hui yang, “when you render his stabs or blows ineffectual, you cover your opponent with shame. But my secret will make him, however brave or strong, afraid to stab or strike at all.”

“Better still,” said the Prince; “let me hear about it.”

“It is all very well for him to be afraid to do it.” said Hui Yang; “but that does not imply he has no will to do it. Now, my secret would deprive him even of the will.”

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“Better and better,” said Prince K’ang; “I beseech you to reveal it to me.”

“Yes,” said Hui Yang; “but this not having the will to injure does not necessarily connote a desire to love and do good. But my secret is one whereby every man, woman, and child in the empire shall be inspired with the friendly desire to love and do good to each other. This is much better than the possession of mere courage and strength. Has Your Highness no mind to acquire such a secret as this?”

The Prince confessed that, on the contray, he was most anxious to learn it.

“It is nothing else than the teachings of Confucius and Mo Ti,” said Hui Yang.

A main idea of Taoism—one with which the Confucius of orthodox Confucianism did not concern himself—is the possibility of creating within one’s outer and mortal an inner and immortal self; by subduing desire, by sublimating away all impurities, by concentration. The seed of that Immortality is hidden in us; the seed of mastery of the inner and outer worlds. Faith is the key. Shang Ch’iu K’ai, whose “faith had made him whole,” walked through fire. “Whoso hath faith as a grain of mustard-seed,” said Jesus, can move mountains. It sounds as if he had been reading the *Book of Liehtse;* which is at pains to show how the thing is done. T’ai-hsing and Wang-wu, the mountains, stood not where they stand now, but in the south of the Chi district and north of Ho-yang. I like the tale well, and shall tell it for its naive Chinesity. The Simpleton of the North Mountain, an old man of ninety, dwelt opposite to them, and was vexed in spirit because their northern flanks blocked the way for travelers, who had to go round. So he called his family together and broached a plan.—“Let us put forth our utmost strength and clear away this obstacle,” said he; “let us cut right through the mountains till we come to Han-yin.” All agreed except his wife. “My goodman,” said she, “has not the strength to sweep away a dung-hill, let alone such mountains as T’ai-hsing and Wang-wu. Besides, where will you put the earth and stones?” They answered that they would throw them on the promontory of P’o-hai. So the old man, followed by his son and grandson, sallied forth with their pickaxes, and began hewing away at the rocks and cutting up the soil, and carting it away in baskets to the promontory. A widow who lived near by had a little boy who, though he was only just shedding his milk-teeth, came skipping along to give them what help he could. Engrossed in their toil they never went home except once at the turn of the season.

The Wise Old Man of the River-bend burst out laughing and urged them to stop. “Great indeed is your witlessness!” said he. “With the poor remaining strength of your declining years you will not succeed in removing a hair’s-breadth of the mountains, much less the whole vast mass of rock and soil.” With a sigh the Simpleton of the North Mountain answered:—“Surely

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it is you who are narrow-minded and unreasonable. You are not to be compared with the widow's son, despite his puny strength. Though I myself must die, I shall leave my son behind me, and he his son. My grandson will beget sons in his turn, and those sons also will have sons and grandsons. With all this posterity my line will not die out; while on the other hand the mountains will receive no increment or addition. Why then should I despair of leveling them to the ground at last?"—The Wise Old Man of the River-bend had nothing to say in reply.

Chinese! Chinese!—From whatever angle you look at it, it smacks of the nation that saw Babylon fall, and Rome, and may yet—

But look now, at what happened. There was something about the project and character of the Simpleton of the North Mountain, that attracted the attention of the Serpent-Brandishing deities. They reported the matter to Almighty God; who was interested; and perhaps was less patient than the simpleton.—I do not quite know who this person translated 'Almighty God' may be; I think he figures in the Taoist hierarchy somewhere below Laotse and the other Adepts. At any rate he was in a position to order the two sons of K'ua O—and I do not know who K'ua O and his sons were— to expedite matters. So the one of them took up T'ai-hsing, and the other Wu-wang, and transported them to the positions where they remain to this day to prove the truth of Liehtse's story. Further proof:—the region between Ts'i in the north and Han in the south—that is to say, northern Homan—is still and has been ever since, an unbroken plain.

And perhaps, behind this naive Chinesity, lie grand enunciations of occult law. . . .

I will end with what is probably Liehtse's most famous story— and, from a purely literary standpoint, his best. It is worthy of Chwangtse himself; and I tell it less for its philosophy than for its fun.

One morning a fuel-gatherer—we may call him Li for convenience, though Liehtse leaves him nameless—killed a deer in the forest; and to keep the carcass safe till he went home in the evening, hid it under a pile of brushwood. His work during the day took him far and when he looked for the deer again, he could not find it. "I must have dreamed the whole thing," he said;—and satisfied himself with that explanation. He made a verse about it as he trudged home through the woods, and went crooning:

> At dawn in the hollow, beside the stream,
> I hid the deer I killed in the dream;
> At eve I sought for it far and near;
> And found 'twas a dream that I killed the deer.

He passed the cottage of Yen the woodman—Yen we may call him, though Liehtse calls him nothing.—who heard the song, and pondered. “One might as well take a look at the place,” thought he; it seemed to him it might be such and such a hollow, by such and such a stream. Thither he went, and found the pile of brushwood; It looked to him a likely place enough to hide a deer under. He made search, and there the carcass was.

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He took it home and explained the matter to his wife. “Once upon a time,” said he, “a fuel-gatherer dreamed he had killed a deer and forgotten where he had hidden it. Now I have got the deer, and here it is; so his dream came true, in a way.”—“Rubbish!” she answered. “It was you must have dreamed the fuel-gatherer and his dreim. You must have killed the deer yourself, since you have it there; but where is your fuel-gatherer?”

That night Li dreamed again; and in his dream saw Yen fetch the deer from its hiding-place and bring it home. So in the morning he went to Yen’s house and there, sure enough, the deer was. They argued the matter out, but to no purpose. Then they took it before the magistrate, who gave judgment as follows:

“The plaintiff began with a real deer and an alleged dream; and now comes forward with a real dream and an alleged deer. The defendant has the deer the plaintiff dreamed, and wants to keep it. According to his wife, however, the plaintiff and the deer are both but figments of the defendant’s dream. Meanwhile, there is the deer; which you had better divide between you.”

The case was reported to the Prince of Cheng, whose opinion was that the magistrate had dreamed the whole story, himself. But his Prime Minister said: “If you want to distinguish between dream and waking, you would have to go back to the Yellow Emperor or Confucius. As both are dead, you had better uphold the magistrate’s decision.” *

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* The tale is told both in Dr. Lionel Giles’s translation mentioned above, and also, with verbal differences, in Dr. H. A. Giles’s work on *Chinese Literature*. The present telling follows now one, now the other version, now goes its own way;—and pleads guilty to adding the verse the woodman crooned.

XIII. MANG THE PHILOSOPHER, AND BUTTERFLY CHWANG

Liehtse’s tale of the Dream and the Deer leads me naturally to this characteristic bit from Chwangtse:*—

“Once upon a time, I, Chwangtse, dreamed I was a butterfly fluttering hither and thither; to all intents and purposes a veritable butterfly. I followed my butterfly fancies, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly I awoke, and there I lay, a man

again. Now how am I to know whether I was then, Chwangtse dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am Chwang?"

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* Which, like nearly all the other passages from him in this lecture, is quoted from Dr. H. A. Giles's *Chinese Literature*, in the Literatures of the World series; New York, Appleton.

For which reason he is, says Dr. Giles, known to this day as "Butterfly Chwang"; and the name is not all inappropriate. He flits from fun to philosophy, and from philosoply to fun, as if they were dark rose and laughing pansy; when he has you in the gravest depths of wisdom and metaphysic, he

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will not be content till with a flirt of his wings and an aspect gravely solemn he has you in fits of laughter again. His is really a book that belongs to world-literature; as good reading, for us now, as for any ancient Chinaman of them all. I think he worked more strenuously in the field of sheer intellect—stirred the thought stuff more—than most other Chinese thinkers,—and so is more akin to the Western mind; he carves his cerebrations more definitely, and leaves less to the intuition. The great lack in him is his failure to appreciate Confucius; and to explain that, before I go further with Butterfly Chwang, I shall take a glance at the times he lived in.

They were out of joint when Confucius came; they were a couple of centuries more so now. Still more was the Tiger stalking abroad: there were two or three tigers in particular, among the Great Powers, evidentlv crouching for a spring—that should settle things. Time was building the funeral pyre for the Phoenix, and building it of the debris of ruined worlds. In the early sixth century, the best minds were retiring in disgust to the wilds;—you remember the anchorite's rebuke to Tse-Lu. But now they were all coming from their retirement—the most active minds, whether the best or not—to shout their nostrums and make confusion worse confounded. All sorts of socialisms were in the air, raucously bellowed by would-be reformers. A "loud barbarian from the south" (as Mencius called him—I do not know who he was) was proclaiming that property should be abolished, and all goods held in common. One Yang Chu was yelling universal egoism: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Against him, one Mo Ti had been preaching universal altruism;—but I judge, not too sensibly, and without appeal to philosophy or mysticism. Thought of all kinds was in a ferment, and the world filled with the confused noise of its expression; clear voices were needed, to restate the message of the Teachers of old.

Then Mencius arose to speak for Confucius in this China so much further progressed along the Gadarene road. A strong and brilliant man, he took the field strongly and brilliantly, and filled the courts of dukes and kings with a roll of Confucian drums. Confucius, as I have tried to show you, had all Mysticism divinely behind and backing him, though he said little about it; Mencius, I think, had none. Mencius remade a Confucius of his own, with the mystical elements lacking. He saw in him only a social reformer and teacher of ethics; and it is the easiest thing in the world to see Confucius only through Mencian spectacles.

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I would not fall into the mistake of undervaluing Mencius. He was a very great man; and the work he did for China was enormous, and indispensable. You may call him something between the St. Paul and the Constantine of Confucianism. Unlike Constantine, he was not a sovereign, to establish the system; but he hobnobbed with sovereigns, and never allowed them to think him their inferior; and it was he who made of Confucianism a system that could be established. Unlike St. Paul, he did not develop the inner side of his Master's teachings; but he so popularized them as to ensure their triumph. He took the ideas of Confucius, such of them as lay within his own statesmanlike and practical scope of vision, restated and formulated them, and made of them what became the Chinese Constitution. A brave and honest thinker, essentially a man of action in thought, he never consciously deteriorated or took away from Confucius' doctrine. It is more as if some great President or Prime Minister, at some future time, should suddenly perceive that H.P. Blavatsky had brought that which would save his nation; and proceed to apply that saving thing, as best he might, in the field of practical politics and reform—or rather to restate it in such a way that (according to his view) it might be applied.

He put the constituents parts of society in order of importance as follows: the People; the Gods; the Sovereign: and this has been a cardinal principle in Chinese polity. He saw clearly that the Chow dynasty could never be revived; and arrived at the conclusion that a dynasty was only sacred while it retained the "mandate of heaven." Chow had lost that; and therefore it was within the rights of Heaven, as you may say, to place its mandate elsewhere;—and within the rights of the subject—as the logic of events so clearly proved Chow had lost the mandate—to rebel. Confucius had hoped to revivify Chow—had begun with that hope, at any rate: Mencius hoped to raise up some efficient sovereign who should overturn Chow. The Right of Rebellion, thus taught by him, is another fundamental Chinese principle. It works this way: if there was discontent, there was misrule; and it was the fault of the ruler. If the latter was a local magistrate, or a governor, prefect, or viceroy, you had but to make a demonstration, normally speaking, before his yamen: this was technically a 'rebellion' within Mencius' meaning; and the offending authority must report it to Pekin, which then commonly replaced him with another. (It would get to Pekin's ears anyway; so you had better—and ususally did—report it yourself.) If the offender was the Son of Heaven, with all his dynasty involved— why, then one had to rebel in good earnest; and it was to be supposed that if Heaven had really given one a mandate, one would win. The effect was that, although nominally absolute, very few emperors have dared or cared to fly quite in the face of Confucius, or Mencius, of their religio-political system, of the Board of Censors whose business it was to criticize the Throne, and of a vast opinion.

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There was the tradition an emperor ruled for the people. The office of ruler was divine; the man that held it was kept an impersonality as much as possible. He changed his name on coming to the throne, and perhaps several times afterwards: thus we speak of the great emperors Han Wuti and Tang Taitsong; who might, however, be called more exactly, Liu Ch'e, who was emperor during the period *Wuti* of the Han Dynasty; Li Shihmin, who filled the throne during the T'ang period called *Taitsong.* Again, there was the great idea, Confucio-Mencian, that the son of Heven must be 'compliant': leading rather than driving. He promulgated edicts, but they were never rigidly enforced; a certain voluntaryism was allowed as to the carrying out of them: if one of them was found unsuccessful, or not to command popular approval, another could be—and was—issued to modify or change it. So that the whole system was far removed from what we think of as an 'Oriental Despotism'; on the contrary, there was always a large measure of freedom and self-government. You began with the family: the head of that was its ruler, and responsible for order in his little realm. But he governed by consent and affection, not by force. Each village-community was self-governing; the headman in it taking the place of the father in the family; he was responsible for order, so it was his business to keep the people happy;—and the same principle was extended to fit the province, the viceroyalty, the empire. Further, there was the absence of any aristocracy or privileged class; and the fact that all offices were open to all Chinamen (actors excepted)—the sole key to open it being merit, as attested by competitive examinations.

The system is Mencian; the inspiration behind it from Confucius. It is the former's working out of the latter's superb idea of the *li.*

The Mencian system has broken down, and been abolished. It had grown old, outworn and corrupt. But it was established a couple of centuries before that of Augustus, and has been subject to the same stress of time and the cycles; and only broke down the other day. Time will wear out anything made by man. There is no garment, but the body will out-grow or out-wear it; no body, but the soul will outlive it and cast it away. Mencius, inspired by his Master Confucius, projected a system that time took two thousand years and more to wear out in China. It was one that did much or everything to shield the people from tyranny. Whether a better system has been devised, I do not know; but should say not—in historical times. As to the inspiration behind it—well, lest you should doubt the value of Confucius, compare the history of Europe with that of China. We have disproportioned ideas, and do not see these things straight. The Chinese Empire was founded some two centuries before the Roman: both composed of heterogeneous elements. Both, after about four centuries, fell; but China, after about four

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centuries more, came together and was great again. Fifteen hundred years after Ts'in Shi Hwangti had founded China, her manvantara then having ended, and her whole creative cycle run through, she fell to the Mongols. Fifteen hundred years after Julius Caesar had founded his empire, the last wretched remnant of it fell to the Turks. But China first compelled her conquerors to behave like Chinamen, and then, after a century, turned them out. The Turks never became Greek or Roman, and so far have not quite been turned out. The roman empire disappeared, and never reunited;—that is what has been the matter with Europe ever since. Europe, in her manvantara, has wasted three parts of her creative force in wars and disunion. But China, even in her pralaya, became a strong, united power again under the Mings (1368-1644)—the first of them—a native dynasty. Conquered again, now by the Manchus, she mader her conquerors behave like Chinamen,—imposed on them her culture;—and went forth under their banners to conquer. The European pralaya (630-1240) was a time barren of creation in art and literature, and in life uttterly squalid and lightless The Chinese pralaya, after the Mongol Conquest, took a very long time to sink into squalidity. The arts, which had died in Europe long before Rome fell, lived on in China, though with ever-waning energy, through the Mongol and well into the Ming time: the national stability, the force of custom, was there to carry them on. What light, what life, what vigor was there in Rome or Constantinople a century and a half after Alaric or Heraclius? But Ming Yunglo, a century and a half after the fall of Sung, reigned in great splendor; sent his armies conquering to the Caspian, and his navies to the conquest of Ceylon, the discovery of Africa, the gathering in of the tribute of the Archipelago and the shores of the Indian Ocean. Until the end of the eighteenth century the minor arts and crafts—pottery and bronzes—of which there was nothing to speak of in Europe in the corresponding European age—were flourishing wonderfully; and in the seventeenth and eighteeenth centuries, under Kanghi and Kienlung, China was once more a great military power. She chased and whipped the Goorkhas down through the Himalays and into India, only twenty years before England fought difficult and doubtful campaigns with those fierce little mountaineers. You may even say she has been better off in her pralaya, in many ways, and until recently, than most of Europe has been in most of *her* manvantara. In Kienlung's reign, for example (1735-1795) there were higher standards of life, more security, law, and order, than in the Europe of Catherine of Russia, Frederick the Great, Louis XV and the Revolution, and the English Georges. There was far less ferment of the Spirit, true; less possibility of progress;—but that is merely to say that China was in pralaya, Europe in high manvantara. The explanation is that a stability had been imparted to that Far Eastern civilization,

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which Europe has lacked altogether; whose history, for all its splendid high-lights, has had thousands of hideous shadows; has not been so noble a thing as we tacitly and complacently assume; but a long record of wars, confusions, disorder, and cruelities, with only dawning now the possibility of that union which is the first condition of true progress, as distinguished from the riot of material inventions and political experiments that has gone by that name.—But now, back to Mencius again.

In all things he tried to follow Confucius; beginning early by being born in the latter's own district of Tsow in Shantung, and having a woman in ten thousand for his mother; —she has been the model held up to all Chinese mothers since. He grew up strong in body and mind, thoughtful and fearless; a tireless student of history, poetry, national institutions, and the lives of great men. Like Confucius, he opened a school, and gathered disciples about him: but there was never the bond of love here, that there had been between Confucius and Tse Lu, Yen Huy, and the others. These may have heard from their Master the pure deep things of Theosophy; one would venture the statement that none of Mencius' following heard the like from him. He saw in Confucius that which he himself was fitted to be, and set out to become. He went from court to court, and everywhere, as a great scholar, was received with honor. (You will note as one more proof of an immemorial culture, that then, as now the scholar, as such, was at the very top of the social scale. There was but one word for *scholar* and *official.*)—He proposed, like Confucius, that some king should make him his minister; and like Confucius, he was always disappointed. But in him we come on none of the soft lights and tones that endear Confucius to us; he fell far short of being Such a One. A clear, bold mind, without *atmosphere,* with all its lines sharply defined.... he made free to lecture the great ones of the earth, and was very round with them, even ridiculing them at his pleasure. He held the field for Confucius—not the Taoist, but the Mencian Confucius—against all comers; smote Yang Chu the Egotist hip and thigh; smote gentle Mo Ti, the Altruist; preached fine and practical ethics; and had no patience with those dreamers of the House of Laotse.—A man sent from the Gods, I should say, to do a great work; even though—

And then there was that dreamer of dreams, of Butterfly dreams,— subtle mystical humorous Chwangtse: how could it be otherwise than that clear-minded clarion-throated Philosopher Mang should afford him excellent play? Philosopher Mang (Philosopher of the Second Class, so officially entitled), in the name of his Master K'ung Ch'iu, fell foul of Dreamer Chwang; how could it be otherwise than that Dreamer Chwang should aim his shafts, not a Mang merely, but (alas!) at the one whose name was always on Mang's lips?—"Confucius says, Confucius says, Confucius says"— cries Philosopher Mang.—"Oh hang your Confucius!" thinks Chwang the Mystic; "let us have a little of the silence and splendor of the Within!" (Well, Confucius would have said the same thing, I think.) "Let me tell you a tale," says Chwang; and straight goes forward with it.

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“It was the time of the autumn floods. Every stream poured into the river, which swelled in its turbid course. The banks were so far apart that from one to the other you could not tell a cow from a horse.

“Then the Spirit of the River laughed for joy that all the beauty of the earth was gathered to himself. Down with the current he journeyed east, until he reached the Ocean. There looking eastward, and seeing no limit to its expanse of waves, his countenance changed. As he gazed out, he sighed, and said to the Spirit of the Ocean: ’A vulgar proverb says that he who has heard but a part of the truth thinks no one equal to himself. Such a one am I.

“’When formerly I heard people detracting from the learning of Confucius, or underrating the heroism of Po I. I did not believe. But now that I have looked on your inexhaustibility — alas for me had I not reached your abode! I should have been forever a laughing-stock to those of comprehensive enlightenment.’

“To which the Spirit of the Ocean answered: ’You cannot speak of ocean to a well-frog, —the creature of a narrower sphere. You cannot speak of ice to a summer insect,—the creature of a season. You cannot speak of Tao to a pedant; his scope is too restricted. But now that you have emerged from your narrow sphere, and have seen the great sea, you know your own insignificance, and I can speak of great principles.

“Have you never heard of the Frog of the Old Well? The Frog said to the Turtle of the Eastern Sea, ’Happy indeed am I! I hop on the rail around the well. I rest in the hollow of some broken brick. Swimming, I gather the water under my arms and shut my mouth tight. I plunge into the mud, burying my feet and toes. Not one of the cockles, crabs, or tadpoles I see around me is my match. Why do you not come, Sir, and pay me a visit?’”

“Now the Turtle of the Eastern Sea had not got its left leg down ere its right leg had stuck fast, so it shrank back and begged to be excused. It then described the sea, saying, ’A thousand leagues would not measure its breadth, nor a thousand fathoms its depth. In the days of Yu the Great there were nine years of flood out of ten; but this did not add to its contents. In the days of T’ang there were seven years of drought out of eight, but this did not narrow its span. Not to be affected by volume of water, not to be affected by duration of time—this is the happiness of the Eastern Sea.’ At this the Frog of the Old Well was considerably astonished, and knew not what to say next. And for one whose knowledge does not reach to the positive-negative domain the attempt to understand me is like a mosquito trying to carry a mountain, or an ant to swim the Yellow River,—they cannot succeed.”

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If Chwangtse had lived before Mencius, or Mencius after Chwangtse, Chwangtse could have afforded to see Confucius in his true light, as Liehtse did; but the power and influence of the mind of Mencius were such that in his time there was no looking at the Master except through his glasses. We do not know what happened when Laotse and Confucius met; but I suspect it was very like what happened when Mr. Judge met Madame Blavatsky. But Butterfly Chwang, the rascal, undertook to let us know; and wrote it out in full. He knew well enough what would happen if he met Mencius; and took that as his model. He wanted Mencius to know it too. He itched to say to him, "Put away, sir, your flashy airs," and the rest; and so made Laotse say it to Confucius. It shows how large Philosopher Mang had come to loom, that anyone could attribute "flashy airs" to that great-hearted simple Gentleman K'ung Ch'iu. One thing only I believe in about that interview: Confucius' reputed speech on coming forth from it to his disciples:—"There is the Dragon; I do not know how he mounts upon the wind and rises about the clouds. Today I have seen Laotse, and can only compare him to the Dragon." He *would have said* that; it has definite meaning; the Dragon was the symbol of the spirit, and so universally recognised.—Confucius appears to have taken none of his disciples into the Library; and Confucianist writers have had nothing to say about the incident, except that it occurred, I believe. Chwangtse, and all Taoist writers after him, show Confucius taking his rating very quietly;—as indeed, he would have done, had Laotse been in a mood for quizzing. For Confucius never argued or pressed his opinions; where his words were not asked for and listened to, he retired. But it is not possible the recognition should have been other than mutual: the great Laotse would have known a Man when he saw him. I like the young imperturbable K'ung Jung, precocious ten-year-old of some seven centuries later. His father took him up to the capital when the Dragon Statesman Li Ying was the height of his power; and the boy determined on gaining an interview with Li. He got admission to the latter's house by claiming blood-relationship. Asked by the great man wherein it lay, says he very sweetly: "Your ancestor Laotse and my ancestor Confucius were friends engaged in the search for truth; may we not then be said to be of the same family?"— "Cleverness in youth," sneered a bystander, "does not mean brilliancy in later life."—"You, Sir," says Ten-years-old, turning to him, "must have been a very remarkable boy." *

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* Giles: *Chinese Literature.*

The truth is, both Mencius and Chwangtse stood a step lower and nearer this world than had the two they followed: whose station had been on the level platform at the top of the altar. But Mencius descending had gone eastward; Chwangtse towards the west.

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He was all for getting at the Mean, the Absolute Life, beyond the pairs of opposites;—-which is, indeed, the central Chinese thought, Confucian or Taoist, the *raison d'etre* of Chinese longevity, and the saving health of China. But unfortunately he —Chwangtse —did not see that his own opposite, Philosopher Mang, was driving him an inch or two away from the Middle Line. So, with a more brilliant mind (a cant phrase that!) he stands well below Laotse; just as Mencius stands below K'ung Ch'iu. The spiritual down-breathing had reached a lower plane: soon the manvantara was to begin, and the Crest-Wave to be among the black-haired People. For all these Teachers and Half-Teachers were but early swallows and forerunners. Laotse and Confucius had caught the wind at its rising, on the peaks where they stood very near the Spirit; Chwangtse and Mangtse caught it in the region of the intellect: the former in his wild valley, the latter on his level prosaic plain. They are both called more daring thinkers than their predecessors; which is merely to say that in them the Spirit figured more on the intellectual, less on its own plane. They were lesser men, of course. Mencius had lost Confucius' spirituality; Chwangtse, I think, something of the sweet sanifying influence of Laotse's universal compassion.

Well, now: three little tales from Chwangtse, to illustrate his wit and daring; and after then, to the grand idea he bequeathed to China.

"Chwangtse one day saw an empty skull, bleached, but still preserving its shape. Striking it with his riding-whip, he said: 'Was thou once some ambitious citizen whose inordinate yearnings brought him to this pass?—some statesman who plunged his country in ruin, and perished in the fray?—some wretch who left behind him a legacy of shame?—some beggar who died in the pangs of hunger and cold? Or didst thou reach this state by the natural course of old age?'

"He took the skull home, and slept that night with it under his head for a pillow, and dreamed. The skull appeared to him in his dream, and said: 'You speak well, Sir; but all you say has reference to the life of mortals, and to mortal troubles. In death there are none of these things. Would you like to hear about death?'

"Cwangtse, however, was not convinced, and said: 'Were I to prevail upon God to let your body be born again, and your bones and flesh be renewed, so that you could return to your parents, to your wife and to the friends of your youth—would you be willing?'

"At this the skull opened its eyes wide and knitted its brows and said: 'How should I cast aside happiness greater than that of a king, and mingle once again in the toils and troubles of mortality?'"

Here is the famous tale of the Grand Augur and the Pigs:—

“The Grand Augur, in his ceremonial robes, approached the shambles and thus addressed the Pigs:—

“‘Why,’ said he, ’should you object to die? I shall fattan you for three months. I shall discipline myself for ten days and fast for three. I shall strew fine grass, and place you bodily upon a carved sacrificial dish. Does not this satisfy you?

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"'Yet perhaps after all,' he continued, speaking from the pigs' point of view, 'it is better to live on bran and escape the shambles...

"'No,' said he; speaking from his own point of view again. 'To enjoy honor when alive one would readily die on a war-shield or in the haeadsman's basket.'

"So he rejected the pigs' point of view and clung to his own. In what sense, then, was he different from the pigs?"

And here, the still more famous tale of the Sacred Tortoise:—

"Chwantse was fishing in the river P'u when the Prince of Ch'u sent two high officials to ask him to take charge of the administration.

"Chwangtse went on fishing, and without turning his head said: 'I have heard that in Ch'u there is a sacred tortoise which has been dead now some three thousand years. And that the prince keeps this tortoise carefully enclosed in a chest on the altar of his ancestral temple. Now if this tortoise had its choice, which would it prefer: to be dead, and have its remains venerated; or to be alive, and wagging its tail in the mud?'

"'Sir,' replied the two officials, 'it would rather be alive, and wagging its tail in the mud.'

"'Begone!' cried Chwangtse. 'I too will wag my tail in the mud!'"

Well; so much for *Butterfly;* now for *Chwang*—and to introduce you to some of his real thought and teaching. You will not have shot so wide of the mark as to see in his story of the skull traces of pessimism: Chwantse had none of it; he was a very happy fellow; like the policeman in the poem,

".....a merry genial wag
Who loved a mad conceit."

But he was by all means and anyhow for preaching the Inner as against the outer. Yet he did not dismiss this world, either, as a vain delusion and sorrowful mockery;—the gist of his teaching is this: that men bear a false relation to the world; and he desired to teach the true relation. He loved the Universe, and had a sublime confidence in it as the embodiment and expression of Tao; and would apply this thought as a solvent to the one false thing in it: the human personality, with its heresy of separateness. Dissolve that,—and it is merely an idea; in the words of a modern philosopher, *all in the mind,*—and you have the one true elixir flowing in your veins, the universal harmony; are part of the solemn and glorious pageant of the years. The motions of the heavenly bodies, the sweetness of Spring and the wistfulness of Autumn, flaunting Summer and Winter's beauty of snow—all are parcel of yourself, and within the circle of your consciousness.

Often he rises to a high poetic note;—it is largely the supreme beauty of his style which keeps his book, so thouroughly unorthodox, still alive and wagging its tail among his countrymen. Chwangtse will not help you through the examinations; but he is mighty good to read when your days of competing are over; as I think it is Dr. Giles who says.

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Like his contemporary Diogenes, he would have his dead body cast out to the vultures; but the spirit of his wish was by no means cynical. “When Chwangtse was about to die,” he writes (anticipating things pleasantly), “his disciples expressed a wish to give him a splendid funeral. But he said: ’With heaven and earth for my coffin and shell, and the sun, moon, and stars for my burial regalia; with all creation to escort me to the grave — is not my funeral already prepared?’”

He speaks of the dangers of externalism, even in the pursuit of virtue; then says: “The man who has harmony within, though he sit motionless like the image of a dead man at a sacrifice, yet his Dragon Self will appear; though he be absorbed in silence, his thunder will be heard; the divine power in him will be at work, and heaven will follow it; while he abides in tranquillity and inaction, the myriads of things and beings will gather under his influence.”—“Not to run counter to the natural bias of things,” he says, “is to be perfect.” It is by this running counter—going aginst the Law, following our personal desires and so forth,—that we create karma,—give the Universe something to readjust, —and set in motion all our troubles. “He who fully understands this, by storing it within enlarges the heart, and with this enlargement brings all creation to himself. Such a man will bury gold on the hillside, and cast pearls into the sea.”— sink a plummet into that, I beseech you; it is one of the grand utterances of wonder and wisdom.—“He will not struggle for wealth or strive for fame; rejoice over longevity, or grieve at an early death. He will get no elation from success, nor chagrin from failure; he will not account the throne his private gain, no look on the empire of the world as glory personal. His glory is to know that all thigns are one, and life and death but phases of the same existence.”

Why call that about burying gold and casting pearls into the sea one of the supreme utterances?—Well; Chwangtse has a way of putting a whole essay into a sentence; this is a case in point. We have discussed Natural Magic together many times; we know how the ultimate beauty occurs when something human has flowed out into Nature, and left its mysterious trace there, upon the mountains, or by the river-brink,

> “By paved fountain, or by rushy brook.
> Or on the beached margent of the sea.”

Tu Fu saw in the blues and purples of the morning-glory the colors of the silken garments of the lost poet Ssema Hsiangju, of a thousand years before—that is, of the silken garments of his rich emotion and adventures. China somehow has understood this deep connexion between man and Nature; and that it is human thought molds the beauty and richness, or hideousness and sterility of the world. Are the mountains noble? They store the grandeur and aspirations of eighteen millions of years of mankind. Are the deserts desolate and terrible? It was man made the deserts: not with his hands, but with his thought. Man is the fine workshop and careful laboratory wherein Nature prepares the most wonderful of her wonders. It is an instinct for this truth that makes Chinese poetry the marvel that it is.—So the man of Tao is enriching the natural world: filling the hills with gold, putting pearls in the sea.

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I do not know where there is a more pregnant passage than this following,—a better acid (of words) to corrode the desperate metal of selfhood; listen well, for each clause is a volume. “Can one get Tao to possess it for one’s own?” asks Chwangtse; and answers himself thus: “Your very body is not your own; how then should Tao be?—If my body is not my own, whose is it, pray?—It is the delegated image of God. Your posterity is not your own; it is the delegated exuviae of God. You move, but know not how; you are at rest, but know not why; you taste, but know not the cause; these are the operations of universal law. How then should you get Tao so as to possess it for your own?”

Now then, I want to take one of those clauses, and try to see what Chwangtse really meant by it. “Your individuality is not your own, but the delegated adaptability of God.”—There is a certain position in the Scheme of Things Entire,—a point, with a relation of its own to the rest of the Scheme, to the Universe;— as the red line has a relation of its own to the rest of the spectrum and the ray of light as a whole..... From that point, from that position, there is a work to be done, which can be done from no other. The Lonely Eternal looks out through these eyes, because it must see all things; and there are things no eyes can see but these, no other hands do. This point is an infinitesimal part of the whole; but without its full and proper functioning, the Whole falls short in that much:—because of your or my petty omissions, the Universe limps and goes lame.—Into this position, as into all others impartially, the One Life which is Tao flows, adapting itself through aeons to the relations which that point bears to the Whole: and the result and the process of this adaptation is—your individuality or mine.

You are not the point, the position: because it is merely that which you hold and through which you function; it is yours, but not you. What then are *you?* That which occupies and adapts itself to the point? But that is Tao, the Universal. You can only say it is you, if from *you* you subtract all *you*-ness. Your individuality, then, is a temporary aspect of Tao in a certain relation to the totality of Tao, the One Thing which is the No Thing:—or it is the “delegated adaptability of God.”

How and wherein adaptable?—The Infinite, occupying this position, has formed therein all sorts of attachments and dislikes; and each one of them hinders it adaptability. Your surroundings have reflected themselves on you: and the sum of the reflexions is your personality,—the little cage of I-am-ness from which it is so hard to escape. Every reflected image engraves itself on the stuff of yourself by the sensation of attachment or repulsion which it arouses. When it says, “The One becomes the Two”—which is the way in one form or another all ancient philosophy sums up the beginning of things;—this is

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what is meant: the ‘One’ is Tao; the ‘Two’ is this conditioned world, whose nature and essence is to appear as pairs of opposites—to be attractive, or to repel. The pigs’ point of view was that it was better to live on bran and escape the shambles; the Grand Augur’s, that the pomp and ceremony of the sacrifice, the public honor, ought more than to compensate them for the momentary inconvenience of being killed. Opposite ways of thinking; points of view: which cherishing, Grand Augur and pigs alike dwelt on the plane of externals; and so there was no real difference between them. When you stand for you, and I for myself, it is six of one and half a dozen of the other; but when either of us stand for That which is both of us, and all else,— then we touch reality; then there is no longer conflict, or opposites; no longer false appearances,—but the presence and cognition of the True.

Here let me note what seems to me a radical superiority in Chinese methods of thought. You may take the *Bhagavad-Gita,* perhaps, as the highest expression of Aryan religio-philosophic thinking. There we have the Spirit, the One, shown as the self of the Universe, but speaking through, and as, Krishna, a human personality. Heaven forbid that I should suggest there is anthropomorphism in this. Still, I think our finest mystical and poetic perceptions of the Light beyond all lights do tend to crystallize themselves into the shape of a *Being;* we do tend to symbolize and figure that Wonder as ..... an Individuality .....in some indefinable splendid sort. Often you find real mystics, men who have seen with their own eyes so to say, talking about *God, the Lord,* the *Great King,* and what not of the like; and though you know perfectly well what they mean, there was yet that necessity on them to use those figures of speech. But in China, no. There, they begin from the opposite end. Neither in Laotse nor in Confucius, nor in their schools, can you find a trace of personalism. Gods many, yes; as reason and common sense declare; but nothing you can call a god is so ancient, constant, and eternal as Tao, “which would appear to have been before God.” Go to their poets, and you find that the rage is all for Beauty as the light shining through things. The grass-blade and the moutain, the moonlit water and the peony, are lit from within and utterly adorable: not because God made them; not as reminding you of the Topmost of any Hierarchy of Being; but, if you really go to the bottom of it, because there is no personality in them, —and so nothing to hinder the eternal wonder, impersonal Tao, from shining through.—-As if *we* came through our individuality to a conception of the Divine; but *they,* through a perception of the divine, to a right understanding of their individuality. It amounts to *us* to fall into gross hideous anthropomorphism; the worst of them into superstitions of their own.—When one quotes Chwangtse as speaking of “the delegated adaptability of *God,*” one must remember that one has to use some English word for his totally impersonal *Tao* or *Tien,* or even *Shangti,* or whatever it may be.

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This Tao, you say, something far off,—a principle in philosophy or a metaphysical idea,—may be very nice to discuss in a lecture or write poetry about; but dear me! between whiles we have a great deal to do, and really—But no! it is actually, as Mohammed said, “nearer to thee than thy jugular vein.” It is a simple adjustment of oneself to the Universe,—of which, after all, one cannot escape being a part; it is the attainment of a true relationship to the whole. What obscures and hinders that, is simply our human brain-mind consciousness. “Consider the lilies of the field,” that attain a perfection of beauty. The thing that moves us, or ought to move us, in flowers, trees, seas and mountains, is this: that lacking this fretting, gnawing sense of I-am-ness, their emanations are pure Tao, and may reach us along the channel we call beauty: may flood our being through “the gateway of the eyes.” Beauty is Tao made visible. The rose and peony do not feel themselves ‘I,’ distinct from ‘you’ and the rest; they are in opposition to nothing; they do not fall in love, and have no aversions: they simply worship Heaven and are unanxious, and so beautiful. When we know this, we see what beauty means; and that it is not something we can afford to ignore and treat with stoic indifference or puritan dislike. It is Tao visible; I call every flower an avatar of God. Now you see how Taoism leads to poetry; is the philosophy of poetry; is indeed *Poetics,* rather than *Metephysics.* Think of all the little jewels you know in Keats, in Shelley, or Wordsworth: the moments when the mists between those men and the divine “defecated to a thin transparency";—those were precisely the moments when the poets lost sight of their I-am-ness and entered into true relations with the Universe. A daffodil, every second of its life, holds within itself all the real things poets have ever said, or will ever say, about it; and can reach our souls directly with edicts from the Dragon Throne of the Eternal.—I watched the linarias yesterday, and their purple delicacy assured me that all the filth, all the falsehood and tragedy of the world, should pass and be blown away; that the garden was full of dancing fairies, joy moving them to their dancing; that it was my own fault if I could not see Apollo leaning down out of the Sun; and my own fatuity, and that alone, if I could not hear the Stars of Morning singing together, and all the sons of God shouting for you. And it was the truth they were telling; the plain, bald, naked truth;—they have never learned to lie, and do not know what it means. There is no sentimentalism in this; only science. We live in a Universe absolutely soaked through with God,—or with Poetry, which is perhaps a better name for It; a Universe peopled thick with Gods. But it is all very far from our common thoughts and conceptions; that is why it sounds to most people like sentimental nonsense and ‘poetry.’ No wonder Plato hated that word;—since it is made a hand-grenade, in the popular mind, to fling at every truth. And yet Poetry ’gets in on us,’ too, occasionally, and accomplishes for

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“the woods and waters wild”

the work they cannot do for themselves;—the work they cannot do, cause we will not look at them, cannot see them, and have forgotten their ancient language, being too much immersed in a rubbishing gabble of our own.

What Toism, and especially Chwangtse as I think, did for the Chinese was to publish the syntax and vocabulary of that ancient language; to make people understand how to take these grand protagonists of Tao; how to communicate familiarly with these selfless avatars of the Most High. Listen to this: the thought is close-packed, but I think you will follow it:—

“The true Sage rejects all distinction of this and that,” that is to say, of subjective, or that which one perceives within one’s own mind and consciousness, and objective, or that which is perceived as existing outside of them;—he does not look upon the mountain or the daffodil as things different or apart from his own conscious being. “He takes his refuge in Tao, and places himself in subjective relations with all things”; he keeps the mountain within him; the scent of the daffodil, and her yellow candle-flame of beauty, are within the sphere and circle of himself;

“...the little wave of Breffny goes stumbling through his soul.”

“Hence it is said”—this is Chwangtse again—“that there is nothing like the light of Nature.

“Only the truly intelligent understand this principle of the identity of things. They do not view things as apprehended by themselves, but transfer themselves into the position of the things viewed.”—And there, I may say, you have it: the last is the secret of the wonder-light in all Far Eastern Poetry and Art; more, it is the explanation of all poetry everywhere. It is the doctrine, the archeus, the *Open Sesame,* the thyme- and lavender- and sweetwilliam-breathed Secret Garden of this old wizardly Science of Song;—who would go in there, and have the dark and bright blossoms for his companions, let him understand this. For Poetry is the revelation of the Great Life beyond the little life of this human personality; to tap it, you must evict yourself from the personal self; “transfer yourself into the position of the things viewed,” and not see, but *be,* the little stumbling wave or the spray of plum-blossom, thinking its thoughts.—-“Viewing things thus,” continues our Chwangtse, “you are able to comprehend and master them. So it is that to place oneself in inner relation with externals, without consciousness of their objectivity,—this is Tao. But to wear out one’s intellect in an obstinate adherence to the objectivity—the apartness—of things, not recognizing that they are all one—this is called *Three in the Morning.*—’What do you mean by *Three in the Morning?’* asked Tse Yu.—’A keeper of monkeys,’ Tse Chi replied, ’said with regard to their daily ration of chestnuts that each monkey should have three in the morning and four at night. At this the monkeys were very angry; so he said that they might have four

in the morning and three at night; whereat they were well pleased. The number of nuts was the same; but there was an adaptation to the feelings of those concerned.'"—which, again, means simply that to follow Tao and dodge until it is altogether sloughed off the sense of separateness, is to follow the lines of least resistance.

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All these ideas are a natural growth from the teachings of Laotse; but Butterfly Chwang, in working them out and stating them so brilliantly, did an inestimable service to the ages that were to come.

XIV. THE MANVANTARA OPENS

Laotse's Blue Pearl was already shining into poetry. Ch'u Yuan, the first great poet, belongs to this same fourth century; it is a long step from the little wistful ballads that Confucius gathered to the "wild irregular meters," * splendid imagery, and be it said, deep soul symbolism of his great poem the Li Sao (Falling into Trouble). The theme of it is this: From earliest childhood Ch'u Yuan had sought the Tao, but in vain. At last, banished by the prince whose minister he had been, he retired into the wilds, and was meditating at the tomb of Shun in Hupeh, in what was then the far south. There the Phoenix and the Dragon came to him, and bore him aloft, past the West Pole, past the Milky Way, past even the Source of the Hoangho, to the Gates of Heaven. Where, however, there was no admittance for him; and full of sorrow he returned to earth.

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* *Chinese Literature*, by Dr. H. A. Giles. What is said about the *Li Sao* here comes from that work—except the suggestions as to its inner meaning.

On the banks of the Mi-lo a fisherman met him, and asked him the cause of his trouble. —"All the world is foul," answered Ch'u Yuan, "and I alone am clean."—"If that is so," said the fisherman, "why not plunge into the current, and make its foulness clean with the infection of your purity? The Man of Tao does not quarrel with his surroundings, but adjusts himself to them." Ch'u Yuan took the hint: leaped into the Mi-lo;—and yearly since then they have held the Dragon-boat Festival on the waters of Middle China to commemorate the search for his body.— Just how much of this is in the *Li Sao,*—where the poem ends,— I do not clearly gather from Professor Giles's account; but the whole story appears to me to be a magnificent Soul Symbol: of that Path which leads you indeed on dragon flights to the borders of the Infinite, but whose end, rightly considered, is in this world, and to be as it were drowned in the waters of this world, with your cleanness infecting them to be clean,—and lighting them for all future ages with beauty, as with little dragon-boats luminous with an inner flame. Ch'u Yuan had followers in that and the next century; but perhaps his greatness was hardly to be approached for a thousand years.

But we were still in Tiger-time, and with quite the worst of it to come. Here lay the Blue Pearl scintillating rainbows up through the heavy atmosphere; but despite its flashing

and up-fountaining those strange dying-dolphin hues and glories, you could never have told, in Tiger-time, what it really was. The Dragon was yet a long way off; though indeed it must be allowed that flight, when Chwangtse wrote

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and Ch'u Yuan sung, was surprised with the far churr of startling wings under the stars. Ears intent to listen were surprised; but only for a moment;— there was that angry howling again from the northern hills and the southern forests: the two great Tigers of the world face to face, tails lashing;—and between them and in their path, Chow quite prone,—the helpless Black-haired People trembling or chattering frivolously. Not for such an age as that Chwangtse and Ch'u Yuan wrote, but indeed you may say for all time. What light from the Blue Pearl could then shine forth and be seen, would, in the thick fog and smoke-gloom, take on wild fantastic guise; which, as we shall see, it did: —but what Chwangtse had written remained, pure immortality, to kindle up better ages to come. When China should be ready, Chwangtse and the Pearl would be found waiting for her. The manvantara had not yet dawned; but we may hurry on now to its dawning.

The Crest-Wave was still in India when China plunged into the abyss from which her old order of ages never emerged. Soon after Asoka came to the throne of Magadha, in 284 B.C., Su Tai, wise prime minister to the Lord of Chao, took occasion to speak—seriously to his royal master as to the latter's perennial little wars with Yen.* "This morning as I crossed the river," said he, "I saw a mussel open its shell to the sun. Straight an oyster-catcher thrust in his bill to eat the mussel; which promptly snapped the shell to and held the bird fast.—'If it doesn't rain today or tomorrow,' said the oyster-catcher, 'there'll be a dead mussel here.'—'And if you don't get out of this by today or tomorrow,' said the mussel, 'there'll be a dead oyster-catcher.' Meanwhile up came a fisherman and carried them both off. I fear Ts'in will be our fisherman."

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* The tale is taken from Dr. H.A. Gile's *Chinese Literature*.

Which duly came to pass. Even in Liehtse's time Ts'in characteristics were well understood: he tells a sly story of a neighboring state much infested by robbers. The king was proud of a great detective who kept them down; but they soon killed the Pinkerton, and got to work again. Then he reformed himself,—and the robbers found his kingdom no place for them. In a body they crossed the Hoangho into Ts'in;—and bequeathed to its policy their tendencies and aptitudes.

Ts'in had come to be the strongest state in China. Next neighbor to the Huns, and half Hun herself, she had learned warfare in a school forever in session. But she had had wise rulers also, after their fashion of wisdom: who had been greatly at pains to educate her in all the learning of the Chinese. So now she stood, an armed camp of a nation, enamored of war, and completely civilized in all external things. Ts'u, her

strongest rival, stretching southward to the Yangtse and beyond, had had to deal with barbarians less virile than the Huns; and besides, dwelling as Ts’u did among

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the mountains and forests of romance, she had some heart in her for poetry and mysticism, whereas Ts'in's was all for sheer fighting. Laotse probably had been a Ts'u man; and also Chwangtse and Ch'u Yuan; and in after ages it was nearly always from the forests of Ts'u that the great winds of poetry were blown. Still—he had immense territories and resources, and the world looked mainly to her for defense against the northern Tiger Ts'in. Soon after Su Tai told his master the parable of the mussel and the oyster-catcher the grand clash came, and the era of petty wars and raidings was over. Ts'u gathered to herself most of the rest of China for her allies, and there was a giant war that fills the whole horizon, nearly, of the first half of the third century B. C. New territories were involved: the world had expanded mightily since the days of Confucius. "First and last," says Ssema Tsien, "the allies hurled a million men against Ts'in." But to no purpose; one nation after another went down before those Hun-trained half-Huns from the north-west. In 257 Chau Tsiang king of Ts'in took the Chow capital, and relieved Nan Wang, the last of the Chows, of the Nine Tripods of Ta Yu, the symbols of his sacred sovereignty; —the mantle of the Caliphate passed from the House of Wen Wang and the Duke of Chow.

The world had crumbled to pieces: there had been changes of dynasty before, but never (in known history) a change like this. The Chows had been reigning nearly nine hundred years; but their system had been in the main the same as that of the Shangs and Hias, and of Yao, Shun, and Ta Yu: it was two millenniums, a century, and a decade old. A Chinaman, in Chau Tsiang's place, would merely have reshaped the old order and set up a new feudal-pontifical house instead of Chow; which could not have lasted, because old age had worn the old system out. But these barbarians came in with new ideas. A new empire, a new race, a new nation was to be born.

Chau Tsiang died in 251; and even then one could not clearly foresee what should follow. In 253 he had performed the significant sacrifice to Heaven, a prerogative of the King-Pontiff: but he had not assumed the title. Resistance was still in being. His son and successor reigned three days only; and *his* son, another nonentity, five years without claiming to be more than King of Ts'in. But when this man died in 246, he left the destinies of the world in the hands of a boy of thirteen; who very quickly showed the world in whose hands its destinies lay. Not now a King of Ts'in; not a King-Pontiff of Chow;—not, if you please, a mere *wang* or king at all;—but Hwangti, like that great figure of mythological times, the Yellow Emperor, who had but to sit on his throne, and all the world was governed and at peace. The child began by assuming that astounding title: *Ts'in Shi Hwangti,* the First August Emperor: peace to the ages that were past; let them lie in their tomb; time now should begin again!—Childish boyish swank and braggadocio, said the world; but very soon the world found itself mistaken. *Hwangti;*—but no sitting on his throne in meditation, no letting the world be governed by Tao, for him!

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If you have read that delightful book *Through Hidden Shensi,* by Mr. F. A. Nichols, the city of Hienfang, or Changan, or, by its modern name, Singanfu or Sian-fu in Shensi, will be much more than a name to you. Thither it was that the Dowager Empress fled with her court from Pekin at the time of the Boxer Rebellion; there, long ago, Han Wuti's banners flew; there Tang Taitsong reigned in all his glory and might; there the Banished Angel sang in the palace gardens of Tang Hsuantsong the luckless: history has paid such tribute of splendor to few of the cities of the world. At Hienfang now this barbarian boy and Attila-Napoleon among kings built his capital;—built it right splendidly, after such ideas of splendor as a young half-Hun might cherish. For indeed, he had but little and remote Chinese heredity in him; was of the race of Attila and Genghiz, of Mahmoud of Ghazna, Tamerlane, and all the world-shaking Turkish conquerors. —Well, but these people, though by nature and function destroyers, have been great builders too: building hugely, monumentally, and to inspire awe, and not with the faery grace and ephemeral loveliness of the Chinese;—though they learned the trick of that, too,—as they learned in the west kindred qualities from the Saracens. Grand Pekin is of their architecture; which is Chinese with a spaciousness and monumental solemnity added. Such a capital Ts'in She Hwangti built him at Hien fang or Changan. In the Hall of audience of his palace within the walls he set up twelve statues, each (I like this barbarian touch) weighing twelve thousand pounds. Well; *we* should say, each costing so many thousand dollars; you need not laugh; I am not sure but that the young Hun had the best of it. And without the walls he built him, too, a Palace of Delight with many halls and courtyards; in some of which (I like this too) he could drill ten thousand men.

All of this was but the trappings and the suits of his sovereignty: he let it be known he had the substance as well. No great strategist himself, he commanded the services of mighty generals: one Meng-tien in especial, a bright particular star in the War-God's firmament. An early step to disarm the nations, and have all weapons sent to Changan; then, with these, to furnish forth a great standing army, which he sent out under Meng-tien to conquer. The Middle Kingdom and the quondam Great Powers were quieted; then south of the Yangtse the great soldier swept, adding unknown regions to his master's domain. Then rorth and west, till the Huns and their like had grown very tame and wary;—and over all these realms the Emperor spread his network of fine roads and canals, linking them with Changan: what the Romans did for Europe in road-building, he did for China.

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He had, of course, a host of relatives; and precedent loomed large to tell him what to do with them: the precedent of the dynasty-founders of old. Nor were they themselves likely to have been backward in reminding him. Wu Wang had come into possession of many feudal dominions, and had made of the members of his family dukes and marquises to rule them. Ts'in Shi Hwangti's empire was many times the size of Wu Wang's; so he was in a much better position to reward the deserving. We must remember that he was no heir to a single sovereignty, but a Napoleon with a Europe at his feet. Ts'in and Ts'u and Tsin and the others were old-established kingdoms, with as long a history behind them as France or England has now; and that history had been filled with wars, mutual antagonisms and hatreds. Chow itself was like an Italy before Garibaldi;—with a papacy more inept, and holding vaguer sway:—it had been at one time the seat of empire, and it was the source of all culture. He had to deal, then, with a heterogeneity as pronounced as that which confronted Napoleon; but he was not of the stuff for which you prepare Waterloos. No one dreamed that he would treat the world other than as such a heterogeneity. His relations expected to be made the Jeromes, Eugenes, and Murats of the Hollands, Spains, and Sicilies to hand. The world could have conceived of no other way of dealing with the situation. But Ts'in Shi Hwangti could, very well.

He abolished the feudal system. He abolished nationalities and national boundaries. There should be no more Ts'in and Tsin and Ts'u; no more ruling dukes and marquises. Instead, there should be an entirely new set of provinces, of which he would appoint the governors, not hereditary; and they should be responsible to him: promotable when good, dismissable and beheadable on the first sign of naughtiness. It was an idea of his own; he had no foreign history to go to for models and precedents, and there had been nothing like it in Chinese History. Napoleon hardly conceived such a tremendous idea, much less had he the force to carry it out. Even the achievement of Augustus was smaller; and Augustus had before him models in the history of many ancient empires.

Now what was the ferment behind this man's mind;—this barbarian —for so he was—of tremendous schemes and doings? The answer is astonishing, when one thinks of the crude ruthless human dynamo he was. It was simply *Taoism:* it was Laotse's Blue Pearl;— but shining, of course, as through the heart of a very London Particular of Hunnish-barbarian fogs. No subtleties of mysticism; no Chwangtsean spiritual and poetry-breeding ideas, for him!—It has fallen, this magical Pearl, into turbid and tremendous waters, a natural potential Niagara; it has stirred, it has infected their vast bulk into active Niagarahood. He was on fire for the unknown and the marvelous; could conceive of no impossible—it should go hard, he thought, but that the subtler worlds that

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interpenetrate this one should be as wonderful as this world under Ts'in Shi Hwangti. Don't argue with him; it is dangerous!—certainly there was an Elixir of Life, decantable into goblets, from which Ts'in Shi Hwangti might drink and become immortal,—the First August Emperor, and the only one forever! Certainly there were those Golden Islands eastward, where Gods dispensed that nectar to the fortunate;—out in your ships, you there, and search the waves for them! And certainly, too, there were God knew what of fairylands and paradises beyond the western desert; out, you General Meng-tien, with your great armies and find them! He did tremendous things, and all the while was thus dreaming wildly. From the business of state he would seize hours at intervals to lecture to his courtiers on Tao;—I think *not* in a way that would have been intelligible to Laotse or Chwangtse. Those who yawned were beheaded, I believe.

How would such a prodigy in time appear to his own age? Such cataclysmic wars as Ts'in had been waging for the conquest of China take society first, so to say, upon its circumference, smash that to atoms, and then go working inwards. The most conservative and stable elements are the last and least affected. The peasant is killed, knocked about, transported, enclaved; but when the storm is over, and he gets back to his plough and hoe and rice-field again, sun and wind and rain and the earth-breath soothe him back to and confirm in what he was of old: only some new definite spiritual impulse or the sweep of the major cycles can change him much,—and then the change is only modification. At the other end of society you have the Intellectuals. In England, Oxford is the home and last refuge of lost causes. A literary culture three times as old as modern Oxford's, as China's was then, will be, you may imagine, fixed and conservative. It is a mental mold petrified with age; the minds participating must conform to it, solidify, and grow harder in the matrix it provides than granite or adamant. We have seen how in recent times the Confucian literati resisted the onset of westernism. All these steam-engines and telegraphs seemed to them fearfully crude and vulgar in comparison with the niceties of literary style, the finesses of time-taking ceremonious courtesies, that had been to them and to their ancestors time out of mind the true refinements of life, and even the realities. China rigid against the West was not a semi-barbarism resisting civilization, but an excessively perfected culture resisting the raw energies of one still young and, in its eyes, still with the taint of savagery: brusque manners, materialistic valuations.

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Ts'in Shi Hwangti in his day had to meet a like opposition. The wars had broken up the structure of society, but not the long tradition of refined learning. That had always seemed the quarter from which light and leading must come; but it had long ceased to be a quarter from which light or leading could come. Mencius had been used to rate and ridicule the ruling princes; and scholars now could not understand that Mencius and his ruling princes and all their order were dead. They could not understand that they were not Menciuses, nor Ts'in Shi Hwangti a kinglet such as he had dealt with. Now Mencius had been a great man,—a Man's son, as they say;—and very likely he and Ts'in Shi Hwangti might have hit it off well enough. But there was no Mencius, no Man's son, among the literati now. The whole class was wily, polite, sarcastic, subtle, unimaginative, refined to a degree, immovable in conservatism. The Taoist teachers had breathed in a new spirit, but it had not reached them. How would Ts'in Shi Hwangti, barbarian, wild Taoist, and man of swift great action, appear to them?

Of course they could not abide him; and had not the sense to fear. They were at their old game of wire-pulling: would have the feudal system back, with all the old inefficiency; in the name of Ta Yu and the Duke of Chow they would do what they might to undo the strivings of this Ts'in upstart. So all the subtleties of the old order were arrayed against him,—pull devil, pull baker.

He knew it; and knew the extreme difficulty of striking any ordinary blow to quiet them. He had challenged Time Past to the conflict, and meant to win. Time Future was knocking at the doors of the empire, and he intended it should come in and find a home. His armies had crossed the Gobi, and smelt out unending possibilities in the fabulous west; they had opened up the fabulous south, the abode of Romance and genii and dragons. It was like the discovery of the Americas: a new world brought over the horizon. His great minister, Li Ssu had invented a new script, the Lesser Seal, easier and simpler than the old one; Meng-tien, conqueror of the Gobi, had invented the camel's-hair brush wherewith to write gracefully on silk or cloth, instead of difficultly with stylus on bamboo-strips as of old. It was the morning stir of the new manvantara; and little as the emperor might care for culture, he heard the Future crying to him. He heard, too, the opposing murmur of the still unconquered Past. The literati stood against him as the Papacy against Frederick II of Sicily: a less open opposition, and one harder to meet.

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He did not solve the problem till near the end of his reign. In 213 he called a great meeting in the Hall of Audience at Changan. See the squat burly figure enthroned in grand splendor; the twelve weighty statues arranged around; the chief civil and military officers of the empire, thorough Taoists like himself, gathered on one side; the Academies and Censorates, all the leaders of the literati, on the other. The place was big enough for a largish meeting. Minister Li Ssu rises to describe the work of the Emperor; whereafter the latter calls for expressions of opinion. A member of his household opines that he “surpasses the very greatest of his predecessors”: which causes a subdued sneer to run through the ranks of scholars. One of them takes the floor and begins to speak. Deprecates flattery guardedly, as bad for any sovereign; considers who the greatest of these predecessors were:—Yao, Shun, and Yu, ’Tang the Completer, Wu Wang; and—implies a good deal. Warms to his work at last, and grows bitter; almost openly pooh poohs all modern achievements; respectfully—or perhaps not too respectfully—advocates a return to the feudal—

“Silence!” roars Attila-Napoleon from his throne; and motions Li Ssu to make answer. The answer was predetermined, one imagines. It was an order that five hundred of the chief literati present should retire and be beheaded, and that thousands more should be banished. And that all books should be burned. Attila-Napoleon’s orders had a way of being carried out. This was one.

He had meanwhile been busy with the great material monument of his reign: the Wall of China; and with cautious campaigns yearly to the north of it; and with personal supervision of the Commissariat Department of all his armies everywhere; and with daily long *hikes* to keep himself in trim. Now the Wall came in useful. To stretch its fifteen hundred miles of length over wild mountains and valleys in that bleak north of the world, some little labor was needed; and scholars and academicians were many and, for most purposes, useless; and they needed to be brought into touch with physical realities to round out their characters;—then let them go and build the wall. He buried enough of them—alive, it is to be feared: an ugly Ts’in custom, not a Chinese,—to make melons ripen in mid-winter over their common grave; the rest he sentenced to four years of wall-building,—which meant death. That, too, was the penalty for concealing books. He was now in dead earnest that the Past should go, and history begin again; to be read forever afterwards in this order,—the Creation, the Reign of Ts’in Shi Hwangti.

But he spared books on useful subjects: that is to say, on Medicine, Agriculture, and Magic.

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So ancient China is to be seen now only as through a glass darkly; if his great attempt had been quite successful, it would not be to be seen at all. His crimes made no karma for China; they are not a blot on her record;—since they were done by an outside barbarian,—a mere publican and Ts'inner. From our standpoint as students of history, he was a malefactor of the first order; even when you take no account of his ruthless cruelty to men;—and so China has considered him ever since. Yet Karma finds ruthless agents for striking its horrible and beneficial blows; (and woe unto them that it finds!). It seems that Ts'in Shi Hwangti did draw the bowstring back—by this very wickedness,—far back—that sent the arrow China tearing and blazing out through the centuries to come. The fires in which the books were burned were the pyre of the Phoenix,—the burning of the astral molds,—the ignition and annihilation of the weight and the karma of two millenniums. The Secular Bird was to burn and be consumed to the last feather, and be turned to ashes utterly, before she might spring up into the ether for her new flight of ages.

One wonders what would happen if a Ts'in Shi Hwangti were to arise and do by modern Christendom what this one did by ancient China. I say nothing about the literati, but only about the literature. Would burning it be altogether an evil? Nearly all that is supremely worth keeping would live through; and its value would be immensely enhanced. First the newspapers would go, that sow lies broadcast, and the seeds of national hatreds. The light literature would go, that stands between men and thought. The books of theology would go, and the dust of creedalism that lies so thick on men's minds. A thousand bad precedents that keep us bound to medievalism would go with the law-books: there would be a chance to pronounce, here and now as human beings, on such things as capital punishment;—which remains, though we do not recognise the fact, solely because it has been in vogue all these centuries, and is a habit hard to break with. History would go; yes;—but a mort of pernicious lies would go with it. Well, well; one speaks of course in jest (partly). But when all is said, China was not unfortunate in having a strong giant of a man, a foreigner withal, at her head during those crucial decades. Ts'in Shi Hwangti guarded China through most of that perilous intermission between the cycles. It was the good that he did that mostly lived after him.

In 210 he fell ill, took no precautions, and died,—in his fiftieth year. A marvelous mausoleum was built for him: a palace, with a mountain heaped on top, and the floor of it a map of China, with the waters done in quicksilver. Whether his evil deeds were interred with his bones, who can say?—certainly his living wives were, and the thousands of living workmen who had built the mausoleum. Ts'innish doings, not Chinese. In the *Book of Odes,* Confucius preserved a Ts'in ballad mourning over men so buried alive with their dead king.

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The strong hand lifted, rebellion broke out, and for awhile it looked as if Chu Hia must sink into the beast again. His feeble son got rid of Meng-tien, poisoned Li Ssu, offered the feeblest resistance to the rebels, and then poisoned himself. After four years of fighting,—what you might call “unpleasantness all round,”—one Liu Pang achieved the throne. He had started life as a beadle; joined Ts’in Shi Hwangti’s army, and risen to be a general; created himself after the emperor’s death Prince of Han; and now had the honor to inaugurate, as Emperor Kaotsu, the greatest of the Chinese dynasties.

In the two-fifties strong barbarous Ts’in had swallowed unmanly worn-out China, and for half a century had been digesting the feast. Then—to mix my metaphors a little—China flopped up to the surface again, pale, but smiling blandly. In the sunlight she gathered strength and cohesion, and proceeded presently to swallow Ts’in and everything else in sight; and emerged soon young, strong, vigorous, and glowing-hearted to the conquest of many worlds in the unknown. What was Ts’in, now is Shensi Province, the very Heart of Han: the Shensi man today is the Son of Han, *Ts’in* Englished; but in Shensi, the old Ts’in, in their tenderest moods, they call it *Han* still,—the proudest most patriotic name there is for it.

Not at once was the Golden Age of Han to dawn: half a thirteen-decade cycle from the opening of the manvantara in the two-forties had to pass first. Ts’in Shi Hwangti had mapped out a great empire; it fell to the Hans to consolidate it. Han Kaotsu followed somewhat in the footsteps of his predecessor, less the cruelty and barbarism, and most of the strength. The sentiment of the empire was Chinese, not Ts’innish; so, though not a brilliant or always a fortunate soldier, he was able to assert his sway over the greater part of China Proper. Chinesism had spread over territories never before Chinese, and wherever it had spread, the people were glad of a Chinese dynasty; besides, his rule was tactful and kindly. They were glad that the Gods of the Soil of Han were to be worshipped now, and those of Ts’in disthroned; and that the Ts’in edicts were annulled; —as they were with one important exception: those relating to literature. A cultureless son of the proletariat himself. Han Kaotsu felt no urge towards resurrecting that; and perhaps it was as well that the sleeping dogs should be let lie awhile. The wonder is that the old nationalities did not reassert themselves; but they did not, to any extent worth mentioning; and perhaps this is the best proof of Han Kaotsu’s real strength. Ts’in Shi Hwangti had dealt soundly with the everlasting Hun in his time; but when he died, the Hun recovered. They kept Han Kaotsu busy, so that his saddle, as he said, was his throne. They raided past the capital and down into Ssechuan; once very nearly captured the emperor; and had to be brought out at last with

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a Chinese princess for the Hun king. Generally speaking, the Hans would have lived at peace with them if they could, and were ready to try better means of solving the problem than war. But it certainly was a problem; for in these Huns we find little traces of human nature that you could work upon. But China was a big country by that time, and only a part of it, comparatively small, suffered from the Huns. For the rest, Han Kaotsu was popular, his people were happy, and his reign of twelve years was a breathing-time in which they gathered strength. He kept a hundred thousand workmen busy on public works, largely road- and bridge-building: a suspension bridge that he built, a hundred and fifty yards long, and crossing a valley five hundred feet below, is still in use,—or was during the last century. He died in 194.

He was succeeded, nominally, by his son Han Hweiti; really by his widow, the empress Liu Chi: one of the three great women who have ruled China. At this time the Huns, under their great Khan Mehteh, were at the height of their power. Khan Mehteh made advances to the Empress: "I should like," said he, "to exchange what I have for what I have not." You and I may think he meant merely a suggestion for mutual trade; but she interpreted it differently, thanked him kindly, but declined the flattering proposal on the score of her age and ugliness. Her hair and teeth, she begged him to believe, were quite inadequate, and made it impossible for her to think of changing her condition.—I do not know whether it was vanity or policy.

But it was she, or perhaps her puppet son the emperor, who started the great Renaissance. A commission was appointed for restoring the literature: among its members, K'ung An-kuo, twelfth in descent from Confucius. Books were found, that devotion had hidden in dry wells and in the walls of houses; one Fu Sheng, ninety years old, repeated the Classics word for word to the Commissioner, all from his memory. The restrictions gone, a mighty reaction set in; and China was on fire to be her literary self again. A great ball was set rolling; learning went forward by leaps and bounds. The enthusiasm, it must be said, took directions legitimate and the reverse;—bless you, why should any written page at all be considered lost, when there were men in Han with inventive genius of their own, and a pretty skill at forgery? The Son of Heaven was paying well; to it, then, minds and calligraphic fingers!

So there are false chapters of Chwangtse, while many true ones have been lost. And I can never feel sure of Confucius' own *Spring and Autumn Annals,* wherein he thought lay his highest claim to human gratitude, and the composition of which the really brilliant-minded Mencius considered equal to the work of Ta Yu in bridling China's Sorrow;—but which, as they come down to us, are not impressive.—The tide rolled on under Han Wenti, from 179 to 156: a poet himself, a man of peace, and a reformer of the laws in the direction of mercy. Another prosperous reign followed; then came the culmination of the age in the Golden Reign of Han Wuti, from 140 to 86.

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The cyclic impulse had been working mainly on spiritual and intellectual planes: Ssema Tsien, the Father of Chinese History, gives gloomy pictures of things economic.*

“When the House of Han arose,” says Ssema, “the evils of their predecessors had not passed away. Husbands still went off to the wars; old and young were employed in transporting food, production was almost at a standstill, and money was scarce. The Son of Heaven had not even carriage horses of the same color; the highest civil and military authorities rode in bullock carts; the people at large knew not where to lay their heads. The coinage was so heavy and cumbersome that the people themselves started a new issue at a fixed standard of value. But the laws were lax, and it was impossible to prevent the grasping from coining largely, buying largely, and then holding for a rise in the market. Prices went up enormously:”—it sounds quite modern and civilized, doesn’t it?—“rice sold at a thousand cash per picul; a horse cost a hundred ounces of silver.”

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* The passages quoted are taken from Dr. Giles’s work on *Chinese Literature*.

Under the Empress Liu Chi and her successors these conditions were bettered; until, when a half cycle had run its course, and Han Wuti had been some twenty years on the throne, prosperity came to a culmination. Says Ssema Tsien:

“The public granaries were well-stocked; the government treasuries full... The streets were thronged with the horses of the people, and on the highroads, whole droves were to be seen, so that it became necessary to forbid the public use of mares. Village elders ate meat and drank wine. Petty government clerkships lapsed from father to son, and the higher offices of state were treated as family heirlooms. For a spirit of self-respect and reverence for the law had gone abroad, and a sense of charity and duty towards one’s neighbor kept men aloof from disgrace and crime.”

There had been in Kansuh, the north-westernmost province of China Proper, a people called the Yueh Chi or White Scythians, whom the Huns had driven into the far west; by this time they were carving themselves an empire out of the domains of the Parthians, and penetrating into north-west India, but Han Wuti knew nothing of that. All that was known of them was, that somewhere on the limits of the world they existed, and were likely to be still at loggerheads with their ancient foes the Huns. Han Wuti had now been on the throne seven years, and was and had been much troubled by the Hun problem: he thought it might help to solve it if those lost Yueh Chi could be raked up out of the unknown and made active allies. To show the spirit of the age, I will tell you the story of Chang Ch’ien, the general whom he sent to find them.

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Chang Ch'ien set out in 139; traversed the desert, and was duly captured by the Huns. Ten years they held him prisoner; then he escaped. During those ten years he had heard no news from home: a new emperor might be reigning, for aught he knew; or Han Wuti might have changed his plans. Such questions, however, never troubled him: he was out to find the Yueh Chi for his master, and find them he would. He simply went forward; came presently to the kingdom of Tawan, in the neighborhood of Yarkand; and there preached a crusade against the Huns. Unsuccessfully: the men of Tawn knew the Huns, but not Han wuti, who was too far away for a safe ally; and they proposed to do nothing in the matter. Chang Ch'ien considered. Go back to China?—Oh dear no! there must be real Yueh C'hi somewhere, even if these Tawanians were not they. On he went, and searched that lonely world until he did find them. They liked the idea of Hun-hurting; but again, considered China too far away for practical purposes. He struck down into Tibet; was captured again; held prisoner a year; escaped again,—and got back to Changan in 126. A sadder and a wiser man, you might suppose; but nothing of the kind! Full, on the contrary, of brilliant schemes; full of the wonder and rumor of the immense west. These he poured into Han Wuti's most sympathetic ears; and the emperor started now in real earnest upon his Napoleonic career.

The frontier was no longer at the Great Wall. Only the other day Sir Aurel Stein discovered, in the far west, the long straight furrows traced by the feet of Han Wuti's sentinels on guard; the piles of reed-stalks, at regular intervals, set along the road for fire-signals; documents giving details as to the encampments, the clothes and arrows served out to the soldiers, the provisions made for transforming armies of conquest into peaceful colonies. All these things the sands covered and preserved.

And behind these outposts was a wide empire full of splendor outward and inward; full of immense activities, in literature, in engineering, in commerce. New things and ideas came in from the west: international influences to reinforce the flaming up of Chinese life.

The moving force was still Taoism; the Blue Pearl, sunk deep in the now sunlit waters of the common consciousness, was flashing its rainbows. Ts'in Shi Hwangti, for all his greatness, had been an uncouth barbarian; Han Wuti was a very cultured gentleman of literary tastes,—a poet, and no mean one. He too was a Taoist; an initiate of the Taoism of the day; which might mean in part that he had an eye to the Elixir of Life; but it also meant (at least) that he had a restless, exorbitant, and gorgeous imagination. Such, indeed, inflamed the whole nation; which was rich, prosperous, energetic, progressive, and happy. Ts'in ideas of bigness in architecture had taken on refinement in Chinese hands; the palaces and temples of Han Wuti are of course all lost, but

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by all accounts they must have been wonderful and splendid. Very little of the art comes down: there are some bas-reliefs of horses, fine and strong work, realistic, but with redeeming nobleness. How literature had revived may be gathered from this: in Han Wuti's Imperial Library there were 3123 volumes of the Classics and commentaries thereupon; 2705 on Philosophy; 1318 of Poetry; 2528 on Mathematics; 868 on Medicine; 790 on the Science of War. His gardens at Changan were famous; he had collectors wandering the world for new and ornamental things to stock them; very likely we owe many of our garden plants and shrubs to him. He consecrated mountains and magnificent ceremonies; and for the sake of the gods and genii appeared as flaming splendors over Tai-hsing and the other sacred heights. For the light of Romance falls on him; he is a shining half faery figure.—Outwardly there was pomp, stately manners, pageantry, high magnificence; inwardly, a burning-up of the national imagination to ensoul it. The Unseen, with all its mystery and awe or loveliness, was the very nearly visible: not a pass nor lake nor moor nor forest but was crowded with the things of which wonder is made. Muh Wang, the Chow king, eight centuries before, had ridden into the West and found the garden of that Faery Queen whose Azure Birds of Compassion fly out into this world to sweeten the thoughts of men. Bless you, Han Wuti married the lady, and had her to abide peaceably in his palace, and to watch with him

"The lanterns glow vermeil and gold,
Azure and green, the Spring nights through,
When loud the pageant galeons drew
To clash in mimic combating,
And their dark shooting flames to strew
Over the lake at Kouen Ming."

From about 130 to 110 Han Wuti was Napoleonizing: bringing in the north-west; giving the Huns a long quietus in 119; conquering the south with Tonquin; the southern coast provinces, and the lands towards Tibet. Ssema Tsien tells us that "mountains were hewn through for many miles to establish a trade-route through the south-west and open up those remote regions"; that was a scheme of Chang Ch'ien's, who had ever an eye to penetrating to India.

There was a dark side to it. Vast sums of money were eaten up, and estravagance in private life was encouraged. Says Ssema:

"From the highest to the lowest, everyone vied with his neighbor in lavishing money on houses and appointments and apparel, altogether beyond his means. Such is the everlasting law of the sequence of prosperity and decay.... Merit had to give way to money; shame and scruples of conscience were laid aside; laws and punishments were administered with severer hand."

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It is a very common thing to see signs of decline and darkness in one's own age; and Ssema himself had no cause to love the administration of Han Wuti; under which he had been punished rather severely for some offense. Still, what he says is more or less what you would expect the truth to be. And you will note him historian of the life of the people; not mere recounter of court scandals and chronicler of wars: conscious, too, of the law of cycles;—all told, something a truer historian than we have seen too much of in the West.—Where, indeed, we are wedded to politics, and must have our annalists chronicle above all things what we call political growth; not seeing that it is but a circle, and squirreling round valiantly in a cage to get perpetually in high triumph to the place you started from; a foolish externality at best. But real History mirrors for us the motions of the Human Spirit and the Eternal.

I said that what Ssema tells us is what you would expect the truth to be; this way:—After half a cycle of that adventurous and imaginative spirit, eyes jaundiced a little would surely find excuse enough for querulous vision. There is, is there not, something Elizabethan in that Chang Ch'ien, taking the vast void so gaily, and not to be quenched by all those fusty years imprisoned among the Huns, but returning only the more fired and heady of imagination? If he was a type of Han Wuti's China, we may guess Ssema was not far out, and that vaulting ambition was overleaping itself a little; that men were buying automobiles who by good rights should have ridden in a wheelbarrow. Things did not go quite so well with the great emperor after his twenty flaming Napoleonic years; his vast mountain-cleaving schemes were left unfinished; Central Asia grew more troublesome again, and he had to call off Chang Ch'ien from an expedition into India by way of Yunnan and Tibet and the half-cleaved mountains, to fight the old enemy in the north-west. But until the thirteen decades were passed, and Han Chaoti, his successor, had died in 63 B.C., the vast designs were still upspringing; high and daring enterprise was still the characteristic of the Chinese mind. The thirteen decades, that is, from the accession of Han Hueiti and the beginning of the Revival of Literature in 194.

XV. SOME POSSIBLE EPOCHS IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

Han Chaoti died in 63 B.C.; his successor is described as a "boor of low tastes";—from that time the great Han impetus goes slowing down and quieting. China was recuperating after Han Wuti's flare of splendor; we may leave her to recuperate, and look meanwhile elsewhere.

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And first to that most tantalizing of human regions, India; where you would expect something just now from the cyclic backwash. As soon as you touch this country, in the domain of history and chronology, you are certain, as they say, to get 'hoodooed.' Kali-Yuga began there in 3102 B.C., and ever since that unfortunate event, not a single soul in the country seems to have had an idea of keeping track of the calendar. So-and-so, you read, reigned. When?—Oh, in 1000 A.D. Or in 213 A.D. Or in 78 A.D. Or in a few million B.C., or 2100 A.D. Or he did not reign at all. After all, what does it matter?—this is Kali-Yuga, and nothing can go right.—You fix your eyes on a certain spot in time, which, according to your guesses at the cycles, should be important. Nothing doing there, as we say. Oh no, nothing at all: this is Kali-Yuga, and what should be doing? .... Well, if you press the point, no doubt somebody was reigning, somewhere. —But, pardon my insistence, if seems—. Quite so, quite so! as I said, somebody must have been reigning.—You scrutinze; you bring your lenses to bear; and the somebody begins to emerge. And proves to be, say, the great Samundragupta, emperor of all India (nearly); for power and splendor, almost to be mentioned with Asoka. And it was the Golden Age of Music, and perhaps some other things.—Yes, certainly; the Guptas were reigning then, I forgot. But why bother about it? This is Kali-Yuga, and what does anything matter?—And you come away with the impression that your non-informant could reveal enough and plenty, if he had a mind to.

Which is, indeed, probably the case. All this nonchalant indefiniteness means nothing more, one suspects, than that the Brahmans have elected to keep the history of their country unknown to us poor Mlechhas. Then there are Others, too: the Guardians of Esotericism in a greater sense; who have not chosen so far that Indian history should be known. So we can only take dim foreshadowings, and make guesses.

We saw the Maurya dynasty,—that one seemingly firm patch to set your feet on in the whole morass of the Indian past,—occupy the thirteen decades from 320 to 190 B.C., (or we thought we did); now the question is, from that *pied-a-terre* whither shall we jump? If you could be sure that the ebb of the wave would be equal in length to its inrush,—the night to the day:—that the minor pralaya would be no longer or shorter than the little manvantara that preceded it—why, then you might leap out securely for 60 B.C., with a comfortable feeling that there would be some kind of turning-point in Indian history there or thereabouts. Sometimes things do happen so, beautifully, as if arranged by the clock. But unfortunately, enough mischief may be done in thirteen decades to take a much longer period to disentangle; and again, it is only when you strike an average for the whole year, that you can say the nights are equal to the days. We are trying to see through to the pattern of history; not to dogmatize on such details as we may find, nor claim on the petty strength of them to be certain of the whole. So, our present leap (for we shall make it), while not quite in the dark, must be made in the dusk of an hour or so after sunset. There must be an element of faith in it: very likely we shall splash and sink gruesomely.

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Well, here goes then! From 190 B.C. thirteen decades forward to 60 B.C., and,—-squish! But, courage! throw out your arm and clutch—at this trailing root, *57 B. C.,* here within easy reach; and haul yourself out. So; and see, now you are standing on something. What it is, *Dios lo sabe!* But there is an Indian era that begins in 57 B.C.; for a long time, dates were counted from that year. That era rises in undefined legendary splendor, and peters out ineffectually you don't just know where. There is nothing to go upon but legends, with never a coin nor monument found to back them;—never mind; dates you count eras from are generally those in which important cycles begin. The legends relate to Vikramaditya king of Ujjain,—which kingdom is towards the western side of the peninsula, and about where Hindoostan and the Deccan join. He is the Arthur-Charlemain of India, the Golden Monarch of Romance. In the lakes of his palace gardens the very swans sang his praises daily—

> "Glory be to Vikramajeet
> Who always gives us pearls to eat";

and when he died, the four pillars that supported his throne rose up, and wandered away through the fields and jungle disconsolate: they would not support the dignity of any lesser man.* Such tales are told about him by every Indian mother to her children at this present day, and have been, presumably, any time these last two thousand years.

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* *India through the Ages,* by Mrs. Flora Annie Steel.

Of his real existence Historical Research cannot satisfy itself at all;—or it half guesses it may have discovered his probable original wandering in disguise through the centuries of a thousand years or so later. But you must expect that sort of thing in India.

At his court, says tradition, lived the "Nine Gems of Literature," —chief among them the poet-dramatist Kalidasa; whom Historical Research (western) rather infers lived at several widely separated epochs much nearer our own day. Well; for the time being let us leave Historical Research (western) to stew in its own (largely poisonous) juices, and see how it likes it,—and say that there are good cyclic chances of something large here, in the half-cycle between the Ages of Han Wuti and Augustus.

We may note that things Indian must be dealt with differently from things elsewhere. You take, for example, the old story about the Moslem conquerors of Egypt burning the Alexandrian Library. The fact that this is mentioned for the first time by a Christian who lived six hundred years after the supposed event, while we have many histories written during those six hundred years which say nothing about it at all,—is evidence amounting to proof that it never happened; especially when you take into account the

known fact that the Alexandrian Library had already been thoroughly burnt several times. But you can derive no such negativing certainty,

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in India, from the fact that Vikramaditya and Ujjain and Kalidasa may never have been mentioned together, not associated with the era of 57 B.C., in any extant writing known to the west that comes from before several centuries later. Because the Brahman were a close corporation that kept the records of history, and kept them secret; and gave out bits when it suited them. Say that in 1400 (or whenever else it may have been) they first allowed it to be published that Kalidasa flourished at Vikrmaditya's court:—they may have been consciously lying, but at least they were talking about what they knew. They were not guessing, or using their head-gear wrongfully, their lying was intentional, or their truth warranted by knowledge. And no motive for lying is apparent here.—It would be very satisfactory, of course, were a coin discovered with King Vikrmaditya's image and superscription nicely engraved thereon: *Vikramaditya De Gratia: Uj. Imp.; Fid. Def.; 57 B.C.* But in this wicked world you cannot have everything; you must be thankful for what you can get.

You may remember that Han Wuti, to solve the Hun problem, sent Chang Ch'ien out through the desert to discover the Yueh Chi' and that Chang found them at last in Bactria, which they had conquered from Greeks who had held it since Alexander's time. He found them settled and with some fair degree of civilization; spoke of Bactria under their sway as a "land of a thousand cities";—they had learned much since they were nomads driven out of Kansuh by the Huns. Also they were in the midst of a career of expansion. Within thirty years of his visit to them, or by 100 B.C., they had spread their empire over eastern Persia, at the expense of the Parthians; and thence went down into India conquering. By 60 B.C. they held the Punjab and generally the western parts of Hindoostan; then, since they do not seem to have got down into the Deccan, I take it they were held up. By whom?—Truly this is pure speculation. But the state of Malwa, of which Ujjain was the capital, lay right in their southward path; if held up they were, it would have been, probably, by some king of Ujjain. Was this what happened?—that the peril of these northern invaders roused Malwa to exert its fullest strength; the military effort spurring up national feeling; the national feeling, creative energies spiritual, mental and imaginative;—until a great age in Ujjain had come into being. It is what we often see. The menace of Spain roused England to Elizabethanism; the Persian peril awakend Athens. So King Vikramaditya leads out his armies, and to victory; and the Nine Gems of Literature sing at his court. It is a backwash from Han Wuti's China, that goes west with Chang Ch'ien to the Yueh Chi, and south with them into India. And we can look for no apex of literary creation at this time, either in China or Europe. In the Roman literature of that cycle it is the keen creative note we miss: Virgil, the nearest to it, cannot be

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said to have possessed quite; and Han literature was probably its first culmination under Han Wuti, and its second under the Eastern Hans. One suspects that great creation is generally going on somewhere, and is not displeased to find hints of its presence in India; is inclined to think this may have been, after all, the Golden Age of the Sanskrit Drama.—At which there can be at any rate no harm in taking a glance at this point; and, retrospectively, at Sanskrit literature as a whole;—a desperately inadequate glance, be it said.

I ask you here to remember the three periods of English Poetry, with their characteristics; and you must not mind my using my Welsh god-names in connexion with them. First, then, there was the Period of Plenydd,—of the beginnings of *Vision;* when the eyes of Chaucer and his lyricist predecessors were opened to the world out-of-doors; when they began to see that the skies were blue, fields and forests green; that there were flowers in the meadows and woodlands; and that all these things were delectable. Then there was the Period of Gwron, Strength; when Marlowe and Shakespeare and Milton evolved the Grand Manner; when they made the great March-Music, unknown in English before, and hardly achieved by anyone since:—the era of the great Warrior-poetry of the Tragedies and of *Paradise Lost.* Then came, with Wordsworth and Keats and Shelley, the Age of Alawn, lasting on until today; when the music of intonation brought with it romance and mystery and Natural Magic with its rich glow and wizard insight. And you will remember how English Poetry, on the uptrend of a major cycle, is a reaching from the material towards the spiritual, a growth toward that. Though Milton and Shakespeare made their grand Soul-Symbols,—by virtue of a cosmic force moving them as it has moved no others in the language,—you cannot find in their works, or in any works of that age, such clear perceptions or statements of spiritual truth as in Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise;* nor was the brain-mind of either of those giants of the Middle Period capable of such conscious mystic thought as Wordsworth's. There was an evolution upward and inward; from Chaucer's school-boy vision, to Swinburne's (in that one book) clear sight of the Soul.

We appear to find in Sanskrit literature,—I speak in a very general sense,—also such great main epochs or cycles. First a reign of Plenydd, of Vision,—in the Age of the Sacred Books. Then a reign of Gwron,—in the Age of the heroic Epics. Then a reign of Alawn, in the Age of the Drama.

But the direction is all opposite. The cycle is not upward, from the sough of a beastly Iron Age towards the luminance of a coming Golden; but downward from the peaks and splendors of the Age of Gold to where the outlook is on to this latter hell's-gulf of years. Plenydd, when he first touched English eyes, he was Plenydd the Lord of Spiritual vision, the Seer into the Eternities. Wordsworth at his highest only approaches,—Swinburne in *Hertha* halts at the portals of, the Upanishads.

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Now, what may this indicate? To my mind, this: that you are not to take these Sanskrit Sacred Books as the fruitage of a single literary age. They do not correspond with, say, the Elizabethan, or the Nineteenth-Century, poetry of England; but are rather the cream of the output of a whole period as long (at least) as that of all English literature; the blossoming of a Racial Mind during (at least) a manvantara of fifteen hundred years. I do not doubt that the age that gave birth to the *Katha-Upanishad,* gave birth to all manner of other things also; flippancies and trivialities among the rest;—just as in the same England, and in the same years, Milton was dictating *Samson Agonistes,* and Butler was writing the stinging scurrilities of *Hudibras.* But the Sanskrit Hudibrases are lost; as the English one will be, even if it takes millenniums to lose it. Full-flowing time has washed away the impermanencies of that ancient age, and left standing but the palaces built upon the rock of the Soul. The Soul made the Upanishads, as it mide *Paradise Lost;* it made the former in the Golden Age, and the latter in this Age of Iron; the former through men gifted with superlative vision; the latter through a blind old bard. Therein lies the difference: all our bards, our very greatest, have been blind,—Dante and Shakespeare, no less than Milton. Full-flowing Time washed away the impermanencies of that ancient age, and left standing but the rock-built palaces of the Soul; and these,—not complete, perhaps;—repaired to a degree by hands more foolish; —a little ruinous in places,—but the ruins grander and brighter than all the pomps, all the new-fangled castles of genii, of later times, —come down to us as the Sacred Books of India, the oldest extant literature in the world. How old? We may put their epoch well before the death of Krishna in 3102 B. C.,—well before the opening of the Kali-Yuga; we may say that it lasted a very long time;—and be content that if all scholarship, all western and modern opinion, laughs at us now,—the laugh will probably be with us when we have been dead a long time. Or perhaps sooner.

They count three stages in this Vedic or pre-classical literature, wherefrom also we may infer that it was the output of a great manvantara, not of a mere day of literary creation. These three, they say, are represented by the Vedas, the Brahmanas, and the Upanishads. The Vedas consist of hymns to the Gods; and in a Golden Age you might find simple hymns to the Gods a sufficient expression of religion. Where, say, Reincarnation was common knowledge; where everybody knew it, and no one doubted it; you would not bother to make poems about it: —you do not make poems about going to bed at night and getting up in the morning—or not as a rule. You make poems upon a reaction of surprise at perceptions which seem wonderful and beautiful,— and in a Golden Age, the things that would seem wonderful

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and Beautiful would be, precisely, the Sky, the Stars, Earth, Fire, the Winds and Waters. Our senses are dimmed, or we should see in them the eternally startling manifestations of the Lords of Eternal Beauty. It is no use arguing from the Vedic hymns, as some folk do, a 'primitive' state of society; we have not the keys now to the background, mental and social, of the people among whom those hymns arose. Poetry in every succeeding age has had to fight harder to proclaim the spiritual truth proper to her native spheres: were all spiritual truth granted, she would need do nothing more than mention the Sky, or the Earth, and all the wonder, all the mystery and delight connoted by them would flood into the minds of her hearers. But now she must labor difficultly to make those things cry through; she gains in glory by the resistance of the material molds she must pierce. So the Vedas tell us little unless we separate ourselves from our preconceptions about 'primitive Aryans'; whose civilization may have been at once highly evolved and very spiritual.

The *Brahmanas* are priest-books; the *Upanishads,* it is reasonable to say are Kshattriya-books;—you often find in them Brahmans coming to Kshattriyas to learn the Inner Wisdom. The *Brahmanas* are books of ritual; the *Upanishads* came much later that the *Brahmanas:* that they represent a reaction towards spirituality from the tyranny of a priestly caste. But probably the day of the Kshattriyas was much earlier than that of the priests. The Marlow-Shakespear-Milton time was the Kshattriya period in English poetry; also the period during which the greatest souls incarnated, and produced the greatest work. So, perhaps, in this manvantara of the pre-classical Sanskrit literature, the Rig-Veda with its hymns represents the first, the Chaucerian period; but a Golden Age Chaucerian, simple and pure,—a time in which the Mysteries really ruled human life, and when to hymn the Gods was to participate in the wonder and freeddom of their being. Think, perhaps, as the cycle mounted to its hour of noon, esotericism opened its doors to pour forth an illumination yet stronger and more saving: mighty egos incarnated, and put in writing the marvelous revelations of the *Upanishads:* there may have been a descent towards matter, to call forth these more explicit declarations of the Spirit. The exclusive caste-system had not been evolved by any means, nor was to be for many ages: the kings are at the head of things; and they, not the priests, the chief custodians of the Deeper Wisdom.—And then, later, the Priest-cast made its contribution, evolving in the *Brahmanas* the ritual of their order; with an implication, ever growing after the beginning of the Kali-Yuga, that only by this ritual salvation could be attained. Not that it follows that this was the idea at first. Ritual has its place: hymns and chantings, so they be the right ones, performed rightly, have their decided magical value; we can understand that in its inception and first purity, this Brahmana literature may have been a growth or birth, under the aegis of Alawn of the Harmonies, of the magic of chanted song.

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And having said all this, and reconsidering it, one feels that to attribute these three branches of literature to a single manvantara is a woeful foreshortening. I suppose the Rig-Veda is as old as the Aryan Sub-race, which, according to our calculations, must have begun some 160,000 years ago.

The *Upanishads* affect us like poetry; even in Max Muller's translation, which is poor prose, they do not lose altogether their uplift and quality of song. They sing the philosophy of the divine in Man; I suppose we may easily say they are the highest thing in extant literature. They do not come to us whole or untainted. We may remember what the Swami Dayanand Sarasvati said to H. P. Blavatsky: that he could show the excellent "Moksh Mooller" that "what crossed the Kalapani from India to Europe were only the bits of rejected copies of some passages from our sacred books." Again, Madame Blavatsky says that the best part of the Upanishads was taken out at the time Buddha was preaching; the Brahmans took it out, that he might not prove too clearly the truth of his teachings by appeals to their sacred books. Also the Buddha was a Kshattriya; so the ancient eminence of the Kshattriyas had to be obscured a little;—it was the Brahmans, by that time, who were monopolizing the teaching office. And no doubt in the same way from time to time much has been added: the Brahmans could do this, being custodians of the sacred literature. Yet in spite of all we get in them a lark's song,— but a spiritual lark's song, floating and running in the golden glories of the Spiritual Sun; a song whose verve carries us openly up into the realms of pure spirit; a wonderful radiance and sweetness of dawn, of dawn in its fresh purity, its holiness,—-haunted with no levity or boisterousness of youth, but with a wisdom gay and ancient, —eternal, laughter-laden, triumphant,—at once hoary and young,—like the sparkle of snows on Himalaya, like the amber glow in the eastern sky. Here almost alone in literature we get long draughts of the Golden Age: not a Golden Age fought for and brought down into our perceptions (which all true poetry gives us), but one actually existing, open and free;—and not merely the color and atmosphere of it, but the wisdom. One need not wonder that Madame Blavatsky drew so freely on India for the nexus of her teachings. That country has performed a marvelous function, taking all its ages together, in the life of humanity; in preserving for us the poetry and wisdom of an age before the Mysteries had declined; in keeping open for us, in a semi-accessible literature, a kind of window into the Golden Age.—Well; each of the races has some function to fulfil. And it is not modern India that has done this; she has not done it of her own good will,—has had no good will to do it. It is the Akbars the Anquetil Duperrons and Sir William Joneses, —and above all, and far above all, H. P. Blavatsky,—whom we have to thank.

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So much, then, for the age of the Vedic literature. It passed, and we come to an age when that literature had become sacred. It seems to me that in the natural course of things it would take a very long time for this to happen. You may say that in the one analogy we have whose history is well known,—the *Koran,*—we have an example of a book sacred as soon as written. But I do not believe the analogy would hold good here. The *Koran* came as the rallying-standard of a movement which was designed to work quick changes in the outer fabric of the world; it came when the cycles had sunk below any possibility of floating spiritual wisdom on to the world-currents;—and there were the precedents of Judaism and Christianity, ever before the eyes of Mohammed, for making the new religious movement center about a Book. But in ancient India, I take it, you had some such state of affairs as this: classes there would be, according to the natural differences of egos incarnating; but no castes; religion there was,—that is to say, an attention to, an aspiration towards, the spiritual side of life; but no religions,—no snarling sects and jangling foolish creeds. Those things (a God's mercy!) had not been invented then, nor were to be for thousands of years. The foremost souls, the most spiritual, gravitated upward to the headship of tribes and nations; they were the *kings,* as was proper they should be: King-Initiates, Teachers as well as Rulers of the people. And they ordained public ceremonies in which the people, coming together, could invoke and participate in the Life from Above. So we read in the Upanishads of those great Kshattriya Teachers to whom Brahmans came as disciples. Poets made their verses; and what of these were good, really inspired, suitable—what came from the souls of Poet-Initiates,— would be used at such ceremonies: sung by the assembled multitudes; and presently, by men specially trained to sing them. So a class rose with this special function; and there were other functions in connexion with these ceremonies, not proper to be performed by the kings, and which needed a special training to carry out. Here, then, was an opening in life for men of the right temperament;—so a class arose, of *priests:* among whom many might be real Initiates and disciples of the Adept-Kings. They had the business of taking care of the literature sanctioned for use at the sacrifices,—for convenience we may call all the sacred ceremonies that,—at which they performed the ritual and carried out the mechanical and formal parts. It is very easy to imagine how, as the cycles went on and down, and the Adept-Kings ceased to incarnate continuously, these religious officials would have crystallized themselves into a close corporation, an hereditary caste; and what power their custodianship of the sacrificial literature would have given them;—how that literature would have come to be not merely sacred in the sense that all true poetry with the inspiration

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of the Soul behind it really is;—but credited with an extra-human sanction. But it would take a long time. When modern creeds are gone, to what in literature will men turn for their inspiration? —To whatever in literature contains real inspiration, you may answer. They will not sing Dr. Watts's doggerel in their churches; but such things perhaps as Wordsworth's *The World is too much with us,* or Henley's *I am the Captain of my Soul.* And then, after a long time and many racial pralayas, you can imagine such poems as these coming to be thought of as not merely from the Human Soul, an ever-present source of real inspiration, —but as revelations by God himself, from which not one jot or tittle should be taken without blasphemy; given by God when he founded his one true religion to mankind. We lose sight of the spirit, and exalt the substance; then we forget the substance, and deify the shadow. We crucify our Saviors when they are with us; and when they are gone, we crucify them worse with our unmeaning worship and dogmas made on them.

Well, the age of the Vedas passed, and pralayas came, and new manvantaras; and we come at last to the age of Classical Sanskrit; and first to the period of the Epics. This too is a Kshattriya age. Whether it represents a new ascendency of the Kshattriyas, or simply a continuance of the old one: whether the priesthood had risen to power between the Vedas and this, and somewhat fallen from it again,—or whether their rise was still in progress, but not advanced to the point of ousting the kings from their lead, —who can say? But this much, perhaps, we may venture without fear: the Kshattriyas of the Epic age were not the same as those of the Upanishads. They were not Adept-Kings and Teachers in the same way. By Epic age, I mean the age in which the epics were written, not that of which they tell. And neither the *Mahabharata* nor the *Ramayana* was composed in a day; but in many centuries;—and it is quite likely that on them too Brahmanical hands have been tactfully at work. Some parts of them were no doubt written in the centuries after Christ; there is room enough to allow for this, when you think that the one contains between ninety and a hundred thousand, the other about twenty-four thousand couplets;—the *Mahabharata* being about seven times, the *Ramayana* about twice as long as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined. So the Age of the Epics must be narrowed down again, to mean the age that gave birth to the nuclei of them.

As to when it may have been, I do not know that there is any clue to be found. Modern criticism has been at work, of course, to reduce all things to as commonplace and brain-mind a basis as possible; but its methods are entirely the wrong ones. Mr. Romesh Dutt, who published abridged translations of the two poems in the late nineties, says of the *Mahabharata* that the great war which it tells of "is believed

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to have been fought in the thirteenth or fourteenth century before Christ"; and of the *Ramayana,* that it tells the story of nations that flourished in Northern India about a thousand years B. C.—Is believed by whom, pray? It is also believed, and has been from time immemorial, in India, that Krishna, who figures largely in the *Mahabharata,* died in the year 3102 B.C.; and that he was the eighth avatar of Vishnu; and that Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana,* was the seventh. Now brain-mind criticism of the modern type is the most untrustworthy thing, because it is based solely on circumstantial evidence; and when you work upon that, you ought to go very warily;—it is always likely that half the circumstances remain un-discovered; and even if you have ninety and nine out of the hundred possible, the hundredth, if you had it, might well change the whole complexion of the case. And this kind of criticism leads precisely nowhere, does not build anything, but pulls down what was built of old. So I think we must be content to wait for real knowledge till those who hold it may choose to reveal it; and meanwhile get back to the traditional starting-point; —say that the War of the Kuravas and Pandavas happened in the thirty-second century B.C.; Rama's invasion of Lanka, ages earlier; and that the epics began to be written, as they say, somewhere between the lives of Krishna and Buddha,—somewhere between 2500 and 5000 years ago.

Why before Buddha?—Because they are still Kshattriya works; written before the Brahman ascendency, though after the time when the Kshattriyas were led by their Adept-Kings;—and because Buddha started a spiritual revolt (Kshattriya) against a Brahman ascendency well established then,—a revolt that by Asoka's time had quite overthrown the Brahman power. Why, then, should we not ascribe the epics to this Buddhist Kshattriya period? To Asoka's reign itself, for example?—Well, it has been done; but probably not wisely. Panini in his *Grammar* cites the Mahabharata as an authority for usage; and even the westernest of criticism is disinclined, on the evidence, to put Panini later than 400 B.C. Goldstucker puts him in the seventh century B.C. *En passant,* we may quote this from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as to Panini's *Grammar:* "For a comprehensive grasp of linguistic facts, and a penetrating insight into the structure of the vernacular language, this work stands probably unrivalled in the literature of any language."—Panini, then, cites the *Mahabharata;* Panini lived certainly before Asoka's time; the greatness of his work argues that he came in a culminating period of scholarship and literary activity, if not of literary creation; the reign of Asoka we may surmise was another such period;—and from all this I think we may argue without much fear that the the nucleus and original form of it, was written long before the reign of Asoka. Besides, if it had been written during the Buddhist ascendency, one fancies we should find more Buddhism in it than we do. There is some;—there are ideas that would be called Buddhist; but that really only prove the truth of the Buddha's claim that he taught nothing new. But a Poem written in Asoka's reign, one fancies, would not have been structurally and innately, as the *Mahabharata* is, martial.

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There is this difference between the two epics,—I speak of the nucleus-poems in each case;—the *Mahabharata* seems much more a natural growth, a national epic,—the work not of one man, but of many poets celebrating through many centuries a tradition not faded from the national memory;—but the *Ramayana* is more a structural unity; it bears the marks of coming from one creative mind: even western criticism accepts Valmiki (whoever he may have been) as its author. To him it is credited in Indian tradition; which ascribes the authorship of the *Mahabharata* to Vyasa, the reputed compiler of the *Vedas;*—and this last is manifestly not to be taken literally; for it is certain that a great age elapsed between the *Vedas* and the Epics. So I think that the *Mahabharata* grew up in the centuries, many or few, that followed the Great War,—or, say, during the second millennium B.C.; that in that millennium, during some great 'day' of literary creation, it was redacted into a single poem;— and that, the epic habit having thus been started, a single poet, Valmiki, in some succeeding 'day,' was prompted to make another epic, on the other great traditional saga-cycle, the story of Rama. But since that time, and all down through the centuries, both poems have been growing *ad lib.*

This is an endeavor to take a bird's-eye view of the whole subject; not to look at the evidence through a microscope, in the modern critical way. It is very unorthodox, but I believe it is the best way: the bird's eye sees most; the microscope sees least; the former takes in whole landscapes in proportion; the latter gets confused with details that seem, under that exaggeration, too highly important,—but which might be negatived altogether could you see the whole thing at once. A telescope for that kind of seeing is not forthcoming; but the methods of thought that H. P. Blavatsky taught us supply at least the first indications of what it may be like: they give us the first lenses. As our perceptions grow under their influence, doubtless new revelations will be made; and we shall see more, and further. All we can do now is to retire from the confusion brought about by searching these far stars with a microscope; to look less at the results of such searching, than at the old traditions themselves, making out what we can of them through what Theosophic lenses we have. We need not be misled by the ridiculous idea that civilization is a new thing. It is only the bias of the age; the next age will count it foolishness.—But to return to our epics.—

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First to the *Mahabharata.* It is, as it comes down to us, not one poem, but a large literature. Mr. Dutt compares it, both for length and variety of material, to the sermons of Jeremy Taylor and Hooker, Locke's and Hobbes's books of Philosophy, Blackstone's *Commentaries,* Percy's Ballads, and the writings of Newman, Pusey, and Keble,—all done into blank verse and incorporated with *Paradise Lost.* You have a martial poem like the *Iliad,* full of the gilt and scarlet and trumpetings and blazonry of war;—and you find the *Bhagavad-Gita* a chapter in it. Since it was first an epic, there have been huge accretions to it: Whosever fancy it struck would add a book or two, with new incidents to glorify this or that locality, princely house, or hero. And it is hard to separate these accretions from the original,—from the version, that is, that first appeared as an epic poem. Some are closely bound into the story, so as to be almost integral; some are fairly so; some might be cut out and never missed. Hence the vast bulk and promiscuity of material; which might militate against your finding in it, as a whole, any consistent Soul-symbol. And yet its chief personages seem all real men; they are clearly drawn, with firm lines;—says Mr. Dutt, as clearly as the Trojan and Achaean chiefs of Homer. Yudhishthira and Karna and Arjuna; Bhishma and Drona and the wild Duhsasan, are very living characters;—as if they had been actual men who had impressed themselves on the imagination of the age, and were not to be drawn by anyone who drew them except from the life. That might imply that poets began writing about them not so long after they lived, and while the memory of them and of their deeds was fresh. We are to understand, however,—all India has so understood, always,—that the poem is a Soul-symbol, standing for the wars of Light and Darkness; whether this symbol was a tradition firmly in the minds of all who wrote it, or whether it was imposed by the master-hand that collated their writings into an epic for the first time.

For it would seem that of the original writers, some had been on the Kurava, some on the Pandava side; though in the symbol as it stands, it is the Pandavas who represent the Light, the Kurava,— the darkness. There are traces of this submerged diversity of opinion. Just as in the *Iliad* it is the Trojan Hector who is the most sympathetic character, so in the *Mahabharata* it is often to some of the Kurava champions that our sympathies unavoidably flow. We are told that the Kurava are thoroughly depraved and villainous; but not seldom their actions belie the assertion,—with a certain Kshattriya magnamity for which they are given no credit. Krishna fights for the sons of Pandu; in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and elsewhere we see him as the incarnation of Vishnu,—of the Deity, the Supreme Self. As such, he does neither good nor evil; but ensures victory for his

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protegees. Philosophically and symbolically, this is sound and true, no doubt, but one wonders whether the poem (or poems) ran so originally; whether there may not be passages written at first by Kuravist poets; or a Brahminical superimposition of motive on a poem once wholly Kshattriya, and interested only in showing forth the noble and human warrior virtues of the Kshattriya caste. I imagine that in that second millennium B. C., in the early centuries of Kali-Yuga, you had a warrior class with their bards, inspired with high Bushido feeling,—with chivalry and all that is fine in patricianism—but no longer under the leadership of Adept Princes;—the esoteric knowledge was now mainly in the hands of the Priest-class. The Kshattriya bards made poems about the Great War, which grew and coalesced into a national epic. Then in the course of the centuries, as learning in its higher branches became more and more a possession of the Brahmans,—and since there was no feeling against adding to this epic whatever material came handy,—Brahmin esotericists manipulated it with great tact and finesse into a symbol of the warfare of the Soul.

There is the story of the death of the Kurava champion Bhishma. The Pandavas had been victorious; and Duryodhana the Kurava king appealed to Bhishma to save the situation. Bhishma loved the Pandava princes like a father; and urged Duryodhana to end the war by granting them their rights,—but in vain. So next day, owing his allegiance to Duryodhana, he took the field; and

> “As a lordly tusker tramples on a field of feeble reeds,
> As a forest conflagration on the parched woodland feeds,
> Bhishma rode upon the warriors in his mighty battle car.
> God nor mortal chief could face him in the gory field of war.” *

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* The quotations are from Mr. Romesh Dutt’s translation.

Thus victorious, he cried out to the vanquished that no appeal for mercy would be unheard; that he fought not against the defeated, the worn-out, the wounded, or “a woman born.” Hearing this, Krishna advised Arjuna that the chance to turn the tide had come. The young Sikhandin had been born a woman, and changed afterwards by the Gods into a man. Let Sikhandin fight in the forefront of the battle, and the Pandavas would win, and Bhishma be slain.—Arjuna, who loved Bhishma as dearly as Bhishma loved him and his brothers, protested; but Krishna announced that Bhishma was so doomed to die, and on the following day; a fate decreed, and righteously to be brought about by the stratagem. So it happened:

“Bhishma viewed the Pandav forces with a calm unmoving face;
Saw not Arjun’s bow Gandiva, saw not Bhima’s mighty mace;
Smiled to see the young Sikhandin rushing to the battle’s
fore
Like the white foam on the billow when the mighty storm
winds roar;
Thought upon the word he plighted, and the oath that he had
sworn,
Dropt his arms before the warrior that was, but a woman
born;”

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—and so, was slain.... and the chiefs of both armies gathered round and mourned for him.—Now it seems to me that the poets who viewed sympathetically the magnanimity of Bhishma, which meets you on the plane of simple human action and character, would not have viewed sympathetically, or perhaps conceived, the strategem advised by Krishna,—which you have to meet, to find it acceptable, on the planes of metaphysics and symbolism.

There is a quality in it you do not find in the *Illiad.* Greek and Trojan champions, before beginning the real business of their combats, do their best to impart to each other a little valuable self-knowledge: each reveals carefully, in a fine flow of hexameters, the weak points in his opponent's character. They are equally eloquent about their own greatnesses, which stir their enthusiasm highly;—but as to faults, neither takes thought for his own; each concentrates on the other's; and a war of words is the appetiser for the coming banquet of deeds. Before fighting Hector, Achilles reviled him; and having killed him, dragged his corpse shamefully round the walls of Troy. But Bhishma, in his victorious career, has nothing worse to cry to his enemies than—*Valiant are ye, noble princes!* and if you think of it on the unsymbolic plane, there is a certain nobility in the Despondency of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita.*

Says the *Encyclopaedia Brittanica:*

"To characterize the Indian Epics in a single word: though often disfigured by grotesque fancies and wild exaggerations, they are yet noble works, abounding in passages of remarkable descriptive power; and while as works of art they are far inferior to the Greek epics, in some respects they appeal far more strongly to the romantic mind of europe, namely, by the loving appreciation of natural beauty, their exquisite delineation of womanly love and devotion, and their tender sentiment of mercy and forgiveness."

—Precisely because they come from a much higher civilization that the Greek. From a civilization, that is to say, older and more continuous. Before Rome fell, the Romans were evolving humanitarian and compassionate ideas quite unlike their old-time callousness. And no, it was not the influence of Christianity; we see it in the legislation of Hadrian for example, and especially in the anti-Christian Marcus Aurelius. These feeling grow up in ages unscarred by wars and human cataclysms; every war puts back their growth. The fall of Rome and the succeeding pralaya threw Europe back into ruthless barbarity. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries humanism began to grow again; and has been gaining ground especially since H. P. Blavatsky began her teaching. But not much more than a century ago they were publicly hanging, drawing, and quartering people in England; crowds were gathering at Tyburn or before the Old Bailey to enjoy an execution. We have hardly had four generations in Western Europe in which men have not

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been ruthless and brutal barbarians with a sprinkling of fine spirits incarnate among them; no European literature yet has had time to evolve to the point where it could portray a Yudhishthira, at the end of a national epic, arriving at the gates of heaven with his dog,—and refusing to enter because the dog was not to be admitted. There have been, with us, too great ups and downs of civilization; too little continuity. We might have grown to it by now, had that medieval pralaya been a quiet and natural thing, instead of what it was:— a smash-up total and orgy of brutalities come as punishment for our sins done in the prime of manvantara.

A word or two as to the *Ramayana.* Probably Valmiki had the other epic before his mental vision when he wrote it; as Virgil had Homer. There are parallel incidents; but his genius does not appear in them;—he cannot compete in their own line with the old Kshattriya bards. You do not find here so done to the life the chargings of lordly tuskers, the gilt and crimson, the scarlet and pomp and blazonry, of war. The braying of the battle conches is muted: all is cast in a more gentle mold. You get instead the forest and its beauty; you get tender idylls of domestic life.—This poem, like the *Mahabharata,* has come swelling down the centuries; but whereas the latter grew by the addition of new incidents, the *Ramayana* grew by the re-telling of old ones. Thus you may get book after book telling the same story of Rama's life in the forest-hermitage by the Godavari; each book by a new poet in love with the gentle beauty of the tale and its setting, and anxious to put them into his own language. India never grows tired of these Ramayanic repetitions. Sita, the heroine, Rama's bride, is the ideal of every good woman there; I suppose Shakespeare has created no truer or more beautiful figure. To the *Mahabharata,* the *Ramayana* stands perhaps as the higher Wordsworth to Milton; it belongs to the same great age, but to another day in it. Both are and have been wonderfully near the life of the people: children are brought up on them; all ages, castes, and conditions make them the staple of their mental diet. Both are semi-sacred; neither is quite secular; either relates the deeds of an avatar of Vishnu; ages have done their work upon them, to lift them into the region of things sacrosanct.

And now at last we come to the age of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain,—to the Nine Gems of Literature,—to a secular era of literary creation,—to the Sanskrit Drama, and to Kalidisa, its Shakespeare;—and to his masterpiece, *The Ring of Sakoontala.*

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There is a tendency with us to derive all things Indian from Greek sources. Some Greek writer says the Indians were familiar with Homer; whereupon we take up the cry,—The *Ramayana* is evidently a plagiarism from the *Iliad;* the abduction of Sita by Ravan, of the abduction of Helen by Paris; the siege of Lanka, of the siege of Troy. And the *Mahabharata* is too; because,—because it must be; there's a deal of fighting in both. (So Macedon plagiarized its river from Monmouth.) We believe a Greek at all times against an Indian; forgetting that the Greeks themselves, when they got to India, were astounded at the truthfulness of the people they found there. Such strained avoidance of the natural lie,—the harmless, necessary lie that came so trippingly to a Greek tongue,—seemed to them extraordinary.—So too our critics naturally set out from the position that the Indian Drama must have been an offshoot or imitation of the Greek. But fortunately that position had to be quitted *toute de suite;* for the Indian theory is much nearer the English than the Greek;—much liker Shakespeare's than Aeschylus's. *Sakoontal* is romantic; it came in a Third or Alawn Period; of all Englishmen, Keats might most easily have written it; if *Endymion* were a play, *Endymion* would be the likest thing to it in English. You must remember that downward trend in the Great Cycle; that make each succeeding period in Sanskrit literature a descent from the heights of esotericism towards the personal plane. That is what brings Kalidasa on to a level with Keats.

Behind *Sakoontala,* as behind *Endymion,* there is a Soul-symbol; only Kalidasa, like Keats, is preoccupied in his outer mind more with forest beauty and natural magic and his romantic tale of love. It marks a stage in the descent of literature from the old impersonal to the modern personal reaches: from tales told merely to express the Soul-Symbol, to tales told merely for the sake of telling them. The stories in the *Upanishads* are glyphs pure and simple. In the epics, they have taken on much more human color, though still exalting and ennobling,—and all embodying, or molded to, the glyph. Now, in *The Ring of Sakoontala,*—and it is typical of its class,—we have to look a little diligently for the glyph; what impresses us is the stillness and morning beauty of the forest, and,—yes, it must be said.—the emotions, quite personal, of King Dushyanta and Sakoontala, the hero and heroine.

She is a fairy's child, full beautiful; and has been brought up by her foster-father, the yogi Kanwa, in his forest hermitage. While Kanwa is absent, Dushyanta, hunting, follows an antelope into that quiet refuge; finds Sakoontala, loves and marries her. Here we are amidst the drowsy hum of bees, the flowering of large Indian forest blossoms, the scent of the jasmine in bloom; it is what Keats would have written, had his nightingale sung in an Indian

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jungle.—The king departs for his capital, leaving with Sakoontala a magical ring with power to reawaken memory of her in his heart, should he ever forget. But Durvasas, a wandering ascetic, passes by the hermitage; and Sakoontala, absorbed in her dreams, fails to greet him; for which he dooms her to be forgotten by her husband. She waits and waits, and at last seeks the unreturning Dushyanta at his court; who, under the spell of Durvasas, fails to recognise her. If what she claims is true, she can produce the ring?—But no; she has lost it on her journey through the forest. He repudiates her; whereupon she is caught up by the Gods into the Grove of Kasyapa beyond the clouds.

But the ring had fallen into a stream in the forest, and a fish had swallowed it, and a fisherman had caught the fish, and the police had caught the fisherman .... and so it came into the hands of Dushyanta again; who, at sight of it, remembered all, and was plunged in grief over his lost love.

Years pass, and Indra summons him at last to fight a race of giants that threaten the sovereignty of the Gods. In the course of that warfare, mounting to heaven in the car of Indra, Dushyanta comes to the Grove of Kasyapa, and is reunited with Sakoontala and with their son, now grown into an heroic boy.

As in *The Tempest* a certain preoccupation with the magical beauty of the island dims the character-drawing a little, and perhaps thereby makes the symbol more distinct,—so in Sakoontala. It is a faery piece: begining in the morning calm and forest magic; then permitting passion to rise, and sadness to follow; ending in the crystal and blue clearness of the upper air. In this we see the basic form of the Soul-Symbol, which is worked out in the incidents and characters. Dushyanta, hunting in the unexplored forest, comes to the abode of holiness, finds and loves Sakoontala;—and from their union is born the perfect hero,—Sarva-Damana, the 'All-tamer.'—Searching in the impersonal and unexplored regions within us, we do at some time in our career of lives come to the holy place, get vision of our Immortal Self; from the union of which with this, our human personality is to be born some time that new being we are to become,—the Perfect Man or Adept. But that first vision may be lost; I suppose almost always is;—-and there are wanderings and sorrows, forgetfulness and above all heroic services to be performed, before the final reunion can be attained.

XVI. THE BEGINNINGS OF ROME

We have seen an eastward flow of cycles: which without too much Procrusteanizing may be given dates thus:—Greece, 478 to 348; Maurya India, 320 to 190; Western Han China, 194 to 63; in this current, West Asia, being then in long pralaya, is overleaped. We have also seen a tide in the other direction; it was first Persia that touched Greece to awakenment; and there is that problematical Indian

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period (if it existed), thirteen decades after the fall of the Mauryas, and following close upon the waning of the first glory of the Hans. So we should look for the Greek Age to kindle something westward again, sooner or later;— which of course it did. 478 to 348; 348 to 218; 218 to 88 B.C.; 88 B.C. to 42 A. D.: we shall see presently the significance of those latter dates in Roman history. Meanwhile to note this: whereas Persia woke Greece at a touch, thirteen decades elapsed before Greece began to awake Italy. It waited to do so fully until the Crest-Wave had sunk a little at the eastern end of the world; for you may note that the year 63 B.C., in which Han Chaoti died, was the year in which Augustus was born.

With him in the same decade came most of the luminaries that made his age splendid: Virgil in 70; Horace in 65; Vipsanius Agrippa in 63; Cilnius Maecenas in what precise year we do not know. The fact is that the influx of vigorous light-bearing egos, as it decreased in China, went augmenting in Italy: which no doubt, if we could trace it, we should find to be the kind of thing that happens always. For about four generations the foremost souls due to incarnate crowd into one race or quarter of the globe; then, having exhausted the workable heredity to be found there,—*used up* that racial stream, —they must go elsewhere. There you have the *raison d'etre,* probably, of the thirteen-decade period. It takes as a rule about four generations of such high life to deplete the racial heredity for the time being,—which must then be left to lie fallow. So now, America not being discovered, and there being no further eastward to go, we must jump westward the width of two continents (nearly), and (that last lecture being parenthetical as it were) come from Han Chaoti's death to Augustus' birth, from China to Rome.

But before dealing with Augustus and the Roman prime, we must get some general picture of the background out of which he and it emerged: this week and next we must give to early and to Republican Rome. And here let me say that these two lectures will be, for the most part, a very bare-faced plagiarism; summarizing facts and conclusions taken from a book called *The Grandeur that was Rome,* by Mr. J. C. Stobart, of the English Cambridge. One greatest trouble about historical study is, that it allows you to see no great trends, but hides under the record of innumerable fidgety details the real meanings of things. Mr. Stobart, with a gift of his own for taking large views, sees this clearly, and goes about to remedy it; he does not wander with you through the dark of the undergrowth, labeling bush after bush; but leads you from eminence to eminence, generalizing, and giving you to understand the broad lie of the land: he makes you see the forest in spite of the trees. As this is our purpose, too, we shall beg leave to go with him; only adding now and again such new light as Theosophical ideas throw on it;—and for the most part, to avoid a tautology of acknowledgments, or a plethora of footnotes in the PATH presently, letting this one confession of debt serve. The learning, the pictures, the marshaling of facts, are all Mr. Stobart's.

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In the fifth and sixth centuries A. D., when the old manvantara was closing, Europe was flung into the Cauldron of Regeneration. Nations and fragments of nations were thrown in and tossing and seething; the broth of them was boiling over, and,—just as the the Story of Taliesin, flooding the world with poison and destruction: and all that a new order of ages might in due time come into being. One result that a miscellany of racial heterogeneities was washed up into the peninsular and island extremities of the continent. In the British you had four Celtic and a Pictish remnant,—not to mention Latins galore,—pressed on by three or four sorts of Teutons. In Spain, though it was less an extremity of Europe than a highway into Africa, you had a fine assortment of odds and ends: Suevi, Vandals, Goths and what not; superimposed on a more or less homogenized collection of Iberians, Celts, Phoenicians, and Italians;—and in Italy you had Italians broken up into numberless fragments, and overrun by all manner of Lombards, Teutons, Slavs, and Huns. Welded by cyclic stress, presently first England, then Spain, and lastly Italy, became nations; in all three varying degrees of homogeneity being attained. But the next peninsula, the Balkan, has so far reached no unity at all; it remains to this day a curious museum of racial oddments, to the sorrow of European peace; and each of them represents some people strong in its day, and perhaps even cultured.

What the Balkan peninsula has been in our own time, the Apennine peninsula was after the fall of Rome, and also before the rise of Rome: a job-lot of race-fragments driven into that extremity of Europe by the alarms and excursions of empires in dissolution whose history time has hidden. The end of a manvantara, the break-up of a great civilization and the confusion that followed, made the Balkans what they are now, and Italy what she was in the Middle Ages. The end of an earlier manvantara, the break-up of older and forgotten civilizations, made Italy what she was in the sixth century B.C. Both peninsulas, by their mere physical geography, seem specially designed for the purpose.

Italy is divided into four by the Apennines, and is mostly Apennines. Everyone goes there: conquerors, lured by the *dono fatale,* and for the sake of the prizes to be gathered; the conquered, because it is the natural path of escape out of Central Europe. The way in is easy enough; it is only the way out that is difficult. The Alps slope up gently on the northern side; but sharply fall away in grand precipices on the southern. There, too, they overlook a region that would always tempt invaders: the great rich plain the Po waters; a land no refugees could well hope to hold. It has been in turn Cisalpine Gaul, the Plain of the Lombards, and the main part of Austrian Italy; this thrice a possession of conquerors from the north. It is the first of the four divisions.

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There never would be safety in it for refugees; you would not find in it a great diversity of races living apart; conquerors and conquered would quickly homogenize,—unless the conquerors had their main seat in, and remained in political union with, transalpine realms. Refugees would still and always have to move on, if they desired to keep their freedom. Three ways would be open to them, and three destinies, according to which way they chose. They might go down into the long strip of Adriatic coastland, where there are no natural harbors—and remain isolated and unimportant between the mountain barrier and the sea. Those who occupied this *cul de sac* have played no great part in history: the isolated never do.—Or they might cross the Apennines and pour down into the lowlands of Etruria and Latium, where are rich lands, some harbors, and generally, fine opportunities for building up a civilization. Draw-backs also, for a defeated remnant: Etruria is not too far from Lombardy to tempt adventurers from the north, the vanguard of the conquering people;—although again, the Apennine barrier might make their hold on that middle region precarious. They might come there conquering; but would form, probably, no very permanent part of the northern empire: they would mix with the conquered, and at any weakening northward, the mixture would be likely to break away. So Austria had influence and suzerainty and various crown appanages in Tuscany; but not such settled sway as over the Lombard Plain. Then, too, this is a region that, in a time of West Asian manvantara and European pralaya, might easily tempt adventurers from the Near East.

But the main road for true refugees is the high Apennines; and this is the road most of them traveled. Their fate, taking it, would be to be pressed southward along the backbone of Italy by new waves and waves of peoples; and among the wild valleys to lose their culture, and become highlandmen, bandit tribes and raiding clans; until the first comers of them had been driven down right into the hot coastlands of the heel and toe of Italy. Great material civilizations rarely originate among mountains: outwardly because of the difficulty of communications; inwardly, I suspect, because mountain influences pull too much away from material things. Nature made the mountains, you may say, for the special purpose of regenerating effete remnants of civilizations. Sabellians and Oscans, Samnites and Volscians and Aequians and dear knows what all:—open your Roman Histories, and in each one of the host of nation-names you find there, you may probably see the relic of some kingdom once great and flourishing north or south of the Alps;—just as you can in the Serbians, Roumanians, Bulgars, Vlachs, and Albanians in the next peninsula now.

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One more element is to be considered there in the far south. Our Lucanian and Bruttian and Iapygian refugees,—themselves, or some of them, naturally the oldest people in Italy, the most original inhabitants,—would find themselves, when they arrived there, very much de-civilized; but, because the coast is full of fine harbors, probably sooner or later in touch with settlers from abroad. It is a part that would tempt colonists of any cultured or commercial peoples that might be spreading out from Greece or the West Asian centers or elsewhere; and so it was Magna Graecia of old, and a mixing-place of Greek and old Italian blood; and so, since, has been held by Saracens, Normans, Byzantines, and Spaniards.

The result of all this diversity of racial elements would be that Italy could only difficultly attain national unity at any time; but that once such unity was attained, she would be bound to play an enormous part. No doubt again and again she has been a center of empire; it is always your ex-melting-pot that is.

Who were the earliest Italians? The earliest, it least, that we can guess at?—Once on a time the peninsula was colonized by folk who sailed in through the Straits of Gibraltar from Ruta and Daitya, those island fragments of Atlantis; and (says Madame Blavatsky) you should have found a pocket of these colonists surviving in Latium, strong enough for the most part to keep the waves of invaders to the north of them, and the refugees to the high Apennines. Another relic of them you would have found, probably, driven down into the far south; and such a relic, I understand, the Iapygians were.

One more ethnic influence,—an important one. Round about the year 1000 B.C., all Europe was in dead pralaya, while West Asia was in high manvantara: under which conditions, as I suggested just now, such parts as the Lombard Plain and Tuscany might tempt West Asians of enterprise;—as Spain and Sicily tempted the Moslems long afterwards. Supposing such a people came in; they would be, while the West Asian manvantara was in being, much more cultured and powerful than their Italian neighbors; but the waning centuries of their manvantara would coincide with the first and orient portion of the European one; so, as soon as that should begin to touch Italy, things would begin to equalize themselves; till at last, as Europe drew towards noon and West Asia towards evening, these West Asians of Etruria would go the way of the Spanish Moors. There you have the probable history of the Etruscans.

All Roman writers say they came from Lydia by sea; which statement could only have been a repetition of what the Etruscans said about themselves. The matter is much in dispute; but most likely there is no testimony better than the ancient one. Some authorities are for Lydia; some are for the Rhaetian Alps; some are for calling the Etruscans 'autochthonous,'—which I hold to be, like *Mesopotamia,* a 'blessed

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word.’ Certainly the Gauls drove them out of Lombardy, and some of them, as refugees, up into the Rhaetian Alps,—sometime after the European manvantara began in 870. We cannot read their language, and do not know enough about it to connect it even with the Turanian Group; but we know enough to exclude it, perhaps, from every other known group in the Old World,—certainly from the Aryan. There is something absolutely un-Aryan (one would say) about their art, the figures on their tombs. Great finish; no primitivism; but something queer and grotesque about the faces.... However, you can get no racial indications from things like that. There is a state of decadence, that may come to any race,—that has perhaps in every race cycles of its own for appearing,—when artists go for their ideals and inspiration, not to the divine world of the Soul, but to vast elemental goblinish limboes in the sub-human: realms the insane are at home in, and vice-victims sometimes, and drug-victims I suppose always. Denizens of these regions, I take it, are the models for some of our cubists and futurists. . . . I seem to see the same kind of influence in these Etruscan faces. I think we should sense something sinister in a people with art-conventions like theirs;—and this accords with the popular view of antiquity, for the Etruscans had not a nice reputation.

The probability appears to be that they became a nation in their Italian home in the tenth or eleventh century B.C.; were at first war-like, and spread their power considerably, holding Tuscany, Umbria, Latium, with Lombardy until the Gauls dispossessed them, and presently Corsica under a treaty with Carthage that gave the Carthaginians Sardinia as a *quid pro quo.* Tuscany, perhaps, would have been the original colony; when Lombardy was lost, it was the central seat of their power; there the native population became either quite merged in them, or remained as plebeians; Umbria and Latium they possessed and ruled as suzerains. The Tuscan lands are rich, and the *Rasenna,* as they called themselves, made money by exporting the produce of their fields and forests; also crude metals brought in from the north-west,—for Etruria was the clearing-house for the trade between Gaul and the lands beyond, and the eastern Mediterranean. From Egypt, Carthage, and Asia, they imported in exchange luxuries and objects of art; until in time the old terror of their name,—as pirates, not unconnected with something of fame for black magic; one finds it as early as in Hesiod, and again in the *Medea* of Euripides,—gave place to an equally ill repute for luxurious living and sensuality. We know that in war it was a poor thing to put your trust in Etruscan alliances.

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According to their own account of it, they were destined to endure as a distinct people for about nine centuries; which is probably what they did. Their power was at its height about 600 B.C. As they began to decline, certain small Italian cities that had been part of their empire broke away and freed themselves; particularly in Latium, where lived the descendants of those old-time colonists from Ruta and Daitya,—priding themselves still on their ancient descent, and holding themselves Patricians or nobles, with a serf population of conquered Italians to look down upon. Or, of course, it may have been *vice versa:* that the Atlanteans were the older stock, nearer the soil, and Plebeians; and that the Patricians were later conquerors lured or driven down from Central Europe.

At any rate, as their empire diminished, Etruria stood like some alien civilized Granada in the midst of surrounding medieval barbarism; for Italy, in 500 B.C., was simply medieval. Up in the mountains were war-like highlanders: each tribe with its central stronghold,—like Beneventum in Samnium, which you could hardly call a city, I suppose: it was rather a place of refuge for times when refuge was needed, than a group of homes to live in; in general, the mountains gave enough sense of security, and you might live normally in your scattered farms.—But down in the lowlands you needed something more definitely city-like: at once a group of homes and a common fortress. So Latium and Campania were strewn with little towns by river and seashore, or hill-top built with more or less peaceful citadel; each holding the lands it could watch, or that its citizen armies could turn out quickly to defend. Each was always at war or in league with most of the others; but material civilization had not receded so far as among the mountaineers. The latter raided them perpetually, so they had to be tough and abstemious and watchful; and then again they raided the mountaineers to get their own back, (with reasonable interest); and lastly, lest like Hotspur they should find such quiet life a plague, and want work, it was always their prerogative, and generally their pleasure, to go to war with each other.—A hard, poor life, in which to be and do right was to keep in fit condition for the raidings and excursions and alarms; ethics amounted to about that much; art or culture, you may say, there was none. Their civilization was what we know as Balkanic, with perpetual Balkanic eruptions, so to speak. Their conception of life did not admit of the absence of at least one good summer campaign. Mr. Stobart neatly puts it to this effect: no man is content to live ambitionless on a bare pittance and the necessaries; he must see some prospect, some margin, as well; and for these folk, now that they had freed themselves from the Etruscans, the necessaries were from their petty agriculture, the margin was to be looked for in war.

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Among these cities was one on the Tiber, about sixteen miles up from the mouth. It had had a great past under kings of its own, before the Etruscan conquest; very likely had wielded wide empire in its day. A tradition of high destiny hung about it, and was ingrained in the consciousness of its citizens; and I believe that this is always what remains of ancient greatness when time, cataclysms, and disasters have wiped all actual memories thereof away. But now, say in 500 B.C., we are to think of it as a little peasant community in an age and land where there was no such wide distinction between peasant and bandit. It had for its totem, crest, symbol, what you will, very appropriately, a she-wolf....

Art or culture, I said, there was none;—and yet, too, we might pride ourselves on certain great possessions to be called (stretching it a little), *in that line;* which had been left to us by our erstwhile Etruscan lords, or executed for us by Etruscan artists with their tongues in their cheeks and sides quietly shaking.—Ha, you men of Praeneste! you men of Tibur! sing small, will you? *We* have our grand Jupiter on the Capitoline, resplendent in vermilion paint; what say you to that? Paid for him, too, (a surmise, this!) with cattle raided from your fields, my friends!

Everything handsome about us, you see; but not for this must you accuse us of the levity of culture. We might patronize; we did not dabble.—One seems to hear from those early ages, echoes of tones familiar now. Ours is the good old roast beef and common sense of—I mean, the grand old *gravitas* of Rome. What! you must have a Jupiter to worship, mustn't you? No sound as by Parliament-Established-Religion of Numa Pompilius, Sir, and the world would go to the dogs! And, of course, vermilion paint. It wears well, and is a good bloody color with no levity about it; besides, can be seen a long way off—whereby it serves to keep you rascals stirred up with jealousy, or should. So: we have our vermilion Jupiter and think of ourselves very highly indeed.

Yes; but there is a basis for our boasting, too;—which boasting, after all, is mainly a mental state; we aim to be taciturn in our speech, and to proclaim our superiority with sound thumps, rather than like wretched Greeks with poetry and philosophy and such. We do possess, and love,—at the very least we aim at,—the thing we call *gravitas;* and —there are points to admire in it. The legends are full of revelation; and what they reveal are the ideals of Rome. Stern discipline; a rigid sense of duty to the state; unlimited sacrifice of the individual to it; stoic endurance in the men; strictest chastity in the women:—there were many and great qualities. Something had come down from of old, or had been acquired in adversity: a saving health for this nation. War was the regular annual business; all the male population of military age took part in it; and military age did

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not end too early. It was an order that tended to leave no room in the world but for the fittest, physically and morally, if not mentally. There was discipline, and again and always discipline: *paterfamilias* king in his household, with power of life and death over his children. It was a regime that gave little chance for loose living. A sterile and ugly regime, Nevertheless; and, later, they fell victims to its shortcomings. Vice, that wrecks every civilization in its turn, depend upon it had wrecked one here: that one of which we get faint reminiscences in the stories of the Roman kings. Then these barren and severe conditions ensued, and vice was (comparatively speaking) cleaned out.

What were the inner sources of this people's strength? What light from the Spirit shone among them? Of the Sacred Mysteries, what could subsist in such a community?—-Well; the Mysteries had, by this time, as we have seen, very far declined. Pythagoras had made his effort in this very Italy; he died in the first year of the fifth century soon after the expulsion of the kings, according to the received chronology;—in reality, long before there is dependable history of Rome at all. There had been an Italian Golden Age, when Saturn reigned and the Mysteries ruled human life. There were reminiscences of a long past splendor; and an atmosphere about them, I think, more mellow and peace-lipped than anything in Hesiod or Homer. I suppose that from some calmer, firmer, and more benignant Roman Empire manvantaras back, when the Mysteries were in their flower and Theosophy guided the relations of men and nations, some thin stream of that divine knowledge flowed down into the pralaya; that an echo lingered,—at Cumae, perhaps, where the Sibyl was,— or somewhere among the Oscan or Sabine mountains. Certainly nothing remained, regnant and recognised in the cities, to suggest a repugnance to the summer campaigns, or that other nations had their rights. Yet there was something to make life sweeter than it might have been.

They said that of old there had been a King in Rome who was a Messenger of the Gods and link between earth and heaven; and that it was he had founded their religion. Was Numa Pompilius, a real person?—By no means, says modern criticism. I will quote you Mr. Stobart:—

"The Seven Kings of Rome are for the most part mere names which have been fitted by rationalizing historians, presumably Greek, with inventions appropriate to them. Tomulus is simply the patron hero of Rome called by her name. Numa, the second, whose name suggests *numen,* was the blameless Sabine who originated most of the old Roman cults, and received a complete biography largely borrowed from that invented for Solon."

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—He calls attention, too, to the fact that Tarquin the Proud is made a typical Greek Tyrant, and is said to have been driven out of Rome in 510,—the very year in which that other typical Greek Tyrant, Hippias, was driven out of Athens;—so that on the whole it is not a view for easy unthinking rejection. But Madame Blavatsky left a good maxim on these matters: that tradition will tell you more truth than what goes for history will; and she is quite positive that there is much more truth in the tales about the kings than in what comes down about the early Republic. Only you must interpret the traditions; you must understand them. Let us go about, and see if we can arrive at something.

Before the influx of the Crest-Wave began, Rome was a very petty provincial affair, without any place at all in the great sweep of world-story. Her annals are about as important as those of the Samnium of old, of which we know nothing; or those, say, of Andorra now, about which we care less. Our school histories commonly end at the Battle of Acium; which is the place where Roman history becomes universal and important: a point wisely made and strongly insisted on by Mr. Stobart. I shows how thoroughly we lack any true sense of what history is and is for. We are so wrapped up in politics that our vision of the motions of the Human Spirit is obscured. There were lots of politics in Republican Rome, and you may say none in the empire; so we make for the pettiness that obsesses us, and ignore the greatness whose effects are felt yet. Rome played at politics: old-time conqueror-race Patricians against old-time conquered-race Plebians: till the two were merged into one and she grew tired of the game. She played at war until her little raidings and conquests had carried her out of the sphere of provincial politics, and she stood on the brink of the great world. Then the influx of important souls began; she entered into history, presently threw up politics forever, and performed, so far as it was in her to do so, her mission in the world. What does History care for the election results in some village in Montenegro? Or for the passage of the Licinian Rogations, or the high exploits of Terentilius Harsa?

Yet, too, we must get a view of this people in pralaya, that we may understand better the workings of the Human Spirit in its fulness. But we must see the forest, and not lose sight and sense of it while botanizing over individual trees. We must forget the interminable details of wars and politics that amount to nothing; that so we may apprehend the form, features, color, of this aspect of humanity.

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Here is a mighty river: the practical uses of mankind are mainly concerned with it as far up as it may be navigable; or at most, as far up as it may be turning mills and watering the fields of agriculture. There may be regions beyond when poets and mythologists may bring great treasures for the Human Spirit; but do you do well to treat such treasures as plug material for exchange and barter? They call for another kind of treatment. The sober science of history may be said to start where the nations become navigable, and begin to affect the world. You can sail your ships up the river Rome to about the beginning of the third century B.C., when she began to ermerge from Italian provincialism and to have relations with foreign peoples: Pyrrhus came over to fight her in 280. What is told of the century before may be true or not; as a general picture it is probably true enough, and only as a general picture does it matter; its details are supremely unimportant. The river here is pouting through the gorges, or shallowly meandering the meads. It is watering Farmer Balbus's fields; Grazier Ahenobarbus's cows drink at it; idle Dolabell angles in its quiet reaches: there are bloody tribal affrays yearly at its fords. It is important, certainly, to Babbus and Dolabella, and the men slain in the forays;—but to us others—.

And then at 390 there are falls and dangerous rapids; you will get no ships beyond these. The Gauls poured down and swept away everything: the records were burnt; and Rome, such as it was, had to be re-founded. Here is a main break with the past; something like Ts'in Shi Hwangti's Book-burning; and it serves to make doubly uncertain all that went before. Go further now, and you must take to the wild unmapped hills. There are no fields beyond this; the kine keep to the lush lowland meadows; rod and line must be left behind,—and angler too, unles he is prepared for stiff climbing, and no marketable recompense. Nor yet, perhaps, for some time, much in things unmarketable: I will not say there is any great beauty of scenery in these rather stubborn and arid hills.

As to the fourth century, then (or from 280 to 390)—we need not care much which of Ahenobarbus's cows was brindled, or which had the crumpled horn, or which broke off the coltsfoot bloom with lazy ruthless hoof. As to the fifth,—we need not try to row the quinqueremes of history beyond that Gaulish waterfall. We need not bother with the weight Dolabella claims for the trout he says he caught up there: that trout has been cooked and eaten these twenty-three hundred years. Away beyond, in the high mountains, there may be pools haunted by the nymphs; you cannot sail up to them, that is certain; but there may be ways round.....

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Here, still in the foot-hills, is a pool that does look, if not *nymphatic,* at least a little fishy, as they say; the story of Rome's dealings with Lars Porsenna. It even looks as if something historical might be caught in it. The Roman historians have been obviously camouflaging: they do not want you to examine this too closely. Remember that all these things came down by memory, among a people exceedingly proud, and that had been used to rely on records,—which records had been burnt by the Gauls. Turn to your English History, and you shall probably look in vain in it for any reference to the Battle of Patay; you shall certainly find Agincourt noised and trumpted *ad lib.* Now battles are never decisive; they never make history; the very best of them might just as well not have been fought. But at Patay the forces which made it inevitable France should be a nation struck down into the physical plane and made themselves manifest: as far as that plane is concerned, the centuries of French history flow from the battlefield of Patay. But what made trumpery Agincourt was only the fierce will of a cruel, ambitious fighting king; and what flowed from it was a few decades of war and misery. That by way of illustration how history is envisaged and taught: depend upon it, by every people; it is not peculiar to this one or that.—Well then, the fish we are at liberty to catch in this particular Roman pool is a period during which Rome was part of the Etruscan Empire.

The fact is generally accepted, I believe; and is, of course, the proposition we started from. How long the period was, we cannot say. The Tarquins were from Tarquinii in Etruria; perhaps a line of Etruscan governors. The gentleman from Clusium who swore by the Nine Gods was either a king who brought back a rebellious Rome to temporary submission, or the last Etruscan monarch in whose empire it was included. But here is the point: whether fifty or five hundred years long—and perhaps more likely the former than the latter—this period of foreign rule was long enough to make a big break in the national tradition, and to throw all preceding events out of perspective.

At the risk of *longueurs*—and other things—let me take an illustration from scenes I know. I have heard peasants in Wales talking about events before the conquest;—-people who have never learnt Welsh history out of books, and have nothing to go on but local legends;—and placing the old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago at "over a hundred years back, I shouldn' wonder." It is the way of tradition to foreshorten things like that,—Nothing much has happened in Wales since those ancient battles with the English; so the six or seven centuries of English rule are dismissed as "over a hundred years." Rome under the Etruscans, like Wales under the English, would have had no history of her own: there would have been nothing to impress itself on the race-memory. Such times

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fade out easily: they seem to have been very short, or are forgotten altogether. But this same Welsh peasant, who thus forgets and foreshortens recent history, always remembers that there were kings of Wales once. Perhaps, if he were put to it to write a history, with no books to guide him, he would name you as many as seven of them, and supply each with more or less true stories. In reality, of course, there were eight centuries of Welsh kings; and before them, the Roman occupation,—which he also remembers, but very vaguely; and before that, he has the strongest impression that there were ages of wide sovereignty and splendor. The kings he would name, naturally, are the ones that made the most mark.—I think the Romans, in constructing or making Greeks construct for them their ancient history, did very much the same kind of thing. They remembered the names of seven kings, with tales about them, and built on those. There were the kings who had stood out and stood for most; and the Romans remembered what they stood for. So here I think we get real history; whereas in the stories of republican days we may see the efforts of great families to provide themselves with a great past. But I doubt we could take anything *aupied de la lettre;* or that it would profit us to do so if we could. Here is a pointer: we have seen how in India a long age of Kshattriya supremacy preceded the supremacy of the Brahmins. Now observe Kshattriya Romulus followed by Brahmin Numa.

I do not see why Madame Blavatsky shold have so strongly insisted on the truth of the story of the roman Kings unless there were more in it than mere pralayic historicity. Unless it were of bigger value, that is, than Andorran or Montenegrin annals. Rome, after the Etruscan domination, was a meanly built little city; but there were remains from pre-Etruscan times greater than anything built under the Republic. Rome is a fine modern capital now; but there were times in the age of papal rule, when it was a miserable depopulated village of great ruins, with wolves prowling nightly through the weed-grown streets. Yet even then the tradition of *Roma Caput Mundi* reigned among the wretched inhabitants,—witness Rienzi: it was the one thing, besides the ruins, to tell of ancient greatness. Some such feeling, borne down out of a forgotten past, impelled Republican Rome on the path of conquest. It was not even a tradition, at that time; but the essence of a tradition that remained as a sense of high destinies.

Who, then, was Romulus?—Some king's son from Ruta or Daitya, who came in his lordly Atlantean ships, and builded a city on the Tiber? Very likely. That would be, at the very least, as far back as nine or ten thousand B.C.; which is contemptibly modern, when you think of the hundred and sixty thousand years of our present sub-race. The thing that is in the back of my mind is, that Rome is probably as old as that sub-race, or nearly so; but wild horses

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should not drag from me a statement of it. Rome, London, Paris,—all and any of them, for that matter.—But a hundred and sixty thousand or ten thousand, no man's name could survive so long, I think, as a peg on which to hang actual history. It would pass, long before the ten millenniums were over, into legend; and become that of a God or demigod,—whose cult, also, would need reviving, in time, by some new avatar. Now (as remarked before) humanity has a profound instinct for avatars; and also (as you would expect) for Reincarnation. The sixth-century Britons were reminded by one of their chieftains of some mighty king or God of prehistory; the two got mixed, and the mixture came down as the Arthur of the legend. This is what I mean by 'reviving the cult.' Now then, who was Romulus?—Some near or remote descendant of heroic refugees from fallen Troy, who rebuilt Rome or reestablished its sovereignty?—Very likely, again;—I mean, very likely both that and the king's son from Ruta or Daitya. And lastly, very likely some tough little peasant-bandit restorer, not so long before the Etruscan conquest, whom the people came to mix up witl mightier figures half forgotten. . . . .

We see his history, as the Romans did, through the lens of a tough little peasant-bandit city; through the lens of a pralaya, which makes pralayic all objects seen. It is like the Irish peasant-girl who has seen the palace of the king of the fairies; she describes you something akin to the greatest magnificence she knows,—which happens to be the house of the local *squireen.* Now the Etruscan domination, as we have noted, could probably not have begun before 1000 B.C.; at which time, to go by our hypothesis as to the length and recurrence of the cycles, Europe was in dead pralaya, and had been since 1480. So that, possibly, you would have had between 1480 and 1000 a Rome in pralaya, but independent—like Andorra now, or Montenegro. The stories we get about the seven kings would fit such a time admirably. They tell of pralayic provincials; and Rome, during that second half of the second millennium B.C., would have been just that.

But again, if the seven kings had been just that and nothing more, I cannot see why H. P. Blavatsky should have laid such stress on the essential truth of their stories. She is particular, too, about the Arthurian legend:—saying that it is at once symbolic and actually historical,—which latter, as concerns the sixth-century Arthur, it is not and she would not have considered it to be: no Briton prince of that time went conquering through Europe. So there must be some further value to the tales of the Roman kings; else why are they so much better than the Republican annals? Why?—unless all history except the invented kind or the distorted-by-pride-or-politics kind is symbolic; and unless we could read in these stories the record, not merely of some pre-Etruscan pralayic centuries, but of great ages of the past and of the natural unfoldment of the Human Spirit in history through long millenniums? Evolution is upon a pattern; understand the drift of any given thousand years in such a way that you could reduce it to a symbol, and probably you have the key to all the past.

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So I imagine there would be seven interpretations to these kings, as to all other symbols. Romulus may represent a Kshattriya, and Numa a Brahmin domination in the early ages of the sub-race. Actual men, there may yet be mirrored in them the history —shall we say of the whole sub-race? Or Root-race? Or the whole natural order of human evolution? It is business for imaginative meditation,—which is creative or truth-finding meditation. But now let us try, diffidently, to search out the last, the historic, pre-Etruscan Numa.

If you examined the Mohammedan East, now in these days of its mid-pralaya and disruption: Turkey especially, or Egypt: you should find constantly the tradition of Men lifted by holiness and wisdom and power above the levels of common humanity: Unseen Guardians of the race,—a Great Lodge or Order of them. In Christendom, in its manvantara, you find no trace of this knowledge; but it may surprise you to know that it is so common among the Moslems, that according to the Turkish popular belief, there is always a White Adept somewhere within the mosque of St. Sophia,—hidden under a disguise none would be likely to penetrate. There are hundreds of stories. The common thought is that representatives of this Lodge, or their disciples, often appear; are not so far away from the world of men; may be teaching, quite obscurely, or dropping casual seeds of the Secret Wisdom, in the next village. Well; I imagine pralayic conditions may allow benign spiritual influences to be at work, sometimes, nearer the surface of life than in manvantara. The brain-mind is less universally dominant; there is not the same dense atmosphere of materialism. You get on the one hand a franker play of the passions, and no curbs imposed either by a sound police system or a national conscience; in pralaya time there is no national conscience, or, I think, national consciousness,—no feeling of collective entity, of being a nation,—at all; perhaps no public opinion. As it is with a man when he sleeps: the soul is not there; there is nothing in that body that feels then ‘I am I’; nothing (normally) that can control the disordered dreams. . . . Hence, in the sleeping nation, the massacres, race-wars, mob-murders, and so on; which, we should remember, affect parts, not the whole, of the race. But on the other hand that very absence of brain-mind rule may imply Buddhic influences at work in quiet places; and one cannot tell what unknown graciousnesses may be happening, that our manvantaric livelinesses and commercialism quite forbid. . . . Believe me, if we understood the laws of history, we should waste a deal less time and sanity in yelling condemnations.

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Italy then was something like Turkey is now. Dear knows whom you might chance on, if you watched with anointed eyes . . . in St. Sophia . . . or among the Sabine hills. Somewhere or other, as I said just now, reminiscences of the Mysteries would have survived. I picture an old wise man, one of the guardians of those traditions, coming down from the mountains, somewhere between 1500 and 1000 B. C., to the little city on the Tiber; touching something in the hearts of the people there, and becoming,—why not?—their king. For I guess that this one was not so different from a hundred little cities you should have found strewn over Italy not so long ago. The ground they covered,—and this is still true,—would not be much larger than the Academy Garden; their streets but six or seven feet across. Their people were a tough, stern, robberish set; but with a side, too, to which saintliness (in a high sense) could make quick appeal. Intellectual culture they had none; the brain-mind was the last thing you should look for (in ancient Rome at least);—and just because it was dormant, one who knew how to go about it could take hold upon the Buddhic side. That was perhaps what this Numa Pompilius achieved doing. There would be nothing extraordinary in it. The same thing may be going on in lots of little cities today, in pralayic regions: news of the kind does not emerge. We have a way of dividing time into *ancient and modern;* and think the one forever past, the other forever to endure. It is quite silly. There are plenty of places now where it is 753 B.C.; and no doubt there were plenty then where it was pompous 1919. —Can anyone tell me, by the bye, what year it happens to be in Europe now?

How much Numa may have given his Romans, who can say? Most of it may have worn away, before historic times, under the stress of centuries of summer campaigns. But something he did ingrain into their being; and it lasted, because not incompatible with the life they knew. It was the element that kept that life from complete vulgarity and decay.

You have to strip away all Greekism from your conceptions, before you can tell what it was. The Greek conquest was the one Rome did not survive. Conquered Greece overflowed her, and washed her out; changed her traditions, her religion, the whole color of her life. If Greece had not stepped in, myth-making and euhemerizing, who would have saved the day at Lake Regillus? *Not* the Great Twin Brothers from lordly Lace-daemon, be sure. Who then? Some queer uncouth Italian nature-spirit gods? One shakes one's head in doubt: the Romans did not personalize their deities like the Greeks. Cato gives the ritual to be used at cutting down a grove; says he—"This is the proper Roman way to cut down a grove. Sacrifice with a pig for a peace-offering. This is the verbal formula: 'Whether thou art a god or a goddess to whom that grove is sacred,' "—and so on. Their gods were mostly like that: potentialities in the unseen, with whom good relations must be kept by strict observance of an elaborate ritual. There were no stories about them; they did not marry and have families like the good folk at Olympus.

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Which is perhaps a sign of this: that Numa's was a religion, the teaching of a (minor) Teacher who came long after the Mysteries had disappeared. Because in the Mysteries, cosmogenesis was taught through dramas which were symbolic representations of its events and processes; and out of these dramas grew the stories about the gods. But when the real spiritual teaching has ceased to flow through the Mysteries, and the stones are accepted literally, and there is nothing else to maintain the inner life of the people,—a Teacher of some kind must come to state things in plainer terms. This, I take it, is what happened here; and the very worn-outness of conditions that this implies, implies also tremendous cultural and imperial activities in forgotten time; I imagine Italy, then, at two or three thousand B.C., was playing a part as much greater outwardly than Greece was, as her part now is greater than Greece's, and has been during recent centuries.

This, then, is what Numa's religion did for Rome:—it peopled the woods and fields and hills with these impersonal divinities; it peopled the moments of the day with them; so that nothing in space or time, no near familiar thing or duty, was material wholly, or pertained to this world alone;—there was another side to it, connected with the unseen and the gods. There were Great Gods in the Pantheon; but your early Roman had no wide-traveling imagination; and they seemed to him remote and uncongenial rather,—-and quickly took on Greekishness when the Greek influence began. Minerva, vaguely imagined, assumed soon the attributes of the very concretely imagined Pallas; and so on. But he had nearer and Numaish divinities much more a part of his life,—which indeed largely consisted of rituals in their honor. There were Lares and Penates and Manes, who made his home a kind of temple, and the earth a kind of altar; there were deities presiding over all homely things and occasions; formless impersonal deities; presences to be felt and remembered, not clothed imaginatively with features and myths:—Cuba, who gave the new-born child its first breath; Anna Perenna of the recurring year; hosts of agricultural gods without much definition, and the unseen genii of wood, field, and mountain. Everything, even each individual man, had a god-side: there was something in it or him greater, more subtle, more enduring, than the personality or outward show.—To the folk-lorist, of course, it is all 'primitive Mediterranean' religion or superstition; but the inner worlds are wonderful and vast, if you begin to have the smallest inkling of an understanding of them. I think we may recognise in all this the hand of a wise old Pompilius from the Sabine hills, at work to keep the life of his Romans, peasant-bandits as they were, clean in the main and sound. Yes, there were gross elements: among the many recurring festivals, some were gross and saturnalian enough. The Romans kept near Nature, in which are, both animal and cleansing forces; but the high old *gravitas* was the virtue they loved. And supposing Numa established their religion, it does not follow that he established what there came to be of grossness in it.

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They kept near Nature; very near the land, and the Earth Breath, and the Earth Divinities, and the Italian soil,—and that southern laya center and gateway into the inner world which, I am persuaded, is in Italy. There are many didactic poems in world-literature,—poems dealing with the operations of agriculture;— and they are mostly as dull as you would expect, with that for their subject; but one of them, and one only, is undying poetry. That one is the Roman one. Its author was a Celt, and his models were Greek; and he was rather a patient imitative artist than greatly original and creative;—but he wrote for Rome, and with the Italian soil and weather for his inspiration; and their forces pouring through him made his didactics poetry, and poetry they remain after nineteen centuries. Nothing of the kind comes from Greece. As if whenever you broke the Italian soil, a voice sang up to you from it: *Once Saturn reigned in Italy!*

It is this that brings Cincinnatus back to his cabbage-field from the war,—and politics, as to something sacred, a fountain at which life may be renewed. Plug souls; no poetry in them;—but the Earth Breath cleanses and heals and satisfies them. In place of a literature, they have wild unpoetical chants to their Mayors to raise as they go into battle; for art and culture, they have that bright vermilion Jove; nothing from the Spirit to comfort them in these! But put the ex-dictator to hoe his turnips, and he is in a dumb sort of way in communication at once with the Spirit and all deepest sources of comfort. —What is Samnite gold to me, when I have my own radishes to toast,—sacred things out of my own sacred soil? The Italian sun shines down on me, and warms more than my physicality and limbs. See, I strike my hoe into Italy, and the sacred essences of Earth our Mother flow up to me, and quiet my mind from anxious and wasting thought, and fill me with calmness and vigor and Italy, and her old quaint immemorial gods!

Not that the Roman had any conception, patriotically speaking, about Italy; it was simply the soil he was after,—which happened to be Italian. Not for him, in the very slightest, Filicaia's or Mazzini's dream! Good practical soul, what would he have done with dreaming?—But he had his feet on the ground, and was soaked through, willy nilly, with its forces; he lived in touch with realities, with the seasons and the days and nights,—-how we do forget those great, simple, life-giving, cleansing things!—and his mind was molded to what he owed to the soil, to the realities, to *Dea Roma;*—and Duty became a great thing in his life. Out of all this comes something that makes this narrow little cultureless bandit city almost sympathetic to us,—and very largely indeed admirable.

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They knew how to keep their heads. There were those two races among them,—races or orders;—and a mort of politics between the two. Greek cities, in like manner but generally less radically divided, knew no method but for one side to be perpetually banishing the other, turn and turn about, and wholesale; but these spare, tough Romans effect compromise after compromise, till Patricians and Plebs are molten down into one common type. They are not very brilliant, even at their native game of war: given a good general, their enemies are pretty sure to trounce them. Pyrrhus, a fine tactician but no great strategist, does so several times;—and then they reply to his offers of peace, that they make no peace with enemies still camped on Italian soil.— Comes next a real master-strategist, Hannibal; and senate and people, time after time, are forced (like Balbus in the poem)

> "With a frankness that I'm sure will charm ye
> To own it is all over with the army."

He wipes them out in a most satisfactory and workmanlike manner. Their leading citizens, *ipso facto* their generals (amateur soldiers always cabbage-hoers at heart) afford him a good deal of amusement; as if you should send out the mayor of Jonesville, Arkansaw, against a Foch or a Hindenburg. One of them, a fool of a fellow, blunders into a booby-trap and loses the army which is almost the sole hope of Rome; and comes home, utterly defeated, —to be gravely thanked by the Senate for not committing suicide after his defeat: "for not despairing of the Republic." Ah, there is real Great Stuff in that; they are admirable peasant bandits after all! Most people would have straight court martialed and beheaded the man; as England hanged poor Admiral Byng *pour encourager les autres.* And all the while they have been having the sublime impudence to keep an army in Spain conquering there. How to account for this unsubduability? Well; there is Numa's teaching; and what you might call a latent habit of *Caput-Mundi-ship:* imperial seeds in the soil.

There is that indestructible god-side to everything; especially, behind and above this city on the seven hills, there is divine eternal ROME. So, after the Gaulish conquest, they rejected proffered and more desirable Etruscan sites, and came back and provided *Dea Roma* with a new out-ward being; the imperial seeds, molds of empire, were on the Seven Hills, not at Veii. So, when this still greater peril of Hannibal so nearly submerged them, they took final victory for granted,—could conceive of no other possibility,—and placidly went forward while being whipped in Italy with the adventure in Spain. There was one thing they could not imagine: ultimate defeat. It was a kind of stupidity with them. They were a stupid people. You might thrash them; you might give them their full deserts (which were bad), and fairly batter them to bits; all the world might think them dead; dozens

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of doctors might write death-certificates; you might have Rome coffined and nailed down, and be riding gaily to the funeral;—but you could not convince *her* she was dead; and at the very graveside, sure enough, the ‘pesky critter’ (as they say) would be bursting open the coffin lid; would finish the ceremony with you for the corpse, and then ride home smiling to enjoy her triumph, thank God for his mercies,—and get back to her hoe and her cabbages as quickly as might be.

It is this that to my mind makes it philosophically certain that she had had a vast antiquity as the seat of empire; I mean, before the Etruscan domination. *Dea Roma,*—-the Idea of Rome,— was an astral mold almost cast in higher than astral stuff: it was so firmly fixed, so unalterably there, that I cannot imagine a few centuries of peasant-bandits building it,—unimaginative tough creatures at the best. No; it was a heritage; it was built in thousands of years, and founded upon forgotten facts. There was something in the ideal world, the deposit of long ages of thinking and imagining. How, pray, are nations brought into being?

By men thinking and willing and imagining them into being. Such men create an astral matrix; with walls faint and vague at first, but ever growing stronger as more and more men reinforce them with new thought and will and imagination. But in Rome we see from the first the astral mold so strong that the strongest party feelings, the differences of a conqueror and a conquered race, are shaped by it into compromise after compromise. And then, too, an instinct among those peasant-bandits for empire: an instinct that few European peoples have possessed; that it took the English, for example, a much longer time to learn than it took the Romans. For let us note that even in those early days it was not such a bad thing to come under Roman sway; if you took it quietly, and were misled by no patriotic notions. That is, as a rule. Unmagnanimous always to men, Rome was not without justice, and even at times something quite like magnanimity, to cities and nations. She was no Athens, to exploit her subject peoples ruthlessly with never a troubling thought as to their rights. She had learned compromise and horse sense in her politics it home: if her citizens owed her a duty, —she assumed a responsibility towards them. It took her time to learn that; but she learned it. She went conquering on the same principle. Her plebeians had won their rights; in other towns, mostly, the plebeians had not.

Roman dominion meant usually a betterment of the conditions of the plebs in the towns annexed, and their entering in varying degrees upon the rights the plebs had won at Rome. She went forward taking things as they came, and making what arrangements seemed most feasible in each case. She made no plans in advance; but muddled trough like an Englishman. She had no Greek or French turn for thinking things out beforehand;

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her empire grew, in the main, like the British, upon a subconscious impulse to expand. She conquered Italy because she was strong; much stronger inwardly in spirit than outwardly in arms; and because (I do but repeat what Mr. Stobart says: the whole picture really is his) what should she do with her summer holidays, unless go on a campaign?—and because while she had still citizens without land to hoe cabbages in, she must look about and provide them with that prime necessity. All of which amounts to saying that she began with a habit of empire-winning,—which must have been created in the past. On her toughness the spirited Gaul broke as a wave, and fell away. On her narrow unmagnanimity the chivalrous mountain Samnite bore down, and like foam vanished. She had none of the spiritual possibilities of the Gaul; but the Crest-Wave was coming, and the future was with Italy. She had none of the high-souled chivalry of the Samnite; but she was the heart of Italy, and the point from which Italy must expand. She was hard, tough, and based on the soil; and that soil, as it happened, the laya center,—a sort of fire-fountain from within and the unseen. You stood on the Seven Hills, and let heaven and hell conspire together, you *could not* be defeated. Gauls, Samnites, Latins,—all that ever attacked her,—were but taking a house-cloth to dry up a running spring. The Crest-Wave was coming to Italy; whose vital forces, all centrifugal before, must now be made to turn and flow towards the center. That was Rome; and as they would not flow to her of their own good will, out she must go and gather them in. Long afterwards, when the Caesars and Augusti of the West left her for Milan and Ravenna, it was because the Crest-Wave was departing, the forces turning centrifugal, and Italy breaking to pieces; long afterwards again, in the eighteen-seventies, when the Crest-Wave was returning, Italy must flow in centripetally to Rome; no Turin, no Florence would do.

So, by 264 B.C., she had conquered Italy. Then, still land-hungry, she stepped over into Sicily, invited by certain rascals in Messana, and light-heartedly challenged the Mistress of the Western Seas. At this point the stream is leaving Balbus's fields and Ahenobarbus's cattle, and coming to the broad waters, where the ships of the world ride in.

XVII. ROME PARVENUE *

The Punic War was not forced on Rome. She had no good motive for it; not even a decent excuse. It was simply that she was accustomed to do the next thing; and Carthage presented itself as the next thing to fight,—Sicily, the next thing to be conquered. The war lasted from 264 to 241; and at the end of it Rome found herself out of Italy; mistress of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. The Italian laya center had expanded; Italy had boiled over. It was just the time when Ts'in at the other end of the world was conquering China, and the Far Eastern Manvantara was beginning. Manvantaras do

not begin or end anywhere, I imagine, without some cyclic event marking it in all other parts of the world.

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* This lecture, like the preceding one, is based on Mr. J. H. Stobart's, *The Grandeur that was Rome.*

We have heard much talk of how disastrous the result would have been if Carthage, not Rome, had won. But Carthage was a far and belated outpost of West Asia and of a manvantara that had ended over a century before:—there was no question of her winning. Though we see her only through Roman eyes, we may judge very well that no possibility of expansion was left in her. There was no expansive force. She threw out tentacles to suck in wealth and trade, but was already dead at heart. All the greatness of old West Asia was concentrated, in her, in two men: Hamilcar Barca and his son: they shed a certain light and romantic glory over her, but she was quite unworthy of them. Her prowess at any time was fitful: where money was to be made, she might fight like a demon to make it; but she was never a fighting power like Rome. She won her successes at first because her seat was on the sea, and the war was naval, and sea-battles were won not by fighting but by seamanship. If Carthage had won, they say;—but Carthage could not have won, because the cycles were for Rome. You will note how that North African rim is tossed between European and West Asian control, according to which is in the ascendant. Now that Europe's up, and West Asia down, France, Italy, and England hold it from Egypt to the Atlantic; and in a few centuries' time, no doubt it will be quite Europeanized. But West Asia, early in its last manvantara, flowed out over it from Arabia, drove out all traces of Europeanism, and made it wholly Asiatic. Before that, while a European manvantara was in being, it was European, no less Roman than Italy; and before that again, while the Crest-Wave was in West Asia, it was West Asian, under Egypt and Phoenician colonies. As for its own native races, they belong, I suppose, to the fourth, the Iberian Sub-race; and now in the days of our fifth Sub-race (the Aryan), seem out of the running for wielding empires of their own.

So if Carthage had won then, things would only have been delayed a little; the course of history would have been much the same. Rome might have been destroyed by Hannibal; she would have been rebuilt when Hannibal had departed; then gone on with her expansion, perhaps in other directions,—and presently turned, and come on Carthage from elsewhere; or absorbed her quietly, and let her do the carrying trade of the Mediterranean 'under the Roman flag' as you might say,—or something of that sort. Rome eradicated Carthage for the same reason that the Spaniards eradicated the Moors: because the West Asian tide, to which Moors and Carthaginians belonged, had ebbed or was ebbing, and the European tide was flowing high. Hamilcar indeed, and Hannibal, seem to have been touched by cyclic impulses, and to have felt that a Spanish Empire might have received the influx which a West Asian town in Africa

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could not. But Italy's turn came before Spain's; and all Hamilcar's haughty heroism, and Hannibal's magnanimous genius, went for nothing; and Rome, the admirable and unlovely, that had suffered the Caudine Forks, and then conquered Samnium and beheaded that noble generous Samnite Gaius Pontius, conquered in turn the conqueror at Cannae, and did for his reputation what she had done with the Samnite hero's person: chopped its head off, and dubbed him in perfect sincerity 'perfidus Hannibal.' Over that corpse she stood, at the end of the third century B.C., mistress of Italy and the Italian islands; with proud Carthage at her feet; and the old cultured East, that had known of her existence since the time of Aristotle at least, now keenly aware of her as the strongest thing in the Mediterranean world.

Now while she had been a little provincial town in an Italy deep in pralaya, Numa's religion, what remained of it, had been enough to keep her life from corruption. Each such impulse from the heaven-world's, in its degree, an elixiral tincture to sweeten life and keep it wholesome; some, like Buddhism, being efficient for long ages and great empires; some only for tiny towns like early Rome. What we may call the exoteric basis of Numaism was a ritual of many ceremonies connected with home-life and agriculture, and designed to keep alive a feeling for the sacredness of these. It was calculated for its cycle: you could have given no high metaphysical system to peasant-bandits of that type;—you could not take the Upanishads to Afghans or Abyssinians today. But as soon as that cycle was ended, and Rome was called on to come out into the world, there was need of a new force and a new sanction.

Has it occurred to you to wonder why, in that epochal sixth century B.C., when in so many lands the Messengers of Truth were turning away from the official Mysteries, and preaching their Theosophy upon a new plan broadcast among the peoples, Pythagoras, after wandering the east and west to gather up the threads of wisdom, should have elected not to return to Greece, but to settle in Italy and found his Movement there? I suppose the reason was this: He knew in what direction the cycles should flow, and that the greatest need of the future ages would be for a redeemed Italy; he foresaw, or Those who sent him foresaw, that it was Italy should mold the common life of Europe for a couple of thousand years. Greece was rising then, chiefly on the planes of intellect and artistic creation; but Italy was to rise after a few centuries on planes much more material, and therefore with a force much more potent and immediate in its effects in this world. The Age of Greece was nearer to the Mysteries; which might be trusted to keep at least some knowledge of Truth alive; the Age of Italy, farther away and on a lower plane, would be in need of a Religion. So he chose Croton, a Greek city, because if he had gone straight to the barbarous Italians, he could have

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said nothing much at that time,—and hoped that from a living center there, the light might percolate up through the whole peninsula, and be ready for Rome when Rome was ready for it. He left Athens to take care of itself;—much as H. P. Blavatsky chose New York at first, and not immediately the then world-capitals Paris and London;—I suppose we may say that Magna Graecia stood to old Greece in his time as America did to western Europe forty years ago. Had his Movement succeeded; had it struck well up into the Italian lands; how different the whole after-history of Europe might have been! Might?—certainly would have been! But we know that a revolution at Croton destroyed, at the end of the sixth century, the Pythagorean School; after which the hope and messengers of the Movement— Aeschylus, Plato—worked in Greece; and that although the Pythagorean individual Lucanians, Iapygians, and even Samnites— that noble Gaius Pontius of the Caudin Forks was himself a Pythagorean and a pupil of the Pythagorean Archytas,—it was, in the Teacher's own lifetime, practically broken up and driven out into Sicily, where those two great Athenians contacted it. We have seen that it was not effectless; and, what glimmer of it came down, through Plato, into the Middle Ages. But its main purpose: to supply nascent Italy with a saving World-Religion; had been defeated. Of all the Theosophical Movements of the time, this so far as we know was the only one that failed. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, each lasted on as a grand force for human upliftment; but Pythagoreanism, as an organized instrument of the Spirit, passed. When Aeschylus made his protests in Athens, the Center of the Movement to which he belonged had already been smashed. Plato did marvels; but the cycle had gone by and gone down, and it was too late for him to attempt that which Pythagoras had failed to accomplish.

So Rome, when she needed it most, lacked divine guidance; so drifted out on to the high seas of history pilotless and rudderless;—so *Weltpolitik* only corrupted and vulgarized her. She had no Blue Pearl of Laotse to render her immortal; no Confucian Doctrine of the Mean to keep her sober and straight; and hence it came that, though later a new start was made, and great men arose, once, twice, three times, to do their best for her, she fell to pieces at last, a Humpty-Dumpty that all the king's horses and all the king's men could never reweld into one;—and the place she should have filled in history as Unifier of Europe was only filled perfunctorily and for a time; and her great duty was never rightly done. *Hinc lacrimae aetatum*—hence the darkness and miseries of the Christian Era!

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Take your stand here, at the end of the Punic War, on the brink of the Age of Rome; and you feel at once how fearfully things have gone down since you stood, with Plato, looking back over the Age of Grecce. There is nothing left now of the high possibilities of artistic creation. Of the breath of spirituality that still remained in the world then, now you can find hardly a trace. A Cicero presently, for a Socrates of old; it is enough to tell you how the world has fallen. Some fall, I suppose, was implied in the cycles; still Rome might have gone to her more material duties with clean heart, mind, and hands; she might have built a structure, as Ts'in Shi Hwangti and Han Wuti did, to endure. It would not be fair to compare the Age of Han with the Augustan; the morning glory of the East Asian, with the late afternoon of the European manvantara; and yet we cannot but see, if we look at both dispassionately and with a decent amount of knowledge, how beneficently, the Eastern Teachers had affected their peoples, and what a dire thing it was for Europe that the work of the Western Teacher had failed. Chow China and Republican Rome fell to pieces in much the same way: in a long orgy of wars and ruin; —but the rough barbarian who rebuilt China found bricks to his hand far better than he knew he was using,— material with a true worth and vitality of its own,—a race with elements of redemption in its heredity; whereas the great statesman, the really Great Soul who rebuilt Rome, had to do it, if the truth should be told, of materials little better than stubble and rottenness. Roman life, when Augustus came to work with it for his medium, was fearfully infected with corruption; one would have said that no power human or divine could have saved it. That he did with it as much as he did, is one of the standing wonders of time.

But now back to the place where we left Rome: in 200 B.C., at the end of the Carthaginian War. No more now of Farmer Balbus's fields; no more of the cows of Ahenobarbus; Dolabella's rod and line, and his fish-stories, shall not serve us further. It is the navigable river now; on which we must sail down and out on to the sea.

Already the little Italian city is being courted by fabulously rich Egypt, the doyen of culture since Athens declined; and soon she is to be driven by forces outside her control into conquest of all the old seats of Mediterranean civilization;—and withal she is utterly unfitted for the task in any spiritual or cultural sense: she is still little more than the same narrow little provincial half-barbarous Rome she has always been. No grand conceptions have been nourished in her by a literature of her own with high lights couched in the Grand-Manner; no olden Homer has sung to her, with magnificent roll of hexameters to set the wings of her soul into magnificent motion. Beyond floating folk ballads she has had no literature at all; though latterly, she is trying to supply the

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place of one with a few slave-made translations from the Greek, and a few imitations of the decadent Greek comedy of Alexandria;—also there has been a poet Naevius, whom —she found altogether too independent to suit her tastes; and a Father Ennius,—-uncouth old bone of her bone, (though he too Greek by race) who is struggling to mold her tough inflexible provincial dialect into Greek meter of sorts,—and thereby doing a real service for poets to come. And there is a Cato the Censor, writing prose; Cato, typical of Roman breadth of view; with, for the sum of a truly national political wisdom, yelping at Rome continually that fool's jingo cry of his:—your finest market in the western seas, your richest potential commercial asset, must be destroyed. There you have the high old Roman conception of *Weltpolitik;* whereby we may understand how little fitted Rome was for *Weltpolitik* at all; how hoeing cabbages and making summer campaigns,—as Mr. Stobart says, with a commissariat put up for each soldier in a lunch-bag by his wife,—were still her metier,—the Italian soil, whether in actual or only potential possession—held already, or by the grace of God soon to be stolen—still her inspiration. And this Italian soil she was now about to leave forever.

The forces that led her to world-conquest were twofold, inner and outer. The inner one was the summer campaign habit, formed during several centuries; and the fact that she could form no conception of life that did not include it: the impulse to material expansion was deep in her soul, and ineradicable. She might have followed it, perhaps, north and westward; finished with Spain; gone up into Gaul (though in Gaul she might have found, even at that time, possibly, an unmanageable strength); she might even have carried her own ultimite salvation up into Germany. But we have seen Darius flow victorious eastward towards India, but unsuccessful when he tried the passes of the west; and Alexander follow him in the same path, and not turn westward at all. So you may say an eastward habit had been formed, and inner-channels were worn for conquest in that direction, but none in the other. Besides,—and this was the outer of the two forces,—the East was crying out to Rome. There were pirates on the other side of the Adriatic; and for the safety of her own eastern littoral she had been dealing with them, as with Spain, during and before the terrible Hannibalic time. To sit securely at home she must hold the Illyrian coast: and, she thought, or events proved it to her, to hold that coast safely, she must go conquering inland. Then again Egypt had courted her alliance, for regions. The Ptolemy of the time was a boy; and Philip of Macedon ind Antiochus of Syria had hatched a plan to carve up his juicy realm for their own most delectable feasting. It was the very year after peace—to call it that—had been forced on prostrate Carthage; and you might think an exhausted Rome would have welcomed

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a breathing time, even at the expense of losing her annual outing. And so indeed the people were inclined to do. But the summer was icumen in; and what were consuls and Senate for? Should they be as these irresponsibles of the comitia? Should they fail to look about them and take thought?—As if someone should offer you a cottage (with all modern appointments) by the seaside, or farmhouse among the mountains, free of rent for July and August, here were all the respectabilities of the East cooingly inviting Rome to spend her summer with them; they to provide all accessories for a really enjoyable time.

In this way eastern politics assorted themselves,—thus was the Levant divided: on the one hand you had the traditional seats of militariasm; on the other, famous names—and the heirs to the glory (a good deal tarnished now) that once had been Greece. The former were Macedon and Syria, or Macedon with Syria in the background; what better could you ask that a good square se-to with these? Oh, one at a time; that was the fine old Roman way; *divide et impera;* Mecedon now, and, a-grace of God, Syria—But let be; we are talking of this summer; for next, the Lord (painted bright vermilion) it may be hoped will provide. So for the present Philip of Mecedon figures as the desired enemy. —As to the other side, the famous names to be our allies, they are: Egypt, chief seat in recent centuries of culture and literature, and incidentally the Golconda of the time, endowed past dreaming of with commerce, wealth, and industries; and Rhodes, rich and republican, and learned too; and the sacred name of Athens; and Pergamum in Asia, cultured Attalus's kingdom. Are we not to ally ourselves with the arts and humanities, with old fame, with the most precious of traditions?—For Rome, it must be said, was not all Catos: there was something in her by this time that could thrill to the name of Greece. And Philip had been in league with Hannibal, though truly he had left him shamefully unsupported. *Philip had been in league with Hannibal—with Hannibal!* —Why, it was a glorious unsought fight, such as only fortune's favored soldiers might attain. The comitia vote against it? They say Hannibal has made them somewhat tired?—Nonsense! let 'em vote again! let 'em vote again!—They do so; assured pithily that it is only a question whether we fight Philip in Macedon, or he us on our own Italian soil. Of course, if you put it that way, it is Hobson's choice: the voting goes all right this time. So we are embarked on the great Eastern Adventure; and Flamininus sets out for Greece.

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Now your simple savage is often a gentleman. I don't mean your Congo Quashi or Borria Bungalee from the back-country blocks of New South Wales—our Roman bore no resemblance to them; but say your Morocco kaid, your desert chieftain from Tunis or Algiers. Though for long generations he has lost his old-time civilized attainments, he retains in full his manners, his native dignity, his wild Saharan grace. But banish him to Paris, and see what happens. He buys up automobiles,—and poodles,—and astrolabes, —and patent-leather boots,—and a number of other things he were much better without. He exchanges his soul for a pass into the *demi-monde;* and year by year sees him further sunk into depths of vulgarism. This is precisely what in a few generations happened to Rome.

But meanwhile she was at an apex; touched by some few luminous ideals here and there, and producing some few great gentlemen. Unprovincial egos; like Scipio Africanus had been edging their way into Roman incarnation; they were swallows of a still far-off summer; they stood for Hellenization, and the modification of Roman rudeness with a little imported culture. Rome had conquered Magna Graccia, and had seen something there; had felt a want in herself, and brought in slaves like Livius Andronicus to supply it. Flamininus himself was really a very great gentleman: a patrician, type of the best men there were in Rome. He went to Greece thrilled with generous feelings, as to a sacred land. When he restored to the Greek cities their freedom,— handed them back to their own uses and devices, after freeing them from Philip,—it was with an infinite pride and a high simplicity. We hear of him overcome in his speech to their representatives on that occasion, and stopping to control the lump in his throat: conqueror and master of the whole peninsula and the islands, he was filled with reverence, as a great simple-hearted gentleman might be, for the ancient fame and genius of the peoples at his feet. He and his officers were proud to be admitted to the Games and initiated at Eleusis. I think this is the finest chapter in early Roman history. There is the simplicity, pride, and generosity of the Roman gentleman, confronted with a culture he was able to admire, but conscious he did not possess;—and on the other hand the fine flow of Greek gratitude to the liberator of Greece, in whom the Greeks recognised that of old time, and which had been so rare in their own life. At this moment Rome blossomed: a beautiful bloom, we may say.

But it was a fateful moment for her, too. The Greeks had long lost what capacity they had ever had for stable politics. Flamininus might hand them back their liberties with the utmost genuineness of heart; but they were not in a condition to use the gift. Rome soon found that she had no choice but to annex them, one way or another. They were her proteges; and Antiochus attacked them;—so then Antiochus had to be fought and conquered. That fool had great Hannibal with him, and resources with which Hannibal might have crushed Rome; but it did not suit Antiochus that the glory should be Hannibal's. Then presently Attalus bequeathed Pergamum to the Senate; which involved Rome in Asia Minor. So step by step she was compelled to conquer the East.

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Now there was a far greater disparity of civilization between Rome and this Hellenistic Orient and half-orientalized Greece, than appeared afterwards between the Romans and Spaniards and Gauls. Spain, very soon after Augustus completed its conquest, was producing most of the brightest minds in Latin literature: the influx of important egos had hardly passed from Italy before it began to appear in Spain. Had not Rome become the world metropolis, capable of attracting to herself all elements of greatness from every part of the Mediterranean world, we should think of the first century A.D., as a great Spanish Age. Gaul, too, within a couple of generations of Ceasar's devastating exploits there, had become another Egypt for wealth and industries. The grandson's of the Vercingetorixes and Dumnorixes were living more splendidly, and as culturedly, in larger and better villas than the patricians of Italy; as Ferrero shows. We may judge, too, that there was a like quick rise of manvantaric conditions in Britain after the Claudian conquest: we have news of Agricola's speaking of the "labored studies of the Gauls," as if that people were then famed for learning,—to which, he said, he preferred the "quick wits and natural genius of the Britons." And here I may mention that, even before the conquest of Gaul, Caesar's own tutor was a man of that nation, a master of Greek and Latin learning;—but try to imagine a Roman tutoring Epaminondas or Pelopidas! So we may gather that a touch from Italy—by that time highly cultured,—-was enough to light up those Celtic countries at once; and infer from that that no such long pralayic conditions had obtained in them as had obtained in Italy during the centuries preceding the Punic Wars. Spain at thirteen decades before Scipio, Gaul at as much before Caesar, Britain at as much before Caesar or Claudius, may well have been strong and cultured countries: because you wake quickly after the thirteen decade period of rest, but slowly after the long pralayas.

Roman Italy woke very slowly at the touch of Greece; and woke, not like Spain and Gaul afterwards at Rome's touch, to culture; not to learning or artistic fertility. What happened was what always does happen when a really inferior civilization comes in contact with a really superior one. Rome did not become civilized in any decent sense: she simply forwent Roman virtues and replaced them with Greek vices; and made of these, not the vices of a degenerate culture, but the piggishness of cultureless boors.—-Behold her Gadarene stations, after Flamininus's return:—

Millions of money, in indemnities, loot, and what not,—in bribes before very long,—are flowing in to her. Where not so long since she was doing all her business with stamped lumps of bronze or copper, a pound or so in weight, in lieu of coinage, nor feeling the need of anything more handy,—now she is receiving yearly, monthly, amounts to be reckoned in millions sterling; and has no more good notion

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what to do with them than ever she had of old. If the egos (of Crest-Wave standing) had come in as quickly as did the shekels, things might have gone manageably; but they did not by any means. Her great misfortune was to enter the world-currents only on the material plane; to find her poor little peasant-bandit-souled self mistress of the world and its money, and still provincial to the core and with no ideas of bigness that were not of the earth earthy; with nothing whatever that was both spiritual and Roman to thrill to life the higher side of her;—a multimillionaire that could hardly read or write, and knew no means of spending her money that was not essentially vulgar. She had given up her sole means of salvation—which was hoeing cabbages; her slaves did all that for her now;—and so was at a loss for employment; and Satan found plenty of mischief for her idle hands to do. There were huge all-day-long banquets, where you took your emetic from time to time to keep you going. There were slaves,—armies of them; to have no more than a dozen personal attendants was poverty. There were slaves from the East to minister to your vices; some might cost as much as five thousand dollars; and there were dirt-cheap Sardinians and 'barbarians' of all sorts to run your estates and farms. All the work of Italy was done by slave labor; and the city swarmed with an immense slave population; the country slaves with enough of manhood left in them to rise and butcher and torture their masters when they could; the city slaves, one would say, in no condition to keep the semblance of a soul in them at all,—living dead. For the most part both were shamefully treated; Cato,— high old Republican Cato, type of the free and nobly simple Roman—used to see personally to the scourging of his slaves daily after dinner, as a help to his digestion.—So the rich wasted their money and their lives. They bought estates galore, and built villas on them; Cicero had—was it eighteen?— country-houses. They bought up Greek art-treasures, of which they had no appreciation whatever,—and which therefore only helped to vulgarize them. Such things were costly, and thought highly of in Greece; so Rome would have them for her money, and have them *en masse.* Mummius brought over a shipload; and solemnly warned his sailors that they would have to replace any they might break or lose. The originals, or such substitutes as the sailors might supply,—it was all one to him. As to literature,—well, we have seen how it began with translations made by a Greek slave, Livius Andronicus, who put certain Hellenistic comedies and the Odyssey into Latin ballad meters; the kind of verse you would expect from a slave ordered promiscuously by his master to get busy and do it. Then came Father Ennius; and here I shall diverge a little to try to show you what (as I think) really happened to the soul of Rome.

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It was a queer set-out, this job that Ennius attempted,—of making a real Roman poem, an epic of Roman history. Between old Latin and Greek there was the same kind of difference as between French and English: one fundamental in the rhythm of the languages. I am giving my own explanation of a very puzzling problem; and needless to say, it may be wrong. The ancient Roman ballads were in what is called Saturnian meter, which depends on stress and accent; it is not unlike the meter of the Scotch and English ballads. That means that old Latin was spoken like English is, with syllabic accent. But Greek was not. In that, what counted, what made the meters, was tone and quantity. Now we have that in English too; but it is a subtler and more occult influence in poetry than accent is. In English, the rhythm of a line of verse depends on the stresses; but where there is more than rhythm,—where there is music,—quantity is a very important factor. For example, in the line

> "That carried the take to Sligo town to be sold,"

you can hear how the sound is held up on the word *take,* because the *k* is followed by the *t* in *to;* and what a wonderful musical effect is given thereby to the line. All the swing and lilt and rhythm of Greek poetry came in that way; there were no stresses, no syllabic accents; the accents we see written were to denote the tones the syllables should be—shall I say *sung on?* Now French is an example of a language without stresses; you know how each syllable falls evenly, all taking an unvarying amount of time to enounce. I imagine the basic principle of Greek was the same; only that you had to add to the syllables a length of sound where two consonants combining after a vowel retarded the flow of tone, as in *take to* in the line quoted just now.

Now if you try to write a hexameter in English on the Greek principle, you get something without the least likeness either to a Greek hexameter or to music; because the language is one of stresses, not, primarily, of tones.

"This is the forest pimeval; the murmuring pines and the hemlocks."

will not do at all; there is no Greek spondee in it but—*rest prime*—; and Longfellow would have been surprised if you had accused that of spondeeism. What you would get would be something like these—I forget who was responsible for them:

> "Procession, complex melodies, pause, quantity, accent,
> After Virgilian precedent and practice, in order."

Lines like these could never be poetry; poetry could never be couched in lines like these;—simply because poetry is an arrangement of words upon a frame-work of music: the poet has to hear the music within before his words can drop naturally into the places in accordance with it. You could not imitate a French line in English, because each of the syllables would have to be equally stressed; you could not imitate an

English line in French, because in that language there are none of the stresses on which an English line depends for its rhythm.

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But when I read Chaucer I am forced to the conclusion that what he tried to do was precisely that: to imitate French music; to write English without regard to syllabic accent. The English lyrics of his time and earlier depend on the principle of accent:

Sum'—mer is'—i-cum'—en in,
Loud'—e sing'—cuccu';

—but time and again in Chaucer's lines we find that if we allow the words their natural English stresses, we break up the music altogether; whereas if we read them like French, without syllabic accent, they make a very reasonable music indeed. Now French had been in England the language of court and culture; it was still spoken in polite circles at Stratforde-at-le-Bowe; and Chaucer was a courtier, Anglo-French, not Anglo-Saxon; and he had gone to France for his first models, and had translated a great French poem; and Anglo-Saxon verse-methods were hardly usable any longer. So it may well have appeared to him that serious poetry was naturally French in meter and method. There was no model for what he wanted to do in English; the English five-iambic line had not been invented, and only the popular lyricists, of the proletariat, sang in stresses. And anyhow, as the upper classes, to which he belonged more or less, were only growing out of French into English, very likely they pronounced their English with a good deal of French accent.

Now it seems to me that something of the same kind, with a difference, is what happened with Ennius. You are to understand him as, though Greek by birth, *Romanior ipsis Romanis:* Greek body, but ultra-Roman ego. One may see the like thing happen with one's own eyes at any time: men European-born, who are quite the extremest Americans. In his case, the spark of his Greek heredity set alight the Roman conflagration of his nature. He was born in Calabria, a Roman subject, in 239; and had fought for Rome before Cato, then quaestor, brought him in his train from Sardinia in 204.

A glance at the cycles, and a measuring-up of things with our thirteen-decade yardstick, will suggest the importance of the time he lived in. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* gives A.D. 42 as the date for the end of the golden Age of Latin Literature. Its first great names are those of Cicero, Caesar, and Lucretius. Thirteen decades before 42 A.D., or in 88 B.C., these three were respectively eighteen, fourteen, and eight years old; so we may fairly call that Golden Age thirteen decades long, and beginning in 88. Thirteen decades back from that bring us to 218; and as much more from that, to 348. You will remember 348 as the year of the death of Plato, which we took as marking the end of the Golden Age of Greek. In 218 Ennius was twenty-one. He was the Father of Latin Poetry; as Cato the Censor, seven years his junior, was the Father of Latin Prose. So you see, he came right upon a Greek cycle; right upon the dawn of what should have been a new Greek day, with the night of Hellenisticism in between. And he took, how shall I put it?—the forces of that new day, and transmuted them, in himself as crucible,

from Greek to Roman... A sort of Channel through which the impulse was deflected from Greek to Latin...

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I think that, thtilled with a patriotism the keener-edged because it was acquired, he went to work in this way:—He was going to make one of these long poems, like those (inferior) Greek fellows had; and he was going to make it in Latin. (I do not know which was his native language, or which tradition he grew up in.) He didn't see why we Romans should not have our ancient greatness sung in epic; weren't we as good as Homer's people, anyhow? Certainly we were; and a deal better! Well, of course there was our old Saturnian meter; but that wasn't the kind of way serious poetry was written. Serious poetry was written in hexameters. If Greek was his native tongue, he may have spoken Latin all his life, of course, with a Greek accent; and the fact that he was sitting down to make up his 'poem' in a meter which no native-born Latin speaker could hear as a meter at all, may have been something of which he was profoundly unconscious. But that is what he did. He ignored (mostly) the stresses and accents natural to Latin, and with sweet naivete made a composition that would have scanned if it had been Greek, and that you could make scan by reading with a Greek rhythm or accent. The Romans accepted it. That perhaps is to say, that he had no conception at all of poetry as words framed upon an inner music. I think he was capable of it; that most Romans of the time, supposing they had had the conviction of poethood, would have been capable of it. It was the kind of people they were.

But that was not all there was to Ennius, by any means. A poet-soul had incarnated there; he had the root of the matter in him; it was only the racial vehicle that was funny, as you may say. He was filled with a high conception of the stern grandeur Romans admired; and somehow or other, his lines carry the impress of that grandeur at times: there is inspiration in them.

And now comes the point I have fetched all this compass to arrive at. By Spenser's time, or earlier, in England, all traces of Chaucer's French accent had gone; the language and the poetry had developed on lines of their own, as true expressions of the national soul. But in Rome, not so. Two centuries later great Roman poetry was being written: a major poet was on the scenes, —Virgil. He, I am certain, wrote with genuine music and inspiration. We have accounts of his reading of his own poems; how he was carried along by the music, chanting the lines in a grand voice that thrilled all who heard. He chanted, not spoke, them; poets always do. They formed themselves, grew in his mind, to a natural music already heard there, and existent before the words arose and took shape to it. That music is the creative force at work, the whirr of the loom of the Eternal; it is the golden-snooded Muses at song. And therefore he was not, like Ennius, making up his lines on an artificial foreign plan; to my mind that is unthinkable; —he was writing in the Latin spoken by the cultured; in Latin

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as all cultured Romans spoke it. But, *mirabile dictu,* it was Latin as Ennius had composed it: he was writing in Ennius' meter. I can only understand that Greek had so swamped the Latin soul, that for a century or more cultured Latin had been spoken in quantity, not in accent; in the Greek manner, and with the Greek rhythm. Ennius had come to be appreciable as meter and music to Roman ears; which he certainly could not have been in his own day.

So we may say that there is in a sense no Roman literature at all. Nothing grew out of the old Saturnian ballad-meter,—except perhaps Catullus, who certainly had no high inspiring impersonal song to sing. The Roman soul never grew up, never learned to express itself in its own way; before it had had time to do so, the Greek impulse that should have quickened it, swamped it. You may think of Japan, swamped by Chinese culture in the sixth century A.D., as a parallel case; but no; there Buddhism, under real spiritual Teachers, came in at the same time, and fostered all that was noblest in the Japanese soul, so that the result was fair and splendid. A more cognate case is that of the Turks, who suffered through suddenly conquering Persia while they were still barbarous, and taking on, outwardly, Persian culture wholesale; Turkish and Latin literature are perhaps on a par for originality. But if the Greek impulse had touched and wakened Rome under the aegis of Pythagoreanism,—Rome might have become, possibly, as fine a thing as Japan. True, the Crest-Wave had to roll in to Rome presently, and to raise up a great literature there. But whose is the greatest name in it? A Gaul's, who imitated Greek models. There is something artificial in the combination; and you guess that whatever most splendid effort may be here, the result cannot be supreme. The greatest name in Latin prose, too,—Livy's—was that of a Gaul.

And herefrom we may gather what mingling of forces is needed to produce the great ages and results in literature. You have a country; a tract of earth with the Earth-breath playing up through the soil of it; you have the components or elements of a race mixed together on that soil, and molded by that play of the Earth-breath into homogeneity, and among them, from smallest beginnings in folk-verse, the body of a literature must grow up. Then in due season it must be quickened: on the outer plane by an impulse from abroad,—intercourse with allies, or resistance to an invader; and on the inner, by an inrush of Crest-Wave egos. There must be that foreign torch applied,—that spark of inter-nationalism; and there must be the entry of the vanguard of the Host of Souls with its great captains and marshals, bringing with them, to exhibit once more in this world, the loot of many lands and ages and old incarnations; which thing they shall do through a sudden efflorescence of the literature that has grown up slowly to the point of being ready for them. Such natural growth happened in Greece,

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in China; in our own cycle, in France, Italy, England: where the trees of the nation literatures received buddings and manurings from abroad, but produced always their own natural national fruit:—Shakespeare was your true English apple, grown from the Chaucer stock; although in him flower for juices the sweetness and elixir of all the world and the ancient ages. But in Rome, before the stock was more than a tiny seedling, a great branch of Greece was grafted on it,—and a degenerate Greece at that—and now we do not know even what kind of fruit-tree that Roman stock should have grown to be.

How, then, did this submersion and obliteration of the Roman soul come to pass? It is not difficult to guess. Greek meant culture: if you wanted culture you learnt Greek. All education was in Greek hands. The Greek master spoke Latin to his boys; no doubt with a Greek accent. So cultured speech, cultured Latin, came to mean Latin without its syllabic stresses; spoken, as nearly as might be, with Greek evenness and quantity.—-As if French should so submerge us, that we spoke our United States dapping out syllable by syllable like Frenchmen. But it is a fearful thing for a nation to forgo the rhythm evolved under the stress of its own Soul,—especially when what it takes on instead is the degenerate leavings of another: Alexandria, not Athens. This Rome did. She gained the world, and lost her own soul; and the exchange profited her as little as you might expect.

Imitation of culture is often the last touch that makes the parvenu unbearable; it was so in Rome. One likes better in some ways Cato's stult old Roman attitude: who scorned Greek all his life for sheer foppery, while he knew of nothing better written in it than such trash as poetry and philosophy; but at eighty came on a Greek treatise on manure and straightway learned the language that he might read and enjoy something profitable and thoroughly Roman in spirit.—Greek artists flocked to Rome; and doubtless the more fifth-rate they were the better a thing they made of it: but it was risky for good men to rely on Roman appreciations. Two flute-players are contending at a concert; Greek and perhaps rather good. Their music is soon drowned in catcalls: What the dickens do we Romans want with such *footling tootlings?* Then the presiding magistrate has an idea. He calls on them to quit that fooler and get down to business:—Give us our money's worth, condemn you to it, ye naughty knaves: *fight!*—And fight they must, poor things, while the audience, that but now was bored to death, howls with rapture.

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So Rome passed away. Where now is the simple soul who, while his feet were on his native soil and he asked nothing better than to hoe his cabbages and turn out yearly for patriotic throat-cuttings, was reputable—nay, respect-worthy,—and above all, not a little picturesque? Alas! he is no more.—You remember Kelly,—lovable Kelly, who in his youth, trotting the swate ould bogs of Cohhacht, heard poetry in every sigh of the wind,—saw the hosts of the Danaan Sidhe riding their flamey steeds through the twilight,—listened, by the cabin peat-fire in the evenings, to tales of Finn MacCool and Cuculain and the ancient heroes and Gods of Ireland?—Behold this very Kelly now!—What! is this he?—this raucous, pushing, red-haired, huge-handed, green-necktied vulgarian who has made his pile bricklaying in Chicago;—this ward-politician; this—Well, well; *Sic transit gloria mundi!* And the Roman cad of the second century B.C. was worse than a thousand Kellys. He had learned vice from past-masters in the Levant; and added to their lessons a native brutality of his own. His feet were no longer on the Italian soil; *that* was nothing sacred to him now. His moral went as his power grew. His old tough political straightforwardness withered at the touch of Levantine trickery; his subjects could no longer expect a square deal from him. He sent out his gilded youth to govern the provinces, which they simply fleeced and robbed shamelessly; worse than Athens of old, and by much. The old predatory instinct was there still: Hellenisticism had supplied no civilizing influence to modify that. But it was there minus whatever of manliness and decency had once gone with it.

Karma travels by subtle and manifold links from the moral cause to the physical effect. There are historians who will prove to you that the ruin of Rome came of economic causes: which were, in fact, merely some of the channels through which Karma flowed. They were there, of course; but we need not enlarge on them too much. The secret of it all is this: a people without the Balance of the Faculties, without the saving doctrine of the Mean, with but one side of their character developed, was called by cyclic law, while still semi-barbarian, to assume huge responsibilities in the world. Their qualities were not equal to the task. The sense of the Beautiful, their feeling for Art and Poetry, had not grown up with their mateial strength. Why should it? some may ask; are not strength and moral enough?—No; they are not: because it is only the Balance which can keep you on the right path; strength without the beauty sense,—yes, even fortitude, strength of will,—turns at the touch of quickening time and new and vaster conditions, into gaucherie, disproportion, brutality; ay, it is not strength:—the saving quality of strength, morale, dribbles out and away from it: only the Balance is true strength. The empires that were founded upon uncompassion, through they

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swept the world in a decade, within a poor century or so were themselves swept away. Rome, because she was only strong, was weak; her virtues found no exit into life except in things military; the most material plane, the farthest from the Spirit. Her people were not called, like the Huns or Mongols, to be a destroyer race: the Law designed them for builders. But to build you must have the Balance, the proportionate development spiritual, moral, mental, and physical: it is the one foundation. Rome's grand assets at the start were a sense of duty, a natural turn for law and order: grand assets indeed, if the rest of the nature be not neglected or atrophied. In Rome it was, largely.

To be strong-willed and devoted to duty, and without compassion: —that means that you are in train to grow a gigantic selfhood, which Nature abhors; emptiness of compassion is the vacuum nature most abhors. You see a strong man with his ambitions: scorning vices, scorning weakness; scorning too, and lashing with his scorn, the weak and vicious; bending men to his will and purposes. Prophesy direst sorrow for that man! Nature will not be content that he shall travel his chosen path till a master of selfishness and a great scourge for mankind has been evolved in him. She will give him rope; let him multiply his wrong-doings; because, paradoxically, in wrong-doing is its own punishment and cure. His selfishness sinks by its own weight to the lowest levels; prophesy for him that in a near life he shall be the slave of his body and passions, yet keeping the old desire to excel;—that common vice shall bring him down to the level of those he scorned, while yet he forgets not the mountain-tops he believed his place of old. Then he shall be scourged with self-contempt, the bitterest of tortures; and the quick natural punishments of indulgence shall be busy with him, snake-locked Erinyes with whips of wire. In that horrible school, struggling to rise from it, he shall suffer all that a human being can in ignominy, sorrow and shame;—and at last shall count it all well worth the while, if it has but taught him That which is no atribute, but Alaya's self,—-Compassion. So Karma has its ministrants within ourselves; and the dreadful tyrants within are to be disthroned by working and living, not for self, but for man. This is why Brotherhood is the doctrine and practice that could put a stop to the awful degeneratioin of mankind.

Rome was strong without compassion; so her strength led her on to conquests, and her conquests to vices, and her vices to hideous ruin and combustion. She loved her *gravitas,*—which implied great things;—but contemned the Beautiful; and so, when a knowledge of the Beautiful would have gone far to save her, by maintaining in her a sense of proportion and the fitness of things—she lost her morale and became utterly vulgarian. But think of China, taking it as a matter of course that music was an essential part of government; or

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of France, with her *Ministre des Beaux Arts* in every cabinet. Perhaps; these two, of all historical nations, have made the greatest achievements; for you must say that neither India nor Greece was a nation.—As for Rome, with all her initial grandeur, it would be hard to find another nation of her standing that made such an awful mess of it as she did; one refers, of course, to Republican Rome; when Augustus had had his way with her, it was another matter.

She took the Gadarene slope at a hand-gallop; and there you have her history during the second century B.C. Not till near the end of that century did the egos of the Crest-Wave begin to come in in any numbers. From the dawn of the last quarter, there or thereabouts, all was an ever-growing rout and riot; the hideous toppling of the herd over the cliff-edge. It was a time of wars civil and the reverse; of huge bloody conscriptions and massacre; reforms and demagogism and murder of the Gracchi:— Marius and Sulla cat and dog;—the original Spartican movement, that wrecked Italy and ended with six thousand crucifixions along the road to Capua;—ended so, and not with a slave conquest and wiping-out of Rome, simply because Spartacus's revolted slave-army was even less disciplined than the legions that Beast-Crassus decimated into a kind of order and finally conquered them with. It was decade after decade of brutal devasting wars, —wars chronic and incurable, you would say: the untimely wreck and ruin of the world.

It is a strange gallery of portraits that comes down to us from this time: man after notable man arising without the qualities that could save Rome. Here are a few of the likenesses, as they are given Dr. Stobart: there were the Gracchi, with so much that was fine in them, but a ruining dash of the demagog,—an idea that socialism could accomplish anything real;—and no wisdom to see through to ultimite causes. There was Marius, simple peasant with huge military genius: a wolf of a soldier and foolish lamb of a politician; a law-maker who, captured by the insinuations and flatteries of the opposite side, swears to obey his own laws "so far as they may be legal." There was Sulla, of the class of men to which Alcibiades and Alexander belonged, but an inferior specimen of the class and unscrupulous rip, and a brave successful commander; personally beautiful, till his way of living made his face "like a mulberry sprinkled with flour";— with many elements of greatness always negatived by sudden fatuities; much of genius, more of fool, and most of rake-helly demirep; highly cultured, and plunderer of Athens and Delphi; great general, who maintained his hold on his troops by unlimited tolerance of undiscipline. There was Crassus the millionaire, and all his millions won by cheatery and ugly methods; the man with the slave fire-brigade, with which he made a pretty thing out of looting at fires. There was Cicero, with many noble and Roman qualities and a large foolish vanity: thundering orator with more than a *soupcon* of the vaudeville favorite in him: a Hamlet who hardly showed his real fineness until he came to die.

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And there was Pompey;—real honesty in Pompey, perhaps the one true-hearted gentleman of the age: a man of morale, and a great soldier,—who might have done something if his general intelligence had been as great as his military genius and his sense of honor:—surely Pompey was the best of the lot of them; only the cursed spite was that the world was out of joint, and it needed something more than a fine soldier and gentleman to set it right.—And then Caesar—could he not do it? Caesar, the Superman,—the brilliant all-round genius at last,—the man of scandalous life—-scandalous even in that cesspool Rome,—the epileptic who dreamed of world-dominion,—the conqueror of Gaul, says H.P. Blavatsky, because in Gaul alone the Sacred Mysteries survived in their integrity, and it was his business, on behalf of the dark forces against mankind, to quench their life and light for ever;—could not this Caesar do it? No; he had the genius; but not that little quality which all greatest personalities,—all who have not passed beyond the limits of personality: tact, impersonality, the power that the disciple shall covet, to make himself as nothing in the eyes of men:— and because he lacked that for armor, there were knives sharpened which should reach his heart before long.—And then, in literature, two figures mentionable: Lucretius, thinker and philosopher in poetry: a high Roman type, and a kind of materialist, and a kind of God's warrior, and a suicide. And Catullus: no noble type; neither Roman nor Greek, but Italian perhaps; singing in the old Saturnian meters with a real lyrical fervor, but with nothing better to sing than his loves.—And then, in politics again, Brutus: type, in sentimental history of the Republican School, of the high old roman and republican virtues; Brutus of the "blood-bright splendor," the tyrant-slayer and Roman Harmodios-Aristogeiton; the adored of philosophic French liberty-equality-fraternity adorers; Shakespeare's "noblest Roman of them all";—O how featly Cassius might have answered, when Brutus accused him of the "itching palm," if he had only been keeping *au fait* with the newspapers through the preceding years! *"Et tu, Brute,"* I hear him say, quoting words that should have reminded his dear friend of the sacrd ties of friendship,—

"Art thou the man will rate thy Cassius thus? This is the most unkindest cut of all; For truly I have filched a coin or two:— Have been, say, *thrifty;* gathered here and there *Pickings,* we'll call them; but, my Brutus, thou— Didst thou not shut the senators of Rhodes (I think 'twas Rhodes) up in their senate-house, And keep them there unfoddered day by day. Until starvation forced them to disgorge All of their million to thee? Didst not thou—"

Brutus is much too philosophical, much to studious, to listen to qualities of that kind, and cuts the conversation short right there. Cassius was right: that about starving the senators of his

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province that surrendered their wealth was precisely what our Brutus did.—Then there was Anthony, the rough brave soldier,—a kind of man of the unfittest when the giants Pompey and Caesar had been in; Anthony, master of Rome for awhile,—and truly, God knows Rome will do with bluff Mark Anthony for her master!—It is a very interesting list; most of them queer lobsided creatures, fighting with own hands or for nothing in particular; most with some virtues: Then that might have saved Rome, if, as Mrs Poyser said, “they are hatched again, and hatched different.”

XVIII. AUGUSTUS

We left Rome galloping down the Gadarene slope, and scrimmaging for a vantage point whence to hurl herself headlong. Down she came; a riot and roaring ruin: doing those things she ought not to have done, and leaving undone those things she ought to have done, and with no semblance of health in her. There was nothing for it but the downfall of the world; good-bye civilization and all that was ever upbuilded of old. Come now; we should become good Congo forester in our time, with what they call ‘long pig’ for our daintiest diet. It is a euphemism for your brother man.

But supposing this mist-filled Gadarene gulf were really bridgable: supposing there were another side beyond the roar of hungry waters and the horror; and that mankind, —European mankind,—might pass over, and be saved, were there but staying the rout for a moment, and affording a means to cross?

There is a bardic proverb in the Welsh: *A fo Ben, bydded Bont:*—’He who is Chief, let him be the bridge’: Bran the Blessed said it, when he threw down his giant body over the gulf, so that the men of the Island of the Mighty might pass over into Ireland. And the end of an old cycle, and the beginning of a new, when there is—as in our Rome at that time—a sort of psychic and cyclic impasse, a break-down and terrible chasm in history, if civilization is to pass over from the old conditions to the new, a man must be found who can be the bridge. He must solve the problems within himself; he must care so little for, and have such control of, his personality, that he can lay it down, so to speak, and let humanity cross over upon it. History may get no news of him at all; although he is then the Chief of Men, and the greatest living;—or it may get news, only to belittle him. His own and the after ages may think very little of him; he may possess no single quality to dazzle the imagination:—he may seem cold and uninteresting, a crafty tyrant;—or an uncouth old ex-rail-splitter to have in the White House;—or an illiterate peasant-girl to lead your armies; yet because he is the bridge, he is the Chief; and you may suspect someone out of the Pantheons incarnate in him.

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For the truth of all which, humanity has a sure instinct. When there is a crisis we say, *Look for the Man.* Rome thought (for the most part) that she had found him when Caesar, having conquered Pompey, came home master of the world. If this phoenix and phenomenon in time, now with no competitor above the horizons, could not settle affairs, only Omnipotence could. Every thinking (or sane) Roman knew that what Rome needed was a head; and now at last she had got one. Pompey, the only possible alternative, was dead; Caesar was lord of all things. Pharsalus, the deciding battle, was fought in 48; he returned home in 46. From the year between, in which he put the finishing touches to his supremacy, you may count the full manvantara of Imperial Rome: fifteen centuries until 1453 and the fall of the Eastern Empire.

All opinion since has been divided as to the character of Caesar. To those whose religion is democracy, he is the grand Destroyer of Freedom; to the worshipers of the Superman, he is the chief avatar of their god. Mr. Stobart,* who deals with him sanely, but leaning to the favorable view, says he was “not a bad man, for he preferred justice and mercy to tyranny and cruelty, and had a passion for logic and order”; and adds, “he was a man without beliefs or illusions or scruples.” He began by being a fop and ultra-extravagant; and was always, if we may believe accounts, a libertine of the first water. He was, of course, an epileptic. In short, there is nothing in history to give an absolutely sure clue to his real self. But there is that passage in Madame Blavatsky, which I have quoted before, to the effect that he was an agent of the dark forces, and conquered Gaul for them, to abolish the last effective Mysteries; and I think in the light of that, his character, and a great deal of history besides, becomes intelligible enough.—I will be remembered that he stood at the head of the Roman religion, as Potifex Maximus.

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* On whose book, *The Grandeur that was Rome,* this paper also largely leans.

But it was not the evil that he did that (obviously) brought about his downfall. Caesar was fortified against Karma by the immensity of his genius. Whom should he fear, who had conquered Pompeius Magnus? None in the roman world could reach so high as to his elbow;—for sheer largeness of mind, quickness and daring, he stoood absolutely the Superman among pygmies. He knew his aim, and could make or wait for it; and it was big and real. Other men crowed or fumbled after petty and pinch-beck ends; impossible rhetorical republicanisms; vain senatorial prestiges; —or pleasure pure and simple—say rather, very complex and impure. Let them clack, let them fumble! Caesar would do things and get things done. He wore the whole armor of his greatness, and could see no chink or joint in it through which a hostile dagger might pierce. Even his military victories were won by some greater than mere military greatness.—Karma, perhaps, remembering the Mysteries at Gaulish Bibracte, and the world left now quite lightless,

might have a word to say; might even be looking round for shafts to speed. But what, against a man so golden-panoplied? “Tush!” saith Caesar, “there are no arrows now but straws.”

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One such straw was this: (a foolish one, but it may serve)—

Rome for centuries has been amusing herself on all public occasions with Fourth of July rhetoric against kings, and in praise of tyrannicides. Rome for centuries has been cherishing in her heart what she calls a love of Freedom,—to scourge your slaves, steal from your provincials, and waste your substance in riotous living. All of which Julius Caesar,—being a real man, mind you,—holds in profoundest contempt for driveling unreality; which it certainly is. But unrealities are awfully real at times.

Unluckily, with all his supermannism, he retained some traces of personality. He was bald, and sensitive about it; he always had been a trifle foppish. So when they gave him a nice laurel wreath for his triumph over Pompey, he continued, against all precedent, to wear it indefinitely,—as hiding certain shining surfaces from the vulgar gaze.... “H’m,” said Rome, “he goes about the next thing to crowned!” And here is his statue, set up with those of the Seven Kings of antiquity; he allowing it, or not protesting. —They remembered their schoolboy exercises, their spoutings on many Latins for Glorious Fourth; and felt very badly indeed. Then it was unlucky that, being too intent on realities, he could not bother to rise when those absurd old Piccadilly pterodactyls the Senators came into his presence; that he filled up their ridiculous house promiscuously with low-born soldiers and creatures of his own. And that there was a crowd of foolish prigs and pedants in Rome to take note of these so trivial things, and to be more irked by them than by all the realities of his power:—a lean hungry Cassius; an envious brusque detractor Casca; a Brutus with a penchant for being considered a philosopher, after a rather maiden-auntish sort of conception of the part,—and for being considered a true descendant of his well-known ancestor: a cold soul much fired with the *ignis fatuus* of Republican slave-scourging province-fleecing freedom. An unreal lot, with not the ghost of a Man between them;—what should the one Great Man of the age find in them to disturb the least ofhis dreams?

Came, however, the Ides of March in B.C. 44; and the laugh once more was with Karma,—the one great final laugher of the world. Caesar essayed to be Chief of the Romans: he who is chief, let him be the bridge;—this one, because of a few ludicrous personal foibles, has broken down now under the hurry and thunder of the marching cycles. The fact being that your true Chief aspires only to the bridgehood; whereas this one overlooked that part of it, intent on the chieftaincy.—And now, God have mercy on us! there is to be all the round of wars and proscriptions and massacres over again: *Roma caput mundi* herself piteously decapitate; and with every booby and popinjay rising in turn to kick her about at his pleasure;—and here first comes Mark Anthony to start the game, it seems.

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Well; Mark Anthony managed wisely enough at that crisis; you would almost have said, hearing him speak at Caesar's funeral, that there was at least a ha'porth of brains hidden somewhere within that particularly thick skull of his. Half an hour changes him from a mere thing alive on sufferance—too foolish to be worth bothering to kill—into the master of Rome. And yet probably it was not brains that did it, but the force of genuine feeling: he loved dead Caesar; he was trying now to be cautious, for his own skin's sake: was repressing himself;—but his feelings got the better of him,—and were catching,— and set the mob on fire. Your lean and hungry ones; your envious detractors; your thin maiden-auntish prig republican philosophers:—all very wisely sheer off. Your grand resounding Cicero,—*vox et praeterea almost nihil* (he had yet to die and show that it was *almost,* not *quite,*) sheers off too, into the country, there to busy himself with an essay on the *Nature of the Gods* (to contain, be sure, some fine eloquence), and with making up his mind to attack Anthony on behalf of Republican Freedom.—-Anthony's next step is wise too: he appoints himself Caesar's executor, gets hold of the estate, and proceeds to squander it right and left buying up for himself doubtful support. —All you can depend on is the quick coming-on of final ruin and dismay: of all impossibilities, the most impossible is to imagine Mark Anthony capable of averting it. As to Caesar's heir, so nominated in the will—the persona from whom busy Anthony has virtually stolen the estate,—no one gives him a thought. Seeing who he was, it would be absurd to do so.

And then he turned up in Rome, a sickly youth of eighteen; demanded his moneys from Anthony; dunned him till he got some fragment of them;—then borrowed largely on his own securities, and proceeded to pay—what prodigal Anthony had been much too thrifty to think of doing—Ceasar's debts. Rome was surprised.

This was Caesar's grand-nephew, Octavius; who had been in camp at Apollonia in Illyricum since he had coolly proposed to his great-uncle that the latter, being Dictator, and about to start on his Parthian campaign, should make him his Master of the Horse. He had been exempted from military service on account of ill-health; and Julius had a sense of humor; so he packed him off to Apollonia to 'finish' a military training that had never begun. There he had made a close friend of a rising young officer by the name of Vipsanius Agrippa; a man of high capacities who, when the news came of Caesar's death, urged him to lose no time, but rouse the legions in their master's name, and march on Rome to avenge his murder.—"No," says Octavius, "I shall go there alone."

Landing in Italy, he heard of the publication of the will, in which he himself had been named heir. That meant, to a very vast fortune, and to the duty of revenge. Of the fortune, since it was now in Mark Anthony's hands, you could predict nothing too surely but its vanishment; as to the duty, it might also imply a labor for which the Mariuses and Sullas, the Caesars and Pompeys, albeit with strong parties at their backs, had been too small men. And Octavius had no party, and he was no soldier, and he had no friends except that Vipsanius back in Apollonia.

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His mother and step-father, with whom he stayed awhile on his journey, urged him to throw the whole matter up: forgo the improbably fortune and very certain peril, and not rush in where the strongest living might fear to tread. Why, there was Mark Anthony, Caesar's lieutenant—the Hercules, mailed Bacchus, Roman Anthony—the great dashing captain whom his soldiers so adored— even he was shilly-shallying with the situation, and not daring to say *Caesar shall be avenged.* And Anthony, you might be sure, would want no competitor—least of all in the boy named heir in Caesar's will.—-"Oh, I shall go on and take it up," said Octavius; and went. And paid Caesar's debts, as we have seen, presently: thereby advertising his assumption of all responsibilities. Anthony began to be uneasy about him; the Senatorial Party to make advances to him; people began to suspect that, possibly, this sickly boy might grow into a man to be reckoned with.

I am not going to follow him in detail through the next thirteen years. It is a tortuous difficult story; to which we lack the true clues, unless they are to be found in the series of protrait-busts of him taken during this period. The makers of such busts were the photographers of the age; and, you may say, as good as the best photographers. Every prominent Roman availed himself of their services. Mr. Baring-Gould, in his *Tragedy of the Caesars,* arranges, examines, and interprets these portraits of Augustus; I shall give you the gist of his conclusions, which are illuminating.—First we see a boy with delicate and exceedingly beautiful features, impassive and unawakend: Octavius when he came to Rome. A cloud gathers on his face, deepening into a look of intense anguish; and with the anguish grows firmness and the clenched expression of an iron will: this is Octavian in the dark days of the thirties.—the anguish passes, but leaves the firmness behind: the strength remains, the beauty remains, and a light of high serenity has taken the place of the aspect of pain: this is Augustus the Emperor. The same writer contrasts this story with that revealed by the busts of Julius: wherein we see first a gay insouciant dare-devil youth, and at last a man old before his time; a face sinister (I should say) and haunted with ugly sorrow.

We get no contemporary account of Augustus; no interpeting biography from the hand of any one who knew him. We have to read between the lines of history, and with what intuition we can muster: and especially the story of that lonely soul struggling through the awful waters of the years that followed Caesar's death. We see him allying himself first with one party, then with another; exercising (apparently) no great or brilliant qualities, yet by every change thrown nearer the top; till with Anthony and Lepidus he is one of the Triumvirate that rules the world. Then came those cruel proscriptions. This is the picture commonly seen:—a cold keen

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intellect perpetually dissembling; keen enough to deceive Anthony, to decieve the senate, to decieve Cicero and all the world; cruel for policy's sake, without ever a twinge of remorse or compunciton: a marble-cold impassive *mind,* and no heart al all, with master-subtlety achieving mastery of the world.—Alas! a boy in his late teens and early twenties, so nearly friendless, and with enemies so many and so great... A boy "up aginst" so huge and difficult circumstances always, that (you would say) there was no time, no possibility, for him to look ahead: in every moment the next agonizing perilous step that must be taken vast enough to fill the whole horizon of his mind, of any human mind perhaps;—ay, so vast and compelling that every day with wrenches and torsion that horizon must be pushed back and back to contain them,—a harrowing painful process, as we may read on his busts... As to the proscriptions, Dio, a writer, as Mr. Baring-Gould says, "never willing to allow a good quality to one of the Caesars, or to put their conduct in other than an unfavorable light," says that they were brought about mainly—"by Lepidus and Anthony, who, having been long in honor under Julius Caesar, and having held many offices in state and army, had acquired many enemies. But as Octavian was associated with them in power, an appearance of complicity attached to him. But he was not cruel by nature, and he had no occasion for putting many to death; moreover, he had resolved to imitate the example of his adoptive father. Added to this, he was young, was just entering on his career, and sought rather to gain hearts than to alienate them. No sooner was he in sole power than he showed no signs of severity, and at that time he caused the death of very few, and saved very many. He proceeded with the utmost severity against such as betrayed their [proscribed?] masters or friends; but was most favorable to such as helped the proscribed to escape."

It was that "appearance of complicity" that wrote the anguish on his face: the fact that he could not prevent, and saw no way but to have a sort of hand in, things his nature loathed. In truth he appears to us now rather like a pawn, played down the board by some great Chess-player in the Unseen: moving by no volition or initiative of its own through perils and peace-takings to Queenhood on the seventh square. But we know that he who would enter the Path of Power must use all the initiative, all the volition, possible in any human being, to attain the balance, to master the personality, to place himself wholly and unreservedly in the power, under the control, of the Higher thing that is "within and yet without him"' The Voice of his Soul, that speaks also through the lips of his Teacher; whether that Teacher be embodied visibly before men or not. He obeys; he follows the gleam; he sufferes, and strives, and makes no question; and his striving is all for more power to obey and to follow. In this, I think, we have our clue to the young Octavian.—'Luck' always favored him; not least when, in dividing the world, Anthony chose the East, gave Lepidus Africa, and left the most difficult and dangerous Italy to the youngest partner of the three.

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He had two friends, men of some genius both: Vipsanius Agrippa the general, and Cilnius Maecenas the statesman. Both appear to us as great personalities; the master whom they served so loyally and splendidly remains and Impersonality,—which those who please may call a 'cold abstraction.' While Octavian was away campaigning, Maecenas, with no official position, ruled Rome on his behalf; and so wisely that Rome took it and was well content. As for those campaigns, 'luck' or Agrippa won them for him; in Octavian himself we can see no qualities of great generalship. And indeed, it is likely he had none; for he was preeminently a man of peace. But they always were won. Suetonius makes him a coward; yet he was one that, when occasion arose, would not think twice about putting to sea in an open boat during a storm; and once, when he heard that Lepidus was preparing to turn against him, he rode alone into that general's camp, and took away the timid creature's army without striking a blow: simply ordered the soldiers to follow him, and they did. If he seems now a colorless abstraction, he could hardly have seemed so then to Lepidus' legions, who deserted their own general —and paymaster—at his simple word of command. Or to Agrippa, or to Maecenas, great men who desired nothing better than to serve him with loyal affection. Maecenas was an Etruscan; a man of brilliant mind and culture; reputed somewhat luxurious when he had nothing to do, but a very dynamo when there was work.—A man, be it said, of great ideals on his own account: we see it in his influence on Virgil and Horace. In his last years some coldness, unexplained, sprung up between him and his master; yet when Maecenas died, it was found he had made Augustus his sole heir.—But now Augustus is still only Octavian, moving impassively and impersonally to his great destiny; as if no thing of flesh and blood and common human impulses, but a cosmic force acting;—which indeed the Impersonal Man always is.

What he did, seems to have done, or could not help doing, always worked out right, whether it carries for us an ethical look or no. The problems and difficulties that lay between that time and Peace flowed to him: and as at the touch of some alchemical solvent, received their solution. We get one glimpse of the inner man of him, of his beliefs or religion. He believed absolutely in his *Genius* (in the Roman sense); his luck, or his Karma, or—and perhaps chiefly—that God-side of a man which Numaism taught existed:—what we should call, the Higher Law, the Warrior, and the Higher Self. There, as I think, you have the heart of his mystery; he followed that, blindly,—and made no mistakes. In the year 29 B.C. it led him back to Rome in Triumph, having laid the world at his feet. He had been the bridge over that chasm in the cycles; the Path through all the tortuosities of that doubtful and wayward time; over which the Purposes of the Gods had marched to their fulfilment. He had been strong as destiny, who seemed to have little strength in his delicate body. With none of Caesar's dash and brilliance, he had repeated Caesar's achievement; and was to conquer further in spiritual

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“regions Caesar never knew.”

With none of Anthony’s soldiership, he had easily brought Anthony down.—Why did Cleopatra lose Actium for Anthony?

We face the almost inexplicable again in the whole story of Octavian’s dealings with Cleopatra. She is one of the characters history has most venomously lied about. Mr. Wiegand has shown some part of the truth about her in his biography; but I do not think he has solved the whole problem; for he takes the easy road of making Octavian a monster. Now Augustus, beyond any question, was one of the most beneficent forces that ever appeared in history; and no monster can be turned, by the mere circumstance of success achieved, into that. Cleopatra had made a bid to solve the world-problem on an Egyptian basis: first through Caesar, then through Anthony. We may dismiss the idea that she was involved in passionate attachments; she had a grand game to play, with World-stakes at issue. The problem was not to be solved through Caesar, and it was not to be solved through Anthony; but it had been solved by Octavian. There was nothing more for her to do, but step aside and be no hindrance to the man who had done that work for the Gods that she had tried and been unable to do. So she sailed away from Actium.

Julius Caesar in his day had married her; and young Caesarion their son was his heir by Egyptian, but not by Roman, law. When, in the days of Caesar’s dictatorship, she brought the boy to Rome, Caesar refused to recognise her as his wife, or to do the right thing by Caesarion. To do either would have endangered his position in Rome; where by that time he had another wife, the fourth or fifth in the series. He feared the Romans; and they feared Egypt and its Queen. It seemed very probably at that time that the headship of the world might pass to Egypt; which was still a sovereign power, and immensely rich, and highly populated, and a compact kingdom;—whereas the Roman state was everywhere ill-defined, tenebrous, and falling to pieces. At this distance it is hard to see in Egypt anything of strength or morale that would have enable it to settle the world’s affairs; as hard, indeed, as it is to see anything of the kind in Rome. But Rome was haunted with the bogey idea; and terribly angry, aftewards, with Anthony for his Egyptian exploits; and hugely relieved when Actium put an end to the Egyptian peril. Egypt, it was thought, if nothing else, might have starved Italy into submission. But in truth the cycles were all against it: Cleopatra was the only Egyptian that counted,—the lonely Spacious Soul incarnate there.

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When Octavian reached Alexandria, all he did was to refuse to be influenced by the queen's wonderfully magnetic personality. He appears to me to have been uncertain how to act: to have been waiting for clear guidance from the source whence all his guidance came. He also seems to have tried to keep her from committing suicide. It is explained commonly on the supposition that he intended she should appear in his triumph in Rome; and that she killed herself to escape that humiliation. I think it is one of those things whose explanation rests in the hands of the Gods, and is not known to men. You may have a mass of evidence, that makes all humanity certain on some point; and yet the Gods, who have witnessed the realities of the thing, may know that those realities were quite different.

Then her two elder children were killed; and no one has suggested, so far as I know, that it was not by Octavians's orders. It is easy, even, to supply him with a motive for it; one in keeping with accepted ideas of his character:—as he was Caesar's heir, he would have wished Caesar's own children out of the way;—and Caesar's children by that (to Roman ideas) loathed Egyptian connexion. His family honor would have been touched....

Up to this point, then, such a picture as this might be the true portrait of him:—a sickly body, with an iron will in it; a youth with no outstanding brilliancies, who never lost his nerve and never made mistakes in policy; with no ethical standards above those of his time:—capable of picking his names coldly on the proscription lists; capable of having Cleopatra's innocent children killed;—one, certainly, who had followed the usual custom of divorcing one wife and marrying another as often as expediency suggested. Above all, following the ends of his ambition unerringly to the top of success.

The ends of his ambition?—That is all hidden in the intimate history of souls. How should we dare say that Julius was ambitious, Augustus not? Both apparently aimed at mastery of the world; from this human standpoint of the brain-mind there is nothing to choose, and no means of discrimination. But what about the standpoint of the Gods? Is there no difference, as seen from their impersonal altitudes, between reaching after a place for your personality, and supplying a personality to fill a place that needs filling? There is just that difference, I think, between the brilliant Julius and the staid Octavian. The former might have settled the affairs of the world,—as its controller and master and the dazzling obvious mover of all the pieces on the board. I do not believe Octavian looked ahead at all to see any shining pinnacle or covet a place on it; but time and the Law hurled one situation after another at him, and he mastered and filled them as they came because it was the best thing he could do.... If we say that the two men were as the poles apart, there are but tiny indications of the difference:

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the tactlessness and small vanities that advertise personality in the one; the supreme tact and balance that affirm impersonality in the other. The personality of Julius must tower above the world; that of Augustus was laid down as a bridge for the world to pass over. Julius gave his monkeys three chestnuts in the morning and four at night;—you remember Chwangtse's story;—and so they grew angry and killed him. Augustus adjusted himself; decreed that they should have their four in the morning. His personality was always under command, and he brought the world across on it. It never got in the way; it was simply the instrument wherewith he (or the Gods) saved Rome. He—we may say he—did save Rome. She was dead, this time; dead as Lazarus, who had been three days in the tomb, *etc*. He called her forth; gave her two centuries of greatness; five of some kind of life in the west; fifteen, all told, in west and east. Julius is always bound to make on the popular eye the larger impression of greatness. He retains his personality with all its air of supermanhood; it is easy to see him as a live human being, to imagine him in his habit as he lived,—and to be astounded by his greatness. But Augustus is hidden; the real man is covered by that dispassionate impersonality that saved Rome. If all that comes down about the first part of his life is true, and has been truly interpreted, you could not call him *then* even a good man. But the record of his reign belies every shadow that has been cast on that first part. It is altogether a record of beneficence.

H.P. Blavatsky speaks of Julius as an agent of the dark forces. Elsewhere she speaks of Augustus as an Initiate.

Did she mean by that merely an initiate of the Official Mysteries as they still existed at Eleusis and elsewhere? Many men, good, bad and indifferent, were that: Cicero,—who was doubtless, as he says, a better man for his initiation: Glamininus and his officers; most of the prominent Athenians since the time of Pericles and earlier. I dare say it had come to mean that though you might be taught something about Karma and Reincarnation, you were not taught to make such teachings a living power in your own life or that of the world. There is nothing of the Occultists, nothing of the Master Soul, in the life and actions of Cicero; but there was very much, as I shall try to show, in the life and actions of Augustus. And, we gather from H.P. Blavatsky, the only Mysteries that survived in their integrity to anything like this time had been those at Bibracte which Caesar destroyed. (Which throws light, by the bye, on Lucan's half-sneering remark about the Druids,—that they alone had real knowledge about the Gods and the things beyond this life.) So it seems to me that Augustus' initiation implied something much more real,—much more a high status of the soul,—than could have been given him by any semi-public organized body within the Roman world.

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Virgil, in the year 40 B.C., being then a pastoral poet imitating Theocritus,—nothing very serious,—wrote a strange poem that stands in dignity and depth of purpose far above anything in his model. This was the Fourth Eclogue of his Bucolics, called the *Pollio.* In it he invokes the "Sicilian Muse" to inspire him to loftier strains; and proceeds to sing of the coming of a new cycle, the return of a better age, to be ushered in, supposedly, by a 'child' born in that year:—

Ultima Cumaci venit jam carminis aetas; Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo; Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna; Jam nora progenies coelo demittitur alto.

This was taken in the Middle Ages as referring to the birth of Jesus; and on the strength of having thus prophesied, Virgil came to be looked on as either a true prophet or a black magician. Hence his enormous reputation all down the centuries as a master of the secret sciences. The chemist is the successor to the alchemist; and in Wales we still call a chemist *fferyll,* which is *Virgil* Cymricized. Well; his reputation was not altogether undeserved; he did know much; you can find Karma, Reincarnation, Devachan, Kama-loka—most of the Theosophical teachings as to the postmortem-prenatal states,— taught in the Sixth Book of the *Aeneid.* But as to this *Pollio* Eclogue: even in modern textbooks one often sees it asserted that he must have been familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures;—because in the Book of Isaiah the coming of a Messiah to the Jews is prophesied in terms not very unlike those he used. To my mind this is far-fetched: Virgil had Gaul behind him, if you must look for explanations in outside things; and at least in after ages Celtic Messianism was as persistent a doctrine as Jewish. A survival, of course; in truth the initiated or partly initiated among all ancient peoples knew that avatars come. Virgil, if he understood as much about Theosophy as he wrote into the Sixth Aeneid, would also have known, from whatever source he learnt it, the truth about cycles and Adept Messengers.

There has been much speculation as to who the child born in the year of Pollio's consulship, who was to bring in the new order of ages, could have been. But we may note that in the language of Occultism (and think of Virgil as an Occultist), the 'birth of a child' had always been a symbolical way of speaking of the inititation of a candidate into the (true) Mysteries. So that it does not follow by any means that he meant an actual baby born in that year; he may have intended, and probably did intend, some Adept then born into his illumination,—or that, according to Virgil's own ideas, might be thought likely soon to be. One cannot say; he was a very wise man, Virgil. At least it indicates a feeling,—perhaps peculiar to himself, perhaps general,—that the world stood on the brink of a great change in the cycles, and that an Adept Leader might be expected, who should usher the new order in.

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His eyes may have been opened to the possibilities of the young Octavian. It is possible that the two were together at school in Rome, studying rhetoric under Epidius, in the late fifties; and certainly Virgil had recently visited Rome and there interviewed the Triumvir Octavian; and had obtained from him an order for the restitution of his parental farm near Mantua, which had been given to one of the soldiers of Philippi after that battle. Two or three of the Eclogues are given to the praises of Octavian; whom, even as early as that, Virgil seems to have recognised as the future or potential savior of Rome. The points to put side by side are these: Virgil, a Theosophist, expected the coming of an avatar, an Initiate who should save Rome;—H.P. Blavatsky speaks of Augustus as an Initiate;—Augustus did save Rome.

When did he become an Initiate? Was there, at some time, such a change in his life that it was as if a new Soul had come in to take charge of that impersonal unfailing personality? There are tremendous mysteries connected with incarnation; the possibility of a sudden accession of entity, so to say,—a new vast increment of being. As Octavius and Octavian, the man seems like one without will or desires of his own, acting in blind obedience to impersonal forces that aimed at his supremacy in the Roman world. As Augustus, he becomes another man altogether, almost fathomlessly wise and beneficient; a Master of Peace and Wisdom. He gave Rome Peace, and taught her to love peace. He put *Peace* for a legend on the coinage; and in the west *Pax,* in the east *Irene,* became favorite names to give you children. He did what he could to clean Roman life; to give the people high ideals; to make the empire a place,—-and in this he succeeded,—where decent egos could incarnate and hope to progress; which, generally speaking, they cannot in a chaos. His fame as a benefactor of the human race spread marvelously: in far-away India (where at that time the Secret Wisdom and its Masters were much more than a tradition), they knew of him, and struck coins in his honor; coins bearing the image and superscription of this Roman Caesar.

I said that he went to work like an Occultist: like one with an understanding of the inner laws of life, and power to direct outward things in accordance with that knowledge. Thus:—the task that lay before him was to effect a complete revolution. Rome could not go on under the old system any longer. That system had utterly broken down; and unless an efficient executive could be evolved, there was nothing for it but that the world should go forward Kilkenny-catting itself into non-existence. Now an efficient executive meant one-man rule; or a king, by whatsoever name he might be called. But the tradition of centureis made a king impossible. There were strongly formed astral molds; and whoever should attempt to break them would, like Caesar, ensure his own defeat.

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Whoever actually should break them,—well, the result of breaking astral molds is always about the same. H.P. Blavatsky said that she came to break molds of mind; and so she did; but it was not in politics; and the while she was laying her trains of thought-dynamite, and exploding them gloriously, she was also building up fair and glorious mansions of thought to house those made homeless. The situation we are looking at here is on a different plane, the political. You break the astral molds there; and they may be quite worthless, quite effete and contemptible,—yet they are the things which alone keep the demon in man under restraint. It is the old peril of Revolutions. They may be started with the best of intentions, in the name of the highest ideals; but, unless there be super-human strength (like Ts'in Shi Hwangti's) or superhuman wisdom (like Augustus') to guide them, as surely as they succeed in breaking the old molds, they degenerate into orgies,—blood, vice, and crime.

Augustus effected his revolution and kept all that out; he substituted peace and prosperity for the blood and butchery of a century. And it was because he went to work with the knowledge of an Occultist that he was able to do so.

He carefully abstained from breaking the molds. He labored to keep them all intact,—-for the time being, and until new ones should have been formed. Gently and by degrees he poured a new force and meaning into them; which, in time, would necessarily destroy them; but mean-while others would have been growing. He took no step without laboriously ascertaining that there were precedents for it. Rome had been governed by Consuls and Tribunes; well, he would accept the consulate, and the tribuniciary power; because it was necessary now, for the time being at any rate, that Rome should be governed by Augustus. It is as well to remember that it was the people who insisted on this last. The Republican Party might subsist among the aristocracy, the old governing class; but Augustus was the hero and champion of the masses. Time and again he resigned: handed back his powers to the senate, and what not;—whether as a matter of form only, and that he might carry opinion along with him; or with the real hope that he had taught things at last to run themselves. In either case his action was wise and creditable; you have to read into him mean motives out of your own nature, if you think otherwise. Let there be talk of tyrants, and plots arising, with danger of assassination,—and what was to become of re-established law, order, and the Augustan Peace? The fact was that the necessities of the case always compelled the senate to reinstate him: it was too obvious that things could not run themselves. If there had been any practicable opposition, it could always have made those resignations effectual; or at least it could have driven him to a show of illegalism, and so, probably, against the point of some fanatic theorist's dagger. In 23 B.C. there was a food shortage; and the mob besieged the senate house, demanding that new powers should be bestowed on the Caesar: they knew well what mind and hands could save them.

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But he would run up no new (corrugated iron or reinforced concrete) astral molds, nor smash down any old ones. There should be no talk of a king, or, perpetual dictator. Chief citizen, as you must have a chief,—since a hundred years had shown that haphazard executives would not work. *Primus inter Pares* in the senate: *Princeps,*—not a new title, nor one that implied royalty,—or meant anything very definite; why define things, anyhow, now while the world was in flux? Mr. Stobart, who I think comes very near to showing Augustus as he really was, still permits himself to speak of him as "chilly and statuesque." But can you imagine the mob so in love with a chilly and statuesque—tyrant, or statesman, or politician,—as to besiege the senate-house and clamor for an extension of his powers? And this chilly statuesque person was the man who delighted in sharing in their games with children!

Another reason why there was no talk of a king: he was no Leader of a spiritual movement, but merely dealing with politics, with which the cycles will have their way: a world of ups and downs, not stable because linked to the Heart of Things. Supposing he should find one to appoint as his worthy successor: with the revolutions of the cycles, could that one hope to find another to succeed him? Political affairs move and have their being at best in a region of flux, where the evils, and especially the duties, of the day are sufficient therefor. In attending to these,— performing the duties, fighting the evils,—Augustus laid down the lines for the future of Rome.

He tried to revive the patriciate; he wanted to have, cooperating with him, a governing class with the ancient sense of responsibility and turn for affairs. But what survived of the old aristocracy was wedded to the tradition of Republicanism, which meant oligarchy, and doing just what you liked or nothing at all. The one thing they were not prepared to do was to cooperate in saving Rome. At first they showed some eagerness to flatter him; but found that flattery was not what he wanted. Then they were inclined to sulk, and he had to get them to pass a law making attendance at the senate compulsory. Mean views as to his motives have become traditional; but the only view the facts warrant is this: he lent out his personality, not ungrudgingly, to receive the powers and laurels that must fall upon the central figure in the state, while ever working to vitalize what lay outward from that to the circumference, that all Romans might share with him the great Roman responsibility of running and regenerating the world. Where there was talent, he opened a way for it. He made much more freedom than had ever been under the Republic; gave all classes functions to perform; and curtailed only the freedom of the old oligarchy to fleece the provinces and misdirect affairs.

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And meanwhile the old Rome that he found on his return in 29,— brick-built ignobly at best, and now decaying and half in ruins, —was giving place to a true imperial city. In 28, eighty-two temples were built or rebuilt in marble; among the rest, one to Apollo on the Palatine, most magnificent, with a great public library attached. The first public library in Rome had been built by Asinius Pollio nine years before; soon they became common. Agrippa busied himself building the Pantheon; also public baths, of which he was responsible for a hundred and seventy within the limits of the city. Fair play to the Romans, they washed. All classes had their daily baths; all good houses had hot baths and swimming-tanks. The outer Rome he found in brick and left in marble:—but the inner Rome he had to rebuild was much more ruinous than the outer; as for the material he found it built of—well, it would be daring optimism and euphemism to call those Romans *bricks*—says someone.

Time had brought southern Europe to the point where national distinctions were disappearing. No nation could now stand apart. Greek or Egyptian or Gaul, all were, or might be, or soon would be, Romans; and if any ego with important things to say should incarnate anywhere, what he said should be heard all round the Middle Sea. This too is a part of the method of natural Law; which now splits the world into little fragments, the nations, and lets them evolve apart, bringing to light by the intensive culture of their nationalisms what hidden possibilities lie latent in their own soils and atmospheres;—an anon welds them into one, that all these accomplished separate evolutions may play upon each other, interact,—every element quickening and quickened by the contact. In the centrifugal or heterogenizing cycles national souls are evolved; in the centripetal or homogenizing they are given freedom to affect the world. We have seen what such fusion meant for China; perhaps some day we may see what such fusion may mean for the world entire. In Augustus' time, fusion was to do something for the Mediterranean basin. If he had been an Occultist, to know it, his great cards lay in Italy and Spain: the former with her cycle of productiveness due to continue, shall we say until about 40 A.D.?—the latter with hers due soon to begin.

Well, it does look rather as if he knew it. We shall see presently how he dealt with Italy; within two years of his triumph he was turning his attention to Spain, still only partly conquered. We may picture that country, from its first appearance in history until this time we are speaking of, as in something like modern Balkan conditions. Hamilcar Barca, a great proud gentlman, the finest fruit of an ancient culture, had thought no scorn to marry a Spanish lady; as a king of Italy nowadays found it nowise beneath him to marry a Montenegrin princess. In either case it meant no unbridgable disparity in culture. Among any of the Spanish people you

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should have found men who would have been at home in Greek or Carthaginian drawing-rooms, so to say; though the break-up of a forgotten civilization there had left the country in fragments and small warfares and disorder. If you read the earliest Spanish accounts of their conquests in the new world, you cannot escape the feeling that, no such long ages ago, Spain was in touch with America; not so many centuries, say, before Hamilcar went to Spain. Such accounts are no doubt unscientific; but may be the more intuitional and true and indicative for that. When Augustus turned his eyes on Spain, Basque and Celtic chieftains in the northern mountains and along the shores of Biscay, the semi-decivilized *membra disjecta* of past civilizations, were always disposed to make trouble for the Roman south. He could not have left them alone, except at the cost of keeping huge garrisons along the border, with perpetual alarms for the province. So he went there in person, and began the work of conquering those mountains in B.C. 27. It was a long and difficult war with hideous doings on both sides: the Romans crucified the Spaniards, and the Spaniards jeered at them from their crosses. This because Augustus was too sick to attend to things himself; half the time he was at death's door. Not till he could afford to take Agrippa from work elsewhere was any real progress made. But at one point we see his own hand strike into it; and the incident is very instructive.

Spain had her Vercingetorix in one Corocotta, a Celt who kept all Roman efforts useless and all Roman commanders tantalized and nervous till a reward of fifty thousand dollars was offered for his capture. Augustus, recovered a little, was in camp; and things were going ill with the Spainiards. One day an important-looking Celt walked in, and demanded to see the Caesar upon business connected with the taking of Corocotta. Led into the Caesar's presence, he was asked what he wanted.—"Fifty-thousand dollars," said he; "I am Corocotta." Augustus laughed long and loud; shook hands with him heartily; paid him the money down, and gave him his liberty into the bargain; whereafter soon this *Quijote espanol* married a Roman wife, and as Caius Julius Corocottus "lived happily ever after." It was a change from the 'generous' Julius' treatment of Vercingetorix; but that Rome profited by the precedent thus established, we may judge from Claudius' treatment of the third Celtic hero who fell into Roman hands, —Caradoc of Wales.

Spain was only one of the many places where the frontier had to be settled. The empire was a nebulous affair; you could not say where it began and ended; and to bring all out of this nebulosity was one of the labors that awaited Augustus. Even a Messenger of the Gods is limited by the conditions he finds in the world; and is as great as his age will allow him to be. Though an absolute monarch, he cannot change human nature. He must concentrate on

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points attackable, and do what he can; deflect currents in the right direction; above all, sow ideals, and wait upon the ministrations of time. He must take conditions as he finds them, following the lines of least resistance. It is nothing to him that posterity may ask, Why did he not change this or that?—and add he was no better than he should be. At once to change outer things and ways of feeling that have grown up through centuries is not difficult but impossible; and sometimes right courses, violently taken, are wronger than wrong ones. Augustus was a man of peace, if anybody ever was, yet (as in Spain) made many wars. The result of this Spanish conquest was that the Pax Romana came into Spain, bringing with it severa centuries of high prosperity; the world-currents flowed in there at once and presently the light of Spain, such as it was at that time, shone out over the Roman world. Most of the great names of the first century A.D. are those of Spaniards.

After Spain, the most immediate frontier difficulty was with Parthia; and there Augustus won his greatest victory. At Carrhae the Parthians had routed Crassus and taken the Roman eagles. Rome was responsible for the provinces of Asia; and she was nominally at war with Parthia,—so those provinces were in trim to be overrun at any time. The war, then, must be finished; and could Rome let it end on terms of a Parthian victory? Where (it would be argued) would then be Roman prestige? Where Roman authority (a more real and valuable thing)? Where the Pax Romana?—All very true and sound; everybody knew that for the war to reopen was only a question of time;—Julius had been on the point of marching east when the liberators killed him. Yes, said Augustus; the matter must be attended to. But Parthia was a more of less civilized power: a state at least with an established central government; and when you have that, there is generally the chance to settle things by tact instead of by fighting. He found a means. He opened negotiations, and brought all his tact to bear. He was the chief, and a bridge again. Over which presently came Phraates king of Parthia, amenable and well-disposed, to return the eagles and such of the prisoners as were still alive. Rome had won back her prestige; Parthia was undegraded; peace had won a victory that war would have spent itself in vain striving after.

But the frontier was enormous, and nowhere else marched with that of an established power. There was no winning by peace along that vast northern line from the Black to the North Sea, at the most vital spot of which an unlucky physical geography makes Italy easily invadable and rather hard to defend. Negotiations would not work here, since there was no union to negotiate with; only ebullient German tribes whose game was raiding and whose trade plunder. So the Alps had to be held, and a line drawn somewhere north of them,—say along the Danube and the Rhine or Elbe; a frontier that could be made safe

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with a minimum of soldiers. All this he did; excluding adventurous schemes: leaving Britain, for example, alone;—and was able to reduce the army, before he died, to a mere handful of 140,000 men.—Varus and his lost legions? Well; there is something to be said about that. Augustus was old, and the generals of the imperial family, who knew their business, were engaged elsewhere. And Germany was being governed by a good amiable soul by the name of Quintilius Varus, who persisted in treating the Germans as if they had been civilized Italians. And there was a young Cheruscan who had become a Roman citizen, spoke Latin fluently, and had always been a good ally of Rome. His Latin cognomen was Arminius; of which German patriotism has manufactured a highly improbable *Hermann.* The trustful Varus allowed himself to be lured by this seemingly so good friend into the wilds of the Saltus Teutobergiensis, where the whole power of the Cheruscans fell on and destroyed him. Then Tiberius came, and put the matter right; but there was an ugly half hour of general panic first. There had been no thought of adding Germany to the empire but only as to whether the frontier should be on the Elbe or the Rhine. Varus' defeat decided Augustus for the Rhine.

Now we come to what he did for Italy: his second trump card, if we call Spain his first. Spain belonged to the future, Italy to the present. Her cycle was half over, and she had done nothing (in B.C. 29) very worthy with it. First, an effort should be made towards the purificatior of family-life: a pretty hopeless task, wherein at last he was forced to banish his own daughter for notorious evil-living. He made laws; and it may be supposed that they had some effect *in time.* A literary impulse towards high dignified ideals, however, may be much more effective than laws. He had Maecenas with his circle of poets.

Of course, poetry written to order, or upon imperial suggestion, is not likely to be of the highest creative kind. But the high creative forces were not flowing in that age; and we need not blame Augustan patronage for the limitations of Augustan literature. There is no time to argue the question; this much we may say: the two poets who worked with the emperor, and wrote under his influence and sometimes at his suggestion, left work that endures in world-literature; that is noble and beautiful, and still interesting. I mean Virgil and Horace, of course. Ovid, who was not under that influence, but of the faction opposed to it, wrote stuff that it would be much better were lost entirely.

The poet's was the best of pulpits, in those days: poets stood much nearer the world then than for all the force of the printing-press they can hope to do now. So, if they could preach back its sacredness to the soil of Italy; if they could recreate the ideal of the old agricultural life; something might be done towards (among other things) checking the unwholesome crowding to the capital,—as great an evil then as now. Through Maecenas and directly Augustus influenced Virgil, the laureate; who responded with his *Georgics.*

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It is a wonderful work. Virgil was a practical farmer; he tells you correctly what to do. But he makes a work of art of it all poetical. He suffuses his directions for stock-raising and cabbage-hoeing with the light of mythology and poetry. He gives you the Golden Age and Saturn's Italy, and makes the soil seem sacred. He had the Gaul's feeling for grace and delicacy, and brought in Celtic beauty to illumine the Italian world. The lines are impregnated with the soul, the inner atmosphere, of the Italian land; full of touches such as that lovely

Muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba,

of violets and popies and narcissus; quinces and chestnut trees. All that is of loveliness in rural (and sacred) Italy is there; the landscapes are there, still beautiful; and the dignity and simplicity of the old agricultural life. It is a practial treatise on farming; yet a living poem.

Horace too played up for his friend Maecenas and for Caesar. Maecenas gave him that Sabine farm; and Horace made Latin songs to Greek meters about it: made music that is a marvel to this day, so that it remains a place of pilgrimage, and you can still visit, I believe, that

fons Bandusia splendidiot vitro

that he loved so well and set such sweet music to. He give you that country as Virgil gives you the valley vistas, not unfringed with mystery, of Appenines and the north. Between them, Italy is there, as it had never been interpreted before. If—in Virgil at least—there is a direct practical purpose, there is no less marvelous art and real vision of Nature.

And then Augustus set both of them to singing the grandeur of Rome; to making a new patriotism with their poetry; to inspiring Roman life with a sense of dignity,—a thing it needed sorely: Virgil in the *Aeneid* (where also, as we have seen, he taught not a little Theosophy); Horace in the *Carmen Saeculare* and some of the great Odes of the third and fourth books. The lilt of his lines is capable of ringing, and does so again and again, into something very like the thrill and resonance of the Grand Manner. Listen for it especially in the third and fourth lines of this:

Quid debeas, o Roma, Neronibus
Testis Metaurum flumen et Hasdrubal
Devictus, et pulcher fugatis
Ille dies Latio tenebris.

I am not concerned here to speak of his limitations; nor of Virgil's; who, in whatever respect the *Aeneid* may fall short, does not fail to cry out in it to the Romans.

Remember the dignity and the high mission of Rome!—By all these means Augustus worked towards the raising of Roman ideals.

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To that end he wrote, he studied, he made orations. He searched the Latin and Greek literatures; and any passage he came on that illumined life or tended towards upliftment, he would copy out and send to be read in the senate; or he would read it there himself to the senators; or publish it as an edict. There is a touch of the Teacher in this, I think. He has given Rome Peace; he is master of the world, and now has grown old. He enjoys no regal splendor, no pomp or retinue; his life is as that of any other senator, but simpler than most. And his mind is ever brooding over Rome, watchful for the ideas that may purify Roman life and raise it to higher levels.

Many things occurred to sadden his old age. His best friends were dead; Varus was lost with his legions; there had been the tragedy of Julia, whom he had loved well, and the deaths of the young princes, her sons. He was a man of extraordinarily keen affections, and all these losses came home to him sorely.

But against every sadness he had his own achievements to set. There was Rome in its marble visibly about him, that he had found in brick and in ruins; Rome now capable of centuries of life, that had been, when he came to it, a ghastly putridity.

XIX. AN IMPERIAL SACRIFICE

“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”

This is the secret of writing: look at the external things until you see pulsating behind them the rhythm and beauty of the Eternal. Only look for it, and persist in your search, and presently the Universal will be revealed shining through the particular, the sweep of everlasting Law through the little object, and happenings of a day.

Come to history with the same intent and method, and at last things appear in their true light. Here, too, as in a landscape, is the rhythm of the Eternal; here are the Basic Forms. I doubt if the evidence of the annalists is ever worth much, unless they had an eye to penetrate to these. When one sees behind the supposed fact narrated and the judgments pronounced the glimmering up of a basic form, one guesses one is dealing with a true historian.

Recently I read a book called *The Tragedy of the Caesars,* by the novelist Baring-Gould; and in it the life of a certain man presented in a sense flatly contradictory to the views of nineteen centuries anent that man; but it seemed to me at last an account that had the rhythm, the basic form, showing through. So in this lecture what I shall try to give you will be Mr. Baring-Gould’s version of this man’s life, with efforts of my own to go further and make quite clear the basic form.

What does one mean by ‘basic form’? In truth it is hard to define. Only, this world, that seems such a heterogeneous helter-skelter of mournful promiscuities, is in fact the

pattern that flows from the loom of an Eternal Weaver: a beautiful pattern, with its rhythms and recurrences; there is no haphazard in it; it is not mechanical,—yet still flawless as the configuarations of a crystal or the petals of a perfect flower.

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The name of the man we are to think of tonight has come down as a synonym for infamy: we imagine him a gloomy and bloodthirsty tyrant; a morose tiger enthroned; a gross sensualist;—well, I shall show you portraits of him, to see whether you can accept him for that. The truth is that aristocratic Rome, degenerate and frivolous, parrot-cried out against the supposed deneracy of the imperial, and for the glories of the old republican, regime; for the days when Romans were Romans, and 'virtuous.' One came to them in whom the (real) ancient Roman honor more appeared than in another man in Italy, perhaps before or since;—and they could not understand the honor, and hated the man. They captured his name in a great net of lies; they breathed a huge fog of lies about him, which come down to us as history. Now to see whether a plain tale may not put them down.

Once more take your stand, please, on the Mountain of the Gods: the time, in or about the year 39 B.C.:—and thence try to envisage the world as Those do who guide but are not involved in the heats and dusts of it. The Western World; in which Rome, *caput mundi,* was the only thing that counted. *Caput mundi;* but a kind of idiot head at that: inchoate, without co-ordination; maggots scampering through what might have been the brain; the life fled, and that great rebellion of the many lives which we call decay having taken its place. And yet, it was no true season for Rome to be dead; it was no natural death; not so much decent death at all as the death in life we call madness. For the Crest-Wave men were coming in; it was the place where they should be. The cycle of Italy had begun, shall we say, in 94 B.C., and would end in 36 A.D.; —for convenience one must give figures, though one means only approximations by them;—and not until after that latter date would souls of any caliber cease to be incarnate in Roman bodies. Before that time, then, the madness had to be cured and Rome's mission had to be fulfilled.

The mission was, to homogenize the world. That was the task the Law had in mind for Rome; and it had to be done while the Crest-Wave remained in Italy and important egos were gathered in Rome. Some half dozen strong souls, under the Gods' special agent Octavian, had gone in there to do the work; but the Crest-Wave had flowed into Rome when Rome was already vice-rotten; and how could she expect to run her whole thirteen decades a great and ruling people? None of those strong souls could last out the whole time. Octavian himself, should he live to be eighty, would die and not see the cycle finished: twenty years of it would remain—to be filled by one worthy to succeed him, or how should his work escape being undone? The world must be made homogensous, and Rome not its conqueror and cruel mistress, but its well-respected heart and agreed-on center; and all this must be accomplished, and established firmly, before her cyclic greatness had gone elsewhere:—that is, before 37 A.D.

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The Republic, as we have seen, had had its method of ruling the provinces: it was to send out young profligates to fleece and exploit them, and make them hate Rome. This must be changed, and a habit formed of ruling for the benefit of the subject peoples. Two or three generations of provincials must have grown up in love with Rome before the end of the cycle, or the Empire would then inevitably break. By 37 A.D., the Crest-Wave would have left Italy, and would be centering in Spain. Spain, hating Rome, would shake off the Roman yoke; she would have the men to do it;—and the rest of the world would follow suit. Even if Spain should set herself to the Gods' work of union-making, what path should she take towards it? Only that of conquest would be open; and how should she hope to conquer, and then wipe out the evil traces of her conquering, and create a homogeneity, all within her possible cycle of thirteen decades? Rome's great opportunity came, simply because Rome had done the conquering before ever the Crest-Wave struck her; in days when the Crest-Wave was hardly in Europe at all. Even so, it would be a wonder if all could be finished in the few years that remained.

By Rome it never could have been done at all: it was the office of a Man, not of a state or nation. The Man who should do it, must do it from Rome: and Rome had first to be put into such condition as to be capable of being used. It devolved upon Augustus to do that first, or his greater work would be impossible. He had to win Rome to acquiescence in himself as Princeps. So his primary need was a personality of infinite tact; and *that* he possessed. He was the kind of man everybody could like; that put everyone at ease; that was friendly and familiar in all sorts of society; so he could make that treacherous quagmire Rome stable enough to be his *pied-a-terre.* That done, he could stretch out his arms thence to the provinces, and begin to weld them into unity. For this was the second part and real aim of his work: to rouse up in the Empire a centripetalism, with Rome for center, before centripetalism, in Rome itself, should have given place to the centrifugal forces of national death.

Rome ruled the world, and Augustus Rome, by right of conquest; and that is the most precarious right of all, and must always vanish with a change in the cycles. He had to, and did, transmute it into a stable right: first with respect to his own standing in Rome, —which might be done, with *tact* for weapon,— in a few years; then with respect to Rome's standing in the world,—which could not be done in less than a couple of lifetimes, and with the best of good government as means. If the work should be interrupted too early it would all fall to pieces. So then he must have one successor at least, a soul of standing equal to his own: one that could live and reign until 37 A.D. Let the Empire until that year be ruled continuously from Rome in such a manner as to rouse up Roman—that is, World, —patriotism in all its provinces, and the appearance of the Crest-Wave in a new center would not be the signal for a new break-up of the world. The problem was, then, to find the man able to do this.

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The child: for he must not be a man yet. And seeing what was at stake, he must be better equipped than Augustus: he must be trained from childhood by Augustus. Because he was to work in the midst of much more difficult conditions. Augustus had real men to help him: the successor probably would have none. When the Crest-Wave struck it, Rome was already mean and corrupt and degenerate. Augustus, not without good human aid, might hope to knock it into some kind of decency during the apex-time of the thirteen decades. His reign would fall, roughly, in the third quarter of the cycle, which is the best time therein; but his successor would have to hold out through the last quarter, which is the very worst. The Crest-Wave would then be passing from Italy: Rome would be becoming ever a harder place for a Real Man to live and work in. Meaner and meaner egos would be sneaking into incarnation; decent gentlemanly souls would be growing ever more scarce. By ‘mean egos’ I intend such as are burdened with ingrate personalities: creatures on whom sensuality has done its disintegrating work; whose best pleasure is to exempt themselves from any sense of degradation caused by fawning on the one strong enough to be their master, by tearing down as they may his work and reputation, circulating lies about him, tormenting him in every indirect way they can. Among such as these, and probably quite lonely among the, the successor of Augustus would lave to live, fulfilling Heaven’s work in spite of them. Where to find a Soul capable, or who would dare undertake the venture? Well; since it was to be done, and for the Gods,—no doubt the Gods would have sent their qualified man into incarnation.

In B.C. 39 Octavian proclaimed a general amnesty; and among these who profited by it was a certain member of the Claudian gens,—one of that Nero family to which Rome owed so much—

> *Testis Metaurum flumen et Hasdrubal*
> *Devictus*

He had been a friend of Caesar’s and an enemy of Octavian’s; and had been spending his time recently in fleeing from place to place in much peril; as had also his wife, aged eighteen, and their three-year-old son. On one occasion this lady was hurrying by night through a forest, and the forest took fire; she escaped, but not until the heat singed the cloak in which the baby boy in her arms was wrapped. Now they returned, and settled in their house on the Palatine not far from the house of Octavian.

In Rome at that time marriage was not a binding institution. To judge by the lives of those prominent enough to come into history, you simply married and divorced a wife whenever convenient. Octavian some time before had married Scribonia, to patch up an alliance with her kins-man Sextus Pompey, then prominent on the high seas in the role—I think the phrase is Mr. Stobart’s—of gentleman-pirate. As she was much older than himself, and they had nothing

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in common, it occurred to no one that, now the utility of the match had passed, he would not follow the usual custom and divorce her. He met Livia, the wife of this Tiberius Claudius Nero, and duly did divorce Livia. A new wedding followed, in which Claudius Nero acted the part of father to his ex-wife, and gave her away to Octavian. It all sounds very disgraceful; but this must be said: the great Augustus could never have done his great work so greatly had he not had at his side the gracious figure of the empress Livia,— during the fifty-two years that remained to him his serenest counselor and closest friend.

And then—there was the boy: I believe the most important element in the transaction.

His father died soon afterwards, and he came to live in the palace, under the care of his mother,—and of Augustus; who had now within his own family circle the two egos with whom he was most nearly concerned, and without whom his work would have been impossible. So I think we may put aside the idea that the marriage with Livia was an 'affair of the heart,' as they call it:—a matter of personal and passional atraction. He was guided to it, as always, by his *Genius,* and followed the promptings of the Gods.

But,—Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. The divorced Scribonia never forgave Augustus. She became the center of a faction in society that hated him, hated Livia, loathed and detested the whole Claudian line. There must have been bad blood in Scribonia. Her daughter Julia became profligate. Of Julia's five children, Agrippa Postumus went mad through his vices; Julia inherited her mother's tendencies, and came to a like end. Agrippina, a bitter and violent woman, became the evil genius of the next reign. Of this Agrippina's children, Drusus and Caligula went mad and her daughter was the mother of the madman Nero. To me the record suggest this: that the marriage with, not the divorce of, Scribonia was a grave mistake on the part of Octavian; bringing down four generations of terible karma. He was afloat in dangerous seas at that time, and a mere boy to take arms against them: did he, trusting in material alliances and the aid of Sextus Pirate, forget for once to trust in his *Genius* within? We have seen how the lines of pain became deeply graven on his face during the years that followed Caesar's death. A high soul, incarnating, must take many risks; and before it has found itself and tamed the new personality, may have sown griefs for itself to be reaped through many lives. The descendants of Augustus and Scribonia were the bane of Augustus and of Rome. But Livia was his good star, and always added to his peace.

But now, back to the household on the Palatine, in the thirties B.C.

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Julia (Scribonia's daughter), pert, witty, bold, and daring, was the darling of her father, whom she knew well how to amuse. Drusus, the younger son of Livia and Claudius Nero, was a bold handsome boy of winning manners and fine promise, generally noticed and loved. To these two you may say Augustus stood in only human relations: the loving, careful, and *jolly* father, sharing in all their games and merriment. He always liked playing with children: as emperor, would often stop in his walks through the streets to join in a game with the street-boys. But with Livia's elder son, Tiberius, he was different. Tiberius had no charm of manner: Drusus his brother quite put him in the shade. He carried with him the scars of his babyhood's perilous adventures, and the terror of that unremembered night of fire. He was desperately shy and sensitive; awkward in company; reserved, timid, retiring, silent. Within the nature so pent up were tense feelings; you would say ungovernable, only that he always did govern them. He went unnoticed; Drusus was the pet of all; under such conditions how much harmony as a rule exists between two brothers? But Tiberius loved Drusus with his whole heart; his thoughts knew no color of jealousy; unusual harmony was between them until Drusus died.—The world said Augustus disliked the boy: we shall see on what appearances that opinion was based. But Tiberius, then and ever afterwards, held for Augustus a feeling deeper and stronger than human or filial affection: it was that, with the added reverence of a disciple for his Teacher.—You shall find these intense feelings sometimes in children of his stamp; though truly children of the stamp of Tiberius are rare enough; for with all his tenderness, his over-sensitiveness and timidity, put him to some task, whisper to him *Duty!*—and the little Tiberius is another child altogether: unflinching, silent, determined, pertinacious, ready to die rather than give in before the thing is most whole-souledly done.

Augustus, merriest and most genial of men, never treated him as he did Julia and Drusus: there were no games and rompings with Tiberius. Let this grave child come into the room, and all ended; as if the Princeps were a school-boy caught at it by some stern prowling schoolmaster. Indeed, it was common talk that Augustus, until the last years of his life, never smiled in Tiberius' presence; that his smile died always on his stepson's entry; the joke begun went unfinished; he became suddenly grave and restrained;—as, I say, in the presence of a soul not to be treated with levity, but always upon a considered plan.

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The children grew up, and people began to talk of a successorship to Augustus in the Principate. It would be, of course, through Julia, his daughter. He married her to Marcellus, aged seventeen, his sister Octavia's son, who he adopted. Marcellus and Julia, then, would succeed him; no one thought of retiring Tiberius. Marcellus, however, died in a couple of years; and folk wondered who would step into his place. Augustus gave Julia to Vipsanius Agrippa, the man who had won so many campaigns for him. Agrippa was as old as the Princeps, but of much stronger constitution; and so, likely to outlive him perhaps a long while. Very appropriate, said Rome: Agrippa will reign next: an excellent fellow. No one thought of shy Tiberius.—Agrippa, by the way, was a strong man and a strict disciplinarian,—with soldiers, at any rate: it might be hoped also with wives. It was just as well for lady Julia to be under a firm hand.

Ten years later Agrippa died, and the heirship presumptive passed to his two eldest children by Julia: the princes Caius and Lucius. Augustus adopted them in due course. Heirship presumptive means here, that they were the ones Rome presumed would be the heirs: a presumption which Augustus, without being too definite, encouraged. The Initiate Leaders and Teachers of the world do not, as a rule, as far as one can judge, advertise well beforehand the identity of their successors.—As for Tiberius;—why, said Rome, his stepfather does not even like him. Drusus, now, and *his* children,—ah, that might be a possibility.

For the marriages of the two brothers told a tale. Drusus had married into the sacred Julian line: a daughter of Octavia and Mark Anthony; his son Germanicaus was thus a grand-nephew of Augustus, and a very great pet. But Tiberius had made a love-match, with a mere daughter of Agrippa by some former wife: an alliance that could not advance him in any way. Her name was Vipsania; the whole intensity of his pent-up nature went into his feeling for her; he was remarkably happily married;—that is, for the human, the tender, sensitive, and affectionate side of him.

Meanwhile both brothers had proved their worth. At twenty-two, Tiberius set up a kind in Armenia, and managed for Augustus the Parthian affair, whereby the standards of Crassus were returned. There were Swiss and German campaigns: in which Drusus was rather put where he might shine,—and he did shine;—and Tiberius a little in the shade. But Drusus in Germany fell from his horse, and died of his injuries; and then Tiberius was without question the first general of his age, and ablest man under the Princeps. As a soldier he was exceedingly careful of the welfare of his men; cautious in his strategy, yet bold; reserved; he made his own plans, and saw personally to their carrying out;— above all, he never made mistakes and never lost a battle. His natural shyness and timidity and awkwardness vanished as soon as there was work to be done: in camp, or on the battlefield, he was a very different man from the shy Tiberius of Roman society.

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Gossip left his name untouched. It took advantage of Augustus; natural *bonhomie,* and whispered tales agains *him* galore: even said that Livia retained her hold on him by taking his indiscretions discreetly;—which is as much as to say that an utterly corrupt society judged that great man by its own corrupt standards. But Tiberius was too austere; his life chilled even Roman gossip into silence. There was also his patent devotion to Vipsania..... You could only sneer at him, if at all, for lack of spirit.

He had, then, great and magnificent qualities; but the scars of his babyhood peril remained. There was that timid and clinging disposition; that over-sensitiveness that came out when he was away from camp, or without immediate business to transact, or in any society but that of philosophers and occultists:—for we do know that he was a student of Occult Philosophy. He had grand qualities; but felt, beneath his reserve, much too strongly; had a heart too full of pent-up human affections. But it is written:

"Before the Soul can stand in the prescence of the Masters, its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart."

It devolved upon his Teacher to break that heart for him; so that he might stand in the presence of the Masters.

Agrippa had died; and for Julia's sake it was wise and better to provide her with a husband. Augustus hesitated long before he dared take the tremendous step he did: as one doubtful whether it would accomplish what he hoped, or simply kill at once the delicate psychic organism to be affected by it. Then he struck, —hurled the bolt. Let Tiberius put away Vipsania and marry Julia.

Put away that adored Vipsania:—marry that Julia,—whom every single instinct in his nature abhorred! Incompatible:—that is the very least and mildest thing you can say about it;—but he must say nothing, for he is speaking to her father. He resists a long time, in deep anguish; but there is one word that for Tiberius was ever a clarion call to his soul.

What, cries he, is this terrible thing you demand of me?—and his Teacher answers: *Duty.* Duty to Rome, that the Julian and Claudian factions may be united; duty to the empire, that my successors, Caius and Lucius, may have, after I am gone, a strong man for their guardian.—You will note that, if you please. Augustus had just adopted these two sons of Julias; they were, ostensibly, to be his successors; there was no bait for ambition in this sacrifice Tiberius was called on to make; he would not succeed to the Principate; the marriage would not help him; there was to be nothing in it for him but pure pain. In the name of duty he was called on to make a holocaust of himself.

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He did it; and the feet of his soul were indeed washed in the blood of his heart. He said no word; he divorced Vipsania and explained nothing. But for months afterwards, if he should chance to meet her, or see her in the street far off, he could not hide the fact that his eyes filled with tears.—Then Rome in its own kindly way took upon itself the duty or pleasure of helping him out a little: gossip got to work to soothe the ache of his wound. “Vipasania,” said gossip;—“you are well rid of her; she was far from being all that you thought her.” Probably he believed nothing of it; but the bitterness lay in its being said. A shy man is never popular. His shyness passes for pride, and people hate him for it. Tiberius was very shy. So society was always anxious to take down his pride a little. The truth was, he was humble to the verge of self-distrust.

He did his best for Julia: lived under the same roof with her for a few agonized months, and discovered what everyone knew or suspected about her. The cup of his grief was now quite full; and indeed, worse things a man could hardly suffer. Austere, reserved, and self-controlled as he was, at sight of Vipsania he could not hide his tears. But it is written:

"Before the eyes can see, they must become incapable of tears."

—He was the butt of Roman gossip: in all rancorous mouths because of the loved Vipsania; in all tattling mouths because of the loathed Julia; laughed at on both accounts; sympathized with by nobody; hearing all whispers, and fearfully sensitive to them. But

"Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness."

The storm was upon him; the silence was ahead; he was rocked and shaken and stunned by the earthquakes and thunders of Initiation: when a man has to be hopeless, and battered, and stripped of all things: a naked soul afflicted with fiery rains and torments; and to have no pride to back him; and no ambition to back him; and no prospect before him at all, save such as can be seen with the it may be unopened eyes of faith. This is the way Tiberius endured his trials:—

All Rome knew what Julia was, except Augustus. So it is said; and perhaps truly; for here comes in the mystery of human duality: a thing hard enough to understand in ourselves, that are common humanity; how much harder the variety that appears in one such as Augustus! You may say, He must have known. Well, there was the Adept Soul; that, I doubt not, would have known. But perhaps it is that those who have all knowledge at their beck and call, have the power to know or not know what they will?—-to know what shall help, not to know what shall hinder their work? Julia was not to be saved: was, probably, tainted with madness like so many of her descendants:—then what the Adept Soul could not forfend, why would the human personality, the warn-hearted father, be aware of?

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Had that last known, how should he escape being bowed down with grief: then in those years when all his powers and energies were needed? Octavian had gone through storm and silence long since: in the days of the Triumvirate, and his enforced partnership in its nefarious deeds;—now his personal mind and his hands were needed to guide the Empire: and needed clear and untrammeled with grief... Until Tiberius should be ready; at least until Tiberius.... So I imagine it possible that the soul of Augustus kept from its personality that wounding knowledge about Julia.

Tiberius was not the one to interfere with its purposes. Why did he not get a divorce? The remedy was clear and easy; and he would have ceased to be the laughing stock of Rome. He did not get a divorce; or try to; he said no word; he would not lighten his own load by sharing it with the Teacher he loved. He would not wound that Teacher to save himself pain or shame. Augustus had made severe laws for punishing such offenses as Julia's; and—well, Tiberius would bear his griefs alone. No sound escaped him.

But, as no effort of his could help or save her, live with Julia, or in Rome, he could not. His health broke down; he threw up all offices, and begged leave to retire to Rhodes. Augustus was (apparently) quite unsympathetic; withheld the permission until (they say) Tiberius had starved himself for four days to show it was go or die with him. And no, he would not take Julia; and he would give no reason for not taking her. Well; what was Augustus to do, having to keep up human appearances, and suit his action to the probabilities? What, but appear put out, insulted, angry? Estrangement followed; and Tiberius went in (apparent) disgrace. I find the explanation once more in *Light on the Path;* thus—

"In the early state in which a man is entering upon the silence he loses knowledge of his friends, of his lovers, of all who have been near and dear to him: *and also loses sight of his teachers.*"

So in this case. "Scarce one passes through," we read, "without bitter complaint." But I think Tiberius did.

How else to explain the incident I cannot guess. Or indeed, his whole life. Tacitus' account does not hang together at all; the contraditions trip each other up, and any mud is good enough to fling. Mr. Baring-Gould's version goes far towards truth; but the well is deep for his tackle, and only esotericism, I think, can bring up the clear water. Whether Augustus knew all personally, or was acting simply on the promptings of his inner nature, or of Those who stoood behind him,—he took the course, it seems to me, which as an Occult Teacher he was bound to take. His conduct was framed in any case to meet the needs of his disciple's initiation. He, for the Law, had to break that disciple's outer life; and then send him lonely into the silence to find the greater life within. Truly these waters are deep; and one may be guessing with the utmost presumption. But

hear *Light on the Path* again; and judge whether the picture that emerges is or is not consistent. It says:

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“Your teacher or your predecessor, may hold your hand in his, and give you the utmost sympathy the human heart is capable of. But when the silence and the darkness come, you lose all knowledge of him: you are alone, and he cannot help you; not because his power is gone, but because you have invoked your great enemy.”

—Tiberius was alone, and Augustus could not help him; and he went off, apparently quite out of favor, to seven years of voluntary exile in Rhodes, there to don the robe of a philosopher, and study philosophy and “astrology,” as they say. Let us put it, the Esoteric Wisdom; I think we may.

The truth about Julia could not be kept from Augustus forever. It came to his ears at last; when his work was by so much nearer completion, and when Tiberius was by so much nearer his illumination. The Princeps did his duty, thought it made an old man of him: he banished Julia according to his own law. Then it was the wronged husband who stepped in and interceded; who wrote pleading letters to his stepfatehr, imploring him to have mercy on the erring woman: to lighten her punishment; to let her mother, at least, be with her in her exile. He knew well what tales Julia had been telling her father about him; and how Augustus had seemed to believe them; but “a courageous endurance of personal injustice” is demanded of the disciple; and very surely it was found in him. Rome heard of his intercession, and sneered at him for his weak-spiritedness; as kindly letter-writers failed not to let him know.

“Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm, not till then.”

The flower bloomed in this case during those seven years at Rhodes; then Tiberius was fit to return. Outer events shaped themseves to fit inner needs and qualifications: here now at last was the Man who was to succeed Augustus, duly and truly prepared, worthy and well-qualified: initiated, and ready to be named before the world Heir to the Principate. Within a few months of each other Caius and Lucius, the hitherto supposed successors designate, died; their brother Agrippa Postumus was already showing signs of incipient madness. True, there were many of the Julian line still alive and available, were Augustus (as had been thought) bent on making Julian blood the qualification necessary: there was Germanicus, married to Agrippina; he the son of Drusus and Antonia, Octavia’s daughter; she the daughter of Julia, and so grand-daughter of Augustus himself: there were these two with their several children. But all else might wait upon the fact that Tiberius, the real man, was now ready. The Princeps adopted him, and no one was left to doubt who was to be the successor. The happiest years in Tiberius’s life began: he had at last the full, unreserved, and undisguised friendship of his Teacher. His portarait-busts taken at this period show for the fist and only time a faint smile on his gravely beautiful face.

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Also he was given plenty of work. His great German campaigns followed quickly; and the quelling of the Pannanian insurrection that called him back from the Rhine; and Varus' defeat while Tiberius was in Pannonia; and Tiberius's triumphant saving of the situation. It was then, when the frontier was broken and all the world aquake with alarm, that he consulted his generals; the only time he ever did so. Says Velleius Paterculus, who served uner him:—"There was no ostentation in his conduct; it was marked by solid worth, practicality, humaneness. He took as much care of any one of us who happened to be sick, as if that one's health were the main object of his concern." Ambulances, he continues, were always in attendance, with a medical staff, warm baths, suitable food, *etc*., for the sick. "The general often admonished, rarely punished; taking a middle part, dissembling his knowledge of most faults, and preventing the commission of others.... He preferred the approval of his own conscience to the acquisition of renown."

He returned to Rome in triumph in the autumn of A.D. 12; and dismissed his chief captives with present, instead of butchering them in the fine old Roman way. He was at the height of his fame; undeniably Rome's savior, and surely to be Princeps on his Teacher's death. Augustus, in letters that remain, calls him "the only strength and stay of the Empire." "All who were with you," says he, "admit that this verse suits you:"

> 'One man by vigilance has restored the state.'

Whenever anything happens that requires more than ordinary consideration, or when I am out of humor, then, by Hercules, I long for the presence of my dear Tiberius; and Homer's lines rise in my mind:

> 'Bold from his prudence, I could e'en aspire
> To dare with him the burning rage of fire.'

"When I hear that you are worn out with incessant fatigue, the Gods confound me if I am not all in a quake. So I entreat you to spare yourself, lest, should we hear of your being ill, the news prove fatal to your mother and myself, and the Roman people be alarmed for the safety of the Empire. I pray heaven to preserve you for us, and bless you with health now and ever,—if the Gods care a rush for the Roman people. ....Farewell, my dearest Tiberius; may good success attend you, you best of all generals, in all that you undertake for me and for the Muses."

Two years later Augustus died, and Tiberius became emperor; and the persecution broke out that was not to end till his death. Let us get the whole situation firmly in mind. There was that clique in high society of men who hated the Principate because it had robbed them of the spoils of power. It gathered first round Scribonia, because she hated Augustus for divorcing her; then round Julia, because she was living in open contempt of the principles her father stood for. Its chief bugbear of all was Tiberius,

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because he was the living embodiment of those principles; and because Julia, the witty and brilliant, hated him above all things and made him in the salons the butt for her shafts. Its darling poet was Ovid; whose poetic mission was, in Mr. Stobart's phrase, "to gild uncleannes with charm." Presently Augustus sent him into exile: whiner over his own hard lot. But enough of unsavory him: the clique remained and treasured his doctrine. When Caius and Lucius died, it failed not to whisper that of course Tiberius had poisoned them; and during the next twenty-five years you could hardly die, in Rome, without the clique's buzzing a like tale over your corpse.—A faction that lasted on, handing down its legends, until Suetonius and Tacitus took them up and immortalized them; thus creating the Tiberius of popular belief and "history," deceiving the world for twenty centuries.

The Augustan system implied no tyranny; not even absolutism:—it was through no fault of its founder, or of his successor, that the constitutional side of it broke down. Remember the divine aim behind it all: to weld the world into one. So you must have the provinces, the new ones that retaineed their national identity, under Adept rule; there must be no monkeying by incompetents there. Those provinces were, absolutely all in the hands of Caesar. But in Rome, and Italy, and all quiet and long-settled parts, the senate was to rule; and Augustus' effort, and especially Tiberius' effort, was to make it do so. But by this time, you may say, there was nothing resembling a human ego left among the senators: when the Manasaputra incarnated, these fellows had been elsewhere. They simply could not rule. Augustus had had constantly to be intervening to pull them out of scrapes; to audit their accounts for them, because they could not do the sums themselves; to send down men into their provinces to put things right whenever they went wrong. Tiberius was much more loath to do this. At times one almost suspects him of being at heart a republican, anxious to restore the Republic the first moment it might be practicable. That would be, when the whole empire was one nation and some few souls to guide things should have appeared. At any rate (in his latter years) it must have seemed still possible that the Principate should continue: there was absolutely no one to follow him in it. So the best thing was to leave as much as possible the senate's duty to the senate, that responsibility might be aroused in them. For himself, he gave his whole heart and mind to governing the provinces of Caesar. He went minutely into finances; and would have his sheep sheared, not flayed. His eyes and hands were everywhere, to bring about the Brotherhood of Man. There is, perhaps, evidence in the Christian Evangels: where we see the Jewish commonalty on excellent good terms with the Roman soldier, and Jesus consorting freindily with Tiberius' centurions and tax-gatherers; but the Jewish national leaders

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as the enemies of both—of the Romans, and of the democratic Nazarene. If this emperor's life had come down through provincial, and not metropolitan, channels, we should have heard of him as the most beneficent of men. Indeed, Mr. Baring-Gould argues that among the Christians a tradition came down of him as of one "very near the Kingdom of God." It may be so; and such a view may even be the reflexion of the Nazarene Master's own opinion as to Tiberius. At any rate, we must suppose that at that time the Christian Movement was still fairly pure: its seat was in the provinces, far from Rome; and its strength among humble people seeking to live the higher life. But those who were interested to lie against Tiberius, and whose lies come down to us for history, were all metropolitans, and aristocrats, and apostles of degeneracy. I do not mean to include Tacitus under the last head; but he belonged to the party, and inherited the tradition.

It was on the provinces that Tiberius had his hand, not on the metropolis. He hoped the senators would do their duty, gave them every chance to; he rather turned his eyes away from their sphere, and kept them fixed on his own. We must understand this well: the histories give but accounts of Roman and home affairs; with which, as they were outside his duty, Tiberius concerned himself as little as he might.

But the senate's conception of duty-doing was this: flatter the Caesar in public with all the ingenuity and rhetoric God or the devil has given you; but for the sake of decency slander him in private, and so keep your self-respect.—I abased my soul to Caesar, I? Yes, I know I licked his shoes in the senate house; but that was merely camouflage. At Agrippina's *at home* I made up for it; was it not high-souled I who told that filthy story about him?—which, (congratulate me!) I invented myself. How dare you then accuse me of being small-spirited, or one to reverence any man soever?—So these maggots crawled and tumbled; untill they brought down their own karma on their heads like the Assyrian in the poem, or a thousand of bricks. Constitutuionalism broke down, and tyranny came on awfully in its place; and those who had not upheld the constitution suffered from the tyranny. But it was not heroic Tiberius who was the tyrant.

He was unpopular with the crowd, because austere and taciturn; he would not wear the pomps and tinsels, or swagger it in public to their taste. He was too reserved; he was not a good mixer: if you fell on your knees to him, he simply recoiled in disgust. He would not witness the gladiatorial games, with their sickening senseless bloodshed; nor the plays at the theatre, with their improprieties. In these things he was an anomaly in his age, and felt about them as would any humane gentleman today. So it was easy for his enemies to work up popular feeling aginst him.

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At the funeral of Augustus he had to read the oration. A lump in his throat prevented him getting through with it, and he handed the paper to his son Drusus to finish. "Oh!" cried his enemies then and Tacitus after them, "what dissimulation! what rank hypocrisy! when in reality he must be overjoyed to be in the dead man's shoes." When that same Drusus (his dear son and sole hope) died some years later, he so far controlled his feelings that none saw a muscle of his face moved by emotion while he read the oration. "Oh!" cried his enemies then and Tacitus after them, "what a cold unfeeling monster!" Tiberius, with an absolute eye for reading men's thoughts, knew well what was being said on either occasion.

When Augustus died, his one surviving grandson, Agrippa Postumus, was mad and under restraint in the island of Planasia, near Elba. A plot was hatched to spirit him away to the Rhine, and have him there proclaimed as against Tiberius by the legions. One Clemens was deputed to do this; but when Clemens reached Planasia, he found Agrippa murdered. Says Suetonius:

"It remained doubtful whether Augustus left the order (for the murder) in his last moments, to prevent any public disturbance after his death; or whether Livia issued it in the name of Augustus, or whether it was issued with or without the knowledge of Tiberius."—Tacitus in the right,—though truly this Agrippa Postumus was a peculiarly violent offensive idiot, and Augustus knew well what the anti-Claudian faction was capable of. Nor can one credit that gracious lady Livia with it; though it was she who persuaded Tiberius to hush the thing up, and rescind his order for a public senatorial investigation. For an order to that effect he issued; and Tacitus, *more suo,* puts it down to his hypocrisy. Tacitus' method with Tiberius is this: all his acts of mercy are to be attributed to weak-spiritedness; all his acts of justice, to blood-tyranny; everything else to hypocrisy and dissimulation.

Neither Augustus, nor yet Livia, then, had Agrippa killed; must we credit it to Tiberius? Less probably, I think, it was he than either of the others: I can just imagine Augustus taking the responsibility for the sake of Rome, but not Tiberius criminal for his own sake. Here is an explanation which incriminates neither: it may seem far-fetched; but then many true things do. We know how the children of darkness hate the Messengers of Light. Tiberius stood for private and public morality; the Julian-republican clique for the opposite. He stood for the nations welded into one, the centuries to be, and the high purposes of the Law. They stood for anarchy, civil war, and the old spoils system. —Down him then! said they. And how?—Fish up mad Postumus, and let's have a row with the Legions of the Rhine.—Yes; that sounds pretty—for you who are not in the deep know of the thing. But how far do you think the Legions of the Rhine are going to support this young revolting-habited madman against the first general of the age? You are green; you are crude, my friends;—but go to it; your plot shall do well. But we, the cream and innermost of the party,—we have another. Let the madman be murdered,—-and who shall be called the murderer?

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I believe they argued that way;—and very wisely; for Tiberius still carries the odium of the murder of Agrippa Postumus.

Why did he allow himself to be dissuaded from the public investigation? Was it weakness? His perturbation when he heard of the murder, and his orders for the investigation, were natural enough. One can perhaps understand Livia, shaken with the grief of her great bereavement, fearing the unknown, fearing scandal, fearing to take issue with the faction whose strength and bitterness she knew, pleading with her son to let the matter be. Was it weakness on his part, that he concurred? This much must be allowed: Tiberius was always weak at self-defense. Had he taken prompt steps against his personal enemies, it might have been much better for him, in a way. But then and always his eyes were upon the performance of his duty; which he understood to be the care of the empire, not the defense of himself. We called Augustus the bridge; Tiberius was the shield. He understood the business of a shield to be, to take shafts, and make no noise about it. Proud he was; with that sublime pride that argues itself capable of standing all things, so that the thing it cares for—which is not its own reputation—is unhurt. You shall see. We might call it unwisdom, if his work had suffered by it; but it was only his peace, his own name—and eventually his enemies— that suffered. He brought the world through.

Detail by detail, Mr. Baring-Gould takes the incidents of his reign, and show how the plot was worked up against him, and every happening, all his deeds and motives, colorless or finely colored, given a coat of pitch. We can only glance at one or two points here: his relations with Germanicus, and with Agrippina; the rise and fall of Sejanus.

Germanicus, his nephew, was fighting on the Rhine when Tiberius came to the throne. There was a mutiny; which Germanicus quelled with much loss of dignity and then with much bloodshed. To cover the loss of dignity, he embarked on gay adventures against the Germans; and played the fool a little, losing some few battles. Tiberius, who understood German affairs better than any man living, wanted peace in that quarter; and recalled Germanicus; then, lest there should be any flavor of disgrace in the recall, sent him on a mission to the East. Your textbooks will tell you he recalled him through jealousy of his brilliant exploits. Germanicus being something flighty of disposition, the emperor sent with him on his new mission a rough old fellow by the name of Calpurnius Piso to keep a weather eye open on him, and neutralize, as far as might be, extravagant actions. The choice, it must be said, was a bad one; for the two fought like cat and dog the better part of the time. Then Germanicus died, supposing that Piso had poisoned him; and Agrippina his wife came home, an Ate shrieking for revenge. She had exposed her husband’s naked body in the

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marketplace at Antioch, that all might see he had been poisoned; which shows the kind of woman she was. Germanicus was given a huge funeral at Rome; he was the darling of the mob, and the funeral was really a demonstration against Tiberius. then Piso was to be tried for the murder: a crabbed but honest old plebeian of good and ancient family, who Tiberius knew well enough was innocent. There were threats of mob violence if he should be acquitted; and the suggestion studiously sown that Piso, guilty, had been set on to the murder by the Princeps. Tiberius, knowing the popular feeling, did not attend the funeral of his nephew. It was a mistake in policy, perhaps; but his experience had been unpleasant enought at the funeral of Augustus. Tacitus says he stayed away fearing lest the public, peering into his face thus from close to, might see the marks of dissimulation in it, and realize that his grief was hypocrisy. How the devil did Tacitus know? Yet what he says comes down as gospel.

This sort of thing went on continually, and provided him a poor atmosphere in which to do his great and important work. As he grew older, he retired more and more. He trusted in his minister Sejanus who had once heroically save his life: an exceedingly able, but unfortunately also an exceedingly wicked man. Sejanus became his link with Rome and the senate; and used that position, and the senate's incompetence, to gather into his own hands a power practically absolute in home affairs. Home affairs, be it always remembered, were what the Princeps expected the senate to attend to: their duty, under the constitution. Instead, however, they fawned on Sejanus *ad lib.* Sejanus murdered Tiberius' son Drusus, and aspired to the hand of Livilla, his widow: she was the daughter of Germanicus and Agrippina; and she certainly, and Agrippina probably, were accessories to the murder of Drusus. For Agrippina was obsessed with hatred for Tiberius: with the idea that he had murdered her husband, and with thirst for revenge. Sejanus was thus in a fair way to the ends of his ambition: to be named the successor to the Principate.

Then Tiberius found him out; and sent a message to a senate engaged in Sejanus-worship, demanding the punishment of the murderers of Drusus.

Sejanus had built up his power by fostering the system of delation. There was no public prosecutor in the Roman system: when any wrong had been done, it was anyone's business to prosecute. The end of education was rhetoric, that you might get on in life. The first step was to bring an accusation against some public man, and support it with a mighty telling speech. If you succeeded, and killed your man,—why, then your name was made. On this system, with developments of his own, Sejanus had built; had employed one half of Rome informing against the other. It took time to bring about; but he had worked up by degrees a state of things in which all went in terror of him;

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and the senate was eager perpetually to condemn any one he might recommend for condemnation. When Tiberius found him out, they lost their heads entirely, and simply tumbled over themselves in their anxiety to accuse, condemn, and execute each other. Everyone was being informed against as having been a friend of Sejanus, and therefore an enemy of their dear Princeps; who was away at Capri attending to his duty; and whose ears, now Sejanus was gone, they might hope to reach with flatteries. You supped with your friend overnight; did your best to diddle him into saying something over the wine-cups;—then rose betimes in the morning to accuse him of saying it: only too often to find that he, (traitorly wretch!) had risen half an hour earlier and accused you; so you missed your breakfast for nothing; and dined (we may hope) in a better world. Thus during the last years of the reign there was a Terror in Rome: in the senate's sphere of influence; the senatorial class the sufferers and inflictors of the suffering. Meanwhile Tiberius in his retirement was still at his duty; his hold on his provinces never relaxed. When the condemned appealed to him, the records show that in nearly every case their sentences were commuted. Tiberius' enemies were punishing themselves; but the odium of it has been fastened on Tiberius. He might have interfered, you say?—What! with Karma? I doubt.

His sane, balanced, moderate character comes out in his own words again and again: he was a wonderful anomaly in that age. Rome was filled with slanders against him; and the fulsome senate implored him to punish the slanderers. "We have not much time to spare," Tiberius answered; "we need not involve ourselves in this additional business." "If any man speaks ill of me, I shall take care so to behave as to be able to give a good account of my words and acts, and so confound him. If he speaks ill of me after that, it will be time enough for me to think about hating him." Permission was asked to raise a temple to him in Spain; he refused to grant it, saying that if every emperor was to be worshiped, the worship of Augustus would lose its meaning. "For myself, a mere mortal, it is enough for me if I do my duties as a mortal; I am content if posterity recognises that... This is the only temple I desire to have raised in my honor, —and this only in men's hearts."—the senate, in a spasm of flattery, offered to swear in advance to all his acts. He forbade it, saying in effect that he was doing and proposed to do his best; but all things human were liable to change, and he would not have them endorsing the future acts of one who by the mere failure of his faculties might do wrong.

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In those sayings, I think, you get the man: perhaps a disciple only, and never actually a Master; perhaps never absolutely sure of himself, but only of his capacity and determination to do his duty day by day: his own duty, and not other men's:—never setting himself on a level with his Teacher; or thinking himself able, of his own abilities, to run the world, as Augustus had had the power and the mission to do,—but as probably no man might have had the power to do in Tiberius' time;—and by virtue of that faith, that high concentration on duty, carrying the world (but not Rome) through in spite of Rome, which had become then a thing incurable, nothing more than an infection and lamentable scab.

He left it altogether in his last years; its atmosphere and bitterness were too much for him. Form the quiet at Capri he continued to rule his provinces until the end; ever hoping that if he did his duty, someone or some spirit might arise in the senate to do theirs. Tacitus explains his retirement—as Roman society had explained it when it happened,—thus: Being then seventy-two years old, Tiberius, whose life up to that time had been irreproachable and untouched by gossip, went to Capri to have freedom and privacy for orgies of personal vice. But why did he not stay at Rome for his orgies: doing at Rome as the Romans did, and thereby perhaps earning a measure of popularity?

Over the bridge Augustus, western humanity had made the crossing; but on the further shore, there had to be a sacrifice to the Fates. Tiberius was the sacrifice. And that sacrifice was not in vain. We get one glimpse through provincial (and therefore undiseased) eyes of the empire he built up in the provinces. It is from Philo Judaeus, a Jewish Theosophist of Alexandria, who came to Rome in the reign of Caligula, Tiberius' successor. (Tiberius, it must be said, appointed no successor; there was none for him to appoint.) Caligula, says Philo,

"....succeeded to an empire that was well organized, tending everywhere to conceed—-north, south, east, and west brought into friendship; Greeks and barbarians routed, soldiers and civilians linked together in the bonds of a happy peace."

That was the work of Tiberius.

In the Gospel narrative, Jesus is once made to allude to him; in the words quoted at the head of this paper: "Render unto Caesar"—who was Tiberius—"the things which are Caesar's" I think it is about time it should be done: that the wreath of honor should at last be laid on the memory of this brave, just, sane, and merciful man; this silent duty-doer, who would speak no word in his own defense; this Agent of the Gods, who endured all those years of crucifixion, that he might build up the Unity of Mankind.

Says Mr. Baring-Gould:

“In the galleries of Rome, of Naples, Florence, Paris, one sees the beautiful face of Tiberius, with that intellectual brow and sensitive mouth, looking pleadingly at the passer-by, as though seeking for someone who would unlock the secret of his story and vindicate his much aspersed memory.”

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XX. CHINA AND ROME: THE SEE-SAW

That mankind is a unit;—that the history of the world, however its waters divide,—-whatever islands and deltas appear,—is one stream;—how ridiculous it is to study the story of one nation or group of nations, and leave the rest ignored, coming from your study with the impression (almost universal,) that all that counts of the history of the world is the history of your own little corner of it:—these are some of the truths we should have gathered from our survey of the few centuries we have so far glanced at. For take that sixth century B.C. The world seems all well split up. No one in China has ever heard of Greece; no one in Italy of India. What do the Greeks know about Northern Europe, or the Chinese about the Indians or Persians?—And yet we find in Italy, in Persia, in India, in China, men appearing,— phenomenal births,—evolved far above their fellows: six of them, to do the same work: Founders of Religions, all contemporary more or less; all presenting to the world and posterity the same high passwords and glorious countersigns. Can you conceive that their appearance, all in that one epoch, was a matter of chance? Is not some prearrangement suggested,—a *put-up job,* as they say: a definite plan formed, and a definite end aimed at? Then by whom? Can you escape the conclusion that, behind all this welter of races and separate histories aloof or barking at each other, there is yet somewhere, within the ringfence of humankind, incarnate or excarnate, One Center from which all the threads and currents proceed, and all the great upward impulses are directed?

Those Six Teachers came, and did their work; then two or three centuries passed; time enough for the seeds they sowed to sprout a little; and we come to another phase of history, a new region in time. High spiritual truth has been ingeminated in all parts of the world where the ancient vehicle of truth-dissemination (the Mysteries) has declined; A Teacher, a Savior, has failed to appear only in the lands north and west of Italy, because there among the Celts, and there alone, the Mysteries are still effective:—so you may say the seeds of spirituality have been well sown along a great belt stretching right across the Old World. Why? In preparation for what? For something, we may suppose. Certainly for something: for example, for the next two thousand five hundred years,—the last quarter, I would say, of a ten-millennium cycle, which was to end with a state of things in which every part of the world should be know to, and in communication with, every other part. So now in the age that followed that of the Six Teachers, in preparation for that coming time (our own), the attempt must be made to weld nations into unities. Nature and Law compel it: whose direction now is towards grand centripetalism, where before they had ordained heterogeneity and the scattering and aloofness of peoples.

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But Those who sent out the great six Teachers have a hand to play here: they have to put the welding process through upon their own designs. They start at the fountain of the cyclic impulses, on the eastern rim of the world: as soon as the cycle rises there, they strike for the unification of nations. Then they follow the cycle westward. To West Asia?—Nothing could be done there, because this was the West Asian pralaya; those parts must wait for Mohammed. In Europe then,—Greece?—No; its time and vigor had passed; and the Greeks are not a building people. They must bide their time, then, till the wave hits Italy, and what they have done in China, attempt to do there.

Only, what they had done in China was a mere Ts'in Shi Hwangti,— because Laotse and Confucius had not failed spiritually to prepare the ground,—they must send forth Adept-souled Augustus and Tiberius to do,—if human wisdom and heroism could do it, —in Italy;—because Pythagoras' Movement had failed.

The Roman Empire was the European attempt at a China; China was the Asiatic creation of a Rome. We call the Asiatic creation, *China, Ts'in-a;* it may surprise you to know that they called the European attempt by the same name: Ta *Ts'in,* 'the Great Ts'in.' Put the words *Augustus Primus Romae* into Chinese, and without much straining they might read, *Ta Ts'in Shi Hwangti.* The whole period of the Chinese manvantara is, from the two-forties B.C. to the twelve-sixties A.D., fifteen centuries. The whole period of the Roman Empire, Western and Eastern, is from the forties B.C. to the Fourteen-fifties A.D., fifteen centuries. The first phase of the Chinese Empire, from Ts'in Shi Hwangti to the fall of Han, lasted about 460 years; the Western Roman Empire, from Pharsalus to the death of Honorius, lasted about as long. Both were the unifications of many peoples; both were overturned by barbarians from the north: Teutons in the one case, Tatars in the other. But after that overturnment, China, unlike Rome, rose from her ashes many times, and still endures. Thank the success of Confucius and Laotse; and blame the failure of Pythagoreanism, for that!

But come now; let me draw up their histories as it were in parallel columns, and you shall see the likeness clearly; you shall see also, presently, how prettily time and the laws that govern human incarnation played battledore and shuttlecock with the two: what a game of see-saw went on between the East and West.

From 300 to 250 B.C. there was an orgy of war in which old Feudal China passed away forever, and from which Ts'in emerged Mistress of the world. From 100 to 50 B. C. there was an orgy of war in which Republican Rome passed away forever, and out of which Caesar emerged World-Master. Caesar's triumph came just two centuries after Ts'in Shi Hwangti's accession; Kublai Khan the Turanian, who smashed China, came just about as much before Mohammed II the Turanian, who swept away the last remnant of Rome.

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In the first cycles of the two there is a certain difference in procedure. In China, a dawn twilight of half a cycle, sixty-five years, from the fall of Chow to the Revival of Literature under the second Han, preceded the glorious age of the Western Hans. In Rome, the literary currents were flowing for about a half-cycle before the accession of Augustus: that half-cycle formed a dawn-twilight preceding the glories of the Augustan Age.

It was just when the reign of Han Wuti was drawing towards a sunset a little clouded,—-you remember Ssema Ts'ien's strictures as to the national extravagance and its results,—that the Crest-Wave egos began to come in in Rome. Cicero, eldest of the lights of the great cycle of Latin literature, would have been about twenty when Han Wuti died in 86. We counted the first "day" of the Hans as lasting from 194 (the Revival of the Literature) to the death of Han Wuti's successor in 63; in which year, as we saw, Augustus was born. During the next twenty years the Crest-Wave was rolling more and more into Rome: where we get Julius Caesar's career of conquest;— it was a time filled with wine of restlessness, and, you may say, therewith 'drunk and disorderly.' Meanwhile (from 61 to 49) Han Suenti the Just was reigning in China. His "Troops of justice" became, after a while, accustomed to victory; but in defensive wars. Here it was a time of sanity and order, as contrasted with the disorder in Rome; of pause and reflexion compared with the action and extravagance of the preceding Chinese age. It was Confucian and ethical; no longer Taoist and daringly imaginative; Confucianism began to consolidate its position as the state system. So in England Puritan sobriety followed Elizabethanism. Han Wuti let nothing impede the ferment of his dreams: Han Suenti retrenched, and walked quietly and firmly. His virtues commanded the respect of Central Asia: the Tatars brought him their disputes for arbitration, and all the regions west of the Caspian sent him tribute. China forwent her restless and gigantic designs, and took to quietude and grave consideration.—So we may perhaps distribute the characteristics of these two decades thus between the three great centers of civilization: in China, the stillness that follows an apex time; in India, creation at its apex; in Rome, the confusion caused by the first influx of Crest-Wave Souls.

As Octavian rose to power, the House of Han declined. We hear of a gorging Vitellius on the throne in the thirties; then of several puppets and infants during the last quarter of the century; in A.D. 1, of the dynasty overthrown by a usurper, Mang Wang, who reigned until A.D. 25. Thus the heyday of Augustan Rome coincides with the darkest penumbra of China. Then Kwang-wuti, the eldest surviving Han prince, was reinstated; but until two years before the death of Tiberius, he had to spend his time fighting rebels. Now turn to Rome.

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While Han Kwang-wuti was battling his way towards the restitution of Han glories, Tiberius, last of the Roman Crest-Wave Souls, was holding out grimly for the Gods until the cycle should have been completed, and he could say that his and their work was done. For sixty-five years he and his predecessor had been welding the empire into one: now, that labor had been so far accomplished that what dangerous times lay ahead could hardly imperil it. So far it had been a case of Initiate appointing Initiate to succeed him: Augustus, Tiberius;—but whom should Tiberius appoint? There was no one. The cycle was past, and for the present Rome was dead; and on the brink of that unfortunate place to which (they say) the wicked dead must go. Tiberius finally had had to banish Agrippina, her mischief having become too importunate. You remember she was the daughter of Julia and Agrippa, and Germanicus' widow. His patience with her had been marvelous. Once, at a public banquet, to do her honor he had picked a beautiful apple from the dish, and handed it to her: with a scowl and some ostentation, she gave it to the attendant behind her, as who should say: 'I know your designs; but you do not poison me this time'; all present understood her meaning well. Once, when he met her in the palace, and she passed him with some covert insult, he stopped, laid a hand on her shoulder, and said: "My little woman, it is no hurt to you that you do not reign." But his patience only encouraged her in her machinations; and at last he was compelled to banish her. Also to keep one of her sons in strictest confinement; of which the historians have made their for him discreditable tale: the truth is, it was an heroic effort on his part to break the boy of his vices by keeping him under close and continuous supervision. But that is more easily said than done, sometimes; and this Drusus presently died a madman. He then took the youngest son of Agrippina to live with him at Capri; that he, Tiberius, might personally do the best with him that was to be done; for he foresaw that this youth Caius would succeed him; his own grandson, Tiberius Gemellus, being much younger. He foresaw, too, that Caius, once on the throne, would murder Gemellus; which also happened. But there was nothing to be done. Had he named his grandson his successor, a strong regent would have been needed to carry things through until that successor's majority, and to hold the Empire against the partisans of Caius. There was no such strong man in sight; so, what had to come, had to come. *Apres lui le deluge:* Tiberius knew that. *Le deluge* was the four years' terror of the reign of Caius, known as Caligula; who, through no good will of his own, but simply by reason of his bloodthirsty mania, amply revenged the wrongs done his pedecessor. Karma put Caligula on the throne to punish Rome.

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The reign was too short, even if Caligula had troubled his head with the provinces, for him to spoil the good work done in them during the preceding half-cycle. He did not so trouble his head; being too busy murdering the pillars of Roman society. Then a gentleman who had been spending the afternoon publicly kissing his slippers in the theater, experienced, as they say, a change of heart, and took thought to assassinate him on the way home; whereupon the Praetorians, let loose and having a thoroughly good time, happened on a poor old buffer of the royal house by the name of Claudius; and to show their sense of humor, made him emperor *tout de suite.* The senate took a high hand, and asserted *its* right to make those appointments; but Claudius and the Praetorians thought otherwise; and the senate, after blustering, had to crawl. They besought him to allow them the honor of appointing him.—what a difference the mere turn of a cycle had made: from Augustus bequeathing the Empire to Tiberius, ablest man to ablest man, and all with senatoral ratification; to the jocular appointment by undisciplined soldiery of a sad old laughingstock to succeed a raging maniac.

Claudius was a younger brother of Germanicus; therefore Tiberius' nephew, Caligula's uncle, and a brother-in-law to Agrippina. Mr. Baring-Gould says that somewhere deep in him was a noble nature that had never had a chance: that the soul of him was a jewel, set in the foolish lead of a most clownish personality. I do not know; certainly some great and fine things came from him; but whether they were motions of his own soul (if he had one), or whether the Gods for Rome's sake took advantage of his quite negative being, and prompted it to their own purposes, who can say?—Sitting down, and keeping still, and saying nothing, the old man could look rather fine, even majestic; one saw traces in him of the Claudian family dignity and beauty. But let hm walk a few paces, and you noted that his feet dragged and his knees knocked together, and that he had a paunch; and let him get interested in a conversation, and you heard that he first spluttered, and then roared. Physical wakness and mental backwardness had made him the despair of Augustus: he was the fool of the family, kept in the background, and noticed by none. Tiberius, in search of a successor, had never thought of him; had rather let things go to mad Caligula. He had never gone into society; never associated with men of his own rank; but chose his companions among small shopkeepers and the 'Arries and 'Arriets of Rome, who, 'tickled to death' at having a member of the reigning family to hobnob with them in their back-parlors, would refrain from making fun of his peculiatities. Caligula had enjoyed using him as a butt, and so had spared his life. He had never even learned to behave at table: and so, when he came to the throne, made a law that table-manners should no longer be incumbent on a Roman gentleman. All this is recorded of him; one would hardly believe it, but that his portraits bear it out.*

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* The accounts of Claudius and Nero are from *The Tragedy of the Caesars,* by S. Baring-Gould.

For all that he did well at first. He made himself popular with the mob, cracking poor homely jokes with them at which they laughed uproariously. He paid strict attention to business: made some excellent laws; wisely extended Roman citizenship among the subject peoples; undertook and pushed through useful public works. Rome was without a decent harbor: corn from Egypt had to be transshipped at sea and brought up the Tiber in lighters; which resulted in much inconvenience, and sometimes shortage of food in the city. Claudius went down to Ostia and looked about him; and ordered a harbor dredged out and built there on a large scale. The best engineers of the day said it was impossible to do, and would not pay if done. But the old fool stuck to his views and made them get to work; and they found it, though difficult and costly, quite practicable; and when finished, it solved the food problem triumphantly. This is by way of example.—Poor old fool! it was said he never forgot a kindness, or remembered an injury. He came soon, however, to be managed by various freedmen and rascals and wives; all to the end that aristocratic Rome should be well punished for its sins. One day when he was presiding in the law courts, someone cried out that he was an old fool, —which was very true.—and threw a large book at him that cut his face badly,—which was very unkind. And yet, all said, through him and through several fine and statesmanlike measures he put through, the work of Augustus and Tiberius in the empire at large was in many ways pushed forward: he did well by the provinces and the subject races, and carried on the grand homogenization of the world.

He reigned thirteen years; then came Nero. If one accepts the traditional view of him, it is not without evidence. His portraits suggest one ensouled by some horrible elemental; one with no human ego in him at all. The accounts given of his moods and actions are quite credible in the light of the modern medical knowledge as to insanity; you would find men like Tacitus Nero in most asylums. Neither Tacitus nor Suetonius was in the habit of taking science as a guide in their transcriptions; they did not, in dealing with Tiberius for example, suit their facts to the probabilities, but just set down the worst they had heard said. What they record of him is unlikely, and does not fit in with his known actions. But in drawing Nero, on the contrary, they made a picture that would surprise no alienist. Besides, Tacitus was born some seventeen years after Tiberius died; but he was fourteen years old at the death of Nero, and so of an age to have seen for himself, and remembered. Nero did kill his mother, who probably tried to influence him for good; and he did kill Seneca, who certainly did. His reign is a monument to the rottenness of Rome;

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his fall, a proof, perhaps, of the soundness of the provinces. For when *they* felt the shame of his conduct, they rose and put him down; Roman Gaul and Germany and Spain and the East did. Here is a curious indication: Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who made such a sorry thing of the two years (68 and 69) they shared in the Principate, had each done well as a provincial governor. In the provinces, then, the Tiberian tradition of honest efficient government suffered not much, if any, interruption. The fact that Rome itself stood the nine years of Nero's criminal insanity,—and even, so far as the mob was concerned, liked it (for his grave was long kept strewn with flowers)—shows what a people can fall to, that the Crest-Wave had first made rotten, and then left soulless.

By the beginning of 70, things were comfortably in the hands of Vespasian, another provincial governor; under whom, and his son Titus after him, there were twelve years of dignified government; and seven more of the same, and then seven or eight of tyranny, under his second son, Domitian. Against the first two of these Flavians nothing is to be said except that the rise of their house to the Principate was by caprice of the soldiery. Vespasian was an honest Sabine, fond of retiring to his native farm; he brought in much good provincial blood with him into Roman society.—Then in 96 came a revolution which placed the aged senator Nerva on the throne; who set before himself the definite policy—as it was intended he should—of replacing personal caprice by legality and constitutionalism as the instrument of government. He reigned two years, and left the empire to Trajan; who was strong enough as a general to hold his position, and as a statesman, to establish the principles of Nerva. And so things began to expand again; and a new strength became evident, the like of which had not been seen since (at least) the death of Tiberius.

Octavian returned to Rome, sole Master of the world, in B.C. 29. A half-cycle on from that brings us to 36 A.D., the year before Tiberius died: that half-cycle was one, for the Empire all of it, and for Rome most of it, of bright daylight. The next half-cycle ends in 101, in the third year of Trajan: a time, for the most part, of decline, of twilight. You will notice that the Han day lasted the full thirteen decades before twilight came; the Roman, but six decades and a half.

We ought to understand just how far this second Roman half-cycle was an age of decline: just how much darkneww suffused the twilight it was. We talk of representative government; as if any government were ever really anything else. Men get the government that represents them; that represent their intelligence, or their laxity, or their vices:—whether it be sent in by the ballot or by a Praetorian Guard with their caprice and spears. In a pralayic time there is no keen national consciousness, no centripetalism. There was none in Rome in those days; or not enough

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to counteract the centrifugalism that simply did not care. The empire held together, because Augustus and Tiberius had created a centripetalism in the provinces; and these continued in the main through it all to enjoy the good government the first two emperors had made a tradition in them, and felt but little the hands of the fools or madmen reigning in Rome. And then, blood from the provinces was always flowing into Rome itself; particularly in the Flavian time; and supplied or fed a new centripetalism there which righted things in the next half-cycle. It was Rome, not the provinces, that Nero and Caligula represented in their day; the time was transitional; you may call Otho and Vitellius the first bungling shots of the provinces at having a hand in things at the center; wholesome Vespasian was their first representative emperor: Nerva and those that followed him represented equally the provinces and a regenerated Rome.—This tells you what Nero's Rome was, and how it came to tolerate Nero; when Vitellius came in with his band of ruffians from the Rhine, and the streets flowed with blood day after day, the places of low resort were as full as ever through it all; while carnage reigned in the forums, riotous vice reigned within doors.

But look outside of Rome, and the picture is very different. The Spaniard, Gaul, Illyrian, Asiatic and the rest, were enjoying the Roman Peace. There was progress; if not at the center, everywhere between that and the periphery of civilization. Life, even in Italy (in the country parts) was growing steadily more cultured, serious, and dignified; and in all remote regions was assimilating its standards to the best in Italy. From the Scottish Lowlands to the Cataracts of the Nile a single people was coming into being; it was a wide and well-tilled field in which incarnate souls might grow. The satirists make lurid pictures of the evils Rome; and the evils were there, with perhaps not much to counter-balance them, *in Rome.* Paris has been latterly the capital of civilization; and one of its phases as such has been to be the capital of the seven deadly sins. The sins are or were there: Paris provided for the sinners of the world, in her capacity of world-metropolis; just as she provided for the artists, the *litteratuers,* and so on. Foolish people drew from that the conclusion that therefore Frenchmen were more wicked than other people: whereas in truth the life of provincial France all along has probably been among the soundest of any. So we must offset Martial's and Juvenal's pictures of the calm and gracious life in the country: virtuous life, often, with quiet striving after usefulness and the higher things. He reveals to us, in the last quarter of the century, interiors in northern Italy, by Lake Como; you should have found the like anywhere in the empire. And where, since Rome fell, shall you come on a century in which Britain, Gaul, Spain, Italy, the Balkans, Asia and Africa, enjoyed a Roman or any kind of peace? Be not deceived: there has been no such success in Europe since as the empire that Augustus the Initiate made, and for which Tiberius his disciple was crucified.

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Yet they captured it, as I find things, out of the jaws of failure and disaster. Failure: that of Pythagoreanism six centuries before;—disaster: Caesar's conquest of Gaul and destruction of the Mysteries there. Men come from the Masters of the World to work on this plane or on that: to found an empire perhaps, or to start a spiritual movement. Augustus came commissioned to the former, not to the latter, work. Supposing in his time the Gaulish Mysteries had been intact. We may trust him to have established relations somehow: he would have had close and friendly relations with the Gaulish hierophants; even if he had conquered the people, he would not have put out their light. But I imagine he would have found a means to union without conquest. Then what would have happened? We have seen that the cyclic impulse did touch Gaul at that time; it made her vastly rich, hugely industrial;—as Ferero says, the Egypt of the West. That, and nothing better than that, because she had lost her spiritual center, and might not figure as the world Teacher among nations. But, you say, Augustus proscribed Druidism—which sounds like carrying on Julius' nefarious work. He did, I believe;—but why? Because Julius had seen to it that the white side of Druidism had perished. The Druids were magicians; and now it was the dark magic and its practitioners that remained among them,—at least in Gaul. So of course Augustus proscribed it.

Remember how France has stood, these last seven centuries, as the teacher of the arts and civilization to Europe; and this idea that she might have been, and should have been, something far higher to the Roman world, need not seem at all extravagant. I think it was a possibility; which Caesar had been sent by the kings of night to forestall. And so, that Augustus lacked that reinforcement by which he might have secured for Europe a unity as enduring as the Chinese Teachers secured for the Far East.

And yet the Lodge did not leave Rome lightless; there was much spiritual teaching in the centuries of the Empire; indeed, a new out-breathing in each century, as an effort to retrieve the great defeat;—and this has been the inner history of europe ever since. This: raidings from the Godworld: swift cavalry raidings, that took no towns as a rule, nor set up strongholds here on hell's border; yet did each time, no doubt, carry off captives. Set up no strongholds;—that is, until our own times; so what we have missed is the continuous effort; the established base 'but here upon this bank and shoal,' from which the shining squadrons of the Gods might ride. Such a base was lost when Caesar conquered Gaul; then some substitute for Gaul had to be found. It was Greece and the East; where, as you may say, abjects and orts of truth came down; not the live Mysteries, but the *membra disjecta* of the vanished Mysteries of a vanished age. With these the Teachers of the Roman world had to work, distilling out of them what

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they might of the ancient Theosophy. So latterly H.P. Blavasky must gather up fragments in the East for the nexus of her teaching; she must find seeds in old sarcophagi, and plant and make them grow in this soil so uncongenial; because there was no well-grown Tree patent to the world, with whose undeniable fruitage she might feed the nations. This was one great difficulty in her way; whe had to introduce Theosphy into a world that had forgotten it ever existed.

So,—but with a difference,—in that first century. The difference was that Pythagoreanism, the nexus, was only six hundrd years away, and the memory of it fairly fresh. Stoicism was the most serious living influence within the empire; a system that concerned itself with right and brave living, and was so far spiritual; but perhaps not much further. The best in men reacted against the sensuality of the mid-century, and made Stoicism strong; but this formed only a basis of moral grit for the higher teaching; of which, while we know it was there, there is not very much to say. I shall come to it presently; meanwhile, to something else.—In literature, this was the cycle of Spain: the Crest-Wave was largely there during the first thirteen decades of the Christian era. Seneca was born in Cordova about 3 B. C.; Hadrian, the last greatman of Spanish birth (though probably of Italian race), died in 138. Seneca was a Stoic: a man with many imperfections, of whom history cannot make up its mind wholly to approve. He was Nero's tutor and minister during the first five golden years of the reign; his government was wise and beneficent, though, it is said, sometimes upheld by rather doubtful means. In the growing gloom and horror of the nightmare reign of Nero, he wrote many counsels of perfection; his notes rise often, someone has said, to a sort of falsetto shriek; but then, the wonder is he could sing at all in such a hell's cacophony. A man with obvious weaknesses, perhaps; but fighting hard to be brave and hopeful where there was nothing in sight to encourage bravery or foster hope; when every moment was pregnant with ghastly possibilities; when death and abominable torture hobnobbed in the Roman streets with riots of disgusting indulgence, abnormal lusts, filthiness parading unabashed. He speaks of the horrors, the gruesome impalings; deprecating them in a general way; not daring to come down to particulars, and rebuke Nero. Well; Nero commanded the legions, and was kittle cattle to rebuke. If sometimes you see tinsel and tawdriness about poor Seneca, look a little deeper, and you seem to see him writing it in agony and bloody sweat. . . . He was among the richest men in Rome, when riches were a deadly peril: he might even, had he been another man, have made himself emperor; perhaps the worst thing against him is that he did not. His counsels and aspirations were much better than his deeds;—which is as much as to say his Higher Self than his lower. He stood

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father-confessor to Roman Society: a Stoic philosopher in high, luxurious, and most perilous places: he cannot escape looking a little unreal. Someone in some seemingly petty difficulties, writes asking him to sue his influence on his behalf; and he replies with a dissertation on death, and what good may lie in it, and the folly of fearing it. Cold comfort for his correspondent; a tactless, strained, theatrical thing to do, we may call it. But what strain upon his nerves, what hideous knowledge of the times and of evils he did not see his way to prevent, what haunting sense of danger, must have driven him to that fervid hectic eloquence that now seems so unnatural! One guesses there may be a place in the Pantheons or in Valhalla of the heroes for this poor not untawdry not unheroic Seneca. One sees in him a kind of Hamlet, hitting in timorous indecision on the likely possibility of converting his Claudius by a string of moral axioms and eloquence to a condition that should satisfy the Ghost and undo the something rotten in the state.... Yet the Gods must have been grateful to him for the work he did in holding for Stoicism and aspiration a center in Rome during that dreadful darkness. Perhaps only the very strongest, in his position, could have done better; and then perhaps only by killing Nero.*

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* Dill: *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius.*

But there was a greater than Seneca in Rome, even in Nero's reign;—there intermittently, and not to abide: Appollonius of Tyana, presumably the real Messenger of the age:—and by the change that had come over life by the second century, we may judge how great and successful. But there is not getting at the reality of the man now. We have a *Life* of him, written about a hundred years after his death by Philostratus, a Greek sophist, for the learned Empress Julia Domna, Septimius Severus' wife; who, no doubt, chose for the work the best man to hand; but the age of great literature was past, and Philostratus resurrects no living soul. The account may be correct enough in outline; the author was painstaking; visited the sites of his subject's exploits, and pressed his inquiries; he claims to have based his story on the work of Damis of Neneveh, a disciple of Apollonius who accompanied him everywhere. But much is fabulous: there is a gorgeous account of dragons' in India, and the methods used in hunting them; and you know nothing of the real Apollonius when you have read it all. Here, in brief, is the outline of the story: Apollonius was born at Tyana in Cappodocia somewhere about the year 1 A.D., and died in the reign of Nerva at nearly a hundred: tradition ascribed to his birth its due accompaniment of signs and portents. At sixteen he set himself under Pythagorean discipline; kept silence absolute for five years; traveled, healing and teaching, and acquired a great renown throughout Asia Minor. He went by Babylon and Parthia to India; spent some

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time there as the pupil of certain Teachers on a sacred mountain; they, it appears, expected his coming, received him and taught him; ever afterwards he spoke of himself as a disciple of the Indian Master Iarchus. Nothing in the book is more interesting than the curious light it throws on popular beliefs of the time in the Roman World as to the existence of these Indian masters of the Secret Wisdom;—India, of course, included the region north of the Himalayas. Later he visited the Gymnosophists of the Tebaid in Egypt; according to the account, these were of a lower standing than the Indian Adepts; and Apollonius came among them not as a would-be disciple, but as an equal, or superior.—He was persecuted in Rome by Nero; but over awed Tigellinus, Nero's minister, and escaped. He met Vespasian and Titus at Alexandria, soon after the fall of Jerusalem; and was among those who urged Vespasian to take the throne. He was arrested in Rome by Domitian, and tried on charges of sorcery and treason; and is said to have escaped his sentence and execution by the simple expedient of vanishing in broad daylight in court. One wonders why this from his defense before Domitian, as Philostratus gives it, has not attracted more comment; he says: "All unmixed blood is retained by the heart, which through the blood-vessels sends it flowing as if through canals over the entire body."—According to tradition, he rose from the dead, appeared to several to remove their doubts as to a life beyond death, and finally bodily ascended into heaven. Reincarnation was a very cardinal point in his teaching; perhaps the name of Neo-Pythagoreanism, given to his doctrine, is enough to indicate in what manner it illuminated the inner realms and laws which Stoicism, intent only on brave conduct and the captaincy of one's own soul, was unconcerned to inquire into. Another first century Neo-Pythagorean Teacher was Moderatus of Gades in Spain. The period of Apollonius's greatest influence would have corresponded with the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, from 69 to 83; the former, when he came to the throne, checked the orgies of vice and brought in an atmosphere in which the light of Thesophy might have more leave to shine. The certainty is that the last third of the first century wrought an enormous change: the period that preceded it was one of the worst, and the age that followed it, that of the Five Good Emperors, was the best, in known European history. —Under the Flavians, from 69 to 96,—or roughly, during the last quarter,—came the Silver Age, the second and last great day of Latin literature: with several Spanish and some Italian names,—foam of the Crest-Wave, these latter, as it passed over from Spain to the East. It will, by the way, help us to a conception of the magnitude of the written material at the disposal of the Roman world, to remember that Pliny the Elder, in preparing his great work on Natural History, consulted six thousand published authorities. That was in the reign of Nero; it makes one feel that those particular ancients had not so much less reading matter at their command than we have today.

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Of the great Flavian names in literature, we have Tacitus; Pliny the Younger, with his bright calm pictures of life; Juvenal, with his very dark ones: these were Italians. Juvenal was a satirist with a moral purpose; the Spaniard Martial, contemporary, was a satirist without one. Martial drew from life, and therefore his works, though coarse, are still interesting. We learn from him what enormous activity in letters was to be found in those days in his native Spain; where every town had its center of learning and apostles and active propaganda of culture. Such things denote an ancient cultural habit, lapsed for a time, and then revived.

Another great Spainiard, and the best man in literature of the age, was Quintilian: gracious, wise, and of high Theosophic ideals, especially in education. He was born in A.D. 35; and was probably the greatest literary critic of classical antiquity. For twenty years, from 72 until his death, he was at the head of the teaching profession in Rome. The “teaching” was, of course, in rhetoric. Rome resounded with speech-makings; and Gaul, Spain, and Africa were probably louder with it than Rome. Though the end of education then was to turn out speech-makers,—as it is now to turn out money-makers,—I do not see but that the Romans had the best of it,—Quintilian saw through all to fundamental truths; he taught that your true speech-maker must be first a true man. He went thoroughly into the training of the orator,—more thoroughly, even from the standpoint of pure technique, than any other Greek or Roman writer;—but would base it all upon character, balance of the faculties,—in two words, Raja-Yoga. Pliny the Younger was among his pupils, and owed much to him; also is there to prove the value of Quintilian’s method;—for Quintilian turned out Pliny a true gentlman. Prose in those days,—that is, rhetoric,—was tending ever more to flamboyancy and extravagance: a current which Quintilian stood against valiantly. We find in him, as critic, just judgment, sane good taste, wide and generous sympathies;—a tendency to give the utmost possible credit even where compelled in the main to condemn;—as he was in the case of Senaca. He had the faculty of hitting off in a phrase the whole effect of a man’s style; as when he speaks of the “milky richness of Livy,” and the “immortal swiftness of Sallust.” *

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* *Encyclopaedia Britannica;* article ‘Quintilian’

So then, to sum up a little: I think we gain from these times a good insight into cyclic workings. First, we shall see that the cycles are there, and operative: action and reaction regnant in the world,—a tide in the affairs of men; and strong souls coming in from time to time, to manipulate reactions, to turn the currents at strategic points in time; making things, despite what evils may be ahead, flow on to higher levels than their own weight would carry them to: thus did Augustus and Tiberius;

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—or throwing them down, as the merry Julius did, from bright possibilities to a sad and lightless actuality. For perhaps we have been suffering because of Julius' exploit ever since; and certainly, no matter what Neros and Caligulas followed them, the world was a long time the better for the ground the great first two Principes captured from hell.—And next, we shall learn to beware of being too exact, precise, and water-tight with out computations and conceptions of these cycles: we shall see that nature works in curves and delicate wave-lines, not in broken off bits and sudden changes. Rome was going down in Tiberius' reign: she was bad enough then, heaven knows; though we may put her passing below the meridian at or near the end of it;— conveniently, in the year 36. And then, what with (1) the tenseness of the gloom and the severity of suffering in the reigns of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian;—and (2) the inflow of new and cleaner blood from the provinces at all times but especially under Vespasian; and above all, (3) the Theosophic impulse whose outward visible sign is the mission of Apollonius and Moderatus:—we find her ready to emerge into light in 96, when Nerva came to the throne, instead of having to wait the five more years for the end of the half-cycle;—-although we may well suppose it took that time at least for Nerva and Trajan to clear things up and settle them. So we may keep this scheme of dates in memory as indicative: a (rough) half-cycle before 29 B.C., that of dawn and darkest hour preceding it; 29 B.C. to 36 A.D. daylight; 36 to 101, night and the beginnings of a new dawn.

And now we must turn to China.

Dusk came on in Rome with the death of Tiberius in A.D. 37; but what is dusk in the west is dawn in the east of the world. In 35 Han Kwang-wuti had put down the Crimson-Eyebrow rebellion, and seated himself firmly on the throne. The preceding half-cycle, great in Rome under Augustus and Tiberius, had been a time, first of puppet emperors, then of illegalism and usurpation, then of civil war. Han Kwang-wuti put an end to all that, and opened, in 35, a new cycle of his own.

But there is also an old cycle to be taken into account: the original thirteen-decade period of the Hans, that began in 194, and ended its first "day" in 63 or so,—to name convenient dates. I should, if I believed in this cyclic law, look for a recurrence of that: a new day to dawn, under its influence, in 66 or 67 A.D., thirteen decades after the old one ended,—and to last until 196 or 197. But on the other hand, here is Han Kwang-wuti starting things going in 35, a matter of thirty-two years ahead of time,—catching the flow of force just as it diminished in Rome.—And this thirty-two years, you may note, with what odd months we may suppose thrown in, is in itself a quarter-cycle.

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Now cyclic impulses waste; a second day of splendor will commonly be found a Silver Age, where the first was Golden: it will often be more perfect and refined, but much less vigorous, than the first. So I should look for the second “day” of the Hans to come on the whole with less light to shine and less strength to endure than its predecessor; I should expect a gentleness as of late afternoon in place of the old noontide glory. But then there is the complication induced by Han Kwang-wuti, who started his cycle in 35.... or more probably his half-cycle;—I should look for it to be no more than that, on account of this same wastage of the forces;—this also has to be taken into consideration.

Brooding over the whole situation, I should foretell the history of this second Han Dynasty in this way: from 35 to 67,—the latter date the point where the old and new cycles intersect,— would be a static time: of consolidation rather than expansion; of the gathering of the wave, not of its outburst into any splendor of foam. Between 67 and 100, or when the two cycles coincide, I should look for great things and doings; for some echo or repetition of the glories of Han Wuti,—perhaps for a finishing and perfecting of his labors. From then on till 197 I should expect static, but weakening conditions: static mainly till 165, weakening rapidly after. Advise me, please, if this is clear.—Well, if you have followed so far, you have a basis for understanding what is to come.

The dynasty, as thus re-established by Kwang-wuti, is known as that of the Eastern Hans; for this reason:—just as late in the days of the Roman empire, Diocletian was stirred by cyclic flowing east-ward to move his capital from Rome to Nicomedia,—Constantine changed it afterwards to Byzantium,—so was Han Kwang-wuti to move his from Changan in Shensi, in the west, eastward to Loyang or Honanfu,—the old Chow capital,—in Honan.

While Rome was weltering under Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, China was recovering herself, getting used to a calm equanimity, under Haii Kwang-wuti: the conditions in the two were as opposite as the poles. She dwelt in quietness at home, and held her own, and a little more, on the frontiers. In 57, two years before Nero went mad and took the final plunge into infamy, Han Kwang-wuti died, and Han Mingti succeeded him. As Nero went down, Han Mingti went up. His ninth or tenth year, remember, was to be that of the recurrence of the old Han cycle. It was the year in which the provinces rose against Nero,—the lowest point of all in Rome. I do not know that it was marked by anything special in China; the fact being that all the Chinese sixties were momentous.

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In the third Year of his reign Han Mingti dreamed a dream: he saw a serene and "Golden Man" descending towards him out of the western heavens. It would mean, said his brother, to whom he spoke of it, the Golden God worshiped in the West,—the Buddha. Buddhism had first come into China in the reign of Tsin Shi Hwangti; but that imperial ruffian had made short work of it:— he threw the missionaries into prison, and might have dealt worse with them, but that a "Golden Man" appeared in their cell in the night, and opened all doors for their escape. Buddhist scriptures, probably, were among the books destroyed at the great Burning. So there may have been Buddhists in China all through the Han time; but if so, they were few, isolated and inconspicuous; it is Han Mingti's proper glory, to have brought Buddhism in.

He liked well his brother's interpretation, and sent inquirers into the west. In 65 they returned, with scriptures, and an Indian missionary, Kashiapmadanga,—who was followed shortly by Gobharana, another. A temple was built at Loyang, and under the emperor's patronage, the work of translating the books began.—We have seen before how some touch from abroad is needed to quicken an age into greatness: such a touch came now to China with these Indian Buddhists;—who, in all likelihood, may also have been in their degree Messengers of the Lodge.

In the usual vague manner of Indian chronology, the years 57 and 78 A.D. are connected with the name of a great king of the Yueh Chi, Kanishka, whose empire covered Northern India. Almost every authority has a favorite point in time for his habitat; but these dates, not so far apart but that he may well have been reigning in both, will do as well as another. You will note that 72 A.D. (which falls between them) is a matter of thirteen decades from 58 B.C., the date sometimes ascribed to that much-legended Vikramaditya of Ujjain. Or, if we go back to the (fairly) settled 321 B.C. of Chandragupta Maurya, and count forward thirteen-decade periods from that, we get 191 for the end of the Mauryas (it happened about then); 61 for Vikramaditya (which may well be); 69 for Kanishka,—which also is likely enough, and would make him contemporary with Han Mingti. As the years 57 and 78 are both ascribed to him, it may possibly be that they mark the beginning and end of his reign respectively.

We know very little about him, except that he was a very great king, a great Buddhist, a man of artistic tastes, and a great builder; that he loved the beautiful hills and valleys of Cashmere; and that his reign was a wonderful period in sculptue, —that of the Gandhara or Greco-Buddhist School. Again, he is credited (by Hiuen Tsang) with convening the Fourth Buddhist Council: following in this, as in other matters, the example of Asoka. We are at liberty I suppose, if we like, to assign that cyclic year 69 to the meeting of this Council: this year or its neighborhood. So that all

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this may have had something to do with the missionary activity that responded to Han Mingti's appeal. But there is something else to remember; something of far higher importance; namely, that during all this period of her most uncertain chronology, India was in a peculiar position: the Successors of the Buddha were more or less openly at work there;—a long line of Adept leaders and teachers that can be traced (I believe) through some thirteen centuries from Sakya-muni's death. We may suppose, not unreasonably, that Kashiapmadanga and Gobharana were disciples and emissaries of the then Successor.

It is, so far, and with so little translated, extremely hard to get at the undercurrents in these old Chinese periods; but I suspect a strong spiritual influence, Buddhist at that, in the great events of the years that followed. For China proceeded to strike into history in such a way that the blow resounded, if not round the world, at least round as much of it as was discovered before Columbus; and she did it in such a nice, clean, artistic and quiet way, and withal so thoroughly, that I cannot help feeling that that glorious warriorlike Northern Buddhism of the Mahayana had something to do with it.

It was not Han Mingti himself who did it, but one of his sevants; of whom, it is likely, you have never heard; although east or west there have been, probably, but one or two of his trade so great as he, or who have mattered so much to history. His name was Pan Chow; his trade, soldiering. He began his career of conquest about the time the major Han Cycle was due to recur,—in the sixties; maintained it through three reigns, and ended it at his death about when the Eastern Han half-cycle, started in 35, was due to close;—somewhere, that is, about 100 A.D., while Trajan was beginning a new day and career of conquest in Rome.

XXI. CHINA AND ROME: THE SEE-SAW (CONTINUED)

During the time of Chinese weakness Central Asia had relapsed from the control the great Han Wuti had imposed on it, and that Han Suenti had maintained by his name for justice; and the Huns had recovered their power. One wonders what these people were; of whom we first catch sight in the reign of the Yellow Emperor, nearly 3000 B.C.; and who do not disappear from history until after the death of Attila. During all those three millenniums odd they were predatory nomads, never civilized: a curse to their betters, and nothing more. And their betters were, you may say, every race they contacted.

It seems as if, as in the human blood, so among the races of mankind, there were builders and destroyers. I speculate as to the beginnings of the latter: they cannot be . . . races apart, of some special creation;—made by demons, where it was the Gods

made men. . . . “To the Huns,” says Gibbon, “a fabulous origin was assigned worthy of their form and manners,—that the witches of Scythia, who for their foul and deadly

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practices had been driven from society, had united in the desert with infernal spirits, and that the Huns were the offspring of this execrable conjunction." But it seems to me that it is in times of intensive civilization, and in the slums of great cities, that Nature—or anti-Nature—originates noxious human species. I wonder if their forefathers were, once on a time, the hooligans and yeggmen of some very ancient Babylon Bowery or the East End of some pre-Nimrodic Nineveh? Babylon was a great city,—or there were great cities in the neighborhood of Babylon, before the Yellow Emperor was born. One of these may have had, God knows when, its glorious freedom-establishing revolution, its up-fountaining of sansculottes,—patriots whose predatory proclivities had erstwhile been checked of their free brilliance by busy-body tyrannical police;—and then this revolution may have been put down, and the men of the underworld who made turned out now from their city haunts, driven into the wilderness and the mountains,—may have taken,—would certainly have taken, one would say,—not to any industry, (they knew none but such as are wrought by night unlawfully in other men's houses); not to agriculture, which has ever had, for your free spirit, something of degradation in it;—but to pure patriotism, freedom and liberty, as their nature was: first to cracking such desultory cribs as offered,—knocking down defenseless wayfarers and the like: then to bolder raidings and excursions;—until presently, lo, they are a great people; they have ridden over all Asia like a scirocco; they have thundered rudely at the doors of proud princes,—troubling even the peace of the Yellow Emperor on his throne.

Well,—but isn't the stature stunted, physical, as well as mental and moral, when life is forced to reproduce itself, generation after generation, among the unnatural conditions of slums and industrialism? . . . Can you nourish men upon poisons century by century, and expect them to retain the semblance of men?

They had bothered Han Kwang-wuti; who could do little more than hold his own against them, and leave them to his successor to deal with as Karma might decree. Karma, having as you might say one watchful eye on Rome and Europe, and what need of chastisement should arise after awhile at that western end of the world, provided Han Mingti with this Pan Chow; who, being a soldier of promise, was sent upon the Hun war-path forthwith. Then the miracles began to happen. Pan Chow strolled through Central Asia as if upon his morning's constitutional: no fuss; no hurry; little fighting,—but what there was, remarkably effective, one gathers. Presently he found himself on the Caspian shore; and if he had left any Huns behind him, they were hardly enough to do more than pick an occasional pocket. He started out when the Roman provinces were rising to make an end of Nero; in the last year of Domitian, from his Caspian headquarters he determined to discover

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Rome; and to that end sent an emissary down through Parthia to take ship at the port of Babylon for the unknown West. The Parthians (who were all against the two great empires becoming acquainted, because they are making a good thing of it as middle-men in the Roman-Chinese caravan trade), knew better, probably, than to oppose Pan Chow's designs openly; but their agents haunted the quays at Babylon, tampered with west-going skippers, and persuaded the Chinese envoy to go no farther. But I wonder whether some impulse achieved flowing across the world from east to west at that time, even though its physical link or channel was thus left incomplete? It was in that very year that Nerva re-established constitutionalism and good government in Rome.

Pan Chow worked as if by magic: seemed to make no effort, yet accomplished all things. For nearly forty years he kept that vast territory in order, despite the huge frontier northward, and the breeding-place of nomad nations beyond. All north of Tibet is a region of marvels. Where you were careful to leave only the village blacksmith under his spreading chestnut-tree, or the innkeeper and his wife, for the sake of future travelers, let a century or two pass, and their descendants would be as the sea-sands for multitude; they would have founded a power, and be thundering down on an empire-smashing raid in Persia or China or India: Whether Huns, Sienpi, Jiujen, Turks, Tatars, Tunguses, Mongols, Manchus: God knows what all, but all destroyers. But as far as the old original Huns were concerned, Pan Chow settled their hash for them. Bag and baggage he dealt with them; and practically speaking, the land of their fathers knew them no more. Dry the starting tear! here your pity is misplaced. Think of no vine-covered cottages ruined; no homesteads burned; no fields laid waste. They lived mainly in the saddle; they were as much at home fleeing before the Chinese army as at another time. A shunt here; a good kick off there: so he dealt with them. It is in European veins their blood flows now;—and prides itself on its pure undiluted Aryanism and Nordicism, no doubt. I suppose scarcely a people in continental Europe is without some mixture of it; for they enlisted at last in all foraying armies, and served under any banner and chief.

Pan Chow felt that they belonged to the (presumably) barbarous regions west of the Caspian. Ta Ts'in in future might deal with them; by God's grace, Han never should. He gently pushed them over the brink; removed them; cut the cancer out of Asia. Next time they appeared in history, it was not on the Hoangho, but on the Danube. Meanwhile, they established themselves in Russia; moved across Central Europe, impelling Quadi and Marcomans against Marcus Aurelius, and then Teutons of all sorts against the whole frontier of Rome. In the sixties, for Han Mingti, Pan Chow set that great wave in motion in the far east of the world. Three times thirteen

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decades passed, and it broke and wasted in foam in the far west: in what we may call the Very First Battle of the Marne, when Aetius defeated Attila in 451. I can but think of one thing better he might have done: shipped them eastward to the remote Pacific Islands; but it is too late to suggest that now. But I wonder what would have happened if Pan Chow had succeeded in reaching his arm across, and grasping hands with Trajan? He had not died; the might of China had not begun to recede from its westward limits, before the might of Rome under that great Spaniard had begun to flow towards its limits in the east.

Through the bulk of the second century China remained static, or weakening. Her forward urge seems to have ended with the death of Pan Chow, or at the end of the half-cycle Han Kwang-wuti began in 35. We might tabulate the two concurrent Han cycles, for the sake of clearness, and note their points of intersection, thus:

—Western Han Cycle, 130 years

—Eastern Han Half-Cycle, 65 yrs

—35 A.D. Opened by Han Kwang-wuti.

—A static and consolidating time until 67 A.D., thirteen decades from the death of Han Chaoti. Introduction of Buddhism in 65.

—The period of Pan Chao's victories; the Golden Age of the
Eastern Hans, lasting until (about):

—100 A. D. the end of the Eastern Han 'Day'; death of Pan Chow.

—Continuance of Day under this, and supervention of Night under this Cycle, produce:

—A static, but weakening period until:

—165, the year in which a new Eastern Han Day should begin. A weak recrudescence should be seen.

—197: the year in which the main or original Han Cycle should end. We should expect the beginnings of a downfall. By or before:

—230, the end of the second, feeble, Eastern Han Day, the downfall would have been completed.

Now to see how this works out.

The first date we have to notice is 165. Well; in the very scant notices of Chinese history I have been able to come on, two events mark this date; or rather, one marks 165, and the other 166. To take the latter first: we saw that at a momentous point in Roman history,—in the year of Nerva's accession, 96,—China tried to discover Rome. In 166 Rome actually succeeded in discovering China. This year too, as we shall see, was momentous in Roman history. You may call it a half cycle after the other; for probably the ambassadors of King An-Tun of Ta Ts'in who arrived at the court of Han Hwanti at Loyang in 166, had been a few years on their journey. You know King An-tun better by his Latin name of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

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The event for 165 is the foundation of the Taoist Church, under the half-legendary figure of its first Pope, Chang Taoling; whose lineal descendants and successors have reigned Popes of Taoism from their Vatican on the Dragon-Tiger Mountain in Kiangsi ever since. They have not adverertised their virtues in their names, however: we find no Innocents and Piuses here: they are all plain Changs; his reigning Holiness being Chang the Sixth-somethingth. It was from Buddhism that the Taoists took the idea of making a church of themselves. Taoism and Buddhism from the outset were fiercely at odds; and yet the main splendor of China was to come from their inner coalescence. Chu Hsi, the greatest of the Sung philosophers of the brilliant twelfth century A.D., says that “Buddhism stole the best features of Taoism; Taoism stole the worst features of Buddhism: as if the one took a jewel from the other, and the other recouped the loss with a stone.” * This is exact: the jewel stolen by Buddhism was Laotse’s Blue Pearl,—-Wonder and Natural Magic; the stone that Taoism took instead was the priestly hierarchy and church organization, imitated from the Buddhists, that grew up under the successors of Chang Taoling.

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* *Chinese Literature:* H.A. Giles

If Laotse founded any school or order at all, it remained quite secret. I imagine his mission was like Plato’s, not Buddha’s: to start ideas, not a brotherhood. By Ts’in Shi Hwangti’s time, any notions that were wild, extravagant, and gorgeous were Taoism; which would hardly have been, perhaps, had there been a Taoist organization behind them;—although it is not safe to dogmatize. It was, at any rate, mostly an inspiration to the heights for the best minds, and for the masses (including Ts’in Shi Hwangti) a rumor of tremendous things. After Han Wuti’s next successor, the best minds took to thinking Confucianly: which was decidedly a good thing for China during the troublous times before and after the fall of the Western Hans. Then when Buddhism came in, Taoism came to the fore again, spurred up to emulation by this new rival. I take it that Chang Taoling’s activities round about this year 165 represent an impulse of the national soul to awakenment under the influence of the recurrence of the Eastern Han Day half-cycle. What kind of reality Chang Taoling represents, one cannot say: whether a true teacher in his degree, sent by the Lodge, around whom legends have gathered; or a mere dabbler in alchemy and magic. Here is the story told of him; you will note an incident or two in it that suggest the former possibility.

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He retired to the mountains of the west to study magic, cultivate purity of life, and engage in meditation; stedfastly declining the offers of emperors who desired him to take office. Laotse appeared to him in a vision, and gave him a treatise in which were directions for making the 'Elixir of the Dragon and the Tiger.' While he was brewing this, a spirit came to him and said: "On the Pesung Mountain is a house of stone; buried beneath it are the Books of the Three Emperors (Yao, Shun, and Yu). Get these, practise the discipline they enjoin, and you will attain the power of ascending to heaven." He found the Pesung Mountain; and the stone house; and dug, and discovered the books; which taught him how to fly, to leave his body at will, and to hear all sounds the most distant. During a thousand days he disciplined himself; a goddess came to him, and taught him to walk among the stars; then he learned to cleave the seas and the mountains, and command the thunder and the winds. He fought the king of the demons, whose hosts fled before him "leaving no trace of their departing footsteps." So great slaughter he wrought in that battle that, we are told, "various divinities came with eager haste to acknowledge their faults." In nine years he gained the power of ascending to heaven. His last days were spent on the Dragon-Tiger Mountain; where, at the age of a hundred and twenty-three, he drank the elixir, and soared skyward in broad daylight;—followed (I think it was he) by all the poultry in his barnyard, immortalized by the drops that fell from the cup as he drank. He left his books of magic, and his magical sword and seal, to his descendants; but I think the Dragon-Tiger Mountain did not come into their possession until some centuries later.

I judge that the tales of the Taoist *Sennin* or Adepts, if told by some Chinese-enamored Lafcadio, would be about the best collection of fairy-stories in the world; they reveal a universe so deliciously nooked and crannied with bewildering possibilities:—as indeed this our universe is;—only not all its byways are profitable traveling. It is all very well to cry out against superstition; but we are only half-men in the West: we have lost the faculty of wonder and the companionship of extrahuman things. We walk our narrow path to nowhere safely trussed up in our personal selves: or we not so much walk at all, as lie still, chrysalissed in them:—it may be just as well, since for lack of the quality of balance, we are about as capable of walking at ease and dignity as is a jellyfish of doing Blondin on the tight-rope. China, in her pralaya and dearth of souls, may have fallen into the perils of her larger freedom, and some superstition rightly to be called degrading: in our Middle Ages, when we were in pralaya, we were superstitious enough; and being unbalanced, fell into other evils too such as China never knew: black tyrannies of dogmatism, burnings of heretics wholesale.

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But when the Crest-Wave Egos were in China, that larger freedom of hers enabled her, among other things, to achieve the highest heights in art: the Yellow Crane was at her disposal, and she failed not to mount the heavens; she had the glimpses Wordsworth pined for; she was not left forlorn. This merely for another blow at that worst superstition of all: Unbrotherliness, and our doctrine of Superior Racehood.—Many of the tales are mere thaumatolatry: as of the man who took out his bones and washed them once every thousand years; or of the man who would fill his mouth with rice-grains, let them forth as a swarm of bees to gather honey in the valley,—then readmit them into his mouth as to a hive, where they became rice again,—presumably "sweetened to taste." But in others there seems to be a core of symbolism and recognition of the fundamental things. There was a man once,—the tale is in Giles's Dictionary of Chinese Biography, but I forget his name—who sought out the Sennin Ho Kwang (his name might have been Ho Kwang); and found him at last in a gourd-flask, whither he was used to retire for the night. In this retreat Ho Kwang invited our man to join him; and he was enabled to do so; and found it, once he had got in, a fair and spacious palace enough. Three days he remained there learning; while fifteen years were passing in China without. Then Ho Kwang gave him a rod, and a spell to say over it; and bade him go his ways. He would lay the rod on the ground, stand astride of it, and speak the spell; and straight it became a dragon for him to mount and ride the heavens where he would. Thenceforth for many years he was a kind of Guardian Spirit over China: appearing suddenly wherever there was distress or need of help: at dawn in mountain Chungnan by Changan town in the north; at noon, maybe, by the southern sea; at dusk he might be seen a-dragon-back above the sea-mists rolling in over Yangtse;—and all in the same day. But at last, they say, he forgot the spell, and found himself riding the clouds on a mere willow wand;—and the wand behaving as though Newton had already watched that aggravating apple;—and himself, in due course dashed to pieces on the earth below.—There is some fine symbolism here; the makings of a good story.

And now we come to 197, "the year in which (to quote our tabulation above) the main or original Han Cycle should end," and in which "we should expect the beginnings of a downfall." The Empire, as empires go, is very old now: four hundred and forty odd years since Ts'in Shi Hwangti founded it; as old as Rome was (from Julius Caesar's time) when the East and West split under Arcadius and Honorius; nearly three centuries older than the British Empire is now;—the cyclic force is running out, centripetalism very nearly wasted. In these one-nineties we find two non-entitous brothers quarreling for the throne: who has eyes to see, now, can see that the days of Han are numbered.

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All comes to an end in 220, ten years before the third half-cycle (and therefore second 'day') of the Eastern Han series; there is not force enough left to carry things through till 230. Han Hienti, the survivor of the two brothers aforesaid, retired into private life; the dynasty was at an end, and the empire split in three. In Ssechuan a Han prince set up a small unstable throne; another went to Armenia, and became a great man there; but in Loyang the capital, Ts'ao Ts'ao, the man who engineered the fall of the Hans, set his son as Wei Wenti on the throne.

He was a very typical figure, this Ts'ao Ts'ao: a man ominous of disintegration. You cannot go far in Chinese poetry without meeting references to him. He rose during the reign of the last Han,—the Chien-An period, as it is called, from 196 to 221,—by superiority of energies and cunning, from a wild irregular youth spent as hanger-on of no particular position at the court,—the son of a man that had been adopted by a chief eunuch,—to be prime minister, commander of vast armies (he had at one time, says Dr. H. A. Giles, as many as a million men under arms), father of the empress; holder of supreme power; then overturner of the Han, and founder of the Wei dynasty. Civilization had become effete; and such a strong wildling could play ducks and drakes with affairs. But he could not hold the empire together. Centrifugalism was stronger than Ts'ao Ts'ao.

The cycles and all else here become confused. The period from 220 to 265—about a half-cycle, you will note, from 196 and the beginning of the Chien-An time, or the end of the main Han Cycle,—is known as that of the San Koue or Three Kingdoms: its annals read like Froissart, they say; gay with raidings, excursions, and alarms. It was the riot of life disorganized in the corpse, when organized life had gone. A great historical novel dealing with this time,—one not unworthy, it is said, of Scott,—remains to be translated. Then, by way of reaction, came another half-cycle (roughly) of reunion: an unwarlike period of timid politics and a super-refined effeminate court; it was, says Professor Harper Parker, "a great age of calligraphy, belles lettres, fans, chess, wine-bibbing and poetry-making." Then, early in the fourth century, China split up again: crafty ladylike Chinese houses ruling in the South; and in the north a wild medley of dynasties, Turkish, Tungus, Tatar, and Tibetan,— even some relics of the Huns: sometimes one at a time, sometimes half a dozen all together. Each barbarian race took on hastily something of Chinese culture, and in turn imparted to it certain wild vigorous qualities which one sees very well in the northern art of the period: strong, fierce, dramatic landscapes: Nature painted in her sudden and terrific moods. China was still in manvantara, though under obscuration; she still drew her moiety of Crest-Wave souls: there were great men, but through a lack of co-ordination, they failed to make a great empire or nation. So here we may take leave of her for a couple of centuries. Just why the vigor of the Crest-Wave was called off in the two-twenties, causing her to split then, we shall see presently. Back now to Rome, at the time of the death of Pan Chow the Hun-expeller and the end of the one glorious half-cycle of the Eastern Hans.

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As China went down, Rome came up. Pan Chow died early in the reign of Trajan, the first great Roman conqueror since Julius Caesar; and only the Caspian Sea, and perhaps a few years, divided Trajan's eastern outposts from the western outposts of the Hans. We need not stay with this Spaniard longer than to note that here was a case where grand military abilities were of practical value: Trajan used his to subserve the greatness of his statesmanship; only a general of the first water could have brought the army under the new constitutional regime. The soldiers had been setting up Caesars ever since the night they pitched on old Claudius in his litter; now came a Caesar who could set the soldiers down.—His nineteen years of sovereignty were followed by the twenty-one of Hadrian: a very great emperor indeed; a master statesman, and queer mass of contradictions whose private life is much better uninquired into. He was a mighty builder and splendid adorner of cities; all that remained unsystematized in the Augustan system, he reduced to perfect system and order. His laws were excellent and humane; he introduced a special training for the Civil Service, which wrought enormous economies in public affairs: officials were no longer to obtain their posts by imperial appointment, which might be wise or not, but because of their own tested efficiency for the work.—Then came the golden twenty-three years of Antoninus Pius, from 138 to 161: a time of peace and strength, with a wise and saintly emperor on the throne. The flower Rome now was in perfect bloom: an urbane, polished, and ordered civilization covered the whole expanse of the empire. Hadrian had legislated for the down-trodden: no longer had you power of life and death over your slaves; they were protected by the law like other men; you could not even treat them harshly. True, there was slavery, —a canker; and there were the gladiatorial games; we may feel piously superior if we like. But there was much humanism also. There was no proletariat perpetually on the verge of starvation, as in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. If we can look back now and say, There this, that, or the other sign of oncoming decay; the thing could not last;—it will also be remarkably easy for us, two thousand years hence, to be just as wise about these present years 'of grace.' It is perhaps safe to say, —as I think Gibbon says—that there was greater happiness among a greater number then than there has been at any time in Christendom since. Gibbon calculates that there were twice as many slaves as free citizens: we do know that their number was immense,—that it was not unusual for one man to own several thousand. But they were well treated: often highly educated; might become free with no insuperable difficulty:—-their position was perhaps comparable with that of slaves in Turkey now, who are insulted if you call them servants. Gibbon estimates the population at a hundred and

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twenty millions; many authorities think that figure too high; but Gibbon may well be right, or even under the mark,—and it may account for the rapid decline that followed the age of the Antonines. For I suspect that a too great population is a great danger, that hosts at such times pour into incarnation, besides those that have good right to call themselves human souls;—that the maxim “fewer children and better ones” is based upon deep and occult laws. China in her great days would never appear to have had more than from fifty to seventy millions: the present enormous figures have grown up only since the Manchu conquest.

There was no great stir of creative intellect and imagination in second century Rome: little noteworthy production in literature after Trajan’s death. The greatest energies went into building; especially under Hadrian. The time was mainly static,—though golden. There were huge and opulent cities, and they were beautiful; there was enormous wealth; an even and widespread culture affecting to sweetness and light the lives of millions— by race Britons, Gauls, Moors, Asiatics or what not, but all proud to be Romans; all sharing in the blessings of the Roman Citizenship and Peace. Not without self-government, either, in local affairs: thus we find Welsh clans in Britain still with kings, and stranger still, with senates, of their own.

It was the quiet and perfect moment at the apex of a cycle: the moment that precedes descent. The old impulse of conquest flickered up, almost for the last time, under Trajan, some of whose gains wise Hadrian wisely abandoned. Under whom it was, and under the first Antonine, that the empire stood in its perfect and final form: neither growing nor decreasing; neither on the offensive nor actively on the defensive. Now remember the cycles: sixty-five years of manvantara under Augustus and Tiberius,—-B.C. 29 to A. D. 36. Then sixty-five mostly of pralaya from 36 to 101; and now sixty-five more of mnavantara under the Five Good Emperors (or three of them), from 101 to 166.

But why stop at 166, you ask. Had not Marcus Aurelius, the best of them all, until 180 to reign?—He had; and yet the change came in 166; after that year Rome stood on the defensive until she fell. It was in that year, you will remember, that King An-tun Aurelius’s envoys reached Loyang by way of Bumiah and the sea.

But note this: Domitian was killed, and Nerva came to the throne, and Rome had leave to breathe freely again, in five years before the half-cycle of shadows should have ended: the two years of Nerva, and the first three of Trajan, we may call borrowed by the dawning manvantara from the dusk of the pralaya that was passing. Now if we took the strictness of the cycles *au* very *pied de lettre,* we should be a little uneasy about the last five years of that manvantara; we should expect them at least to be filled with omens of coming evil; we should expect to find in them a dark compensation for the five bright years at the tail of the old pralaya.—Well, cycles have sometimes a pretty way of fulfilling expectations. For see what happened:—

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Marcus Aurelius came to the throne in 161: a known man, not untried; one, certalnly, to keep the Golden Age in being,—if kept in being it might be. Greatly capable in action, saintly in life and ideals: what could Rome ask better? Or what had she to fear?—The king is the representative man: it must have been a wonderful Rome, we may note in passing, that was ruled by and went with and loved well those two saintly philosophic Antonines enthroned.—Nothing, then, could seem more hopeful. Under the circumstances it was rather a mean trick on the part of Father Tiber (to whom the Romans pray), that before a year was out he must needs be breeding trouble for his votaries: overflowing, the ingrate, and sweeping away large parts of his city; wasting fields and slaughtering men (to quote Macaulay again); drowning cattle wholesale, and causing shortage of supplies. And he does but give the hint to the other gods, it seems; who are not slow to follow suit. Earthquakes are the next thing; then fires; then comes in Beelzebub with a plague of insects. There is no end to it. The legions in Britain,—-after all this long peace and good order,—grow frisky: mind them of ancient and profitable times when you might catch big fish in troubled waters;—and try to induce their general to revolt. Then Parthian Vologaeses sees his chance; declares war, annihilates a Roman army, and overruns Syria. Verus, co-emperor by a certain too generous unwisdom that remains a kind of admirable fly in the ointment of the character of Aurelius, shows his mettle against the Parthians,—taking his command as a chance for having a luxurious fling beyond the reach and supervision of his severe colleague;—and things would go ill indeed in the East but for Avidius Cassius, Verus' second in command. This Cassius returns victorious in 165, and brings in his wake disaster worse than any Parthians:—after battle, murder, and sudden death come plague, pestilence, and famine. In 166 the first of these latter three broke out, devastated Rome, Italy, the empire in general; famine followed;—it was thought the end of all things was at hand. It was the first stroke of the cataclysm that sent Rome down. . . . Then came Quadi and Marcomans, Hun-impelled, thundering on the doors of Pannonia; and for the next eleven years Aurelius was busy fighting them. Then Avidius Cassius revolted in Asia;—but was soon assassinated. Then the Christians emerged from their obscurity, preachers of what seemed anti-national doctrine; and the wise and noble emperor found himself obliged to deal with them harshly. He *was* wise and noble,—-there is no impugning that; and he *did* deal with them harshly: we may regret it; as he must have regretted it then.

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So the reign marks a definite turning-point: that at which the empire began to go down. In it the three main causes of the ruin of the ancient world appeared: the first of the pestilences that depopulated it; the first incursion of the barbarians that broke it down from without; the new religion that, with its loyalty primarily to a church, an *imperium in imperior,* undermined Roman patriotism from within. Nero's persecution of the Christians had been on a different footing: a madman's lust to be cruel, the sensuality that finds satisfaction in watching torture: there was neither statecraft nor religion in it; but here the Roman state saw itself threatened. It was threatened; but it is a pity Aurelius could find no other way.

In himself he was the culmination of all the good that had been Roman: a Stoic, and the finest fruit of Stoicism,—which was the finest fruit of philosophy unillumined (as I think) by the spiritual light of mysticism. He practised all the virtues; but (perhaps) we do not find in him that knowledge of the Inner Laws and Worlds which alone can make practise of the virtues a saving energy in the life of nations, and the imspiration of great ages and awakener of the hidden god in the creative imagination of man. The burden of his *Meditations* is self-mastery: a reasoning of himself out of the power of the small and great annoyances of life;—this is to stand on the defensive; but the spiritual World-Conqueror must march out, and flash his conquering armies over all the continents of thought. An underlying sadness is to be felt in Aurelius's writings. He lived greatly and nobly for a world he could not save... that could not be saved, so far as he knew. He died in 180; and another Nero, without Nero's artistic instincts, came to the throne in his son Commodus; pralaya, military rule, disruption, had definitely set in.

Now anciently a manvantara had begun in Western Asia somewhere about 1890 B.C.; had lasted fifteen centuries, as the wont of them appears to be; and had given place to pralaya about 390; and that, in turn, was due to end in or about 220 A.D. We should, if we had confidence in these cycles, look for what remained of the Crest-Wave in Europe to be wandering flickeringly eastward about this time. Hitherto it had been in two of the three world-centers of civilization: in China and in Europe; now for a few centuries it was to be divided between three.—I am irrigating the garden, and get a fine flow from the faucet, which gives me a sense of inward peace and satisfaction. Suddenly the fine flow diminishes to a miserable dribble, and all my happiness is gone. I look eastward, to the next garden below on the slope; and see my neighbors busy there: their faucet has been turned on, and is flowing royally; and I know where the water is going. The West-Asian faucet was due to be turned on in the two-twenties; now watch the spray from the sprinklers in the Chinese and Roman

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gardens. In those two-twenties we saw China split into three; and it rather looked as if the manvantara had ended. I shall not look at West Asia yet, but leave it for a future lecture. But in Europe, with Marcus Aurelius died almost the last Italian you could call a Crest-Wave Ego. The cyclic forces, outworn and old, produced after that no order that you can go upon: events followed each other higgledipiggledy and inertly;— but it was the Illyrian legions that put him on the throne. Note that Illyria: it is what we shall soon grow accustomed to calling *Jugoslavia.* Severus's reign of eighteen years, from 193 to 211, was the only strong one, almost the only one not disgraceful, until 268; by which time the Roman world was in anarchy, split into dozens, with emperors springing up like mushrooms everywhere. Then came a succession of strong soldiers who reestablished unity: Claudius Gothicaus, an Illyrian peasant; Aurelian, an Illyrian peasant; Tacitus, a Roman senator, for one year only; Probus, an Illyrian peasant; Caus, an Illyrian; then the greatest of all statesmen since Hadian, who refounded the empire on a new plan,—-the Illyrian who began life as Docles the slave, rose to be Diocles the soldier, and finally, in 284, tiaraed Diocletian reigning with all the pomp and mystery and magnificence of an Eastern King of kings. He it was who felt the cyclic flow, and moved his capital to Nicomedia, which is about fifty miles south and east from Constaintinople.

One can speak of no Illyrian cycle; rather only of the Crest-Wave dropping a number of strong men there as it trailed eastward towards West Asia. The intellect of the empire, in that third century, and the spiritual force, all incarnated in the Roman West-Asian seats; in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Syria, as we shall see in a moment. But you not how bueautifully orderly, in a geographical sense, are the movements of the Wave in Roman world and epoch: beginning in Italy in the first century B.C.; going west to Spain about A.D. 1,—and to Gaul too, though there kindling chiefly material and industrial greatness; passing through Italy again in the late first and in the second century, in the time of the Glavians and the five Good Emperors; then in the third like a swan flying eastward, with one wing, the material one, stretched over Illyria raising up mighty soldiers and administrators there, and the other, the spiritual wing, over Egypt, there fanning (as we shall see) the fires of esotericism to flame.

For it was in that third century, while disaster on disaster was engulfing the power and prestige of Rome, that the strongest spiritual movement of all the Roman period came into being. History would not take much note of the year in which a porter in Alexandria was born; so the birth-date of the man we come to now is unknown. It would have been, however, not later than 180; since he had among his pupils one man at least born not later than 185. According

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to Eusebius, he was born a Christian; and H.P. Blavatsky, in *The Key to Theosophy,* seems to accept, or at least not to contradict, this view. I think she often did allow popular views on non-essentials to pass, for lack of time and immediate need to contradict them. But Eusebius (of who she has much to say, and none of it complimentary to his truthfulness) is, I believe, the sole authority for it; and scholars since have found good reason for supposing that he was mixing this man with another of the same name, who *was* a Christian; whereas (it is thought) this man was not. Be that as it may, we know almost nothing about him; except that he began life as a porter, with the job of carrying goods in sacks; whence he got the surname Sakkophoros, latter shortened to Saccas;—from which you will have divined by this time that his personal name was Ammonius. We know also that early in the third century he had gathered disciples about him, and was teaching them a doctrine he called *Theosophy;* very properly, since it was and is the Wisdom of the gods or divine Wisdom. An eclectic system, as they say; wherein the truths in all such philosophies and religions as come handy were fitted together and set forth. But in truth all this was but the nexus of his teaching: Theosophy, then as now, is eclectic only in this sense: that some truth out of it underlies all religions and systems; which they derive from it, and it from them nothing.

All through the long West-Asian pralaya,—West-Asian includes Egyptian,—the seeds of the Esoteric Wisdom remained in those parts; they lacked vitalization, because the world-currents were not playing there then; but they survived in Egypt from the Egyptian Mysteries of old; and as in India you might have found men who knew about them, but not how to use them for the uplifting of the world,—so doubtless you should have found such men in Egypt during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Hence the statement of Diogenes Laertius, that the Theosophy of Ammonius Saccas originated with one Pot Ammun, a priest of Ptolemaic times: who, perhaps, was one of those who transmitted the doctrine in secret. The seeds were there, then; and how that the Crest Wave was coming back to West Asia, it was possible for Ammonius to quicken them; and this he did. But it had not quite come back; so he made nothing public. He wrote nothing; he had his circle of disciples, and what he taught is to be know from them. Among them was Origen, who was born, or became, a Christian; but who introduced into, or emphasized in, his Christianity much sound Theosophical teaching; very likely he was deputed to capture Christianity, or some part of it, for truth. Here I may offer a little explanation of something that may have puzzled some of us: it will be remembered that Mr. Judge says somewhere that Reincarnation was condemned by the Council of Constantinople; and that in a series of learned articles which appeared in THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH recently, the late Rev. S.J. Neill contradicted this asserion. The truth seems to be this: Origen taught, if not Reincarnation, at least the pre-existence of souls; and, says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica:* “It is true that many scholars deny that Origen [read, his teachings] was condemned by this council [of Constantinople, A.D. 553]; but Moller rightly holds that the condemnation is proved.”

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Another pupil of Ammonius was Cassius Longinus, born in 213 at Emessa (Homs) in Asia Minor. Later he taught Platonism for thirty years at Athens; then in the two-sixties went east to the court of Zenobia at Palmyra,—whose brilliant empire, though it fell before the Illyrian Aurelian, was a sign in its time that the Crest-Wave had come back to West Asia. Longinus became her chief counselor; it was by his advice that she resisted Aurelian;—who pardoned the Arab queen, and, after she had paraded Rome in his triumph, became very good friends with her; but condemned her counselor to death. But Longinus I think had failed to follow in the paths laid down for him by his Teacher: we find him in disagreement with that Teacher's successor.

Who was Plotinus, born of Roman parents at Lycopolis in Egypt. It is from his writings we get the best account of Ammonius' doctrine. He was with the latter until 243; then joined Gordian III's expedition against Persia, with a view to studying Persian and Indian philosophies at their source. But Gordian was assassinated; and Plotinus, after a stay at Antioch, made his way to Rome and opened a school there. This was in the so-called Age of the Thirty Tyrants, when the central government was at its weakest. Gallienus was emperor in Rome, and every province had an emperorlet of its own;—it was before the Illyrian peasant-soldiers had set affairs on their feet again. A lazy erratic creature, this Gallienus; says Gibbon: "In every art that he attempted his lively genius enable him to succeed; and, as his genius was destitute of judgement, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready orator, an elegant poet, a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and a most contemptible prince." Yet he had a curious higher side to his nature, wherewith he might have done much for humanity,—if he had ever bothered to bring it to the fore. He, and his wife, were deeply interested in the teachings of Plotinus. Such a man may sometimes be 'run,' and made the instrument of great accomplishment: a morass through which here and there are solid footholds; if you can find them, you may reach firm ground, but you must walk infinitely carefully. It is the old tale of the Prince with the dual nature, and the Initiate who tries to use him for the saving of the world,—and fails.

Plotinus knew what he was about. Was it last week we were talking of the endless need of the ages: a stronghold of the Gods to be established in this world, whence they might conduct their cyclic raidings? What had Pythagoras tried to do in his day?—-Found a Center of Learning in the West, in which the Laws of Life, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual, should be taught. He did found it,—at Croton; but Croton was destroyed, and all the history of the next seven centuries suffered from the destruction. Then—it was seven centuries after his death,—

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Ammonius Saccas arose, and started things again; and left a successor who was able to carry them forward almost to the point where Pythagoras left them. For the fame of this Neo-Platonic Theosophy had traveled by this time right over the empire; and Plotinus in Rome, and in high favor with Gallienus, was a man on whom all eyes were turned. He proposed to found a Point Loma in Campania; to be called Platonopolis. Things were well in hand; the emperor and empress were enthusiastic:—as your Gallieneuses will be, for quarter of an hour at a time, over any high project. But certain of his ministers were against it; and he wobbled; and delayed; and thought of something else; and hung fire; and presently was killed. And Claudius, the first of the Illyrian emperors, who succeeded him, was much to busy defeating the Goths to come to Rome even,—much less could he pay attention to spiritual projects. Two years later Plotinus died, in 270;—and the chance was not to come again for more than sixteen centuries.

But Neo-Platonism was not done with yet, by any means. Plotinus left a successor in his disciple Porphyry, born at Tyre or at Batanea in Syria in 233. You see they were all West Asians, at least by birth: the first spiritual fruits of the Crest-Wave's influx there. Porphyry's name was originally Malchus (the Arabic *Malek,* meaning *king*); but as a king was a wearer of the purple, someone changed it for him to Porphyry or 'Purple.' In 262 he went to Rome to study under Plotinus, and was with him for six years; then his health broke down, and he retired to Sicily to recover. In 273 he returned,—Plotinus had died three years before, and opened a Neo-Platonic School of his own. He taught through the last quarter of that century, while the Illyrian emperors were smashing back invaders on the frontiers or upstart emperors in the provinces. Without imperial support, no Platonopolis could have been founded; and there was no time for any of those Illyrians to think of such things.—even if they had had it in them to do so, as they had not:—-witness Aurelian's execution of Longinus. The time had gone by for that highest of all victories: as it might have gone by in our own day, but for events in Chicago, in February, 1898. When Porphyry died in 304, he left a successor indeed; but now one that did not concern himself with Rome.

It was Iamblichus, born in the Lebanon region; we do not know in what year; or much about him at all, beyond that he was an aristocrat, and well-to-do; and that he conducted his Theosophic activities mainly from his native city of Chalcis. he died between 330 and 333; thus through thirteen decades, from the beginning of the third century, these four great Neo-Platonist Adepts were teaching Theosophy in the Roman world;—Ammonius in Egypt; Plotinus and Porphyry,—the arm of the Movement stretched westward to save, if saved they might be, the Roman west Europe, —in Rome itself; then, since that was not be done, Iamblichus

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in Syria. We hear of no man to be named as successor to Iamblichus; I imagine the great line of Teachers came to an end with him. Yet, as we shall see, their impulse, or movement, or propaganda, did not cease then: it did not fail to reach an arm down into secular history, and to light up one fiery dynamic soul on the Imperial Throne, who did all that a God-ensouled Man could do to save the dying Roman world. Diocletian, that great but quite unillumined pagan, was dead; the new order, that subverted Rome at last, had been established by Constantine; and the House of Constantine, with all that it implied, was in power. But a year or two before the death of Iamblichus it chanced that a Great Soul stole a march on the House of Constantine, and (as you may say) surreptitiously incarnated in it, for the Cause of the Gods and Sublime Perfection. And to him, in his lonely and desolate youth, kept in confinement or captivity by the Christian on the throne, came one Maximus of Smyrna, a disciple of Iamblichus;— and lit in the soul of Prince Julian that divine knowledge of Theosophy wherewith afterwards he made his splendid and tragic effort for Heaven.

XXII. EASTWARD HO!

The point we start out from this evening is, in time, the year 220 A.D., in place, West Asia: 220, or you may call it 226,— sixty-five years, a half-cycle, after 161 and the accession of Marcus Aurelius; and therewith, in Rome, the beginning of the seasons prophetic of decline. So now we are in 226; look well around you; note your whereabouts;—for there is no resting here. You have seen? you have noted? On again then, I beseech you; and speedily. And, please, backwards: playing as it were the crab in time; and not content till the whole pralaya is skipped, and you stand on the far shore, in the sunset of an elder day: looking now forward, into futurity, from 390, perhaps 394 B.C.; over first a half-cycle of Persian decline,—long melancholy sands and shingle, to —there on the edge of the great wan water,—that July in 330 when mean Satrap Bessus killed his king, Codomannus, last of the Achaemenidae, then in flight from Alexander;—and the House of Cyrus and Darius came to an end. What a time it was that drifted into Limbo then! One unit of history; one phase of the world's life-story! It had seen all those world-shaking Tiglath-pilesers eastward; all those proud Osirified kings by the Nile;—and now it was over; had died in its last stronghold, Persia, and there was nowhere else for it to be reborn; and, after a decent half-cycle of lying in state under degenerate descendants of the great Darius, had been furied (cataclysmal obsequies!) beneath a landslide of Hellenistic Macedonianism. Its old civilization, senile long since, was gone, and a new kind from the west superimposed;—Babylon was a memory vague and splendid;—the Assyrian had gone down, and should never re-arise: —Egypt of the Pharaohs had fallen forever and ever;—Aryan Persia was over-run;—

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"Iran indeed had gone, with all his rose,
And Jamshyd's seven-ringed cup, where no one knows:"

—And the angel that recorded their deeds and misdeed had written *Tamam* on the last page, sprinkled sand over the ink,—shut the volume, and put it away on the shelf;—and with a *Thank God that's done with!* settled down to snooze for six hundred years and ten.

For what had he to do with what followed? With Alexander's wedding-feast in 324,—-when upwards of ten thousand couples, the grooms all Macedonian, the brides all Persian, were united: what had he to do with the new race young Achilles Redivivus thus proposed to bring into being? These were mere Macedonian doings, to be recorded by his brother angel of Europe; as also were the death of Alexander, and his grand schemes that came to nothing. There was no West Asia now; only Europe: all was European and Hellenized to the borders of India, with periodical overflowings beyond;—just as, long afterwards, Spain was a province of West Asia; and just as Egypt now is submerged under a European power.

Only the trouble is that the seed of something native always remains in regions so overflowed with an alien culture; and Alexander dreamed never of what might lie quiescent, resurrectable in time, in the mountains of Persis, the Achaemenian land, out of the path of the eastward march of his phalanxes;—or indeed, in those wide deserts southward, parched Araby, that none but a fool—and such was not Alexander—would trouble to invade or think of conquering: something that should in its time reassert West Asia over all Hellenedom, in Macedonia itself, and West beyond the Pillars of Hercules and the limits of the world. But let that be: it need trouble no one in this year of 324 B.C.! Only remember that "that which hath been shall be again, and there is nothing new under the sun."

In this study of comparative history one finds after awhile that there are very few dates that count, and they are very easy to keep in mind. The same decades are important everywhere; and this because humanity is one, and however diversified on the outside, inwardly all history is the history of the one Host of Souls. Take 320 B.C. Alexander is dead three years, but the world is still vibrating with him. Chandragupta Maurya has just started his dynasty and great age in India, which is to last its thirteen decades until the neighborhood of 190. Seleucus Nicataor, the only one of the Macedonian *diadochi* who has not divorced his Persian bride, is about to set up for himself a sovereignty in Babylon,—which Scipio Africanus, thirteen decades afterwards, struck from the list of the Great Powers when he defeated Seleucus' descendant Antiochus at Magnesia,—in 190 again; at which time the Romans first broke into Asia. And it was in the one-nineties, too, that the second Han Emperor came to the Dragon Thone, and the glorious age of the Western Hans began.

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Though the Seleucidae possessed for some time a great part of Darius Hystaspes' empire,—and, except Egypt, all the old imperial seats of the foregone manvantara,—they do not belong to West Asia at all; their history is not West-Asian, but European; they are a part of that manvantara whose forces were drifting West from Greece to Italy. The history of all the Macedonian kingdoms is profoundly uninteresting. There was enough of Greek in them to keep them polished; enough of Macedonian to keep them essentially barbarous; they sopped up some of the effeteness of the civilizations they had displaced, Egyptian and Asiatic; but the souls of those old civilizations remained aloof. There was mighty little Egypt in the Egypt of the Ptolemies: what memories and atmosphere of a grand antiquity survived, hid in the crypts and pyramids; all one saw was a sullen fanatic people scorning their conquerors. So too in Seleucus' Babylon there was little evidence of the old Childacan wisdom, or the Assyrian power, or the pride and chivalry of the Persian. It was Europe occupying West Asia; and not good Europe at that; and only able to do so (as is always the case) because the Soul of West Asia was temporarily absent. The Seleucidae maintained a mimic greatness in tinsels until 190 and Scipio and Magnesia; then a mere rising-tide-lapped sand-castle of a kingdom until, in 64 B.C., Pompey made what remained of it a Roman province,—just twice thirteen decades after the marriage-feast at Babylon; just when the great age of the Western Hans was ending, and when Augustus was thinking of being born, and (probably or possibly) Vikramaditya of starting up a splendor at Ujjain. What Pompey took,—what remained for him to take,—consisted only of Syria; all the eastern part of the Seleucid empire had gone long since.

In 255 Diodotus, the Seleucid satrap of Bactria, rebelled and made himself a kingdom; and that the kingdom might become an empire, went further on the war-path. On the eastern shores of the Caspian he defeated one of the myriad nomad tribes of Turanian stock that haunt those parts,—first cousins, a few times removed perhaps, to our friends the Huns; a few more times removed, to that branch of their race that had, so to say, married above them and become thus a sort of poor relations to the aristocracy,—the Ts'inners who were at that time finishing up their conquest of China. Thus while the far eastern branch of the family was prospering mightily, the far western was getting into trouble: I may mention that they were known, these far westerners, as the *Parni;* and that their chief had tickled his pride with assumption of the Persian name of Arsaces;—just as I dare say you should find various George Washingtons and Pompey the Greats now swaying empire in the less explored parts of Africa. South of this Parnian country lies what is now the province of Khorasan, mountainous; then a Seleucan satrapy known as Parthia;—also

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inhabited by Turanians, but of a little more settled sort; the satrap was Andragoras, who, like Diodotus in Bactria (only not quite so much so), had made himself independent of the reigning Antiochus (II). With him Arsaces found refuge after his defeat by Diodotus, and there spent the next seven years:—whether enjoying Andragoras' hospitality, or making trouble for him, this deponent knoweth not. In 248, however, he proceeeded to slay him and to reign in his stead. Two years later, Arsaces died, and his brother Tiridates succeeded him and carried on the good work; he was driven out by Seleucus II in 238, but returned to it when the latter was called westward by rebellions soon after. Thenceforward the Parthian kingdom was, as you might say, a fact in nature; though until a half-cycle had passed, a small and unimportant one, engaged mostly in reinvogorating the native Turanianism of the Parthians with fresh Parnian importations from the northern steppes. Then, in 170, Mithradates I came to the throne, and seriously founded an empire. He fought Eucratidas of Bactria, and won some territory from him. He fought eastward as far as to the Indus; then conquered Meida and Babylonia in the west. In 129 Demetrius II Nicator, the reigning Seleucid, attacked Mithradates' son, Phraates II, and was defeated; and the lands east of the Euphrates definitely passed from Seleucid to Parthian control.

Why not, then, count as manvantaric doings in West Asia this rise of the Parthians to power? Why relegate them and their activities to the dimness of pralaya? Says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica:*

"The Parthian Empire as founded by the conquests of Mithradates I and restored, once by Mithradates II (the Great, c. 124 to 88 B.C.), and again by Phraates II (B.C. 76 to 70), was, to all exterior appearances, a continuation of the Achaemenid dominion. Thus the Arsacids now began to assume the old title 'King of kings' (the shahanshah of modern Persia), though previously their coins as a rule had borne only the legend 'great king.' The official version preserved by Arrian in his *Parthica,* derives the line of These Parnian nomads from [the Achaemenian] Artaxerxes II. In reality however the Parthian empire was totally different from its predecessor, both externally and internally. It was anything rather than a world empire. The countries west of the Euphrates never owned its dominion, and even of Iran itself not one half was subject to the Arsacids. There were indeed vassal states on every hand, but the actual possessions of the kings—the provinces governed by their satraps—consisted of a rather narrow strip of land stretching from the Euphrates and north Babylonia through southern Media and Parthia as far as north-western Afghanistan... Round these provinces lay a ring of minor states which as a rule were dependent on the Arsacids. They might, however, partially transfer their allegiance on the rise of a new power (e.g. Tigranes in Armenia) or a Roman invasion. Thus it is not without justice that the Arsacid period is described, in the later Persian and Arabian tadition, as the period of the 'kings of the part-kingdoms'—among which the Ashkanians (i.e. the Arsacids) had won the first place....

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“It may appear surprising that the Aracids made no attempt to incorporate the minor states in the empire and create a great and united dominion, such as existed under the Achaemenids and was afterwards restored by the Sassanians. This fact is the clearest symptom of the weakness of their empire and of the small power wielded by their King of kings. In contrast alike with its predecessors and successors the Arsacid dominion was peculiarly a chance formation—a state which had come into existence through fortuitous external circumstances, and had no firm foundation within itself, or any intrinsic *raison d’etre.*”

A Turanian domination over Iran, it had leave to exist only because the time was pralaya. When a man dies, life does not depart from his body; but only that which sways and organizes life; then life, ungoverned and disorganized, takes hold and riots. So with the seats of civilization. One generally finds that at such times some foreign power receives, as we are getting to say, a mandate (but from the Law) to run these dead or sleeping or disorganized regions,—until such time as they come to life again, and proceed to evict the mandataries.—As well to remember this, now that we are proposing, upon a brain-mind scheme, to arrange for ourselves what formerly the Law saw to:— the nations that are now to be great and proud manditaries, shall sometime themselves be mandataried; and those that are mandataried now, shall then arrange their fate for them; there is no help for it: you cannot catch Spring in a trap, or cage up Summer lest he go.—It seems now we must believe in a new doctrine: that certain ‘Nordics’ are the Superior Race, and you must be blue-eyed and large and blond, or you shall never pass Peter’s wicket. One of these days we shall have some learned ingenious Hottentot arising, to convince us poor others of the innate superiority of Hottentottendom, and that we had better bow down! . . . But to return:

The Parthians remained little more than Central-Asian nomads: something between the Huns who destroved civilization, and the Turks who cultivated it for all they were worth (in a Central Asian-nomad sort of way). All their magnates were Turanian; they retained a taste for tent-life; their army and fighting tactics where of the desert-horseman type: mounted bowmen, charging and shooting, wheeling and scattering in flight,—which put not your trust in, or ’ware the “Parthian shot.” They were not armed for close combat; and were quite defenseless in winter, when the weather slackened their bow-string. True, Aryan Iran put its impress on them: so that presently their kings wore long beards in the Achaemenian fashion, made for themselves an Achaemenian descent, called themselves by Achaemenian names. They took on, too, the Achaemenian religion of Zoroaster:—so, but much more earnestly and adventurously and *opera-bouffe* grimly. Ts’in Shi Hwangti took on the quest of Tao.

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There was also a stratum of Hellenistic culture in their domains, and they took on something of that. When they conquered Babylonia, it was inevitable that they should move their headquarters down into that richest and most thickly-populated part of their realm—to Seleucia, the natural capital, one might suppos?—a huge Hellenistic city well organized for world-commerce.—But let these nomad kings come into it with their horde, and what would become of the ordered civic life? Nomads do not take well to life in great cities; they love the openness of their everlasting plains, and the narrrow streets and high buildings irk their sensibilities. For this reason, and perhaps because they recognised their deficienceies, they shunned Seleucia; and built themselves lumbering straggling gawky Ctesiphon across the Tigris to be their chief capital;—for they had many; not abiding to be long in one place, but gadding about as of old. Still, Greek culture was not to be denied. They coined money, copying the inscriptions on the coins of the Seleucids, and copyting them ever worse and worse. Not until after 77 A.D., and then only occasionally, do Parthian coins bear inscriptions in Aramaic. Yet sometimes we hear of their being touched more deeply with Greekness. Orodes I,—he who defeated Crassus,— spoke good Greek, and Greek tragedies were played at his court. — As with nomads generally, it was always easy for a Parthian king to shark up a great army and achieve a striking victory; but as a rule impossible to keep the horde so sharked up thogether for solid conquests; and above all, it was impossible to organize anything.

But they played their part in history: striking down to cut off the flow of Greek culture eastward. It had gone, upon Alexander's impulse, up into Afghanistan and down into India; may even have touched Han China,—probably did. I do not suppose that the touch could have done anything but good in India and China; where culture was well-established, older, and in all essentials higher, than in Greece. But in Persia itself the case was different. Persia was under pralaya, in retreat among its original mountains; and submergence under Hellenisticism might have meant for its oblivion of its own native Persianism. Consder: of the two great centers of West-Asian culture, Egypt fell under Greek, and then under Roman, dominion; and the old Egyptian civilization became, so far as we can tell, utterly a thing of the past. When Egypt rose again, under the Esotericist Sultans of the tenth century A.D., I dare not quite say that her new glory was linked by nothing whaterver to the ancient glory of the Pharaohs; but that would be the general—as it is the obvious—view. Fallen into pralaya, she had no positive strength of her own to oppose to the active manvantaric influence of Greekism under the Ptolemies; and in Roman days it was her imported Greekism that she opposed to the Romans, not her own old and submerged Khemism.

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Her soul was buried very deep indeed, if it remained with her at all. In Persia, on the other hand, West Asia retained much more clearly its cultural identity. Persianism was submerged for about thirteen decades under the Seleucids; then the Parthians cut in, and the drowning waters were drained away. The Parthians had no superior culture to impose on the Persians; whereas the Greeks had,—because theirs was active and in manvantara, while that of the Persians themselves was negative, because in pralaya. One might say roughly that a nation under the dominance of a people more highly or actively cultured than itself, tends to lose the integrity of its own culture,—as has happened in Ireland and Wales under English rule:—they take on, not advantageously, an imitation of the culture of their rulers. But under the dominance of a stronger, but less advanced, people, they tend to seek refuge the more keenly in their own cultural sources: as the Finns and Poles have done under the Russians. This explains in part the difference between Egypt and Persia it the dawn of the new West-Asian manvantara. We have seen that in the former the seeds were ready to sprout, and did,—in Ammonius Saccas and his movement. They were Egyptian seeds; but the soil and fertilizers were so Greek that the blossom when it appeared seemed not Egyptian, not West-Asian, but Neo-Greek; and turned not to the rising, but to the setting sun. The new growth affiliated itself to the European manvantara that was passing, not to the West-Asian one that was to begin. Persia was in a different position.

Certain events went to quicken the Persian seed within the Parthian empire. One was the rise of the Yueh Chi. During the period between the end of the brilliance of the Western, and the beginning of that of the Eastern Hans, these people were consolidating an empire in Northern India, and figuring there as the Kushan Dynasty: their power culminated, probably, in the reign of Kanishka. They had wrested from the Parthians some of their eastern provinces;—really, the overlordship of these rather than the sovereignty, for the Parthians held all things lightly except the ground they happened to be camping on; and this made a change in the center of Parthian gravity which was of enormous help to the Persians.

The heart of Persiandom was the province of Fars or Persis, the mountain-land lying to the east of the Persian Gulf, and between it and the Great Persian Desert. Mesopotamia, where were Ctesiphon, the Parthian’s chief capital, and Seleucia, their greatest city,—the richest and most populated part of their empire, stretches northward from the very top of the gulf, a long way from Fars; and the main routes eastward from Mesopotamia run well to the north of the latter avoiding its mountains and desert beyond. So this province is remote, and well calculated to maintain appreciable independence of any empire not born in itself. The Parthian

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writ had never run there much; nor had the Median in the days when the Medes were in power; though of that empire, as of the Parthian, it had been more or less nominally a dependent province. It was from these mountains that a chieftain came, in the five-fifties B.C., to over turn Astyages the Mede's sovereignty, and replace it with his own Achaemenian Persian; and to take Persianism out of mountain Fars, and spread it over all West Asia. Back to Fars, when the Achaemenians fell, that Persianism receded; there to maintain itself unimportantly aloof through the Seleucid and Arsacid ages; probably never very seriously menaced by Greekism, even in Seleucid times, because so remote from the routes of trade and armies. The conquests of the Yueh Chi put Fars still nearer the circumference of Parthia: threw the center of that more definitely into Mesopotamia, and closed the avenues eastward. The change made Fars the more conscious of herself.

But there were Persians all over the Parthian domain; and had been ever since they first went down out of their mountains under Cyhrus to conquer. It was in accordance with what I may call the Law of Cyclic Backwashes, that the rise of Yueh Chi should have stirred up Persian feeling in them everywhere. Thus: the impulse of Han Wuti's westward activities passed as a quickening into the Yueh Chi; and on from them, not into the Parthians, who were but an unreality and mirage of empire, but into these Persians, the true possessors of the land whose turn it was to be quickened. They began remembering, now, their ancient greatness; and turning their eyes to their still half-independent ancestral mountains, whence—dared they hope it?—another Cyrus might appear.

Then came another psychic impulse, from the west: when Trajan's eastward victories shook the Parthian power again. Then,—you will remember how the Roman world was shaken at the time of Marcus Aurelius' accession: how Vologaeses seized the opportunity to attack; how Verus the co-emperor went against him, and made a mess of things; how Avidius Casius (who brought back the plague to Rome) saved the situation. In doing so, he conferred unwittingly untold benefits on the Persian subjects of Parthia. He destroyed Seleucia as a punitive measure. Now Seleucia had been the cultureal capital of the Parthian empire; and it was a Greek city. Its culture was Greek; and Greek culture had ever been, for Persianism, a graver danger and more present check than Parthian ignorance; or it submerged and abashed, where the other only ignore, the Persian spirit. So when Seleucia was wiped out, in 165, the chief and real enemy of the National Soul had vanished. The Persians might no longer look to Hellenism for their cultural inspiration; might no more set up *Its* light against the Parthian darkness; they must find a light instead proper to their own souls;—and must look towards mountain Fars to find it. Within a half-cycle they were up. They were due to be up, as you will remember, in the two-twenties: the decade in which we saw the stream in China, as in Rome, diminish. Troubles had begun in Rome in 162, the second year of Aurelisus. 162 plus 65 are 227. In 227 Persia rose and Parthia vanished.

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In the second century A.D. there had been a man in Fars named Papak the son of Sassan, who took as his motto the well-known lines from Marlowe:

> “Is it not passing brave to be a king
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?”

—Persepolis, indeed, was gone, and only its vast and pillared ruins remained in the wilderness; but near by the town of Istakhr had grown up, to be what Persepolis had been in the old Achaemenian days,—the heart and center of Fars, which is spiritually, the heart and center of all Iran. Papak thought he would make Istakhr serve his purpose; and did;—and reigned there in due course without ever a Parthian to say him nay. In 212 he died; and what he had been and desired to be, that his son Ardashir would be in turn, and much more also. This Ardashir was very busy remembering the story of the Achaemenidae: men, like himself, of Fars; men, like himself, of the One and Only True Religion: but further, conquerors of the world and Kings of the kings of Iran and Turan. And if they, why not he?—So he goes to it, and from king of Istakhr becomes king of Fars; and then unobtrusively takes in Karmania eastward;—until news of his doings comes to the ears of his suzerain Artabanus King of Parthis, who does not like it. Artabanus has recently (217) received in indemnity a matter of seven and a half million dollars from a well-whipped Roman emperor; and is not prepared to see his own uderlings give themselves airs;—so whistles up his horde of cavalry, and marches south and east to settle things. Three battles, and the Parthian empire is a thing of the past; and Ardashir (which is Artaxerxes) the son of Papak the son of Sassan sits in the great seat of the Achaemenidae.

Now this is the key to all the history of the west in those times; and we may include West Asia in the west:—the world was going down, and each new phase of civilization was something worse than the one before. I cannot but see degeneracy, and with every age a step further from ancient truth: Rome with less light than Greece; the Sassanians a feebble copy of the Achaemenians:—knowledge of the Realities receding ever into the past. A new spirit had been coming in since the beginning of the Christian era, or since the living flame of the last-surviving Mysteries was quenched. It is one we are but painfully struggling away from now; it has tainted all life west of China since. China, with her satellite nations, alone in the main escaped it: I mean, the spirit of religious intolerance.

The odium of introducing it belongs not (as you might think) to one particular religious body, but to the evil in humanlty; on which, since the Mysteries were destroyed, there had been no effective check. The corner-stone of true religion is the Divine Spirit omnipresent in Nature; the Divine Soul in Man. As well forbid the rest of men to breathe the air you breathe, or walk under your private stretches

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of sky, as try to peg yourself out a special claim in these! You cannot do it, and the first instinct of man should be that you cannot do it. But lose sight of these Divine Things; lose the sense that perceives them, their essential universality, their inevitable universality;—and where are you? What are you to do about the inner life?—Why, for lack of reality, you shall take a sham: you shall hatch up some formula of words; or better still, take the formula already hatched that comes handiest; call it your creed or confession of faith; fix your belief on that, as supreme and infallible, the sure and certain key to the mysteries within and around you;— then you may cease to think of those mysteries altogether; the word-formula will be enough; it is that, not thought, not action, that saves. I believe in—such and such an arrangement of consonants and vowels;—-and therefore I am saved, and highly superior; and you, poor reptile, who possess not this arrangement, but some other and totally false one;—you, thank God, are damned. You are lost; you shall go to hell; I scorn and look down on you from the heights of the special favor of the Maker of the Stars and Suns: as if I lay already snug in Abraham's bosom, and watched you parched and howling.—The Mysteries were gone; there was no Center of Light in the West, from which the thought-essence of common sense might seep out purifying year by year into men's minds; Theosophy the grand antiseptic was not; so such tomfoolery as this came in to take its place. You must react to this from indifference, and to indifference from this;—two poles of inner darkness, and wretched unthinking humanity wobbling between them;—so long as you have no Light. What then is the Light?—Why, simply something you cannot confine in a church or bottle in a creed: and this is a proposition that needs no proving at all, because it is self-evident. There was a fellow in English Wiltshire once, they say, who planted a hedge about his field to keep in the cuckoo from her annual migration. The spirit of Cuckoo-hedging came in, in the first centuries A. D.

It was totally unknown to the Roman polity. Whatever inner things any man or nation chose to bear witness to, said the Roman state, were to be supposed to exist; and might be proclaimed, were they not subversive of the public order, for the benefit of any that needed them. There were two exceptions: Druidism; we have glanced at a possible reason why it was proscribed in Gaul by Augustus; another reason may been that the Druids clung to the memories of Celtic—and so anti-Roman—great things forelost. The other exception was the first historical world-religion that proclaimed the doctrine,—*Believe or be damned!*

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Over the portals of the first century A.D., says H.P. Blavatsky, the words “the Karma of Israel” are written. Judaism had never tried to impress itself on the world, as the religion that was born from it did.—It is rarely that one finds sane views taken as to Jewish history; it is a history, and a race, that provoke extreme feelings. A small people, originally exiled from India, that had had eight thousand years of vicissitudes since; sometimes, it is necessary to think, high fortunes;—no doubt an age of splendor once under their great king Solomon, or some one else for whom the traditional Solomon stands; oftenest, perhaps, subjected to their powerful neighbors in Egypt, Babylon, or Assyria, and latterly Rome: you may say that no doubt they were in the long run no better and no worse than the rest of mankind. They had great qualities, and the failings correspondent. They had, like all other races, their champions of the Light, their Prophets and wise Rabbis; and in ages of darkness their stiff necked fierce materialism incased in dogma and inthroned in high places in the national religion. Their history has been lifted to a bad eminence,—bad for them and the rest of us,—by the ignorance of the last two millenniums; in reality, that history, sanely understood, and not gathered too much from their own records, amply explains their failings and their virtues, and should leave us not unduly admiring, nor unfraternally the reverse. They were human; which means, subject to human duality, to cycles of light, and cycles of darkness. The centuries after the sixth B.C. were, as we have seen, a cycle of growing darkness for most of the world. The position of the Jews, a small people surrounded by great ones, and therefore always liable to be trampled on, had intensified their national feeling to an extraordinary pitch; and their religion was the one lasting bond of their nationality. So, at the beginning of the Christian era, they were notoriously the most difficult people to govern in the Roman world. The passing of the Egyptian Mysteries had left those Egyptians who still were Egyptian sullenly fanatical; but the reaction from ancient greatness kept that fanaticism aloof,—the energies were dormant: Egypt, thoroughly conquered, turned her face from the world, and hoped for nothing. But the Jews maintained an inextinguishable hope; they nourished on it a fighting spirit which entered fiercely into the religion that was for them the one and only truth, and that lifted them in their own estimation high above the rest of mankind. Romans and Egyptians alike worshiped the Gods, though they called them by different names; but the Jews abhorred the Gods. The Maker of Sirius and Canopus and the far limits of the galaxy was a good Jew like themselves, their peculiar property; He had his earthly headquarters in Jerusalem; spoke, I suppose, only Hebrew, and considered other languages gibberish; of all this earth, was only interested in a tiny corner at the south-east

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end of the Mediterrancan; and of all the millions of humanity only in the million or two of his Chosen People. I say at once that, considering their history, and the universal decline of the Mysteries, and the gathering darkness of the age, there is nothing surprising in their attitude. Much oppression, many conquests,—never accepted by themselves,—had driven them in on themselves and kept their racial self-consciousness at a perpetual boiling-point; and it all went into their religion, which compensated them with unearthly dignities for the indignities they suffered on earth .... *them*.... the Chosen People of the Lord! It bred in them scorn of the Gentiles, for which there was no solvent in the Roman polity, the Roman citizenship, the Roman peace.—-There must have been always noble protest-ants among them. The common people,—as the picture in the Gospels shows,—were ready enough to fraternize humanly with Gentiles and Romans; but the fact remains that at the time Judaism gave birth to Christianity, this narrow fierce antagonism to all other religions was the official attitude of the Jewish church. It was, perhaps, the darkest moment in Jewish spiritual history; and it was the moment chosen by a Teacher as that in which he should be born a Jew.

The story in the Gospels cannot, I suppose, be taken as *au pied de lettre* historical; but no doubt it gives a general picture which is true enough. And the picture it gives shows the Jewish proletariat in very favorable contrast with the officials heads of the church and state. They, the common people, received the Teacher well; to them, he was a gracious figure whom they came in multitudes to hear. He was in fierce opposition to the hierarchic aristocracy,—the “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” as he called them: the body that nourished the tradition of exclusiveness and intolerance. He preached pure ethics to the people, and they loved him for it. He gathered round him disciples,—-men eager to learn from him that which it would have been ridiculous to have tried to teach the mob: the Secret Wisdom, without which to keep them sweet, ethics become sentimentalism, and philosophy a cold corpse. It is a law in the Schools of this Wisdom that seven years of training are necessary before the disciple can reach that grade of insight and self-mastery which will enable him in turn to become a Teacher: seven years at the very least. Within four years of the beginning of his mission, before, in the nature of things, one single disciple could have been more than half-trained, the hierarchic aristrocracy had had this Teacher crucified.

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Who, then, was to transmit his doctrine? he wrote nothing of it down; in the truest sense it never can be written down: had never had time to teach it; from any writings whatsoever each student can only gain the nexus of what he is to learn from life; for teaching does not mean giving dissertations, arguments, proofs; enunciating principles, and explaining them, or the like. It means, so far as one dare try to express it, bringing such experiences to bear on the lives of those who are to be taught, as shall awaken their own inner perceptions to truth. So this Man's doctrine *was never transmitted.* His disciples, good and earnest men, as we may imagine, had not the weapons spiritual wherewith to wage effective warfare for the Light. Supposing H.P. Blavatsky had died in 1879....?

The next step was, the inevitable materialization of the whole movement. It followed the course all such movements must follow, that are without spiritual leadership at the head, spiritual wisdom at the core. It reacted against the exclusiveness of Judaism,—and at the same time inherited it. Feelings of that sort lie far deeper than the articles of belief; a change of creed will not remove them; it needs special, defined, and herculean efforts to remove them. You might, for example, react from a bigoted creed to one whose sole proclaimed article was universal toleration, and become a fierce bigot in that,—for the creed, not the idea; because creeds always obscure ideas: when a creed is formulated, it means that ideas are shelved. So now Chrisitianity inherited the Chosen People dogma, but transferred it from a racial-ecclesiastical to a wholly ecclesiastical basis; and, since every Teacher comes upon a cyclic impusle outward, took on a missionary spirit. The Chosen People now were the members of the church, who might belong to any race. Within that churchly pale you were saved; you were a special protege of the Maker of Sirius and Canopus and the far limits of the galaxy; who had—for a dogma had to be invented to explain the untimely disastrous death of the Teacher,—incarnated and been crucified in Judea. Outside that pale you were damned,—from Caesar on his throne to the smallest newsboy yelling false news in the Forum. While such a spirit had been confined to the Jews, it had been comparatively harmless; now it was spreading broadcast through the Roman world, an entirely new thing, and the darkest and most ominous yet.

Whom, then, shall we blame? These sectarians?—No: to understand is to forgo the imagined right apportioning blame. It was that humanity had entered on a dark region in time: a region whose terrors had not been forefended; to be entered perforce by a humanity, or section of humanity, that had no Center of Light established in its midst. Had Croton of Pythagoras survived; or the Mysteries at Gaulish Bibracte: had there been but one firm foothold for the Lodge in the world of men;—I think

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none of these things could have come about; and that for the same reason that you cannot have total darkness in a room in which a lamp is lighted. But this darkness was total: intolerance is the negation of spiritual light. Of all the various movements in the Roman world that had not actual members of the Lodge behind and moving them, Christianity had the greatest impetus; and it was the one that first entered into this murk and deadly gloom. So that it may seem, to an impartial but not too deeply-seeing eye, as if it were Christianity that invented the gloom. Not so; nor Judaism neither; nor any Christians nor Jews. It was the men who burned Croton; the man who killed the Mysteries in Gaul. For every disaster there are causes far and far back.

Christianity had spread, by this third century, perhaps as much through the Parthian empire as through the Roman. The Zoroastrians had been as tolerant as the Romans; much more so to Christianity;—though the motive of their toleration had been pure indifference to everything religious; whereas in Rome there was statesmanship and wisdom behind theirs. The Persians reacted against Parthianism in all its manifestations. They were shocked at Parthian indifference. The Persian is as naturally religious as the Hindoo: and has the virtues and vices of the religious temperament. The virtues are a tendency to mysticism, a need to concern oneself with the unseen; the vices, a non-immunity to fanaticism and bigotry. They came down now from their mountains determined to combat the slackness; the indifference, the materialism of the world. The virus of intolerance was in the air,—a spirit like the germ of plague or any epidemic; one religion catches it from another. Let it be about, and you are in danger of catching it, unless your faith is based on actual inner enlightenment, and not faith at all, but knowledge; or unless you have a Teacher so enlightened to adjust you, and keep you too busy to catch it;—or unless you are totally heedless of the unseen. The Persians were not indifferent, but very much in earnest; and they had no knowledge, but only faith: so they stood in peculiar danger. And presently a Teacher came to them, and they rejected him.

His name was Mani; he was born in Ctesiphon, of noble Persian family, probably in 215; and came forward as a Teacher (according to the Mohammedan tradition, which is the most trustworthy) at the coronation of Sapor I, Ardashir's successor, in 242. Sapor at first was disposed to hear him; but the Magi moved heaven and earth to change that disposition. Ardashir had bound church and state together in the closest union: no worship but the Zoroastrian was allowed in his dominions. This was mainly aimed at the Christians, and must have caused them much discomfort. But Mani, it would seem, rose against all this narrow-ness. It has been said that he taught Reincarnation, and again denied;—this much he taught certainly,—that all religions

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are founded on one body of truth. He drew his own doctrine from Zoroistrianism, Christianity (chiefly Gnostic), and Buddhism; taking from each what he found to be true. Manichaeism spread quickly, through the Roman world as well as through Persia; in the former it replaced Mithraism, another Persian growth, that had come to be preeminently the religion of the Roman soldier. Sapor looked on him favorably; Hormizd, the heir apparent, was more or less a disciple; but the Magi agitated. They arranged a great debate before the king, and therein convinced him; persuaded him, at least, to withdraw from the Teacher the light of his countenance;—and Mani found it expedient, or perhaps was compelled, to go into exile. In China; where the fimily of the Ts'ao Ts'ao who expelled the Eastern Hans, was reigning as the House of Wei in the north. There Mani busied himself, less in teaching his religion than in studying Chinese civilization,—especially its arts and crafts, and most of all, carpet-weaving. Presently he ventured back to Persia, with a large knowledge of Chinese methods and a large collection of specimens;—with which he gave a new impetus to Persian art and manufactures. Hormizd came to the throne in 271, and befriended him and his doctrine; but reigned only a single year. His successor Bahram I in the name of Zoroastrianism had him flayed and crucified.

So Sassanian history is, on the whole, uninteresting. Their culture stood for no great ideas; only for a narrow persecuting church. West Asia was not ready yet for great and world-important doings; it must wait for these till Mohammed, who struck into the very least promising quarter of it, and kindled in the barbarous wilderness a light to redeem the civilization of the western world. I shall hardly have to turn to the Sassanians again; so will say here what is to be said. We have seen that their empire was quite unlike the Parthian; it was a reversion to, and copy in small of, the Achaemenian of Cyrus and Darius. It never attained the size of that; and only late in its existence, and to a small degree, overflowed the Parthian limits. But it was a well-organized state, with a culture of its own; and enough military power to stand throughout its existence the serious rival of Rome. Its arts and crafts became famous, —thanks largely to Mani; in architecture it revived the Achaemenian tradition, with modifications of its own; and passed the result on to the Arabs when they rose, to be the basis of the Saracenic Style. There was a fairly extensive literature: largely religious, but with much also in *belles lettres,* re-tellings of the old Iranian sagas, and the like. Its history is mainly the record of gigantic wars with Rome; these were diversified later by tussles with the Turks, Ephthalites or White Huns, *et hoc genus omne.* Its whole period of existence lasted from 227 to 637; 410 years;—which we may compare with the 426 of the Hans, and the Roman 424 from the accession

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of Augustus to the final division of the empire. Of its cycles, there is a little information forthcoming; but we may say this: Sapor I came to the throne in 241, succeeding his father Ardashir; he had on the whole a broad outlook; favored Mani at first; was at pains to bring in teachers of civilization from all possible sources;—with his reign the renaissance of the arts and learning, such as it was,—and it was by no means contemptible,— began. Three times thirteen decades from that, and we are at 631. The thirteen decades (less a year) from 499 to 628 are mainly filled with the reigns of Kavadh I and the two Chosroeses,—

"Kai-Kobad the great and Kai-Khusru,"

—all three strong kings and conquerors. When Chosroes II was killed in 628, after a war with Heraclius that began brilliantly and ended in disaster,—the empire practically fell: split up under several pretenders, to be an easy prey for the Moslems a few years later. Was the whole Sassanian period divisible into a day, a night, and a day? Information is not at hand whereby one might gauge the life of the people, and say. The last thirteen decades, certainly, seem to have left their mark as an age of glory on the Persian imagination, and to have been remembered as such in the days of Omar Khayyam.—And here we must leave the Sassanians, having other fish to fry.

We saw the Crest-Wave strike Rome (at Nerva's accession) in 96; then, 131 years later, raise up Ardashir and Persia in 227; —and so, I suppose, should incline to look east again, and jump another thirteen decades, and land in India, in 357 or thereabouts,—-praying God to keep us from a bad fall. *India* I allow; but look before you leap;—or, if you will, in mid-air turn over in your minds the old Indian cycles, as far as you know them, and see if they offer you any prospect of a landing-place. As thus: there were the Mauryas, 320 to 190 B. C.; thence on thirteen decades to 60 B.C.,—and near enough to the reputed 58 of the reputed Vikramaditya of Ujjain. On again (thirteen decades as usual) to the seventies A.D.—and good enough in all conscience for that slippery Kanishka who so dodges in and out among the early centuries, and is fitted with a new date by everyone who has to do with him. On again, from 70 to 200; nothing doing there, I regret to say, (that we know about). Never mind; on thence to 320,—the nearest point to our 357; let us land in the three-twenties then, and see what happens.

On solid ground: for India, remarkably solid. There actually was a Golden Age there at that time; and everybody seems to agree that it lasted, say, one hundred and twenty-nine years; from 326 to 455. This you will note, was the period of the last phase of the Roman Empire: that of its rapid decline. In 323 Constantine came to the throne, and began making Chrisitianity the state religion; in 330 he moved his capital. After 456, no emperor ruled in the west but for puppets set up by the German Ricimer, two set up by Constantinople, and Romulus Augustulus, the last,—and all within twenty years. There

is no bright spot within the whole thirteen decades, except the two years of Julian. The faucet was turned on in India; and the Roman garden went waterless, and wilted.

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What happened was this: in 320, one Chandragupta Gupta married the Pincess of Magadha; and an era was dated from their coronation on the 26th of February in that year. Their son Samudragupta succeeded his father in 326, and reigned until 375. It is characteristic of India that this, probably the greatest monarch since Asoka, is absolutely unmentioned in any history or contemporary literature: the sole evidence for his reign and greatness comes from coins and inscriptions. One of the latter is to be found on a pillar originally set up and inscribed by Asoka, now in the fort at Allahabad. It shows him a mighty conqueror, reigning over all Hindustan; victorious in the Deccan; and, by influence and alliances, dominant from Ceylon to the Oxus. His coins picture him playing on the lyre; the inscriptions speak of him as a poet and musician; in his reign began a great renaissance in art, architecture, literature, and perhaps especially in music,—a renaissance which reached its culmination in the reign of his successor. Another thing to note: when of old time Pushyamitra overturned the Buddhist Mauryas, he showed his Brahmin orthodoxy by performing the great Horse Sacrifice;—a sign that the ancient religion had come back in triumph. They let loose a horse to wander where it would, and followed it with an army for a whole year; then sacrificed it. Samudragupta performed the same rites;—and it is known that the Gupta age was one of strong reaction against Buddhism. I know that it is disputed now that there was ever a persecution of the Buddhists in India; but the tradition remains; and one of the Teachers, in a letter that appears either in the *Occult World* or *Esoteric Buddhism,* speaks of India as a land from which the Light of the Lodge had been driven with the followers of the Buddha. Certainly there were Buddhists in India long after this time: even a great Buddhist king in the seventh century: but it seems more than probably that the spirit of intolerance went east with the eastward cyclic flow we have noted this evening: from Christianity to Zoroastrianism: from Zoroastrianism under the Sassanids to Brahminism under the Guptas.

Not, perhaps, that there was actual persecution, yet. Emissaries from the king of Ceylon found the shrine at Buddhagaya fallen into decay; and they themselves were not well treated at the site. The Buddhist kind, however, determined to remedy things as well as he could. He sent ambassadors with rich gifts to Samundragupta; who called the gifts tribute, and permitted him, on consideration thereof, to restore the shrine. The monastery then built by the Sinhalese was afterwards visited by Hiuen Tsang; who describes it as having three storeys, six halls, three towers, and accommodation for a thousand monks. “On it,” says Hiuen Tsang, “the utmost skill of the artist has been employed; the ornamentation is in the richest colors, and the statue of Buddha is cast in gold and silver, decorated with gems and precious stones.”

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A revolution took place in architecture in this age: the Buddhist style was abandoned, for something which, says Mrs. Flora Annie Steel: *

"…..more ornate, less self-evident, served to reflect the new and elaborate pretensions of the priesthood."

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* To whose book *India through the Ages,* I am indebted for these facts concerning the Gupta Age.

It is summed up, says Mrs. Steel, in the words:

"...._cucumber and gourd_... tall curved vimanas or towers, exactly like two thirds of a cucumber stuck in the ground and surmounted by a flat gourd-like 'amalika.' .... Exquisite in detail, perfect in the design and execution of their ornamentation, the form of these temples leaves much to be desired. The flat blob at the top seems to crush down the vague aspirings of the cucumber, which, even if unstopped, must erelong have ended in an earthward curve again."

The age culminated in the next reign, that of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya. Heaven knows how to distingusih between him and his half-mythological namesake of B.C. 58 and Ujjain. Very possibly the Nine Gems of Literature and Kalidasa and *The Ring of Sakoontala* belong to this reign really. At any rate it was a wonderful time. Fa-hien, the Chinese Buddhist traveler, obligingly visited India during its process, and left a picture of conditions. Personal liberty, says Mrs. Steel, was the keynote feature. There was no capital punishment; no hard pressure of the laws; there were excellent hospitals and charitable institutions of all sorts.—We are to see in the whole age, I imagine, a period of great brilliance, and of humaneness resulting from eight centuries of the really civilizing influence of Buddhism: far higher conditions than you should have found elsewhere to east or west at that time;—and also, the moment when the impulse of culture had reached its outward limit, and the reaction against the spiritual sources of culture began.

Chandragupta Vikramaditya reigned until 413; Kumaragupta, great and successful also, until 455. Then, thirteen decades after Samudragupta's accession, came Skandagupta; and with him, the White Huns. He defeated them on a large scale in the fifties; but they returned again and again to the attack; during the next thirty years their pressure was breaking up the empire; till when Skandagupta died in 480, it fell to pieces.

XXIII. “THE DRAGON, THE APOSTATE, THE GREAT MIND”

The time is the middle of the fourth century A.D. The top of the Crest-Wave is in India, now the greatest country in the world. The young Samudragupta, about thirty years old now, has been filling the whole peninsula with his renown as warrior, poet, conqueror, patron of arts and letters, musician. The Hindus are a busy and efficient people, masterly in this material world. Their colonies are spread over Java, Sumatra, and the other islands; Formosa (think

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where it lies) has a Sanskrit, but not yet (so far as we know) a Chinese, name; all those seas are filled with Indian shipping.—And with Arab shipping, too, by the way; or are coming to be so; and spray of the Wave (in the shape of Indian and Arab ships) is falling in the port of Canton. But China as a whole is in a deep trough of sea: an intriguing, ceremonious, ultra-elegant, and wily-weak court and dynasty have lately been expelled from precarious sovereignty at Changan in the North to Nankin south of the Yangtse; there to abide a little while un-overturned, looking down in lofty impotent contempt on the uncouth Wether Huns, Tunguses, and Tibetans who are sharing and quarreling over the ancient seats of the Black-haired People in the Hoangho basin, after driving this same precious House of Tsin into the south.—Persia is on the back of the Wave, something lower than the Crest: Sapor II, a dozen or so years older than Samudragupta, has been on the throne since some months before his (Sapor's) birth; and has now grown up into a particularly vigorous monarch; conquering here and there; persecuting the Christians with renewed energy since Constantine took them into favor; —and of late years unmercifully banging about Constantius son of Constantine in the open field, and besieging and sometimes taking his fortresses. This, you may say, with one hand: with the other he has been very busy with his neighbors in the north-east, the nomads; he has been punishing them a little; and incidentally founding, as a protection against their in roads, the city of New Sapor in Khorassan,—famed later as Nai-shapur, and the birthplace of a certain Tent-maker of song-rich memory. In Armenia an Arsacid— that is, Parthian—house has survived and holds sovereignty: and Armenia is a sort of weak Belgium between Persia and Rome; inclining to the latter, of course, because ruled by Arsacids, who are the natural dynastic enemies of the Sassanids of Persia. Rome has turned Christian; so, to cement his alliance with Rome and insure Roman aid against powerful Persia, the Armenian king has had himself coverted likewise, and his people follow suit with great piety;—which sends Shah Sapor, King of the kings of Iran and Turan, Brother of the Sun and Moon, to it with a missionary as well as a dynastic zeal; and a war that is to be of nearly thirty years' duration has been in process along the frontier since 336. Persia, better called a kingdom, perhaps, than an empire, commands about forty millions of subjects; as against imperial Rome's—who can say? The population there must have gone down by many millions since the days of the Antonines, with all the civil wars, plagues, pestilences, and famines that have harrowed the years between.

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The sons of Constantine have succeeded to the throne of their father; and the portions of Constantine II, the eldest of the three, and Constans, the youngest, have at last fallen into the hands, or the web, of Constantius,—a sort of cross between a spider, an octopus, and an elderly maiden aunt,—and in general about as unpleasant a creature as ever sat on a throne. Constantine the Great, indeed, had willed the succession into the hands of a much larger number of his relatives; but this Constantius, his father once decently buried, had taken time by the forelock, and insured things to his two brothers and himself by killing out two of his uncles and seven of their sons; so that now, Constantine II and Constans being dead, no male scions of the house of Constantius Chlorus remain as possible rivals to him, except two boys who had been at the time of the massacre, the one too young, and the other too sickly, to count. We shall come to them by and by.

Christianity is well established; though Constantius, followed his father's wise example, is deferring his baptism until the last possible moment: he partly knows the weakness of his nature, and desires to have license for a little pleasant sinning until the end, with the certainty of a glorious resurrection to follow in despite of it.—Dismiss your kindly apprehensions; God was good to Constantius; no untimely accident cut him off unbaptized; his plan worked excellently, and providing an Arian heretic may go to heaven, in heaven he is to this day, singing his Alleluias with the best of them,—and perhaps between whiles arguing it out with the various uncles and cousins he murdered.

Meanwhile, however, priests and bishops are the great men of his empire; and they enjoy immunities from duties and taxation to an extent that throws the whole rational order of government out of gear. Thus, for example, the upkeep of the great roads and posts system,—the lines of communication,—falls upon a certain class called the Decurions, who in each district at their own expense have to maintain all in order. But churchmen,—an enormous class now,—are immune from the decurionship; and are allowed further the use of the post-horses and inns free of cost;—with the result that, practically speaking, no one else can use them at all. Because these churchmen are forever hurrying hither and thither to conference, council, or synod; there each sect,—Arian and Athanasian chiefly,—to damn to eternal perdition (and temporal excommunication when possible) the vile heretics of the other: Homoiousian to thunder against Homoousian, Homoousian against Homoiousian: *Arius contra Athanasium,* and *Athanasius contra mundum:*—till the air of the whole Roman world is thick with the fumes of brimstone and the stench of the Nether Pit. Taxation, on those left to tax, falls an intolerable burden; —we have seen how Shah Sapor is dealing with one end of the empire;—at the other end, in Gaul, one Magnentius rose against

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Constantius, and the latter thoughtfully invited in the Germans to put him down and help themselves to what they found handy;— and a certain Chnodomar, a king in those trans-Rhenish regions, has taken him much at his word. Result: a strip forty miles wide along the left bank of the Rhine from source to mouth has been conquered and annexed; three times as much this side is a perfectly desolate No-man's land; forty-five important cities, including Cologne and Strasbourg, have been reduced to ashes, with innumerable smaller towns and villages; all open towns in north-eastern Gaul have been abandoned; the people of the walled cities are starving on what corn they can grow on vacant corner lots and in their own back-gardens; hundreds of thousands have been killed out, or carried off into slavery in Germany; and King Chnodomar has every reason to think that God is behaving in a very reasonable manner.—As for the rest of the empire, whatever may be its population in human bodies, there is a plentiful lack of human souls to inhabit them; the Roman world has fallen on evil years, truly, but is by no means unchanged;— and the one thing you can prophesy with any decent security is that affairs cannot go on in this way much longer. Rome has conducted a number of funerals in her day, of this nation and that conquered and put an end to; not much intuition is required now, to foresee that the next funeral will be her own.—(Though indeed, I doubt you should have found half-a-dozen in the Roman world who could foresee it.)

Now there is a Way, narrow and most difficult to find,—a Way of conducting the affairs of this life and this world, in balance, in equilibrium; in that fine I condition through which alone the life-renewing forces from the vaster worlds within may flow down, and keep existence here in harmony, and forefend decay. This was, of course, the essence of Chinese thought, Confucian and Taoist. You maintained the inner harmony, and the forces of heaven might use you as their channel. You found Tao (the Way), and grew never old; you succeeded in all enterprises; walked through life unruffled,—duty flowing, beautifully accomplished, at every moment from your hands. You met with no snags or adjusted yourself always to conditions as they arose, and over-rode them in quietest triumph.—They said that, possessing Tao, one might live on many times the common threescore years and ten; very likely there is some truth in it; it seems as if it were true at any rate, of the life of nations. China caught glimpses, and lived on and on; grew old, and reviewed her youth time and again. But normally, what do we find with these un-Taoist nations of the West?—They go easily for some period; then it becomes harder and harder for them to adjust theniselves to conditions. They become clogged with the detritus of old thought and action. What is the meaning of the incessant need we see for reform? Under whatever form of government a nation may be, it arises perpetually;

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it carries us around the ring of the-archies and-cracies, and there is no finality anywhere.—No; there is no straight line of political progress; but round in a ring you go! You turn out your kings, because they are tyrannical: which means that their government is no longer efficient, and cannot cope with affairs; there is a lack of adjustment between the inner and the outer, between the needs and the provision made to meet them. The monarchy, which was at first representative and the true expression of the nation,—because it, or anything else, when there was no detritus, but things were new and the inner air uncluttered, gave freedom to the national aspirations to pour themselves out in action,—gives such freedom no longer; it irks; it misfits; you feel it chafing everywhere. And yet it has not ceased by any means to be representative: it represents now a nation which has lost its adjustment to the inner things and is clogged up by the detritus of old thought and action, and it is that detritus that irks and misfits and chafes you. So you rise and smash an astral mold or two; turn out your kings; shout freedom and liberty, and are very glorious for a time under a totally free and independent republic;—which means, at once or after a while, government by a class. And this succeeds just as well and badly as its predecessor; neither has found Tao, the Way,—following which, your detritus should be consumed as it goes, and life lifted above the sway of Karma. So once more the detritus accumulates, and blocks the channels; and the life of the nation labors and is oppressed. Need arises for reforms; and the reforms are difficultly carried through; the franchise is extended, and there is loud talk about political growth and what not; we see the millennium at hand, and ourselves its predestined enjoyers. And the old process repeats itself, till you have a very full-fledged democracy:—you make all the men vote, and all the women; and presently no doubt all the children; but even when you have all adult dogs and cats and cows voting as well,—you will not find that that order is Tao, the Way, any more than the others were. The presence of a cow or two, or an ass or two, more or less, in your parliament will not really insure efficiency of administration. The detritus grows again, under the most democratic of democracies; and weighs things down;—and you cast about for new methods of reform. Democratic government, somehow, does nothing of what was expected of it; is not the panacea;—you see that, to bring the chaos of affairs into order, you must stop all this jabber and tinkering, and set up some undivided council,—some Man, for God’s sake!—a Dictator who can keep his own and other people’s mouths shut and hands busy, and get things done unimpeded. So you make one more grand reform for the sake of efficiency, and set up your Imperator, and have peace, and decent government; and you have, wittingly or not, started up old bugbear

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Monarchy again; and things go well for a time. But, bless you, you have not found the Way; you know nothing about Tao, which is not to be discovered in the fields of politics, and has nothing whatever to do with forms of government. So you go in search once more for a political method of dealing with that one and only oppressing thing, the detritus,—your karma;—and away you go squirreling round the changes again; and all this you call political evolution, as I dare say the squirrel does his own gyrations in his cage;—whereas if you found Tao,—if you lived balancedly,— if you kept open the channels between this and the God-world,— there would be no political evolution at all —no squirreling,— but only calm, untrammeled beautiful life. All the claptrap about Western Superiority to the Orient, and the growth of freedom in the West, in contrast with Eastern political immobility, simply means that the Orient is less fond of squirreling than we are; taking its aces by and large, there has been a little more Tao with them than with us: more consuming the detritus as they went; more balanced living, and thus more keeping the channels open.—At least, I imagine so.

Now Rome was very old; and, since Augustus' day, the detritus had grown and grown. Diocletian had devoted a political sagacity amounting in some respects to genius to setting things right, and had accomplished something. He had moved out of Rome itself, where the psychic atmosphere was too thickly encumbered; had gone eastward, where the air, after long pralaya, was clearer; had propped up imperial authority, now for the first time, with the definite insignia of imperial state: wore a tiara, was to be kneeled to, addressed as *Dominus,* and so forth:—all outward expedients, and Brummagem substitutes for that inner adjustment which Laotse called Tao: the Way that you are to seek by retreating within, and by advancing boldly without; and not by any one road, because it is not found by devotion alone, nor by religous contemplation alone, or by ardent progress, self-sacrificing labor, or studious observation of life, alone; but the whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desire to enter it. Diocletian knew nothing of this; so, great statesman as he was, his methods were effective only while he sat on the throne; in his old age and retirement he had to watch, from his palace at Spalato, the empire he had piloted banging about in a thousand storms again; and to plead in vain to those to whom he had given their thrones for the safety and life of his own wife and daughter;—the total failure of his life and labors thus miserably brought home to him before he died.

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"Where there is no vision the people perish," said that learned Hebrew of old, King Solomon; and by that one saying proclaimed his right to his title of 'the Wise.' Look into it, and you have almost the whole philosophy of history. The incessant need of humanity is this thing *Vision:* men and nations go mad for lack of it: they seek in hell the joys of heaven which should be theirs, and which they cannot see. It means vision of the Inner Worlds, of the heaven that lies around us. Oh, nothing spooky or foolish; one is far from meaning the Astral Light. People who go burrowing into that are again seeking a substitute for Vision, and a very poisonous one.—If I may speak of a personal experience: coming to Point Loma from London was like coming from the bottom of the sea into the upper ether. There, in the heart of that old civilization, the air is thick with detritus; here—if only because a long pralaya and fallow time have made the land new, —the detritus is negligible; perhaps it is not even forming, but consumed as we go; because at least we have glimpses of the Way. Result: the mental outlook that extended there, in visionary moments, to some six inches, before one's nose, here has broadened out to take in some seas and mountains; in comparison, it runs to far horizons. I take it that this is the experience of us all. So this is what that wise Solomon meant: "When the detritus has accumulated to the point where, like a thick fog, it shuts away all vision of the True, then the nation must go into abeyance; it must fall."—Rome was very near that point.

One wishes one could say something about those Inner Worlds of Beauty. When the voices of self are silenced, and desires abashed and at peace,—how they shine through! This outer world, truly, reflects them; but another and ugly world of our own making.

.....is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers,—
For this, for everything, we are out of tune.

Sometimes; not always, thank God! Look again: there are the mountains, and above them the mournful glories of the anti-sunset; the mute and golden trumpetings of the dawn; —there is the sea, and over it the wistfulness and pomp and pageantry of the setting sun, and the gentleness of heaven at evening;—there is the whole drama of Day with its tremendous glories; and the huge mystery of Night-time: Niobe Night, silent in the heavens,

“Glittering magnificently unperturbed;”

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—and there are the flowers in the garden, those *Praelarissimi* and *Nobilisimi* in the Court of God, the Pansy, the Blue Larkspur, the Purple Anemone;—and what are all these things?— Just symbols; just mirrorings of a beauty in the World of Ideas within; just places where the Spirit has touched matter, and matter, at that fiery and creative touch, has flamed up into the likeness of God, which is Beauty.—What is Vision?—It is to have luminous forms rising in the imagination, like Wordsworth had, like Shelley; it is with shut eyes to see the beauty and wonder of the Gods; it is to have no grayness or dearth or darkness within; but to have the ‘bliss of solitude’ crowded with beautiful squadrons of deities, trembling with the light of legions on legions of suns. For:

Not all we are here
Where this darkness oppresses us;
Not this oblivion
Of Beauty expresses us.

Gaze not on it,
To be stained with its stain;
The Lonely All-Beautiful
Calls us again.

In galleried palaces,
Turquoise blue,
With the sweetness of many suns
Filtering through,—

In the Suns’s own garden,
Where galaxies flame
For lilac and daffodil,
Each on his stem,—

Where apple-bloom Capricorn
Hangs from his tree,
Glittering dim o’er
The dim blue sea,—

And billowing dim o’er
The dim blue lawns
Of heaven come the nebular
Sunsets and dawns,—

We too have the regallest
Part of our being,
Far beyond dreaming of,
Hearing of, seeing.

And the Lonely All-Beautiful
Calls to us here:—
“My knights, my commissioned,
My children dear!

“The hell where affrighted,
Enchanted, ye roam,—
Ye set forth to make it
A heaven for my home!”

—And it is Vision, not to mistake mankind for less or other than Deific Essence cruelly encumbered over with oblivion; it is to see the flame of Eternal Beauty and valiant Godhood in all men; and not to rest or sit content without doing something to uncover that Beauty, to rescue that Godhood.—You go into the slums of a great city; and you do not wonder that the God-essence, inmingling and involved in the clay which is (the lower) man, goes there quite distraught and unrecognizable; where life is so far from the great reflexion of the Worlds of Beauty; where the Sun is no bright brother and confidential friend, but a breeder up of pestilences; where the sky is shut away and there are no flowers to bloom;—whether we like it or no, these things, the unperverted manifestations of the formative pressure of the Spirit, are needed to keep men sane. Beauty you must have, to nourish the Divine within you; alas for him that thinks he may attain to the Good or the True, and in a thin

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meager or Puritan spirit, strives to shut out their divine sister from his needs and aspirations!—But there, in our hideous modern conditions, there is no vision, without or within; so men go mad with fearful lusts and despairs; and it is the van of the Battle, in one sense, between Godhood and Chaos; and reeks with the slaughter and bloodshed and the madness of that conflict; there too the Holy Spirit of Man is incarnate; there the Host of Souls;—but in the shock and din and the carnage, there on the slippery brink of yet unconquered hell,—all the divine descent and ancient glory of the Host is forgotten: —*there is no Vision, and the people perish.*

(It may seem I go a long way round to come to him; but in reality I am already trying to draw you a character-sketch of the subject of this evening's lecture: to present you the permanent part and significance of a strange incarnation of Vision that appeared in Rome's dark and dying days: the man to whom Saint Gregory Nazianzen, in his grand attack, applied that ringing triplet of epithets I have taken for the title of the lecture: "The Dragon, the Apostate, the Great Mind." Know him first in his impersonality thus: a great white flame of Vision; a tremendous Poet of the Gods in action;—and then, when you come to his personality, with what it might have retained of personality, of hereditary impairments, perhaps, that should have vanished had he lived past his young manhood, these will not hinder you from understanding the greatness and beauty and tragedy of that life apparently wasted. But we shall come to him in our time.)

Back in the sixth century B. C., when all those Great Teachers came: when the forces that until then had been pent up in the Mysteries were suddenly let loose upon the world,—and the more vehement for their having been so pent up, and their now being so let loose;—what a flood of vision they brought with them! In Greece, to rouse up almost at once that wonderful wave of artistic creation; in Persia, to create quickly a splendid and chivalrous empire; in India, (so far as we know) to pervade as an ethical illumination the life of the people for some centuries before manifesting in art or empire; in China, to work in a twofold current, on one side upon the imagination, on the other upon the moral conceptions of the race, until the Chinese manvantara began. Its effect in each case was according to the cyclic position of the country at the time: those, seemingly, being the most fortunate, that had to wait longest for the full fruition. Thus it struck China in the midst of pralaya, and lay in the soil fructifying until the pralaya had passed; then, appearing and re-appearing according to cyclic law, was a saving health in the nation for fifteen centuries at least;—India, I imagine, when the manvantara there some five centuries old, and under a minor shadow; which shadow once passed, it produced its splendors in the Maurya time; and was

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in all effective for a thousand years. But it came to Persia in the autumn of the great cycle, when the forces it brought had to ripen quickly, and descend at once on to the military (the lowest) plane;—and to Greece just at noon or early summer,—just before the most intellectual moment,—and so there, too, had no time to ripen, but must burst out at once in artistic creation without ever a chance first to work in and affect the moral life of the race. This last is what Pythagoras at Croton had in mind to do: had Croton endured, there would have been a stable moral basis for the intellectual spendors.—I believe that you have here the very archeus and central clue to history. In China, it was enough for Laotse to float his magical ideas, and for confucius to give out his extremely simple (but highly efficient) philosophy, and to provide his grand Example; in India it was enough for the Lord Buddha to teach his wisdom and to found his Order; he might trust the future to them;—For Persia, one cannot say: the facts as to Zoroaster are not enough known; there might seem to have been some failure there too;—but in Greece, it was imperative that Pythagoras should establish his Lomaland; nothing else could save the forces from squandering themselves at once, in that momentous time, on the intellectual and artistic planes, and leaving life unredeemed and unaffected.

Which indeed they did; and thence on it Europe we see century by century vision waning and the world on a downward path, until the moment comes when a new effort may be made. Augustus calls a halt then; moves heaven and earth; works like ten Herculeses, along all lines, to bring about an equilibrium in outer affairs; and so far succeeds that in his time one or two men may have the Vision, at any rate:—Virgil may catch more than glimpses of the Inner Beauty, and leave the outer world a litle less forlorn. But in place of the rush and fine flow of the Grecian Age, what painful strivings we find in the Augustan!—When too, Teachers labor to illumine the vastnesses within; Apollonius; Moderatus; shall we add, the Nazarene?—So the downward tendency is checked; in the following centuries we see a slow pushing upward,—in the heroic effort of the Stoics, not after Vision—that was beyond their scope and ken,—but after at least that which should bring it back,—a noble method of life.

And then, at last, a dawn eastward: and the bugles of the Spirits of the Dawn heard above the Pyramids, heard over the shadowy plains where Babylon was of old;—and out of that yellow glow in the sky come, now that the cycle permits them, masters of the Splendid vision. They come with something of light from the ancient Mysteries of Egypt; with some shining from Star Plato, and from Pythagoras; and at their coming light up the dark worlds and the intense blue deeps of the sky,—wherein you can see now, under their guidance, immeasurable and beautiful things to satisfy the highest cravings of

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your heart: winged Aeons on Aeons, ring above ring,—mystery emanating mystery, beauty, beauty, from here up to the Throne of the Lonely All-Beautiful.— What growth there had been in Roman Europe, to prepare the way for the spread of Neo-Platonism, I cannot say; but imagine Gnosticism had something to do with it; and that Gnosticism was a graft on the parent stem of Christianity set there by some real Teacher who came later than Jesus. If we knew more of the realities about Simon Magus on the one hand, and Paul of Tarsus on the other, we might have clearer light on the whole problem; at present must be content with saying this much:—that Gnosticism, with its deep mystical truths, emerges into the light of well-founded history about neck and neck with orthodox Christianity; was considered a branch of the same movement, equally Christian; but was at least tinged with esoteric truth, and deeply Hellenized, and perhaps Persianized; —whereas the orthodox branch was the legitimate heir of exoteric Judaism. How much of real vision there may have been in Gnosticism; how much of mere speculation, which is but a step towards vision,—I am not prepared to guess; but have little doubt that Gnostic activities made ready the ground for Neo-Platonism; so that when the latter's Manasaputric light incarnated, it found fit rupas to inhabit.

This was the Lodge's most important effort to sow truth in Europe since Pythagoras. Says even the *Enyclopaedia Britannica* (without help from Esotericism):

"Neo-Platonism is in one aspect ... the consummation of ancient philosophy. Never before in Greek or Roman speculation had the consciousness of man's dignity and superiority to Nature received such adequate expression.... From the religious and moral point of view, it must be admitted that the ethical 'mood' which Neo-Platonisni endeavored to create and maintain is the highest and purest ever reached by antiquity.... It is a proof of the strength of the moral instincts of mankind that the only phase of culture which we can survey in all its stages from beginning to end culminated not in materialism but in the highest idealism."

It asserted the Gods, the great stars and luminaries of the Inner World; it asserted the Divinity of Man,—superior, truly, as the *Encyclopaedia* says to (the lower) Nature, but of the Higher, one part or factor in the whole. It came into Europe trailing clouds of splendor and opening the heavens of Vision. The huge menace and perils of the age, the multiplying disasters, were driving men to seek spiritual refuge of some kind; and there were, in the main, two camps that offered it:—this of Neo-Platonism, proclaiming Human Divinity and strong effort upward in the name of that; and that other which proclaimed human helplessness, and that man is a poor worm and weakling, originally sinful, and with nothing to hope from his own efforts, but all from the grace, help, or mercy of Extracosmic Intervention. It was

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a terribly comfortable doctrine, this last, for a race staggering towards the end of its manvantara under a fearful load of detritus, a culture old and thoroughly tired. No wonder Europe chose this path, and not the Neo-Platonist path of flaming idealism and endeavor. Ammonius, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus,—they had worked wonders; but not the crowning wonder of that which could save the age and the age to come: Plotinus had failed of that, because there no tool at hand for the Gods, but a silly, weak Gallienus.—So now Constantine has made the great change; and the empire that was Roman is now Roman no longer: You owe your first allegiance now, not to the state or to the emperor at its head, but to an *imperium* within the state which claims immunity from laws and duties: the kingdom is divided within itself, and must look for the fate of divided kingdoms. Zeus on Olympus now weighs the Roman empire in his scales,—-and finds the fate is death, and no help for it: there are to be thirteen decades of moribundity, and then Christian burial, with Odoacer and sundry other the like barbarians to be mourners and heirs; and then,—blackest night over the western world for God knows how long: night, with nightmare and horror, and no Vision, no beautiful dreams, no refreshment, no peace. For the party that Constantine has now made dominant despises cordially all the ancient light of Hellenism; Aeschylus, Homer, Plato, Sophocles, Euripides,— everyone you could in any sense a light-bearer that came of old, to bring mankind even the merest brain-mind culture,—these people condemn and abhor for heathen, and take pleasure in the thought that they are now, and have been since they died, and shall be forever, frizzling in the nether fires: they condemn the substance of their writings, and will draw no ideas, no saving grace, from them whatever;—will learn from them nothing in the world but grammar and eloquence with which to thunder at them and all their like from barren raucous pulpits. So, Vision having gone, culture is to go too, and all you can call civilization; and therewith law and order, and the decencies of life: all that *soap* stands symbol for is to be anathema maranatha; all that the Soul stands symbol for is to be anathema maranatha;—a pretty prospect! Zeus sighs in heaven, and his sigh is a doleful thunder prophetic of the gloom that is to overspread all the western skies for many centuries to come.

—And then comes Helios, the Unconquered Sun, and lays a hand on his arm, and says: “Not so fast!; Never despair yet; look down—*there!*”

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And the Gods look down: to a gloomy castle upon a crag in the wild mountains of Cappadocia; and they see there a youth, a captive banished to that desolate grand region: well-attended, as befits a prince of the royal blood, but lonely and overshadowed; —not under fear, because fear is no part of his nature; but yet never knowing when the order for his death may come. They read all this in his mind, his atmosphere. They see him deep in his books: a soul burning with earnestness, but discontented, and waiting for something: all the images of Homer rising about him beckoning on the one hand, and on the other a grim something that whispers, These are false; I alone am true! —"What of him?" says Zeus; "he too is a Christian."—-"Watch!" says Sol Invictus; "I have sent my man to him."—And they watch; and sure enough, presently they see a man coming into this youth's presence, and pointing upwards towards themselves; and they see the youth look up, and the shadow pass from his eyes as a great blaze of light and splendor breaks before him,—as he catches sight of them, the Gods, and his eye meets theirs, and he rises, illumined and smiling; —and they know that in the Roman world there is this one man with the Grand Vision; this man who may yet (if they play their cards well) wear the Roman diadem;— that there is vision in the Roman world again, and it may be the people shall not perish.

It was Julian, "the Dragon, the Apostate, the Great Mind"; I thank thee, Gregory of Nazianzus, for teaching me that word!—and the one that came to him there in Cappadocia was Maximus of Smyrna, Iamblichus' disciple. His story has been told and re-told; I expect you know it fairly well. How he was a son of Julius Constantius, son of Constantius Chlorus,—and thus a nephew of Constantine the Great, and a first cousin to the Octopus-Spider-Maiden Aunt Constantius then on the throne;—how he because of his infancy, and his half-brother Gallus because of a delicate constitution which made it seem impossible he should grow up, were spared when Constantius had the rest of the family massacred;—how he was banished and confined in that Cappadocian castle; —of Gallus' short and evil reign that ended, poor fool that he was, in his being lured into the spider-web of Constantius and beheaded;—how Julian was called then to the court at Milan, expecting a like fate;—how he spent seven months there, spied on at every moment, and looking for each to be his last;—how he was saved and befriended by the noble Empress Eusebia (a strangely beautiful figure to find in those sinister surroundings);—and sent presently to the University of Athens, there to spend the happiest moments of his life;—then called back to be made Caesar: he who had never been anything but a student and a dreamer, called from his books and dreams at twenty-four, and set to learn (as Caesar) his elementary drill,— which he found very difficult to learn indeed;—and then sent to fight the Germans in Gaul. How

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Constantius tried always to thwart him while he was there: setting underlings over him with power to undo or prevent all he might attempt or do;—how in spite of it all he fought the Germans, and drove them across the Rhine, and followed them up, and taught them new lessons in their own remote forests; and took the gorgeous Chnodomar, their king, prisoner; and sent for him, prepared to greet friendlily one so great in stature and splendid in bearing; but was disgusted when the gentleman, on coming into his presence, groveled on the floor and whined for his life,—whereupon Julian, instead of treating him like a gentleman as he had intended, packed him off to his (Chnodomar's) old ally the Maiden Aunt at Milan to see what they would make of each other;—how he fought three campaigns victoriously beyond the Rhine; restored the desolated Cisrhenish No-man's land, and brought in from Britain, in six hundred corn-ships, an amount Gibbon calculates at 120,000 quarters of wheat to feed its destitute population. —And this fact is worth nothing: if Britain could export all that wheat, it surface was not, as some folks hold, mainly under forest: it was a well-cultivated country, you may depend, with agriculture in a very flourishing condition,—as Gibbon does not fail to point out.

—And you know, probably, how Julian loved his Paris, and governed Gaul thence in civil affairs in such a manner that Paris and Gaul loved him;—how his own special legions, his pets, his Tenth, so to say, were the *Celts* and *Petulants,* and after these, the *Herulians* and *Batavians* (or shall I say *Dutchmen?*);—how Constantius tried to deprive him of these, ordering him to send them off to him for wars with Sapor in the east;—how Julian sorrowfully bade them go, judging well by Gallus his brother's experience (whom Constantius had treated in the same way as a first step towards cutting off his head) what the next thing should be;—but how they, (bless their Celtic and Petulant and Herulian and Dutch hearts!) told him very plainly that that kind of thing would not wash with them: "Come!" said they; "no nonsense of this sort; be you our emperor, and *condemn* that old lady your cousin Constantius!—or we kill you right now." Into his bed-room in Paris they poured by night with those terms,—an ultimatum; whether or not with a twinkle in their eyes when they proposed the alternative, who can say?—What was a young hero to do, whom the Gods had commissioned to strike the grand blow for them; and who never should strike it, that was certain, if Constantius should have leave to take away from him, first his Celts and Petulants, and then his head? So he accepts; and writes kindly and respectfully to his Maiden Aunt— Spidership the Emperor telling him he must manage *without* the legions, and *with* a Co-Augustus to share the empire with him,— ruling (it was to be hoped in perfect harmony with himself) the west and leaving the east to Constantius. However,

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all will not do: Constantius writes severe and haughtily, Send the men, and let's hear no more of that presumptuous fooling about the second Augustus!—So Julian marches east; whither, accompanying him, the lately rebellious Celts and Petulants are ready enough to go now; and Constantius might after all have fallen in battle, and so missed his saving baptism; but his plans had gone agley, and the whole situation was extremely disturbing; and you never knew what might happen: and really, when you thought how you had treated this Julian's father, and his two brothers, and numberless uncles and cousins, you might fear the very worst;— and so, good maiden-auntish soul, he fell into a sadness, and thence into a decline; and while Julian and his Petulants were yet a long way off, got baptized respectably, and slipped off to heaven.

And you know, too, probably, how Julian, being now sole emperor, reigned: working night and day; wearing out relays of secretaries, but never worn out himself; making the three years of his reign, as I think Gibbon says, read like thirty; disestablishing Christianity, and refounding Paganism,—not the Paganism that had been of old, but a new kind, based upon compassion, human brotherhood, and Theosophical ethics, and illumined by his own ever-present vision of the Gods;—how he reformed the laws; governed; made his life-giving hand felt from the Scottish Wall to the Nile Cataracts;—-instilled new vigor into everything; forced toleration upon the Christians, stopping dead their mutual persecutions, and recalling from banishment those who had been banished by their co-religionists of other sects;—made them rebuild temples they had torn down, and disgorge temple properties they had plundered;—and amidst all this, and much more also, found time in the wee small hours of the nights to do a good deal of literary work: Theosophical treatises, correspondence, sketches....—And you will know of the spotless purity, the asceticism, of his life; and how he stedfastly refused to persecute;—-whereby his opponents complained that, son of Satan as he was, he denied them the glory of the martyr's crown;—and of his plan to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, and to re-establish Jews and Judaism in their native land:—of his letter to the Jewish high priest or chief Rabbi, beginning "My brother";—of the charitable institutions he raised, and dedicated to the Lord of Vision, his God the Unconquered Sun;—of his contests with frivolity and corruption at Antioch, and his friendship with the philosophers;—and then, of his Persian expedition, with its rashness,—its brilliant victories,—its over-rashness and head-strong advance;—of the burning of the fleet, and march into the desert; and retreat; and that sudden attack,—the Persian squadrons rising up like afreets out of the sands, from nowhere; and Julian rushing unarmed through the thickest of the fight, turning, first here, then there, confusion into firmness, defeat into victory;—and

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of the arrow, Persian or Christian, that cut across his fingers and pierced his side; and how he fainted as he tried to draw it out; and recovered, and called for his horse and armor; and fainted again; and was carried into a tent hastily run up for him:—and of the scene there in the night, that made those who were with him think of the last scene in the life of Socrates; Julian dying, comforting his mourning officers; cheering them; talking to them quietly about the beauty and dignity of death, and the divinity of the Soul; then suddenly inquiring why Anatolius was not present,—and learning that Anatolius had fallen,—and (strange inconsistency!) the dying man breaking into tears of the death of his friend.—And you will know of the hopeless march of the army back under ignominious Jovian, all Shah Sapor's hard terms accepted;—and the doom of the Roman Empire sealed.

That was the Man: that is the record, outwardly, of a Soul fed upon the immensities of Vision. Vision is the keynote of him: the intense reality to him of the ever-beautiful compassionate Gods.... It is true there was a personality attached; and all his defenders since have found much in it that they wished had not been there. A lack of dignity, it is said; a certain self-consciousness... Well; he was very young; he died a very boy at thirty-two; he never attained to years of discretion:—in a sense we may allow that much. You say, he might very well have followd the reaonable conventions of life; and condescended, when emperor, not to dress as a philosopher of the schools. So he might. They laughed at his ways, at his garb, at his beard;— and he went the length of sitting up one night to write the *Misopogon,* a skit upon his personality. Only philosophers wore beards in those days; it was thought most unsuitable in an emperor. I do not know what the men of Antioch said about it; but he speaks of it as unkempt and,—in the Gibbonistic euphemism,—*populous;* indeed, names the loathsome cootie outright, which Gibbon was much too Gibbonish to do. In the nature of things, this was a libel.

I read lately an article, I think by an Irish writer, on the eccentricities of youthful genius. It often happens that a soul of really fine caliber, with a great work to do in the world, will waste a portion of his forces, at the outset, in fighting the harmless conventions. But as his real self grows into mastery, all this disappears, and he comes to see where his battle truly lies. Julian died before he had had time quite to outgow the eccentricities; but for all that, not before he had shown the world what the Soul in action is like.

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Every great soul, incarnating, has still this labor to carry through as prolog to his life's work:—he must conquer the new personality, with all its hereditary tendencies; he must mold it difficultly to the perfect expression of the glory and dignity of himself. Julian had to take up a body in which on the one side ran the warrior blood of Claudius Gothicus and Constantius Chlorus, on the other, the refinement and culture of the senatorial house of the Anicii. Two such streams, coming together, might well need some harmonizing: might well produce, for example, an acute self-consciousness,—to be mastered. What he got from them, for world-service, was on the one hand his superb military leadership and mastery of affairs; on the other, his intense devotion to learning and culture. Thus the two streams of heredity appeared, dominated by his own quality of Vision. The paternal stream, by his generation, had grown much vitiated: it was pure warriorism in Claudius Gothicus, and even in Constantius Chlorus; it was warriorism refined with subtlety and cruelty in Constantine I; it was mere fussy treacherous cruelty in the Spider-Octopus,—and sensual brutality in Julian's brother Gallus. The vices of the latter may indicate how great a self-conqueror the unstained Julian was.

He was a Keats in imperial affairs, dying when he had given no more than a promise of what he should become. He laws, his valor, his victories, his writings, are no more than *juvenilia:* they are equal to the grand performance, not the promise, of many who are counted great. He came out from his overshadowment and long seclusion, from him books and dreams; was thrown into conditions that would have been difficult for an experienced statesman, and won through them all triumphantly; was set to conduct a war that would have taxed the genius of a Caesar, a Tiberius, or an Aurelius,—and swept through to as signal victories as any of theirs. He learnt the elements of drill, and was straight sent to conquer the conquering Germans; and did it brilliantly. He came to a Gaul as broken and hopeless as Joan of Arc's France; and found within himself every quality needed to heal it and make it whole.

Joan conquered with her Vision; Julian conquered with his. He set out with this before his eyes and in his soul:—The Gods are there; the beautiful Gods; uttermost splendor of divinity is at the heart of things. The glory of the Gods and of their world filled his eyes; and the determination filled his soul to make this outer world conform to the beauty of his vision. The thing he did not care about,—did not notice, except in a humourous way, —was that queer thing of a personality that had been allotted to himself. How could he have succeeded, in the world that then was?—And yet even a Christian poet was constrained to say,—and to rise, says Gibbon, above his customary mediocrity in saying it,—that though Julian was hateful to God, he was altogether beneficent to mankind.

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I do not know how to explain the Persian expedition. He himself said, when dying, that he had loved and sought peace, and had but gone to war when driven to it. We cannot see now what were the driving factors. Did he go to reap glory that he might have used, or thought he might have used, in his grand design? Did he go to break a way into India, perhaps there to find a light beyond any that was in Rome? ... Or was it the supreme mistake of his life.... one would say the only mistake?

It failed, and he died, and his grand designs came to nothing; and Rome went out in utter darkness. And men sneered at him then, and have been sneering at him ever since, for his failure. Perhaps we must call it that; it was a forlorn hope at the best of times. But you cannot understand him, unless you think of him as a Lord of Vision lonely in a world wholly bereft of it: a man for whom all skies were transparent, and the solid earth without opacity, but with the luminous worlds shining through wherein Apollo walks, and all the Masters of Light and Beauty;—unless you think of him as a Lord of Vision moving in an outer world, a phase of civilization, old, tired, dying, dull as ditch-water, without imagination, with no little vestige of poetry, no gleam of aspiration,—with wit enough to sneer at him, and no more; by no means with wit enough to allow him to save it from itself and from ruin.

XXIV. FROM JULIAN TO BODHIDHARMA

When the news came drifting back over the Roman world that the Emperor had been killed in Persia, and that an unknown insignificant Jovian reigned in his stead;—and while three parts of the population were rejoicing that there was an end of the Apostate and his apostasy; and half the rest, that there was an end of this terrible strenuosity, this taking of the Gods (good harmless useful fictions—probably fictions) so fearfully in earnest: I wonder how many there were to guess how near the end of the world had come? The cataclysm was much more sudden and over-whelming than we commonly think; and to have prophesied, in Roman society, in the year 363, that in a century's time the empire and all its culture would be things of the past (in the West), would have sounded just as ridiculous, probably, as such a prophesy concerning Europe and its culture would have sounded in a London drawing-room fifteen years ago. There were signs and portents, of course, for the thoughtful; and no doubt some few Matthew Arnolds in their degree to be troubled by them. And of course (as in our own day, but perhaps rather more), an idea with cranks that at any moment Doomsday might come. But while the world endured, and the Last Trump had not sounded, of course the Roman empire would stand.—Christianity? Well, yes; it had grown very strong; and the extremists among the Christians were rabid enough against culture of any sort. But there were also Christians

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who, while they hated the olden culture of Paganism, were ambitious to supply a Christian literature in prose and verse to take the place of the Classical. There had been an awful devastation of Gaul; the barbarians of the north had been, now and again, uneasy and troublesome; but see how Julian—even he, with the Grace of God all against him—had chastised them! The head of the Roman State would always be the Master of the World.

And strangely enough, this was an idea that persisted for centuries; facts with all their mordant logic were impotent to kill it. Hardly in Dante's time did men guess that the Roman empire and its civilization were gone.

Life, when Julian died, was still capable of being a very graceful and dignified affair,—-outwardly, at any rate. On their great estates in Gaul, in Britain, in Italy, great and polished gentlemen still enjoyed their *otium cum dignitate.* The culture of the great past still maintained itself amongst them; although thought and all mental vigor were buried deep under the detritus. In fourth century Gaul there was quite a little literary renaissance; centering, as you might expect, in the parts furthest from German invasion. Its leading light was born in Bordeaux in the three-thirties; and was thus (to link things up a little) a younger contemporary of the Indian Samudragupta. He was Ausonius: teacher of rhetoric, tutor to the prince Gratian, consul, country gentleman, large land-owner, and, in a studious uninspired reflective way, a goodish poet. Also a convert to Christianity, but unenthusiastic:—altogether, a dignified and polished figure; such as you might find in England now, in the country squire who has held important offices in India in his time, hunts and shoots in season, manages his estates with something between amateur and professional interest, reads Horace for his pleasure, and even has a turn for writing Latin verses. Ausonius leaves us a picture of the life of his class: a placid, cultured life, with quite a strong ethical side to it; sterile of any deep thought or speculation; far removed from unrest.— Another respresentative man was his friend Symmachus at Rome: also highly cultured and of dignified leisure; a very upright and capable gentleman widely respected for his sterling honesty; a pagan, not for any stirring of life within his heart or mind, but simply for love of the ancient Roman idea,—sheer conservatism;—for much the same reasons, in fact, as make the Englishman above-mentioned a staunch member of the English Church.

There were many such men about: admirable men; but unluckily without the great constructive energies that might, under Julian's guidance for example, have saved the empire. But the empire! In that crisis,—in that narrow pass in time! It is not excellent gentlemen that can do such near-thaumaturgic business; but only disciples; for the proposition is, as I understand it, to link this world with the God-world, and hold fast through

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thunders and cataclysm, so that what shall come through,—what shall be when the thunder is stilled and the cataclysm over,— shall flow on and up onto a new order of cycles, higher, nearer the Spirit. . . . . No; it is not to be done by amiable gentlemen, or excellent administrators, or clever politicians. . . . Julian had come flaming down into the world, to see if he could rouse up and call together those who should do it; but his bugles had sounded in the empty desert, and died away over the sands.

There were tremendous energies abroad; but they were all with the Destroyers, and were to be, ever increasingly: with such men as, at this time, Saint Martin of Tours, that great tearer-down of temples; or in the next century, Saint Cyril of Alexandria and Peter the Reader, the tearers-to-pieces of Hypatia. Perhaps the greatest energies of all you should have found, now and later, in the Christian mob of Alexandria,—wild beasts innocent of nothing but soap and water.

It was Symmachus who was chosen by the Roman Senate to remonstrate with the emperor Valentinian against the removal of the altar and statue of Victory,—the Pagan symbols,—from the senate house. I quote you Gibbon's summary of a part of his petition:

"The great and incomprehensible Secret of the Universe eludes the enquiry of man. Where reason cannot instruct, custom may be permitted to guide; and every nation seems to consult the dictates of prudence by a faithful attachment to those rites and opinions which have received the sanction of ages. If those ages have been crowned with glory and prosperity—if the devout people have frequently obtained the blessings which they have solicited at the altars of the Gods—it must appear still more advisable to persist in the same salutary practise and not to risk the unknown perils that may attend any rash inovations. The test of antiquity and success, (continues Gibbon), was applied with singular advantage to the Religion of NUMA, and Rome herself, the celestial genius that presided over the fates of the city, is introduced by the orator to plead her own cause before the tribunal of the emperors. 'Most excellent princes,' says the venerable matron, 'fathers of your country! pity and respect my age, which has hitherto flowed in an uninterrupted course of piety. Since I do not repent, enjoy my domestic institutions. This religion has reduced the world under my laws. These rites have repelled Hannibal from the city, and the Gauls from the Capitol. Were my grey hairs reserved for such intolerable disgrace? I am ignorant of the new system I am required to adopt; but I am well assured that the correction of old age is always an ungrateful and ignominious office.'"

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Symmachus was addressing a Christian emperor; and it was an ill thing then, as in the days of Hadrian, to argue with the master of the legions. Still, the method he chooses is interesting: it holds a light up to the inwardness of the age, and shows it dead. This was at twenty-one years after the death of the Dragon-Apostate; whose appeal had all been to the realities and the divinity of man and the living splendor of the Gods he knew and loved. That splendor, said he, should burn away the detritus, and make Romans men and free again. But Symmachus, for all his admirable restraint, his rhetorical excellence, his good manners and gentlemanly bearing,—which I am sure we should admire,— appeals really only to the detritus; to nothing in the world that could possibly help or save Rome. The Christians wanted to be free of it, because they felt its weight; the Pagans wanted to keep it, because they found it warm and comfortable. Symmachus sees nothing higher or better than custom; the secret of the universe, says he, is unknowable; there is no inner life. —He was confuted by a much more alive and less estimable man: Ambrose, bishop of Milan,—with whom, also, both he and Ausonius were on friendly terms. Ambrose's argument, too, is illuminating: like the King of Hearts', it was in the main that "you were not to talk nonsense." How ridiculous, said he, to impute the victories of old Rome to the Religion of Numa and favor of the Gods,—when the strength and valor of the Roman soldier were quite enough to account for all. Thus he appears in the strange role of a rationalist. Christianity, he continued, was the one and only true religion; and all the rest—etc., *etc*., *etc*. Ambrose and his party were fighting towards a definite and positive end; knew what they wanted, and meant to get it. Of course they won. Symmachus and the senate were fighting only for a sentiment about the past, and had no chance at all. And it really did not matter: Rome was doomed anyway.

But in passing I must e'en linger on a note of sublimity in this petition of Symmachus: of sublime faith;—when he makes Dea Roma refer to her history as having "hitherto flowed in an uninterrupted course of piety." It makes one think that they taught Roman history in their schools then much in the same way that we teach our national histories in our schools today; here and in England, and no doubt elsewhere, *"An uninterrupted course of piety!"* quotha. Marry come up!

But all this is anticipating the years a little: looking into the eighties, whereas we have not finished with the sixties yet. Julian died in 363, on the 26th of June; and within a couple of years, you may say,—many said so then,—the Gods began to avenge him. Nature herself took a hand, to warn a degenerate world. In 365 came an earthquake; gollowed by a huge withdrawal of the sea, so that you could explore dry-shod the antres of the sea-gods. And then a tidal wave which

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threw large ships up onto the roofs of houses two miles inland, and killed in Alexandria alone fifty thousand people.—“Aha!” said the Pagans, “we told you so.”—“Nothing of the kind!” said the Christians in reply; “did not we set a saint on the beach at Epidaurus, before whom the oncoming billow stopped, bowed its head, and retired?” Well; no doubt that was so; but Alexandria was a perfect hotbed of saints, one of whom, you might think, might have been lured down to the beach and the perilous proximity of water for the occasion. But let it pass!

Ten years later the Law began to marshal its armies seriously for the destruction of an obsolete world. The Huns crossed the Volga, and fell upon the Ostrogoths, who had had a Middle-European empire up through Austria and Germany. The Ostrogoths, somewhat flattened out, joined with the Huns to fall upon the Visigoths; who theeupon poured down through the Balkans to fall upon the Romans; and defeated and killed the emperor Valens at Adianople in 378. Theodosius, from 379 to 395, held precariously together a frontier cracking and bulging all along the line as it had never cracked and bulged before. When he died, the empire finally split: of his two sons, Arcadius taking the East, Honorius the West.

In Honorius’ half, from now on it is a record of ruin hurrying on the footsteps of ruin. Ended the quiet *otium cum dignitate* of the great country gentlemen; the sterile culture, the somewhat puritan morality, the placid refined life we read of in Ausonius. You shall see now the well-ordered estate laid waste;—the peasants killed or hiding in the woods;—the mansion smashed, and its elegant furniture;—the squire, the kindly-severe religious matron his mother the young wife,—gracious lady of the house,— and the bonny children:—they are hacked corpses lying at random in the wrecked salons, or in the trampled garden where my lady’s flowers now grow wild. The land went out of cultivation; the populace, what remained of it, crowded into the walled cities, there to frowse in mental and physical stuffiness until the Middle Ages were passed,—or else took to the wilds under any vigorous mind, and became bandits. The open country was all trodden down by wave after wave of marauding, murdering, beer-swilling, turbulent giants from the north,—or by the still more dreaded dwarfish horsemen whose forefathers Pan Chow had driven long since out of Asia. They poured down into Greece; they, poured down through Gaul and Spain into Africa; into Italy; host after host of them;—civilization was a pathetic sand-castle washed over and over by ruining seas. Rome, indeed, could still command generals at times: Stilicho, Aetius, and afterwards Belisarius and Narses; but they were all pitiful Partingtons swishing their mops round against a most ugly Atlantic. In 410 Rome itself was sacked by Alaric; in the same year Britain, and then Brittany, rose and threw off the Roman yoke. In the four-fifties came the keen

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point of the Hunnish terror, putting the fear of death on even the worst of the barbarians that had wrecked the Roman world. In 476, the pretense of a Western Empire was abandoned.—So now to follow the great march of the cycles eastward; with this warning: that next week we shall glance at a little backwash in the other direction, and see the disembodied soul of this now closed phase of human culture ‘go west.’

The split with Rome was altogether of value to the Eastern empire of Constantinople. That empire lasted, from the time of Arcadius to that of Constantine IX and Mohammed the Conqueror, “one thousand and fifty-eight years,” says Gibbon, “in a state of premature and perpetual decay.”—A statement which, taken as an example of Gibbonese, is altogether delightful; but for the true purposes of history it may need a little modification. The position of this Byzantine Empire was a curious one: European in origin, mainly West-Asian in location. Its situation permitted it to last on so long into the West-Asian manvantara; its origin doomed that long survival to be, for the most part, devoid of the best characteristics of life. Yet during most of the European pralaya it was far and away the richest and most civilized power in Christendom; and, except during the reigns of extraordinary kings in the west, like Charlemagne, the strongest too. It specialized in military science; and the well-trained Byzantine soldiers and highly scientific generals had little to fear, as a rule, from the rude energies and huge stature of the northern and western hordes. But culture remained there in the sishta state, and could do nothing until it was transplanted. There were cycles: weaknesses and recoveries; on the whole its long life-period matters very little to history; it only became of great importance when it died.

The reason why it did not succumb when Rome did was that the tides of life in the whole empire had long been flowing eastward, and were now gathered there almost wholly: there was much more activity in the east; there were much bigger cities, and a much greater population. So that part was harder to penetrate and conquer: there was more resistance there. The barbarian deluge flowed down where it might flow down most easily: following, as deluges and everything else gifted with common sense always do, the lines of least resistance. The way through Gaul and Spain was quite open; the way into Italy nearly so;—but the way into Asia was blocked by Constantinople. That city is naturally one of the strongest in the world, in a military sense; and, you would say, inevitably the capital of an empire. If Dardanus had had a little more intuition, and had founded his Troy on the Golden Horn instead of on the Dardanelles, Anax andron Agamemnon and his chalcho-chitoned Achaeans, I dare say, would have gone home to Greece much sadder and wiser men;—or more probably, not at all. But Troy is near enough to that inevitable

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site to argue the strong probability of its having been, perhaps long before Priam's time, a great seat of empire, trade, and culture. If one dug in Constantinople itself, I dare say one should find the remains of cities that had been mighty. Events of the last seven years have shown how difficult it is to attack, how easy to defend. Since its foundation by Constantine it has been besieged nine times, and only twice taken by foreign enemies. When the Turks took it, they had already overflowed all the surrounding territories; and they were the strongest military power in the world, and the Byzantines were among the weakest.—So it stood there in the fifth century to hold back the hordes of northern Europe from the rich lands of Asia Minor and Syria: a strength much beyond the power of those barbarians to tackle; while all Europe west-ward was being trampled to death.

Further, the peace imposed on Jovian by Shah Sapor in 364 lasted, with one small intermission of war, and that successful for the Romans, for a hundred and thirty-eight years; during which time, also, the powers that were at Constantinople ruled mainly wisely and with economy. They were generally not the reigning emperor, but his wife or mother or aunt, or someone like that.

So then, in the year 400 we find the world in this condition:— western Europe going

> "With hideous ruin and combustion down
> To bottomless perdition;"

—the Eastern Empire weakish, but fairly quiet and advancing towards prosperity: in pralaya certainly, and so to remain for thirteen decades (395 to 527) from the death of Theodosius to the accession of Justinian;—Persia, under an energetic and intelligent Yazdegird II (399 to 420), a strongish military power: Yazdegird held his barons well in hand, and even made a brave effort to broaden the religious outlook; he tried to stop the persecution of the Christians, and allowed them to organize a national church, the Nestorian;—India, still and until 456, at the height of her glory:—there is a continual rise as you go eastward, with the climax in India. The next step is China; to which now after all these centuries we return.

As we have seen, since the Hans fell there had been a confusion of ephemeral kingdoms jostling and hustling each other across the stage of time: there had been too much history altogether; too many wars, heroes, adventures and wild escapades. Life was too riotous and whirling an affair: China seemed to have sunk into a mere Europe, a kind of Kilkenny Christendom. Not that culture ever became extinct; indeed, through this whole period the super-refinement that had grown up under the Hans persisted side by side with the barbarian excursions and alarms. It was not, as in Rome, a case of major pralaya: men did not resort to savagery; literary production seems never to have run quite so sterile. But things were in the melting-pot, centripetalism had gone; little

dynasties flared up quickly and expired; and amidst all those lightning changes there was no time for progress, or deep concerns, or for the Soul of the Black-haired People to be stirring to manifestation.

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You will, I dare say, have learned to look for a rise in China at any falling-time in Europe; so would consider something should have happened there in 365, the year of the great earthquake and tidal wave, when the fifty thousand Alexandrians were drowned,— the second year after Julian's death. Well; in that 365 Tao Yuan-ming was born, who later became known as Tao Chien: in Japanese, Toemmei. There had been poets all along. During the last thirty years of the Hans, 190 to 220, there had been the Seven Scholars of the Chien An Period: among them that jolly K'ung Jung who, because he was a descendant of Confucius, claimed blood-relationship with the descendants of Laotse. Ts'ao Ts'ao himself wrote songs: he was that bold bad adventurer and highly successful general who turned out the last Han and set his own son on the throne as Wei Wenti; who also was a poet, as was his brother Ts'ao Chih. Of Ts'ao Chih a contemporary said: "If all the talent in the world were divided into ten parts, Ts'ao Chih would have eight of them."—"Who, then, would have the other two?" asked somebody.—"I should have one of them myself," was the answer, "and the rest of the world the other." Ts'ao Chih enriched the language with one of its most familiar and delicious quotations:

> "The Superior Man takes precautions,
> And avoids giving rise to suspicion:
> He does not pull up his shoes in a melon patch,
> Nor adjust his cap while passing through an orchard of plums."

It is indicative of his own position at court.

Later in the third century came the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, a "club of rather bibulous singers"; and there are names of many scholars besides to say that the time was not too barren; yet on the whole it was, I suppose, a period of slump in literary production, as it was of confusion in politics. But when Julian had been dead two years in the west of the world, Tao Yuan-ming was born in the east: I do not say the creator of a new time; but certainly a sign of its coming.

A large amount of his poetry survives; and it is filled with a new spirit. Like Wordsworth, he went back to nature. Ambition, of course, had been a great mark of the age: men raced after office, and scrambled for the spoils. Tao Yuan-ming was called to fill an official post, and went up reluctantly to the capital; but very soon escaped back to the things he loved: the mountains, and his chrysanthemum garden, and the country, where he could hear the dogs barking in the far farms, and see the chickens scratching in the lanes. We do not find in him, perhaps, the flood of Natural Magic that came with the poets of the Great Age three or four centuries later; but we do find a heart-felt worship of the great unspoiled world under the sky: he is there to say that China was returning to her real strength, which is Nature-worship. While he pottered about in the front garden, he tells us, his wife pottered about in the back garden; they made an idol of their chrysanthemums, and started or nourished the cult which has flourished so strongly since in Japan. He was I suppose the greatest poet since Ch'u Yuan, who

came some seven centuries earlier; it is from him we get the story some of you may know under the title *Red Peach-Blossom Inlet.*

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For about half a cycle (sixty-five years) barbarian dynasties had been holding the north; with the result that the center of gravity of the real Black-haired People had been shifted from the puritan landscapes of North China to the pagan landscapes of the Yangtse Valley,—a region of mountains and forests and lakes and wild waters: Tsu the land of Laotse and Ch'u Yuan, and I think Chwangtse too. It is here are the Hills of T'ang, the metropolis of Natural Magic perhaps for all the world; and the mind and imagination of China, centered here, were receiving a new polarization; something richer and more luminous was being born. Contemporary with Tao Yuan-ming was Ku Kaichih, the first supreme name in painting. Fenollosa speaks of a "White Lotus Club," organized by Hui Yuan, A Buddhist priest, and consisteing of "mountain-climbers and thinkers,"—Tao Yuan-ming being a member.

One would like to get at the heart of what happened in that last quarter of the fourth century. This is what we see on our side: Canton and Yangtse ports were being visited more and more by Hindu, Arab, and Sassanian traders, bringing in new things and ideas: the Hindus, especially, an impetus towards culture from the splendor of the gupta period, then at its topmost height. Also ther were new inventions, such as that of paper, which was an incentive to literary output. The Chinese mind, in the south especially, was quickened on the one hand by the magical wind from the mountains, and on the other by a wind from the great world over-seas: the necessary nationalistic and international quickenings. But deeper quickenings also were taking place. India was fast becoming, under the Gupta reaction towards Brahmanism, no place for the Buddhists; and the Hindu ships that put in at Canton and the Yangtse were bringing much to China besides merchandise. A great propaganda of Buddhism was in process; by Indian monks, and now too for the first time by native Chinese. We read of a missionary who went about preaching to an indifferent world; then in sorrow took to the mountains, and proclaimed the Good Law to the mountain boulders; and they "nodded as it were their heads in assent." * But there is evidence that China was fast becoming the spiritual metropolis of the world: Buddhism was drifting in, and mingling among the mountains with mountain Taoism, that dear and hoary magic of the Eastern World; and the result was an atmosphere in which astounding events were to happen.

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* Giles *Dictionary of Chinese Biography;* from which work, and from the same author's *Chinese Literature*, the facts, quotations, and enecdotes given in this lecture are taken.

In 401, Kumarajiva, the seventeenth Buddhist Patriarch, came from India and took up his residence at the court at Changan, where a Tibetan family was then reigning over the north; and this, when you think that these Patriarchs were (as I believe) no popes elected by

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a conclave of churchly dignities, but the Spiritual Successors of the Buddha, each appointed by his predecessor, an event momentous enough in itself. Still, Kumarajiva came (it would appear) but to prepare the way for the great change that was impending; left behind him a successor in India, or one to fill the office at his death; in India the headquarters of Buddhism remained. Two years before his arrival, Fa Hian, a Chinese Buddhist monk, had set out on foot from Central China, walked across the Gobi Desert, and down through Afghanistan into India, a pilgrim to the sacred places: a sane and saintly man, from whom we learn most of what we know about the Gupta regime. He returned by sea in 412, landing at Kiao-chao in Santung,—a place latterly so sadly famous,—bringing with him spiritual and quickening influences. In the south, meanwhile, another Indian teacher, Buddhabhadra, had been at work. Before very long, a Renaissance was in full flow.

The political events that led up to it were these: between 304 and 319 a Tatar family by the name of Liu, from Manchuria, succeeded in driving the House of Tsin out of northern China: these Tsins were that effete, ladylike, chess-playing, fan-waving, high-etiquettish dynasty I have spoken of before. In 319 they took up their abode in Nanking, and there ruled corruptly for a hundred years, leaving the north to the barbarians. In 420, a soldier in their employ, Liu-yu by name, deposed the last Tsin emperor, and set himself on the throne as the first sovereign of the Liu-song Dynasty. He was a capable man, and introduced some vigor and betterment into affairs; he found conditions ripe for a renaissance of civilization; and in his reign we may say that the renaissance took shape. 420 is, so far as a date can be given for what was really a long process, a convenient date to give. We have seen Persia rise in the two-twenties; India in the three-twenties; we shall not go far wrong in giving the four-twenties to China. That decade, too, marks a fresh step downward in the career of Rome: Honorius died in 423. Fenollosa is definite upon 420 for the inception of the great age of the Southern Renaissance of art. That age culminated in the first half of the next century, and ended with the passing of the Liang dynasty in the five-fifties: a matter of thirteen decades again; which, I take it, is further reason for considering our four-twenties epochal.

I fancy we shall grow used to finding the twenties in each century momentous, and marked by great political and spiritual re-shapings of the world. We shall find this in our historical studies; in the next few years we may find it in current events too; and what we shall see may remind us that in these decades the sun generally rises in some new part of the world,—the sun of culture and power. Naturally enough:—in the last quarter of each century you have the influx of spiritual forces; which influx, it is to be supposed,

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can hardly fail to produce changes inwardly,—a new temperature, new conditions in the world of mind. So there must be readjustments; there is a disharmony between outer and inner things, between the world of causes and the world of effects; and one commonly finds the first two decades of the new century filled with the noise and confusion of readjustment. New wine has been poured into the old skin-bottles of the world; and ferments, explodes, rends them. Then, in the twenties or so, things calm down, and it is seen that readjustments have been made. By 'readjustments,' one does not mean the treaties of statesmen and the like; brain-mind affairs for the most part, that amount to nothing. One means a new direction taken by the tide of incarnating souls. As if the readjusting cataclysms had blocked their old channels of these, and opened new ones...

A new *arpeggio* chord, but rather a faint and broken one, sounds in the five-twenties, or begins then. At Constantinople the thirteen pralayic and recuperative decades since the death of Theodosius and the split with the West have ended. Now an emperor dies; and it becomes a question which of several likely candidates can lay out his money to best advantage and secure the succession. There is an official of some sort at court there, one Justin, a Balkan peasant by birth; you will do well to bribe him heavily, for he, probably, can manage the affair for you,— One of the candidates does so: hands him a large sum, on the assurance from Justin that he shall be the man. But the old fellow has peasant shrewdness, shall we say; and the money is *used* most thriftily; but not as its donor intended. Justin duly ascends the throne.

Nothing very promising in that, to insure manvantaric times coming in. But the old man remembers a nephew of his back there in Bulgaria or Jugoslavia or where it may have been; and sends for him, and very wisely lets him do most of the running of things. In 527, this nephew succeeds to the purple on his uncle's death: as Justinian; and, for Europe and the Byzantine empire, and for the times,—that is to say, 'considering,' —-manvantaric doings do begin. A man of hugely sanguine temperament, inquisitive and enterprising and impulsive, he had the fortune to be served by some great men: Tibonian, who drew up the Pandects; Belisarius and Narses, who thrashed the barbarians; the architect who built Saint Sophia. Against these assets to his reign of thirty-eight years you must set the factions of the circus, at Constantinople itself; and bloody battle over the merits of the Greens, the Blues, the Whites, *etc*. But certainly Justinian contrived to strike into history as no other Byzantine emperor did; with his law code, and with his church. So now enough of him.

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Four years after the accession of this greatest of the Byzantines, the greatest of the Sassanids came to the throne in Persia: Chosroes Anushirwan: a wise and victorious reign until 579. There was an 'Endless Peace' sworn with Rome in 533; and not peace merely, but friendship and alliance; it was to last for all time, and did last for seven years. The Chosroes, jealous of the western victories of Justinian, listened to the pleadings of the Ostrogoths, and declared war; peace came again in 563, on the basis of a yearly tribute from Rome to Persia,— but with compensations, such as toleration for the Christians in Persia.—there were reforms in the army and in taxation; improvements in irrigation; encouragement of learning; revision of the laws; some little outburst in literature and culture generally: the culmination, in all but extent of territory, of the whole Sassanian period.—We may throw in one item from the future,—that is from 620: in that year Sassanian Persia had flowed out to the full limits of the empire of Darius Hystaspes: held Egypt, Syria, all West Asia to within a mile of the walls of Constantinople. Within three years the fall had begun; within twenty it was completed.

As to India, this (520) is among the hidden times: the Ephthalites had overturned the Guptas; they were Huns of the Hunniest; they had over-turned the Guptas and all else (in the north). Tales come down of the fiendishness of their kings: of a man that for his sport would have elephants hurled from the top of precipices; it may be that the Indian manvantara closed with the Gupta fall;—though we get the finical dandiacal 'great' reign of Harsha in 700. The light certainly was dying from India now: the Crest-Wave had been there, in all its splendor; they had made good use of it in all but the spiritual sense, and very bad use of it in that. The year in which you may say (as nearly as history will tell you) the light died there, was precisely this year of 520; and that effected a change in the spiritual center of gravity of the world of the most momentous kind: so much so that we may think of a new order of ages as beginning then; and looking at world-history as a whole, we may say, Here endeth the lesson that began where we took things up in the time of the Six Great Teachers; and here beginneth a new chapter,— with which these lectures will hardly concern themselves. But we may glance at the event that opens it.

It made very little stir at the time. It was merely the landing at Canton of an old man from India: a 'Blue-eyed Brahmin,'—but a Buddhist, and the head of all the Buddhists at that;—and his preaching there until Liang Wuti, the emperor at Nanking, had heard of his fame, and invited him to court; and his retirement thence to a cave-temple in the north. Beyond this there is very little to tell you. He was a king's son from southern India; his name Bodhidharma; and one would like to know what the records of the Great Lodge have to say

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about him. For he stands in history as the founder of the Dhyana or Zen School, another form of the name of which is *Dzyan;* when one reads *The Voice of the Silence,* or the Stanzas in *The Secret Doctrine,* one might remember this. Outwardly,—I think this is true,—he refused to cut into history at all: was a grand Esoteric figure, whose campaigns, (super-Napoleonic, more mirific than those of Genghiz Khan), were all fought on spiritual planes whence no noise of the cannonading could be heard in this outer world. He was the twenty-eighth Successor of the Buddha; of a line of Masters that included such great names as those of Vasubandhu, and of Nagarjuna, founder of the Mahayana,—"one of the four suns that illumine the world." We have seen that he had been preceded: Kumarajiva had come to China a century before; but experimentally, leaving the Center of the Movement in India; there must have been thousands of disciples in the Middle Kingdom in 520 when Bodhidharma came, bringing with him the Buddha's alms-bowl, the symbol of the Patriarchate, to make in China his headquarters and that of his successors. For a thousand years the Buddha's Movement had been in India a living link with the Lodge;—in that land of esoteric history which hides from us what it means to be so linked and connected. Now India had failed. The Guptas had reigned in great splendor; but they had flourished upon a reaction away from the Light. I suppose it means this: that the burden of fighting upward had been too much for this people, now wearied with old age; they had dropped the burden and the struggle, and found in the relief a phantom of renewed youth to last them a little day.

Whatever may be true of Buddhism now,—however the long cycles may have wasted its vitality, and to whatever depths it may have fallen,—we should remember this: that certainly for about fourteen centuries there was contained within it a living link with the Masters' Lodge. It was not like any other existing religion (so far as one knows): like none of the dominant religions of today, at any rate. At its head, apparently, through all those long centuries, was a line of Adepts, men of spiritual genius, members of the Lodge. So what Bodhidharma's coming meant, I take it, was that in China that was established actually which in the West first Pythagoras, and then Plotinus had tried to establish, and tried in vain. It was, as you may say, the transplanting of the Tree of Life from a soil that had grown outworn to one in which it could flourish; and the result was, it appears to me, a new impulse given to the ages, to all history.

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Hitherto, in the main, we have seen (except in China) a downward trend of cycles; from this point an upward trend began. We have been dealing, latterly, with dullish centuries, and history in a febrile and flickering mood;—but give this wonderful change time to take effect, and the centuries begin to flame up, and history to become a roaring conflagration. We might here spy out into that time, which will lie beyond the scope of these lecture; and see the glory of the T'angs begin in China in 618; Corea's one historic age of splendor, in art and also in military prowess, at its highest point about 680; the era of Shotoku Daishi, saint, sage, prince and protagonist of civilization in Japan, from about 580 to 620; the rise of Siam, and of Tibet, into strength and culture and Buddhism, in the first half of the seventh century;— then, looking westward, the wonderful career of Mohammed in Arabia, who gave the impetus that rescued civilization first in West Asia and then, when in the thirteenth century a new European manvantara was ready to open, in Europe also: rescued civilization first in West Asia and then, when in the thirteenth century a new European manvantara was ready to open, in Europe also; an impetus which worked on the intellectual-cultural plane until it had brought things to the point where H. P. Blavatsky might come to give things a huge twist towards the spiritual,— and where Katherine Tingley might accomplish that which all the ages had been expecting, and the whole creation groaning and travailing to see. Oh, on brain-mind lines you can trace no connexion; but then the plane of causes lies deeper than the brain-mind. We may understand now, I think, what place the Buddha holds in human history: how it was not for nothing that he was *the Buddha,* the central Avatar, the topmost and Master Figure of humanity for these last twenty-five hundred years, with what other sublime men appeared as it were subordinate to him, and the guides of tributary streams: Laotse and Confucius preparing the way for him in China; Pythagoras carrying his doctrine into the West.... Well; here is scope for thought; and for much thought that may be true and deep, and illuminative of future ages; and *yet not convenient to write down at this time.*

But to Bodhidharma again.

H. P. Blavatsky affirmed that Buddhism had an esoteric as well as an exoteric side: an affirmation that was of course disputed. But here is this from a Chinese writer quoted by Edkins:

"Tathagata taught great truths and the causes of things. He became the instructor of men and devas; saved multitudes, and spoke the contents of more than five hundred books. Hence arose the Kiaumen or Exoteric branch of the system, and it was believed to hold the tradition of the words of the Buddha. Bodhidharma brought from the Western Heaven the seal of truth, and opened the Fountain of Dhyana in the east. He pointed directly to Buddha's heart and nature, swept away the parasitic growth of book instruction, and thus established the Esoteric branch of the system containing the doctrine of the heart, the tradition of the Heart of Buddha. Yet the two branches, while presenting of necessity a different aspect, form but one whole."

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Now that Doctrine of the Heart had always been in existence; it does not mean that Bodhidharma invented anything. But in a line of Teachers, each will have its own methods, and, if there is progress, there will be new and deeper revelations. The Buddha gave out so much, as the time permitted him; Nagarjuna, founding the Mahayana, so much further; Bodhidharma, now that with the move to China a new lease of life had come, gave out, or rather taught to his disciples, so much more again of the doctrine that in its fulness is and always has been the doctrine of the Lodge.

Lian Wuti, the emperor at Nanking, had been at the end of the fifth century a general in the service of the last scion of a dying dynasty there, and a devout Taoist; in 502 he became the first of a new dynasty, the Liang; and presently, a devout Buddhist. Chinese historians love him not; Fenollosa describes him as too generous-minded and other-worldly for success. Yet he held the throne for nearly fifty years; a time in which art was culminating and affairs advancing through splendor and unwisdom to a downfall. Twice he took the yellow robe and alms-bowl, and went forth through his domains, emperor still, but mendicant missionary preaching the Good Law.—The Truth? the Inner doctrine?—I learn most about this poor Lian Wuti from the record of an interview held once between him and the 'Blue-eyed Brahmin' Master of Dzyan. Lian Wuti invited Bodhidharma to court, and Bodhidharma came. Said the emperor:

—"Since my accession I have been continually building temples, transcribing books, and admitting new monks to take the vows. How much merit may I be supposed to have accumulated?"

—"None," said Bodhidharma.

—"And why none?"

—"All this," said the Master, "is but the insignificant effect of an imperfect cause not complete in itself; it is but the shadow that follows the substance, and without real existence."

—"Then what," asked Wuti, "is real merit?"

—"It consists in purity and enlightenment, depth and completeness; in being wrapped in thought while surrounded by vacancy and stillness. Merit such as this cannot be won by worldly means."

Wuti, I suppose, found this kind of conversation difficult, and changed the subject,—with an exotericist's question. Said he:

—"Which is the most important of the holy doctrines?"

—"Where all is emptiness," said Bodhidharma, "nothing can be called holy."

A neat compliment, thinks good externalist Wuti, may improve things.—“If nothing can be called holy,” says he, “who is it then that replies to me?”—holiness being a well-known characteristic of Bodhidharma himself. Who answered merely:

—“I do not know”; and went his ways. The final comment on the interview is given by a Japanese writer thus: “Can an elephant associate with rabbits?”

For the rest, he spent the remaining years of his life in a cave-temple near Honanfu; and died after appointing a Chinaman his successor. Besides this small stock of facts there is a sort of legend; as for example:

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After leaving the court of Lian, he crossed the Yangtse on a reed,—a theme in sacred art for thousands ever since,—and because of this miraculous crossing, is worshiped still by Yangtse boatman as their patron saint,—on the 28th of February in each year.—-Once, as he sat in meditation, sleep overcame him; and on waking, that it might never happen again, he cut off his eyelids. But they fell on the earth, took root and sprouted; and the plant that grew from them was the first of all tea plants,—the symbol (and cause!) of eternal wakefulness. He is represented in the pictures as being footless; in his missionary travels, it is said, he wore away his feet. Thus where there is no known life-story, but all hidden away beneath a veil of esotericism and a Master's seclusion, myths have grown, and a story has been made.—He sat there in his cave silent through the years, they say; his face to the wall. Chih Kuang came to him, asking to be taught the doctrine; and for seven days stood in the snow at the cave-mouth, pleading and unnoticed. Then, to show that he was in earnest, he drew his sword and sliced off his left arm; and the Master called him in, and taught him.—Legend again, no doubt.

I imagine we can only judge of the man and of his astounding greatness by the greatness of the ages he illumined. It was as if he gave, in East Asia, the signal for nation after nation to leap into brilliant being. As for China, she became something new. The Age of Han had been golden, strong, manly, splendid. But Han was like other empires here and there about the world. Henceforth during her cycle China was to be as a light-giving body, a luminary wondrous in the firmament with a shining array of satellite kingdoms circling about her. Her own Teachers of a thousand years before had prepared the way for it: Confucius when he gave her stability; Laotse when he dropped the Blue Pearl into her fields. That Pearl had shone, heaven knows. Now Ta-mo, this Bodhidharma, breathed on it; and it glowed, and flame shot up from it, and grew, and foamed up beautiful, till it was a steady fountain of wonder-fire spraying the far stars. Heretofore we have had a background of Taoist wizardry: in its highest aspects, Natural Magic,—the Keatsism of the waters and the wild, the wood, the field, and the mountain; henceforth there was to be a sacred something shining through and inmingled with this: the urge of the Divine Soul, the holy purposes of evolution. We may say this in Art, to take that one field alone, the most perfect, the fullest, the divinest, expression of Natural Magic

> "whereof this world holds record"

was to come in the school of the Successors of Bodhidharma, directly the result of his 'Doctrine of the Heart.'

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His school remained esoteric; but it was established, not among the secret mountains, nor in far unvisited regions; but there in the midst of imperial China: an extension of the Lodge, you may say, visible among men. Bodhidharma—are you to call him a *Messenger* at all? He hardly came out into the world. It was known he was there; near by was the northern capital;—he taught disciples, when they had the strength to insist on it. Yet he dwelt aloof too, and wrapped about in the seclusion Masters must have, to carry on their spiritual work. One must suppose that Messengers of the Lodge had been very busy in China between 375 and 400, in the days of Tao Yuang-ming and Ku Kai-chih; that they had been very busy again in the last quarter of the fifth century; for it seems as if somehow or other there was such an atmosphere in China in the first half of the sixth century,—when ordinarily speaking the Doors of the Spiritual World would be shut,—that the Lodge was enabled partly to throw off its seclusion, and it was possible for at least one of its Members to take up his abode there, and to be known to the world as doing so.

A Messenger was sent out into the Chinese world from the School of Bodhidarma in 575: Chih-i, the founder of the Tientai School which was the spiritual force underlying the glory of the T'ang age; but he was a Messenger from the Dzyan School of Bodhidharma, not its Head. As far as I have been able to gather the threads of it, the line of those Heads, the Eastern Patriarchs, Bodhidharma's successors, was as follows: He died in or about 536, having appointed Chi Kuang to succeed him. Chi Kuang appointed Hui Ssu, called the "Chief of the Chunglung School of the followers of Bodhidharma." Hui Ssu died in 576, having sent out Chih-i into the world the year before, and having appointed Seng T'san to succeed him as head of Dzyan. Seng T'san died in 606; Tao Hsin, his successor, in 651; Hung Jen, his, in 675. Hung Jen, it appears, left two successors: Lu Hui-neng in the south, and Shen Hsiu in the north. It was the last quarter of the century: I imagine Lu Hui-neng was the Messenger sent out into the world; he spent the rest of his life teaching in the neighborhood of Canton; I imagine Shen Hsiu remained the Head of the Esoteric School. After that the line disappears; but the school attained its greatest influence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in China, and later still in Japan.—All these were men living not quite in the world: it was known that they were there, and where they might be found. After Shen Hsiu, the last Northern Chinese Patriarch, the line probably withdrew to Tibet, which had lately come into relations with China, and where civilization had been established through the efforts of T'ang Taitsong. And now I will close this lecture with a saying of Shen Hsiu's which, in this modified form, is very familiar to all of you:

"Mind is like a mirror: it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of soul wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions."

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XXV. TOWARDS THE ISLANDS OF THE SUNSET

I had not thought to speak to you further about Celtic things. But there is something in them here which concerns the spiritual history of the race; something to note, that may help us to understand the Great Plan. So, having beckoned you last week to the edge of the world and the fountain of dawn, and to see Bodhidharma standing there and evoking out of the deep a new order of ages, I find myself now lured by a westward trail, and must jump the width of two continents with you, and follow this track whither it leads: into the heart and flame of mysterious sunset. I hope, and the Gwerddonau Llion, the Green Spots of the Flood,—Makarn Nesoi, Tirnanogue, the Islands of the Blest.

We saw that while the great flow of the cycles from dying Rome ran in wave after wave eastward, there was a little backwash also, by reason of which almost the last glow we saw in the west was in fourth century Gaul, in the literary renaissance there which centers round the name of Ausonius. Now in later history we find every important French cycle tending to be followed by one in England: as Chaucer followed Jean de Meung; Shakespeare, Ronsard and the Pleyade; Dryden and Pope, Moliere and Racine; Wordsworth and Shelley, the Revolution. And we have seen China wake in 420; and we have noted, in the first of these lectures, the strange fact that whenever China 'gets busy,' we see a sort of reflexion of it among the Celts of the west. And we shall come presently to one of the most curious episodes in history,— the Irish Renaissance in the sixth century: when all Europe else was dead and buried under night and confusion, and Ireland only, standing like a white pillar to the west, a blazing beacon of culture and creative genius. Now if you see a wave rising in fourth-century Gaul, and a wave breaking into glorious foam in sixth- and seventh-century Ireland,—-what would you suspect?— Why, naturally, that it was the same wave, and had flowed through the country that lies between: common sense would tell you to expect something of a Great Age in fifth- and early sixth-century Britain. And then comes tradition,—which is nine times out of ten the truest vehicle of history,—and shouts that your expectations are correct. For within this time came Arthur.

You know that in the twelfth century Geoffrey of Monmouth published what he claimed to be a History of the Kings of Britain from the time of the coming there of the Trojans; and that it was he mainly who was responsible for floating the Arthurian Legend on to the wide waters of European literature. What percentage of history there may be in his book; how much of it he did not "make out of whole cloth," but founded on genuine Welsh or Breton traditions, is at present unknowable;—the presumption being that it is not much. But here is a curious fact that I only came on this week. The Romans were expelled from Britain in 410, remember. Arthur passed from the world of mortals on the night after Camlan, that

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> “last weird battle in the west,”

when

> “All day long the noise of battle rolled
> Among the mountains by the wintry sea,
> Till all King Arthur’s Table, man by man,
> Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord
> King Arthur.”

Now the reign of Arthur may be supposed to represent the culmination of a national revival among the British Celts; and, —this is the detail I was pleased to come upon,—-according to Geoffrey, Camlan was fought in 542;—a matter of thirteen decades (and two years) after the expulsion of the Romans. So that, I say, it looks as if there were some cyclic reality behind it. Geoffrey of Monmouth did not know that such periods of national revival do last as a general rule for thirteen decades. He had some other guide to help him to that 542 for Camlan.

History knows practically nothing about fifth-century Britain. It has been looking at it, since scientific methods came in, through Teutonic (including Anglo-Saxon) or Latin eyes; and seen very little indeed but confusion. Britain like the rest of the western empire, suffered the incursions of northern barbarism; but unlike most of the rest, it fought, and not as a piece of Rome, but as Celtic Britain;—fought, and would not compromise nor understand that it was defeated. It took eight centuries of war, and the loss of all England, and the loss of all Wales, to teach, it that lesson; and even then it was by no means sure. In the twelve-eighties, when last Llewelyn went to war, he was still hoping, not to save Wales from the English, but to re-establish the Celtic Kingdom of Britain, Arthur’s Empire, and to wear the high crown of London. The men that marched to Bosworth Field under Harri Tudor, two centuries later, went with the same curious hope and assurance. It was a racial mold of mind, and one of extraordinary strength and persistence,—and one totally unjustified by facts in what were then the present and future. But I do not believe such molds can ever be fudged up out of nothing: *ex nihilo nihil* is as true here as elsewhere. So we must look for the cause and formation of this mold in the past. Something, I think, within that first cycle of Welsh history must have impressed it on the Welsh mind: some national flowering; some great figure, one would say.—Arthur? He is like Vikramaditya of Ujjain; no one know whether he existed at all. There is no historic evidence; but rather the reverse. But then there are all those mountains and things named after him, “from the top of Pengwaed in Cornwall to the bottom of Dinsol in the North”; and, there is the Arthurian Legend, with such great vitality that it drove out the national Saxon legends from England, and quenched the Charlemagne legend in France, and made itself master of the mind of western Europe in the Middle Ages;— I imagine there would have been an Arthur. Some chieftain who won battles; held up the Saxon advance for a long time, probably; and reminded his

people of some ancient hero, or perhaps of a God Artaios, thought to be reincarnate in him.

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Not that I believe that the mold of mind of which we have been speaking could have been created in the fifth and sixth centuries. Whoever Arthur was—the Arthur of that time,—however great and successful, he could but have reigned over some part of Britain, precariously resisting and checking the barbarians; but tradition tells of a very Chakravartin, swaying the western world. No; that mold certainly was a relic of the lost Celtic empire. It had grown dim during the Roman domination; but it had survived, and the coming in of the Crest-Wave had put new life into it. Nothing could have put new life into it, it seems to me, but such a coming in of the Crest-Wave,—to make it endure and inspire men as it did. I think it is certain the Crest-Wave, —a backwash of it, a little portion of it, but enough to make life hum and the age important,—was among the Welsh between 410 and 542. The wave was receding towards the Western Laya-Center; and gathered force as it rolled from Ausonius' Gaul to Taliesin's Wales, and from Tallesin's Wales to Ireland.

Let us look at the probabilities in Britain in 410, seeing what we can. Three hundred years of Roman rule had left that province, I cannot doubt, rich and populous, with agriculture in a better condition than it has been since:—remember the corn Julian brought thence to feed Gaul. We must think of a large population, Roman and Romanized, mixed of every race in the Roman world, in the cities; and of another population, still Celtic, in the mountains of northern England, in the western Scottish Lowlands, and especially in Wales. It was the former element, the cities, that appealed to Aetius for help against the Picts and Scots; the latter, dwelling in less accessible places, fought as soon as they felt the invaders' pressure. Wales itself had never been all held by the Romans. The legions had covered the south from Caerleon in Monmouthshire to Saint Davids in Penfro, a region held by Silures and Gaelic Celts. They had marched along the northern coast to the island of Mona, establishing, just as Edward the Conqueror did in his day, strongholds from which to dominate the dangerous mountains: these regions also were held by Gaels. But just south of those mountains, in what are now the counties of Meirionydd and Montgomery, there was a great piece of Wales which they seem never to have penetrated; and it was held by the Cymric Ordovices, Welsh, not Irish, by language.

About this time there was a great upheaval of the Irish; who conquered western Scotland, and established there sooner or later the Scottish kingdom of history. They also invaded Wales and England, and sent their fleets far and wide: they were the 'Picts and Scots' of the history-books. There seems also to have been an invasion and conquest of Wales, from the north, by the Welsh; who, joining forces with the Welsh Ordovices whom they found already in the unconquered un-Roman part, established in the

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course of time the kingdom and House of Cunedda, which reigned till the Edwardian Conquest. It is pretty safe to say that the Romanized cities and the Romanized population generally offered no great resistance to the Saxons; mixed with them fairly readily, and went to form perhaps the basis of the English race; that they lost their language and culture is due to the fact that they were cut off from the sources of these on the continent, and, being of an effete civilization, were far less in vigor than the Saxon incomers. And as we saw in the first of these lectures, there was probably a large Teutonic or Saxon element in Britain since before the days of Julius Caesar.

But there seems to have been a time during those thirteen decades that followed the eviction of the Romans, when the Celtic element, wakened to life and receiving an impulse from the Crest-Wave, caught up the sovereignty that the Romans had dropped, remembered its Ancient greatness, and nourished vigorous hopes. To the Welsh mind, the age has appeared one of old unhappy far-off things,—unhappy, because of their tragic ending at Camlan;— but grandiose. Titanic vague figures loom up: Arthur, the type of all hero-kings; Taliesin, type of all prophet-bards; Merlin, type of magicians. Tennyson caught the spirit of it in the grand moments of the *Morte D'Arthur;* and missed it by a thousand miles elsewhere in the *Idylls.* The spirit, the atmosphere, is that of a glory receding into the unknown and the West of Wonder; into Lyonnesse, into Avallon, into the Sunset Isles. There is a sense of being on the brink of the world; with the 'arm clothed in white samite' reaching in from a world beyond,—that Otherworld to which the wounded Arthur, barge-borne over the nightly waters by the Queens of Faerie, went to heal him of his wounds, and to await the cyclic hour for his retum. He is the symbol of —what shall we say?—civilization, culture, or the spiritual sources of these, the light that alone can keep them sweet and wholesome; that light has died from the broken Roman world, and passes now west-ward through the Gates of the Sunset: through Wales, through Ireland, the Laya-Center; into the Hidden, the Place of the Spirit; into Avallon, which is Ynys Afallen, the 'Isle of Apple-trees';—whence to return in its time:—*Rex quondam, rexque futurus.*

There is a poem by Myrddin Gwyllt, traditionally of the sixth century, about that Garth of Apple-trees; which he will have a secret place in the Woods of Celyddon, the Occult Land, and not an island in the sea at all; and in this poem it has always seemed to me that one gets a clue to the real and interesting things of history. He claims in it to be the last of the white-robed Guardians of the Sacred Tree, the fruit of which none of the black-robed,—no 'son of a monk,'—shall ever enjoy. There has been a battle, in which the true order of the world has gone down; but there Myrddin stays to guard the 'Tree' against the

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’Woodmen,’—whom also he seems to identify with the ‘black-robed’ and the priests Myrddin Gwyllt, by the by, is one of the two figures in Welsh tradition who have combined to become the Merlin of European tradition; the other was Myrddin Emrys the magician. I take great risks, gentlemen but wish to give you a taste, as I think the sound of some lines from the original may, and doubt any translation can, of the old and haughty sense of mystery and grandeur embodied in the poem; because it is this feeling, perhaps the last echo of the Western Mysteries, that is so characteristic of the literature that claims to come down to us from this age:

Afallen beren, bren ailwyddfa,
Cwn coed cylch ei gwraidd dywasgodfa;
A mi ddysgoganaf dyddiau etwa
Medrawd ac Arthus modur tyrfa;
Camlan darwerthin difiau yna;
Namyn saith ni ddyraith o’r cymanfa.

Afallen bere, beraf ei haeron,
A dyf yn argel yn argoed Celyddon;
Cyt ceiser ofer fydd herwydd ei hafon,
Yn y ddel Cadwaladr at gynadl Rhyd Theon,
A Chynan yn erbyn cychwyn y Saeson.
Cymru a orfydd; cain fydd ei Dragon;
Caffant pawb ei deithi; llawen fi Brython!
Caintor cyrn elwch cathl heddwch a hinon.

What it means appears to be something of this sort:

Sweet and beautiful Tree of the trees!
The Wood-dogs guard the circle of its roots;
But I will foretell, a day shall be
When Modred and Authur shall rush to the conflict;
Again shall they come to the Battle at Camlan,
And but seven men shall escape from that meeting.

Sweet Apple-tree, sweetest its fruitage!
It grows in secret in the Woods of Celyddon;
In vain shall they seek it on the banks of its stream there,
Till Cadwaladr shall come to Rhyd Theon,
And Cynan, opposing the tumult of Saxons,
Wales shall arise then; bright shall be her Dragon;
All shall have their just reward; joy is me for the Brython!
The horns of joy shall sound then the song of peace and

calmness....

The sweet fruits of the Tree, he says, are the “prisoners of words,” (*carcharorion geirau*) —which is just what one would say, under a stress of inspiration, about the truths of the Secret Wisdom;—and they shall not be found, he says,—they shall be sought in vain, —until the *Maban Huan,* the ’Child of the Sun,’ shall come. The whole poem is exceedingly obscure; a hundred years ago, the wise men of Wales took it as meaning much what I think it means: the passing of the real wisdom of the Mysteries,—of Neo-druidism,—away from the world and the knowledge of men, to a secret place where the Woodmen, the Black-robed, could not find to destroy it;—until, after ages, a Leader of the Hosts of Light should come—you see it is here Cadwaladr, but Cadwaladr simply means ‘Battle-Leader,’ —and the age-old

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battle between light and darkness, Arthur and Modred, should be fought again, and this time won, and the Mysteries re-established.—If I have succeeded in conveying to you anything of the atmosphere of this poem, I have given you more or less that of most of the poetry attributed to this period; there is a large mass of it: some of the poems, like the long *Gododin* of Aneurin, merely telling of battles; others, like the splendid elegies of Llywarch Hen, being laments,—but with a marvelous haughty uplift to them; and others again, those attributed to Taliesin, strewn here and there with passages that . . . move me strangely . . . and remind me (to borrow a leaf from the Imagists) of a shower of diamonds struck from some great rock of it; and of a sunset over purple mountains; and of the Mysteries of Antiquity; and of the Divine Human Soul. Much of this poetry is unintelligible; much of it undoubtedly of far later origin; and the names of Taliesin and Myrddin, all through the centuries spells for Celts to conjure with, are now the laughing-stock of a brand-new scholarship that has tidied them up into limbo in the usual way. It is what happens when you treat poetry with the brain-mind, instead of with the creative imagination God gave you to treat it with: when you dissect it, instead of feeding your soul with it. But this much is true, I think: out of this poetry, the occasional intelligible flashes of it, rings out a much greater note than any I know of in our Welsh literature since: a sense of much profounder, much less provincial things: the Grand Manner,—-of which we have had echoes since, in the long centuries of our provincialism; but only I think echoes; —but you shall find something more than echoes of it, say in Llywarch Hen, in a sense of heroic uplift, of the titanic unconquerableness that is in the Soul;—-and in Taliesin, in a sense of the wizardly all-pervadingness of that Soul in space and time:

> “I know the imagination of the oak-trees.”
>
> “Not of father and mother,
> When I became,
> My creator created me;
> But of nine-formed faculties,
> Of the Fruit of fruits,
> Of the fruit of primordial God;
> Of primroses and mountain flowers,
> Of the blooms of trees and shrubs,
> Of Earth, of an earthly course,
> When I became,—
> Of the blooms of the nettle,
> Of the foam of the Ninth Wave.
> I was enchanted by Math
> Before I became immortal.
> I was enchanted by Gwydion,
> The purifier of Brython,

Of Eurwys, of Euron,
Of Euron, of Modron,—
Of Five Battalions of Initiates,
High Teachers, the children of Math.”

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—Now Math—he was a famous wizard of old—means ‘sort,’ ‘kind’; and so implies such ideas as ‘differentiation,’ ‘heterogeneity.’ To say that you were enchanted by Math before you became immortal, is as much as to say that before the great illumination, the initiation, one is under the sway of this illusionary world of separatenesses;—as for being ‘enchanted by Gwydion,’ that name is, I suppose, etymologically the same as the Sanskrit *Vidya,* or *Budha;* he is the ‘Purifier’ of those ’Five Battalions of—*’Celfyddon,’* the word is ‘artists,’ ’skillful ones’; but again I imagine, it is connected with the word *Celi,* ‘occult’ or ‘secret’; so that being ‘enchanted by’ him would mean simply, being initiated into the Occult Wisdom. It is difficult for a student of symbolism not to believe that there were Theosophical activities in fifth- and sixth-century Britain.

Another glimpse of the feeling of the age you get in the two oldest Arthurian romances: *The Dream of Rhonobwy,* and *Culhwch and Olwen.* They were written, in the form in which we have them, not until the last centuries of Welsh independence,—when there was another national illumination; and indeed all the literature of this early time comes to us through the bards of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They transmitted it; wrote it down; added to and took away from it; altered it: a purely brain-mind scholarship might satisfy itself that they invented it; but criticism, to be of any use at all, must be endowed with a certain delicacy and intuition; it must rely on better tools than the brain-mind. Matthew Arnold, who had such qualifications, compared the work of the later bards to peasants’ huts built on and of the ruins of Ephesus; and it is still easier for us, with the light Theosophy throws on all such subjects, to see the greater and more ancient work through the less and later. I shall venture to quote from *Culhwch and Olwen:* a passage that some of you may know very well already. Culhwch the son of Cilydd the son of the Prince of Celyddon rides out to seek the help of Arthur:

“And the youth pricked forth upon a steed with head dappled gray, of four winters old, firm of limb, with shell-formed hoofs, having a bridle of linked gold on his head, and upon him a saddle of costly gold. In his hands were two spears of silver, sharp, well-tempered, headed with steel, three ells in length, of an edge to wound the wind and cause blood to flow, and that faster than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at its heaviest. A gold-hilted sword was at his side, the blade of which was of gold, bearing a cross of inlaid gold of the hue of the lightning of heaven; his war-horn was of ivory. Before him were two brindled white-breasted greyhounds, having strong collars of rubies about their necks, reaching from the shoulder to the ear. And the one that was on the right side bounded across to the left side,

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and the one that was on the left to the right, and like two sea-swallows sported they around him. And his courser cast up four sods with his four hoofs like four swallows in the air, now above his head and now below. About him was a four-cornered cloth of purple, having an apple of gold at each corner; and every one of the apples was of the value of a hundred kine. And there was precious gold of the value of three hundred kine upon his shoes and upon his stirrups, from his knee to the tip of his toe. And the blade of reed-grass bent not beneath him, as he journeyed towards the gates of Arthur's palace."

So far we have the glittering imagination of the twelfth-century bard; you might think working in a medium not wholly Celtic, but Norman-influenced as well; imagining his Arthurian Culhwch in terms of the knights he had seen at the courts of the Lords Marchers,—were it not that just such descriptions are the commonplaces of Irish Celticism, where they come from a time and people that had never seen Norman knights at all. But now you begin to leave regions where Normans can be remembered or imagined at all:

"Spake the youth, 'Is there a porter?'—'There is; and unless thou holdest thy peace, small will be thy welcome. I am the porter of Arthur's hall on the first day of January in every year; and on every other day than this the post is filled by Huandaw, and Gogigwc, and Llaescenym, and Penpingion who goeth upon his head to save his feet, neither towards the heavens nor towards the earth, but like a rolling stone upon the floor of the court.'—'Open thou the portal.'—'I will not open it.'— 'Wherefore not?'—'The knife is in the meat and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's court; and no man may enter but a craftsman bearing his craft, or the son of the king of a privileged country. But there will be refreshment for thy dogs and for thy horse, and for thee there will be collops cooked and peppered, and luscious wine and mirthful song,—and food for fifty men shall be set before thee in the guest chamber, where the stranger and the sons of other countries eat, who come not into the precincts of the palace of Arthur. Said the youth, 'That will I not do. If thou openest the portal, it is well. If thou dost not open it, I will bring disgrace upon thy lord and an evil report upon thee. And I will set up three shouts at this very gate, than which none were ever more deadly, from the top of Pengwaed in Cornwall to the bottom of Dinsol in the North, and to Esgair Oerfel in Ireland.'—'Whatsoever clamor thou mayest make,' said Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr, against the rules of Arthur's court thou shalt not enter until I first go and consult with Arthur.'

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“Then Glewlwyd went into the hall. And Arthur said to him, ’Hast thou news from the gate?’—Half of my life is past, and half of thine. I was heretofore in Caer Se and As Se, in Sach and Salach, in Lotor and Ffotor, in India the Greater and India the Less. And I was with thee in the Battle of Dau Ynyr, when the twelve hostages were brought from Norway. And I have also been in Europe and in Africa and in the islands of Corsica, and in Caer Brythwch and Brythach and Ferthach; and I was present when thou didst conquer Greece in the East. And I have have been in Caer Oeth and Annoeth and Caer Nefenhir: nine supreme sovereigns, handsome men, saw we there; but never did I behold a man of equal dignity to him who is now at the door of the portal.’ Then said Arthur:—’If walking thou didst enter here, return thou running. And everyone that beholds the light, and everyone that opens and shuts the eye, let him show him respect and serve him; some with gold-mounted drinking-horns, others with collops cooked and peppered, until such time as food and drink can be set before him.”

Culhwch came in, and asked a boon of Arthur; and Arthur answered that he should receive whatsoever his tongue might name, “as far as the wind dries and the rain moistens and the sun revolves and the sea encircles and the earth extends; save only my ship and my mantle, and Caledfwlch my sword, and Rhongomiant my lance, and Wynebgwrthucher my shield, and Carnwenhau my dagger and Gwen Hwyfar my wife. By the truth of heaven thou shalt receive it cheerfully, name what thou wilt.” So Culhwch made his request;— and it is really here that the ancient ages come trooping in:—

“I crave of thee that thou obtain for me Olwen the daughter of Yspaddaden Head of Giants; and this boon I seek likewise at the hands of thy warriors. I seek it from Cai, and Bedwyr, and Greidawl Galldonyd, and Greid the son of Eri, and Cynddelig Cyfarwvdd, and Tathal Cheat-the-Light, and Maelwys the son of Baeddan, and”—well, there are hundreds of them; but I must positively give you a few; they are all, it is likely, the denizens of ancient Celtic God-worlds and fairy-worlds and goblin-worlds,—“and Duach and Grathach and Nerthach the sons of Gwawrddur Cyrfach (these men came forth from the confines of hell); and Huell the son of Caw (he never yet made a request at the hands of any lord.) And Taliesin the Chief of Bards, and Manawyddan son of the Boundless, and Cormorant the son of Beauty (no one struck him in the Battle of Camlan by reason of his ugliness; all thought he was an auxiliary devil. Hair had he upon him like the hair of a stag). And Sandde Bryd Angel (no one touched him with a spear in the Battle of Camlan by reason of his beauty; all thought he was a ministering angel). And Cynwyl Sant (the third man who escaped from the Battle of Camlan; and he was the last that parted from Authur upon Henrtoen his horse). And Henwas the Winged the son of Erim; (unto these three men belonged these three peculiarities:

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with Henbedestyr there was not anyone that could keep pace, either on horseback or on foot; with Henwas Adeiniog no fourfooted beast could run the distance of an acre, much less could it go beyond it; and as to Sgilti Ysgawndroed, when he intended to go on a message for his lord, he never sought to find a path, but knowing whither he was to go, if his way led through a wood he went along the tops of the trees. During his whole life a blade of grass bent not beneath his feet, much less did it break, so light was his tread.) Teithi Hen the son of Gwynhan (his dominions were swallowed by the sea, and he himself barely escaped, and he came to Arthur; and his knife had this peculiarity: from the time he came there no haft would ever remain on it; and owing to this a sickness came on him, and he pined away during the remainder of his life, and of this he died.) Drem the son of Dremidyd (when the gnat arose in the morning with the sun, Drem could see it from Gelli Wis in Cornwall as far off as Pen Blathaon in North Britain.) And Eidol the son of Ner, and Glwyddyn Saer (who built Ehangwen, Arthur's hall.) Henwas and Henwyneb, (an old companion unto Arthur). Gwallgoyc another. (When he came to a town, though there were three hundred houses in it, if he wanted anything, he would let sleep come to the eyes of no man until he had it.) Osla Gyllellfawr (he bore a short broad dagger. When Arthur and his hosts came before a torrent, they would seek a narrow place where they might cross the water, and lay the sheathed dagger across the torrent, and it would be a bridge enough for the armies of the Three Islands of the Mighty and the three islands near thereby, with all their spoils.) The sons of Llwch Llawyniog from beyond the raging sea. Celi and Cueli and Gilla Coes Hydd, (who could clear three hundred acres at a bound: the chief leaper of Ireland was he). Sol and Gwadyn Ossol and Gwadyn Odyeith. (Sol could stand all day upon one foot. Gwadyn Ossol, if he stood upon the top of the highest mountain in the world, it would become a level plain under his feet. Gwadyn Odyeith,—the soles of his feet emitted sparks when they struck upon things hard, like the heated mass drawn out of the forge. He cleared the way for Arthur when they came to any stoppage.) Hireerwm and Hiratrwm (the day they went upon a visit three cantref provided for their entertainment, and they feasted until noon and drank until night and they they devoured the heads of vermin as if they had never eaten anything in their lives. When they made a visit they left neither the fat not the lean, the hot nor the cold, the sour nor the sweet, the fresh not the salt, the boiled nor the raw.) Huarwar the son of Aflawn (who asked Arthur such a boon as would satisfy him; it was the third great plague of Cornwall when he received it. None could get a smile from him but when he was satisfied.) Sugyn the sone of Sugnedydd (who could suck up the sea on which there were three hundred ships, so broad-chested

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he was). Uchtryd Faryf Draws (who spread his red untrimmed beard over the eight-and-forty rafters that were in Arthur's hall). Bwlch and Cyfwlch and Sefwlch the three sons of Cleddyf Cyfwlch, the three grandsons of Cleddyf Difwlch. (Their three shields were three gleaming glitterers. Their three spears were three pointed piercers. Their three swords were three griding gashers,—Gles, and Glessic, and Gleisad.) Clust the son of Clustfeinad; (though he were buried seven cubits beneath the earth, he would hear the ant fifty miles off rise from her nest in the norning). Medyr the son of Methredydd; (from Belli Wic he could in a twinkling")—

Well; one must stop somewhere; Culhwch himself was in no hurry to. He went on until the armies of the Island of the Mighty and the chief ladies of Arthur's court, with all their peculiarities, had been enumerated. But here, I say, you are let into an elder world; beyond this one in space, beyond it in time. You are on the precipice edge of the world's end, and mist fills the chasm before you; and out of the mist, things vast and gigantic, things half human and things not half human, present themselves, stirring your wonder, and withdraw leaving your imagination athirst. "These men came forth from the confines of hell" .... Who wrote of them had news, I think, of terrific doings in Atlantis, when earth shook to the tread of giant hosts. I confess that to me all things European, after this, look a little neat and dapper. I look from the cliffs at the limit of things, out over

.....the sunset bound of Lyonnesse,
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten people dwelt:

—it is not in this world; belongs not to this Fifth Race; but is more ancient, fantasmal, and portentous.

Has it ever occurred to you that no body of men, no movement, no nation for that matter, can choose for itself a symbol that does not actually express it? The flags of the nations are all, for those that can read them, the sign manuals of the souls of the nations, wherein the status of each is written plain; though those that chose the symbol, and those that glory in it, may have no idea how they are thus revealing or exposing themselves.—No, I am not going to speak of the Dragon; which, by all traditions, was the symbol chosen for the monarchy set up by the fifth-century Britons; nor to remind you—and yet it is worth remembering,— that the Dragon is the symbol of the Esoteric Wisdom;—I am going to speak of something else.—You take some form, some picture; and it seems to you in some inexplicable way inspiring; and you adopt it, and say *In hoc signo vincam.* Why? You know nothing about symbolism; and yet, if you have any inner

life, those who understand symbolism can read your inner life in you symbol. That is because symbolism is a universal science, real, and with nothing arbitrary about it; and because something in your subconsciousness wiser than you has directed you choice, and means you to be expressed.

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Take one of the most universal symbols of all: the Cross. In one form or another we find it all over the world. In ancient Egypt, where it is called the *Ankh,* and is drawn as a capital T with a circle above. There it symbolizes life in the largest sense. The circle above stands for Spirit; the Tau or cross below, for matter: thus it pictures the two in their true relation the one to the other.—The Christian Church, as it grew up in the last centuries of the Roman empire, chose for itself a symbol,—in which Constantine went forth to conquer. It was the four limbs of the cross: simply the symbol of Matter.

But somehow, the Christian Church in the Celtic Isles did not adopt this symbol, or rather this form of it. It took what is called the Celtic Cross: the Cross, which is matter, with the Circle, which is Spirit, imposed over the upper part of it. Now if you brought a man from India, or China, or anywhere, who knew nothing about European history or Christianity, but understood the ancient science of symbolism; and showed him these two crosses, the Celtic and the Latin; he would tell you at once that the one, the Latin, stood for a movement wholly unspiritual; and that the other, the Celtic, stood for a movement with some spiritual light in it. How much, I am not prepared to say.

One of the chief formative forces in Christian theology was Saint Augustine of Hippo, born in 354, died in 430. He taught that man was Originally sinful, naturally depraved; and that no effort of his own will could make him otherwise: all depended on the Grace of God, something from without, absolutely beyond control of volition. Then rose up a Welshman by the name of Morgan,—or he may have been an Irishman; some say so; only Morgan is a Welsh, not an Irish name; and evidence is lacking that there were Irish Christians at that time; he was a Celt, 'whatever';—and went to Rome, teaching and preaching. His doctrine was that man is not originally sinful and naturally depraved; he had the temerity to declare that pagans, especially those who had never heard of Christianity, were not by God's ineffable mercy damned to everlasting hell; that unbaptized infants were not destined to frizzle eternally; that what a man ought to do, that he had the power, within his own being, to do; and that his salvation lay in his own hands. They translated his Welsh name (which means 'Sea-born') into the Greek—-Pelagius; and dubbed his damnable heresy 'Pelagianism'; and it was a heresy that flourished a good deal in the Celtic Isles;—his writings came down in Ireland. The incident is not much in itself; but something. Not that the Celtic Church of David and Patrick was Pelagian; it was not. In the matter of doctrine it is impossible to distinguish it from the Church on the continent. But Pelagianism may suggest that there were in Britain relics of an elder light.

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Did some echo of ancient wisdom, Druidic, survive in Britain from Pre-roman days? It is a question that has been much fought over; and one that, nowadays, the learned among my countrymen answer very rabidly in the negative. You have but to propound it in a whisper, to make them foam heartily at the mouth. Bless you, they know that it didn't, and can prove it over and over; because—because—it couldn't have, and you are a fool for thinking it could. Here is the position taken by modern scholarship (as a rule): we know nothing about the philosophy of the Druids, and do not believe they had one. They could not have had one; and the classical writers who said they had simply knew nothing about it. It may be useful to quote what some of these classical writers say.

"They (the Druids) speak the language of the Gods," says Diodorus Siculus (v, 31, 4); who describes them also as "exhorting combatants to peace, and taming them like wild beasts by enchantment" (v, 31, 5). They taught men, says Diogenes Laertius, "to worship the Gods, to do no evil, and to exercise courage" (6). They taught "many things regarding the stars and their motions, the extent of the universe and the earth, and the nature of things, and the power and might of the immortal Gods," says Caesar (iv, 14.); and Strabo speaks of their teaching in moral science (iv, 4, 4). "And ye, ye Druids," says Lucan, "to you only is given knowledge or ignorance (whichever it be) of the Gods and the powers of heaven. . . . From you we learn that the borne of man's ghost is not the senseless grave, not the pale realm of the monarch below." (i, 451 sq,) "The Druids wish to impress this in particular: that souls do not perish, but pass from one to another after death." (Caesar, iv, 14) Diodorus testifies that "among them the doctrine of Pythagoras prevailed, that the souls of men are immortal, and after completing their term of existence, live again, the soul passing into another body" (v, 28). Says Valerius Maximus: "They would fain make us believe that the souls of men are immortal. I would be tempted to call these breeches-warers fools, if their doctrine were not the same as that of the mantle-clad Pythagoras"; and he goes on to speak of the Celtic custom of lending money to be repaid in a future life (vi, 6, 10). Timagenes, Strabo, and mela also bear witness to their teaching the immortality of the soul.

I may say at once that I copy all these quotations from a book written largely to prove that the Druids were savage medicine-men with no philosophy at all: it is, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts,* by Canon MacCulloch. The argument used by this learned divine is very simple. The Druids were savage medicine-men, and could have known nothing about Pythagoras' teachings or Pythagoras himself. Therefore they didn't. All the classical writers were exaggerating, or inventing, or copying from one another.—It never occurs to our Canon to remember Iamblichus' statement that the Druids did not borrow or learn from Pythagoras, but Pythagoras from them. He quotes with no sign of doubt the things said by the classical writers about barbaric Druid rites; never dreaming that in respect to these there may have been invention, exaggeration, or copying one from another— and that other chiefly the gentle Julius who—but I have mentioned *his* exploit before.

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Holding to such firm preconceptions as these,—and being in total ignorance of the fact that the Esoteric Wisdom was once universal, and therefore naturally the same with Pythagoras as with anyone else who had not lost it, whether he and the Druids had ever heard of each other or not,—it becomes quite easy for my learned countryment to scout the idea that any such doctrine or system could have survived among the Britons until the fifth century, and revived then. Yet Nennius, by the way, asserts that Vortigern (the king who called in the Saxons) had 'Magi' with him; which word in the Irish text appears as 'Druids': and Canon MacCulloch himself speaks of this as evidence of a recrudescence of Druidism at that time.

With those quotations from the classical writers in view—if with nothing else,—I think we may call Reincarnation.... the characteristic doctrine of Druidism. It so appeared to the Romans; it was that doctrine, which with themselves had been obscured by skepticism, worldliness, and the outwornness of their spiritual perceptions, that struck them as the most noteworthy, most surprising thing in Druidic teaching. It stood in sharp contrast, too, with the beliefs of Christianity; so that, supposing it, and the system that taught it, had died during the Roman occupation of Britain, there really was nowhere from which it might have been regained. Wales has been, until very recently, extraordinarily cut off from the currents of civilization and world-thought. She has dwelt aloof among her mountains, satisfied with an interesting but exceedingly narrow little culture of her own. You might almost say that from the time the Romans left Britain there was no channel through which ideas might flow in to her; and this idea, especially, was hardly in Europe to flow in. And yet this idea has curiously persisted in Wales, as a tradition among the unlettered, even to our own day. Dr. Evans-Wentz, of Berkeley, Oxford, and Rennes Universities, in this present twentieth century, found old people among the peasantry who knew something about it, had heard of it from their elders; there was nothing new or unfamiliar about it to them; and this though nearly all Welsh folklore, even belief in the fairies, almost suffered extinction during the Religious Revivals of the eighteenth century and since. They say the chapels frightened the fairies out of Wales; it is not quite true; but you can understand how wave after wave of fervid Calvinism would have dealt with a tradition like that of Reincarnation. And yet echoes of it linger, and Dr. Wentz found them. I myself remember hearing of a servant-girl from the mountains to whom her mistress (from whom I heard it) introduced the subject. The girl expressed no surprise whatever: indeed to goodness she shouldn' wonder, so there; her father was a druid, miss, indeed and had told her about it when she was a child.

We have collateral evidence,—in Nennius, I believe,—for the existence of several famed poets among the Welsh at that time; and Tallesin' is one of the names mentioned. Seventy-seven poems come down ascribed to him: I quoted some lines from one of them; here now are some line from another. The child Taliesin is discovered in the court of Maelgwr Gwynedd, where he has confounded the bards with his magic; and is called forth to explain himself. He does so in the following verses:

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Primary Chief Bard am I to Elphin,
And my original country is the Region of the Summer Stars;
Idno and Heinin called me Merddin;
At length every being shall call me Taliesin.

I was with my Lord in the highest sphere
When Lucifer fell into the depths of hell;
I have borne a banner before Alexander;
I know the names of the stars from north to south.

I was in Canaan when Absalom was slain;
I was in the Court of Don (the Milky Way) before the birth
of Gwydion;
I was on the high cross of the merciful Son of God;
I have been three periods in the prison of Arianrhod.

I was in Asia with Noah in the Ark;
I saw the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah;
I was in India when Rome was built;
I am now come here to the remnant of the Trojans.I was with my Lord in the ass's manger;
I strengthened Moses through the waters of Jordan;
I was in the firmament from the Cauldron of Ceridwen
I shall be on earth until the day of doom. *

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* I quote it from Mr. T.W. Rollestone's *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race*. The poem appeares in the *Hanes Taliesin,* in Lady Guest's *Mabinogion*.

Now, what would common sense have to say about things like that? Simply, I think, that they are echoes that came down in Wales through the ages, of a teaching that once was known. They do not,—they would not,—no one would expect them to,—give the true and exact features and the inwardness of such teaching, but they do reflect the haunting reminiscences of a race that once believed in Reincarnation so firmly, that people were ready to lend money not to be repaid until a future life on earth. If you can prove that that poem not written until the thirteenth, or sixteenth, or eighteenth century, all the better; it only shows the greater strength, the longer endurance, of the tradition; and therefore, the greater reality of that from which the tradition came. It is the ghost of something which once was living; and the longer you can show the ghost surviving,—-the more living in its day was the something it survived from. Your Tamerlanes and Malek Rics can be used to frighten babies for centures;—their ghosts walk in that

sense; their memories linger;—but your Tomlinsons die and are done with, and no wind carries rumors of them after.

And the name of Taliesin,—whom you may say we know to have been a Welsh poet of the sixth century,—is made the peg on which to hang these floating reminiscences of Druidic teaching;—and the story told about him,—a story replete with universal symbolism, —is, for anyone who has studied that science, clearly symbolic of the initiation of a Teacher of the Secret Doctrine.

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What is it accounts for race-persistence? *Not* just what you see on the physical plane. There is what we should call an astral mold; and this is fed and nourished,—its edges kept firm and distinct,—by forces from the plane of causes, the thought-plane. When this mold has been well established,—as by centuries of national greatness and power,—all sorts of waves of outer circumstance may roll over the race, and apparently wash its raciality clean away; and yet something in the unseen operates to resist, and, when the waves recede, to raise up first the old race-consciousness, and finally national existence again. Take Ireland for example. It has been over-run and over-run so much that many authorities would deny the existence of any Celtic blood there at all. But what is absolutely undeniable is that a distinct and well-defined racial type exists there; and that it corresponds largely to the racial type—I do not mean physical so much as spiritual,—that the Greek and Roman writers ascribed to the Celtic Gauls. It is often claimed that an Irishman is merely an inferior kind of Englishman, and that there is little difference in blood between the two; but those who make this claim most loudly would not dream of denying the difference of the mental types; they are generally the ones who see most difference. Why was it that the children of the Norman invaders of Ireland became *Hiberniores ipsis Hiberniis?* Because of the astral mold, certainly. It is race-consciousness that makes race, and not the other way; and there is something behind that makes race-consciousness; so that even where calamity has smashed up the latter and put it altogether in abeyance, the seeds of it remain, in the soil and on the inner planes, to sprout again in their day; when the Crest-Wave rolls in; when Souls come to revive them. It may be that this will never happen, of course; but it seems to me that where Nature wishes to put an end to these racial recrudescences, she must take strong steps.

Though the British Celts had been under Roman rule for four centuries, their language today is Celtic.—Why?—Because there was what you may call a very old, well-established and strong Celtic-speaking astral mold. We absorbed a large number of Latin words; but assimilated them to the Celtic mold so that you would never recognise them; whereas in a page of English the Latin borrowings stand out by the score. Look at that *ascend,* for instance: Latin *ascendere* parading itself naked and unashamed, and making no pretense whatever to be anything else. You shall find *ascendere,* too, on any page of Welsh; or rather, you shall not find him, by reason of his skillful camouflage. He has cut off his train, as in English; but he has cut off more of it: the *d* of the stem, as well as the ending. He has altered both his vowels, and one of his three remaining consonants; and appears as *esgyn,* to walk the pages undetected for an alien by that vigilant police, the Celtic sense of euphony. He is typical of a thousand others. Wherefore the difference?—The English were a new people in process of formation, and besides with a whole heap of Latin blood in them from the Roman province; their mold was faintly formed, or only forming; but the Celts had formed theirs rigidly in ancient times.

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Again: when in the ninth century Hywel Dda king of Wales codified the laws of his country, the result was a Celtic code without, I think, any relation to Roman law; though Roman law had prevailed in Roman Britain for three centuries or so. What strong Celtic molds must have persisted, to cause this! Roman law imposed itself on nearly all Europe, including many peoples that never were under Roman rule; and yet here was this people, that had been all that time under the Romans, oblivious of Roman law, uninfluenced by it, practically speaking;—and returning at the first opportunity to the kind of laws they had had before the Romans were born or thought of.

Druidism had been proscribed, as a practice, during Roman times. The worship of the Celtic Gods had continued; but they had been assimilated to those of the empire;—-which would be a much more difficult thing to do were the Gods, as your modern learned suppose, mere fictions of the superstitious, and not the symbols of, or the Powers behind, the forces of Nature. So Celtic religion outwardly was submerged in Roman religion; and then later. Christianity came in. But the science, the institutions, and the philosophy of the Druids had been part and parcel of the inner life of the race perhaps as long as their laws and language had; and your Celt runs by nature to religion, or even to religiosity,—ultra-religion. Is it likely that, while he kept his laws and language, he let his religion go? And when it was not an arbitrary farrago of dogmas, like some we might mention; but a philosophy of the soul so vivid that he counted death little more to fuss about than going to sleep?

When should those old ideas have reappeared,—when should the racial astral molds have been brought out and furbished up with new strength to make them endure? Why, when the Roman dominion came to an end; when the people were turning for inspiration to their own things, and away from Latin things; when they were forgoing Latin for Celtic; reviving Celtic laws and customs; trying to forget they had been subjected to foreigners, and to remember and resurrect the old Monarchy of Britain. Christianity would not give them all the difference from Romanism that they wanted,—-that the most ardent among them wanted: the Romans were Christians too;—but there was that other ancient thing which the Romans had proscribed. It still existed, in Ireland for example; and for that matter, there were plenty of places in Britain where the Roman arm could never have reached it. Matthew Arnold saw these things in his day, and argued for the Neo-druidism of the sixth century. He was a man accustomed to deal in ideas. You may easily train your mind to an acuteness and sagacity in dealing with grammatical roots, and forms, that will not help you in dealing with ideas.

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To sum up, then: I believe there was an influx of the Crest-Wave into Britain, from about 410 to 540: a national awakenment, with something of greatness to account for the Arthurian legend; and with something of spiritual illumination, through a revival of Druidic Wisdom to account for the rumor of Taliesin. I am not sure but that this influenced the Celtic Church: I am not sure but that David, and Cadoc, and Teilo, and Padarn, fathers of that church, were men pervious to higher influences; and that the monastery-colleges they presided over were real seats of lerning, unopposed to, if not in league with, the light.

XXVI. "SACRED IERNE OF THE HIBERNIANS" *

"I could not put the pen aside
Till with my heart's love I had tried
To fashion some poor skilless crown
For that dear head so low bowed down."

—From the Celtic

It is but a step from Wales to Ireland. From the one, you can see the "fair hills of holy Ireland" in the heart of any decent sunset; from the other, you can see Wales shining landed in in any shining dawn. No Roman legion ever landed in Ireland; yet all through Roman times boats must have been slipping across and across; there must have been constant communication, and there was, really, no distinction of race. There was a time, I believe, when they were joined, one island; and all the seas were east of the Severn. Both peoples were a mixture of Gaels and Cymry; only it happens that the Gaelic or Q language survived in Ireland; the Cymric or P language in Wales. So, having touched upon Wales last week, and shown the Crest-Wave flowing in there, this week, following that Wave westward,

> I invoke the land of Ireland!
> Shining, shining sea!
> Fertile, fertile mountain!
> Gladed, gladed wood!
> Abundant river, abundant in water!
> Fish-abounding lake!

It was what Amargin the Druid sang, when the Gael first came into Ireland. Here is the story of their coming:—

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* The stories told in this and the following lecture, and the translations of Irish poems, *etc.*, are taken from Mr. T.W.

Rollertone's delightful *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race*, or from M. de Jubainville's *Irish Mythological Cycle*, translated and published in Dublin in the 'nineties.

Bregon built a tower in Spain. He had a son named Ith; and one fine evening in winter Ith was looking out over the horizon from Bregon's tower, and saw the coast of Ireland in the distance; for "it is on a winter's evening when the air is pure that one's sight carries farthest." So says the eleventh century bard who tells the tale: he without knowing then that it was not in Spain was Bregon's tower, but on the Great Plain, which is in the Atlantic, and yet not in this world at all.

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Now this will tell you what you ought to know about Ireland, and why it is we end our lectures with her. We saw Wales near the border of things; looking out from that cliff's edge on to the unknown and unseen, and aware of mysterious things beyond. Now we shall see Ireland, westward again, down where the little waves run in and tumble; sunlit waves along shining sands; and with boats putting out at any time; and indeed, so lively an intercourse going forward always, that you never can be quite sure whether it is in mortal Ireland or immortal Fairyland you are,—

> "So your soul goes straying in a land more fair;
> Half you tread the dew-wet grasses, half wander there."

For the wonder of Ireland is, that it is the West Pole of things; there is no place else nearer the Unseen; its next-door neighbor-land westward is this Great Plain, whither sail the Happy Dead in their night-dark coracles,—to return, of course, in due season; and all the peoplings of Ireland were from this Great Plain. So you see why the Crest-Wave, passing from dying Europe, "went west" by way of Ireland.

I will tell you about that Great Plain: it is

"A marvelous land, full of music, where primrose blossoms on the hair, and the body is white as snow.

"There none speaks of *mine and thine;* white are the teeth and black the brows; eyes flash with many-colored lights, and the hue of the fox-glove is on every cheek. . . .

"Though fair are the plains of Ireland, few of them are so fair as the Great Plain. The ale of Ireland is heady, but headier far the ale of the Great Country. What a wonder of a land it is! No youth there grows to old age. Warm streams flow through it; the choicest mead and wine. Men there are always comely and blemishless."

Well; Ith set sail from the Great Plain, with three times thirty warriors, and landed at Corcaguiney in the south-west of Ireland; and at that time the island inhabited less by men than by Gods; it was the Tuatha De Danaan, the Race of the Danaan Gods, that held the kingship there. Little wonder, then, that the first name of Ireland we get in the Greek writings is "Sacred Ierne, populous with the Hibernians."

Well now, he found MacCuill, MacCecht, and MacGrene the Son of the Sun, arranging to divide the kingdom between them; and they called on him to settle how the division should be.—"Act," said he, "according to the laws of justice, for the country you dwell in is a good one; it is rich in fruit and honey, in wheat and in fish; and in heat and cold it is temperate." From that they thought he would be designing to conquer it from them, and so forestalled his designs by killing him; but his companions escaped, and sailed back

to the Great Plain. That was why the Milesians came to conquer Ireland. The chiefs of them were Eber Finn, and Eber Donn, and Eremon, and Amargin the Druid: the sons of Mile, the son of Bile the son of Bregon; thus their grandfather was the brother of that Ith whom the Gods of Ireland slew.

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It was on a Thursday, the first of May, and the seventeenth day of the moon, that the Milesians arrived in Ireland; and as he set his right foot on the soil of it, Amargin chanted this poem:

I am the wave of the Ocean;
I am the murmur of the billow;
I am the ox of the seven combats;
I am the vuture upon the rock;
I am a tear of the sun;
I am the fairest of plants;
I am a wild boar in valor;
I am a salmon in the water;
I am a lake in the plain;
I am a word of science;
I am the spear-point that gives battle;
I am the god who creates in the head the fire of thought.
Who is it that enlightens the assembly upon the mountain,
if not I?
Who telleth the ages of the moon, if not I?
Who showeth the place where the sun goes to rest?

They went forward to Tara, and summoned the kings of the Danaan Gods to give up the island to them; who asked three days to consider whether they would give battle, or surrender, or quit Ireland. On that request Amargin gave judgment: that it would be wrong for the Milesians to take the Gods unprepared that way; and that they should go to their ships again, and sail out the distance of nine waves from the shore, and then return; then if they could conquer Ireland fairly in battle, it should be theirs.

So they embarked, and put the nine waves between themselves and the shore, and waited. And the Danaans raised up a druid mist and a storm against them, whereby Ireland seemed to them no more than the size of a pig's back in the water; and by reason of that it has the name of Innis na Wic, the Island of the Pig. But if the Gods had magic, Amargin had better magic; and he sang that Invocation to the Land of Ireland; and at that the storm fell and the mist vanished. Then Eber Donn was exulting in his rage at the thought of putting the inhabitants to death; but the thought in his mind brought the storm again, and his ship went down, and he was drowned. But at last the remnant of them landed, and fought a battle with the Gods, and defeated them; whereafter the Gods put a druid invisibility on themselves, and retired into the hills; and there in their fairy palaces they remain to this day; indeed they do. They went back into the inwardness of things; whence, however, they were always appearing, and again vanishing into it; and all the old literature of Ireland is thridded through with the lights of their magic and their beauty, and their strange forthcomings and withdrawings. For example:

There was Midir the Proud, one of them. In the time of the great Caesar, Eochaid Airem was high king of Ireland; and he had for his queen Etain, reborn then as a mortal,—but a Danaan princess at one time, and the wife of Miidir. It was a fine evening in the summer, and Eochaid Airem was looking from the walls of Tara and admiring the beauty of the world. He saw an unknown warrior riding towards him; clad in purple tunic; his hair yellow as gold, and his blue eyes shining like candles. A five-pointed lance was in his hand; his shield was ornamented with beads of gold.

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—“A hundred thousand welcomes to you,” said the high king. “Who is it you are?”

—“I know well who you are,” said the warrior, “and for a long time.”

—“What name is on you?” said Eochaid.

—“Nothing illustrious about it in the world,” said the other. “I am Midir of Bregleith.”

—“What has brought you hither?”

—“I am come to play at chess with you.”

—“I have great skill at chess,” said the high king; and indeed, he was the best at it in Ireland, in those days.

—“We shall see about that,” said Midir.

—“But the queen is sleeping in her chamber now,” said Eochaid; “and it is there the chessboard is.”

—“Little matter,” said Midir, “I have here a board as good as yours is.”

And that was the truth. His chessboard was of silver, glittering with precious stones at each corner. From a satchel wrought of shining metal he took his chessmen, which were of pure gold. Then he arranged them on the board.—“Play you,” said he.

—“I will not play without a stake,” said the king.

—“What will the stake be?” said Midir.

—“All one to me,” said Eochaid.

—“If you win,” said Midir, “I will give you fifty broad-chested horses with slim swift feet.”

—“And if you win,” said Eochaid Airem, sure of victory, “I will give you whatever you demand.”

Midir won that game, and demanded Etain the queen. But the rules of chess are that the vanquished may claim his revenge,—a second game, that is, to decide the matter; and the high king proposed that it should be played at the end of a year. Midir agreed, and vanished.

The year ended, and Eochaid was at Tara; he had had the palace surrounded by a great armed host against Midir; and Etain was there with him. Here is the description of Etain:

“A clear comb of silver was held in her hand, the comb was adorned with gold; and near her, as for washing, was a basin of silver whereon four birds had been chased, and there were little bright gems of carbuncles on the rim of the basin. A bright purple mantle waved round her; and beneath it another mantle with fringes of silver: the outer one clasped over her bosom with a golden brooch. A tunic she wore, with a long hood that might cover her head attached to it; it was stiff and glossy with green silk beneath red embroidery of gold, and clasped over her breast with marvelously wrought clasps of gold and silver, so that men saw the bright gold and the green silk flashing against the sun. On her head were two tresses of golden hair, and each tress plaited into four strands, and at the end of each strand a little ball of gold. Each of her two arms was as white as the snow of a single night, and each of her two cheeks of the hue of the foxglove. Even and small the teeth in her head, and they shone like pearls. Her eyes were blue as the blue hyacinth, her lips delicate and crimson. . . . White as snow, or the foam of the wave, was her neck. . . . Her feet were slim and white as the ocean foam; evenly set were her eyes, and the eyebrows of a bluish black, such as you see on the shell of a beetle.”

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—What I call on you to note about that is something very unpoetic. It is not the flashing brightness, the grace, the evidence of an eye craving for beauty, and of a hand sure in the creation of beauty;—but the dress. The Irish writers got these ideas of dress without having contacted, for example, classical civilization, or any foreign civilization. The ideas were home-grown, the tradition Irish. The writer was describing what he was familiar with: the kind of dress worn by an Irish princess before Ireland had seen foreign fashions and customs. He was heightening picture for artistic effect, no doubt; but he was drawing with his eye on the object. I am inclined to think that imagination always must work upon a basis of things known; just as tradition must always be based on fact. Now then: try, will you, to imagine primitive savages dressing like that, or sufficiently nearly like that for one of their bards to work up such a picture on the actualities he had seen. I think you cannot do it. And this picture is not extraordinary; it is typical of what we commonly find in the ancient Irish stories. What it proves is that the Ireland that emerges into history, war-battered and largely decivilized by long unsettled conditions as she was, remembered and was the inheiritor of an Ireland consummately civilized.—But to return to the hall of Eochaid Airem:

Every door in it was locked; and the whole place filled with the cream of the war-host of the Gael, and apprehension on everyone, they not knowing would it be war and violence with Midir, or what it would be. So it had been all day; so it was now in the dusk of the evening. Then suddenly there stood Midir in the midst of them: Midir the Proud; never had he seemed fairer than then. No man had seen him enter; none knew how he had come. And then it was but putting his spear in his left hand for him, and putting his right arm about the waist of Etain, and rising through the air with her, and vanishing through the roof. And when the men of Ireland rushed out from the hall, they saw two swans circling above Tara and away, their long white necks yoked together with a yoke of moon-bright silver.

It was a long time the Gods were ruling in Ireland before the Milesians came. King after king reigned over them; and there are stories on stories, a rich literature for another nation, about the time of these Danaan Gods alone. One of them was Lir, the Boundless Deep. He had four children by his first wife; when she died, he married her sister, Aoife by name. Aoife was jealous of the love he had for his children, and was for killing them. But when it came to doing it, “her womanhood overcame her,” and instead she put swanhood on the four of them, and the doom that swans they should be from that out for nine hundred years: three hundred on Lake Derryvaragh in West Meath, three hundred on the Straits of Moyle between Ireland and Scotland, three hundred on the Atlantic by Erris and Innishglory. After that the enchantment would end.

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For that, Bov Derg, one of the Gods, changed her into a demon of the air, and she flew away shrieking, and was heard of no more. But there was no taking the fate from the swan-children; and the Danaans sought them on their lake, and found they had human speech left to them, and the gift of wonderful Danaan music. From all parts they came to the lake to talk with them and to hear them singing; and that way it was for three hundred years. Then they must depart, Fionuala and her three brothers, the swan-children, and wing their way to the northern sea, and be among the wild cliffs and the foam; and the worst of loneliness and cold and storm was the best fate there was for them. Their feathers froze to the rocks on the winter nights; but they filled the drear chasms of the tempest with their Danaan singing. It was Fionuala wrapped her plumage about her brothers, to keep them from the cold; she was their leader, heartening them. And if it was bad for them on the Straits of Moyle, it was worse on the Atlantic; three hundred years they were there, and bitter sorrow the fate on them.

When their time to be freed was near, they were for flying to the palace of Lir their father, at the hill of the White Field in Armagh. But long since the Milesians had come into Ireland, and the Danaans had passed into the hills and the unseen; and with the old centuries of their enchantment heavy on them, their eyes had grown no better than the eyes of mortals: gorse-grown hills they saw, and green nettles growing, and no sign of the walls and towers of the palace of Lir. And they heard the bells ringing from a church, and were frightened at the “thin, dreadful sound.” But afterwards, in their misery, they took refuge with the saint in the church, and were converted, and joined him in singing the services. Then, after a while, the swanhood fell from them, and they became human, with the whole of their nine centuries heavy on them. “Lay us in one grave,” said Fionuala to the saint; “and place Conn at my right hand, and Fiachra at my left, and Aed before my face; for there they were wont to be when I sheltered them many a winter night upon the seas of Moyle.” So it was they were buried; but the saint sorrowed for them till the end of his days. And there, if you understand it, you have the forgotten story of Ireland.

She was once Danaan, and fortunate in the Golden Age. Then she was enchanted, and fell from her high estate; and sorrow and the wildness of ages of decivilizing wars were her portion; but she retained her wonderful Danaan gift of song. Then came Christianity, and she sang her swan-song in the services of the Church;—when she had overcome her terror of the ominous sound of the bells. She became human again: that is, enjoyed one more period of creative greatness, a faint revival of her old splendor; and then,—Ah, it was a long time ago; a long time the hermit had been sorrowing over her grave! But listen, by the lake of Derryvaragh, on the seas of Moyle, or by Erris and Innishglory, and you will hear still the ghostly echoes of the singing of Danaan swans. *Danaan* swans: music better than of the world of men!

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O Swan-child, come from the grave, and be bright as you were
of old
When you sing o'er the sun-bright wave in the Danaans' Age
of Gold!
Are you never remembering, darling, the truth that you knew
well then,
That there's nobody dies from the world, asthore, but is
born in the world again.

It brings me naturally to the place where we take her up in our history. At the end of the fourth century, "the sea," says the Roman poet Claudian, "was foamy with the hostile oars of the Irish." Niall of the Nine Hostages was high king of Tara; and he was all for a life on the ocean wave and a home on the rolling deep. He raided the coasts of Britain annually, and any other coasts that came handy, carrying off captives where he might. One of these was a boy named Sucat, from Glamorgan: probably from Glamorgan, though it might have been from anywhere between the Clyde and the Loire. In time this Sucat escaped from his Irish slavery, entered the Church, took the Latin name of Patrick, and made it his business to Christianize Ireland. That was about the time when the Britons were throwing off the Roman yoke. He was at the height of his career in the middle of the fifth century.

Even if he did not make a clean and bloodless sweep of the whole country, Patrick was one of the most successful Christian missionaries that ever preached. There was some opposition by the druids, but it was not successful. He went to the courts of the kings, and converted them; and to say you had baptized a king, was as good as to say you had his whole clan captured; for it was a fractious unnatural clansman who would not go where his chieftain led. We are in an atmosphere altogether different from the rancor and fanaticism of the continent. Patrick,—there must have been something very winning and kindly about the man,— roused no tradition of animosity. He never made Ireland hate her pagan past. When the Great Age came,—which was not till later, —not till the Crest-Wave had passed from Wales,—and Christian Irishmen took to writing down the old legends and stories, they were very tender to the memories of the Gods and heroes. It was in pity for the Children of Lir, that were turned into swans, that they were kept alive long enough to be baptized and sent to heaven. Can you fancy Latona and her children so received by Greekish or Latin monks into the Communion of Saints? But the Irish Church was always finding excuses for the salvation of the great figures of old. Some saint called up Cuculain from hell, converted him, and gave him a free pass that Peter at the Gates should honor. There was Conchobar MacNessa again. He was king of Ulster in the days of the Red Branch, the grand heroic cycle of Irish legend; Cuculain was the chief of his warriors. A brain-ball was driven through the skull of Conchobar from a sling; but sure, his druid doctors would never be phased by

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a trifle like that. They bound up the wound and healed him in a cauldron of cure; but warned him never to get excited or over-exert himself, or the brain-ball would come out and he would die; barring such accidents, he would do splendidly. And so he did for some years. Then one day a darkness came over the world, and he put his druids to finding out the cause of it. They told him they saw in their vision three crosses on a hill in the east of the world, and three men nailed on them; and the man in the middle with the likeness of the Son of God. With that the battle-fury came on Conchobar, and he fell to destroying the trees of the forest with his sword. "Oh that I were there!" he cried; "thus would I deal with his enemies." With the excitement and over-exertion, out came the brain-ball, and he died. And if God Almighty would not take Conchobar MacNessa, pagan as he was, into heaven for a thing like that,—sure, God Almighty was not half such a decent kindly creature as the Irish monk who invented the yarn.

So nothing comes down to us that has not passed the censorship of a race-proud priesthood, with perhaps never a drop of the wine of true wisdom in them, to help them discriminate and truth to shine through what they were passing on; but still, with a great deal of the milk of human kindness as a substitute, so far as it might be. They treasured the literary remains of druid days; liberally twisting them, to be sure, into consonance with Christian ideas of history and the fitness of things; but still they treasured them, and drew from them inspiration. Thus the whole past comes down euhemerized, cooked, and touched up. It comes down very glorious,—because the strongest feeling in Irish hearts was Irishism, race-consciousness. Whereas the Latin Church was fiercely against antiquity and all its monuments, the Celtic Church in Ireland was anxious above all things to preserve Celtic antiquity,—having first brought it into line with the one true faith. The records had to be kept,—and made to tally with the Bible. The godhood of the Gods had to be covered away, and you had to treat them as if they had been respectable children of Adam,—more or less respectable, at any rate. A descent from Noah had to be found for the legendary kings and heroes; and for every event a date corresponding with that of someone in the Bible. Above all, you had to pack the whole Irish past into the few thousand years since Noah came out of the Ark.—You get a glimpse in Wales of the struggle there was between Hebrao-Christian chronology and the Celtic sense of the age of the world: in the pedigree of an ancient family, where, it is said, about half way down the line this entry occurs after one of the names: "In his time Adam was expelled from Paradise." In Ireland, indeed, there was at least one man from before the Flood living in historic times: Fintan, whom, with others, Noah sent into the western world while the Ark was building. Here is one of Fintan's poems:

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“If you inquire of me concerning Ireland, I know and can relate gladly all the invasions of it since the beginning of the delightful world. Out of the east came Cessair, a woman, daughter of Bith, with her fifty maidens, with her three men. The flood came upon Bith on his mountain without mystery; on Ladru at Ard Ladran; on Cessair at Cull Cesra. As for me, for the space of a year, beneath the rapid flood, on the height of a mighty wave, I enjoyed sleep which was exceeding good. Then, in Ireland, I found my way above the waters until Partholan came out of the East, from the land of the Greeks. Then, in Ireland, I enjoyed rest; Ireland was void till the son of Agnoman came, Nemed with the delightful manners. The Fir Bolg and the Fir Galioin came a long time after, and the Fir Domnan also; they landed at Erris in the west. Then came the Tuatha De Danaan in their hood of mist. I lived with them for a long time, though their age is far removed. After that came the sons of Mile out of Spain and the south. I lived with them; mighty were their battles. I had come to a great age, I do not conceal it, when the pure faith was sent to Ireland by the King of the Cloudy Heaven. I am the fair Fintan son of Bochra; I proclaim it aloud. Since the flood came here I am a great personage in Ireland.”

In the middle of the sixth century he was summoned as a witness by the descendants of Niall of the Nine Hostages against King Dermot MacKerval, in a dispute as to the ancient divisions of Ireland. He came to Tara with nine companies in front of him, and nine companies behind: they were his descendants. This, mind you, is in strictly historical times. The king and his people received him kindly, and after he had rested a little, he told them his story, and that of Tara from its foundation. They asked him to give them some proof of his memory. “Right willingly,” said Fintan. “I passed one day through a wood in West Munster; I brought home with me a red berry of the yew-tree, which I planted in my kitchen-garden, and it grew there till it was as tall as a man. Then I took it up, and re-planted it on the green lawn before the house, and it grew there until a hundred champions could find room under its foliage, to be sheltered there from wind and rain, and cold and heat. I remained so, and my yew remained so, spending our time alike, until at last all its leaves fell off from decay. When afterwards I thought of turning it to some profit, I went to it, and cut it from its stem; and I made of it seven vats, and seven keeves, and seven stans, and seven churns, and seven pitchers, and seven milans, and seven medars, with hoops for all. I remained so with my yew vessels until their hoops all fell off from decay and old age. After that I re-made them; but could only get a keeve out of the vat, and a stan out of the keeve, and a mug out of the stan, and a cilorn out of the mug, and a milan out of the cilom, and a medar out of the milan; and I leave it to Almighty God that I do not know where their dust is now, after their dissolution with me from decay.” *

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* De Jubainville, *Irish Mythological Cycle;* when also Fintan's poem quoted above.

Now here is a strange relic of the Secret Teaching that comes down with this legend of Fintan. Each of the four Cardinal Points, it was said, had had its Man appointed to record all the wonderful events that had taken place in the world.* One of them was this Fintan, son of Bochra, son of Lamech, whose duty was to preserve the histories of Spain and Ireland, and the West in general. As we have seen, Spain is a glyph for the Great Plain, the Otherworld.

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* See *The Secret Doctrine,* for the Thesophical teaching.

From this universal euhemerization,—this loving preservation and careful cooking of the traditions by the Christian redactors of them,—we get certain results. One is that ancient Ireland remains for us in the colors of life: every figure flashes before our eyes in a golden mellow light of morning, at once extremely real and extremely magical: not the Greek heroic age appears so flooded with dawn-freshness, so realistic, so minutely drawn, nor half so lit with glamor. Another result is that, while strange gleams of Esotericism shine through,—as in that about the Four Recorders of the Four Cardinal Points,—things that it seemed undangerous to the monks, because they did not understand their significance, to let pass,—we hear nothing in Irish literature about the philosophy of the Druids. Ireland retains her belief in magic to this day; and his would be a hard skull that could know Ireland intimately and escape that belief. So it seemed nothing irreligious to the monks to let the Druids remain magicians. But philosophy was another matter entirely; and must be ruled out as conflicting with the Christian scheme of things. From this silence our Druid-Medicine-men Theorists draw great comfort and unction for their pet belief. Reincarnation appears in some stories as a sort of thing that might happen in special cases; because "God is good to the Irish," and might be willing to give them sometimes another chance. But nothing is allowed to come down to imply it was known for a law in Nature; no moral or philosophic bearing is attached to it. This is just what you would expect. The Christian censors of the literature had rejected it as unchristian doctrine. They would hate to have it thought that Irishmen could ever have believed in such things; they would cover such belief up in every possible way. You would find peasant-bards in Wales to this day, men learned in the national tradition, who are deacons in their chapels and druids of the Gorsedd, and firm believers in Druidism. They have founded a Gorsedd here in America lately, with an active propaganda of

Druidism, and lecturers touring. They think of it as a kind of Pre-christian Christianity; and would open their eyes wide to hear that Reincarnation was the cornerstone teaching in it. This may throw a little light on the attitude of those early Irish Christians. —But on the other hand there were tales that could not be preserved at all, that you could not tell at all, without bringing a touch of reincarnation into them. The universal doctrine survived in that way in Ireland, as it survived as a rumor in the folk-lore in Wales.

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There is the story, for instance, of Mongan son of Fiachta, a historical chieftain killed in 625. According to Tigernach, the oldest of the Irish annalists, Finn MacCool died in A.D. 274. Finn, you will remember, is the central figure of the Fenian Cycle of sagas; he was the father of Oisin and the leader of the Fenians; next to Cuculain, he is the chiefest hero of Irish legend. I quote this story from M. de Jubainville.*

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* But without word-for-word exactitude; hence the absence of inverted commas. The same remark applies to all the stories quoted, or nearly quoted, from Mr. Rollerstone'e book.

Mongan had a quarrel with Forgoll, his chief bard or *file,* as to the place where Fothad Airgtech king of Ireland had been slain by Cailte, one of Finn's companions. Mongan said it was on the banks of the Lame in Ulster, near his own palace; Forgoll said it was at Dubtar in Leinster. Forgoll, enraged at being contradicted by a mere layman, threatened to pronounce awful incantations against Mongan, which might put rat-hood on him, or anything. The end of it was that Mongan was given three days to prove his statement; if he should not have done so by that time, he and all his possessions were to become the property of the file.

Two days passed, and half the third, and Mongan did nothing, but remained at his ease entirely, never troubling in the world. As for his wife, poor woman, from the moment he made the wager her tears had not ceased to flow.—"Make an end of weeping," said he; "help will certainly come to us."

Forgoll came to claim his bond.—"Wait you till the evening," said Mongan. Evening came, and if help was coming, there was no sign of it. Mongan sat with his wife in the upper chamber; Forgoll out before them waiting to take possession of everything. Pitiless and revengeful the look of Forgoll; the queen weeping and walling; Mongan himself with no sign of care on him.—"Be not you sorrowful, woman," said he; "the one who is coming to help us is not far off; I hear his footsteps on the Labrinne." It is the River Caragh, that flows into Dingle bay in the southwest; a hundred leagues from where they were in the palace at Donegore in the north-east of Antrim.

With that she was quiet for awhile; but nothing happened, and she began weeping again.—"Hush now!" said Mongan; "I hear the feet of the one that will help us crossing the Maine." It is another river in Kerry, between the Caragh and the north-east: on the road, that is, between Mongan's palace and the Great Plain.

That way he was consoling her again and again; and she again and again breaking out with her lamentations. He was hearing the footsteps at every river between Kerry and

Antrim: at the Liffey, and then the Boyne, and then the Dee, and after that, at Carlingford Lough, and at last at Larne Water, a little to the south of the palace.—-
“Enough of this folly,” said Forgoll; “pay you me what

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is mine." A man came in from the ramparts;—"What news with you?" asks Mongan.—-"There is a warrior like the men of old time approaching from the south, and a headless spear-shaft in his hand."—"I told you he would be coming," said Mongan. Before the words were out from between his teeth, the warrior had leaped the three ramparts into the middle of the dun, and in a moment was there between Mongan and the file in the hall.—"What is it is troubling you?" said he.

—"I and the file yonder have made a wager about the death of Fothad Airgtech," said Mongan. "The file said he died at Dubtar in Leinster; I said it was false."

—"Then the file has lied," said the warrior.

—"Thou wilt repent of that," cried Forgoll.

—"That is not a good speech," said the warrior. "I will prove what I say." Then he turned to Mongan. "We were with thee, Finn MacCool," said he,—

—"Hush!" said Mongan; *"it is wrong for thee to reveal a secret."*

—"Well then," said the warrior, "we were with Finn coming from Alba. We met Fothad Airgtech near here, on the banks of Larne Water. We fought a battle with him. I cast my spear at him, so that it went through his body, and the iron head quitted the shaft, and went into earth beyond, and remained there. This is the shaft of that spear," said he, holding up the headless shaft he had with him. "The bare rock from which I hurled it will be found, and the iron head is in the earth a little to the east of it; and the grave of Fothad Airgtech a little to the east of that again. A stone chest is round his body; in the chest are his two bracelets of silver, and his two arm-rings, and his collar of silver. Over the grave is a stone pillar, and on the end of the pillar that is in the earth is Ogham writing, and it says, 'Here is Fothad Airgtech. He was fighting with Finn when Cailte slew him.'"

Cailte had been one of the most renowned of Finn's companions; he had come now from the Great Plain to save his old master. You will note that remark of the latter's when Cailte let the fact escape him that he, Mongan, had been Finn: "Hush! it is wrong for the to reveal a secret." That was the feeling of the Christian redactors. Reincarnation was not a thing for baptized lips to speak about.

But we are anticipating things: the coming of Patrick did not bring about the great literary revival which sent all these stories down to us. Patrick Christianized Ireland: converted the kings and established the church; and left the bulk of the people pagan-hearted and pagan-visioned still,—as, glory be to God, they have been ever since. I mean by that that under all vicissitudes the Irish have never quite lost sight of the Inner

Life at the heart of things, as most of the rest of us have. Time and men and circumstance, sorrow and ignorance and falsity, have conspired to destroy the race; but there is a vision there, however thwarted and hedged

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in,—and the people do not perish: their woods and mountains are still full of a gay or mournful, a wailing or a singing, but always a beautiful, life. Patrick was a great man; but he never could drive out the Danaan Gods, who had gone into the hills when the Milesians came. He drove out the serpents, they say; and a serpent was a name for a Druid Adept: Taliesin says, in one of his poems, *'Wyf dryw, wyf sarff,'* 'I am a druid, I am a serpent'; and we know from H.P. Blavatsky how universal this symbol was, with the meaning of an Initiate of the Secret Wisdom. So perhaps Patrick did evict his Betters from that land of evictions; it may be so;—but not the God-life in the mountains. But I judge from the clean and easy sweep he made of things that Druidism was at a low pass in Ireland when he came. It had survived there five centuries since its vital center and link with the Lodge had been destroyed at Bibracte by Caesar; and, I suppose, thus cut off, and faced with no opposition to keep it pure and alert, might well, and would naturally have declined. Its central light no longer burning, political supremacy itself would have hastened its decay; fostering arrogance for spirituality, and worldliness for true Wisdom. How then about the theory that some life and light remained or was revivable in it in Britain? Why claim that for Britain, which one would incline to deny to Ireland and Gaul?— Well; we know that Druidism did survive in Gaul a long time after the Romans had proscribed it. But Gaul became very thoroughly Romanized. The Romans and their civilization were everywhere; the Celtic language quite died out; (Breton was brought in by emigrants from Britain;)—and where the Celtic language had died, unlikely that Celtic thought would survive. But in Britain, as we have seen, while the Romans and their proscription were near enough to provide a salutary opposition and constant peril, there were many places in which the survivors of Suetonius' massacre in Mona might have taken refuge. I take it that in Ireland it suffered through lack of opposition; in Gaul, it died of too effective opposition; but in Britain there were midway conditions that may well have allowed it to live on.

Beyond Christianizing the country, it does not appear that Patrick did much for it. It is not clear that Ireland made any progress in material civilization then,—or for that matter, at any time since. We should know by this time that these things are a matter of law. Patrick found her essentially in pralaya, essentially under the influence of centrifugalism; and you cannot turn the ebbing tide, and make it flow before its time. There was a queer mixture of intensive culture and ruthless barbarism: an extreme passion on the one hand for poetry and the things of the spirit,—and on the other, such savagery as continual warfare always brings in its train. The literary class was so strong that in the little kingdom of Tir Conall in Donegal

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alone the value of ten thousand dollars of the revenue was set aside yearly for its support and purposes;—whereby one would imagine that for all things else they could but have had a nickel or so left. This is culture with a vengeance. There was, besides, wonderful skill in arts and crafts, intricate designing in jewelry-work;—and all this is not to be called by another name than the relics of a high civilization. But there was no political unity; or only a loose bond under the high kings at Tara, who had forever to be fighting to maintain their authority. There was racial, but not national consciousness.

But where in Europe was there national consciousness? We should remember that it only began to exist, or to reincarnate from times beyond the horizon of history, in the thirteenth century A.D. There would be a deal less sneering at Ireland were only these facts known. England was perhaps the first country in which it became effective: the wars of the first and third Edwards called it into being there. Joan lit the fires of it in France; she mainly;—in the fourteen-twenties and thirties. Spain had to wait for Ferdinand and Isabel; Sweden for Gustavus Vasa; Holland for William the Silent; Italy for Victor Emmanuel; Germany for Bismarck. Wales was advancing towards it, in an imperfect sort of way, rather earlier than England; but the Edwardian conquest put the whole idea into abeyance for centuries. So too Ireland: she was half-conquered by the Normans, broken, racked, ruined and crucified, a century before the idea of Nationhood had come into existence, and while centrifugalism was still the one force in Europe. It is thus quite beside the point to say that she was never a nation, even in the days of her native rule. Of course she was not. Nor was England, in those times; nor any other. In every part of the continent the centrifugal forces were running riot; though in some there were strong fighting kings to hold things together. This by way of hurling one more spear at the old cruel doctrine of race inferiorities and superiorities: at Unbrotherliness and all its wicked works and ways. I was the European pralaya; when your duty to your neighbor was everywhere and always to fight him, to get in the first blow; to kill him before he killed you, and thank God for his mericies. So Ireland was not exceptional in that way. Where she was exceptional, bless her sweet heart, lay, as we shall see, in the fact that while all the rest were sunk in ignorance and foulest barbarism, and mentall utterly barren,—she alone had the grace to combine her Kilkenny Cattery with an exquisite and wonderful illumination of culture. While she tore herself to pieces with one hand, with the other she was holding up the torch of learning,—and a very real learning too, —to benighted Europe; and *then* (bedad!) she found another hand again, to be holding the pen with it, and to produce a literature to make the white angels of God as green as her own holy hills with envy! *That* was Ireland!

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The Crest-Wave rolled in to her; the spiritual forces descended far enough to create a cultural illumination, but not far enough to create political stability. We have seen before that they touch the artistic creative planes, in their descent, before they reach the more material planes. So her position is perfectly comprehensible. The old European manvantara was dying; elsewhere it was dead. Its forces, when they passed away through Ireland, were nearly exhausted; in no condition whatever to penetrate to the material plane and make political greatnesses and strengths. But they found in her very soil and atmosphere a spiritual something which enabled them to produce a splendor of literary creation that perhaps had had no parallel in Europe since Periclean days: Yes, surely Ireland was much more creative than Augustan Rome.

Have any of you heard of literary savages? Of wild men of the woods, your true prognathous primitives, that in a bare couple of generations, and upon no contact with civilized races, rose from their native pithecanthropism to be the wonderful beacon of the West or East? You have not, and cannot imagine it; nor could it ever be. A great literary habit is only acquired in long ages of settled civilization; and there were long ages of settled civilization behind Ireland;—and when, about thirteen decades after Patrick's coming, she flamed up into cultural creation, she was but returning to what was proper to her soul; in the midst of her dissolution, she was but groping after an olden self. That olden self, very likely, she had even by that time more than half forgotten; and we now can only see it refracted, as it were, through the lens of those first Christian centuries, and with the eyes of those Christian monks and bards. How would they have seen them?—There was that spirit of euhemerization: of making ancient things conform to new Christian ideas. They had the Kilkenny Catterwauling in their ears daily; would they have allowed to any Pagan times a quieter less dissonant music? Could they have imagined it, indeed?—I doubt. Kilkennyism would have appeared to them the natural state of things. Were you to look back into Paganism for your Christian millennium, to come not till Christ came again? Were you to search there for peace on earth and mercy mild?—there in the long past, when all the near past was war?—Besides, there was that ancientest of Mariners, Noah, but a few thousand years back; and you had to make things fit.

So I find nothing in it conclusive, if the legends tell of no conditions different from those Patrick found: Kilkenny Cattery in politics, intensive culture in the things of the spirit; and I see no difficulty in the co-existence of the two. The cultured habit had grown in forgotten civilized ages; the Cattery was the result of national or racial pralaya; of the break-up of the old civilization, and the cyclic necessary night-time between it and the birth of another.

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Let us remember that during the Thirty Years War, in mid-manvantara, Europeans sunk into cannibalism; let us remember the lessons of our own day, which show what a very few years of war, so it be intense enough, can do toward reducing civilized to the levels of savage consciousness. So when we find Ireland, in this fourth century, always fighting,— and the women as well as the men; and when we find a tribe in Scotland, the Attacotti, with a reputation for cannibalism;—we need not for a moment imagine that things had always been like that. It is not that man is naturally a savage, and may from the heights of civilization quickly relapse into savagery; it is that he is a dual being, with the higher part of his nature usually in abeyance, and its place taken, when it is taken at all, by the conventions of law and order; and so the things that are only thought, or perhaps secretly practised, in times of civilization, as soon as war has broken down the conventions, find their full expression in action,—and others along with them. So Patrick found Ireland, what she has been mostly since, a grand Kilkenny Cattery; but with the literary habit of an older and better day surviving, and nearly ready to be awakened into transcendent splendor. The echoes of the Danaan music were ringing in her still; and are now, heaven knows;—and how would they not be, when what to our eyes are the hills of her green with fern, to eyes anointed, and to the vision of the spirit, are the palaces of the Danaan Sidhe, and the topless towers of Fairyland?

I shall come to my history next week; meanwhile here for you is the *Song of Finn in Praise of May,* a part of it, as Mr. Rollertone translates it, to give a taste of the literary habit of Pre-christian Ireland:

> May day! delightful day!
> Bright colors play the vales along;
> Now wakes at morning's slender ray,
> Wild and gay, the blackbird's song.
>
> Now comes the bird of dusty hue,
> The loud cuckoo, the summer lover;
> Broad-branching trees are thick with leaves;
> The bitter evil time is over.
>
> Swift horses gather nigh,
> Where half dry the river goes;
> Tufted heather crowns the height;
> Weak and white the bog-down blows.
>
> Corncrake singing, from eve til morn,
> Deep in corn, the strenuous bird;
> Sings the virgin waterfall,
> White and tall, her one sweet word.

Loaded bough of little power
Goodly flower-harvests win;
Cattle roam with muddy flanks;
Busy ants go out and in.

Carols loud the lark on high,
Small and shy, his tireless lay,
Singing in wildest, merriest mood
Of delicate-hued delightful May.

And here, from the same source, are the *Delights of Finn,* as his son Oisin sang them to Patrick:

These are the things that were dear to Finn,—
The din of battle, the banquet's glee,
The bay of his hounds through the rough glen ringing,
And the blackbird singing in Letterlee.

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The Shingle grinding along the shore,
When they dragged his war-boats down to the sea;
The dawn-wind whistling his spears among.
And the magic song of his ministrels three.

Whereby you may know, if you consider it rightly, what great strain of influence flows in from the Great Plain and the Land of Youth, that may yet help towards the salvation of Europe. When you turn your eyes on the diaphanous veil of the Mighty Mother, and see it sparkling and gleaming like that, it is but a step to seeing the motions of the Great Life behind; but a step to seeing

'Eternal Beauty wander on her way;'

—that Beauty which is the grand Theophany or manifestation of God. It would not be, it could not exist, but that the Spirit is here; but that the Gods are here, and clearly visible; talk not of the Supreme Self, and shut your eyes meanwhile to the Beauty of the World which is the light that shines from It, and the sign of Its presence! And the consciousness of this Beauty is one which, since Ireland, thrilled from the Otherworld, arose and sang, has been forcing itself ever more and more through the minds, chiefly of poets, of a Europe exiled from truth. I cannot over-estimate the importance of this delight in and worship of Beauty in Nature, which the wise Chinese considered the path to the highest things in Art. Europe has inherited, mainly from the Greeks and the time the western world fell into ignorance, a preoccupation with human personality: in Art and Literature, I mean, as well as in life. We are individuals, and would peg out claims for ourselves even in the Inner World; and by reason of that the Inner World is mostly shut away from us;—for there, as the poem I quoted about the Great Plain says, "none talk of 'mine' and 'thine.'" But down through the centuries of Christendom, after our catching it so near its source in magical Ireland, comes this other music: this listening, not for the voices of passion, and indecision, and the self-conceit which is the greatest fool's play of all, within our personal selves,—but for the meditations of the Omnipresent as they are communicated through the gleam on water, through the breath and delicacy of flowers, through the

'blackbird's singing in Letterlee,'

—this tendency to 'seek in the Impersonal' (Nature is impersonal) 'for the Eternal Self.'

So here, in these fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, I find the forces 'going west,' through Gaul, through Wales, through Ireland, to the Great Plain; there to recover themselves bathing in the magical Fountain of Youth which is so near to the island the Greeks called "Sacred Ierne of the Hibernians." It may be that the finest part of them has not come back yet; but will re-emerge, spiritual and saving, through this same gateway. One would be ashamed of the Host of the Gods, were they not doing strenuous battle in the unseen for the regeneration of this poor Ireland, that will yet

mean so much to the world: and one would marvel at the hellions, indeed one would, were they in their turn not moving heaven and earth, with their best battle-breaking champions in the fore-front, to maintain their strangle-hold on her tortured and beautiful soul.

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XXVII. THE IRISH ILLUMINATION

We put 420 for a date to the Southern Renaissance in China, and 410 to the age that became Arthurian in Wales. The next thing in China is 527, and the coming of Bodhidharma; the next thing in Celtdom is 520, and the coming of Findian.

He was an Irishman, and had been studying in Wales; where, certainly, there was great activity in churchly circles in those days. Get a map of that country, and note all the place-names beginning with *Llan,*—and you will see. There are countless thousands of them. 'Llan' means 'the holy place of,' and the rest of the name will be that of the saint who taught or preached there: of whom, I believe, only David appears in the Catholic calendar. They were most of them active in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Findian, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* had come under the influence of three of the foremost of them: David, Gildas, and Catwg the Wise; who were perhaps great men, if we may judge by the results of their teaching, as Findian transmitted it to those that came after him. We have seen that Patrick opened no kind of golden age in Ireland, gave no impulse to civilization or letters. The church he founded had fallen on rather evil days since his death; and now Findian came to reform things in the light of what he had learned in Wales. He began by founding at Clonard a monastery on the Welsh plan. That was some twenty-two years before Geoffrey's date for the passing of Arthur. By the time Camlan had been fought, and the Crest-Wave had left Wales, Findian had made a channel through which it might flow into Ireland, and in the five-forties the Irish illumination began.

We must say a word or two as to the kind of institution he founded. There were several of them in Wales,—to be called colleges, or even universities, as rightly as monasteries:—one at Bangor in the north; two or three in Glamorgan; one at Saint Davids. Students flocked to them by the thousands; there was strict discipline, the ascetic life,—and also serious study, religious and secular. It was all beautifully simple: each student lived in his own hut,

> "of clay and wattles made,"

—or, where stone might be plentiful, as it is in most parts of Wales, of stone. Like a military camp, the whole place would be surrounded with fosse and vallum. They grew their own corn and vegetables, milked their own cows, fished in the streams, and supported themselves. The sky roofed their lecture-halls; of which the walls, if there were any, were the trees and the mountains. But these places were real centers of learning, the best there were in Europe in those days; and you needed not to be a monk to attend them.

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In Wales the strain of the Saxon wars kept them from their full fruition. Celtic warfare was governed by a certain code: thus, you, went to war only at such and such a time of the year; invaded your neighbor's territory only through such and such a stretch of his frontier; and no one need trouble to guard more than the recognized doorway of his realm. Above all, you never took an army through church lands. So through all the wars the Britons might be waging among themselves to keep their hands in, the monastery-colleges remained islands of peace, on friendly terms with all the combatants. But Wales, with no natural frontier, lay very open to invaders who knew no respect for religion or learning. Twelve hundred of the student-monks of Bangor, for example, were slaughtered in 613 by the Saxon Ethelfrith;—whereafter the rest fled to Bardsey Island in Cardigan Bay, and the great college at Bangor ceased to be.

Augustine of Canterbury, sent by the Pope to convert the English, had summoned the Welsh bishops to a conference, and ordered them to come under his sway and conform to Rome. They hardly knew why, but disliked the idea. Outwardly, their divergence from Catholicism was altogether trivial: they had their own way of shaving their heads for the tonsure, and their own times for celebrating Easter,—though truly, these are the kind of things over which you fight religious wars. However, it was not these details that worried them so much; but an uneasy sense they derived, perhaps, from the tone of Augustine's summons. The story runs that they took counsel among themselves, and agreed that if he were a man sent from God, they would find him humble-minded and mannered; whereof the sign should be, that he would rise to greet them when they entered. But Augustine had other ideas; and as the ambassador of the Vicar of Christ, rose to greet no man. So still, not quite knowing why, they would have no dealings with him; and went their ways after refusing to assimilate their Church of the Circled Cross to his of the Cross Uncircled;—whereupon he, to teach them a sound lesson, impelled the Saxon kings to war. Fair play to him, he was dead before that war brought about the massacre of the monks of Bangor,—who had marched to Chester to pray for the Briton arms.

But when Findian went back to Ireland he found no such difficulties in his way. Not till two hundred and seventy-five years later was that island disturbed by foreign invaders; and whatever domestic Kilkenny Cattery might be going forward, the colleges were respected. His school at Clonard quickly grew* till its students numbered three thousand; and in the forties, he sent out twelve of the chief of them to found other such schools throughout the island. Then the great age began; and for the next couple of thirteen-decade periods Ireland was a really brilliant center of light and learning. Not by any means merely, or even chiefly, in theology; there was a wonderful quickening of mental energies, a real illumination. The age became, as we have seen, a sort of literary clearing-house for the whole Irish past. If the surviving known Gaelic manuscripts were printed, they would fill nearly fifty thousand quarto volumes, with matter that mostly comes from before the year 800,—and which is still not only interesting, but fascinating.

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* *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* article ‘Ireland’; whence all re Findian and the colleges.

The truth is, we seem to have in it the relics and wreckage of the literary output of a whole foregone manvantara, or perhaps several. For in the vast mass of epics and romances that comes down, one distinguishes three main cycles: the *Mythological,* the *Red Branch,* and the *Fenian.* The first deals with the Five Races that invaded or colonized Ireland: Partholanians, Nemedians, Firbolgs, Gods, and Irish;—in all of it I suspect the faint memories and *membra disjecta* of old, old manvantaras: indeed, the summing up of the history of created man. You will have noted that the number of the races, as in Theosophic teaching, is five. M. de Jubainville points out that the creation of the world, or its gradual assumption of its present form, goes on *pari passu* with the evolution of its humanities, and under their eyes; thus, when Partholan, the first invader, arrived, there were but three lakes in Ireland, and nine rivers, and one plain. This, too, is an echo of the secret doctrine; and incidentally indicates how tremendously far back that first invasion was thought to have been.

The Partholanians came into Ireland from the Great Plain, the “Land of the Living,” as the Irish called it, which is also the Land of the Dead:—in other words, they came *into* this world, and not from another part of it. Their peculiarity was that they were “no wiser the one than the other “; an allusion to the mindlessness of the early humanities before the Manasaputra incarnated in the mid-Third Root Race. Again, before their coming, there was a people in Ireland called the Fomorians: they came up from the sea, were gigantic and deformed; some of them with but one foot or one arm, some with the heads of horses or goats. That will remind you of the “water-men, terrible and bad” in the Stanzas of Dzyan: the first attempts of the Earth or unaided Nature to create men. But when the Partholanians fought with and defeated these Fomoroh, they were said to have “freed Ireland from a foreign foe”; this though the Fomorians were there first, and though the Partholanians were “invaders,” and utterly ceased to be after a time, so that no drop of their blood runs in Irish veins. Why, then, does Ireland identify itself with the one race, and discard the other as “foreign foes"?— Because the Partholanians represent the first human race, but the Fomoroh or ‘Water-men’ were unhuman, and a kind of *lusus naturae.* ‘Fomoroh,’ by the way, may very well be translated ‘Water-men’; *fo* I take to be the Greek *upo,* ‘under,’ and ‘mor’ is the ‘sea.’ Now the Battle of Mag Itha, between Partholan and the Fomorians, is a very late invention; not devised, I think, until the eleventh century. And of course there was no war or contact between the First Race and the Water-men, who had been destroyed long before. This is a good example of what came down in Pagan Ireland, and how the Christian redactors treated it. They had heard of the existence of the Fomoroh before the coming of Partholan, and

thought it wise to provide the latter with a war against them. Later, as we shall see, the Fomoroh stood for the over-sea people westward,—the Atlantean giant-sorcerers.

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The second race of invaders, the Nemedians, were also given a war with the Fomorians,—in the story of the seige of Conan's Tower. But this story is told by Nennius as applying to the Milesians, the Fifth Race Irish, and not to the Second Race Nemedians; and probably relates to events in comparatively historical tiems,— say a million years ago, or between that and the submersion of Poseidonis about nine thousand B.C. One would imagine that Ireland, from its position, must have been a main battle-ground between the men of the Fifth and the Atlanteans, between the White and the Black Magicians. Mr. Judge's *Bryan Kinnavan* stories indicate that it was a grand stronghold of the former.

The Nemedians were akin to the Partholanians: the Second Race to the First,—both mindless: they came after their predecessors had all died out; and in their turn died or departed to the last man. So we find in *The Secret Doctrine* that the first two humanities passed utterly and left no trace. If I go into all this a little fully, it is because it illustrates so well the system of *blinds* under which the Inner Teaching was hidden, and at the same time revealed, by the Initiate of every land. These Celtic things seem never to have come under the eye of *Mme*. Blavatsky at all; or how she might have drawn on them! I think that nowhere else in the mythologies are the Five Root-Races, the four past and the one existent, mentioned so clearly as here in Ireland. For historic reasons at which we have glanced,—the Roman occupation, which was hardly over before the Saxon invasions began,—Wales has preserved infinitely less of the records of ancient Celtic civilization than Ireland has; and yet Professor Kund Meyer told me,—and surely no living man is better qualified to make suct a statement,—that the whole of the forgotten Celtic mythology might yet be recovered from old MSS. hidden away in Welsh private libraries that have never been examined. How much more then may be hoped for from Ireland!

The third invasion was by a threefold people: the Fir Domnan, or Men of the Goddess Domna; the Fir Bolg, or Men of the Sacks; and the Galioin. From these races there were still people in Connacht in the seventeenth century who claimed their decent. Generally all three are called by the one name of Firbolgs. They were "avaricious, mean, uncouth, musicless, and inhospitable." Then came the Tuatha De Danaan, "Gods and false gods," as Tuan MacCarell told St. Finnen, "from whom everyone knows the Irish men of learning are descended. It is likely they came into Ireland from heaven, hence their knowledge and the excellence of their teaching." Thus Tuan, who has just been made to allude to them as "Gods and *false gods.*" This Tuan, I should mention, originally came into Ireland with Partholan; and, that history might be preserved, kept on reincarnating there, and remembering all his past lives. These Danaans conquered, and then ruled over, the Firbolgs: it is a glyph of the Third or Lemurian Race, of which the first three (and a half) sub-races were mindless—the Fir Domnan, Fir Bolg and Galioin; then the Lords of Mind incarnated and reigned over them, the Tuatha De Danaan, wafted down from heaven in a druid cloud. So far we have a pretty exact symbolic rendering of the Theosophic teaching.

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The Danaans conquered the Firbolgs, it is said, at the Battle of Moytura. Now there were two Battles of Moytura, of which this was the first; it alludes to the incarnation of the Manasaputra, and with it the clear symbolic telling of human history comes to an end. So much, being very remote, was allowed to come down without other disguise than that which the symbols afforded. But at this point, which is the beginning of the mind-endowed humanity we know, a mere eighteen million years ago, further blinds became necessary. History, an esoteric science, had still more to be camouflaged, lest memories should seize upon indications too readily, and find out too much. Why this should be, it is not the time to argue; enough to say that the wisdom of antiquity decreed it.

There has always been some doubt as to the Second Battle of Moytura. Because of a certain air with which it is invested, scholars think now, for the most part, that it was a later invention. But I do not think so: I think that air comes from the extra layer of symbolism that is laid over it; from the second coating of camouflage; from the fact that the few years between the two battles represent several million years,—about which the mythological history is silent, running them all together, like street-lights you see a long way off. What happened was this:

In the first battle Nuada, king of the Danaans, lost his hand; and, because a king must be blemishless, lost his kinghood too. It went to Bres son of Elatha; whose mother was Danaan, but whose unknown father was of the Fomoroh. Note the change: the first battle was with the Firbolgs, the mindless humanity of the early third Race; now we are to deal with Fomorians, who have come to symbolize the Black Magicians of Atlantis: the second half of the Lemurian, and nearly the whole of the Atlantean period, have elapse.—In person, Bres was handsome like the Danaans; in character he was Fomorian altogether. This is the sum of the history of later Lemuria and of Atlantis; Moytura, and Nuada's loss of his hand and kinghood there, symbolize the incarnation of the Manasaputra,—descent of Spirit into matter,— and therewith, in time, their forgetting their own divinity. I should say that it is Bres himself, rather than the Fomorians as a whole, who stands symbol just now for the Atlantean sorcerers. There is a subtle connexion between the Firbolgs and Fomoroh: the former are the men, the latter the Gods, of the same race; the Firbolgs stood originally for the mindless men of the early third, men evolving up out of the lower kingdoms towards the point of becoming human and mind-endowed; the Fomorians were the Gods or so to say Spiritual Powers of those lower worlds; the forces in opposition to upward evolution. So we see Bres of that dual lineage: with magic from his Danaan mother, and blackness from his Fomorian father: the Atlanteans, inheriting mind from the Manasaputra, but turning their divine inheritance to the uses of chaos and night.

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As his reign represents the whole Atlantean period, we might expect it to have begun well enough, and worsened as it went. This was so; had he shown his colors from the first, it is not to be thought that the Danaans would have tolerated him at all. But it came to be, as time went on, that he oppressed Ireland abominably; and at last they rose and drove him out. Nuada, whose missing hand had been replaced with one of silver, was restored in the kingship; henceforth he is called Nuada of the Silver Hand. Here we have the return or redescent of the Divine Dynasties who came to lead the men of the early Fifth Race against the Atlantean giants. I shall beg leave now to tell you the story of the Second Battle of Moytura.

Perhaps it was in Ireland that the White Adepts of the Fifth made their first stand against the Atlanteans? Perhaps thence it first got its epithet, *Sacred* Ierne?—Bres, driven out by the Gods, took refuge with his father the Fomorian king beyond the western sea; who gave him an army with which to reconquer his lost dominions. Now we come to the figure who represents the Fifth Race. There are in Europe perhaps a dozen cities named after Lugh Lamfada, the Irish (indeed Celtic) Sun-god: Lyons, the most important of them, was Lug-dunum, the *dun* or fortress of Lugh. Lugh was a kind of counterpart to Bres; he was the son of Cian, a Danaan, and a daughter of the Fomorian champion Balor of the Mighty Blows, or of the Evil Eye. The story of his birth is like that of Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae. Danae's son, you remember, was fated to kill his grandfather Acrisius; so Acrisius shut Danae in an inaccessable tower, that no son might be born to her. The antiquity of the whole legend is suggested by this nearness of the Greek and Irish versions;—even to the similarity of the names of Dana and Danae: though Dana was not the mother of Lugh, but of the whole race of the Gods: *Tuatha De Danaan* means, the 'Race of the Gods the Children of Dana.' So you see it comes from the beginnings of the Fifth Race, a million years ago; but how much better the history of that time is preserved in the Irish than in the Greek version! As if the Irish took it direct from history and symbolism, and the Greeks from the Irish. And why not? since in the nature of things Ireland must have been so much nearer the scene of action.

Lugh grew up among his mother's people, but remembered his divine descent on his father's side; and when it came to the War of the Fomoroh against Ireland, was for fighting for his father's people. So he set out for Tara, where Nuada and the Gods were preparing to meet the invasion; and whoever beheld him as he came, it seemed to them as if they had seen the sun rising on a bright day in summer.—"Open thou the portal!" said he; but the knife was in the meat and the mead in the horn, and no man might enter but a craftsman bearing his craft. "Oh then, I am a craftsman," said Lugh; "I

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am a good carpenter." There was an excellent carpenter in Tara already, and none other needed.-"It is a smith I am," said Lugh. But they had a smith there who was professor of the three new designs in smithcraft, and none else would be desired. Then he was a champion; but they had Ogma son of Ethlenn for champion, and would not ask a better. Then he was a harper; and a poet; and an antiquary; and a necromancer; and an artificer; and a cup-bearer. But they were well supplied with men of all those crafts, and there was no place for him.— "Then go and ask the king," said Lugh, "if he will not be needing a man who is excellent in all those crafts at once"; and that way he got admission.

After that he was drawing up the smiths and carpenters, and inquiring into their abilities, and giving them their tasks in preparation for the battle. There was Goibniu, the smith of the Danaans.—"Though the men of Ireland should be fighting for seven years," said Goibniu, "for every spear that falls off its handle, and for every sword that breaks, I will put a new weapon in its place; and no erring or missing cast shall be thrown with a spear of my making; and no flesh it may enter shall ever taste the sweets of life after;—-and this is more than Dub the smith of the Fomorians can do." And there was Creidne the Brazier: he would not do less well than Goibniu the Smith would; and there was Luchtine the Carpenter: evil on his beard if he did less than Creidne;—and so with the long list of them.

It was on the first day of November the battle began; and when the sun went to his setting, the weapons of the Fomorians were all bent and notched, but those of the Gods were like new. And new they were: new and new after every blow struck or cast thrown. For with three strokes of his hammer Goibniu would be fashioning a spear-head, and after the third stroke there could be no bettering it. With three chippings of his knife, Luchtine had cut a handle for it; and at the third chipping there would be no fault to find with the handle either by Gods or men. And as quickly as they made the spear-heads and the shafts, Creidne the Brazier had the rivets made to rivet them; and if there were bettering those rivets, it would not be by any known workmanship. When Goibniu had made a spear-head, he took it in his tongs, and hurled it at the lintel of the door so that it stuck fast there, the socket outward. When Luchtine had made a spear-haft, he hurled it out at the spear-head in the lintel; and it was good hurling, not to be complained of: the end of the haft stuck in the socket, and stuck firm. And as fast as those two men did those two things, Creidne had his rivets ready, and threw them at the spear-head; and so excellent his throwing, and the nicety of his aim, no rivet would do less than enter the holes in the socket, and drive on into the wood of the shaft;—and that way there was no cast of a spear by the Gods at the hellions, but there was a new spear in the smithy ready to replace it. Then the Fomoroh sent a spy into the camp of the Gods, who achieved killing Goibniu with one of the latter's own spears; and by reason of that it was going ill with the Gods the next day in the battle. And it was going

worse with them because of Balor of the Mighty Blows, and he taking the field at last for the Fomorians,—

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> “Balor as old as a forest, his mighty head helpless sunk,
> And an army of men holding open his weary and death-dealing eye,”

—for wherever his glances fell, there death came. They fell on Nuada of the Silver Hand, and he died,—albeit it is well known that he was alive, and worshiped in Britain in Roman times, for a temple to him has been found near the River Severn.—Then came Lugh to avenge Nuada, and a bolt from his sling tore like the dawn ray, like the meteor of heaven, over Moytura plain, and took the evil eye of Balor in the midst, and drove it into his head; and then the Fomorians were routed. And this, in truth, like Camlan and Kurukshetra, is the battle that is forever being fought: Balor comes death-dealing still; and still the sling of Lugh Lamfada is driving its meteor shafts through heaven and defeating him.

As for the defeat of the Gods by the Milesians, and their retirement into the mountains, —that too is actual history told under a thinnish veil of symbolism: the Fifth Race having been started, the Sons of Wisdom, its first Gods and Adept Kings, who had sown the seeds of all bright things that were to be in its future civilizations, withdrew into the Unseen.

All this and much more,—the whole Mythological Cycle,— represents what came over into Irish literature from ancient manvantaric periods, and the compression of the records of millions of years. A century seems a very long time while it is passing; but at two or three millenniums ago, no longer than a few autumns and winters; and at a million years’ distance, the doings and changes, the empires and dynasties of a hundred centuries, look to the eyes of racial memory like the contents of a single spring. So it is the history and wisdom of remote multiplied ages that come down to us in these tales.

But with the Heroic Cycle we seem to be entering a near manvantara. This is the noon-period of Irish literature, the Shakespeare-Milton time; where the other was the dawn or Chaucer period. Or the Mythological Cycle is the Vedic, and the Heroic, the Epic, period, to take an Indian analogy; and this fits it better, because the Irish, like the Indian, dawn-period is immensely ancient and of immense duration. But when you come to the Heroic time, with the stories of the high king Conary Mor, and of the Red Branch Warriors, with for *piece de resistance* the epic *Tann Bo Cuailgne,* you seem (as you do in the *Mahabharata*) to be standing upon actual memories, as much historical as symbolic. Here all the figures, though titanic, are at least half human, with a definite character assigned to all of importance. They revel in huge dramatic action; move in an heroic mistless sunlight. You can take part in the daily life of the Red Branch champions as you can in that of the Greeks before Troy; they seem real and clear-cut; you can almost remember Deirdre’s beauty and the sorrow of the doom of the Children

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of Usna; you have a shrewd notion what Cuculain looked like, and what Conall Carnach; you are familiar with the fire trailed from the chariot wheels, the sods kicked up by the horses' hoofs; you believe in them all, as you do in Odysseus and Ajax, in Bhishma and Arjuna, in Hamlet and Falstaff;—as I for my part never found it possible to believe in Malory's and Tennyson's well-groomed gentlemen of the Table Round.

And then, after long lapse, came another age, and the Cycle of the Fenians. It too is full of excellent tales, but all less titanic and clearly-defined: almost, you might say, standing to the Red Branch as Wordsworth and Keats to Shakespeare and Milton. The atmosphere is on the whole dimmer, the figures are weaker; there is not the same dynamic urge of creation. You come away with an impression of the beauty of the forest through which the Fenians wandered and camped, and less with an impression of the personalities of the Fenians themselves. There is abundant Natural Magic, but not the old Grand Manner; and you would not recognise Finn or Oisin or Oscar, if you ment them, so easily as you would Cuculain or Fergus MacRoy or Naisi. Civilization appears to have declined far between the two ages, to have become much less settled,—as it naturally would, with all that fighting going on. I take it that all the stories of both cycles relate to ages of the breakup of civilization: peaceful and civilized times leave less impress on the racial memory. The Fenians are distinctly further from such civilized times, however, than are the Red Branch: they are a nomad company, but the Red Branch had their capital at Emain Macha by Armagh in Ulster. But what mystery, what sparkling magic environs them! Mr. Rollerstone cites this as an example: Once three beautiful unknown youths joined Finn's company; but stipulated that they should camp apart, and be left alone during the nights. After awhile it fell out what was the reason for this: one of them died between every dusk and dawn, and the other two had to be watching him. That is all that is said; but it is enough to keep your imagination at work a long while.

—And then, the manvantara dies away in a dolphin glory of mystical colors in the many tales of wondrous voyages and islands in the Atlantic: such as the Voyage of Maelduin, of which Tennyson's version gives you some taste of the brightness, but none at all of the delicacy and mysterious beauty and grace.

Except the classical, this is the oldest written literature in Europe; and I doubt there is any other that gives us such a wide peep-hole into lost antiquity. Yes; perhaps it is the best lens extant, west of India. It is a lens, of course, that distorts: the long past is shown through a temperament,—made into poetry and romance; not left bare scientific history. But perhaps poetry and romance are after all the truest and final form of history. Perhaps, in looking at recent ages, we are balked

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of seeing their true underlying form by the dust of events and the clamor of details; for eyes anointed they might resolve themselves into Moyturas and Camlans endlessly fought; into magical weapons magically forged; into Cuculains battling eternally at the Watcher's Ford, he alone withstanding the great host of this world's invaders, while all his companions are under a druid sleep. . . . It is the most splendid scene or incident in the *Tann Bo Cuailgne;* and I cannot think of it, but it calls up before my mind's eye another picture: that of a little office in New York, and a desk, and rows of empty seats; and another Irishman, lecturing to those empty seats . . . . but to all humanity, really . . . . from the ranks of which his companions should come to him presently; he would hold back the hosts of darkness alone, waiting for their coming. And I cannot think of this latter picture but it seems to me as if:

Cuculain rode from out the ages' prime,
    The hero time, spacious and girt with gold,
For he had heard this earth was stained with crime.

With loud hoof-thunder, clangor, ring and rhyme,
    With chariot-wheels flame-trailing where they rolled,
Cuculain rode from out the ages' prime.

I saw his eyes, how darkening, how sublime,
    With what impatient pity and power ensouled;
(For he had heard this earth was stained with crime!)

Song on his lips—I heard the chant and chime.
    The stars themselves danced to in days of old:—
Cuculain rode from out the ages' prime.

Love sped him on to out-speed the steeds of Time:
    No bliss for him, and this world left a-cold,
Which, he had heard, was stained with grief and crime.

Here in this Iron Age's gloom and grime
    The Ford of Time, the waiting years, to hold,
Cuculain came . . . . and from the Golden prime
Brought light to save this world grown dark with crime....

Well; from the schools of Findian and his disciples missionaries soon began to go out over Europe. To preach Christianity, yes; but distinctly as apostles of civilization as well. Columba left Ireland to found his college at Iona in 563; and from Iona, Aidan presently went into Northumbria of the Saxons, to found his college at Lindisfarne. Northumbria was Christianized by these Irishmen; and there, under their auspices,

Anglo-Saxon culture was born. In Whitby, one of their foundations, Caedmon arose to start the poetry: a pupil of Irish teachers. At the other end of England, Augustine from Rome had Christianized Kent; but no culture came in or spread over England from Augustine and Kent and Rome; Northumbria was the source of it all. You have only to compare *Beowulf,* the epic the Saxons brought with them from the continent, with the poetry of Caedmon and Cynewulf, or with such poems as *The Phoenix,* to see how Irishism tinged the minds of these Saxon pupils of Irish teachers with, as Stopford Brooke says, “a certain imaginative passion, a love of natural beauty, and a reckless wildness curiously mingled with an almost scientific devotion to metrical form.”

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Ireland meanwhile was the heart of a regular circulation of culture. Students poured in from abroad, drawn by the fame of her learning; we have a poem in praise of generous Ireland from an Anglo-Saxon prince who spent his exile there in study. Irish teachers were at the court of Charlemagne; Irish teachers missionarized Austria and Germany. When the Norsemen discovered Iceland, they found Irish books there; probably Irish scholars as well, for it has been noted (by Matthew Arnold) that the Icelandic sagas, unlike any other Pre-Christian Teutonic literature, bear strong traces of the Celtic quality of Style. They had their schools everywhere. You hear of an Irish bishop of Tarentum in the latter part of the seventh century; and a hundred years later, of an Irish bishop of Salzburg in Austria. This was Virgil—in Irish, Fergil, I imagine a native name of Salzburg: a really noteworthy man. He taught, *at that time,* that the world is a globe, and with people living at the antipodes; for which teaching he was called to order by the Pope: but we do not hear of his retracting. Last and greatest of them all was Johannes Scotus Erigena, who died in 882: a very bright particular star, and perhaps the one of the largest magnitude between the Neo-Platonists and the great mystics of later times, who came long after the new manvantara had dawned. He is not to be classed with the Scholastics; he never subordinated his philosophy to theology; but approached the problems of existence from a high, sane, and Theosophic standpoint: an independent and illuminated thinker. He taught at the court of Charles the Bald of France; and was invited to Oxford by Alfred in 877, and died abbot of Malmesbury five years later,—-having in his time propounded many tough nuts of propositions for churchmen to crack and digest if they could. As, that authority should be derived from reason, and not, as they thought, vice versa; and that “damnation was simply the consciousness of having failed to fulfill the divine purpose,”— and not, as their pet theory was, a matter of high temperature of eternal duration. The following are quotations from his work *De Divisione Naturae;* I take them from M. de Jubainville’s *Irish Mythological Cycle,* where they are given as summing up Erigena’s philosophy,—and as an indication of the vigorous Pantheism of Pre-christian Irish thought.

“We are informed by all the means of knowledge that beneath the apparent diversity of beings subsists the One Being which is their common foundation.”

“When we are told that God makes all things, we are to understand that God is in all things, that he is the substantial essence of all things. For He alone possesses in himself all that which may be truly said to exist. For nothing which is, is truly of itself, but God alone; who alone exists *per se,* spreading himself over all things, and communicating to them all that which in them truly corresponds to the notion of being.”

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I think we can recognise here, under a not too thick disguise of churchly phraseology, the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* Again:

“Do you not see how the creator of the universality of things hold the first rank in the divisions of Nature? Not without reason, indeed; since he is the basic principle of all things, and is inseparable from all the diversity which he created, without which he could not exist as creator. In him, indeed, immutably and essentially, all things are; he is in himself division and collection, the genus and the species, the whole and the part of the created universe.”

“What is a pure idea? It is, in proper terms, a theophany: that is to say, a manifestator of God in the human soul.”

You would be mildly surprised, to say the least of it, to hear at the present day a native, say in Abyssinia, rise to talk in terms like these: it is no whit less surprising to hear a man doing so in ninth-century Europe. But an Irishman in Europe in those days was much the same thing as an Oxford professor in the wilds of Abyssinia would be now;—-with this difference: that Ireland is a part of Europe, and affected by the general European cycles (we must suppose). Europe then was in thick pralaya (as Abyssinia is now); but in the midst of it all there was Ireland, with her native contrariness, behaving better than most people do in high manvantara.

The impulse that made that age great for her never came far enough down to awaken great creation in the plastic arts; but it touched the fringes of them, and produced marvelous designing, in jewel-work, and it the illumination of manuscripts. Concerning the latter, I will quote this from Joyce’s Short History of Ireland; it may be of interest:—

“Its most marked characteristic is interlaced work formed by bands, ribbons and cords, which are curved and twisted and interwoven in the most intricate way, something like basket work infinitely varied in pattern. These are intermingled and alternated with zigzags, waves, spirals, and lozenges; while here and there among the curves are seen the faces or forms of dragons, serpents, or other strange-looking animals, their tails or ears or tongues elongated and woven till they become merged or lost in the general design. . . . The pattern is so minute and complicated as to require the aid of a magnifying glass to examine it. . . . Miss Stokes, who has examined the *Book of Kells,* says of it: ’No effort hitherto made to transcribe any one page of it has the perfection of execution and rich harmony of color which belongs to this wonderful book. It is no exaggeration to say that, as with the microscopic works of Nature, the stronger the magnifying power brought to bear on it, the more is this perfection seen. No single false interlacement or uneven curve in the spirals, no faint tiace of a trembling hand or wandering thought can be detected.’”

The same author tells us that someone took the trouble to count, through a magnifying glass, in the *Book of Armagh,* in a “small space scarcely three quarters of an inch in

length by less than half an inch in width, no less than one hundred and fifty-eight interlacements of a slender ribbon pattern formed of white lines edged with black ones."—One of these manuscripts, sometimes, would be given as a king's ransom.

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An unmasculine art, it may be said; and enormous laborious skill spent upon tribial creation. But once again, the age was pralaya; all Europe was passing into, or quite sunk in, pralaya. The Host of Souls was not then holding the western world; there was but a glint and flicker of their wings over Ireland as they passed elsewhere; there was no thorough entering in to take possession. But the island (perhaps) is the Western Lay-center, and a critical spot; the veils of matter there are not very thick; and that mere glint and flicker was enough to call forth all this wonderful manifestation of beauty. If I emphasize over-much, it is because all this talk about 'inferior races,'—and because Ireland has come in for so much opprobrium, one way and another, on that score. But people do not know, and they will not think, that those races are superior in which the Crest-Wave is rearing itself; and that their superiority cannot last: the Crest-Wave passes from one to another, and in the nature of things can never remain in any one for longer than its due season. It is as certain that it will pass sometime from the regions it fills with strength and glory now, as that it will sometime thrill into life and splendor the lands that are now forlorn and helpless; and for my part, seeing what the feeble dying away of it, or the far foam flung,—no more than that,—raised up in Ireland once, I am anxious to see the central glory of it rise there; I am keen to know what will happen then. It will rise there, some time; and perhaps that time may not be far off.—Oh if men could only look at these national questions with calm scientific vision, understanding the laws that govern national and racial life! There would be none of these idiotic jealousies then; no heart-burnings or contempt or hatred as between the nations; there would be none of this cock-a-doodling arrogance that sometimes makes nations in their heyday a laughing-stock for the Gods. Instead we should see one single race, Humanity; poured now into one national mold, now into another; but always with the same duality: half divine, half devilish-idiotic; —and while making the utmost best of each mold as they came to inhabit it, the strong would find it their supreme business to help the weak, and not exploit or contemn them. But it will need the sound sense of Theosophy,—-knowledge of Reincarnation, the conviction of Human Brotherhood,—to work this change in mankind.

Well; now to the things that brought Ireland down. In 795 the Norwegians began their ravages, and they seem to have had a peculiar spite against the monastery-colleges. That at Armagh was sacked nine times in the ninth, and six times in the tenth century. In the same period Glendalough was plundered seven times; Clonard four times; Clonmacnois five times betnveen 838 and 845, and often afterwards. These are only samples: there were scores of the institutions, and they were all sacked, burnt, plundered, and ravaged, again and

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again. The scholars fled abroad, taking their precious manuscripts with them; for which reason many of the most valuable of these have been found in monasteries on the continent. The age of brilliance was over. For a couple of centuries, the Norwegians, and then the Danes, were ruining Ireland; until Brian Boru did their quietus make at Clontarf in 1014. Before the country had had time to recover, the Norman conquest began: a thing that went on for centuries, and never really finished; and that was much more ruinous even than the invasions of the Norsemen. As to the Celtic Church, which had fostered all that brilliance, its story is soon told. In Wales, the Norman and Plantagenet kings of England were at pains to bring the see of St. Davids under the sway of Canterbury and into close communion with Rome: they and the Roman Church fought hand in hand to destroy Celtic liberties. The Church of the Circled Cross had never been an independent organization in the sense that the Greek Church was: it had never had its own Patriarchs or Popes; it was always in theory under Rome. But secular events had kept the two apart; and while they did so, the Celtic Church was virtually independent. In the eleventh and twelfth Centuries the Welsh Church fought hard for its existence; but Norman arms backed by Papal sanction proved too strong for it; and despite the valor of the princes, and especially of that gallant bishop-historian Gerald the Welshman, it succumbed. As to Ireland: an English Pope, Adrian IV, born Nicholas Brakespeare, presented the island to King Henry II; and King Henry II with true courtesy returned the compliment by presenting it to the Pope. The Synod of Cashel, called by Henry in 1172, put Ireland under Rome; and the Church of the Circled Cross ceased to be. There, in short and simple terms, you have the history of it.

And therein, too, as I guess, you may see all sorts of interesting phases of karmic working. For the Church of the Circled Cross, that had done so well by Ireland in some things, had done marvelously badly in others. There was a relic of political stability in ancient Ireland,—in the office of the High-kings of Tara. It is supposed now that it had grown up, you may say out of nothing: had been established by some strong warrior, to maintain itself as it might under such of his successors as might be strong too. I have no doubt, on the other hand, that it was really an ancient institution, once firmly grounded, that had weakened since the general decay of the Celtic Power. The Gods in their day had had their capital at Tara; and until the middle of the fifth century A.D. Tara stood there as the symbol of national unity. When Patrick came the position was this: all Ireland was divided into innumerable small kingdoms with their kinglets, with the Ard-righ of Tara as supreme over them all as he could make himself. The hopefullest thing that could have happened would have been the abolition of the kingdoms and kinglets, and the establishment of the Ard-righ’s authority as absolute and final.

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Dermot son of Fergus Kervall became High-king in 544. A chief named Aed Guairy murdered one of Dermot's officers, and sought sanctuary with St. Ruadan of Lorrha, one of Findian's twelve apostles, to whom he was related. The king hailed him forth, and brought him to Tara for trial. Thereupon the whole Church of Ireland rose to a man against the mere layman, the king, who had dared thus defy the spiritual powers. They came to Tara in a body, fasted against him, and laid their heavy curse on him, on Tara, and, in the result, on the kingship.—"Alas!" said Dermot, "for the iniquitous contest that ye have waged against me, seeing that it is Ireland's good I pursue, and to preserve her discipline and royal right; but it is Ireland's unpeace and murderousness ye endeavor after." *

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* I quote this from Mr. Rollerstone's book.

Which was true. The same trouble came up in England six centuries later, and might have ended in the same way. But the dawn of a manvantara was approaching then, and the centrifugal forces in England were slowly giving place to the centripetal: national unity was ahead, and the first two strong Williams and Henrys were able in the main to assert their kingly supremacy. But in the Irish time not manvantara, but pralaya, was coming; and this not for Ireland only, but for all Europe. In the natural order of things, the centrifugal forces were increasing always. That is why Dermot MacKervall failed, where Henry II in part suceeded. There was nothing in the cycles to support him against the saints. Tara, accursed, was abandoned, and fell into ruin; and the symbol and center of Irish unity was gone. The High-kingship, thus bereft of its traditional seat, grew weaker and weaker; and Ireland, except by Brian Boru, a usurper, was never after effectively governed. So when the Norsemen came there was no strong secular power to defend the monasteries from them, and the karma of St. Ruadan's churchly arrogance and ambition fell on them. And when Strongbow and the Normans came, there was no strong central monarchy to oppose them: the king of Leinster invited them in, and the king of Ireland lacked the backing of a united nation to drive them out; and Ireland fell.

Well; we have seen how often things tend to repeat themselves,— but on a higher level, —after the lapse of fifteen centuries. Patrick, probably, was born in or about 387. In 1887 or thereabouts Theosophy was brought into Ireland. Patrick's coming led eventually to the period of the Irish illumination; the coming of Theosophy led in a very few years to the greatest Irish illumination, in poetry and drama especially, that had been since Ireland fell. But Patrick did not complete things; nor did that first touch of Theosophy in the 'eighties and 'nineties of last century. Theosophy, known in those days only to a score or so of Irishmen, kindled wonderful fires: you know that English literature is more alive in Ireland now than anywhere

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else in the English-speaking world; and that that whole Celtic Renaissance was born in the rooms of the Dublin Theosophical Society. Yet there were to be eventualities: the Dublin Lodge was only a promise; the Celtic Renaissance is only a promise. Theosophy only bides its time until the storm of the world has subsided. It will take hold upon marvelous Ireland yet; it will take hold upon Sacred Ierne. What may we not expect then? When she had but a feeble candle of Truth, in those ancient times, she stood up a light-giver to the nations; how will it be when she has the bright sun shining in her heart?

So now we have followed the history of the world, so far as we might, for about a thousand years. We have seen the Mysteries decline in Europe, and nothing adequate rise to take their place; and, because of that sorrowful happening, the fall of European civilization into an ever-increasing oblivion of the Spiritual things. We have seen how in the East, in India and China, spiritual movements did arise, and succeed in some sort in taking the place of the Mysteries; and how in consequence civilization there did in the main, for long ages, go forward undeclining and stable. And we have watched the Crest-Wave, indifferent to all national prides and conceits, flow from one race to another, according to a defined geographical and temporal plan: one nation after another enjoying its hour of greatness, and none chosen of the Law or the Spirit to be lifted forever above its fellows;—but a regular circulation of splendor about the globe, like the blood through the veins: Greece, India, China; Rome, Spain, Rome, Egypt, Persia, India, China: each repeating itself as the cycles of its own lifetime might permit. And then, as the main current passed eastward from dying Europe, a reserve of it, a little European *Sishta,* passing west: from Gaul to Britain, from Britain to Ireland; from Ireland to Tirnanogue and Wonderland,* there to hide for some centuries until the Great Wave should roll westward again from China through Persia, Egypt, Africa, Sicily and Spain, up into Europe: when the Little Wave, returning magic-laden out of the Western Paradise should roll back Europewards again through Ireland, twelfth-century Wales and Brittany; and spray Christendom with foam from the sea! that wash the shores of Fairyland: producing first what there was of mystery and delicacy to uplift mankind in feudal chivalry; then the wonder-note in poetry which has probably been one of the strongest and subtlest antidotes against deathly materialism. Hence one may understand the *raison d'etre* for that strange correspondence between Chinese and Celtic happenings which we have noted: the main wave rolls east; the backwash west; and they touch simultaneously the extremities of things, which extremities are, Celtdom and China. In both you get the sense of being at the limits of the world,—of having beyond you only nonmaterial and magical realms:—Peng-lai in the East, Hy Brasil in the West;—the Fortunate Islands of the Sunset, and the Fortunate Islands of the Dawn.

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We have seen opportunities coming to each nation in turn; but that how they used them depended on themselves: on whether they would turn them to spiritual or partly spiritual, or to wholly material uses: whether they would side, in their hour of prosperity, with the Gods—as China did to some extent; or with the hellions, as in the main Europe did. And above all, we have seen how the Gods will never accept defeat, but return ever and again to the attack, and are in perpetual heroic rebellion against the despotism of materialism and evil and human blindness; and we know that the victory they so often failed to achieve of old, they are out to win now, and in the way of winning it: that we are in the crisis and most exciting of times, standing to make the future ages golden; that the measure of the victory the Gods shall win is somewhat in our own hands to decide. The war-harps that played victory to Heaven at Moytura of old are sounding in our ears now, if we will listen for them; and when Point Loma was founded, it was as if once more the shaft of Lugh the Sunbright took the eye of Balor Balcbeimnech in the midst.

And so, at this point, we take leave of our voyaging together through the past.

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* Perhaps, if we knew anything about American history, to America. One is tempted to put two and two together, in the light of what we have seen, and note what they come to. The great American Empires fell before Cortes and Pizarro, between 1520 and 1533. That surely marked the end of a manvantaa or fifteen hundred years period of cultural activity; which then would have begun between 20 and 33 A.D.—upon a backwash of the cycle from Augustan Rome? We are not to imagine that any outward link would be necessary. Is it possibly a fact that in those centuries, the first five of our era roughly, when both Europe and China were somewhat sterile for the most part,—the high tide of culture and creation was mainly in the antipodes of each other, America and India? And that after the fall of the Tang glory in China (750) and the Irish illumination in the west (775), some new phase of civilization began, somewhere between the Rio Grande del Norte and the borders of Chile? The Incaic Empire, like the Han and the Western Roman, we know lasted about four centuries, or from the region of 1100-A.D. —But there we must leave it, awaiting the work of discovery.