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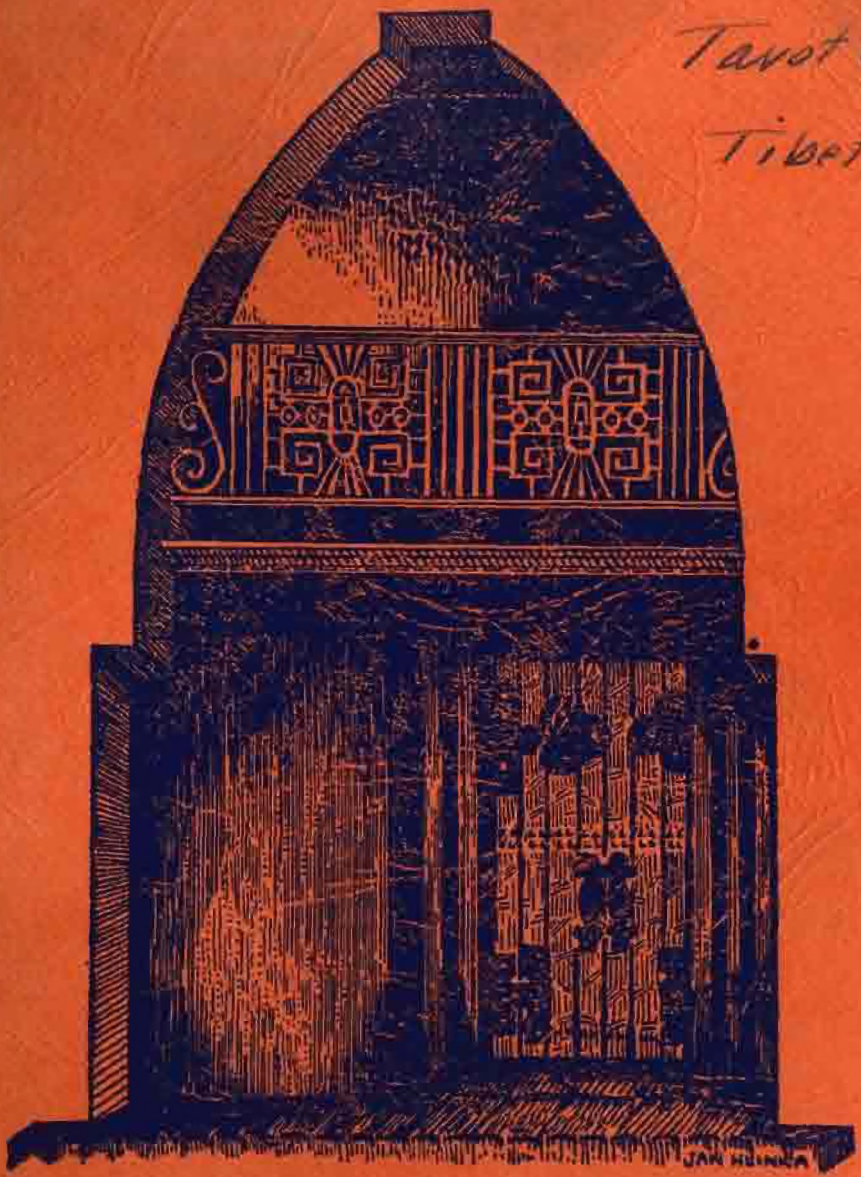

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HORIZON

Journal of the Philosophical Research Society

WINTER
1948

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QUARTERLY
VOLUME 8 No. 3

HORIZON
LINES

AN EDITORIAL
BY MANLY PALMER HALL

Plato and the Dodo

RECENTLY, one of our large national journals published an article setting forth the contributions made by ancient philosophers and scientists to the modern way of life. The survey included references to the ideals and convictions of these enlightened men, and intimated that many of the principles that they advocated might have practical value in our present disturbed generation.

Naturally, the editors received numerous letters, and inevitably the letter writers included those with ultramodern viewpoints. One correspondent was properly indignant at the thought that we should turn to the past for inspiration and spiritual guidance. The burden of his remarks was that we should seek consolation and leadership among the noble intellects of our own time. To him, Plato and the dodo belonged to a remote past, a benighted time prior to this glorious century when we are privileged to bask in the warm vitalizing rays of the atomic bomb.

Plato was quite likely a comfort to some of the Athenians and a discomfort to some of the others. Ditto for Socrates. Buddha may have had a mission in the India of long ago, and Confucius was not a bad chap—in fact, an outstanding progressive—B. C. 500.

But times have changed. We should remove the old faces from their sanctified niches and make way for new portraitures executed in the postimpressionistic style. We may not be able to recognize a prominent physicist modeled in chicken wire, but at least he is up-to-date. The letter failed to mention his candidates for the new order of immortals, and modesty forbids that we should speculate further on this rather gruesome subject.

We all like to feel modern, and I am reminded of the pertinent remarks of the president of a society where I once gave a dinner speech. She leaned over and whispered confidentially across the salad: "I have always said that I like culture because it is so cultural." We may say the same thing of progress; we admire it because it is so progressive.

Anyone who has read or studied the great intellectuals of the past realizes that these men had numerous and inevitable limitations. They were by no means perfect, and some of their conclusions

were faulty and immature. But the mistakes were of the minutia. The broad, deep programs which they advocated have guided and inspired over two thousand years of idealists, artists, mystics, dreamers, philosophers, scholars, and statesmen. Basic truths have an eternal quality about them, and while they must be adapted to the requirements of various times and places, the principles remain comparatively constant.

If Plato lived today he would be an outstanding leader in the thought of his world. Certainly he would adapt his concepts to the requirements of modern living, and would do so with superlative skill. I may be prejudiced, but I would not exchange what I have learned from Plato for the solemn and conflicting pronouncements of any committee of modern educators assembled from outstanding institutions for the improvement and edification of the young.

There is an old saying among men who go down to the sea in ships that back in the good old days of the frigate, Constitution, "ships were made of wood, and men were made of iron." It would seem today that ships are made of iron, and men are made of wood. If this be progress, let us proceed at a moderate pace.

When measuring the advancement of mankind, let us not be confused by superficials and inconsequentials. The proper measure for man is the essential development of his own character. He is not better because he has lengthened the fringe on his toga, nor because he has devised new and ingenious means for complicating his own existence.

It is also useful to meditate upon some of the wonderful discoveries which seem to the superficial prima-facie proof of a magnificent enlargement. We have devised some splendid remedies for ailments completely unknown to our ancestors. Most of these panaceas simply lower vitality and reveal a tendency to anemia in the organ of cerebration.

Let us pick entirely at random a few names and vital statistics out of the dismal past. Pythagoras lived to be approximately eighty years of age. This is conservative for some historians give him ninety or even a hundred years, and all authorities agree that he was murdered, so his life span cannot be determined with certainty.

Confucius died in his seventy-fourth year; Plato in his eighty-first; Zoroaster at approximately eighty, and Socrates was cut short in his prime at seventy by the Athenian senate. Buddha lived beyond his eightieth year, and entered Nirvana from no particular ailment. The average length of life for these six men, three of whom were murdered, was nearly seventy-eight years.

These life spans compare favorably with the expectancy tables of modern insurance companies. The interesting point, however, is that these old scholars as spiritual leaders reached ripe old age without vitamins, enriched bread, gland shots, chlorinated drinking water, quarantines, neurologists, psychologists, optometrists, and that conglomeration of specialists now struggling so valiantly to keep body and soul together in the name of science.

We may ponder that these bygone immortals fulfilled their days without losing their tonsils, adenoids, gall bladders, or appendixes. They not only survived the natural hazards but also the man-made obstacles to mortal continuance. They passed through wars, seditions, conspiracies, and agitations both religious and civil. They traveled far, mingled with strange people, and for the most part lived modestly by choice and necessity. All died in the full possession of their senses knowing nothing of anesthesia or DDT.

Plato, without bifocals, read the poems of Sophrom by the light of an oil lamp the night before he died. These ancient sages used neither elaborate drugs to prolong their lives, nor were they bolstered by fleets of consultants, advisors, or servants. Each made imperishable contributions to the progress of humankind, living without fear, and dying with a good hope. One and all, they faced the difficulties of their times and places with the strength of character, fortitude, and courage derived from some inner source within themselves. Even health was

brought under the rule of reason. They lived simply, well, and long.

If these are the dodos, we need more of them and need them immediately. Whatever knowledge they possessed was sufficient to their requirements, but the knowledge that we possess today is not sufficient to our requirements. This suggests the problem in Einsteinian relativity. If our problems are greater, theoretically at least we are an older and wiser race.

Factually we are a little older, but our wisdom is open to reasonable doubts. We have radios, motion pictures, overstuffed furniture, and air-conditioners; but have these things for which we pay and pay and pay brought us any real security, happiness, health, or peace? Are we more enlightened, or are we merely more burdened?

It requires all that we can earn to live, and regardless of our standard of living we are dissatisfied. We live so close to the circumference of our income that every doctor's bill is a disaster. We work that we may eat, and eat that we may work. Fighting desperately for leisure, we have neither plan nor program for the use of our own spare time. In every emergency we dash to an expert, only to find him more troubled than ourselves. We pay handsomely for bad advice, and look hopefully for a better administration of our affairs each time there is an election.

We spend twenty years and thousands of dollars acquiring an education, only to find at the end that every trade and profession is so crowded that we must fight and chisel and steal in order to make a living. After an intensive process of being polished by our higher culture, we make the distressing discovery that we are too soft to hold the polish. Probably there is not a great deal we can do about correcting these evils all at once, but there is no law which requires that we shall admire them or accept them as proofs of progress.

The trouble seems to be a matter of emphasis. We are concentrating all our efforts to the end of building a bigger and more expensive world. We appear to believe that if all of us could make more money, we should finally attain security; but the more we make, the more it costs us to live. If each of us made a thousand dollars a day we would have gained very little if we had to pay fifty dollars a piece for lamb chops. One expert, without benefit of Plato, has suggested that the solution is to keep wages up and prices down. We would enjoy seeing a working model of this concept.

Even in the midst of our miseries we are highly incensed and properly indignant if anyone suggests that we are not the noblest birth of time. Even as we engage in a mutual interchange of congratulations, we are passingly disturbed by the announcement that it will be necessary to increase taxes to provide additional facilities at the city jail.

When grandfather was a boy he walked six miles to school, snow, rain, or shine. Today a line of automobiles string along the curb every afternoon. One mother told me, "I am afraid to let my children walk two blocks unattended." Five hundred years ago the Venetian traveler, Marco Polo, walked to China, requiring five years to make the journey. He arrived safely, passing undisturbed through the most dangerous terrain.

But in all fairness to the modernist, let us ask him to point out the leaders he would select from among the contemporaries to guide us toward the Promised Land. Who are the men of vision, courage, and experience willing to sacrifice personal interest and profit to serve unselfishly the principles of truth and honor? Not brittle intellectuals who would nourish the world on a diet of doubts, but men of sufficient vision, addicted to those eternal principles without which neither states nor individuals can survive.

Where are men adequately trained for positions of responsibility in government? Who are the elder statesmen whose wise and kindly counsel is free from party politics and self-interest? Where are the scientists dedicated to the use of skill solely for constructive ends? Who is truthful, honest, and good? These are vital questions; and until we find something better than excuses and evasions with which to answer these rele-

vant queries, we should bear the grandeur of our times with some modesty.

A Greek citizen, more than twenty-three hundred years ago, hastening to the games in the local Athenian arena, chanced to meet a philosopher. "Come," exclaimed the sport's fan, "I have an extra seat. It will be a great exhibition, for you will see there men as strong as lions, as swift as deer, who can swim like fishes, and leap like birds." The philosopher shook his head. "Not interested. I have no desire to see human beings competing with animals, but if you promise that there is someone there inspired by the gods to the high and noble thoughts befitting a human being, I will accompany you gladly."

There are no solutions for our problems while wooden men build an iron world. One day Plato rebuked Alcibiades for his vanities and his follies, saying: "There is no merit in putting a leaden dagger in a jeweled sheath." No matter how stupendous our material accomplishments may appear, they profit us nothing if we ourselves remain barbarians in the midst of our luxuries. Civilization does not perfect man; man himself must perfect civilization.

A barbarian is one addicted to barbaric practices; it matters not whether he lives in a palace or a cave. Any man who advances his own causes without consideration for the rights of others, who grows rich making other men poor, or reaps profit from war and crime, or permits to go uncorrected the vices which flourish within himself is a barbarian. He may be gifted, accomplished, polished, and proficient in the superficial social graces, but if he lives by a code of ruthlessness he is a savage. We may cut down the jungle to build cities, but we are never free of the jungle until we have conquered its ways in ourselves. There is a part of man that changes with the mood of fashion, presenting ever-new faces, but inwardly remaining unchanged. Fashions are not progress unless they reflect an orderly pattern of conviction. It is more dangerous to be out of step than out of style.

It has always seemed strange to me that people extremely particular about their appearances are so completely indifferent to their dispositions and their temperaments. It is overoptimism to assume that we shall be truly admired simply because we wear an attractive hat. Confidentially, it still remains possible to distinguish between the hat and the wearer, and to like one and dislike the other. If we really wish to put our best foot forward, we cannot depend entirely on the shoe to lend enchantment. In the end we like people for what they are, and not for what they have.

Wealth attracts a variety of parasites, but seldom if ever inspires true friendship. We all know this, but the majority is still willing to trust its social destinies to a finger-wave or a five-dollar necktie. Why should we wish to appear good, knowing in our hearts that our true natures will come out in due time? Why not recognize that integrity and intelligence are the final criteria of our social station?

Socrates was noted for the shapelessness and dilapidation of his garments. He insisted upon sufficient coverage, but devoted little consideration to cut and color. The patricians of the day wore fine raiment, rare jewels, and paraded about with all the sacroiliac slouch now known as the "new look."

Unfortunately, we do not know the names of any of these patricians and we find no evidence of their having performed any useful functions. They drove their sport chariots up and down the rutted streets, and killed pedestrians with the same abandon familiar in our age of motor transportation. There is rumor

that these wealthy Grecians ate too much, drank too much, and set a bad example to the underprivileged classes; that is about all we know of them. But old Socrates will never be forgotten while men continue to admire the proportions of a true hero. Without striped trousers and a four-in-hand tie, he was still "a man of distinction."

It may well be that in a hasty survey of the past and its accomplishments, we attempt to draw conclusions without sufficient familiarity with or sympathy for the remote circumstances about which we are resolved to pass judgment. We are all inclined to depreciate the unfamiliar and to question the importance or utility of that which is different or remote. The life patterns of other days or peoples are dismissed with such faint praise as the familiar terms "quaint," "curious," or "picturesque."

The tourist is amused by the custom of other countries, but he seldom examines into the merits or demerits of these unfamiliar practices. Or else he measures values with the yardstick of his own tribal tradition. In this way he dismisses many foreign styles and habits, including the short, fluffy, kilt-like garment resembling a ballet skirt favored by the Greek military of today. He is amused by the skirt, but seldom ponders the distinguished record of the small but valiant Greek army.

On the assumption that anyone wearing a chlamys, (a short mantle fastened over the shoulder with a clasp and popular among the ancient Greeks) could not possibly be as efficient and practical as a man in a pinch-back checkered sport coat, we dismiss antiquity with a gesture.

Life in India, China, Persia, Greece, or Egypt 2000 years ago was not different in any essential way from life in modern London, Paris, or New York. We must not cloud the issue in attempting to prove modernity by pointing out the metropole, the underground, or the subway. These are conveniences developed to solve the transportation problems of large cities. They are no proof that the man who makes use of them to reach his destination is a better human being or engaged on a more significant errand than an Egyptian merchant, cantering along on his gaily caparisoned donkey in the days of Ptolemy the Great.

This same Egyptian merchant, whose remains were not sufficiently important to be embalmed, suffered from shortages, black markets, high costs, narrow margins of profit, and delinquent creditors. He developed monopolies, formed cartels, sued and was sued, grumbled over the taxes, paid usurers rates on the money he borrowed, and charged them on the money he lent. He looked longingly at the palaces of the rich, and snubbed the poor.

This Egyptian contributed to charity, developed ingenious ways of advertising his wares, wrote slogans, created artificial markets wherever possible, joined popular clubs, argued politics, professed religious principles he never practiced, and liked to be referred to as "square-deal Rhadamus," or "honest Horopades." He had week-end sales, overstock sales, and timely fire sales. He saved his money and, for lack of banking facilities, buried it in a pot under the floor of his house, where it paid about the same rate of interest as most modern financial institutions. He swaped and bartered and chiseled with a good hope, and was properly indignant when some other merchant outsmarted him.

When the time came for this man to depart to "that land from whence no man returneth," he had as handsome a funeral as his means would permit; and lest there be none to sincerely mourn him, he arranged in advance for a chorus of professional weepers at so much an hour. This wailing crew frequently did not know even the name of the deceased, but business is business.

As soon as the late merchant was tucked away in his eternal home, the relatives, one and all, took spades and picks and went after the buried riches. If the merchant died intestate, there was a proper family brawl, won by the clan with the strongest man power. The successful contestants promptly squandered the money and everyone lived unhappily ever after. Of course, if the pot of gold were of sufficient size, the government stepped in and took most of it on one

pretext or another. Human conduct is largely a course of action motivated by instinct, and these deep-hidden impulses remain reasonably constant over vast periods of time.

A rich Grecian merchant once took his son to Diogenes to be educated. The businessman was quite frank in his discussion with the old sage. He had no interest in having his heir become an impoverished intellectual, but he knew that Diogenes was a shrewd and thoughtful man, a keen observationalist and skilled in estimating human character.

The Athenian financier did not wish his son to be indoctrinated in any lofty ideals or sentiments that would interfere with his ability and inclination to make money. "Tell me, Diogenes," the merchant asked, "in what way is learning profitable?" The eyes of the great cynic twinkled with sly humor as he explained. "The principal benefit is this. Your son is rich, and when he goes to the games in the amphitheater, he will sit in a fine marble chair. If he studies with me, men seeing him there on his fine stone bench will not say, 'Behold one rock resting on another.'"

We can have little essential progress in this world until men discover that self-improvement is a glorious adventure. When we honestly enjoy becoming wiser more than we enjoy becoming richer, most of the pressing problems of the hour will solve themselves. If this precept underlies our concept of life, we may regard ourselves as progressives; until then, we are wandering in circles, and will stumble into the grave "sans life, sans hope, sans everything, sans end."

At this point in our rumination the *Didus ineptus*, alias the dodo, is entitled to brief notice. This large awkward bird became extinct about A. D. 1681. It was inedible and incapable of flight, laid one large white egg, and was a native of Mauritius. Its nearest relative was the *Solitaire* of Rodriguez, also now extinct. It seems to have perished along with most of its relatives simply because it lacked the ingenuity necessary for survival. The poor bird sounds more like a modern intellectual than an ancient scholar.

The dodo may teach us all a useful lesson, to wit: Any form of life can become extinct. Survival depends upon essential progress. Either we grow or we perish. Many of the huge animals of the antediluvian world were impressive in terms of mass, but deficient in terms of mind; for lack of mind, the mass was swallowed in bogs and mud pits.

We cannot depend upon the size and number of our material accomplishments. Vast cities become death traps unless those inhabiting them solve the problems of war, crime, poverty, and disease. Size is the measure of power only when the bulk is drawn into a high measure of functional integrity by a network of nerves carrying the impulses of the sovereign mind.

This is in no way intended as a tirade against modernity or a disparagement of the accomplishment of recent men. We only desire to point out that achievements must be examined and their relative importance estimated honestly and fairly. To be complacent is to dull the keen edge of true discernment. To be satisfied with a present condition is to weaken our resolution to attain a more adequate security. The smug vanish from the earth, for they have lost the most natural of all incentives: the impulse to grow.

Through the years I have been considerably criticized for emphasizing accomplishments of the ancients. To do this is to be branded a reactionary or a mental misfit. This might be an excellent opportunity to clarify my own convictions on this interesting subject. No one really wants to go back to the ancients, but there may be a virtue in the idea of going forward with them toward the accomplishment of common dreams. They sought the same ends we seek, and their experiences were and are as useful as ours.

The word *honesty* carries a variety of overtones. Strictly speaking, it applies to a code of conduct applicable to the physical dealings of men. The honest merchant gives fair weight at a fair price, keeps his word, and does not misrepresent his goods. The honest man pays his bills, supports his family, and engages

in no shady enterprises. There is a dogged devotion to the letter of the prevailing code, and this code itself is accepted as the standard of right and wrong.

Folks may be honest and at the same time be narrow, bigoted, intolerant, and profoundly ignorant of real values. We may keep the letter of a bad law, or obey at great sacrifice to ourselves a conviction itself essentially unsound. Some of the worst crimes in history have been committed in the name of honesty by people who firmly believed in the virtue of their undertakings. Everyone who says what he thinks does not think what he says. Unless the principles involved are sound, the conduct originating in these principles will not be sound.

The word *integrity* implies that large honesty which is possible only to those internally enlightened. Integrity is spiritual, mental, emotional, and moral honesty. It is impossible for the uninformed to act with integrity, for they lack the breadth of understanding which makes possible the judging of righteous judgment. Only spiritually perfected religion and philosophy can equip the individual for a life of integrity.

The wise man does not trust his decisions to the keeping of prevailing codes or his immature opinions. He aligns his judgment with the pattern of universal laws operating about him and within him and testifying to the divine plan which must be fulfilled in the world. Before he can obey these laws he must study them, understand them, and voluntarily accept them. This is the life of reason, and in the presence of the reasoning man all that is unreasonable loses its power to injure and impair.

This realization is not ancient; it is eternal. The experience of wisdom is forever old and forever new. Those who attain it approach timelessness, and once we share in its benevolence we are one with the good and the true who have gone before us and will come after us. The priceless heritage that comes to each of us in vision. We must make it our own for a day, and then pass it on.

It would be foolish to think that there is any real difference between the honesty of an ancient Chinese and the honesty of a modern American. Nor can we imagine how Christian honesty can differ from pagan honesty. Twelve eggs make a dozen anywhere, everywhere, and always. The shopkeeper who cheats the customer by intentionally leaving out one of the eggs is dishonest, whether he be black, brown, red, yellow, or white of skin. The fact that he has graduated from one of the vast educational institutions of the modern world only makes his dishonesty more reprehensible.

In common experience it appears that honesty fails to the degree that what we call civilization succeeds. There is very little crime among primitive peoples, but it increases rapidly when the blessings of culture are bestowed by traders, explorers, conquerors, and missionaries.

As of honesty, so of integrity. Discrimination inclines us to admire that which is by subject and nature admirable. The place of the admirable in the descent of history is of very little importance. Some say that when meditating upon the ancients, we forget their faults and remember only their virtues. Perhaps that is so, but if those who come after us forget our faults, for what shall we be remembered?

Just as training and experience enable us to discriminate between a fine painting and a poor one, between a piece of great sculpturing and a mediocre example, so the elevation of the mind to the contemplation of realities refines our taste and judgment, and causes us to feel a special affinity for that which satisfies the aspirations in our own hearts. This is neither idolatry nor hero worship.

We revere the courage, the skill, the resolution, the sincerity, and the devotion of those of all times who have lived as true to universal principles as the natural weaknesses of their human compositions would permit. We appreciate them because we know from our own experiences how difficult it is to live well. We do not say they should have done better, for how can we judge such matters, and what right have we to assume censorship in a sphere governed by an all-tolerant Providence.

We are all human enough to love the humanity in those we accept as great.

We like to remember that they had small faults, and perhaps some larger ones. We like to believe, in fact we know, that they were molded from no better earth than ourselves. At the same time, let us not find comfort in their infirmities, thus attempting to draw them down to our own uncomfortable level. If we decide that the illustrious dead and the somewhat less illustrious living have vices in common, it might be well for the living to strive also to the end that the old and the new have virtues in common.

When philosophers are ambitious it is regrettable, but when the ambitious are not philosophers it is a tragedy. To practice the vices of antiquity and disregard its virtues is not progress. It is easier to forgive egotism in the illustrious than in those of no accomplishments, but this does not imply that egotism is a virtue.

We may never know accurately the limitations of Plato's personality. Some people distrust him because he came from a rich family; others, because he gave away his goods. A few feel that he set a bad example by not marrying and raising a brood of "little Platos and Platoesses." One group thinks he should have stayed in politics, and another thinks that he was too much of an idealist. Because nothing is known about his private life, an occasional critic reveals his own unhealthy morals by intimating that Plato probably had much to conceal. It all sums up to that kind of unrighteous indignation which the stupid feel in the presence of their betters.

The fact is: Plato was distinctly and definitely worth knowing. We can suspect from his writings that he was a grand old character, wise, genial, and comfortable. There is something about him infinitely more human and lovable than we notice in his interpreters and detractors. He was not a highbrow gazing down from some lofty intellectualism upon an untutored world. He dared to dream that mankind could attain all the good things which humans have struggled after since the dawn of time. He left some imperishable advice essentially practical and suitable to advance the spiritual destiny of mankind.

Plato did not confer historical immortality upon himself. It is unlikely that he ever expected his name to be inscribed on the walls of public libraries, or his bust to perch in the vestibules of prominent colleges—honored and ignored. He was elevated to the high estimation of intelligent men and women by the importance of his contributions in the sphere of enduring knowledge. Why date him? He belongs to the ages.

It is doubtful if Mohammed ever expected his religious reforms to extend beyond the boundaries of Arabia. He attempted to solve the problems of his own people, and it was the integrity of his solution that spread from nation to nation, binding together the farflung nations that now form the great Islamic

league. The same principle held true of Confucius, or Buddha, or Zoroaster, or Moses. These men recognized a serious spiritual deficiency and were moved to supply, so far as it was in their power, remedies for the sovereign ills of their times and places. It was a grateful humankind that conferred honors and distinction upon them.

The Grecian concept of the heroic overstate cannot be too frequently emphasized. The Orphics taught that true elevation of consciousness lifted the human mind into a kind of middle distance between the estates of gods and men. The hero was still bound to the earth by certain limitations of body and temperament, but he had attained to a partial state of deliverance and was able to ascend through spiritual experience to a tranquil zone above the confusion of the mortal strife.

As the rational part of the human constitution verges toward identification with reality it transcends the boundaries imposed by time and place. Not only does the sage himself experience an internal sense of freedom, but his accomplishments also take on the dimensions of universality.

The hero, rising above the quality levels of his own people, is no longer limited historically, geographically, or chronologically to the destinies of that people. If his thoughts are timeless, they escape from the net of time. If his dreams are universal, they cannot be held within the limits of any particular. The hero, therefore, becomes a citizen of the world, testifying to a Utopian overstate which must sometime exercise sovereignty in all human affairs.

We have already reached that state in our spiritual estimation of values in which we no longer say Plato was a Grecian, Buddha was a Hindu, Confucius was a Chinese, Mohammed was an Arab, or Jesus was a Jew. The man who has outgrown the arbitrary boundaries of race and place also escapes from the tyranny of time. When we lose interest in where he was born, we also lose interest in when he was born. He is contemporary to the degree that his contributions are contemporary, and he remains a man of the future until we catch up with his thinking.

One of the principal reasons why we appreciate the arts of antiquity is the quality of workmanship evident in the productions of the past. We wonder at the patience of the Gobelin tapestry makers, and at the skill of those who devoted years to the intricate patterns of needlepoint lace. We regret that in modern times costs of production and the complexities of living have lowered the standards of quality in almost every field of endeavor.

The only possible conclusion that we can draw from the surviving testimonies is that antiquity, free from most of the pressures that afflict the modern world, was able to accomplish a measure of thoroughness in its projects and undertakings not possible under present-day conditions.

This general and technical superiority is also evident in the intellectual accomplishments of the classical civilizations. Philosophy, religion, and science were cultivated in a mental atmosphere uncontaminated by the intense commercialism with which we are plagued. The tempo of life permitted the leisurely contemplation of essential values, and without leisure there can be no enduring culture. If, then, the older philosophers perfected their doctrines with a grace and dignity not noticeable in the contemporary schools, it is because they found no advantage in compromising their concepts or thinking in terms of utility alone.

Only a way of life free from the excessive pressures of false values can attain its own ethical maturity. We are not assuming that antiquity was not without corruption, for there is every indication that it suffered most of the evils inevitable in human society. But the honest and enlightened thinker was not forced to accept completely the ills of his time in order to survive economically.

If a man no longer enjoyed the company of his fellow citizens, he could retire to a vacant place, build himself a house, and live with a minimum of overhead. There were few fences, restrictions, statutes, and the like, and profiteering on the essentials of life was compar-

atively unknown. The individual could still supply himself with essentials for his own survival, and could barter and exchange when need arose. In substance, those who wished to live quietly, studiously, and ethically were not penalized for the integrity of their convictions. Under such conditions, monuments both intellectual and architectural were possible that would be prohibitive under a highly competitive profit system.

There is no doubt that the present century could produce great spiritual and intellectual leaders if it did not prevent the maturing of such minds by a vicious circle of circumstances. As long as we penalize integrity and reward that which is superficial, we cannot expect to compete with the products of better times.

In other articles I have discussed the importance of leisure, so it is only necessary to point out that a certain amount of this precious though intangible commodity is absolutely necessary to the advancement of human life. Leisure does not imply laziness, but freedom from the pressure of inconsequentials. Each man must earn his way, but having done so must have the assurance that he can enjoy without fear the rewards of his own endeavors.

Many modern thinkers are inclined to regard that which we call time as an illusion of the human mind. It is a man-made instrument of measurement by which eternity is divided hypothetically into past, present, and future. If time has no essential reality, then divisions set up in time or by use of the time instrument are of appearance rather than of reality. The escape from time would then imply an escape from illusion, while emphasis upon time factors would be proof of bondage to a concept.

It is a mistake to assume that all change is progress; rather we should regard change as an invitation to progress. New situations offer new opportunities, but do not require the use of these opportunities. In new situations some adjust themselves and become stronger; others fall into endless complaints and die unadjusted. The fact that we live later than the ancients is an accident, but to live better than the ancients is a proof of enlightened intent.

Classical philosophy used the term *accident* in an arbitrary manner entirely different from popular concept. The human being, while in a bodily state, is unaware of the merits and demerits of previous lives and the karmic debts which are to influence his present existence. That which occurs to him, of which he is without knowledge of the cause, is termed *accidental.* He is unable to explain these providential occurrences in the terms of his day-by-day conduct, and usually he is unprepared to cope with these exigencies immediately or conclusively. Thus fortune is always his own fortune, but appears to him to be fortuitous. *Intent* is contrasted to *accident* in as much as it is self-directed action, determined by experience or conviction.

That which is accidental should not be regarded as proof of distinction. Of course, it may be argued that there are no accidents, and in the larger sense probably this is true, but such apparent accidents as birth in a dominant nation or race, or in a cultured family, or in the circumstance of wealth, or with certain endowments of appearance are not sufficient to justify a superiority complex.

The more elevated our station, the heavier our responsibilities to ourselves and to our social order. In the same way, the accident of our birth in time does not insure our superiority over all that existed previous to ourselves. We are not entitled to assume an arrogant manner because of what we regard as a fortunate place in time. In fact, each generation bears a heavier responsibility because it receives from the past both its wisdom and its burden.

The more we have, the more may be demanded of us. The savage, having little, cannot be expected to accomplish much. It is not seemly, however, that the civilized man, having much, should accomplish little. Too many of the moderns are like children of rich men; they have inherited the wealth of the past and now they squander it in riotous living. Like these same rich children, we have become snobs, looking down upon those

less fortunate and accepting luxury and dissipation as our birthright. It has been said that the poor leave wealth to their children, and the rich leave poverty to theirs.

It seems as though our generation considered collectively can be described as a "poor little rich child." We all wish to be maintained in the style to which we hope to become accustomed. Perhaps it is ourselves and not the school of Athens that may be most appropriately symbolized by the ungainly dodo, wandering about looking for a way to become extinct. Certainly we are showing little sincere concern for our own survival, and neither the Lord nor nature is inclined to help those who will not help themselves.

Occasionally a philosopher of history emerges from the unimpressive modern collective and points out the valuable lessons which we may learn by an honest estimation of our descent through time. Inevitably, such a thoughtful man will be hailed by a few and denounced by the many. Generally speaking, those who condemn him will be an uncomfortable lot of discontented folk, who have solved few of their own problems and have nothing to contribute but immature advice in the matter of the collective emergency. Even while they wail that we are not contemporaries, they are burdened by personal faults and failings as old as the human race.

If we are expected to renounce the past, why do we carefully preserve all its vices, intemperances, and stupidities, and then cry out that its ideals, dreams, and virtues are prehistoric? If we wish to be up-to-the-minute, why do we govern our collective conduct by the ancient legal code of Hammurabi with revisions by Caesar and amendments by Justinian? The answer is simple: We have not yet been able to improve upon the principles of equity set up by these distinguished ancients.

We are forever revolting against the experiences of the past, resolving to be original, and producing something out of our originality that neither ourselves nor anyone else can endure. At last we return to the old ways discomfited but not converted. No one recommends that we cease striving, but it is wiser to build upon the past than to reject long-proved principles.

Occasionally someone tries to become very scientific and develop an elaborate and intricate formula to prove beyond question or doubt that new ways are better, regardless of all evidence to the contrary. That which has failed in fact is demonstrated to be a success on paper. We are assured that our very misfortunes are themselves proof of superiority.

Even if we become extinct it will be a glorious achievement, for we shall cease stupendously by a technique infinitely in advance of any means known to the ancients. Those who find comfort in this notion are welcome to enjoy it to the full. Perhaps the dodo also had a complete explanation, but as he has failed from among us, his ways are of small interest.

As long as we are confronted by innumerable unsolved mysteries and uncorrected ills, we are scarcely in a fair condition to be proud. It would be wiser to devote our attention directly to the pressing need for immediate and lasting solutions for our difficulties. Where these solutions come from, when they were discovered, and who discovered them is of no importance. If these solutions have been available for thousands of years and we have not had the wisdom, wit, or courage to apply them, it is a general indictment of our civilization and ourselves.

Actually, we should know some of the solutions to the disasters that threaten. It is foolish to say that we have traveled this far along the roads of history and experience without a fairly complete knowledge of the causes and the remedies for the contemporary chaos. We are not poor little underprivileged stepchildren of the Infinite.

When a distinguished committee of educators meets in protracted session to survey our requirements and comes to the solemn conclusion that "something should be done," this is not because we are intensely stupid. Our real trouble is that we want a solution for our difficulties which will in no way interfere with

those individual or collective traits of character directly responsible for the difficulties. We are waiting for some universal Providence to reveal a plan by which we can eat the cake and still have it.

For example, we want a world co-operation that does not interfere in any way with world competition. We want to work together and work each other at the same time. We want a strong social order in which everyone thinks only of himself. We want to love everyone in general and dislike heartily most of the folks we know. We want religious unity, with each sect running all the rest. We want racial equality, with our own race on top of the heap.

We want our children to grow up with a high quality of idealism which will in no way interfere with their later exploitation of each other. We want all the rest of the world to be honest, and ourselves smart enough to impose upon that honesty. We want everyone to be rich enough so that he can have servants, forgetting that if all are rich there will be no servants.

It may be that one of the reasons why we dislike Plato is because he left so reasonable and honorable a philosophy that we dimly perceive that there is slight probability that we can attain our concept of successful living. We distinctly resent being reminded that there are rules governing the game of living, and that if we disobey these rules we shall be in trouble in spite of John Dewey.

Hoping against hope that we can attain by the sorcery of science that which is contrary to commonsense, we pin our faith upon the miraculous even as we are insisting that there are no miracles. We plunge stubbornly on, determined to be happy in spite of ourselves; and if we follow this course consistently we shall be miserable to the end.

There exists in the world today a great ethical code held in common by all the honorable religions and philosophies of the world. This code would work if it could be applied, and the reason that it cannot be applied is man himself, who has not reached a degree of maturity which can inspire him to follow a course of conduct suitable to his needs.

When individuals in any part of the world through personal experiences become convinced of the importance of right action, they accept voluntarily a standard of living which satisfies their convictions. This is automatic, and a greater number is coming to this realization with each passing year. But those unconvinced cannot be converted. We are not miserable because we *have* to be, but because we *choose* to be, and the whining, mumbling, and grumbling are but evidences of a bad disposition.

All reformers have felt that if humanity ever saw the facts, it would rush forward gloriously and joyously to embrace wisdom and understanding. But even these reformers are not originators of doctrines, for there is nothing new under the sun. We have had some version of the golden rule ever since the Stone Age, but we have carefully avoided applying it to practical problems.

Those periods in history in which we were most honest were the ones in which dishonesty was the least profitable. When we had nothing we were willing to share it with all, but when we got something we decided to keep it for ourselves. States were best governed when the laws were few, just, and honorably enforced. The more laws we developed, the more crime burdened our states. As long as we patch effects and remain indifferent to causes, we shall be perturbed by the prevailing corruptions.

The question has often been asked: Why should a man be honest, and how shall we induce him to develop a taste for the simple virtues? Religions have tried hope of heaven and fear of hell, but these mechanisms have lost vitality. Then we tried elaborate philosophical systems by which we could prove beyond doubt, if not to the point of enlightenment, that honesty was mathematically sound. Still the jails were full.

Then science came along and gave us a broad survey of the workings of natural law by which all nature united to reward the honest man. But nature's benevolence was slow in arriving and the rewards of dishonesty could be collected immediately, so man exchanged a future hope for a present profit. Psychiatrists have pointed out that most of the personal miseries from which we suffer are due to dishonest thinking, but apparently we still prefer to nurse our notions and arrive eventually in the psychopathic ward.

The most common explanation that has come to me to explain the conduct of individuals who spend their lives in quandries is *that they just can't help it.* When we feel like getting mad, there seems nothing possible to do but to get mad; anything else is a violent frustration. If we are by nature stingy, well—that's how it is. After all, some folks seem to be able to get along with us, and those who cannot will have to develop new acquaintances.

What is more, if we are mean enough we get a lot of attention, our friends are careful not to irritate us, and we usually succeed in having our own way. These ripe fruits available for the asking, in fact ready to drop in our lap, are far more attractive than the small green apple of philosophy at the top of the tree. Let others do things the hard way; we will do them the easy way, and then curse the rest for our misfortunes.

The I-can't-help-it philosophy of life is supported by a strange mental density. There is no internal awareness or instinct inviting us to assert our intelligence over our instincts. Even when the harvest comes, we do not really recognize our own responsibilities. If the facts are too obvious to deny, we may have a superficial acknowledgement, but even then we do not sincerely believe what we are saying. Our real conviction remains that had it not been for a spell of bad luck we would have succeeded with our original program. So we try again, hoping that fortune will favor our intemperances. The crime is not to do wrong but to get caught.

Until the average person realizes that he has the strength of character necessary to control himself, he can never be redeemed by any code of ethics imposed upon a society as a group. He can study anything, believe anything, and discuss learnedly the most noble of all doctrines, but until he can apply principles of integrity to his own nature he is an ungenerated creature. But sometime, somewhere, someway each of us comes to the day of decision. Be it in this life or in lives to come, eventually we must face the facts.

By the time we get around to the business of self-improvement it will have lost most of its terrors. We will be so miserable that even being virtuous will not seem so dreadful as we expect. In that moment of heroic determination, we shall discover a new world of hope and aspiration beyond the dense clouds now enveloping our projects.

When the light of dawn glows within our own hearts and minds, we shall discover that the heroes of the past have an immortal and timeless existence within our own consciousness. We will no longer think of Plato teaching his disciples beside the Athenian swamp long ago. He will come to us as a present impact, for he lives when we find him. He continues to live as long as we need him, and he walks with us into our own future.

All good things are distant and dead until we experience them. In that moment they are imminent and immortal. We no longer talk about the past and the future; we live in an unfolding state of Now. All that we need lives Now, and in ourselves all distances and dimensions are reconciled by our necessity.

It would seem that under conditions as they exist today all prejudices about

possible sources of vital knowledge are unfortunate. We should not be thinking in terms of times and places, but should accept with sincerity and gratitude the contributions of all past and present who can make a vital contribution to our needs. So desperate is the necessity of the hour that we but delay progress by idle argument about what we will acept and what we will not accept. If it is useful, use it; and give honor without reservation where honor is due.

It is a natural human privilege to express gratitude, and we are better people when we acknowledge a just indebtedness. The heroes of the past require no allegiance to themselves, but they invite all of us to give allegiance to those enduring principles which they also served, gallantly and unselfishly.

With this spirit of honest and honorable seeking and with a high conviction, we can find reasonable answers to all reasonable doubts. We can establish our lives on sure footings, and proceed to the work at hand with a good hope. The fate of the dodo proves that the useless shall not inherit the earth. This awkward bird survived its natural time, and failed for lack of the qualities of survival. Even this humble biped can teach us a valuable lesson, and we could all meditate with considerable profit upon both Plato and the dodo.

THE MIND OF THE PEOPLE

When Dante published his *Inferno,* it was widely held that the great poem was a factual account of Dante's personal descent into perdition.

When Sir Thomas More issued his *Utopia,* a learned theologian of the time recommended that missionaries be dispatched immediately to convert the inhabitants of the island to the Christian faith.

A certain writer, publishing a collection of letters, arranged the book without pagination so that the binder could put each purchaser's letters at the beginning of the book as an indication of their relative importance.

By the middle of the 18th century, it was customary to pay from ten to twenty guineas for the honor of having a play dedicated to you. Of course, it was not customary to consumate the transaction without a certain amount of haggling. You could have your name on an inferior production at a special discount.

In those good old days when rulers practiced philosophy, the king of Egypt sent a questionaire to the king of Ethiopia. One of the questions was, "What is the oldest of all things?" The king of Ethiopia answered, "Time," because it included and measured the extent of all other things. Thales, the Greek Sophist, disagreed, insisting that time consisted of past, present, and future, and that future time must be regarded as the youngest of all creations, inasmuch as it does not yet exist. Thales answered the question of the Egyptian king, saying, "The most ancient of things is God, for he never had beginning or birth." That which is eternal is older than time, and includes within itself all the dimensions of duration.

The Christmas Mystery

Broadcast given for the veterans at Hospital in Pasadena

THE Christmas season has been held in the deepest veneration since the beginning of human civilization. Nations that no longer exist celebrated this festival long before the dawn of the Christian era. This particular season was sacred to the Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and the peoples of the Near East, and was regarded as the proper time for special ceremonies, festivals, and religious rites, even in the Far East.

Probably the original concept of Christmas resulted from the consideration of the motions of the heavenly bodies, especially as these related to the phenomena of the equinoxes and solstices. The winter solstice, which occurs between the 20th and 25th of December, was a time of universal rejoicing, for it was regarded as the annual birthday of the sun. On that day the sun began its northward motion, bringing the promise of spring and summer to the tribes and nations dwelling in the Northern Hemisphere of the earth.

In those olden times when most of human civilization was agricultural, the mystery of life was symbolized by the mystery of the germinating seed and the growth of the grains, fruits, and vegetables necessary to sustain man, and make possible the storing away of various food products against the coming winter and various accidents that might occasionally afflict the harvest.

The modern religious practice of tithing, or setting aside a part of one's wealth and income for the service of God, seems to have begun among farming classes of long ago. When the harvest was gathered, ten per cent of the seed was set aside for the next planting. If men ate or sold all their grain, there could be no crop the following year. Gradually the practice of reserving a part as sacred and necessary for the preservation of the tribe or nation gave rise to a completely religious practice. But, like so many religious principles, tithing originated in a useful and important concept of practical action.

It is not really true that ancient peoples worshiped the sun, even though they held the orb of day as an important religious symbol. To them, the sun blazing in the sky bore witness to a divine life that created and preserved all things. The life of the sun sustained all the vital processes of nature. The light of the sun revealed the broad program of nature's production, and the warmth of the sun was an ever-present comfort

and protection against the strange dark coldness of the night.

When the sun went to sleep, the world was filled with an impenetrable gloom, and men feared the darkness and the strange savage creatures that prowled in the darkness. Then each day the dawn came again with a new promise of security and hope.

Later, the men living in the valley of the Euphrates studied the stars and the motions of the heavens from their tall towers in the desert. They measured the seasons and observed that the year was like a long day made up of many days and nights. The year had its spring when the seeds grew, its summer when men guarded their crops, the fall when the harvesting brought in the wealth of the year, and lastly, the cold, dark winter, when only a few plants, like the evergreens—now the Christmas tree—survived to prove that life was eternal.

There were three long, dark nights, the longest of the year. Then, for some mysterious reason, the nights began to shorten, and the days grew longer, and the love of the sun for its creatures seemed to begin again. When this lengthening of the day occurred, it was appropriate to recognize this solstice as a peculiar proof of God's love, and as a pact and a promise that the world would soon again be green and covered with flowers and bear its fruits for the preservation of mankind.

So the priests of Zoroaster in Persia lit their sacred fires. The Druids of ancient Britain sent runners across the hills with blazing torches. The Greeks held great processionals of rejoicing, and the Romans sang hymns to the new-born sun god.

Even today we preserve many of the old symbols, although we have forgotten the origin of them. We trim the Christmas tree, one of the world's oldest symbols of the promise of immortality. We send presents and gifts and greetings and good wishes, because that is what ancient men believed the sun was doing on that festive day. Our presents represent the wealth of the harvest, and our good wishes for the new year acknowledge that on this winter solstice a new life begins for all men, preserved by the light and warmth of the sovereign sun.

There is a Santa Claus, old St. Nicholas, who lives at the North Pole. He comes from Egypt, where a very fat, very jolly bewhiskered old divinity secretly brought gifts to children four thousand years ago at the time of the winter solstice. On this occasion, also, the banquet is spread, families gather together, all grudges and feuds are terminated, and men acknowledge their dependence upon a spirit vaster and more beautiful than themselves.

In Christendom the festival of Christmas is associated especially with the birth of a noble and wonderful person, who taught men to love their heavenly father and to dwell together in a condition of friendliness, justice, and peace. It is in his name and in his honor that hundreds of millions of his followers throughout the world celebrate the day of his nativity. There are religious observances and family gatherings and, in recent years especially, there is a tendency to believe that this day is a peculiar festival for children. Most grownups have forgotten that in their hearts they are also children, and that Christmas can mean a great deal to them if they accept it as a kind of mystical experience within themselves.

It is not good that Christmas should be commercialized and that we should measure friendship by the cash value of the gifts we send or receive. If we take such an attitude, we shall certainly lose the spirit of the occasion and decide that it is a tiresome, burdensome, and expensive festival with little or no vital significance.

Let us rather use this occasion to be thoughtful, perhaps to dream back through the long corridors of time to the nations of the past and to those early faiths, when men went out alone into the night to commune with the spirit that hovered in the sky, whose eyes were like the twinkling stars. The old Greeks believed in an ever-coming spirit of truth and beauty. This spirit dwells forever like a benediction in the heart of its world. Men, living their busy problem-burdened lives, forget the privilege of thinking beautiful thoughts and perform-

ing generous deeds. So the spirit of truth and love is locked within them, like the prisoner in some dark and distant dungeon; yet, this spirit is the best of man himself, for in it abides the dreams, the aspirations, and the noble convictions which transform an animal-creature into a truly human being.

It was St. Paul who said, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This Christ in you is a Christliness which exists as a potential, everywhere and in everything. It is released into manifestation through the practice of the principles which it represents. It can have no expression, no release, no manifestation in our lives except when we release our own nobility and give it an opportunity to lead us and guide us in ways of righteousness.

The ever-coming Lord of the old mysteries is universal love, coming into birth in the hearts of men. It can come only to those who are dedicated to such noble and generous convictions as are appropriate to the true dignity and estate of man. It can come as the Prince of Peace unto nations, only when the men and women who make up the nations practice the principles of brotherhood in their daily lives. Just as the annual birth of the sun brings the promise of the good harvest, so the birth of a spirit of universal life in the heart and mind of man brings with it also the abundant rewards reserved for those who practice the presence of God in daily living.

We all wait for better times, when the world will be guided by a spirit of righteousness, but these better times cannot come until the human being has kept the faith in his own heart. Neither laws nor statutes, neither prophets nor saviors, neither threats nor promises can bring this world to happiness and security unless each of us, in his own way, experiences a mystery in the spirit.

Each year at Christmas, the story of this mystery is repeated, and men are reminded of this larger plan which it is possible for them to fulfill, if they incline their hearts and minds to such a lofty purpose. As an early Christian mystic once said, "Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, there is no remedy for the forlornness in our own hearts. The cross of Golgotha stands in vain on Calvary, unless within our own hearts we experience this divine tragedy of man."

Christmas is not something to be read about or to be talked about. It is not enough that we shall gather about festive boards or get down on our knees and play with the toys intended for the children. It is not enough that we have remembered those who have remembered us, and given according to our expectancy of that which shall be given unto us. Christmas is not a routine in which we carefully put away the ornaments of the tree so that we shall have them again the following year. The peculiar riches of this day belong to the overtones and the imponderables, the things that are beyond dimension and description. While we may share ourselves and our goods with others, the real mystery of the Christmas spirit is revealed only to and through the heart of man and the heart of his world.

Each man must follow the star of hope within himself. Like the wise men of old, he must bring his skill, his plans, and the ambitions of his life and offer them to a spirit of beauty mangered in his own internal consciousness. The Christ story is a world story. It belongs to no particular sect or creed, or to any man-made institution. It has nothing to do with races, or national boundaries, or languages. It is simply an experience of dedication to the best part of ourselves, and through ourselves the best part of all that lives.

Today we live in an atmosphere of insecurity, burdened with the realization that there is little real peace in the world. Nations fear each other; and the brotherhood of man, the deepest and most sacred of the convictions of our race, appears to be a dream impossible of actual accomplishment. Yet it is the message of our faith and of the faiths of all good and honorable men that the brotherhood of man is not only possible but actually the most practical and most reasonable solution to the dilemmas of our generation.

Brother Lawrence, in his beautiful and touching mystical tribute, *The Practice of*

the Presence of God, reveals in words of majestic simplicity the formula of an enduring peace. It can come only when men are aware of an integrity within themselves and have the courage and sincerity to live according to the laws of that integrity. We may call this spirit of love and understanding what we will, but by any name and by any concept it is the deliverer and the redeemer.

Why not sanctify this Christmas by a gentle moment of personal quietude? Why not be still, and in this stillness celebrate a mystical communion with a spirit that abides in peace and in stillness? By so doing, we truly keep the faith. We keep the faith of all the great and the good and the true who have gone before. We keep the faith of the prophets, the patriarchs, and the apostles. We keep the faith of the great philosophers, the immortal artists, the inspired musicians, and the poets whose souls have sensed the glory of their Lord.

But more than all this, we keep the faith with our world in pain. We discover by an inward experience ways and means of extending peace outward from ourselves into our homes, our families, and our places of business. If ours is the worker's place we work with honesty and joy in our hearts. If we are leaders and have authority over men we administer that authority with gentle, wise, and loving thoughtfulness. In each of our good deeds, in each of our good thoughts, and in each of our good actions a universal spirit is made manifest, and through us comes to its sorrowing world.

But there is still more, and this is most important. We find and we keep a faith with ourselves through long hours of pain and sorrow, through bitter years of loneliness, through what seems to be an endless struggle against countless difficulties. A strength from within gives us the courage and the wisdom to keep the faith. With a song in our own hearts we can face almost any external conditions with wisdom and tolerance and generosity.

It is promised that though thousands may perish upon the right hand and thousands upon the left hand, the just man shall not be moved. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, and whatever the consequences, we are sufficient if we have found the immortal spirit of truth within ourselves. It is not even necessary that we shall know all of the workings of this spiritual mystery within us, for we have also faith which can accept much that cannot be completely comprehended. Once we have sensed the immortal good within, we can serve it, obey it, and find in it an ever-present help in time of trouble.

It is not because we are lacking in science or in education or in transportation and communication that we are a race of unhappy people. In terms of physical progress, each day brings greater security, greater prosperity, greater opportunity. Our misfortune lies in the poverty of our internal lives. We have so many luxuries, and yet we do not have the one necessity. That necessity is a high conviction, sustained by a strong and certain realization of the way in which we should live and think and act. Without an internal life to illumine our way, physical things lead only to chaos and discord. It is so necessary that we find this life and, finding it, have the courage to dwell in it and obey its laws.

Nearly all of the faiths of men teach that at some time a comforter and a redeemer will come to men. Although the details of the doctrines may differ, is it impossible or unreasonable that this spirit, which is desired of all nations, can come to us as honorable persons, and through us come to others who receive the strength and courage of our generous understanding and helpfulness?

Probably we are not intended to be each other's keepers, but there is something essentially fine in the concept of being each other's helpers. After all, the entire world is looking for the same things: happiness, peace, and security. Physical institutions have never been able to bestow these wonderful but intangible qualities. It may well be that they cannot be given to us in the ordinary sense of the word; we must discover them by an experience of ourselves and in ourselves.

Let Christmas be the occasion of a rededication of our small lives to the purposes of that great life in which we live and move and have our being. Of ourselves truly we are little, but there is locked within us a greatness we can never control and can never master. But if we elect to become the servants of this greatness, living to fulfill its purposes as they are manifested about us in life, we come to a state of internal security that surpasses understanding. We are not weak or negative, nor do we lose the courage of action; we gain new courage because we have experienced a worthy reason for action. We live no longer, each man thinking of his own requirements, but mindful of the requirements of others; and in this larger mindfulness, we attain the greatest good for ourselves.

Such thoughts as these should enrich and enlarge the experience of Christmas. This sacred day, set apart by humanity from ancient times, is an annual reminder of an eternal covenant between the light of the universe and the immortal flame burning in the human soul. We should enjoy Christmas in every way possible and share that joy with as many as we can. But we should also set aside a little time to ponder the mystery of that larger life which we must come to understand and obey if we are to survive. So we give thanks for the generous earth that supports us, but let us also remember that we live not by bread alone nor by the fulfillment of worldly desires.

Our real life—our eternal life—is sustained by a spirit to which we owe not only gratitude but obedience, not only obedience but understanding—the mystery of a universal beauty which is not of this world, but is born into this world for the salvation of all peoples. The birthplace of this mystery is the heart of man; and once this spirit is born, there can be no end to the human effort until all men dwell together in the love of God and the service of one another.

CULINARY NOTES

The Elder Pliny writes of a man who studied the art of fattening snails with a kind of paste. He was so successful that the shells of some of the snails could contain several quarts.

The Romans fattened peacocks, and the flesh of young foxes fed on grapes is mentioned as a delicacy by Galen. Hippocrates describes the flesh of young puppies as superior to that of most birds.

Juvenal describes a man who could tell by the first oyster in a stew the nation from which all came.

According to Hegesias, life is more important to a fool than to a wise man, because there is much more that a fool can learn from it.

Bion said, "It is a great misfortune not to be able to bear misfortune."

One day a man came to Menedemus, asking, "Master, should a good man take a wife?" Menedemus replied, "Do you think I am a good man?" When the visitor assented, the philosopher continued, "Well, I have taken one."

Notes and Reflections on the Tarot Cards

THE history of playing cards and the possibility that these symbolical devices have a religious or philosophical significance have intrigued esoteric thinkers for more than two centuries. There are several hypotheses, each supported by groups of research students and enthusiasts. As is so often the case in a matter of this kind, the critical investigator arrives at conclusions in conflict with the transcendentalists. It seems wiser, therefore, to present impartially the evidence variously accumulated and allow the reader to form his own conclusions.

Some may feel that an impartial approach reveals a lack of devotion to the subject, but we prefer not to indulge in the kind of directional writing which obscures facts in an effort to defend opinions. The lack of a sober scholarship in the spheres of esoteric arts and sciences has led to a confusion rather than a clarification of the issues involved. We must learn to bestow our allegiance upon that which is true and not trust to the productions of wishful thinking. In this spirit of honorable inquiry, we shall attempt a reconstruction of those mystical traditions which deals with the origin and development of Tarot symbolism, and then compare our findings with available historical data. In this way nothing relevant or necessary to an honest evaluation will be neglected.

There is a persistent rumor that the Tarot cards formed an integral part of the symbolism of the Arabian Mysteries, especially the arcane doctrines of the dervishes. Although conclusive evidence is unavailable, it is reported that pictorial devices, arranged in the form of a deck of cards, were in circulation among the mysterious wise men of Fez and Damascus. It was among these elusive adepts that the equally elusive Father C. R. C. of Rosicrucian manifestoes is said to have been initiated.

3 L'IMPERATRICE

When conquering Christendom destroyed the pagan sanctuaries of Serapis, Isis, and Osiris, the magic and sorcery of Egypt retired into the desert lands of the Near East and were given asylum among the mystics of Islam. In the *Book of Revelation* it is written that the woman, clothed with the sun and carrying the man-child who was the hope of the world, fled into the desert to escape the great dragon, which sought to destroy her and her progeny. This may be a prophetic allusion indicating that the author of the *Apocalypse* (himself an initiate of the Phrygian Rites) realized that the ancient arcana was in danger of extinction.

The *Book of Revelation* is dominated by the doctrine of anthropomorphism. As far back as religio-philosophic thought can be traced, two forces have struggled to dominate the human mind by controlling its reasoning power. The anthropo-

morphic deity of the early Persian magi fought in space with its own shadow for dominion over the world. This shadow, the evil spirit Ahriman, or Satan, forever opposing the principle of Good, set up a strife which extends into every departmen of the creation.

The war in heaven between Ormazd, the benevolent principle of light, and Ahriman, the spirit of negation, was reflected downward into human society as the eternal conflict between the ancient mysteries as institutions of philosophic, religious, and aesthetic culture and enlightenment, and that primitive ignorance which sought by tyranny, ambition, and greed to engulf the ancient temples and extinguish the sacred fires upon their altars.

As an organic structure of institutions, the pagan mysteries sank into historic oblivion about the 6th century A. D. A night of spiritual darkness descended upon the world, and theological dogmas eventually eclipsed the light of reason. Certainties were obscured by uncertainties. Practices surrendered to theories, and the dictates of a blind and fanatical faith supplanted the noble doctrine of the initiated philosophers. Thus came the Dark Ages, long centuries of benightedness, in which man tortured and destroyed his fellow man for the glory of an all-merciful God. Out of the religious and ethical chaos that followed the collapse of classical learning emerged the dark-cowled form of the Inquisition. Theology retrograded to the condition of a pious sham, until humanity with one despairing gesture repudiated the thralldom of an unendurable dogmatism, and rushed to embrace the materialism and skepticism of modern times.

From the comparatively mental security of the 20th century, it is difficult to understand the terror which burdened the intellectual atmosphere of medieval Europe. Bigotry sat in the seat of the mighty, and the rack and gibbet chilled the zeal of the dissenter and the heretic. The Dark Ages not only extinguished the graces of gentle, spiritual conviction, but contributed to the decline of all the physical arts and sciences with the possible exceptions of music and painting. The fundamentals of logical thinking, developed with such meticulous care by the Greeks and Egyptians, were buried under the common ruin until rediscovered and restated by such courageous intellectuals as Paracelsus, Paré, and Vesalius. Ignorance generated plagues of the flesh, and whole communities and nations were wiped out through their own filth and degeneracy.

Intoxicated with a false culture, rendered pompous with petty power, and encouraged and condoned by a misinterpreted faith, Europe built its tower of Babel. Then the lightning bolts of an avenging Providence struck the monstrous structure. Throne after throne crumbled. Prince after prince was tortured and murdered, that another equally worthless might take his place, enjoy his privileges for a little while, and then meet a similar fate. Even in this far-off day, Europe still suffers from the vengeance of an outraged destiny. Her fields are strewn with the bodies of her dead; her streams have run red with human blood, and the hearts of her people have ached from the burden of their sorrows.

But the martyred heroes of those Dark Ages, whose bodies fed the flames of the Inquisition, did not die in vain. Out of this travail of the flesh and the soul emerged the ideals of liberty, tolerance, fraternity, and democracy. Science was born in a dungeon surrounded by the most dangerous of beasts—evil men. Retiring from those intolerant institutions which enslaved and corrupted the human soul, those few of clearer vision sought the answer to life's mysteries in far places. Even in an age of ruthless tyranny, there were some with larger foresight than others who realized that evil times would pass away and that the human purpose would rise victoriously, like the fabled Phoenix from the ashes of its own dead.

While the intellectual life of Europe waned, the beacon fires of a higher and more sufficient concept were kept alight in remote parts of Syria, Arabia, and adjacent lands, beyond the dominion of European princes. In hillside caves and desert oases, communities of the wise

KNIGHTS FROM AN EARLY PORTUGUESE DECK

congregated as did the patriarchs and sages of old. The great body of Platonic lore, the Orphic traditions, the laws of Zarathustra, the mysteries of primitive Islam (later to be reformed by the prophet (Mohammed), the Hermetic arcanum, the secrets of alchemy: all these and many other orders of knowledge were safe-guarded by the wise men of the desert, the descendents of the ancient magi and Sabians - - - the stargazers of Chaldea and Phoenicia.

The Crusades brought Europe into vital contact with the Near East, and the soldiers of the cross, while far from their native lands, were endoctrinated with those traditions and philosophies so painstakingly obliterated from the states of Christendom. Many of the crusaders were devout men who rejoiced in being servants of the true God, and who left their homes and families, sacrificing all that was near and dear to free the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidel.

The feudal lords and petty barons, with their knights and squires, who had come to fight the devil in the guise of a loathsome brigand, found instead the refined and chivalrous Saracen, whose delicately chiseled features bore witness to centuries of culture, and who was not only a valiant foe but all too often a generous victor. When they returned to Europe, the disillusioned knights-crusaders served as a wedge by means of which Eastern culture so long diverted from the

West flowed back again into chaotic Europe. The heraldic arms of many an Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic lord reveal that these nobles took brides from among the Saracens, and brought these accomplished ladies back with them to their feudal castles.

The Knights Templars, of Jerusalem in particular, applied themselves studiously to the Syrian Mysteries. Contacting the secret Brotherhood of Mt. Lebanon, where were preserved the original traditions of the Jewish and Christian cults, they discovered that the Jesus of the Church was not the Jesus of Nazareth. Initiated into the more profound principles of their faith, these crusading knights returned to Europe as men of vision and power and suited to advance the civilization of their day. The Templars became a real menace to the structure of European intolerance, and jeopardized the solidarity of existing political and theological orders. The entrenched nobility and clergy gathered their resources, combined their forces, and by recourse to the most despicable means destroyed the Templars and confiscated their extensive properties.

The heroic figures of the guardians of the Sepulchre were rendered more heroic, however, by their martyrdom. The last Grand Master of the Temple, Jacques de Molay, died avenged. For even from the stake he imperiously ordered his executioners to appear with him before the Everlasting Tribunal. As Albert Pike, the distinguished Masonic scholar, so well points out, the sword of the Templar was broken to become the poniard of the Revolution. Rendered doubly powerful by death, the Templars marched on, and eventually contributed a powerful impetus toward the liberation of Europe. The wisdom which they brought from the hills of Lebanon, from the Druses, and from the Sons of St. John avenged them many fold.

Among the philosophical mysteries which these Templars contacted among the old mystics of Syria and Arabia appears to have been the Tarot cards. In *The Devil's Picture Book,* Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer, who has made diligent investigation of the origin of playing cards, writes: "That cards were brought by the home-returning warriors, who imported many of the newly acquired customs and habits of the Orient to their own countries, seems to be a well-established fact." The Templars are said to have brought these cards with them because they realized that all the knowledge of the ages was epitomized in this little loose-leaf picture book.

In his *Tarot of the Bohemians,* the French esotericist, Papus, reminds us that we cannot but admire the great wisdom which has entrusted truth to the keeping of the thoughtless. Men of every age will change faiths and renovate their notions. They may overthrow their governments and slay their closest friends, but as long as men remain men they will gamble; and as long as they play cards, the secret doctrine cannot be entirely lost. Thus the greatest good has been concealed beneath the instruments of one of man's besetting sins.

The learned books which the Templars wrote, translated, or imported from distant lands were burned, their symbols destroyed, their organization disrupted, until today it is difficult to restore even an outline of their beliefs. But playing cards have become so popular that it is impossible to remove them even by legislation. True, the decks have been mutilated, so that all the doctrine is not immediately revealed, but enough remains to serve as a useful guide for those who desire to investigate the profundities of the subject.

In the light of this tradition the transcendentalists insist that the Tarot cards should be regarded as the leaves of some sacred book of the ancient pagan world. Seldom do we associate decks of cards with books, but among many ancient nations books were not bound or sewed; they consisted merely of loose leaves, confined by cover-boards on the top and bottom, and bound around with cords. The hieroglyphical figures upon the cards are supposed to pertain to certain Arabian philosophic systems, which in turn were based upon still earlier esoteric orders. Hence the Tarot deck is an eclectic book — many philosophies and systems united into one general pattern.

The Tarot cards are considered a picture book of essential truths, setting forth figuratively those fundamental verities about which all enlightened faiths are in common agreement.

Of these cards, the great French Magus of the 19th century, Eliphas Levi, writes that if a man were imprisoned in a dungeon with nothing but a deck of the Tarot, he could, if acquainted with the correct keys, reconstruct from them alone the entire body of learning. How potent, then, he points out, are these bits of pasteboard which reveal all that has been, all that is, and all that yet shall be! Called variously the bible of Bibles, the book of books, the scripture of Scriptures, the Tarot is by no means, however, the first instance in which men have gambled with the word of God or perverted the issues of sacred things.

Though numerous authors have written upon the subject of the Tarot, almost without exception they have promised that which they could not give; namely, the original keys to the meaning of the cards. It is noteworthy that in this field of speculation nearly every writer has formed very definite opinions. All too often he advances his opinions as facts, thereby hopelessly clouding the issues. The less information available upon a subject, the more certain men are to dogmatize, evidently upon the presumption that if nothing is known, anything may be true, and none will dare to contradict.

The great secrets of the Tarot still await solution. Some believe the original keys perished with the Templars; others affirm that these keys remain in the possession of the dervish mystics. The cabalists are likely candidates, when seeking for the keepers of the lost *clavis*. However, all interpretations, although they may lead in the right direction, are to some measure unsatisfactory. We may point out the broad spirit of disagreement which divides "authorities" and the rather unhappy practice of each interpreter supporting his own conclusions by disparaging the deductions of others.

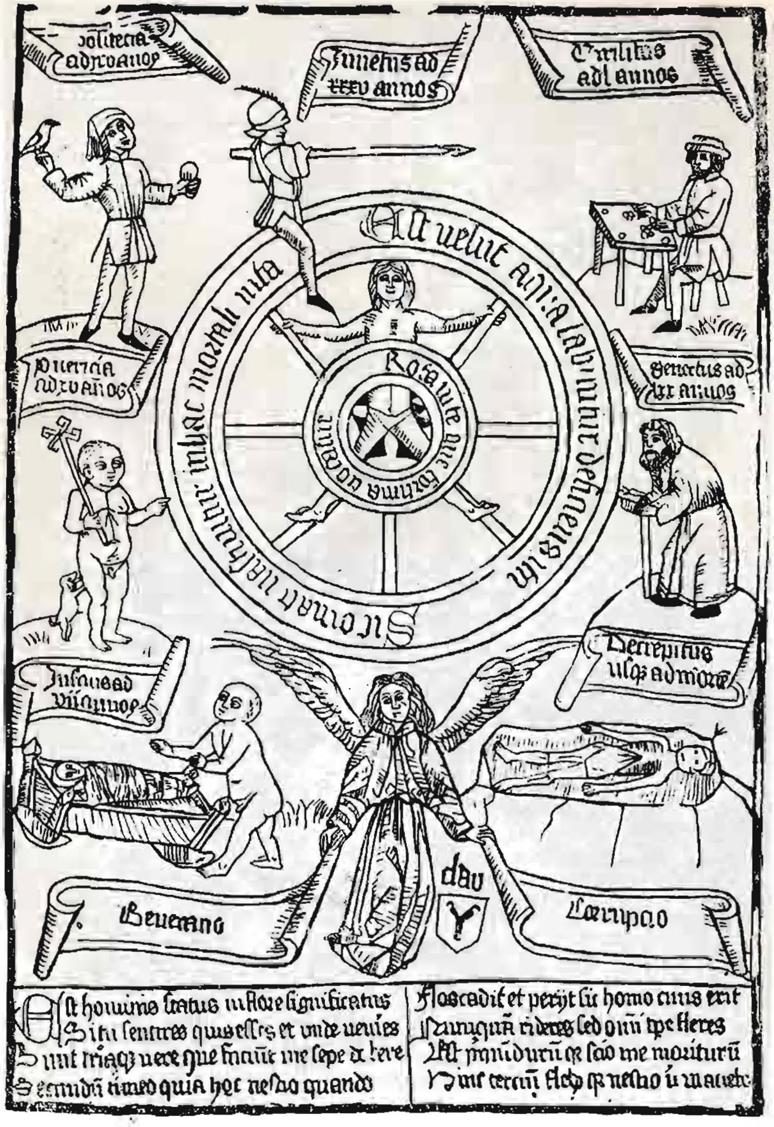
If Socrates were correct in teaching that men are only qualified to instruct in such subjects as they mutually agree upon, the whole sphere of education requires considerable renovation. Though modern mystics have been explaining the Tarot for over a hundred years, no method has emerged sufficiently certain in its structure to receive universal acclaim and acceptance. It remains for someone to bring out of this confusion of speculation a system that can satisfy the minds of the majority of scholarly investigators.

It is neither my intention nor desire to condemn anyone, for most writers on the Tarot are undoubtedly sincere. Many have produced interesting and stimulating works, and some of them may be approaching the facts. All we wish to do is to warn the student that it is dangerous to addict oneself completely to findings as yet far from complete.

It is neither our purpose to complicate further the uncertainties of this difficult subject, nor to add one jot or tittle to the already ponderous mass of presumed "certainties." We desire to direct the student's attention toward two important items which do not appear to have as yet received sufficient consideration. First, there is definite evidence that we should search for the philosophical keys to the Tarot among the esoteric groups of the Near East, for they most certainly possessed a sacred book of figures and symbols which was believed to reveal to the informed the mysteries of the heavens and the earth. Second, we should search for the origin of the modern deck of playing cards with its Europeanized figures and symbols among the early Templars, Rosicrucians, alchemists, cabalists, and Freemasons.

If we accept the esoteric premise that playing cards were originally intended as symbols of philosophic principles, we must proceed to the justification of this premise by supporting it with adequate evidence. Cards made their appearance in Europe at a time when a number of schools devoted to the occult arts were flourishing. It is nice to regard the Tarot as the supreme gesture of persecuted medieval occultism that decided,

THE CHARIOT
From a deck of Tarot cards painted especially for Charles VI, King of France

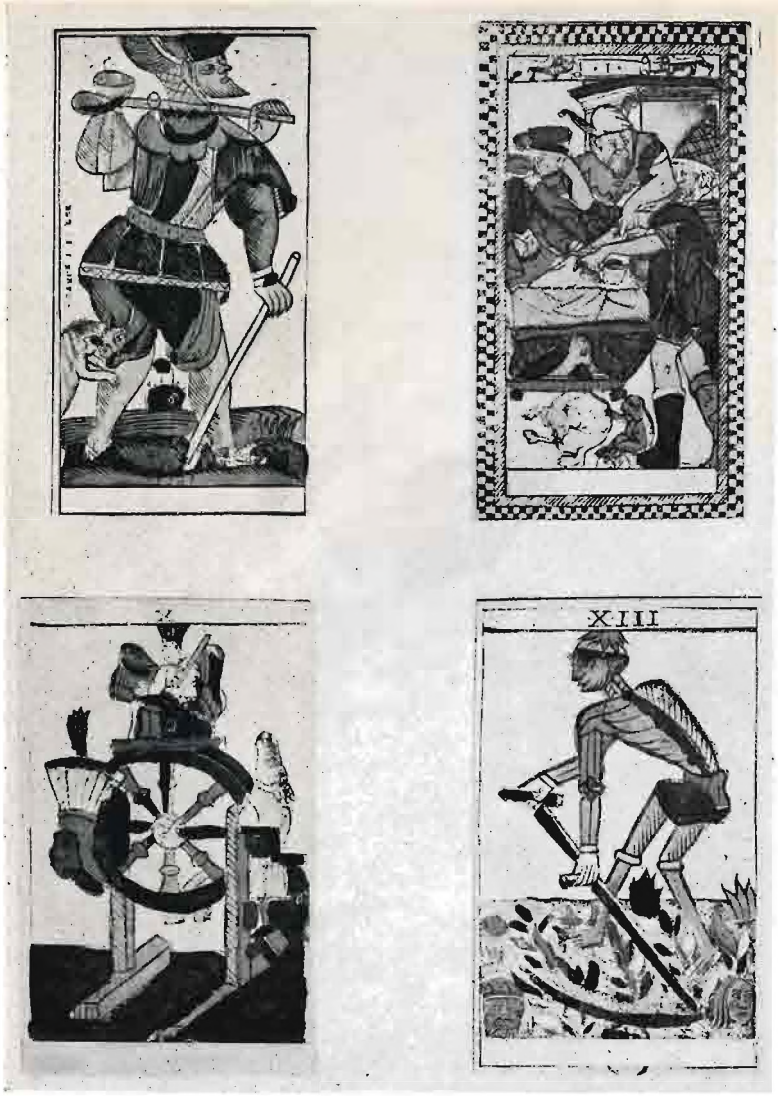


THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN

From a woodblock print of the 15th century preserved in the British Museum. Compare with figure on page 36.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

From the *Margarita Philosophica*, the first encyclopedia published in Europe. Compare with figure on page 36.



—From *Witchcraft, Magic & Sorcery by De Givry*

OLD TAROT CARDS, 15TH TO 17TH CENTURIES
Upper left, The Fool; upper right, The Juggler; lower left, The Wheel of Fortune; lower right, Death.

paradoxically, to conceal itself by rendering its symbols too common for serious consideration.

Obviously, if the cards were the text of a mystery doctrine, only one acquainted with the mysteries of the ancient world and their doctrines would be qualified or equipped to discover the actual meanings of the Tarot symbols. None but a student versed in the lore of antiquity, who has discovered the cabalistic keys of Solomon and who has unveiled the whole elaborate pageantry of mythology and fable, can successfully assay the enigma of the Tarot.

The cards can never be explained solely by the study of the hieroglyphics themselves, for the symbols have passed through many stages of modification. Each succeeding generation has redrawn the Tarots, until frequently only the roughest outline of the original idea remains. The student must look behind the cards for the psychology which produced them. Consequently, only one versed in the origins of philosophies and religions can hope to understand the grand system which the cards were intended to perpetuate.

Like all other forms of symbolism, the Tarot unfailingly reflects the viewpoint of the interpreter himself. This does not detract from its value, however, for symbolism is one of the most useful instruments of instruction in the spiritual arts, because it continually draws from the subjective resources of the seeker the substance of his own erudition. The greatest of all symbolic books is Nature itself; for by contemplating the manifold wonders of creation, the human being is inclined to thoughtful inquiry about the substance and operation of the universal plan.

Although the process is not especially pleasant, we must in all fairness attack certain false reports in order that they shall not deceive the sincere. The so-called Egyptian Tarot solemnly presented as a veritable seven-day wonder is a modern fabrication, and would cause any well-informed Egyptologist to turn over in his grave. The deck is rather cleverly drawn, it is true, but it is the contribution of French wonder-workers, who have attempted to build some rather shaky framework upon the Court de Gebelin's wild shot in the dark as to the Egyptian origin of the Tarot cards. De Gebelin was far too eminent and concientious an archaeologist to have been party to any such representation. The Tarot figures appearing in de Gebelin's *La Monde Primitif* show no intentional distortion, but he planted a seed in the popular mind which grew and flowered into a most fantastic shrub.

The Tarot figures of this eminent member of the French intelligentsia have been gloriously Egyptianized and caused to take on a most venerable appearance. In fact, the project was so overdone that the purpose was completely undone. It is one of those achievements entirely too remarkable to be true. It must be a wonderful thing to have an imagination such as that of Paul Christian, another member of the French esoteric world, who was able to see Tarot cards carved along the walls of the subterranean passages of the pyramids. He is only exceeded by M. Vaillant, whose powers of discernment enabled him to perceive a deck of these remarkable Tarots under the arm of one of the archangels, who descended upon the top of the mountains as related in the *Book of Enoch*.

While these dilettanti of the occult romantically affirmed the origin of the Tarot cards to be concealed in the very night of time, we may pass lightly over their well-intentioned absurdities. It is quite impossible to disillusion these Tarot enthusiasts who seem to consider it not only probable but demonstrable that the gods on high Olympus played celestial cribbage with these remarkable pasteboards, during those peaceful ages which preceded the creation of man. While some of the symbols upon the Tarots are undeniably very old, the cards themselves in their present form can scarcely be regarded as antedating the costumes and customs represented on the earliest known decks.

The gypsies (who may have been the wandering descendants of the priests of Serapis) preserved books or manuscripts filled with the lore of Egypt. Many believed that among these remains was the

sacred *Book of Thoth,* a priceless manuscript of ancient magic rescued from the burning of the Serapeum at Alexandria and carried by the gypsies in their wanderings across the face of Europe. We must not be too resentful against those who have immediately decided that the Tarot is the *Book of Thoth.* Likely enough, any of us would be inclined to speculate on such a possibility.

Even if the gypsies had cards of divination, this would not necessarily conflict with the records associating the Tarot with the Knights Templars. The mysteries of gypsy magic have been carefully preserved within the group, and very little is available to the general public relating to this interesting subject. Several authors have mentioned the strange rituals of the gypsies, and the way in which this wandering tribe has maintained its isolated existence. Many gypsies are credited with second-sight, and it is possible that such psychic sensitivity can be traced to their custom of inbreeding.

The gypsy cards, even if they be the Tarot and even if they had an Egyptian origin, are not, however, the so-called Egyptian decks now in circulation. While all Tarot cards are worthy of consideration, none is sufficiently accurate to permit much dogmatizing about the original meanings of the symbols. The preponderance of evidence suggests that the Tarot cards in their present form are not more than four or five hundred years old. It is a legitimate question, nevertheless, to ask whether these medieval figures were designed from some more ancient pattern. If this were true, unfortunately no prototypes of the decks consisting of similar numbers or sequences of cards have ever been discovered.

A possible origin for the Tarots is the mysterious Table of Cebes. The ancient Greek philosopher, Cebes, is said to have designed a hieroglyphical figure setting forth the entire history of mankind. There are some old descriptions of this Table, but all pictorializations of it are more or less fanciful.

Where, we may ask, did the designers of the ancient or original Tarot secure the mass of symbolism which has led men to attribute so great an age to the designs? Were the card symbols accidentally incorporated or accumulated, or was there a distinct purpose in the combinations? Is the medieval Tarot possibly a product of the craftsmen of the Freemasonic Order and enriched with the archaic symbolism so abundantly apparent in the rituals and the trestle board?

Without committing our minds to any final opinions, it is useful to select a likely site for our philosophical excavations. Realizing the pattern of the Secret Societies operating in Europe, it seems not only possible but consistent with known practices that decks of cards, variously marked with esoteric emblems, could have been privately circulated among the members of Secret Brotherhoods. The Count di Cagliostro was of the opinion that these cards were the sacred and supreme symbolic book of these affiliated movements; and in his *Morals and Dogma,* General Pike declares Cagliostro to have been an emissary of the Knights Templars.

Turning to the Rosicrucian angle of the Tarot problem, when Father C. R. C., who is said to have founded the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, returned to Europe from Arabia, he brought with him a remarkable book called *M.* According to the Rosicrucian manifestoes, this book contained all the knowledge of the world. Reports about this book are believed to have inspired the Encyclopedist movement in France.

In a work entitled *Conspiracy Against the Catholic Religion and Against Crowned Heads,* published anonymously in 1792, a pious writer hurls the following accusations against the Rosicrucians: "They claim to possess a volume, wherein they can learn all that is to be found in other books, which now are, or which can ever come into existence. This volume is their own reason, in which they find the prototype of all that subsists by their facility in analyzing, summarizing, and creating a kind of intellectual world, and of all possible beings. See the philosophical, theosophical, and microcosmic cards." This is indeed a

significant allusion, but we must be careful not to build an illusion upon it.

As an additional commentary upon the possibility that the Rosicrucians were acquainted with the Tarot cards, it may be mentioned that it was the dream of that great scientist and philosopher, Sir Francis Bacon, to gather the whole knowledge of the world into one great reference work. The French Encyclopedists are believed to have been influenced somewhat in their project by Bacon's effort to integrate this vast program of knowledge.

Is it possible that there is some connection between the Tarot cards and the great encyclopedia of the Rosicrucians? They announced their book containing the entire knowledge of the world as a kind of symbolic work, through the study of which all scientific and philosophical speculations were integrated into one mathematical pattern.

If the Rosicrucian legend of the Tarot has any foundation in fact, the cards are lifted from the lowly and ignominious roles of fortunetelling and gambling devices to the higher and more dignified realms of philosophy and science. It obviously behooves studious and open-minded philosophers, in the light of this possibility, to give more than a passing investigation to this curious deck, in the hope that among its confused mass of symbolic devices may be discovered certain definite keys to the sealed mysteries of the Masonic arcana, and those procedures and disciplines termed by the ancients the "life of wisdom."

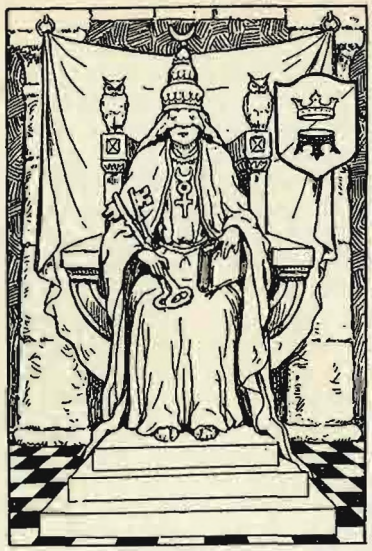
The fact that no authentic material is available concerning the Tarots prior to the Middle Ages and that they remained in complete obscurity until the Court de Gebelin projected them into fame, further suggests the possibility of the prior concealment of their philosophical value for a definite purpose. The mathematical formulas involved in the organization of the Tarot cards belie the probability of an accidental origin. Considerable time and thought must have been devoted to them before the finished product made its public appearance.

The Court de Gebelin was a man of unimpeachable integrity, an eminent scholar of his day, and a high Freemason of the Grand Orient of France. He certainly did not invent the cards nor make any essential changes in their emblems. There is sufficient evidence at hand to render such an assumption of imposture untenable. Renowned as an antiquarian, de Gebelin was appointed by the Grand Orient of France to interrogate the mysterious Count di Cagliostro respecting the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry. It required but a few moments of interrogation, however, to convince de Gebelin that he was no match for the illustrious Italian in the realm of polemics.

The student of European politics must realize that during the 18th century the whole Continent seethed with political, philosophical, and religious intrigue. Mysterious groups were constantly springing up in the most unlikely places. Then, after serving some obscure end, these fugitive sects disappeared as unaccountably as they came. The Court de Gebelin may have been appointed by one of these Secret Orders, with which he had considerable contact, to publicize in a quiet and dignified manner the existence of the Tarot cards.

Old decks of the Tarots and even well-designed modern decks are extremely difficult to secure, and when they appear in bookstalls they command high prices. An authentic deck of the Court de Gebelin's design will fetch ten pounds in England. Some time ago in England an engraved deck brought two hundred fifty dollars, and even comparatively modern Tarots are expensive. The most easily secured cards of the Tarot type are the common Italian *tarocco* decks. These, however, are very crude and are usually double-headed cards, with the symbolism so mutilated that it is of comparatively little value. The Italian attitude toward religion has somewhat interfered with the designs, for in the modern *tarocco* decks the two cards, *Le Pape* and *La Papesse,* are usually removed and two other figures inconsistent with the general design, called Jupiter and Juno, are substituted.

However, the demand for Tarot cards has produced several decks, most of which unfortunately vary in essential de-



2 LA PAPESSE ב

tails from the original designs. In some instances these departures were motivated by an effort to beautify the cards, but often they represent a definite effort to design a deck which would substantiate the preconceived notions of their inventor. Such a course of action is both misleading and unethical. If an individual wishes to publish a deck of cards to please his own concept of what symbolism should reveal, that is perfectly within his individual rights, but to declare that these innovations are the original Tarots simply confounds the prevailing confusion.

One such popular set of Tarots has departed so far from the original deck that it is almost unrecognizable. If these cards are analyzed for the merit of their drawings, much can be said in their defense. The artist was a good craftsman, with a lively imagination, but the quaintness and the authenticity of the originals are hopelessly lost. Many people have wasted valuable time working out symbolisms that never existed except in the fertile imagination of the modern card designer.

In order to pursue their investigation of the Tarots, students of card symbolism have found it necessary to cut pictures of the major trumps out of books and mount them on pasteboard, thereby creating a makeshift deck. Some have had the cards photostated or gone through the slow and laborious process of drawing them by hand. Under such conditions the minor cards are usually slighted or entirely ignored, and the result is unsatisfactory and incomplete.

It may be well to summarize the conclusions of several outstanding writers who have attempted to define the Tarot. According to these interpreters, the word *Tarot* signifies "the Royal Road," "the Way of Wisdom," "the Tablets of the Doctrine of Mercury," "the Book of the History of Time," or "the Tables of the Year." De Gebelin enthusiastically piles up evidence to substantiate the theory that the Tarot was indeed the lost *Book of Thoth*. Some believe the Tarots to have been the symbolical child of Hermes, that production of Egyptian genius that was to endure through countless generations. We are indebted to Egypt for so many legends and fables that it is difficult to know just where a line should be drawn. The Court de Gebelin was an Egyptologist, and it is an almost universal human limitation to be influenced by our personal interest when attempting to arrive at impersonal conclusions.

The *Book of Thoth* is famous among the ancient annals of magic. It was conceived to be a most potent work resplendent with spiritual power. Only the highest grade of initiates were permitted to gaze upon the curious hieroglyphics which it contained. So majestic were these sacred symbols that but to look upon them was to be elevated to the highest parts of wisdom. The book was kept in a golden casket, the key to which was part of the insignia of the High Priest.

Only by speculation, however, can we relate this sacred *Book of Thoth* to the modern Tarots, yet the rumor has been so persistent that it may have some foundation in fact. If the Tarots are indeed leaves from the *Book of Thoth*, it is evident that the original work has been mutilated out of all superficial semblance

to its original design. The hierophants of the mysteries would never have permitted an unabridged work containing the inner secrets of the sanctuary to fall into the hands of the profane. Those accepting the ancient origin of the Tarots are confronted with a most perplexing problem, for they can only speculate upon the particulars of the mutilation through which the book has passed. It is quite possible that cards were either added to or substracted from the original number to complicate interpretation and foil the ends of numerologists. It is also reasonably certain that the cards have been renumbered and rearranged so as to be out of their original sequence, and thus disrupt their continuity. Some writers believe that the unnumbered card is the key to the whole enigma, and that the reading of the Tarot symbolism depends entirely upon the discovery of the proper position of *Le Fou,* or the zero card.

5 LE PAPE ה

Court de Gebelin apparently sensed the magnitude of the problem, but being bound by Masonic obligations could only hint at the true significance of the symbols. His descriptions are ingenious but extremely far-fetched, and those who have followed in his footsteps have demonstrated their intellectual shortcomings by imitating his errors. The extremely flexible nature of the Tarot symbols is a common cause of bewilderment to would-be interpreters. Each of the cards can be explained in a dozen different ways, and as several of these interpretations are contradictory, it becomes evident that they cannot all be right. The problem as to which of them may be right is only second in importance to the problem: Is any one of them right?

The present Tarot deck consists of 78 cards and may be divided into three sections. The first division contains only one card, unnumbered and designated *Le Fou* (the fool). The second division consists of 21 cards, now numbered and lettered for mystical purposes according to the Hebrew alphabet, and called the major trumps. (In this connection, it should be borne in mind that neither the numbers nor the letters appear on the most ancient decks, and we are indebted to the ingenuity of such minds as Eliphas Levi and Papus for these additions.) The third division consists of 56 cards, divided into four suits of fourteen cards each. These make up the minor trumps, and are similar to modern playing cards with the exception of one extra court card in each suit.

It is possible that the universal monad or indivisible unity may be signified by "the fool." If so, from it are suspended 21 principles which together constitute the secret and spiritual number of the powers of the Sun. These 21 powers (or letters) represent the *anima mundi,* or the soul of the world, while the unnumbered card, *Le Fou,* in whom wisdom is so perfect that man cannot comprehend its implications, represent the divine Causal Being.

The 21 major trumps, when distributed throughout the sidereal system, constitutes what Paracelsus referred to as the solar agencies. The 21 powers and 7 triads into which they form themselves are represented in the celebrated Bembine Table of Isis, and are resident in the Sun, from which they manifest forth their spiritual activities. The body of Nature or the material universe, which William Blake called "the vegetable

THE GREAT MANTEGNA DECK OF SYMBOLIC CARDS

mirror," consists of four great waves of life which, conspiring together in the creative processes, are symbolized by the four-headed cherubim of Ezekiel. Thus, four orders are fundamental in Nature, for which reason the inferior universe was represented in ancient symbolism by a square.

The sphere of the soul is a triad consisting of three sevens (or seven threes) being the 21 major trumps, and the spiritual universe, which may not be internally analyzed, is a cipher or zero, appropriately signified by an unnumbered card. Thus in both the ancient Tarot symbolism and the *Mensa Isiaca,* or Bembine Table, the circle, the triangle, and the square become the symbols of the three Pythagorean divisions of the universe. A similar plan underlies the Platonic concept and is recalled by the words of Paracelsus: "Man's spirit is from the stars, his soul from the planets, and his body from the elements."

Containing but one card—*Le Fou*—the first order is a reminder that the origin of all things is that definitionless Infinity which precedes the one and from which the numbers flow, as from a Father-Fountain. In the Bembine Table of Isis the seven planets are the apexes of seven triads; each consisting of a Father, a Power, and a Mind. These seven triads, which Eliphas Levi relates to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, are fractional rays of the solar power, having their origin and nature in the Sun. Thus it would appear that the 21 cards called the major trumps are the planetary triads of the Chaldean system. These triads issue from the "abiding destiny" which is their First Cause and from which they are suspended, according to the theory of the Pythagorean Tectractys.

Thus the trinity, whether pagan or Christian, rules over these three orders. God the Father presides over the threefold darkness signified by the blindfolded fool. God the Son presides over the 21 powers, which by Pythagorean deduction become three, or the power of the soul, which is always found either in its own nature or inclined toward its polarities and consequently exists in three states: divine, rational, and irrational. The 56 minor trumps are under the control of the demiurgus, or Lord of the World, whose name whether it be Zeus

THE GREAT MANTEGNA DECK OF SYMBOLIC CARDS

or the Tetragrammaton IHVH (Jehovah) consists of four letters, which are the four regions or angles of heaven, from which pour out streams which are seven within and seven without. From the compounding of this numerical mystery, we derive the 56 cards.

If we question that the minor trumps are symbolic of the inferior universe under the demiurgus, we have but to apply the Pythagorean process of reduction, by which we secure symbolical numbers by adding together the numerals of any given sum. Thus, the number 56 becomes five plus six or eleven, being the number of a cycle or a new beginning. The number 11 in turn becomes one plus one, or two, which is the symbol of diversity, matter, discord, dissention, and death. In the Hebrew system we have four emanations or streams, called the Sephirothic trees, which descending through four worlds constitute forty mysterious steps. We also have the fifty gates of light through which the soul must ascend to the contemplation of reality.

John Heydon, generally included among the Rosicrucians, declared the number 11 to be the most evil agent in that it was greater than the number of the commandments, which is ten, and less than the number of grace and perfection, which is twelve. It is also the number of Lilith, the demon wife of Adam. She signifies the physical nature of the world before spirit was imparted to it. In the secret writings it is stated that when the spirits of men descended into Nature, they were of a different creation from the substances which enveloped them.

Before the coming of these rational spirits, called in the Bible "the sons of God," the natural creatures generated themselves according to a strange disorder producing by their interminglings the races of demons and monsters mentioned by Berosus, whose ancient history was translated by Cory, in his *Ancient Fragments*. Even after the spiritual life descended into Nature, these strange creatures persisted for some time, for man had to accustom himself to his elemental environment. Accordingly, we are told that there were giants upon the earth in those days and a wild riot of forms and fantasies. Lilith was the symbol of the earth born. She was the mother of monstrosities, whose creation

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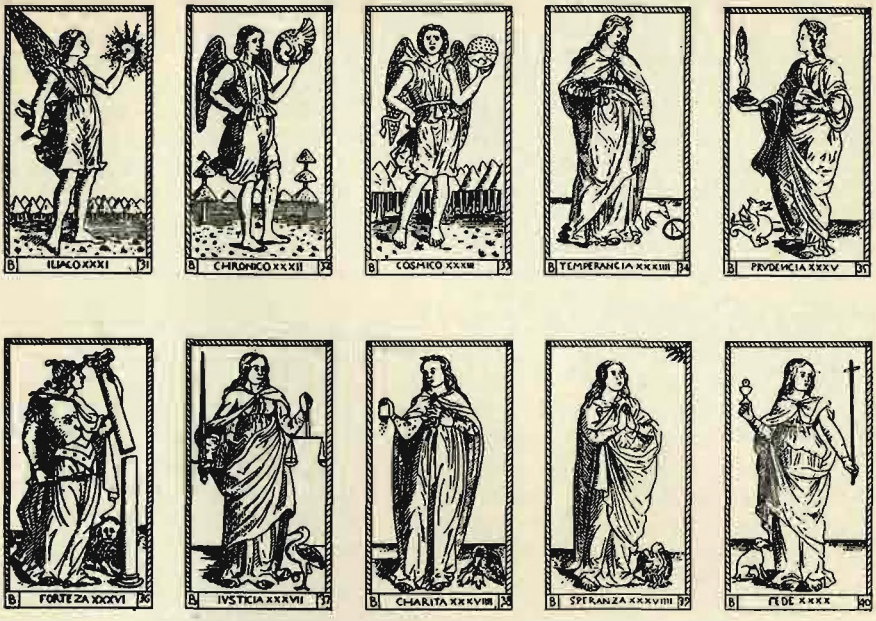
passed away but whose activities are preserved in the esoteric mystery of the number 11.

From the above fragment, it may be concluded that the Tarot cards were not intended originally as fortunetelling devices, but rather, like the esoteric astrological symbols of the Egyptian hierophants, were the keys to the sciences of universal procedure. From the Chaldean and Phoenician mysteries certain truths are revealed which exhibit remarkable parallels to the Tarot symbolism. Time alone will establish whether there is any actual connection between the two. While these stray bits of really worthwhile information exist they should be gathered and applied to the Tarot problem in the hope of establishing some of the early philosophical landmarks, which, now lost to mankind in general, may survive obscurely in the symbolism of these cards.

We, therefore, advise the studiously inclined to approach the Tarot as a sacred book primarily intended to illumine the mind through the instrument of a mathematically ordered symbolism. To those versed in the ancient philosophies it appears unfortunate that these cards should be collected and examined mainly in the interest of fortunetelling. Man's place in the universe is far more important than the outcome of his daily concerns.

Several eminent writers have investigated Tarot symbolism and have written extensively on the subject. Although they are in considerable conflict they invite serious examination of their hypotheses. Probably the most complete work on Tarot symbolism available in English at the present time is *The Tarot of the Bohemians,* by Papus. This book is largely indebted to stray hints, intimations, implications, and curious references contained in *The Doctrines and Rituals of Transcendental Magic,* by Eliphas Levi. Levi's book is divided into sections numbered according to the major trumps of the Tarot, and is illuminating in a general way. There is a persistent belief, however, that Levi intentionally confused his readers, and that his true method is not faithfully recorded in his writings.

Mr. Arthur Edward Waite, the translator of Levi and also his editor and



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critic, may have been intrigued by the confused but dramatic productions of the French magus. In any event Mr. Waite apparently sponsored the creation of a highly artistic Tarot deck. When this appeared it was accompanied by his little book entitled *A Pictorial Key to the Tarot.* The "revised" cards are eminently successful artistically speaking, but the authority for the innumerable changes and enlargements of the designs appears much less certain. Mr. Waite's little essay informed the student of Mr. Waite's opinions; beyond that the whole matter is decidedly dim.

One of the most sincere and thoughtful modern investigators of Tarot symbolism is Mr. Paul Foster Case, whose writings deserve careful consideration. There are several other authors whose works do not exist in English or are extremely difficult to secure. Profound interest will lead to them in the natural course of inquiry. Such study is determined by individual taste. Each investigator must sharpen the mental tools at his command and attack the problem for himself. If he should be fortunate enough to solve the mystery of the Tarot, he will settle one of the most heated controversies in the field of the esoteric arts.

In an effort to be factual and practical, certain difficulties relating to the Tarots should be clearly stated before students are led astray by modern enthusiasts. The essential difficulties may be summarized under three headings:

I. The original number of cards is unknown, but it is quite within the range of possibility that the modern deck lacks several vital cards. The removal of one or two symbols would corrupt the sequence of the figures, and thus hopelessly confuse would-be interpreters. As decks with different numbers of cards do exist, and the history of the Tarot is hopelessly incomplete, this doubt is more reasonable than might at first appear probable.

2. There are numerous uncertainties as to the original order of the cards of the present deck. Many modern conclusions are based entirely upon what may prove to be coincidence; as for example, the association of the

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Hebrew letters with the major trumps, because there are 22 of each. The cards may be the elements of a secret writing; that is, they may form together a philosophic cipher, and until the elements of the cryptic alphabet have been accurately established the subject must remain debatable.

3. Most of the earlier writings on the subject of the Tarot are by persons bound by the obligations of Secret Societies. As these writers were required to conceal the esoteric keys, we cannot tell with certainty to what degree they have confused the facts. There is no doubt that such intentional confusion does exist in the most prominent texts.

While on the subject of difficulties, we should also mention the lack of certainty about the original designs appearing on the cards. No ancient decks of Tarots are known to exist. The earliest we have date from medieval Europe. If these cards were brought from Arabia as is generally suspected, it is obvious that these Arabian originals were not ornamented with essentially Christian and European figures. We cannot imagine the magicians of Fez or Bagdad including a figure of the Pope in one of their esoteric manuals. It is equally unlikely that they would use an obviously Christian form of marriage, or represent the Last Judgment in theological form. None of the symbols on the modern Tarots are essentially Arabic, although a few show pseudo-Egyptian influence. The least that we can say then is that the cards have been strongly Europeanized. This leads to a natural inquiry: how strongly? Does it imply that the original symbols were damaged beyond recognition, or merely modified?

I have not been able to learn that the Arabian nation now preserves any equivalent to the Tarot cards. We see many Oriental decks, mostly modern, certainly not older than the European forms. These are artistically superior but there is no obvious trace of Tarot symbolism. There is an East Indian deck based upon the incarnations of the god, Vishnu. It is quite possible that these circular cards have a deep symbolical meaning, but they are not close enough to the Tarots for the meanings to be interchangeable.

Although the American market alone absorbs more than 75,000,000 decks of playing cards a year, the possibility of cards having more than recreational significance remains unsuspected. Some authorities feel that the concept of playing cards developed parallel with the concept of paper currency. In China particularly, early cards closely resemble early money. The most conservative attitude is to assume that cards originated early in the development of the graphic arts. Probably they developed spontaneously in several areas and were almost immediately adapted to gambling. One school of research is inclined to suspect that games of chance were closely associated with the divinatory arts. The almost infinite number of combinations into which the cards could fall, the streaks of luck always evident in gaming, and the association of the designs with the circumstances of life led almost inevitably in the direction of fortune-telling.

More recently, the factor of antiquity has contributed to the popular veneration for the traditional figures and ornaments upon the deck of cards. As a result, they have been changed but little in general appearance from the decks popular in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Various pictorial decks and numerous educational, humorous, historical, and even religious designs have gained temporary popularity. Most outstanding events have affected either the obverse or the reverse of playing cards. Considerable imagination has been devoted to the subject, but since the turn of the present century there have been few changes on the faces of the cards. The backs, however, have been subject to countless modifications for artistic and commercial reasons. Most old cards have extremely plain backs or designs primarily geometric. The marking of the backs of cards to cheat in gaming has influenced the patterns to a considerable degree.

From what we can learn, the court cards were cut in complete sets of sixteen on one block of wood, and separated later. Spaces often were left for the insertion of special material. The knights (knaves), for example, might carry shields, which remained blank, so that the purchaser could insert his own crest. The pips or markers in the corners showing the suit were usually added by hand after the printing. When professional card printers came into existence, devoting all their resources to this type of artistry, some very handsome and dramatic decks were produced. The best printing of this type was done between 1475 and 1550. This period agrees closely with the finest epoch in the art of book printing. Not infrequently, fragments of early decks of playing cards are found in the bindings of old books. Most of the cards actually in use have vanished from long handling.

The French, in designing their first playing cards, often gave names to the court cards, so that the decks combined historical and mythological characters according to popular fancy. In one deck the kings, David, Alexander, Caesar, and Charlemagne were honored, and among the knights were Hector and Lancelot. Among the prominent ladies were Joan of Arc and Judith of Bethulia. When the court cards were not actually named, space was sometimes provided for the honoring of local heroes, and in surviving examples the same design is frequently associated with several dignitaries.

About 1490, the city of Lyon attained almost a monopoly on the manufacture of playing cards, which were then distributed by itinerant merchants throughout Europe. The cardmakers of Lyon were responsible for numerous modifications and improvements, and their common agreement and standardization of the designs has influenced all subsequent manufacturers.

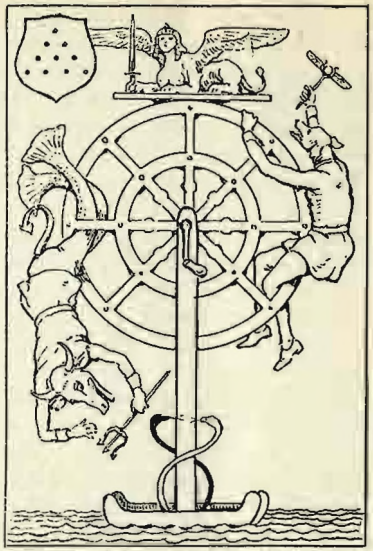
It is now believed that the Tarot deck, especially the 22 Tarot cards which were added to the standard deck of the period, thus forming the Tarots, or *tarocco* cards, first appeared among the Italians, and from Italy spread to France, Germany, and even the Balkans. If, therefore, we seem to ramble about in a maze of historical contradictions, we are merely presenting a factual diagram of the conflicting "authorities" who have attempted to trace these almost untraceable bits of pasteboards.

Assuming that the card makers of Lyons and their less celebrated competitors in other districts were competing to please the public taste and supply the avid market, it would be interesting to discover if possible the source of their artistic inspiration. Certainly some of them should be included among the emblemists and those so frequently called upon to embellish various tracts and treatises with appropriate figures and symbols. To indicate the practice they appear to have followed, we might mention the tenth card of the Tarot deck which is usually referred to as the Wheel of Fortune.

La Roue de Fortune is represented as a wheel, with four or eight spokes, and two figures, one good and the other evil, clinging to its rim. Above sits an immobile character sometimes carrying a sword or scales. In the pseudo-Egyptian Tarots, a sphinx sits on the top of the wheel, and on the rim Anubis is ascending and Typhon descending. The wheel is supported on a small ship floating in the sea and the support is entwined with serpents. Obviously, this is a comparatively late and sophisticated form of the design, but is based upon earlier and cruder concepts.

An exceedingly rare and curious woodblock print of the Seven Ages of Man is preserved in the British Museum. This print appears to belong to the middle of the 15th century. The central design represents a wheel with eight spokes, one of which is concealed behind the human figure spread on the wheel. The eight-spoke design is unusual as it does not conform with the European structure of a wheel, and is reminiscent of the Buddhist Wheel of Life, or Wheel of the Law, which invariably has eight spokes. On the wheel in our block print the figure of a knight, bearing a lance, rides the rim.

Several designs which occur on conventional Tarot cards surround the wheel motif. At the upper right is a man seated at a gaming table, or possibly a banking board. He is most reminiscent of the card called the Juggler. Below him is a decrepit elder with a staff, suggestive of the ninth Tarot called The Hermit. On the opposite of the wheel is a child carrying what seems to be a pinwheel. A dog is biting at his legs. This is almost exactly the design of the unnumbered Tarot card called The Fool. One cannot examine this old woodblock without arriving at the conclusion that a series of familiar designs occupied the public mind and influenced early engravers of both pictures and playing cards.



10 LA ROUE DE FORTUNE

While on this subject, we might mention the *Margarita Philosophica,* which was the first encyclopedia published in Europe. We have in our Library the edition which appeared in Basil, Switzerland, in 1508. Here, again, is the wheel form of the tenth Tarot. In this case, four figures are attached to the wheel, and the design in general is very close to the Tarot design. A figure in equilibrium sits on top of the wheel. Life ascends and death descends, and in the midst is Fortuna, depicted without eyes and carrying two vases. On the fourteenth Tarot a figure called Temperance carries two vases, pouring a liquid from one to the another. It would be an interesting project to examine outstanding collections of 15th-century woodblocks, paintings, and sculpturings to ascertain

if possible if the various Tarot designs were in use with other meanings prior to the actual invention of the deck of cards. It is evident that some designs or parts of them were relatively common.

The thirteenth card, bearing the reaping skeleton, suggests the great cycle of the Dance of Death. The 20th card, the Last Judgment, occurs in Church symbolism from an early time. The figure of the devil portrayed one of the outstanding characterizations of the medieval period. Justice occurs in its conventional form, and the figure of the Pope is equally familiar. The selection of various emblems may have been influenced by the divinatory vogue that was sweeping across Europe. Astrological and alchemical symbols on the cards also invite examination.

It is not our intention to dismiss the symbolism of playing cards as merely the product of the competitive ingenuity of the early card printers; rather we may wonder what devices they rejected or changed in their efforts to increase the popularity of what the pious like to call "the devil's picture book." The moment theologians suggested that the devil had a hand in the manufacturing of these curious bits of pasteboard, they assumed new importance. The so-called Prince of Evil has always been a progressive, and the inventions which he fathered were seldom trivial. Usually things attributed to his satanic majesty originated among pagans; hence the anathema pronounced upon them.

If a symbolical deck of cards reached Europe from Tatars or other Eastern nations decorated with the "horrible" emblems of heathen doctrines, a critical situation could well have arisen. The cards offered a splendid instrument of magic and divination, and an admirable and attractive means of keeping money in circulation. Of course, good Christian nations could not gamble with the hideous relics of some barbarous tribe of unbelievers. It was necessary to substitute approved designs, at the same time preserving whatever values or particular devices were essential to gaming or fortunetelling with the cards. If the Templars were responsible for the importing of the cards, all traces of the doctrines of the Temple had to be eradicated. It would be nice to know how this censorship of Christian morals was accomplished and who did the censoring.

We cannot agree with the enthusiastic French Transcendentalists of the 19th century that the cards descended to the Court de Gebelin comparatively unmutilated. There are too many evidences that point in a contrary direction. It is rather evident that Asiatic cards would not be decorated with such figures as the devil of the Brocken, or the four beasts of the Apocalypse. The shift to Egypt is a little too smooth and easy to be entirely convincing. At the time the shift could have been made, the Egyptian civilization was already long dead and Europe was completely uninformed as to the essentials of Egyptian philosophy and religion. The hieroglyphics had not yet been correctly decoded, and European intellectuals were dependent upon the misinterpretations of the Latin writers for most of their misunderstanding of Egyptian life. Even today popular metaphysical concepts of Egyptian religion are extremely faulty. We may, therefore, hold certain reasonable doubts. This does not mean that the card designs could not have originated in Egypt, but rather that we have no actual proof of such a hypothesis.

W. F. C. Wigston, who did so much research on the Baconian riddle, is convinced that Lord Bacon used the Tarot symbolism in his ciphers. In his *Columbus of Literature,* Wigston points out that the important cryptic numbers, 21, 56, and 78 are all important Tarot numbers. There are 21 major trumps, not counting the unnumbered card, 56 cards in the minor suits, and 78 cards in the total deck. As an example, Wigston demonstrates that in the 1623 edition of the Shakespearean folio Lord Bacon's Christian name Francis appears 21 times on page 56 of *The Histories.*

Does this mean that the descent of Secret Societies, which culminated in the plan for the universal reformation projected by Lord Bacon, was involved in the symbolism of the Tarot cards? Certainly these cards existed prior to the

17th century, but so also did many of the emblems and figures which appear in the Rosicrucian and alchemical books published by these 17th-century mystics.

The descendent of the esoteric Orders in Europe from the Templars, the Troubadours, and the Albigensian heretics is generally acknowledged by scholars. Playing cards could well have been a useful instrument in this program and a subtle means of promulgating a universal philosophy through a popular gaming device. Unfortunately, research on playing cards up to the present time has not been directed in any specific course, and no effort has been made to establish direct links with particular groups of philosophers or scholars. Such efforts might prove profitable.

As many works are available dealing with present conclusions about the symbolic meanings of the cards and their arrangements for purposes of divination, we do not intend to repeat the findings here. We restrict ourselves to the important questions of origin and development, and hope sincerely that others will extend this field toward the discovery of the facts.

Among nearly all nations where cards, dice, and other mathematical, symbolical games have been developed, a generally consistent pattern has been followed. The factors, like the chess men, the checkerboard, and the spots on dice, are based upon principles of universal symbolism. The very law and order which make the exact operations of these games possible are derived from formulas relating to the cosmos, the solar system, the elements, and the basic divisions of human society. There is every reason to assume, therefore, that the Tarot cards began in some concept of universal dynamics. Even modern playing cards show indebtedness to the calendar, with their four suits (seasons), thirteen cards (lunar months) to a suit, fifty-two cards (weeks of the year), and three hundred sixty-five spots (days of the year). So many coincidences cease to appear coincidental, and undoubtedly reveal a pattern.

The use of numbers and their combinations, progressions, and sequences as a means of restoring or representing a concept of the world originated in India, was communicated to the Egyptians, and perfected by the Greeks. According to Pythagoras, numbers have particular virtues or powers, and if these principles are mastered by the human mind, all existing compounds in nature may be discovered. This is the premise which has inspired research in the Tarots. It is very probable that the premise itself is correct, but the efforts to extend this premise into the field of particulars have been, up to the present time, conflicting.

Perhaps greater emphasis should be placed upon the discovery of the principles themselves before attempting to identify the principles with the different cards. The key is in the fact, and not in the symbol used to represent the fact. Until the fact is known, its correct symbol cannot be distinguished with certainty.

The happy coincidence that the Hebrew alphabet contained 22 letters has already been mentioned. It is inevitable that this apparently supporting fact should excite a wide field of speculation, but we must not jump to conclusions. Almost any number can be fitted into some system of philosophy. Once we have addicted ourselves to a concept, it becomes our duty to protect and expand that concept in every possible way. Sometimes defense becomes a light obsession, and we begin to disregard such details of our hypotheses as fail to conform with our dominant convictions.

It is easy to assume that the different religions and philosophies are merely expressions of one idea, especially if some parallels do appear. Actually, while in the abstract there is only one universal stream of wisdom, most existing systems of religious philosophy have some degree of basic incompatibility. The fact that the Hindus and the Jews both held the number 22 as highly significant cannot be extended without a great deal of study to the conclusion that both nations were in agreement as to the meaning of this number. If we wish to be true to the convictions of various peoples and to benefit from these convictions thus enlarging our philosophies, we should con-

sider the meanings of these beliefs as they were held by the peoples among whom they originated.

There is much to recommend the idea that the Tarots offer a convenient symbolic textbook with the advantage that the separate leaves are susceptible of innumerable arrangements. Through the designs upon the cards, ideas are substituted for numbers, and the mind becomes aware of a new dimension of thinking. Always, however, symbols draw their meanings from those attempting to interpret the designs. In this way, symbolism stimulates imagination, strengthens the observational faculties, and invites the intellect to practice reflection and contemplation.

Each human being must interpret formal symbols as he interprets life; that is, in the light of personal experience. Meaning is not inherent in material forms; it is bestowed upon them. It follows that each interpreter arrives at somewhat different conclusions, applying a censorship of interests at each step of his interpretation. Thus an Orientalist could be impressed by the vestiges of Eastern symbolism in the Tarot designs. An Egyptologist could be equally certain that the figures originated in the sanctuaries along the Nile. The student of the cabala finds cabalism in everything, and the alchemist would not hesitate to defend the cards as genuine remains of ancient alchemy.

The average layman confronted with what appears to be the evidence of a universal symbolism can be excused for failing to realize that the enthusiastic interpreters have held up the cards as mirrors before their own faces. Each has seen his pet concept supported and justified, yet the very concepts themselves may be in hopeless conflict. It might be wiser and safer simply to acknowledge that playing cards are a relic of antiquity, probably of sacred origin, and offer considerable material for study and reflection. Anyone attempting an analysis of the cards should first acquaint himself with their historical descent in order to protect his conclusions from popular errors and conceits.

We are often asked why we should waste precious time that might be devoted to abstract meditation upon such a vulgar and prosaic problem as historical descent, when we can assume the numerous accounts attributing the invention of cards to ancient priesthoods to be correct, and proceed to the fascinating pastime of daydreaming about mystical content? Such vague practices unfortunately have insufficient scholarship, and the daydreamer drifts along from one incredible notion to another. If however, he had made a sensible project out of his research, he would have a reference frame of reasonable probabilities with which to censor and circumscribe his inspirations. Only when we unfold sequentially the descent of a doctrine can we be confident that we understand that doctrine in the terms of those who devised and promulgated its teachings.

Most of the decks of Tarot cards now available have been subjected to recent "improvements." Those unable to locate standard decks, which now bring a considerable premium, are referred to the *Tarot of the Bohemians,* by Papus. The cards reproduced in this work are about the best now obtainable, and give a fair idea of the consummation of the Tarot tradition. Efforts have been made to interest large manufacturers of playing cards in issuing a Tarot deck uninfluenced by modern opinions. To the present time, however, the market has not been sufficient to justify the heavy initial expense.

It might be well to note that many celebrated decks of playing cards used in divination have no resemblance to the Tarot. Sometimes in reading about old cards the student is misled. There have been hundreds of different decks of fortunetelling cards, of which one of the most famous is that invented and used by the French seeress, Mlle. Le Normand. It would also be interesting to revive a few of the earliest card games. It is quite possible that these games might supply a clue to the more serious use of the symbolic pasteboards.

In Reply

A Department of Questions and Answers

QUESTION:—*Will you give us some thoughts on the subject of the civic responsibility of the individual seeking to live an enlightened life?*

ANSWER: It is obvious from the examples left to us by the great spiritual leaders of the past that the mystic and the philosopher cannot avoid a degree of participation in the social problems of his time. All important systems of religion have brought about political changes, and the founders and leaders of these movements have committed themselves to well-defined ethical and political convictions. You can keep philosophy out of politics, but you cannot keep politics out of philosophy.

The political consequences of the teachings of Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mohammed have been far-reaching and clearly defined. It is impossible to attempt the reformation of man without a renovation of his institutions. When we change the individual we alter the pattern of his allegiances, and it is inevitable that such alterations should have social repercussions. When, through learning, the human being emerges as an individual with convictions of his own, he can no longer accept domination by the herd or follow without question the motions that control those less thoughtful than himself.

Needless to say, most philosophers have had unhappy experiences when their inclinations to improve mankind caused them to drift into politics. It was not so bad in those remote times when there was no essential difference between spiritual and political institutions, and the powers of the priest, the scholar, and the prince were administered by the initiate-king and his priestly council. But when the several offices were divided, intervals of interest came into existence, which, since that time, have not been bridged successfully. The practical business of government passed into the keeping of professional politicians, and these have always resented any interference with their privileges and prerogatives.

Plato had an early and unhappy experience when he attempted to enlighten the officials of the Athenian state. Some two hundred years earlier, Pythagoras had run into similar difficulties; and Aristotle, a contemporary of Plato, was forced into exile by the politicians who were resolved to keep philosophers out of politics.

Socrates was a thorn in the flesh of those Grecians who rejoiced to consider themselves statesmen. His socialistic inclinations were the real cause behind his execution as a common criminal for corrupting the morals of the Athenians. Diogenes is said to have devoted considerable time and attention to his search for an honest man, but he found none, neither in the Senate nor in the market place.

After realizing that the Greek politicians had no interest in enlightenment and resented bitterly any effort to enlarge their intellects, Plato decided discretion to be the better part of valor, so he retired quietly to the Lyceum to devote his time and effort to the education of those who sincerely desired to become learned. He realized that no one could become a statesman in his spare time. To be a governor required specialized aptitudes and wide experience. He did not feel that he wished to renounce all other subjects to advance himself politically. It seemed wiser, therefore, to dedicate his resources to a larger and more significant program than managing the corruption of the Athenians.

All great world teachers have been social idealists. They taught not only the Fatherhood of God but the brotherhood of man. They recognized the importance of collective security and included an essential social factor in their codes of human deportment.

However, the political convictions of the world's great humanitarians have never dominated the political institutions of humankind. We revere these men and regard their words as Scripture, but we have no intentions of permitting idealism to interfere with the practice of special privileges and unequal opportunities.

For the mystical-minded and the philosophically-inclined of today, we should point out that the reformation of political institutions requires much more than a sincere conviction that something is wrong or that something should be done about it. The type of mind generally given to esoteric speculation is singularly deficient in those faculties necessary to bring about political reformation.

The practical reformer must have not only breadth of viewpoint but a solid penetration into the substance of his subject matter. He must realize that the science of government has become so incredibly complicated that no sweeping generality has any essential meaning. We all know what should be done because we have had no practical contact with the problem. The moment we are given an opportunity to exercise our convictions, we realize the hopelessness of the task.

A fair knowledge of rounds and races and some acquaintance with esoteric arts and sciences are not sufficient endowments to equip us to conduct a universal reformation of mankind. Nearly always the idealist labors under the misconception that the peoples of the world wish to be reformed. The truth is, the solid citizenry of empires wishes to continue to act, individually and collectively, exactly as it pleases.

What individuals desire is a comfortable means of escaping the consequences of their misdeeds. The desired formula can be described as an overwhelming urge to live badly and enjoy the rewards of living well. Anyone who can bring this about painlessly and without expense, work, or trouble will be hailed as a universal prophet.

From the security of some quiet cloister, we contemplate the derelections of our fellow citizens. The answer seems quite simple, and we wonder why no one before our time has had the wit to bring about the needed reforms. As one man said: "All we have to do is to change the educational system, spiritualize the sciences, purify the arts, chase the money lenders from the temples, and put honest men in the high places of government." All this sounds easy when you say it, but in practice there are certain aggravating obstacles.

For example, just how are we going to change the educational setup? After all, it is well entrenched and is enjoying much prestige and large financial support. Prominent educators take themselves and their opinions rather seriously, and have the intention of neither relinquishing their dignities nor reversing

their processes of thinking. Not only are these custodians of the world's learning keenly aware of their own significance but they have created a feudal system, which they are prepared to defend against any danger of infection by what David Starr Jordan called "a sickly mysticism." Napoleon pointed out that other things being equal, God is usually on the side with the heaviest artillery; and our educational institutions are well fortified with everything from the primitive slingshot to the atomic bomb.

Furthermore, these Brahmans of the West exercise a wide influence over the public school system, which has become in recent years merely the vestibule of the universities. Few school teachers or superintendents would dare to question the infallible utterances of the intellectual elect. Even if they dared, it would mean nothing—they would simply be replaced. Just where then would be the appropriate spot to attack the battlements of the higher materialism?

The optimistic reformer might decide that he should take his message directly to the common people who pay the taxes that support schools, and who sometimes include a substantial contribution to the Alma Mater in the last will and testament. Experience proves that the results of an appeal to the public mind are most depressing. The average man and woman have no clear concept of what goes on in the lofty chambers of advanced education.

The educators are a dignified-looking lot, heartily endorsed by each other, and wearing their scholastic gowns with the same gentility as the local bishop. This is enough to overawe that plebian who never graduated from grammar school. Furthermore, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker have all they can do to worry about their own affairs. Why should they waste time arguing with their betters?

Perhaps parents who have to live with their own children would be vulnerable to a loftier concept. They would, as long as it did not require any modification of their own prejudices or interfere with their religious, political, economic, and social preferences. One of them told me that it made little difference what his children were taught as long as they graduated with enough education to make a living. He was profoundly suspicious of any new-fangled notions that might cause his offspring to depart from a rigid attention to the three R's.

As a last recourse, we might appeal to the student body. Here are the solid citizens, sound and true, who will rule the world tomorrow; but if you point this out to them, they may ask cynically: "What tomorrow?" These young people, for the most part, have neither the experience nor the courage to resist family pressure on the one hand and scholastic pressure on the other. If they differ from their parents, they will be reminded that the beginning of a meritorious career is to do what one is told and to listen respectfully to the erudition of one's elders.

In a polyglot social structure, in which peoples of a hundred national backgrounds, many racial groups, and several hundred religious denominations must all be given respectful consideration, we cannot, according to the spirit of our democracy, insist that any of these conflicting elements be forced to conform with the others.

The individual who believes that God is a dignified old gentleman snooping about in space cannot be required to alter or enlarge this concept without interfering with his inalienable rights to freedom of worship and the respectful consideration of his fellow citizens. To demand tolerance is to interfere with the spiritual convictions of the intolerant, and, of course, the intolerant never fail to bring up this point whenever their notions are challenged.

We must also have the same kindly and tolerant regard for the agnostic who is not certain of anything, and for the atheist who is absolutely certain of nothing. No one can have these assorted convictions without an irresistible impulse to bestow them upon his progeny unto the third and fourth generation. If you explain to him that you have a better solution, he will not even listen, for he is convinced completely that he has the best and only solution. You may

feel like exterminating him as a stubborn fool; but if you do, the very democracy which gives you the privilege of expressing your convictions will be destroyed, and public opinion will pass into the keeping of majority groups whose first steps will be to eliminate all minorities.

If we are inclined to feel that education is the only touchy subject, we need only make a superficial survey of politics in order to have this impression corrected. Political allegiances, especially to parties and programs, are as devout and fanatical as any religious affiliations. The primary end of politics is that a particular party comes into power; all other considerations are comparatively negligible. When it comes to reform, the party in power is usually satisfied with the status quo, and the party out of power is in no position to advance any cause.

Religious and philosophical movements with clearly defined programs for the regeneration of delinquents and their systems all too often are unable to supply the skeptical with a practical example of human co-operation. Progressive groups have little confidence in each other, for they are not agreed as to what constitutes an acceptable pattern of constructive idealism.

Frequently, these groups themselves are ridden with small intrigues and are unable to apply, even among a "spiritual elect," the principles which they would bestow upon all mankind. It is a little difficult to imagine how an individual or a group that cannot integrate itself into something resembling law and order could bestow these principles upon a society infinitely less prepared to accept or use them.

The prevailing tendency to ignore internal confusion and bestow patterns upon others we have been unable to apply to ourselves is rather disconcerting to the impartial observer. He is forced to conclude that human nature is not yet sufficiently mature to permit a general renovation of its conduct patterns.

That certain abstract principles are true cannot seriously be questioned. It is obvious, even to the uninformed, that it would be highly desirable for human beings to live together in some kind of a co-operative commonwealth. But even the reformers are unable to agree among themselves as to what constitutes an acceptable reformation and by what means it shall be accomplished.

The world has had every possible incentive to correct the errors of its ways. Since the beginning of history, we have been plagued with wars, crimes, depressions, and epidemical diseases. During the same period, nations and states have been ruled by kings, emperors, princes, presidents, committees, commissions, electorates, tyrants, despots, dictators, priests, soldiers, business men and assorted characters from the proletariat. With the exceptions of brief and unusual interludes, there has been general dissatisfaction and an endless series of complaints. Each class has a solution until it reaches a position of authority, then the solution either fails or is not applied.

All this may sound superficially discouraging, but we do not intend to leave this subject in a minor key. What we wish to point out particularly is the prevailing inadequacy of those who attempt to upset the social apple cart. It is not enough to have altruistic convictions; it is absolutely necessary to be trained in the arts and sciences of leadership. It is the worst of all mistakes to underestimate the adversary. It is better to overestimate him and thus be prepared for any possible contingency.

In all matters of reform, the primary adversary is the static of masses. A mass motion can never be as rapid as the motion of any of its separate parts. When we attempt to move vast groups, we must proceed only at the rate possible to the slowest parts of the collective. The static of the mass is the inertia of untrained minds and undisciplined lives. The mass is not bad, nor should it be regarded as indifferent to progress; it simply lacks the capacity to move more rapidly than its experience permits. Experience cannot be conferred by education; it must result from direct action. What we are told, we believe, perhaps, but what we experience, we know.

I have the acquaintance of many persons who have attained a comparatively high degree of education and who have

advanced some distance in their studies of philosophy, mysticism, and comparative religion. They are sensible, reasonably normal folks, and they all feel that a great reformation of our way of life is necessary to our survival. They gather to discuss the problem, and they have many ideas which in the abstract are true. They are progressive, altruistic, and essentially constructive in their convictions. Even under the most critical comparison, they are far in advance of that mass of mankind which is in such desperate need of cultural redemption.

These admirable characters, however, with their obviously constructive recommendations are themselves incapable of an enlightened management of the responsibilities peculiarly their own. Their homes are not happy, their affairs are not in order, and they have been unable to share their higher convictions with others of their own kind naturally sympathetic. These spiritual progressives still worry, fret, fear, and permit themselves to indulge in quite a variety of destructive notions. Most of them are a little intolerant of those they regard as less enlightened, and several have pronounced racial and religious prejudices.

What then should be the attitude of these people in civic matters? Should they refrain completely from co-operation with existing systems? Should they crusade their own causes in the face of certain failure, simply because they feel these causes to be correct? Should they affiliate themselves with civic organizations of one kind or another, dedicating their spare time to what they regard as essential changes and reforms?

My first suggestion would be that if they are resolved to embark in some program of reform that they first of all make a thorough survey and study of the conditions as they are today. These people should be familiar with existing laws and why they were enacted. They should recognize the privileges and natural restrictions peculiar to our concept of government. Most of all, they should learn to appreciate the true position of the legislator. They should realize that he is not a free agent, able to do anything that he pleases; rather, he is a representative of a well-defined system and his powers are limited by the rules and regulations of that system. If he knowingly or willfully rejects or ignores these rules and restrictions, and performs actions contrary to the concept of constitutional government, he becomes a despot or a dictator, regardless of his internal motivations.

It may occur occasionally that a man of such high integrity appears that he could be trusted with dictatorial powers, but this is a dangerous precedent and opens the way to tyranny for many ambitious and unscrupulous politicians.

Making laws for a nation as diversified in its interests as the United States of America is extremely difficult. The needs and requirements of various geographical areas and various economic classes result in a conflict of requirements. Each group of the governed demands loudly and insistently that its own peculiar needs be given first consideration, nor is there any special desire of the various classes to advance each others causes. Each is indifferent to all needs except his own. The optimistic reformer who has no practical experience fails to take into account the innumerable details, any one of which may be sufficient to invalidate his program.

There are certain and distinct opportunities for enlightened individuals to advance the cause of essential civilization. These invite practical co-operation and also require sacrifice and dedication. Although many of these groups of progressives are not strong numerically or financially, they exercise large spheres of influence and have been able to support successfully considerable constructive legislation. They are excellent training schools for practical idealists, and through them necessary experience in the dimensions of government is gained.

Civic responsibilities begin with the individual himself. He may not be able immediately to attain a position of authority or distinction, but he can emerge as a discriminating and thoughtful person. He can inform himself so that he can make the best possible use of his voting power. While the ballot may not be to his liking, he can discriminate and

throw his weight in the direction most likely to result in progress.

A person can, for example, free himself from the hypnosis created by the political spell-binder. He can refuse mentally to become a victim of propaganda, and he can free his consciousness from party politics, and develop the courage to support the better candidate rather than the traditional political form.

This progressive can associate himself with such religious institutions as he believes represent the larger and wiser spiritual convictions. He can supplement the materialistic education of the public schools by making it his business to build solid ideals in his children. This is not impossible if the parent sets the example, not by words but by deeds.

The progressive, also, can throw his weight by supporting the kind of press that he regards as decent and constructive. He can do the same in his selection of books, theatrical entertainment, motion pictures, and radio programs. If he refuses to permit his own integrity to be compromised and is willing to support the integrity in others, even though they may not be in complete agreement with him in all particulars, he will work toward unity among minority groups.

While there is a natural tendency of progressives to form organizations to advance their causes, these organizations should be supported only to the degree that they are useful. It seldom accomplishes any good to sacrifice oneself for a cause obviously inadequate and evidently unable to survive. Intelligent administration implies the ability to recognize inadequacy, and either correct it or waste no further time.

A great deal can be done by thoughtful individuals who have trained themselves to know what is possible and reasonable at any given time. We usually defeat our purposes by attempting to overreach our means and capacities. It is far wiser to let small things grow than to have overestimated the public ability to grow. To think in terms of millions is usually to think in excess of our capacity to think clearly.

The laboratories in which we may perfect our civic plans are the home and the business. These are the most intimate collectives with which we come into constant and favorable contact. The home is a miniature of the world. The elements which compose it and the problems which confront it are typical of those present in the international arena. I have observed that once family attitudes become too crystallized, the members of this small commonwealth become incapable of the intelligent arbitration of their disputes. Some new device must be found by which these difficulties are solved.

Likely enough, this device when discovered can be applied to the larger world-family. If there are a hundred reasons why a broken home cannot be repaired, there are a hundred thousand equally good reasons why the human family, with its diversity of interests and prejudices, cannot be reconciled. If we are helpless to solve the disputes of half a dozen "impossible" relatives, we are not likely to fair better with three hundred highly opinionated nations and states.

I have discussed this problem with several optimistic reformers, and they have met it by pointing out that in their particular case the domestic snarl presented circumstances beyond all human help. If certain persons were not completely unreasonable, the situation might be solved. That is exactly the findings of the Hague conferences, the League of Nations, and the United Nations Organization. We must remember that in every crisis, a percentage of the factors are "impossible." All we have to do to solve the world's dilemma is to find a simple and sufficient remedy for the "impossible." The rest is easy.

We could examine at some length the substance of the "impossible." It usually means that someone else is as certain about his opinions as we are about ours. To them, we are the "impossible." Of course, the adamant state of certainty which we find it impossible to overcome arises from a conviction of right or advantage as basic as ours, but in violent disagreement.

Someone asked once, "Do you wish to know the truth?" The one interro-

gated replied, "Whose truth—mine or yours?" This becomes a problem in semantics, and intelligent folks are beginning to realize that the universe is not composed of one truth and many errors, but of one truth in many forms. Each of these forms is held as a sacred and immovable conviction by someone who is willing to defend the concept with his life, his liberty, and his worldly goods.

While it is true that the knowledge of principles is indispensable to the solution of problems, it is also important to have an accurate and sufficient grasp of the particulars to which these principles must be applied. The scholar is seldom a man of action, and the man of action is seldom a scholar. It is entirely possible to have a general solution to pressing difficulties and at the same time be without a particular remedy which can be applied directly to a vital issue. Failure to realize this implies overenthusiasm, overoptimism, or lack of insight.

A correct diagnosis may be counted as half of the cure. If reforms could be accomplished easily, humanity would long ago have attained to a Utopian state. To date, all efforts to diagnose the human ailment have failed to consider some vital circumstance, factor, or element of the problem, and subsequently have been wrecked upon one of these submerged shoals.

Civic responsibility cannot be interpreted as implying that we must impose our convictions upon others; rather it implies that we must be capable of constructive teamwork in which we work with others toward ends held in common. In simple fairness we cannot demand respect for our convictions, unless we accord a similar quality of respect to all others making up the collective under consideration.

If each individual attempts to impose his convictions or concepts on the others, chaos is the consequence. We cannot direct the lives of others without giving them at the same time the right to direct ours. This thought leads immeditely to a righteous indignation based on the concept that *we* know what *they* need, but *they* haven't the slightest idea of what *we* need.

The rather ludicrous position of resenting in others what we advocate in ourselves does not inspire a broad confidence. As each member of the political, social, or cultural group is quite convinced that he alone is qualified to exercise the dominant influence over the others, we create a many-headed dragon, with the heads snarling, biting, and snapping at one another. Under such conditions the fate of the total dragon is open to considerable speculation.

Much of the overenthusiasm could be reduced to reasonable bounds if we had a fair working concept of practical difficulties. We have already mentioned the static generated by mass or number. Never for a moment should we regard this inertia as a ground waiting to be plowed, or as a state of repose requiring only awakening in order to become a sphere of frenzied activity. If we may confuse language for a purpose, we may say that the static of collectives is a dynamic resistance to change.

We can symbolize this static by a reference to Uncle Hezekiah's theological integrity. This good and venerable man regarded piety, patriotism, and honor as arising from complete and utter resistance to all change. He was proud of the fact that he would die in the theological bracket into which he had been born. He used to say with utter sincerity when referring to his creed that it had been good enough just as it was for ten generations of ancestors and it was good enough for him. To alter one jot or tittle of this completely packaged product was high treason, which could

only lead his own immortal soul straight to perdition.

Uncle Hezekiah was ready in any emergency to shoulder his muzzle-loading carbine and sally forth to do or die in defense of his right to remain exactly what he had always been. To even think in terms of improvement was to question or doubt the infinite perfection of his present conclusions. Such doubts were not only heretical but were a personal insult, undermining his sincere conviction that he already knew what was best for himself, his wife, his children, the community, the state, the nation, the world, and the universe. After all, it would be a pity to disturb a man so completely satisfied with everything in general and himself in particular. In truth, it would be *impossible* to disturb the conviction of this pious character.

There are many sincerely proud of their reactionary tendencies. To them a change of mind is a proof of feebleness of intellect. Consistency is a cardinal virtue, and it is of no importance whether the devotion be to sound or unsound principles.

Like so many of nature's noblemen, Uncle Hezekiah accepted enthusiastically his heavy responsibility for making certain that all the members of his family agreed with him in every detail and particular. With the inspired relentlessness of some ancient patriarch, he governed his kith and kin with a rod of iron. To differ from Uncle Hezekiah was like unto differing with God, and even a mental reservation was a mortal sin. One obeyed or left home.

Although the golden age of intellectual tyranny has past, there are millions of citizens, tried and true, dedicated to the perpetuation at all costs of complete conformity with the status quo. These reactionaries flourish even in socalled progressive circles, defining arbitrarily the boundaries of progress, and deciding for themselves and all who will accept their decisions the questions of science, philosophy, politics, ethics, economics, and morality.

These persons weigh all evidence against their own preconceptions and by a curious coincidence always discover themselves to be right. Only a blind enthusiast can disregard this important bloc, or hope to get new ideas or even new interpretations of old ideas into militantly closed minds.

Three indispensable ingredients make up the compound of human intellectual progress. First, there must be information worth communication. Second, there must be someone capable of communicating it clearly and effectively, and third, there must be someone else sincerely desiring to be informed. The failure of any one of these factors frustrates the entire end.

Assuming that there are great ideas worthy of perpetuation, our first major obstacle is the scarcity of teachers or instructors capable of preserving the integrity of any doctrine or concept through the process of transmission. It is almost impossible to communicate a fact without adding or substracting some interpretive material. The issue is confused by the natural and inevitable circumstance which the interpreter assumes that his commentaries reveal the true intent of the original author.

Next, we must find a listener with a trained capacity to absorb information without introducing out of his own thinking further improvisations on the principal theme. When we observe the procedure in action, we can but wonder how any reasonable transmission of information is accomplished.

After numerous tragic experiences it is likely to dawn upon us that the way of the reformer is hard, and that the best intentions and efforts may have tragic results. But we need not be entirely discouraged, for, failing in all else, we can finally get around to ourselves where there is a genuine opportunity to contribute to the security of the world. Once we have faced the challenge of our own ineptitudes we find a full-time job ready at hand.

Unfortunately, self-improvement lacks the glamour and distinction conferred by universal reformation. It seems a pity to limit magnificent ideas to our small environment, when, theoretically at least, they could sweep like wildfire across the surface of the earth. But they do not

"sweep," so we may as well devote ourselves to the less pretentious project. Nor should we assume that self-improvement is a selfish course of behavior. To correct personal faults is to bestow a precious blessing upon our families, our neighbors, and our friends. Who improves himself serves many, and sets a notable example which speaks much louder than words.

Most dyed-in-the-wool reformers insist that to devote oneself to personal improvement is selfish and antisocial. We will grant that the cultivation of cosmic consciousness at the expense of our families, friends, and communities produces little of lasting good for anyone concerned. But philosophy is not to blame if those professing it conduct themselves contrary to its principles. It is not necessary to be a nuisance in order to be dedicated to the higher life.

Everything in nature grows and unfolds beautifully and lovingly. Man is the only creature whose development is a horrible ordeal. The birds and the bees live ther natural span and perform their normal functions without developing deep-seated neuroses, persecution complexes, or delusions of divinity.

It is reserved for the genus homo, only occasionally sapiens, to become so completely befuddled by the overwhelming implications of himself that it is difficult for him to perform the simplest action gracefully or graciously.

The Eastern sage who said that the mind is the slayer of the real knew whereof he spoke. The brain faculties operate much like the proverbial Board of Directors or the equally remarkable Committee of Ways and Means. Either of these bouquets of representative citizens will require from ten to a hundred times as long to accomplish anything as one qualified person with authority to proceed according to common sense.

When one group of prejudices opposes itself to another group equally well entrenched and our internal resolution to do exactly as we please settles down to an indefinite filibuster, we arrive at psychoses rather than at solutions.

As long as we live in a socialized state and each of us is capable of functioning to the detriment of others, personal improvement is a civic responsibility. Plato pointed out that the type of government under which we live cannot be held responsible for the quality of our living. The human being can be equally happy under a benevolent monarchy, a benevolent oligarchy, or a benevolent democracy; he might even do well under a benevolent anarchy.

Conversely, man will languish under any and all systems the moment he ceases to be benevolent or the moment he abuses the privileges which these systems confer. We could all be utterly miserable in paradise if we failed to abide by the rules of this sphere of blessedness. The moment the individual breaks faith with the collective pattern, he destroys both himself and the pattern.

The criminal is a good example of an individual betraying the way of life to which he belongs. It would be foolish to say that the criminal injures only himself or that his regeneration would be of advantage only to himself. If one per cent of the population of a state is criminally delinquent, this antisocial minority can keep the other ninety-nine per cent in a condition of perpetual insecurity.

Vast sums of money must be appropriated to apprehend, try, convict, and punish these wrong-doers. They cause suspicion, doubt, fear, and in various ways undermine man's confidence in his own kind. They give rise to a general apprehension, which in turn leads to tension, worry, and many forms of negative thinking.

Furthermore, no means have ever been devised by which the collective group could compel the reformation of the criminal. The penal system has never prevented crime; it merely drives it underground, and encourages the wrongdoer to develop ingenious methods for covering his tracks.

If a criminal should decide, for one reason or another, to correct himself and accept the rules of his social order, he would by this decision bestow important benefits upon his community. Such self-improvement would be useful and unselfish; in fact, would be the greatest

good to the greatest number. We are all more or less socially unadjusted. We may not be dangerous criminals, but we may be contributing to a negative condition in which crime, delinquency, and degeneracy can incubate.

The chronic nagger, the worrier, the fear-monger, the spiteful, and the envious suffer from personality defects as dangerous to their social order as epidemical diseases. It is impossible to perpetuate destructive tendencies without creating an ever-increasing sphere of harmful influence. Thus, the improvement of ourselves and the correction of our faults is a solemn duty of citizenship. Our increasing control over our thoughts and actions confers greater personality security upon all directly or indirectly influenced by our conduct.

In ancient times and among primitive peoples even today, citizenship was not bestowed by birth but conferred as a reward for merit. The young man or woman had to earn the right to be a member of his tribe or clan. From childhood young people were inspired to fit themselves for participation in the mature actions and decisions of their group. The boy looked forward to the time when he would be eligible to apply for citizenship. He prepared himself for the tests and trials which would prove his integrity. The highest honor that could come to him was his seat in the council, and for this evidence of maturity he planned and worked with the same enthusiasm which we bestow on the accumulation of our first million dollars.

Broadly speaking, we all desire to advance the civilization of which we are a part. We would like to vote more intelligently, support constructive measures, correct flagrant injustices, and feel a sense of participation in civic affairs. Lacking a profound knowledge of the workings of government, the majority is unable to think in terms of ultimate solutions or adequate means. When in doubt, it is usually wise to advocate and support moderate courses.

Many good things have failed because of extremists, who are unwilling to develop long-range plans and stay with them over long periods of time. We are enthusiasts but we lack continuity. Our interests shift rapidly, and that which dominates our thinking today is a forgotten cause tomorrow.

Occasionally I am approached by someone who has a plan which amounts to little less than a cultural revolution. It may be that the cause is just and the ends desirable, but where the methods are fanatical they will most certainly fail. Most entrenched errors cannot be driven from their fortifications with a grand gesture. Often abuses can be curbed more easily than they can be stopped. By a gradual process of curbing, we may ultimately attain complete solution; but when we attempt an all-or-nothing ultimatum, it is probable that we must be satisfied with the nothing.

The educational system is a case at point. We know that it needs a general renovation. The educators, whose intimate acquaintance with their problems is much more practical than that of the parlor nihilist, are of the same mind. Thousands of educators all over the world are using every means in their power to overcome the static in the public consciousness.

For every insincere professor or teacher there are thousands of indifferent parents. These parents forever complain, but are unwilling to sacrifice any of their own life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness to do anything practical. Regrets are tossed about in wild confusion, but such heroic educators as are ready, willing, and able to correct prevailing ills are blocked in their efforts by the inertia and even open antagonism of those they are trying to help.

The school is not a satisfactory substitute for home training and example, nor can it take the place of the churches or the groups specializing in youth activities. Parents have depended more than they should upon the public school and have attempted to shift on to the state responsibilities which are essentially private and personal.

The majority of parents look forward with the gravest apprehension to the summer vacation when the children will

be home interfering with the adult activities of the family. Shipping the children off to summer camp often involves a nice bit of hypocrisy. We tell everyone they are going to have such a wonderful time, when really *we* are the ones looking forward to fun and frolic while they are away. We have found it rather embarrassing to be confronted for three long summer months with the products of our own system of child-culturing.

When a public school teacher inherits a class composed of forty or fifty undisciplined, neglected, or spoiled junior citizens, we should not be surprised if the course of education does not run smoothly. One teacher told me that the class which he inherited required an animal trainer, not an educator.

There are exceptions to all rules, but while a considerable per cent of children has been so brought-up as to be unmanageable and totally lacking in social graces, no educational system can function with a maximum of efficiency. We cannot blame the children for this sad commentary and we will not blame ourselves, so we must decide that the public school system has failed.

In terms of civic responsibility, let us remember that when two persons marry and establish a home, this is a matter of more than passing significance. If these newlyweds have two children, and each of these children in turn has two children, and this continues for seven generations, and all the incidental factors are taken into consideration, statistics indicate that there will be hundreds of descendants. If we further realize that it will require eight generations to absorb completely the consequences of delinquent tendencies, always assuming that these tendencies are not fortified by outside factors, we have an interesting social picture.

It is quite possible for a neglectful parent's thoughtlessness and cruelty to leave an enduring mark, itself detrimental, upon the character of a large number of human beings living more than a century after the original parents are dead. Out of this progeny some may reach prominence, and their derelections affect the destinies of nations and states. It is therefore entirely impossible to take the attitude that our temperamental irascibilities are a private matter. The majority of human beings, living thoughtlessly and selfishly, are setting in motion the causes of mass disaster one hundred, five hundred, or a thousand years from now.

Great-grandfather was a stout character who specialized in highway robbery. He lived by his wits, and met an unfortunate end at the hands of a committee of vigilantes; but great-grandfather did not perish utterly. The tragedies he caused survived him, passed on from father to son, not necessarily as a physical heredity but as a psychological heredity. There is not one of his descendants who has not suffered because of him. Perhaps none of them has turned to a life of crime, but something has been substracted from the happiness expectancy of each.

When these descendants married, outsiders were brought under morbid personality patterns; thus the sickness went on. Probably great-grandfather did not know—very likely he didn't care—for he was a rugged individualist who believed that we are here to do anything we can get away with. Because he had no sense of civic responsibility in himself, he made a generous contribution to the weariness and disillusionment of mankind in general.

Great-grandfather was neither by nature nor temperament qualified to be a prophet or a sage. He was just one of those ordinary mortals tossed about on

the sea of circumstance. He would not have founded a university, endowed a hospital, or left an imperishable contribution to the sciences. He was no artist, nor was he so far as he knew a dynast. Had he pondered his life away, he probably could not have devised any particular means by which he could have accomplished a reformation of his world. But he could have been a constructive man, a good husband, and a wise father in those simple matters within the possibility of us all.

Great-grandfather's sons could have received strength of character and have been taught to be honorable citizens. They could have had normal nervous systems, and throughout their lives their childhoods could have been sources of inspiration, courage, and integrity. Had this been true there would have been fifty or a hundred better homes in America today. This is the contribution to the present and the future which the average person can make. If enough accept this responsibility as a privilege and a birthright, the affairs of the world will run more smoothly.

As students of philosophy we must plan programs suitable to our capacities. This honestly and honorably done will increase these capacities and fit us for larger undertakings. Even if circumstances call us to a larger ministry, these small but essential responsibilities cannot be ignored. Unfoldment increases opportunity, but does not remove responsibility. It is useless to fail particulars in the service of principles. While we live in this world we must get along with the particulars we have neglected.

Often we waste much time regretting conditions which we lack the power to correct. While it is good to exercise discrimination, and we are not supposed to ignore the conspiracies which distinguish our times, here again we must take a moderate course. Much talking exhausts the impulse to accomplish. If we talk enough we will never do anything. All the pressure of our discontent is wasted on empty air or on the empty heads of those satisfied to listen.

The cracker-barrel congress does more to perpetuate the status quo than to advance any constructive project. This does not mean that it is unprofitable to discuss, as long as the discussion is limited to things and matters possible of accomplishment. But words must always be linked with deeds appropriate to those words, and the solution in fact of the imminent is better than a solution in theory of the ultimate. We gain a reputation for being intelligent by learned remarks, but we lose this reputation the moment we indulge in irrational conduct.

Conviction naturally leads to action, but where the conviction is weak, the action will also be inadequate. When a man asks us whom he should vote for, it means that even if he elects the candidate he mildly favors, the man he puts in office can expect nothing more from the voter than a mild uncertainty and a wavering allegiance.

We always hope that we are going to get the right man into office, and he always hopes that if he gets in someone will support him. Both hopes are vain. We must develop the intelligence to decide the qualifications of our representatives, and having elected them by intent we must continue our intentions by sustaining them in the program for which they have been elected. This takes intelligence, and in a democracy there is no substitute for intelligence.

Democratic government depends for its unfoldment and survival upon a gradually rising level of public thoughtfulness. A foolish people can never be well-governed. As each voter is indispensable to the collective security, so each voter is responsible for the intelligence of his own decisions. Civic responsibility begins with the individual, who must fit himself for constructive participation in the business of his nation.

No commercial enterprise can succeed unless the members of the corporation are qualified to transact its business. Each is a vital factor in the success or failure of the corporation. Civilization is itself a vast institution. Its survival depends upon the skillful administration of its affairs. Every inadequate citizen is a menace to the whole corporation. If we do not develop a consciousness of

responsibility which inspires us to personal improvement for the common good, we leave ourselves open to the impositions of despotism or tyranny. If we do not preserve with vigilance that which we have gained through courage, we shall lose all through stupidity.

In our private lives we produce the psychological values that are the basic materials from which our composite culture is built. In the face of large world decisions our personal lives may appear trivial. Under the democratic theory, however, these trifles make perfection, and this perfection is no trifle. The way we feel when we arise in the morning can set up chain reactions as important to us all as those which we associate with the potentials of the atomic theory.

If the energy in the atom can blow nations from the earth, the energy in man can prevent this disaster. We shall learn that security is itself a chain reaction. It begins with one individual and passes rapidly to others and in time, like the mysterious elixir of the alchemists, transmutes all base metals into precious substances.

Instead, therefore, of settling down into a state of hopelessness because our personal vote cannot change the course of history, let us set to work industriously changing the course of ourselves, with a certain conviction that history is nothing more nor less than the report of the conduct of little people under pressure.

"The life of a covetous person is much like the feasts prepared in honor of the dead. The corpse is in the presence of all, but enjoys nothing."—*Socrates.*

"Whoever brings his son up well, though he leave him little of this world's goods, gives him much."—*Zenophon.*

A throne is only a bench covered with velvet—*Napoleon.*

"Nothing persuades people of small understanding so much as that which they cannot understand."—Cardinal Retz.

"Knowledge is choked by its own undergrowth."—*Erasmus.*

"One age spends its best energies in offsetting and outgrowing the errors of another."—Jastrow.

"The gods sell us all good things for the coin of hard work."

—Xenophon

"Gold is tested by fire; man is tested by gold."

Chinese proverb

"Forget the good deed you have done; remember the kindness you have received."

Chinese proverb

The Mystical Christ

THE pressure of world events and the uncertainties which burden the lives of private citizens have intensified the human need for spiritual consolation. Religious institutions always flourish in periods following wars or other collective disasters. The individual turns instinctively to some idealistic system of convictions for strength and security against the demoralization which follows the collapse of prevailing ethical, moral, or economic systems.

Christianity is the dominating religion of Western civilization. It has directed the course of Western cultural motion since the collapse of the pagan Roman Empire. As the Occident increased in temporal power, the influence of its religion has extended into non-Christian regions where converts have become important minority groups. Even though Christianity has never been inclined to fraternize with other religions, still it stands with them against the materialistic and atheistic forces seeking to destroy religion per se. The lack of religious unity is especially disastrous in these confused years which are threatening every aspect of human idealism.

It is inevitable that the contemporary man or woman seeking refuge in a religious system should want to understand the basic principles of the faith with which he associates himself. We are no longer inclined to a general unquestioning acceptance of any doctrine. We cannot bestow our allegiance unless we are convinced that religion offers a practical and reasonable solution to our difficulties.

Although Christianity is the nominal faith of an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Americas, comparatively few of the devout members of the various denominations of this great religion have any broad knowledge of its doctrines, principles, or history. There is a large nominal following, but very little deep understanding.

It is becoming daily more evident that modern social differences are no longer essentially racial or national. These differences are now ideological and psychological. Groups are instinctively aligning themselves, according to native inclination, under the banners of idealism or materialism. We all know that there are countless forms and schools of idealistic conviction, and probably an equal number of minor divisions within the ranks of the materialists. We also know from experience that idealists find it more difficult to co-operate or overlook the minor differences in their tenets and beliefs than do the materialists. It would appear that there are many kinds of beliefs, but only one form of unbelief. As a result, the forces working against the survival of spiritual convictions are far better integrated than the organizations attempting to defend the dignity of religion.

As a nondenominational religious corporation, we receive many inquiries from confused persons seeking to identify themselves with liberal and progressive

Christian movements. We are asked to recommend a denomination without prejudice or intolerance, dedicated to the practice of Christian principles, and free of the limitations imposed by the dogmas of theological systems. Incidentally, this is quite an order. Other embarrassing questions include: Which is the true Church? Must a person be baptized in order to be saved? Is the apostolic succession genuine? And can a sincere person be a Christian without joining any church? No matter how one answers these questions, he is bound to offend someone, and with a little skill he can generally succeed in offending everyone.

The subject is exceedingly touchy; and in the confusion caused by intense prejudice, all the facts are either forgotten or fail to appear relevant. Assuming that the average human being needs and wants spiritual guidance, in what direction can we advise him to turn in search of a practical religion? We must remember that the average American has graduated from high school, has a fair acquaintance with world events, and, through the radio, the newspaper, and the pulpit, is in possession of a number of general facts bearing upon the theory and practice of religion as it is taught today. It is no solution to advise a man to associate himself with an organization whose principles do not satisfy the natural instinct of his heart or mind. In substance, progressive people cannot be happy or useful in reactionary movements.

It is not our present intention to express any personal beliefs relating to the respective merits or demerits of the sects of Christendom, nor do we wish to convey the impression that we are belittling or depreciating their creeds or endeavors. Our entire purpose is to be helpful in so far as is possible in answering the persistent query, "Where can I find religious help and inspiration?"

The easiest way out would be to remind the seeker that the difficulty is within himself, and that any faith could help him if he approached its teachings with sufficient sincerity and humility. In practice, however, this rather platitudinous generality is seldom sufficient to change the course of human character. It is much like saying any lawyer is better than no lawyer, or any doctor is better than no doctor. We must bear in mind that a poor lawyer and a poor doctor are both dangerous to the cause of their clients. An inadequate spiritual concept may impoverish the heart and the mind, though its followers be entirely sincere. It is no doubt true that all religions help someone, but it still remains to discover which religion can help us.

If it is sometimes obscure as to how one sect of a religion differs from another sect of the same religion, it is equally obscure as to how the great religions of the world differ from each other. If we eliminate such accidental or inconsequential factors as race, historical background, language, time, and local customs from the different religions, we have very little difference left. We must not permit, for example, the architectural differences between the minaret of a mosque and the steeple of a church to convey the impression that the two works represent different spiritual convictions. Emphasis upon physical forms is itself a symptom of materialism, for it would substitute the appearance of things for the fact of things.

We must remember that the sects of a religion are entities which survive only by emphasizing real or imaginary differences. An individual is only an individual because he differs from others. If he becomes exactly like others, he loses his individuality. If the five hundred sects of Christendom overcame their traditional dissimilarities, there would no longer be five hundred sects of Christendom. It is difficult, however, to interest the average individual or the average sect in a program of self-annihilation. It is especially true in religion, where each group believes that its own interpretation is superior to all others and the ultimate hope of the whole world. The sect is firmly convinced that if it eliminates itself, it is false to God and removes the first line of defense against the error dominant in all other sects.

The historical aspects of the religious question cannot be entirely ignored.

While it is true that the human soul cannot be saved by history alone, most religions place peculiar emphasis upon time-and-place factors and the sequences of historical events. It may even be pointed out that the historical traditions are absolutely necessary to the survival of separate religious institutions.

Such basic spiritual concepts as the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the human soul, the ultimate victory of good over evil, and the practice of the Golden Rule are held in common by all the great religions of the world, and were shared by most of the extinct faiths which in the past have guided human destiny. Separateness demands some kind of uniqueness, and as the uniqueness does not lie in the doctrine it must depend upon conditions, times, persons, and places involved in the formation and dissemination of the doctrine.

We are forced, therefore, to consider historical events, in as much as Christianity, with which we are primarily concerned at the moment, emphasizes and has always emphasized the essential spiritual significance of a series of historical events. It has further required its followers to accept the peculiar sacredness of these events as events, and has pronounced anathemas against any person who shall doubt or question the literal, factual, historical and divine import of these events. In the Jewish Scriptures, we have lengthy historical accounts of the migrations of peoples and tribes, of wars, crimes, and disasters, of reigning monarchs and the incidents in their lives. In fact, the *Old Testament* is regarded as a general source of information on the history of the Jewish nation. In the *New Testament* we have a considerable space devoted to the genealogy of Jesus, a record of his life, his ministry and his death, and then, through the Epistles and other apostolic writtings, the record of the dissemination of his teachings through the lifetimes of his disciples.

It is against the background of this historical sequence, which probably takes up three-quarters of the texts of both the *Old* and *New Testaments,* that the doctrinal elements are developed and specialized. As long as these books are the most sacred texts of the religions of the Jews and the Christians, it is impossible to ignore the historical equations in these faiths. Either the history is true and important, or it is untrue and unimportant.

Between these extremes have developed elaborate schools of mystical speculation, which regard the historical aspect as symbolical or allegorical, referring to creative or regenerative processes under veiled terms. This, however, does not solve the difficulty. If the history is allegorical, then it loses literal significance. If it is historical, it loses allegorical significance, for we cannot assume, without overemphasis upon the miraculous, that history as fact was modified and changed in order to supply a veritable foundation for allegory.

We become somewhat suspicious of history when we recognize the parallels existing in the traditions of the various world religions. It is unlikely that the same historical incidents occurred in widely separated times and places. Generalities might recur, but specific incidents and sequences of incidents violate the laws governing the probabilities of recurrence. Thoughtfulness, therefore, inclines us to regard these so-called religious histories as symbolical and mystical, and such actual factual data as they may contain as incidental.

Of course, this attitude of doubt about jots and tittles will be subject to violent opposition in certain quarters. But each person must decided for himself as to what constitutes a reasonable approach to an extremely difficult problem. For ourselves, we feel that overemphasis upon historical content is responsible for the decline of spiritual values in many sects of the Christian faith. If it is true that the letter of the law killeth, but the spirit of the law giveth life, it seems to me that the historical controversy partakes of the quality of the letter.

Religious histories become more difficult the moment one begins to investigate them. Usually they are in definite conflict with so-called profane history. The sober or profane historians of the

times and places under consideration seldom sustain the findings of the ecclesiastical historians. Of course, there are some exceptions where the secular histories are founded largely upon the religious histories, as in the case of the old Jewish records.

It is curious but worthy of note that no satisfactory historical accounts are available about any of the great religious founders of the past. This is equally true of both Eastern and Western saviors and prophets. Even the dates of their births are subject to controversy, and their writings have been subjected to so many vicissitudes, including destruction, re-editing, censoring, and reinterpretation, to say nothing of translation, that very little is certain. We know much more about soldiers and politicians, conquerors and despots than we know of saints, sages, mystics, and philosophers.

Perhaps the very uncertainties are beneficial, for they tend to make great spiritual leaders unhistorical. After all, spiritual revelation, though it must emerge at some time in some place, is essentially universal and eternal. The human need changes but little through the centuries, and the solution to the human need must have the same detached quality of endurance.

Regardless, however, of our resolution to abide with principle, we cannot escape entirely from the fascination of personality. If we respect and admire a message and find it worthy of our veneration, we also desire to have some knowledge of the messenger. We want to know what he was like, the kind of life he lived, the people he knew, the motives which inspired him, and, if possible, the source of his doctrine. Probably, we are instinctively searching for *his humanity*. We want to know that to a degree at least he was like ourselves. We want to feel that he shared our problems. It is more important to us to believe that he was a normal human being who achieved through consecration to truth than that he was a god graciously bestowing salvation upon a world destitute of the power to save itself.

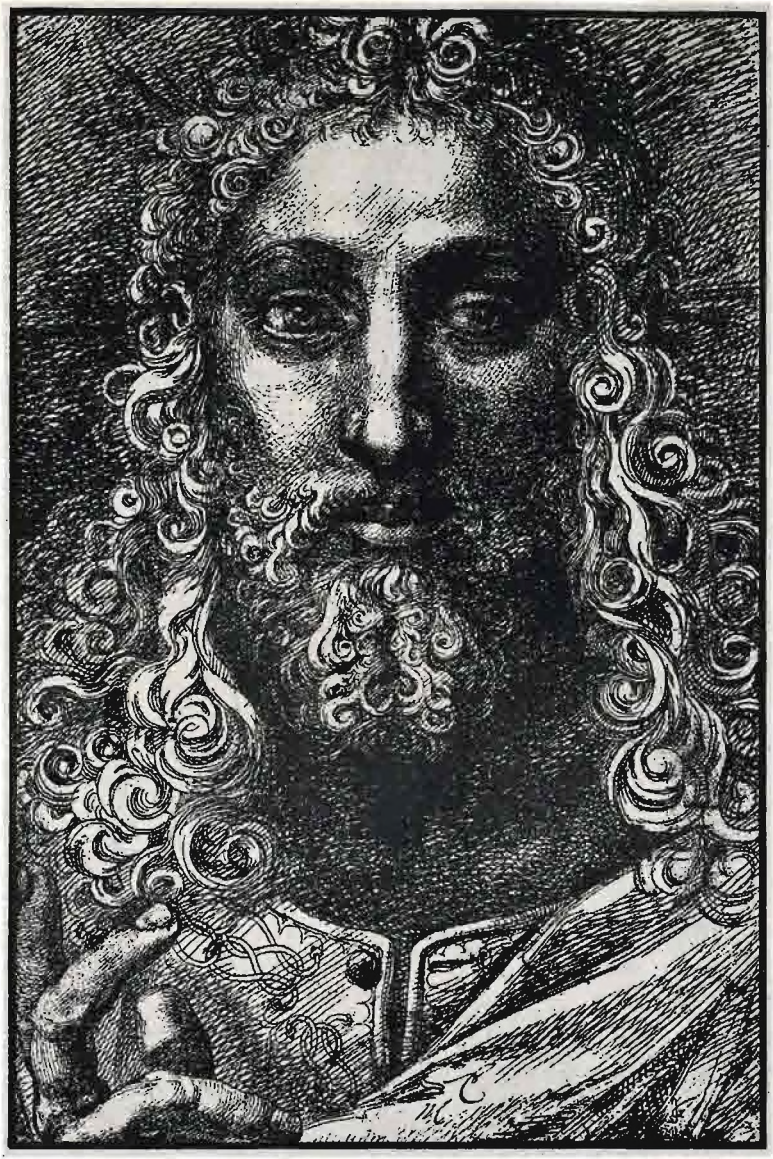
No human being is important outside of a reference frame of time and place. We cannot estimate the merit of action unless we know the circumstances under which that action was performed. We hope secretly that our savior or messiah lived in times and places much like ours. Unless he was the victim of the tyranny, dishonesty, and materialism of his contemporaries, he could not know or share the peculiar tragedy with which we are burdened. We want to understand our religious leader as a person. We want to feel that he could be a guest in our house, sharing with us the simple joys and sorrows which make up ordinary living. Our bond with him must have an emotional warmth, a vitality of comradeship, or else his words and teaching seem remote and cold.

As early as the 1st century there was a division of opinion in the Christian congregations about the historical importance of the life of Christ. The group dominated by St. Peter emphasized the significance of the historical Jesus, while the followers of St. Paul inclined toward a mystical interpretation. It is possible that this division was the result of the circumstance that St. Peter had come under the personal influence of Jesus, whereas St. Paul knew the Christ only as a mystical experience. In any event, the breach widened with the passing of the centuries, and the mystical concept lost favor with the rising temporal power of the Church.

Although thousands of books have been written as interpretations of the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth, little has actually been added to the accounts contained in the Gospels and the *New Testament Apocrypha*. It is not our intention to take a controversial attitude, but in all fairness, we must acknowledge the source of available data. The Jesus of the Gospels is familiar to all followers of his faith, regardless of their denominations. It is also reasonably well known to the members of most other religions, and to students of comparative religion, regardless of their persuasions. It therefore seems unnecessary to repeat the substance of a common knowledge; rather, it might be more profitable to examine those parts of the Master's life about

From an extra-illustrated copy of the great Elzevir Bible

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
Engraved from the original by Peter Paul Reubens

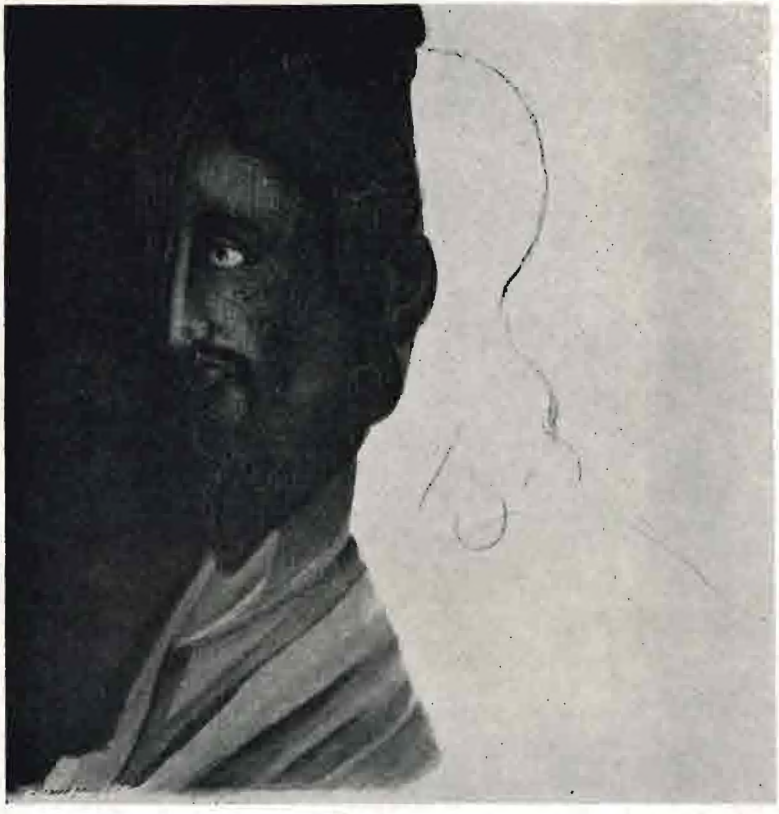


HEAD OF CHRIST

By Toussaint Budreuil (1561-1602) Ecole Francaise

THE BLACK VIRGIN OF MONTSERRAT

This antique woodcarving is said to have been the work of St. Luke, and it was solemnly crowned by Pope Leo XIII, in 1881. The monastery of Montserrat, built in 1031 A. D., is believed to be the Montsalvat of the Parsifal legend.



—From a sketch by Thomas Heaphy

MOSAIC HEAD OF CHRIST FROM THE ROMAN CATACOMBS

This head of very early date is said to be the work of a pagan artist employed by early Christians. Although criticized for being too philosophical, the head corresponds closely with the earliest traditional likenesses.

ANCIENT DRAWING OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

which the evangelists maintained a common silence.

Of the thirty-three years of the earthly life of Jesus, eighteen years are a complete blank. When we consider the sovereign importance of the life of Jesus to hundreds of millions of his followers, it seems remarkable that research has failed to fill the interval between his discussion with the elders in the synagogue and the beginning of his public ministry.

Almost equally mysterious are the intimations that Jesus gave to his disciples —certain teachings or doctrines which were not contained in his public utterances. These certain other teachings referred to by the evangelists have not survived in his church, or if they have are not available to the congregations of today. There is no hint as to what such teachings might contain, unless we are inclined to accept the authenticity of the Gnostic gospels.

With over half of his earthly life unknown and his deeper teachings to his own followers unrecorded, the ministry of Jesus lacks those vital elements necessary to clarity and certainty. Nearly all of the religious difficulties which have afflicted Christendom could have been prevented had the Gospels made precise statements on a few vital issues.

All efforts to rescue precise statements after the lapse of so many centuries have led to schisms. Various reformers and interpreters, convinced by study, meditation, or illumination that they have found the true keys to the mystery, have drawn about them followings and broken away from earlier interpretations. Any or all of these reformers may have discovered a vital clue to the secret, but as the fact itself is completely obscure, it is impossible to determine the relative merits of the interpretations. The extraordinary number of sects which exist within the Christian structure is the result of this universal uncertainty and devout efforts to solve the riddle.

The eighteen dark or silent years in the life of Jesus not only include the period of the development of his own character, but cover the period of his preparation for his ministry. This matter of preparation is the most vital of all considerations. Was Jesus taught only by mystical extensions of consciousness within himself, or did he come under the influence and guidance of learned men belonging to the religious and philosophical institutions which flourished at the time? Did he travel to far lands?

Did he practice an art or trade? Who were the associates of his formative years? Were the disciples and apostles completely ignorant of all these matters, or were they silent by some common consent? Did the Master himself demand this silence, or were passages later deleted from the apostolic writings in order to obscure historical circumstances prejudicial to the rising authority of the Church?

Some persons will say that it makes no difference, but I cannot agree with them that such is the case. Could the facts be discovered, they might end some of the bitterest feuds that ever disfigured a religious doctrine. Naturally, there have been opinions about the dark years preceding the ministry. One group of opinions or beliefs is founded upon certain obscure references in the *Talmud* of the Jews. These references imply that a teacher, tentatively identified as Jesus, journeyed to Egypt with his Master, a celebrated Rabbin, and there became learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians.

There is nothing unreasonable nor improbable in such an account. Scholars from all the nations bordering upon the Mediterranean and the Aegean Seas journeyed to North Africa to study with the priests of the celebrated sanctuaries, which were the wonders of the then-known world. Also in Alexandria were famous collections of books and manuscripts suitable to excite the curiosity of the studious.

Considering the limited facilities available in the Holy Land, a young man who wished to devote his life to the enlightenment of his people might well have believed it desirable to inform himself in arts and sciences likely to advance his purposes. Had such been the case, he would have had three choices: Athens, Rome, or Alexandria. His choice might further have been influenced in favor of Egypt because of the important colony of Jewish philosopher-mystics then flourishing in North Africa. Even the problem of language may have been a determinant. We have no way of knowing whether Jesus spoke Greek or Latin, and there seems no evidence that the disciples did, with the exception of the apostle Paul. In Alexandria, Jesus could have mingled with members of his own race and through them and their scholarship have found an open door to the great Egyptian colleges and temples.

We are not saying that any of this rumination is factual, but it seems rather obvious that could such a course of events be proved, it would have a considerable effect upon the direction of Christian philosophical thinking. It would also give a vital incentive for modern research into the learning of the Egyptians. We know that Moses, Pythagoras, and Plato studied in Egypt, and by this means became outstanding leaders in the spiritual lives of their peoples.

In 1877-78, Nicholas Notovitch undertook a series of journeys in the Far East. He reached Ladak, and while in the provence visited the great monastery of Himis, an important Tibetan religious and cultural center. Notovitch broke his leg and received excellent care from the lama priest-physicians. While recuperating, he attempted to verify a report that there existed in the archives at Lhasa very ancient memoirs treating of the life of Jesus Christ.

The librarian of the Himis monastery told the Russian traveler that copies of some of the manuscripts in question were available in the Himis collection. Notovitch writes: "During my short stay with the Lamas, I had the honor of obtaining the consent of their chief to have brought from the library the manuscript relating to Jesus Christ, and, aided by my interpreter, who translated to me from the Tibetan language, I wrote down carefully the verses as they were read by the Lama."

After his return to Europe, Notovitch made several efforts to interest Christian religious leaders in sponsoring the publication of his notes and further research in Asiatic archives. Everything possible was done to discourage the project on the grounds that it would undermine the already insecure foundations of the orthodox Christian doctrine. One prominent divine offered to buy the notes to prevent their publication. Ultimately Notovitch published his material under the title, *The Unknown Life of Jesus*

Christ. He suggested that learned societies could without undue expense organize a scientific expedition to study the manuscripts in the great Tibetan libraries, in this way verifying their historical value.

Naturally, the publication of this extraordinary commentary on the life of Jesus aroused popular indignation. It seems to have accomplished everything that Notovitch intended except to encourage investigation of the Tibetan originals. We cannot learn of any effort except Dr. Goodspeed's biased report to verify the Notovitch story.

In the manuscript preserved at Himis, Jesus is referred to as Holy Issa, a man of Israel, and the details parallel so closely the accounts given in the Gospels, including the names of persons involved, that there can be no possibility that a different person is intended. The trial before Pilate, the crucifixion and the resurrection are set forth almost in the words of the evangelists.

According to the Tibetan record, Jesus, while still a young man, traveled to India where he associated himself with the sect of the Jains. The Jains begged him to remain with them, but he preferred to travel to Jagannath, where he devoted himself to the study of religion and philosophy. Jesus remained six years studying the precious Sanskrit books and religious manuscripts in the great library at Jagannath. He acquainted himself with the languages of the region, and became proficient in medicine and mathematics.

Jesus, discovering certain failings in the religions of India, preached against what he regarded as perverted doctrines, and excited the animosity of the Brahman priests. A conspiracy was formed to kill him, but warned of his danger, Jesus took refuge in the mountains of Nepal. He remained among the Buddhists of North Asia, where he found a doctrine of pure living which satisfied his heart and mind for six years, and having reached his twenty-sixth year resolved to return to his native land which was under the heavy oppression of a foreign power. He returned across Persia, where he had difficulties with some of the Zoroastrians, and, according to the Buddhistic record, reached his native country and began his ministry in his twenty-ninth year.

It is not impossible that Jesus could have reached India. Pythagoras had accomplished this journey five hundred years earlier, and Apollonius of Tyana reached the headwaters of the Ganges in the 1st century A. D. There was considerable commerce between the Near East and innermost Asia; and where commerce exists there are roads along which not only merchants but scholars can travel.

It is regrettable that Notovitch did not make arrangements to secure native copies of the texts or some documentation from the abbot of the monastery. It is also remarkable that other travelers of acceptable reputation have not mentioned the tradition which Notovitch contacted with such slight effort on his own part. It should not be impossible to clarify this issue and to determine with certainty not only the existence of the manuscripts but their approximate age and the probabilities of their authenticity. Under the condition we can only refer to the account, and hope that new evidence will come to light as explorations in the Tibetan area are extended.

It is possible that the silence so carefully preserved by the evangelists about the young manhood of Jesus was inspired by the same misgivings that led 19th-century theologians to request the suppression of the Notovitch narrative. If it were proved beyond doubt that Jesus had been instructed in Grecian, Egyptian, or East Indian religious philosophy, certain Christian dogmas would be compromised. If, however, historical factors are important in the descent of a religious tradition, such facts should not be withheld. The truth of a matter is nearly always more vital and ultimately more constructive than any subterfuge that can be invented to conceal or distort that truth.

Entirely apart from historical considerations is the descent of Christianity as a mystical tradition. Mysticism by its very nature and substance is unhistorical. It escapes completely from the restric-

tions imposed by time and place equations, and possesses the peculiar virtue of being forever contemporary. The power of the Christian faith in the 20th century depends on its impact upon the hearts and minds of men and women living in the 20th century. All other considerations become secondary when compared with the importance of this contemporary impact. The present generation is in desperate need of a vital spiritual conviction. This conviction cannot be bestowed by tradition or authority; it must originate in the vitality of a solutional message.

The social upheaval resulting from two world wars, a world depression, and the development of the instruments of atomic warfare challenges the religious institutions of the world. In the presence of this challenge, interreligious discord and competitive theological practices are of slight interest. We no longer care especially which is the holiest among our creeds. We would rather know which of our faiths stands ready to supply the spiritual incentives suitable to meet the prevailing need. Everywhere we see the human being falling away from his principles, compromising his ethics, and sacrificing his internal security to satisfy his material ambitions. While this motion away from all that is true and purposeful continues unchecked, we may question the sufficiency of religious institutions in general.

Having discussed this critical condition with many religious leaders, I have gained the impression that most of them are fully aware of the unfortunate predicament in which they find themselves. They are inclined to admit that they lack the means of transforming static doctrines into dynamic spiritual, ethical, or moral forces. They continue to preach and their followings continue to listen, but very little practical good is accomplished. Perhaps we are unable to estimate the benevolent effects of religious training upon sincere individuals, but it is evident that these effects are not sufficient to change the course of collective conduct.

The policies of nations and individuals as recorded in our daily press and affecting our political, industrial, economic, and intellectual lives are without any obvious spiritual content. The common denominator of public practice is private profit. Each individual is concerned almost completely with the advancement of his own material estate and the perpetuation of such institutions as insure the privileges of mutual exploitation. Yet countries which have departed so far from the practice of the brotherhood of man wish to regard themselves as Christian nations. Religious organizations in the United States claim seventy-five million members, and the nominally Christian population numbers nearly a hundred million. This means that the Christian religion is the largest, numerically speaking, of all the forces that influence public and private practices.

How does it happen that an immense body of human beings dedicated to principles of unselfishness, charity, kindliness, and co-operation can tolerate unethical practices which have already become the scandal of the century? One gentleman of the cloth observed piteously, when confronted with this inconsistency: "Well, the other religions aren't doing any better."

Mirabile dictu! It is a bad day when our theologians must make such a comparison. Not long since, they were preaching that other religions were so inferior as to be unworthy of any comparison. We continue to send missionaries, and then admit that in simple practice the true believer and the false believer are in the same dilemma.

It has been pointed out, also, that the rising tide of materialism is responsible for the submergence of spiritual convictions. But where did this tide originate, and why has it been permitted to rise without interruption or strenuous objection for hundreds of years until it has reached the proportions of a universal flood?

Once in awhile an elder from some prominent church weeps on my shoulder. One told me recently that the finances of his institution were in a precarious conditions. Most of the supporters were elderly, and as they dropped out no younger folks took their places. Much

of the financing of religious organizations is now in the hands of men and women over sixty. We may infer, therefore, that a major crisis is in the making. Why is it that the majority of younger people are not inclined to attend places of worship or to contribute to their support?

Many of those who stay away are dissatisfied with the type of spiritual nourishment now available. They are not willing to attend church as a religious habit; there are too many other places of greater interest. Many say that they prefer to spend the time in rest or relaxation. There is something seriously wrong when millions of essentially good-hearted Americans choose an automobile ride or a picnic in the place of a religious service. Of course, a survey of sermons supplies a clue to the mystery.

Yet, in this disordered time the majority of mortals feels a desperate need for internal strength. They want something which will give them the courage to build well and to live well under conditions which test their wisdom and patience. The individual does not outgrow his spiritual needs, but with the passing of time and the enlargement of the cultural horizons, his requirements change. Just as the grown man finds the interests of childhood no longer sufficient, so the evolving race escapes from the limitations of the past and requires a more advanced concept of life-purpose. Religions must grow and unfold with their world or else they lose their power to influence the destiny of their followers.

The religious experience moves inevitably from congregational worship toward an inward communion. No matter how desperately sects and creeds attempt to oppose the concept, religion finally becomes a personal, spiritual experience. Each man must find his own faith, and he must find it within himself. Religious systems may supply him with the instruments of this personal quest, but cannot accomplish the quest for him.

Racial and national religions and even those faiths which gather their memberships from various levels of society are unable to impose a common religious consciousness upon their members. In fact, no spiritual experience can be bestowed; it must result from sincere and devout reflection and meditation. It must be discovered as an urgent and necessary impulse to seek the source of self and the source of the world's good. We can share certain intellectual convictions, but they remain separate and distinct and without vitality until they are given life by a divine energy flowing from the deepest parts of our own natures.

Mystical Christianity is that fulfillment of faith which results from the mystical experience. It is impossible to define a mystical experience in terms or words which convey the dynamics of such an extension of consciousness. Perhaps we may say that it is the enlargement of the personal toward the universal. It is a sudden awareness of the place of the person in the plan. A universe previously regarded as completely external is suddenly realized to be both internal and eternal. The materialist is seeking to establish man's place in the universe, but the mystic discovers the place of the universe in man.

The tyranny of words has afflicted the course of human conduct since the beginning of history. We are forever substituting words for ideas, and believing that we know things because we have named them. It is quite possible for words to dominate also the subjective field of the mental life. As long as we think in terms of words, we are believers and not knowers. It requires a great deal of inward intensity to experience the ideas behind words. The word itself is only important if it conjures out of the depths of ourselves a dynamic personal realization. Perhaps it is the substitution of words for ideas that has resulted in static religions. Words are slight comfort in time of trouble, and words are never solutions for problems requiring action. We may know all words and remain ignorant of facts.

From the compounding of words we fashion creeds, assemble dogmas, and justify the endless divisions which distinguish sectarianism. Once we have established formulas and measured allegiances in terms of addiction to these

formulas, we have destroyed the free living spirit of religion. We have brought into existence theologies which are for the most part profound opinions about that substantially unknowable. Over these opinions we can wrangle endlessly, opposing one with another, and trying to determine relative superiority. In this battle of words, we can all take sides, but when the battle is over, none of the problems actually has been solved. We still lack that internal security which would help us to build a better way of life for ourselves and others.

The drift to materialism reveals clearly the impoverishment of internal resources. In the emergencies of life, we lack the incentives for enlightened action. The inner life does not dominate the outer life, and we naturally obey the stronger impulse; in this case, the impulse to survive materially at the expense of our ethical convictions.

The true power of Christianity lies in its simple appeal to the instincts of friendliness and kindliness. It is not a great intellectual religion with a deep and involved philosophy of life, but it has inspired many of its followers to a high measure of self-sacrifice in the cause of human good. Those most deeply touched have been the natural mystics, like St. Francis of Assisi and Jakob Boehme. These men, and countless others unknown and unhonored, have lived devout and useful lives, inspired by the simple example of Jesus of Nazareth. It is this simple faith that has failed, and the measure of the failure is evident everywhere in our social system. When I say *failed,* I mean primarily the failure of organized religion to perpetuate the mystical tradition. The mystical experience itself cannot fail nor cease, but we have failed to emphasize the religious values likely to induce such an extension of consciousness. By emphasizing forms, we have crucified the spirit upon the cross of form, thus perpetuating symbolically the world tragedy.

In recent years many sects have emerged which have emphasized the importance of enlarging the philosophical background of Christianity. These groups have attempted to advance the cause of Christianity by elaborate metaphysical and occult systems of explanation and analysis. They firmly believe that by so doing they make the faith more attractive to the modern intellectual. In other words, they want to prove Christianity for the biologists, the physicists, and others of their persuasions. While the motives of these groups are certainly high and sincere, it seems to me that they frustrate not only their own ends but the very cause which they seek to advance.

Those in the scientific field have available already a mass of evidence relating to universal procedures which could make them religious, were their minds so inclined. The difficulty is that these intellectuals are completely captured in the net of their scientific speculations. They live to think, when they should use thought to discover a way to live. In other words, the means for the discovery of fact has become an end in itself. The savant is fascinated by his own findings and absorbed in the extension of these findings. He arrives at the end of his mortal life without applying his knowledge to the enlargement of his own nature.

The new Palomar telescope is a good example of a superb scientific toy. Learned men will devote the remaining years of their present incarnations to the thrilling and absorbing task of experimenting with this huge mirror. Each time they discover a new dot in space they will glow with intellectual satisfaction. For them, the counting of stars and the study of stellar spectra are all-sufficient pastimes.

Unfortunately religious and philosophical groups can get into the same difficulties. The process of assembling a reasonable concept of the spiritual universe can become a most satisfying pursuit. If we succeed in fitting all the parts together in some reasonable pattern, we are properly amazed at our ingenuity and go forth to share the glad tidings with others. This is only another form of intellectualism, and someday we may awake duly amazed that we know so much and live so badly.

As Christianity has been the religion of Western nations for nearly twenty centuries, it offers the most available and acceptable form of religious teachings. Venerated by tradition, and sanctified by the experience of ages, the teachings of Jesus and the inspiration offered by his life are close to the hearts of countless millions. In spite of these obvious advantages, however, the Christian faith has not as yet succeeded in bringing to its followers the spiritual overtones necessary to a dynamic conviction. We see unfolding about us the unhappy spectacle of a nominal Christian world compromising all its sacred convictions and attempting to survive by codes that are less than the policies usually associated with barbarianism.

The present failure is not the result of the doctrines and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The faith has not failed men, but men have failed the faith. They have been content to substitute the formal memberships in religious organizations for the actual practice of the religious life. The condition is due, beyond question, to the failure of the clergy to emphasize the importance of the Christian mysteries as personal spiritual experiences. No individual becomes truly enlightened by indoctrination alone. While it is obvious that we must study or consider any religion or philosophy before we can practice its principles, such study is sterile unless instruction leads directly to the *practice of the presence of a divine principle* in the operation of human affairs.

Mystical Christianity consists of three interrelated spiritual values; these together form the Covenant. The first part consists of the teachings of the Master as reported in the *New Testament*. The second part is the life of Jesus, which may be regarded as the great example. The third part is the Ecclesia; that is, the assembly or the Church. The use of the word *church* here does not imply denomination, but is itself the Covenant or the body of the faith. Each of these three "witnesses" must be discovered, not historically but mystically, through participation in the conviction of this Covenant or assembly.

Our forefathers built their way of life around the family Bible. It was usually an elaborate, massive, gilded volume, kept in the best room of the house. Between the *Old* and *New Testaments* were several leaves inserted for vital statistics. Here births, marriages, and deaths were recorded, and flowers from important occasions were pressed between the pages. Always, on Sunday, and usually on weekdays at evenfall the family gathered, while the patriarch read appropriate verses from the sacred text. With all seriousness and devotion the family assembled, but when one looked into the faces of these pious folks, it was uncommon to see much of Christian gladness. They were dour, stern people, most of them suffering silently the tyrannies of each other. To them the great virtue was patience for which they would be properly rewarded in heaven.

This picture fifty years ago was not the exception but the rule. In fact, it had been the rule for centuries, and, while it bred a kind of nobility, it was a sad, silent righteousness. This was not a mystical communion, nor a covenant of gentleness, but a dedication to the jots and tittles. Nearly always one or two members of the family were ab-

sent from these sacred assemblages. There was no Christian kindness for these absentees, for they had departed from grace by displeasing the elders and even to speak their names was forbidden. The ones most needing help had been cast from the fold, and those who remained prayed silently for release from this solemn tyranny sincerely practiced in the name of an all-loving God.

The truly orthodox stood ready to die if necessary to preserve their doctrine. No sacrifice was too great, and often they went against the dictates of their hearts in order to be true to the letter of the Law. They could quote the Scriptures to good purpose, but they had found little of comfort. To them the promised Comforter had not yet come, so they watched and waited and prayed unceasingly. This has been the tragedy of the faiths, and it is this sorry state of affairs, rendered holy by habit, that has brought us to the present century with great churches and small faith.

Religion has become so solemn, so serious, so heavy a responsibility upon the human heart and mind that we have a neurotic obsession on the subject of God. Deity has assumed the proportions of a universal despot, demanding of his children the kind of obedience reminiscent of some square-toed puritanical grandfather. It ended with our internal experience being one of strange, dark, mysterious *fear.*

For this experience of fear, we must substitute a nobler emotion. We must come to know the mystery of God as a deep soul-satisfying *joy;* not the kind of joy which merely bubbles on the surface, but rather a quiet serene sense of internal security. We must learn to meditate upon the mystery of our faith as the source of a broad and deep understanding of life and living. It may be that our daily problems are heavy and our burdens numerous. We may grow tired and superficially depressed, but we will neither falter nor fall if deep within ourselves there is an abiding realization of universal wisdom and universal love.

The storms that agitate our external lives may not be quickly quelled. In fact, only the broad vistas revealed by the doctrine of rebirth can offer the experiences and opportunities necessary for our final conquest of our limitations. The human personality is a complex organism with which we all have to strive. No religion has a right to demand the immediate perfection of its followers. We have lived so long on the surface of ourselves and our world that we have ceased to recognize the importance of depths. The true source of our strength lies in the deepest and most sacred parts of our own consciousness.

The great question of religion is: What do we find when we seek within ourselves? Do we find a deep and abiding realization of our own identity with the Divinity which dwells in the furthermost and the innermost? For our present security do we find a strong steady flame, the light of the Christianity taught by Jesus Christ? If we do not, we are not Christians, regardless of the sacraments or rituals of a man-made Church in a God-made world.

As St. Paul so wisely observed, it is the Christ in you that is the hope of glory. It is the realization of the Christ within that constitutes the mystical experience of Christianity. Once this realization is established and accepted, the outer conduct is modified slowly but inevitably toward agreement with this internal conviction. Obviously, those of different degrees of intellectual attainment will experience differently the mystery of this internal illumination. Yet each will find in this, or experience through it, that which is necessary to the integration of his own life pattern. As long as the world is ruled from the outside, we will have conflict and discord. The hope of world peace is fulfilled only when we are governed by a quality of spiritual conviction which makes it impossible for the individual to resist the impulse of his own internal standard of integrity.

I doubt seriously if this internal illumination can come from the reading of books, from the preaching of other men, or from association with vast institutions. All these factors may incline the individual in ways of righteousness, but righteousness itself is born of an internal

expansion of the self. It seems reasonable and likely that at this stage of our evolution there are many human beings capable of capturing the spirit of religion. They are essentially sincere men and women, but they have neither recognized nor been taught either the importance of personal spiritual experience or the means for its attainment. As long as they are assured by their religious leaders that affiliation with an organization and the acceptance of its creed constitute religion, they have no incentive to attempt a further growth. In fact, in many instances, they are warned against any departure from the outer forms of dogma and belief.

It is inevitable that those who have attained an internal sustaining faith should drift away from addiction to physical organizations. This does not mean that they should disparage religious institutions, but rather that they have shifted their allegiance from formal doctrines to a code of spiritual integrity which is unfolding within their own hearts and minds.

Entirely apart from intellectual formulas, there comes to the mystic the impact of the experience of the life and ministry of Jesus. This impact can neither be explained nor rationalized. It is simply a fact so evident and so inevitable that no force nor faculty within the human personality can doubt or question its reality or authority. Jesus becomes entirely unhistorical. He emerges as the spiritual symbol of the ideals and hopes of Christendom. Vitalized by the consciousness of the devout person, this symbol takes the place of egocentricity and self-purpose as the guiding power in the unfoldment of character. Only those are Christians who have experienced Christ in a mystery.

This is the importance of the world teacher in the descent of his faith. That which is true of mystical Christianity is true of all other world religions. We must have not only the doctrine; we must have the personal experience of identity with the spirit of that doctrine. We are too feeble as creatures to conjure a great integrity from the unformed substances of space.

Our moral code is based upon our understanding of the prophet or messiah identified with our religious conviction. This identity is not historical but entirely mystical. We bridge the interval between ourselves and the spirit of our belief across the bridge of the Great Teacher. Christ said that none could come unto the Father save through him. The same is true with Buddha, or Zoroaster, or Lao-tse. Through meditation upon our own convictions of the true character of these immortal teachers, we discover our own code of life. Through them our abstract convictions take on moral, ethical, and cultural force, and through them, finally, we grow toward the nameless and formless Principle in which resides the Absolute Truth of all things.

This mystical significance of great ministries will lead the individual finally to ask, in a moment of decision, what would the Master do in this circumstance? Instinctively we know that the Master would do the wise, the loving and the honorable thing. Perhaps we are not certain as to the particular course of action, but we will strive toward a behavior true to the substance of our belief. If we are the disciples, we will keep the commandments of the spiritual being that we cherish in our hearts. For the Christian, the code of the Master is too well-known to require amplification. Each of us, if we are thoughtful, can feel how he would act. We know that he would be patient in all things, humble in all things, and kind in all things. If we claim to be his disciples, we shall strive not for our own advancement only, but for the peace and security of our fellow men. There cannot be war and strife and selfishness in our hearts if we believe in any power of good or strive to live in the light of the spirit.

The Christian assembly or Ecclesia is made up of those who have inwardly resolved to take upon themselves the Way of Christ. No man is a Christian because he has been confirmed into the faith, but because he has taken upon himself the code of Christ. It is useless for him to attempt to live this code merely because he has an intellectual conception of its rules. As long as his

internal instincts are at variance with the principles which he has nominally accepted, he will live a life of conflict and confusion. Even if he keeps the rules he will not be virtuous, because his heart and instincts do not conform with his conduct. Religion fails, therefore, without the mystical experience and the mystical example. These cannot be bestowed; they must be discovered by the aspiring human soul earnestly desiring to outgrow its own inadequacies.

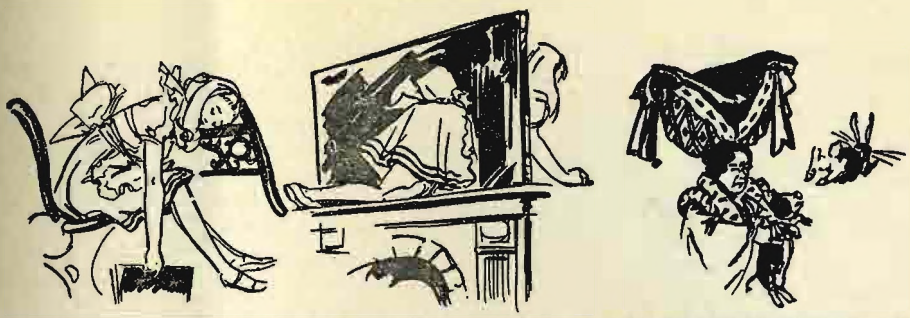
In the matter of the mystical experience, all men stand equal; the scientist, the philosopher, the theologian, and the materialist are without advantage one over the other. Each with his various abilities and accomplishments stands in the same need of that internal light which alone can bring peace. The griefs of the learned are not different from the sorrows of the unschooled. Regardless of our intellectual acquirements, we are all insufficient until some mysterious spiritual alchemy transmutes our base metals into the gold of true enlightenment. The distance to the heart of all human beings is equal, but if we wish to reach it along the paths of the mind, the way is circuitous and uncertain. With all that we know to guide us we may still lack the comfort and consolation which come only from within ourselves.

We have devoted some space to the historical side of the Christian problem, only because it bears directly upon our own internal attitudes. The human consciousness growing toward its own larger destiny needs to be liberated from the barriers imposed by creeds upon the personal convictions of their members. We need to build faith upon large and generous foundations. To escape from the uncertainties of our doctrines, we must emerge into the concept of a world religion. If the example of Jesus inspires to a deep and generous appreciation of the good works of all good men in all times, this realization broadens the horizons of the truth seeker. He comes nearer to the reality by overcoming the interval imposed by the limitations of human leaders. These limitations have assumed the proportions of essential doctrines, and have interfered seriously with the natural growth of human idealism.

We will all be wiser and better people when we recognize the importance of our own spiritual adjustment with the divine over-plan. As long as we neglect the personal practice of right convictions, our religious world will languish in a slough of despondency. It is not enough to think of large motions moving us collectively in the direction of the Promised Land. We will not drift to truth on some friendly tide. Growth results from personal effort, personal vision, and personal adjustment. Each of us must live by a code of spiritual ethics which satisfies the promptings and instincts of personal conscience. It is not so important that we acknowledge shortcomings as it is that we recognize the need for personal planning in the direction of internal peace.

The simplest and most natural way to develop extrasensory powers is to build character upon a broad and solid foundation of daily improvement. Meditation and concentration and other specialized disciplines fail unless in small things we exercise the principles of a wise and gentle faith. For Christendom, the way of Christ is personified in the life of Christ. We will not attain spiritual maturity merely by copying the conduct of a good man, but contemplation of this conduct and its universal power to solve existing difficulties may inspire us to a decision as to what constitutes a satisfactory standard of conduct.

The lives of the great and the good remind each of us that greatness and goodness are possible. We can never be truly happy until this spiritual greatness and goodness awakens within us and leads us along paths of righteousness. As long as we compromise with our principles, we shall fall short of the security we seek. We may not attain the end or goal in the present life or in many lives to come, but we can make a sincere effort in the right direction. This effort itself brings with it a feeling of personal integrity and well-being, and is the best available remedy for those strange dark neurotic impulses which destroy for us the beauty and goodness of the world in which we live.



Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Great Benin

Benin is the name of a country, a city, and a river, and the area is now a province of South Nigeria. Until the closing years of the 19th century Benin was an independent country, holding neighboring tribes and villages as tributaries. The government was administered by the King of Benin City, who in turn was under the influence of a group of officials combining priestly and political powers. Although juju is prevalent among African tribes, the Bini do not appear to have been dominated by a formal priesthood. The individual citizen worshiped according to his own convictions, but religious practices in general were consistent with those of surrounding nations.

Great Benin has had an extraordinary history. It was discovered by the Portuguese between 1480 and 1490, and was visited periodically by explorers, merchants, scientists, and historians. Among distinguished visitors in the region were Giovanni Belzoni, who died at Gwato in Benin teritory in 1823, Sir Richard Burton, who visited the city in 1862, and published an extensive account of the area, and M. Jacolliot, whose reports of the court of the King of Benin were published in Paris in 1878.

During the early days of European trading the principal exports of Benin were slaves and ivory. At one time the exporting of slaves reached very large proportions, but so unhealthful was the climate that the French, English, Dutch and Portuguese were unable to continue operations. Many ships lost from half to three-quarters of their crews from tropical diseases on a single trip.

Factually, nothing is known of the history of Benin prior to the Portuguese explorations. The natives themselves imply considerable antiquity to their nation, and this would be sustained by the indications of an ancient and highly organized culture. The Bini are a pure Negro people, with a root language, and a remarkable school of indigenous art. It is quite possible that they are descended from, or at least had direct contact with, the Ethiopian kings of Egypt.

We should mention a figure from H. L. Roth's *Great Benin*. Here the author compares a bronze plaque of a fetish King of Benin with a Gnostic abraxoid in the British Museum. In this fetish group the central figure is evidently a person of consequence, for his arms are being supported by two officers or Ukoba (attendants). The great person's legs end in the forms either of serpents or symbolical catfish. The design is so startling and curious that it seems

extremely unlikely that the similarity with the abraxas gems is entirely coincidental. It is much more likely that ancient Benin shared in the cultural tradition of the Egyptian Empire.

The city of Great Benin has been described by many early travelers. Apparently time has reduced the importance of the community, and the ancient buildings which excited the admiration of explorers have entirely vanished. One writer reported that the principal street was seven to eight times broader than the main thoroughfare in Amsterdam. After walking a good half mile along this broad road, there seemed no end to the inhabited area. The King's quarters, which contained the abodes of the principal families and their slaves, and was surrounded by high walls, was said to have a population of approximately fifteen thousand. Here also was the King's palaver house and the other buildings of state.

Allowing a gradual deterioration and decline of the power of Great Benin, it seems possible that at the height of its prosperity the city might have contained between fifty and a hundred thousand souls. It is known, for example, that the King of Benin could put a hundred thousand soldiers in the field if an emergency arose. We do not think of primitive African society as being so well-organized, or its cities attaining to such proportions.

The religion of the Bini has long been associated with the most sanguinary practices. Benin has been called the "city of blood," for nearly all of the important ceremonials of the court or the people were associated with human sacrifice. It has been difficult to reconcile the cultural achievements of this extraordinary country with its utter addiction to rituals of death. The people were never cannibalistic, and in their daily contact are kindly, good-natured, and sympathetic. They have finely proportioned bodies and noble, intelligent faces; and, although dominated by their spirit cults and fetishes, have a sincere and rather enlightened concept of God and the operations of universal law.

Ancient relics indicating an early contact with Christianity have been discovered among the Bini. Some of these relics are supposed to have belonged to the fabled empire of Prester John, whose dominions lay beyond Abyssinia. The Bini practice of crucifixion is believed to have been inspired by early Christian crosses, with figures of Christ hanging upon them.

Although hundreds, even thousands, died in the Bini festivals, the governors of the city insisted that only criminals or those who proved to be undesirable citizens were killed in these rites. Victims were never tortured, and usually were drugged before execution. Foreigners reporting these bloody rituals all commented on the apparent indifference of the victims. There was seldom any expression of terror or anguish. The rites were taken as a matter of course, and execution was more desirable than to be sold into slavery or subjected to the numerous indignities of daily living.

In 1897, Vice-Consul Phillips of the Niger Coast Protectorate resolved to undertake a peaceful mission to Benin. He was warned by King Overami that such a visit was untimely, as the nation was in the midst of its great annual celebrations. Mr. Phillips, however, was new to the country and was determined to make the journey completely unarmed, so as not to arouse animosity on the part of the natives. The trip was a disaster, and seven white men including Mr. Phillips together with their native carriers were massacred.

After this the British government felt that it was necessary to send a punitive expedition. This was under the command of Admiral Sir Harry Rawson. After a short campaign the city of Benin was captured, and in the legal trials that followed several native officials responsible for the massacre of the Phillips' expedition were executed. The King, however, was exonerated, and was sent into exile, where he died at Calaber in 1914. His son was recognized as the head of the native government.

While the British were within Benin City, two of the native carriers through carelessness set fire to a hut. There was

BRONZE CASTING FROM BENIN

(Courtesy of George Rony)

a strong breeze, and in a short time the entire area was in flames. The complete destruction of Great Benin in this conflagration resulted in the loss of priceless records and treasures of native art. Only about six hundred examples of Benin bronze casting are known to have survived the flames, and as a result these extremely curious productions are now among the most valuable African primitives. There was a corresponding loss of wood and ivory relics, and nearly all evidence of this important school of African culture perished in the general destruction.

This brings us to a brief study of Benin bronze casting. The style and decoration of these African bronzes have caused much controversy and confusion among artists and archaeologists. Nearly every type of ornamentation known in the world occurs here. Some of the designs are Nordic; others are Syrian, Phoenician, or even Chinese. There are Greek chains, conventionalized fleur-de-lis, and of course numerous elements obviously African.

We can summarize the problem by a quotation from H. L. Roth, with references to his text-figures omitted: "But in an attempt to ascertain the origin of the Benin bronze art, we cannot pass over unnoticed the facts that several of their institutions show indications of exotic origin, and that the ornamentation is full of foreign forms. We find the law of inheritance different from that of the people of the surrounding country, probably as a result of the gross superstition which centered everything in the fetishism of the king. We find vestiges of the old Catholic rituals in more than one instance. We find that the internal division of the buildings are exotic arrangements. We find designs in wood carvings which were common forms among the Hittites, and we have bronze and brass castings which bear undoubted traces of the influence of Europe of the Middle Ages. One of the patterns of a ring is Graeco Roman, another we meet in Tunis, a third is like Saxon work and on one of the bells we find a double-spiral ornamentation of the old

Swiss lake dwellers. The manilla is almost Celtic in shape; the squeezed-up lizard might be Scandinavian. The mixture of the designs in fact almost equals that of the population of ancient Babylonia." (See *Great Benin*)

While some of the bronze casting show a distinct influence resulting from contact with the Portuguese and other Europeans, it is certain that this metal was used before the advent of foreign travelers. The Benin bronzes were made by what is known as the *cire perdue* process; that is, a core of hardened sand was prepared on which was molded a wax model. The model was then coated with clay, the wax melted out, and molten metal poured into the clay molds. The rough casting was then finished by hand. Thus the Bini were more clever than the Etruscans or Greeks whose castings were always solid. The Egyptians seem to have introduced the practice of using the sand core, which saved bronze and permitted the object to be much lighter and more easily transported.

In the tradition of Great Benin the knowledge of the workings of bronze was brought to the people at a remote time by a man of light skin. This man, whose name was Ahammangiwa, created a school which however became extinct. There is a further report that the ancient bronze work, no specimens of which are known to have survived, was much finer than that which can be produced in modern times. As Leo Frobenius points out in *The Voice of Africa*: "A great portion of the sacred relics of Benin do actually consist of comparatively recent castings and can be so recognized, because many a dish or salver shows Portuguese with rolls of money, typical fashion of dress, beard to correspond, and muskets. It is known that these Benin bronzes were manufactured until quite recently, but this naturally affords no clue whatever to the period and form of culture from which they originated."

The debris of Benin City is still being worked for its lost art treasures. Also a school of craftsmen is developing to capitalize on world-wide interest in African design. Unfortunately, however, contact with the Western world and modern civilization has destroyed the spirit underlying sincere folk artistry. Leon Underwood, in his little work on *Masks of West Africa,* describes the case of Bamboya. He was a Yoruba carver who produced many fine masks and figures about thirty years ago. He was persuaded to come to the government experimental school to teach carving to the boys there. Although native methods were used, the result was disappointing. The boys did not gain any sincere skill, and Bamboya himself lost his own integrity of art consciousness. The productions of this group are described as "typical of the meritorious though lifeless work in European art-craftsmenship exhibitions."

Primitive art is nearly always closely involved in religious conviction. If the religion fails, the arts fail with it. As the African people have come more and more under the domination of foreign powers and foreign faiths, they have lost the sincerity which was the real strength of their art. The masks, fetishes, ghost and spirit figures are not important unless they express the profound convictions not only of the artist, but of the village and of the tribe in which he lives.

The accompanying figure is a bronze mask from Great Benin, approximately half life-size, and was worn on the belt, possibly as a covering for the handle of a knife or a sword. Similar masks exist in ivory. They may also have been made in wood, but this is a very perishable medium in Africa.

Some hold that these masks were figures to represent spirits, but it is quite possible that they were regarded as ancestral portraits, or at least were idealized racial types. Although some bronze work, most of it extremely crude, is found among other African tribes, the Bini are the only people who developed this art to a high degree independent of contact with European nations. Frobenius favors the possibility that the great arts of Africa originated in Atlantis, and that what we see today is merely the remnant of a once highly organized artistic consciousness.

Comparing the ivories and castings of Great Benin with the crafts of surround-

ing peoples, we are forced to conclude that the Bini preserved an artistic form of unusual purity and intensity. Nothing closely resembling Bini workmanship is to be found anywhere else in the world. Like most folk art it is not immediately appreciated by those untrained in the study of primitives. Thoughtfulness, however, increases our respect and admiration. We respond instinctively to the integrity of the basic concept. We also realize that many European and American artists are drawing heavily upon folk art for their inspiration and stylization.

The simple lesson that we can learn from all primitive art and crafts is the significance of sincerity. Art fails unless it expresses a human conviction about some force or principle in nature superior to man. When this conviction is shaken or confused by conflicting doctrines, the artistry deteriorates until nothing remains but that hopeless and horrible export trash, which is manufactured for the only motive that can inspire those who have lost all integrity of purpose—the motive of profit.

"We may compare ourselves to a chorus which is placed around a chorus master, but which sings out of tune so long as it directs its attention away from him to external things; but when it turns to him it sings in perfect harmony, deriving its inspiration from him."—*Plotinus*

Library Notes

By A. J. HOWIE

Tibetan Philosophy, Religion, Literature, Lore

A reasonable conclusion after reading a number of travel books on Tibet is that few occidentals could live harmoniously amid typical Tibetan surroundings. The majority of those who are anxious to penetrate into Tibet seem to be motivated by commercial interests or the missionary spirit—intent on imposing our Western ways of life on the people rather than on learning how they have thrived for generations in their own ways. The Tibetans may not be physically clean according to our standards; they may not be scientifically progressive in a Western sense; they may be wasting their lives and souls in superstitious beliefs. But whatever their modes of life may be, they have been innocent of aggression in recent centuries, and have retired further and further into their isolation.

There seems to be a comprehensive plan that is common to all religious teachings. As we grow in an understanding of principles we have some chance to outgrow the limitations of misunderstanding, bias, bigotry, intolerance —even emancipate ourselves from the feeling that our particular faith is best for the entire world.

The Tibetan beliefs are suited to the Tibetans. But the student of comparative religion will find here material upon which to discipline his whole method of study. No one book seems to be quite accurate; writers and authorities are at variance on many names and concepts. It is unlikely that any student ever learns the full content of his texts. There is no problem of converting anyone to Tibetan religion, philosophy, learning, psychology, because it is just as true in Tibet as in the West that there is a great interval between theory and/or belief and practice. Hence it is futile to judge between "good" or "bad" doctrines, or even to compare them favorably or unfavorably with similar or dissimilar beliefs.

The student can practice the open mind, expand his knowledge, and enjoy with greater understanding the religious motives of other races and nations—endlessly, without in any way intruding upon his personal convictions. But such study may well awaken him to the necessity of the exercise of religion as a vital factor in daily life rather than to

be held as a colorful pageantry for holy days.

The student of Tibetan lore will find it helpful to orient himself to several simple facts. Then the confusing and apparently endless array of divinities, sects, symbols, and personages will take some order in relation to these basic, or at least accepted, generalities.

The ancient religion of the Tibetans was Bon, a highly developed though primitive system of magic and demon worship. The Bon influence is strong in all of the present systems in Tibet, and the Bon rites and ceremonies persist as such in various isolated places. Because of its alien nature to Western thought, Western students have made little headway in learning much more than the popular superstitions concerning Bon.

Since the middle of the 7th century Tibet has become essentially Buddhistic in its religion. During the 600's, King Sron Tsan Gampo married two Buddhist wives, one a Chinese and the other a Nepalese. These converted him to Buddhism and persuaded him to send to India for teachers and books.

About 747 Padma Sambhava, the Lotus-Born, the Precious Guru, was invited to Tibet by the then reigning king. Padma Sambhava was a Tantric yogi skilled in the magical arts. He founded the Lamaist system with its elaborate hierarchy into which merged the Tantric and Bon rites; and it is out of this melting pot that have emerged the numerous present day sects. The direct successors to Padma Sambhava are the members of the Nyingmapa Sect who are popularly known as the Red Caps.

Centuries of growth for Buddhism in Tibet with at least one major reform culminated in the reorganization of the principal sect at the beginning of the 15th century by Tson ka-pa. He altered the name to the Gelugpa Sect, "the virtuous order." This sect soon eclipsed all the others; and in five generations it obtained the priest-kingship of Tibet, which it still retains to this day. (Evans-Wentz). These are the Yellow Caps.

A third most important group is the Kargyutpa Sect, the "Followers of the Apostolic Succession." They belong to the Mahamudra School and practice rigid ascetic and yoga disciplines. The most famous among the apostolic succession is Milarepa, the fourth in the line of descent after its founding.

"At this very moment there are hundreds of the Kargyutpa ascetics living in the bleak solitudes of the Tibetan Himalayas, some of them in caves at the base and on the sides of Mount Everest, wherein are still to be found, as places of special sanctity and pilgrimage, the hermitages of Jetsun [Milarepa]. There nature remains as it has been since Earth's early ages, and the Kargyutpa hermits dwell undisturbed by the restlessness of the world beyond, wherein the ancient ideals which they uphold no longer govern men, but where there rules, instead, the opinion that success means the acquisition of worldly riches, fame, and power." (Evans-Wentz)

The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism. By Antoinette K. Gordon. Columbia University Press, New York, 1939.

From the foreword by William B. Whitney: "The number of Gods in the Tibetan pantheon seems to be limited only by the bounds of the human imagination ... Some of these divinities are in human form and have their origins in history, legend, or pure imagination. The elements, forces of nature, mountains, and rivers, and even doctrinal systems, have been deified in human or tantric forms, and spirits and genii, beneficent and malicious, have been imagined and given form ... In addition there is a formidable array of disciples, apostles, sorcerers, teachers, and translators .... also the founders and successive heads of the different sects of Lamaism ... All are represented by images .... each image is made according to definite specifications, or a fixed formula ... pose, expression, and dress ... posture, number of faces, arms, and legs and the mystic gestures ... and the symbols, if any ... Color is always important."

Miss Gordon has included a simple pronunciation table and a well-chosen glossary of terms. There are basic drawings of ritual objects, talismans, symbols, mudras (the symbolic hand poses), asa-

nas* and vahanas. There are examples of thang-kas, paintings of divinities or groups of divinities which are carried by monks in religious processions and hung in the temples; mandalas or ritual diagrams. The classification of sacred images gives both the Sanskrit and Tibetan names. The book proceeds with various keys to identifying particular schools, grades of hierarchies, and individuals.

Quite a game can be made of learning to identify the Tibetan sacred personages. We have in the library some twenty-five or thirty examples of fine thang-kas. They have been but roughly identified—possibly dubiously. There is a project here for some interested student to prepare to analyze the detail of these thang-kas. The work of photographing one or two can be easily accomplished when someone qualifies.

Buddhism in Tibet illustrated by literary documents and objects of religious worship, with an account of the Buddhist systems preceding it in India. By Emil Schlagintweit. With a folio atlas of twenty plates and twenty tables of native print in the text. Trubner & Co., London, 1863.

Emil Schlagintweit was never in Tibet and his book embodies the findings of his brothers, together with the results of his own literary researches based on the works of Hodgson and Burnouf. His Tibetan studies were assisted by Schiefner at St. Petersburg whom he quotes many times in the text.

Although more than eighty-five years have intervened, Schlagintweit's chapter on the sacred literature of Tibet is still a simple and informative introduction to the important Tibetan books. He reviews the *Kanjur,* the *Tanjur,* the *Mani Kambum.*

The *Kanjur*—translation of the commandments of the Buddha. It consists of 108 large volumes classed under the following principal divisions: Discipline, transcendental wisdom, association of Buddhas, jewel peak, sutras or aphorisms, the doctrine of deliverance from existence, and tantra. An abstract of the *Kanjur* was originally made by Csoma de Koros and an index was edited by the Imperial Russian Academy of St. Petersburg in 1845. There were in 1863 complete copies of the *Kanjur* only at the library of St. Petersburg, the library of the India Office, the Imperial Library at Paris, and the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. [Waddell has published a list of Tibetan sacred books brought back with the Younghusband expedition in 1908 and distributed to various important libraries.]

The *Tanjur*—translation of the doctrine comprising 225 volumes. Complete copies of these were known at that time outside of Tibet only in the library of St. Petersburg and the library of the India Office. (We do not have a present cataloguing, but we understand that the Library of Congress now has complete sets of both the *Tanjur* and *Kanjur.*)

The *Mani Kambum*—a hundred thousand precious commandments, contains in twelve chapters a detailed account of the numerous legendary tales respecting Padmapani's merits as the propagator of Buddhism in Tibet, and a statement of the origin and application of the sacred formula *Om mani padme hum.* Some historical events are added with reference to the king of Tibet and his two wives who were instrumental in introducing Buddhism to Tibet. Schlagintweit gives an excellent and interesting resume of the work.

He has reproduced in Tibetan characters *An Address to the Buddhas of Confession,* together with a carefully annotated translation. To indicate the spirit of the work we quote a fragment, omitting the numerous repetitions of adoration for the various deities:

Reverence be to the very spotless Buddhas, who all come in the same way. Repentance of all sins.

I adore the Tathagatas.... I rejoice over the cause of virtue, I turn the wheel of the doctrine.

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* In an attempt to anglicize as far as practical oriental terms, we are omitting all diacritical marks. The critical scholar is able to supply them for himself. These articles are intended for popular reading.

Whatever human being upon earth writes the names of these Buddhas, or carries them with him or reads them, or makes a vow, will be blessed for it: He will become clean from all darkening sins and will be born in the region Devachan, which is toward the west.

The work closes with an imposing bibliography which, though early, represents some of the most important pioneering work done in things Tibetan. The glossary gives the phonetic transcription, Tibetan characters, transliteration, and page reference for all the Tibetan terms used in the text. This will prove helpful to the more technical student and the philologist.

The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism, with its mystic cults, symbolism and mythology, and in its relation to Indian Buddhism. By L. Austine Waddell. W. H. Allen & Co., Limited, London, 1895. Many plates, diagrams, photographs, and reproductions.

The author claims to have studied both the Hinayana and Mahayana system of Buddhism prior to his studies of Tibetan Lamaism. Waddell was the archaeologist attached to the Younghusband mission to Lhasa. He purchased a Lamaist temple with its complete fittings and prevailed upon the officiating priests to explain the details of the symbolism and rites as they were performed. The lamas told him that they accepted him as a reflex of the Western Buddha, Amitabha. Whether the lamas were sincere is a matter of conjecture because apparently Waddell's attitude never departed from that of an impersonal scientist as typified by the following:

"For Lamaism is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism, beneath which the sinister growth of poly-demonist superstition darkly appears." The words sinister and darkly seem unnecessary. Or again, "And this Yoga parasite, containing within itself the germs of Tantrism, seized strong hold of its host and soon developed its monster outgrowths, which crushed and cankered most of the little life of purely Buddhistic stock yet left in the Mahayana."

It may be unnecessary to caution the reader regarding such directional language because the general textual material is obviously excellent, scholarly, informative, and has been accepted for many years by critical scholars and authorities on kindred subjects. However it is important to adjust the mind to the product of a researcher who apparently refused to commit himself in print to a sympathy with his subject. It would have been more generous of him not to have been so obviously aloof and critical.

The Buddhism of Tibet follows a well-organized and comprehensive outline:

Historical—the changes in primitive Buddhism leading to Lamaism, the origins of Lamaism and its sects. *Doctrinal*—the metaphysical sources of the doctrine, morality, literature. *Monastic*—Lamaist curriculum, daily life, dress, discipline, hierarchy, incarnate deities, re-embodied saints. Buildings — temples, monuments, shrines. *Pantheon* and *mythology*—including symbolism. *Ritual* and *sorcery—sacerdotal* services, astrology, oracles, divination, charms, necromancy. *Festivals* and *sacred plays. Popular and domestic Lamaism* in everyday life, customs, and folklore.

There is a section on Tibetan rosaries. We have several examples of Buddhist rosaries which the student may examine. The section on Tibetan astrology has some unusual information.

Here is an item of divinatory practice that may startle devotees of the *galloping dominoes*: "A most peculiar application of the dice is for determining the successive regions and grades of one's future re-births." There is an illustration of the dice-board and a brief description of this little-known belief.

Tibetan Manuscripts and Books, Etc., Collected during the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa. By L. A. Waddell. 33 pages from *The Asiatic Quarterly Review,* July, 1912.

This is a priceless reference work for locating Tibetan manuscripts and printed books that have never been translated. Waddell gives a number of generalities in regard to the collecting of these literary and religious treasures. Then fol-

lows a catalog of the books and manuscripts, giving their titles and the names of the libraries to which they have been entrusted.

Magic and Mystery in Tibet by Alexandra David-Neel. Originally copyrighted in 1932, our copy is from the sixth printing, April, 1937, by the Crown Publishers, New York.

Magic and Mystery in Tibet is more than a recital of a tourist sharing experiences with readers. Mme. David-Neel devoted years of her life in a search for firsthand lore concerning Buddhism. She is a Buddhist who practices the disciplines while maintaining the viewpoint of a cultured woman of the world. She makes Buddhism an intriguing doctrine although she makes no attempt to defend an ism or to proselyte her beliefs.

Mme. David-Neel has recorded a dramatic scene from her stay at the Kum-Bum monastery which we shall digest. The several word changes are merely condensing devices in order that we might present enough of the general material to form a unit.

It is pre-dawn in the Kum-Bum monastery.

Salutation to the Buddha

In the language of the gods and
in that of the lus,
In the language of the demons and
in that of the men,
In all the languages which exist,
I proclaim the Doctrine.

Several lads atop the assembly hall hastily recite the liturgic formula, then simultaneously lift conches to their lips and blow an uninterrupted bellowing that breaks the silence enveloping the sleeping monastery. The musical summons fades. Moving lights appear through the windows of the Grand Lama's mansions and the houses of the ordinary monks. Doors open, stamping feet hurry along the streets—the lamas are going to morning assembly.

The sky pales as they reach the hall. Day breaks. Taking off their boots, which are left piled here and there outside, each hastens toward his place. The lamas form a strange, shabby, ill-smelling crew, offering a strange contrast to the sumptuousness of the gold brocade vests worn by the dignitaries and the jewelled cloak and rod of the elected ruler of the *gompa*.

Behind rows of butter lamps at the bottom of the hall shine softly the gilded images of former Grand Lamas and the massive silver and gold reliquaries which contain their ashes or mummified bodies. A mystic atmosphere envelops men and things, veiling all vulgar details, idealizing the attitudes and the faces.

Now everyone is seated cross-legged, motionless: the lamas and officials on their thrones whose heights vary according to their rank, and the common ecclesiastic folk on long benches nearly on the level of the floor. Deep-toned chanting begins in a slow rhythm. Bells, wailing *gyalings*, thundering *ragdongs*, tiny drums and big drums at times accompany the psalmody. The seemingly interminable ritual is broken with the serving of buttered tea, a daily ration—occasionally enriched with Tibetan dainties provided by the rich and pious, luxuries eagerly anticipated by the poor ascetics.

Thus day after day, in the frosty morning or the warm summer dawns, that peculiar lamaist matins is performed in countless *gompas* all over immense territories of which Tibet itself is but a small part. Each morning, half-awake lads, together with their elders, are bathed in a curious atmosphere which is a blend of mysticism, gastronomic preoccupation, and anticipation of a dole. Out of this rather incoherent monastic training issue a small elite of litterati, a number of idle, dull, sleepy fellows, wanton braggarts, and a few mystics who resort to lonely hermitages and life-long meditations. Many individuals are a complex of all these impulses. Plurality of personalities in the apparently single individual, of course, is not peculiar to Tibetan lamas, but it exists in them to a remarkably high degree.

"Lamaseries are meant .... to house people who pursue a spiritual aim ... Humble or lofty, the goal of each monk remains his secret and he may endeavour

to reach it by any means he chooses.... The only rules that exist are of a lay character, relating to the good order, the keeping up of the monastery, of the attendance of the members of the *gompa* to daily or occasional meetings. These assemblies themselves have nothing to do with the celebration of a cult in which each one present joins for his own sake and from which he expects good fruits for himself. When lamaist monks meet in the assembly hall, it is.... to read parts of the Scriptures for the benefit of the monastery, the State, or the supporters and occasional benefactors of the *gompa*.

"Before the images of the Buddha boons are not requested, for Buddhas have passed beyond the 'world of desire' and, in fact, beyond all worlds. But vows are taken and spiritual wishes expressed such as: 'May I be, in this life or in the next one, able to distribute a quantity of alms, to contribute efficaciously to the welfare of many,' or 'may I be able to understand the meaning of Buddha's doctrine and to live accordingly.'

"There are a larger number than one would suppose who, when raising a small lamp in the gesture of an offering before the Buddha's image, ask for no more than spiritual insight. Though they may make but little practical effort to reach it, the mystic ideal of salvation through enlightenment remains alive amongst Tibetans."

The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling.. Alexandra David-Neel and the Lama Yongden. Claude Kendall, New York, 1934.

This is a free translation of the story line of the great Tibetan epic. Gesar is the great national hero whose mission consists in causing order to reign on earth and in suppressing injustice and violence. Aside from his role as defender of religion and moral law, he is awaited as the great avenger who will be reborn to remedy the evils of the world. The prophecies concerning him are widespread. For centuries these tales have been preserved and transmitted orally by Tibetan bards. In recent centuries versions have been made in manuscript, but Mme. David-Neel has been unable to locate a printed edition, and she has been assured by qualified Tibetans that none exists. In fact apparently there does not exist a manuscript collection that includes the whole of the epic. Each manuscript refers to a special part of the hero's adventures. Mme. David-Neel has listened to Mongolian and Tibetan singers tell these stories amidst native surroundings, and she in turn has done an excellent job of rendering them readable for Western students.

In the legend Padma Sambhava is recited as he who rules from on high and directs the acts of his hero, Gesar, incarnated on earth to carry out the Guru's plans. After many fantastic adventures, Gesar's mission is completed and he prepares to depart.

"'Our work is accomplished,' said Gesar to his followers. 'For the time being we may rest in peace; *but we shall have to return to this world to preach the Good Law in the Western lands,* after having destroyed those who feed on the substance of beings and spread suffering. The wars that we have undertaken were little wars, the one that will come will be a great war. Instead of a single sword, I shall hold two, so as to mow down the enemy with both hands.'"

After rites of purification and the uttering of fervent wishes for the happiness of all beings:

"Gesar looked at them pensively:

"'It is not possible for us to enter in a paradise with our bodies of flesh,' he said. 'To-morrow we will detach the 'spirit' from them by the rite of *pholang*.'

"Once more the five become motionless in perfect concentration of thought. The next morning, before dawn, many deities, playing different instruments, and throwing a rain of flowers, appeared on a white rainbow.

"The first sunbeam shot an arrow of light above the distant mountains. Without a movement, without lifting their lowered eyelids, Gesar and his companions uttered the piercing *hiḳ*, then the grave *phat;* and, on the rocky terrace of the white mountain, there remained only five empty robes, aureoled in light."

Tibet's Great Yogi, Milarepa, a biography from the Tibetan, being the *Jetsun-Kahbum* or biographical history of Jetsun-Milarepa, according to the late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English rendering. Edited, with introduction and annotations, by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. Oxford University Press, London, 1928.

Some years ago our library was presented with a copy of the *Ten Thousand Hymns of Milarepa* with a biography, in Tibetan characters. It was first offered to the Library of Congress; as they already had a copy, the friend gave it to us. As far as we know, these are the only two originals of this work in the United States.

Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, or seven books of wisdom of the Great Path, according to the late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English rendering. Arranged and edited with introductions and annotations to serve as a commentary by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. With a foreword by Dr. R. R. Marett. Oxford University Press, London, 1935. 5 illustrations.

"Regarded thus, as the applied psychology of religion, *yoga* is the very taproot of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Taoism. Similarly, if perhaps in less degree, it has nourished the growth of the Faith of the Parsees; and in the development of the three Semitic Faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, it has been a very important shaping influence. In its less systematized, and probably degenerate form, *yoga* plays a part even in some of the magical and animistic cults of the so-called primitive races. Among peoples of higher culture, invocations, exorcisms, masses for the dead or for the living, prayers, *mantric* chants, religious meditations, tellings of beads, methods of attaining spiritual discipline or insight, and all forms of ritual which aim at enabling man to attain to mystic communion with higher than human power, or liberation from worldly existence, are in varying degrees more or less of the nature of *yoga.*"

The following works have been translated in the text:

I. *The Precious Rosary* of Dvagpo-Lharje (1077-1152) being "The Supreme Path of Discipleship: The Precepts of the Gurus."

II. *The Epitome of the Great Symbol* —a work believed to have been composed in the first century B. C. and passed on through a direct line of descent, including the great gurus of the Kargyutpa Sect.

"...our text assumes that the *Yoga* of the Great Symbol will be practiced only under the personal guidance of a competent *guru.* Accordingly, some details of instructions are omitted from the text, the *guru* being expected to supply them. This, too, is, in large measure, true of all systems of *yoga* which have been reduced to writing."

III. *The Path of Knowledge*: The Yoga of the Six Doctrines.

IV. *The Profound Path of the Doctrine of Consciousness*—[Transference], "The Seed of the Heart," from the Final Secrets of the Ear—[whispered] Tantras."

V. *The Method of Eradicating* [the Lower Self], called "The Divine Mirth of the *Dakinis.*"

VI. *The Path of the Five Wisdoms*: The Yoga of the Long *Hum.*

VII. *Essence of the Prajna-Paramita Sutra.* This summary of the great *Prajna Paramita* is introduced by a brief, well-stated resume of the history, variants, and significance of the work.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead or the after-death experiences on the *Bardo* plane, according to Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English rendering by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. With foreword by Sir John Woodroffe. Illustrated. Oxford University Press, London, second impression, June, 1936. (First impression August, 1927.)

The *Bardo Thodol* is a manual or guide for the spirit during the transition at death. There is no coddling of the departing ego, nor is fear instilled. With the measure of his understanding, the dying person is told what he may expect during the various stages in the great void. Then he is constantly assured that all he will see is the product of his own thoughts, and that as soon as he has freed himself from attachments, he may seek a more fortunate rebirth.

Mr. Evans-Wentz has given an excellent resume of the general tenets regarding rebirth, the general theme of which becomes increasingly harmonious with Western trends in thought on the subject. The entire book is a practical laboratory instruction in the art of dying so as to insure a favorable rebirth. The passing called death comes eventually to all. Occasionally we are called upon to encourage one who realizes that the great reaper is about to visit him. More frequently we have to comfort those who have lost friends or relatives by this separation. And at those times our own words sound hollow, inadequate, futile. Not so, those of the *Bardo Thodol*.

The *Bardo Thodol* presents the Tibetan viewpoint on the cycle of life. "As men think, so are they, both here and hereafter, thoughts being things, the parents of all actions, good and bad alike; and, as the sowing has been, so will the harvest be." The after-death state is treated as a psycho-physical problem—what the percipient sees on the *Bardo* plane is due entirely to his own mental-content. The heaven and hells, the gods and demons—none has individual existence apart from the thoughts that constitute his personality which is an impermanent product arising from the thirst for existence and from the will to live and to believe.

Even the greatest lamas have need of the reminders of the ear-whispered doctrine so that the spirit may find the most propitious exit from the worn-out body to awaken immediately with full consciousness in the Clear Light of Reality. Only the most spiritually advanced are able to take advantage of the potent opportunities of this awakening in the void. Lesser degree students of the doctrine require a longer period of help in order to arouse the spirit to conscious acceptance of the after-death state and early efforts to work out the problems of rebirth. The great mass of souls may be comforted, encouraged, and directed only in accord with the measure of spiritual devotion they have exercised during life and the impulses they have had to right action.

There are three *Bardo* regions. The first two are treated together, the first very briefly.

The *Chikhai Bardo* and the *Chonyid Bardo*. Herein lieth the setting-face-to face to the Reality in the intermediate state: The Great Deliverance by Hearing while on the after-death plane, from "The Profound Doctrine of the Emancipating of the Consciousness by Meditation upon the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities."

The text is to be read correctly and distinctly near the dead body, preferably by the deceased's guru; otherwise by a brother of the faith, or a learned man of the same faith. Failing to secure the services of one of these, as a last choice the reader may be any person who can read correctly and distinctly. There are various actions which should be performed as death approaches, all of which tend to keep the mind of the dying person alert and to prevent him from lapsing into unconsciousness.

When the symptoms of death are about to be completed, then enjoin upon the one dying this resolution, speaking in a low tone of voice in the ear.

"O nobly born, that which is called death being come to thee now, resolve thus: 'O this now is the hour of death. By taking advantage of this death, I

will so act, for the good of all sentient beings, peopling the illimitable expanse of the heavens, as to obtain the perfect Buddhahood, by resolving on love and compassion toward the Sole Perfection.'"

The Bardo of the Experiencing of Reality.

"O nobly-born, thou wilt experience three *Bardos* .... That which is called death hath now come. Thou art departing from this world, but thou art not the only one; death cometh to all. Do not cling, in fondness and weakness to this life. Even though thou clingest out of weakness, thou has not the power to remain here. Thou wilt gain nothing more than wandering in this *Sangsara.* Be not attached; be not weak. Remember the Precious Trinity.

"O nobly-born, whatever fear and terror may come to thee in the *Chonyid Bardo,* forget not these words; and bearing their meaning at heart, go forwards: in them lieth the vital secret of recognition:

> *"Alas! when the Uncertain Experiencing of Reality is dawning upon me here,*
> *With every thought of Fear or terror or awe for all set aside.*
> *May I recognize whatever appear, as the reflection of mine own consciousness;*
> *May I know them to be of the nature of apparitions in the Bardo;*
> *When at this all-important moment of achieving a great end,*
> *May I not fear the bands of Peaceful and Wrathful Deities, mine own thought-forms."*

The *Sidpa Bardo.* This is known as the good head-part of that called "The Profound Essence of the Liberation by Hearing"—the reminder, the clear setting-face-to-face in the intermediate state when seeking rebirth.

By the reading of these lines properly, those devotees who are advanced in understanding can make the best use of the transference at the moment of death. Others who are a little less practised will go by the upward course. Those lower than these will be liberated in accordance with their particular abilities and virtues. In seeking rebirth, even the lower natures, resembling the brute order, will have been able—in virtue of the application of the Refuge—to turn from entering into misery; and obtaining the great boon of a perfectly endowed and freed human body, will, in the next birth, meet with a guru who is a virtuous friend and obtain the vows.

The work closes with these words: "Thus is completed the Profound Heart-Drops of the *Bardo* Doctrine... which liberateth embodied beings."

Tibetan Language Books

Tibetan Word Book by Sir Basil Gould and Hugh Edward Richardson, with a foreword by Sir Aurel Stein. Oxford University Press, 1943.

"The true door to a knowledge of its [Tibet] people leads through their language. Books dealing with it are numerous. But it may well be doubted whether the access to that door has ever been as widely opened before as it has by this book." Aurel Stein.

Tibetan Syllables by Sir Basil Gould and Hugh Edward Richardson. Oxford University Press, 1943.

2000 key syllables which were given in the Word Book in Tibetan alphabetical order are rearranged, according to their phonetic values, in English alphabetical order.

Morphology of the Tibetan Language. A contribution to comparative Indosinology by Hans Nordewin Von Koerber. Suttonhouse, Los Angeles and San Francisco, 1935.

Tibetan-English Dictionary with special reference to the prevailing dialects. To which is added an English-Tibetan vocabulary. By H. A. Jaschke. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., London, 1934.

This work represents a new and thoroughly revised edition of a Tibetan-German Dictionary, which appeared in a lithographed form between the years 1871 and 1876. This original was prepared for Christian missionaries who were endeavoring to convert the Buddhists of Central Asia.

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