

# HORIZON



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OTHER NEW AND INTERESTING ARTICLES

Many subscribers are requesting additional copies for their friends. As the supply of magazines is limited we suggest that you make reservations for extra copies in advance.

Journal of the  
 Philosophical Research Society

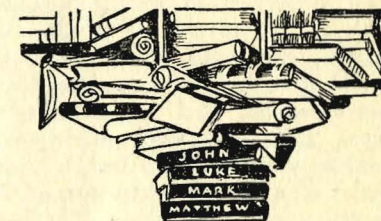
SUMMER  
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ISSUED  
 QUARTERLY  
 VOLUME 9 No. 1

HORIZON  
 LINES

AN EDITORIAL  
 BY MANLY PALMER HALL



The Use and Abuse of Great Books

BOOKS have become an essential part of the equipment of civilization. Throughout the world the written and printed word is the principal means for the dissemination of knowledge. Since the invention of printing in China in the 9th century or earlier and in Europe in the 15th century, the production of books has steadily increased until millions of volumes are now printed and distributed every year. The demand for books of every kind seems insatiable, and publishing as a business has become highly profitable.

Books are made and circulated either to enrich the world or to enrich the author and publisher. Of late, the latter motive appears to dominate. A goodly part of modern literature, especially in America, is intended solely to amuse or divert the reader. Fiction increases in popularity as the pressures of living intensify and the problem of recreation assumes psychological importance. The public taste is determined by the gross volume of sales, and authors vie with each other to produce works catering to popular demand. The goal of literary effort

in our time seems to be inclusion in the monthly list of the ten best sellers.

Naturally, the type of literature which appeals to the greater number must be concerned with the interests of this group and must be presented in a form acceptable to those more or less mentally lazy. There are notable exceptions, such as the Bible and the dictionary, but these exceptions are explainable in terms of mass conviction and common utility. We do not wish, however, that our remarks should indicate that we disparage recreational reading. It plays a very important part in the kind of world which has come into being within the last fifty years. As long as psychic stress continues to drain the mental and emotional resources of the average citizen, he needs and demands what may be termed escapist literature.

Authors seem to have fallen into the same dilemma that afflicts playwrights, scenarists, and those preparing radio scripts. They cater to a mediocre stratum of the public mind, and then complain because that mind nurtured on such a diet fails to improve. Bread-and-butter writing seems to please everyone except

its author, who grows more antisocial everyday as a result of his increasing royalties. He regards himself as a martyr to the delinquencies of the public taste, but lacks the courage or the means to resist the pressures of publisher and public.

Fortunately for the world, the great books which have changed the course of empires were written, at least most of them, before it was necessary for writers to cater to their agents and to permit their publishers to rewrite manuscripts with an eye to current trends. Under existing conditions, Plato and Aristotle would have had little to show for their endeavors but neat stacks of rejection slips. Like most other departments of modern society, the literary field is the victim of a top-heavy structure of mechanization and marketing. The book is now regarded chiefly as a unit of merchandise.

The increasing ease and rapidity with which the written word now flows into print brings with it a deluge of publications of only momentary significance. Politicians authorize a biography everytime they run for office, and no one would be surprised if the city dog-catcher announced that he was retiring to compile his memoirs. These vital "human" documents have gained new dignity through their psychological implications. Thousands of persons take a deep pseudo-scientific interest in the subconscious or unconscious processes of superannuated judges, ex-prize fighters, and poultry raisers. These cross sections, these brief excursions into the lives of the "other half," also gain charm from their social significance.

Such ephemeral publications exhaust a considerable amount of our dwindling reserve of wood pulp, and many an honest tree has been sacrificed to man's incorrigible determination to perpetuate his own accomplishments. Fortunately for all concerned, a goodly percentage of these works never go further than the first edition. Unfortunately, however, they stack up here and there, requiring considerable dusting and storage until they return to the pulp vat.

Somewhat nearer to our heart's desire is the field of inspirational literature. Some folks feel that their first good deed in life should be to write a book. The inspirational quality is frequently autobiographical, the author or authoress being inspired to share with the soul-hungry world the secrets of infinite prosperity, cosmic consciousness, radiant health, universal peace, and other trifles. I remember one dear soul who had just completed a manuscript on the spontaneous availability of wealth, and came to me to see if I would advance fifty dollars toward the cost of publication! There was another gentle character who asked me one day: "I want to write a book to save the world. What should I write about?" Some have no trouble over material, for, like a certain Oriental who published the *Bhagavad Gita* under his own name, they merely quote their favorite authors for a couple of hundred pages and forget the credits.

Previous incarnations have always supplied delightful material for literary endeavors. It is hard to resist the impulse to preserve for the good of posterity a true and faithful account of a high-priestess incarnation in Egypt or that life when Nero fed us to the lions. Unfortunately when such accounts reach publication, they are ornamented with glaring historical inaccuracies and the names of the principal characters are outside the boundaries of any known language. We gather from most of these accounts that life in the good old times consisted mainly of initiations in dim-lit sanctuaries, inhabited by initiates in glistening robes. Very few of those remembering past lives identify themselves with any of the dis-respectable citizenry of antiquity.

Part of the difficulty that burdens modern printing is due to what is generally termed "vanity publishing." While it is true that most book manufacturers are reticent when it comes to printing works in the metaphysical field, this tendency has been exaggerated in the popular mind. Occasionally it is wise and useful to co-operate in the cost of printing to bring out a book of exceptional value but with an extremely limited sales ap-

peal. On the other hand, many manuscripts are rejected because they are simply unprintable. Nearly all amateur productions require editing that amounts to rewriting, and even then, there is no reasonable expectation of any one being interested in the contents except the author and his immediate friends. I remember one charming little work consisting of a dozen intimate poems, bordered with lilies, which was tastefully produced under the title, *Little Lizzie Wore It*. The theme was a sunbonnet belonging to the deceased younger sister of the authoress. The treatment of the subject matter was exceedingly sentimental, and the impact of the book upon the literary world can best be described as a dull thud.

The "vanity publisher" too often thinks only of the down-payment he is to receive. He explains that the manuscript is "out of this world." But sad to relate, such lofty and inspirational quality is too advanced to be appreciated. Future ages will grow up to such a high level of appreciation, but under existing conditions the author will have to advance a thousand dollars to "assist" in the cost of production. The results of this practice are gross misrepresentations which sometimes have tragic consequences. Fully believing that they are on the threshold of a literary career, folks spend money in this wasteful business only to be disillusioned in the end.

Assuming that an author has some field for the distribution of his books, he should also bear in mind that he has a responsibility for the impact of his ideas upon his potential readers. Experience proves that well-intentioned writers can produce works which contribute to the confusion already prevalent in the public mind. The written word, even more than the spoken word, passes out of our keeping to become a force in the lives of persons we have never known and will never meet. These readers can estimate only the actual words on the printed page. They cannot know what we *really* meant when we said something else, and they can bestow upon our language no definitions or interpretations not to be found in a standard dictionary.

The greater number of metaphysical students are the victims of the books they have read. Lacking discrimination themselves, they have assumed the significance of the printed word. It is astonishing how much psychological power is generated by the process of publishing. We give much consideration to a book merely because it is a book; and if the title be pretentious, our common sense is completely overwhelmed.

The tendency to vagary, common to most untrained thinkers, is often exaggerated to sheer fantasy by indiscriminate reading. The mind set adrift in a sea of notions floats about at the mercy of wind and current. An immature and undirected literary diet of mystical experiences, visions, initiations, black magicians, psychic malpractice, and the like, results in a sad state of metaphysical indigestion. After immersing themselves in such writings for several years, would-be students lose completely the direct power of constructive action. Thus books, which at first glance may appear only useless, become, if believed, actually detrimental. That which does no good generally does some harm.

Books should never be written merely to gratify the ego. If we are sincerely convinced that we are in possession of some fact, knowledge, or idea of general utility, we should mature the project with care and thoughtfulness before committing it to print. Instead of assuming that by some miraculous circumstance we have been blessed by a private revelation denied to the rest of mankind, it is always wise to do a little research in the matter. It is quite possible that others have anticipated our findings and that we will discover a tastey statement of our unique discovery somewhere in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Buddha, or Confucius. If we do not, perhaps that in itself should give cause for hesitation.

Many books which claim to put into words that which has never been said before merely contain that which never should have been said at all. Instead of assuming that the past was too benighted to come upon such choice concepts as we have formulated, it may be useful to

suspect that antiquity passed over them in silence by intent.

One of the most delightful types of literary endeavor is that which interprets or reveals for the first time the true meaning of someone else's religious or philosophical productions. Usually the original author is dead, which places him at a distinct disadvantage but saves him considerable embarrassment. Scarcely an important writer is without an interpreter, and the principal interpreters are in turn victims of interpretation. Unfortunately, to an interpreter the original meaning of his author is usually of slight consequence. The real purpose is almost always to prove that the interpreter knows far more about the subject than the original author, who must be corrected, amended, and brought up to date. I can speak with some authority on this subject, for I have been interpreted while yet I live!

Among the favorite subjects for interpretation are the writings of Plato and Aristotle and the Jewish and Christian sacred books. The philosophers have suffered deeply from scholastic mutilation, and the Bible has been considerably disfigured by theologians and laymen alike. Most interpreters of the Scriptures reveal a shocking lack of Biblical language, idiom, history, and psychology; but nothing daunted, they go in where angels fear to tread, and produce documents more difficult to interpret than the original. There is a peculiar belief among the religious-minded that no author ever said what he meant. Usually this is merely because the simple and obvious text does not agree with the opinions of the interpreter.

All this interpretation is due in part to the fact that modern metaphysicians lack the courage to assume the responsibility for their own ideas. They feel that their texts must be embellished with appropriate quotations from the immortals. Quite possibly, the above-mentioned immortals failed to say the words appropriate to the occasion or openly rejected our favorite notion. It becomes indispensable, therefore, to fall back upon interpretations. In this way, we can make anyone say anything that serves

the purpose of the moment. Had it not been for this tendency expertly applied, the spiritual life of humanity would have been much simpler and more honorable.

We do not mean to imply that intelligent interpretation of obscure texts is not useful and important, but such interpretation and commentary must originate with someone equipped for the work. It should also bear the stamp of familiarity with the whole scope of the subject. The interpreter must be true to his author and minimize the personal equation. Followers of one belief are seldom successful interpreters of another. It is almost impossible for even an honest scholar to approach any subject with a completely open mind. If the mind is that open, it is likely to be empty. Only careful training and constant watchfulness enables the scholar to think toward a conclusion, rather than from one.

Great books are the working tools of scholarship, as necessary to the learned as the hammer and saw are indispensable to a master carpenter. It does not follow, however, that the wise are merely bookish-minded, anymore than the journeyman is in abject servitude to the instruments of his trade. The state of mental maturity is not attained merely by dogged devotion to a favorite author or the memorizing of significant phrases. The intellect is nourished in many ways, but a balanced program of reading supplies the mind with a sequence of valuable stimuli. Association can enrich the individual; and through the medium of great books we associate ourselves with enlightened persons of all ages and nations, thus learning to use more effectively the accumulated knowledge of our world.

Reading is an art, which must be cultivated with the same diligence necessary to the mastery of any worthwhile field of endeavor. In recent years, books and pamphlets have been prepared and are available in most libraries devoted entirely to the subject of purposeful reading. Probably it has not occurred to the average book-skimmer that the literary faculties of his mind require cultivation. He assumes it to be a self-evident fact that having mastered the A, B, C's and

having a prefatory acquaintance with the dictionary he is master of all he peruses. He settles down with Dr. Elliott's Five-Foot Bookshelf and the naive conviction that by devoting fifteen minutes a day to cerebration he will conquer the literary world.

Sometime ago I came across a simplified guide to reading which left nothing to chance or imagination. The author introduced his subject something as follows: "First, you open the book, and then you turn to the title page." Doubtless the compiler of this treasury of practical advice envisioned the uninformed fumbling hopelessly with the *Memoirs of Winston Churchill*, trying to find some way to pry open the covers. While the obstacles to the physical process of reading appear somewhat exaggerated, it is certain that some difficulty does exist, or else the average man would be better informed on vital issues than is commonly the case. We have a genius for being literate and unlearned at the same time.

There is scarcely an unsolved problem of human life and relationship for which a practical solution is not available in the literature of our race. Perhaps it will require a little ingenuity to adapt the available remedy to the crisis of the moment, but the essential principles can be recovered from the collective experience of humanity with a moderate amount of time and effort.

Reading wisely-selected books provides a valuable censorship over our own opinions. When we contemplate a course of action which appears to us new and original, it is useful to remember that countless others have followed precisely the same course. Many were better informed, and a goodly number were more expertly equipped than ourselves. Their findings may suggest that we pause and reconsider. It does not mean that we should give up in despair because others have failed. Perhaps their very failures reveal the proper means of solution. We can benefit by their mistakes, but only by becoming aware of these mistakes.

Thoughtful reading in any chosen field bestows a deeper appreciation for the magnificent achievements of mankind. The more we study, the more

humble we become. No honest scholar can be conceited. Books are not only the records of men's thoughts, but true and faithful accounts of men's efforts to improve themselves and each other. From the crude petroglyphs on the walls of ancient cliffs to the most elegant productions of the Kelmscott Press, writing has been a means of sharing useful knowledge. All human beings are convinced that their personal experiences are valuable guides and aids to those who come after them. While the life stories of most mortals are not recorded, enough is preserved to enable the historian, the philosopher, and the theologian to reconstruct the social state of humanity in each significant epic of man's descent. We can restore the Roman Empire, rebuild Greek civilization, and revive the vanished grandeur of the Renaissance. In each of these periods, we can also recapture the conditions of the private citizen and those so-called "little people" toiling beneath the surface of large political motions.

It is from the quiet consideration of the human picture that we gain the wisdom to co-operate with those evolutionary processes which indicate the true course of progress. Only knowledge can enable us to conserve resources. The individual who tries desperately to be contemporary and who ignores the experience of the past wastes energy on fruitless enterprises. We all resent any limitation imposed upon the free exercise of our opinions. We rebel against the censorship of existing institutions and ancient traditions. While there is no virtue in merely accepting old corruptions as inevitable, it is wise to examine the reason for these delinquencies and why they have survived thousands of years of reformations and renovations.

Let us take a simple example—political corruption. The abuse of office has existed ever since there was office to abuse. Tribal chieftains, witch doctors, and all conceivable types of hereditary and elected potentates have found leadership the proper opportunity for tyranny, despotism, and exploitation. The pattern is as old as history, and as new as now. No one has ever liked the situa-

tion except those who profited thereby. Every conceivable remedy has been suggested, and many have had limited or temporary application. When we are tired of monarchy, we try dictatorship. When that fails, we may plunge into anarchy, or emerge in the patterns of republics or democracies. If these become unwieldy, we develop socialistic instincts, contemplate Communism, or align ourselves with the mugwumps, the single-taxers, the no-taxers, or the too-many-taxers. If a leader is completely futile, we impeach him. If he is too dishonest, we may remove him by legislation; and if he is too honest, we may remove him by assassination.

In the present century, we have dethroned the rulers, executed entire royal families, liquidated complete social classes, created new states, and strengthened leagues and organizations to administer surviving nations. Class upheavals have become the order of the day. We have had old deals, new deals, and double deals. We are now experimenting with the "welfare state," which we hope to maintain at the cost of \$42,000,000,000 for the fiscal year. We have groomed every type of expert, specialist, and technician for high office, but the results so far have not been completely satisfactory.

While Plato lacked that liberal education enjoyed by the delegates at the sessions of the United Nations Organization, he pointed out some 2,300 years ago the very essence of the difficulty. His conclusions were that the type of government under which human society functions was comparatively unimportant. With honest and enlightened leadership any system would work, and without these priceless ingredients all systems must fail. Dedication to system is a mistake which can only be remedied by dedication to principles.

If Plato had been the only man to arrive at these conclusions, we might regard him as suffering from certain prejudices of the Athenians. Also, if we had ever had any peace, security, or happiness apart from integrity, we might be able to disprove his conclusions. But Plato was only one of thousands of seri-

ous, able, and generous thinkers in every nation of the world and in every period or history who have arrived at the same realization.

Thus, through the quiet and thoughtful use of great books, we escape from the mental provincialism which limits the horizon of the untutored mind. We rescue ourselves from the dismal dilemma of that smug conceit of the uniqueness of our notions in any sphere of activity. We attain to a kind of penetration which adds new dimensions and enables us to estimate more completely the elements of a proposition.

The history of our world and the record of the forces which activate its social motions supply the materials for an adequate reference frame. Without this frame, incidents and accidents are merely fragments; but once the patterns of time and place are recognized, we become aware of what we may call the morality of history. In a strange way, historical records both teach and preach. They not only report occurrences, but also reveal the relationships, and we see each incident suspended between cause and consequence. There is a cause for everything, and things themselves lead inevitably to appropriate consequences.

Some resent the limitation which thoughtfulness imposes upon action. The intellectual is popularly regarded as non-eventuating. He is thought of as a mild-mannered, stoop-shouldered, absent-minded bookworm, peering at life through thick-lensed eyeglasses, and seldom, if ever, contributing vitally to any of the pressing problems of his generation. He haunts great libraries and second-hand book stores, apparently oblivious to the desperate and urgent policies of his contemporaries. Also, he is usually deficient in ambition and acquisitiveness, and the advantages of cornering the quinine supply or lobbying for monopoly cause no fluttering in his libido. Naturally, a non-intellectual estimation of the character of a profound intellectual is likely to be prejudiced.

There are two kinds of thinkers in the world: one thinks fast, and the other thinks well. To the individual who lives and dies in great haste, now is always

the appointed moment. Nearly always, hasty decisions are improperly matured. Thinking that is inspired by desperation and urgency is usually the direct cause of further desperation and urgency. We are still struggling with the emergency edicts of past generations. It is as painful to die of the remedy as of the disease. The human being is not equipped to combine speed and thoroughness in his process of cerebration. Naturally there are emergencies in which decisions must be immediate, but in those large projects which involve the future security of collectives, long-range thinking is indicated.

Socrates had but slight influence upon his own time, and such impact as he did achieve did not increase his popularity. He was a thorn in the flesh of the Athenians. But Socrates was a long-range thinker. He was a self-appointed observer of causes and consequences as these were revealed through the corruptions of the Greeks. It is impossible to estimate completely the effect of Socrates upon Western civilization, but it is no exaggeration to say that his influence has been and still is prodigious. He is rightfully included among those who thought well. It is still a moot question whether the world should think back to Socrates or forward with him. As one mild-mannered Dean of Philosophy remarked quietly to his class of none-too-eager postadolescents: "Socrates had a nice quality of timelessness about his mind."

This "nice quality of timelessness" should give us pause in these days when time itself is little less than an obsession. Yet timeless thinking alone can remedy most of our so-called timely problems. In these days, too many authors write in haste and live to regret their own books. If they should not be aware of their own mistakes, there is always the critic! In this case, a critic may be another hasty intellectual with no time to correct his own errors, but quick to see the faults in others.

Here, again, the importance of the reference frame should be mentioned. The average person thinks only from his own experience. If for some unaccountable reason a single project of his own

goes well, he comes to regard himself as the peculiar custodian of a universal panacea. He then feels that truly he has fulfilled the requisite of the ages—he speaks from experience. Even experience itself is not an all-sufficient guide unless it is justified by application on many levels of human activity. This brings into consideration the problem of levels or strata, as these represent broad planes of social consciousness.

Humanity breaks into groups distinguished by capacities, interests, and allegiances. Most intellectuals are immersed in group patterns and seldom have the opportunity or interest to apply their remedies outside their own classes. They assume that the universe is an infinite extension of familiar spheres of activity. Thus, the college professor may take it for granted that the cosmos is a vast campus and can be put in order by the same rules that impose an appearance of integration upon the collegiate body. The Christian theologian regards space as a vast diocese, where it is predestined and foreordained that the unbeliever awaits conversion. Nations and races are always peculiarly "chosen." It is reported that certain tribes of Eskimos are convinced that ultimately "God's frozen people" will rule the world. In the light of recent atomic progress among civilized nations, perhaps the Eskimo is right.

This universal habit of generalizing upon particulars has led to a great deal of intolerance and tyranny. Often it is little short of tragic to force upon others the privilege of doing the things that make us happy. Like as not, the infidel and the unbeliever, the unredeemed and the unregenerated have ideas of their own as to what constitutes a satisfactory life pattern. While we are busy assuring them that they are wrong, they are hard at work promulgating their own concepts. When we convert others, it is an admirable state of affairs; when they attempt to convert us, something must be done immediately to stop the insidious influence. In this way, ideologies are locked in mortal conflict, and our fond hopes of peace lead directly to war.

Only a larger reference frame and a mind keenly aware of basic values and

common problems can protect us from false estimations of human requirements. Teaching is a noble profession, but the teacher comes to grief unless he has the facilities to learn even as he teaches. While we are pouring out our erudition, we should not forget to do a little growing ourselves. The very foolish person whom we are attempting to enlighten may know many things from which we could benefit, if we kept still and did a moderate amount of listening. Only a large reference frame bestows that kind of genius which listens well.

One reason why most would-be reformers seldom read widely or deeply is because of the disintegrating effect of such a pursuit on the ego. There is always the devastating possibility that if we read our opponents thoughtfully, we may agree with them. The safer course, therefore, is to prevent such contamination by the general assumption that study is a waste of time. There have been several outstanding instances in which the insidious influence of good books has overcome long-seated devotion to false doctrines. A certain Dr. Butler, an Anglican clergyman, once decided that it was his religious duty to write a voluminous and scholarly condemnation of astrology. Unlike most of the modern astronomer's however, he decided to do extensive research in order that his book might be completely devastating in its consequences. The Reverend Doctor did such a thorough job that in the end he was completely converted to astrology, and his book, when it did appear, was one of the most valuable and thoughtful texts on the subject. This points out the dangers of peering over the edge of your reference frame and, as a result, coming into a larger one.

All things being otherwise equal (itself a large statement), experience is the most important source of knowledge and judgment. In ancient times, the grand tour, as it was called, was an essential of higher education. Even among tradesmen, apprentices were expected to travel as journeymen to enlarge their skill and gather new ideas. In the modern world, however, it is hardly possible for the average person to visit foreign countries,

study their cultures, estimate their psychologies, and ponder their contributions to human progress. Even in a day of radio, television, and motion pictures, we have but slight acquaintance with the basic problems of our world.

It is evident, for example, that foreign nations will gain but slight appreciation of the normal American way of life from attending American motion pictures. A Persian gentleman who was attempting to broaden his reference frame with the aid of the American cinema came to the conclusion that the people of the United States were divided into three classes: the extremely wealthy, who divided their time between yachts and night clubs; the middle class, which was dedicated almost entirely to solving murders, and a third group, which inhabited vast plains and was eternally stealing cattle from its own members. His conclusion was that America was inhabited by a race of perpetual adolescents.

Books may have the same faults, in as much as most of them are written from peculiar biases and prejudices. Napoleon is reported to have said that European histories were accounts compiled by the victors to describe the vices of the victims. For centuries, nonfictional literature has been impelled into existence from what may be called the springboard of criticism. Book after book is introduced to prove that some previous authority was addepleted. The result has been what the bibliophile calls "the battle of the books." After moderate reading of these warring authors, the average layman finds his confusion worse confounded. What native intelligence he may possess is drowned in a sea of learned doubts. Here, again, discrimination must be used, but even the worst book can tell us something. It can act as a horrible example of a course of action to be avoided at all costs.

In his essay *Of Studies*, Lord Bacon, a man himself prodigiously learned but not limited in his thoughts by reading, leaves us several deep and significant observations: "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability.... Crafty men condemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them.... Read



not to contradict, and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.... Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: That is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not cursorily; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.... Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.... Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep; morals grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend."

My mind becomes naturally suspicious when I find an author who would advance his own cause by condemning the thoughts of others. It is better to make a simple statement of our belief or position and let the reader judge the merit of the stand we have taken. Condemnation usually indicates intolerance and a narrow frame of reference, especially in those subjects on which common agreement may not reasonably be expected. Authors of slight ability are sometimes remembered only because they have attacked those of larger learning.

Good books must be good friends, and we seldom choose our acquaintances from among those by nature unreasonable or unsympathetic. If we are seeking knowledge, we like it presented in a simple and direct manner. We want to understand our author, and we have learned out of experience that if he talks too much and his terms are too obscure there is good possibility that he is uncertain of his ground. Great grammarians seldom write great books, because their minds are on their words, and they have elevated the means above the ends. Our books must match our moods, and when we settle down to a quiet evening of

reading, we do not wish to be jugged from our reflections by unnecessary discords or morbid conclusions. Naturally we hope that our author agrees with us, but if he be wiser, we also hope that we have the courage to agree with him.

As we develop the art of reading, we naturally develop certain internal standards of good taste and propriety. Our appreciation for great books, like our understanding of great men, increases with acquaintance. The search for literary companionship includes the instinct to discover the humanity of scholars. We like to discover a few frailties, and even the faulty construction of a sentence brings with it a warm glow of intimacy. The search is not for perfection but for a generous sharing of good thoughts. If our author is devoid of humor, we can only tolerate him for brief periods or because we urgently require his material. If he takes himself too seriously, we will convict him of egotism, and if he tries to batter down our thinking with the power of his words, we suspect him of dictatorial ambitions.

Some readers cannot enjoy literature unless they are satisfied with the characters, dispositions, and habits of the writers. This does not appear relevant, for we should accept or reject on the merit of the material. As an old theologian observed: "The truth is not less true if the devil speaks it." We are in this world to improve ourselves and, if possible, to contribute to the collective good. We are not here to judge each other or to waste our lives in the criticism of personalities.

Books are to the mind what fine art is to the aesthetic sense. Few students of art begin with an immediate appreciation for the higher forms of genius. We appreciate only as we grow and extend our faculties of perception and reflection.

It requires maturity of instinct to recognize maturity of accomplishment. It should therefore follow that in our reading we proceed from lesser authors to those of greater abilities. It is this natural unfolding of discernment that impels the reader to selectivity in his choice of books. It is this very selectivity, practiced by the discriminating for thousands of years, that has caused mankind to elevate and set apart the immortal literature of his race. The admiration of mankind bestows immortality upon the great books.

No matter how industriously an author may attempt to spread his writings or force them upon the attention of his reluctant generation, it is impossible for him to assure the survival of his book. He must place his precious volume into the keeping of time and future ages. These will judge his work, and beyond their judgment there is no recourse. Thus it happens that frail, slender treatises have survived and monumental tomes have perished in limbo. In sober truth, the very monumental method of production gravitates against survival. Men do not take to their hearts that which is burdensome or confused or interminable. Life is too short to glean these sterile fields where thousands of pages may bestow but one small thought.

The books that survive are for the most part earnest, friendly books. We feel the sincerity which brought them into being, and a little of the pathos of the gentle heart that sent them forth to minister to some frailty of man. We like the books that give us hope and help us to meet the little problems that burden the day. We also cherish those volumes which open doors and windows for our minds, bestowing faith and enlarging the purposes for which we live. We enjoy a sympathetic book as we do a sympathetic ear. As we read, we like to feel that the author steps from his high and distant niche in the Hall of Fame and joins us beside the fireplace or the gas grate. We want the feeling that he is not too good or too busy to share with us in simple conversation. Wonderful as it may appear, we learn to know that the men and women who

wrote the great books were that kind of people—our kind of people. Perhaps they would appear quaint in their togas or robes or starched ruffs, and perchance we might have difficulty speaking with them in their native tongues, but we know that they were honest, earnest folks. We can tell this by their kindly advice, their practical understanding of life in general, and our moods in particular. If we have no ability to admire our authors from the personalities they reveal in their writings, what they said is not for us.

Modern writers might do well to remember that tomorrow they sleep with yesterday's seven thousand years. Five centuries from now they will be restored as persons only from the written word they leave behind. We have mental pictures to fit dispositions whose owners we have not seen. Our portraits may be somewhat impressionistic, but they serve our purposes. What kind of a picture will we conjure to cover or reveal the critic who finds fault with everything and is himself disproved by those who follow after? We will gradually discard the pompous, the bigoted, the neurotic, the fanatic, and all his ilk, and choose our mental company from such lovable old reprobates as Diogenes, or patient, thoughtful men such as John Bunyon, who wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* in debtors prison.

The great books have one quality in common: They are all simple. Seldom can we edit them, digest them, or paraphrase them without serious loss of contents. The more we edit, the more we lose; and the more we interpret them, the further we get from the truth. They said what they meant, and meant what they said; and we know in our hearts that their words are true. It is this internal acceptance by uncounted millions of readers that has bestowed upon these precious volumes the crown of literary immortality. We further admire these books because they are dedicated to solution of eternal problems. They help us to live better; they give us fresh courage to be true to those principles which we most sincerely believe, but which we find it difficult and often painful to apply.

We like books that give strength to internal realization and help us to be true to ourselves and our world. Also we like to understand, if possible, the great spiritual order that underlies the apparent confusion of material existence. We want to understand God and Nature and ourselves. Books seldom live if their authors were men of small faith. Unbelief and disbelief may flourish in generations of disillusionment but these negative convictions have no permanent place in the human search for truth and wisdom. We may almost say that the soul in man is the final judge of the great books.

All that is written is not true, and this applies not only to small and ephemeral works, but also to the sober productions of great minds. There are certain inevitable limitations in the reference frame of each human being. He can benefit from the past, but he cannot estimate infallibly the motions of the future. Even the prophet does not anticipate all that is to come. He may see the long shadows cast by coming events, but he is safe only while he remains on the plane of generalities. Leonardo da Vinci realized the possibility of the airplane. He went so far as to design a craft that might fly though heavier than air. His principles were correct, his generalities beyond dispute, but the model which he constructed bore little resemblance to a practical flying machine.

Many gallant books have been written to defend lost causes. These reveal the reactionary blind spots in the mental eyes of progressives. Tycho Brahe, one of the greatest astronomers of all times, and Robert Fludd, a truly profound and enlightened thinker, were both on the wrong side of the controversy raging over the opinions of Copernicus. We should not, however, discard the useful contributions these men have made to learning simply because they were in error in some of their opinions. It is not necessary that our author should always be right, but he must be honorable and gallant.

Some books are written from an uneasy conscience or in order that the author shall have the support of his own

words in printed form. If he reads his book often enough and devoutly enough, he may ultimately believe it himself. For example, the delightful old incunabula, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499), attributed to Francesco Columna, had a novel justification for its existence. The book is concerned principally with amorous anecdotes from the lives and legends of pagan gods and heroes. The author was an ecclesiastic who, for reasons probably intimate and personal, attempted to prove that celibacy was not essential to the clergy. The text was so handsomely and appropriately illustrated that few copies of the original exist in which the engravings have not been mutilated by censorship.

The bibliophile may select his literary companionship from an almost limitless assortment of informative, stimulating, interesting or amusing subjects. Every interest that has ever diverted the human mind has its literature. We may accumulate an entire library on the history, care, style, and barbering of beards. If this line does not strike a responsive chord, we may explore the origin, development, and special utility of trout flies, including technique for casting and other details of infinite fascination to the heirs of Isaac Walton. The details of new and useful improvements, including surveys of previous accomplishments in the matter of artificial dentures, extends into many thousands of volumes, some of which are extremely rare. The history of the bathtub, with warnings and observations, has intrigued a number of collectors, while some have restricted the research to accounts of celebrated persons who have died in the tub. There are enormous collections of old theater handbills, railroad tickets, valentines, and associated curiosia. The instinct to accumulate inspires many of these unusual collections; but each item has a story, and the quest for rarities is an ever-stimulating pastime.

To the more serious-minded, such trivia as the historical descent of the potbellied stove may appear little better than a waste of time. But we must realize that man is more than a creature of utility. He refuses to consider only

the responsibilities of living. Often these apparently unproductive accumulations of quaint writings prove the truth of the old saying that to know anything we must study everything. From his addiction to the literature about beards, one collector gained, as a kind of by-product, a knowledge of world history, politics, and even economics that would have confounded the most conscientious professor of sociology.

Certain literary hobbies are less important than the serious use of the great books, but they advance minds not yet ready to cope with heavier considerations. Nearly all hobbyists are more entertaining and interesting as people and are easier to live with than persons without such interests. The psychological value of hobbies is now generally recognized, and they are frequently recommended as a valuable form of psychotherapy. In one way or another, they enlarge the reference frame.

In these difficult and uncertain days, the building of a library for personal use requires considerable thoughtfulness. It is surprising, however, the number of extensive collections in the possession of private citizens of moderate means. Many of the smaller home-libraries are related directly to the trade or profession of their owners. The importance of such reference accumulations can scarcely be overestimated. Completely cultural collections are not quite so common, but are increasing in popularity everyday. We are recognizing the need for relaxation to protect health and sanity. In olden times, libraries were part of the family tradition, and each generation inherited the literary collection of its ancestors. As such legacies did not necessarily reflect the tastes or inclinations of the beneficiaries, the books were perpetuated in trust rather than actually used.

The inherited library, except for a few important collections, has almost ceased as part of family tradition. Such accumulations are generally disposed of along with other unwanted chattel. The modern reader wishes to select his own reading and to accumulate books which reflect his own personality. A man's library reveals his tastes and instincts

more clearly than any other portion of his worldly goods. Books and civilization advance together.

If space is limited and means are moderate, books should be selected as wisely as possible. Today most of the great books of the world are available in convenient and inexpensive reprints. Unless the reader is a collector at heart and appreciates the art of fine bookmaking, it is not necessary for him to seek out rare editions or early printings. Unfortunately, however, thoughtfulness and good taste usually occur together. The ninety-eight-cent reprint may satisfy the requirements of the intellect, but the aesthetic instincts are likely to be offended. As one means of satisfactory compromise, the collector may secure a few fine and early volumes as opportunity permits, and be satisfied with less-expensive copies for the remainder and larger part of his accumulation. There is a certain satisfaction of soul that comes with the possession of books from the early presses. The old papermakers, compositors, printers, and bookbinders were not only artisans but also artists in their own right. Their productions are just as beautiful and satisfying as fine paintings, ceramics, lace or tapestry.

The day of standard sets by sterling authors has passed. The neat, matched volumes of Thackeray, Scott, and Dickens, to say nothing of the eternal *Ridpath*, are in slight demand. They belonged to a generation of leisurely readers whose recreational opportunities were extremely limited. Such reading was traditional, and familiarity with these "classics" was a cultural requirement. Today a large percentage of readers of nonfiction is endeavoring to be contemporary. Folks wish to be informed of the vital changes taking place about them in order to clarify their own places in the social structure. Current literature is for the most part "dated," and the books themselves become obsolete in from five to twenty years. This is especially true of economic, scientific, and political texts that pass with the generation which inspired them. Bookshelves can become badly cluttered with these odd volumes which "one hates to throw away."

The wise collector does not accumulate or keep such books as are too recent to be rare and too old to be authoritative. Like the collector of antique furniture, he realizes that between the new and the antique there is a melancholy interval of worthlessness. If we keep junk long enough, it will become antique and quite likely priceless, but few of us will live to see the day. With a few notable exceptions, there is a dismal interlude in literature extending from about 1825 to 1925. Some of the worst books ever written appeared during this time; and while there are exceptions to every rule, only the poets saved the age. The sterility of this hundred years was due largely to the pressure of orthodoxy—religious on the one hand, and scientific on the other. This very pressure, however, caused a certain rebellion; and a small but important group of mystical, occult, and metaphysical writers made enduring contributions.

The modern intellectual is inclined to grumble because most of the great books were written before the rise of scientific, philosophic, and industrial materialism. It is disconcerting to the contemporary mind that this peculiarly blessed generation has not outthought and outwritten the ages. To date, however, we have achieved little more than mass production and a quantity of admirable reprints. The test of time will probably reveal that the 20th century has contributed its great books, but we have not yet the wit or wisdom to distinguish them with reasonable certainty. Most of our present projects are, to a degree at least, unbalanced. The lack of great spiritual and philosophical leadership gravitates against the production of an enduring literature.

If it should happen that we desire a modest but satisfying library of useful books, there are certain practical suggestions that should prove helpful. First of all, we must remember that on the printed page sequences of words are used to convey ideas. Unless we are in common agreement about the words themselves, we shall never concur about the meanings. The dictionary, therefore, is an essential instrument, a basic tool, and it should be used generously and opti-

mistically. Perhaps it should be consulted prayerfully in the devout hope that our author also was familiar with its contents.

Words have slight meaning outside their own reference frame of time and place, and in current literature there is a singular disrespect for proper usage. A good student equips himself with an unabridged dictionary of recent date. A slightly ancient dictionary at reduced prices is not a bargain. For those concerned with abstract philosophical subjects or comparative religion, the abridged dictionaries are insufficient. The more difficult terms are nearly always lacking, or the definitions unhappily shortened. Up-to-date dictionaries now include many terms relating to Asiatic doctrines and obscure cults not to be found in earlier editions. It should be noted that in technical works familiar words are often used in an unfamiliar way. Even a fair acquaintance with the classical languages is not enough to solve modern compounds without recourse to some approved text.

If the library cannot expand into many departments of human endeavor, an encyclopedia must supply a variety of generalized information. Most encyclopedias are extremely aggravating because their editors achieve coverage at the expense of penetration. The subject with which we are at the moment concerned usually is omitted altogether or passed over with a light touch. This monument to the intellectual requirements of the proletariat is consistently unkind to the esoteric arts and personalities in these fields. All in all, however, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is the best of the lot and is helpful in many a literary emergency.

Specialized research may suggest the purchase of one of the encyclopedias devoted to a particular field, as *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, or *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. Smaller dictionaries and encyclopedias limited to the teachings of special groups, sects, cults or creeds are also obtainable.

Assuming that the student is concerned primarily with the essential doc-

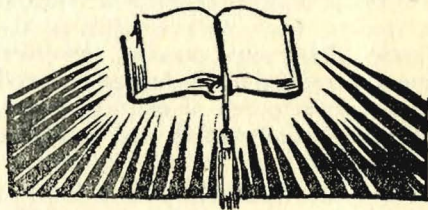


trines of his race and wishes to enlarge his understanding of enduring principles of life and conduct, we recommend the complete writings of Plato. This may seem rather discouraging, especially directly following the encyclopedia, but those unacquainted with the *Platonic Dialogues* have missed many a pleasant as well as profitable hour. The Platonic writings are the fundamental texts of Western civilization. Most of the hopes, ideals, and aspirations which inspire contemporary men can be traced to the Platonic Academy. Yet the *Dialogues* themselves include priceless fragments of humor, delightful impressions of human nature, and fascinating digressions into art, literature, music, sociology, and politics.

But we must not allow ourselves to cater entirely to natural inclinations. We must with equal fairness examine the works of less-attractive personalities. The temperament of Plato was essentially jovial; whereas his celebrated disciple, Aristotle, was of a Saturnine disposition. In fairness to Plato, as well as to ourselves, we should examine the great texts of Aristotle, especially the *Organum*, with proper attentiveness. Aristotle was the great organizer, and his mind exemplified the vices and virtues of organizations. The Peripatetics prepared a rigid constitution and by-laws for the administration of the intellectual world. These philosophers were the self-appointed custodians of mental methods. It seems to us that their conclusions were dogmatic and sterile, but Aristotle and those who followed after him shaped the thinking of Europe for more than a thousand years. Even today, Aristotelianism is a force to reckon with in the higher institutions of learning.

We cannot think of the *Organum* of Aristotle without being reminded of the *Novum Organum* of Bacon. The English philosopher, Francis Bacon, set for himself the gigantic task of classifying and organizing the essential learning of the human race. This encyclopedic concept he called the *Instauratio Magna*. Although the project was never completed because of the burdens of State, the Lord Chancellor perfected several sections

and outlined others. The *Novum Organum* and *De Augmentis Scientiarum* are the best known parts of the great *Instauratio*. Francis Bacon's mind was not only profound but also remarkable for the conciseness and elegance of its expression through the written and spoken word. His lordship refined the English language, and was the first to employ it as a vehicle for philosophy. To read Bacon is not only to become informed but also to gain a new appreciation for the proper presentation of knowledge. To him, more than to any other modern scholar, we are indebted for the enlargement of the concept of philosophy and science.



Among the great basic books of Western civilization, *The Holy Bible* occupies a unique position. It is the most widely read book of all time. The annual sale of the Bible averages more than a million copies, and it is more often referred to and quoted than any other volume. The combined Testaments constitute the essential religious literature of two of the world's living religions: Judaism and Christianity. We are frequently asked to recommend a satisfactory translation or edition of the Bible. The two versions now generally accepted are the Douay (Catholic) and the King James (Protestant). The Douay version was undertaken by the English College at Douai in Flanders in 1568, and was substantially a translation of the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome. The King James, or Authorized Version, was prepared by a group of Anglican scholars, and published in 1611. It is believed that Francis Bacon edited the manuscript before it passed to the printer.

Several efforts have been made to revise the Authorized Version, but these have enjoyed but slight popularity. Not only has this Version received the stamp

of public approval, but its words and phrases have been so widely quoted and memorized that it is impossible to change a single passage without arousing antagonism and indignation. We know that the Authorized Version by no means satisfies the requirements of advanced Biblical scholarship, but unless the reader is equipped to translate from early languages, he must depend upon various interpretations, themselves open to objections. For practical purposes, the Authorized Version together with an adequate concordance and a good Bible dictionary must suffice. Under existing conditions, however, it is not altogether wise to use Bible quotations to prove obscure points of doctrine, as the quotations themselves may be incorrect. In its entirety, however, *The Holy Bible* is a majestic work, bearing witness to lofty ideals and high moral convictions.

The Bible student should remember for his own good that all the inspired religions of mankind have their sacred books. The generous scholar will be sincerely interested in the spiritual codes and convictions of all enlightened races and nations. The liberality of the open mind can be symbolized by familiarity with at least one other of the world's Scriptures. The *Koran* of Mohammed, prophet of Islam, can be recommended, because its concepts are more familiar than the sacred writings of the Far East. Mohammed himself was profoundly influenced by early Christianity, and he founded a faith which has endured and flourished and is today one of the most powerful religions of men. Again, we must learn to read with an honest spirit of inquiry, and with true charity of heart and mind for both the author and his book. "Comparative religion" is a dangerous term semantically if we permit comparisons to be critical. Rather we should seek for the spiritual vitality in a faith which has drawn men to it and has brought them inspiration and consolation. To find real and lasting good in the faiths of others is to enlarge our reference frame, and at the same time we may find practical help in the solution of our own doubts and uncertainties. We all

need the experience of interreligious understanding.

Most of the programs now available as guides to selective reading completely ignore the sacred books of the East and the great literary epics of Asia. Unless the student is prepared to devote a large amount of his time to reading, and this is seldom indicated as a wise procedure, it is better to select outstanding sections of larger works as symbolical or typical of a vast literature. The *Mahabharata*, for example, presents extraordinary difficulties to the non-Asiatic, but the Hindu himself has selected from this massive work one small section, the *Bhagavad Gita*, or *The Lord's Song*. This has been described as the Brahman "Book of Psalms." The *Gita* is available in many translations, of which the most poetic is that by Sir Edwin Arnold, and one of the most satisfactory, that of Mr. Chatterji. The version sponsored by the Theosophical Society is simple and very readable. In passing, we might note that of the Buddhist Scriptures the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* has exercised the widest influence in Asia and is especially suitable to the Western reader. Often called *The Diamond Sutra*, it the oldest printed book known to exist.

To Bible students who are interested in the Old Testament and the religious, philosophical, and social background from which Christianity emerged, we recommend a thoughtful examination of the Babylonian *Talmud*. Both the *Talmud* and the *Mishna* are valuable keys to the *Torah*, the laws of the Jews. The perspective gained from a working acquaintance with the beliefs and customs of the old Jewish people will impose a valuable censorship upon the tendency to interpret the Old Testament without consideration for actual meaning. Selections from the *Talmud* are available in modern inexpensive reprints, and the complete work can be secured in English with a moderate amount of effort.

To express one person's opinion (my own), *The Secret Doctrine* by Madame Blavatsky is the most important text of the esoteric tradition compiled in the modern world. Mme. Blavatsky herself declared her work to be merely an in-

roduction, but if this be true, most students will find the introduction about as much as they can handle. The immense amount of material gathered in *The Secret Doctrine* is somewhat deficient in organization. For this reason, it is more often consulted as a reference work than read completely through. The majority of writers on occult subjects since Mme. Blavatsky's time have drawn heavily on her material in the preparation of their own basic texts. The foreign words used by Mme. Blavatsky have proved stumbling blocks to many readers, but if they are observant, they will find that she defines all her terms in the course of unfolding her concepts.

Specialists in various fields will want to include in their private collections books they have personally found indispensable. We cannot attempt at this time to survey these numerous specialties. Usually, however, there are one or two basic texts which stand above and are the source of extensive literature. Also likely enough, some of our most treasured volumes will be simple works which have brought satisfaction to our inner lives.

It may be mentioned that most students, by the very seriousness of their minds, are deficient in aesthetics. We recommend, therefore, a comprehensive book of great art, preferably one which unfolds the descent of the schools of painting and sculpturing from early

times to the present day. Fine reproductions of the world's artistic masterpieces, preferably in color, should accompany the text. We must learn to appreciate fine art and the reason why it has survived. The experience of beauty is a vital part of education.

Lastly, a word about the poets. Many of the noblest and truest of the aspirations and convictions of humanity are preserved for us in the majestic lines of the mystic and philosophic poets. The decline of appreciation of fine poetry and the false notion that verse is incidental or superficial reflect the shallowness of our generation. Milton, Dante, Goethe, and others who were fledglings of "the white bird of great verse" have contributed generously to the substance of essential wisdom. The poets have dared to sing what scholars have been afraid to speak, and it is not without good cause that the Delphic Oracle declared poetry to be the language of the gods.

It may not be possible for us to line panelled walls with ancient tomes. Perhaps, like one scholar of my acquaintance, we must keep our library in a suitcase. But we can still have our precious books, love them well, and use them wisely. In any event, we will find them ever-present aids and all-sufficient guides. Let us be grateful for great books, and let us prove our gratitude by helping to build in the future a way of life which will fulfill the noble dreams of the past.

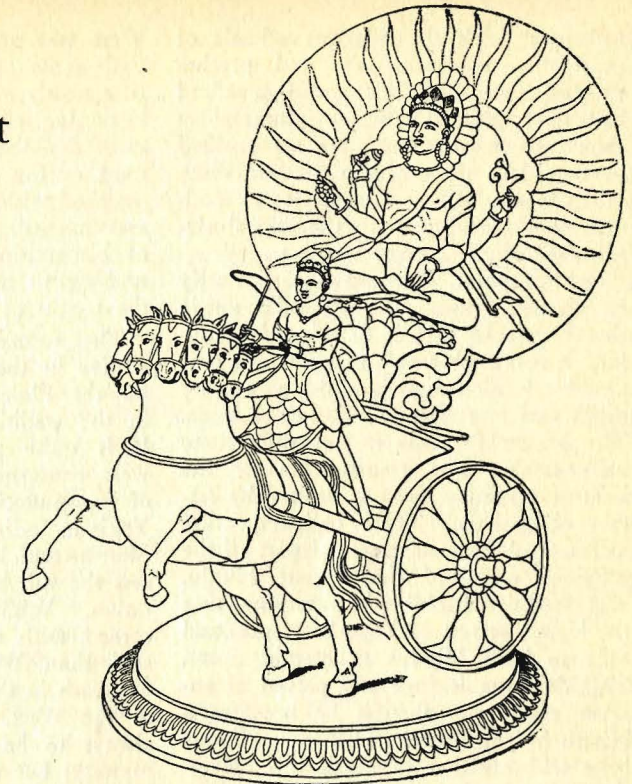
#### INSURANCE COMPANIES TAKE NOTE

Chinese fire insurance is very much a matter of tradition. The policy consists of a large sheet of colored paper on which is written the Chinese character meaning water. If this is hung on a house by a Taoist priest it is certain protection against fires. If, however, the house should burn down in spite of the charm, neighbors will not shelter the homeless family until they have been rained upon. Even in this dilemma the natural ingenuity of the Chinese is sufficient to the situation. The homeless family is placed under an umbrella over which water is then poured. The evil spirits causing fires are completely frustrated by this machinery, and can only stand about chewing their fingernails in rage.

(See article in *Asia Magazine*, by Clarence Burton Day.)

## The Fire Mist

### *A Study of the Kundalini and the Spinal Chakras*



THE mystics of India have long-claimed to possess a secret or esoteric science for the regeneration of the human being. The origin of the Hindu disciplines now perpetuated in the schools of Yoga and Tantra has been the subject of considerable discussion and debate. According to native traditions, the sacred sciences were revealed originally by the gods themselves to certain Rishis (learned and sanctified persons), who passed on the mystical formulas to specially prepared and dedicated disciples. The transmission was oral, and written texts, diagrams, etc., are comparatively recent.

There is nothing in Western religious philosophy which compares closely with this Eastern system of development. For this reason, the whole subject appears extremely mysterious or even fantastic to the Occidental mind. The general concept of Oriental occult physiology is

based upon the belief that it is possible to enlarge the spiritual estate of man by a highly-specialized technique which can be scientifically standardized. There is considerable evidence to indicate that such training, if faithfully and properly followed, does result in the stimulation of extrasensory faculties and perceptions. Needless to say, however, experts in the Yogic disciplines are as few in number as outstanding technicians in any field requiring extraordinary skill, application, or discrimination.

The word *yoga* means *union*; and in philosophical discipline, it signifies a way of attainment which leads ultimately to union with God, or the Sovereign Power which administers the world. One of the principal ends of Yoga is emancipation from the limitations imposed upon consciousness by the tyranny of the lower mind and the physical instincts and appetites. Many valuable principles now

associated with the Western schools of psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and psychotherapy were known to, and practiced by, the initiated Hindu philosophers thousands of years ago. We are justified in regarding most of the esoteric disciplines of the East as forerunners of modern schools dealing with the ethical significance of the mental sciences.

At this point, I would like to clarify an obscure issue. Though fully aware that I may be subject to misunderstanding, it seems necessary to point out that Occidental metaphysicians have a very slight and imperfect knowledge of Yoga. The reason for this is not difficult to understand. The transmission of the keys of operative Yoga is limited by certain obligations. These obligations are sacred, and form an essential part of the religious creed of the devout Hindu. The traditional obligations require that the higher secrets of Yoga be transmitted only to born Hindus of certain castes. This does not include any person of another race, even though he becomes a Hindu by conversion. Orthodox Hindus have told me that to break this obligation is to deprive oneself of all the spiritual merits bestowed by one's faith. I have discussed this matter with several distinguished Brahman scholars, and they have all assured me that the rule is inflexible. I merely report their statements.

These rules of secrecy do not apply to all parts of the teachings of Yoga. A considerable literature is available dealing with the principles of the disciplines. There are a number of native texts which have not yet been translated and which will enlarge our general acquaintance with the subject. Those parts of the Yogic doctrine which involve physical training, relaxation, and simple exercises for integrating the personality are available to Westerners. All that is necessary to a broad acquaintance with the theory of Yoga and even a scientific analysis of its physiological processes and psychological implications can be studied in standard texts or learned from qualified teachers. Only the esoteric part is held as a sacred trust.

There is a tradition, with some foundation, that one great philosopher of the

West was actually initiated. This was Pythagoras of Samos, who received the rites nearly six hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era in the great Brahman sanctuary at Ellora. As most of the disciples of this great sage perished with him at the time his school was burned, and only small fragments of his writings have survived, there is nothing to indicate that he transmitted the secrets of Yoga through his school.

The supreme keys of Yoga are as elusive in the East as the true formula for the Philosophers' Stone was elusive in the traditions of European alchemy. It is quite possible that both systems were concerned with the same mystery of transmutation. While there are many Yogis in India, only a few semilegendary Masters and hermits are believed to possess the full knowledge of the science of union. While India is far more concerned with the esoteric powers of the soul than Western nations, the search for truth in the East is just as difficult as in the West. The truth seeker seems always to be on the threshold of the mystery; but as he presses on, it eludes him, ever retiring toward those northern mountains which are the abode of the timeless sages.

There are several schools of Yoga, and, in a large sense, all striving toward reality, all self-discipline motivated by religious convictions may be considered as forms of Yoga. The simplest type of religious exercise is service. Some mystics devote their entire time to the performance of good deeds, believing that in this way they will attain to the internal illumination. Others feel that by cheerfully and resignedly accepting their karmic responsibilities, meeting all obligations and duties with internal poise and detachment, they will free themselves from bondage to the laws of physical living. Still others strive for attainment through the cultivation of the mind, convinced that understanding which comes from the perfection of knowledge will bring them in the end to union with the consciousness of God.

The magical side of Yoga has been developed by the Tantric sages. In a way, the principle involved in this case

can be described as a scientific approach. The union results from the exact performance of certain exercises, rites, and rituals. If these can be perfectly mastered and perfectly performed, the Eastern equivalent to cosmic consciousness is inevitable. Here the disciplines take precedent over every other factor. Thus, the supremely important consideration is to secure the secret formula. Nearly always this formula bestows also the highly-desirable ability (according to Tantra) to perform miracles, to control the elements, to overcome enemies, and under certain conditions to emerge in the full habiliments of a sorcerer. Skill without integrity must lead to black magic whether on the physical or the spiritual plane of life.

Most of the venerated Masters and Gurus are assumed by their disciples to possess the higher mysteries of Yoga. We say *assumed*, because I have talked with many of the disciples of these distinguished teachers and they have admitted that they have studied twenty to thirty years in preparation, but have not received the highest instructions. In no sense of the word can Yoga be regarded as a short cut to universal enlightenment, anymore than enrollment in Van Dyke's workshop could be interpreted as an easy road to superlative artistic genius. Among the Eastern teachers, advanced instruction must be merited by integrity, ability, and devotion. These qualities can be enlarged or strengthened by discipline, but they cannot be bestowed.

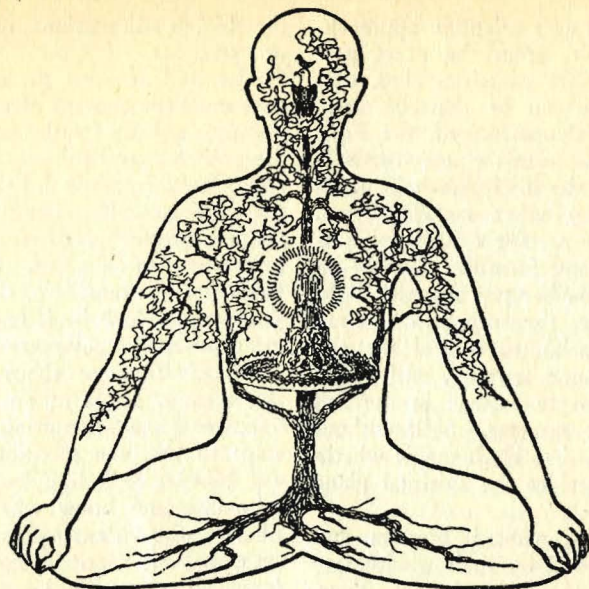
We should also bear in mind a fact out of context loses much of its significance. Yoga is part of a way of life, and separated from a larger pattern becomes almost unintelligible. It is useless to approach the mastery of Eastern mystical disciplines with the same general attitude with which we would take a course in Diesel engineering. We may read the books, attend the classes, answer the questions, take down motors and reassemble them, and pass a final examination. This being accomplished creditably, we receive a diploma, the blessing of the faculty, and go forth in search of fame and fortune. This prevalent policy toward essential learning is worthless in

the higher dimensions of the spiritual universe.

The student must get out of his consciousness the concept of ten easy lessons, intensive courses for the favored few, and the supreme availability of peace, power, and plenty by slow inhalations through the right nostril. The Occidental is a combination of practical convictions and impractical speculations. He is comparatively helpless outside of the three dimensions with which he is familiar. Having no practical acquaintance with the principles of Yoga or the requirements of the science, he is at an extreme disadvantage when attempting even the first step: to wit, the selection of a teacher. All Hindus look like Yogis to the man who does not know what a Yogi looks like. If the Oriental should wear a long robe and sit crossed-legged on a gilded lotus, all otherwise reasonable doubts are removed.

In the literary sphere, things are not much better. Anyone suspected of having visited Tibet, for example, must either be a Mahatma or the favorite disciple of one, through the co-operation of Cook's Tours. There is no doubt that Yogic and Tantric disciplines are practiced by ascetics and mystics inhabiting the trans-Himalayan hinterland, but there is some question as to whether these venerable men are waiting impatiently to initiate Western tourists, mountain climbers, trade delegates, etc. If the old Gurus have one half the extrasensory power with which they are credited, they should certainly have at least a vague premonition of the misuses and abuses which result from imparting the secret traditions to the unqualified.

Even the most sincere and honorable of Eastern religious teachers have found that the Western way of life presents serious obstacles to the practice of the Yogic disciplines. Claude Bragdon quotes some remarks of Swami Vivekananda concerning the instructions about Prana-yama, in his book *Raja Yoga*. The Swami regretted that he had failed to take into account certain physiological and psychological peculiarities which distinguished the Occidental. The Hindu science of breath is very difficult for the



American, explained the Swami, because Easterners do it from childhood, and their lungs are prepared for it. Such complications arise in every type of Yoga.

It is generally believed that the esoteric practices of Yoga were invented or perfected by the ancient sage, Patanjali. This venerated Master is said to have flourished about 200 B. C. Even this date is subject to considerable controversy. Some authorities insist that the *Yoga Aphorisms* were compiled in the 4th or 5th century A. D. by a later mystic of the same name. Most agree, however, that the school of Yoga is based upon the philosophy of Sankhya, founded by Kapila Rishi, and one of the six Darshanas, or schools of Indian philosophy. Kapila Rishi is mentioned as one of the great adepts of antiquity. Vivekananda says that the science of Yoga was discovered more than four thousand years ago. He adds that this sublime form of learning has been almost destroyed by mystery-mongering. The Swami points out the striking fact, "that the more modern the commentator, the greater the mistakes he makes. The more ancient the writer on it, the more rational he is." (See *Raja Yoga*.)

Vivekananda follows the general trend in defining the word *yoga* as *joining*,

and the purpose of the science as *joining the lower with the higher self*. We should mention, however, that non-Asiatic authorities have felt themselves qualified to correct the misunderstandings current among the Eastern sages. Professor Max Muller prefers to define Yoga as a kind of process of integration by which the resources of the personality are gathered by the power of the will. Thus, to him the union is not identification with God, or spirit, but merely an organization of personal potentials. This probably reflects more the Sankhya Yoga, which was closer to the materialistic psychological attitudes of modern mentalists than to the mystic speculations of Patanjali. It has been said of Patanjali that he rescued Deity from the atomistic speculations of the disciples of Kapila.

The German intelligentsia opined that Yoga could not mean union with Divinity if taught by a system which denied or ignored the existence of a personal God. As there was no Superior Being with which to be united, union could only imply self-organization. Of course, the reality of a spiritual state entirely beyond the conception of the objective sensory perception was too much for those learned gentlemen who were en-

trusted with the translation of Eastern Scriptures. The Yoga of Patanjali definitely teaches a final state of identification with a reality which transcends diversity, and is itself the eternal substance of unity.

The several schools of Yoga include Raja Yoga (union by will), Hatha Yoga (union by the purification and control of the body), Gnana Yoga (union by the attainment of true knowledge, which is the perception of the Eternal), Bhakti Yoga (union through love, devotion, and the ultimate ecstasy of the adoration of the Divine), Karma Yoga (union through the exhaustion of negative karma, and the performance of such works and services as lead to liberation), and Mantra Yoga (union through formulas of vibration and the release of force through music, the pronouncement of sacred formulas, and, in a sense, through the practice of the creative arts.) Occasionally, references are made to other Yogas, some modern or claiming to release advanced disciplines. It is generally acknowledged, however, that Raja Yoga, which is the princely or royal path of union, is the highest school and the custodian of the greatest secrets of the science. The esoteric formulas of Raja Yoga are the ones so carefully guarded by Eastern esotericists.

In the *Gheranda Sanhita*, which is a treatise on Hatha Yoga, the sage Gheranda summarizes the broad concept of Yoga, thus: "There is no bondage like that of delusion, there is no force stronger than Yoga, there is no friend truer than knowledge, and there is no enemy worse than pride. . . . From good and bad works the bodies of men are produced, and the bodies give birth to karma and thus the circle is continued like a rotating mill. . . . The human soul passes through life and death moved by karma. As an unbaked earthen pot is soon dissolved when placed in water, so the body; it must be strengthened and purified by the fire of Yoga in order to harden it. The seven practices or *Sadhanas* which appertain to Yoga are the following: Purification, strengthening, steadiness, calmness, lightness, perception and isolation."

Vivekananda laid special emphasis upon strength, not of the body, but of the mind and of the will. He also emphasized the importance of moderation in the conduct of life, in these words: "A Yogi must avoid the two extremes of luxury and austerity. He must not fast, or torture his flesh; he who does so, says the *Gita*, cannot be a Yogi; he who fasts; he who keeps awake; he who sleeps much; he who works too much; he who does no work; none of these can be Yogis."

There is a most important factor which must be examined at this stage of our survey. To what degree are the phenomena of Yoga the result of auto-suggestion? Is the entire science a progressive form of self-hypnosis? In other words, is it psychological rather than essentially metaphysical? I fully realize that even these questions will outrage the sensitive sensibilities of many students, but it is only fair to examine without prejudice or pressure various opinions on such subjects. It is dangerous to discuss religion and autosuggestion in the same breath, for, regardless of the essential facts, most theological concepts exercise a hypnotic force over the minds of believers. Such a state of affairs is in no way limited to the field of Yoga.

Regardless of the underlying facts, it is certainly true in practice that most amateur dabblers in Eastern doctrines are suffering from hallucinations. I do not intend to imply that the doctrines themselves are at fault, and the trouble may lie in broad misunderstanding and faulty guidance. Over the years, literally hundreds of would-be Yogis have come to me for help and advice. Practically all of them had succeeded in frightening themselves out of their own wits by some fantastic formula for the attainment of Samadhi or a dominant personality. The majority complained that as a result of breathing exercises, mantrams, and the fixation of gaze involving unusual tension, they had developed violent and uncomfortable symptoms which they were unable to overcome.

These symptoms include a motion as of warmth or air through the nerves,

headaches, pressures in the head, strange sounds, pressures on various parts of the body, the feeling of life being drawn from the body, depletion, difficulties in sleeping, loss of appetite, minor optical hallucinations, loss of the control of the mind for brief periods, pronounced antisocial tendencies, and the eternal, inevitable, and ever-present trouble with low vibrations. Frequently, there is a black magician in it somewhere, or the teacher responsible for the trouble is determined to destroy his faithful or faithless disciple, body and soul, by deep esoteric means.

It does not require more than an introduction to the study of abnormal psychology to realize that these are run-of-the-mill examples of self-delusion. Everyone will see this clearly except the sufferer, who knows that he or she has been completely misunderstood. The source of the trouble lies in those deep fear mechanisms against which Vivekananda issued his warning. In religion, fear certainly originates in mystery, and that which is mysterious always implies the possibility of danger and menace. For example, the moment the unstable metaphysician comes to believe in the reality of superphysical powers, he is inclined to cultivate them to satisfy his instincts, appetites, and ambitions. It is lovely to think that by "holding the thought" we can acquire some preferment over others; but in the midst of this happy possibility, a horrible thought presents itself to our minds. Suppose someone else uses these same powers to advance his causes at our expense? We suspect that the motives of our neighbors may be no better than our own. Almost instantly we surround ourselves with intangible dangers, and the very peace of mind which we are seeking to cultivate is destroyed by morbid anxiety mechanisms.

Hypnosis and autohypnosis can produce a variety of impressive and apparently important phenomena. If the mind is completely poised, it can practice disciplines of meditation without falling into delusions. Unfortunately, most folks do not study esoteric sciences because they have internal security, but in the hope of attaining a state of poise or tran-

quillity. Thus, they approach occult exercises beset with so many mental and emotional intemperances that they are unable to proceed reasonably in any direction. With more enthusiasm than good sense, they attack a science, such as Yoga, with typical Occidental audacity. Most are saved from serious consequences by the fact that their enthusiasm is completely exhausted by the end of the third lesson. Not having attained cosmic consciousness immediately, they decide to look elsewhere.

The more-faithful settle down to a conscientious effort to fulfill the mechanics, if not the ethics, of illumination. Perhaps they try fixing the gaze steadfastly at the tip of the nose. Possibly there is a virtue behind this, but the fixation without the virtue is extremely confusing. After a few seconds, the eyes become extremely fatigued, the tip of the nose begins to move back and forth, up and down, and in and out. The longer the victim stares, the more fascinated he becomes, until he is not quite sure whether the nose belongs to him or he belongs to the nose. The room goes around, and a profound disorientation results which is not cosmic consciousness, but is the first stage of autohypnosis. Precisely the same results can be obtained by the use of a small brilliant object or the bowl of a spoon.

Normally, disorganization by fatigue leads to a state of sleep, but if during the process certain suggestions are made, these bring with them a degree of hypnotic tension and autosuggestion suitable to produce the usual psychological phenomena. Normal hypnosis can cause color blindness, the disappearance of visible objects, tension or pain in any part of the body, sounds as music or words, and a wide range of physical symptoms; feeling can be blocked in an arm or leg, and the patient can be made to believe himself in almost any kind of environment or predicament. By posthypnotic suggestion, he can be subjected to compulsions which may not take effect for some time after he has been released from general hypnosis.

If a subject can by suggestion be made to believe that he is listening to a one

hundred-piece symphony orchestra, directed by a world-famous conductor and playing the music of Bach in a vast auditorium, why is it not possible for this type of hallucination to be concerned with metaphysical phenomena? The subject not only hears the music, but also sees the orchestra, and knows himself to be in the auditorium. As far as he is concerned, the experience is absolutely real, and at the operator's discretion, the subject can have a full memory of the experience after he has been awakened.

Autosuggestion is exactly the same as the suggestion used by an operator, except that the visualizations are due to the direction of the patient's own mind. Thus, a trained subject can anesthetize his own body or visualize himself as attending the nonexistent Bach concert, if he believes that he can do so. The mind, however, steps in and interferes with the tendency to fantasy. If the person suggests to himself that he will hear or see a musical event which he knows is not taking place, his own subconscious process of rationalization defeats the suggestion. He knows that the concert is not real, therefore he cannot believe it. Let him, however, escape into fantasy where his mind can no longer protect him, and the situation is entirely different. He believes within himself that certain things are occurring in the invisible world about him. Perhaps he believes that in some mystic shrine Masters are performing initiatory rites. When through discipline, of one kind or another, he places himself in a susceptible state and then suggests to himself the reality of something which his judgment cannot censor, a complete autohypnosis is possible. He will experience exactly what he desires or expects to experience, and he will vitalize many negative fears, doubts, and anxieties, bestow a semblance of reality upon them, and suffer from the consequences.

Once the student has experienced a vivid hallucination, it becomes exceedingly difficult to correct the trouble by rational means. The sufferer has actually seen, heard, and been part of something, and cannot escape the testimony of his own senses, even though

these senses have been artificially conditioned. Under hypnosis, a person may be told that the parlor carpet is a mountain stream which he must wade across. He will then see the stream clearly, will remove his shoes and socks, roll up his trouser legs, and carefully wade to the other side. Later, he is rescued from the hallucination by seeing the parlor carpet, and realizing that the simplest explanation is that his own mind has been unduly influenced.

In the world of internal religious fantasy, unfortunately, there is nothing to re-establish the realities. All the experiences are subjective. We have no friends to remind us that we waded across the parlor carpet. If anyone should dare to make such a suggestion, we should be righteously indignant. For lack of landmarks, we move in a sphere of mysteries in which anything seems to be possible. If we try to free these deluded persons from their own private worlds, we are accused of religious intolerance and of failure to recognize extraordinary cosmic happenings.

It is also worthy of note that most religious autohypnosis produces a state of extreme morbidity and psychic persecution. Self-delusion never seems to arrive at a heavenly state. Always the deluded person is in danger, under some negative spell, subject to some persecution, or inadequate in one way or another. The old menace of the unknown is released through the misgivings within the personality, which become vital parts of the suggestions imposed by the subconscious.

I have known many examples in which students have reported a high degree of development in Yoga. They have practiced the disciplines sincerely for some time; have observed the changes in their own personalities; are aware of the motions of the psychic currents of the body through the chakras to the brain, and have experienced consciousness outside the body during advanced meditation. Further examination proves, however, that the entire procedure was autohypnotic, and not one of the actual processes of Yoga had taken place. The kundalini was quietly tucked away where it belonged, sleeping peacefully, while

the deluded owner thereof was busy at work founding a new school of cosmic consciousness.

This strange autohypnosis, which is the ever-present hazard in all the spiritual sciences, is what the French Transcendentalist, Eliphas Levi, called "the mystery of the astral light." It is the power of the mind to create a mirage, to intensify things longed-for and sought-after, and then to drift along through the years in an imaginary world. Only after the mind and consciousness have been solidly established on the rock of eternal principles can the student escape delusion. In this sense, delusion is the capacity to believe the untrue. Only when truth itself protects us so that we cannot accept that which is contrary to universal law do we reach a state of internal security. If we know the facts, we cannot accept the error. Therefore, we cannot autosuggest a condition which is not acceptable to ourselves.

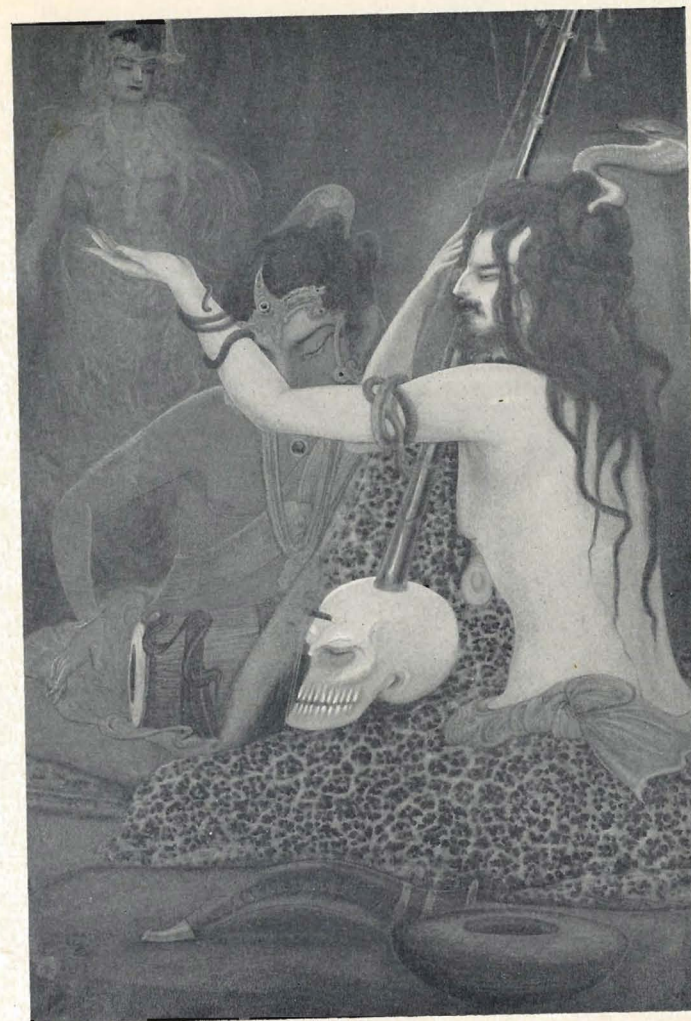
We now approach the great contribution that was made by Buddha. Evidently this wonderful teacher was well aware of what modern psychologists call autosuggestion. The capacity for illusion or delusion he called maya. All creatures dwell in illusion until they escape from ignorance, superstition, and fear. While these instincts remain, man can deceive himself; and while he can deceive himself, he defeats his own search for liberation. Buddha, therefore, emphasized philosophic detachment from those objects of the mind, emotions, and body which are most likely to bind the consciousness to selfishness, egotism, or gratification. The moment the lower instincts are permitted to accompany the would-be mystic into his meditation, they rise in the form of Mara, the demon of temptation. While personal equations remain, concentration, meditation, and realization are polluted with self-interest, and are immediately transformed into autohypnotic processes. No skill can save the mystic in this emergency, and he achieves only a fool's paradise from which he falls, like Indra from the heaven of Brahma.

It does not seem to me that a sufficient explanation has been available as to why

meditative exercises have led to so many complications. It is because meditation is impossible while the personality exerts any pressure upon the subtle spiritual aspirations. The moment there is pressure, there is delusion; and wherever there are personal interests or ambitions, there is pressure. Ignorance exerts a most subtle pressure, for it places the human being in bondage to the unknown. In practice, the unknown is never a vacuum. It is the abode of negative hallucinations, false values demanding acceptance. Until these false values are actually known and experienced to be untrue, their pressures are never defeated. This is why man cannot develop spiritually by any esoteric discipline until he has come to an honest estimation of himself. Theoretically, if he could attain truth, errors would cease; but practically, while the errors remain, he cannot attain truth.

In the Western world, there are many more direct incentives to selfishness, egotism, ambition, and pride than exist in Asia. We have become so dominated by the psychology of success, by the desire to possess, and by competitive instincts that we are poor subjects for immediate redemption. There are so many things we want in addition to truth that the primary quest is given scant consideration. We have just as much chance of being vicariously redeemed by a direct bolt from heaven as we have of being washed clean of our sins by what Voltaire called "a douche of cold water on the occiput."

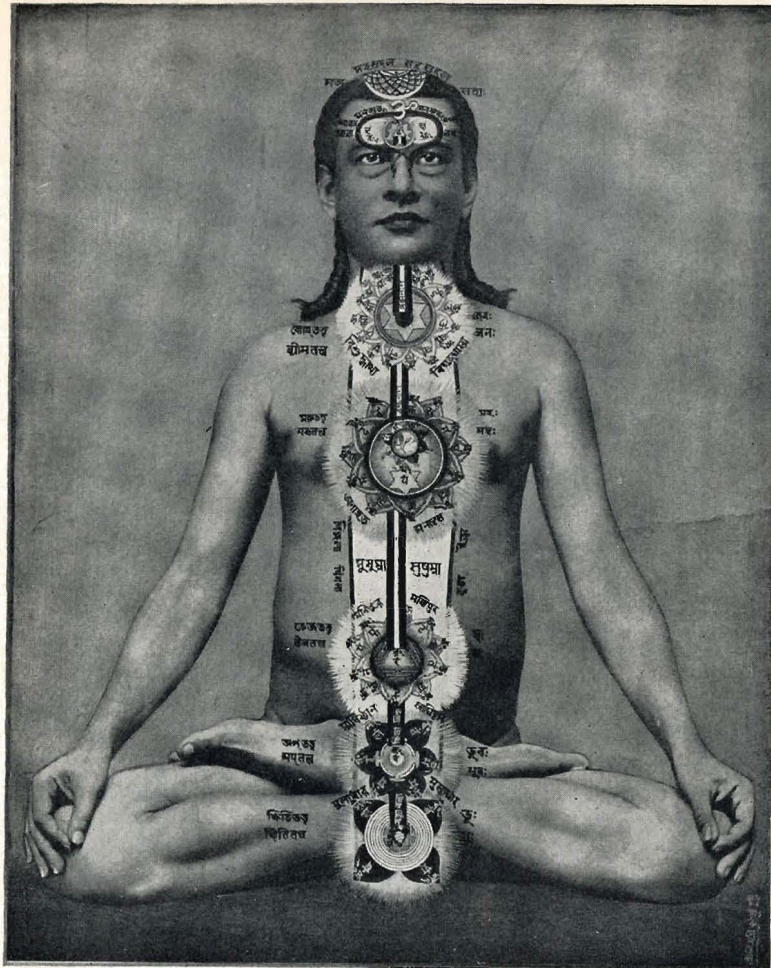
The quiet and systematic program of outgrowing our own limitations by natural means is scarcely dramatic enough to inspire a popular cult; yet this still remains the only sure path of discipleship. Those who fall into difficulties are not intentionally delinquent. They have the common failing of overestimating their own virtues and underestimating their own limitations. They know they have faults, but they expect these to be indulged in heaven, as they have been indulged on earth. We take it for granted that we shall be excused or understood. By *understood*, we mean *misunderstood* in our own favor. If some



—From an original water-color by Promode Chatterjee

#### RAGINI DEVI

Siva plays the tune of the universe on an instrument made of the emblem of transiency. His son Ganesha accompanies with the rhythm of the universe. When both tune and time are in perfect accord, a gesture of invocation calls forth the goddess of music, Ragini Devi.



—From a native print

CONVENTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE CHAKRAS

It is to be understood that all such figures are diagrammatic, indicating vortices of energy with their attributes.



—From a native print

THE CHAKRA SYSTEM

In this representation, the deity Siva is associated with the Ajna chakra; Vishnu, with the Anahata chakra, and Brahma, with the Manipura chakra.



—From a native print

### VISHNU MANIFESTING THE GOD BRAHMA ON A LOTUS

Brahma, as Universal Law, rises from the Manipura chakra, while Vishnu rests on the coils of the serpent of cosmic time.

glamorous pseudo adept assures us that we should never permit our own delinquencies to interfere with our soul growth, we are only sustained in our own convictions.

By the time we get around to finding out that we were wrong, the pseudo adept has departed, and we are so confused that we cannot think anything through clearly. When one kindly soul had described to me her symptoms after taking a course on "breathing for prosperity," I recommended that she consult the teacher responsible for the trouble. She did so, and returned in a few days to say that he did not know what to do about it, and suggested that she find a remedy for herself.

This is in no way intended to be a criticism or condemnation of the genuine religious philosophies of Asia, but is a warning against the pretensions of unqualified exponents and the gullibility of unqualified students. The combination is fatal, and the sooner we realize this, the sooner we will examine Eastern philosophies with intelligence and discrimination. Asia has much to give us, but it can bestow little on those who lack capacity. The West has given but scanty thought to the mysteries of the internal life. We cannot, therefore, approach the subject as though we were already well advanced. Yoga is part of a way of life. To practice the science, we must obey its rules as these apply to conduct and consciousness. It is unsafe and unwise to separate the technique from the moral and ethical structure to which it belongs, and without which it is fragmentary.

We have learned what happens when we attempt to impose phases of our economic life upon Eastern nations. We know what happened to Japan when it attempted to imitate, without understanding, Western industrialism. Wherever we have imposed our concepts on other nations, we have injured them, not necessarily because the concepts were wrong, but because they were not assimilable without proper conditioning. It is the same with Eastern philosophies. The genuine teachers who have come to this country have been amazed and discouraged because their honest purposes re-

sulted in so little positive accomplishment. For the West, spiritual growth must be built upon the solution to practical problems and not upon the evasion of these problems under religious pretexts.

According to the ancient teachings, Raja Yoga is the Prince of all the Yogas. It is attained by the exercise of the spiritual will, that motion of consciousness which impels the human being to the attainment of his divine destiny. In order to understand the disciplines of Raja Yoga, we must examine certain metaphysical concepts relating to the structure and function of the human body. The Hindus believed man to be a microcosm or miniature of the universe. Like the cabalists and other mystical sects of Europe and the Near East, they taught that the human being was bound to the larger world by vibratory sympathies. These sympathies could be demonstrated objectively by similarities or analogies, which reveal that man and the cosmos were identical in design, differing only in magnitude. This concept of identity was extended further to reveal that the atom and the world were degrees in the unfoldment of one inevitable pattern.

Evolution was life escaping through form, and this process of escape was revealed as growth. All things grow through extensions of the life principle within them. Growth as release requires appropriate vehicles for the manifestation and use of the life-principle. We are forever building nobler mansions for the soul which abides in the innermost parts of ourselves. The natural way of growth through evolutionary processes ultimately brings all creatures to the fulfillment of their own potentials. But this process is long, difficult, confused, and painful. The evolving creature is impelled into situations which require perpetual adjustment. Failure to adjust brings pain, disaster, and even physical extermination. Spiritual extermination is impossible, but forms, such as nations, races, types, and species, can perish as instruments of progress if the life within them does not meet the challenge of eternal growth. When the human be-



ing, long ago, reached the state of self-awareness and gained the power of personal decision, the evolutionary path divided. The primitive road of adjustment resulting from external pressure remained, but a new road—"the royal road"—was opened. This path of wisdom is the way of conscious co-operation with the requirements of the universal plan.

The Hermetic axiom, "Art perfects Nature," means that it is possible for the self-conscious human being to grow by intent and by a voluntary dedication to the plan of his own advancement. We see everywhere in Nature a gradually-increasing intelligence guiding the forms from within themselves. As this intelligence enlarges and strengthens, it gains discrimination and can select such activities as advance the primary purpose of living. For example, a man may plant a garden with the seeds of beautiful flowers or useful herbs. Two courses are then open to him: He may leave this garden unattended, or he may cultivate it faithfully. If he leaves it unprotected, the flowers may be destroyed by weeds, may perish from lack of water, or be ravaged by birds or insects. If, however, he is a good gardener, his flowers and plants will be improved and will reward him with their beauty and fragrance.

The life of man, human society collectively, and the whole world are like gardens. If neglected, they go to seed and weed; but if man accepts his stewardship and becomes a protector and preserver of life, he is rewarded for his care by the obvious improvement and enrichment of his own nature and the society of which he is a part. Discipline, therefore, is carefulness, watchfulness, and skill in the guarding of precious things. Through the practice of spiritual stewardship, the enlightened person becomes a true and faithful servant of the divine purpose.

There is a basic misconception due largely to the material equation in human thinking. The purpose of the Yogas is not the emancipation of the individual so that he can enjoy a state of perpetual blessedness. Such an interpretation is as faulty as to believe that a pious

addiction to the jots and tittles of orthodox Churchianity will result in the re-deemed soul floating about forever on billowy clouds, strumming a harp. A work-weary world can think of no happier future than one of eternal blissful unemployment. Some creeds and cults have catered to the human inclination to laziness, but no system of religious philosophy worthy of the name holds out such stupid inducements.

The belief that self-development is a highly-refined form of selfishness masquerading behind spiritual consideration has no foundation in fact. All Yogas seek to fit the individual for unselfish service. The disciplines are intended to bestow the wisdom, skill, and understanding without which the servant is inadequate for the work to be done. Obviously, a trained man is more valuable than an untrained one. The more he knows, the more he can do. We have all been plagued with well-meant assistance which did more harm than good. The mere fact that we want to be helpful is not sufficient. We must have the discrimination to help wisely. Discrimination is not bestowed; it must be earned. If we really want to be useful and to dedicate our lives to the improvement of mankind, we must learn what is necessary and how the needed things can be accomplished.

Wrong motive has brought more students of the esoteric sciences to grief than all other hazards put together. The moment that selfishness or self-gratification intrudes itself, the student falls into maya, or illusion. Ulterior motives are like weeds in a spiritual garden. They must be found and cleared away or the good plants will be destroyed. In my own experience, I have never examined a case in which spiritual exercises led to trouble where ulterior motives have not been present. Always there was something on the student's mind besides the simple, earnest search for truth. Usually, the student was trying to escape the consequences of his own conduct without actually correcting the faults.

In the East, religion is important in itself. The religious life is a high and respected career. The penniless saint is

more honored than the wealthy sinner. Children growing up look forward to the privilege of serving God through ministering to the needs of their fellow men. In the West, for the most part, this temper does not prevail. Religion is incidental, and usually becomes important only to the degree that other activities become unendurable. The miserable, the frustrated, the disillusioned, and the indigent turn in desperation to their faith for comfort and consolation. Obviously, such characters are loaded with ulterior motives and are seeking to cuddle for the rest of eternity in Abraham's bosom. Little immediate good can result from such a pattern or its products.

The royal road is for those who have the courage to do, to dare, and to be silent. It requires much more strength of character to advance in the spiritual quest than to succeed in the physical world. Those frightened out of their wits by material responsibilities are in no condition to face the greater challenge of spiritual responsibilities. Discipline is not a short cut, but it is an intensification of effort under guidance and direction. It is sad but true, as the Bible tells us, that all who cry, "Lord, Lord," shall not be heard.

Raja Yoga, (in fact all the Yogas) teaches that the regeneration of man is a psychochemical mystery at this stage of human evolution. Essential growth, though not in itself physical, produces physical reflexes by which progress can be estimated. There can be no true growth that does not produce consequences which bear witness. The individual who believes himself to be soaring triumphantly heavenward without any appreciable improvement in his mundane conduct or affairs is deluding himself. Yet this is a common spectacle, and those most satisfied with their cosmic unfoldment reveal a lamentable lack of natural graces.

In the teachings of Raja Yoga, the thermometer which measures the degree of real growth is the Sushumna Nadi, a minute tube extending longitudinally through the center of the spinal cord. This tube is the path of the fire mist—a mysterious luminous substance called

the kundalini by the Yogis. Just as a mercury thermometer reveals the temperature of the body, so the movement of the kundalini upward through the Sushumna Nadi measures the intensity and accomplishment of the spiritual will. The kundalini, in turn, in its ascent activates vortices of psychic energy along the spinal cord by which the spiritual powers of man are intensified. "Thus the rousing of the kundalini," writes Swami Vivekananda, "is the one and only way of attaining Divine Wisdom, and super-conscious perception, the realization of the spirit. It may come in various ways, through love for God, through the mercy of perfected sages, or through the power of the analytic will of the philosopher. . . . All worship, consciously or unconsciously, leads to this end."

In the Hindu system, the spinal cord consists of three parallel tubes: the one on the left called the Ida, and the one on the right, the Pingala. Between them is the tiny canal known to Western science as the sixth ventricle. A curious little work, titled the *Uttara Gita: Being the Initiation of Arjuna by Shri Krishna Into Yoga and Dhyana*, contains a detailed account of the kundalini system. The *Uttara Gita* is supposed to be an esoteric commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. From this text we learn that the spinal column extends upward through the trunk of the body from the coccyx to the skull, like the backbone of a vina or harp. This flexible column consists of thirty-three segments, of which the sacral group is usually united in the adult. The vina is an ancient Hindu musical instrument associated with Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom. The original vina had seven strings and a long bamboo finger, with movable frets, and a gourd resonator at each end. In the ancient Hindu system of music, both the instrument and the notation were associated with esoteric practices. The god Siva, signifying the universal life-agent, is occasionally depicted playing upon the vina.

The backbone itself containing the spinal cord is called the Meru-Danda, referring to Meru, the fabulous golden

mountain, around which the planets revolve and on the summit of which is the abode of the gods. By analogy, this heavenly city corresponds with the skull and its internal organs. Meru is the axis of a planetary or solar system, or more precisely the central support of a composite living structure. The spine is considered as the axis of the human body. The staves carried by Hindu holy men and Islamic mystics are often carved or ornamented to represent the spine and the principal centers, or chakras, adjacent to it. The same symbolism is concealed under the story of Aaron's rod, Joseph's staff that budded, the caduceus of Hermes, and the Tat column of the Osirian Mysteries.

The Sushumna Nadi, which is the great nerve canal, originates above in the ventricles of the brain and, descending the length of the spinal cord, ends, according to the Tantric Mysteries, opposite the sacral coccygeal ganglion, which corresponds with the Muladhara plexus, or chakra. The spinal cord tassel-out in the area of the lumbar vertebrae, but a fine fiber continues down toward the Muladhara. Although this fiber is very tiny, it is still the channel of the fire mist. Normally it is closed at the lower end.

The Sushumna Nadi "takes its origin from the thousand-petaled lotus in the brain (the Sahasrara) and growing gradually finer, descends through the canal of the spinal column... At first nine sets of smaller Nadis spring from it and spread toward the eyes and organs of sense, etc.; afterwards from each joint of the spinal column to which the pairs of ribs are attached, one on either side, and underneath each rib, there are successively stretched thirty-two sets of Nadis, with innumerable branchlets covering the whole body like a network; these produce the sense of touch and perform other necessary work requisite for the upkeep of the Sthula Sharira (physical body). These Nadis are so fine in their texture that if four hundred of them be collected and tied together, still they cannot be seen by the naked eye; though so fine, still they are like pipes, are hollow and in this space

there exists a certain substance, like oil, in which the Chaitanya (consciousness) or intelligence) reflects; for this reason the Rishis (sages) called the Sushumna the parent of all these small Nadis, the Dnana-Nadi, and consider it to be just like a tree with its innumerable branches covering the whole of the human body, the root being upward—at the Sahasrara—and the branches downward."

From this description, we realize that the ancient Hindus possessed an extensive knowledge of the human nervous system. They gained this insight by observing clairvoyantly the processes of the body. To them, the nervous system involved many processes and functions outside the province of Western neurologists. I once examined a secret Tantric book in which this nervous system was unfolded with exquisite detail, and each nerve terminal was ornamented with the tiny figure of a deity. The composite design was a complete exposition of the Tantric pantheon, considered psychologically rather than theologically. The ancients recognized two basic functions of nerves: The first was to carry impulses from the brain to the circumference of the body, and the other was to convey reflexes from the sensory contacts back to the brain. Because each of the fibers carried within it the Chaitanya, or consciousness, there was also a transmission of qualitative reflexes. The nerves conveyed to the brain the moral force of the personality and also conveyed from the brain a reflection, or degree, of the spiritual powers of the overself.

The Nadis, therefore, were eternally testifying or bearing witness, and, like the Buddhist Lohans, went forth into all the world (body) to teach the blessed mystery of the Law. All conduct is reported by the Nadis. Conduct in itself changes the vibratory rate of the symbolical processes of the body. Thus, in spite of every effort of the individual to distort the values of living, a true record beyond his control is continually kept and transferred to the governing centers in the brain. A considerable part of psychological phenomena not understood in the West is due to the function of the Nadis.

The commentaries then go on to explain that the sun and the moon, the planets and asterisms, the fourteen worlds or planes, the ten directions, the sacred places, the seven oceans, the Himalayas and other mountains, the seven continents, the seven sacred rivers, the four *Vedas* and all philosophies, the sixteen vowels and twenty-four consonants, the holy mantrams, the eighteen *Puranas* and their glossies, the three Gunas (attributes), Mahat itself (cosmic intelligence), all the jivas (vital principles), the ten breaths, the whole world in fact consisting of all such particular activities and things exist in the Sushumna Nadi.

From these considerations, we become aware of an entirely new dimension of Oriental thinking. We suddenly realize that the Hindu concept of the cosmos is anatomical and physiological. The creation of the universe, as described in the *Vishnu Purana*, is based upon the development of the human embryo. Cosmogony is an extension of the Yogic pattern, and the sacred geography is derived from the chakra system. Thus, as an experience of consciousness, creation is indeed the operation of will and Yoga, and its inner meaning is revealed by Dhyana, or meditation. Thus, all mythologies and the reports of sacred histories are veiled accounts of the disciplines of Raja Yoga. The uninitiated accepted the theological interpretation, but those who had been accepted into the Mysteries experienced the universe as the symbol of the way of regeneration.

Certain Indian sages have taught that man is conscious of the outside world merely because all external phenomena are reflected in the subtle substances which flow through the great spinal nerve. That which we appear to see in the world, we actually perceive inwardly in the luminous material which circulates through the Nadis, or nerves. It requires the power of projecting the mind outside the limitations of the bodily complex in order to attain the objective ability to see the universe directly. Until this liberation from the psychic complex of self is achieved, the external is experienced only through the mirroring-power of the nerve fluid.

Here, again, is a key to a mystery. As long as man sees only through himself, he can never escape from the fixations which he has imposed upon his own mind. As these fixations differ with each human being, all come to different conclusions upon matters which appear self-evident to each. We perceive only that which is the fulfillment of our own preconceptions. This is part of the illusion, and explains the disconcerting circumstance that persons of equal sincerity have no common vision. Only when all ulterior considerations cease in the personality can the reflection of the world in us be without distortion. I mean especially the moral or ethical sphere, in which the major differences are held and defended.



Like the Greek caduceus, the central rod of which terminates above in a winged globe, the Sushumna Nadi rises to the Sahasrara and is entwined with two undulating nerves resembling two serpents. In the Hindu system, these attendant Nadis are called the Pingala Nadi and the Ida Nadi. On the right side spreads the Pingala Nadi, from the sole of the right foot to the top of the head, the upper part of its course entwined with the central spinal nerve. This Nadi is bright and shining, like a great circle of fire (the sun), and is called the vehicle of the devas. The term *deva*, meaning a resplendent or celestial being, has no exact equivalent

in Western religious philosophy. The devas are the inhabitants of the three worlds, or planes, directly above the abode of human beings. It is said that there are thirty-three groups or three hundred thirty million devas. The term does not necessarily imply whether these beings are good or bad, any more than the term *human*, applied to a kind of creature, implies a particular degree of virtue or vice. As man contains within himself a miniature of the entire cosmos, so each of the celestial regions has a vehicle or polarity within him, by virtue of which he is able to receive into his consciousness certain impressions from the universe.

On the left side of the human body stretches the Ida Nadi, from the sole of the left foot upward to the crown of the head. This is the polar opposite of the Pingala, and parallels its course along the spine. The brilliance of this Nadi is less than the Pingala, so that it is like the disk or circle of the moon. It abides with the breath of the left nostril and is called the vehicle of the Pitris. In the *Manava Dharma Shastra*, the Pitris are called the lunar ancestors. They belong to those races which preceded humanity in its descent into the corporeal state. In a sense they are Elders, or those who have gone before, superior to man in certain respects, but deficient in the type of spiritual experience which humanity is perfecting through its life cycle.

It is only fair to point out that various Oriental sects are not in complete agreement on the particulars of the anatomy and physiology of Yoga. Some teachers insist that the chakras are along the spine. Others maintain that these centers are actually in the brain, and that only reflections or reflexes of them are in the body below. Some schools regard the Ida and Pingala as within the spinal cord; others, that they are the right and left sympathetic cords. One group insists that the kundalini rises in the Sushumna, while another sect maintains that it moves through the pneumogastric nerve. Nor is there complete agreement regarding the number of principal chakras, some recognizing five, others

six, and still others seven. Most uncertain of all is the attempt to associate these chakras with the large ganglia and plexuses recognized by Western science. Probably the most complete works available on the subject in English are by Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon).

While differences of opinion are inevitable on any subject in which all elements are not obvious, it serves our purpose to sketch the major outlines of the doctrine. According to the *Arunopanisad*: "There is a chakra in which the Kundalini attains her early youth, uttering a low, deep note; a chakra in which she attains her maturity; a chakra in which she becomes fit to marry; a chakra in which she takes a husband, these and whatever happiness is conferred by her, are all due to Agni (fire)." Pranayama is that division of Yoga devoted to awakening the kundalini and causing her to rise upward through the chakras. Each of the five lower centers distributes one of the five forms of prana, or the energy of the sun. Each of these chakras also has a corresponding tattva, or breath—emotion or condition of spiritual air.

The principal chakras in ascending order, with their more familiar symbols and attributes, are as follows:

1. The Muladhara; a lotus of four petals and letters assigned to the rulership of Saturn, and located approximately in the network of nerves lying in the pelvis in front of the concavity of the sacral bone. Within this chakra is the phallus of Siva, and above this, resting over it in three and one-half circles, is the sleeping serpent kundalini, covering with her head the entrance to the Sushumna Nadi.

2. The Svadhishtana: a lotus of six petals and letters assigned to the rulership of Jupiter, and associated with the prostatic plexus of modern science. Within this lotus "is the white discus of Varuna (Neptune)." One of the Tantric writings says: "He who can realize the discus of Varuna in his mind, becomes in a moment free from individual consciousness, and, emerging from the darkness of folly, shines like the sun."

3. The Manipura: a lotus of ten petals and letters associated with Mars, and identified with the epigastric or solar plexus of modern science and the navel. This chakra contains within it the triangular discus of fire and three fire seeds called swastika, which lie outside the triangle. This center is related to the appetites and the organs of assimilation and excretion.

4. The Anahata: a lotus of twelve petals and letters associated with Venus, and appearing to correspond in a general way with the cardiac plexus situated at the base of the heart. According to Yoga, the sun, moon, and stars dwell in the heart, and the saint realizes perfect bliss by visualizing the seven Lokas (worlds) and innumerable other celestial abodes in the heart. Woodroffe says that in this place the Munis (saints) hear that "sound which comes without the striking of any two things together," which is the pulse of life.

5. The Vishuddha: a lotus of sixteen petals and letters associated with Mercury, and corresponding generally with the pharyngeal plexus. This is the abode of Akasha, the fifth element or ether, which is represented as mounted on a white elephant. The Tantrics tell us that within the pericarp of this lotus is a spotless disk of the moon, which is the vestibule of final emancipation. The deities throned here represent hearing and speech.

6. The Ajna: a lotus of two petals and letters associated with the moon, and located somewhat vaguely in the cavernous plexus of the brain. The *Uttara Gita* says that the Ajna is between the eyebrows, is silvery like moonbeams, and is the place of communion of Yogis. Here is located, a little above the eyebrows, the seat of the intellect. According to the commentaries, the seat of the Knower and Seer of all "is the brain (at the mouth of the Sushumna nerve where the two brains meet, and over it the Brahmans keep a long braid of hair)." The Ajna shines in the glory of meditation.

7. The Sahasrara: a lotus of a thousand petals and letters associated with the sun. It is difficult to identify this chakra directly with any area recognized by Western science. Some writers have attempted to identify it with the pineal gland; others with the higher brain ventricles, and still others with the nerve centers in the upper part of the cerebral hemispheres. In the midst of this discus dwells the great deity Siva, whose form is Akashic, and who is the destroyer of ignorance and illusion.

The practice of Yoga leads to Samadhi, which means self-possession. It is a state of complete and blissful trance, including absolute control over all physical, psychical, or mental faculties. The term is subject to numerous misinterpretations. Under no conditions should it be interpreted as a negative or static state. The two principal purposes of Yoga are the organization of the outer life in accordance with virtue, and the organization of the inner life in accordance with the divine will. Vivekananda defines Samadhi as superconsciousness. The actual state of Samadhi cannot be communicated; it must be experienced. Vivekananda explains that when a man goes to sleep he enters a state of unconsciousness, but when he awakens, the sum total of his inner understanding has not been increased. When he enters Samadhi, however, he goes into a superconsciousness from which he returns with his entire character and life changed by internal illumination. Therefore Samadhi cannot be negative or static. It is a positive suspension of objectivity, in no way to be confused with a loss or diminution of the self. It is a positive escape from the limitations imposed by the ego. It is in no way a defeating of the natural propensities of the ego.

An analogy may clarify. Two men are subjected to abuse; neither retaliates. The first is patient, because he is afraid, and the second, because he is consecrated to a concept of nonviolence. The unenlightened assailant distinguishes no difference in the conduct of these two men, and assumes that both are cowards. In Yoga, there is positive nonaction, but this has no resemblance to the inertia

which results from an inability to act. Only those who have experienced these states of consciousness have any right to pass judgment upon them. The unenlightened gain a reputation for being informed, because they have opinions about everything. The enlightened may gain a reputation for being ignorant, because they are too wise to indulge in fruitless argument and contention. The classics say there are two kinds of silence: the silence of God, which contains all wisdom, and the silence of fools, which contains nothing.

The proper disciplines of Yoga teach the disciple how to attain that state of internal consciousness by which the power of illusion is overcome. For this reason, in many of the native drawings (see Supplement) the god Siva is identified with the higher cranial chakras. Occidentals think of Siva as the third person of the Brahmanic triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. In this classification, Brahma is conceived to be the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer of the world. Actually, Siva is not a destroying principle, for Nature has within it no principle of destruction. Siva is the dispeller of illusion. He turns his trident against the productions of the mortal, or false, mind. In Yoga, therefore, he appears as the divine, or perfect, mendicant—the eternal ascetic.

Yoga is a way of liberation, by which the consciousness is raised gradually through the ascending degrees of the world-experience until it reaches an internal strength, in which it is capable of

casting off the illusion by the power of illumined will. When reality reveals the dimensions of maya (illusion) and overcomes Mara (worldliness), consciousness as Siva slays the adversary.

The principal lesson which the average Westerner can learn from a survey of the Yogic disciplines is ethical. The sacred ethics has to do particularly with Karma Yoga, or salvation through works. The purpose of life is revealed as a natural, gracious maturing of consciousness. Evolution is the gradual awakening from a strange and disordered dream. The very circumstance of awaking dispels the fantasies of sleep. The waking state is incomprehensible to the sleeper until he himself awakens. Brahma, the objective universe, is born from the navel of Vishnu (the world-soul), while the god Vishnu sleeps upon the serpent of the great time cycle. This means that the deities, like mortals, unfold the powers of consciousness through a system of chakras. Brahma is manifested by Vishnu through the Manipura chakra (the solar plexus). The divine love, Vishnu, gives birth to universal law, Brahma. Both love and law are redeemed by absolute truth, Siva, the eternal ascetic, who remains forever aloof from the illusion, seated on the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. The Himalayas in this case represent the Yogas. The unchangeable, the immovable, and ever-pure white mountains are symbols of the ageless disciplines, on the summit of which, man experiences the supreme union.



The eight-pointed star in Christian art and the eight-petalled lotus of Buddhism are the prophetic symbols of the Divine incarnation which is to redeem the world.

At the time of the Roman Empire, the known world was owned by thirty thousand men. The rest of humanity was held in slavery.

It is reported that John Howard Payne composed "Home Sweet Home" as he wandered homeless through the streets of London.



## In Reply

### A Department of Questions and Answers

*QUESTION: In the last few years there has been a sharp increase of alcoholism in all classes of society. As this condition is responsible for many difficulties and even tragedies, we would appreciate your thoughts on the subject.*

*ANSWER: The use of intoxicating beverages seems to have originated among the religious cults of ancient peoples. This general statement is justified by an examination of the practices of savage and primitive tribes, as these exist today in remote places. Under the influence of intoxicants, according to old beliefs, extrasensory faculties and perceptions could be artificially stimulated. The resulting dreams, visions, and ecstasies were accepted as signs of spirit possession. In other words, a condition of consciousness was produced, which appeared to bestow a participation in matters beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals.*

For the most part, the exhilaration produced by stimulants only intensified the basic instincts of the individual. If his mind was concerned with the fulfillment of sacred rites and rituals, the experiences which came to him or in which he seemed to be involved were consistent with his expectations. It was only when his normal thinking was dominated by negative or destructive at-

titudes that he exhibited morbid tendencies. With certain exceptions, therefore, overindulgence did not produce the widespread demoralization among ancient nations that is noticeable in modern conduct.

Pressures incline the personality to excess in all forms of indulgence. It is noticeable that it is ever more difficult for the modern man to practice moderation. This is true in every department of living. Excess is always unfortunate, and it has been said that even an excess of virtue becomes a vice. We all live too intensively. Intensity itself exhausts natural resources, and we may resort to stimulants to maintain a pace of action, itself unreasonable and unnatural. Where the tempo of life is moderate, the consumption of alcohol is decreased, and its effects are noticeably less violent.

Contemporary civilization is a complicated and confused pattern of artificial insecurities. The individual finds himself hopelessly involved in situations which he is unable to control. There is little consideration for the inevitable

inequalities which distinguish the capacities of various persons. Those who have exhausted their mental, emotional, and physical endowments attempt to supplement their energies by artificial means. Of course, the entire theory is wrong, but it is especially dangerous whenever the drinker is a frustrated and inhibited mortal with few natural graces within himself.

It has been noticeable, for example, that the American Indian disintegrates his personality almost immediately if he resorts to alcoholic stimulants. In the first place, he has no resistance or immunity to alcohol, because his people used no intoxicants prior to the European colonization of America. In the second place, the Indian carries in his subconscious an intense resentment against the injustices to which his nations and tribes have been subjected. When intoxicating beverages release him from the restraints imposed by his conscious mind, he reveals strong antisocial tendencies.

Contemporary man is almost completely without an understanding of the importance of self-discipline. It seldom occurs to him that he should exercise control over himself. He drifts along through life, using most of his energies to fulfill the dictates of his instincts and appetites. The very thought of refining or directing the instincts and appetites themselves is most depressing.

For lack of discipline, the personality perpetuates bad habits, and permits immoderate attitudes to develop unchecked and uncorrected. In the end, the man himself becomes the victim of his own intemperances, and must spend the second half of his life enduring the consequences of earlier indiscretions. When we work, we work ourselves to death. When we play, we play ourselves into an early grave. We eat as though each meal would be our last, and plan careers with the subconscious expectancy of immortality. We accumulate with such intensity that we have no strength left with which to enjoy our worldly goods. Our code of "all speed and no control" results in the sensitive psychical mech-

anism, by which we function, tearing itself to pieces.

We become victims not only of the intensities themselves but of the personality stress associated with intensity. Obsessed by manias of accumulation, ambition, and gratification, we become dissatisfied with all moderate accomplishments, gaining little, if any, satisfaction from the blessings and privileges we already enjoy. Completely absorbed in projects of slight consequence, we hurry on unmindful of the inevitable end. It is not remarkable that the unoriented and the disoriented should be intemperate. To be devoted to any excess is intemperance, even though we may not indulge in alcohol.

One of the most ardent prohibitionists of our century died of overeating. Strong drink never passed his lips, but he had an irresistible tendency to gluttony and, having reached the years of discretion without the discretion, collapsed after a breakfast that would have fed four ordinary men. Socrates gave excellent advice when he recommended "in all things not too much."

Excess itself is a symbol. Wherever it is practiced, it reveals deficiency. The less internal life we have, the more external life we demand. If we have nothing inside, we demand everything. It is impossible to satisfy the individual who himself has the least to offer. The hustle and the bustle, the haste and the waste bear witness to a kind of perpetual adolescence. Internal maturity bestows moderation. The thoughtful require little; the thoughtless demand much.

Old Diogenes used to get his water from the public fountain at Sinope. He brought with him a cheap clay cup, until one day it dawned upon his mind that this cup was a heavy burden upon his life. He had to carry it back and forth, wash it, and make sure that some mischievous urchin did not break it or carry it away. Diogenes decided that his bowl belonged in the same category with those personal possessions which encumbered the rich. No man could be free so long as he had to polish his cup. So he threw it away with a sigh of re-

lief, and drank from the hollow of his hand.

Diogenes philosophized further on the subject of morbid luxuries. He gave thanks that his bowl had not been of gold or encrusted with precious stones. It would have been no more useful, but much harder to throw away. While it is not recommended that we all take the great Cynic's opinions literally, there is a truth in them which suggests moderate reflection. It is very easy to become the slave of our own chattels, defending with our lives the worldly goods that cheat us of peace and happiness.

Once having been dedicated to false principles, we find them decidedly inconvenient. We must defend each mistake with two more. Thus immoderation grows and extends itself through every department of our conduct, until at last no faculty of the mind remains uncontaminated. As the distress grows and indiscretion confronts us with innumerable difficulties and complications, we have need of "moral support." So we add a new vice as a remedy to the others, and complete a vicious circle, much like the man who burned his home, stick by stick in the stove to keep the house warm.

The Greeks recorded mortgages on property by inscribing the records upon stones and piling these rocks on the corners of the land. A philosopher, observing a particularly large heap on the property of a certain dissipated youth, put a sign on the top which read: "A monument to the intemperance of the Athenians." Perhaps we could define the present crisis in alcoholism as a monument to the intemperance of contemporary civilization.

The very complexities of modern living invite the cultivation of escape mechanisms. A generation which has grown up in an environment of insecurity and at the same time has not given much consideration to the development of internal strength is without any solid footings. When such folks are subjected to unusual pressures, they lack personality resources. The first instinct is to run away, and as physical escape is practically impossible, they take symbolic refuge

in habits and practices which represent mental escape.

There has been an increasing tendency among psychiatrists to consider alcoholism as a disease rather than as a habit. Certainly advanced cases assume the proportions of serious illness and require heroic measures to effect a cure. It seems to me that the subject is still inadequately understood. We talk a great deal about intoxicants as being habit-forming. Certain personality and conduct patterns suggest, however, that the so-called habit originates in the person rather than with the beverage. A considerable group of alcoholics belong to a distinct type. They have certain personality defects in common, and the defects antedate the actual addiction. Alcoholism seldom makes serious inroads in the lives of individuals who do not nurse, protect, and cater to character inadequacies.

What appears to be an exception to the general rule is the practice of business or social drinking. Recently, this phase of alcoholism has been greatly emphasized. In those circles which like to regard themselves as somewhat sophisticated, life has become an almost endless round of cocktail parties and high teas. The success of the gathering is measured in terms of alcohol consumption. A brilliant hostess in this set confided to me that it was advisable to keep the guests well supplied from the bar, because if the gathering ever became sober it would bore itself to extinction. "Only after a few cocktails," she explained, "are stupid people amusing."

Business drinking is inspired by much the same policy. It is used to soften sales resistance, to entertain out-of-town executives, and has become a synonym for hospitality. Unless you wish to join the boys while they are building a monumental hangover, your opportunities to make friends and influence people are seriously limited. You are a "kill-joy," a "blue stocking," and regard yourself as superior to your fellow man, unless you join enthusiastically in his riotous living. Many are bullied into the sincere conviction that they will lose their employment or at least will not be given preferment

when better opportunities are available unless they have gained the reputation of being "hail fellows, well met."

In order, therefore, to be considered socially popular and economically farsighted, many persons are exposed to far more alcohol than they can carry with dignity. All this is in an atmosphere of broad regrets. The host deplors his liquor bill, and the guests wish they were elsewhere. No one has a good time, but must convey the impression of whole-souled exuberation. After the formalities of departure, the victims murmur under their breaths, "Thank heavens, that is over. Now we will drop in on the Joneses."

The decline of the art of interesting conversation, the lack of purposeful projects, and the failure of significant ideas contribute to the degeneration of social functions. The principal activities of most persons are so completely selfish and self-centered that they are of no interest to their friends, relatives, or acquaintances. Left to their own sober devices, these folk gather in groups and talk shop or simply gaze steadfastly at the ceiling and wait to be amused. The majority is too successful to be talented or too ambitious to be relaxed. Each wishes to be regarded as a genial host, but lacks the personal quality of geniality. For many, the secret of a successful evening is to indicate the location of the bar, and leave the guests to devise their own amusements.

While it does not follow that social drinking must lead to acute alcoholism, it is certainly a move in that direction. Exposed constantly to a habit, in itself meaningless, the human being, by nature a creature of habits, easily comes to lean upon such stimulants as produce temporary exhilaration. This is especially true when society as a whole has a tendency to be neurotic. The average person is not especially happy or even reasonably contented, regardless of the advantages and luxuries which he enjoys. In the midst of the symbols of his own success, he recognizes that as a human being he is a dismal failure.

The search for forgetfulness too often leads in the direction of alcoholism or

some other intemperance. What we please to call "our way of life" supplies innumerable excuses for discontent. Rather than face this fact and plan a proper remedy, we seek refuge in oblivion.

The inferiority complex is a common psychological ailment. Most of us cherish the internal conviction that we are potential heroes. By some unhappy and obviously unfair miscarriage of universal justice, we have been deprived of that adulation and respect which is our natural birthright. In short, we are not appreciated. Furthermore, we are misunderstood. We have been so repressed and depressed by those lacking the wit to perceive our native superiority that we have just cause for antisocial tendencies. The world is against us! Others, lacking our merit, occupy the places rightfully ours. It is hard to live placidly and contentedly while fully aware that our light is under a bushel.

After a few drinks, the flame of our genius becomes an obvious conflagration. (At least it is obvious to us.) We become the life and soul of the party—even if the party is rather lifeless. We are free from those mysterious mechanisms called inhibitions. We lose our fear of people—a strange dark terror that afflicts introverts. Substantially, we escape back to childhood, and cast off that mask or appearance of maturity which we have been forced to assume by the dictates of society.

Most chronic alcoholics are perpetual adolescents. They resent the pressure of responsibility; in fact, responsibility is terrifying to them. It demands a course of action and a conduct of affairs beyond their natural capacities. Afraid to think for themselves and to assume the consequences of their own actions, they seek to escape the unpleasantness of self-censure. It does not occur to them that the only practical solution is to enlarge capacity and strengthen character. Even if they think in this direction, the thought itself throws them into a deeper panic. There is a subconscious realization that self-improvement demands a certain amount of will power, control, and direction, and there is present a dis-

inclination to assume such self-leadership.

Spoiled children are apt to grow up to become intemperate. The spoiling has weakened character and has made them hypersensitive to those inevitable shocks to which the flesh is heir. Society as a collective receives these overindulged youngsters with a certain amount of suspicion. Associates find it easier to cater to unreasonable whims than to create cycles of unpleasant incidents. Furthermore, well-intentioned advice or suggestions are either resented or ignored, and nothing is accomplished. Gradually, the spoiled person is left to his own devices. He is cultivated only by those who hope to gain in some way by tolerating a bad disposition. In this way, society itself instinctively follows a well-established psychiatric technique. It avoids a direct clash with those by temperament unreasonable, and allows unpleasantness to bring its own rewards.

An opulent childhood and doting parents do not necessarily spoil a young person. Each individual is born with a temperament of his own, and can survive a great deal of unfortunate conditioning. If, however, the disposition is inclined to spoil easily, early luxury usually completes the process. Incidentally, even the children of the poor can be spoiled, for with them, ambitions are overstimulated, and the success mania is as dangerous as class decadence.

As the majority of humanity is inclined to a policy of peace at any price, there is a tendency to humor unreasonable dispositions. It is not considered nice to criticize or condemn others, nag them, or find fault unless their actions are completely unbearable. So we are careful not to irritate Joe, antagonize Pete, argue with John, or contribute to Jane's supply of local gossip. Our own attitudes are defensive, dominated by a determination not to contribute to our own discomfort. Thus these characters drift along as minor nuisances, until a major problem catches up with them.

Whether we like the thought or not, the economic factor is one of life's primary disciplinarians. This profane and prosaic institution, upon which most de-

pend for their bread and butter, has never been distinguished for its social graces. In business, a man is not measured by the hypersensitivity of his ego. Managers, department heads, and foremen have no inclination to play the parts of doting grandmothers to perpetual adolescents. The individual must maintain his status by his proficiency in the work he is supposed to do. If it offends his consciousness, enrages his aesthetic sense, or profanes his convictions, he is invited to resign and to find more congenial environment in the vast and unmeasured elsewhere.

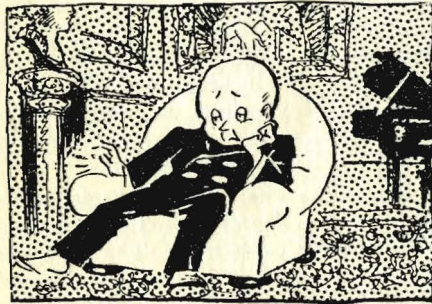
This is a rude shock. Probably on several occasions, the offended one walks out in high dudgeon. But the walking-out process buys no food, pays no rent, and solves no problems. Of course, one justification is a complete condemnation of the capitalistic system. The socially-unadjusted join with others of their type, and by intensive training in dissatisfaction achieve to the next lower rung of the ladder of adjustment. They become antisocial. All this time, however, it is not the sword of Damocles but an eviction notice that hangs over their heads. Society has slight patience with the drone. It is all very cruel and brutal and unspiritual, but, according to the Good Book, each man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

Sometimes vital interests begin to develop and a degree of self-pride or self-responsibility takes over. The individual adjusts, because it is only in this way that he can secure the advantages which he naturally desires to enjoy. If this occurs, the mature citizen emerges; and life, thought it may still be difficult, is patterned to some purpose. Maturity is no more or less than an acceptance of responsibility for the conduct and condition of one's self. This acceptance, however, must not be reluctant, but genuine and complete. If it is reluctant, the individual becomes the chronic complainer, resenting every burden, and yearning always for the lost state of infancy. These reluctant ones are good prospects for acute alcoholism.

Those who never achieve even the state of reluctant co-operation with their

world may engage in a guerilla warfare against society for the rest of their lives. They have been described as tramps or hobos, but the "fraternity of the open road" disclaims any association with them. More likely, these antisocial characters become chronic chislers, surviving whenever and wherever possible at the expense of sober and responsible citizens. Some drift into alcoholism, but it is not so prevalent, because they lack the means to indulge such intemperances. Certainly, however, they drift into extremely negative and useless positions, and are further burdened by self-reproach. If they become intemperate, this self-reproach is the primary motivation.

There are always exceptions to every rule, but in most cases alcoholism is due to internal immaturity. It does not cause this immaturity, but caters to it. It is the weakness of his character which prevents the rehabilitation of the alcoholic rather than the alcohol itself. Excessive drinking is a degree in the unfoldment of a negative pattern, and too often it terminates the pattern.



Sometimes a person who has established a solid reputation for sober living is inclined to take refuge in alcoholism as the result of some tragic incident or some extended pressure which has exhausted personal resources. Most human beings have a breaking point, and beyond this point they lack courage in the conduct of their affairs. In such cases, alcohol may be depended upon as a stimulant and, like any other drug of its class, seems to supply needed energy. Unfortunately, the individual becomes more and more dependent upon this false stimulation. In this way, alcohol-

ism slowly but relentlessly undermines physical health, and the emergencies become progressively more frequent and more urgent.

Alcohol is a stimulant, but not a food. It does not replenish depleted vitality, but obscures symptoms which demand immediate attention. In a highly competitive system, the business man or the professional man often attempts to perpetuate his efficiency by recourse to stimulants. Frequently he feels that he cannot afford the rest and relaxation which the condition of his health demands. Where such motivations have led to habitual alcoholism, cases nearly always respond to proper treatment. Vitamin therapy has succeeded where no morbid psychology is involved.

Each alcoholic who seeks help has a slightly different case history. Except where the habit is the result of extraordinary pressures, these histories have character deficiencies as their common denominators. We cannot deny that economic pressures and mental and emotional stress are contributing factors. The average person is not equipped to meet life. His early home environment, his educational institutions, his religious convictions, and his philosophical concepts are all deficient and often actually detrimental. Society as a collective is indifferent to the destructive policies which it creates and encourages. It requires considerable character endowments to live honorably and placidly in this mundane sphere. Unfortunately, we cannot change the world; that is, rapidly enough to redeem our present incarnation. We must examine ourselves to determine the particular pressures which threaten our undoing. Such an examination usually reveals a possible remedy without a renovation of external institutions.

It has been my observation that most persons who are unhappy carry within them a deep abiding indifference to the true causes of their misery. It is hard to explain the actual dimensions of this indifference for it is present in many who possess adequate means to correct the fault, were they so minded. We may define this indifference as a blind spot

in character, but that tells only part of the story. This indifference is also loaded with egotism—probably the subconscious conviction that the individual is right, even if all his affairs go badly. As long as we are not honestly convinced that we are at fault, we lack the vitality to correct conditions.

We all know the story of the resolute pedestrian who, knowing that he had the right of way, marched defiantly into the midst of traffic. Even though law and order were with him, after the accident, he was just as dead as though he had been wrong. There is said to be an epitaph in an old cemetery which reads: "Here lies the man who had the right of way." Motivated by an irrevocable determination to stand or fall by our own concepts of the rightness and fitness of things, we frequently fall. Our civilization is a co-operative, and we must live together by modifying certain extremes of conduct. As long as we demand that the world accept us completely on our own ground, we should not be surprised if we are rejected on that same ground.

While in universals it may be true that God and one constitute a majority, in this world survival depends upon internal adjustment with the requirements of groups. If we insist upon living completely and entirely according to our personal codes and determination, it is rather certain that we shall live alone. We have the right to live alone; but if we so act as to isolate ourselves, we have no right to expect to enjoy those advantages, regards, and affections reserved for less-adamant characters. That is the trouble. We want to do as we please, and then have others *do as we please*. No doubt the concept would be charming if it could be made to operate, but the chances are slight that we can convert the rest of the world to such a course.

Unfortunately, these determinations within us are seldom recognized for what they are—merely symptoms of our perpetual adolescence. Any notion that arises somewhere in the mysterious depths of ourselves gains extraordinary dignity by virtue of this Immaculate

Conception. God is the Father of our every notion, and to resist, deny, or modify even the most selfish of our instincts is, for most of us, the real sin against the Holy Ghost. Thus the tyranny of our own will-to-do that which we will to do makes ourselves its first victim. What we overlook is that everyone else also has this nucleus of infallibility. Thus the world is locked in an eternal conflict over these conflicting revelations of infallibles and inevitables. The more we work with people, the more we realize that when we question the sufficiency of their opinions and conclusions we are attacking their true religion. As a result we accumulate small gratitude for our pains, and are included among those unspiritual types who have not the wit to recognize Divinity, even when in the presence of its perfect work.

In psychology, obsession means *possession by an idea*; whereas, in many metaphysical systems, it is defined as *possession by an entity*. Ideals long held secretly and cherished against oppositions sometimes become obsessions. When this happens, the person becomes a slave to some fixed and dominant concept. He may then try to live his entire life in all its departments in strict conformity with this concept. There might be some justification for such a severe code if the concept itself were absolutely or certainly true. Usually, however, it is true only to the person who holds it, and its defects are obvious to everyone else. Further proof, if the victim of the obsessing idea could estimate the values, is that the concept does not bring security, peace, happiness, or enriched living to the person who guards it so zealously. Here is the blind spot. We cannot take a separate look at ourselves. We cannot stand at one side and watch ourselves go by in the crowd. If we had this genius of detached observation, we would see that the personality which we have always regarded as exceptional is only eccentric.

After taking ourselves overseriously for some time, a process which almost inevitably destroys the sense of humor, we become such a burden upon our own frail resources that life is scarcely worth living. By this time we are afraid to let

go of the basic concept which caused the trouble. We are convinced that emancipation from the obsession would leave us without purpose or excuse for existence. Our entire life has been built around this dominating conviction. In addition to the discomfort of reorientation, there is the ghastly business of acknowledging to ourselves or others that we have been wrong about something. To know that we are wrong is bad enough, but to let others find out is life's supreme tragedy.

Death always offers an escape from a quandry, but while we may be heroic about our concept of life, few of us are in a hurry to die for its sake. Beaten and baffled by the reluctance of the world to see things our way, we develop another remarkably clever idea. As the perfect and complete revenge, we shall deprive the world of our presence. This is a shock from which the rest of humanity shall never recover. Those who cannot get along with us will certainly perish for lack of us. There is a little of the martyr in everyone, and we like people to realize how deeply we suffer because of them. To disintegrate on someone's doorstep is subtly satisfying to our bruised ego. Here alcoholism often enters the arena. It is an act of slow self-destruction, by which we seek to accomplish one of two ends. The first is to prove to others that by their heartlessness and misunderstanding they are causing our destruction. Second, by blotting out the operation of our minds, we are tempting to kill the thought-form of our adversary in ourselves.

This is a rather complicated procedure, and requires further analysis. Remember that the enemy is only an enemy because he opposes us. What he really is and what he really does is unimportant. It is our own estimation of him that afflicts our lives. By killing our memory of him or destroying his likeness, we are achieving the supremacy of our own concepts. We say of our enemy that we want to get him out of our minds, for that is the only place where he actually exists as an enemy. Regardless of what he had done to us, his power to hurt actually is the power we

have given him. In destroying the thought-form, therefore, we really destroy the enemy.

An enemy is not necessarily a person who has injured us. He may be anyone who attempts to destroy the sovereignty of the concepts which possess us. His crime may be only honest disagreement, but in basic patterns there can be no friendly difference of opinion. That which is not for us is against us, and the mind defending its obsession recognizes no ethical restraint. We must discomfort the adversary in some way, even if it is only by forcing him to remember that he has brought about our collapse. In these situations, a primitive atavism takes over. Even the conscious mind does not understand what is occurring. It is the helpless instrument of instincts and impulses.

We have a certain type of alcohol addiction which follows this revenge formula. We will our own destruction to burden another with the consequences. The more obviously we are at fault, the more desperately we seek some means of shifting the blame. If we can no longer shift the blame, then we seek to shift the consequences. At the same time, it is necessary to force the adversary to the position where he accepts the blame. Therefore, we do everything possible to create an obsession of guilt in his mind. It is very ingenious. We shall destroy his likeness in us, and gain a kind of immortality by perpetuating our likeness in him. The average person never thinks this process through; he merely follows instinct, struggling always for self-justification.

In this way, a spoiled child grows up and revenges itself against its family by becoming a burden and a disgrace. It realizes that its own character has been injured but prefers the "getting even" process to the more difficult program of personal rehabilitation. By drinking himself into a stupor, for any one of countless causes, the individual is punishing the world in which he lives for what he believes it has done to him.

But there are other subjects upon which we must linger for a moment. If the alcoholic is simply a neurotic and

has no dynamic complexes, other than the sense of inadequacy, he reveals the causes of his trouble by extroverting autocorrectively. Thus timid souls become belligerent, and the belligerent become timid. The strong dissolve in self-pity. Those frustrated by routine act in a disorderly manner, and those simply weary with it all promptly go to sleep. The greater the pressures, the more remarkable and dynamic the reversals in the personality. Among American people, alcohol usually leads to depression. There may be some exhilaration in the early stages of drinking, but in the end the personality falls to pieces.

This reveals the primary condition which underlies the American mental attitude toward life. The personality is not integrated around any structure of conviction sufficiently strong to sustain the mind through periods of uncertainty or stress. We lack a philosophy of life that is basically important. We live on the surface of everything, and are frightened at the very thought of depth. Alcoholism is an escape from insufficiency through the symbolism of increased activity or power. We develop the illusion of mastery, which indicates something profoundly desired but unattained. The problems which beset us lead to infinite confusion, and we have no certain remedies for even the simplest of these uncertainties.

We see around us a world condition which is the product of unreasonable attitudes. There is hardly anyone who does not feel deeply within himself that his way of life is wrong. He is perfectly aware that he has no assurance that his efforts will bring him contentment or security. He reads the paper; he listens to the radio; he talks to his neighbor; he explores new books, and attends civic gatherings. In every case, his uncertainties persist and are even increased. He loses faith in the abilities of his leaders, and regards himself, directly or indirectly, as the victim of a system with which he does not agree, but about which he is unable to do anything. He considers the future of his family with grave apprehension, and has lost direct contact with the realities which strengthened the

simple thinking of his ancestors. He is drifting in an unknown sea, and even though his boat may have a rudder, he is without a compass.

The completely thoughtless have no morbid reflections, because they have never sensed the magnitude of the problem, and the completely thoughtful have found security in a larger consciousness of the world's motions. But between these two extremes is the great muddled class. Their only recourse in disaster is to seek the consolation of their faith, and this has brought millions back to churches whose doctrines are far from satisfactory. We may kill out even reasonable doubts in the hope of finding a measure of peace in unquestioning acceptance. The younger generation is denied even this consolation, for it has been brought up in an era of extreme skepticism.

To be born thoughtless is natural to those who have not evolved beyond this mental state; but for those who have attained some thoughtfulness, to cultivate a condition of ignorance is a dangerous retrogression. Once the mind begins to operate, the individual must go forward until his thinking sustains him. Probably he would do so, except that he is unable to perceive any pattern in human affairs to justify a belief in the reality of a universal plan. He is so involved in the particulars of living that the great generals upon which life depends are no longer obvious. In desperation he seeks to cast off the entire burden, and to recapture the dim remembrance of a state of infancy in which nothing was expected of him except conformity with the prevailing dominating forces.

Alcoholism is not the curse of any Age, but the problem of all time. It becomes more dangerous, however, as man himself becomes more dangerous. The world presents hazards to the modern man far more imminent and threatening than those which afflicted the remote past. Ancient man feared his God; modern man fears his brother. The fear of God leads to rituals and rites of appeasement, but there appears to be no remedy for man's inhumanity to man. A competitive code has led to a wide-



spread distrust of the motives of mankind.

It is not possible to legislate temperance, anymore than it is possible to legislate honesty or faith or good will. Prohibitions of all kinds lead inevitably to a widespread dissatisfaction and a resolve to do that which is prohibited. All reformations must originate in the re-education of convictions. Until the human being is strong enough to cope with the complexities of his daily existence, he will take refuge in some type of escape mechanism. As escape itself is a negative concept, nearly all the mechanisms springing from it are intemperate to some degree. There is no satisfactory way of avoiding the realities of living.

Today alcoholism is being treated with considerable success, and the alcoholic who sincerely wishes to break the habit usually can do so with a minimum of discomfort and inconvenience. Most of the successful treatments involve the reorientation of the personality. Practical psychology plays an important part in many of the cures.

The older methods of hospitalizing alcoholics and subjecting them to purging and drugging are rapidly passing out of fashion. After an interlude in these Sanatoria, the patient usually celebrates his liberation by promptly becoming inebriated. The technique of treatment may terrify a few into a state of sobriety, but the basic factors are seldom considered. It is not the alcoholism but the *cause* of the alcoholism that demands attention.

The alcoholic is frequently at outs with his family, friends, and associates, even before he appeals for help. He has been branded as a weakling, and upbraided for his selfishness, thoughtlessness, and lack of backbone. A therapist can expect very little co-operation from the relatives of his patient. Likely as not, the family theme song is: "He will be back on the bottle in a week." Naturally, if he hears this often enough, he will accept the suggestion as a compulsion and will proceed as expected. Of course, the relatives have their side of the story, for it is not easy to live in



close association with a perpetual backslider. In substance, there is a vicious circle of negative expectancies. Incompatibilities of one kind or another, wrong types of employment, unfortunate associations, and certain constitutional debilities incline toward the cultivation of intemperance.

Frequently it is necessary to break up patterns of living in order to change patterns of conduct. This is especially true if the burden of responsibility has inclined the mind in the direction of escape. We often involve ourselves in situations which we are not ready or willing or, for that matter, able to maintain over long periods of time. Once the mind rebels against the obligations which it has assumed, these are magnified and become insurmountable obstacles to freedom and self-expression. We are all bargain hunters. We want as much as we can get, and give as little as possible for it. If our affairs run smoothly, we can carry moderate burdens with some grace; but if conditions become difficult and critical, and the bonds which tie us to our responsibilities are weak, we may walk out, physically, mentally, emotionally, or normally.

Once the alcoholic loses his grip on the realities which keep him in line, difficulties seldom come singly. He loses the confidence and respect of his intimates, and lowers his economic status. He finds it ever more difficult to maintain his standard of living, and this reacts unfavorably upon his self-esteem. As he hazards the security of his de-

pendents, these are apt to turn upon him or he is forced to watch their discomfiture, resulting from his intemperance. A gloom settles upon the whole scene, offering further inducements to drown remorse.

If conditions permit, it is frequently desirable for an alcoholic to work out his recovery away from home in an environment unaware of or indifferent to the facts of the case. The inducements to positive action are enlarged and the probabilities of negative remarks at critical times minimized. Also, after recovery, the rehabilitated person returns to familiar scenes more likely to produce a constructive impact. Doubts have disappeared, and minds conditioned against the probability of recovery must re-estimate their own conclusions.

There is danger, of course, that the alcoholic free of certain criticisms may drift, if alone, into more negative patterns and worse associations. If, however, this danger is real, the situation will not be solved by nagging and supervision. The family may have a better chance to rehabilitate itself if given even an interlude of relief from the pressure always caused by dissipation.

The tendency now rather pronounced for alcoholism to increase among those of high school and college age is traceable in part to the state of the average American home. Where the parents themselves dissipate or if teetotalers are inclined to other intemperances which destroy the integrity of home environment, young people have difficulty in building personality security. Lack of supervision, especially in the department of recreation, and the unfortunate type of entertainment to which the young are exposed are also contributing factors. I was once involved in the problems of a chronic alcoholic, age eighteen. This lad already showed serious damage to the liver, such as might have been expected in a heavy drinker thirty years his senior. The first question seemed to be where this minor had been able to secure so large a supply of distilled spirits. Tactful questioning revealed that his parents bought the whiskey for him by the case. There is also a marked

trend for those just over the legal age to purchase hard liquor for their younger friends.

While such a state of affairs remains uncorrected, we can expect exactly what is occurring. Although a slight lag has been noticed recently, the sale and distribution of distilled spirits is still the largest in the history of the race. Saloons, under various names, and dispensaries are to be found in almost every city block. Although it is well known that these are responsible for many traffic accidents, much crime, and juvenile delinquency, and incalculable distress, no suitable program of public education is receiving any general support. It is worse than useless to assume that the condition can be corrected merely by restricting distribution. The individual must experience for himself that it is unnecessary to depend upon artificial stimulation to meet the problems of the day. Only the cultivation of constructive interests and the recognition of personal responsibilities will effect a permanent remedy.

It may be worth noting that religious conviction has restricted the use of alcohol in several countries. The followers of Mohammed use very little hard liquor, because it is against the teachings of the *Koran*. Devout Hindus and Buddhists seldom drink, and most of the bars in Asia are for the benefit of Occidentals. Some Orientals do drink, and the Japanese have developed an abiding fondness for imported whiskey. But all in all, intemperance is far less a problem where spiritual convictions of some kind are reasonably intense. The Soviet Union is reported to have reduced alcohol consumption considerably by pointing out that drunkenness is detrimental to the State and retards the dissemination of the Communistic doctrines. Thus ideological factors can play an important part in moderating the use of alcoholic stimulants.

Here again we appear to be in a dilemma. Our religious ideals are comparatively ineffective, because we have never cultivated them to a degree that we permitted them to dominate our codes of conduct. This is not discount-

ing devout persons who have been inspired to temperance by the implications of their religion. The Christian Churches, however, never seem to have taken a definite stand on alcoholism. Some groups have, but for most, the issue has been "too hot to handle."

We must conclude, therefore, that in the Western world the individual must achieve or maintain a state of temperance as the result of a definite decision within himself. He cannot depend upon much psychological assistance from the mass. To gain the internal resources for a temperate life, each person must build a structure of conviction which satisfies his own requirements, and gives him adequate reasons for the control of excessive appetites. Fortunately, character does not depend upon externals for its survival. Each person is a law unto himself, but he must operate from a concept which is meaningful and purposeful. Without such a concept, we cannot evolve satisfactory precepts or rules; and without rules, we cannot civilize ourselves.

Some day we shall develop a technique of preventative medicine, which will be founded in the concept of philosophical

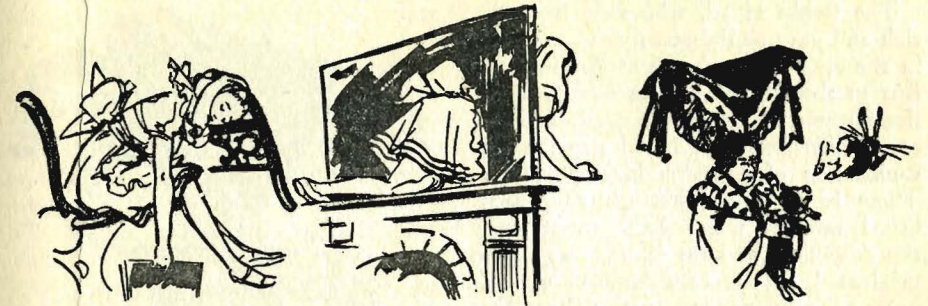
therapy. We have never thought of philosophy as a medicine, but certainly it is suitable for the healing of the diseases of the mind and the imagination. Philosophical therapy is the establishment within the personality of a code of reasonable convictions by which desperate uncertainties are resolved. Once the individual has put his ideals in order, he cannot fail to apply them to his material affairs whenever the need arises. Functioning from an internal integration, he is not subject to those vague panics of his emotions and nerves which drive him to physical excesses. Wisdom is the universal medicine, even as ignorance is the world disease.

While we cannot become completely wise, we can with a little effort become sufficiently thoughtful to administer our conduct with some semblance of dignity. Until our educational system educates us in essential values, we shall exhibit our ethical bankruptcy by habits and practices which reveal the untutored state of the soul and mind in a world proud of its learning. The alcoholic will have to grow up a little inside if he wishes to outgrow the physical symptoms of his perpetual adolescence.



#### VITAL STATISTICS

According to Dr. Franz Weidenreich, research associate of the American Museum of Natural History, there may have been a prehistoric man twice as big as a gorilla, and four times as ugly. The Doctor has a fossil jaw from the island of Java and some teeth discovered in the shop of a Hong Kong chemist to sustain his belief that there were, in sober truth, giants upon the earth in the long-departed past.



## Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

### The Thieves' Market

In ancient times, cities and communities set aside districts or streets where stolen goods could be freely and openly advertised. Pilfered articles which reached these markets could not be reclaimed by their former owners except by repurchase. The psychology involved reveals an interesting sidelight on social customs and the codes of early law.

In ancient society, there were associations of thieves. The candidates were initiated by elaborate rituals, and were bound by oaths and obligations. Sometimes the thieves were dedicated to the service of one of the gods who had a reputation for corruptibility. Among the Greeks and Latins, Mercury was the patron deity of secret Orders of brigands, highwaymen, and the dishonest gentry in general. The dexterity associated with this winged genius caused him to be the particular patron of pickpockets. Among the Scandinavians, the god Odin was believed to be the protector of law-breakers.

The confusion resulting from almost constant warfare undermined all concepts of honorable allegiances. Quite possibly, early groups of thieves were involved in politics. They continued to

sabotage conquerors and despots long after organized resistance had ceased. Open class-warfare was also a vital factor. The underprivileged majority organized itself against entrenched exploitation. The wealthy aristocrat was both feared and hated. Anything that discomforted him received encouragement and support from the masses. The lesser thief, if he succeeded in outwitting the greater one, became a popular hero.

The rich were forever stealing from the poor, under one pretext or another. The plump abbot with his bloated purse, the shrewd moneylender with his massive strongbox, the banker who had tampered with his scales, the merchant who short-changed and short-weighted his customers, and the dissolute prince who taxed his provinces to gratify his own intemperances: these were the great criminals. Against the injustices of such "honorable citizens," there was no legal recourse. No man was optimistic enough to believe that he would find redress by appeals to courts of law. The fat judge was party to the prevailing iniquity, and took for himself, in the form of fines, anything which his confreres had overlooked.

The Robin Hood, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor, was a criminal in the eyes of the sheriff of Nottingham. But to the Empire of the Greenwood—the farmers, peasants, the poor, and the overburdened—Robin Hood was the personification of a divine kind of justice. There is no doubt that many of those broad reforms which later swept away the despotism of both Church and State originated in the confederation of beggars, adventurers, and petty thieves that flourished in all large communities. The Beggars' Empire of Francois Villon that held court in the sewers under Paris was a typical example of early resistance-movements.

We are not here to defend brigandage or those addicted to breaking and entering. We are only observing the historical fact that such a condition existed and flourished in the merry days of yore. The selling of stolen goods always presented difficulties, especially when a man could be broken on the rack, hanged, quartered, or dipped in boiling oil for stealing twopence-halfpenny. Many a culprit was slowly tortured to death for a theft involving less than a dollar in actual value. There was seldom a day when there was not some fruit hanging on the gallows tree.

When the local church discovered its silver plate to be missing or some grand family was short several bottles of its most precious vintage, the situation called not only for justice, but also for sober reflection. Obviously, the thief would have to dispose of his ill-gotten gains for a fraction of the real value. He might even escape to another country or bury the loot, be killed in a later escapade, and the goods hopelessly lost. If a clever rascal succeeded in outwitting the defenses which a rich man placed about his worldly possessions, the wiser course might be arbitration. In this way, thieves' markets came into existence. It was mutually understood by all parties concerned that transactions within this specified zone should be "as is and no questions asked." The morning after the disappearance of the abbey's plate, a discreet Brother hid himself to the rendezvous of those questionable char-



acters with unquestionable skill. Here he might find the missing articles tastefully displayed. Usually, he could buy them back for a quarter of their value, and even gather a little advice as to practical means for preventing a repetition of the crime. He might even pass the time of day with the actual thief, who had all the manners of a righteous and God-fearing citizen. It has even happened that the man who stole the goods helped to carry it back to the church, in an outburst of good disposition.

There are still thieves' markets in several countries, but today most of them secure their merchandise by legitimate means. It has been noted, however, that good solid citizens love to frequent these bazaars in the hope that they might pick up "for a song" some bauble pilfered from a Grand Duke. Even now, there is considerable illegal traffic in fine art. Many priceless pieces exhibited and sold by respectable merchants have long histories of crime and tragedy. Most countries which prohibit the legal export of their antiquities or archaeological treasures are being pilfered everyday. Sharp merchants hire local talent to do the stealing, bribing, and the like, and the loot is flown across the borders at night in high-powered planes. Whole palaces and temples disappear, and where governments are shaky, even the State Museum,

Library, or Art Gallery may be stripped in a few weeks.

Strangely enough, there is always a good market for stolen goods. Even famous works of art which cannot be publicly exhibited are bought and kept secretly for years so that the purchaser can have the satisfaction of possession. The looting of Asia is especially profitable, and the Asiatics themselves are always ready to co-operate. Bandit generals are a practical source of art treasures, as one of their principal activities is looting towns and villages. Most of these war lords have "connections," and supply markets in Europe and America.

Dealers in stolen goods must always be on their guard against "dishonesty," as no redress is possible, and complaints result in unfavorable publicity. There is a very profitable trade in cleverly made fakes and reasonable facsimiles. There are factories known to interested parties which will copy almost anything so accurately as to deceive all but the greatest experts. The finest museums of the world and the most reputable dealers are imposed upon, at least occasionally. Many priceless items finally must be discarded as clever imitations. The purchase of expensive works of art under shady circumstances or from unproven sources is almost certain to result in a waste of money.

The thieves' market in Peking survived the vicissitudes which ended such bourses in other countries. Until the recent period of warfare, it was a thriving area combining several standards of business ethics and practice. In some

cases, thieves brought in their goods to blandly-honest merchants; and in others, the blandly-honest merchants were the greater thieves. It seems that in practice Chinese life is an endless cycle of bartering, swapping, and grand larceny. About half of the displays was worthless junk, for which elaborate and fascinating histories had been invented on the spur of the moment. The amber proved to be celluloid; the jade, green glass; the bronze, painted lead, and the antique paintings were being manufactured daily by the family in a small room behind the store. Under the dirt and the glamour, numerous inconsistencies were overlooked, and the thieves' market was an appropriate description of the prevailing policy.

Here and there, however, a genuinely fine item has been found, but it was quite possible that the grinning, toothless merchant was unaware of the facts. While walking through one of the narrow streets with a friend, we were attracted to what appeared to be a large and important piece of jade. It was a rough, green rock weighing several pounds, and in one surface was deeply cut a procession of pilgrims and officials climbing a narrow path. After consultation, my friend decided to buy the piece for twenty-five Mexican dollars. Later, Tiffany appraised the item at \$10,000. No one knows where it came from, and probably no one ever will. Stories like this perpetuate the thieves' markets, but it may be noted that bargains are becoming fewer every year.



In the River Elb there is a rock known throughout Europe as the "famine stone." As the water in the river falls, this stone becomes visible, and is inscribed with the words: "Whenever you can see me, you will cry." The phenomenon is caused by drought, and the inscription is now visible.

*Ex Libris P.R.S.*

## Dante's Divine Comedy

DANTE Alighieri (1265-1321) though generally honored as a poet, must be included among the Humanist philosophers who cultivated mystical speculations. Although Dante's political career was deeply involved in those civil wars between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, which burdened the State of Florence, he found time to pursue an intensive literary career.

Most biographies of Dante are typical of the spirit which pervades accounts of careers somewhat out of the ordinary. The writers tell us that nothing is known about the youth and immaturity of the great poet. He is believed to have been studious; not exactly a daring observation in the light of subsequent events. There is some question as to the bracket of Florentine society to which the family of Dante, or Durante, belonged. Historians generally like to find a trace of aristocracy in the background of notable persons. In this case, they have decided that distinguished ancestry entitled the poet to a place on the outer fringe of higher gentility. Had he been an aristocrat, he could not have occupied so prominent a place in movements which rejected completely all members of noble or illustrious families. The common man was king for a day, and Dante's popularity depended upon his name being unsullied by blue blood.

The young man developed an early acquaintance with amatory poets and their passionate productions. He had enough melancholy in his disposition to fit him for heart-sick devotion to unpopular causes. At the same time, he was a keen observationalist with large talents in the delineation of human character. Like most of the Troubadours, he concealed his true objectives, but he

never wavered in his allegiance to the practical principles of Humanistic reform.

It has been said of Dante that he was the last poet of the medieval world, and the first poet of modern time. He was a citizen and senator of Florence. Voltaire refers to him as a prior, not of the Church but of the State. The poet came from an old Florentine family of decent but not illustrious circumstances. The family gained pride and comfort by tracing its lineage to ancient Roman stock. Dante's early life was influenced strongly by his vicarious passion for Beatrice, his deep regard for the aged poet, Guido Cavalcanti, and his profound respect for the philosopher and statesman, Brunetto Latini. The Alighieri family was deeply involved in the factional strife of the "Whites" and the "Blacks." The poet's forebears had fought and bled for the Guelphs, but Dante himself cast his fortunes with the Ghibellines. Unfortunate involvement in politics is a concise statement of the poet's public career.

There were early interludes of scholarship, amorous pinings after the unattainable, and a brief period of active service in a cavalry regiment. Beatrice died when Dante was about twenty-five years old. Although he worshiped her from afar, her passing had a most demoralizing effect upon the young man. He fell into so dissolute and depraved a way of life that historians and Dantophilists have considered it an act of Christian kindness to ignore the interlude completely. If the greater sinner makes the greater saint, Dante was laying the foundation for a most exalted place.

The sobering influence of years and the innate nobility of Dante's mind rescued him in due course, and restored

him to the respect and esteem of that faction of the Florentines with whom he had cast his political lot. He married a lady of noble birth, by whom he had at least four children. He had trusted his fortunes with the people against the more turbulent aristocrats. He rose as the fortunes of the people ascended, and fell when the noble faction regained authority. Several charges were made against him, including misuse of public office, nonconformity with the teachings of the Church, and such unusual complaints as were sufficient to ruin a man in those days. His goods and properties were confiscated; he was sentenced to perpetual exclusion from all public office; first, exiled for two years, and finally, condemned to death if he ever set foot within the power of the Commune.

In spite of his inclusion of several Popes and other high prelates among those consigned to the inferno, it does not appear that Dante suffered particularly from the ecclesiastical machinery after he was exiled from Florence. The Church is inclined to recognize him as one of her most illustrious sons, on the grounds that, although he attacked certain particular vices then prevalent in the religious hierarchy, he exhibited a proper respect and reverence for the fundamental doctrines of the faith. Dante's wife, by virtue of her family associations, appears to have escaped the trials and tribulations which burdened the dishonored poet. She did not follow him into exile, but he was later joined by his two sons and one of his daughters. Scholars have wondered why Dante never referred to his wife in his writings. It has been assumed that his mystical adoration of Beatrice completely filled his heart, but there is the practical consideration that the proud lady of the Donatis never even visited her husband after his sentence of exile.

One of the most valuable keys to Dante's inner life is his celebrated letter to Can Grande della Scala. Although the authenticity of this letter has been questioned, there is a growing conviction that it is genuine. In the letter, the poet dedicates the *Paradisio* to Can Grande, and explains, at some length, the mys-

ticism of his cosmic scheme. Dante advanced the testimonies of several canonized Church philosophers to defend the possibility of the elevation of the mind to an exalted state of spiritual apperception. There is a definite implication that Dante himself had received such a religious experience, and that the substance thereof was so exalted as to be beyond adequate description.

Like St. Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi, Dante's illumination seems to be intimately associated with repentance and contrition. The burden of guilt hangs heavily on the human soul, especially in times which emphasize the divine ministry of conscience. Dante's intemperances as a young man preyed upon his mind, setting in motion those subtle forces which fashion the saint from the base matter of the sinner. The powerful emotions which distinguish the Latin temperament worked a miracle within the flesh of the poet. His longing for the consolation of the spirit became so overwhelming that it is reported that he could not contemplate the wonders of the heavenly mercy without falling into a state of ecstasy resembling catalepsy.

The last vestiges of Dante's human instincts were expressed in his longing to return to Florence, the city that he loved, and in his ardent devotion to the cause of his long-suffering fellow man. He was a son of the future, dreaming of a social commonwealth which would bring security, peace, and honor to all humanity. He lived to no great age, and in his fifty-sixth year he returned to Ravenna from an embassy to Venice to avert a war. He sickened on the journey home and died of a fever soon after reaching Ravenna. He was buried with pomp and circumstance in the Church of the Friars Minor, his head crowned with laurel and "garbed as a poet and a philosopher."

It is certain that Dante was a Troubadour, and the principal concerns of his mind parallel the program of these tragic poets of unrequited love. No other intellectual of the period so clearly indicates the political convictions of the Troubadours and other heretical groups. Dante was an apostle of rational philos-

ophy in a world of mystical extension. Well-read in the theological and political texts available to the medieval scholar, he dedicated his life and capacities to the service of social progress and to the rights of man. Naturally, he was restricted by the narrow horizons of the period, but he was strengthened by a fertile and intensive genius. Unfortunately, his convictions were beyond the comprehension of the majority of his contemporaries, and even today the more subtle parts of his concepts are overlooked or ignored.

In the *Divina Commedia* (*Divine Comedy*) a great part of Dante's esoteric philosophy is revealed. Of course, Dante titled his work only the *Commedia*. The epithet *Divina* was not added until some three hundred years after Dante's death. The *Commedia*, one of the most extraordinary works ever written, could only have been produced under the massive pressures (political and religious) which dominated the 13th and 14th centuries. The heresies were beginning to gain a measure of temporal authority. The struggle to establish and maintain democratic institutions led to bitter programs of revenge and retaliation. Although Dante suffered considerably and was exiled for years from his beloved city, he was more fortunate than many of his contemporaries. Not a few outspoken liberals paid with their lives for their convictions, but it appeared that Dante's language was so elegant and so subtle that his opinions were not clearly understood by his less literate if more influential opponents.

The philosophical symbolism of Dante centers around three persons, each historical in a sense, but all employed unhistorically in the vast allegory of the *Commedia*. First, there is the poet himself, for Dante becomes the hero of his own cosmic fiction. He ceases to be the Florentine poet, and is revealed as "the observer." So successful was Dante's use of his own character that it was widely reported that the *Purgatorio* was the faithful account of an actual journey.

The character of Virgil is introduced in the capacity of a guide or companion. He accompanies the poet and personifies

the philosophical powers of the mind. We must seek deeper, however, if we would understand the larger implications of the story. Virgil was one of the last pagan initiates, and the account of his initiation into the old Mysteries is preserved in the *Aeneid*. In this description, Aeneas is led to the gates of Hell by a Sibyl, and experiences fragments of the great Eleusinian Rites. Dante was well acquainted with this report, and used Virgil to represent natural religious philosophy uncontaminated by ecclesiastical authority. The Humanists, striving toward the reign of reason, emphasized the dignity of natural law as it operated in a divine world. Virtue consisted of obedience to the simple, reasonable, obvious, and ever-present patterns of morality, ethics, and utility. Virgil embodies the motion toward realism and social consciousness which was preparing the way for the modern concept of living.

Beatrice personifies mysticism, without which natural philosophy is imperfect and inadequate. Virgil guides Dante through the Underworld, but Beatrice becomes his companion as he ascends to the contemplation of the Divine Mystery. Here Dante reveals his dependence upon the Neoplatonic doctrine of the mystical experience. Natural religion and philosophy can explain the physical phenomena of man's mundane state, but only the intuitional and inspirational faculties of the soul can ascend to the examination of the substance of First Cause. As we unlock the symbolism of Beatrice, we find the answer to the whole cycle of the love-sick poetry of the Troubadours. The ancients recognized the powers of the soul as emanations of a subtle principle within man himself which serves as a bridge between materialism and complete illumination. The soul is the guide of man's inner life, as the mind is the guide of his outer life.

In the symbolism, Dante, the candidate for enlightenment about to experience an initiation into the universal mystery, ventures forth on Good Friday to learn the inner meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. At the beginning of his ritualistic journey, the poet finds himself in a deep and gloomy forest, in



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the early morning in the year of grace, 1300. The wild and menacing terrain represents the uncertainty of the mortal state. In the forest of doctrines, creeds, concepts, traditions, and dogmas, the truth seeker is lost. This symbolism also is derived from the Courts of Love, and from all those legends in which the bard or the knight-errant rides forth into a dreary, wooded region.

As Dante attempts to free himself from the uncertainty of the forest and to climb the mountain of peace and internal security, he is prevented from doing so by the presence of three animals: a wolf, a leopard, and a lion. These beasts are embodiments of those organized forces of society which are resolved to prevent the human soul from attaining enlightenment. To many of the medieval heretics, the wolf was the symbol of Rome. Even after the imperial city became the throne of the Popes, it was remembered that it was founded by Romulus and Remus, the nurselings of the she-wolf. When the Church began hunting down the heretics, these persecuted Humanists decided that

the wolf was an appropriate symbol of their common enemy.

In support of the contention that the she-wolf signifies the power of Rome, reference should be made to the *Inferno*, *Canto Primo*, line 101. Dante, overwhelmed and appalled at the ravaging she-wolf, is comforted by the promise that he must wait "until that greyhound come, who shall destroy her with sharp pain." The Italian word for greyhound is *veltro*. It should also be borne in mind that at that period *u* and *v* were interchangeable, so the word could be spelled *ueltro*, without any unreasonable license. The astrologer Landino, commenting on Dante's use of *veltro*, wrote: "It is certain, that in the year 1484, on the 15th day of November, at 13 hours and 41 minutes, will be the conjunction of Saturn with Jupiter in the Scorpion. This indicates a *change of religion*; and since Jove predominates, it will be a *favorable change*. I have, therefore, a firm confidence that the Christian Commonwealth will then be brought into an excellent condition of discipline and government."

The first edition of Landino's *Commentary* was dated Florence, 1481, three years previous to the event predicted. In the very year and month prophesied by Landino, Martin Luther was born. There is some confusion as to the birth data of this celebrated reformer. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* gives the date November 10, 1483, following the mathematicians, Jerome Cardan and Francis Junctinus. Philipp Melancthon asked Luther's mother when her illustrious son was born, but she could remember only the hour and day, and could not recall the year exactly. According to her, Martin was born on the 10th of November, between eleven and twelve at night. Lucas Gauricus, in *Tractatu Astrologico, etc.*, revealed not only his mathematical skill but also his theological biases in describing Luther's nativity thus: "This is wonderful and dreadful; the conjunction of five planets in Scorpio, in the ninth house, which was ascribed by the Arabians to religion, was the cause of his being a sacrilegious heretic."

It seems possible, therefore, that Landino's prognostication might have been correct within five days, for *veltro* or *ueltro* is the exact anagram of Lutero, the greyhound (Luther had been a monk) who was to overcome and discomfort the wolf. If there is any pattern underlying Dante's selection of certain words, we have to consider the possibility that he also possessed dimensions as a prophet. We know from the structure of the *Comedy* that he was fully acquainted with the principles of astrology, and included his own horoscope in the verses. He was not the only mystic to set forth profound ideas in *gergo*; that is, in confused or unintelligible form.

The leopard, which is proverbial for the fact that it cannot change its spots, seems to be used by Dante to represent the peculiar static of masses. The great Humanist program of universal reformation and enlightenment is frustrated by the inertia and indifference of those for whom the program is intended. The herd instinct, as it is referred to by modern psychologists, is not dependable. It lacks continuity of purpose and is sub-

ject to unpredictable moods and intemperances. The collective turns upon its natural prophets and leaders and, urged on by propaganda and advantage, persecutes and destroys those who seek to improve its state. The law of the jungle is old and deeply rooted within the human constitution. It requires long periods of time to transmute the way of the beast to the way of Christ.

By the lion, which is the king of the animal world in the ancient symbolism, is represented the temporal power of the State. The aristocracy and nobility, the entrenched authority of princes, and their conspiracy to survive at the expense of the masses bar the way to the material establishment of the Philosophical Empire. The herd is governed by the strongest of its own kind, and the struggle for the strategic position of ruler of the herd goes on century after century. Dante realized that the powers of the human soul could never be released until some means were found to free himself (the truth seeker) from the conspiracy of the institutions of worldliness. These bar the way to the mountains of illumination.

Thus we perceive beneath the surface of Dante's concept a factor which has been called *conversion*. This may be defined as a mystical motion of consciousness away from the world and toward the spirit. Some authorities believe that the experience of conversion came to Dante when he was about thirty-five years old. The mood resulted in a series of revulsions against such persons and institutions as personified the unregenerate way of life. The mystic overcomes the world by renouncing its significance to himself. This renunciation brings with it an exhilaration, ecstasy, or enthusiasm — an at-one-ment (atonement) with God. The mystical experience was the goal of the Troubadours and other Albigensian heretics of the time. It was the discovery of God outside and beyond the authority of the Church.

As the forest represents the mortal jungle, the beasts inhabiting it and threatening those attempting to journey along the narrow and dismal pathways are, of course, the animal propensities of man

himself. The three ferocious animals are cupidity, pride, and lust. These govern a sphere of mortal ambition—that path of glory which leads but to the grave. In his interpretation of the beasts, Dante comes very close to the ethical philosophy of Buddha. The Indian sage taught that the wheel of birth and death turned on an axis of mortal pain. The three primary vices of man were responsible for the rotation of the Wheel of Illusion. There can be no escape from maya, the dream of desire, until the aspiring mystic discovers within himself the mystery of the Middle Road.

In the midst of the dilemma, Virgil comes to the assistance of the confused poet. We, therefore, sense the possibility that Virgil represents not only natural religious philosophy, but also one of the initiated Albigensian bishops, or Perfect Ones. The Golden Bough carried by Aeneas in his descent to Avernus is supposed to have been a branch of mistletoe. This was the sacred plant of the Druids. It was the heavenly parasite nourished and sustained by the powers of the stars and the forces of the sidereal spheres. It was attached to the oak, as the soul was attached to the body, and was contaminated if it came in contact with the earth. Thus, soul power protects the candidate for heavenly mysteries as he wanders through the darkness of the infernal domain.

Although mysticism unfolds within the heart of the mystic, its growth must be guided or the neophyte cannot accomplish his goal. Virgil, as the guide, personifies all the keepers and guardians of the Middle Road. He brings to Dante tidings from three high ladies who are watching over his destiny. The first of these is the Virgin Mary, who stands for the eternal mercy of heaven. In this sense, mercy or compassion is not to be interpreted theologically. Mercy is the providence of salvation, the infinite capacity of universal consciousness to perfect all things. The realization of this benevolent providence is the proper cause for the soul forever giving thanks. This capacity for perfection and the divine benevolence, which provides not only the capacity, but also the inevitable fulfill-

ment of that capacity, is a mystery so profound and so infinitely benevolent as to call forth a timeless, boundless, and immeasurable gratitude. One of the Greeks said that the true mystic abides forever in the state of being grateful.

The second of the gracious ladies is St. Lucia, who here represents the substance of grace itself. Grace is not only a Christian virtue, but is also the virtue of Christ, for it represents divine assistance which is given to man for his regeneration or sanctification. As the Virgin Mary signifies the eternal possibility of salvation, so St. Lucia personifies the eternal means of salvation. Thus, the fact and the means unite in the mystery of conversion. Christ is not only the promise of intercession, but the *way*. This *way* is the internal contemplation of the substance of grace, and the external practice of the way or means by which the human creature justifies his redemption. To abide in the state of grace or the state of the elect is to become a citizen in the commonwealth of God.

The third lady is Beatrice, temporarily the institution of mystical religion. She is the True Church, the assembly, the congregation, the communion of the elect. This *ecclesia* adorned as a bride prepares itself to become the Bride of the Lamb. The sacrament of conversion is here represented as a wedding, and those who have experienced the internal mystery prepare their wedding garments for the symbolic Feast of the Bridegroom. Beatrice is, of course, the spiritual power of Mother Nature. She is both the world-soul and the human-soul, which are fashioned in the likeness of the eternal. Regenerated humanity transforms the mother of all that lives, the *mater deorum* of the pagans into the Mother of Mysteries, sometimes called Diana, the great goddess of the Ephesians. Thus, Isis and all similar divinities represent the assembly of those who have attained the conversion. These are the True Church, the Everlasting Witnesses—those who have kept the faith.

Buddhism represents this experience of consciousness as three jewels—the law, the way, and the assembly. There is no essential difference between the Eastern

and the Western concepts. The terms change, but the truth cannot change. That which is real is not susceptible to alteration of substance, but appears to change because of the unfoldment of interpretation. Man changes toward truth, arriving at an unfolding sequence of definitions. By conversion, consciousness experiences a nearness to truth, but may not unveil the absolute substance of the mystery.

Thus, we see that Dante unfolds a cosmic drama by revealing creation to be the unfoldment of the divine nature, and regeneration as man's acceptance of this fact. The world as we see it and know it ceases to be an end in itself, but only a means to an end. The very body of Satan becomes a bridge. We now approach a very important mystery of doctrine. If the world is in itself not an end, and human security and happiness do not fulfill the human purpose, why is it important to reform the institutions of men? Why not depart completely from these institutions by a will of consciousness, renouncing entirely that which is not the complete fulfillment of man's spiritual necessity?

This reveals the essential structure of mystical Humanism, as this may be distinguished from scientific or political humanism. Since the rise of man's consciousness of his own potential, the concept of a Philosophic Empire in this world has grown and flourished. It has seemed important that the Kingdom of Heaven should be established upon the earth. There must be a mortal paradise, even though mortality itself is an illusion. One of the reasons why most of the religions of the world have contributed but slightly to the physical progress of humanity has been the conviction that his progress is transitory and, therefore, comparatively unimportant. At best, the Utopia can only be a monument to a departed order of life. When man is spiritual enough to rule his material state with internal enlightenment, he will have outgrown his reasons for being in this vale of tears. He accomplishes only to depart.

To the Humanist, the world *ecclesia*, or the congregation of the blessed, is not

an end in itself, but a kind of justification. It is the state of witness; it is the proof that man chooses to live according to the law. The Philosophic Empire is the final sacrament of conversion. It is the calling together of those who dwell in the spirit. The Philosophic Empire is not only the perfect State; it is the True Church. As the word was made flesh and dwelt among us for our redemption, so it is the responsibility of man to build the Everlasting House as proof of his eternal desire and his eternal dedication. The human being has no right to beseech the spirit of God until he himself, by his own works, establishes the state of godliness in his own transitory affairs.

No interpretation of Dante's vision of the *Commedia* can be meaningful without due consideration of the philosophical convictions of the poet. He flourished in that transition period which led to the Renaissance and, later, to the Protestant Reformation. His writings proved beyond any reasonable doubt his familiarity with the noble ideals and doctrines of the ancients. He was heir to the mystical teachings of the Neoplatonists and the Persian cult of Manes. Both of these important sects emphasized illumination as the only means of fulfilling the religious mystery. The details of Dante's conversion to the Hidden Church are lacking, but the indications of such a conversion are conclusive.

Dante had beheld with the eyes of the soul the new heaven and the new earth. He had passed through the twilight of the old gods and was aware of the secret meaning of the Promised Land. He saw the resurrection as a spiritual emergence—a coming forth of realities through the very illusions of material existence. He discovered the ever-spiritual in the apparently material. The light concealed in Nature came forth to meet the light emerging from himself. The Philosophic Empire was always here, everywhere, in everything, waiting to be discovered. Man could not find it in the world until he experienced it in himself.

The Utopia is the proof that the human mind and heart have discovered the truth, not by static acceptance but by

dynamic apperception. To know is to do. The proof of enlightenment is the practice of enlightenment. Deity is proved in its own works, and this proving is the Covenant. Mystics have been accused of spiritual selfishness. It has been said of them that they think only of the enlargement of their own visions and the perfection of their own natures. Those explaining the mystical experience as an intellectual fact may come to such negative opinions, because they have not participated in the universality of the spiritual conversion. It is one thing to describe the light, and quite another thing to dwell in the light. We can learnedly debate about the will of God until we experience that will operating in our own hearts. Once we have ascended into the substance of that divine will, or have received it into ourselves, debate and argument are meritless. The fact moves all things, and in this motion we consider no longer our own will, but the will of Heaven revealed by the alchemy of illumination.

The mystical motion of Humanism was to bring mankind together in the practice of the presence of truth. The human mind, freed from all unreasonable doubts concerning Providence and destiny, abode in the light. As a proof of this eternal establishment, men practiced in their daily works those natural virtues which flow from the fountain of all virtue. There can be neither rejection nor resistance, and that which is less than goodness no longer appears desirable.

The one world of one spirit is the only offering completely acceptable to the one spirit which created and governs all things. A lesser offering reveals that man himself is not ready to take his place in the celestial choir above the circle of the angels. The esoteric doctrine never taught that we should fashion a perfect earth and live there in eternal bliss. Institutions are only embodiments of principles, and the reformation of institutions is only possible through the regeneration of human instincts and impulses. The prodigal son will return to his father's house. There is no provision for a separate existence, even in a state of enlightenment. At least such was the

conviction of the mystics, and every impulse that unfolded within them was opposed to a concept of separateness. They were eternal seekers, ever-questing the substance of the divine nature. They had no adequate terms with which to define the ultimate toward which they aspired. Those who named it never found it, and for those who found it, it remained forever nameless. The mystic understood clearly the difference between the name and the substance. We live in a world of names, but we shall never heal the wound of the world so long as we are satisfied with word formulas of solution. The mystic sought not solution, but absolution. Men could possess the world, but they could not possess God. In the end, God must possess men through their conscious and voluntary acceptance of the divine dicta.

Dante wisely chose the term *commedia* to cover the human tragedy. By the very term, he cast aside, as though it were a play for the amusement of the profane, the whole drama of man's mortal existence. Life without internal realization is, indeed, a comedy of errors. All values appear inverted, as though mirrored from the surface of a deep pool. There is a strange deep irony, a kind of bitter humor in Dante's emblems. His writings have been described as satirical, malicious caricatures, and sharp attacks upon mortal convictions. Yet his very irony, like that of the Eastern Masters of Zen, is a sharp, clean sword to divide the false and true. If it be cynical to remind man that he lives and chooses to live darkly in a world filled with light, then Dante was a cynic. But he knew that the darkness men feared was not in the world but in themselves. As the world is not dark, there is no way in which reformers can bring it light. Man finds the light through the perfection of himself, for all light and all darkness are in his keeping.

The forest of worldly care is a familiar symbol of mortal confusion. It represents not only the tribulations of physical existence, but also the gloomy and foreboding concepts which dominate the administration of human institutions. Always the truth seeker finds himself in

some desolate fastness, surrounded by mortal dangers. The shrine of the Holy Grail stood on a mountain in the midst of a deep wood. Sleeping Beauty was surrounded by a hedge of thorns. Brunhilde, entranced by the thorn of sleep, lay in a distant, rocky place enveloped by walls of fire. The knight-errant traversed gloomy roads, and Eugenius Philalethes described the mountain castle of the Rosy Cross as standing alone in a deep forest filled with monsters and raging beasts. Always the symbolism is the same, for to the mystic this world of mortal care is a place of dark and hazardous activities.

The *Roman de la Rose* describes the great castle of the Courts of Love, covered with curious hieroglyphics and guarded by ferocious animals, as being located in a magic forest. The symbolism, therefore, is traceable directly not only to the cult of the Troubadours, but also to the earlier rituals of the Greek and Egyptian Mysteries. The journey of the soul in search of the Throne Chamber of Osiris of the Underworld in the Egyptian rituals of the dead parallels closely Dante's wanderings through Purgatory and the Inferno. Porphyry, in his commentary on *The Cave of the Nymphs*, and the accounts preserved in the Mithraic Mysteries of Persia, tell the same story of nocturnal and subterranean rites. The Phrygian vision recorded by St. John in *The Apocalypse* and the apocryphal account of Mohammed's *Night Journey to Heaven* are derived from the same basic concept of the structure of the cosmos employed by Dante.

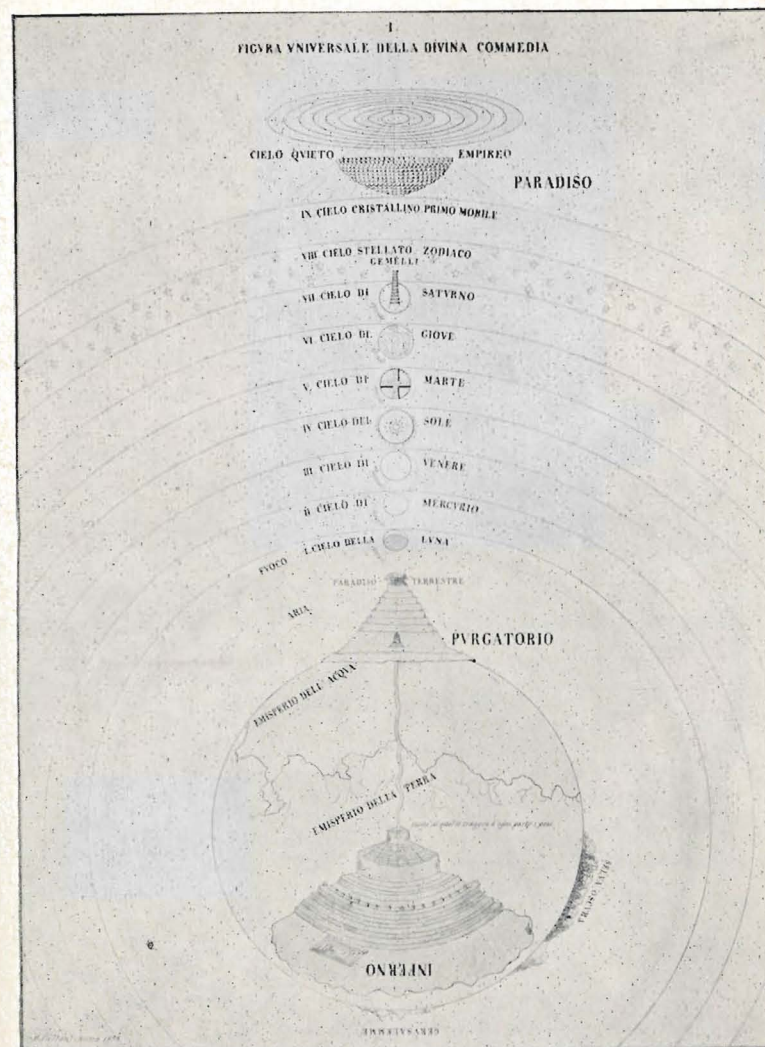
The classic concept of the structure of the cosmos was organized most completely in the sidereal geography of Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria. It survives to us in the now-discarded geocentric system of astronomy. Although the geocentric theory was overthrown by the works of Galileo and Copernicus, it was held valid as a spiritual mystery by certain of the Rosicrucians and cabalists, including Robert Fludd and Michael Maier.

These metaphysicians insisted that the Ptolemaic form or design of the universe was esoterically true, even though the

heliocentric system was exoterically true. According to them, the conflict between the systems was apparent rather than real, inasmuch as they referred to entirely different aspects of universal structure. Researches in the auras or magnetic fields of the human body indicate that these superphysical emanations follow, in their order and arrangement, the geocentric hypothesis. In the cosmogony of the mysteries, it is the element of earth, and not the planet earth, that is placed in the center of the solar system. By extension, matter itself, wherever it may exist as a quality in space, is the lowest degree or state of being. The interval between matter at the lower extremity of a vast organization and spirit at the higher extremity is divided into vibratory intervals or states of ascending life and virtue. The cabalists recognized forty-nine levels or major planes between the two extremes. Pythagoras stretched a hypothetical cord between heaven above and earth below. He called this The Monochord. He calculated the mathematical intervals which he marked hypothetically with frets or bridges, forming in this way a musical instrument. These calculations led him to speculate upon the science of universal harmonics or the Music of the Spheres.

The geocentric or Ptolemaic astronomical pattern is the key to much obscure religious and philosophical symbolism. Without this concept, some of the most remarkable and profound allegories and fables of the ancients are meaningless. The descent of Ishtar through the seven gates, the wanderings of Orpheus in the Underworld, Jacob's vision of the sidereal ladder, the seven terraces of the hanging gardens of Semiramis, the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, the seven spiral levels of the ziggurat of Babel: all these and countless others refer to esoteric astronomy.

Plate 1 of the Supplement shows the general divisions of the world concept according to the *Commedia*. Charles Allen Dinsmore, in his article "The Topography of Dante's Spiritual World," wrote: "He maintained that the earth is round, having a hemisphere of land, in the center of which stands Jerusalem.

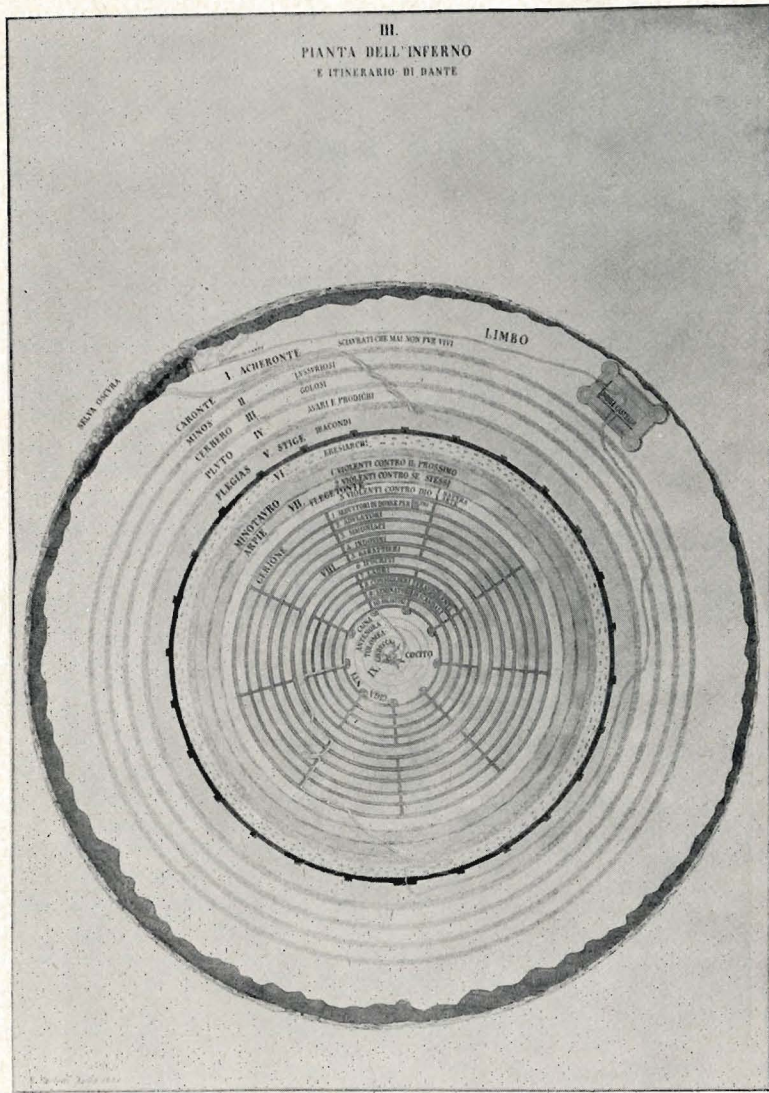


—From *La Materia della Divina Commedia, etc.*, Rome, 1855

#### THE UNIVERSAL FIGURE OF THE DIVINE COMEDY

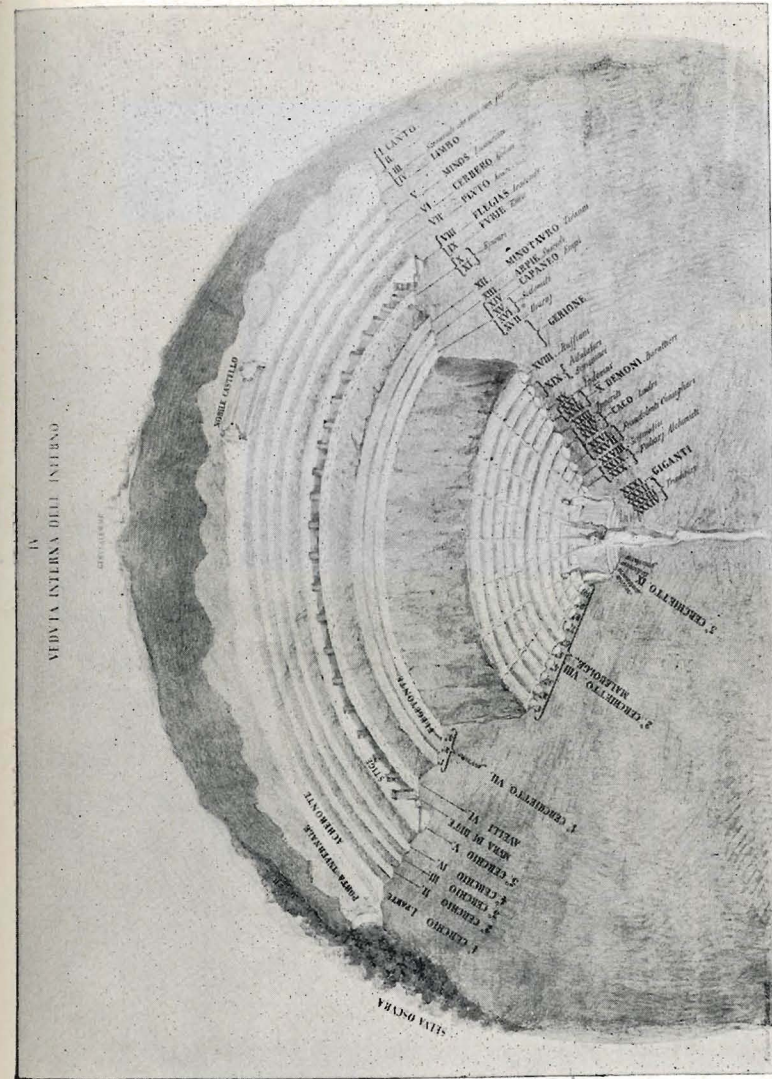
This is the first of a series of designs prepared by M. Caetani to illustrate Dante's cosmological speculations. The three principal parts—the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*—are represented in their proper mutual relationships.



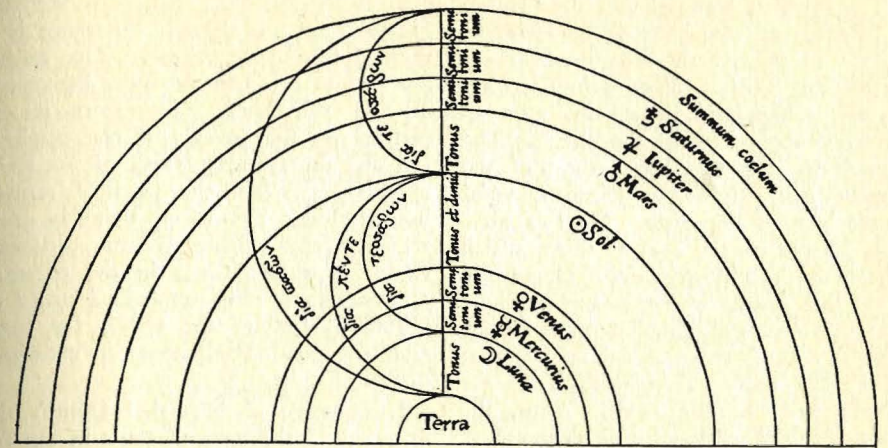


—From *La Materia della Divina Commedia, etc.*  
 PLAN OF THE INFERNO

In this figure, the road taken by Dante in his descent begins at the upper-left side of the figure of the chart, marked *Selva Oscura*. The pathway winds over through the outer sphere of *limbo*, and slowly penetrates to the very center of the strange map.



—From *La Materia della Divina Commedia, etc.*  
 THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE INFERNO  
 The arrangement of the Inferno has been described as a funnel extending to the center of the earth. It should be remembered that in reference to the key-diagram (Plate I in our Supplement) the Inferno should be inverted with the New Jerusalem located directly beneath the pyramid of the Paradiso. The Underworld is represented as divided into thirty-four strata.



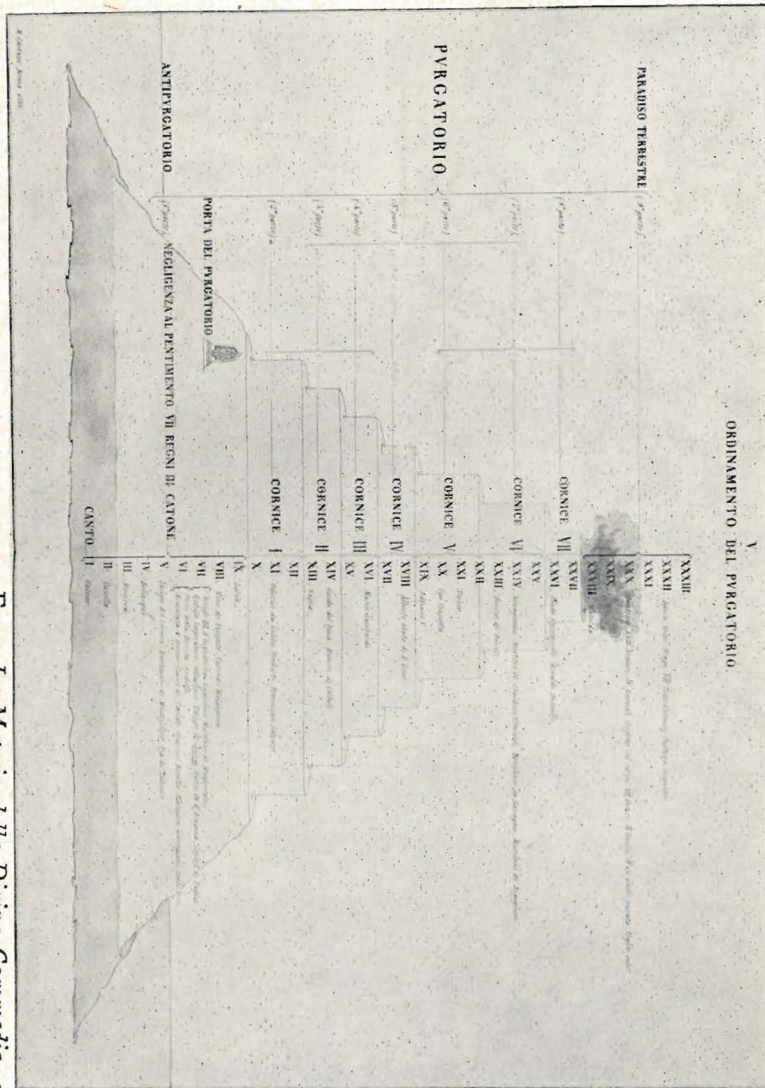
THE PYTHAGOREAN MONOCHORD

The other hemisphere originally contained land; but when Lucifer, hurled from Heaven, was about to fall upon it, the soil 'veiled itself with the sea' and came to the other side of the globe, making a hemisphere of land and a hemisphere of water. The interior of the earth also retreated before the descending Lucifer, leaving a vast conical-shaped cavity, which extended from the center of the globe to the surface of the inhabited hemisphere. The void which evil made in the world is the abode of lost souls, and is divided into nine circles, of which the seventh is subdivided into three smaller circles, the eighth into ten ditches, and the ninth into four belts. At the center of the earth, and thus at the point farthest from God, is Lucifer, with his head and body in one hemisphere, and his legs in the other, so that when Virgil and Dante turned upon his haunch, they passed the center of gravity and emerged from one hemisphere to the other."

In the middle part of the hemisphere of water stands a conical mountain—Purgatory—rising in seven steps, called cornices. On the summit is the terrestrial Paradise, or Garden of Eden, where Dante met Beatrice. As the human soul climbs the seven cornices of Purgatory, it is cleansed of the seven mortal sins, and it then ascends through the seven spheres of the Ptolemaic universe. To each of the planets is assigned one

of the seven virtues. In the eighth sphere, the soul receives the knowledge of spiritual truth; and in the ninth or highest, it is absorbed into the celestial mysteries. (See *Encyclopedic Outline of Symbolical Philosophy*, p. XVII, by Manly Hall.)

Assuming that by the term *earth* Dante actually intended the element so-named by the ancients, and not the planet, we can understand the division into hemispheres of land and water. Paracelsus, for example, pointed out that material substance existed in two qualities: one solid, and the other dense. These two states he called physical and etheric. The higher parts of matter formed an etheric envelope surrounding the earth and causing it to float like a ship in a sea of subtle humidic substance. The Greeks taught that souls descending into physical birth passed through a mysterious fluidic medium, and in most religious systems, the dead, departing from the mortal state, must cross a river, a sea, or an expanse of water, on the farther shore of which is the abode of blessed spirits. The Buddhist crosses the unchartered ocean in the Ship of the Doctrine. The old Grecian believed that he must cross the River Styx in Charon's decrepit boat. Old Christian hymns describe "how we shall meet on the other shore," and that "there is one more river to cross."



THE CORNICES OF THE PURGATORIO

—From *La Materia della Divina Commedia*, etc.

Dante's ascent through the thirty-three degrees, represented by Cantos of the *Purgatorio*, is here diagrammatically set forth. It is on the summit of this pyramid in a grove of trees that Dante meets Beatrice and prepares for his ascent through the orbits of the planets and stars.

The cabalists believed that the Garden of Eden, or the terrestrial Paradise, existed in the etheric sphere which enclosed the earth. Here primitive humanity, represented by Adam, went to school in the college of the angels. The mysterious Fall was the descent of the human being into the dense material hemisphere of the earth. On this occasion, he put on the coat of skins, which represents the physical body. Dante employs this system of symbolism to show that the terrestrial Paradise exists in the highest part of the material sphere; that is, in the most subtle stratum of the etheric body of the earth. Thus, the most material parts of the elements of earth constitute the Inferno; and the least material parts, an ascending order of attenuation, rising to an apex corresponding with Eden.

We now recognize three essential divisions within the structure of creation. These are the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso. These correspond closely to the cabalism of Paracelsus, who distinguished three essential parts in the compound of man by which he is bound to the threefold structure of the world. Paracelsus wrote that man had a spirit from the stars, a soul from the planets, and a body from the elements. In the cosmogony of Dante, we have analogies with this concept. The body is the sepulcher of the soul; and the soul, completely enslaved by the instincts and appetites of the body, is imprisoned in the Inferno. The redemption of the soul and its ascent to the higher and more luminous substances of a purified body are symbolized by the ascent of the cornices which lead to the Edenic Paradise. Incidentally, it is upon the flat platform at the summit of the cornices that the Philosophic Empire must be established. The pyramidal hill which supports Eden is the philosophical mountain, and a proper clue to the whole cycle of pyramid symbols. Here is located the primal sphere of innocence and the final sphere of virtue. The transmutation of innocence into virtue is accomplished by the symbolic journey; that is, the Fall and the Resurrection.

It is by the Fall that man becomes greater than the angels. Innocence is a state antipodal to virtue. The angels are said to abide in perpetual innocence, adoring the Lord. The story is explained by the parable of the prodigal son and the Gnostic *Hymn of the Robe of Glory*. When the prodigal returns home, sadder but wiser, there is great rejoicing, for virtue is the conscious choice of righteousness in the presence of temptation. The symbolic journey of initiation signifies the search for truth and the final attainment of conscious virtue.

It must be obvious that Dante's description of the state of souls in the *Inferno* is completely allegorical. He is setting forth a mystery, which must be accepted in the spirit rather than with the literal faculties of the mind. The ancients had various descriptions of Hades, Tartarus, or the abode of Dis. The concept of immortality as we understand the term is comparatively recent. Primitive peoples believed the tomb to be the doorway of a subterranean region, in which the dead dwelt much as they had in life, only restricted by the gloomy dimensions of an Underworld. At first, there was no clear conception of the post-mortem state. It was usual to bury with the dead such of their earthly belongings as might add to their comfort. The ancestors lived on in their mounds, doing the same things and having the same attachments which had concerned their earthly existences. The Egyptians buried models of farms and barns and granaries with their landed gentry, so the landlord could continue to collect his rents and supervise his establishments. The old Chinese did the same; and among the Nordics, provision was made for perpetual feasting when old warriors should gather to recount their former exploits.

There was no provision for punishment, and no emphasis upon future reward. The ghostly existence went on forever, and even Homer did not offer any consolation to the dead. They were a ghostly empire, wandering about in an endless, shadowy sphere where the light of the sun never reached. If there

was little of joy in this concept, there was also little of pain. The sadness lay in the eternal monotony; but this was the ultimate of all that lived, and over the inevitable, one should not grieve.

It was only with the conviction of a divine purpose operating through the laws of Nature that the concept of a purgatorial state was evolved. Life in the grave was no longer eternal, but a transition from a mortal condition to one of immortality. Punishments and rewards beyond the grave determined codes of conduct before death. There was little evidence of justice in the affairs of ambitious mortals, so a judgment was set up in the Underworld. In this court, there could be no corruption, and each man was judged according to his works. In the classical civilizations, the concept of an eternal condition after death ceased almost completely. Purification led in the end to the redemption of all souls. Rebirth gave new opportunity for growth and perfection, and the after-death state became a temporary zone for the clarification of moral, ethical, and spiritual values. It was only after the rise of the temporal power of the Church that the idea of eternal perdition, especially as the penalty for nonconformity, was emphasized as a means of terrifying man into a hollow semblance of a state of grace.

According to early mystical Christian records, Christ, during the three days in the tomb, descended as a spirit into the deepest parts of Hell, and brought the promise of ultimate forgiveness to lost souls. The same is reported in the Buddhist legends. Buddha, by the magical multiplication of himself, appeared as a projection of consciousness in the six states or conditions, and brought to the creatures inhabiting all of them the promise of liberation.

The Egyptians revealed the mystery of the Inferno, when they taught that it was a zone set aside for the annihilation and ultimate disintegration of the lower astral bodies cast off by evolving souls. These discarded vehicles were called "sin bodies"—demoniacal entities degenerated by perversion in the same way that the soul-body or luminous vehicle

is generated by the practice of the virtues. Such demons as the incubus and the succubus were the progeny of human corruption. Perhaps they may be likened to the destructive phobias, complexes, neuroses, and so forth, that finally take possession of the human mind and impel it to its own destruction. Evil thoughts and evil desires can and do corrupt the lower vehicles of the human being; and after death, these vehicles were believed by the ancients to drift about, becoming malignant parasites.

The Oriental avichi, or sphere of lost souls, is where these shells or ghosts are finally destroyed by the negative forces within themselves. While the ghosts may bear the appearances of their former earthly incarnations, they are only empty shells, from which the life has already departed after certain purgatorial purifications. Thus, it is not actually men, but the excesses of men, that Dante sees suffering for their crimes. Excess tortures itself and finally destroys itself. Historical persons remembered for certain excesses and crimes become the symbols of these crimes, but it is the crime and not the criminal that is finally dissolved in Perdition.

All the ancient Mysteries practiced three rites or degrees, corresponding with Dante's divisions of the world. The first degree of the sacred rituals was purification; the second, discipline, and the third, illumination. Purification is the release of consciousness from the instincts and appetites by which it is held in bondage to the illusion of matter. It is a mistake to assume that purification is attained by inhibition or frustration. It results from a conviction of right use, and the unfoldment of conscious purpose. The body, which has long dominated the person who dwells within it, must relinquish its tyranny and become the servant of its natural and proper master. Rites of purification included the cleansing of the body by hygienic means, exercise, and moderation of all habits and appetites. But most of all, purification was the liberation of the whole personality from the tyranny of the senses and the despotism of the mental ambitions.

One writer has suggested that the *Commedia* deals with three spiritual conditions of the soul, consequent upon its attitude toward sin. "The *Inferno* treats of sin indulged in, the *Purgatorio* of sin repented of, and the *Paradisio* of sin overcome." The seven capital sins are listed as pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and incontinence. If we recognize love as devotion to the divine law, the first three sins are the effect of love perverted, the last three of profane love excessive, and the middle one (sloth) as love defective. The early Church recognized a definite division between sin and crime. Crime is an act against the State, and is punished by penalties of law. Sin is an act which results in alienation of the heart from God, and must be atoned for by repentance. Thus, the State punishes the *deed*, and the Church requires atonement for the *intent*.

The second degree of the sacred rituals was discipline, which partakes of the quality of repentance or atonement. Discipline is an act motivated from within the self, by which the consciousness accepts responsibility for spiritual growth. Philosophy uses the term *discipline* to include both the rational concept of conscious growth and the science of personal unfoldment according to a prescribed program. The secret sciences of the Mystery Schools operated according to a concept of works. Repentance is not merely contrition or the acknowledgement of sin; it is a motion toward truth according to law. The disciplines could be either philosophical or mystical; that is, by the machinery of reason or faith. Reason was a conversion of the self by rational procedure. Faith was a conversion of the self by an experience of emotion. The symbolical alchemical marriage of the sun and moon, from which union was born the adept, signifies the mingling of the forces of the mind and the heart, through which the illumination is attained.

The ancient disciplines enlarged the capacity to know, for knowledge alone is the remedy for the conflict of opinions. Men may differ in thinking, believing or feeling, but they cannot differ in knowing. To know, one must be cap-

able of the complete acceptance and experience of the fact. This is not possible while the mind is dominated by material illusions or the emotions are enslaved by the physical appetites. Yet, excess is not to be conquered by excess. War, even against evil, cannot bring peace. Discipline, therefore, is not obedience resulting from pressure of the will or from violent resistance to temptation. It is co-operation through understanding, and the power to understand must be enlarged and cultivated toward this end.

The *Purgatorio* is keyed to the concept of cause and effect. Suffering is the consequence of ignorance. Peace is the consequence of perfected love-wisdom. The struggle to redeem the soul from bondage to misery is consummated by ceasing the courses of action which must result in misery. To cease the cause is to end the effect. The Mysteries acknowledge no other liberation except freedom from the impulse to wrong action. Within the circles of the *Purgatorio*, the mystery of salvation is symbolically exhibited. The process culminates in the terrestrial Paradise, the equilibrium which results from freedom from excess without slothfulness or inertia. Equilibrium is not the end of action, but rather the end of activity contrary to the laws of God and Nature. One action or motive remains: the determination to attain with the Divine. Buddhism indicates this by teaching that all desires must end, dying of themselves, except the desire for truth, which is the one sacred emotion.

The Garden of Eden is the state of internal peace, which consummates man's human experience. This is exemplified in the composure of the true philosopher and mystic. Those who have attained this condition are in the world but not of it, a mystery revealed through the location of the earthly Paradise in Dante's psychocosmic scheme. Having attained freedom from all intemperances of the mind as well of the body, the soul is balanced in pain and pleasure, and, as the *Bhagavad Gita* says, "is fitted for immortality." This is why we have likened the seventh cornice of the *Purgatorio* to the city of the philosophic-elect, or the

Perfect Commonwealth. That which brings concord to the inner life brings security to the social and political structures.

When Dante and Virgil reach the terrestrial Paradise, Beatrice appears, surrounded by blessed spirits, to lead Dante upward toward the mystery of cosmic consciousness. In the diagram, the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* form a unit, for they refer to the purification and regeneration of the human being as a person. Man emerges from these two spheres as master of himself and qualified to attempt the spiritual extension of his consciousness upward to identity with universal reality. The *Paradisio* is devoted to this ladder of ascent. The heavenly system consists of nine spheres where dwell blessed spirits, arranged according to the characteristics of their piety. The system itself reflects not only the pagan philosophy of Ptolemy but also the Christian adaptation of that philosophy by Dionysius, the Areopagite. This Dionysius was an important link between the classical Greek and the Christian metaphysical concepts. The heavens or spheres above the earth's etheric atmosphere are in the conventional astrological order. They ascend, like the orbits of the heavenly bodies, in the following sequence: the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. The conventional forms for the planets or their astrological symbols do not occur in the diagram. Mars is represented as a cross within a circle, Jupiter by an eagle, and Saturn by a circle, from which a ladder ascends to the sphere of the fixed stars.

The eighth heaven, that of the stars of the zodiac, forms a kind of heavenly wall, through which the soul must pass to the attainment of the final Eternal Quietude. In the *Commedia*, motion or desire or restlessness is the unsatisfied impulse of all creation to reach identity with the Divine. Motion must continue until no interval remains between consciousness and the Infinite. The ninth heaven, or the crystal abode, divides motion from the immovable. All that is below moves; all that is above is unmoved. We are reminded of the three-

fold concept of motion found in the Platonic writings. Deity is represented as the spiritual unmoved-mover of all things. Man is the self-moved by the power of will and desire. Nature is the moved, to which motion is imparted, but has not an intrinsic source of motion. The upper extremity of the crystal heaven touches the substance of God at every point and surface, and therefore has perfect contentment. Being thus without deficiency, it is without change. In a way, the immovability of God as consciousness, completely sufficient, corresponds with the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, which is the end of differentiated experience. As the human mind is unable to estimate that which is unconditioned, Nirvana cannot be contemplated in a positive way. It must be defined as a superabundance of tranquillity, an unchanging and unconditional extension of eternal peace.

As Dante ascends, he experiences the four cardinal virtues called circles, and the three celestial virtues represented by crosses. The cardinal virtues are prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice; and the celestial virtues are faith, hope, and charity. As Beatrice leads Dante upward from sphere to sphere, the poet depends upon the increasing luminosity which radiates from her body and her eyes to measure the progress he makes through the spheres. At last he attains to the full proportions and dimensions of the mystery, for he passes through all the spheres to the contemplation of the threefold nature of the Godhead itself. He beholds the Immeasurable Mystery as an immense flower. This effulgent blossom is the macrocosm or universal of his own soul. The great journey is from rebellion (Lucifer) to obedience (God).

Lucifer, whose abode is in that part of the cosmic scheme furthest removed from the Divine, is self-will, the supreme worldly pride, for which sin fell the angels. The ascent is always away from pride and toward humility. Humility in this sense is not a negative servile emotion, but the growing within the soul of the natural love for God which must lead to union with the Beloved. Dante's ultimate vision of the In-



THE COSMIC ROSE

visible Church is the perfect communion of love. It is the love of God which sets all the spheres in motion. The first motion of the cosmos is creation, which ends in the formation of man in the likeness of his creator. The first motion of love in man is the urge to redemption, which causes the creature to seek throughout space and throughout all time and eternity for its Creator. Thus the quest is the love of God in man moving him toward conscious reunion with the Divine.

The journey home, guided by wisdom and love, is the theme of many great epic poems. It is the very substance of the *Illiad*. Ulysses, after the siege of Troy, resolves to return to his own country. The adventures of this journey home, like the navigations of Sinbad the Sailor, represent the obstacles imposed by the lower world upon the aspirations of the human soul. Ulysses spreads the sails of his ships, and seeks his own far-distant native land. This is the same that Michael Maier implies by the title

of one of his books, *Silentium Post Clamores*. After the sound and the fury comes the silence which is the peace of the spirit. This silence cannot come until the pride of Lucifer is overcome.

All humanity comes finally to the branching of the Pythagoric Y—the two roads that branch from the single stem. By one branch, the soul turns toward the Empire of the False Light, represented in the *Comedy* as ruled over by Lucifer and his fallen angels. In a strange way, Lucifer represents all things exterior, or

outside of man, and therefore estimated by the physical sensory perceptions. This does not mean that the material world is evil, but rather that it is a false end if man addicts himself completely to its concerns. It is Lucifer that impels men to attempt to conquer the world. Philosophies of life, in our troubled state, are of two kinds: One would attain security through possessing, and the other would seek contentment by becoming. The first leads to darkness, and the second leads to light.



## QUOTATIONS

"To secure a contented spirit, measure your desires by your fortunes, not your fortunes by your desires."  
—*Jeremy Taylor*

"The hardest way of learning is by easy reading; every man that tries it, finds it so."  
—*Theodore Parker*

"What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul."  
—*Addison*

"Contentment consists not in great wealth, but in few wants."  
—*Epicurus*

"To be angry is to revenge the faults of others upon ourselves."  
—*Pope*

"Maxims are the condensed good sense of nations."  
—*Anonymous*

"To be humble to superiors, is duty; to equals, is courtesy; to inferiors, is nobleness; and to all, safety."  
—*Sir F. More*

"We should not be too niggardly in our praise; for men will do more to support a character than to raise one."  
—*Cotton*

"In general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes."  
—*Ruskin*

"He that knows not when to be silent, knows not when to speak."  
—*Anonymous*

"A true friend is like ivy—the greater the ruin, the closer he clings."  
—*Anonymous*

"It is easy finding reasons why other folks should be patient."  
—*George Eliot*

"You will do the greatest service to the State, if you shall raise not the roofs of the houses, but the souls of the citizens."  
—*Epictetus*



## Nostradamus

### *The Saint of the Plague*

SHUN-TI, the last of the Yuen Emperors, came to the throne of great Cathay in 1333. The omens were unpropitious. Strange forms were seen in the sky. There were unseasonable storms, and the earth was moved from its foundations. An account of these times, artistically embellished with literary extravagances, has been preserved by Chinese historians. Mountains fell into the sea; wide crevasses opened in the earth; great lakes appeared; fountains dried at their source; streams of water burst forth out of barren hills; cities were destroyed; chasms swallowed up whole towns, and the countryside was laid waste.

In his account of "The Black Death," J. F. C. Hecker M. D. (April, 1885, Humbolt Library No. 67) describes the natural commotions of that time: "From China to the Atlantic, the foundations of the earth were shaken—through Asia and Europe the atmosphere was in commotion, and endangering by its baneful influence both vegetable and animal life."

After the earthquakes came the famine; tens of thousands died. A parching drought prevailed for five months at Honan. In vain the priests chanted the sutras; the gods were not appeased. Swarms of locusts appeared and destroyed every vestige of vegetation. At Nan-ch'ang Fu (Kiang-Si) four hundred thousand perished in floods. Canton was inundated, and torrential rains washed away entire communities. The dynasty founded by Genghis Khan was brought to naught by the anger of the heavens.

Then came the plague. Out of the ruin and desolation wrought by earthquake and famine appeared the grim shadow of the Black Death. Like the pale horseman of the Apocalypse, this fearsome specter rode across the world and left death and devastation in its wake. The Chinese believed that the comets and eclipses, earthquakes and droughts were omens announcing the Great Death. Today we realize that the plague was the result of these natural disasters. Pestilences, having their origin in areas of congestion and squalor, migrate from nation to nation along channels of poverty and malnutrition.

In China, thirteen million died of the Black Death. Relentlessly, the spirit of the plague moved westward across the face of Asia. India was almost depopulated. Pope Clement estimated the number of dead at twenty-three million in India and the rest of Asia, apart from China. In Mesopotamia, Syria, and other parts of the Near East the dead lay unburied. Whole cities perished utterly, not one surviving to mourn the rest. Many, who did not die of the plague, died of fear. Madness howled in the streets. The repentant prayed for forgiveness, and begged God to preserve them from "the plague, the Turk and the comet."

Hecker further points out that various awesome phenomena likewise occurred in Europe. In 1333, Mount Etna erupted; in the winter of 1336, extraordinary thunderstorms were observed in Northern

France; the following years swarms of locusts appeared in Franconia, and in 1342 there were great floods in France and Germany.

During this same period there is a strange account of a poisonous "mist," which was reported in many places. In the East a meteor fell, which so infected the air that all living things within a radius of a hundred miles perished. Noxious fumes and vapors poured out from subterranean caverns and the rotting dead infected the air. Millions of putrefying locusts were responsible for some of the terrifying odors. At one time, a thick, death-laden fog spread itself over the greater part of Italy. (See Mansfeld's *Chronicles*.) This writer describes how a hurricane had blown great clouds of locusts out to sea. Afterward, the tides cast the dead bodies of the insects onto the shore, and they produced a noxious exhalation.

In 1348, the plague reached the Island of Cyprus. First, a pestilential air flowed across the island, so that many died of suffocation. This was followed by an earthquake. Those who sought to escape on ships found the sea strangely agitated, and the vessels were dashed to pieces on the rocks. In a few short months this beautiful and fertile island was changed into a desert.

About 1348, the bubonic plague reached the Continent of Europe. From that time on it made occasional reappearances over a period of three hundred years. The population of 14th-century Europe has been estimated at approximately 100,000,000. Of this number, 25,000,000 perished of the scourge. One authority wrote that during its course of three centuries the bubonic plague destroyed one-fourth of the population of the entire world.

The mortality figures for the plague years are almost beyond belief. In England nine out of ten died; 100,000 perished in Venice; 60,000 in Florence; 70,000 in Siena; 124,000 Franciscan Friars died in Germany; 30,000 Minorites in Italy. In many parts of France eighteen out of twenty of the inhabitants succumbed, and 60,000 died in Avignon alone. On December 20, 1348, a pillar

of fire hung at sunrise over the Pope's palace in Avignon. The same year a grisly comet appeared in the midheaven over Paris. The astrologers declared this comet to be of the order of Saturn and to indicate a horrible mortality.

The Medical Faculty of Paris met in solemn session to determine the cause of the Black Death and to suggest the most approved scientific methods of combating the pestilence. Their findings are preserved in an old document, which opens with the impressive lines: "We, the Members of the College of Physicians, of Paris, have, after mature consideration and consultation on the present mortality, collected the advice of our old masters in the art, and intend to make known the causes of this pestilence, etc., etc." Their pithy findings include a description of a valiant struggle between the rays of the sun and certain emanations from the constellations.

This celestial warfare, which centered in the Indian Ocean, resulted in the creation of vapors which alternately rose and fell for 28 days. These vapors, falling into the sea, corrupted the water so that the fish died. The sun strove valiantly with these vapors but was not sufficiently powerful to consume them, so they floated over Europe, infecting the air. This learned document then added: "The like will continue, so long as the Sun remains in the sign of Leo... if the inhabitants of those parts do not employ and adhere to the following, or similar, means and precepts, we announce to them inevitable death—except the grace of Christ preserve their lives."

Then followed the remedies: Everyone should protect himself from the air, especially before and after rain; great fires should be lighted to purify the atmosphere; wormwood and chamomile should be burnt in the marketplaces and densely populated areas; young pork and old beef should not be eaten; to leave the house at night or in the early morning was considered dangerous on account of dew; olive oil as an article of food was considered fatal, and bathing was considered most injurious.

In spite of these "helpful" hints, the rate of mortality increased, for the reason

that no one had hit upon the real cause of the ailment. Following the superstitions of very ancient authors, the doctors and scientists were convinced that the plague was carried in the air. The more materialistic accepted a doctrine of "vapors," while the theologically-inclined affirmed that the odors were the effluvia emanating from the invisible bodies of infernal spirits.

Several authors attempted to describe the elemental beings responsible for the infection. Old artists and engravers have pictured these descriptions. A good example is to be found in Henry Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (1609). Here is a gallery of "infernal" bacteria which must have terrified his contemporaries into a condition of susceptibility to almost any disease. Human-headed dragonflies, forked-tailed salamanders, and numerous winged composita are depicted as buzzing about the firmament, spreading disaster.

It remained for later generations to discover the true "demon" of the plague—the rat. It is now well established that the flea was the malicious sprite that moved in the air, and that the bubonic plague was carried by fleas from the bodies of infected rats. When one realizes that the human population of the earth is outnumbered 5 to 1 by these rodents, the true measure of the problem is understandable. Even today the bubonic plague is not dead. If modern laws regulating commerce and sanitation were relaxed for even a few months, the specter of the Black Death would rise again.

The astrologers of the 14th and 15th centuries were convinced that the plague cycles were first announced by celestial configurations. Most of them agreed that the conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars in Aquarius on the 24th of March, 1345, was the principal cause of the epidemic. They did not hold that the stars actually created the disease, but rather that they timed the cycles of its recurrence.

The Greeks and Romans had been visited by the plague, but for centuries the disease had not appeared in Europe. By causing certain natural atmospheric and

magnetic unrest, the planetary positions created a condition suitable for the spread of the disease. When the planets changed their positions, the virulence of the malady declined.

Modern science still is at a loss to explain the cycles of epidemic disease. Physically speaking, one time is as appropriate as another for the spread of contagion; yet it is well known that pestilences follow definite patterns and, having run their course, decline for some unknown reason. Astrologers maintain that only by consideration of planetary positions can the real secret of these health cycles be discovered.

The Dark Ages conditioned Europe for the plague. We read much of the glory and grandeur of the Middle Ages. Wealth, art, and literature flourished; great princes held their courts and patronized scholarship. Beneath all this glamour, however, was an incredible ignorance of sanitation and cleanliness. Dr. Biagi, in his book, *The Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines*, brings out something of the living conditions of a great city during the early years of the Renaissance. The city streets, for example, were scavenged only by herds of swine, and the family refuse was swept under the beds. Once disease struck these communities, it was almost impossible to cope with its inroads.

Too much cannot be said for the sincerity, devotion, and sacrifice of the physicians of that time. Unequipped to meet the challenge of the Black Death and unable even to protect themselves from the contagion, they still remained at their posts, and often died with those to whom they ministered. Similar credit goes to the religious Orders. These seldom, if ever, shirked their responsibilities. Courageously, if pathetically, they contributed their utmost to the great human need.

The plague doctor was a fearsome spectacle. In addition to certain prescribed habiliments, many evolved their own personal theories for self-protection which, if not effective, were at least impressive. It is recorded that patients died of fright at mere sight of the physician. During the earlier periods, the doctor appeared in the approved cap and gown.

He usually carried a small bunch of aromatic herbs, which he held to his nose while diagnosing the plague victims; this was on the assumption that the disease was carried by fumes emanating from the body of the sufferer.

Later, the doctor's regalia took on elaborate proportions. From head to foot he was decked out in protections and medications. Some wore long overcoats that reached to the ground, from which numerous bundles of herbs and powders were suspended. There was a protective covering for the arms and legs; great gauntletlike gloves often adorned with charms and spells; wide-brimmed, tight-crowned hats, over which various neck and face coverings were draped like curtains, and, most fearsome of all, the plague mask. In some provinces these masks were of glass, and breathing involved a none-too-comfortable process of inhaling through filters of chemicals.

The most common of these plague masks had an immense stalklike proboscis. This snout or beak was rightly packed with herbs, and the first impression of the doctor upon his patient was that of some inquisitive and ungainly bird approaching its victim. The efficacy of this elaborate costume was due, however, to one important but unsuspected truth: Confronted with this weird armament of science, the lowly flea could find no point of ingress!

The plight of human society during the plague years is almost indescribable. Families fled from their homes and spread the contagion over the countryside; infants were deserted in their cribs; the aged and infirm were abandoned to their own resources; the dead were left in their beds. In the poorer homes the staircases to the upper floors were so narrow that the bodies of the victims could not be brought down and were, therefore, thrown from the windows into the streets.

To convicted felons was assigned the task of gathering up the dead. Christian burial was impossible and thousands were thrown into shallow trenches. Cemeteries were not adequate to hold all the bodies, and at Avignon the Pope

consecrated the River Rhone to receive the Catholic dead.

Many dwelling in coastal communities sought to escape on ships, only to discover after their vessel was well out to sea that the plague was with them on the boat. Hundreds of these derelicts floated about manned only by the ghosts of the dead. So great was the terror that many cases are recorded where families buried the sick before they were actually dead. Those stricken with the dread malady often sewed themselves up in their own winding sheets to protect their remains from the indignities heaped upon the dead.

Naturally, in such emergency, many forms of religious fanaticism appeared. Groups of Flagellants wandered about the countryside, recruiting members in various communities until they resembled huge armies. A great pilgrimage to Rome was attempted, but nine out of ten who went on the pilgrimage never returned. Repentant sinners, carrying banners descriptive of their sins, howled in the streets at night. Crime increased. Thieves broke into deserted houses, and were later found dead of the plague with the loot clutched in their hands. Some sought life through the practice of abstinence and austerities, while others lived by the philosophy: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Such is the story of the Black Death—the most terrifying and malignant scourge of the human race. Century after century it returned to exact its appalling toll of human life and happiness; century after century the learned schools of Europe vainly sought a remedy to cope with it. Rows of physicians sat in solemn conclave, searching the old writings, pondering the words of Galen and Avicenna, questing into the traditions of the Arabs, grasping at the slightest hint. Every known remedy was tried; a few succeeded, but most failed.

Nearly two centuries after the first appearance of the plague in Europe, Michel de Nostra-Dame, a young man of good family, entered the School of Medicine at the old University of Montpellier. He was held in more than common esteem

by his masters, not only because of his personal aptitudes but because of the distinguished scholarship of his ancestry. It was most unusual for a youth of nineteen to possess knowledge of the dead languages, chemistry, and dialing. Still further amazed were the professors at his knowledge of the elliptical motion of the planets, together with such obscure problems as the mathematics of eclipses and the orbits of comets.

While it was not seemly for gray-bearded scholars to seek knowledge from novices, the faculty nevertheless listened attentively to the young man's opinions, and predicted for him a brilliant future when the ardor of youth should be enriched by the experience of maturity.

The young prodigy from Avignon was not, however, an unqualified delight to his professors. His understanding of pharmacology, while extensive, was decidedly unorthodox. He quoted authors with authority, and possessed the disconcerting habit of advancing opinions that could find no verification in the writings of either Galen or Avicenna. Worst of all was the strange kind of astrology he practiced. It was not the sober astrology of Ptolemy, useful in the practice of medicine, but an intricate cabalism involved with theology rather than science.

Like most advanced medics of their time, the doctors at Montpellier were searching for a panacea for the pest. Epidemics of the Black Death and the sweating sickness were forever breaking out in some part of France. The astrologues of Montpellier gathered periodically to ponder the acts of Providence. They resented this youth who, expressing himself openly and with conviction, exercised an ever-increasing influence over his fellow students. It was considered the privilege of the old to teach, the duty of the young to listen.

Legends persist that this difficult young student had discovered, by his obscure calculations, that a new and exceedingly virulent epidemic of the plague was about to break out. When rumors of his findings reached the faculty, the dean decided the time had come to administer a few sound words of fatherly

advice. It is not difficult to reconstruct the substance of his "counsel." Undergraduates should not indulge too freely in extracurricular meditation; it was the wiser course, by far, to contemplate the solid advantage afforded by the great university.

With special emphasis, the learned dean dwelt upon the fact that at Montpellier it was even possible to study dissection. There had been years when as many as four corpses were available. Of course the university was not always so fortunate; there had been lean periods when, crime declining, there were no public executions and hence no supply of cadavers. All the doctors could do was to hope for the best. So, in the sedate atmosphere of such scholastic opportunities, young students were admonished not to dabble in magic, but rather to fit their minds for the useful practices of purging, bleeding, and surgery. Furthermore, there had been no serious outbreak of the plague for several years—probably the scourge was conquered.

A year later the same young man stood alone in the vaulted corridors of the old School of Medicine. From their niches in the walls, the stone faces of dead physicians looked sadly down upon him. The classrooms were empty. The professors in their black robes had departed. The students were gone. The great college was closed.

The plague had come again! It had come just as this young man had known it would come—even at the time he had predicted correctly. He was not yet a doctor. There were years of study ahead. As the plague spread through the countryside, the young man had resolved to try his own remedies with the sick. He did not dare to practice in the larger cities where the physicians would not accept an unlicensed student. He would go into the countryside where doctors were few and the suffering great. If he were cautious and circumspect, there would not likely be any interference. When the plague came, the rules of medicine were relaxed; minor infringements of medical ethics were overlooked. This was his opportunity to prove the virtue of his own theories and prescriptions.

Descending the steps worn smooth by the feet of countless scholars, the young man left through the broad doorway, shadowed by the tower of a nearby church. A mule—the chosen vehicle of the medical profession—awaited below. Mounting the animal, which was heavily packed with the paraphernalia of the healing arts, this young student rode out alone to fight the plague. He was Michel de Nostra-Dame, the young Christian Jew who became the Saint of the plague, and whom France has honored for four centuries as physician and seer.

The golden age of Jewry in Spain came to an end in 1391. A priest, Fernando Martinez, fired by an unholy zeal, incited a general persecution as the result of his fanatical preachings. There were several massacres of Jews who had earned the dislike of the populace because they had been appointed the King's tax collectors. Many fled the country, and settled in more liberal areas of Italy, France, and Germany. At the time of this exodus, Spanish Jewry had reached a high degree of education and culture. A number of influential Jews had aided Ferdinand III (who died in 1252) in his conquest of Andalusia, and enjoyed his protection and confidence. They were elevated to important positions in the State, and gained eminence as counsellors, physicians, and lawyers.

The ancestors of Nostradamus were among those driven out of Andalusia. The family of de Nostra-Donna, or Nostra-Dame, had resided for some time in Italy. The astrologer-physician, Pierre de Nostra-Donna, traveled from Italy to France and established a medical practice in the town of Arles. There he Gallicized the family name, and soon rose to prominence because of the success of his medications. Doctor Pierre had brought with him a number of choice recipes from Italy and Spain, and soon became annoyed with the local apothecaries. They were, he declared, too ignorant to read his formulas aright and too corrupt to fill the prescriptions.

The good doctor undertook to prepare his own medications. At odd hours he steeped and brewed and crushed and

pounded ingredients both rare and common. He further aggravated the local chemists by dispensing these drugs direct to his clientele, thus materially increasing his own income.

The apothecaries of Arles conspired to remove this menace to their fame and fortune. As is usual under such conditions, the ultimate fate of the sick received scant consideration. The "foreign doctor" was subjected to a campaign of slander and abuse. Not accomplishing their ends by these means, the druggists appeared in a body before the local magistrates and accused the Master Pierre de Nostra-Dame of falsifying his drugs.

A providential circumstance rescued Doctor Pierre from his difficulties. The Duke of Calabria, who had long admired both the astrological and medical skill of the Italian savant, detained him as his personal physician. He remained with the Duke for some years, attaining to the position of his confidential advisor.

The Duke of Calabria was burdened with an affable, but irresponsible father, Rene (1409-1480), Count of Provence, Duke of Anjou, of Lorraine and Bar, Count of Piedmont, King of Naples and Sicily, and titular King of Jerusalem. A gentle and scholarly soul, Rene was better fitted for the life of a cleric than a prince. He was devoted to astrology and the mystical arts, and a staunch admirer of the Jews. When Count Rene asked his son for Doctor Nostra-Dame, the Duke of Calabria was well pleased. He knew that his father would receive good counsel and faithful service from this wise physician.

So Doctor Pierre de Nostra-Dame settled in Saint-Remy as principal physician to Rene, Count of Provence. A manuscript in the archives of Aix declared that Rene and Doctor Pierre were often closeted for many hours, and discussed the mysteries of the celestial spheres and other choice secrets of nature. As the years passed, Rene developed a great love for his physician, and bestowed upon him numerous tokens of his esteem.



At the court of King Rene, the Master Pierre de Nostra-Dame, met another scholar of his own race, Doctor Jean de Saint-Remy, a proficient in the "humanities," a term which embraced the general field of genteel culture, including the classics, belles-lettres and languages. Doctor Jean had lived long at the court of the kindly Count Rene, and was a person of consequence. When he rode his gaily caparisoned mule down the streets of Saint-Remy, the populace made way for him—he was a great personage.

Doctors Pierre and Jean became close and devoted friends. They had much in common; both were astrologers and chemists, and both were philosophically minded. Through long years of association their friendship ripened. They grew old together in the service of their genteel and amiable prince.

Pierre de Nostra-Dame had a fine son for whom he had recently purchased a notaryship, so that the young man might have an honorable profession against the uncertainties of the time. Jean de Saint-Remy had a beautiful and accomplished daughter whom he had named after his friend and patron of many years, the good King Rene. It was only natural that the two old astrologer-physicians should plot a match that would unite their ancient families. In due course, their hopes were realized. At an auspicious time, astrologically computed, Jacques de Nostra-Dame married Renee de Saint-Remy.

The death of King Rene in 1480 profoundly affected the estate of the Jews in Provence. Rene left his territories to his nephew, Charles, Count of Maine, by his will of 1474. Charles, at his death in 1482, willed Provence to the King of France, Louis XI, but it was not officially annexed until the reign of Charles VIII, in 1486. In 1499, the lands passed to Louis XII. Louis suffered from an affliction common to princes: extravagant tastes and a depleted treasury. He chose a time-honored remedy for his difficulties. On Sept. 26, 1501, he issued his edict against the Jews. According to the terms of this edict, they must become Christian within the space of six months or else forfeit all their lands and posses-

sions and leave Provence forever. For a people who had long enjoyed a tolerant and generous rule, Louis' decree meant the end of everything—hope, future, and fortune. Again, Israel must return to its tents and take up its ageless search for the Promised Land. Many gathered up what they could of their worldly goods and departed; others, especially the learned and the powerful, pondered the matter and finally resolved to accept the Christian faith rather than leave the only homes they had ever known.

Among the families which chose baptism rather than exile were those of Saint-Remy and Nostra-Dame. Thus it happened that Jacques and his young wife became nominal Christians and continued to live at Saint-Remy on the best of terms with their Catholic neighbors. There is nothing to indicate that the natives of Provence ever persecuted the Jews, and many of the more illustrious families of France trace their ancestry to these Jewish converts. With the exception of an occasional tax levied against them, the "new converts" lived on in peace and contentment. It has also been pointed out that because of their superior educational and social opportunities, the Jews of Provence were themselves a tolerant and democratic class, and contributed to the honor and prosperity of the communities in which they dwelt.

Into the cultured home of Jacques de Nostra-Dame, on Thursday, the 14th of December, according to the Julian calendar (23rd of December, according to the Gregorian), 1503, was born Michel de Nostra-Dame. The hour of his birth was near noon, and his horoscope—calculated by the traditional rules of the art—bears witness to the extraordinary qualities of his mind. The Sun is in Capricorn, conferring thoughtfulness, gravity, scholarship, dignity of person, a courtly manner, and a grave, religious spirit.

The ascending sign which, according to astrology, describes the most personal attributes of the native, is Pisces, the constellation of the fishes. This sign has long been associated with mysticism and seership, extraordinary clairvoyant abili-

ty, second sight, and such obscure faculties as are associated with oracles and divination. Also ascending is Uranus, the planetary significator of the astrologer, lighting the native with the ray of foreknowledge.

The two grandfathers pondered many hours over the starry portents. Here was a child admirably suited to scholarship and adapted by nature for the mastery of mysterious arts. It is not surprising, then, that guided by the horoscope of their promising grandchild, the two aging physicians appointed themselves his mentors.

The French historians give special emphasis to the tutelage of the maternal grandfather. From their accounts, young Michel may have lived with Doctor Jean for a number of years. In the house of this old physician, the child was brought into early contact with the healing arts. There were herbs and simples, syrups and elixirs, rows of jars neatly labeled and filled with an assortment of prescriptions. There was also the research laboratory. Here Doctor Jean and his alter ego, Doctor Pierre, compounded philters and experimented with the virtues of various waters.

Young Michel absorbed a great deal of medical knowledge during his early years. He observed the ailments of the people, that endless procession of the infirm which passes the doctor's door. Grandfather Jean would stroke his beard and discuss the opinions of Aristotle, and Grandfather Pierre would nod his white head approvingly and balance the conversation with well-chosen comments upon the "humours." Each would vie with the other to explain the mysteries of science and literature to their beloved grandchild. The boy had a quick mind and a retentive memory, and all that he learned from his old teachers was safely stored away for use in later years.

When Grandfather Jean died, Grandfather Pierre officially assumed his duties as guardian of a growing mind. But the old savant realized that Michel must receive a formal education, so arrangements were made for the youth to enter the nearby University of Avignon.

Although Michel de Nostra-Dame was baptized into the Catholic faith and throughout his life exhibited a genuine devotion to the Church, he was not without regard for his Jewish ancestry and tradition. From his dotting grandfathers he learned the strange story of the wanderings of Israel after the Diaspora. He was told that his ancestors were of the tribe of Issachar, cabalistically the ninth "son" of Jacob. The people of the land of Issachar had been given to the arts of peace. They were tillers of the fields, and their lands were over against Carmel.

Among the mystical traditions of the Jews it was believed that the people of Issachar possessed the power to prophesy things that were to come in the world. Had it not been written of the sons of Issachar that they were "men of understanding who knew all times to order what Israel should do, two hundred principal men: and all the rest of the tribe followed their counsel"? (I Chron. 12:32, Douay.) And, moreover, was it not from the tribe of Issachar that had come "the seven wise men that knew the times"? (Esther 1:13.)

When the tribe of Issachar was dispersed after the fall of Jerusalem, they carried with them into exile secret rolls and manuscripts of magical arts which had belonged to the priesthood of that time. The territories of Issachar had included a sacred place of pilgrimage near Mount Tabor. Here dwelt a very learned school of ancient Rabbins, versed in the sacerdotal arts.

For some centuries the people of Issachar had attempted to carry on their agricultural pursuits in other countries, but repeatedly their lands were confiscated, their crops stolen from them, and they were finally forced to migrate to other areas. Because of this persecution, they were compelled to abandon the agrarian life and take up merchandising, especially such trades as lend themselves to frequent removal. Finding Spain hospitable, the Jews availed themselves of the opportunities for scholarship permitted by the tolerance of that country. They studied the sciences in the Moorish universities, and rose to honorable positions among a liberal aristocracy.

In the course of their wanderings, the personal possessions of the Jewish families were, for the most part, lost and scattered. Thus it came about that the sacred knowledge of Israel—the mysteries of the Mishna and the secret learning of the Sod—vanished from the people. Only the elders remembered, and even these memories were dimmed to a kind of legendry.

From his race young Michel de Nostra-Dame inherited two priceless gifts. The first was the prophetic spirit—the spirit of the patriarchs of old. The second was a great box filled with old manuscripts, vellums and papyri. These priceless volumes appear to have descended to him through his mother's family. When the tribes of Israel departed from Egypt, they carried with them valuable records from the Egyptian temples. There were rituals of initiation, books on geometry, cosmogony, and algebra, magic scrolls, and strange works dealing with divination and sorcery.

Then came the Romans. The Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed; the Jews were dispersed. Before the Romans sacked the Temple, however, the magical documents and the sacred treasures had disappeared. The Holy of Holies was empty. (See *Le Secret de Nostradamus*, by Piobb.) Some of the tribe of Issachar, who lived near the Temple of the Kings, are believed to have escaped with the priceless documents. The lost books were never recovered.

This literary heritage included other important treasures. There were ancient Persian scrolls, Hermetic and Arabic writings, and rare manuscripts, both astronomical and astrological. Strange books were these that the world has never seen—secret books of ancient mystery!

In the fullness of time, these rare and hallowed manuscripts—wrapped in ancient cloths, into which were woven the secret names of the Splendours—were placed in the young man's hands. Michel de Nostra-Dame became the last custodian of the magical books of Issachar. The transcendental art of Solomon, the King, which, traced in strange symbols and ciphers, he had imparted to his son,

Reheboam; the words of power which could draw forth the spirits from the deep; the formulas for the fumigations and the consecration of wands; the making of talismans and amulets; the designing of pentagrams; the rituals for the binding of demons and angels and creatures of the air; the invocations of wizardry and necromancy—all these were the lore of Issachar.

In addition to these ancient treasures of arcane lore, there were more recent books—valuable treatises collected by Doctors Jean and Pierre during their long lives of scholarship—that had come from Spain and Italy; filled with recipes and prescriptions and all that wide array of information which alone can appease the hunger of a liberal scholarship.

If Michel de Nostra-Dame truly possessed the gift of prophesy, and surely the centuries stand witness to this strange endowment, much of his power came from these ancient books. Like Iroe, the Greek, who discovered the priceless key to the wisdom of the three worlds in the ivory casket buried with King Solomon, so Michel de Nostra-Dame found in the books of Issachar the "lost keys" to the three parts of Time—the past, the present, and the future. By the use of these keys he became the greatest prophet of the modern world.

Michel of Nostra-Dame began his formal education in the old University at Avignon, the city of the Popes. Historians fail to record dates or details. Avignon was not regarded as a particularly good university, but it was cosmopolitan and convenient. Sympathetic biographers insist that Michel was a good student. One writes: "Such was his memory that he could recite his lessons, word for word, having heard them once." Michel was about sixteen years old when he entered Avignon to study his "arts."

University life in the early 16th century consisted chiefly of a tedious excursion into the opinions of classical authors. Michel received a liberal dosage of "gentility" from professors who sat enthroned like emperors, and who talked down to their pupils, both intellectually and literally; in fact, many teachers disdained to

humiliate themselves by addressing any remarks direct to the members of their classes. Bundled in their voluminous robes, they sat in dignified silence, while their assistants read the lectures and quizzed the students. According to reports, the citizenry of nearby communities were occasionally called in to examine the undergraduates and thereby relieve the professors of this tedious responsibility.

Books were scarce and most of the writing paper was brought by camel caravans from Arabia. Those desirous of advancing rapidly made use of the university libraries, where the important texts were stapled to the walls with links of chain. The French schools were largely dominated by the Church; they owed most of their dignity and no small part of their wealth to the benevolences of the Popes.

At Avignon, Michel de Nostra-Dame received instruction in mathematics (which also included geometry and astronomy). Here, also, were imparted Greek, Latin, literature, and history. Nothing was taught that would offend the clergy; however, this sovereign body imposed no serious limitations to nominal education. It often permitted wandering professors to hold classes, and the faculty at Avignon was frequently aug-

mented by teachers who had graduated from the Moorish universities in Spain. The latter brought with them a specialized knowledge of natural history, algebra, and optics.

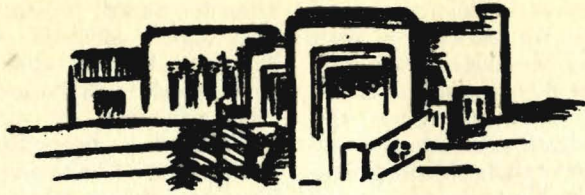
While at Avignon, Michel announced his intention of becoming an astronomer, but this ambition was frustrated by parental disapproval. Astronomy at that time was a conglomeration of navigation, meteorology, geography, mathematics, surveying, almanac making, and the broad field of prognostics. The last factor was a particularly hazardous one; a few bad predictions and a career could be ruined! To combine this kind of astronomy with young Michel's natural inclination toward the mysterious and the marvelous might well lead to disastrous consequences, it was thought.

Jacques de Nostra-Dame convinced his son that it would be far wiser for him to complete his course in medicine and follow in the footsteps of his illustrious grandfathers. Then, if he wished to dabble a little in magic or the cabala or horoscopy, he could do so under the protection of his doctorate.

Medicine was not taught at Avignon; so in 1521, after securing his basic letters (Master of Arts), Michel de Nostra-Dame removed to Montpellier, where in 1522 he entered the medical college.

(To be continued)





## Library Notes

By A. J. HOWIE

### Andrew Jackson Davis and his Harmonial Philosophy

Original thinkers are interesting as people. They are usually colorful, turbulent, egotistic characters. They are impatient and uncertain with friends, perpetually embroiled with real or imaginary antagonists, and frequently are carried away with themselves in spite of their better material interests. They are impetuous in their enthusiasms, positive and absolute in their ideas—and they do have ideas, ideas that are agelessly important. Unfortunately, their personal lives brook little intimacy.

Andrew Jackson Davis was one of the earliest writers on occultism in a modern sense in the Americas. He was associated with various reform movements of the middle and late 19th century, and it was in the various Reformers' Refuges that he gave many of his earlier lectures. Under the influence of hypnotism he diagnosed disease and prescribed cures. He was an early champion of equal rights for women. He took a mild but positive stand against Negro slavery. And he was in contact with much of the spiritualistic phenomena of the period. He was active with many of the leaders of groups interested in psychic phenomena, but at various times was violently repudiated as a spiritualist—and

in this respect he recognized himself as having an interpretation apart from popular spiritualism. The controversy with the bickering and accusations that disrupted personal friendships was unfortunate and unprofitable for both Spiritualism and Davis.

There have been countless unrecognized plagiarisms of the conceptions that are buried in the wordiness of the Davis books. There have been many writers who have followed the same pattern of mystical interviews with spiritual personalities. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify any particular source of the Andrew Jackson Davis revelations, or to account for them on any other basis than some interior inspiration achieved at first under a hypnotic state induced by an operator; later he was able voluntarily to enter this "superior state," as he calls it, until he lived almost perpetually in a borderland from which he viewed the world of men and the Summerland of the spirit at the same time.

Andrew Jackson Davis has written very frankly about himself in several autobiographical works. He defends his unconventional episodes, and plays up the fact that he had almost no formal schooling. These self-portraits high-light

his sincerity, his eccentricities, his analysis of his relations with his co-workers, and a wealth of miscellaneous material valuable for psychological interpretation.



Davis was born August 11, 1826, at Bloomingrove, New York. His mother was a negative, pliant, dreamy woman given to psychic premonitions, who lived in drab subservience to a good-natured husband who spent too much of his scanty earnings tipping frequently with cronies at the local taverns. The family's poverty was blamed on hard luck, and Davis senior had untimely urges to move on in search of "more favorable" opportunities. Without warning he would arrange to sell out their few pieces of furniture and the family would set out for some vague "better" place.

As for the family's worldly goods, Davis humorously says that his father, the half-weaver and half-shoemaker, a wholly honest man, in common with his wife amassed considerable of that property which is most easily acquired by the married poor. Andrew Jackson himself was the sixth added portion of that wealth. He arrived just before the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency of the United States, and Davis senior declared his politics by naming the newborn son accordingly.

*The Magic Staff* (New York, 1857) was written while Davis was just entering his 30's. Probably more in retrospect

than during his boyhood, he is vividly aware of an environment of ignorance, intemperance, poverty, discord. He had an early sense of sin and fear of death. His first temptation was an occasion of intense remorse—his sister had urged him to steal apples from a neighbor's basement; the fact that the neighbor caught him in the act most likely inspired the youth's fearful penitence rather than any innate sense of right. A later temptation was to use profane language in a fit of anger when his father forgot to bring a promised present on his return from a trip to the city. Davis is priggish in his emotional regrets regarding petty temptations, but it is conceivable that the course of his life might readily have taken an unfortunate direction. His ancestry and home opportunities certainly were not conducive to inspiring an idealist and reformer of wide influence.

Physically he could not have been robust. A fall, resulting from his boyish impulse to ride the center bar on a lumber wagon, left him with "a weak back, a soreness in the sternum-bone a stiffness of the intercostal muscles, and a very sensitive stomach." His debilitated digestive system was a source of annoyance throughout life.

There were sporadic attempts at schooling which never lasted more than a few weeks at a time. He seemed unable to progress beyond the rudiments of reading, writing, and the simplest figuring. He was rather doltish and had difficulty in securing odd jobs which he held rather uncertainly. At 16 he succeeded in becoming apprenticed to a boot and shoe merchant.

In late November of 1843 "Professor" Grimes came to Poughkeepsie where the Davis family was then living. Flaming announcements introduced the wonders of *Mesmerism* and *phrenology*. Everybody laughed at the "professor's" pretensions, yet all wished to make personal tests. The excitement spread like an epidemic. Even dull-witted Davis begged his employer for time off to attend. He submitted to the mesmeric passes of the "professor" but there was no apparent reaction at that time. Nevertheless, the

spark of interest in superphysical phenomena had been awakened.

Actuated by the casual suggestion of a William Levingston as a result of this initial curiosity, Davis consented to submit to experiments in the magnetic state. The first magnetic sleep (December 1, 1843) revealed his clairvoyant powers. He read "from his forehead" the large letters on a newspaper; told the time by various watches in their owners' pockets; and described where some of the audience were diseased. Relaxed from the magnetic sleep, he had no memory of these activities.

Davis returned daily during December to repeat the experiment, always with similar results. On January 1, 1844, his clairvoyance took on a new phase. He observed that each human body glowed with many more or less brilliant magnetic colors. He saw that each person was enveloped in an atmosphere which emanated from their respective bodies. The nails had one sphere of light surrounding them; the hair, the ears, the eyes each had still another. The head was luminous with emanations spreading out into the air from four inches to as many feet.

The extension of his sight on this occasion was progressive. In a few moments he not only beheld the exterior of individuals, but also their interiors and the hidden sources of the luminous magnetic emanations. He saw that every separate organ had several centers of light besides being enveloped by a general sphere peculiar to itself. Then his vision extended out from the room into space. He seemed to observe the locality, properties, qualities, uses, and essences of every form and species of wild vegetation within the earth's constitution. But still his perceptions flowed on! The broad surface of the earth for many hundreds of miles swept before his vision. He especially remarked the fiery glowing of mineral deposits, the particular colors of earth, stones, etc.

March 6, 1844, Davis had a "mystical" experience which marked a crisis in his activities. After being put into the magnetic state as usual, the reactions were unsatisfactory, and he left the hall with-

out being fully brought out of his trance. He retired, but after falling asleep, he obeyed a command to arise and follow an intangible something. It was just a voice. There ensues a rather fantastic experience in which a shepherd dominates the scene—the sheep are scattered, the shepherd requests his aid, and together they establish order among the sheep.

The setting changes. "I stood almost free from thought; the blood chilled in my exposed body; my head and chest were painfully congested; I was surrounded with a death-like darkness, and became almost insensible. I struggled and gasped for breath; but the effort failed. Life had almost fled. All was cold, dark, deathly. I made a feeble effort to escape that lonely death, and then fell unconsciously to the ground."

There is another sheep-and-shepherd episode in which Davis calms the sheep and sees them gathered and guided into the path leading around a mountain base. A new peace now seems to characterize their condition. Both sheep and shepherd are for the first time inseparably united. Eternal principles of right have accomplished their salvation.

Davis retires to rest and meditate. Presently a man apparently absorbed in thought approaches him. The person is of diminutive stature yet with a beautiful structure. His fine symmetry, beauty, and elegance of deportment captivate attention. He appears advanced in years, and is attired in a style corresponding nearly to that of the Friends. His silvery white hair floats in shadowy locks over his brow and hangs gracefully about his neck and shoulders. His full and expressive face shows moral and intellectual developments prominent.

"In his hands I perceived a clear white scroll. Its edges sparkled with gilding of the finest quality; and the care with which he preserved its beauty, excited in me the deepest respect." Although the scroll is inscribed in characters Davis never before has seen, he is able to translate them without hesitation. When he acknowledges belief in the words, he signs the scroll at the bearer's request.

Davis locates the entire experience in the Catskill mountains about forty miles from Poughkeepsie because he says that he inquired of a farmer that he met on the road!

Another radiant being approaches him and discourses at length, imparting his theories of disease: "In this system I maintain the proposition, that every particle in the human body possesses a close affinity to particular particles below in the subordinate kingdoms — and that these latter particles, if properly associated and applied, would cure any affected portion or organ of the human frame."

Raising an elegant cane, the stranger continues: "Here is a full synopsis of my system and practice . . . You will gently and justly apply its teachings to the good of your brethren, mankind!"

Thus saying, he touched a singular spring at the top, and the cane mechanically parted into three longitudinal strips or pieces. A strong rod graduated to accord with the cane's shape ran through the center, appearing to be of highly-polished silver. The pieces remained whole when disengaged from the rod. The stranger took these in his hand and unfolded them piece by piece until they completely separated. The smaller pieces now assumed the diamond form, especially when closely observed.

"Here," said he, "on these little blocks, is the name of every disease with which the human race is afflicted. In the inside of these blocks you will find a composition which, when applied, will palliate or remove the disease named upon its exterior. Of this compound make you a quantity suggested at the time you examine the diseased individual, and sufficiently strong to be well adapted."

"Take this," said he, handing the cane to me, "and preserve the charge devotionally; for it is a work of a lifetime, demanding equal attention, reflection, and application."

A third character appears who promises Davis instructions and makes certain prophecies concerning his future work. There is a little scene in which Davis loses his temper, surrenders the *Magic Staff*, and is told that it will be returned to him when he learns not to

be depressed under any circumstances, nor by any influences elated.

Davis identifies the smaller of the two men as Galen, and the other as Swedenborg.

This experience motivated Davis to announce a change of program immediately. No more would he give tests to prove his clairvoyance by telling the time by concealed watches, reading titles of books for the amusement of the curious; henceforth he would limit himself to diagnosing disease and prescribing therefor. A moderate fee was to be charged for this service only to those who were in easy circumstances.

For a time thereafter Davis had a vague sense of uneasiness, of having lost something he did not know what. One night while engaged in intense prayer, a flash of light revealed the *Magic Staff* which he instantly recognized. He reached eagerly for it, but it eluded him. He gave vent to an angry expression for which he was immediately remorseful. There was another flash of light and he saw on a transparent sheet the words: "Behold! Here is thy magic staff: UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES KEEP AN EVEN MIND. Take it, Try it, Walk with it, Talk with it, Lean on it, Believe on it, For ever."

There followed a period of itinerant lecturing and diagnosing of disease. In the midst of these activities, he went through a period of weakening response to the operations of Levingston, and finally was impressed to select a new operator, Dr. S. S. Lyons who was a practicing medical doctor. This association was maintained during the period while he was dictating his first book, *Divine Revelations*. Shortly after the completion of the book he found that he was able to induce the Superior Condition without outside aid.

Feeling dubious as to his future course with reference to Dr. Lyons, and dreading the approaching danger of being made the supernatural center of a semi-philosophical and eventually superstitious propagandism, he hastened to his mountain sanctuary for instruction. The individual whom he termed *Guide* chided

him for his dependence on outside aid. "See from thine own central sight the palest beam of light o'er thy pathway. And I will come only when thou hast done all thou canst, and yet requirest sight and power."

Davis resolved that he would henceforth live an independent life, be his own center of sight, his own inditer of impressions, be responsible for his own mistakes, help on the work of human progress as one among many, be the leader of no party, the friend of no useless compromise, and thus walk over the mountains and through the valleys of his individual pilgrimage.

Throughout the book there are fragments of increasing states of maturer realizations. For example:

"It is not an easy and idle task to be an unselfish worker for selfish and sorrowing multitudes! Human *Intuition*, when *clairvoyant*, knows no space. The sensibilities of the soul may merge into one river, unseen to physical eyes, roll between the rugged mountains of human life, and gather upon its wide margins 'impressions' of individual trials on both sides of the Atlantic . . . Intuitively I became identified with the living world of human beings. My soul yearned to free the slaves I saw—to shelter flying fugitives in all departments of life—fugitives from false theology, from political bondage, from the slavery of licentious domestic alliances . . . O, how I prayed for power to awaken in each human soul a moral *courage* that would not stop short of universal justice!"

*The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and A Voice to Mankind.* By and through Andrew Jackson Davis, the "Poughkeepsie Seer," and "Clairvoyant." In three parts. Part First. Any theory, hypothesis, philosophy, sect, creed, or institution, that fears investigation, openly manifests its own error. Part Second. Reason is a flower of the spirit, and its fragrance is liberty and knowledge. Part Third. When distributive justice pervades the social world, virtue and morality will bloom with an immortal beauty; while the Sun of Righteousness will arise in the horizon of universal industry, and shed its genial rays over

the fields of peace, plenty, and HUMAN HAPPINESS! 2 vols. John Chapman, London, 1847. This is a stereotype reproduction of the first edition in America.

The scribe's introduction to the published work admits that he is responsible for the verbal clothing—Davis seemed to receive the *ideas* as such, but could transmit them only in the same way that he would have had he received the information by ordinary means.

We have no information of an even remotely comparable work dictated in a trance state. Regardless of how a scientist, psychologist, clergyman, or skeptic may try to disparage this work and the other writings of Davis, there is an encompassing unity of purpose, a continuity, a progressiveness, and a noble universality of viewpoint that were far in advance of popular new thought of his own times, that have been receiving wider acceptance during the intervening years, and still are modern in their outlook for social advancement.

The Vortex of Positive Power justly may be considered as ONE SYSTEM. It is here subdivided in order to facilitate a general conception of the whole structure. Yet it is but one general evolution of worlds from the Great Center, and therefore is but one infinite production from one eternal origin. Comparatively but a single moment has elapsed since the first-formed universal system has had an existence, passing through all the various changes and conditions which the particles of each have assumed, in form, order, specific gravities, geological developments, undefinable and unimaginable revolutions, reciprocal and incessant interchanging and circulation of parts and particles. All these suns and systems of suns with their accompanying worlds are but as one particle, are but one breathing forth of internal qualities from the great eternal Fount in comparison to the grand and glorious developments that are to be produced and extended throughout the height, depth, length, and breadth of the vast *Univercoelum*.

Thus but *one atom* has been developed in comparison to that which shall be de-

veloped; but *one second* has elapsed in comparison to the corresponding extension of time.

Thought finds no resting place. It feels the material form, and is conscious of its habitation. It meditates definitely only upon objects that are suitable for its comprehension and association. Anything beyond such objects is but a vacuum. The human mind can not conceive of eternity or infinity. It is limited in its nature, belonging to, and produced by, finite forms, and existing among transient things. Consequently its thoughts must have bounds. Limits are therefore necessary in order that the mind may conceive correctly of internal realities and external forms and substances.

As it was in the beginning, so the vast and boundless *Univercoelum*, the Great Sun and Center from which all these worlds and systems of world emanated, is still an exhaustless fountain of chaotic material and living, inherent energy. It has eternal motion, contains the forms that all things subsequently assume, manifests the laws that are displayed in the geometrical and mechanical structure, combinations, and movements of the vast systems that are brought forth.

All of the mighty systems that were evolved from the great Center observe a rotary and orbicular motion around the Center. The very moment that an association of particles was established, action and reaction, condensation, and an orbicular and rotary motion were produced. And in accordance with the density or rarity of the planet, was the intervening distance between it and the sun around which it revolved. There was no disconnected force or impetus applied to the bodies thus formed to set them in harmonious motion; no foreign power impelled and guided them in order in their respective planes of revolution; but *inherent laus*, capable of controlling these manifestations, were developed and brought into action.

A true conception of the *Univercoelum* and of its harmonious formations would lead the human mind to conceive of systems corresponding to each other, and to make useful and extensive generalizations—the result of which would be to

cause man to carry out more harmoniously *in his own life* the teachings of the beauties that exist in the universe and to apply them properly to his own happiness and usefulness.

*The Diakka*, and Their Earthly Victims: being an explanation of much that is false and repulsive in Spiritualism. Colby & Rich, Boston, 1873. This is the only work of Davis that H. P. Blavatsky mentions in the *Secret Doctrine*.

Davis locates the land of the Diakka in that portion of the heavens known as *Draco Major*. It appears like an immeasurable wilderness covering the whole sphere to the southwest, and throwing a shadow far up into the dome of the rosy blue heavens resembling a beautifully decorated trapezium with countless chains of bars and swings trembling in the atmosphere, supported and upheld by nothing. This celestial wilderness seems boundless as it stretches in a great semicircle from the far northwest to the equally far southwest. Its aerial crown mottled with delicate brilliant points, so dazzlingly bright and exquisitely prismatic as to make the immediate surroundings black, give the beholder an impression that the hills and dales and forests beneath must be insufferably splendid with diamonds and golden riches too perfect for earthly eyes to gaze upon.

The country of the Diakka is a Garden of Eden where the morally deficient and the affectionately unclean enter upon a *strange probationary life*. A Diakka is a person of an occult temperament, often polished and dignified, with propensities bubbling from a fountain-head of overcharged self-consciousness. They take insane delight in playing parts, in juggling tricks, in personating opposite characters; prayers and profane utterances are of equal value to them; they display a passion for lyrical narrations, and every attitude is instinct with the schemes of specious reasoning, sophistry, pride, pleasure, wit, subtle convivialities.

A Diakka is an unbalanced, not an evil person—he wanders in his own congenial forest, never resting, never satisfied with life, often amusing himself with jugglery and tricky witticisms, invariably victimizing others; secretly tor-

menting mediums, causing them to exaggerate in speech, and to falsify by acts; they delight in unlocking and unbolting the doors of your bosom and memory, pointing your feet into wrong paths.

A large proportion of the discordant and repulsive and false experiences in Spiritualism is to be explained by the fact that the Diakka continually are victimizing sensitive persons, making sport of them, and having a jolly time laughing at the expense of really honest and sincere people, including mediums, whom they especially take delight in psychologizing and dispossessing of the use of will. There is no kind of alleged obsession, no species of assumed witchcraft, no phase of religious insanity where such psychology is not possible.

The remedy consists in knowledge. Remove the mystery of spiritual intercourse, and you remove the danger. No person of ordinary judgment need complain that he cannot overcome the influence of a Diakka. At most they can do nothing more than confuse your thoughts, break up the lines of your memory, mingle their inclinations with your own, and psychologize your nervous and muscular systems. If you yield in moments of curiosity or when morally weak, you can not escape legitimate punishment. Gratify one of their trifling impertinences, and you may be exhibited as a fool to your neighbors.

These evil forces of human selfishness are not confined in their effects to men's individual lives. Under the control, or rather by the permission of superior minds, the Diakka play important parts in great assaults upon bad governments, upon pernicious organized customs, upon evil social conditions, and frequently upon religious errors and superstitions. But for these spiritual freebooters little progress would be made. The evil communications of the meddlesome minds are, in time, completely overruled for good, because Good and not Evil is positive. The selfishness of the unredeemed carpets the floors of the coming temple of Humanity.

The main portion of the book is devoted to a subtle, clever satire on the

visit of a Diakka to the smug, cultural city of Notsob—Boston spelled backwards. The foibles of the intelligentsia, the academic elect, the religious conventions, and spiritualistic dilettantes—all are ridiculed very gently in a vague, misty unveiling of sensitive weaknesses.

These fragments of biography and quotations leave untouched much that is important as well as colorful in the activity of this gentle reformer and seer. Unorthodox in all things, Davis encountered opposition from the medical profession because of his theories of magnetic healing. He met the challenge to his right to diagnose disease and prescribe remedies by enrolling in a liberal-minded institution, the United States Medical College of New York. He rallied many other similarly interested students to do the same. He studied and met all of the usual requirements of the then 3-year course. He received his diploma as a medical doctor in March, 1883—when he was almost 60.

About this time the well-organized medical profession questioned by court action the qualifications of the United States Medical College to grant medical degrees. The case proceeded through several lower courts to the Appellate Court of New York which sustained an adverse ruling. But Davis influenced the college to take the case before the State Legislature which passed a measure declaring that all diplomas issued by the United States Medical College were valid and that their holders were entitled to the full practice of medicine with rights equal to those graduating from other institutions. Theodore Roosevelt signed this measure as Governor of the State of New York.

The thesis which Davis wrote for his doctorate was: *The Reality of Imaginary Diseases*. "But for the existence of mind and its psychical potencies, diseases would not only be unknown, but impossible." He elaborated on related theories in his *Harbinger of Health and Mental Disorders*.

The life work of Davis ended January 13, 1910. His legacy of books even now are being prepared for republication.

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