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About the Cover: Horoscope of Ebenezer Sibly with portrait.



Summer 1984

PRS JOURNAL

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RELIGIOUS DELUSIONS CAN BE DANGEROUS

While the importance of religion has been recognized since the beginning of human history, we have always been burdened with theological conflicts. It was easier to disseminate spiritual convictions when most countries had national faiths which the citizens held in common, when each believer was supported by the prevailing convictions of the community. Still more important was the simple fact that very few were even aware of the concept of comparative religion. There was also the unwritten law that travelers should obey the laws of the communities they visited and respect the gods of foreigners. The placid surface of religious life was sometimes disturbed by wars and internecine strife but, if the gods of the conquerers took over, there was very little change in moral convictions.

As communication and transportation spread throughout the world, conflicts of convictions became more numerous. This led to a complicated pattern of evangelism with missionaries promulgating their teachings with no regard for indigenous ideologies. Today, it is taken for granted that hundreds of different sects and cults have a right to exist and make as many converts as possible. As a result, there have been a number of holy wars and outbreaks of intolerance and persecution. We sometimes speak of one world, but are not yet able to worship one God.

It is universally accepted that religious persons must stoutly defend their own beliefs even to the point of martyrdom. My old Methodist friend used to say that "there are two doxies—ortho-

doxy which is my doxy, and hetrodoxy which is everybody else's doxy." At this point the discussion ended. It was regarded as a proper devotion to remain as long as we live in the faith which we inherited from our ancestors. Any doubt of the infallibility of our own sect was heresy. It is becoming increasingly difficult to isolate our inner lives from the beliefs of others. Children of different faiths go to school together and choose careers which break through theological boundaries. Some marry outside of their faith and may raise their families with a greater degree of theological tolerance. It becomes more obvious every day that we must do business with members of many faiths or some who have no religious convictions.

Economic and social survival now demands the recognition of the rights of friends and associates to worship according to the dictates of their own consciences. Gradually the concept of comparative religion has come to be widely accepted as right and proper. This branch of learning implies an acceptance of various doctrines and dogmas as an integral part of the human lifeway. There is still considerable resistance to this approach, which however is finding support among younger people who have never experienced a dominant sectarianism. It is quite a shock to discover that missionaries of other faiths feel that we are the ones standing most in need of salvation. Dedicated teachers, who are shepherds of sheep not of the Christian fold, have been reasonably successful in their labors. Many persons who have found prevailing orthodoxies less than inspiring are earnestly studying the contributions of foreign doctrines to the ennoblement of their inner lives.

Unfortunately, most of the members of major or minor doctrines have spent little time in the contemplation of spiritual realities. Many assemble once a week to listen to a kindly-faced minister whose sermon has grown shorter with every passing year. This good man has been obligated to say nothing detrimental about the denomination he serves and to refrain from expressing any opinions of his own. On the market are handsomely illustrated books dealing with the various faiths of mankind. We see pictures of the beautiful mountain shrines of Eastern people, the domes

and minarets of India and Persia, and the great sanctuaries of ancient faiths. It is inevitable, therefore, that truly dedicated persons shall be interested in the larger aspects of human worship and conduct.

This alchemical transformation of the policies of worship also presents difficulties for which the average believer is unprepared. While one group is investigating the new, another group is clinging desperately to the old. It is becoming necessary for every believer to know what he believes, why he believes, and why his neighbor has a right to his own beliefs. To shift about without proper knowledge of the universality of truth can lead to tragic consequences. Things will not get much better until truth seekers become mentally and emotionally capable of evaluating the various doctrines that are now circulating in Western society.

Confusion is especially troublesome when it is involved with divine matters. There is little solid ground available to those who are no longer satisfied with orthodox beliefs. It has been assumed that at last the doors of salvation have been opened to all. The wise and the otherwise shall go forth rejoicing and new revelations will overcome all the weaknesses of the mind, heart, or body. This conviction is supported by a proliferation of literature which is doing very well in the book trade, but is not solving legitimate human problems. Many sincere individuals are becoming hopelessly involved in a psychic wonderland which exceeds the most elaborate mythologies of antiquity. All this is due in part to the prevailing neurotic pressure and the sense of futility resulting from the insecurities of modern living. Many publications dealing with metaphysical and mystical subjects are merely catering to the escape mechanisms of confused mortals.

We all are becoming weary of junk mail. We are tired of bargains which simply impose upon our credulity, and we begin to doubt the avalanche of sweepstake tickets and other great benefits from small efforts. We take it for granted that these are astute systems of merchandising. If, however, among these assorted offerings there is an attractive folder assuring us that a spiritual revelation can make us an exalted teacher of future generations, we may

experience a hopeful uncertainty. Maybe it is true, who knows? Certainly we do not, but it is rather inspiring to be told that we are selected for spiritual qualities that we did not even know we possessed. In moments like this we must use discrimination perhaps for the first time, and protect ourselves from the dangers of our own wishful thinking.

If we inquire further into this unique opportunity, we may be told that perfect enlightenment can come only if we give complete, unswerving obedience to the mysterious leaders of the group in question. Have we ever thought that we would be required to obey without question the orders of unknown persons? It is unlikely that we would even consider such a procedure if it were not involved in a religious belief. Many individuals find it difficult to obey even traffic regulations, the importance of which is obvious to all concerned.

Perhaps we should pause for a moment and clarify two important types of metaphysical religious instruction. The most common forms of psychic phenomena are spiritualism and mediumship. In most cases this constitutes communication between a person alive in the physical world and one who is either deceased or belongs to an order of beings superior to ordinary humanity. Communications may be verbal, written, or given through some psychic device such as a Ouija board. In older times, slate writings were a favored method. In this type of phenomenology, the sources of the messages can never be factually ascertained and everything must be taken on faith. While there is substantial evidence that genuine psychism does exist and many mediums are sincere, this procedure can be dangerous, detrimental, and complicate the lives of sincere persons. Wherever the source of a doctrine or belief is some form of psychism, such teachings must be censored by common sense and adequate personal integration.

Mysticism is an actual expansion of consciousness resulting in a personal experience of the spiritual realities of life. There is no intermediary and the mystic is lifted up into a higher dimension which has been termed illumination. Metaphysical truths are not described or communicated, but intimately experienced and the

possibility of self-delusion is considerably reduced. Occasions of this kind are rare because they can only occur when the mystic has already regenerated his own nature by worship or discipline.

Psychism can be involved in wish fulfillment and is more likely to occur to those with neurotic tendencies. Genuine mystics are without spiritual ambitions and are not longing for peace, power, or plenty in the mundane realms. Jacob Boehme, probably the greatest of Protestant Christian mystics, was a shoemaker to the end of his mortal span. He never attempted to liberate his mind or body from the burdens of private life, and was a gentle, loving husband and a kindly father. It never occurred to him to seek for any distinction for himself, to found a cult, to attract disciples, and he remained a devout Lutheran to the day of his death. So far as is known, Boehme never had a visible or invisible teacher. He inwardly experienced certain mysteries of the higher worlds and used the keys he had discovered to open the gates to the kingdom of God.

Many persons who have had psychic experiences have brought questions to me which indicate their common difficulties. Some ask why they are suddenly involved in psychism, and are completely unprepared to understand the meaning of the messages which they receive. Often they will describe an occurrence and ask me what it means, or they turn to some metaphysical organization for an explanation. Others ask if their dreams or spiritualistic messages can be depended upon. Frequently, early psychic experiences are pleasant and inspire hope in difficult situations. Gradually however, factors of a morbid nature introduce themselves and the victim is led ultimately to the brink of desperation. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, on the occasion of her husband's death, gained certain consolation from messages received on a Ouija board, but when she became aware of the destructive influence of this "devil's flatiron" she publicly renounced all psychism of this type.

Persons who trust futures to the keeping of psychic revelations have usually been subject to a long-standing neurosis. They have had bad marriages, frustrated romances, wayward children, or no family at all. There could have been business disappointments,

congenital nervous ailments, or a superiority complex that never gained distinction. Esoteric experiences can appear to be an answer to an otherwise meaningless existence. The longing is so great and the need so immediate that no questions may be asked about a curious belief which promises great rewards with slight effort. It has been my observation in such cases that little or no effort is made by neurotics to correct their natural faults, improve their dispositions, practice charity, overcome animosities, or cultivate humanity. Unfortunately, organizations that attract this type are either unaware of a student's shortcomings or find it unprofitable to demand reformations of character.

The earlier faiths of mankind were able to protect themselves from unacceptable candidates to their religious mysteries. Sensation seekers had no desire to undergo discipline for five years before they could be admitted to the sanctuaries of wisdom. Those who were happy and well adjusted in their common occupations were satisfied with practical and virtuous beliefs. Today however, there is little or no supervision in the selection of members. The one consolation is that the mystical truths remain inaccessible to those who have not earned the right to greater insight. The first duty of the confused is to unconfuse themselves and not pass on their uncertainties to more or less normal associates.

False learning can lead to an obnoxious superiority complex. A person living in the rarified atmosphere of self deceit can be a nuisance to those in his environment and a destroyer of his own integrities. Such a one can be sincere, but many fanatics undoubtedly believe that they are instruments of destiny. By degrees, they hallucinate, exaggerating their own exalted opinion of themselves and in the end lose control of their imaginations.

It is not always the fault of the teaching that members of metaphysical groups come in the end to trouble. I know many cases in which sincere persons have carried their spiritual convictions with appropriate dignity. Reasonable individuals organize their beliefs with common sense and gain much through association with honorable organizations. There is no way, however, to prevent the foolish from suffering as a result of their own follies. The revolt

against materialism is justified, but the consequences are often unfortunate. For one reason or another, groups with highly specialized beliefs may have strong financial ambitions. Some are already in trouble for misuse of their funds. To succeed economically, competition must be encouraged.

Some groups are dedicated to protect humanity from the teachings of other groups. Public relations can result from a series of ethical compromises, blatant advertising, exorbitant fees, and a steady stream of propaganda enriching the organization, but lowering its standard of instruction. It is a little disturbing that ministries founded on psychic revelations should be in conflict with each other. We might reasonably hope that messages from higher sources would at least be compatible, but this is not always the case. Even a comparatively innocuous sect will announce with finality that they are the sole custodians of divine wisdom and the appointed guardians of deluded humankind.

For over sixty years, I have been trying to explain to countless persons the meanings of the messages that have disturbed their sleep and perturbed their associates. They come because they are in need of help, at least that is the stated reason. In reality, they will reject anything that does not agree with their own estimation of themselves. Some have told me regretfully that they have been warned by the voices that they must break up their homes, desert their children, and retire into a community of the elect. Others are forbidden to read any books except those published by their chosen organization. They must give up useful pursuits and spend their lives in meditation in the hope of transcending the responsibilities of daily living. There are very few success stories among these devotees of intangible convictions.

The majority of well-intentioned followers of strange beliefs accomplish little or nothing for themselves or for the causes with which they are associated. It has always seemed to me that truth-seekers following any path must first of all put their own lives in order. The best way to unfold the spiritual potentials with which we have been endowed is to make an honest list of our own shortcomings. In Oriental philosophy, character defects are often re-

ferred to as "the hindrances." There is no way of transcending personal faults except by correcting them.

The total person must grow as a compound, and it is fallacy to assume that we can press on to enlightenment and leave our faults behind. This is obvious when we try to counsel with those who hold fanatical attitudes. On one occasion, I inquired as to family relationships. This resulted in an outburst of unrighteous indignation. The person who had come for counseling had not spoken to a relative for years, despised most of them for their lack of spiritual development, acquaintances did not accept the mystical revelations, and the world in general was really not worth saving. The individual in question departed in a huff when I recommended the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. It should be obvious that no legitimate organization would accept such a person and hold out the promise of enlightenment.

Another question which can be asked and for which a constructive answer is not likely to be given, involves social responsibility. Is the developed person self-supporting and engaged in some useful enterprise contributing to the public good? Usefulness should be stressed in all religious training. We remember the story of St. Simon Stylite who long ago spent most of his life sitting on the top of a column in the Libyan desert. To avoid worldly contamination he had his food drawn up to him in a bucket. Many came to wonder and admire, but as far as we know, no one else became a pillar sitter. One interesting case involved a woman who lived in an atmosphere of high vibrations. She would not open a door or touch any common object without gloves on because low vibrations were too painful to her. She departed from this world in due time, but there were no indications that she grew in righteousness. Fanaticism is its own reward. The intolerant person brings out the worst in those around him and misrepresents any reasonable organization with which he may become associated.

An individual with nothing useful on his mind can easily become a hopeless neurotic. If it becomes evident that we are not maintaining a proper mental and emotional balance, we should diversify our interests although this may be contrary to inclination.

One can always develop a hobby, advance education, study the arts, travel, and volunteer time to philanthropic projects. One should try to reestablish old friendships without selling a belief; express constructive affections, and overcome all racial, religious, and social prejudices. Rather than trying to convert someone, the proper way is to radiate as a happy, well-adjusted human being; and prove that growth is more cheerful and a better disposition. Salvation depends upon oneself. A normal amount of study and thoughtfulness will help along the way and provide useful landmarks. The present way of life should be considered as a kind of test—perhaps one of the lesser mysteries of the ancient systems of initiation. Passing the tests of each day with quiet determination the true seeker earns a greater degree of enlightenment.



By love I do not mean any natural tenderness, which is more or less in people according to their constitution; but I mean a larger principle of the soul, founded in reason and piety, which makes us tender, kind, and gentle to all our fellow creatures as creatures of God, and for his sake.

—William Law

God grant that not only the love of Liberty but a thorough knowledge of the Rights of Man may pervade all the Nations of the Earth so that a Philosopher may set his foot anywhere and say: This is my Country.

—Benjamin Franklin

Our one time Ambassador to the United States, during Mr. Carter's presidency, Nani Palkhivala has recently written a book on India, *We, the People*, which gives a vivid picture of our people and the country. He writes,

TO MY COUNTRYMEN Who gave unto themselves the Constitution
but not the ability to keep it.
Who inherited a resplendent heritage
but not the wisdom to cherish it.
Who suffer and endure in patience without
the perception of their potential.

This quotation is contained in a letter which we recently received from the Bodes in India. It is sufficiently pertinent to be passed along to concerned persons in every nation.

LONGEVITY

On December 28, 1956, the Republic of Colombia issued two stamps, one for regular postage, and the other for air mail, both honoring Javier Pereira. The occasion was to celebrate Pereira's 167th birthday. Rumor had it that this very elderly man had worked most of his life on a coffee plantation and drank large quantities of coffee throughout his life. Obviously, efforts were made to disprove the official report, but it was generally assumed that the Republic of Colombia had researched the matter with reasonable diligence. Give or take a few years, the case of Pereira is of importance to many students exploring the mysteries of longevity. Statistical tables of life expectancies are a little like the Nielsen ratings. Although a number of persons are interviewed, there are exceptions to every rule.

In spite of air and water pollution, hazardous employment, leakages in nuclear plants, accidents and crime—all complicated by emotional pressures—life expectancies are greater than ever before. The Greeks of the fourth century B.C. had a life expectancy of from thirty-five to forty years, but Plato lived to be eighty-one and Socrates might have lived even longer had he not been condemned to death by the Areopagites of Athens. Pythagoras is supposed to have been a centenarian, but he was assassinated. In India where longevity has always been exceptional Gautama Buddha died in his eightieth year. Many modern persons find considerable consolation in the reasonable possibility that they may be hale and hearty in their eighties or nineties.

All these considerations naturally focus attention on various theories dealing with the extension of life by spiritual, philosophical, scientific, and physical systems. The basic question and the most difficult to answer is why some individuals live longer than others. There are numerous theories relating to this, but conclusions differ widely.



Postage stamps to commemorate the 167th year of the life of Javier Pereira.

An elderly gentleman who used to attend my lectures lived to the ripe age of 102. As always, someone asked him the secret of his longevity. He replied that he had never realized how old he was until someone told him his age which was a serious shock. He said that he had never regretted the past, had no fear of the future, and that he would do the best he could in this world until the Lord took him. This is not exactly the scientific solution to the problem under consideration, but may indicate something. One day, Konrad Adenauer's physician told him that he could not prevent him from growing old. The Chancellor replied, "I don't expect you to. All I ask is that you keep me growing older."

In his *Great Instauration*, Bacon discusses the "double road of active life." He tells us that one branch of this path is at the beginning pleasant and promising, but with the advance of years leads into dangerous and difficult regions for which the traveler is ill prepared. The other path is steep and rough at the entrance, but becomes easier as the traveler advances and terminates in perfect smoothness.

In the *History of Life and Death*, Lord Bacon writes as follows: "We read that the Esseans, amongst the Jews, did usually extend their life to a hundred years. Now, that sect used a single or abstemious diet, after the rule of Pythagoras. Apollonius Tyaneus exceeded a hundred years, his face betraying no such age; he was

an admirable man, of the heathens reputed to have something divine in him, of the Christians held for a sorcerer; in his diet pythagorical, a great traveller, much renowned, and by some adored as a god; . . . But, lest his long life should be imputed to his pythagorical diet, and not rather that it was hereditary, his grandfather before him lived a hundred and thirty years."

Bacon, always inclined to be conservative, mentions several examples of longevity among the ancients. Among those who lived to their eighties were Numa, King of Rome, Solon, lawgiver of Athens, Anacreon, the poet, and Pindarus, a poet of Thebes. Bacon mentions especially Galeria Copiola, an actress and dancer. She was brought to the stage as a novice. Her actual age at that time is not recorded, but she was ninety-nine years old at the time Pompey the Great (B.C. 106-48) dedicated a theater. She was present, not as an actress, but as an example of longevity. Later, during the solemnities for the health and life of Augustus, she appeared on the stage and received the tribute of the assemblage as a wonder of the world.

"At the end of the eighteenth century, the expectation of life at birth in North America and northwestern Europe was about thirty-five to forty years. By 1970 it exceeded seventy years, and at some future date the death of a person at an authenticated age of more than 114 years can be expected." (See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, pp. 912-913.)

Although a number of experts on the subject of longevity have condescended to mention Thomas Parr, it is evident that they desired to demolish the story of Parr's longevity. He was born in Shropshire in 1483. At the age of eighty years he married the first time and lived happily with his wife for thirty-two years. Eight years after her decease, Parr, being 120 years old, married a second time. In 1635 in the 152nd year of his life he was visited by the Earl of Arundel. His Lordship was so impressed that he invited Parr to visit London and supplied him with a carriage and a traveling companion. In London there was an odd fellow with whom Parr became friendly, and this irresponsible man wined and dined Parr so generously that he died shortly after his return from London.

John Taylor, known as the water poet, published a pamphlet entitled *The Old, Old, Very Old Man*, recording incidents in the life of Thomas Parr. Parr was buried the fifteenth of November, 1635, in Westminster Abbey and a monument was erected to his memory. The celebrated Dr. William Harvey, credited with the discovery of the circulation of the human blood, and the outstanding scientist of his day, performed an autopsy on Parr and declared that his body was in excellent condition for a person of such advanced years. John Taylor gives us a bit of scandal. At the age of 105, Parr had an intrigue with Catherine Milton, who later became his second wife. Because of this indiscretion, Parr was required to do penance in a white sheet at the door of the parish church. When he was introduced to Charles I, the king asked Parr what he had done more than other men. Parr replied, "I did penance when I was a hundred years old." A special distinction was bestowed upon Parr when a patent medicine was named after him. On the label of this elixir was a likeness of Parr by the celebrated painter, Peter Paul Rubens.

It has been said that the record of Henry Jenkins, who was born in Yorkshire in 1501 and died in 1670, is well proved. He claimed that he remembered the battle of Flodden Field which was fought in 1513. By the register of Chancery Court it was proved he had appeared in evidence and had an oath administered to him 140 years before his death. In the office of the King's Remembrancer is the record of a deposition in which he appeared as a witness at the age of 157. When over a hundred, he swam a river. (See *The Human Body* by Logan Clendening, M.D., New York: 1927.)

In these later days, there seems to be no single factor that guarantees a long life. It has been assumed that a good disposition is helpful. It certainly makes living more pleasant, but many in their eighties and nineties are quarrelsome, belligerent and spiteful to the very end. In one case I was present when a querulous, old man whispered with great relish that he knew his death was working a severe hardship on his family. These were his last words and he died happy. Bertrand, Lord Russell lived to be ninety-eight, and he admitted that he had no explanation for his longevity. He suffered

considerably for his beliefs, and was imprisoned twice for pacifism. George Bernard Shaw lasted for ninety-four years. He had a caustic wit and was able to annoy others with his beliefs. It is reported that he was a vegetarian which contributed to his fame, but it is also rumored that he took a number of vitamins, some of which may have included animal substances.

To go back as far as possible, we can ask, "Does length of years depend upon heredity?" It may be a factor, but a case I know personally casts the shadow of a doubt. A man born of tubercular parents lost both his father and mother before his twenty-first year. He spent many years as an able bodied seaman, then went into construction work which included carrying one-hundred-pound sacks of concrete up stepladders. He had very few illnesses, but suffered from a fractured spine which resulted in no lengthy disability, retaining all his faculties until his death in his eighty-seventh year. An old Civil War veteran that I knew was seriously wounded in combat and was left on the battlefield to die. He was only eighteen at the time, but lived an important and constructive life also into his eighties.

What happens if one parent dies young and the other lives to advanced age? In such cases the tendency seems to be to enjoy a long life. Phrenologists say that there is a formation of the skull in the area of the mastoid processes. If there is an unusual fullness of the skull in this area the probabilities of survival are markedly increased—all other factors notwithstanding. If the new born babe has survived the hazards of the prenatal epoch and delivery, it comes under the immediate pressure of environment. Statisticians are inclined to give special attention to this factor. No one can deny that a child is markedly influenced by the conditions in its early home. It is during these years also that mental and emotional pressures build up and may interfere with the proper development of the physical body.

Here, public opinion comes to a parting of the ways. Some feel that an easy, gentle, sheltered childhood weakens the boy or girl and makes them less fit to face the conflicts of maturity. Others favor the notion that reversals and misfortunes strengthen char-

acter, but may ruin disposition. One authority on the subject feels that there would be more healthy young people if parents were more cautious and careful in the selection of mates. Under the glamour of romance, there is little consideration for biological compatibility. The Chinese may have suspected this and, together with several other nations, selected mates for their sons and daughters with emphasis upon hereditary backgrounds and early environmental modifications. The professional matchmaker has little influence today, and one of life's most important steps is seldom disciplined by wisdom or common sense.

Nature has a plan for human beings which cannot be completely ignored. As soon as possible after the individual attains maturity it is proper for him or her to become self-sustaining, build a home, marry an appropriate helpmate, raise a family, and assume a proper place in community affairs. Education, as we have it today, is too heavy a burden for mortal flesh to bear. One young man that I knew had his major in art and archaeology. In the desperate search for knowledge in his chosen field, he attended four different universities, spent several years in museums in Europe, and was matriculating for special courses in Madrid. In substance, he was over forty years old and still in school. I said to him one day, "If you keep this up, you will be eligible for Social Security and Medicare by the time you graduate."

Young people are more concerned about appearance than length of years. Again, there are differences of opinion. In this area there is much emphasis upon high protein, low carbohydrate nutrition. A devout spiritualist I knew whose greatest goal in life was to be a centenarian was much overweight, and it was generally assumed in the health circles that he would be the victim of his adipose tissues. They were right. He only lived to ninety-nine years and eleven months.

A number of our outstanding nutritionists have been short lived. Have we any means of actually knowing the best way to prolong physical life and fitness? We cannot be entirely sure, but there is some reason why even in these chaotic times we have added several years to life expectancy. The population explosion tells us

that more children are being born, but it is also telling us that many persons are living longer. In the United States, some of this improvement at least is due to Social Security, Medicare, and industrial or private health insurance policies.

Our forebears had to face the uncertainties of age as best they could. Most persons alive today can live independently far into their seventies or eighties. In retirement homes that are well managed, living is pleasant, the food is nourishing, and a certain amount of health care is often included. The weakness of this program however is the lack of meaningful activities. It is probably a good health rule to remain employed as long as possible. The discipline of regular activities is better than purposeless leisure.

One physician writing in the last century said he was convinced that with concerted effort humanity could become disease free within a century. The incentive has not been sufficiently strong. Most people are not sincerely health conscious until they become ill. From available facts, it seems rather unlikely that the elixir of life will be available in the near future. In the meantime the best way to preserve health is to obey natural law. We must sometime learn that the body is often wiser than the mental autocrat ready to sacrifice it at any time for the fulfillment of ambitions and dissipations.

The length of life cannot always be measured by years. Time is only worthwhile according to the use we make of it. We cannot find proof that the rich live longer than those of moderate means, but with extensive medical care they can take longer to die. Another unsolved problem is immunity. Doctors and nurses work with highly contagious diseases without becoming affected whereas others take on contagions, infections, and allergies at the slightest provocation. There are scientific explanations for these differences, but they are highly theoretical.

Assuming that we are sinking into the abyss of junk food, we take on a regime of approved nutrition. While we count the calories religiously, our bad dispositions are still making life miserable for those around us while we are absorbed in some nefarious objectives of our own. There was an old story that goes

back to the 1920's and 1930's, the golden age of eating fads. In a certain family, the wife was a vegetarian and the husband was a meat eater. One day the wife served herself a steak while her husband was struggling with a mass of vegetables which he firmly believed would contribute to his spiritual salvation. Finally, he could not stand it any longer, and in a moment of righteous indignation, he hit his wife over the head with the salad bowl and she spent several days in the hospital. The words of Jesus would imply that the stomach will take care of itself, but dispositional defects must be corrected in the heart and mind.

The best rule we have ever had healthwise is moderation—in all things not too little and not too much. We all make mistakes and must correct them. We contract bad habits and have long years to regret them. Even when many social benefits are available, unnecessary sickness is an extravagance very few can afford. Drug addictions and alcoholism often have long-range consequences. The victims may live for many years, useless to themselves and a burden to others. Bad habits of these kinds are often said to be caused by the corruptions of society. We are all overacting in our response to world conditions.

Factually, the human race has been afflicting itself since before the beginning of history. Obsidian arrowheads and flint spear-points testify to the grudges and grievances of our ancestors. Nature did not decree that it was the moral duty of humanity for nations and races to exterminate each other. There has never been a time when human beings could not have become lasting friends if they had really desired to get along peacefully together. Because we do not have sense enough to think and live constructively, we have developed diseases appropriate to our misdeeds. While we worry and emotionalize about problems that never end, we become embittered and intolerant. Our own follies increase the crime rate, encourage social violence, condone anarchy, and some even contemplate suicide as the easy way out of the conspiracies of a degenerating planet.

This adds up to sickness. We are too weak to carry the pressure and too ignorant to solve it. Our escape mechanisms bestow little

inspiration for those who spend most of their leisure time watching artificial portrayals of social corruptions on television.

If there is balm in statistics, we are told that if we reach seventy we have a good chance of making eighty, and with eighty behind us there could be six or eight more years in which to pay taxes. It is no longer only a remote possibility that we can be centenarians. As long as it is possible for us to exceed our expectations, it might be timely to plan for a future which we have a good chance to experience. Grandma Moses was quite an inspiration, and she made a name for herself after her hundredth birthday. Instead of waiting for retirement we should all be planning second or third careers. We are never sure of just how long our lives will last, but it can do no harm to take longevity for granted.

It is sad to note that, while we live longer than ever before, there is less of beauty and compassion in our dealings with each other. We have made the mortal sphere too difficult for our own good. We exist in a state of perpetual emergency and transgress the proprieties which should help and guide us through the whole length of our earthly journey. Long before our troubled centuries, the Chinese mystic Lao-tzu made a careful study of conditions in China. He found pride, avarice, corruption, and decadence throughout the nation. Leaders were jealous of each other, ambitious dictators sought to overthrow the rulers of the empire and the lowly were not above defrauding each other. He decided that there was only one thing he could do. If he could not live in peace with his neighbors, he would travel to some place where he could die in peace. As a little, wizened old man, he rode off into the desert of Gobi, on a clumsy water ox. No one really knows what happened to him, but poets like to think that he traveled to the regions of the immortals where persons of all beliefs and convictions drank their tea together, free of the delusions of gain and loss.

The old alchemists claimed to have discovered a universal medicine against all the ills of the flesh. Many chemists devoted their lives to the quest of everlasting youth, but as Mrs. Mary Atwood intimates in her book *A Suggestive Inquiry into the*

Hermetic Mystery, London: 1850, the chemical formulas are veiled accounts of the regeneration of character through personal disciplines and dedications. Jakob Boehme uses alchemical symbols to represent metaphysical principles.

A desperate search for salvation nearly always ends in tragedy. While we are certainly here to grow, it does not follow that we should ignore the cultivation of the social graces. There is no evidence that extreme austerities hasten the improvement of life. It is by guarding ourselves against small faults of character, we hasten the integration of the complete personality. Although many disagreeable people live to very advanced age, it should not be understood that their unpleasant dispositions contribute to their longevity. More likely, natural law gives each person every possible opportunity to correct his weaknesses. It is a good plan to make a careful inventory of our virtues and vices, and prepare a program suitable to take the stress out of daily relationships.

There have been many speculations that where we live has a bearing on how long we will live. One group is convinced that altitude is a factor in longevity. Mountainous areas in Asia and eastern Europe are associated with long lives. Research however has been inconclusive. The regions are sparsely populated and vital statistics are largely lacking. In one area it is suspected that men purposely exaggerated their ages to escape military duty. It is probable, however, that mountainous regions are beneficial places in which to live and also contribute to mystical disciplines such as Yoga and Zen.

In most of the ancient systems of mythology, the heavenly regions were above the smog belt. The Greek Olympus, the Nordic Asgard, the Hindu Kalasa, and the Sumeru of Buddhism were snow capped from the dawn of time. Modern research, however, appears to indicate that the rapidly increasing air pollution will ultimately reach the highest peaks of the Himuvat.

It is not certain that persons living in high altitudes live longer than those who spend their lives on sea level. It has been reported however that the lungs are larger and more active in high altitudes. Mystics are usually depicted in Chinese art as dwelling in moun-

tainous areas, far from the contamination of industrialism. The Chinese regions of the immortals, if we can trust their paintings, are situated in high altitudes. We hear people say almost every day that they would choose to live in the country if they could earn a living there. The great city destroys health by exhaustion, and the small town by boredom. Civilization has been organized to make obsolescence certain. The human body is most ingenious in its efforts to survive; but it remains true that for every year of life added by conveniences, a year is taken away by environmental circumstances.

There are many complaints about the corruption of natural resources, and there is some anxiety over the inconsistent circumstance that as a result of trying to live in a cesspool of our own making where conditions are arising which endanger survival, we must protect ourselves in every way possible. The private citizen cannot make a living and escape all the forms of pollution in the midst of which he is struggling to protect his health. The first thing he can do is to reduce, so far as is possible, the evils with which the physical body must contend. He can ease up on aspirin, tobacco and alcohol along with artificial sweeteners and appetite controllers. This will free more of his energies to struggle with acid rain and nuclear leakage.

He can also pay more sincere attention to controlling his intake of assorted pharmaceuticals which allay symptoms, but cure nothing. Even air conditioning is a mixed blessing. Some workers can't stand fluorescent lighting; and rock music in large doses can wreck the nervous system, damage the endocrine glands, and is especially dangerous to small children.

It has been stated by some authorities that we often dig our graves with our teeth. A phrenologist I once knew declared that he could distinguish between a vegetarian and a meat eater by the shape of the skull. Those who require meat at nearly every meal develop health problems from which vegetarians are less likely to be afflicted. On the other hand, the meatless diet often becomes entangled in psychological complications which impair both health and disposition. The elephant, which is the largest and most

powerful of all land animals, is a strict vegetarian. Most animals used for food or domesticated for human service also abstain from animal food.

It is probably inevitable that we will be unable to maintain the cattle industry. Cattle, for example, are vegetarians and we could save time and money and the horrors of the slaughter house by eating the grain ourselves. It has already been necessary to devote considerable land to animal sanctuaries. By degrees, these will be encroached upon to provide additional land for housing and farming. While it is not certain that we can immediately become a race of centenarians, we might attain certain benefits referred to in the ancient chronicles of China. In these it is stated that the sages of old slept without dreams and died without ailment of any kind.

There is one other phase of this problem which must be considered and that is accidental or violent death. Under this heading would come victims of accidents, epidemics, wars, natural disasters, and even suicides. Signs of accidental or violent deaths are clearly shown in the lines of the hand, horoscopes, and are foreseen by psychics and numerologists. Such events, like mundane prophecies must indicate that they are parts of karmic patterns. Everyone alive today is solving old problems and creating new ones. In this complex process we are also strengthening virtue, deepening understanding, and building the foundations of better lives in the future. Each embodiment is a fragment of an eternal destiny, and the great story of humanity must have a happy ending.

Vanity can have a bearing on life expectancy. As long as appearance is the first consideration, many persons are willing to endanger health, and even survival, in the effort to appear glamorous. There is no doubt that prosperous nations eat too much while a considerable part of the human race is undernourished. To endure the pressures of modern lifestyles, the nutritional intake must be maintained. If a loss of weight is accomplished by depriving the body of essential food elements, appearance may improve to some degree, but the lifespan may be shortened.

In the days of my youth the science of nutrition was still in its

infancy. Supplements of various kinds were not obtainable in health food stores, and medical science gave virtually no attention to body chemistry. Hearty eating was also the first line of defense against tuberculosis. Today, many people depend almost entirely upon an assortment of powders, pills, and capsules to protect themselves from malnutrition. The result has been a flourishing business, partly dedicated to weight loss and partly to super-abundant vitality.

There is some excuse for the gullibility of the public. There is no universally accepted program which those seeking better health can follow. Actually, specialized diets are dedicated principally to compensate for the adulteration of basic foods. There is some doubt as to whether this procedure can contribute to longevity. It may well be that optimism is largely responsible for the success of many of these programs.

Theoretically, the more affluent levels of society should be the most fortunate in the preservation of health. On the contrary, however, they have more funds to maintain intemperances and over-indulgences. My old friend, Dr. Bronson already mentioned, had a very glum expression on his face when he told me that he had just come from the funeral of a close friend who was ten years his junior. When asked the nature of the ailment which had terminated fatally, Dr. Bronson explained, "He was a rich man and he died of wealth. He spent too much time trying to enjoy himself. He was a high liver and a low thinker." Those who can afford to drive expensive cars, maintain a cellar of costly liquors, and buy all the drugs they want frequently commit involuntary suicide.

Health has no adversary more dangerous than wealth. Even in times of financial stress, an expensive meal is a status symbol. The gourmet is actually in more trouble than the gourmand. The chef, probably trained in Europe, breaks every rule of practical nutrition. When the diner reads the exorbitant charge for his meal, he should realize that he is contributing generously to a painful old age. Although catering to sophisticated taste buds, he is actually not an epicure. In sober truth, Epicurus, the Greek patron saint of the dinner table, was most abstemious. When he invited his friends to

a banquet, he usually served stale bread dipped in sour milk. The rest of the dinner was intellectual communion.

Exercise is another victim of wealth. The golfer now rides around in a cart and only the caddy benefits physically. A person who is reluctant to perform ordinary physical activities may be coaxed to join a health spa at a goodly fee. His grandparents had no such requirements. There was plenty of exercise on the farm or even in a country store.

Vacations do very little to help this situation. The more costly the accommodations, the less healthy they may be. There is a tendency to pay generously to cheat the body of its normal exertions. All this adds up to an overwhelming mistake. Society is an endless sequence of food and drink; and even those who might realize that they are making a mistake, are afraid to express their anxieties. A lifetime given to maintaining the responsibilities of wealth has consequences that few like to consider.

To give credit where credit is due, the greatest advancements in medical science have been in the fields of surgery and geriatrics. Pacemakers and heart bypasses have added many years of constructive living and social usefulness. Sad to say however, for every improvement in health programming there have been added dangers and emergencies.

It has taken us nearly three thousand years to extend our lives beyond the three score and ten set down in the Scriptures. Scientists are fully aware of the fact that the human body, with proper care and insight, could hold up fairly well for a hundred years or more. The trouble is, few seem to care about this pleasant prospect. The scientists are far more busily engaged in space exploration and the perfection of nuclear armaments. To a measure at least, progress is now a matter of funds. The rich have little general interest in survival, and the poor are even less concerned.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes chapter III verses 1 and 2, King David as the preacher expresses his personal feeling on length of life as follows: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is plant-

ed; . . ." He writes from a contemplation of his older years. Strength fails, faculties become tired, and various ailments infect the flesh. When this happens, longevity is not attractive, and David, the King, found that even the royal estate was little better than a burden upon the flesh.

He makes an important point, however, when he implies that the processes of birth and death are regulated by a power beyond human control. If the life span of every human being is unique to himself, then he must in some way exist within a pattern of universal laws. It can scarcely be assumed that Deity in person proclaims the physical duration of each living creature.

Here, philosophy becomes a most useful instrument. This branch of learning deals with reasonableness; in other words, patterns of probabilities. Life is either meaningful or meaningless. If it is meaningless, the physicist, astronomer, and theologian all labor in vain. Why build greater telescopes or microscopes if nothing matters and there is no reason for existence? Certainly this approach is neither inspiring nor contributory to progress. Nothing is solved by attempting to divide the meaningful from the meaningless.

The scientist faces every day evidence he chooses to ignore. With microscope and telescope the trained thinker becomes aware of an incredible universe of precise procedures which he is unable to explain. With modern equipment it is possible to photograph the incredible structure of the eye of a fly. There is no explanation, however, for the processes of the universe which make this eye inevitable. Even in the smallest cell there are wonders beyond our comprehension. We go along, understanding little and hoping that these natural wonders will pass unnoticed so that they will not challenge prevailing theories of involution and evolution.

In the preface of his book *Life and Death, or, of The Prolongation of Life*, Lord Bacon writes, "For I have hope, and wish, that it may conduce to common good; and that the nobler sort of physicians will advance their thoughts, and not employ their times wholly in the sordidness of cures, neither be honoured for necessity only, but that they will become coadjutors and instruments of

the Divine omnipotence and clemency in prolonging and renewing the life of man; especially, seeing I prescribe it to be done by safe, and convenient, and civil ways, though hitherto unassayed."

There is another approach to this complex subject. Cheiro and a number of other palmists of repute are convinced that the lifeline in the human hand indicates clearly the life expectancy of every individual. Frequent testing appears to sustain the testimonies of palmistry. It should be noted therefore that there are many lines in the palm each bearing witness to the potentials and characteristics of the complete personality. These indications are present on the hands of infants and are not greatly changed over the entire lifetime. The head line testifies to the mental attitudes and the heart line to the emotional stress. The fate line is concerned with the pressures of ambition, and the health line with the natural stamina of the person. The mounts of the hands intensify pressures or when poorly developed, dispositional deficiencies. No two hands are alike, but they can be classified in groups according to general similarity.

Some have tried to fit the testimonies of palmistry and phrenology into the Mendelian theory, but such findings are inconsistent with the natural processes of universal integrity. Nothing of constructive value would be accomplished, and it would seem to be a major injustice to assume that an individual is inclined to a criminal career because one of his remote ancestors was a pickpocket.

Most persons wish to live according to the complex pressures within themselves. Perhaps they would prefer to fulfill the archetype revealed by the lines on their hands. They would all like to be healthy, but have no intention of allowing their habitual activities to be modified or curtailed. By following the complex pressures of innate characteristics, they fulfill expectancy patterns and terminate their lives according to the rules of cause and effect.

Does education contribute to vital statistics? In the little red schoolhouse there was very little damage from the communication of learning. At the present time however, higher education can be, and often is, a menace to health. Years ago, I knew a young lady

who was an exceptional student. She went through college with straight A grades and earned her Phi Beta Kappa key. In the last few months of schooling she pushed herself very hard and showed signs of fatigue, and, two months after graduation, she died of physical exhaustion. Another young woman, caught in the educational trap, was carrying a fairly heavy program. Her major required from three to five hours of homework every day. Two other courses demanded the same number of hours of homework and the teachers were highly competitive in their time assignments. The young lady finally dropped out with mononucleosis.

Due to circumstances which we may never fully understand, we have a life allotment which we can use or abuse. Proper use will make a good life. Wrong use will be accomplished by an assortment of disasters—physical and psychological. Let us assume therefore that nature rewards normalcy and common sense. There is no proof that universal laws must be fully understood, but we must keep them to enjoy the consequences. The good natured individual can be imposed upon and condemned for his happy disposition. He may not actually live any longer in the land which the Lord has given unto him. A good life is not bestowed by science, nor can our mistakes all be cured by legislation.

If there is a way by which we can live longer, it means nothing unless we choose to live better. I was talking one day to one of those optimists who thought we would get further if we added twenty-five or fifty years to our life expectancy. Geniuses would have more time to advance their contributions, artists would come closer to perfection, and we would all have opportunities to grow and enrich our destiny. I asked him if he would like to see fifty years added to the life of Adolph Hitler or Benito Mussolini? Would it be a good idea for all our politicians to continue their dominating influences into the middle years of the twenty-first century? Is it likely that a gift of additional time would be an inspiration to virtue or only an invitation to greater iniquities?

Among the constructive contributions that transition makes to the advancement of life is that it breaks up personal ambitions and conspiracies. It should be obvious by this time that all physical

projects are transitory. A Greek scholar once said, "No man kills his own successor." Our patterns and plans must pass on to others who will use or abuse them as fancy dictates. Those who devote most of their lives to accumulation have actually achieved nothing of permanence. To sacrifice fame and material success is actually to gain precious time in which to mature the nobler parts of our own natures.

Even while we watch, the environment in which we live is warning us of our unreasonable incentives. It is not the convulsions of seismic disturbances that are most endangering our futures, but the ulterior motives pressing us on to self destruction. From all this we can learn one simple fact: Do not rush headlong toward the open grave. There is no reason why we should not pause to consider the beauties of the natural world, to share with loved ones the simple pleasures of a kindly family, and to perform charitable services for all in need. We never have to pay the same debt a second time. When we make things right, karma is satisfied and finds ways to reward us.

There is another factor seldom considered. The great majority of human beings has no way of breaking patterns except to die and leave the difficulties behind, at least for awhile. Very few would want an extension of life if it was merely the continuation of domestic inharmony, industrial uncertainty, economic insecurity, inflation, and exploitation. We must have a separate look at things if we are to grow in grace. To have a vacation from this harrassed planet, for at least a short time, can be beneficial to all concerned.

Scientists have not yet reached that degree of philosophical insight which would enable them to accept the belief in reincarnation. It might well be that each of us comes into birth to learn lessons that we avoided or evaded in previous embodiments. If there is a destiny that dates our ends, it is the result of the virtues and vices cultivated long ago. This seems to be the only explanation in harmony with universal integrity. If the past dominated our present embodiments the human race would be doomed to mediocrity, whereas we would rather choose to hope that there are at least minor indications of progress. If we are able to make useful

reforms in our own natures, the results may not be completely obvious in the present lifetime, but in future incarnations the life expectancy may be obviously improved.

We usually consider accidental death as an interference with reasonable life expectancy. There are certainly occasions when circumstances are beyond our control and for these there is consolation in the Bhagavad Gita, often called the Hindu book of Psalms. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Arjuna, Prince of the Pandavas, in his war chariot looks across to the ranks of his enemies and finds among them his own kinsmen. He is resolved rather to die himself than to kill others. In this moment, the Lord Krishna takes on the human form of Arjuna's charioteer and speaks thus to the young prince:

Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;
 Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!
 Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit for ever;
 Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!

Who knoweth it exhaustless, self-sustained.
 Immortal, indestructible,—shall such
 Say, "I have killed a man, or caused to kill?"

Nay, but as when one layeth
 His worn-out robes away
 And, taking new ones, sayeth,
 "These will I wear to-day!"
 So putteth by the spirit
 Lightly its garb of flesh,
 And passeth to inherit
 A residence afresh.

From: *The Song Celestial or Bhagavad-gita*,
 transl. by Sir Edwin Arnold,
 Philadelphia: n.d., pages 9, 10

Belief in reincarnation has increased in popularity in recent years. While science remains skeptical and some religions find the doctrine displeasing, it is the best available explanation for the complexities of modern living. Alternative hypotheses require an acceptance of dubious operations of divine and natural laws. The rather common belief that the human life span is a concatenation

of accidents is irrational. If there is no reason for existence, space remains only a graveyard of worlds and the earth itself a cemetery. With our natural tendency to shift responsibility for our misfortunes, we have several possibilities, all of which are unsatisfactory. We cannot assume that God is the source of the evils that afflict us or is punishing us for the sins of our remote progenitors. The idea that afflictions are heaped upon us simply to test our spiritual stamina will not bear serious reflection. While all compounds are perishable, the energies which ensoul bodies are eternal and contribute to the fulfillment of the divine intent.

Honesty requires that each person as we see him today is working out his salvation with some degree of diligence. An infant coming into this vale of uncertainties is not a new being, but a seasoned traveler in a new body. Most of the tribulations which disfigure our present careers are due to ignorance or indolence which we have brought with us into birth. When these reasonable facts are better known and more widely accepted, the whole course of civilization will be changed.

Among the East Indian people it is taken for granted that no one can become perfect in a single lifetime, but as perfection is inevitable and, even the most guilt-laden must come in the end to enlightenment, rebirth is the wise provision of nature that assures universal salvation.

Pythagoras brought the doctrine of reincarnation from Asia to the Mediterranean region. It was a happy solution to the Greek philosophy of life. Their earliest concept of the afterlife may be best described as sterile. There was no actual punishment, but the ghosts of the dead wandered endlessly and hopelessly in the gloomy regions of Hades. Neoplatonism advanced the doctrine of metempsychosis and transformed the cycle of life into a vast initiatory ceremony.

Some materialists have wondered why we cannot satisfy ourselves with a worldly paradise. What more can there be than a stately mansion, a swimming pool, and abundance of funds? This attitude is a mistake and nature is beginning to clarify this misunderstanding. While we can greatly improve our society if we in-

still the virtues and integrities set forth in the sacred writings, but the material world will always be a temporary abode along the caravan route of living creatures. Populations increase, natural resources are gradually exhausted, we give little or no thought to the future, but the day must come when we realize one and all that we have a nobler destiny than to remain forever upon this molehill we call the earth. Whether the thought is comforting or not, both love and hate perpetuate human relationships. While this means that those we love may be close to us in a future embodiment, the same is true if we harbor dislikes. Unless we solve antagonisms in the present incarnation, we will carry our grievances to plague us in some future embodiment.

We should never attempt to exploit our acquaintances or victimize other persons to advance our own estates. To do so is to create unfortunate karma for ourselves. Some enmities have already been brought forward from past embodiments and will be carried into the future unless we solve them here and now. If animosities are due to ulterior motives in ourselves, we are twice afflicted. Some may feel that trying to improve character and disposition seriously interferes with the passing pleasures of the hour. Experience however proves beyond doubt that we have more time for happiness when we stop perpetuating unhappiness.

Nearly every sacred book of the world deals with the mystery of transition. In Egypt there were elaborate mortuary rituals all built upon the conviction that human beings survive the transition from one world to another. There was a pleasant region, watered by the celestial Nile where the farmer and his patient ox still labored together and life went on as usual. There were festivals to welcome meritorious persons into the gardens of Amentet. Nothing ended, there was only change. It might be noted however that those who died without atoning for their misdeeds were turned over to Typhon, and this monster devoured them. Typhon, of course, is the material world to which they had to return in the course of self-improvement.

It may seem that we have not found the answer to the mystery of death. The real true consolation must always be dependent in

large measure upon faith. If we have a good philosophy of life and have found the supporting strength of religion, fears will subside and the peaceful heart will trust the power that fashioned it in the first place. In the *History of Life and Death*, Lord Bacon writes as follows:

“A life in religion, and in holy exercises, seemeth to conduce to long life. There are in this kind of life these things, leisure, admiration, and contemplation of heavenly things, joys not sensual, noble hopes, wholesome fears, sweet sorrows. Lastly, continual renovations by observances, penances, expiations, all which are very powerful to the prolongation of life.”

The Indian tribes of North America lived close to nature and were endowed with a variety of psychic propensities. Most writers on Amerindian mythology have been forced to admit that the medicine priests of the various tribes had a communion with spiritual reality including clairvoyance, clairaudience, and clair-sentience. When I brought Hasteen Klah to Los Angeles, I learned that he had a remarkable reputation for his healing powers. The Yeibichai was a solemn healing ceremony with elaborate ritualism. The sick person was laid upon a sand painting and strange rites were performed to free the physical body from the ailments which afflicted it. I asked Klah what would happen if, in spite of the esoteric rites, the patient failed to recover? Through the interpreter, Klah answered gravely, “I do not know. No one ever died.”

The reservation agent who was not an Indian came with Hasteen Klah because he said that if anything happened to the venerable healer while he was away from home, there would be serious consequences. The agent told me that a very old Navaho woman suffering from a malignancy was brought in to be treated in the reservation clinic. It was decided that nothing could be done for her and it would be best to return her to her own people. She was carried out on a wooden door which was placed in an open wagon. Back on the reservation, a Yeibichai was performed for

her and several months later she walked in to the Indian store completely cured. What happened no one seemed to know, but the occurrence caused considerable consternation.

Most medicine priests are born to be healers. Usually their totem is the thunderbird, or phoenix which destines them to religious life. They receive no formal medical training, but are ordained to their labors by the "old ones" and the "trues" abiding in the great medicine lodge in the sky. When a member of the tribe fell sick, the medicine priest went alone at night and while practicing vigil usually the necessary remedies were revealed to him. He would look about and see a little glow of light surrounding certain plants and herbs. He gathered the ones so marked and they proved to supply the necessary medication.

When it came time for an Indian to die, the medicine priest temporarily left his body and accompanied the soul of the dying person into the afterlife. It never occurred to the Amerindians that the human soul was not immortal. There was no death, only a change of worlds.

Dr. Evens-Wentz in his book, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, 1911, refers also to the belief of the early Irish people that psychics guide the souls of the dead into the afterlife. In regions that have so far avoided the sophistication that undermines faith in universal benevolence, quiet acceptance of a divine lifeway probably contributes considerably to longevity. The unquestioning acceptance of the problems of living completely eliminates those neurotic anxieties which so-called civilized persons carry with them from the cradle to the grave. Where there is no physician trained in modern ways, natural law guides the human being through the uncertainties of mortal existence.



Alexander Dumas Pere one day dined at the house of Dr. Gistal, a celebrity of Marseilles. After dinner the good doctor brought his distinguished guest an autograph album, and asked him to add his name to it. "Certainly," said Dumas, and he wrote: "Since the famous Dr. Gistal began to practice here they have demolished the hospital." "Flattery!" cried the delighted doctor. "And on its site made a cemetery," added the author.

THE GREAT MUGHAL

On October 15, 1542, Abu-ul-Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar was born at Amarkot in the Sind. Among his ancestors were Genghis Khan who bore the title "King of Kings" and Tamerlane (Timur Shah), remembered in the Far East as "the shaker of the earth." Akbar was a devout Muslim, but is remembered among the learned as one of the most enlightened rulers of the Eastern world. In most respects, he was a benevolent despot, reigning in the midst of oriental splendor.

Akbar was so busy with many matters that he never learned to read or write, but this lack did not dull the edge of his intellect. It was perfectly possible to consult with experts in almost any field. The Emperor's contribution was to arrange new ideas in practical and compatible relationships. When the labors of the day were finished, Akbar had many long and significant discussions with religious leaders who enjoyed his friendship. His first problem was to pacify his fellow Moslems who were sorely troubled by Akbar's liberal thinking. Among his advisors were Moslems, Hindus, Christians, and Jains and, needless to say, there were many differences of opinion. In the affairs of state, the Emperor consulted four ministers in order to make decisions which were above prejudice.

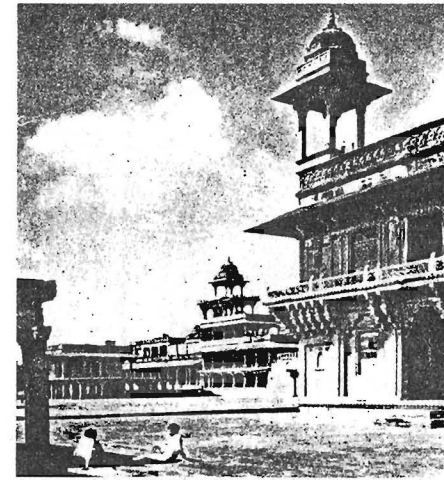
Toward the end of his life, Akbar created a kind of mysticism of his own. The creed, if it may be called such, was the "Divine Faith." While it has been suggested by skeptics that Akbar was motivated by political contingencies, there is no real evidence to support this criticism. Actually, the Emperor simply broadened the basis of Islamic mysticism which always emphasized the cultivation of divine wisdom and the practice of social virtues.

In 1509, Akbar established his capitol at Fatehpur Sikri which is located about twenty-six miles from Agra. I spent many hours



Akbar Shah from an Indian miniature.

wandering about this great architectural complex which was built in 1569 and deserted in 1586. There are many conflicting reports concerning the founding of this city and its abandonment. It seems that Akbar had no son and heir to succeed him to the throne. He therefore sought counsel with the Muslim saint, Salim Chishti who correctly predicted the birth of Akbar's son. Fatehpur Sikri was created to commemorate this happy event. Then we hear that the saint liked the idea of sitting in a house built entirely for his comfort where he could watch the throngs that passed every day. After a time, the bustle and confusion annoyed the holy man so he politely requested Akbar to remove the city so that he could continue his saintly meditations in quietude and peace. Without hesitation

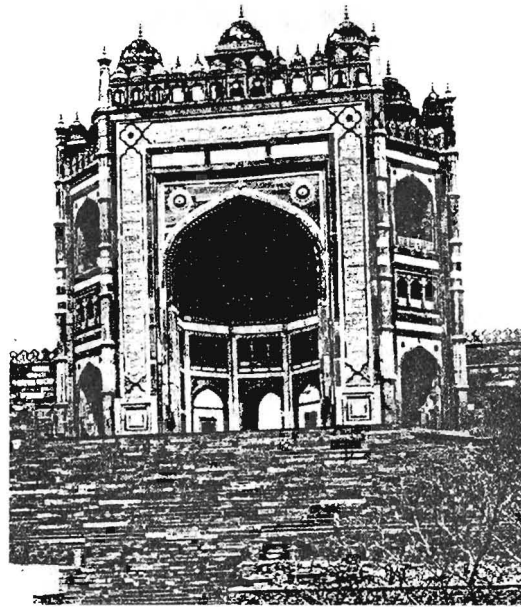


In right foreground the Hall of Private Audience (the Diwan-i-Khas) and in the background, center, the five story pleasure pavilion.

therefore the Emperor moved the entire community to Delhi and built a new capitol.

Historians are of the opinion that Fatehpur Sikri was deserted because the site was unfortunate. There was an inadequate water supply and the atmosphere was unhealthy. In the great mosque at Fatehpur Sikri there is a beautiful memorial tomb to Salim Chishti. This small but impressive building is protected by screen-like walls of latticework marble and the tomb canopy is inlaid with mother-of-pearl. This mausoleum is still visited by pilgrims, especially those who desire to have children.

Although the Encyclopaedia notes that in 1971 Fatehpur Sikri had a population of some eighteen thousand persons, there was no sign of inhabitants when I was there in the 1920's, and in most travel books it is described as deserted. In any event, it is well kept up. The buildings are in good repair and the damages wrought by time or vandalism have been skillfully restored. Most of the buildings have been identified, at least tentatively. There were sumptuous accommodations for the members of the court and distinguished guests. Apparently Akbar liked to play chess so he had a courtyard laid out like a chessboard with living persons acting the



The Gate of Victory. It is on the wall of this arch that the quotation attributed to Jesus is beautifully inlaid.

parts of the various pieces under Akbar's direction.

The entire complex of buildings seems to have been constructed from reddish sandstone with generous inlays of marble and semi-precious gems. There were beautiful ponds, and indoor fountains and pools for bathing. The Emperor recognized no religious prejudices, but decreed that the inhabitants of his city and his palace should live together harmoniously.

The city of Fatehpur Sikri is about seven miles in circumference, protected on three sides by a high wall, and on the northwest side by a large artificial lake. One of the most interesting buildings in the group is the Panch Mahal which rises to five stories in steps. It is believed that it was built for the pleasure of the ladies of the court. The first floor is supported by fifty-six columns, each of a different design. The view from the top floor provides a splendid panorama of the palaces and courts of the city. The Diwan-i-Khas, Akbar's hall of private audience, is a unique structure.

Among other unusual structures is a tower said to have been

built over the grave of Akbar's favorite elephant. The tower is ornamented with a large number of elephant tusks protruding from its central column.

On the south wall is the Buland Darwaza, known as the Gate of Victory. This beautifully designed archway is approximately 176 feet high. From the outside, however, it looks much higher because it is approached by a great flight of steps. On the left wall of the arch as one leaves the court is an inscription commemorating the return of the Emperor as a conqueror of distant provinces. On the opposite side is an inscription which is famous throughout the world, "Isa (Jesus), on whom be peace said: 'The world is a bridge, pass over it, but build no house on it. The world endures but an hour, spend it in devotion.'"



A letter by Mr. Rowbotham dated June 13, 1862, concerning the death of Mr. Thomas Taylor, the Platonist—

My dear Sir:

I am at last enabled to answer some of your queries respecting Mr. Thomas Taylor, whose death took place at 9 Manor Place, Walworth, where he had resided for more than 40 years. He was born the 15th of May, 1758, and died on Sunday, the 1st of November 1834. He was interred in the Church yard of St. Mary Newington, on Monday the 9th day of November. Halley's Comet appeared 1759, and again in August 1835. The name of the dissenting minister under whom he studied for some time was Worthington. For a memoir of his life written by himself vide "Public Characters" for 1798. I have not yet been able to get to see Mr. Neal, but will take an early opportunity to do so. With best respects to Mrs. Inglis and family, believe me

My dear Sir,
Yours ever very truly,

WHO DISCOVERED AMERICA?

In December 1931, the library of our Society received a gift of miscellaneous literary items formerly belonging to Dr. Augustus LePlongeon. Included was a monograph by Verplanck Colvin presented to LePlongeon with the compliments of the author. The brief publication was entitled *Plutarch's Account of Ancient Voyages to the New World*, and the paper was read before the Albany Institute on April 4, 1893. Colvin's principal reference source was from *Plutarch's Morals*, Volume V, pages 281-284, from the eighth edition published in Boston by Little Bros. and Co., 1878.

According to Colvin's digest: "Plutarch tells the story of these ancient navigators so briefly, that it may be well to first call to mind some of the many references to the existence of a continent beyond the 'great ocean' in the ancient writings already referred to; but, as my purpose is to particularly discuss the outgoing and return voyage described by Plutarch, and to mathematically consider the courses and distances he mentions, I will omit consideration of those words of other historians which merely confirm the belief that this country was known for ages before the Christian era; accepting the early knowledge of this country by these ancient navigators as a fact established; and devote my attention to identifying the localities visited by Plutarch's voyagers from the statements made in his narrative."

Plutarch (46?-120 A.D.?) seems to take it for granted that the explorations which he describes had taken place some time before his own birth and he did not find it necessary to doubt the authenticity of the earlier reports. Nearly every author in modern times dealing with the history of the Western hemisphere has asked the question, "How was it possible for this vast area to remain unknown and uncharted until the fifteenth century A.D.?" The most probable answer is that the mythological legendry relating to the subject was passed over lightly as devoid of factual information.

In sober truth, the Western world was discovered so many times and by such a diversity of colonists that this mystery will probably never be solved.

Among the principal contenders are the Norsemen, the Irish, the Welsh, the Chinese, the Japanese, Arabs, and early Christian missionaries. The Chinese are said to have made their landfall in the fifth century A.D. probably in California or Mexico. They called this region the land of Fusang where a mysterious tree grew which provided the inhabitants with clothing and writing paper. The Culdees, an early Christian group, took refuge in what is now New England to escape the persecutions of the Vikings. In the meantime, of course, the Norsemen, according to the old sagas, established temporary settlements in Iceland and Greenland. In the twelfth century, the Roman church recorded that the Bishop of Greenland and Vinland attempted to explore the unknown land adjacent to his parish, but he never returned.

About the year 565 A.D., St. Brendan, an adventurous Irishman, discovered an island in the Western hemisphere which was clearly marked on the map used by Columbus. The Welsh wrote songs and poems admitting that they were the true discoverers of America. In addition to their discoveries, some of the Welsh were on very friendly terms with the Indians and this resulted in Indians that looked like Welshmen and vice versa. Later eight Arabs sailed out of the harbor of Lisbon in the twelfth century to discover a continent whose peoples had reddish skin and straight black hair.

There is also a strong report that in 743 A.D. the Archbishop of Oporto discovered a western island called Antillia and built there seven cities. These probably were the ones that the Spanish conquistador, Coronado, sought to rediscover several centuries later. While all this was going on, the Japanese, probably following the coastline, crossed by way of the Aleutian Islands, according to an account with some substance, and finally landed in Peru. In recent times, the Japanese presented a handsome statue of their candidate to the Peruvian government.

Plutarch gave sufficient details to provide Colvin with some interesting mathematical findings. He learned from Herodotus a number of details dealing with how far and how fast an ancient

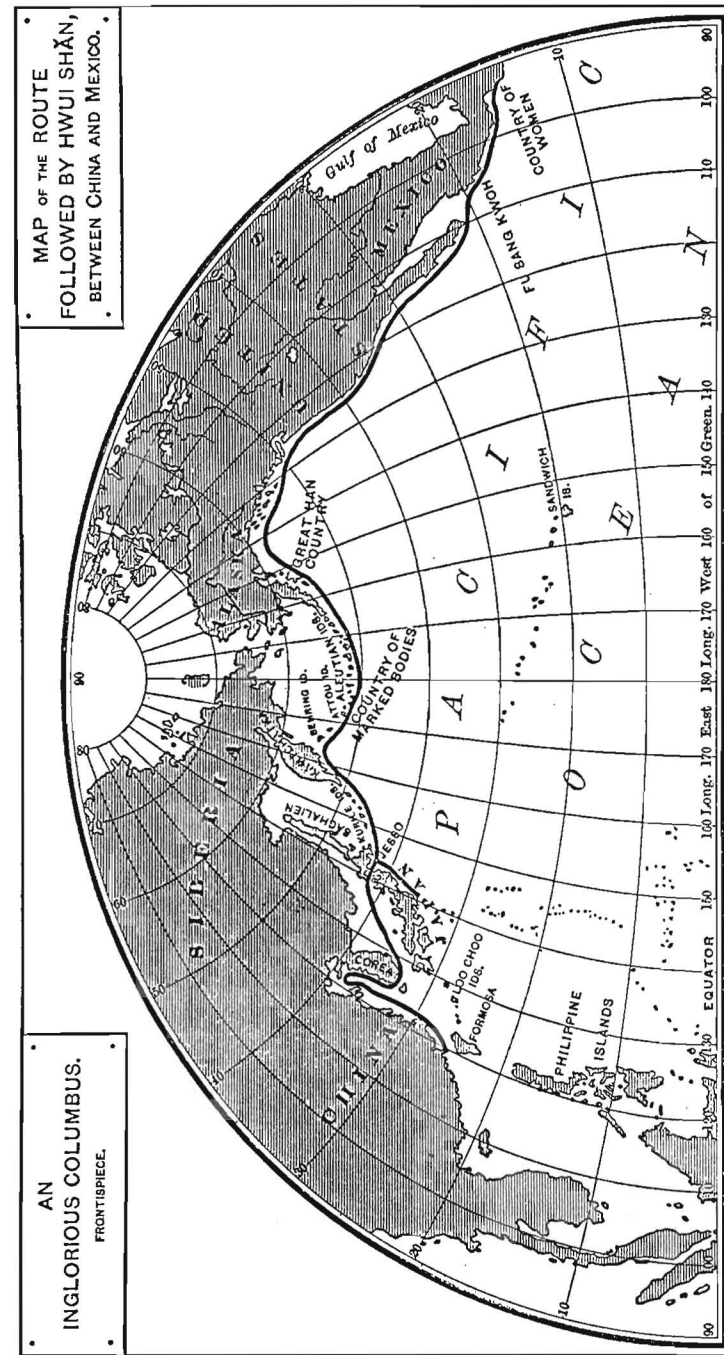
ship could travel. When these measurements are carefully organized, there is no doubt in the world that navigation to the west was practical and had actually taken place several centuries before the Christian era.

Colvin explains that even as early as the time of Homer the islands of the West Indies were part of Isle Ogygia and were only about five days sail westward from the coast of Britain. It was on one of these islands that was described as lying in the arms of ocean that Saturn was exiled by Jupiter. Astronomy became involved and Greek settlements were established for commerce. It would appear that the esoteric legendry surrounding the Western hemisphere protected it from permanent colonization in ancient times. Plato, enlarging upon Solon's account of the lost Atlantis, states that after the destruction of Poseidonis, navigation to the westward ceased, and that for ages the waters in that region were strangely and dangerously agitated.

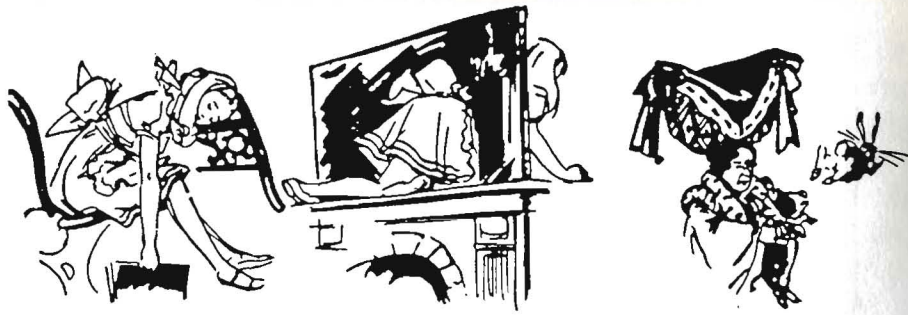
For those dwelling in Europe and the Near East who sailed their little ships out of the Mediterranean Sea through the Pillars of Hercules, the Western Paradise where Jason went to consult the Golden Fleece was a supernatural realm. It was there that souls journeyed in their quest for the Elysian Fields, the realms of blessed spirits.

Colvin, writing nearly ninety years ago, closes his brief essay with the following highly significant statement, "The lands reserved by Providence for us; these realms of the blest; our noble, delightful, grand and glorious country; ours for joy and happiness as long as we remain worthy of such possessions; using our knowledge, intelligence and intellect in the service of God—the Creator and Giver; or to be lost, forgotten, hidden again for ages if the race persists in idle, vain, sensuous indulgences such as those which destroyed the civilized races of the past."

For an in-depth study of ancient travel to the Western hemisphere, the reader is referred to *The Inglorious Columbus* by Edward P. Vining, New York: 1885. This author is primarily concerned with a party of Buddhist monks from Afghanistan who discovered America in the fifth century A.D. The map included in Vining's book is reproduced in the present article.



Map of the route followed by Hwui Shan, between China and Mexico. From Edward P. Vining's *An Inglorious Columbus*, New York: 1885.



Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

EBENEZER SIBLY, M.D.

Dr. Sibly who was born on January 30, 1751 has the distinction of having published, so far as is known, the first horoscope of the United States of America. It appears in his book *A New and Complete Illustration of the Celestial Science of Astrology*. This is a ponderous work, in large quarto, containing 1,130 pages and our copy was published in London in 1785.

Unfortunately, very little is known about the personal life of Ebenezer Sibly. There is a persistent rumor, however, that he endured various marital difficulties, and finally retired to an upstairs room in his house where he remained for many years devoted to his astrological researches. Food was sent in to him through an opening in the bottom of the door. How he treated patients is not recorded. He also published another work entitled *A Key to Physic and the Occult Sciences*. In this volume of texts dealing with medicine and surgery are interlarded with old Rosicrucian symbols, designs borrowed from Khunrath, and two unusual pictures dealing with Mesmerism and animal magnetism.



Horoscope of Ebenezer Sibly with portrait.



Revolution of America.

Revolution of America. Horoscope of the United States—from Sibly's *Illustration of Astrology*, London, 1785.

The accompanying plate preserves for us the likeness of Dr. Sibly surrounded by his horoscope and including his coat of arms. He was much interested in the outcome of the Revolutionary War which ended in the founding of a new independent nation in the Western Hemisphere. Sibly took it for granted, however, that an appropriate horoscope should be erected for the meridian of London because the severance was of most immediate concern for Great Britain. His chart, therefore, is erected for London, July 4, 1776 for 10:00 P.M.

Facing page 1054 of Sibly's *Illustration of Astrology* is a rather handsome engraving which dramatizes the subject of American independence. The horoscope floats in the clouds supported and heralded by what appears to be an angel blowing a long-stemmed trumpet. Below is an imaginary panorama of the new nation. The scene is dominated by a rather uncertain portrait of George Washington and a smaller figure of Justice, blindfolded. Unfortunately, the paper is of poor quality and the text on the following page shows through on to the illustration faintly in places, but even so the plate is worthy of reproduction.

As Sibly states firmly that his horoscope is set for London, we must assume that the time in Philadelphia would be about five hours earlier. This would bring the chart into harmony with Jefferson's report that the Declaration of Independence was signed late in the afternoon before supper time. From his calculations Sibly believed that the new country would have an exalted destiny. He calls the angel with the trumpet Fame, and writes as follows:

“. . . The state of America shall in time have an extensive and flourishing commerce; an advantageous and universal traffic to every quarter of the globe, with great fecundity and prosperity among the people. At this period we are in some measure enabled to speak experimentally of the truth of this prescience; though the stars point out these particulars, with all other important incidents relative to the lives and progress of the united states, with as much cer-

tainty and precision, as by the Moon we calculate the ebbing and flowing of the sea, the times and period of eclipses, the courses and effects of comets, or any other extraordinary phenomena, wherein nature, and the ordinations of God, the great and primary cause of all things, are at the bottom."

Sibly's horoscope supports the probability that Sagittarius was ascending at the time when the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia was signed. The hieroglyph for Sagittarius is Chiron, the Centaur, a mythological being with the body of a horse and the head and shoulders of a man.

Chiron was the most noble of the centaurs, and was instructed by Apollo and Diana. He was renowned for his knowledge of hunting, medicine, music, and the art of prophecy. The greatest heroes of Greece were his pupils, among them, Aesculapius, who was entrusted to his care by his father, Apollo. Chiron, most wise and honorable of all the centaurs, was the mentor of Jason, Hercules, and Achilles. He was accidentally wounded by a poisoned arrow, but, being immortal, he could not die. He prayed to Zeus for liberation and, departing from the mortal world, was placed among the stars as the constellation of Sagittarius.

With the sign of the centaur ascending on the eastern horizon at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, it would follow that the new nation would take on some of the attributes of this sign and its astrological ruler, Jupiter. The United States has shared its skills with most other nations, and contributed in a major way to the advancement of medicine and other sciences. It has been committed to vast enterprises, has excelled in sports, and has also been a refuge for persecuted exiles from foreign countries. Although it has been injured by both accident and intent, it cannot die, but will remain for all time to come as a symbol of hope and advancements of knowledge.

What is a philosopher? One who opposes nature to law, reason to usage, conscience to opinion, and his judgment to error.

—Chamfort

In
Reply



A Department of Questions and Answers

Question: How can one help a scientist who is attempting to break through his materialistic background?

Answer: It is good to notice that hard-core materialists are not as often met with these days as they were ten or fifteen years ago. The adulation from the public which they had come to expect has considerably subsided, and the proletarian has come to identify scientists with nuclear missiles and various types of pollution. There seems to be a feeling that highly trained minds often lose perspective and overlook their responsibility to protect the world from the consequences of the proliferation of death and disaster.

The scientists share a humanity with workers in every walk of life. The physicist is subject to all the vicissitudes which affect fathers, mothers, and small children. It is very likely that he is married himself and has a deep concern for the safety of his family. How does it happen then that he dedicates his ingenuity to discoveries which may destroy him, his loved ones, and a large part of the human race? If he is a materialist and does not believe in life after death, how can he continue to damage the immediate environment in which he lives, moves, and has his being? If there is no place to go after death, why does he not choose to make his present embodiment as pleasant and useful as possible? If he does have some religious insight, how can he reconcile his respect for an all-benevolent deity and at the same time participate in a competitive arms race which can bring misery and despair to millions.

There is a story going around that a major said to the four-star

general: "We can capture that hill over there, but it would cost three hundred thousand lives." The general then replied, "So what's the problem?"

Biologists, physicists, astronomers, and mathematicians like to believe they are in full control of essential facts and that their position in the sphere of learning is impregnable. Those less informed are victims of their own vagaries and this includes philosophers and theologians. Scientists can be asked some questions that they will find it extremely difficult to answer. This is especially true if the person asking happens to be one of their own children. Supposing a boy of ten, seriously in search of knowledge inquires, "Well, Dad, what is life all about, anyway? How did it start, why does it exist in the first place, and where is it going?" The most likely answer will be, "You will have to wait till you grow up before you can learn the answers." The son then inquires naively, "You're grown up, Dad, so why don't you tell me right now?" There is only one answer left to the father, "Let's turn on the TV and watch the big ball game."

While it is true that all scientists do not suffer from an infallibility complex, a goodly number of them sincerely believe that if they keep on probing, experimenting, analyzing, dissecting, and compounding the elements of existence, they will ultimately solve all mysteries. This may take a long time at the present rate, and it would be helpful to know that they can keep the peace and protect human society until that great day of omniscience comes. Even now many scientists go to church, support religious institutions, listen to their children's prayers, and accept family responsibilities with dignity. Is this just a superficial gesture of respectability? Or is there something in their hearts that longs to believe even what the mind seeks to discredit? If moral values had not survived to some degree, could the materialist even exist in a godless world?

Is the atheistic individual a natural creature who has descended from primordial days fashioned in the beginning to be a doubter, a skeptic, and a cynic? If so, research to prove this point has been overlooked. The fact seems to be that idealism has been trained out of him in the process of education. All teaching is directed

toward emancipation from the mystical vagaries of faith. Only weaklings depend upon divine support. When the young person, male or female, enters the cloistered corridors of some great institution and finds a bust of Darwin gazing down from one niche and an equally formidable figure of de Laplace across the hall, he is apt to feel that he is in the hallowed sanctuary of infallible reality. No one tells him that the honored ghosts that wander about the corridors have been disagreeing with each other for hundreds of years.

Once inside this sanctuary of mental dissection, he turns his destiny over to a professor whose scientific duty is to perpetuate the existing curriculum. While I was walking in the well-kept grounds of one of America's great universities one day, an elderly professor, after pointing out an impressive observatory and an up-to-date nuclear reactor, shook his head sadly, "We need another reactor so badly but all the alumni when they pass on leave their funds for a chapel and these are a drug on the market." In other words, the godly hesitate to leave their funds to the godless.

There is a certain hope, however, which may change the scowling face of the future. A young astronomer I know married a very lovely young woman whose great ambition in life was to be a mother. In time, affection softened the husband and, while he did not go to church regularly, he was perfectly willing to have his new-born son baptized. Family, friends, kindness, and thoughtfulness had their effect. The normal man emerged from his scientific chrysalis and found a far better and more rewarding plan for personal existence.

At the other end of life's allotment, the retired scientist living on a pension or social security often becomes weary of his unbelieving. There is no longer anyone with whom he can argue the curvature of the continuum, and he takes a cautious look into his own future. The great scientists with whom he had mingled had departed long ago and left not a wrack behind. Did he really want to feel that one day in the not-too-distant future the little light of his candle would go out and all the rest would be darkness? In such a case, just why had he lived at all? If there is no memory, what can he remember after death? His reputation in the physical world

will dim a little with each new scientific discovery. He came into this world poorly equipped for life and he departs from it poorly equipped for death. What has he accomplished in between that is more than a confused dream? True, the minds of the aged ones are not so keen or critical. Perhaps in the end they will cease to question anything, but it seems a little strange that millions of years of evolution and a long lifetime of experience should end in nothing. Therefore, we may ask the scientist if his prospect is fully satisfactory. If he tells us that it is delightful, it is probably wise to change the subject.

One hundred years ago, or perhaps only fifty years in some cases, most persons were born into this world with a built-in religious mechanism. Their grandparents and parents were God-loving, though perhaps also God-fearing. They used the Holy Book as a guide to conduct. There were parts of the sacred text that they might not agree with, and still larger sections which they did not understand, but the Decalogue delivered by Moses to the children of Israel presented the Ten Commandments with almost scientific finality. In a few simple sentences, the thoughtful person learned the essential facts of life. He also discovered that when he tried to break the rules, in due course the rules broke him.

We had some pretty good scientists in those days too like Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, and Harvey. They believed in God, but they were not rendered incapable of important independent thinking. Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Lincoln were religious men and tried, each in his own way, to make an enduring contribution to the common good. The beautiful memorials in Washington, D.C., are not to atheists. Why should any person in any walk of life be ashamed of his faith or feel that he must apologize for it or conceal it from his confreres?

We look about us and see a godless world gradually sinking into a slough of despond. Art is without beauty; music is without melody; and personal unions are without fidelity. An emancipated generation has little to live for but video games and turns to narcotics for mental or emotional stimulation. Let's face it honestly, science carries a heavy burden of responsibility for the decline and

fall of human morality. Our public heroes are athletes, rock band musicians, and the idols of the stage and screen. A few years ago you could not have told a scientist of these things, but today there is a good chance that he may agree with you.

Industrialism has resulted in the rise of a vast economic empire. These sprawling conglomerates more or less control the economic destinies of advanced or advancing nations. The more industrialized a country becomes, the less religion it will tolerate. The inalienable right to think, to love, and to hope are verboten on the level of higher economics. When people dream, they may have visions of brotherly love and an experience of the reality of a divine power. This is not healthy according to modern industrial psychology. You must think only of the paycheck and realize that you can be penalized for nonconformity.

Do not think for a moment that the person who is deprived of his ideals will submit to this loss without resistance. Truth may take refuge in secrecy or organized movements which will ultimately restore the nobility of the human spirit. In many countries today, there is a religious underground which will not die. In those free countries where religious liberty is still possible, it is growing rapidly.

In China, Comrade Mao was resolved to liberate the people from their ancient superstitions. Nine hundred million copies of his little red book were distributed among the Chinese for compulsory reading. Mao is gone, the temples are opening again, missionaries are being given restricted privileges, all concerned have learned a valuable lesson and the little red book is no longer important. Unless the individual is supported by constructive spiritual convictions, he will never succeed, even in the material world. A recent volume published in China publicly apologizes for the barbaric treatment of the Tibetans. Their temples are being opened again, and it is once more possible for young Tibetans to become monks. Religion is also gaining prominence in the Soviet republics; and the recent episode in Poland shows that, beneath the discretion resulting from persecution, spiritual integrities remain and always will.

The happiest thing that can arise among the free nations is a solid comradeship between science and faith, in which the faith recognizes that it cannot be fulfilled by science but demands an internal experience of moral and ethical values. A union of science, philosophy, and religion is a dream hopefully to be wished for. We do not have to be atheists to operate computers or to be accredited in institutions of higher learning, but integrity can make a powerful contribution in any profession or trade. Religion inspires honesty and helps to make certain that workers on all levels will serve efficiently, constructively, loyally, and cheerfully. Unbelief of one kind or another is a major cause of inefficiency, disloyalty, and violence.

It would seem that a properly educated mind should accept these obvious facts. No person who is unethical is educated no matter how advanced his scholastic training may have been. It is another mistake to assume that ethics is a form of bondage, and that the atheist has achieved the ultimate personal freedom. Lack of integrity has resulted in a worldwide crime wave. Today, fortunes are being spent to barricade homes against burglary or worse. It used to be that the criminals were behind the bars, but now so-called honest persons are peering out through protective grills and screens.

How can we really feel that we are progressing under these conditions? How can we encourage primitive people to advance into a social chaos more dangerous than the one they leave behind? Let's bring these points straight home to the scientific community. Let us suggest that they turn some of their research funds into the creation of a way of life that is worth living.

If these brilliant minds can explore the vastness of outer space, it seems that it would be a good idea to examine eroding districts and find practical ways to sustain the dignity of our local communities. We do not like to follow the old idea of using religion to convert through fear. We do not want to frighten people into a state of grace, but perhaps there is a certain note of apprehension. Things are getting worse instead of better. Leaders are using every possible device to solve problems without penalizing corruption. If

science wants to regain the admiration of a grateful humankind, it will find ways to inspire truth, honesty, moral decency, and the arbitration of international relationships for the common good. The principal objection is that you cannot be an idealist without an ideal. You cannot have faith unless there is something or someone to have faith in. You cannot have honesty unless you reward it in a sensible way.

In other words, we need religion, but we have not yet suffered enough to realize that there is a Power in the universe which will never compromise its principles or reward corruption. Is this too difficult for a scientist to understand? Is there no way of reaching intelligent young people with a clear statement of the facts of life? Many are now wavering, uncertain and dissatisfied. If they are presented with a simple statement of universal integrities, they are very apt to listen. Probably the first step toward world unity is for the two worlds which exist within each individual to be reconciled and thus provide a solid foundation upon which to build the kind of life for which we were intended from the beginning of our existence.

The Chinese science of acupuncture presents for the benefit of the physician a philosophical theory which is gradually becoming understood in the Western world. Health is maintained by bringing two principles, yin and yang, into perfect equilibrium. These are frequently referred to as "Mr. Yin and Mrs. Yang." This basic duality is present everywhere in the universe except within the nature of the Supreme Being. Conflict between yin and yang is the cause of individual and collective tragedies. We may liken Mr. Yin to science and Mrs. Yang to religion. As long as these remain divided and in a sense competitive, the well-being of corporeal existence is in danger.

The Chinese point out that the yin and yang principles never attempt to preserve separate states. They do not argue over their relationships or compete for distinction. There is no way in which one can actually be considered superior to the other. Separated, they are sterile; united, they are fertile. In human relationships, neither sex can fulfill its destiny except by the recognition of basic

equality. Equilibrium is life, health, and happiness. Imbalance is death, sickness, and unhappiness. When yin and yang are not in equilibrium, the individual is damaged and collective society is endangered. The Chinese have an excellent point here, and their barefoot physicians are traveling through the villages trying to help men, women, and children to discover the equilibrium of heaven and earth. It is this enrichment of values on all levels of personal conduct and function which has come to be called "the way of heaven."

It may be wise to assume that in terms of the universal plan there can never actually be a conflict between science and religion. One cannot be defined in the terms of the other, but each is necessary to the perfection of the other. Mr. Yin is an intellectual emphasizing the mental polarity. Mrs. Yang is a sentimentalist, largely guided and dominated by faith and love. Yin is the brain, yang is the heart; and if either of these organs is disabled the physical body will soon perish. It is the heart that is actually the seat of life, and the marriage of thought and emotion was one of the major objectives of the early alchemists.

The separation of mental attitudes from emotional convictions is a divorce. It testifies to the inability of wisdom and love to discover the perfect equilibrium which preserves all things. The old Chinese sages might speak rather bluntly about the imbalance everywhere evident in the modern world. They may point out an immutable truth which cannot be compromised—live together or die separately. Until this union is achieved, most of us are half-dead even while we are alive. One does not betray Mr. Yin when he comes to the rescue of Mrs. Yang, but he betrays both if he cannot achieve the reconciliation of principles within himself.

In marriage, mutual affection is an expression of the need for equilibrium. Each participant has something to give and something to share. Neither the giving nor the sharing can be competitive or the home soon fails. The arts perish when the sciences fail, and the sciences die of their own inner conflicts unless love binds up their wounds.

Is it too much then to hope that man can do as well as the lesser

forms of life and learn to function according to immutable and inflexible rules? In the hagiology of the church, both men and women can be canonized; at least, this is a conviction maintained by some. There is no reason why a man cannot serve the gentle virtues of faith and love. At the same time, a woman can just as well become a scientist, a mathematician, or a judge. Each can fulfill an appointed destiny sharing the virtues of the other. It is just as noble, pure, and factual to love as it is to think. Sometime, somewhere, Mr. Yin and Mrs. Yang dwelling together within us must take the holy vows of matrimony and live happily ever after. When nations do this, there is peace and progress. When individuals accomplish this hermetic marriage, the home is secure and children have an opportunity to live in bodies in which the principles of yin and yang are already in equilibrium. To the Chinese, acupuncture is a science, the I Ching is a philosophy, and the Quiet Way is love in perfect equilibrium. Here in the West, we are becoming increasingly health conscious. We have discovered that if bodily functions are allowed to be impaired, nutrition is inadequate or unsuited to the prevailing need. If unfortunate habits are not corrected by faith or reason, we do not retain the good health. Much of what we call dis-ease is the desperate effort of yin and yang to unite and make their proper contribution to careers and peace of soul. All that is necessary for science is to contemplate Chinese principles of health which were discovered more than five thousand years ago and are successful in the treatments of modern ailments. There can be no competition between the branches of learning which will not end in suffering. The middle road of cooperation and moderation revealed through the equilibrium of the heart and mind was a belief of the past, which must become the guide to the future.



One cannot help but be in awe when one contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality.

—Albert Einstein

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings,—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

(*Oliver Wendell Holmes believed in reincarnation.*)



Happenings at Headquarters



There has been considerable quiet but significant activity at headquarters. In line with the spirit of the times, we are experimenting with computerization. If an efficient program can be worked out, there should be considerable saving of both money and time. The manuscript of Mr. Hall's new book on meditation symbols was finished about a month ago and the computerized copy approaches completion. We hope that it will be available in the Fall.

A fascinating title will be added to our series of outstanding reprints. Most thoughtful persons are aware of Lord Bacon's utopian fantasy, *The New Atlantis*. It first appeared in print in 1627. The story ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence and was never completed. Some years later, in 1660 to be explicit, a very rare and curious book described as the continuation of Lord Bacon's book appeared anonymously with the following notice on the title page, "A Pleasant intermixture of divers rare Inventions, and wholsom Customs, fit to be introduced into all KINGDOMS, STATES, and COMMON-WEALTHS." In our reprint which is limited to one thousand copies, spelling and punctuation have been modernized, but certain mispagnations which Baconians regard as highly significant have been included from photographic copies of the original text. There is a preface by Manly P. Hall.

The outstanding recent event is the whirlwind tour of England by our librarian, Pearl Thomas. Details of her adventures will appear in forthcoming issues of her library notes. She is already considering further adventures among the wonders and beauties of the British Isles.

There is also a motion in process to increase our seating accom-



modations. New and comfortable benches are under construction for our patio so that visitors can mingle socially in greater comfort and safety.

Knowing our interest in oriental folk art, Dr. and Mrs. Bode sent us from India an unusual group of Kalamkari fabrics featuring Hindu deities. Artistic productions of this kind are the products of native artisans who have become self-supporting as part of a national program to finance social progress. The multi-colored designs perpetuate the works of the Bundi school and, so far as we know, these items have not been introduced into the Western markets. The subject of the accompanying illustration is derived from the Bhagavad Gita, a favorite subject among Eastern artists. The Prince Arjuna is seated in his war chariot and the deity, Krishna, has miraculously become his charioteer. The scene is complete with prancing horses and the coloring is dominantly brick red and blue with touches of black. It is 34 inches wide by 23 inches high. These designs will become part of our permanent collection, but a few duplicates may be available in our gift shop.

Early in the year, Mr. and Mrs. Hall visited Gina Cerminara at



her home in Ojai. She was in a cheerful mood and felt that there was a good probability that she could keep her lecture engagement here at the Society on June 24. It is our sad duty to report that Gina Cerminara departed from this life on April 16, 1984. She had been closely associated with the work of the PRS for a number of years and has authored inspiring and helpful books with strong constructive spiritual emphasis. We know that her dedicated life of service will continue in the world beyond. The accompanying photograph of Miss Cerminara was taken in the library of our Society among books she loved and appreciated.



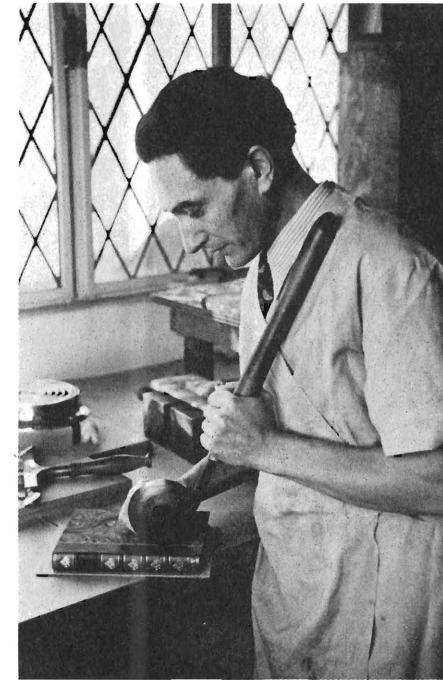
REFLECTIONS ON BOOKS AND THEIR BINDINGS AND THE P.R.S. LIBRARY

For many years, the PRS maintained a bookbinding facility to preserve rare volumes and manuscripts in our Library. Mr. David Murray, a member of our staff for many years, taught himself to restore volumes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which were suffering from advanced states of decrepitude. In those days when prices were moderate, we assembled a collection of book-binder's tools and produced some noteworthy examples of rehabilitation of tattered relic.

We also bound a number of our own publications, and gained considerable satisfaction from learning the craft. Most of the older books on the shelves of our library were in sounder condition when we purchased them, but after over forty years of public usage, are in need of expert attention.

Through the years, the cost of bookbinding has increased, and recent inflation is heartbreaking to lovers of fine books. Important library collections are carefully protected and the more valuable items are available only in microfilm or xerox copies. When today's booksellers advertise a venerable tome printed in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, they are likely to note, "binding scuffed, front and back covers detached, title page restored, last three leaves in facsimile, some damp stains and worming, otherwise a fine copy." Twenty five years ago important booksellers usually had defects restored before a volume was offered to a valued customer. It is all changed now. The buyer pays a high price for the volume, and an appropriate binding may cost from two hundred and fifty to five hundred dollars.

Publishers are now featuring paperback editions of many fine books. A trade paperback is a flimsy affair and the pages are likely to fall out by the second or third reading. Quality paperbacks are more attractive, but have little trade-in value. It should also be borne in mind that even the more expensive paperback editions are



Mr. David Murray putting a gold line on a fine book binding with the aid of an antique tool.

not sewn and the pages are also held in place by a semi-flexible glue. In Europe, many fine editions were issued with temporary paper jackets, but the sections were sewn and could later be bound to satisfy fussy book collectors. To this difficulty should be added that considerable printing is now being done on recycled paper on the assumption that it will be back in the pulp vat in a few years anyway. In most cases this is a small loss, and many of the best sellers of today will be forgotten by the time the pages fall out.

Older bookbindings were created to enshrine important texts. It seems impossible that such volumes could ever fall apart, but, in the course of two or three hundred years, tragic circumstances have taken their toll. Large folios of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were often bound in wood over which was stretched parchment or vellum. Decoration was usually in blind tooling with various designs stamped on the covers. It was not uncommon for

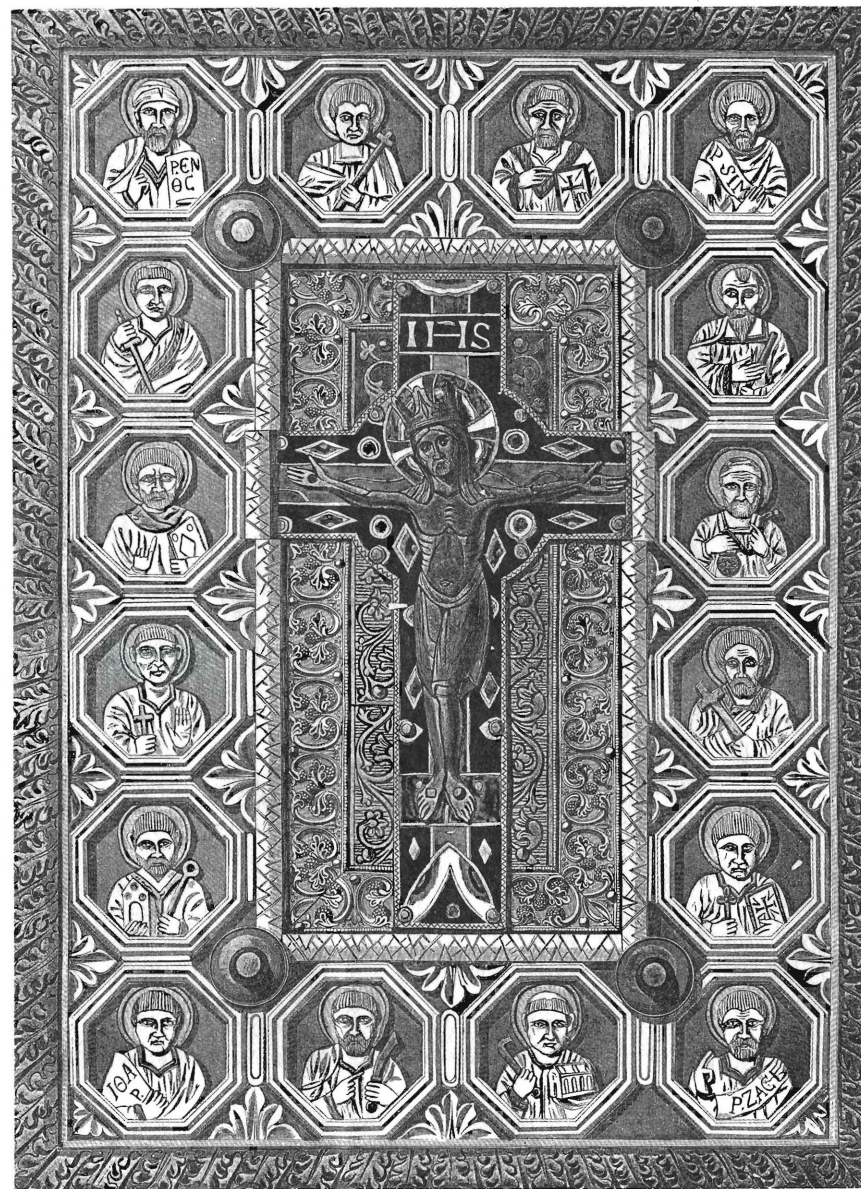
the ornamentations to include the heraldic arms of distinguished families. Later, decorations in gold were created by combining small elements of design with rolls or other tools applied hot. We did all these things also in our shop.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many bookbindings were works of art, and a number of craftsmen became internationally famous for the beauty of their workmanship. Inlaid leathers offered considerable variety and it was not unusual for illustrious ladies to have cherished volumes bound in hand-embroidered velvet. To protect such precious books, slip cases were provided and these were also elaborately decorated. Originality played a part. One day I noticed a very heavy embossed wall-paper and decided to use it on the covers of a large book on calendars published in Mexico. This was forty years ago, and my experiment has held up better than most traditional examples. We also still have in our library some of the textbooks we used in learning our trade.

We might mention one volume in particular which is accompanied by the following catalog notice, "*Monumenta Inedita* on peu connus, faisant partie du cabinet de Guillaume Libri. Copiously illustrated in colour. Large folio, half morocco (corners rubbed, flyleaf and title page frayed). Second Edition. London, 1864." This is a rare and curious work, but the text portions were printed on a poor grade of paper and it is now in an advanced state of deterioration.

From this volume we reproduce three examples of early ornamented bookcovers. The first is from a manuscript on vellum of the eleventh or twelfth century entitled *Lectioarium*. The antique leather cover is a priceless work of art and includes gold and silver metallic inlays, ivory carvings, figures in high relief, and enamels. The ivory medallions are probably of the sixth century and were adapted to their final usage. The back of the binding is similar in design with the front, but the figure of the Virgin occupies the central area.

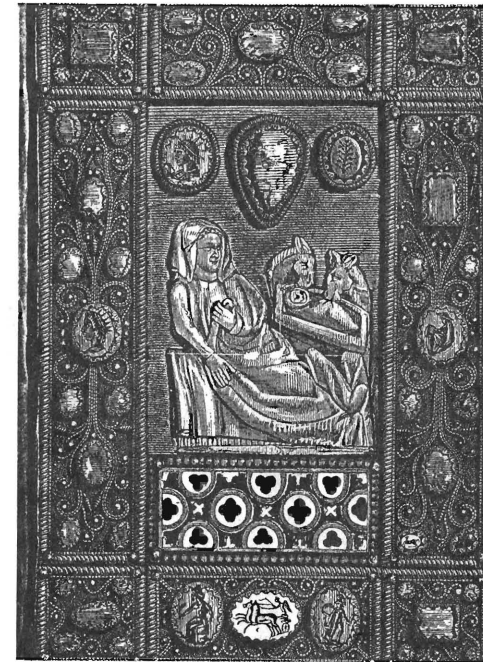
Another example is an *Evangelistarium*, also a manuscript on vellum of the sixth century in uncial (capital) letters. The cover is



An eleventh or twelfth century manuscript of the *Lectioarium* with very rare examples of early inlaid binding. From: *Monuments Inedita*, London: 1864.



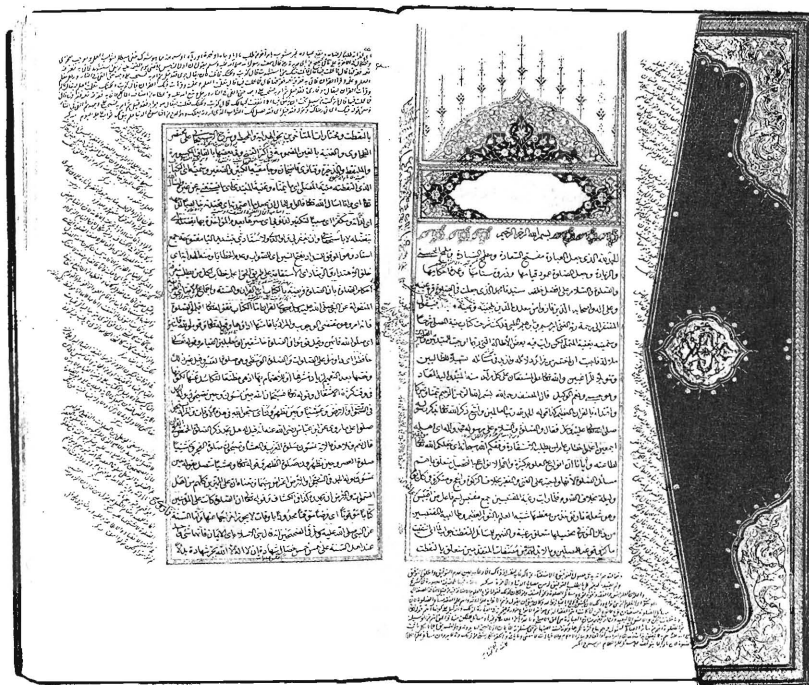
A manuscript of the *Evangelistarium* of the sixth century with an inlaid jewelled binding of the tenth or eleventh century. From: *Monuments Ineditis*, London: 1864.



A fourteenth century manuscript of the *Liber Decretalium* with an inlaid panel of the Nativity scene. From *Monuments Ineditis*, London: 1864.

of silver gilt, embellished with bas reliefs, enamels, and crystals, probably made in the tenth or eleventh century. Christ is represented seated in a lozenge-shaped halo with the Greek letter Omega at His feet. Around Him are the four evangelists symbolized as the zodiacal signs associated with them. The crystals are held in place by metal settings firmly inserted in the borders and corners of the covers.

A third example of early binding is the *Liber Decretalium*. This charming artistic achievement was prepared for a manuscript upon vellum written at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It is described as a gilt, metal binding with an ivory inlay portraying the Nativity of Jesus. The artist captured a special veneration in the faces of the two animals. This binding is also enriched with jewels, most of which appear to have been original settings for rings. Classic symbols of non-Christian significance seem to suggest that



The opening pages of a sixteenth century Arabic manuscript with elaborate annotations.

the person for whom the volume was bound donated jewels from his personal collection.

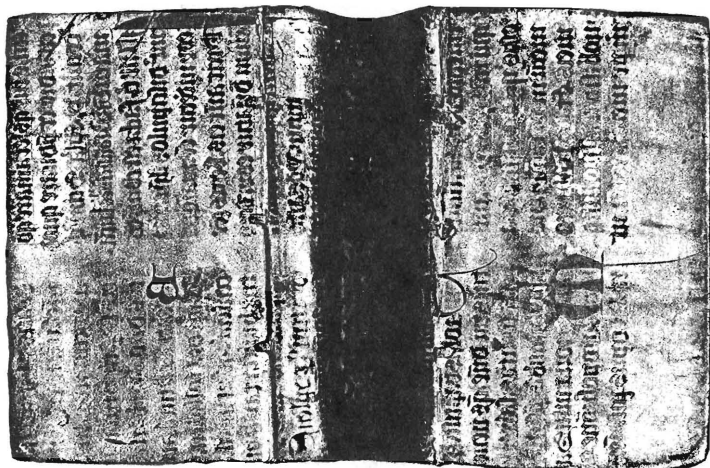
Bookbindings must always be adapted to the requirements of the contents which they are created to protect. We might mention a beautiful Arabic manuscript in its original binding of gold on leather in our collection. It is an abridged form of Al-Halabi's commentary on the treatise on prayer and ablution by Al Kashgatan. Dated 1540 A.D. Manuscript with rubrications. Moslem date A.H. 947. Arabic bookbindings generally feature various designs and embellishments now referred to as arabesques. Flowers are the principal objects involved in these bindings. The calligraphy is exquisite and the opening page is illuminated in gold and colors. The borders of the pages are in gold throughout the volume which is heavily rubricated, and nearly every page has extensive annotations. Our bindery made a special case for this manuscript.



The *Doble Ordinario de la Santa Misa*, Paris: 1840.

Some gracious lady treasured the copy of *Doble Ordinario de la Santa Misa*, Paris: 1840, now in the PRS collection. The binding is leather over wood with elaborately carved metal ornamentations on both front and back. It is held shut with a clasp decorated with a Madonna surrounded by floriate motifs. The edges of the book are gilded and ornamented with designs of small dots. There are two fore edge paintings of sacred persons. These decorated bindings were usually added by the purchaser and sometimes include beautiful miniature paintings protected by isinglass.

Books bound in leather with the hair still on are not too common. We have such an item however, consisting of a group of Arabic religious material written in the Philippine Islands. In addition to sections from the Koran, there are a number of charms to protect deep sea divers and others in hazardous occupations. The writings include religious spells and cabalistic devices. This type of



Early seventeenth century book of Rosicrucian and Lutheran tracts with a vellum binding made from a leaf of an earlier work.

binding must be regarded as folk craft. It forms a kind of wrap-around to protect the magical inscriptions. There is no trace of date, but the collection is probably late eighteenth century.

In the older days, vellum was expensive and leaves of discarded manuscripts were used in making bindings for newer books. Occasionally, this results in the discovery of a valuable fragment of ancient writings. The thrifty owner of the accompanying collection of Rosicrucian pamphlets bound a number of them together into one solid and substantial tome. Included in this collection are very early editions of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes. The principal title translated from the German reads as follows: *Fame of the Fraternity of Uncovering (Exposition) of the Brotherhood of the Honorable Order of the Rosi Cross and also Confessions of the same Fraternity written to all the Learned and Rulers of Europe. Also some reactions of Haselmeyer and other learned peoples to the content of Fama*, printed in Danzig by Andrew Hunefelds in the year 1615. The person who brought together the items making up this collection included writings of an elusive mystic, Julianus de Campis, and two works dealing with Calvin, with references to Martin Luther. It is a pity that the parchment in which the book was bound was not preserved in its original state. It was obviously a beautiful leaf, rubricated by some qualified



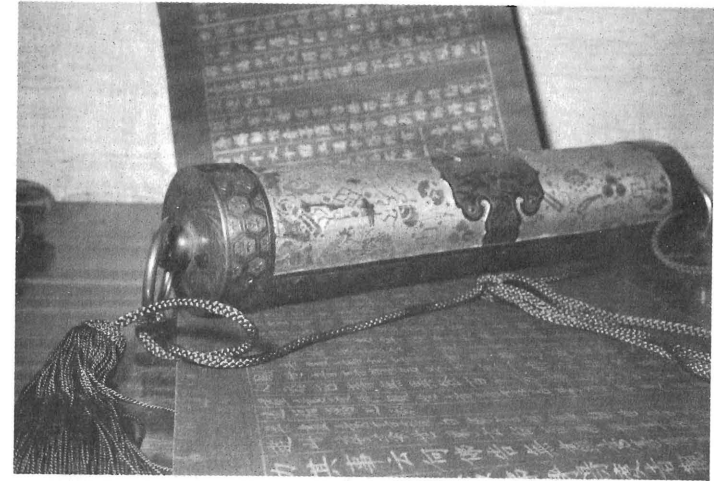
A sixteenth century Bible with special memorial binding of stamped vellum over wood with a portrait of the Elector.

scribe. We have several examples of such curious bindings in our collection including a manuscript leaf of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century rescued from the binding of a later book.

One of the most interesting Bibles in our library published in 1581 has a special memorial binding honoring Frederick, the Wise, Elector of Saxony. He was a friend and protector of Martin Luther and he appointed both Luther and Melancthon to the University of Wittenberg. He was a patron of Lucas Cranach, the Elder; and Albrecht Durer engraved a portrait of Frederick in 1524. The binding of this book shows some very skillful repairing at the hinges, but is otherwise in excellent condition. It is bound in stamped vellum over wood with symbolic figures forming a border. The Elector is shown in armor with his helmet at lower right. His sword is pointed upward to his heraldic arms. One clasp remains. There is also a portrait on the back cover. This binding is an outstanding example of its class.

Before the invention of books, manuscripts were preserved in scroll form. Containers provided to protect manuscript rolls were often elaborate, and both practical and attractive. Before these, Chaldean inscriptions were kept in clay envelopes and it was necessary to destroy the cover so that the contents could be read. The Japanese were strongly inclined to simple paper bindings with labels pasted on the front. They still, however, use cylindrical containers for valuable scrolls. We have a good example of this type of case which was sometimes attached to a tall pole and carried in processions. The Japanese also favored storing rare books and manuscripts in plain paulownia wood boxes. Most Japanese horizontal scrolls include a section of brocade and, when they are tightly rolled, the brocade becomes an attached cover and is provided with a wood or ivory pin to hold it in place.

A common form of covering for Hindu, Burmese, Mongolian, Nepalese, and Tibetan texts is detached decorated wooden boards. The books are of considerable size and consist of separate leaves. The leaves are stacked neatly on the lower board and then the cover is laid on top. The leaves are not attached to each other nor to the covers, but the complete volume is wrapped in silk or cotton cloth and tied with cords.



Japanese sutra case with part of the original writing that was preserved therein.

Tibetan books frequently have interestingly recessed religious pictures on the insides of the covers protected by sacred curtains of silk or brocade. Hand-carved covers for such Tibetan writings are also known, but are scarce. I have seen one which has a secret compartment in the upper board to contain a sacred relic. The books used in the temples are large because the seated priest spreads them across his knees and reads the text by turning the leaves away from himself, thus restacking them in the cover.

The lettering on such books is usually hand done with gold or silver foil. Illuminated manuscripts are not common, but occasionally Buddhistic figures adorn the title pages. I have seen a number of large Tibetan books written on enameled paper. In one case the leaves were about a foot in height, and nearly four feet in width. Works of this size, however, are extremely rare. When a leaf of a book is turned, the monk reading it says a prayer asking the Divine Intelligence to bestow Its blessing upon the study.

Ethiopian sacred books are mostly written on a heavy parchment resembling vellum. We have an example in which a leaf has been elaborately mended because of a slanting hole in it, probably caused by the spear that killed the animal. Large manuscripts are bound in leather over wood with interesting but simple decorations



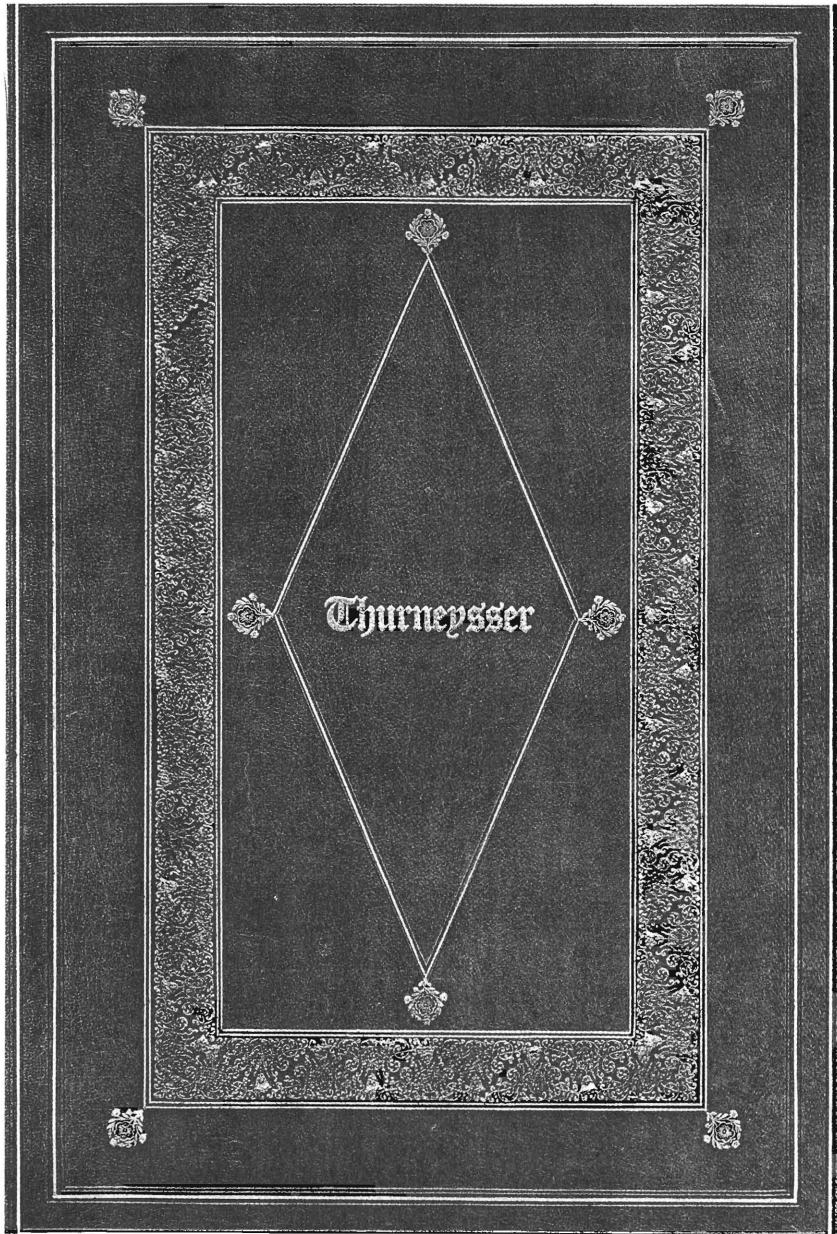
Ethiopian charm. A representation of the Archangel Michael at the beginning of a long scroll, probably eighteenth century.

of lines and circles. There is a class of scroll of which we also have examples. They are charms or amulets and usually include crude, but interesting, representations of the Archangel Michael. These are provided with a pouch binding. It is like a small wallet, with a long leather loop so that it can be worn around the neck or over one shoulder.

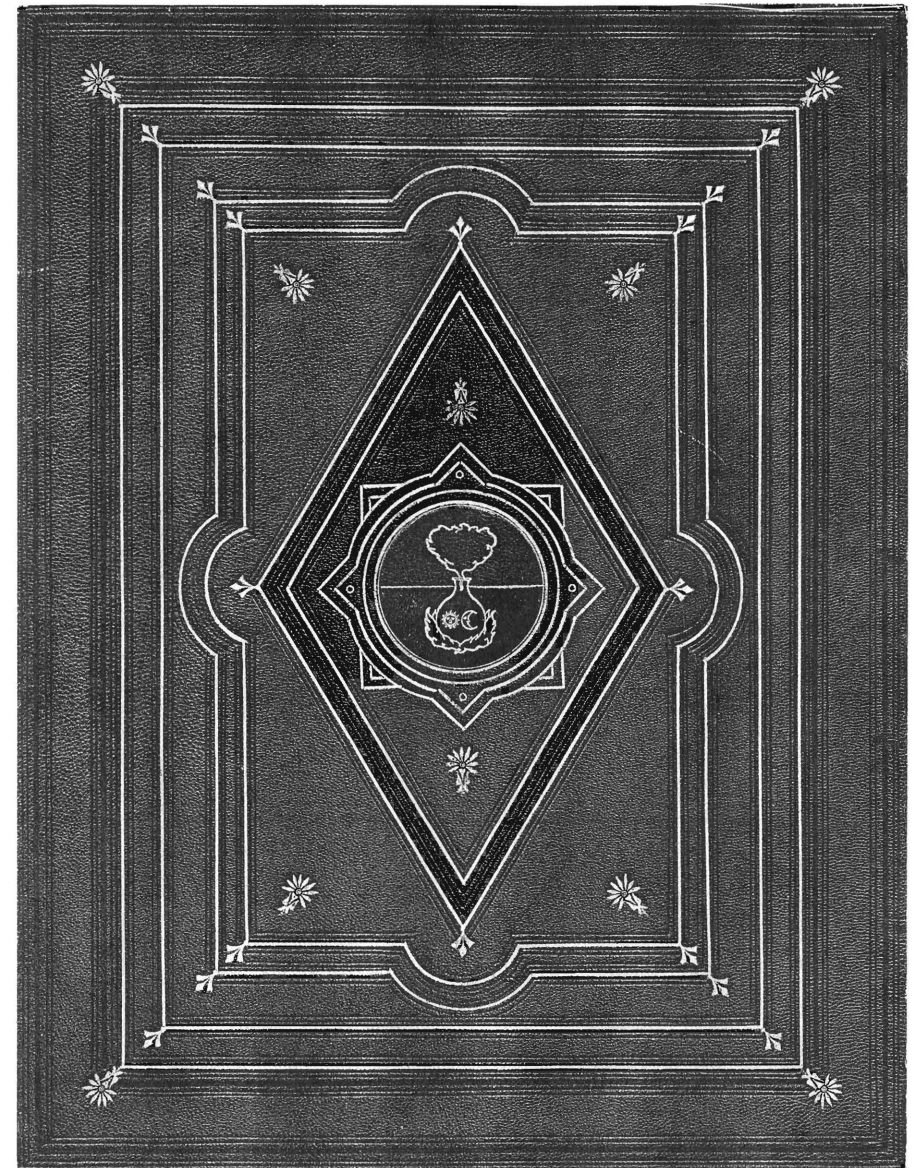
European manuscripts with flap bindings and buckles are comparatively rare, but we have a very fine example. It is a collection of alchemical treatises written in a fine legible hand in French. There is no date, but it belongs to the second half of the eighteenth century. There are 927 pages in a contemporary brown morocco binding. This interesting volume is probably from the library of the mysterious Count de Cagliostro whose name appears at the base of the spine. There are several figures and diagrams in the text. The binding is not elaborate, but is still substantial, and the volume contains the bookplate of F.G. Irwin.

It now seems appropriate to present a few additional items bound in our own facility. An outstanding example of our handiwork is *Historia Und Beschreibung Influentischer/ Elementischer und Natürlicher Wirkungen/ Aller fremden unnd heimischen Erdgewachsen/ etc.*, by Leonhardt Thurneisser, Berlin: 1578. The author was very learned in astrological botany, but was born out of time and had a tragic life. Our binding is in red, French morocco with gold panelling on front and back. There is a rectangle of intricate silver tooling. The raised bands on the spine are also fully decorated and the inside of the binding is panelled in gold where it meets the end sheets. Dave Murray did not sign this binding, but it was equal to the work of a famous hand bindery. The front of the binding is reproduced here, the actual size being nine and one half by fourteen and one half inches.

Dave designed a binding for *Sapienta Veterum*, an unusual alchemical manuscript in our collection. The text is principally in the form of symbols depicting the chemical changes through which the elements pass in the stages of transmutation. The binding is in full leather with fine ruling forming a geometrical pattern. In the center are inlays of red and green leather and an alchemical retort.



The elaborate binding for the sixteenth century edition of Leonhardt Thurneisser includes a complicated design in silver with gold borders.



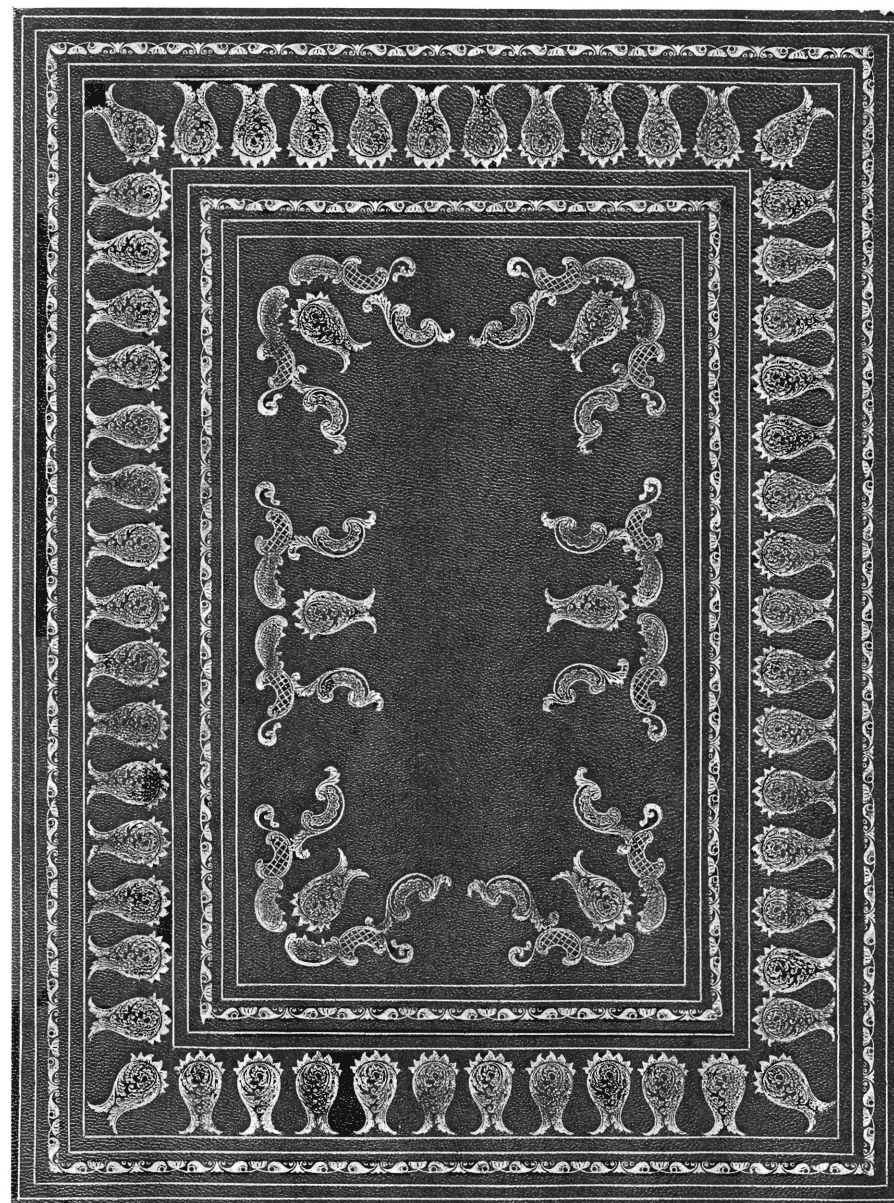
The design for the *Sapienza Veterum* is perhaps the finest example of David Murray's skill. The central medallions on front and back are inlaid with red and green leather and feature an alchemical retort from a diagram by Manly P. Hall.

The inside borders are also decorated where they meet the end sheets.

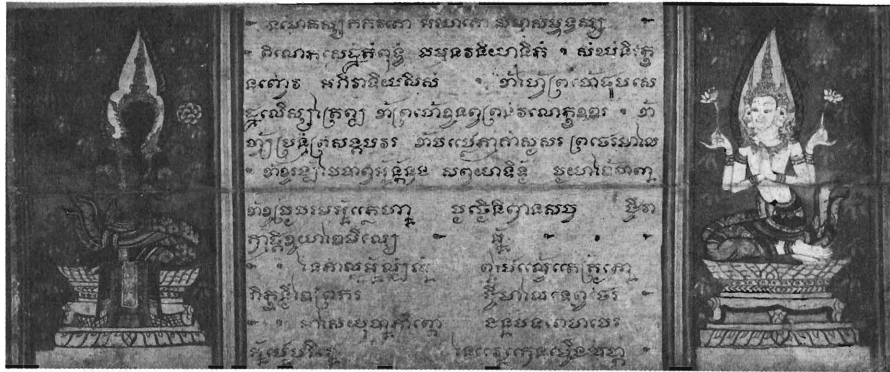
One other binding should be mentioned. There is no author or formal title page, but it contains a number of wash drawings combining cabalistic diagrams with Pythagorean figures. In this binding, there are lines in gold and narrow designs applied with a roller. The major elements of design were laid down separately on a background of mottled morocco. Work of this kind is slow and tedious and it requires several days of skillful and careful labor to complete a single binding. Inflation has made hand work of this quality practically prohibitive in price.

The sacred Buddhist texts of Thailand (Siam) are often beautifully illustrated with miniature paintings. Each volume is in accordion form and the bindings, which are attached, are of heavy lacquered paper, quite substantial and sometimes ornamented. They are of various sizes, and are stored in temple libraries. Some years ago, a diplomat, returning from Thailand, brought in a number of these unusual items. It was contrary to protocol that his belongings should pass through customs, so he brought in a number of early and important Thai and Cambodian antiquities. His Thai books were accepted for sale by a Los Angeles auctioneer who was not particularly happy about the items which had been entrusted to him. He hung the accordion books on the walls of his gallery. By accident, I wandered in and, consoling him, purchased the lot at an attractive price. They were all handwritten, and with attractive multi-colored miniature paintings of various deities and scenes from sacred texts. The accompanying illustration is indicative of old Thai books.

Perhaps we should now turn attention to problems arising from the functions of a research library. Our collection, which abounds in religious curiosities, has been available to the public as a community service for nearly fifty years. We are unable, however, to follow the precedent established in the British Museum. In the manuscript department of this world famous institution, readers are not permitted to touch irreplaceable items. The volume is placed before them on a scholar's easel, covered in the front by a



An interesting design was created for a collection of wash drawings dealing with cabalism and Pythagorean mathematics by making use of a number of separate gilding tools.



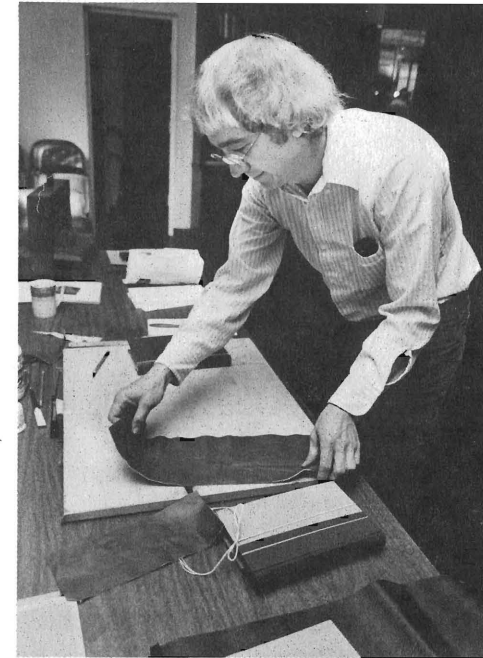
An eighteenth century Siamese, Buddhist scripture with beautiful illustrations of deities and symbolic subjects.

sheet of glass. To turn a page, it is necessary to call an attendant who graciously accommodates the reader.

Up to the present time most of our very scarce and even rare items could be consulted without this formality. It follows, of course, that even with thoughtful care there is wear and tear. I remember one visitor who asked to see an illuminated copy of the Koran. As the magnificently painted opening leaf came into view shining with gold decorations, the delighted viewer put a finger in his mouth then rubbed it across the colophon exclaiming, "Real gold, isn't it." Such incidents are rare, but unforgettable.

Even with most lovable handling, covers gradually become detached, old leather powders away, pages loosen, and even the best paper yellows with age and becomes brittle. The cost of restoring ancient tomes may be considered as prohibitive. In many cases, the repairs cost more than the original price of the volume. In the case of modern books, it is cheaper to buy a new copy than to repair an old one. True book lovers feel a personal responsibility for their literary treasures or the works they consult in public institutions. We are now making photostats available to readers and retiring the originals from general usage.

Among those who have recently become members of our staff is Lynn Blessing who has studied bookbinding and shares our



Mr. Lynn Blessing, who has a deep appreciation of fine books and their bindings, can find plenty to do in the PRS Library.

respect for rare volumes. He has already rescued a number of fugitive fragments from obscurity, including letters and notes of Mary Atwood, a world respected nineteenth century writer on alchemical mysticism. It is hoped that as time goes on, he can repair a number of magnificent bindings created by David Murray nearly half a century ago.

An even better solution is to make photostatic facsimiles of rare volumes and distribute them in limited editions with the certainty that some will survive. The collections in our library include nearly four thousand years of the written word. Acquisition is a joy, but protection is a responsibility. We have already gained considerable recognition among scholars for the breadth and depth of our material, and we are doing everything possible to protect the treasures of our house. Many visitors are amazed at the diversity of our holdings. We are still enlarging some sections, and gradually



Miniature Bibles are collectors items, but they are also appropriate for members of the armed forces or travelers in distant places.

eliminating more common titles which can be found in public libraries.

We hold regular exhibits of material which can only be shown occasionally. It is our hope that the bibliography of our books and manuscripts on alchemy will be available to scholars this year. Our Oriental collection is equally valuable, but less appreciated by the average Western reader.

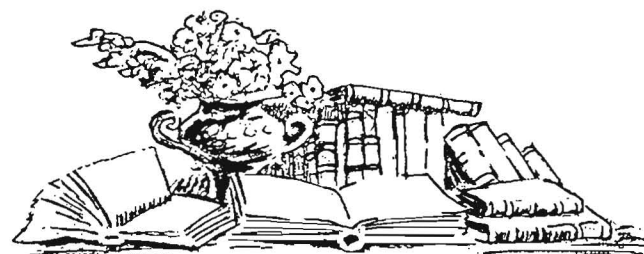
While some of the large folios weigh more than fifty pounds, we also have some miniature curiosities including *The Holy Bible* reproduced here. It was published in Scotland under a license of Her Majesty the Queen. It is the complete King James Version of both Testaments running to 876 pages and beautifully illustrated. It is bound in full Morocco, line stamped, with the title on the spine in gold. For comparison, we have laid a twenty-five cent piece on the blank page preceding the Gospel of St. Matthew. Miniature books appeal to many collectors who have miniature bookcases in which to display them.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

—Francis Bacon

All the known world, excepting only savage nations, is governed by books.

—Francois Marie Voltaire



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*Includes *The Way of Mysticism*, a chapter by Manly P. Hall.

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