

# The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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Dear Friends:



UNDER the nostalgic mood conjured up by the Christmas season, my esteemed grandmother again comes to mind. She was a complete sentimentalist but also possessed the rugged self-restraint inherited from her Scottish ancestors. Even before World War I, she was resisting the mounting pressures of progress. In search of spiritual refreshment, she decided to take her two daughters on the "grand tour" of Europe. There, one could live inexpensively in an atmosphere of propriety and refinement.

Grandmother's passport, (which I still have), in no way resembled today's prosaic little booklet, with its slightly less than flattering portrait of the owner and many blank pages for visas. In the last decade of the nineteenth century a passport resembled the diplomas hanging on the walls of doctors' offices. These passports consisted of a large sheet of fine paper with engraved inscriptions explaining that the government of the United States would appreciate courtesies and assistances bestowed upon its citizens. The two daughters were included on the same passport, and the document was duly signed and handsomely sealed. Armed with this all-sufficient protection, the Palmer family started out on their great adventure.

Grandmother preferred to travel on a steamer belonging to the North German Lloyd Line or the Hamburg-American Line. Comfortably cabined in the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse," the family settled down to eight days on the ocean. The furnishings on the ship were plush, according to the style of the times. There were heavy drapes of maroon velvet with tasseled fringes, magnificently tufted sofas, and an assortment of knick-knacks, most of which were nailed down in case of bad weather. Inevitably, Grandmother was soon seated at the Captain's Table, over which she presided with appropriate dignity.

The first winter was spent in Germany and Austria. In those days, of course, there were no luxury hotels, although there were a few in Berlin that reminded Grandmother of the spacious Auditorium Hotel in Chicago. Grandmother felt that the only way to appreciate a country was to live with the people. She chose pension accommodations



and was soon deeply involved in the study of the German language. To the end of her days, she engaged in German word-dropping, with or without provocation. My mother and her sister were studying violin, and as they were advanced pupils, they were soon enrolled with an internationally famous instructor.

It was about this time, also, that the Christmas season descended upon the German Empire. Grandmother vividly remembered old Prince von Bismarck riding down the Unter den Linden accompanied by two Great Dane dogs. The German countryside was beautiful in the snow, and in the small villages, traditional customs still prevailed. Special events were not staged for tourists, and mercenary factors were negligible. The warmth of the Christmas Spirit included travelers and strangers and best of all, religion was not forgotten. Grandmother approved of a custom still prevailing in many parts of Europe, in which Christmas Day is a completely religious festival. The practices now current in America of celebrating the occasion by handsome meals and the exchanging of gifts seemed inappropriate to the seriousness of the occasion. The children's presents were distributed a few days before Christmas, and the entertaining of relatives had been successfully concluded before the Holy Day dawned upon the world. All the churches had special services, and in the homes there were Bible readings, brief prayers, and emphasis upon gratitude and mutual affection. Christmas stood for something so important that it must be celebrated with a fullness of heart and a dedication of spirit. This did not mean that it was a day of sadness, but rather that people reached out to share in a kind of mystical experience. This was the birthday of the faith to which they belonged--a time set aside for the realization that humanity is bound together, not by laws, but in a spiritual brotherhood.

The church bells tolled, sacred music was heard, and earnest-faced children sought to grasp the meaning of their faith. Grandmother felt that at least one day a year should be set aside to search our own hearts. We have abundant time for amusement and diversion; there is opportunity to do the world's work and earn a living; but in the course of a year there should be at least one day dedicated to the refreshment of faith and gratitude for the benefits we all enjoy. Grandmother went to Europe because even in her day she felt that Christmas was being commercialized in America. We were so busy with exchanging physical gifts that we overlooked the simple fact that we are never truly happy because of what we have: we are only happy because of what we are.

Grandmother was not the only one who felt this way about the quiet dignity of disciplined European living. Mark Twain came very near to settling in Europe because of the good manners of European children. Returning from one of his trips, Twain immediately became involved in a dispute with the United States Customs House and almost returned to his ship to sail back to more genteel regions.

There were things in Grandmother's time that helped to preserve faith in human nature. Certainly, crime was less prevalent, courtesies were more common, families were closer, and friendships were more enduring. Grandmother always felt that societies were bound together by inner sensitivity. The good-hearted would sometime inherit the earth. Gandhi said it a little differently, but he firmly believed that strife would never end until all peoples were bound together by the silken cord of love. Grandmother would have agreed with him, shut her jaw with a note of finality, and murmured in a Scottish accent, "Das ist sehr gut!"



We recently secured from one of our Japanese contacts a delightful little antique which bears witness to the inspired ingenuity of Japanese artists-artisans. The accompanying illustration will be more serviceable than an extensive description. The little container is a gourd about three inches in diameter and two inches deep. To this has been fitted



an ivory rim and a bronze stopper with ivory trimming. There is an interesting story about the use of gourds as decorative items. While they are still small and growing on the vine, their shapes are controlled and altered by the use of wire. This is placed around them in any pattern desired, and as the gourd grows, its shape is correspondingly modified. In this case, the gourd was bound so that it produced a symmetrical form of eight segments resembling the sections of an orange. That Nature could produce so perfect a form, even with human assistance, appears remarkable. After the gourd was dried and the inner contents re-

moved, each of the segments was ornamented with an open-work carving of a stylized swastika within a circle. Each segment was further incised with a representation of one of the eight Chinese Immortals. They were the mysterious mountain hermits who practiced magical arts, and many legends have developed around them. The shallow carvings of the Immortals were then brought into contrast by rubbing dark pigment into the cuttings. Later the whole piece received a final preservative finish. The work was done about 150 years ago.

We do not know with certainty the practical purpose for which this little box was created. It may have been used to hold powdered tea for the Tea Ceremony, or for sachet or incense. Perhaps it had no utility value and was created merely to refresh the soul, bringing pleasure to lovers of beauty. Pieces of this quality are rare today, for there is less leisure available to the average craftsman. He must now compromise his skill or he cannot earn his living.



Our book, *The Secret Destiny of America*, has been out of print for several years, and we have received numerous requests for copies. As we noted in our Friends' Fund Report, a new edition is now available, and we feel that it is an important contribution to the plans for the bicentennial celebration of our national independence in 1976. The book has a special meaning to those who believe that the United States of America is to play a significant role in the creation of a better world.

There have been some requests that selected lectures from our programs be made available on cassette tapes. We might be able to have some of these made if there is sufficient interest. If the idea is meaningful to you, would you drop us a card, phone our office, or leave a note at our book table when you attend a lecture. We can probably arrange for these tapes if they are of service to our friends.

Another year is coming to a close, and each Christmas begins a new birth in time for all of us. Actually, we are reborn every time we achieve greater insight and experience a deeper understanding of ourselves and our world. We deeply appreciate your wonderful friendship and help through the years and sincerely hope that 1973 will bring new adventures in growing and becoming. After all, we are here to learn, and happiness comes to those who love learning.

Always most sincerely,

Marilyn P. Hall

## SPECIAL NOTICE FROM OUR BOOK DEPARTMENT

A number of important and scholarly volumes in our fields of interest are now available in attractive and accurate reprints. Most of those listed here are included in Mr. Hall's list of recommended reading and have long been rare and out of print. To these have been added selected works by outstanding modern authors. The Contributors' Bulletin will list additional works in future issues.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Price</u>
Initiation, Human and Solar	Alice Bailey	\$ 6.00
The Initiation of the World	Vera Alder (P)	3.75
Imprisoned Splendour	Raynor Johnson (P)	2.95
The Initiate- Impressions of a Great Soul	His Pupil	6.95
The Inner Ecstasy	Marcus Bach (P)	1.95
Introduction to Zen Buddhism	D.T. Suzuki (P)	1.50
The Intuitive Philosophy	Rohit Mehta	3.00
The Impersonal Life	Annon. (The Teacher)	3.50
An Introduction to Political Astrology	Charles Carter (P)	3.50
Jade	N. Sakidawa	3.50
William James on Psychical Research	Gardner Murphy	1.95
The Japanese Art of Miniature Trees & Landscapes	Yoshimura & Halford	7.50
Japanese Brush Painting, The Art of	K. Mikami	4.95
Japanese Children's Favorite Stories	Florence Sakade (Ed.)	3.50
Japanese Children's Stories	Florence Sakade (Ed.)	3.50
Japanese Flower Arrangement	Ellen Allen	2.75
Japanese Prints	James Michener	24.50
Japanese Sculptures	Tolchin	25.00
Jesus the Son of Man	K. Gibran	5.95
Carl G. Jung	E.A. Bennet (P)	1.75
C.G. Jung's Contribution to our Time	Eleanor Bertine	6.50
Jung's Psychology & Its Social Meaning	Ira Progoff	6.50
Journey to the East	Hermann Hesse (P)	1.45
Japanese Fortune Calendar	Reiko Chiba	3.25
Japanese Recipes	Tatsuji Tada (P)	1.00
Japanese Things	Basil Chamberlain (P)	2.50
Japanese Food & Cooking	Stuart Griffin (P)	1.75
Japanese Ink Painting	Syukyu Saito	3.75
Japanese Stencil Designs	Andrew Tuer (P)	2.75
Japanese Painting, On the Laws of	Henry P. Bowie (P)	2.50
The Kabbalah	A. Franck	5.95
The Kabala of Numbers	Sepherial	8.50
On the Kabbalah & its Symbolism	Scholem	7.50
The Kabbalah Unveiled	MacG. Mathers (Trans)	8.00
Kappa's Tug-of-War (Children's)	Dorothy Boruch	2.95
Karma, A Story of Buddhist Ethics	Paul Carus (P)	.75
Key to Your Own Nativity	Alan Leo	7.50
The King and the Corpse	Heinrich Zimmer	5.00

These books may be ordered directly from The Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on first page). Please add 25¢ for handling on orders of less than \$5.00, and sales tax is to be included by California residents. Note: Prices are subject to change without notice.