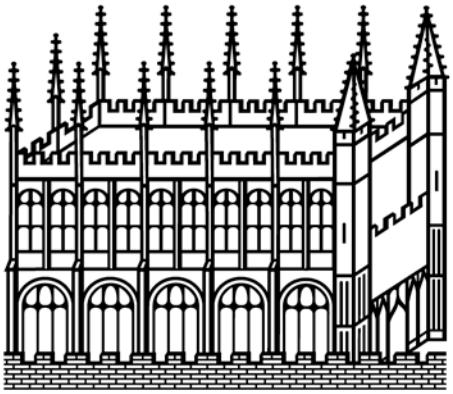

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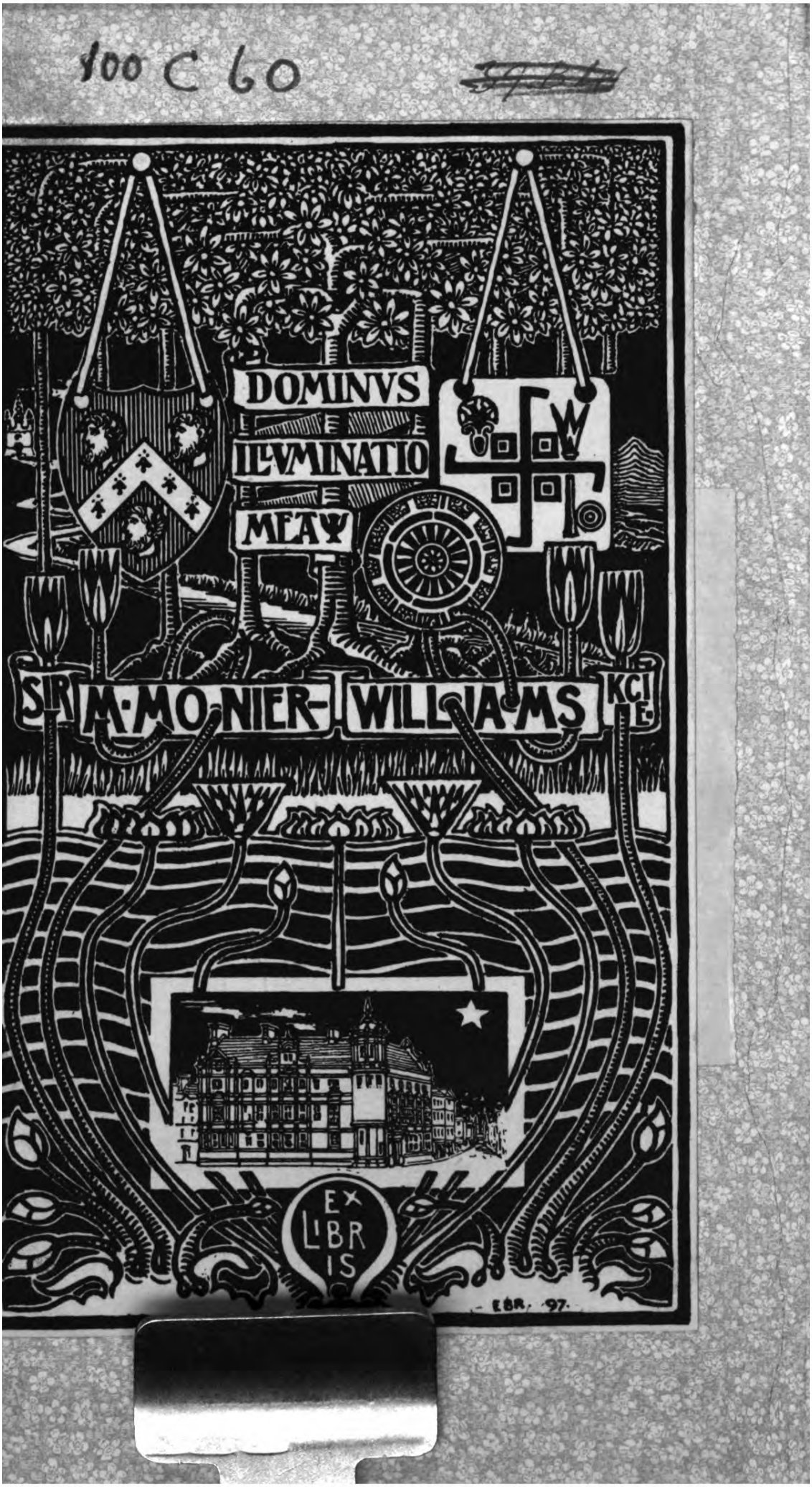
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LIGHT OF THE AGES

(ASIA, AFRICA, EUROPE)

BY THE

REV. H. R. HAWEIS, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF ST. JAMES'S, MARYLEBONE.

AUTHOR OF "MUSIC AND MORALS," "THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES," "SPEECH IN SEASON," "WINGED WORDS," ETC.

*

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FOREWORDS.

THE old text-books are dead. Theological examiners and examining chaplains can hardly put some of their usual questions without a blush, and numbers of really earnest and able men refuse to go into the Church because they will have to answer them. Nonconformists are no better off—ask their chiefs—you will hear the same complaint: "We cannot get good and able men for the ministry."

The Christian doctrines can never die, but most of them require re-statement—

the forms in which they have been received for centuries are used up.

Long currency is no guarantee of truth. The Infallibility of the Pope — Eternal Punishment—Vicarious Atonement—Verbal Inspiration—have all been temporary wrappings of so many truths; have all been taught in their time and all been discredited in their turn. The logic of history will not bend.

The Pope's Supremacy (let alone his infallibility) has always been denied by the Greek and the reformed Churches.

We have lived to see the doctrines of Eternal Punishment and Verbal Inspiration ignored in most church and chapel pulpits, and denounced in some.

The once popular doctrine of the Vicarious

Sacrifice of Christ in the sense of a substitution has never been part of the Eastern Church's dogmatic theology, and within the last twenty years it has dropped out of most English pulpits, just in proportion as Salvation by Christ in a truer sense has been preached.

About twenty-five years ago, when my revered teacher, F. D. Maurice, was assiduously using the old theological phrases about the Atonement and Eternal Punishment in a sense which seemed to him quite natural, but which seemed to most other people quite the reverse, several ingenious attempts were made to re-state the forensic Atonement theories of Anselm and Grotius in a manner not wholly repugnant to the Christian conscience of the times. They met with some sympathy, but they necessarily failed, and

the substitution doctrine will probably not be revived.

The old ecclesiastical theory of Church Government seems going the same way as the old ecclesiastical theory of Salvation. The High Church movement, which began so nobly, has already become like salt which has lost its savour. Men cannot be got to believe that it is the business of the clergyman to sow dissension between husband and wife and to get hold of the children, nor does it seem to most of us true that all correct religion centres either in the Pope at Rome or in the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth.

Uniformity is now seen to mean death and Sectarianism life, instead of *vice versâ*.

Meanwhile change is still in the air. Things look quite stable—like an avalanche

the moment before it falls. A number of theological doctrines seem quite stable, backed by a venerable literature and buttressed by vested interests. Suddenly all these are seen to be struck with sterility —the wind has blown upon them and they melt away.

It is possible to embrace a corpse, believing it still to be alive; but the chill will pierce, and we shall presently have to bury the dead.

These thoughts have been in my mind, as they have doubtless been in the minds of thousands, for many years, and I early asked, in view of the extremely unsettled state of the theological atmosphere, what it might be worth while to try and do—if the silence were broken.

Was it worth while still to induce reasonable men to enter the Church?

Was it worth while to try and put the old theological doctrines intelligibly and in a form likely to be read?

Was it worth while to see whether what appears credible and reasonable to the laity can be openly uttered in a Church of England pulpit?

Was it worth while to make known the results of historical criticism without obvious ecclesiastical bias?

"Thoughts for the Times," "Speech in Season," "Current Coin," "Arrows in the Air," "Winged Words," "The Key," are the books which have hitherto contained my answers to these questions.

That the first of these, "Thoughts for the Times," should have reached a sixteenth edition, and the last, "The Key," have touched its tenth thousand, is my best reply to those who think I have wasted my time in preparing them for the press. In "Winged Words" and "The Key" I have taken care to define my own position as a clergyman of the Established Church.

But twenty years of reading, meditation, and travel, combined with parochial and ministerial work in both extremes of London, have convinced me that all polemical literature, however useful, is in its very nature transitory, and of far less importance than it seems.

The deliverance for clergy and congregation will not come from any answer,

however clever, to this or that orthodox or heretical doctrine which may happen to be uppermost for a time; the general deliverance from all "doxies," heterodox or orthodox, the possession and enjoyment of the truth, or rather the best attainable expression of religious truth, will come to us from HISTORY.

What have men believed, and why?

What is there permanent and what transitory about these beliefs? What are the ascertainable facts about the religions of the world, and especially about the Christian Religion?

History, and not Authority; Fact, and not Fiction, will determine the form of the coming Christianity — which, to a great extent, has come (like the kingdom of God) "without observation."

We have stolen like trespassers into the new time — unawares — we cannot escape from the situation. We are the heirs of all the ages. In Religion, as in Literature, Art, and everything else, we have to look for the survival of the fittest. "To prove all things and to hold fast (*only*) that which is good."

To understand the past is to possess it. To possess it is to sift it. To sift it is to assemble and re-combine for our present use what is indestructible and essential, whilst removing, with the tender hand of a loving antiquary, the artificial growths and almost sacred mould of the ages.

History explains the existence and nature of creeds and articles; it shows their use in

the past, and draws their dogmatical sting in the present.

History makes the Pope an heroic figure and the Catholic Church an angel of light.

History also brands the Papacy with the Inquisition and the Vatican with the bondage of the human mind.

History shows how different views of Christ were at various times necessary and acceptable, and how a mistaken zeal for Truth rivetted, in the form of Dogma, upon succeeding ages what, after all, only amounted to the best Expression of Truth in one age.

With these convictions it seemed to be uninteresting and comparatively unimportant to go on publishing sermons dealing with transitory phases of thought,

when the key to all phases of religious thought was ready to my hand in the study of history; and I then began to arrange in these Five Volumes materials which I had been collecting ever since my college days, and preaching ever since I got a pulpit of my own.

This introductory volume, last in issue though first in order, in dealing with the Religions of the World, is a fitting introduction to the four others which deal with Christ and Christianity up to the death of Constantine in the fourth century.

I would have my reader in this first volume stand in a receptive mood—his own heart aglow with the sense of an awful yet loving Mystery, while before him passes scene after scene of the world's

religious life. He will then be able to place his foot upon the rock. He will surely find the answer to the fashionable craze which proclaims all religion an ephemeral fancy of the human brain, when he perceives throughout the Religions of the World the unity and solidarity of the Religious Consciousness. He will then observe that Religion, like Astronomy, has not been invented, but only discovered by man.

The purpose of the remaining four volumes is sufficiently set forth in the Forewords to each.

JESUS is the central religious Figure of the human race. GOD revealed in and through HIM is the central Fact.

All past religions were grappling with the conception of God through human nature—

for the simple reason that, think and feel as we may, it is as impossible for us to transcend our human nature as it is for us to get into the planet Mars or Jupiter, or formulate in any detail with any sort of probability the life after death. Christ's assertion that "No man cometh to the Father but by Me" appears almost a truism to the Buddhist—it does not in the least interfere with his Buddhism. We Westerns are all poor creatures in metaphysics beside those Aryan masters of abstract thought—still so near the cradle of the race. Says Kasawara, that gifted Buddhist priest, too early, alas! deceased: "You use the same term for the Christ as we do for the Buddha. You say the 'Lord' Christ as we say the 'Lord' Buddha"; and, further—

"It is a very beautiful and noticeable idea in St. John that, when the Word or

manifestation of God was made to mankind a man should be the medium of it. The Christ, the Word of God, means, I apprehend, that God revealed himself in the person of the man Jesus—of course, all Christians believe that Jesus was God manifested through humanity. Yes," he continues, "imaged as in a reflecting mirror to adapt Himself to the power of human vision. Man can only rise to the conception of God by the help of humanity. The highest conception of man must be the best conception of God possible to man—the ideal man must needs be the image of the invisible God."

It is interesting to find the Buddhist accepting as a joy and a helpful revelation that doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord which seems borne as a burden by some professing Christians. It is simply because

in the East metaphysics grow out of doors, in the West they are troublesome exotics.

So it is this JESUS, the central figure of the human race, that we draw near to, and again the reader is asked to stand aside whilst Jesus of Nazareth passes by—to mark His surroundings—to look upon His friends—to listen to His words—to gaze upon His face—to catch the inspiration from His life—and, finally, to assist at the foundation and establishment of the Christian Church, in all its essential features complete in the reign of Constantine.

It would be unfair not to mention any, it would be impossible to mention all, the books which I have consulted while preparing these studies for publication.

Rather than be accused of plagiarism, I shall be quite content to renounce all claims to originality. This is not a work of original research—it is a general statement in a popular form of results which I have arrived at after studying the researches and balancing the conclusions of many others.

Amongst the books that have helped me generally I may mention F. D. Maurice's "Moral Philosophy," Freeman Clarke's "Religions of the World," Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities. The introduction to each volume contains a further reference to special works consulted. I may mention that in compiling Volume I., "The Light of the Ages," I have found great help from—

MANNING'S . . .	Ancient and Mediæval India.
ST. HILAIRE'S (Barthélemy)	Le Bouddha et sa Religion.
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Cox's (G. W.) . .	Aryan Mythology.
Dasent's . . .	Norse Tales.

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BRAHMANISM.

I HAVE but one object in giving some account of the Religions of the World as an introduction to the four volumes on Christ and Christianity. This: I wish to show the essential unity and solidarity of the religious consciousness in man.

I. BROKEN LIGHTS.

Once it used to be said, "Christianity is true, and all other religions are false." We now say of them all, whilst recognising the peculiar supremacy of the religion of Christ—

> "They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

There was a truth revealed to Peter, which has been ignored for about eighteen hundred years. It is this: "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." It is hardly too much to say that every Christian sect has denied this with all its might and main. Such a singular fact should open our eyes once for all to the difference between Christianity and the religion of Christ as Peter understood it.

2. AFFINITIES.

Christianity is not an isolated phenomenon. It stands related to Judaism and Paganism. It claims affinity with the law of Moses, and with the *Daimon* or inspiring guide of Socrates—with the personal sacrifice of Buddha—with the good and evil spirits of Persia—with the Judge and the judgment-seat in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and

even with the gnomic utterances of Confucius, whose cardinal doctrine of "Reciprocity" is summed up in the familiar words, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

In every religion there is something sacred. Each in its own way utters the eternal "cry of the human," and reveals that secret but sublime yearning after the true and unknowable God.

3. INVENTION AND DISCOVERY.

Max Müller tells us that a study of comparative religion will show that some of the vital articles of our faith are the common property of the race, and that as there is no entirely new language so there is no entirely new religion, all religions being more or less combinations of the same few radical ideas.

This is so because religion has not been invented but only discovered by man. Man, it is true, has invented its various forms, vehicles, and disguises, but he has not invented its essence. If a distinction between Christ's religion and others is to be drawn, it will not be correct to say that His is all true, whilst the others are all false. It would be better to say, "Other religions, as far as they are true, were discovered by man.

Christianity, as far as it is untrue, was invented by man; but the religion of Christ was revealed, or to speak more accurately with Paul, 'is being revealed' in man."

Let us be consoled. The Divine Spirit, the Great Oversoul, has always been in contact with the human spirit. "His influence," as has been truly said, "is continuous and impartial, limited to no time or age or race—like the great physical forces, gravity, magnetism, electricity, for ever acting in all particles of matter—not always manifest, sometimes resisted, but eternally at work for definite ends." As the atmosphere presses down upon matter, so God presses down upon spirit. Mind is homogeneous. Sympathy is kindled when mind faces mind. The Oversoul, which is Divine Mind or God, embraces the Undersouls in all flesh, thus holding converse with mind in man. Mind is the common ground—mind is the point of contact — mind is essentially of the same "stuff" always, everywhere. Homogeneity of mind is the ground of man's communion with God. This, and not the dead-ancestor theory, or any merely utilitarian doctrine of the greatest

4. CENTRAL THOUGHTS.

happiness of the greatest number, explains such recurrent world-thoughts as the Intuition of God ; Sense of Human Weakness, combined with a Belief in a Divine Government and the Trust in a Deliverer ; the Distinction between Good and Evil ; the Mystery of Sacrifice ; the Joy-hunger and the Hope of a Future life.

Historically, Christianity is an offshoot of Judaism, as Buddhism was of Brahmanism, or as Mahometanism was of Christianity, but the true place of Christ in history can only be understood when His religion is compared, not only with Judaism, but with the religious aspirations of the whole world. 5. DEVELOPMENTS.

As we look back with straining eyes into the dim, remote past, we see not only men "as trees walking," but the giant forms of empires, evolving, differentiating, migrating.

All civilisation comes from the great plains lying east of the Caspian Sea—the table lands of Asia. As poor Emanuel Deutsch, the great Semitic scholar — the man of one article, *Talmud*-Deutsch 6. HINDU CUSH.

—used to say: "Everything comes from the *Hindu Cush.* If people ask you about the antiquity of man, or the origin of religion and civilisation, whisper low, '*Hindu Cush*'—say no more, and you will be quite safe!" Yet I must take the risk and say something more. There, on those Eastern plains, "between the two mountains," says Manu (800—600 B.C.), "lies the land which the wise men have named Ar-ya-vesta (hence *Aryans*), or *inhabited by honourable men.*"

Soon after *cir.* 3000 B.C., the race of "honourable men" having developed a civilisation and religion of their own, split up—migrating—spreading—settling in various countries—under the names of Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Kelts, Teutons, Slavs—and we call those waves of emigration which reached Europe—*i.e.*, we call the Greeks, Romans, Kelts, Teutons, and Slavs, INDO-EUROPEAN (Aryan), because they came from the Hindu Cush.

7. "FLIES IN AMBER."

How do we know that? Thus: to this day the commonest words in the seven tribal languages —Hindu, Persian, Greek, Roman, Kelt, Teuton, and Slav—betray their common origin. When you find words

like *house*, *ship*, *pastor*, with the same root in all the seven languages, whilst such words as masts and sails are different, what do you infer? Two things. First, that the old Aryans had *houses*, *ships*, and *shepherds*, and when they split up into separate nations, each branch retained these words of the original language; and, secondly, that each branch developed for itself words for things, like masts and sails, not required by the primitive Aryans. The seven tribal languages thus, in addition to their own nomenclature of later date, embalm for us in those *flies in amber* we call "word-roots," memories of the time when the Aryan race was one and undivided in the Hindu Cush.

8. SACRED BOOKS.

The Vedas are the most ancient religious books in the world, extending, according to Max Müller, from 1200 to 200 B.C., whilst Dr. Hans considers the oldest Vedic hymns to date back to *cir.* 2400 B.C. The oldest Veda, or Chandas and Mantra periods, 1200 to 800 B.C., sing praises to Indra (the air), Agni (fire), Aditi (or universal nature).

The *Brahmana* period, which dates from about

800 to 600, contains the laws of Manu. This is the Leviticus age. Brahma is now the supreme deity. Sacrifice is the passport to his favour. It is the despotic age of priest-rule and priest-craft. From this the people had to wait yet 200 years before the deliverer came, in the person of Buddha.

Brahmanism then, a development of the still older Indra-Agni-Aditi cult, was the ancient faith of India. An Aryan wave about three thousand years ago swamped the aborigines of the Peninsula, driving them to the hills, where they are still supposed to linger, and imposing upon the conquered their faith and rule, as in later days the English subdued the Hindu and tried to do likewise. Some six centuries before Christ Buddhism supplanted Brahmanism and ruled supreme for one thousand years. At the present time, although it has little hold over the Peninsula, about four hundred and seventy millions, or one-third of the human race, are Buddhists. Buddha reigns from Nepaul to Ceylon, invades China, Central Asia, Siberia, and Lapland.

9. OLD CULT BRAHMANISM BUDDHISM.

The Brahmans have left no monuments, only the Vedas. The Rigveda (1500 — 1200 B.C.) and perhaps older, contains the celebrated Sun Prayer, "We meditate on Thee, the desirable light," &c., which is probably the oldest extant prayer in the world. Centuries of oral tradition no doubt preceded the written Vedas; but, roughly speaking, we may believe that about the time that Agamemnon was celebrating his nuptials with Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, and quaffing the loving cup (perchance one of those golden goblets unearthed by the industry of Dr. Schliemann, and exposed to our nineteenth-century gaze at the South Kensington Museum), about the time that Gideon was girding on his sword to go up against the Midianites, the Brahman priest was formulating his solemn liturgy on the banks of the Ganges, spreading his prayer-carpet towards the rising sun, and pouring forth that ancient hymn, "We meditate on Thee, the desirable light!"

10. THE SUN PRAYER.

The Vedas have preserved for us sufficiently vivid glimpses of the old life of the Peninsula, which after the lapse of thirty centuries seems to

have changed but little in many of its outward aspects. Certain passages of these religious and poetic idyls might have been written yesterday. The rivers are still seen rushing from the snowy Himalaya—the wolf and tiger lurk in the thick jungle or scour the plain. We come upon the elephant trampling through the thinned and fire-scorched woods. Peacocks, quails, and parrots brighten the tropical forest in spring. The cattle cross the swelling fords in droves, or are driven down from the hills to the sacrifice. There are the Hindu villages with their hurdle-surrounded houses; the village goldsmith is at his filigree work; the carpenter bends above his primitive lathe; the Sudra groans beneath his bales of merchandise; the people sit at their doors eating their simple food of curds, honey, banyan, and barley porridge, or at the close of the day drink from wooden goblets the refreshing but intoxicating *soma*. On feast days, the king is seen riding abroad in his silver-decked chariot, drawn by white mules, and accompanied by his Brahmanic counsellor; the priest seated on his golden prayer-carpet utters mystic incantations, or recites the Vedic hymns.

II. THE OLD WORLD.

We find at a very early period the Brahmanic teachers already established in colleges and leading their troops of disciples by the shores of the Ganges, what time the Indian girls watch their little fire-boats dancing down the sacred flood, which also bears on its heaving bosom the half-charred corpses of the poor who cannot afford a more complete cremation.

12. BY THE RIVER.

The figure of the priest, the typical priest of all ages, stands out clearly. He has evidently made himself, with his rites and mysteries, first indispensable, and then, like the Jewish and Catholic priests after him, intolerably burdensome to the people.

13. PRIESTS AND COLLECTIONS.

Preaching and the recitation of the sacred books were in early times the priest's great power. His tongue, we read in the Vedas, is a bowstring; his voice is as the barb; and his wind-pipe like the arrow-points surrounded with fire—the priest pierces the scorners of the gods!

The "collections" after the sermon don't seem to have been always satisfactory. We come upon constant allusions to "men who wished to give nothing." "So niggardly! how hard," exclaimed

the preacher, "is it to melt the heart of a close-fisted miser." So we see how the common doctrine, that the people were invented only to keep the clergy fat, is after all a very ancient heresy—like most others.

If we shift our inquiry from How did they beg? to What did they teach? the answer is more satisfactory.

14. ANCIENT DOCTRINE.

They spoke of a "Power of Contemplation" (Spirit of God), or Thought, which produced the world out of darkness (moving in the midst of what was darkness without form and void). They spoke of a Parusha, a Supreme God, who was also a victim, and produced the world by offering up himself in sacrifice. They spoke of Agni, the sublime God of Light—yet the friendly sympathetic Being who stooped to consort with, comfort, cherish, and gladden mankind. They spoke of Manu, a mysterious prophet of the elder time, who escaped from a mighty flood with seven persons, carrying with him seeds and animals to stock the earth what time the waters should abate.

The old Brahmanism was undoubtedly polythe-

istic in the sense of worshipping many subordinate gods, or rather symbolic impersonations of nature; but the further we study it the oftener do we come upon the deep mono-theistic note proclaiming a central source from which all power flows. The fire, the water, the wind, the earth-gods—all come from this unknowable central Brahma, the source of thought, who had many names, many manifestations, but alone *is*, and from whom alone all *are*.

15. THE CENTRAL BRAHMA.

Fire, Agni, we are told cannot burn; Vata, wind, cannot blow; Indra, water, cannot pour or drown without Brahma, who is constantly viewed as acting through one and another of these divine agencies, so as to be spoken of now and again as identical with one or another of them. Indeed, nothing has properly any existence at all apart from Brahma, since all matter is "accident," a mere clothing, and trapping of Brahma's thoughts.

"In the beginning," says the grand old Vedic hymn, "there arose the source of golden light."

"Who is the God to whom we should offer sacrifice?

"He who brightens the sky;

16. A VEDIC HYMN.

"He who makes firm the earth;
"He who measures the air;
"He is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice.
"Who is the God," &c.
"He who looks over the water clouds;
"He who is the *only light of the bright earth;*
"He who kindles the altar flame;
"He is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice."

Who can fail to be reminded of a hymn uttered some hundreds of years later:—"Offer sacrifices unto the Lord your God"; or those other words uttered more than a thousand years afterwards, "God is light"; "Our God is a consuming fire"?

17. A LITANY.

But how did man stand related to this awful Being, who was at once an avenging and a purifying fire? That question, which has knocked so imperiously at the door of every religious temple, found its answer in the strophe and anti-strophe of the following sublime Brahmanic litany, a fragment of which only I can afford to give. Man found himself convicted of frailty and sin in the presence of God's awful righteousness. To Agni, the pure and true

purifier, ascended the continuous and penitential wail :—

"May our sin, Agni, be repented of,
Let us not enter into the house of clay,
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
If I go about trembling,
Like a cloud driven by the wind,
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Through want of strength, thou strong, bright God,
Have I gone to the wrong shore.
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Whenever I commit an offence
Before the heavenly host,
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Thirst came upon the worshipper,
Though he stood in the midst of the waters.
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

But from the terrible sifter and purifier of men's actions, the Brahman was able to conduct his trembling disciple to an inward and more peaceful vision. God the sympathiser in the person of Kreeshna is the Emmanuel of Brahmanic theology. He is that "God manifest in the flesh" for whose presence man perpetually craves—belief in whom he reiterates in every one of his creeds, ancient or modern. Kreeshna stands close to the elect prince and warrior, Arjoon, as a mysterious

18. GOD THE COMFORTER.

but divine counsellor. He teaches him wisdom, patience, hope, trust. He is the minor personality, the human side of God revealed, acting with us, and moving us to action. How close is Kreeshna, how vigilant, how full of sympathy—not far from any one of us, about our path, and about our bed, and spying out all our ways. Thus he speaks: "I am the worship, I am the sacrifice, I am the fire, I am the victim, I am the father and mother of the world, I am the living way. The comforter, the witness, the asylum, the friend of man. Amongst the secret I am silence, amongst the wise, wisdom." Every clause of this description might be paralleled with texts referring to Christ.

Lastly, there follows this remarkable and far-reaching sentence, to be matched only by those words of Peter in the Acts, before alluded to:—

"*They who serve other gods with a firm belief in doing so, involuntarily worship me.*"

19. PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

The later hymns and fragments of the Upanishads give us the liveliest glimpses into the thoughts and conversations of the Brahman teachers with their bands of disciples.

By the river in the cool of the day, or beneath

the electric brilliancy of the tropical moon, we can hear them chant together this hymn when they meet—

> "From the unreal lead me to the real,
> From darkness lead me to the light,
> From death lead me to immortality."

Then follow many deep and subtle questionings as, "Whence did the world arise?" "How is the knowledge of Brahma to be gained?" "What are the rules for the discipline of man?"

The Brahman's talk was not long-winded and discursive, but more like that of Confucius, the oracular or conversational utterances of Socrates, the gnomic sayings of the Hebrew prophets, and, I may add, the succinct and didactic phrases of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes the teacher speaks of an unknown yet blessed world where beyond all "these voices there is peace."

"The world of Brahma, the world of pure thought, which is free from decay, will be the portion of them in whom there is no crookedness or lie."

Sometimes the soul is described in language fully as poetical as the "Psyche" parable of the Greeks, but far more spiritual.

"Soul is the essential life of the body. As all the bees go out when the queen-bee goes out, and

all remain when she remains, so all the senses come in and go out with the soul." Or referring more directly to the divine home of the spirit, "As the birds repair to the tree to roost, so do all souls to the Supreme Person."

"There is no death; what seems so is transition," sings the chief of American poets.

"'Yama' or death," says the Brahman, "doth open the mind to that imperishable and unchanging world where alone perpetual glory is to be found." We can almost read back into the words the Christian collect, "Through the grave and gate of death we rise to the life immortal."

Of the knowledge of God it is declared: "He who knows Brahma, for him there is neither rising nor setting sun, but eternal day." Into which I read, "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only True God."

20. DISCIPLE AND TEACHER.

The teacher and his pupils approach the study of religion with hearts and minds at leisure. They come together already absorbed in profound meditation, and before they part they confirm and strengthen one another with such lofty and spiritual utterances as these—

"He who has reverence acquires faith:

"He who controls his passions has reverence:

"The quiet alone have reverence:

"O Lord, I seek the eternal quiet of the soul."

Then the disciples arise and embrace the teacher, saying: "Thou art our Father!" and disperse by river and woodland. I almost seem to hear the voice of another master addressing other disciples beside other waters, "Arise, let us go hence."

21. ESSENCE OF BRAHMANISM.

To enter here more deeply into the developed philosophy of Brahmanism would be quite beyond the scope of this bird's-eye view. The essence of it, cleared of ancient metaphysic, although so much mystery is supposed to surround it, is not hard to grasp. It is this:—

"Soul is the only reality in man which lasts.

"Soul is here on earth separated from, yet dependent on, Brahma (Oversoul).

"Soul struggles whilst working out an individual destiny to be delivered from matter—but is in this struggle forced to ally itself with matter. Brahmanic Philosophy has but one object—to explain how the universe of matter came—and how man can be rid of it once and for ever."

"The soul-struggle is either upwards or downward." Here comes in the doctrine of Transmigration, which provides for the re-incarnation in man or animals of the human spirit. For the very bad various hells are provided; for the very good absorption into Brahma, the soul into the Oversoul, is the reward; for the indifferent, a return into various bodies according to their moral state is taught.

Six systems of philosophy aim at showing how absorption into Brahma may be accomplished, and they deal inferentially with the conduct of life and the whole duty of man.

22. CORRUPTIONS OF BRAHMANISM.

BUDDHISM, which I may call the Broad-Church Reform of Brahmanism, which took place about 620 B.C., will form the subject of the next section.

The ascetic Brahman of later days, himself at last without feelings, had grown insensible to the sufferings of others.

The praying Brahman had turned himself into a mere praying machine like the praying-wheels now imported from Thibet.

The sacrificing Brahman retained not a vestige

of care for the spiritual meaning of all sacrifice—viz., the subjection of the human to the divine will. His system culminated in the fatal divorce between religion and morality. Ascetic penance won the favour of the gods in spite of violations of the moral law. In every religion when that carnal and mechanical principle prevails the dusk of the gods is not far off, and, I may add, the downfall of the priests.

The contemplative Brahman had degenerated into a trance lunatic, without thought.

23. PRIESTLY TYRANNY.

All conduct had got to be regulated by self-seeking motives, and all charity by mechanical and time-serving considerations. In a word, the whole of Brahmanism—and this was its sovereign corruption—had become centred in the priests; to that caste all the others were steadily and consistently sacrificed. One vast ecclesiastical tyranny had spread itself throughout the whole of the Peninsula, more pitiless than Mahometanism, more formal than Romanism, more gloomy than any other kind of Paganism. The masses of the people were oppressed and the rich were squeezed by the extortions of the Brahmans. Nothing could

be done without them, yet what they did seemed of no use to any one. The whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint; such was the spectacle which met the eyes of Prince Buddha when he drove out of his palace gates six hundred years before Christ, determined to look upon the wide outer world for himself.

What he saw, what he was, what he did, I shall now proceed to relate.

BUDDHA.

About 620 B.C. there lived at the city of Kapilavastou, in Nepaul, a princess of astonishing beauty. They called her Maya, or the Illusion, because, say the ancient records, her body was of such unreal loveliness as to be more like a dream or a vision. Her virtues and acquirements were equal to her graces. She was the daughter of a neighbouring king named Soupra-Boudda, and she lived and died at Nepaul, the cherished wife of a still more celebrated king, Koudhodana. He belonged to the great family of the Câkyas, a branch of the Gotoma warrior clan.

24. PRINCESS MAYA.

Maya died seven days after giving birth to a son. This was the young prince who became known later on as the Buddha, or the "Enlightened one." He also bore another name prophetic of his great mission, Siddartha, or "he whose objects have been attained," and when breaking with the royal family he became a wandering missionary, he was called Câkya-Mouni (μονος, or the monk, the solitary).

25. SIDDARTHA BUDDHA.

The enchanting splendours of his father's palace at Kapilavastou, the pleasure gardens of Loumbini, the obsequious slaves, the luxury and ease of an oriental court, left Siddartha ill at ease and restless. Like a wild bird caged from the nest, he seemed to have intuitions of an outer world from which he was shut off. He walked much alone in the woods; the recreations and pageantries of the court did not satisfy him. He was wiser than his counsellors, but they hardly knew how wise. When he had reached maturity, the crown-ministers urged him to take a wife and prepare himself, as Prince Royal of Nepaul and heir-apparent, for the duties of the State. There

26. ABOUT TO MARRY.

was nothing passionate or fanatical about him. He listened discreetly enough, and merely asked seven days to consider. At the end of that time he consented to marry, "Provided," said he, "that the girl you offer me is not vulgar or immodest. I care not to what caste she belongs, so only she be endowed with good qualities." The "good qualities" enumerated by the Prince were, however, so numerous, that most of the young ladies who presented themselves retired in despair.

27. GOPA THE BRIDE.

But the Prince now took the initiative; out of a crowd of the most beautiful and cultivated young girls that could be collected together at Kapilavastou, he singled out one named Gopa, who also belonged to the Câkya family. She was nothing loth, but her father, Câkya Dandapani, objected on the ground that the Prince was an idle, dreamy young man, unworthy of a girl whose relations were all warriors. Prince Siddartha must therefore show that he possessed not only learning but prowess before he could wed the lovely but discreet Gopa. Needless to say that the royal suitor in a fair field overcame all his

rivals in swimming, fighting, jumping, and running, besides excelling all his judges, the professors, and pundits of the court in wisdom, repartee, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

28. GOPA'S NEW STYLE.

Gopa was married, and from that moment began to exhibit an almost startling firmness of character. She refused, contrary to all precedent, to wear a veil, "Sitting or walking," she said, "respectable people are always good to look upon. Women who rule their thoughts and tame their senses, are content with their own husbands, and never think of other men; why may they not walk about unveiled like the sun or the moon? The Gods (Rishi) know the thoughts of my heart, my manner of life, my modesty, why should I cover my face?"

29. WITH CHANNA THE CHARIOTEER.

We read that when Queen Elizabeth drove abroad, all beggars, all signs of woe or pain or death were cleared out of the path of the royal progress, and no less care was taken by the King Koudhodana to keep Siddartha and his Princess Gopa from all that could disturb their happiness. But the

Prince was as restless as ever. He would ride abroad alone with Channa, his charioteer.

30. THE FOUR DRIVES.

One day he went out of the east gate of the city to view the Loumbini gardens. He came upon a miserable old man tottering by the wayside. "Stop, Channa!" he cried; "what is that creature?"

"A miserable old man, my lord Prince, in the last stages of decrepitude."

"And shall we all be like that when we are old?"

"Every one of us, my lord, if we live long enough."

"Drive back, Channa," said the Prince; "what have I to do with pleasure, since the helplessness of old age awaits me?"

Again Siddartha drove out. This time out of the south gate of the city, and he saw a man smitten down with the fever.

"What is that, Channa?"

"Oh, my lord, it is a man in mortal conflict with disease."

"And must disease come upon all?"

"Even so, my lord."

"Drive back, Channa. What have I to do with pleasure since disease awaits me?"

And again the Prince went out. This time from the western gate, and he met a funeral.

"What is that?"

"A corpse, my lord."

"And shall I too be a corpse?"

"My lord, all must die!"

"Drive back, Channa. What have I to do with pleasure since all must die?"

Once more he drove forth, this time out of the north gate of the city, and coming towards him he beheld a devotee in rags; his eyes were downcast, his mien noble and self-contained, his face as it were lit up with a supreme calm and contentment; he held in his hand a little wooden cup for alms.

"Who is that man?" asked the Prince, this time with intense curiosity and eager sympathy.

"He is called a *bhiskhour;* he has renounced all the pleasures of life; he is indifferent to sorrow, to old age, even to disease, and he fears not death since it can deprive him of nothing that he values; he practises austerity, he has subdued his body, he lives only for religion, and he goes about asking alms."

"Good!" said the Prince. "The wise of old have ever praised religion, it shall be my refuge

and strength, and I will make it so for all men. It shall yield me the fruit of life and joy and immortality."

Siddartha—the Buddha—went home, to ponder over old age, disease, death, and the way of deliverance. Decision came to him in the stillness of the night. He heard a voice beneath the golden stars. It bade him choose his path. Before him lay human greatness and divine goodness; an earthly kingdom, or the crownless, homeless lot of the world's Saviour.

31. BUDDHA SEEKS DELIVERANCE.

Once more he sought his charioteer Channa, but not his royal chariot. "Saddle me the horse Kantaka," he said; and he rode forth, a pilgrim under the midnight skies, flaming with portentous meteors, never to rest until he had found deliverance and a new faith for himself and his people.

After all, he mused, were not the times ripe? What had the Brahmans done with their prayers and sacrifices? They had enriched themselves, but the people were more wretched than ever. Another path must be found. As he went through

32. AN INCARNATION.

the forest the bright legions of the Invisibles bent to see. They well knew who rode through the night. They beheld in him, Siddartha, the last incarnation of a long line of Buddhas, manifestations of God under the limitations of humanity — the Stainless one was about to reveal himself afresh to a sin-stained world; He who was the "essence of wisdom and truth," "the healer of pain and disease," who "delighted in the happiness of his creatures," the form of all things, yet formless, the way and the life—now again took form and became incarnate, at once human and divine, to be adored by-and-by by countless millions of the human race as the last and best-beloved manifestation of Deity, the Light unapproachable.

To this day the language of the most ancient Buddhist liturgy used by the Ceylonese priests runs thus:—"I worship continually the Buddhas of the ages that are past."

Thirty-six miles from the royal city Siddartha-Buddha reined in his steed and dismounted. He was still a learner, and as Jesus came to John, so Siddartha at once sought out Arata, the wisest of the

33. IN SEARCH OF LIGHT.

Brahmans. He would drink at the fountain-head. He found the sage in the midst of his three hundred disciples. He listened to the ascetic principles, and marked the rigorous discipline. "But," he exclaimed, "your doctrine does not set men's spirits free, nor does the practice of it heal their bodily woes. I must labour to complete this doctrine. Poverty and the control of the desires—*that* will indeed set men free. This needs further reflection."

34. FIVE DISCIPLES WON.

Passing through the next kingdom, he was recognised by the young prince royal, who was about his own age. Siddartha was now a beggar in rags, but his appearance was so noble, his smile so sweet, his conversation so lofty and seductive, that wherever he went crowds hung upon his lips, and the greatest efforts were made to detain him at the court of Bimbsara. But he had heard of another teacher, and hastened to his feet, only to weigh his wisdom and find it wanting, and to depart, followed by five of the sage's own disciples—even as the disciples of another master forsook the ascetic of the Jordan for the Prophet of Galilee.

For six years Siddartha and the five disciples led a wandering life, practising every kind of austerity, when their young teacher —he was thirty-five— suddenly declared against asceticism. "Freedom of soul," said he, "does not after all lie that way," and, to their astonishment, he began to eat and to drink freely. The five still wedded to the old system, called him in so many words a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber and left him in disgust. But Siddartha lifted up his eyes and saw the flowers of the field arrayed in more than the glory of earthly potentates, the bright birds of the air, the happy woodland creatures, and knew that over the world brooded a love unseen though felt, healer of pain and grief, "delighting in the happiness (not the torture) of all sentient creatures."

35. ASCETICISM RENOUNCED.

Still Siddartha, in seeking the perfect way, the Supreme Good, did not abandon his severe discipline. He merely ceased to follow it as an *end*, and began to use it only as a *means* to control the senses, to stimulate thought, to purify desire. He aimed at the plain living, the high thinking—

36. DISCIPLINE OF THE PERFECT WAY.

minimising the necessaries and abolishing the luxuries of life.

The daughter of a great chief, named Soujata, with ten of her companions, had for some time been in the habit of bringing him scraps of food and such rags of raiment as he would accept; indeed, he seems to have required but little of either, for at this time he sat cross-legged in meditation. "Let my body dry up," he said, "my bones dissolve, if I cease from this meditation before I have attained the Divine intuition." His clothes wore out, but Radha, a slave girl, having died, he proceeded reverently to exhume her body, took off her shroud, washed it, and wore it as his only covering till it fell to pieces.

Thus he attained complete victory over the senses, and he said, "I have now surpassed all human laws, yet have I not attained to the Divine wisdom." Still he seeks the "unknown light," but is, it would seem, led by a true instinct to return to the world for a season, and take a look at human life as it is.

He meets a sacrificial procession, stops it, and

explains that the sacrifice of bulls and goats is useless, inner righteousness being the thing to aim at. "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly."

37. SACRIFICE SET ASIDE.

He next falls in with a poor Sudra of the lowest caste, and eats with him, to the astonishment of all men; and with this one personal stroke the great prophet abolishes caste from his spiritual system.

38. CASTE DEFIED.

"Pity and need make all flesh kin; there is no caste in blood which runneth of one hue; no caste in tears which trickle salt in all; who doth right deeds is high born, who doth ill deeds vile." (Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia.")

After this momentary, yet significant contact with the depths of human life, he passes to the sacred wisdom tree, where he meets the tempter and foils him, the temptations closely resembling those offered to Christ in the desert.

39. UNDER THE WISDOM TREE.

Then, at length, the Senses being subdued, Ambition mortified, and Self forgotten, abstracted

from all earthly sights and sounds, the inner secret of the universe is flashed upon his inner vision in the successive watches of the night.

40. THE THIRD WATCH.

In the third watch the mystery of inexorable law is revealed, and the order of the universe is seen transferred to the plane of human life as the guide to morality. Cause and effect are beheld operant in all lives, leading naturally enough to the transmigration of souls, since all causes set in motion in threescore-years-and-ten have not by any means time to work themselves out in effects.

41. THE MIDDLE WATCH.

In the middle watch he is sustained by a vision of immortality, or the impersonated forces of the universe. In Mr. Edwin Arnold's poetical language, he beholds

"The silver islands of a sapphire sea,"

and beyond and within, all "power that builds."

42. THE SECRET OF SORROW.

In the next watch the secret of sorrow is unfolded. It proceeds from imperfections which, in a world conditioned like ours, *cannot* be avoided, and from moral evil which, as we are human, *will* not be avoided;

sorrow, therefore, will never cease on earth, and the wise man has nothing better to do than to rise above it and aspire to a more perfect state.

As the meditation deepens, the finished path is at last revealed to the seer as he sits under the wisdom tree. It consists in the removal of all impeding conditions, emancipation from all flesh-trammels, which are never again to be imposed, and, consequently, deliverance from the need of all further transmigration.

43. NIRWANA; OR, THE PERFECT WAY.

In the last spiritual analysis all soul is known to be one with the Supreme Lord of the universe. The universe itself is perceived to be a mere illusion which has served its turn; nothing but thought, in fact, remains. Thus at last, without priests or sacrifices, without prerogative and caste, the wise and good possess Nirwana—which is nowhere, nothing — but yet *is* a consciousness here as well as yonder—a state, not a place—"this *is* life eternal."

> "The life that shines beyond our broken lamps,
> The lifeless, timeless Bliss."

And as this supreme and amazing spiritual

conception bursts upon the Buddha, he looks up and perceives that the night is departing.

> "The dew is on the lotus. Rise, great sun,
> And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave;
> *Om mane Padme Hum*, the sunrise comes,
> The dewdrop slips into the shining sea."
>
> ("Light of Asia.")

44. HIS WAY ON EARTH.

The rest of the life of Siddartha-Buddha is enveloped in a fresh cloud of mythic marvels, enclosed, however, in what seems to be certain large historical outlines. The record tells how kings sat at his feet and vied with each other in sending him presents; troops of disciples followed him wherever he went; monasteries and schools, practising his rule and studying the revealed law, sprang up throughout the Peninsula. He became the idol of the people, for he taught and practised an infinite charity; his walk was swan-like and dignified, his skin was perfectly clear, the outline of his features finely proportioned, his look full of overpowering sweetness, and his voice melodious and thrilling. His speech, we are assured, was quite irresistible in its charm; his teachings abounded in parable and allegory, at one time persuasive and tender,

at another full of scathing invective and irony. He was the unflinching foe of the Brahmans, and he inveighed ruthlessly against the established religious ceremonial of the day. For twenty-three years he laboured chiefly in the garden of Anatha Pindika, a rich minister of state, and thither flocked to him, from all parts of the country, all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children to be taught the "law." To the narrow formalists he was severe, and the bitter enemy of all hypocrisy, but to the outcast women he was tender and forgiving.

Towards the close of the narrative, the life of Buddha grows singularly clear and distinct, and, strangely enough, all touches of the supernatural seem to fall off. It is like the clearing of a landscape after rain towards sunset. This is how he died.

45. FAREWELL OF BUDDHA.

At the age of eighty-four Siddartha-Buddha, who, in his last days, seems to have resumed his wandering missionary habits, arrives in his travels on the western bank of the Ganges, and, standing on a rock, looks across the water. The language now rises in stately dignity, it is clothed in the princely dialect, and seems redolent of a

certain sumptuous splendour as of the "Arabian Nights." "It is for the last time," he exclaims, "that I behold yon city of Radjaghria and the throne of the diamond!" Then he crosses the Ganges, and visiting the villages on the other side, he bids farewell to the crowds that flock out to meet him—happy if they may but touch the hem of his garments.

He seems to the end busy ordaining new teachers, and sending them forth to spread the knowledge of the law.

The last thing which occupied him was the pitiable condition of a poor beggar man called Soubhadra! Strange that such a trifling incident should have survived the withering touch of two thousand five hundred years!

As he neared a forest towards the going down of the sun his strength failed him. The weeping disciples laid him beneath a tree, and there the beloved master passed quietly away, his soul sinking into the Nirwana—the eternal rest—for which his whole career had been as one lifelong sigh.

46. THE END.

"Jesus Christ alone excepted," says Barthélemy

Saint-Hilaire, a by no means blind admirer of Siddartha, "there is no more pure, no more touching figure than that of the Buddha in all history. His life is without a blot, his heroism equals his convictions, he is the example of the Virtue he preaches. His self-sacrifice, charity, and indescribable sweetness never fail him. At twenty-nine he leaves his father's palace out of love for the people, to become a lonely wanderer and a preacher of righteousness; he studies and meditates for six years, and then for more than half-a-century preaches his faith and spreads the truth by the weapons of persuasion alone. He dies in the arms of adoring disciples with the serenity of a sage who has lived only for the good, and feels persuaded that he knows the truth!"

47. B. SAINT-HILAIRE ON BUDDHA.

The characteristic of Buddha's religion is a sublime and severe morality wedded to a tender pity and world-wide charity. Its popularity, from age to age, is undoubtedly due to its powerful advocacy of those moral precepts which alone bind human society together, and its inspired recognition

48. MORAL CHARM.

in the spiritual as in the physical world of the inexorable order of cause and effect. It lives so far by virtue of its absolute truth.

Its blemishes as a gospel for humanity are equally obvious. They are, briefly, its scornful, and, in view of its charity, inconsistent branding of human life as worthless; its *over-detachment* from the things of sense, which, if dangerous, are also disciplinary; in spite of its eager and impartial beneficence, its exaltation of meditation and intuitive knowledge at the expense of action.

49. THE MORAL FLAW.

Its strong grasp of personality in the doctrine of transmigration, together with its apparent loss of it in the doctrine of Nirwana, has been for centuries the stumbling-block of Western philosophy and the despair of European metaphysics. The explanation of this—the reconcilement of transmigration and Nirwana — will probably be found in the ideal character of the old philosophy, which reduced the outer world to an illusion, a mere Berkeleyan dream — made matter, in fact, non-existent—so that the extinguishment of self was

50. WHAT IS NIRWANA?

simply the release of mind from the illusion called body, and the restoration of self, yet without loss of individuality, to the ocean of universal being.

Buddha's intelligible moral precepts and his "Law," differing little from that of Moses and all who have attempted to formulate natural morality, together with his burning charity, gave him a popular hold over the masses; but apart from all sense of a personal God revealed in a living Saviour, and operant upon the heart through a Holy Spirit, even such priceless qualities left Buddhism powerless to lift the masses above the evils of Oriental despotism, or in any degree to rival in the East the slowly but surely advancing triumph of Christianity in the direction of civil liberty and moral progress—justice, mercy, and love—in the West.

51. BUDDHA, MOSES, CHRIST.

Still Buddhism was as truly an attempt to reform Brahmanism as Protestantism was an attempt to reform Catholicism—in both Buddhism and Protestantism we find the same contempt of rites and ceremonies as ends, Priests as go-betweens —offerings as substitutes for acts—and, as long before the final breach there were reformers in

the Roman Church—tolerated by the Church—so Buddhism continued, with its priests and monasteries, in the heart of Brahmanism—ultimately to be cast out as everything Albigensian, or Lollardian, or Lutheran was ultimately cast out of the Roman Catholic Church.

52. DESERTED TEMPLES.

The traveller gazes in wonder at the rock-hewn Buddhist monasteries—there are about eight hundred of them known—hidden in lone wildernesses and long since disused and deserted. He comes across vast temples—there are about nine hundred of them, chiefly within the Bombay Presidency — they were scooped out of the live rock between 300 and 200 B.C. They are full of elaborate carvings, often grotesque, sometimes beautiful with florid decoration — submerged in jungle—the home of wild beasts—neglected, almost forgotten. They attest the old glories of Buddhism in India; but we must look for it now chiefly beyond the frontiers of Nepaul. Like liberal Christianity, it propagates itself far away from its ancient centre. Ceylon, Nepaul, China, Thibet own its sway, and, although unable to retain its hold over the Aryan race, it has spread to Japan, and claims nearly the

whole of Eastern Asia. Its sacred books, consisting of the words of Buddha and his exploits, the *Logia* and the *Acta*—together with the voluminous commentaries of his disciples — are preserved independently in Ceylon, Nepaul, China, and Thibet, and are studied at the present day in those countries with at least as much reverence and frequency as are the Holy Scriptures throughout England and America. But it is no part of my purpose to follow the more recent history of any one of the great religions of the world, and Buddhism, numbering 360 millions, is certainly amongst them. I do but aim at seizing the central facts of each mighty development as the eye sweeps over the centuries—I can but do as Dante, when privileged to pass in review the terrors, the wonders, and the joys of that other world, when he obeyed the voice of his guide—"look and pass on."

Still, as the ages roll on, and God fulfils Himself in many ways, the solidarity and unity of the religious consciousness in man steadily emerges. The teacher, whatever else he may have to set forth, has still to show the eightfold path of Buddha

53. THE EIGHTFOLD PATH.

—the path of right doctrine, right purpose, right discourse, right action, right purity, right thought, right loneliness, right rapture. And still we "listen to the lordly music flowing from the illimitable years," as the voice of the sweet master who taught the people wisdom proclaims aloud the solitary supremacy of the Soul, the transitory character of all priests and rituals, the root of all sacrifice in self-purification, the tireless love and service of man, only road to the joy of God, the ultimate rest, the Nirwana, the perfect peace—

"The dewdrop slips into the shining sea."

II.

THE LIGHT OF PERSIA.

54. The valley of Schiraz.—55. Zoroastrianism and Buddhism.—56. Zoroaster.—57. History repeats itself.—58. Common roots.—59. Ahriman.—60. The sacred writings.—61. Ormuzd and Ahriman.—62. The struggle.—63. Triumph of Ormuzd.—64. Zoroastrian centre of thought.—65. A moral reform.—66. Faith and works.—67. The Persian devil.—68. Zoroaster and Christ.—69. Fire!—70. The mighty parable of Ormuzd.

THE Valley of Schiraz, which lies to the south-west of Persia, is lovely enough to justify the Semite's dream of Eden. There in early spring-time may still be seen the blaze of flowers, the luxuriant foliage sheltering the nightingales, the fruit trees, the beautiful women who inspired the lyric genius of Hafiz and Saadi to produce those songs which have become the classic passwords of Eastern mystery and romance. There also, on a level rocky platform in the hollow of a crescent, stand the famed but crumbling ruins of Xerxes' Palace; on the old red granite slabs may still be deciphered these words: "XERXES THE KING OF KINGS,

54. THE VALLEY OF SCHIRAZ.

SON OF DARIUS, SUCCESSOR OF THE RULER OF THE WORLD"—and more significantly still: "AHURA MAZDA (Ormuzd) IS A MIGHTY GOD WHO CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND MEN . . . . WHAT I (*Xerxes*) HAVE DONE, I HAVE DONE BY THE GRACE OF AHURA MAZDA." AHURA MAZDA is the Supreme God of the ancient Persians (Iranians) and Zoroaster is his Prophet.

55. ZOROASTRIANISM AND BUDDHISM.

What shall be said of ORMUZD — what of ZOROASTER—and wherein is the old religion of Persia, with its Zend Avesta, its Zoroaster, and its divine Ormuzd, different from the old religion of India, with its Vedas, its Buddha, and its Brahma? I will answer the last question first. The difference between Zoroastrianism and Buddhism is like the difference between Zend and Sanscrit—a difference of development not of kind. Both spring from a common root. Originally (*cir.* 3000 B.C.), on the vast plains of central Asia, the Aryan race spoke one tongue and worshipped the same one-in-many or many-in-one gods. But the ancient Aryans were nomadic—they roved from land to land — their interests could not always

remain identical. At a certain point in the Aryan story, a conquering bulk of the people split up—one immigration torrent pouring into India, another into Iran or Persia. It has been maintained that from this time forward the Persian or Zend, and the Indian or Sanscrit religions not only diverged, but became antagonistic—the Indian gods re-appearing as devils in the faith of the Persian settlers, who had come to blows with the Indian settlers before they parted company. But I think M. Darmesteter has shown the essential unity and solidarity of the two religions as far as their gods are concerned, in spite of a nomenclature calculated to mislead. As this is a capital point I will quote that distinguished scholar's own words (271, Darmesteter, Ormuzd *et* Ahriman): "The opposition of the two branches—Persian and Indian—resolves itself into a question of grammar, and the theory of a religious schism has been founded upon accidents of language." He points out that the word dæva, or demon, or devil, for instance, applied to certain Persian gods, who are evidently the same as certain good Indian gods, carried with it, in the old language common to both people, no evil signification—so in spite of these ugly sounding words no opposition of character need be assumed

between the Indian and Persian dæva, both being simply gods. In reality there is nothing in the Persian (Mazdæan) conceptions which is not connected in direct line with the Indo-Iranian (or Aryan before the separation) conception. Everywhere evolution, unfolding, modifying, multiplying —nowhere revolution burning up what it once worshipped. No doubt Mazdeism and Vedism differ as Zend differs from Sanscrit. They are two separate and independent developments of one and the same ancient religion (the Indo-Iranian). So much for the general relation between the Indian and Persian religions, the faith of the Vedas and the faith of the Avesta, the Zend and the Sanscrit.

56. ZOROASTER.

But when we come to speak of that startling embodiment of popular religious reform embodied in that great name—ZOROASTER—we miss the graphic *mise-en-scène* and personal distinctness of Buddha or Confucius. When great authorities cannot agree as to whether Zoroaster stands for one or many—whether he lived 1000 or 550 B.C.—or whether he lived at all—it is hardly possible to venture upon his biography. Yet I think it is tolerably

certain that Zoroaster was a real person. A prophet of this name is held to have appeared at the Court of Darius, worked miracles, and reformulated fire-worship. Being brought to the notice of the great king, he read out to that docile monarch the whole of the Avesta, whereupon his prophetical supremacy was at once established, and fire temples were erected throughout the Persian dominions. There is a strange story of Zoroaster being thrown into a fiery furnace in the reign of Darius. He was observed to enter the flames and fall quietly asleep. The legend is curiously suggestive of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who must have been put into the furnace by order of King Darius about that time. If we accept 550 B.C. as the approximate date of Zoroaster, a great deal will hang together intelligibly, which is far from being the case if we make him the contemporary of Moses or Abraham. We shall then get three great names, all within one hundred years of each other, dominating with their systems three of the most advanced nations then upon the earth—the Hindus, the Persians, and the Chinese—Buddha 620, Zoroaster 550, Confucius 550. But whatever be the date of Zoroaster, it is certain that all the three Eastern

prophets, Buddha, Confucius, and Zoroaster, were great reformers. Buddha struck at priestcraft, with its pretences to manipulate Providence by revealing the fixed and eternal order of nature; Zoroaster fought the State conjurors and ritualists of his day, and lifted human life on a higher plane by his conception of moral evil and his intense faith in the final victory of the good; whilst Confucius confined himself modestly to the reform of manners. His rule of conduct was a steady attack upon the license and selfishness which was disintegrating society, and he set to work to mend external conduct without troubling himself about divine essences—the "whence" and the "whither." To him sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof. In all three lands, long before 500 B.C., the primal religious impulses which sufficed to inspire the mysterious civilisations of the Hindu Cush had become exhausted, corrupted, degraded. Then religion had to be re-moulded according to the genius and requirements of each nation in the interests of its oppressed peoples, and in spite of effete but dominant hierarchies.

History repeats itself. Buddha must deal with Brahmanism; Zoroaster with the Magians;

Moses with the Semite worshippers of the Elohim (gods); Isaiah will make short work of Moses; Jesus will "fulfil," or, in other words, restate the prophets; the mediæval church will formulate, for its own purposes, the religion of Jesus; Luther will reformulate mediæval Christianity — and some think it is high time for some one to reformulate Luther; and so "our little systems have their day"; but we who are the heirs of all the ages may stand aside and see the great power of God working itself out in the moral consciousness of His creatures. "The old order changes, yielding place to new, and God fulfils himself in many ways." What then is the significance of that contribution to the religious history of the world which goes by the name of *Z*oroastrianism, or the religion of Ormuzd and Ahriman? Let us trace the stream to its source. What was before *Z*oroaster? What made *Z*oroaster possible?

57. HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

The ancient Indo-Iranian (Aryan) religion gave to India and Persia certain root ideas. The Vedas elaborate these in India—the Avesta in Persia. In both Veda and Avesta we have a cosmic element deal-

58. COMMON ROOTS.

ing with natural forces, and a religious element, or one dealing with liturgical, moral, and spiritual forces.

In the Vedas this order is called *Rita;* in Avesta, *Asha*—it is the expression for physical law and liturgical and moral harmony combined. In both there is a supreme source of life and organisation (the Indo-Iranian deity, Asura). In the Vedas (India) it is Varuna, the supreme one over all others; whose ministers are Agni, Soma, Indra, &c. In the Avesta (Irania or Persia) it is Ahura Mazdao (king omniscient —the organiser) who presides over the celestial intelligences or Amhashpands. The functions and attributes of Varuna and Ormuzd are identical, and their agents are similar.

The vague Vedic serpent of ill repute, *Ahi*, becomes the *Aji* of the Avesta, who in due course of development will grow into Ahriman, by attracting to himself all powers and conceptions which have to do with evil and disorder in the universe of Ormuzd.

59. AHRIMAN.

It is the appearance of this Ahriman which more than anything else separates off the Avesta from the Vedic theology. In the Vedas

the powers of evil never get themselves marshalled against good under such a rival chief as Ahriman. But in Persia evil is, as the chemists say, precipitated, and the drama of opposing forces is then carefully elaborated with move and countermove. For centuries before *Z*oroaster, the good Organiser and his ministers had been growing and multiplying in popular myths handed down orally; whilst the *Aji* serpent had also been globing himself out into an evil prince of darkness with his attendant satellites. Centuries after *Z*oroaster, in the Bundehesch, we get a late recension or Deuteronomy of the so-called dual system, in which the whole story hangs together with beginning, middle, and end. The Persian, like every other religion, is not a creation so much as a development—an advanced sort of Brahmanism, but one which took root in Persia, not India.

60. THE SACRED WRITINGS.

When we attribute the whole of the *Z*end Avesta (consisting of the Vendidad, the Vispered, the Yacna, and the Khordha Avesta, or little breviary) to *Z*oroaster, we must understand that great name to cover a whole school of thought and writing. There

were many Zoroasters, in fact, but only one Zoroaster Spitama—Spitama being his family name. The Gathas, or some prayers found in the Yacnas, are alone attributed to him—the Vendidads are later, and the little Avesta later still. It is a liturgical rather than a dogmatic literature—the dogma is amply formulated in the Bundehesch, a much later version of Zoroastrianism; but like many late recensions, such as Deuteronomy, it contains many valuable fragments of ancient lore, handed down orally or culled from older documents no longer in existence. It is from the Zend Avesta that we get the most beautiful prayers in their most primitive form. It is from the Bundehesch that we get the clearest notion of Zoroastrian dogma.

61. ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN.

We need go back in search of primal essences no further than Ahura-Mazdao or Ormuzd, who exists in a world of ineffable light. In the first act of the mixed drama which follows he creates a world of spiritual existences, in the second the visible world, which is to last twelve thousand years. For the first three thousand years Ormuzd rules undisputed; but in the second three thousand

years the struggle with his antagonist, Ahriman, the spirit of darkness, takes place in the air. Ahriman comes up dazed out of a bottomless abyss, and for the first time becomes aware of the existence of Ormuzd and his world of light. Ormuzd wishes to come to terms with this dark and ignorant being. He tries to win him over to sympathy with his bright world, but failing in this the Powers agree to differ. They are to fight for nine thousand years, Ormuzd (all knowing) foresees that he will remain victorious, whilst Ahriman, blind, and knowing nothing, accepts the unequal contest.

62. THE STRUGGLE.

The struggle begins. Ormuzd elaborates his visible-creation—makes the divine bull. Ahriman kills the bull, but from its carcase springs the whole animal creation. First defeat. Ormuzd creates the divine human being, male and female, in one. Ahriman kills him too, but from his carcase springs the present human race. Second defeat. The controversy has begun in the air between spiritual forces—it ends in a material conflict in a material world. Ormuzd creates a heavenly host, Ahriman creates a counter infernal host—the spiritual elements on

both sides mingle with the human elements, and the battle of good and evil rages with varied fortunes for another three thousand years. The drama unfolds itself in the Bundehesch—thus: First three thousand years Ormuzd reigns undisturbed, the second three thousand years Ormuzd defends his world successfully against Ahriman, the third three thousand years, which is now going on, Ahriman has the advantage, and in the last three thousand years the power of Ahriman is paralysed and finally destroyed. The world is burned up by fire—the molten stream pours down into Ahriman's dominions—the resurrection of the dead takes place simultaneously—the good and bad meet the boiling molten tide, which feels to the good like so much warm milk, whilst the bad are purgatorially treated in the same hell-flood for three days, and then received into heaven with the rest.

63. TRIUMPH OF ORMUZD.

Closing scene, final triumph of Ormuzd and salvation of all his creatures. In these struggles the great fight between Ahriman and Zoroaster, the divine man, priest, lawgiver, and Saviour, is of capital importance. It is to the Parsee what the mission of Christ is to us—the greatest manifestation of

spiritual force in the history of the world. The Parsees also hold that Ahriman himself will ultimately be purified in the purgatorial flood, and then from the wreck of this world's conflagration will spring another world—a new heaven and a new earth—the old things having for ever passed away, the eternal reign of light and joy and righteousness will at last set in.

It would lead me too far afield to trace in detail the connection between the gods and the phenomena of nature. Cloud and storm, night and darkness, summer and winter, wind and water, are the constant natural symbols which give birth in the different mythologies to personages more or less distinct, who are worshipped as reflecting picturesquely the various divine attributes. The parallel between natural and spiritual light and darkness, physical storm and moral struggle, is also constant throughout the Vedas and the Avesta. It is an essential part of the Indo-Iranian system. It is worked out with an inconceivable wealth of illustration in both Zend and Sanscrit, until ideas and images become at times bewilderingly interpenetrated, one God passing into another, or standing for all the rest, whilst purely physical

phenomena suddenly assume volition—almost personality.

64. ZOROASTRIAN CENTRE OF THOUGHT.

It may be difficult to decide in detail what portions of this system should be covered by the great name of *Z*oroaster; but it is not so difficult to make out what are his main contributions to the religious history of the world.

Light — with its concomitants fire, heat, prolific force—is the grand centre around which all true *Z*oroastrian thought circles. The most casual student can hardly miss the spiritual meaning of such a symbol—it has been too well wrought into modern history by the Light of the World—the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world—by One in whom there is no darkness at all—by the God who is a consuming fire, yet the source of all life, in whom we live and move and have our being.

65. A MORAL REFORM.

*Z*oroaster, like Buddha, led a moral reform. Both attacked an effete and tyrannous priesthood, who pretended to do for the people what they never could do—both came to the deliverance of the masses.

But Buddha struck at the Brahmans by revealing the harmony of natural law—cause and effect—to be no more tampered with by priestcraft than the four seasons or the Zodiac.

Zoroaster struck at the Magians and court conjurors by revealing the light and darkness, the good and evil within each man, as a reflection of the light and dark powers without him. In each heart the day and the night, the Ormuzd and the Ahriman, struggled for the mastery, and as Ormuzd fought Ahriman with all planets and stars, and celestial and terrestrial fires, so were there flaming ministers with whom we might side in the great struggle. Priests might formulate our orisons, but the battle must be fought by us, no magic apart from the energy of our own spirit within could give us the victory.

66. FAITH AND WORKS.

Buddha's is the apprehension of the law without, to study which, to conform to which, up to the point of absorption, is the aim of existence. Zoroaster is the apprehension of the law within. Life is neither conformity, nor meditation, nor ceremonial, nor the filling up of meritorious action; but life is a struggle—a constant struggle with

evil. Buddha aimed at merit, Zoroaster at holiness. It is the everlasting controversy between James and Paul in another form. Is a man saved by faith or by the works of the law? Zoroaster said by the fight of faith—Buddha by the accumulation of meritorious actions.

The glory of Zoroaster is his intense belief in the supremacy of a loving and good God. This was to the solar firmament what the sun was to the sky. Whether or not to him Ahriman, the evil being, was already the rival of Ormuzd, as in the later Bundehesch, or hardly more than a Satan growing into an arch-fiend or marplot, troubler of the good wherever found, with his attendant satellites, one thing is certain—that in Zoroaster's religion from the first start Ahriman never had a chance. Ormuzd suffered him for a time—his own light was obscured, as clouds obscure the sun—but the sun would always end in dispersing the clouds, day would always follow night, till at last night would depart for ever. In the ultimate and blessed world of Ormuzd, when the long struggle of 9,000 years was over, then all human creatures should be rescued from the

67. THE PERSIAN DEVIL.

powers of evil and darkness, the portals of the heavenly kingdom would be thrown wide open for ever, and "there should be no night there."

The conception and method of this great prophetic system, as far as we are able to grasp it, are equally grand. The enrolment of every child of man in the great army of the good, *Z*oroaster himself becoming in his mysterious and august struggle with Ahriman the captain of their salvation—this lifted his disciples above the danger of vague contemplation. Like Christianity, it was not so much a Philosophy as a Life. Cause and effect might have its place there, as in a battle weapons well handled may be recognised as the cause of victory; but the energy, the will, the steadfastness, the enthusiasm was everything, all else were the beggarly elements. The grandeur of the situation lay in men being fellow-workers with God; they put on the whole armour of God, and fought, not like those that beat the air, but like those who knew they must come off victorious, simply because Ormuzd is stronger than Ahriman, and must reign until he has subdued all things under his feet.

68. ZOROASTER AND CHRIST.

And the system was grand in its method. It had priests, it had a splendid ritual, but it had only one symbol — FIRE. There was nothing to distract the attention of the worshippers. No possibility of mistake — the doctrine was writ, as it were, upon the midnight disk of Ahriman in characters of perpetual flame, so that he who ran might read. The teaching was visual, simple, but yet many-sided—inexhaustible.

69. FIRE!

By day the worshippers looked up and beheld the sun—the light pierced everywhere—nothing was hid from the brightness thereof—it was the eye of Ormuzd; could any secret deeds be kept from him? the *Patets*—an elaborate form of confession—admit that they could not.

At night when the light shone in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not, when Ahriman seemed in the ascendant and evil beasts stole from their lairs and deeds of infamy were done, still Ormuzd left himself not without a witness — for the moon rose — or, failing the moon, the celestial bodies—all relations of the fire god—kept their appointed watches. At no time could Ahriman have it all his own way—for the earth was the Lord's and

the fulness thereof. Yes, the *fulness* thereof—for Ahriman did nothing but empty and destroy—only Ormuzd opened his hand and filled all things living with plenteousness. His heat and light acted like magic on hill and vale, and the rivers and oceans which teemed with fish. The gloom of winter yielded periodically to Him; wherever a ray pierced there a ferment of joyous life—animal or vegetable—began; the bright winged birds, the rainbow-hued butterflies, fields and woodlands spotted with gold and crimson fires—all creation seemed at times to glow in the valley of Schiraz with the prismatic hues of the heavenly light—as though Ormuzd himself had laid the colours of sunrise and sunset upon the swelling and undulating bosom of the earth, and they had become fast in myriad tints with mystic glow.

Feed the flame upon your altars, ye priests!—let it never droop or die—and as ye bow down before it in your chaste orisons let it teach you yet one more truth of Ormuzd—this: "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." You set flame in noisome places to purify and cleanse—even so does Ormuzd dwell in the spirits of all flesh to purify and cleanse. Wherever the fire passes it sweeps clean. What it attacked bred plague,

pestilence, and famine. What remains looks like death; but it is truly the transition between death and new life; the earth's refuse festering breeds plague—the charred dust heap is innocuous to man, and makes rich the earth for a fresh harvest.

Yet is that fire terrible. Irresistible in its fury —symbol of the inexorable might of Ormuzd—how can Ahriman withstand it?—how can man see it and live? But the fire is not Ormuzd—it is, after all, but his minister—at once it symbolizes him and works his will. Its operation is diverse; it hardens clay, it melts wax, it burns wood, it purifies refuse, it evaporates water, it sifts and separates substances, it fuses metals, it causes vegetation to spring up, it brings to life and keeps alive all creatures, it devours ruthlessly.

Only symbol of Ormuzd! how terrible, how subtle art thou — Ormuzd, understood in part through this thy flaming, ever-contemplated, omnipresent, never-extinguished symbol — how terrible art thou—how beneficent, how searching, how subtle, how indispensable, how altogether unescapable!

We need no ritual of the Avesta—no gloss of Bundehesch to teach us the power of *Z*oroaster's

doctrine. We have simply to stand as the first fire worshipper stood before a flame—watch it—think about it—follow its manifestation, its work in sun, planet, radiance, heat—forked lightning, glow-worm, flint spark, phosphorescence upon sea-waves, in burning forests, in smouldering hayricks, in subterranean shock and molten lava stream—and the mighty parable of Ormuzd will be unfolded like an open secret to us as much as ever it was to the first disciples of Zoroaster. No after age shall quite lose the spell of this sublime conception. The Bible is full of it, nor can we doubt whence the Jews obtained it. It came from the land of fire worship, whence, too, the Jews borrowed their Eden, and their devil, and their resurrection, and their sustained abhorrence of idols. Shall not "the light of Israel be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame" (Isaiah x. 17); and was not the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord upon His heavenly throne "as the appearance of fire?" (Ezek. i. 27). Does He not "break out like a fire in the house of Joseph?" (Amos v. 6); and is not "His fury poured out like fire?" (Nah. i. 6). "Is He not as a refiner's fire?" and even when we come to the New Testa-

70. THE MIGHTY PARABLE OF ORMUZD.

ment, the glow of Zoroaster is upon its latest page, for the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a baptism of fire (Luke ii. 16); "and the fire shall try every man's work" (1 Cor. iii. 13). Truly, we have here, between the sixth (B.C.) and first—may I not say the nineteenth century A.D.—a solidarity and unity not only of religious conceptions, but even of religious symbols.

III.

THE LIGHT OF CHINA.

71. Confucius.—72. Bird's-eye view of China.—73. Chinese oddity.—74. Lines of Fusi.—75. 3000 B.C.—76. Tang on Shang Ti.—77. Spiritual defects.—78. Confucius meets La-ot-ze.—79. La-ot-ze the student.—80. End of La-ot-ze.—81. He yet speaketh.—82. Confucius B.C. 551-478.—83. His wide popularity.—84. His sense of a mission.—85. Face to face with Confucius.—86. His fishing, clothes, feeding, and sleeping.—87. He enforces respect.—88. His experience of life.—89. Defects of his system.—90. The Chinese ideal.—91. Confucius on prayer, sacrifice, death.—92. His pyramidal style.—93. The wise Governor.—94. Wise sayings of Confucius.—95. His shrewdness and depth.—96. Death of Confucius.—97. Mencius (300 B.C.) a humorist.—98. Mencius and the King.—99. The three philosophers.—100. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.—101. "The Heathen Chinee."

ALL that is distinctive in the religion of China may be summed up in one word, "Confucius." La-ot-ze preceded him, Mencius followed him; but, as Mencius admitted, "None are his equals; there is but one Confucius." Indian Buddhism (religious metaphysics) was introduced into China about B.C. 217, and Taoism (spiritualism) about A.D. 140; but Taoists and Chinese Buddhists are alike worshippers of Confucius. His temples number 1,660; 70,000 animals are annually sacrificed and 27,000

71. CONFUCIUS.

pieces of silk annually burnt upon his altars. Yet his is a religion without priests and without a liturgy—it lives in the hearts of the people. Confucius was the apostle of conduct and the idolator of rule.

"China," says Professor F. D. Maurice, "is the source of regulative action, as India was the source of thought. In India all history becomes philosophy, in China all philosophy becomes history." The State has formally established the three religions—Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism; but the genius of Chinese thought finds its centre in the laconic, dry, systematic, and practical Confucius.

72. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CHINA.

Let us take a bird's-eye view of the celestial Empire. Sloping from the eastern tablelands of Central Asia, with a frontier of four thousand four hundred miles and two thousand five hundred of sea-coast, China is eighteen times larger than Great Britain, and contains three hundred and sixty millions bound together with the same language, laws, and literature. The imagination is impressed by China's vast alluvial plains and mountain-ranges, her lakes with floating islands,

her great canal six hundred and fifty miles long, her fleet of junks bearing four hundred and thirty thousand tons of rice; her ancient wall, twenty feet thick and twelve hundred and fifty miles long, built to keep out the Tartars B.C. 220; her rich mineral products; her golden sands, porcelain clays, white copper, ivory, green jade, and profusion of coloured marbles; her flora and fauna; her profusion of roses, gardenias, camellias; her orange groves, perfumed teas, and finest peaches —in short, a variety of vegetation ranging from the pole to the tropics.

73. CHINESE ODDITY.

The Chinese attract European fancy by sheer oddity. They seem to reverse all our usual notions. They don't fear death; they make presents of coffins to each other. They like capital punishment, executing about ten thousand miserable creatures a year. They extol each other's religious differences, wear white at funerals, avoid fires in winter, dislike water, either to drink or wash in, spoil their women's feet, cut off the men's hair where it might be useful, and wear long pig-tails which are of no use at all; only fee the doctor when there is nothing the matter;

have three thousand ceremonial rites; and such a passion for symmetry that they have, it is facetiously said, re-arranged the bodily organs, placing the heart in the middle and the other organs at even distances around it. And for thousands of years China has little changed.

74. LINES OF FUSI.

The most ancient form of religion in China was a Polytheomonotheism, spirit and nature worship with reference to a central source. *Shan* stood for spirits of heaven; *Chi*, earth spirits; *Kwei*, spirits of the dead; *Wang*, the Emperor; the mysterious *Ti* or *Shang Ti*, personal heaven or GOD. Ample provision was made for ceremonial; and what may be called spiritual proprieties and periodical homages were offered to Shang Ti and all spirits, whilst such great cosmic ideas as the expanse, fire-brightness, wind, solidity, the eternal quiet, corruption, and substance, or "that which underlies," were strangely symbolised in the famous lines of Fusi or Fuhe, a philosopher who lived B.C. 1150. These are the lines of Fusi:—

LINES OF FUSI.

They occur everywhere, in temples, houses, in books, and on articles of furniture. I have a complete set of them on an old bit of Nankin blue. They admit, like a peal of bells, of endless arrangement, and of every conceivable combination, and lend themselves to the expression of almost every philosophical thought which the Chinese mind is capable of conceiving. It is characteristic of the Chinaman that he should be intellectually quite satisfied, having once for all put these profound abstractions into straight lines, and so fixed them.

Five thousand years ago we find in China the organised worship of nature—prayer to the cloud-master, the rainmaster, the thunder-master; yet always with the monotheistic tendency. More than two thousand years before Christ the Emperor Wang conducted the state worship of Shang Ti (the supreme God or personal heaven) and all the spiritual host, "with the ordinary forms": "Ye, O spirits! are the ministers, assisting Shang Ti, the worker, the transformer"—so runs the prayer. A square altar was used for the earth spirits, a round altar for the celestial ones.

75. 3000 B.C.

Tang ascended the throne two hundred years before Moses, or about 1700 B.C., the time of Jacob, Esau, and Joseph. Tang said, "Heaven gave the people rulers who were to be the ministers of Shang Ti, and keep the realm in peace and quietness. The little child, charged with the decrees of heaven, did not dare forgive the criminal. I sought the wise man, and united my strength to his. I implored the favour of Shang Ti for you, my innumerable people." Tang also said, "Shang Ti gives a moral in every man's heart; he also raised up the sovereign to see it carried out." Seven hundred years afterwards I read of another king—King David, who said, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

76. TANG ON SHANG TI.

In the earliest times we find in China no regular priesthood, no propitiatory sacrifices, no adequate sense of the meaning and power of spiritual communion, merely offerings to the dead and symbolical libations.

77. SPIRITUAL DEFECTS.

In all that connects life with good government, morals, social order, primitive Chinese religion was strong; in spirituality it was weak. The more meditative and mystic elements came later from a

foreign source. The lives and words of the great Reformers, LA-OT-ZE, CONFUCIUS, and MENCIUS, best illustrate the corruptions that had crept into the primitive doctrine and practice, and the attempted restoration of what seemed to these philosophers vital in each. Yet neither of these three men cared for Buddhism nor could know anything of Taoism.

78. CONFUCIUS MEETS LA-OT-ZE.

In a very curious fragment of the Confucian analects, the two philosophers, LA-OT-ZE and CONFUCIUS, are seen for a moment together. La-ot-ze was a book-worm, he kept the royal archives; Confucius, aged thirty-seven, careful in dress, punctilious in ceremony, polished in manner, visited the old man, and was characteristically treated. He found a sort of Thomas Carlyle, with little sympathy for the masses—"mostly fools," sententious, brief, and not very good-tempered. When asked about the ancestors: "They are dead, their bones are dust; their words alone survive." He also said, with probably a bitter application to himself, "When the superior man is born at the right time he rises to power; but being born at the wrong time he stumbles, as with snared feet. Parties," he

added, "whose principles are different cannot take counsel together." There may have been little difference in principle between La-ot-ze and Confucius, but there was probably a great difference in temperament, for the old philosopher was a pessimist, the young one an optimist. La-ot-ze ends with a truly Carlylese tirade against Bumbledom, flunkeyism, and shams. No doubt Confucius's exquisite manner, careful attire, and courtly ways grated on the rugged student. He broke out, "Put away your stuck-up looks and your self-conceit. They can do you no good. I have nothing more to tell you." And as La-ot-ze turned on his heel, Confucius seems to have been struck with awe. He felt the greatness of the man. "I can snare beasts," he said, "hook fish, and catch birds, but who knows the way of the dragon? I have seen La-ot-ze. I can only liken him to the dragon that mounts through the clouds to heaven."

79. LA-OT-ZE THE STUDENT.

LA-OT-ZE had little, Confucius much, of the popular fibre about him. La-ot-ze saw the corruptions of his own age and denounced them, but had not, like Confucius, the popular sympathy

to set to work and reform them. He did not believe in the people, Confucius did; both were disappointed. La-ot-ze's great book, the Tao-Teh-King, is in parts sublime, but nowhere popular, and not always intelligible. "The divine essence, or reason," he writes, "what is it? We look at it, but do not see it; we listen to it, but do not hear it. The colourless, the soundless—we feel after it, but do not clasp it; the incorporeal—it can neither be defined nor examined. IT IS." (We cannot help thinking of the sublime Hebrew, "I AM.") "I do not know its name. I call it the Way; forcing myself to name it, I call it the Mighty." La-ot-ze, in his more gracious moments, uttered many beautiful sayings for the conduct of life. "There are three things most precious in the world to me. I hold them fast. The first is compassion, the second economy, the third humility. With economy I can afford to be liberal; with humility I can fit myself for all that I am worthy of; with sympathy and gentleness I can overcome the utmost violence. But in these days," sighs the philosopher, "they prefer physical courage, ostentation, and extravagance. Instead of being last they all want to be first. The end of all this is death."

La-ot-ze condemns capital punishment, deplores war, and advocates a return to plain living and high thinking. "The common people look sharp—I look to them dull. They are shrewd—I am not at all shrewd. I am a vessel drifting upon the sea—I am a mere ponderer—I am different from other men. All I care for is the Nursing Mother." By the nursing mother he meant the "Wisdom" of the Old Testament, the "Word" of the New—the "Divine Reason" of the Greek.

80. END OF LA-OT-ZE.

The close of his career was sad, striking, but not inappropriate. His biographer tells us that, in despair at the growing degeneracy of the times, La-ot-ze determined to leave the city of "Chan," where he had passed the greater portion of his life. But the gatekeeper, Yin-Hsi, arrested him, and besought him, ere he went, to write a book. He wrote the "Tao-Teh-King," or Book of Divine Wisdom.

La-ot-ze, nearly ninety years old, then went alone out of the north-west gate of Chan, and was never heard of again. "He was," says his only biographer, "a superior man, and liked to keep himself unknown."

So this strange, uncouth, shy figure passes out into the darkness, but remains on the historic canvas painted with a few imperishable strokes of Time's capricious brush. To me, indeed, La-ot-ze, the deep thinker, the uncouth, sad student, is altogether a pathetic and memorable personage. Careless of what men thought or said of him, he obeyed the voices within him, absorbed in his own reveries. He wrote only at the last, and under great pressure; but the words which had sunk deep into the heart of Yin-Hsi the gate-keeper were so rich and melodious that the world has been listening to them ever since. "Truly," says Emerson, "the unstable estimates of men crowd to him whose soul is filled with a trust as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon."

81. HE YET SPEAKETH.

CONFUCIUS was a very different person, with an intense belief in himself, in the people, in his power to teach them; with a sympathetic and popular address and refined and fascinating manner, he was cut out to be a ruler of men. He was born 551 B.C., and died 478. He was contemporary with the Rise of Rome under the

82. CONFUCIUS B.C. 551-478.

Tarquins, the invasion of Greece under Xerxes, and the return of the Jews from Babylon. He was originally a small government official in the public granaries; but he also set up a school at his own house. The Prince Lû afterwards made him a magistrate, and so extraordinary was his influence that he soon rose to be the First Commissioner of Works and Minister of Crime; but wherever he went, crime ceased; the prisons were empty; strangers flocked to hear his wisdom; and Prince Lû's prosperity was so envied that a plot was successfully laid to seduce the Prince from his allegiance to Confucius, who at last leaves the State in disgust and wanders through China with a few disciples. The Princes of various States seemed eager to receive him, but the severity of his principles displeased the nobles, and the Duke of Tze, to whom he had fled from the Duke of Lû's court, whilst admiring the sage, remarked, "I am old, I cannot use his doctrines."

Meanwhile his words lived from mouth to mouth—strangers visited him in crowds; he was alternately the idol and the bugbear of the populace. Poets sang his praises. "What a plea-

83. HIS WIDE POPULARITY.

sant smile illumines his face; how finely carved and delicate is his mouth; how ravishing his look!" He was always accompanied by a band of devoted disciples, who hung upon his lips; but when a prince rejected his counsels he would go forth without purse or scrip, and was sometimes in great straits even for food. When the lawfulness of taking it was mooted, the master said, "The superior man may suffer want: the mean man alone gives way to license." At times he would dwell on himself and his personal practice when he was appointed overseer of the granaries; he said, "My calculations must all be right, that is all I have to care about."

84. HIS SENSE OF A MISSION.

His strong sense of his mission as one far transcending territorial limits and of world-wide reach, came out in such exclamations as, "I am a man of the north, south, east, and west"; of his own development he said, "At thirty I stood firm; at sixty-nine I had attained to the state of following what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right." He had, that is, trained himself to desire only such things as were good. "How shall we describe you to others?" asked a

disciple. He answered, "Say that I am one who, in his thirst for knowledge, forbears to eat, who forgets sorrow in the joy of attainment, and who hardly has time to notice the advance of old age." At another time he said, "My only merit is to study wisdom without satiety, and to teach others without weariness." And his humility is shown in such complaints as, "These things trouble me; not to live virtuously enough, not to discuss questions thoroughly enough, not to conform practice to doctrine sufficiently, not to reform the bad entirely."

We are able to come very close to the master as he lived and moved amongst his disciples.

85. FACE TO FACE WITH CONFUCIUS.

His motions were all watched, and his habits minutely chronicled. He did everything according to rule. If he bent in salute, his robes always fell in symmetrical folds right and left. In receiving guests, he hastened his steps, extending his arms like the wings of a bird. He left the company slowly. He passed before the throne with a grave and measured step. "The master," they said, "is gentle, yet full of dignity; majestic without severity; respectful to others, yet always

at ease himself." Had he not said, "The superior man is composed, but the mean man is always in a fidget."

He sometimes engaged in sport; but they noticed that he always fished with a rod instead of snaring with a net; and never shot a bird except on the wing. He would wear nothing red or deep purple, or puce colour; but over lamb's wool he was careful to wear black; over fawn and fur, white; over fox's fur, yellow. Indoors he wore thick badger's fur, and he would have his night-dress twice as long as his body. He never lay stretched like a corpse in bed, and never spoke after retiring to rest. He was moderate and precise in his eating, and would have his meals well cooked; he used wine freely, and no one had ever known it to confuse his head. He never spoke at meal-time; but before meat he offered some of the viands reverently in sacrifice to the spirits. He had his meat cut in symmetrical squares, and would not sit on his mat unless it was quite straight. He carried attention to small proprieties to what may seem to us a ridiculous excess, and attached an exaggerated importance

86. HIS FISHING, CLOTHES, FEEDING, AND SLEEPING.

to appearances. "Wang Chung was a great Prime Minister," he once said, and when asked why, he merely added, "But for him we might even now be wearing our hair rough and button the lappets of our coats on the left side." The wisest of the Chinese could hardly conceive of a greater national calamity!

87. HE ENFORCES RESPECT.

Confucius was fond of saying, "Require much of yourself, little of others"; yet would he ill brook disrespect. "Yang," I read, received the master squatting on his heels, whereon the master broke out in wrath: "Not respectful in youth, not diligent in manhood; perchance living on to be old, and a very pest too," and therewith the philosopher struck Yang smartly with his stick and bade him rise up.

88. HIS EXPERIENCE OF LIFE.

In his earlier days he had held that outward conformity to right was the chief thing for a people to study; but later experience taught him, as he himself expresses it, that "we may force people to do justice; we cannot force them to love it."

Confucius was profoundly disappointed at not

getting his maxims adopted. "Virtue," he complained frequently, "is not cultivated—study is not pursued; justice and equity are preached, but not practised; wicked men will not be convinced —this is my grief!"

89. DEFECTS OF HIS SYSTEM.

There was evidently a want somewhere in Confucianism with all its excellence. Its hold on God was weak; it was indifferent to the cultivation of spiritual communion; its appreciation of evil was inadequate; its constant habit of retrospect and never of prospect paralysing; its neglect of human impulse conspicuous; its sense of mystery feeble, and consequently its lift and aspirational power almost *nil*.

90. THE CHINESE IDEAL.

Still, as a regulative force, as a system of ethics and a complete embodiment of the Chinese ideal of life and government, the philosophy of Confucius stands out as one of the most extraordinary efforts of the human mind; and yet we cannot help feeling all through the gnomic utterances of the Analects and the Doctrine of the Mean, that Confucius himself is greater than his system.

There is a sort of personal flavour about his most abstract utterances, and we are quite sure that he never preached anything he was not prepared himself to practise, never gave a counsel he was not himself ready to obey.

Thanks to the love and admiration of his many eager pupils, we are, after the lapse of more than two thousand years, able to listen to the pithy sayings, the trenchant observations, and the singularly earnest, yet cautious, utterances of the man who is still reverenced throughout China above all emperors and statesmen, and is even worshipped as a god.

91. CONFUCIUS ON PRAYER, SACRIFICE, DEATH.

It may be asked, what was the religion of Confucius himself? It must be answered: he accepted what he found without laying stress upon any special doctrines. His genius was neither theological nor metaphysical. Whilst reverencing an unseen divine Power, he yet never spoke of it as personal. He believed in spirits, conformed to ceremonies, and did not check special prayers. Once, when sick, his friends asked that prayers should be made for his recovery. "Is that," said he, "the proper thing to do?" "It is

so set down," they answered, "in the sacred book, 'Address your prayers,' &c." He then uttered this memorable sentence, "The prayer of Confucius is constant." Men observed that he sacrificed to the dead as if they were present; yet he evaded all questions concerning them. "Shall we serve the spirits of the dead?" they asked; his answer was, "If you cannot serve men, how will you serve spirits?" "I venture to ask about death," said a disciple. "You know nothing about life, how can you know anything about death?" "Have the dead knowledge?" still urged the eager student. "You need not know whether they have or not," said the master; "there is no hurry, hereafter you shall know." "He taught," we read elsewhere, "letters, morals, devotion of soul, and sincerity of heart, but all mysterious occurrences—feats of dexterity, abnormal states, and the existence of spiritual beings—he shrank from discussing." Yet the instant the sphere of practice was touched, the trumpet gave no uncertain sound: "Without obeying the ordinances of heaven (*i.e.*, the moral law) it is impossible to be a superior man." "He who sins against Heaven, to whom can he pray?" "No man knows me. I do not complain;

Heaven alone knows me." This is the nearest approach I find to the recognition of a Personal God, and it does not amount even to Monotheism as taught by Moses.

92. HIS PYRAMIDAL STYLE.

His shrewdness and insight, combined with what I may call an habitually pyramidal or cumulative style, are to me a perpetual feast. "The prince must always improve himself; to improve himself he must render others their dues; to do that he must consult wise men; to have the friendship of wise men he must practise their recommendations." Here is a quaint statement of character by inference. "Tsen Lon is capable of leading an army; I know nothing of his humanity. Kieon might govern a city; I know nothing of his humanity. Tchi is capable of dressing himself up in smart clothes and introducing people gracefully to each other; I know nothing of his humanity." When asked about humanity, he exclaimed, "Is humanity so far from us? I wish to possess humanity, and it comes to me."

His thoughts on Government are at least as

much needed now as they were then. "The wise governor, as soon as men change what is wrong, *stops governing*." To an official who complained of the roguery of his subordinates he merely said, "If you, sir, were not rapacious, those whom you govern would not steal." Three things will be found in a country where there is good government: "enough food for the people, a ruler whom men can trust, and a good army." "But if a country must dispense with one of these three, which would it be best to do without?" He answered shortly, "The army."

93. THE WISE GOVERNOR.

Of the Prince he said, "If his personal conduct is right his government will be good without so many orders; and if it be wrong none of his orders will be respected." He thought war a calamity, and considered that a good government should dispense with capital punishment. They asked, "What is shameful in a Government employé?" "To think only of his salary in serving the Prince; a superior man will put duty first and pay last." Of himself he said, "I am not careful to be without office, but careful to fit

94. WISE SAYINGS OF CONFUCIUS.

myself for it." His conversation consisted less in long speeches than in the happiest and briefest replies. "Is there one word which expresses the whole duty of man?" he was once asked. He seems to have paused, unwilling to dismiss so lightly such a momentous topic; but, recovering himself, "Yes," he said, "there is one word, Reciprocity!" which, he explained, was simply the doing unto others as we would they should do unto us. He was never weary of dilating upon this text. "I am not sad," he would say, "because men do not know me, but because I do not know men." Tanchi asked him, "What is benevolence?" The master said, "It is to love all men." "And what is knowledge?" The master said, "It is to know all men."

The aphorisms of Confucius are charming, and sometimes quite poetic. "I have seen the blade spring without flowering, I have seen the plant flower without bearing fruit." "Learning without thought is vain — thought without learning is perilous." "To be rich without pride is easier than to be poor without discontent."

At other times his mere shrewdness of observation arrests us—

"The wise of the highest class, and the stupid of the lowest, neither can be changed."

"I hate those who tell secrets and call themselves straightforward." 95. HIS SHREWDNESS AND DEPTH.

"A man hated at forty is always hated."

"Girls and servants are alike difficult to treat properly. If you are familiar with them they presume, and if you are reserved they sulk."

His three favourite qualities were conscience, humanity, and moral courage: the first corresponded to the knowledge of good and evil, the second to equity of heart, and the third to force of soul, and it was characteristic of his severely practical tone of mind to say, "Whether we practise these naturally or with effort—if we practise them it comes to the same thing"; and yet because he loved the inner rightness, the equity of the heart, he could also utter this beautiful sentence, "The superior man is watchful over his aloneness."

In his later days he said to his disciples, "Have I, O my friends, any doctrines of reserve with you? I have none. I have done and said nothing that I wish to conceal from you." How many of us can look in the face

of those that have known us longest and say as much!

At the age of seventy he returned to the principality of Lû, but he was too old for office. He was broken in health and sad at heart, for he could get no Government to adopt his severe and noble methods.

96. DEATH OF CONFUCIUS.

One day his disciple Tszekum watched him pacing feebly in the sunshine, dragging his stick behind him, and heard him mutter—

> "The great mountain must crumble,
> The strong beam must break,
> And the wise man wither away like grass."

"Ah!" cried his friend, "I fear the master is going to be ill." Confucius then tells him that he knows by a dream that he is soon to die. His last words are those of a weary and disappointed old man: "No wise ruler comes; no prince invites me to be his counsellor; it is time to die." So saying he took to his bed and passed away in a very few days. His writings are still learned throughout the Celestial Empire. The most honoured temples are those raised to Confucius. He remains, after 2,500 years, China's most living force.

MENCIUS (*cir.* 300 B.C.) was characterised by his extremely caustic and humorous application of the Confucian doctrine. But he was a great moralist and a great democrat, as well as a searching humorist.

97. MENCIUS (300 B.C.) A HUMORIST.

"Why do you lie awake on account of the promotion of Lo-Tching-Tsen?" asked a disciple.

"Because," said Mencius, "he is a man who loves what is good."

"Is that enough?"

"Yes; to love what is good is more than enough to govern the empire."

Mencius was very plain spoken with princes.

"The people," he told them, "is the most noble thing in the world—the earth spirits and the fruits of the earth come next—the prince is of the least importance of all." Yet was he unremitting in his efforts to advise, encourage, and even rebuke the princes who took counsel with him.

"If a prince," he said to the ruling sovereign, "rejoices in the joy of his people, the people rejoice in his joy; or if he sorrow with them, they will sorrow with him—if he acts thus, he cannot possibly find any difficulty in governing."

The king read out to him admiringly two lines from the sacred books—"We may be rich and powerful, but we ought to have compassion on the widows and orphans."

98. MENCIUS AND THE KING.

"O King," exclaimed Mencius, "if you admire that doctrine why do you not practise it?"

"My Insignificance," replied the king, "has a certain defect. My Insignificance loves riches."

Said Mencius respectfully, "Kong Lieon loved riches, so he shared them with his people."

"But," went on the king, "my Insignificance loves pleasure."

"So did Tai Wang, therefore he contrived that every one should have recreation, and be able to keep a wife."

The king was silent.

Dr. Johnson used to say, "Your great people don't like having their mouths stopped," but Mencius usually contrived to have the last word, yet was he not shunned, but rather courted by his sovereign.

The king interrogated Mencius in these terms: "I have been told that the park of the king Wen-Wang was seven leagues in circumference, was that the case?"

Mencius answered respectfully, "History tells us so."

The king said, "If so, was not its extent excessive?"

Mencius answered, "The people considered it too small."

The king said, "My Insignificance has a park only four leagues in circumference, and the people consider it too large; whence this difference?"

Mencius answered, "The park of Wen-Wang contained all these leagues, but thither resorted all persons who wanted to cut grass or wood. Thither went all who wanted to take pheasants or hares. As the king had his park in common with the people, the people thought it too small, though it was seven leagues round. Was that wonderful? I, your servant, when I was about to cross the frontier, took care to inform myself of what was especially forbidden in your kingdom before I dared to venture farther. Your servant learnt that there was within your line of customs a park four leagues round, and that the man who killed a stag there was punished with death, as if he had killed a man. So that there is an actual pit of death, of four leagues in circum-

ference, opened in the heart of your kingdom. The people think that park rather too large. Is it wonderful?"

99. THE THREE PHILOSOPHERS.

I have now placed the three great figures of Chinese philosophy in the high relief provided for them by their own characteristic utterances. LA-OT-ZE, the solitary and somewhat pessimist thinker, who believed too little in the people to try any serious reforms. CONFUCIUS, the eager active man of affairs, incessantly conversing, sanguine at first and full of resource and patience, but dispirited at last after failing to get his reforms adopted—failing through want of sustained hopefulness—perhaps for want of love—certainly for want of a loving trust in some one above and beyond him. MENCIUS, the bold and humorous critic, welcome utterer of unwelcome truths, yet full of such imperturbable good humour and ready wit that princes did not seem offended even when they heard without heeding.

That Philosophy, however practical, can never take the place of Religion for the masses—however

it may suffice to control and solace "the superior man"—is perhaps the most impressive lesson to be derived from the study of the Confucian doctrines. The homage of the Confucian system was paid to a law, or, at most, a principle—not a person. The system was weak in the sense of mystery, just where Buddha's was strong; and strong in its earnest care for and belief in this world, just where Buddha's was weak. Buddhism, which crept into China about 217 B.C., supplied the indispensable metaphysic—the speculation on the what, the whence, and the whither, to which the great practical philosopher was so indifferent. TAOISM, which appeared very much in its present form about 140 A.D., supplied the equally indispensable how? It taught the doctrine of intercommunion between the living and the dead—gave the formulæ of approach, was, and is, in fact, very much what we understand by modern spiritualism in its grosser form of oracle and miracle—still it answered the craving for certainty as to the existence of the dead, the reality of spirits, and their sustained and sympathetic interest in human affairs. This is not only the strength of the Chinese religion, but also of the Roman Catholic

saint worship—it accounts also for the spread of modern spiritualism in the teeth of modern materialism—the absence of it in some form is the weakness and not the strength of the Protestant religion, and the humble student of history, less biased than the confident and dogmatic votary of science, will, in his survey of the Religions of the World, probably admit that a craving for, and a belief in, the reality of unseen beings, which is so universal, so recurrent, and so impossible to exterminate—even in this nineteenth century—possibly rests upon some foundation that science may be able to reveal, but is not likely to destroy.

101. "THE HEATHEN CHINEE."

The "Heathen Chinee," with an instinct rather truer than that of the modern missionary, has endowed all three religions—CONFUCIANISM, TAOISM, and BUDDHISM—he has felt that each stood for a truth and answered a need. When the life and practice of the modern Christian—as he appears in the person of the French warrior or the English speculator — is clearly manifest in the eye of the Chinaman as superior to his own, he will probably endow Christianity — not till then.

Preaching by example is one of the cardinal doctrines of Confucius—he had more faith in that than in anything else—he was therefore reverenced. Christians, alas! seem to have less; therefore, in the eyes of the Chinese, they are despised.

IV.

THE LIGHT OF EGYPT.

102.—The sacred Nile.—103. The shores of the Nile.—104. An ancient civilisation.—105. Mena, *cir.* 4000 B.C.—106. The Rosetta stone.—107. Abraham in Egypt.—108. Joseph in Egypt.—109. Israel in Egypt.—110. Life and religion of the tombs.—111. Shishak.—112. Una and Nem.—113. Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment.—114. Sepulchral frescoes.—115. The Great Rameses II.—116. Rameses II. in battle.—117. Princess Nefru-Ari.—118. Rameses in the British Museum.—119. Temples and pyramids.—120. The Sphinx.—121. Unity.—122. Trinities.—123. The sun myth.—124. Ra, or sun-power.—125. Secondary gods.—126. Secret of symbols.—127. An arrested development.—128. Osiris.—129. The book of the dead.—130. Justification by faith.—131. Is the claim allowed?—132. Pure precepts of Ptah Hep.—133. Idolatry and scepticism.—134. Days of the Ptolemies.

As we watch the crowded generations of men hurrying across the stage of history with such feverish haste, there is something very restful to the eye in the hills and plains and rivers, changeless themselves, but associated with all that is most changeful. The dim grey and yellow reaches of the Arabian or Sinaitic desert, the purple Alban hills, the Ganges, the Tiber, or the Nile are just what they were in the days of Moses, Sennacherib, or Romulus. But perhaps there is no river in the

102. THE SACRED NILE.

world which has had such a constant and intimate relation to the life and religion of a people as the Nile. The rise or fall of its waters, dependent chiefly upon the rains in Abyssinia, has always meant life or death—famine or plenty. The Nile stream is sacred; the very creatures that live in it are deified. With the Blue and White Niles, which meet at Khartoum, the one after fertilising Abyssinia, the other after irrigating the Soudan and supplying the lakes of Central Africa, we have here nothing to do. The story of the Egyptian religion proper has for its *mise-en-scène* the Nile from the first cataract to the sea. Follow its course as it flows past the colossal stones of Thebes, the ranged columns and obelisks of Karnak, the temples of Luxor in Upper Egypt, to the statues of Memphis, the city of Cairo, the pyramids of Gizeh, and the vast Libyan Necropolis in Lower Egypt.

The Nile itself reaches an average breadth of three-quarters of a mile; in its periodical overflow it waters and fertilises an alluvial plain nine to ten miles wide; beyond this, for five or ten miles, lies the yellow drifting sand of the desert, edged

103. THE SHORES OF THE NILE.

by a rocky plateau twenty to twenty-five miles wide. Upon this ledge are ranged the pyramids, and beneath it is hollowed out the million-caved Necropolis of Memphis. Beyond are seen the Libyan hills, forming a pale blue or lilac background, but flushed with yellow or crimson in the rising and setting sun; these eternal features of Egyptian landscape are the same as they were in the days of Cheops, or Seneferu, or Joseph, and our eyes may still look upon what they saw.

104. AN ANCIENT CIVILISATION.

Egypt has no beginning. A Caucasian race (not Shemite *or* negro) from the steppes of Asia, *viâ* the shores of Syria, settled in the immemorial past on the fertile banks of the Nile. The oldest mummy skulls are distinctly Caucasian. The oldest Egyptian words come from the Sanscrit. The cave-man became a tent-man, the tent-man a house-man. But of these indispensable stages, which must have ranged over vast cycles of time, there are no traces left. We only know that what *made* the Egyptian was the brain of Asia and the heart of Africa. But at the mixing of these breeds we are not permitted to assist. When at last the capricious bull's-eye lantern of history first strikes

Egypt it falls upon an accomplished civilisation, quite as refined and complex, and under certain physical aspects even mightier than our own.

Six thousand years ago the figure of King Mena stands out, ruling over about seven millions of people, who knew geometry, invented an unsurpassed system of irrigation, built temples to the sun, pyramids to the kings—the stepped pyramid is reckoned to be at least six thousand years old—wrote in hieroglyphics the sacred picture writings, and possessed, at all events, the first two chapters of the Book of the Dead, that sacred ritual which was minutely elaborated later on, and formed a kind of Egyptian missal, rule of faith, creed, and funeral service all in one.

105. MENA, CIR. 4000 B.C.

It was only in 1799 that a window was opened in the present through which the life of that remote past could be seen with something like chronological distinctness.

106. THE ROSETTA STONE.

This window was the famous Rosetta Stone. M. Boussard, a French engineer, discovered, lying amidst the ruins of an old temple near Alexandria, while exca-

vating for a fort, a smooth flat stone. It lay there as it lies now in the British Museum. It is of black basalt, about 3 ft. 7 in. long and 2 ft. 6 in. wide; the side and upper part is broken away, but what is left is more priceless than any Sibylline book. It contains an inscription in three languages — (1) the previously undecipherable hieroglyph; (2) the popular Egyptian or demotic; and (3) the language of the conqueror Greek. It is a decree in honour of Ptolemy Epiphanes, and it was set up by the priests of Memphis in the year B.C. 195. The discovery of what constituted the name of Ptolemy in the hieroglyph led to the deciphering of all the rest. The key of the unknown tongue was found, and the archives of prehistoric Egypt were suddenly unlocked. It was like coming upon records of the world before the Flood. From that moment Egypt has been the new and all-absorbing centre of antiquarian research.

Four thousand years ago Abraham was driven by famine into Egypt. It was in the early days of the shepherd kings, a hardy race who came (*cir.* 2200 B.C.) from the north-east, and were akin to the

107. ABRAHAM IN EGYPT.

Hebrews. They ruled Egypt, according to Brugsch, from the Delta to Memphis, and were turned out by Aahmes, who restored the true Egyptian dynasty. But Abraham found in Egypt the stepped pyramid, which had then been standing for, at least, two thousand years. He found too some of those temples upon which we still gaze, and, I regret to say, scribble our names.

Three thousand six hundred years ago Joseph was carried down into Egypt, and met with the shepherd kings. He found favour with the Hyksos king. He was never at the court of any Egyptian Pharaoh (Brugsch). He saw the ancient pile beneath which Seneferu (*cir.* 3350 B.C.) still sleeps undisturbed. He looked upon the Sphinx, which then stood out uncovered with a temple between its paws; he saw the mighty Chephren and Cheops pyramids shining and wholly incased in white alabaster-like marble, fragments of which we shuffle into our travelling-bags and make into paper-weights.

108. JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

Three thousand three hundred and fifty years

ago Moses floated down the Nile in his basket, and grew up amid the glories of Karnak, Thebes, and Memphis—the oppression growing under the two Rameses, potentates with whose portraits the British Museum has made us familiar. These were the real Pharaohs who restored the Egyptian Dynasty and naturally hated the Hebrews (knew not Joseph) who had as naturally found favour under the Syrian (Hyksos) usurpers.

109. ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

From *Zoan*, now buried beneath the sands, the Israelites on an eventful night set out some three thousand three hundred years ago, in the reign of Maneptha I. (successor of Rameses). The last thing which impressed them as they passed out of the land of bondage was probably the newly erected colossal statue of Rameses II., a monolith then erect, now lying prostrate, and weighing 887 tons.

The life of the ancient Egyptians is still visible on their tombs. These were their eternal houses—the others they called their lodgings or hotels; they clung with the tenacity of despair to what seemed most permanent. The living body was subject

110. LIFE AND RELIGION OF THE TOMBS.

to constant flux and change in the world of matter; the mummy changed not, it bore its own rigid, physical witness to the continuous life of the spirit. The next life was to be a repetition of this; but the blessed could enjoy the whole range of nature — entering into animal forms at will. This transformation must not be confounded with the Pythagorean Metempsychosis. There was nothing expiatory about it. There is no Purgatory in Egyptian theology. The blessed are as the gods—they are identified with Osiris—they are one with God—they are in the Father and the Father is in them. The heaven and hell of Egypt is quite material. There were fields and waters beyond, and waste places of misery, and Judge, and Advocate, and Accuser, and the long roll clearly written out of deeds done in the flesh. The Egyptians lived much with the dead; they brought them fruit and flowers, and covered the sepulchral walls with life scenes. In the British Museum you can still see the rich, mellowed reds, blues, browns, and yellows of Joseph's time; frescoes of oxen ploughing, fish ponds, flocks of tame geese, wild fowl being snared; harvesting, hunting, feasting, and tumultuous processions

with dancing girls, pipe-blowers, harp-players. On the whole, 'tis the life of an industrious, wise, and happy people. The faces of the scribes, high state officials, are singularly pleasing and impressive, and some of the women very graceful and refined, with delicately clear-cut features. The drawing is often excellent, and good or bad, it manages, like the rough carvings of our Middle Ages, to tell its tale. In the side cases of the British Museum, take note of the corn, cakes, clothes, shoes, bracelets, elaborate rings, stools and chairs, at once so artistic and comfortable that we are even now busy reproducing fac-similes of them for our own drawing-rooms and studios.

But ransacked as have been the ancient Egyptian sepulchres, they have, probably, not yet uttered their last word. Special tombs have been found to contain great treasure, which it was the custom to hide away with the same care that the peewit hides her nest, or the squirrel his hoard; and as recently as 1881, in a rock niche opposite Thebes, twenty-nine mummies of kings, queens, and high officers, with much treasure, now in the Museum at Bulak, were quite by chance brought to light.

One coffin was that of Thotmes III., about 1600 B.C., and the mummy of Rameses III. (1886) has since been found. The exquisite jewels, bracelets, gold-work, and enamel hidden in these immemorial tombs have been carefully copied and multiplied by jewellers, and are now familiar to most students and art connoisseurs.

We are more familiar with some of the faces of the great Egyptians than with those of many English kings and queens. There is Shishak, 970 B.C., who favoured the rebel Jeroboam, captured Rehoboam, and shattered the empire of David and Solomon. We have perfect effigies, and, no doubt, speaking likenesses of certain grave and confidential officers of state and overseers of the realm.

111. SHISHAK.

Una is now seated at the Louvre, and he is very impressive and pleasant to look upon. Amen, "of whom the king's heart was full," and Nem are to be seen in the British Museum; both have, more or less, the same characteristics. The wide brow, shapely chin, and wide open vigilant eyes, denote firmness, rectitude, and general

112. UNA AND NEM.

attention to business. The mouth a little protruding, as though about to speak; the frame firmly knit, muscular, and well nourished—that is the type. These people were quite conscious of their own merit, and not at all shy of proclaiming it. "I was valued by his Majesty," says Una, "above all his servants. I was treasurer, scribe, most private secretary; he made me receiver of stores for his royal wife. I laboured to the utmost of my power; I wore out my shoes tramping from place to place to insure orders being carried out. I was the centre of all responsibility; the duke and governor of the South, and, moreover, devoted to the great God Osiris: all this was I, Una."

We need not go to the British Museum to see and touch what Una saw and touched. The obelisk of Thotmes III., 1600 B.C., which belongs to his period, was brought to Alexandria by Cleopatra; there it lay for centuries half-buried in the sand, until, by the munificence of Sir Erasmus Wilson, after a most perilous voyage it reached our shores and may now be seen upon the Thames Embankment.

113. CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.

The figures of the great kings, limned in colossal proportions, still stand out prominently in the sepulchral frescoes. They are seen towering in their war chariots above the pigmy races of common men whom they lead to battle like gods, or triumph over like demons. Rameses II. was the greatest of them all. His magnificent image has not only stamped itself on the walls, been carved out of huge wood blocks and immense monoliths of black basalt, but it is positively alive in the excited and graphic records which date back fifteen hundred years B.C.

114. SEPULCHRAL FRESCOES.

The Great Rameses II. came to the throne at the age of twelve, filled with more than a child's wisdom, and he reigned sixty-seven years, in which time he impressed the whole world with his power. He was the bitter persecutor of the Jews, and the deadly foe of Moses. Under Maneptha, his successor, took place the Exodus. Although Pharaoh's armies are said to have been overthrown in the Red Sea, and his land ravaged by plagues, there are but faint traces of either catastrophe in the monuments of the period; and

115. THE GREAT RAMESES II.

it is probable that from the Israelitish standpoint the escape of a body of foreign slaves, and the consequent annoyance and defeat of the local police or militia, assumed an importance and was enriched with a variety of dramatic details more imposing in the eyes of the Hebrew writers than in those of Pharaoh's annalists. To Pharaoh Rameses this prolific race of patient toilers were chiefly useful to build his cities and his sepulchres, and he never let them out of his grip. "They built," we read, "for Pharaoh, treasure cities, Pithon and *Ramses*." When they got away under his successor, a source of political disquietude was certainly removed, whilst slave labour, constantly recruited by war, remained still sufficiently cheap.

Rameses II., or the Great, was a warrior from his youth; he went out to battle right royally. His chariot was drawn by two splendid horses, and a pet tame lion, called Smam Kefti, ran by his side, and would spring furiously upon the foe like a bloodhound. No special correspondent from the seat of war could give us a more graphic picture of this great prince, in one of his most

116. RAMESES II. IN BATTLE.

critical campaigns, than has been preserved for us on the monuments. Once, whilst warring in Northern Syria, he found himself fighting desperately hand-to-hand. The Syrians, swarming round, cut him off from his followers. "I was alone; my bodyguard had left me. I cried out to my great God, 'Where art thou, my Father Amen?' Now instantly inspired, I plunged into the midst of two thousand five hundred cavalry, a panic seized them — they fled — I, the king, hurried them, head-over-heels, into the rapid river—the river Orontes—the king of Kheta fell down at my feet with uplifted hands." We then read how next morning Rameses reviews the troops, reproves in dignified terms the ignorance and cowardice of his officers, extols the coolness and prowess of Menna, his charioteer, and orders his faithful horses to be brought out and fed in his presence.

The enthusiasm of the ancient chronicler then breaks out with something of the poetic fervour of the Hebrew poet and prophet. "As he stood erect and comely, his face was like the rising sun. He was ready to renew the fight; but there was no enemy!" The vanquished King of Kheta is then brought in chains. He falls prostrate at the feet

of Rameses, crying, "Better is peace than war. Slay us no more; let us be free to serve thee!" The statesmen next step forward, and, addressing the conqueror, urge clemency. "This is excellent. Let thine anger abate, O King! He who refuseth peace must needs give it!"

Whilst Rameses, still flushed with victory, is hesitating, the trembling balance is decided on the side of mercy by the beauty of a woman, and a strange and romantic bridal scene crowns a cruel and bloody war. On one side are the conquered tribes "trembling like a flock of geese," and the terrible trophies, 9,376 prisoners in chains, 42,370 severed fists, and a mighty bundle of heads. On the other side stands a young girl, Nefru-Ari, the daughter of Khetasira, the Syrian king, of such singular beauty that we can hardly wonder at the sudden burst of tenderness and timely mercy which followed the fury of the fight. The clean-cut features, in exquisite proportion, the straight, bright eyes, the compact and delicate figure, the unconscious simplicity and dignified grace, the pale, Syrian complexion, which makes Nefru-Ari almost European in general look—these have

117. PRINCESS NEFRU-ARI.

been figured and sculptured over and over again, until Nefru-Ari is almost as well known to the artist as the Venus de Medici. On a rock temple we find these graceful words: — "The lovely daughter of the King of Kheta stands forth to soften thine heart, O Rameses! She knows not the power of her beauty over thee. Thy name is glorious; thou art perfect in strength; thou knowest how to command, but thou obeyest none!"

118. RAMESES IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

One last glance at the king we may take as he must so often have appeared to the admiring eyes of Nefru-Ari. In the British Museum, amongst the few relics of the nineteenth dynasty (*cir.* 1600 B.C.), there are none more majestic and interesting than the immense and perfect statues of Rameses II. One is of wood, a figure standing bolt upright and kingly, with the strange, placid, imperturbable look of Egyptian royalty. More striking still is the kneeling figure of black basalt, with a table of offerings for the gods. The body is strong, lithe, youthful, and firmly knit; the nose is straighter than in the wooden effigy; the mouth seems about to smile; the wide brow and whole countenance beam with a genial and robust in-

telligence; but there is a certain flashing quickness about the sharply chiselled eye, and a look of powerful and inflexible will. Altogether, the kneeling figure—kneeling to the gods alone—is quite masterful and individual in its dignity.

Before passing more directly to the Religion of Egypt, so inseparably connected with the daily life of the people, let us take a last glance at the stupendous memorials of her past—the only fixed and stable points of those scenes amidst which that wonderful religion arose and flourished. Everywhere we tread upon buried cities, pointing to a time when Egypt was incomparably more prosperous and more civilised than it is now. We pass miles of tombs, palaces, obelisks, temples, at Heliopolis, Memphis, Thebes, and Karnak. Look at the temple of El Karnak, with its gateway 360 feet wide—its hall of assembly, one suite only, consists of 134 columns, each 70 feet high and 12 thick, built about 1400 B.C. The whole of Notre Dame would stand comfortably inside that great temple. Mark the obelisk 180 feet high (about 1400 B.C.), the largest in the world. Yonder, cut in what is now a vast plain, periodically flooded

119. TEMPLES AND PYRAMIDS.

by the Nile waters, stand the statues of Memnon, 70 feet high, raised by Amenoph III. (*cir.* 1500 B.C.) Dominating the desert, indestructible relics of the Ages, against which the waves of time seem to dash themselves almost in vain, stand the three great Pyramids of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerynus. The largest one of Cheops is proudly styled the "Light of the Horizon," the "Great," the "Chief." It is 77 feet higher than St. Paul's, being 480 feet, and it covers thirteen acres of ground. It could just stand in Lincoln's Inn Square, and would completely fill that well-known area. Five thousand years ago it towered in the desert; five thousand years hence it will probably tower there still.

In 820 B.C. the king's room, in the central depths of the Great Pyramid, was robbed.

120. THE SPHINX.

Whether the Pyramid has yet been fully explored the world will never know until it is all pulled to pieces, and that, we may safely say, is never likely to be done. Not far from the Pyramids the mighty head of the Sphinx, disfigured but not destroyed, still looks the world straight in the face with its insoluble enigma. The face alone

measures 30 feet, the paws, which have been unburied from time to time, 140 feet. The chapel between them, the altar of which is preserved in the British Museum, is now completely covered in with the sand-drift. But I dare not linger on such enchanted ground, and so, with this passing glance at the geography, antiquities, temples, kings, statesmen, manners and customs, and the accidental connection of Egyptian history with the Bible story, I pass to a summary of the Egyptian religion proper.

Strange as it may appear to those conversant with the monstrous pantheism of Egypt, the key of Egyptian religion is not pantheism, 121. UNITY. but monotheism in polytheism, or the worship of the *one* in and through the many. *Xoper* the "cause of all being," *Thoth* the "word" (compare St. John) of all being, "*Ra*" the symbol of all being—"all," says Brugsch, "mean one God."

The numerous triads of father, mother, and son, chief amongst which we note Osiris, Isis, and the infant Horus; the sets of 122. TRINITIES. local deities, such as those at Thebes

and Memphis, with their puzzling hosts of attendant gods—little more than impersonations of animal attributes—all these are confusing enough until, by diving into the remote past, we discover the key.

123. THE SUN MYTH.

That key is the triumph of the Solar or "Sun Myth." This is, in fact, the central source of all religion. It appears in the Asiatic cradle of the human race; it is carried abroad by the successive waves of emigration all over the world. The sun is observed to be the source of all life; at once the most conspicuous and the most powerful object in nature, it becomes the symbol of omnipotence, the *outward and visible sign of the invisible, inward, and spiritual God.* This is the central authority which reduces all other symbolisms to order. The gods may be multiplied into a very Olympian rabble, which, apart from this clue, defies arrangement. With the clue the mixture indeed remains, but the confusion disappears. The local deities of upper and lower Egypt may at first be spoken of apart—*Ptah* supreme power in lower, *Ammon* in upper Egypt—and afterwards we may meet with a puzzling Pantheon, the local elements

of which it may not be easy to distribute. But from the moment Power *manifests* itself, there is nothing really but Ra, or the Sun—has not even coal been called bottled sunshine?

The Egyptian deities, nay, all manifestations of power whatsoever, the triumphs of intelligence, the forces of nature, the energies of man, are only so many precipitations of Ra-power. The animal-headed gods are all Ra. The produce of the earth, the fertilising water of the Nile, are all Ra; the king or symbol of law and order is one with Ra; the souls of the blessed are but emanations of Ra—they come from him and they return to him. To him is really addressed all prayer, and the most ancient liturgies are the most direct and uncompromising confessions of this monotheism. "Thou art the only Being," "Living in Truth," "Thou art One; millions of beings proceed from Thee.' Here is a fragment of this ancient *Credo:* "I am yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow"; and this is the prayer:—

124. RA, OR SUN-POWER.

"Hail, Thou great God, who concedest this hour. Father of all fathers, God of all gods, Watcher traversing eternity, the roaring of

Thy voice is in the clouds, Thy breath is on the mountain tops. Heaven and earth obey Thy commands. Bringer of good, God of terrors, giver of great joy, Thou art He who fillest the granaries and carest for the poor, Thou art not graven in marble wearing the double crown; Thou art not seen by mortal eye; Thine abode is not known, no temple can hold Thee. Thy name is not spoken in heaven. Vain are all Thine images on earth. Hail to Thee, Great God!"

Out of this central source, of which the sun became the living symbol, flows, of course, the popular theology. Two more orders of gods are usually specified. The Osiris gods as the second order, and the third order, the children of the Osiris gods—corresponding to the pet saints of Catholic countries. Theology repeats itself strangely indeed, when we remember that Isis and her babe Horus were to the Egyptian cowering before the Judge Osiris very much what the Virgin and Babe became to the Church of the Middle Ages. They represented mercy pleading for the sinner with stern justice; which is precisely what the Virgin did when she could be

125. SECONDARY GODS.

induced to prevail upon her son Jesus to plead for the sinner his atoning sacrifice and perfect righteousness before God the Father. But the earliest conception, "the Father of the Father of the Gods," "The God of all beginnings," is the purest, nor have we got, nor can we intellectually get, beyond it.

126. SECRET OF SYMBOLS.

Had this high ideal been always kept, Egyptian polytheism would have amounted to little more than the comparatively harmless virgin, saint, and relic worship of Roman Catholic Christianity. Man must use some symbols and must have some vehicle of faith and worship, and his religion is pure or impure just in proportion as what he selects as the instruments of devotion allow the soul to pass to the invisible, or arrest it midway upon hawk-headed beasts, sacred bones, holy rags, or mystic rites.

127. AN ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT.

But, as everything about Egypt is peculiar and unique, so are the Egyptian gods. They occupy a point midway between the Hindoo and the Greek deities. The Buddhist gods are mere agents of Divine Power. The Greek gods are mere parodies

of men. The Egyptian animal-headed god is the myth arrested half-way between the executive of deity and its human impersonation. Osiris, and Isis, and Horus are neither human nor divine; they stand before us as the impersonated attributes of a deity, one and indivisible, "Whose abode is not known, Whom no temple can hold, Whose name is not spoken in heaven, Whose images on earth are all vain, Who is the Great God."

This doctrine of an arrested myth grappling with the expression of divine attributes on one side and the phenomena of the visible creation on the other, explains the fluid and changeful conception of such beings as Osiris. Was he a man? did he suffer? did he die? were his limbs scattered? did his virtue triumph over death? did he rise again? The sun myth shall answer. For, after spending itself for man, does not the blessed sun, pursued by the evil Set, or night, at last sink into crimson death in the west? but Isis, the white dawn, collects his scattered limbs, which are none other than the rays of light, and as Horus he rises anew in the person of his own son. The extended parable can be carried further

128. OSIRIS.

throughout the natural and the spiritual worlds. Thus: Sun stands for life; life in man stands for what is good in nature, or it may stand for summer; darkness stands for death; death in man stands for what is evil in nature, or it may stand for winter; but that is not the last word of the solar myth.

God dies in appearance only, the sun rises again; man shall come up from death; spring shall break away victoriously from the ice-cold grip of winter; and thus the parable of the sun myth, fully read and interpreted, is shown to be co-extensive with the phenomena of nature, the laws of the spiritual universe, and the august destinies of an immortal soul.

In that strange epitome of the national religion known as the Book of the Dead, the sun myth undergoes a characteristic transformation or adaptation. The two first sections are of extreme antiquity. No funeral was complete without the rehearsal of a portion, perhaps the whole, of the book. The wrappings of every mummy contain some part of it figured on the papyrus-leaf.

129. THE BOOK OF THE DEAD.

Osiris there appears as the judge. Thoth, the

recorder, stands by his side to write down the evidence, and Horus, the caretaker, leads the dead one by one into the presence of the judge. It is only in the 125th chapter that the dead person who has been reunited to his soul, which has "parted from its sins that it may see the divine faces," is at length brought before the judge, and begins to plead its cause thus:—"Hail to you, Lords. I have come to see your glories. I know you who live by the punishment of the wicked—you the triumphant, who devour their blood; who weigh their words in the holy presence. I am not fraudulent; I do not wrong; I do not overwork my slave; I do not cause weeping; I am no murderer; I do not falsify the sacred tribute; I have not hunted wild animals in their pasturage," and so on through an interminable catalogue, reproducing the moral ideas of all civilised codes.

130. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Notice that the soul is separated, or tries to get separated from its sins, not by confession and repentance, but by denial. Far as the poles asunder from the Christian method? Not so far. Extremes meet. When Paul claims in Christ a righteousness not his own, and stands justified,

not by what he is, but by what he would be when he says the evil in him is not himself, he does the same as the Egyptian who pleaded an ideal standard of merit. Paul claimed Christ. The same justifying idea recurs in another form in Emerson: "I, the imperfect, adore my own perfect." With all its imperfections on its head, the Egyptian soul stands before Osiris and says: "I trust in an eternal goodness as I rehearse the rule of the perfect way, and identify myself in spirit therewith." This was his *justification by faith.* "Accept me," he would say; "*I, the imperfect, adore my own perfect.*"

131. IS THE CLAIM ALLOWED?

Then mark what follows. Is the claim to be allowed? That depends upon the result—when the good and bad deeds actually done in the body are weighed one against the other. The intercessors or advocates with Father Osiris plead the sinner's cause. Thus the professedly aspiring spirit has its sincerity roughly and mechanically but, on the whole, fairly tested. There is one pair of scales for everyone. It is the rough and ready method of a magistrate's court —a good working method, intelligible to the

meanest intellect, and final. After rehearsing all his would-be perfections, the heart of the prisoner at the bar is put into the balance and weighed. Horus takes the indicator, Thoth writes down the result, Osiris pronounces judgment, and the soul, reunited to its body, either passes into the regions of darkness and horror or into those of power and bliss, where it wanders in triumph until it reposes finally in the Elysian Fields.

132. PURE PRECEPTS OF PTAH HEP.

This coherent and, on the whole, elevated view of the after life is on a par with the pure moral philosophy of ancient Egypt. In the oldest proverbs of Ptah Hep, 3000 years B.C., we find the simplest, noblest, and most reverent tributes to the Deity—"All proceeds from God"; "Obey God and it will be well with thee"; "The field is given thee by God; thy treasure is grown through His gift; the good son, the good wife are the gifts of God; the Nile is the gift of God." Piety, charity, self-command, respect for property—such were the characteristics of the primitive religion of Egypt. These lent their fixed majesty to the faces of the Pharaohs; these stamp with placid content the features of artisans, Nile boatmen, fowlers, fishers,

herdsmen ; and the same expression of integrity and ease beams out in the countenances of their rulers and the high functionaries of State.

I need not trace the degradation of these lofty ideals, nor pause to show how the national symbolism dragged down the deities to the level of the beasts which perish. Animal worship and the adoration of physical force must always end so. When the golden calf is set up, whether it be at Memphis or in the wilderness, the people will sit down to eat and drink, and will rise up to play; *materialism and debauchery will assert their inevitable tyranny; the worship of the Creator will be lost in the worship of the creature, and the reign of scepticism will sooner or later set in.* It was so in Egypt under the Ptolemies; in Israel under Ahab and Jezebel; in Rome under Nero and Domitian; in that still more materialistic Rome of Leo X.; and in the materialistic London, Paris, and New York of this nineteenth century; for wherever the votaries of science, or the apostles of the sensuous refuse to lift their eyes above the operation of the scalpel, the mechanism of matter, the thrill of the senses, or the delights of form and colour, there, as

133. IDOLATRY AND SCEPTICISM.

of old, *materialism and debauchery will assert their inevitable sway, and the reign of scepticism will sooner or later set in.*

In the days of the Ptolemies the spiritual element in Egyptian religion had almost disappeared. Morality itself, at Memphis even, as at Jerusalem some three centuries later, was exchanged for rites and ceremonies, whilst vague emotions usurped the place of effectual, fervent prayer, and priests and offerings had thrust themselves between the soul and God until man came to disbelieve in both. Are we listening to a nineteenth-century agnostic or sceptic in this sad and pitiful cry from the tomb transcribed from a Ptolemaic tablet about B.C. 200 ?—"O my brother, my spouse, cease not to eat and drink, to keep holiday as long as thou livest on earth. This is the land of heavy sleep and darkness. Here they wake no more to see their brethren. The god who is here, Death Absolute is his name." The harper also sends his message from the tomb, but it is one inciting the living to conviviality, not to virtue, and he adds, "Mind the day when thou too shalt start for the land where all things are forgotten."

134. DAYS OF THE PTOLEMIES.

"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is a gospel not confined to any age or country, but it is just from such a gospel that He came to deliver us who said, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions"; and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

V.

THE LIGHT OF GREECE.

135. The good and the beautiful.—136. A composite race.—137. Marathon and Thermopylæ.—138. Athenian and Spartan influences.—139. Altars and groves.—140. The great god Pan.—141. Greek religious symmetry.—142. The great gods.—143. Deified men.—144. No devil.—145. The glory of this world.—146. The Acropolis.—147. The Parthenon.—148. Ancient spiritualism.—149. Greek prayers.—150. Sacrifices.—151. The priests respectable.—152. Health in mind and body.—153. Dean Stanley on the "Games."—154. Philosophy and the drama.—155. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle.—156. Person of Socrates.—157. His secret.—158. He knew nothing.—159. Cross-questioning.—160. His elevation of character.—161. Socrates arraigned.—162. Socrates before his judges.—163. Socrates in prison.—164. His last moments.—165. "Not far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

THE sunny buoyant atmosphere of Greece; the ripple of blue water about the Ægæan Isles; the grateful shade of the silvery olive-grove, and the rainbow glitter of the oleander and lemon blossom, seem to have passed into the life and religion of the Greeks from the earliest dawn of their history.

135. THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

We are far from the abstract metaphysics of the Indian, the massive brute-force element and animal worship of Egypt, or the dry utilitarianism of China, but everywhere is colour and light, and

a certain great and childlike rejoicing in nature. The Greek was the first who coupled the Good and the Beautiful together. His Goodness consisted in wisdom, temperance, and reverence for the gods. His ideal of Beauty was the human body; indeed, he had such an opinion of human nature itself and its various perfections that, instead of making man in God's image, he deliberately made his God in the image of man.

136. A COMPOSITE RACE.

The Greek race, like the English, was a curious composite of foreign elements, out of which that something, which we call national genius, born of climate, *entourage*, and confluence of many psychic forces and social tendencies, created a unity which proclaimed itself to all outer barbarians by an assemblage of states, all speaking the same tongue, worshipping the same gods, and devoted to the same or similar games and exercises. The unity of the Hellenes or Greeks, whether merchants at Massilia in Gaul, or at Olbia on the Euxine, or at Cyrene in Africa, reminds one of the freemasonry of the English tourists who meet and salute on the summit of the Pyramids or beneath the snowy spray of Niagara. As England

claimed Norse, and Roman, and Saxon, and Celtic blood, so the wealth and variety of the Greek nature can be traced far back to the dawn of history in the blending, on one and the same peninsula, of the swarthy Egyptian colonies of Cecrops and Danaus—the Phrygian sea-kings of Pelops and the Phœnician adventurers under the mythic Cadmus.

137. MARATHON AND THERMOPYLÆ.

This is not the place to dwell upon the outlines of Greek history; yet is it difficult to mark the religious characteristics of a people without some reference to the great events and personages under which the national religion has grown up or declined and withered. The overthrow of Darius at Marathon is not unnaturally marked by a re-awakenment of piety. The repulse of Xerxes at Thermopylæ, and the annihilation of his fleet at Salamis, could not fail to convince those who were few in number but united and heroic that they were the special favourites of the gods, against whom the million javelins of the Eastern barbarians would be hurled in vain. On the very same day another great victory was obtained by the Sicilian Greeks over the

Carthagenians. Greece, B.C. 480, was victorious along all the line; offerings to the gods were made amidst universal rejoicings, especially to the Delphic Oracle, now profusely enriched by grateful devotees.

138. ATHENIAN AND SPARTAN INFLUENCES.

The history of the Peloponnesian War—the rivalry between Athens and Sparta, which served at once to develop and contrast the intellectual vigour of the one with the moral and physical stamina of the other—the weary squabbles of the minor Grecian States amongst themselves; the Macedonian supremacy; the culmination of Greek conquest and military glory under Alexander; the triumph of Greek art under Phidias; the foundation of Greek legislation under Solon, Lycurgus, and Draco; the art of administration under Pericles, of oratory under Demosthenes, of poetry and the drama under Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes; of philosophy under Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle — belong to the general history of Greece, and their casual connection with the spiritual life of the people can only be slightly indicated in a bird's-eye view of Greek religion.

When the mixed colonies began to settle down, they exhibited what we should call the most "catholic" tendencies in religion. They adopted all the gods they could hear of, about thirty thousand in number, and for fear of leaving out any, altars to "unknown" deities were, down to the late days of Paul, by no means uncommon. The early shrines of Greece rose like the old Hebrew altars on hilly uplands to the "Unknown," to the "Merciful One"; but those rude altars, and temples almost as rude, that early crowned every high hill, where the cloudland of an unknown heaven reached down to mingle with the ascending smoke of burnt sacrifice, yielded in nothing to the sacred groves, where in the grateful shade the worshipper seemed ofttimes to hear the footsteps of sylvan deities walking as in a garden "in the cool of the day."

139. ALTARS AND GROVES.

The wily satyr was not seldom found lurking in ambuscade, and the playful wood-nymph bounded by swiftly, rustling the forest leaves that parted to receive and close again upon her shining form. At evening, across low marsh-lands in autumn,

140. THE GREAT GOD PAN.

by the shallow rifted pools smitten with sunset, the great god Pan himself had been sighted afar off, sitting huge and dark against the throbbing sky, and wild enchanting melodies from his reed pipes came floating with the soughing of the night-wind and the cries of startled waterfowl as they rose and fled like inky spots against the crimson sunstreaks. Sometimes the water-nymphs were almost, but never quite, surprised, bathing in the cool vale of Tempe; the gleam of their white bodies would dance on the surface of the stream only to be quickly buried beneath the wave. An immanent deity seemed everywhere to the teeming imagination of the Greek precipitated into a multitudinous personality; not an attribute of nature but what glowed, or flashed, or languished, or warbled itself into exquisite life, parodying or bettering the human and familiar appearance of man, woman, or child.

141. GREEK RELIGIOUS SYMMETRY.

But these thirty thousand minor personalities which surrounded and comforted the primitive Greek, who were bound to him by strange and sympathetic ties of valued ministry, and charged like specialists to attend to his wants and protect him generally,

were not productive of any confusion. The symmetrical genius of the Greek tempered his Pantheism with Polytheistic order, and the hierarchy of great gods ruled over by King Zeus reduced this Polytheism into something like a further monotheistic unity, shadowed forth by the vague belief in a Moira or supreme fate, which was but another name for the mysterious Anangke, or Principle of Necessity, to which even the greatest of the gods must bow.

The large scheme or framework arranging all minor divine personalities is in the Greek mythology singularly clear, graphic, and suggestive. To the mind of the Greek, until his philosophy corroded the very substance of his religion, the old mythology appears to have been a tolerably complete and satisfactory statement of the world as he saw it and loved it. In his scheme everything fitted in with the perfection and harmony of a Greek frieze or a Corinthian capital.

ZEUS, the son of Chronos (Time), was the highest, mightiest, and wisest of all, father of gods and men, watcher of human affairs, fount of hospitality, receiver of oaths, hater of lies.

142. THE GREAT GODS.

POSEIDON, ruler of the sea, shaker of earth and all its waters, god of deluges.

APOLLON, sun-deity, light of the world; also the light of the mind, terrible in love, in hate, and implacable in resentment.

HEPHAISTOS, god of terrestrial fire, patron of all workers in metal.

ARES, god of war.

HERMES, friend of shepherds, lover of flocks, also swift-footed messenger of commerce and love, a good bargainer—some will have it, patron of clever cheating besides; certainly the wily Greeks of all ages have not been above the suspicion.

ATHENE, Pallas, the goddess of wisdom.

APHRODITE, the goddess of love.

HESTIA, the guardian deity of the domestic hearth, from whose altar fire was taken to be transferred to the distant settlements of the race.

DEMETER, GAIA, the mother of agriculture and all the fruits of the earth.

Such were the chief elements in the divine hierarchy of the ancient Olympus.

And now mark the characteristic link between gods and men, which is to be found in the

systematic hero-worship of kings, warriors, and persons of genius like Æsculapius. Those who habitually expressed their conception of deity under the form of perfectly beautiful, or strong, or swift, or wise human beings found no difficulty in adoring the most beautiful, strong, or wise human beings that had ever been known or believed to exist.

143. DEIFIED MEN.

But perhaps the most extraordinary characteristic of Greek religion is the absence of any definite evil principle. Greece had no devil. The Greek had a perception of the unloveliness of violence, hatred, and disorder, but no clear conception of sin. He did not look upon the senses as so many mousetraps. He believed that the gods visited wrongdoing with vengeance; he even invented the Furies; but the consequence of wrong or mistaken action he regarded as a simple illustration of law and order in a universe divinely constituted, evil-doing not requiring any special atonement, though he certainly thought the gods might be cajoled, propitiated, bribed with wine and sacrifice. His next world was a

144. NO DEVIL.

dim, unreal business enough—truly a world of dreams, in which unreal shadows of men rolled uphill unreal shadows of stones for their misdeeds on earth, or walked like thin vapours in thin and vaporous fields, called Elysian, but full only of nebulous bliss.

145. THE GLORY OF THIS WORLD.

This earth was the Greek's world, the only world he cared about—perhaps the only one he really believed in—a lovely world of jewelled islets, set in a sapphire sea, of running streams and golden corn-lands, and ambrosial woods; a world of fair women and cherubic boys; of strong men, brave warriors, eloquent and ready speakers, legislators, philosophers, poets, and sculptors.

146. THE ACROPOLIS.

Let us now try and catch a glimpse of Greek city life at Athens (fifth century), Queen of Cities, star-crowned, with its Acropolis lifting its snowy statues and temples into the blue sky.

Whatever may be thought of the Greek religion as a spiritual system, it possessed at least one merit—it was inseparably connected with the everyday thoughts of the people. The civic life

of Greece was closely bound up with the games, which had almost, if not quite, a sacred character. The artistic and social life of Greece was inseparable from her shrines and images. The Acropolis of Athens, with its magnificent symbols of religion and art, was the pride of every Athenian, the subject of his hourly contemplation and settled joy. Leading from the Agora, on the top of a white marble flight of steps seventy feet broad, stood, in the days of Pericles, the Propylæa or entrance colonnades of white Pentelic marble, and as one entered a whole wilderness of shining temples burst full upon the view. Of these, the Parthenon raised to Pallas Athene was the most celebrated. We have some of its matchless fragments, commonly known as the Elgin Marbles, now in the British Museum. The Parthenon occupied the highest point of the Acropolis; its grace and symmetry is still the wonder of the world and the despair of architects. As late as 1676 it stood almost entire, as in the days of Pericles, but soon afterwards the Turks used it as a powder magazine. It blew up, and remained more or less of a dust-heap until 1836, when its fragments were unearthed and reconstructed as the traveller now sees them.

The statues and friezes of the Parthenon were executed by Phidias, the greatest of Greek sculptors, and his immediate pupils. Inside stood a colossal statue of Minerva, 40 feet high, of gold and ivory; and outside, another of bronze, 70 feet, both by the great master himself. All round the Parthenon were ranged other temples—the temple of Theseus, of Wingless Victory, and numberless statues of gods and heroes.

147. THE PARTHENON.

The more mystic elements of Greek religion —its holy of holies—were not, however, to be found in such frequented spots as the Acropolis, but rather in the more secluded shrines at Eleusis and at Delphi. Probably something very analogous to what is now known as Spiritualism, Mesmerism, Hypnotism went on at these places. At Eleusis the devotee was trained and initiated by abstinence and discipline of various kinds until his religious exercises passed into meditations and trances, in which he saw visions and dreamed dreams. At Delphi and such-like oracular shrines, the priests gave messages with the tilting tripods, or as we should say table-turnings and

148. ANCIENT SPIRITUALISM.

rappings, and uttered what a modern spiritualist would call trance-speeches; they fell, in fact, under the supposed influence of the gods—they became what would now be called trance-mediums. It is interesting and instructive to note the recurrence of such phenomena. Whether we come upon them in Egyptian soothsaying, Persian Magi, Chinese Taoism, Roman Augur, Delphic Oracle, Old and New Testament seer and miracle workers, Mediæval trance, vision, and *acta sanctorum*, down to the alleged gifts of healing, mesmerism, and the oracular phenomena of modern spiritualism—there seem to be connecting-links between them all, pointing, it may be, to some mystic region of our being not yet adequately explored by modern philosophy.

149. GREEK PRAYERS.

What precisely was the Greek notion of prayer it may be rather difficult to gather. It differed then, probably, as it differs now, according to the petitioner's spiritual elevation. Plato says the Greeks did nothing without prayer; and this is borne out by Homer, whose epic, to all appearances, represents a very real state of society, however mythical may be its settings. Nestor

prays for his success as ambassador, Ulysses prays as he comes into the Trojan camp, Priam prays before he enters the tent of Achilles to beg the body of Hector. But the Spartans had but one prayer; simply this, "That the gods would grant what was good for them," which is certainly not a bad version of "Thy will be done."

150. SACRIFICES.

In Greece there was High Church at rich Athens and Low Church at poor Sparta. Lycurgus favoured a simple form, in order that none might have an excuse for neglecting the gods; but at Athens, naturally, a far more sumptuous ritual prevailed.

In primitive times there were no priests. Everyone could offer sacrifices and pray to the gods in his own way. Sacrifices were innumerable —propitiatory, petitionary, and votive offerings; but due care was taken to show the willingness of the victim when a beast was offered; the animal was led by a loose cord, and made to nod assent by a little pepper being dropped into his ear at the right time, the conventional ceremony thus bearing witness to the highest view of sacrifice—*i.e.*, voluntary surrender.

But no religious system, however simple—and the Greek system was never that—can long escape the adoption by and the final domination of an official caste. Long before the age of Pericles and the Parthenon the priesthood and priestesshood were as perfectly organised as any department of the state. On the whole, if we except the licentious worship of Aphrodite, imported from Phœnicia and Cyprus, the influence of the priests seems to have been salutary enough in the best times. Their lives were respectable, sometimes ascetic; their business was with traditional rites, recitations, formulas, and sacrifices. They were also bound to make known the will of the gods by the deliverance or the interpretation of oracles.

151. THE PRIESTS RESPECTABLE.

Greek religion was not only connected with the arts which flourished vastly in the elaboration of statues and temples in honour of a multitude of divine and mythical personages, but the Grecian games were also sacred. The Greek's idea of good morals was a sound mind in a sound body; he aimed at this "*mens sana in corpore sano.*" This was, he

152. HEALTH IN MIND AND BODY.

believed, the will of the gods, and his training for it therefore rose to the dignity of a sacred duty.

153. DEAN STANLEY ON THE "GAMES."

St. Paul, in an immortal passage (1 Cor. ix. 24) which almost lives and breathes with the suppressed fervour of the spectators who crowded the "stadium" or racecourse, to witness the Isthmian games, has lifted those games for ever into the region of the sublimest Christian allegory. "Know ye not," he says, "that they who run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize."

"The Stadium," writes Dr. Stanley, the late illustrious Dean of Westminster, "or racecourse, of which the apostle speaks, was not a mere resort for public amusement, but an almost sacred edifice under the tutelage of the patron-deity of the Ionian tribes, and surrounded by the most solemn recollections of Greece, its white marble seats rising like the foundation of a temple in the grassy slope, where its outline may still be traced under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel which guards the entrance of the Peloponnesus. The race 'in which all ran,' the pugilistic contest in which they strove not to beat the air—were not merely exhibitions of bodily strength—but solemn

trials of the excellence of the competitors in the 'gymnastic art,' which was to the Greeks one half of human education. As the friends and relatives watched with breathless interest the issue of the contests they knew that the victor would be handed down to posterity by having his name sung in those triumphal odes of which Pindar's are the extant model, and his likeness placed in the long line of statues which formed the approach to the adjacent temple. The 'prize' which he won from the appointed judge who sat in state at the end of the course was such as could awake no mean or mercenary motives, its very simplicity attested its dignity; it was a garland of the Grecian pine, which still under its classical name clothes with its light green foliage the plains of the Isthmus, and which was then consecrated to the sea-god around whose temples its groves were gathered."

From the foregoing sketch it will be seen that there was in the great age of Pericles, and even down to later times, much that was noble in the Greek religion. Its forms nevertheless by an apparently inevitable law gradually became effete. The birth of science, with Thales, Herodotus,

154. PHILOSOPHY AND THE DRAMA.

and Pythagoras, had forced men to sift their religious and philosophical conceptions, and many found that like the sophists they had ceased to believe anything whilst prepared to teach and explain everything. The poets of an age show its tendencies and beliefs. Euripides admits retribution, but declares the Furies to be fancies. He countenances sacrifices, but Iphigeneia reflects that the gods cannot really want it, and in the choruses of the Electra the Greek mythology is criticised as acutely as are the Homeric gods by Plato. Aristophanes was the Molière of the time. He showed up vice without any serious purpose of curing it, or indeed any belief that it could be cured. Æschylus was the noblest of the dramatists. His works are full of an earnest purpose, suffused with religious reverence, breathing a pious resignation to destiny, and a firm belief in the inexorable nature of moral laws.

155. SOCRATES, PLATO, ARISTOTLE.

Into such an age was born Socrates, the wisest of the Greeks. If Plato represents the rich bloom of Greek philosophy, Aristotle its maturer fruit, Socrates undoubtedly represents the germ. He sowed the seed of a new method. Henceforth no

theory of the world or man could escape discussion. Authority with Socrates went for nothing. About everything he asked, "What is it?" "Is it true?" and "What is true about it?" Those three questions fairly sum up the Socratic method. He wrote nothing; we get him at second-hand, as we get a greater than Socrates at second-hand. He conversed constantly in the streets, was always elbowing his way through the crowd to see what was going on, asked incessant questions in the market-place, and was always teaching whilst professing to learn.

156. PERSON OF SOCRATES.

We know that sturdy, stunted figure, with its bullet-shaped head, and eager, quick eyes, and restless mouth, round which there for ever plays that curl of good-humour and playful satire which attracted and won so many heads and hearts. Xenophon and Plato, his friend and pupil, have given us the most fascinating glimpses of his person, and what may almost be called recollections of his preaching at Athens. In that æsthetic city this uncouth philosopher and companion of all men, noticed at once for his genial, ugly face, thick lips, protuberant eyes and

stomach, shuffling gait and ragged cloak, wielded a strange influence. When he walked abroad chatting with high and low it was soon known whether he was in the Agora or on the Acropolis.

He understood and felt deeply the wants of his age. He inquired ever, not what could be said about things, but what things actually were—the truth of the religious idea, the truth of the moral principle, the truth of each scientific conception. He asked men questions and sifted their answers, and chiefly he felt, and made them feel profoundly, the incompetence of the old beliefs to explain the new problems of the time. As our modern poet sings of another age—

157. HIS SECRET.

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

Let us for a moment look a little nearer at that life of Socrates, and at that death.

Born in 468 B.C., in youth Socrates had fought in the wars. Xantippe, his wife, appears to have been a sad scold, but he did not complain; on the contrary, he said she trained him in patience, a quality

158. HE KNEW NOTHING.

which all wise men should cultivate. He put up quietly with many personal privations, for he was very poor; but he never allowed poverty or his wife's temper to interfere with his mission of hunting men—ascertaining what they had to say, probing their superficial views and opinions, and convincing them that they knew nothing. He took no pay; he said he had nothing to teach; he only wished to learn—to know something properly.

This is an example of his searching method. "You talk of *injustice*, my friend; do you know what you mean by it?" "Of course," says the man of the crowd; "to lie, to deceive people, to rob them; that is surely injustice." "What!" says Socrates, "to do all these things to *enemies*, is that injustice?" "Well, no; not exactly, of course. I mean to deceive and rob *friends*." "What!" says Socrates again, "to encourage invalids when sick, disguise their physic by concealing it in their food, and pretending they are not quite so ill as they seem; to inspire soldiers in a forlorn hope with the promise of victory; to rob a friend of that weapon with which he is

159. CROSS-QUESTIONING.

about to commit suicide, is that injustice?" "Well, no; not exactly." And the glib man of the crowd, baffled so far, is brought to feel that he has never realised the exact meaning of his own words, nor been able to render to himself a clear account of injustice.

Goodness is treated in the same way, and Euthydemus goes off, feeling that his ideas are confused and contradictory upon that subject too, and that he truly knows nothing. This was a frequent result of a little conversation with the great Athenian questioner. The knowledge that we don't know anything Socrates held to be the first step towards learning something.

Some kept away from so tantalizing a sage, but Xenophon tells us that Euthydemus, who had been more often baffled and defeated than anyone else, "thought that the only way to improve himself was still to converse with Socrates."

160. HIS ELEVATION OF CHARACTER.

The inquiry of Socrates—so far as he inquired at all—into final causes was altogether summary and practical. He held that the world was the work of a benevolent Creator, that true virtue was based on sound and accurate knowledge, that

the perfect way involved the right use of pleasure, and not total abstinence from it, and that true happiness could only be found in temperance, uprightness, and moderation in all things. When the Athenians called Socrates impious, they must have forgotten such beautiful utterances as that in the "Phœdrus," in which he is willing to wed the religious emotion even to the mythological symbols current in his day. "Oh, beloved Pan!" he prays, "and all ye other gods of this place, grant me to become beautiful in the inner man, that so whatever outward things I have may be at peace with those within." Then, turning to Phœdrus, the master said, "Do we need anything else?"

"Offer up," says Phœdrus, "the same prayer for me also!"

"No one," remarks Xenophon, "ever heard or saw anything wicked in Socrates—a man so pious that he was in constant communion with the gods, so just as never to injure any one in the least degree, so self-controlled that he never preferred pleasure to goodness, so sensible that he never made a mistake between what was better and what was worse. In a word, he was the best and happiest of men."

Thus, under the guise of a simple inquirer after truth, for half-a-century Socrates was the assiduous teacher, friend, and adviser of the people of Athens, who resorted to him as he did to them. But his time came. He had laboured to promote right conduct; that interfered with those who preferred to do evil. He had sought for true knowledge; Athens was full of false professors and sophists. He had always denounced corrupt State practices; Athens was full of dishonest officials and corrupt judges. So it came to pass, inexorably and inevitably as the direct result of his life and conversation, that Socrates was capitally arraigned after sundry vague accusations of unfaithfulness to country, because he neglected State offices and looked after the morals of State officials.

161. SOCRATES ARRAIGNED.

1st. For introducing new gods (and not honouring the old ones), because he saw the need (whilst not wholly discarding the popular religious phraseology) of *restating* religion and *remoulding* theology.

2nd. For baneful influence exercised over the youths of Athens, because he taught them to despise even authority when at variance with right conduct and true knowledge.

The tale of Socrates' trial, last moments, and death, is too familiar and too long to be told in detail here. I can but allude to it before I close. He was found guilty and condemned to drink the poison of hemlock. The prisoner on leaving the dock remarked, "That death, since it introduced us into a higher life, was after all more good than evil; that he would fain be spared the inevitable pains and weaknesses of old age, and thus depart, leaving behind him a fair name and unsullied reputation; that any philosopher might well be content to die, though he should not commit suicide, for to shrink from life was cowardly; that philosophy had prepared him for death, by withdrawing his mind from earthly things, even as death withdraws the soul from the body."

162. SOCRATES BEFORE HIS JUDGES.

On the morning of the day on which he was to die, his friends found him rubbing the leg bruised by the chain which had just been removed, and later on he spoke with incomparable elevation and serenity concerning the nature of Life and Death and the Immortality of the Soul. In view of that next world to which he looked forward so

163. SOCRATES IN PRISON.

confidently, he exhorts his dear friends, as might any gospel preacher, to live well here below, and follow after virtue and wisdom. "For," he adds, "the reward is noble and the life is great!"

Just ere he drank the poison, he turned to Phædo, and said, "Pray to the gods that my departure hence may be happy." He then lifted the cup with a steady hand and drained it to the dregs.

164. HIS LAST MOMENTS.

"I wept," says Phædo, who was an eye-witness, "for myself; I did not weep for him; but for my own calamity in being deprived of such a friend!" Socrates then lay down, and as the chills of death stole over him, he remembered a tribute of reverence owed to the divine Æsculapius. "Pay it, Crito, do not neglect it." These were his last words; they spoke to him, but he answered no more. Socrates was dead.

It is doubtless true that Christians found their hopes of immortality, not on the arguments of Socrates, but on their trust in the love of God revealed by Christ. Yet it is also true, I think, that contemplating such deaths as that of Socrates

165. "NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

—for I will not allude here to the scene on Calvary—it becomes hard for us to believe that lives like his are really extinct when their earth-envelope falls off. The noble yet childlike faith of this Athenian philosopher seems to me the highest level reached by what we are accustomed to call heathen, but which we might perhaps less invidiously term human, philosophy.

VI.

THE LIGHT OF ROME.

166. Roman Characteristics.—167. The Pantheon.—168. Function of the gods.—169. Jupiter.—170. Græco-Roman gods.—171. Janus.—172. One god plays many parts.—173. Everything called divine.—174. Sentiments deified.—175. Genius loci.—176. Guardian spirit.—177. Lares and Penates.—178. In the Lararium.—179. The Pontifex Maximus.—180. The Flamens and other priests.—181. The Vestal Virgins.—182. The Augurs.—183. The Haruspices.—184. Residuum of truth.—185. Veiled deities.—186. St. Paul and Cicero right.—187. The Roman year sacred.—188. Old friends with new faces.—189. The atonement.—190. Prayer.—191. Through thin disguises.—192. A future life.—193. Græco-Roman religion.—194. Lowering tendencies.—195. Picturesque but immoral.—196. Cato a "Mugwump."—197. A change at hand.

THE religion of the Romans like that of all other religions is branded—not in a bad sense—with the leading features of the national character. The agricultural industry of the Roman, his military enterprise, and, above all, his love of order and unique genius for organisation, seem aptly reflected in the major and multitude of minor Roman deities.

166. ROMAN CHARACTERISTICS.

The State or Republic of Rome was slowly but solidly built up out of the most heterogeneous elements. The old story that Romulus, finding it

difficult to defend himself against his neighbours, threw the city open to all sorts of lawless folk on condition that they would hang together and fight it out with their neighbours, may have little historical foundation, but it not inaptly symbolizes the composite character of the Roman nation, their valour and respect for authority. The two key-notes which made Rome great were War and Law—whilst the importance she attached to her ancient agricultural deities emphasizes that Gift of Industry which made Romans, in addition to their military and governmental supremacy, the sovereign cultivators of the soil.

From Mommsen's recent investigations the characteristics of the Roman State emerge clearly. The Roman nation in the earliest days was an amalgamation of three independent cantons—Ramnes, Tities, Luceres (the first by a common shift of sound gave the name Romans to the State). The first and third of these were undoubtedly of Latin stock. The second as certainly Sabine. They seem to have forced themselves upon the Ramnians (of whom in the old traditions they take precedence).

Traces of this tripartite division may be found :—

1. In the words "tribuere"—"tribus," always used in constitutional legal formulae in the sense of partition and part.

2. In ritual, three or some multiple of three almost invariably being the number of members of the oldest colleges.

Long before Rome was built these cantons, at first separate, afterwards united, had their fastness on the seven hills; tilling their fields from the surrounding villages and meeting at the "wolf feast"—Lupercalia—a rural feast on the Palatine which preserved to an unusual extent its antique simplicity and outlived all the other heathen festivals in Christian Rome.

By nature, geographical position, and genius, Rome seemed marked out to be the great old world centre. She was undoubtedly the chief central emporium. The Tiber was the commercial highway of Latium, its mouth necessarily the anchorage and haven of merchantmen from the east and the west. Rome occupied the best position on the river banks as a fortress and a port, it commanded both sides of the river down to the sea; it was equally convenient for the river trader coming down, and the seafarer with the small craft of his day coming up; it was far

enough from the sea to be safe from the Mediterranean pirate so conspicuous in ancient history.

Of course to a trading city on the Tiber the bridges over the river would be of the greatest importance—the word "pontifex," or pontiff, and the attention paid to bridge-making generally among the Romans are interesting in that connection, as showing the recurrent and inseparable connection between the secular life of the Roman and his religion.

167. THE PANTHEON.

The Roman, like the Greek, and I may add the English nationality, owed its strength and variety to its composite nature. The Latins, Sabines, and Etruscans all built up the State of Rome — all contributed their culture and installed their own deities. The Romans had no special cosmogony—no favourite gods—everyone was allowed to bring his own—all seemed welcome, all were equally accepted by the State, which, if it gave any theological unity at all to the National Pantheon, only did so by a rather misty assertion of the general supremacy of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. This, however, seems to me far more significant, both as regards the theology and the

morality of the Roman faith, than some writers who denounce the artificiality of the Roman religion appear to think. For the doctrine of one Supreme God, however misty, really reduces all the rest to so many agents or impersonated attributes—and here, I believe, lies the explanation of that puzzling fact that the Romans could treat their gods very irreverently and even sceptically whilst being most punctilious and elaborate in their prayers, and, as Cicero says, "the most religious people in the world." The symbol might be of small intrinsic value, the work of men's hands, but the Providence remained a central fact, an eternal co-ordinating law to which all must bow. It was the Optimus Maximus fact of the Roman life.

We shall now be able to arrange in some sort of order the Latin, Sabine, and Etruscan gods with their related deities, and that attendant host of pale abstractions, by means of which the idea of an immanent Providence got filtered down through all ranks of society. The Divinity became at last (as in the decadence of all religions) a thing not so much to be obeyed, as to be worked, cajoled,

168. FUNCTION OF THE GODS.

even cheated and coerced into doing the will of man—for the Roman, if he believed at all, got to hold that no god had any right—perhaps not even the power—to resist the demands of his worshippers, providing the proper ritual of approach had been adopted and sufficient sacrifices had been duly performed.

At the head of all the gods stood the ancient Djaus-Pitar—(Sanscrit Aryan deity—the *Z*eus of the Greeks)—the Jupiter of the Etruscans, with his queen, Juno, the goddess of Marriage and Domesticity, and his counsellor, or rather his embodied wisdom or thought, Minerva.

169. JUPITER.

No images in the old days were made—no naughty or undignified stories were told about these great gods. All that mythology came later on, imported from Greece, whose function it was to humanise, popularise, and, we must add, cheapen and degrade the deities of a people originally severe and practical in thought and cold in fancy.

The sunny and rippling laughter of Greek fairy tales, grafted on the stern conceptions of Etruria,

were almost as anomalous as some of those French plays which, when done into English, are found to retain their coarseness and immorality, but not their grace and *naïveté*. The old Italian deities certainly embodied large, serious, and suggestive thoughts.

170. GRÆCO-ROMAN GODS.

The old Sabine god, Janus, was conceived of as a kind of fate. He presided over beginnings—he gives his name to January, the first month of our year. The beginning of everything was to the Romans solemn and fateful —to end well one must start right—when could a man more need divine guidance than at the beginning of a new year—a new day—a new profession —above all, a new war? The Temple of Janus had four sides for the seasons. The gates thrown open in time of war signified that Rome attacked and did not wait to be attacked. The closed doors were a sign that the empire was at peace.

171. JANUS.

The need of associating the great gods, who were generally responsible for the government of the world and men, with special events, gave rise to one god playing many parts, and then being variously apostrophised,

172. ONE GOD PLAYS MANY PARTS.

as Jupiter, the Rain-god (Pluvius), or Fairweather god (Serenator), or the Victorious (Victor), or City-Guardian (Urbis Custos)—and separate temples to him in these his various capacities were erected.

Juno in the same way was not only the goddess of Virgins (Virginensis) and Matrons (Matrona), but of Children (Matuta or Matutina, the Dawn), and also of the Mint (Moneta); and Minerva presided over Medicine (Medica) as well as Wisdom and Thought.

173. EVERYTHING CALLED DIVINE.

The Romans had a habit of calling all kinds of things divine, and of course first and foremost the most common and recurrent phenomena of nature, the Sun (Sol) was a god, though he never attained to divine corporeity until the Greeks took him in hand, and presented him to their imaginative masters as Apollo. The Moon—Vulcan—Neptune—Fontus (god of Fountains), Father Tiber, of course, and there were even some shadowy agents, such as Portumnus (god of Harbours), and Tranquillitas (goddess of Calm Weather), and Vacuna—a goddess who has scarcely yet lost her popularity—she was the goddess of "doing nothing!"

A whole class of so-called gods and goddesses only had a kind of courtesy title to personality. They correspond more to what we should call "sentiments" and "ideas," but are none the less capable of exacting emotion and claiming a certain allegiance and spiritual homage—just as in these days there is a White-Cross movement for chastity, a Salvation Army for temperance, and a whole phalanx of philanthropists united in an ardent confraternity of peace against war.

174. SENTIMENTS DEIFIED.

So there was Vesta, the White-Cross goddess of those days, guardian of modesty, tended only by virgin priestesses, with her sacred fire always alight. The goddess Pudicitia was a fainter abstraction still. Fides, Concordia, Spes, Voluptas were all in some sort divine, whilst every spot of earth and every accident of human association was similarly sealed as with a sacred signet ring. Tellus, the earth; Ceres, the goddess of Cereals; Liber, the god of Wine; Cybele, or the Great Mother; Flora, the Flower goddess, of very doubtful morals; Pomona, of the Harvest; and a certain Bona Dea—the friend and protector of women—from whose rites all men were excluded. She was the Good goddess, dead against all

triflings with love — she recognised only the chastest marriages avowedly for the preservation and continuation of the family, and the protection of the race.

175. GENIUS LOCI.

For a moment the practical Roman mind seems to have been touched with a native fancy, worthy of Greece, but singularly enough in this case not borrowed from Greece. I allude to the *Genius* or Genius loci. The conception is quite Italian. What all sensitive and poetic natures feel about a summer vale, a wild sea coast, a woodland dell, or, especially, any place of human resort touched with characteristic associations, such as Cicero's Tusculum villa, the house of Mæcenas (even the marriage-bed which was called *genial*), the gardens of Lucullus — now so well known as the sylvan walks and shrubberies on the top of the Pincian Hill—about such places there was what we call an atmosphere or feeling, which, to the Roman, seemed almost spiritual and personal. On coming upon such scenes one's mood changed, the mind seemed ruled by certain suave, solemn, or stimulating influences, as the case might be; all were aware of some indefinable

controlling power. Surely this must be an immanent Genius. They called it the *Genius loci.*

A similar spiritual conception—the protecting genius of the individual—was to the Roman what the guardian angel was to the devout Catholic of later ages—the idea was even extended (with perhaps a far-off Aryan refrain from the more ancient Persian theology (the Fravashi of the Avesta) to nations, colonies, and governments — each was under high angelic supervision.

176. GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

Perhaps, however, the most pathetic point of contact between the Roman mind and the Unseen World is to be found in the doctrine of Penates and Lares. In these two words were summed up all that the Roman of the best days felt about his "Home, sweet home." The Lares were none other than their dead ancestors. No worshipper of Confucius believed more firmly in the souls of his ancestors, their spiritual presence in the home and their actual regard for the living beings who owed to them their existence.

177. LARES AND PENATES.

When the Roman looked at the ranged statues or busts in his family oratory, he felt that the realities could not be far off, and that the invisibles looked tenderly on with propitious sympathy whilst he piously crowned their cold marble effigies with fresh flowers in the Lararium (domestic chapel).

178. IN THE LARARIUM.

The inner shrine of the home was sacred to the Penates — a superhuman order of spirits. Thus the Roman, with the truest spiritual instinct, whilst rendering the tenderest homage to the founders of his family, sought for the sanction and benediction of the home-life itself in something above and beyond even the revered ancestors.

The family prayers were conducted by the father of the family, as old Cato has it, "*Scito dominum pro tota familia rem divinam facere*," but the public prayers and ceremonies were of a far more extensive and elaborate character.

In the earlier days, to about 300 B.C., the priesthood was exclusively in the hands of the great Patrician families; but democracy first carried the election of a plebeian Pontifex Maximus in 253 B.C. These

179. THE PONTIFEX MAXIMUS.

Pontiffs—the real ancestors of the Popes of Rome, to whom they have transmitted some curious characteristics—took their name from the bridge uniting both banks of the Tiber, which it was their duty to keep in repair, with a view to sacrificing on either shore. The Pontiff was supreme in all matters of worship, and, like the Pope, he was a great State officer, dealing with the laws of marriage, inheritance, and the order of the public games and ceremonies.

180. THE FLAMENS AND OTHER PRIESTS.

The fifteen Flamens were priests of particular deities; the priest of Jupiter was the most ancient and important of them all, and his life was hemmed round with points of etiquette and ceremony which, like so many of the Mosaic regulations, all had a meaning once, but as time went on stiffened up like all ancient ceremonies into mere formal rites, the significance of which was apt to be ignored or forgotten. No Conventicle ever held a modern Presbyterian tighter than etiquette held the chief Flamen. The Flamen of Jupiter must not swear or ride, or look on armed men or prisoners, or at any toil on a feast day, nor must he eat dog or goat, raw flesh,

or yeast, and he must never bathe in the open air, or pass a night outside the city walls.

The Salii (priests of Mars) Luperci, Epulones, Curiones, and Tities were so many other orders of the priesthood, many colleges of them being needed (like the Roman Catholic seminaries, orders, &c.) for the extremely complicated and incessant service of the gods.

181. THE VESTAL VIRGINS.

The vestal virgins show sufficiently the high honour attached by the Romans to the purity of women. The State needed a well ordered family — the mother of a Roman citizen must come to her husband sacred and pure as a vestal. Whatever irregularities were permitted outside the family circle—and concubinage was not thought wrong—the sinews of family life were felt to depend upon a race of young girls taught to regard their womanhood as a thing to be surrendered unsullied into the keeping of a lawful husband. Girls became vestals very young, but at the age of thirty they might resign. A breach of vows was punished with death, but they had numerous consolations. They enjoyed unbounded public favour, and the most obsequious respect. They

enjoyed the singular privilege of pardoning any condemned criminal whom they might happen to meet. I trace in this one of those instinctive tributes to humane feeling whereby, in all ages, the letter of the law has been waived and justice tempered by mercy. Is there not here also a touch of that old notion of vicarious mercy—the superfluous virtue of the Vestal being placed, as it were, at the disposal of one who had forfeited his own. This extremely forensic and entirely Roman view of the ground on which crimes may be pardoned re-appears succinctly formulated at last by the great jurist, Grotius (1583—1645). It is the doctrine of the imputed merits and vicarious sufferings of Christ—of characteristically Roman origin—an echo of the Roman law court. The Vestals had the best seats at the games and festivities; to strike them was a capital offence; they had large personal liberty, and their lives—unlike those of the Christian nuns—were in every way such as could be contemplated with sympathy and become a practical ideal for young girls living in the world and looking forward to marriage. This was, perhaps, the great social and moral use of the Vestals in the State. They were good types, veritable models of what a high-toned unmarried

girl might well be, and was generally assumed to be—perfectly chaste, perfectly natural, mixing freely with her kind, not cut off from social or festal circles—often engaged in cooking (the vestal made the sacred cakes), and not shut off even from marriage, if she chose, at the age of thirty, to change her special and priestly vocation for the family life.

The functions of the Augurs are, perhaps, rather less intelligible. The Augur was, in fact, the seer; his name comes from an old Aryan root signifying "*Eye*," the Greek *αὐγη*, the German *auge*. Their decisions were associated with a contemplation of the starry heavens, the flight of birds, and the observation of all sorts of casualties, which seemed to supply them with hints, and to rouse suggestions and thoughts as a guide to action.

182. THE AUGURS.

In all ages and countries the "Seer," or perhaps we may say the Trance-medium, has supposed himself to be indebted to such like arbitrary indications, and, as far as we can make out, he has often been the dupe of the most irrelevant phenomena. Like many other aids to devotion

it may well be questioned whether these ritual and ceremonial externals were essential, or rather accidental; but it would be rash to declare, after making every allowance for superstition, self-deception, and conscious imposture, that no occult power of any kind, no sort of second-sight, heightened acuteness of forecast or intuition, call it what you will, belonged to a class of men who were allowed for centuries at any moment to stop the wheels of state, and control almost every conceivable public or private enterprise.

The Haruspices, of Etruscan origin, did not hold the same dignified position as the Augurs. They speculated on the flight of birds, and their business lay chiefly with the sacrificial rites, of which the Romans were so brutally and murderously fond. Cicero asks "How can a cleft in a liver be connected by any natural law with any acquisition of a property?"—and some 1900 years afterwards we can still only ask "how indeed?"

183. THE HARUSPICES.

The rites and superstitions of other countries and ages may often fail to impress us with

anything but a sense of their futility, but I think it is rash to conclude that the Roman religion in its maturity abounded to any great extent in mere senseless and artificial ceremonies. Here, as elsewhere, we may get down if we will through the loam or rubble of man's devices and superstructures to "the hard granite of God's first idea." It may be true that the chance flight of birds and the automatic quivering of cloven entrails signified little in themselves, but that no flight or fall of birds could take place without the ken and guidance of the "Overpower"—that no internal seat of life could vibrate or be revealed without betraying some mystery and wonder of divine intention—are thoughts which, in one form or another, belong to a religion nobler and truer than that of ancient Rome.

184. RESIDUUM OF TRUTH.

We may smile at the wholesale and convenient —almost *ad captandum*—manufacture of gods such as Pecunia the god of cattle, Æsculanus the god of copper coin, and Argentinus the god of silver —but the notion that an increase of flocks and herds, all sources of mineral wealth, and all commercial prosperity through the interchange of commodities are so many divine blessings, and

that their human enjoyment and use should be in some sort divinely regulated, is an idea at least comprehended in the invocation of another liturgy belonging to a very different age, addressed to "the Author and giver of all good gifts," as well as in a certain prayer that, "in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name."

If the shepherd calls HIM the giver of cattle, and the rich man calls Him the giver of silver, and the poor man calls Him the giver of copper —Pecunia, Æsculanus, or Argentinus—our supercilious simile is hardly in place—in truth, "they are but broken lights of Thee, and Thou, O Lord, art more than they!"—yet must we surely call them "lights."

The Etruscans contributed to the Roman cults the worship of veiled deities. Of what use it may be asked could this possibly be? Yet the worship of the unknown God is probably the only form of worship recognised by a multitude of devout but sceptical souls in all ages of the world, and even those who formulate their conceptions of deity most "rigorously and vigorously" are occasionally

185. VEILED DEITIES.

brought to a full stop by some veiled aspect, some inscrutable mystery, some horrible moral contradiction, some insoluble problem, in which the awful Deity still seems to say alike to the agnostics and the dogmatists of the nineteenth century, as He said to Moses when He hid him in a cleft of a rock on Mount Horeb, "Thou canst not see My face."

186. ST. PAUL AND CICERO RIGHT.

I am therefore inclined to think that our conceited patronage of the beautiful Greek myths, and our supercilious contempt for the harder and more mechanical religion of Rome may be, on the whole, superfluous; indeed, Paul was perhaps nearer the mark, when he declared that the Athenians with Phidias, their god-carver, were even "too religious," and Cicero, when he asserted that "the Romans were the most religious people in the world."

187. THE ROMAN YEAR SACRED.

We are familiar with what we call the Christian year—every day is supposed to be marked with religious significance. It is opened and closed with prayer—its weeks and months are jewelled with festi-

vals, or sobered with fasts; but the old Roman year was quite as closely wedded to religion, as religion was then understood, and a few details selected at random from the Roman Calendar will show that every-day life, all the year round, was conceived by the old Romans to be full of religious sanctions. Some of these at least seem fit to be transplanted to more recent times.

The Charistia, or family feast, 18th to 28th of February, for ending quarrels amongst relations, would not disgrace any company of faithful people who now meet to celebrate the Eucharist. The feast of Terminus, 23rd February, or the anointing of boundary stones, would scarcely be inappropriate in a Christian land where nothing is so common as the removal of a neighbour's landmark, and where village greens have shrunk before the encroachments of wealthy land-owners, and park palings are stealthily and unscrupulously built out over common lands by many a roadside. The Vulcanalia, 23rd August, for the prevention of fires, must even now be viewed with peculiar sympathy by our large insurance offices; whilst the Saturnalia, or thanksgiving for the harvest,

188. OLD FRIENDS WITH NEW FACES.

seems to find an echo in every harvest festival throughout the land—may we add that the lawless freedom or rather licence of the old festival is not wholly unreflected in the anything but "pious orgies" of beer—usually inseparable from a harvest-homing in England.

189. THE ATONEMENT.

The Februatio, or feast of purification, lustration, and atonement, strikes a deeper note—it carries the mind back to the elaborate Jewish festival—to the deep craving in the heart of man for moral peace and reconciliation. How that should be effected has indeed been a fruitful source of controversy in the different ages of man's religious development. The Canaanite pointed to Moloch and a holocaust of human victims—the Jew to the blood of bulls and goats—the Greeks to the sacrifice of animal, floral, vegetable, and even mineral treasure—the Christians to Calvary; but the need of a washing and cleansing from sin through some expiatory sacrifice has haunted every religion that has possessed power over the heart of man—whilst the higher spirits in all ages have perceived that the only sacrifice needed was the sacrifice of a will resigned to the

highest—the only expiation—ceasing to do evil and learning to do good.

Lastly, the directions concerning prayer seem by no means idle—but, on the contrary, they practically unite the Roman at prayer to the devout worshipper in all ages and countries. The Roman, when he prayed, covered his head—he must shut out all sights and sounds; others have bowed themselves to the earth, or buried their head in their hands, or retired into their chamber and shut their door—in each case the same end was accomplished. All prayer involves a certain mental abstraction, the three-fold repetitions enjoined by the Roman ritual, like ritual repetitions in all ages, were not necessarily vain or merely mechanical, though they would naturally have a tendency to become so. Repetition is an aid to concentration—a certain trance-like fixity of soul is attained most readily by such means, through such exercises; the soul is rendered passive with a kind of spiritual hypnotism—the troubled surface of life grows calm as a summer morn, and the spirit of God moves on the face of the waters.

190. PRAYER.

Through what thin disguises after all do the old perennial *genii* of religion look out upon us. The great Over-soul of all ages is in Jupiter — His wisdom shines through Minerva. Opening his hand he filleth all things living with plenteousness through Tellus, and Pomona, and Ceres—Sol is his light-giver, seas, tempests, clouds, woods, streams, fires, have all their appointed places in the divine cosmos ; and the moral qualities, such as Fidelity, Chastity, Piety, Concord, and Courage, are all mapped out as it were into so many spiritual provinces, governed by angelic deputies bearing those sacred names.

191. THROUGH THIN DISGUISES.

Did the Romans believe in a future life? In view of their Lares and Penates, their steadfast faith in the haunting presence of dead ancestors, it is impossible to say that they did not; but the life was shadowy and impalpable to a degree—the Virgilian notion of the "shades" is wholly Greek —it is a thin under-world or upper-world life, entirely without the horrible materialism of Dante— the shades mutter in hollow murmurs—depression reigns below and dulness above—they are too

192. A FUTURE LIFE.

unsubstantial to suffer much or enjoy much; they seem to pine feebly for earth life—the fact is, the Greek loved this life too well to realise powerfully any other, whilst the Roman, somewhat like the Mosaic Jew, was so much occupied in organising the present world, that he had no serious thoughts or feelings beyond it. Strange point of similarity between these peoples, so different in almost everything here—alike in this only, their extremely weak hold upon immortality. The Jew said "righteousness here—that is life"; the Greek said "beauty and knowledge here—that is life"; the Roman said "law and industry here—that is life." But St. John, in bringing life and immortality to light, said "This is life—*eternal*—to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent."

193. GRÆCO-ROMAN RELIGION.

The comparative transformation of the Roman religion by contact with the Greek religion is exactly paralleled by the transformation of the Roman social life by contact with the Greek life. Athens became the Paris of Italy; and as many people lament the importation of a certain Gallican ease of manners and laxity of morals through

an increasing acquaintance with French literature and fashion, so the Romans of the old school regretted the corruption and æstheticism and general laxity of morals and scepticism in religion, which crept in along with the wily Greek merchant from Corinth, the smart Ephesian clerk or valet, the Attic lecturer, the Athenian sculptor or poet, actor or musician.

194. LOWERING TENDENCIES.

Mommsen—bearing in mind the almost Spartan severity of the old Roman, his narrow patriotism, his worship of the State, his hard reverence for mere law and order—rightly says "that the Greek civilisation was grandly human, and that Rome was not only stimulated by this influence, but penetrated by it to its very centre," and Cicero means the same thing when he remarks that "A full river of influence and not a little brook has flowed into Rome out of Greece." So full, indeed, that in time every Roman god got his Greek double. Jupiter was identified with Zeus, Venus with Aphrodite, Neptune with Poseidon, Minerva with Athene, and so forth. All this was no doubt humanising enough; but instead of taking up the manhood into Godhead

as in the Christian religion, it dragged down the Godhead into manhood, and not a very respectable manhood either. For with the Greek doubles came in the Greek statues, and with the Greek statues came in the Greek myths, and along with them the "Chroniques scandaleuses" of an Olympus that can hold its own fairly well with the chronicles of the "Petit Trianon" and "Parc-au-Cerfs" of a later age, but a no less materialistic and sensual society.

As the Republic declined, Rome grew picturesque at the expense of virtue—tolerant at the expense of faith—rich without principle, and cultured without morals. James Freeman Clarke has finely said, "As the old faith died more ceremonies were added, for as life goes out forms come in. As the winter of unbelief lowers the stream of piety, the ice of ritualism accumulates along its banks." The Greeks, indeed, imported human passion into the somewhat cold abstractions of Rome; but they gave her no fresh reverence—no wholesome teaching—no rule of conduct—only *spectacle!*

195. PICTURESQUE BUT IMMORAL.

Under these circumstances the attitude of the sturdier souls was singularly helpless. Cato hated the new dances of Bacchus, and the orgies of Cybele; but at the same time he felt sadly that the old stern ideals had lost their power with the people. He could but stand aside and deplore the degeneracy of the age without being prepared with a remedy—he was, in fact, a classic "Mugwump" of the period. But the Mugwump is never a real reformer—he is essentially a grumbler, and with all his affected airs of superiority he belongs to the dead past and not to the living future.

196. CATO A "MUGWUMP."

But the end of the conflict between the old and the new was not far off. Lucretius boldly proclaims the old mythology a lie and a curse—very much as M. Paul Bert denounced the French Priesthood and the Roman Catholic religion; both overlooking the central fact of man's need of a religion and a God, enshrined alike in the heart of the pre-Christian Olympus and the post-Christian Papacy. With the later stoics —Seneca, Epictetus, and the brave Antonines we

197. A CHANGE AT HAND.

get the last expiring attempt to rise above raw scepticism or cynical agnosticism. The fine literary indifference of Cicero—which could air the *pros* and *cons* of the existence or non-existence of the gods, the soul or no-soul theory, the Providence or blind chance opinions with equal gusto and impartiality, and ride off upon an elegant sentiment—could hardly satisfy even a public sufficiently weak to be impressed by the Cataline orations. At last the dilettante treatment, the scholastic exercitation method was laid aside; Seneca is quite serious, Epictetus is more, he is ardent and earnest; whilst Marcus Aurelius adds a peculiar reverence and tenderness, as of a heart saddened and subdued, face to face with problems that can neither be resolved nor ignored.

But it was too late. When enlightened souls and good men like the elder Pliny could exclaim "all religion is the offspring of necessity, weakness, and fear," it was tolerably evident that some radically new standpoint must be found before the religion of the empire would be rehabilitated. The popular religion no longer held the wits and philosophers, nor could the philosophers contrive any religious thing capable of moulding the masses. The old

world was played out indeed when a Marcus Aurelius was not happy, and when his favourite preachers could neither reform the popular morals nor remould the popular faith.

VII.

THE LIGHT OF SCANDINAVIA.

198. The Scandinavian hall-mark.—199. A Teutonic wave.—200. Recurrent ideas.—201. The great gods.—202. The Eddas.—203. Cosmogony and Theogomy.—204. Hymn of creation.—205. Proverbs.—206. Runes.—207. Norse characteristics.—208. Norse navigation.—209. Norse settlers.—210. The conquerors conquered.—211. The dusk of the gods.—212. Oriental Spiritualism.

THE Teutonic and Scandinavian religions have left their hall-mark upon our northern Christianity. Puritanism and Protestantism are strictly Scandinavian. It is the hard severe morality—the reverence for truth — the sense of individual responsibility — the lack of benevolence, grace, and tenderness, the passion of freedom and independence. These Scandinavian peculiarities have doubtless profoundly modified the Roman Christianity as it came over with Augustine, with its sensuousness and asceticism, its indifference to truth, wherever truth conflicted with Papal

198. THE SCANDINAVIAN HALL-MARK.

nterests; its culture, tenderness, ingenious and refined organisation. Scandinavia, in fact, has fitted Roman Christianity for the North, and claimed for it at last an existence absolutely independent of, and in some sort antagonistic to, the cult of the great Southern Mother of churches.

199. A TEUTONIC WAVE.

But now who were these Scandinavians? They were Teutons. The Teutons were a branch of the great Indo-European family; they arrived in a great wave of emigration, flooding central Europe — after the Kelts and before the Slavs. The Scandinavians proper are represented by that Teutonic current which flowed into Denmark, crossed the sea, and spread itself over Sweden and Norway, reaching and peopling Iceland in the ninth and Greenland in the tenth century.

200. RECURRENT IDEAS.

As the word Indo-European implies that Europe was peopled from the plains of central Asia or the Hindu Cush, and as the closest resemblances doubtless exist between the Hindostan, Persian, Greek, Latin, German, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav tongues, we

need not be surprised to find in the Eddas or sacred historic and poetic traditions of Scandinavia, certain root-ideas connected with the religion of Zoroaster. There is, in fact, the old dualism between light and darkness, together with the vague sense of an infinite mystic power behind all gods and men—the same belief in the protracted struggle between good and evil, to be followed by the passing away of all present forms of good and evil and succeeded by a new heaven and a new earth. Odin the All Father is Ormuzd, and Loki the god of destructive fire is Ahriman, and the minor gods are the Amschaspands—whilst Balder, the beautiful and the good, is the sacrificed Redeemer of all religions—defeated in person —triumphant in principle.

201. THE GREAT GODS.

But the form of the Norse religion was largely determined by the singular condition of the Norse life. Carrying with them their reverence for women, their monogamy, their taste for public assemblies, their warlike restlessness, and their passion for freedom, these Teutonic emigrants to the north remoulded their religion to suit their surroundings. The Norse gods were at first little

more than embodiments of those elements of storm and tempestuous seas, rare but scorching sunshine, and perennial ice, with which the indomitable navigator of flood, fiord, and the open Arctic seas found himself in perpetual conflict. The light and heat gods were their friends, the snow and ice-giants their foes. The conflict with nature was inseparably wedded to the conflict with man. The Norseman was always at war — so were his gods, with whom he was on tolerably familiar terms—war was his profession—courage his duty—endurance his virtue.

ODIN, originally the All Father, degenerated at last into a kind of Jehovah or god of battles—he lived in Valhalla, and was called Valfader, or choosing father, because he sent out his emissaries on every battlefield to choose the bravest of the slain to be his companions in the halls of Valhalla.

THOR was the next mightiest god—he clove the icebergs with his hammer—he owned the magic belt which increased his strength irresistibly—whilst iron gauntlets enabled him to wield his mallet victoriously. His exploits were a sort of princely edition of all conceivable acts of prowess and valour.

BALDER the beautiful—eternal symbol of mild and wise goodness and humanity—supplied the counterpoise to the incessant and extravagant slaughter and violence for ever going on between gods, ice-giants, men, dwarfs, and demi-gods. Balder was the last thing that stood upright in the Norse theology—but he had to go. He fell a victim to the conspiracies of the evil one, LOKI —the Satan or Ahriman of the Norse theology.

The Eddas, both the elder (first collected and published in eleventh century) and the poetical books have all been collected and 202. edited in Christian times, and, under THE EDDAS. the circumstances, it is wonderful how little they reflect Christian influences. Indeed, they may fairly be looked upon as genuine attempts to record the Norse tradition and the Norse faith. It is not my purpose to give any further prominence to the various stories of fights and bloody romances such as have been put before the public by Mr. Dasent in the "Burnt Njal," or to dwell at length on the cosmogony, the proverbs, and the runes to be found in these Norse records, in poetry or prose.

The cosmogony, like most ancient speculations

about the beginning of things, resembles the opening of Genesis—the human mind seems in-

203. COSMOGONY AND THEOGONY.

stinctively to pass from a universe without form and void to a universe worked upon by a brooding spirit. The formative spirit of order soon gets split up into attributes, which lose no time in globing themselves out into various deities who, by degrees, fall into subordination to One. This was the order of thought in the Norse theology, and even so we pass in Genesis from the awful Spirit, which brooded upon the face of the universal waters, to the Elohim, or Holy Ones, who said, let *us* make man—and from the Holy Ones to the Jehovah, God of Gods, and Lord of Lords.

But no one, I believe, pretends to affiliate the Norse religion to the Semitic faith. Their simi-

204. HYMN OF CREATION.

larities belong to the essential similarity of the human mind in all ages and countries, which at a certain stage of culture will inevitably begin to revolve round certain conceptions. These, from their recurrent character, seem to be involved in the very constitution of the human race. The following remarkably clear Hymn of the Cosmogony will give a

fair notion of the unity and solidarity of the great cosmic or instinctive speculations of the race:—

"I command the devout attention of all noble souls,
Of all the high and the low of the race of Heimdall;
I tell the doings of the All-Father
In the most ancient Sagas which come to my mind.

There was an age in which Yuin lived,
When was no sea, nor shore, nor salt waves;
No earth below, nor heaven above,
No yawning abyss and no grassy land.

Till the sons of Bors lifted the dome of heaven,
And created the vast Midgard (earth) below;
Then the sun of the south rose above the mountains,
And green grasses made the earth verdant.

The sun of the south, companion of the moon,
Held the horses of heaven with his right hand;
The sun knew not what its course should be,
The moon knew not what her power should be,
The stars knew not where their places were.

Then the counsellors went into the hall of judgment,
And the all-holy gods held a council.
They gave names to the night and the new moon,
They called to the morning and to mid-day,
To the afternoon and evening, arranging the times."

But one must still be supreme—

Then comes the Mighty One to the council of the gods,
He with strength from on high who guides all things;
He decides the strife, He puts an end to struggle,
He ordains eternal laws.

The proverbs do not greatly differ from the ancient proverbs of all ages and countries—

205. PROVERBS. Egyptian—Confucian—Solomonian:—

The wise man on coming in
Is silent, and observes,
Hears with his ears, looks with his eyes,
And carefully reflects on every event.

No worse companion can a man take on his journey
Than drunkenness.

Not as good as many believe
Is beer to the sons of men.

The more one drinks the less he knows,
And less power has he over himself.

A foolish man in company had better be silent ;
Until he speaks no one observes his folly.

But he who knows little does not know this,
When he had better be silent.

It is better to depart betimes,
And not to go too often to the same house.
Love tires, and turns to sadness,
When one sits too often at another man's table.

Small as a grain of sand
Is the small sense of a fool.

Very unequal is human wisdom,
The world is made of two unequal halves.

It is well to be wise ; not well
To be too wise ;
He has the happiest life
Who knows well what he knows.

The sad preacher and the worldly-wise king have said very similar things; yet we need not suppose that the Norse bard had read Ecclesiastes or ever heard of Solomon, whatever may have been the case with his later editors. Nor when we come to the Runes or Charms is there anything original or distinctive. "Storm-runes must thou know to make thy vessel go safely over the waves; carve them on the mast and on the rudder. Herb-runes thou must know to cure disease; carve them on the bark of the tree. Speech-runes must thou know, to defeat thine enemy in council of words in the Thing. Mind-runes must thou know to have good and wise thoughts. These are the Book-runes and Help-runes and Drink-runes and Power-runes—precious for whoever can use them."

206. RUNES.

In all ages there have been sacred sentences, a muttering of charms, a working of spells, a form of incantation, a magic phrase. No early religions ever got on without their "Abracadabra."

But one thing is certain, the Norse religion, hard, severe, keen for justice and freedom, jealous of personal rights, with a certain coarse integrity, rude chivalry, and cruel logic of its own, not

only sustained and trained up a stalwart race capable of blasting the Roman Republic a hundred years before Christ, overthrowing the Roman Empire five hundred years after Christ, subduing England as Saxons in the fifth century, as Danes in the ninth, as Normans in the eleventh century; but to this day and hour the spirit of Scandinavian religion is responsible for what is healthiest, hardiest, soundest in modern life. The Englishman's fidelity to truth, sense of purity, reverence for women, and physical "last" are all Northern. The English gentleman's word of honour and the English prizefighter's pluck are alike in some sort products of the Scandinavian religion. Philologists note many curious traces of the old Norse language and theology, not only in the familiar days of the week, Thor's day (Thursday), Woden's day (Wednesday), Frey's day (Friday), but also in such expressions as "old Nick" (Nokke, the evil one), and nightmare (the Norse Mara, an oppressive kind of spirit credited with disturbing sleep and producing horrid dreams).

207. NORSE CHARACTERISTICS.

The Norsemen were ever great rovers. In

their slight but uncommonly seaworthy boats they took prodigious voyages; they not only glided up shallow rivers, but sailed northwards to Greenland, and, five hundred years before Columbus, discovered Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Massachusetts Bay, "gathering grapes and building houses on the southern side of Cape Cod." In Europe, hugging the coast of France and Spain, they passed through the pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar), and appeared on the shores of Italy and Greece, spreading terror and overthrowing four Roman armies in succession, until they were at last defeated by the military genius of Marius.

208. NORSE NAVIGATION.

But the Norse pirates were not mere savages. They were men of strong will, unequalled daring, and wide intelligence. Of some nations it has been said they learn nothing and forget nothing. The very opposite is true of the Scandinavian pirate and his brothers, the Goth, the Hun, and the Vandal. They were great destroyers, but they were also great colonists. Wherever the North-man landed he settled, or was inclined to settle and intermarry. Whether in Italy, France, or England,

209. NORSE SETTLERS.

he exhibited an extraordinary aptitude for taking on the forms of life and faith that he found, whilst imparting to them a vigour and stability all his own. The South organised and civilised, but the North brought new life-blood to the exhausted and effete empires in the South.

On the other hand, the mingled strength and purity of the Christian religion proved irresistibly attractive to the simple-minded and sturdy-hearted barbarian, reflecting, as did the faith of Rome, all the higher elements of the Norse religion, whilst the gentle personality of Jesus, the fascinating arts of peace, and the milder social system of the South, gave to the life of the hardy warrior just those elements of tenderness and humanity that he never could have found in the impenetrable forests of Germany, the rugged Alps of Switzerland, the stormy seas, rock-bound coasts, and cold fiords of Sweden and Norway, or the terrible snows and volcanoes of inhospitable Iceland.

210. THE CONQUERORS CONQUERED.

We must never forget that it was a Goth, Ulphilas, who, becoming a Christian bishop in 348, made the first translation of the Bible out of Greek and Latin into a German language—that

it was a northern bishop, Hildebrand, who was brought from beyond the Alps to rehabilitate the effete and demoralised Papacy—and that it was a North-man (William the Conqueror) who re-settled, reconquered, and reorganised a country where already the hardy Teuton, Saxon, and Dane had pushed the Kelt before him into the corners of that island-home which he had elected to have and to hold for himself.

From the moment that the Norseman stood fairly face to face with Christianity, the "dusk of the gods" was inevitable. The im- 211. perfection and insufficiency of the old THE DUSK OF ideals became too glaringly apparent THE GODS. —the gods were despised; Balder, the best and most beautiful of all, could find no protection amongst them — their power was on the wane. Like the Greeks the Norseman started from the gods as the ideal representatives of human thought and feeling — Zeus was in Agamemnon, Ares in Achilles, Artemis in Iphegenia. But the growth of the human type, enlarging itself, ever outgrows the old divine symbol—man transcends and conquers Olympus — Cassandra is greater than the gods in her consciousness

of injustice—Prometheus is sublime in his more than god-like defiance of fate. As in the South, so in the North, there is the inexorable progress of the human conscience towards a higher Olympus —a more spiritual and comprehensive Walhalla. Men come from the gods but excel the gods—then follows, with the first touch of a purer, diviner, because more human faith, the inevitable decline of the old deities—"*The dusk of the Gods*," and lastly, the assertion of man's divinity (the keynote of the Christian system), and the rehabilitation through Man of the Divine Idea.

That is the philosophical explanation of the power of Christianity, *vis-à-vis* the Scandinavian and Hellenic religions alike. The North and the South have had both to renew their vigour in the waters of that Oriental Spiritualism which is the oldest and most permanent historical fact of human religion. The North and the South have both to bow down to those cosmopolitan Wise Men of the East—Jesus of Nazareth, the Divine man, and His Twelve Apostles.

212. ORIENTAL SPIRITUALISM.

VIII.

THE STAR IN THE EAST; OR, JUDAISM & CHRISTIANITY.

213. The Jew *loquitur*.—214. The cost of converting a Jew.—215. The Hebrew secret.—216. Old Testament Books.—217. Approximate dates.—218. The people of the Book.—219. Great Hebrew types: Abraham.—220. Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, Esther.—221. Moses, David, Solomon.—222. Spiritual supremacy of the Jew.—223. Emanuel Deutsch on the Jew.—224. Spiritual elements.—225. Influence of Egypt, Assyria, and Persia.—226. A growing Religion.—227. Formulation of immortality.

213. THE JEW *LOQUITUR.*

IT will be convenient to place Judaism—with its records reaching back to the earliest dawn of civilisation—last, for the sake of contemplating Judaism and Christianity as consecutive facts; indeed, if we are to attend to modern Jewish expositors, Christianity itself is claimed as very good Judaism of a sort. Although Christians are extremely anxious to convert the Jews, the Jews wish neither to be converted nor to convert. They say to us in effect:—"You Gentiles, belonging mostly to alien or heathen Aryan races, with your practical polytheism, which you call the Trinity, and your

practical idolatry, which you call the Real Presence —along with your image worship and your saint worship—could not be expected to take up with our pure monotheistic religion, which Moses intended only for us—heathenism is too much in your blood for that. The teaching of the Rabbi Jesus, although heretical in parts, contained much that was wise, humane, and beautiful — those followers of His, like Paul, who became saturated with Gentile tastes and notions congenial to the West, have cast the Judaism of Jesus in a certain free and easy mould, which is good — or good enough for the Gentile West. You cannot expect to be as good Jews as we are, but you are fair mongrel Jews in your way, and we are quite glad to let you alone—if you will only let us alone; but, unfortunately, your mongrel religion has not taught you, even with the assistance of what you call Christian civilisation, the mercy and toleration which you might have learned had you studied our Talmud. Because *we* made a mistake, nineteen hundred years ago, and crucified (under circumstances of exceptional provocation) one heretical Jew, *you*, whilst blaming us for that crime, have imitated our bad example, by practising every kind of barbarity upon our whole

nation ever since, nor has your bitter persecution yet ceased."

It thus appears that the enlightened modern Jew never thinks of separating the Christian religion from Judaism—merely regarding it as a form of Judaism passably well suited for adoption by the Gentiles. Still less can Christians separate their religion from Judaism, for they are obliged to borrow the whole of the pre-Christian-Jewish sacred books before they can even begin their own religion. This may explain the lofty tone of toleration adopted by the Jews towards those who are trying to convert them, and may throw some light upon the extremely poor success which has attended the labours of Christian missionaries amongst the Jews, from the days of Paul downwards. A cynical statistician took the trouble the other day to analyse the conversions published by the Society for the Conversion of the Jews, and I believe he came to the conclusion that it took about £30,000 to convert one Jew — and that would not cover the insurance against relapse.

214. THE COST OF CONVERTING A JEW.

That small portion of the Semitic race known

as Hebrews came originally from beyond the Euphrates, west of the Chaldees, settled in Palestine, migrated to and returned from Egypt to reconquer and re-inhabit Palestine. They occupy a unique place in history by virtue of their national qualities and their distinctly religious mission. Not mechanical or agricultural, or political or military, or artistic as a people—they have yet wielded a sort of influence to which no other nation can lay claim. Their secret was Monotheism and the Moral Law. They alone refused to embody the attributes of the Unseen. They alone conceived of the moral law as the will and the very voice of the one living God. This was their over-powering charm. The unclouded conception of one righteous and supreme Ruler gave a sublime unity to their religious thinking. His moral will revealed a coherence and an adamantine stability to life.

215. THE HEBREW SECRET.

"*The Book*," which tells us all we know about that strange branch of the Semitic race, which emerges about 2000 B.C. out of the mist of antiquity, is called the Old Testament. The Old Testament consists of different books — history, philosophy,

216. OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.

poetry, prophecy, proverbs—written often at long intervals, and stretching roughly over about two thousand years. Who wrote these books, and when were they written? Books of Moses, like Books of Judges, may simply mean books about Moses. No well informed person now holds that Moses wrote all the Pentateuch, or that David wrote all the Psalms. Moses could not write the account of his own death, or give the names of places non-existent in his time, or allude to events which happened many years after him, and so on. No; and the probability is that none of the sacred *literature* of so-called Mosaic origin existed until long after Moses' death. The Hebrews brought with them out of Egypt into the desert memories of their past, old traditions of the beginning of things—they had the book of Genesis in their heads; they carried out of the desert the story of their wanderings, and an account of their government under Moses and Aaron—they carried their "Exodus" in their heads. Thus, from the time of their entrance into Canaan until the general settlement and consolidation of the people, about 1050, under Samuel and Saul, the sources of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers probably remained oral and fragmentary.

About 1050 B.C. (or about 400 years after Moses) the first four books of Moses and the two books of Samuel were probably set in order and written down.

217. APPROXIMATE DATES.

620 B.C. (Josiah) sees a further recension of the Mosaic records, and the probable addition of Deuteronomy.

The Davidic and Solomonian writings, the core of which may date back to 1000 B.C., belong in substance to a class of literature covered by, rather than defined by, those great names, whilst the Kings are compilations emanating from the priestly colleges—the Prophets fit historically enough into the troubled events which they partly record and partly comment upon—Isaiah (1st part) belonging to the reign of Hezekiah—Daniel to the Captivity—Zachariah and Malachi to the Restoration, and so forth. Such is the nature of the Old Testament Books.

Now what shall we say of the people described in these Books? They are the religious teachers of the modern world—coming from the east they have conquered the west. Israel is the great wanderer, but he has left his mark everywhere.

218. THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK.

Abraham (Ibri) the Hebrew, "the man who had crossed" the Euphrates—went out from Chaldea (2000 B.C.). His father Terah served "gods." Abraham was impressed with the Being of some one Supreme God, who alone claimed his allegiance —to that God he clave, to that God his descendants clave. They did not for ages deny the reality of other gods. "Other gods had had dominion over them," but Jehovah or Javeh above them all was the only one they adored. A dim Monotheism and a vivid Polytheism characterised most all the surrounding nations—a vivid Monotheism and a dim Polytheism alone characterised the Hebrews —the tendency all round them was to leave the one for the many—the tendency of the Jew was to leave and ultimately deny and denounce the many for the one.

219. GREAT HEBREW TYPES—ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM the wanderer—standing alone and aloof—amongst the people of another land, but not of them, nevertheless rises to power—is called King of Damascus—Father of the Faithful—the Friend of God. To him is not only revealed the majesty of the Supreme God, but the presence of God as a personal spiritual guide — one who

rewards the obedient—stands for justice between man and man—will not accept human sacrifice (then universal), and will give the Land of Promise to those who submit to His guidance, and train themselves for its possession by faithful service, severe discipline, and absolute trust in Him.

JACOB, the Father of the Faithful—the founder of the great Israelitish family—is the next great wanderer. He goes forth into exile, and is on his way attended by angelic ministries. His ascendancy is inevitable — in serving he rules — in submitting he conquers. He prospers in the land—he founds a mighty family. JOSEPH (1730 B.C.) is the next wanderer. His life too is full of portents. An exile in Egypt—he is soon prime minister. He is ever in close commune with Javeh—he serves but Him—the Jew again rules in his captivity—he casts his spell upon the king and the people alike. Daniel was a later example, so were Esther and Nehemiah—it is ever the same figure—Israel oppressed yet Israel triumphant—ever being cast down yet never destroyed—and to this day, at this moment, does not half Europe persecute the Jew, whilst the other half borrows his money

220. JACOB, JOSEPH, DANIEL, ESTHER.

at usurious interest? The Gentiles will none of him, but the Gentiles are nevertheless delivered into his hands.

But the most memorable wanderer of all is MOSES (1659 B.C.). Leaves Egypt—is deliverer, prophet, founder of a polity. And what is his secret?—the same, ever the same—moral not physical might. Canaan was conquered by religious enthusiasm. For a moment the military genius of David, and the political sagacity of Solomon seemed to place the Jew on a secular level with his neighbour, but it did not last. Solomon, who attempted to shake hands with the outside world, made foreign alliances and introduced foreign fashions, was a thousand years before his time. He was a great king but a bad Jew, and he only succeeded in squandering the wealth which his father David had accumulated—he could not build an Empire—the Jew never was to have an Empire. He was the world-teacher not the world-ruler. He belonged to all nations and languages, but none were ever to belong to him. Solomon's attempt to take secular rank and to claim it for his people failed. The Jew

221. MOSES, DAVID, SOLOMON.

could claim no such portion—he was not to be on a secular level with his neighbour.

222. SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY OF THE JEW.

So long as the Jew was destined to lead the religions of the world, he was priest and prophet or he was nothing. This spiritual quality survived external conflicts and internal discords. The Jew was ever the great quarreller. He fell out with Moses in the desert—with the government of his Judges in Canaan—with the rule of David—with the taxation of Solomon—with the order of every Asiatic, African, Greek, and Roman power, by which he was in turn subdued. Yet such was his fascination that he won upon them all. Hated as a people the popularity of typical Jews and Jewesses has always been remarkable, "The Lord made all those that took them away captive to pity them."

223. EMANUEL DEUTSCH ON THE JEW.

No country has been proof against the charm of their mysteries, the purity of their manners, the simplicity of their faith, the severity of their law, and a certain vivacity and intensity combined, persistent and tyrannous in its personal domina-

tion. "We may think," writes Emanuel Deutsch in his celebrated Talmud article, "what we please about the finger of God in history, but it is a fact that the wandering Jew has been brought into contact with every great nation at the time of its highest civilisation, when it was most capable of assimilating the peculiar influence which the Jews never failed to exercise; that was shown at length in the case of Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, and its contact with Rome was delayed until the Roman Empire stood for the 'whole world.' And then, just as the torch of religious progress was burning low in the hand of the Jew, it was caught up by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah —the King of the Jews, wearing the crown of thorns—and blown again into that bright flame which has become the everlasting 'Light of the World'?" So does the Jew claim Christendom.

Looking back through the ages, we can see the religious mission of Israel in true perspective. Nothing before or after it, save its Christian offspring, can dwarf its towering supremacy. There are no fathers like the Patriarchs—no teachers like the Prophets—no records like the Scriptures. The characters are colossal, their work is monumental—world-embracing.

Abraham stands for the overpowering sense in man of an Unseen World; in him seems to be summed up all the God-hunger and God-consciousness of the race. Moses adds to this the perception that morality is inseparable from true religion (a truth by no means clear to the Aryan mind) — that God's government is moral—that therefore man's conduct must be moral. And, further, Moses, in addition to wedding religion to morality, added to them both an ecclesiastical system. Judaism made these ideas her own, and formulated, with an unsurpassed vigour, a classic force and distinctness, these fundamental human needs. When first the formula threatened to supersede the religion and swallow up morality—when, in a word, the letter of an elaborate law began to smother the spirit—the genius of Judaism had sufficient vitality to protest and recover itself. The Priests took care that nothing should go before its time, whilst the Prophets acted like a sort of vigilance committee, to rescue the things of the spirit from heathen formalism and barren ritualism. To the priest nothing but Moses and the Law were sacred; to the prophet, nothing but God and the Soul. Isaiah makes short work of the new moons,

224. SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS.

the Sabbath days, and the sacrifices, when these things were seen to be merely the substitutes for integrity and the veils of hypocrisy.

Creative, "separate," and self-centred as were the Jews, they could not remain wholly unaffected by the people amongst whom they dwelt at different times. The Ark and the Cherubim are doubtless reminiscences of the coffers and winged things of the Egyptian worship. The Polytheists of Canaan did not fail to leave their mark upon the ten tribes in the Baal-worship of Samaria. Contact with Assyria and Persia during the captivity left enduring traces on the Jewish theology, in the rapid development of the Jewish devil out of Ahriman, the bad spirit. In Job, Satan is a malign, but very subordinate spirit; but after the captivity we find him elevated into something like an Ahriman, or rival power to Ormuzd the good spirit, though it is not until after the close of the Old Testament that we find Satan invested with the full powers of Satanic royalty.

225. INFLUENCE OF EGYPT, ASSYRIA, AND PERSIA.

It remained for the Apochryphal books to work up into a sort of Jewish mythology the spiritualism of Assyria and Persia. In the

Apochrypha we find frequent allusions to all sorts of assistant angels and devils; in fact, between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New, there grew up the complete fabric of our current demonology. Satan is at last crowned—he has his angels or attendant demons — and so we find him in the popular theology of the Jews about the time of Christ. So he is to be found occasionally even now in church and chapel theology,

226. A GROWING RELIGION.

The Jewish religion was influential only so long as it was progressive, growing, capable of re-stating its doctrine, re-defining and re-explaining its law. It was ever towards monotheism. Its way of defining God in Genesis, Psalms, and Isaiah shows an amazing progression from the grossest anthropomorphism as in Eden, to the highest spirituality as in Isaiah's pages. The moral law was found to be equally plastic in the hands of the prophets, who denounced the most explicit ceremonial ordinances, and were even for abolishing sacrifices, when they were no longer felt to be living and growing things. Throughout the patriarchal, Mosaic, judicial, ecclesiastical, and

prophetical dispensations, we notice constant growth, modification, re-statement, and reform. The last great effort of Jewish theology is the attempt to formulate the doctrine of immortality in the Apochrypha. "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God," &c., and the famous words "Yet is their hope full of immortality," both occur in the Apochrypha.

227. FORMULATION OF IMMORTALITY.

But there was no grip upon it, it remained shadowy. Immortality never became a truly national tenet, like the belief in a coming Messiah. The Pharisees held it, the Sadducees denied it— Judaism had passed its creative age, it could no longer impose a creed or invent a tenet. The formulation of immortality was reserved for a fresher religious impulse, and for One greater than Moses and the Prophets. In the Talmud (500 B.C. to 500 A.D.) the Jew looked back for ever. It was commentary on old law and idolatry of old legend. The faith had at the time of Christ's coming crystallised beyond recall. The ministry of the Jews was over. The Christian nations are the spiritual seed of Israel. They are the servants of One who came unto His own and whom His own received not.

But the star which rose upon the nations was still the star of Jacob. "I shall see Him," cried the great Gentile Prophet, "but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."—Numbers xxiv. 17.

Utterance after utterance rang out in the ears of the chosen people, proclaiming the world-wide dominion of the true Messiah even to the remotest Isles of the Gentiles; but the Jews still dreamed of a provincial Saviour who was to come surrounded with warlike pomp and devote Himself exclusively to His own nation.

. . . . .

At last He came—watchers saw a star in the east—wise men found a babe in the manger—shepherds heard the songs of angels—the world received from the lips of a crucified Jew the doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man and the open secret of the Life Eternal.

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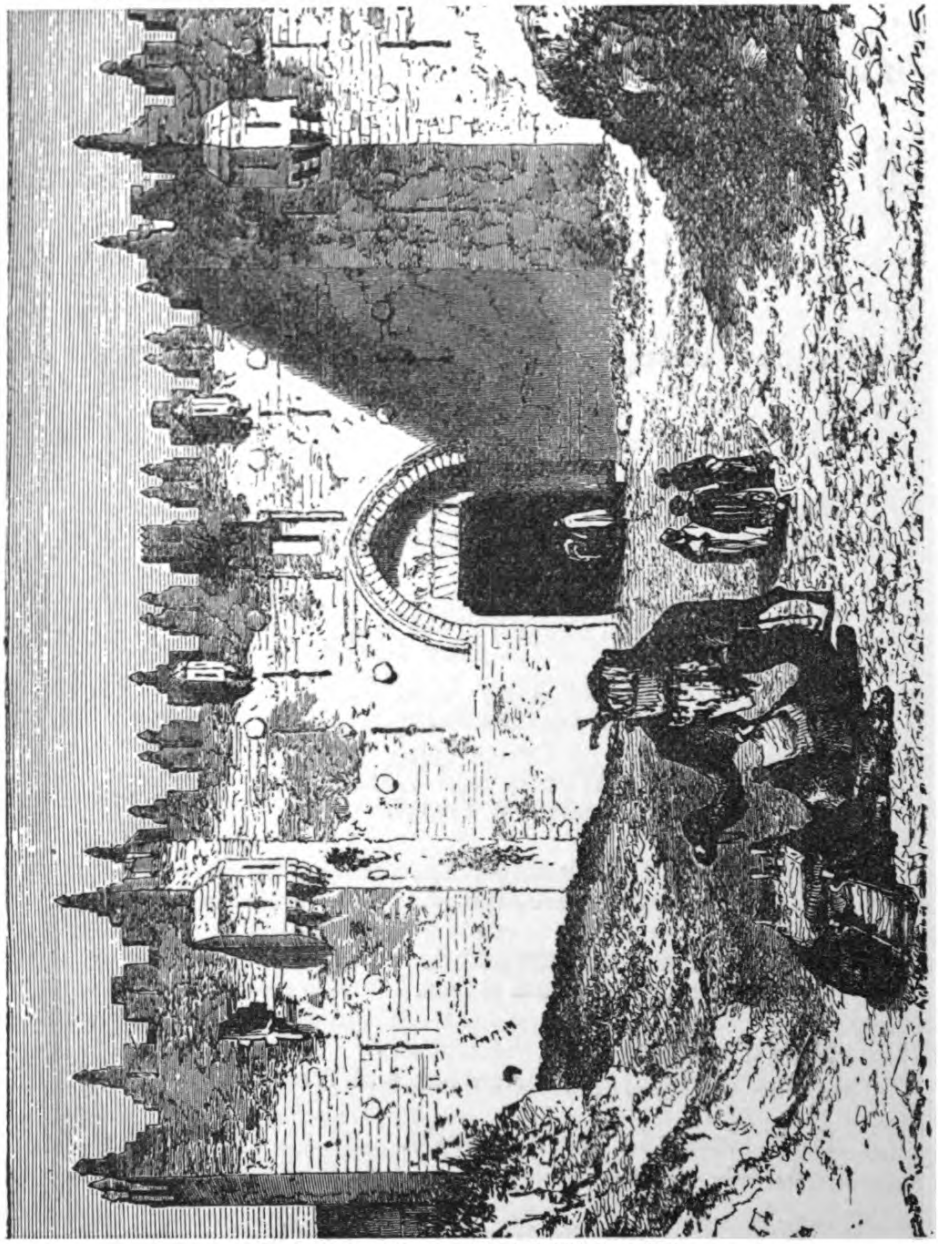

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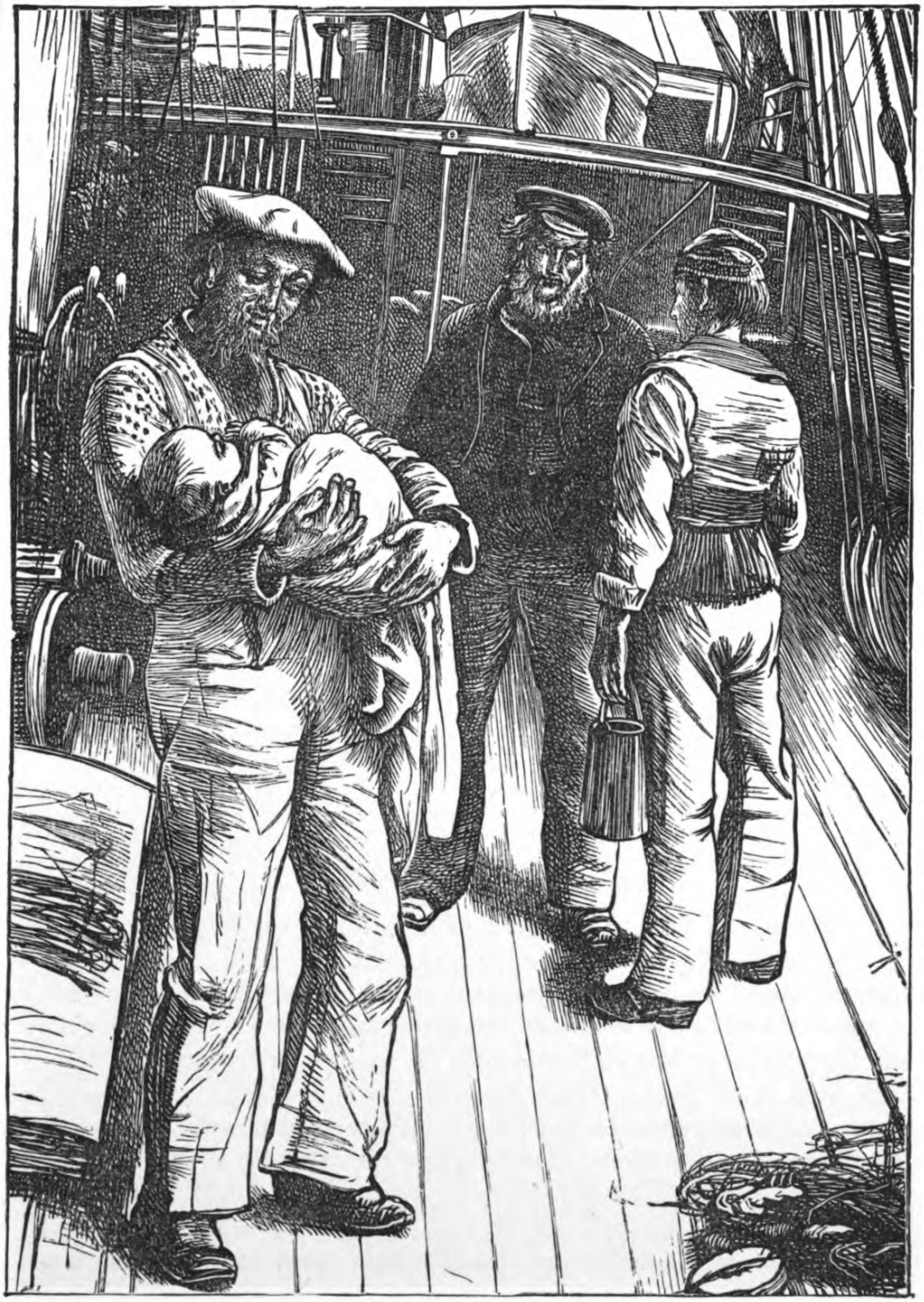

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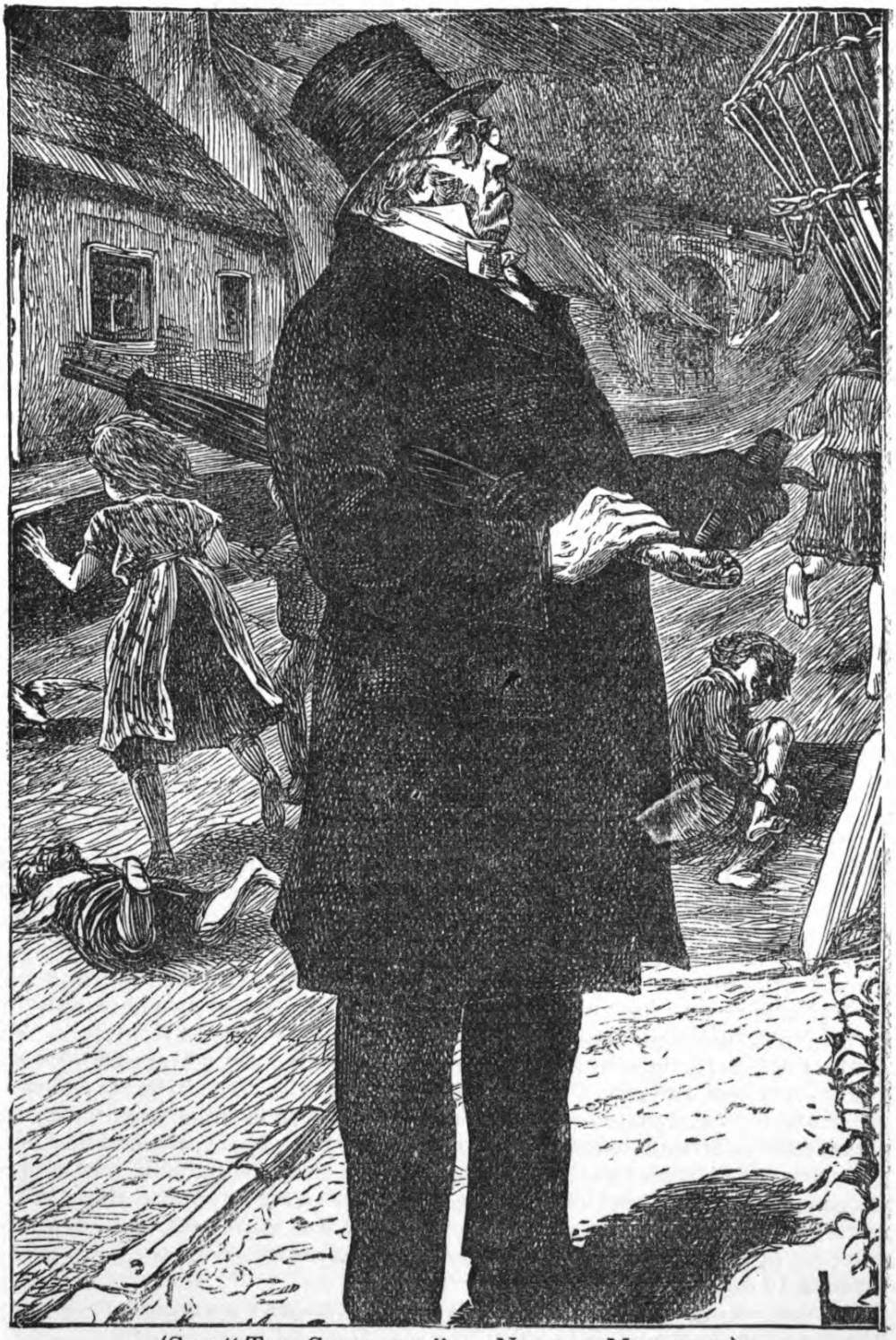

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"'Ned,' continued the Captain, who, as he spoke, sometimes sat down, and sometimes walked a few paces with his hands behind his back: 'Ned, I never had learning; never could tell you many a thing that was passing in my heart; can't do it now. My words don't run through this block of a mouth. Something like a heavy sea stops me when I wish to sail a-head. But your mother knows all about it, and she has told you.' Here the Captain pointed upwards,—then, taking a large pinch of snuff, turned his back to Ned. Bringing himself round again, face to face with his son, he said, 'Ned, you must be a better man than your father. You must, Ned, do what your mother has taught you; not what I could teach you, though God knows how I love you, Ned!'

"'Father,' said Ned, 'don't speak that way, for it makes me sorry, as if you were not as good a father as ever a fellow had. What did I ever see in you but good? What did I ever get from you but good?'

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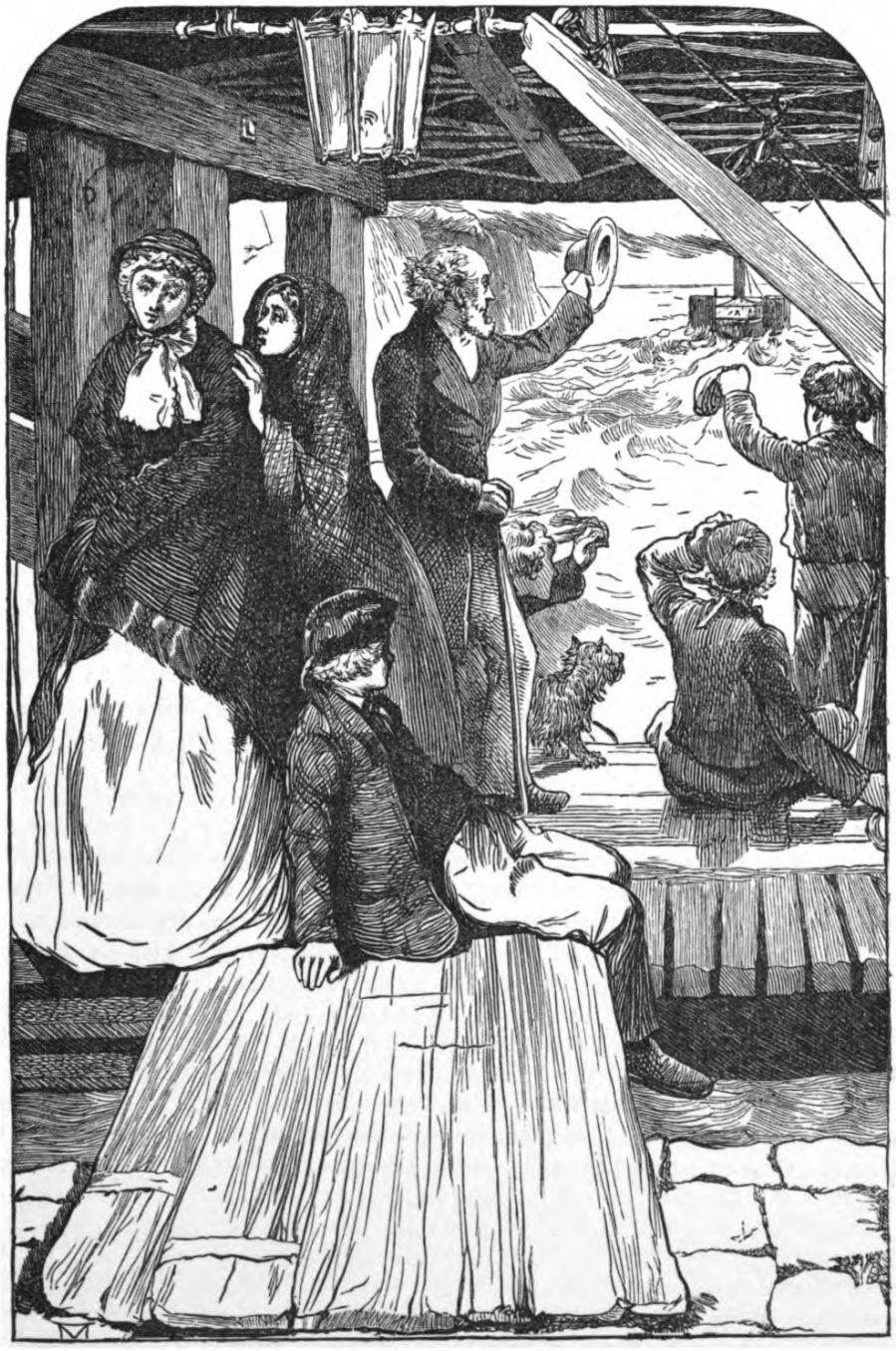

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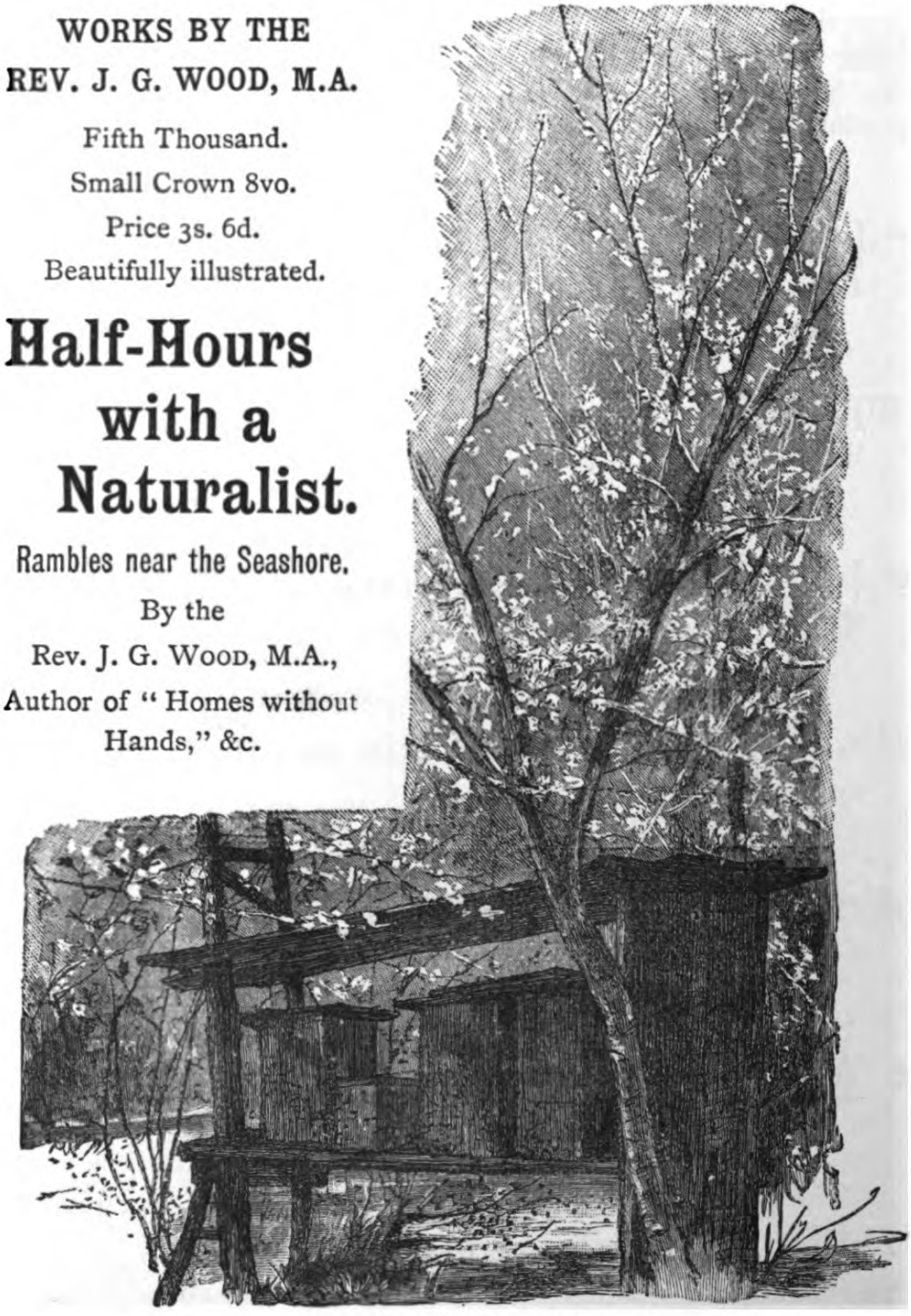

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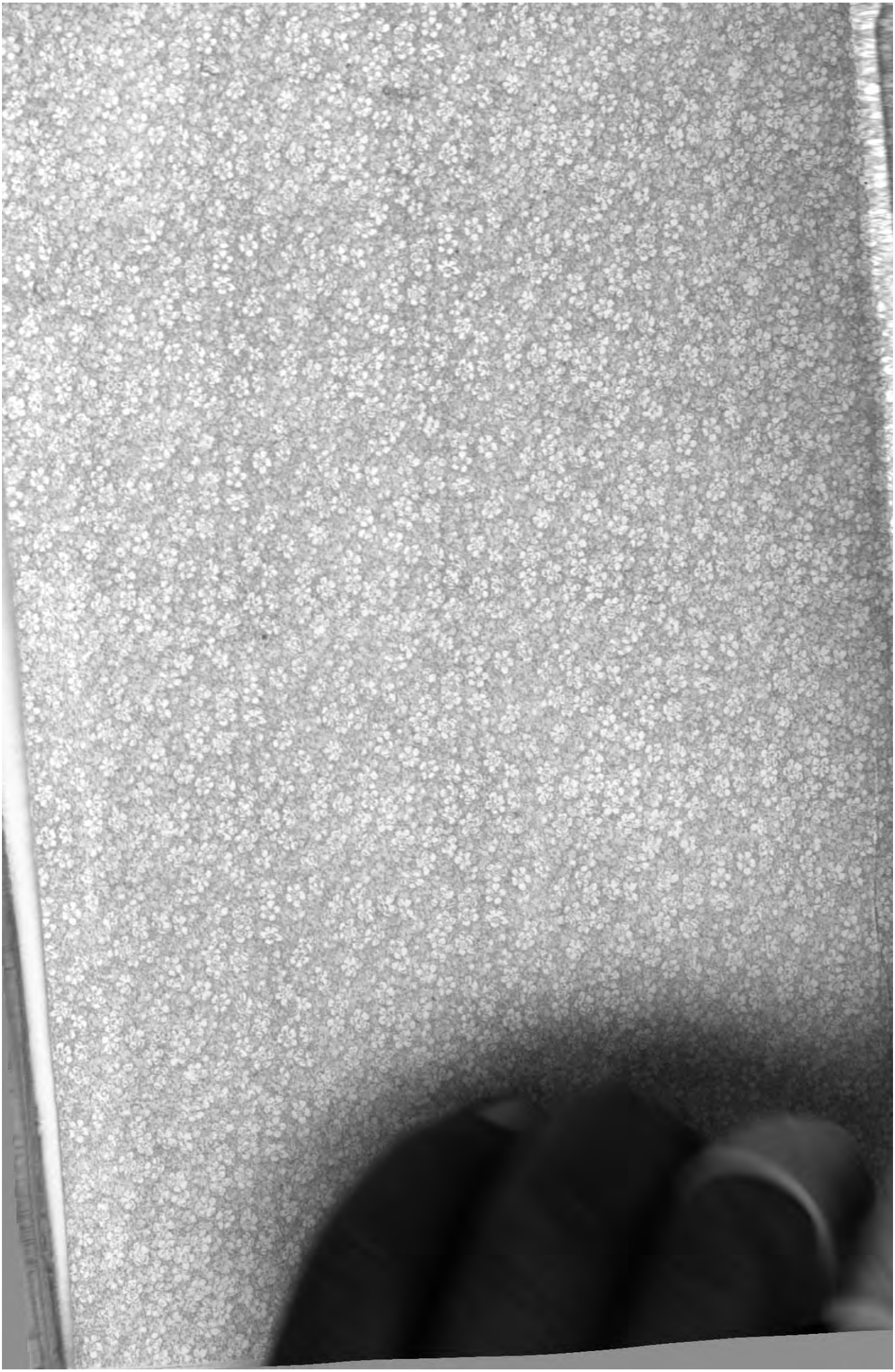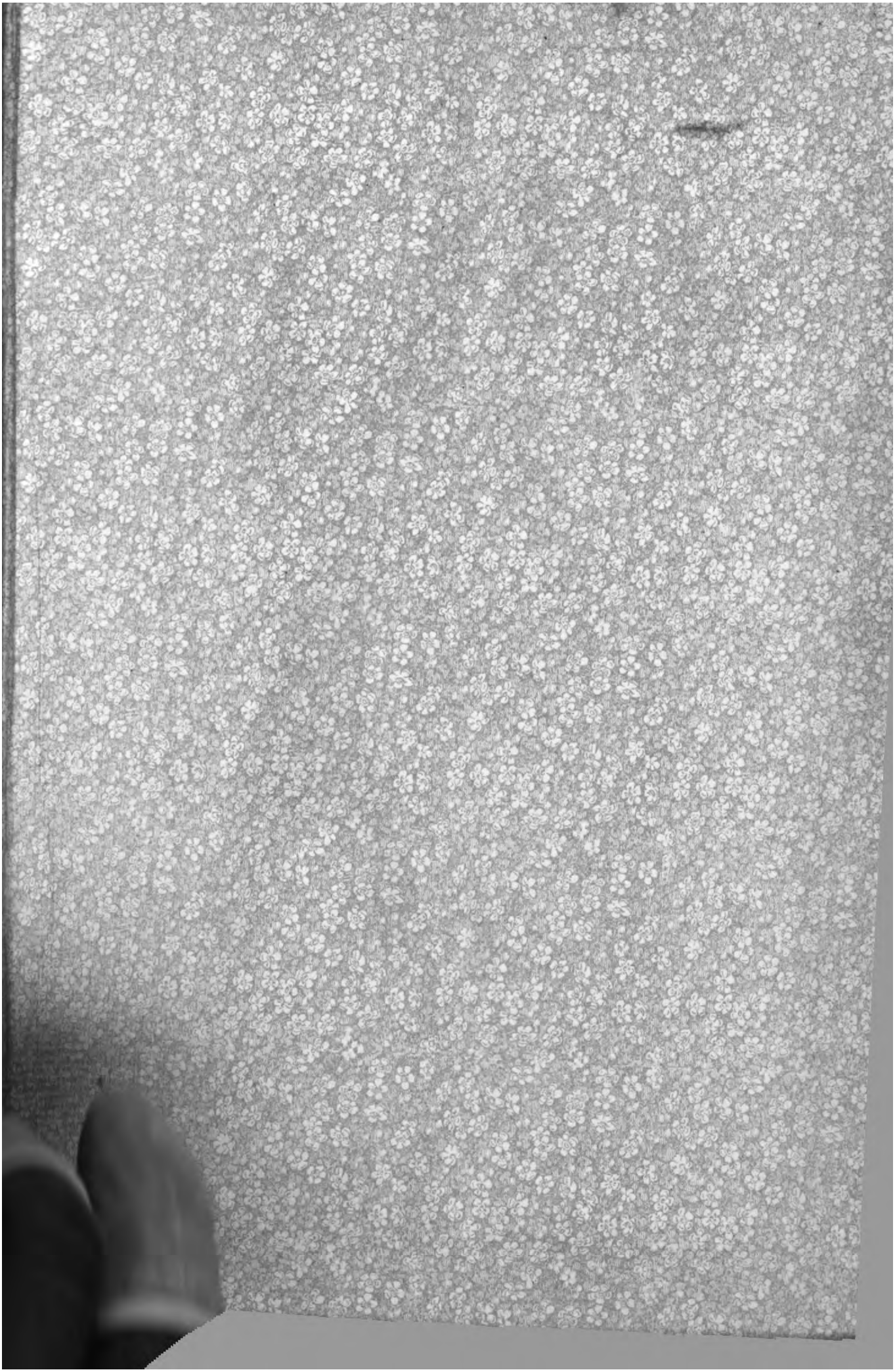
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