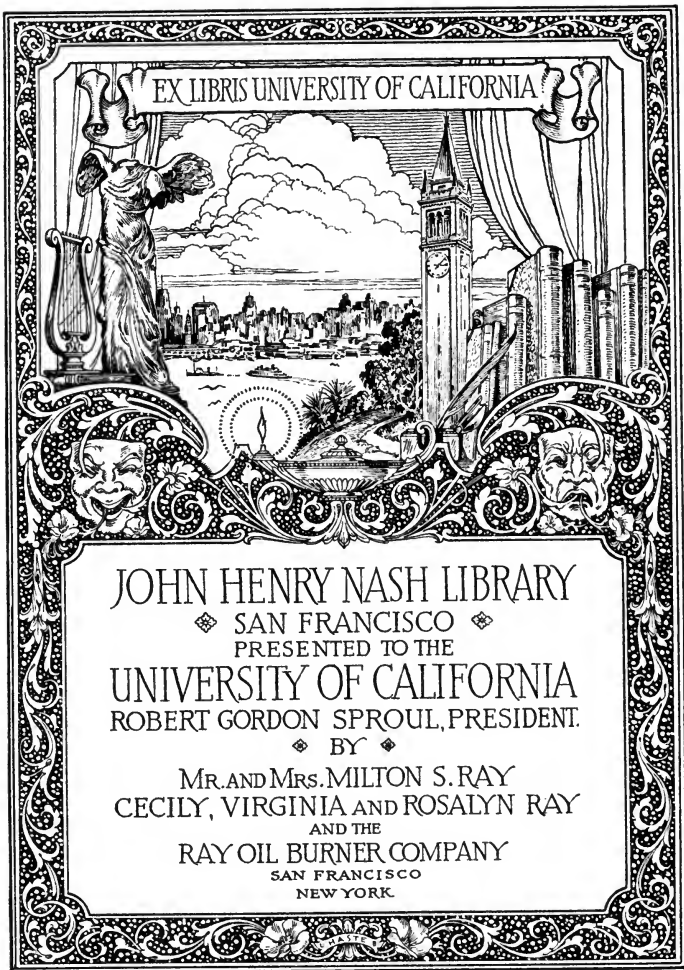


OLYMPUS AND FUJI YAMA

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A STUDY IN TRANS-
CENDENTAL HISTORY
By LAYTON CRIPPEN



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BY LAYTON CRIPPEN

*Before man parted for this earthly strand,
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
God put a heap of letters in his hand,
And bade him make with them what word he could.*

*And man has turn'd them many times; made Greece,
Rome, England, France; — yes, nor in vain essay'd
Way after way, changes that never cease!
The letters have combined, something was made.*

*But ah! an inextinguishable sense
Haunts him that he has not made what he should;
That he has still, though old, to recommence,
Since he has not yet found the word God would.*

*And empire after empire, at their height
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on;
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right,
And droop'd, and slowly died upon their throne.*

*One day, thou say'st, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be.
Ah! we shall know THAT well when it comes near;
The band will quit man's heart, he will breathe free.*

— Matthew Arnold.

THE world is ready for a new Civilization. Since the dawn of history, since the day when the wise King told his people to live by Law, it has learned and suffered much. It has lived for pleasure, the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh, and has grown satiated. In a fever of disgust it has mortified the body that the soul might be redeemed, and has become sick of renunciation. Then it has turned to pleasure again, pleasure less innocent and more alluring because of the haunting fear of an offended God.

And now the world is a-weary. The old ideals, the old faiths, the old incentives to hope and noble effort are fast vanishing. Christianity is no longer a religion, but a sweet memory which the people cannot bring themselves to abandon. The ethics of Christianity have already disappeared before the persistent questioning which is the surest sign of the end of an era. There is a babel of voices, an inferno of activities, but there are few now-a-days who hope. *Quo Vadis?* is the cry again, but this time there is none to answer.

Despair is the dominant note in music and art and literature — despair and wistful longing for days gone by. Pessimism has become a creed, which gains new followers every day. Schopenhauer and Hartmann are its prophets, FitzGerald and James Thomson are its psalmists, and its apostles are in every land.

THE WORLD MELANCHOLY.

Rediscovering a principle which the Buddha discovered two thousand years ago, the philosophers of to-day tell us of what they call the Desire of Life, the Will to Live. What it is they do not know, and do not attempt to know, but that without it humanity could not exist they are ready to prove. How else, they ask, can the clinging to life of those who dwell in misery and filth and poverty be explained? Life can give them nothing, and yet they choose to live. There are a hundred ways of escape, a hundred doors to death, and not one in ten thousand breaks the bond of body and soul that makes our life.

All philosophy is but the pushing back of principles a little nearer to the final mystery, the great First Principle of all; and surely we can get a little nearer to the heart of things than this aphorism of the Desire of Life, the consideration of the world as Will and Idea. For besides the instinct for life which humanity shares with all sentient creation, with the lion and the bee, with the birds and trees and

flowers, there is another principle at work. It is a principle without which man would have remained savage and soulless, dwelling in the forests and the caves, caring for nothing but to satisfy his hunger and gratify his lust.

It is a principle which blesses and which bans. It has given us Praxiteles' Hermes and Lionardo's *Monna Lisa*, Homer's epics and Shakespeare's plays, Beethoven's sonatas and Schubert's *Serenade*; and it has been responsible for the most terrible wars of humanity, for much of its suffering, for many of its diseases, for abominable sins, for incredible cruelties.

Life and Desire are co-existent. Each human being is seeking something that life gives, or may be supposed to give. However wretched his state, he believes — though possibly he may be unconscious of believing — that he is living on in order to attain some happiness, usually for himself, very rarely for others. Power, knowledge, fame, money, love, beauty, pleasure, some aims noble, some ignoble — the man without an ideal for the attainment of which he strives or wishes does not exist. Not every one endeavors actively to realize his desire, but each has some end to which he looks and for which he hopes.

But side by side with Desire, and the multiplication of desires, there has been evolved in mankind, collectively and individually, the consciousness of an Influence in the world which is at once the negation and the comple-

ment of Desire — the note of sadness, frustration, pity. It began with humanity's sense of its own helplessness, with the tragedies of death and pain. Along with the delight, the passion, the joy in life there grew the recognition of another principle — the realization that all those things that are most pleasant pass as quickly as the lily is withered, the purple of the violet turned into paleness.

Every beautiful thing in the world preaches the same lesson. The lost Eden — for a little time we think we may find it here, and then the fair human creature we loved because of something other than human that was there becomes altogether human; we realize our ideal in words or in marble or on canvas and our ideal inspires no longer; sooner or later is born the sorrowful knowledge that all that is divine in our existence is but a memory or a foreshadowing. Seek not your happiness here, nor in love, nor in life, it all seems to say: *I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and Lo, I must die.*

It is this sense of frustration, this realization that all things present are more frail and weak than the webs of spiders and more deceitful than dreams, that has resulted in the world's progresses and its retrogressions, on the one hand in the arts and on the other in religions. It is now a stimulant, now a narcotic. It leads mankind to high noble effort, and then, the effort failing, to listen to the voice of the

prophet and the priest. For man, the only unsatisfied created thing, is ever seeking an ideal, and the spirit that strives after a diviner beauty than nature's is the cause of all his activities and of all his defeats.

Inspiration of all poetry and song, of all arts; moving humanity ever to search for an elusive excellence, a hidden perfection; it wrote Sappho's sweet burning verses, full of a hedonism that yet is akin to tears; it moulded the Cnidian Venus and the Olympian Hermes and the Singing Boys of Donatello into figures so gracious that rhythmic curve and subtle modelling seem to strain beyond nature after the divine; it put the soul into the eyes of Botticelli's Madonna and traced the mystical, flame-like lines of Blake's Morning Stars; Rubinstein heard it when he wrote his Melody and its voice is present in the meanest folk-song; it guides the patriot when he dies for his country, and the lover reads it in the glance of his beloved.

But it has done other things than these. By it the Daughters of Music were raised up, but by it also were they brought low. For it inspired the human sacrifices of a hundred creeds, the self-tortures of the Brahmans and the Flagellants, the work of the Inquisition, the wars of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Men began by regarding the gods they worshipped as the realization of their own ideals; from this the transition was natural to the belief that the gods had power to enable man to attain the ideal.

And together with this belief came the belief that mankind's normal aims and delights, seeing that they all led in the end to bitterness and failure and death, must be wrong; that the way to please the gods was by renunciation; that for a man to attain to perfection it was necessary for him to become more than man.

And when man learned that he could obtain strength by refraining, asceticism was born into the world, and with it a great part of the ills that have afflicted humanity, but without which, it would seem, humanity could not have progressed. There are no historic parallels, says the savant. Possibly, but there is a lesson which history demonstrates so clearly that none can gainsay it—the lesson that asceticism, discipline, the result either of the laws of religion, the laws of the state, or national adversities, is as necessary to a civilization, a race, or a country as is sleep to the individual, as is the denuding of the trees before the life that is in them obtains strength for renewed manifestation.

And behind it all, humanity's efforts and failures, its wars and invasions, its periods of cultivation and its periods of darkness, its times of progress and its times of reverie, its struggles to reach toward the light in so many ways—behind it all can we not see, dimly it may be but yet surely, an Order in the world, a law which governs the activities of the human race, and which, when apprehended, will help

us to explain its past and, in some little measure, to foretell its future? For the beginning of all philosophy is this — that man has accomplished nothing, save through his renunciations, through his tears.

THE LESSON OF HISTORY.

In considering the records left to us from the past we can hardly fail to be impressed by the strangely alternating nature of the energies and ideas that have from the earliest times dominated the Occidental world. The conviction forces itself upon us that the life and thought of civilized mankind can be expressed by two words — action and reaction. We find that there have been two forces at work, or rather a single force exerted in different ways. Alternately has man been engaged, now in searching in his own soul for the God whom the visible world only seems to conceal, now in trying to find the gods whom nature ever seems to be on the point of revealing, but never reveals.

We find that the luminous period of any nation, the period during which it has produced great men and has done great things, during which literature and the arts have flourished in it, has always been preceded by a tenebrous period, during which religion has usually played a principal part in the nation's activities

and in which a stern asceticism has invariably ruled the lives of its people. A period of religious ascendancy has not always been followed by a period of productive activity, but no nation has ever had a flowering time without first passing through the fires of discipline, and suppression, and pain.

And when we regard, not isolated nations, but civilization as a whole, this law becomes still more manifest. The earliest civilization of which we have any accurate knowledge was that of Egypt, and in the gigantic temples, the great enigmatic statues, the marvellous tombs of that land we read the records of a nation to which death was more real than life, in which mystery lay behind mystery and secret and terrible knowledge was in the hands of a few. There may have been a literature in Egypt, but that there was no art except that regulated by the sternest traditional laws we know. And we know, too, that had it not been for the repressive influence of their religion the art of the Egyptians might have progressed far. No race was ever more alive to beauty of form. In one work after another wrought by the Egyptians we find a sweet suggestion of the delicate swaying motion of the human body, a graciousness of line, a capacity for refinement, that even the Greeks did not surpass. And it was all wasted, all came to naught, because the priests stood in the way.

For the Egyptians there was no flowering time, and the great seated figures on the banks

of the Nile now seem to us but the embodiment of the spirit of Silence, bearing no message of hope or of joy, telling us nothing but that the people who made them were shackled, restrained, accursed.

Far otherwise was it with Greece, whither from Egypt the center of Mediterranean civilization was transferred. She, too, had her period of restraint, of asceticism, but it was followed by a period of splendid effort, glorious achievement, when poet and painter called on the world to live with joy and the straight-limbed maiden viewed the gods with scorn. The Greeks brought a new message to the world, a message telling of strange joys, of the enthronement of the body and the perception through the life of the senses of the divine in humanity. Among them the search for beauty became the task of those endowed with intellect and sublimated desire. The priests of Jupiter and the priests who at Tanagra, the sunlight on their naked bodies, led the procession of Mercury, were youths chosen for their beauty. In a song of Simonides, telling of four wishes, the first was for health, the second for beauty. In the chamber of the Greek bride was set a figure of Narcissus or of Hyacinth that, gazing on it, she might give birth to a perfect child.

We find these two great civilizations of the antique world, the Egyptian and the Greek, symbolizing the two great forces which, now one, now the other, have ruled mankind. We know what the Power was that overthrew the star-throned, softly smiling gods of Hellenism; how their deli-

cate wine-stained limbs were dragged in the dust, their fair temples given over to the lizard and the bat, their sacred groves left to become haunted wastes and desert places. We know how flower-crown and song and love gave place to the visions of the anchorite, the morbid excesses of a hundred sects. We know how Christianity prevailed in a time enervated by luxury and sick of culture; how the wonderful work of the past was destroyed; how the iconoclast went through the length and breadth of what was then the world leaving behind him the wreckage of an era, the corpse of an ideal. The reign of humanism was ended; they had to do their penance for all they had tasted of the divine before; the sweets had turned to bitterness; the Egyptian spirit was alive again.

And then for thirteen hundred years there was darkness; the world turned its gaze to a symbol of suffering; beauty was regarded as something devilish; the very Devil himself was supposed to be incarnate in a flower. Only in Southern Spain among a handful of Moors, and in Byzantium in a small company of learned men, was the feeble flame of culture kept alive. Throughout the rest of the Occidental world all the vitality of the people was centered in a narrow and ignorant sacerdotalism, all the power of the nation in a brutalized and overbearing seigneurage.

But the pendulum swung again, and there followed the Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the grandest enfranchisement of all recorded history. It is finished, they had said in the time that even the Church

now allows us to call the time of darkness; it is finished, the Lord cometh, the end of the world is very near. Therefore why waste time and imperil our immortal souls with thoughts of earthly things? Did not the Master say: "Lo, I come quickly?" Are not all things tending to destruction?

And then from this message, which seems to us a message of terror, but which was called in those days good news, gospel; from the pale sad Christ dying on the cross; from the doctrine of suffering, the religion of death, the world turned again to the old Greek ideals, to the worship of the divine in life.

Once more the pendulum swung. The Catholic reaction in Italy, the Huguenot movement in France, followed by the puritanism which swept over England and Scotland, were evidences of the reawakening of the ascetic spirit. The destruction of the tomb of Ronsard may serve as a symbol of the new fury against humanism, a fury which reached its culmination in the burning of Giordano Bruno.

Since then the pendulum has swung backward and forward many times. The English Commonwealth, for example, was followed by the license of the Restoration, then by the religious revival of the eighteenth century, then by the Victorian age, with its poets and artists and philosophers, its doubts and questionings, its overturning of old beliefs.

But the simile of the pendulum applies not only to the action and reaction in the history of

mankind, to the alternate waves of humanism and asceticism; it holds good in another and a deeply suggestive way. The pendulum keeps its balance, but at each swing the momentum is a little less than that which caused the previous one; each time a little less distance is covered. And so it has been with the world. At each swing the impulse has been less powerful than that which preceded it. The Renaissance, glorious as it was, was less glorious than the flowering time of Occidental humanity in the Greek era, and the religious revival which followed it was but a faint reflection of the terrible zeal, the frenzy of righteousness, which marked the opening centuries of the age of Christianity. And, as the present time has been approached, action and action have been more and more rapid, the impulse either way ever fainter.

And what of to-day? Voices in every direction call to us, lament, adjure. The noise deafens us, but no cry is louder than another. Churches and sects and evangelists appeal to us, minatory, commanding. A hundred philosophies offer us different secrets of happiness, different solutions of the mystery of life. And through it all we remain indifferent, seeking in activity, in material well-being, an anodyne for all our doubts and fears. Neither cold nor hot, a fatal Laodiceanism has seized the world.

Are we not reaching the motionless center, the name of which is Death?

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

Beyond towering buildings and giant cities; beyond dazzling wealth and luxury and pride; beyond great armies and splendid warships; beyond even boundless wheatfields, inexhaustible mines, illimitable forests, must we look if we would perceive the true strength of a nation. We must look in its heart, to the things that move it, the things that impel and compel. We must apprehend the nation's Genius in order to foretell its future and understand its past.

Apprehend, for to comprehend is not possible. We can read the literary work of the old Greeks, for instance, with full appreciation of its exquisite form and its noble restraint. Hellenic art can inspire us until we perceive in carven marble and clear-cut gem something of the great mystery of absolute beauty — the sense of frustration, the sense of longing, the divine to which all nature tends. At Rouen or Chartres we can understand something of the spirit of the France of the knightly years which gave Christian chivalry to the world.

In the pearl-like city on the Arno we can trace the beginnings of the great movement toward humanism; in the city of Aldus and of Giorgione we can see that movement at its splendid maturity.

And all these things we discern as in a glass—darkly. The Genius of Greece, of mediæval France, of Tuscany, of Venice has passed away. We have their songs and literatures and arts and buildings and now we are all praisers of times gone by, but our ears are not attuned to the same harmonies, our eyes are open and they cannot see.

And, be it noted, a nation must be judged, just as a man, by what it accomplishes—by the works, that is, of its rulers, lawgivers, soldiers, philosophers, poets, painters. One hears a great deal of talk now-a-days to the effect that however corrupt, immoral, and brainless the dominating class of a state may be, the country's potentialities are not affected if the people retain their virtues and their ideals. But in reality the dominating class is the expression of the country's potentialities; if it is enfeebled by what in place of a better word may be called corruption, the whole structure is weak. The dominating class of a state is not an accident, but an effect. Bad rulers, bad laws, bad strategy, bad poetry and art are but symptoms of the destruction of national ideals, of the loss of national vitality, and sometimes they are the only visible symptoms. The people of Spain are outwardly of the same

character to-day as they were in the sixteenth century, but Spain has lost her rich colonies one by one. Turkey to-day is powerless, keeping her territory only because those who could take it away are jealous of each other; yet those who have seen the Turkish soldier fight all bear tribute to his courage, his tenacity, his cheerfulness amid hardship: the Sultan's army to outward seeming is as capable of great things now as in the days when Mahmud planted the crescent flag upon the citadel of Byzantium and Solyman made all Europe quail.

Walk along the streets of modern Athens, and at every turn you meet young men and maidens who, but for their costume, would pass as originals of the figures of the Elgin marbles or the vases of Megara. On the hills of Fiesole the tourist finds shepherd boys whose very counterparts appear in the frescoes of Gozzoli and the cassone of Pinturicchio. We know into what kind of men the youths of old Athens and fifteenth century Tuscany grew; we know little of the men of modern Athens and of modern Tuscany, for the reason that it is not worth our while to know.

What, then, is the meaning of this paralysis that seizes a whole nation, that cannot be diagnosed in the lives of its people, but that nevertheless leads to helplessness and sterility?

It means that the nation's Genius has paled, that its flowering time has passed. When the Genius of a nation shines before it bright and clear that nation is great; when its Genius be-

comes obscured the nation, however wide its power, loses its strength, becomes barren, ceases to produce, and ultimately dies. The dominating class gives expression to the nation's Genius. It may express itself in many ways, or in few, but it can express itself in no ignoble way. A nation whose ideals are ignoble is a nation whose Genius has paled.

We can, therefore, judge the vitality of a country or of a civilization only by the great things it does, the great men it produces. And, judged by this standard, what can we say of the Occidental world to-day?

What of England? Only a quarter of a century ago she had great men in every walk of life. On a fine May day in London one might meet Disraeli, leaning on Rowley's arm and bowing gravely to passers-by whom he never saw; Gladstone, in his gorgeous carriage and his shabby clothes; Matthew Arnold, chatting on the steps of the Athenaeum, and Herbert Spencer, entering the club for his game of billiards; William Morris, denouncing or praising some work at an art exhibition; Ruskin, pointing out to a student the perfections of the Turner water-colors in the basement of the National Gallery. In Chelsea one could see Carlyle, gray and bowed, and Whistler, with his dandified air, his cane and his monocle, searching the old book-shops for seventeenth century fly-leaves on which to print his etchings, and Rossetti, a wreck through sorrow but

still inspired to write and paint things beautiful and strange, and Burne-Jones, with his brilliant eyes full of enthusiasm, eager to catch every hint of loveliness in sky and waving tree and the unconscious play of children. In the suburbs of the city one might sometimes see Darwin, and, more rarely, Tennyson, on one of his brief absences from his beloved island home. Browning one met everywhere, at the Academy show, at the first nights of plays, at musicales and receptions, never alone and most often the center of a group of beautiful women.

And what of England to-day? How many great men has she now? A few survivors of the splendid Victorian period remain — Swinburne and Meredith and Kelvin. But what of the contemporary generation, as that generation is regarded by its own critics? How many of those who live to-day have found the Roses of Pieria? There is Kipling, who is inspired sometimes, but whose pen more often seems afflicted with a febrile weariness — the weariness of the age. And after Kipling in the domain of letters, mediocrity. In the domain of art, mediocrity. In the domain of statesmanship, one erratic strong man and after him, mediocrity. In the domain of science, several careful investigators. In the domain of philosophy, no one.

What of the rest of Europe? A poet in France, a playwright in Scandinavia, in Russia a novelist-reformer, a poet in Belgium. After them, mediocrity.

What of America? Eighty million people, the majority of them educated, the worlds of science, art, and letters available for them to a greater extent than ever before in the history of mankind, and the net result of it all at the present day a statesman, a handful of eminent scientific men and inventors, not a single poet, one painter (who prefers to live abroad), and two or three prose writers. The showing is pitiful.

But, it may be argued, the world has had great men before, whose greatness was not realized till years, sometimes centuries, after they were dead. Yes, but the world has also had men deemed great in their own generation who, when seen in the perspective of time, have been found not to be great at all. And the latter class has always outnumbered the former.

The conclusion seems inevitable that anaemia has seized the entire Occident with almost incredible suddenness. Were one nation, or two or three, alone affected no moral could be drawn. Most countries have had their periods of stagnation and have recovered from them. But now a whole civilization is involved, not in a period of religious ascendancy, when the West has ever been sterile, but in an age when opportunity is greater than at any time before and when all doors are open.

It is pleasant, for some of us, to live in a crepuscular time. Neither gladness nor sorrow is there, but a sweet sad light over all things — a light that makes visible many a subtle curve

and delicate tone unseen in the sunshine or the night. The austerities of religion horrify us, we cannot understand the sacrifices of patriotism, and we are dazzled and blinded by the works produced in periods of intense humanistic activity. Things strange and exotic move us. We turn to the despairing songs made in the twilight of the gods by the poets of the Anthology, to the artificially simple verses of the French Pleiad, to the bitter ballades of Villon, the flowers of evil of Baudelaire. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* attracts us, and *Aucassin and Nicolette*, and the story of Cupid and Psyche. We become connoisseurs of emotion. We see the pathos of childhood and the tragedy of age. There is a tear in every minor poet's sonnet, a thrill in every song. In place of the splendid strong fellowship of human life of the luminous periods, the alert sense of beauty, the sympathy with all high effort, the robust disregard of repressive conventions; in place of the faith of the tenebrous periods, the fear of offending, the restraints and renunciations, there is for the many a materialism that atrophies and degrades and for the few a self-consciousness that is morbid, a capacity for emotion that is hysterical.

And a message that all the clairvoyants of all time, the poets and prophets and philosophers, have brought us is that there is no room under the sky for those who know not of worst or best.

THE PHOENICIANS OF TO-DAY.

There was once a boy, clear-eyed and with fair hair like an aureole, who looked down from the windows of a cottage on a mountain, across a valley of waving cornfields, to where, in the far distance, a faint haze showed where a great city stood. And the city, which he had never visited, was to him enchanted, a symbol of all the mystery and glory of life.

Near his father's cottage was a house in which the child was allowed to wander as he willed. The house was rich in old Greek things, marbles and bronzes and vases from the Hellespont, and Smyrna, and Cyprus. And there were Persian tiles of subtle, splendid color, and gems with intagli, and illuminated books, and copies of great paintings. There was La Gioconda with her delicious smile, and Botticelli's unearthly dancers, and Piero di Cosimo's Death of Procris.

And the child, playing among the flowers and in the cornfields, came to know a little of Nature's language, to look for the rose color of the dawn, to listen for the sighing of the wind

among the trees. For at first the flowers and trees and sky were more to him than books and pictures and craftsman's fancies, and the striving after a diviner beauty than Nature's was as yet unmeaning to him.

Till, one day, rising early as was his wont, he chanced to enter a room while the first rays of sunshine were falling on a great head of Pallas Athene, the chief treasure of the rich man's collection. Pale, alone, against a dark undefined background, every line seen clear, that sculptured thing told to him its story of a creation not dead and not alive. Its voiceless lips spoke marvellous words, and the invisible crown of secret wisdom lay in the fiery lines of its hair.

And then he began to understand. The whole of nature became attuned to another key, and he searched always for some echo or whisper of that hidden music. There was an unaccustomed wonder in things, some hint of elusive excellence in gem and picture and tapestry, in the writings of the poets, in the histories of great men and deeds of olden days.

The time came for the youth to go out into the world. He left his father's cottage and went down into the city, that had seemed so glorious from afar. Instead of the enchanted city of his dreams he found narrow streets with hideous, dingy buildings, and men ever hurrying, and giant machines roaring. On the worn faces of the people in the daytime was writ the lust for gain, in the nighttime the greed for pleasure.

He would have fled, but shame prevented him. It was only for a little while, he said, and then he would depart for ever from that accursed place. He became a worker in the city, spending his days in painful effort to earn the means to live. And always the thought of the world he had left was with him — the harmonies of field and sky, the sweet suggestions of poet and of painter.

The years passed, and his work bore fruit. He grew rich, and filled his house with beautiful and rare and costly things. He had no time to enjoy them, but, he told himself, he would soon give up the toil for gold and then he would go back to the old ideals and enthusiasms. He remembered how the work of writer and artist had thrilled him, and, he said, he could return to the delicious life of former days when he willed.

And at length he ceased from his labor and built himself a house on a mountain, like the house in which so many hours of his childhood had been spent. And thither he had his pictures and bronzes and tapestries and books taken, and, when all was ready, he went to enjoy those things that he had dreamed of through many years.

It was all unmeaning to him. It had all turned to dust and ashes in his grasp.

Is not this the story of many a toiler in great cities? Is it not the story of the American people? While they dream of noble things

to be, they let them wait. They will wait for beautiful cities, and in the meanwhile their cities become so hideous that they must be razed before beauty is possible. They will wait for a great literature, and in the meanwhile their newspapers and cheap magazines are vulgarizing the minds of the people, destroying their language. They will wait for high national ideals, and in the meanwhile individualism, more perfectly developed than ever before since the decadence of Rome, caring nothing for country or state or city, destroys morality in business and makes legislators and public officials corrupt to an extent that, after revelation upon revelation, is even now but faintly realized.

Every moment, said one of the wisest philosophers of the nineteenth century, some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive for us — for that moment only. While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colors, and curious odors, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the brilliancy of their gifts

some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. We are all *condamnés*, all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among the children of this world, in art and song.

It is all there is. If a man, or a nation, with ears to hear and eyes to see, becomes deaf and blind to those things which are the reflections and symbols of the ultimate ideal, the side-realized life, that man, that nation, is a failure. To gain that which is best in life is success in life; to lose it is defeat. Viewed in this light, the American people to-day are a failure. Their rich men buy rare books and famous pictures, but how many of them could we imagine taking part in those conversations between Florentine plutocrats and artists in the gardens of the Medici in the day of Lorenzo the Magnificent; how many, even, would be intellectually fit to join in a discussion at a Roman gentleman's table in the decadent Neronic period?

Americans have often been grieved and astonished at the behavior of distinguished visitors from Europe. They have come here, have been received with much honor, have been entertained with all lavishness, have seen the towering buildings and gorgeous clubs of New York, the stockyards of Chicago, the steel works of Pittsburg, and the miscellaneous

architectural effects of Washington; and then they have gone home to say things about America bitter, biting, sarcastic, and sometimes even untrue. Americans have not been able to understand it, and, in their turn, have had many caustic things to say about Europe in general and eminent Europeans in particular.

But the explanation would seem to lie deeper than envy, or the lack of courtesy due from guest to host. These visitors from foreign lands cannot all have been ill-bred clowns; there must be some reason for their boorishness. Is it not to be found in the intense, all-pervading, deadly materialism which is all that America has to show?

Some faint trace of nobler life is still to be found in Europe; the impulse is lost, but the memory of diviner days remains. And so, when a traveller of quick perception visits us he is often, without realizing the cause, oppressed and overcome by a sentiment of antipathy, estrangement. It is all so perfectly organized; the machine — at least so far as the stranger can see — runs so smoothly; and it all results in such utter futility.

There are men in America who recognize and deplore the lack of a national ideal and who do what they can to awaken the people to a sense of their grovelling condition. But a national Genius cannot be made to order; by no amount of legislation can nobility of spirit be ordained. The degradation of America is exhibited to an appalling degree in the lives of

the people. The very rich live in a manner which is nauseating in its aimlessness, vulgarity, ineptitude, and imbecility. They are such a by-word that no newspaper, editorially, ever takes them seriously, but this does not prevent the majority of the press from describing at great length all the doings of the Upper Class—their dresses, diamonds, dinner parties, dances, and divorces. A little lower down in the social scale what may be called the stock-broker class—the men who are to be seen in the restaurants at night trying to galvanize themselves into neurotic emotion with wine and music and pretty women—exhibit characteristics even more sordid. In all classes of American society the poison is at work—the poison of activity directed toward ignoble ends. To become rich has been desired by men ever since money was invented, but not till now and here since the days of the Phoenicians has the effort of an entire people been concentrated so completely on this one ideal.

And what befell the Phoenicians we know—how they disappeared leaving no heritage to the world, no beautiful thing, no uplifting thought, no example of heroism or of high achievement, and how, even as the Prophet had foretold, their cities became desolate, a place to spread nets upon.

THE SLEEP OF THE ORIENT

One day in the Summer of 1904 three Englishmen entered a low doorway between dirty, tawdry houses and, after passing through open courtyards and a maze of dark passages and chapels, found themselves in a high pillared sanctuary in which, thrown into clear relief against the surrounding obscurity, was a wonderful golden shrine, adorned with turquoises and pearls, with amber and coral and lapis lazuli. And seated on a throne within the shrine was the most famous statue in all the world.

The place was Lhasa, the cathedral was the Jo-Kang, the statue was that image of the Buddha which was given by the King of Magadha to the Chinese Emperor for his aid when the Yavanas were overrunning the plains of India and which, as the dowry of the Princess Konjo, was taken to Lhasa from Peking twelve hundred years ago.

Until that Summer day no white man had seen the statue, the most sacred thing in the sacred city beyond the Himalayas. The Eng-

lishmen who were admitted to the Jo-Kang — and the Chinese Amban, who obtained the privilege for them, paid for it later with his life — had supposed that they would see a Buddha like the other Buddhas of countless temples of the Orient — the ascetic figure, the mystical, absorbed, ageless countenance, the same from Ceylon to Japan.

But the image in the Holy of Holies of Lhasa, illumined by the light of great golden lamps, set in its jewel-decked shrine, beneath the dragon-borne canopy with its turquoise crown, is not the figure of the Blessed One, already more than man, who, under the bo-tree of Uruvela, cleft the mountain of ignorance and saw that all was illusion and that all was vanity. The face of the Buddha of the Jo-Kang is rounded, alert, youthful; the smile, enigmatic it may be, but almost triumphant. Here, says one of those who saw the figure, is nothing of the Melancholia who has known too much and who has renounced it all as vanity. Here, instead, is the quiet happiness and the quick capacity for pleasure of the boy who had never yet known either pain, or disease, or death. It is Gautama as a pure and eager prince, without a thought for the morrow, or a care for to-day.

In this figure, to which for a thousand years the Buddhists of all Asia have made pilgrimage, braving hardships greater than the travelers to Mecca, making their way over terrible deserts and everlasting mountain snows, we

can read a symbol—a symbol that to-day shines forth more clearly than at any other time since the great golden statue was fashioned, by no man, the Buddhists say, but by Visrakarma, the constructive force of the universe. For the youthful, gracious figure of the Jo-Kang reminds us that Buddhism is a two-fold religion, that it indeed leads to great renunciations, to contempt for life, to self-mortification, to the negation of desire; but that it also teaches the sacredness and interdependence of all manifestations of life, that there is a divine order in things, that humanity is evolving to a condition ever nearer to perfection.

Christ was born in a manger, Mohammed in a desert, but the Siddârtha of the Buddhist legend was born in a garden of roses and grew up in a palace of marble and cedar-wood, surrounded by princely playfellows, and musicians, and beautiful girls. As the centuries have passed the story of his early years has ever been more richly embroidered, until now the legend is a recital of all the suavities of our world-existence, all the delights that nature and art bestow, all the allurements of love and of desire.

Buddhism, in some respects the most ascetic of all religions, is capable of developing into a belief, or a philosophy, as brilliantly humanistic as that of the Greeks. The sense of frustration, of the helplessness of humanity, has ever been more lively in the Orient than in the Occident. While the Western divine warns us that

all shall burn, and with it the world, and all the memory and fame of it shall die, the Eastern teacher goes far beyond this, and tells us that all that is is but illusion, that the soul is drowned in the sea of conditioned existence, that if she sing within her chrysalis of flesh and matter, that even if she whisper to herself that she exists, she is of the earth, ensnared in the webs of delusion. Saint Simeon lived on his pillar and the anchorites of Ireland on lonely storm-swept rocks, but the hermit of Tibet today, with his rosary of human bones and the top of a skull to hold his food, lives in a cave, walled up so that no light may penetrate, and with an opening only large enough to allow a hand to be passed out.

Yes, but they too have lips to kiss with, hearts to love, and eyes to see, and if their renunciations have been more supreme, their capacity for joy is greater. They live an intenser life than we. In place of the *Morte Amoureuse* of the West is the Eastern story of the monk who seven times foreswore the world, and seven times returned to it. The Italian Despot built a Christian church to glorify an illicit passion, but the Eastern King when his favorite died built the Taj Mahal, the result of the labor of twenty thousand men for twenty years.

From the East the world has learned mysticism, esoteric religion, the negation of the flesh by means of violent austerities; but out of the East also have come those things that

are types and symbols of the delight that life has to give, enchanted pleasures, subtilized desires — rose gardens and dancing girls, rich perfumes and precious gems, myrrh and aloes and opium, amber and sandal-wood, rubies and pearls and emeralds, fabrics of silk and marvelously wrought textiles, carvings of ivory and crystal and jade.

And out of that night which ascetic religion has cast over the Orient there have come strange flowers, fascinating as moonlight, inscrutable as the stars. Persia has produced sweet-cadenced verses, passionate with the passion of those for whom the visible world exists but who must steal all joy. India gives us the visions of those who have tortured themselves into clairvoyance, have stupefied themselves into an artificial paradise. From China come porcelains blue as the sky after rain, rose-colored, pearl-white, of tenderest green.

The Orient has been asleep, but it has dreamed, and its dreams have been sweet.

But they have been dreams — nothing else. That in the past the East has been awake we know, and even now we are beginning to learn of the treasures of philosophy and romance and song — the productions of periods of alert and luminous life — which have been preserved through centuries of obtenebration in China and the Indies and Korea.

Will there be another awakening? Will India again be inspired by the spirit which wrote the Vedic hymns; will her Genius again

shine bright and clear? Will China, recovering as she once recovered before from a period of darkness and sterility, produce instead of collate, arrange, and contemplate what has already been done? We cannot tell. The Hindus, a conquered people, find their ideal in the extinction of life and of desire. The Chinese, the oldest nation in the world, seem weary, spiritless, without even the negative ideal of the Hindus. It would seem that these two ancient civilizations of the East must be classed with the civilization of the West as having played their part in the world's progress. Their ideals have departed; the Genius of each has paled.

Is there then no hope for humanity, no promise of a new light to disperse the clouds of pessimism, disappointment, disbelief, to heal the atrophy that results from low ideals?

The answer has been given — in the Sea of Japan, on the plains of Manchuria, on the hills of Liao-Tung.

THE MAKING OF A CIVILIZATION.

Evolved during centuries of isolated life, perfected by discipline compared with which even that of the Spartans was license, encouraged by the natural conditions of temperate climate and a country as beautiful as Italy or the islands of the Grecian archipelago, there has appeared in the Farthest East a nation which is the best hope of humanity to-day — a nation whose Genius shines before it clear as a star, with ideals which are noble, with memories that inspire, with leaders who are great.

In the last eighteen months the Occident has been learning a new word. It was whispered around the correspondents' campfires at Feng-huang-Cheng, while the priests of Shinto and of Buddha, in their shimmering silken robes, were paying honor to those who were slain in the first great battle of the war; it was heard beneath the rose-trees of Liao-Yang; when Port Arthur fell the West began to talk of it; after Mukden it was to be read in newspapers from San Francisco to Vienna; and now, when Japan's triumph over a foe of whom all Europe

was afraid is complete, commentators everywhere are discussing *bushido*.

They call it the Soul of Japan, forgetting that the standard of conduct of a people is not its soul, but the manifestation of its soul. They tell the West to learn *bushido*, but they forget that there can be no effect without a cause and that a noble rule of life is the result of nobility of spirit, of noble national ideals, of steadfastness of purpose, of unspoiled capacity for enthusiasm, of a Genius that guides and inspires.

What *bushido* does the world knows. It has seen warriors go to certain destruction, not only in the excitement of battle, but coldly, deliberately, sacrificing themselves that their cause might gain some slight advantage; it has seen all considerations of personal glory cast aside — even the glory that comes from heroic death — and each soldier of an army inspired only by the hope of the triumph of that army as a whole; it has seen a fighting force on land and another on the sea operating with no hint of discord among the commanders; it has seen an entire nation aiding the army and the navy in every possible way, even the schoolboys forming themselves into companies to till the fields of those who were fighting their country's battles; it has seen fathers kill their children in order to be allowed to join the troops in the field, mothers kill themselves in order that their sons might the more unhesitatingly offer their lives for the Emperor, maidens pray that their lovers at the front might be slain or wounded;

it has seen the Japanese Nation, though its very existence was at stake, though it knew that slaughter and rapine would be its lot were the Muscovite to conquer, composed, confident, admitting no doubt or fear, no hesitation on entering upon the struggle; it has seen that nation, while the issue was uncertain, suffering silently and cheerfully, and not one man in all its millions failing to do what is the hardest thing of all in a time of national excitement, to keep silence; it has seen that nation in time of victory courteous to the vanquished, violating no canon of good taste in its celebrations, expressing no triumph, making no boast, and finally, it has seen the Japanese people display anger for the first time, not at the continuance of the war, not at the prospect of the loss of more lives and the imposition of greater burdens, but at the conclusion of peace when further struggle would have resulted in further triumph.

It has seen all these things — has seen them and marvelled. And yet even now it does not understand. When a man receives a stinging blow he remains dazed for a time. The world within the past year has received such a blow as it had not received for two thousand years, and it is still dazed. It should have been prepared. Perhaps it would have been prepared had it not been that it was so flattered and dazzled by Japan's adaptation of the unessential concomitants of the civilization of the West that it forgot to study her retention of the essentials of her own civilization, the things that count, the things that impel and compel.

And now, with its slowly dawning realization of what the events in the Far East mean, the Occident talks of *bushido*, the knightly code of the Japanese, the standard of conduct which guides the warrior, the counsel of perfection which is held up as the ideal for the entire nation. But *bushido* is not the cause of the strength of the Japanese; it is a manifestation of their strength, and that strength they have attained through an order of life which has taught the individual that his existence is valueless, meaningless, save in relation to that of the family, the community, the state.

Japan comes by her strength naturally, inevitably. It is the strength born of the repressions of a thousand years. Discipline such as she has undergone could not but make her strong. In the ultimate analysis, of course, the strength, the Genius, the virtue as the ancients would have called it, of the Japanese, as of any other nation or race, must remain unexplained. Why this people should have chosen those things that make for strength and not for drunkenness we cannot tell, any more than we can tell why one human being is beautiful and another deformed, why one man is a poet and another a thief, why one is an animal and in another passion leaves the ground to lose itself in the sky.

But as we know that if, possessing a spark of the divine fire, a man guard it by discipline and fan it into flame by work and keep it bright by suffering and hardship, that man is destined

to become great, so we know that a nation with noble ideals, its energies conserved by denial, its arms sharpened by necessity, must conquer and prevail. And by learning the extent of the sacrifices and hardships which have been Japan's we can judge her power to-day.

In his last book, the proofsheets of which were waiting for his correction as he lay upon his deathbed, the man who, of all Occidentals, perhaps came nearer to knowing the Japanese people than any other, described for us the constitution of society in Japan as it existed until a few years ago and which, though no longer legally appointed, is still in all its essentials the organization of the nation. About the sacred person of the Mikado, says Lafcadio Hearn, "we see the tribes ranged in obeisance — each tribe, nevertheless, maintaining its own ancestral cult; and the clans forming these tribes, and the communities forming these clans, and the households forming these communities, have all their separate cults; and out of the mass of these cults have been derived the customs and the laws. Yet everywhere the customs and the laws differ more or less, because of the variety of their origins; they have this only in common,— that they exact the most humble and implicit obedience, and regulate every detail of private and public life. Personality is wholly suppressed by coercion; and the coercion is chiefly from within, not from without,— the life of every individual being so ordered by the will

of the rest as to render free action, free speaking, or free thinking, out of the question. This means something incomparably harsher than the socialistic tyranny of early Greek society; it means religious communism doubled with a military despotism of the most terrible kind. The individual did not legally exist,—except for punishment; and from the whole of the producing classes, whether serfs or freemen, the most servile submission was ruthlessly exacted. It is difficult to believe that any intelligent man of modern times could endure such conditions and live. The incessant and multiform constraint upon mental and moral life would of itself be enough to kill.”

And the same writer, in telling us of the manner of discipline under which the Japanese lived, describes the laws which regulated the existence of a farmer with an income, for instance, of a hundred *koku* of rice. He might build a house sixty feet long, but no longer; he was forbidden to construct it with a room containing an alcove; and he was not allowed—except by special permission—to roof it with tiles. No member of his family was permitted to wear silk. Three kinds of viands only were to be served at the wedding of such a farmer’s daughter or son; and the quality as well as the quantity of the soup, fish, or sweetmeats offered to the wedding guests was legally fixed. So likewise the number of the wedding-gifts; even the cost of the presents of rice-wine and dried fish was prescribed, and the

quality of the single fan which it was permissible to offer to the bride

And when the farmer became a grandfather the presents he was allowed to give to the newborn child were all ordained. On the occasion of the Boy's Festival the gifts from the whole family, including the grandparents, were limited by law to one paper flag and two toy spears.

This rigor of law governed every detail of life. The manner of speech to a superior, an equal, or an inferior, was prescribed. Even the manner of smiling was subject to rule; it was a grave offense so to smile in addressing a superior that the back teeth could be seen.

And through it all the Japanese people remained joyous and young; submitting to restraint willingly; eager and alert; sensitive to all things beautiful. The West speaks of Japan as an ancient country, but the age of a nation is not to be reckoned, as the age of a man, by years, but by the sum of the effort put forth when the nation, emerging from its tenebrous period, realizes itself, draws on the power it has stored up, and gives expression to its ideals.

Japan is beginning to do that. She is young; her flowering time is not over, but is only now arriving, and before it has gone by she is destined to impress upon the Occident the civilization which she has evolved through many centuries. And the weapon which she has forged for her work in the world is not her

army or her navy, not her statecraft or her mastery of the science of the West, but *bushido*, hammered out of pure metal, tempered by discipline, sharpened by obedience, proved by restraint.

It is an ideal new and strange to the West. Take, says one writer, the average scheme of life of the average society of the West, and *bushido*, as nearly as may be, represents its exact antithesis. It offers the ideal of poverty instead of wealth, humility in place of ostentation, reserve instead of *réclame*, self-sacrifice in place of selfishness, the care of the interest of the State rather than that of the individual. *Bushido* inspires ardent courage and the refusal to turn the back upon the enemy; it looks death calmly in the face and prefers it to ignominy of any kind. It preaches submission to authority and the sacrifice of all private interests, whether of self or of family, to the common weal. It requires its disciples to submit to a strict physical and mental discipline, develops a martial spirit, and, by lauding the virtues of courage, constancy, fortitude, faithfulness, daring, and self-restraint, offers an exalted code of moral principles, not only for the man and the warrior, but for men and women in times both of peace and of war.

This is the ideal with which Japan emerges from her period of restraint, of obtenebration; this is the spirit which, actuating her warriors, has enabled them to conquer. Now she has reached the turning point. The old discipline,

the old ascetic order, are about to pass away; the stored up strength is bursting forth. And the world should hope that the flowering time may be as glorious as the preparation was severe.

THE RISEN SUN.

It was a benign Buddha that the sweet child Saint whom Japanese art loves to picture brought back with him across the sea from China a thousand years ago, a Buddha human and loving, a creed which civilized and inspired. The Blessed One pictured in Japanese temples is the same ascetic figure as that which is to be found in Ceylon and China and Borneo, but the spirit of the Japanese Buddha is that of the young Prince, joyous and eager, whom the Englishmen saw imaged in the Jo-Kang of Lhasa.

In Japan it has not been religion which has supplied the restraints and renunciations that have stored up the energy of the people; this discipline has come from within and has been built up out of custom and law like the discipline of the early Greeks. And, like the religion of the Greeks, the religion of the Japanese has been a humanizing influence. The arts followed Buddhism to the country. There was no architecture, no art, no literature in Japan till the Buddhist priest-craftsmen built their

temples and adorned them with statuary and pictures and symbols and taught the people to read the Chinese classics. Gentle and tender and gracious has been the work of Buddhism in Japan, teaching resignation and hope, kindness to all living things and pity for all suffering, harmonizing itself naturally and perfectly with the ancient belief of the country, educating the people, introducing refinements in life and delightful customs and festivals, and, beyond all, providing the impetus that inspired the Japanese to evolve an art and a literature which are by this time perfect media for the expression of the national Genius.

In every museum of the West one may now see specimens of the art of Japan—gray *kakémono*, in which nebulous tones and subtle curves suggest an attenuation of beauty which the painters of the West have never attempted; Shippo *cloisonnés*, of colors so brilliant that in the sunlight they glow like a million gems; lacquers of design so faultless that it seems as if the addition of a hairline would mar it; old Satsuma pottery, in which all the poetry of lamp-lit gardens and all the fascination of glittering accoutrement and bizarre costume are suggested in the space of a square inch; *netsukes* and sword-guards of a fairy delicacy; textiles of colors so splendid and so strange that the Occident has no words to describe them.

Books are written on Japanese art, catalogues of artists are made, experts talk of

styles and schools and masters. And with it all we are unable to understand. We see exquisitely decorated surfaces, cunningly wrought metal, curious patterns, unusual tints and tones; but the soul, the Genius, behind it all is hidden from us. We can, as has been said, only apprehend the Genius of the Greeks or of the Italians of the Renaissance, yet some message there is for us in the marbles of Pheidias, the Victory of Samothrace, the lunettes of the Della Robbia. But a painting by Nobuzane or a statue by Tankei is meaningless to us. Beneath the bronze-tiled roofs of Nikko, beyond the marvellous inner gates which guard the tomb of Iyéyasu, in the Halls of Worship with their Buddhist angels, their vermilion pillars, their golden bells and great stone lanterns, we are impressed, we admire, but we cannot understand. It is all the expression of a civilization that is alien to us.

But it is not the complete expression, in the sense in which, for instance, the Elgin marbles are the expression of the Genius of Greece. The art of the Japanese up to the present time has been the manifestation of intense natural love for beauty, of natural refinement and impeccable delicacy, nature subtilized, rather than a conscious effort toward expression. This refinement, this delicacy, are greater perhaps than any other people in all the world has shown. They are exhibited by the Japanese in a hundred ways that are strange to us — in their perfect arrangement of flowers, in their

landscape gardening, their decoration of houses, their blossom festivals, their tea ceremonies, their poetical contests. And the art of the Japanese has been, so far, chiefly the exquisite arrangement of line and tone and color, without the power of intellectual or emotional excitation possessed by the best works of the masters of the West.

There never has been, and there never can be, any such thing as translation; but so far as we are able to appreciate the literature of Japan we find the same qualities in it as in Japanese art—refinement carried to a point never reached in the Occident, workmanship of amazing delicacy, intense feeling for natural beauty— together with a deep sense of tragedy and an all-pervading enthusiasm for nobility of conduct. It would seem that the literature of Japan has already gone further as an expression of her national Genius than has her art.

And now? All the signs point to the approach of the great flowering time, the time when the self-realization of Japan will be complete, when her Genius will find clear and perfect expression. It has to its hand instruments wonderfully fashioned, perhaps more nearly approaching flawlessness than any the world has previously produced.

The world waits for the message which it will bring. When that message comes we shall understand. Those enigmatic figures, those elusive curves and subtle colors and curious harmonies, that self-abnegation which

sacrifices the individual for the State, that strange code of honor which regards life so lightly — for a moment the world will understand.

Japan will prevail. It may be by conquest; it will surely be by ideas. She has youth, and the rest of the world is old. She has energy, and the Occident is weakened and ennuyé. She has high ideals, and the people of the West are sunk in a materialism that deadens and degrades. They have trod the grapes, they have drunken the wine; with her the grapes are still to tread, the wine is still to drink.

And other civilizations will come, other world cataclysms, other epochal wars. State will fight against state, race against race, and ever the strongest will win. And ever, we may hope, something of good will last, something be gained.

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