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Devoted to the Science of Religion,  
the Religion of Science, and the Extension  
of the Religious Parliament Idea

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

MARCH 1928

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VOLUME XLII    NUMBER 862

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Frontispiece—Benedictus de Spinoza</i>	
<i>Spinoza and Medieval Philosophy.</i> RICHARD MCKEON.....	129
<i>Sir Richard Burton (Concluded).</i> DAVIS L. JAMES, JR.....	146
<i>An Hour with T'ai Shu, Master of the Law.</i> CLARENCE H. HAMILTON .....	162
<i>Walking on the Water in Indian Literature.</i> W. NORMAN BROWN.	170
<i>The Humanism of Boccaccio.</i> BERGER R. HEADSTROM.....	181
<i>Mary and Martha.</i> RUDOLPH KASSNER.....	187

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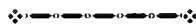
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**BENEDICTUS DE SPINOZA .**

Cui natura, Deus, rerum cui cognitus ordo,  
Hoc Spinoza flatu conspiciendus erat.  
Expressere viri faciem, sed pingere mentem  
Zeuxidis artifices non valere manus.  
Illa viget scriptis: illic sublimia tractat:  
Huic quicumque cupis noscere, scripta lege .

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*Frontispiece to The Open Court.*

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## SPINOZA AND MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

BY RICHARD MCKEON

WITHIN the last fifty years scholars have brought to light materials which make it possible to trace the course of Spinoza's life and the evolution of his thought with reasonable accuracy. It is somewhat more difficult however to be sure, from the same data, of the precise antecedents of his thought. The sources of his speculations are implied in a general way, or sometimes are even named, in his works. Moreover, the inventory of the books that formed his library has fortunately been preserved to us, and consequently doctrines may be traced back with some probability to particular authors if the books of those authors are to be found on the list. Nevertheless though it is obvious that we would understand Spinoza's thought better if we could be sure what in the works of the philosophers he read influenced him, there is very little on which to base conclusions and scholars have been able to find evidences of the influence of a most amazing diversity of men in his works.

Born into the tight orthodoxy of the Portugal Jewish colony of Amsterdam, Spinoza seems to have spent most of the effort of a serious youth in absorbing whatever was available of Jewish lore. There is evidence that there was an abundance of pious men to guide him in this study,<sup>1</sup> and critics have been tempted frequently to speculations concerning the possible relations between the youthful Spinoza and Rabbi Saul Morterira and Mannasseh ben Israel and Rabbi Aboab. Whatever those relations may have been, he entered the Jewish school of Amsterdam at the age of seven (1639) and at the age of twenty-three (1655) he still attended the syna-

<sup>1</sup> See for example Kaufmann, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, XXV, 207.

gogue. He acquired in that time at least a familiarity with the Bible and with Biblic criticism, with cabalistic speculations to which he refers in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* as "those stupidities of charlatans" and with the Talmud. Biblic criticism would carry him into whatever was known in Amsterdam of Jewish philosophy—to at least a knowledge of Maimonides, of Creskas, of Gersonides, of ibn Ezra. For the second period of his life, after his excommunication from the synagogue (July 27, 1656), we have information, in a sense as definite, but also as inconclusive. Clearly he was widely interested in science; he was influenced by Descartes in scientific and mathematical speculation and in philosophic method; he was impressed by Hobbes in politics and in some points of ethics. Bacon is mentioned in his letters and there was a copy of the *Sermones Fideles* in his library and a quotation from the *Novum Organum* in his letters; analogies in doctrines have led to the conjecture of Bruno as a possible influence.

But despite the rather definite items which can be assembled as possible ingredients to the intellectual formation of Spinoza, there is of course no means of determining the exact history of indebtedness and of growth. He would have had to have been much more self-consciously autobiographical to make possible any precise attributions and incontestably clear lines of influence. We have instead indications in footnotes, letters and the implications concerned in the books he left in his library. For philosophic purposes that should be enough. Even more, the paucity of evidence makes imperative an economy which might be recommended on philosophic grounds: borrowing and influences are important in the history of thought only when they help clarify some doctrine or some stage of development; the obvious effect of Hobbes' doctrine of Natural Rights on Spinoza's philosophy is at least as significant as the fact that a copy of *De Cive* was found among Spinoza's books, and the latter fact is important chiefly as it lends additional substance to the former. It is surely as relevant that Spinoza opposed some fundamental tenets of Descartes' philosophy as that he quoted Descartes and read his works. The indebtedness of philosophers is in doctrines, and ultimately the history of thought is to be traced in more subtle data than the presence of a book in a scholar's library or of a quotation from it in his works.

It would be futile, then, to read the history of philosophy for

prognostications and echoes of Spinoza. Anticipations of his doctrines could be found crowded together in wholly impossible places, since almost any doctrine, read with sufficient detachment, could be a remote preparation for any other. To insist, however, that Spinoza's philosophic attitude was defined by the broad learning he had in Medieval Jewish philosophy is a totally different enterprise. Clearly he opposed some of the doctrines that were held almost universally by Jewish philosophers, such for example, as the creation of the world in time. But it is scarcely a question of principles or of individual doctrines. If it were, it would be sufficient to point out that it would have been impossible for a man to assume the whole body of Medieval principles and be—not original and constructive—but only consistent. There was no less divergence in philosophic opinions in the period that separated Isaac Israeli and Creskas than in a period of four hundred years in any other philosophic milieu. But the characteristics of a philosophy are fixed no less surely by the questions that are asked than by the solutions that are found. The purpose of debate is not only to eliminate one of the contending doctrines but incidentally to clarify both, and even the fact that debate is found possible accomplishes something to that end. In that broader sense Spinoza is unintelligible without some survey of the discussions of his Medieval predecessors.

There is at least one total similarity in the philosophies that grew up in the Middle Ages—Arab, Jewish or Christian—that makes it possible to apply the terms Scholasticism to them all in a sense that is not entirely empty and imaginative. There is a growth in them that has for motivation some obscure need, possibly inherent in all religious traditions to interpret themselves and understand themselves. Whatever the motivation, the contact of each of these monotheistic traditions with the works of the Greeks was to bring forth in its particular Scholasticism a philosophy which orders the world on a broadly congruent plan. There were, of course, crossed influences; Jewish thought derived much from Arabic, and Christian thought from both; but even that borrowing was possible only because the problems and the philosophies were already surprisingly similar. The frameworks are consistently Neoplatonic, and the progress of philosophy is usually marked by the degrees in which Aristotle has been made to fill in the details which are

included within the frame. Arab, Jewish and Christian thought elaborated in varying proportions through the centuries syntheses of Aristotelianism within Neoplatonic schemata. Aristotelian doctrines were doomed frequently to combat Neoplatonism, sometimes to correct it, but, though the history of thought in the Middle Ages is largely the progressive triumph of Aristotelian doctrines, it succeeded at no point within the Middle Ages in eliminating it wholly.

The close union of the two strains in each of the traditions can be explained rather simply. Under the encouragement of the Mohammedan Caliphs, particularly of the Abbasid dynasty which was founded in 750 A. D., Syrian scholars and physicians translated the writings of Greek scientists and philosophers into Syriac and Arabic. It was thus that in medicine Hippocrates and Galen, in mathematics Euclid, Archimedes and Ptolemy and in philosophy Aristotle, Theophrastus and Alexander of Aphrodisias became available to Arab scholars. The matter, the method and the terminology for their philosophizing was found in Aristotle. But among the works that purported to be of Aristotle were two treatises, *The Theology of Aristotle* and the *Liber de Causis*. The first of these is in reality a series of extracts taken from the *Enneades* of Plotinus (Books IV-VI) and the second is borrowed from the *Elementatio Theologica* of Proclus.<sup>2</sup> It was inevitable that Arab philosophy be cast on Neoplatonic lines, and what is true of the Arabs is true in the same degree of the Jews, since they were pupils of the Arabs and found almost an identical use for Aristotle. In fact even Ibn Daud, Maimonides and Gersonides, possibly the most Aristotelian of the Medieval Jews, preferred to appeal to Alfarabi or Avicenna or Averroes for authority concerning the Aristotelian position, rather than go directly to the works of Aristotle.

The Neoplatonic mark is placed on Christian scholasticism in a somewhat different fashion. There is a strong Neoplatonic influence in Augustine, and from him perhaps Christian philosophy took its particular cast. If later and more direct influence were needed, there were the translations which John Scotus Erigena made in the ninth century of the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. But whatever the origin, there is in subsequent philosophies an ordering of the world in which all things are derived from and are

<sup>2</sup> See Valentine Rose, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, p. 843, and Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, Introduction.



made to depend on God. In such an ordering a religious tendency manifests itself in an impatience to snap the universe, which has scarcely detached itself from the being of God, back into his ineffable essence. Philosophy is evinced in an inclination to loiter somewhat along the way by which the soul adventures back to the source of things. Where the religion is one of salvation, as the Christian religion is, the world will be noticed only so far as it is a reflection of the nature of God and so far, therefore, as it may clarify some detail of the itinerary of the soul back to God. St. Augustine had in mind more than a criterion of truth when he decided to believe in order to understand and to understand in order to believe; his concern was not entirely to find a way in which his capacities might be applied best to the constructed universe but to find the most efficient realization of the end of man—salvation.<sup>3</sup> Philosophy interposes itself in the flux and reflux of the world out of God and back to God, and from that interposition problems of a purely philosophic nature emerge; the relation of an eternal creation to a temporal existence, the nature of human knowledge, involving in its superior forms manifestations of ideas by God, in its inferior forms the action of individual things, and the analysis of the ends of man. These are questions which become finally considerations of true and false, good and evil and of the relation of reason and faith.

In general the form of the philosophy of Spinoza shows signs of having grown from such a pattern. There is at least a relationship close enough to lead, say, to the visiting of the accusation of pantheism on the head of John Scotus Erigena for the very reasons given when it is applied to Spinoza.<sup>4</sup> Thus Henry Bett (*Johannes Scotus Erigena*, p. 194) would have him influenced either by Bruno (who may not have read Erigena but professed himself a disciple of Nicholas of Cusa who had) or by the Kabbalists who wrote the *Zohar* (which presents coincidents with Erigena's doctrines.) And startling improbabilities in the history of thought may be eliminated by considering this triply intermingling line of

<sup>3</sup> See *de Lib. Arb.* I, II, c. ii. and *Epistola CXX*, c. i. The introduction of St. Augustine is not irrelevant to the formation of Spinoza's thought, since there was a copy of an *Építome Augustini Operum Omnium* in his library.

<sup>4</sup> There have been critics sufficiently impressed by the similarities of the philosophies of Christian writers and Spinoza to establish rather fantastic possibilities of connection between them.

Scholasticism, accumulating bits of classical philosophies and moving down the ages to emerge in different centuries with a constantly fuller Aristotelianism bulging from a Neoplatonic frame. Such a view may be effective in quieting some of the critical apprehensions concerning Spinoza's Neoplatonism; it definitely minimizes the curious and rather recent insistence on Bruno's possibly dominating influence. Finally it makes the Spinozistic mysticism, instead of an anomalous addition, the natural outgrowth of the rationalistic *Ethics*: for in high scholasticism, mysticism and rationalism are in the same description of things, save that mysticism prefers to contemplate the return of the soul to God, while rationalism makes the same journey more slowly and discursively that it may also satisfy its curiosity concerning the soul and the grounds of its knowledge. So Spinoza is no more a contradictory development out of Jewish Scholasticism than Duns Scotus out of Christian, and both crown their high intellectual vision with a mystic contemplation.

It is needless to determine more than this concerning Spinoza's antecedents. We know from the inventory of his library that he had copies of Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed*, Manasseh ben Israel's *Esperanca de Israel* and Leon Abarbanel's (Leo Hebraeus) *Dialogos de amor*. There is little direct reference in Spinoza to his Hebrew sources, except in matters that concern Biblical criticism. His quotations in that field, however, are so numerous and widely distributed as to indicate a broad knowledge of Hebrew philosophies. He cites Maimonides, ibn Ezra, Gersonides, Hasdai Creskas, Juda Alfa 'Har and Abraham ben David. When he refers to them in philosophic connections it is always done familiarly. But even a cursory glance down the succession of Medieval philosophies would be enough to mark certain family resemblances. In all of them God is the source of things, and though there are many differences concerning the way in which the world emerges, by emanation or by some manner of creation, the qualities that exist in things fall, as a result of God's action or his mere being, into fixed relations to each other, and the world is made in some way to represent or reflect attributes merged in God. God is simultaneously the source of all being and all intelligibility, so a nice parallelism of logic and ontology must run through nature. God defines the being of things and from him flows the power that moti-

vates the whole sequence of movement in physical objects; he is the idea that gives meaning to all things that follow from him. They are and are known at the same time and by means of the same derivation from him. God is therefore reflected on all sides and by all things; that things are and that they should be understood, are equally manifestations of him.

It is back this course out of God that the soul is to travel to a salvation of some sort, depending on the tradition, and on the century and phase of the tradition. The Christians developed a neat Trinitarian arrangement, and there were special signs of God in the triple manifestations of him in nature: in the being of things and the logic of things and in the moral way to God. For St. Augustine, God was the source of being as creator, of truth as intellectual light, and finally of moral goodness by his grace; he was the cause of the constituted universe and the light for perceiving truth and the fountain for imbibing felicity. From that, in fact, came the triple division of philosophy into the sciences of Being, of Truth and of Good; into Physics, Logic and Morals. The Medieval Jewish tradition evolved no such stylized form, yet it had the same problems to face; what is the relation of God to the world and what is the reality of the attributes we ascribe to him? Sometimes, as in the case of Saadia, precisely the three attributes were chosen for God—life, power and knowledge. But even in other cases the dangers no less than the solutions are sufficiently similar to permit each tradition to learn something from the other in late scholasticism. The pathway to the contemplation of God is marked and the universe is laid on a definitely similar plan. It is significant that Spinoza's thoughts on God bear kinship at some point to the doctrines of all the great Medieval theologians. But the fact that, say, Israeli might be quoted to elucidate Spinoza's doctrine of God does not force the rest of their doctrine to similar conclusions; the psychologies expounded by the two philosophers are notably different. So too, in the field of God's influence on man, Spinoza may follow Creskas in his doctrine of man's freedom; how far precisely, would be difficult to determine, but the further doctrine that love, not intellect, is the essence of the soul, need not be a necessary consequence, even despite the fact that in the mystic regions where the soul approaches God, being, love and intellect are no more distinguishable in the soul than they are in God.

The innovations then which are to be found in Spinoza's philosophy do not fall out of the line of innovations that had been made through all the Middle Ages. They follow out of the succession of readjustments of dogma and reason, of religion and philosophy. Philosophy had long been concerned with the unity of things, and it was neither out of deference nor by accident that it chose to turn to God and the unity in God. But there were conditions to be fulfilled before reason could be admitted to religion. On the one hand intellectual explanations were to be employed on the traditional documents, and even intellectual ideals and virtues were to be introduced into the tradition. This meant on the other hand the fitting of characteristically religious doctrines to the universe: rewards and punishments, even if they were inscrutable, were henceforth to be meted out in accordance with the system of things; intellectual conditions as well as moral ones had to be fulfilled before the soul could return to its source; it was to be freed from the body by intellectual excellence and right conduct. Judah Halevi and Creskas are the only outstanding exceptions to the common opinion that religion and philosophy are identical in content and different only in method. Israeli defined philosophy as self-knowledge and keeping from evil. When a man knows himself, he knows everything; and the transvaluation has only to be made—the aim of life is to become like God. Religion could make the intellect the sign of God; philosophy in its turn could lend a logical intelligibility to God's workings.

The place of God in the universe was too obvious to permit his existence to be questioned in any intelligible sense. Even when his existence was proved, the logical proofs were usually only more definite illustrations of a definite fact. The significant problem is the relation of God to the universe. Maimonides, in fact, considers God's attributes first, then his existence, so that existence becomes only an attribute of God and the least uncertain of them. All God's attributes, considering God in himself, existence, unity, life, omnipotence, omniscience and others, must merge to the extent that all multiplicity is excluded from them. The very essence of God includes his existence. The only question related to the attributes of God on which opposition was to develop during the Middle Ages was the question of how we come to know them and what significance they can have without endangering God's unity:

clearly the attributes we assign to him do not indicate positive qualities distinct in him but are negations or signs of honor or have some undistinguished grounds in him, and though the debate was hot and constant, it was hardly questioned that God is, or that a plurality of attributes means, not that God is many, but that he acts or he is represented in many ways and that he is characterized by them.

Pure speculation furnishes warrant enough for the existence of God, and from such inferentially-ballasted belief in God, additional proofs, strewn through all nature, follow necessarily. The arguments shift easily from the realm of logic to evidences in fact. The differences of the arguments may be reduced ultimately to the question of whether they are derived primarily from Aristotle or are influenced more by the late Neoplatonic contemplation of Unity. If the philosophy is markedly Platonic the proper examination of the idea of God will adduce warrant for his existence; if it is Aristotelian, corroboration must be sought on the surfaces of life, for each thing and each event will be possible and conceivable only by a necessary nature. Most Platonic philosophies will furnish a basis for cogent a *priori* proofs and it was these that Spinoza was to follow. Both Creskas and ibn Daud considered that God's existence was proved conclusively by the distinction between necessary and possible existence. But on the other hand, ibn Daud was good enough Aristotelian to insist on the proof by the necessity of a prime mover; ibn Zaddik began with the consideration of the contingency of the world; Saadia, Bahya and ibn Pakuda began their proofs from the fact that the world is composite. So there are logical manifestations of God in his world and physical evidences. Out of the unity which is God the manifold world proceeds according to the conditions of existence that just his being imposes on it. God is the principle of order and of law in the world of particular things. Joseph ibn Zaddik thought God must be single because the cause of many things must be one, and consistent with that he insisted that the study of theology be preceded by a knowledge of the sciences. Maimonides too, held that a knowledge of physics and metaphysics was indispensable to a knowledge of God. And it should be remembered that Spinoza once said that everyone knows that ethics must be based on physics and metaphysics.

Yet the problem on which there was perhaps most variation

in Medieval Jewry was concerned with the way in which the world was related to God. The multitude of particular things could not be affected directly by this unity that is God; his efficacy had always to find some intermediary principles and usually the universe was formed in some graduated hierarchy. Ibn Daud insisted that the world to exist at all, had to exist in just the graduated series in which it actually does. But there is no general agreement among Jewish philosophers concerning the number or the nature of the interpositions which are necessary between unity and diversity; where the transition is made by Neoplatonic emanations, as in the case of Maimonides, there are frequently ten stages. Yet there are elements that are fairly constant among the variations of the schema—the inclusive unity which is God, his defining intelligence (with sometimes the addition of a soul) Nature and the corporeal world. Sometimes the mediations between God and the world are accomplished by way of the attributes of God, and eternal matter and their modifications. Creskas, in that fashion, held that there was an infinite extension connected with and opposed to the infinite intelligence of God. Extension was not itself bodily nor made up of parts, and there existed beside it an eternal matter which was qualified by it; the act of creation was only the ordering of this matter. It requires no great violence to the subject matter to fit Spinoza into the discussion of this problem.

In some form or other, then, God is usually manifested in Nature, and the manifestation is such that the universe by existing is essentially rational. To exist, a thing must be intelligible. But not only is everything by its very essence capable of being known, but knowledge by that same fact is part of the world; each thing is so related to God that it aspires, as it were, to be known; Nature, in man, grows into its own comprehension. Anything known is referred to God; there are regularities in the processes by which things are altered in the Sublunar world. Each time a law of nature or a concept of logic is discovered in experience, another indication of God has been noticed. He is the ultimate principle regulating all laws by only thinking all things. By that very fact, of course, it is clear that his attributes are difficult to name since a universal principle would have no particular determinations that could be described. But the logic of the Jewish Medieval philosophers was one they found in the world; it was no longer an Aristotelian instrument applicable to the world; it was in things and

things were arranged in precise concatenations. The metaphysics of Aristotle had, by the exigencies of doctrinal monotheism and through the offices of Neoplatonism, become a cosmology and the *Organon* had come to lay the ground plans for a metaphysics. It was not that things were thought to exist in designated genus and species—these were abstract ideas and repudiated as such by most Jewish philosophers—but there were accurate interrelations by which one thing was connected with another and implied by it. Ultimately they were embraced in the complete unity which was in turn implied by these interconnections. In this fashion Aristotle had been fitted to the Neoplatonic universe. The process was completed somewhat earlier in Jewish philosophy than in Christian, for Aristotle was known earlier in the Jewish than in the Christian tradition; it was never carried to a perfect conclusion, since even in late scholasticism, Aristotle was known only imperfectly, by texts that were sometimes fragmentary and misconceived, often of an authenticity that was mythical and always with a bias set rather by Avicenna and Averroes than by Aristotle.

An object, when God knows it, participates in the logical ordering of the universe, for it means precisely that for God to know. To insist that God knows all things is to maintain the complete intelligibility of the universe. All things exist with logical references to other things and to general principles. If God is, as he frequently is in Medieval Jewish philosophy, the source by way of the Intelligence, of the Active Intellect, it is he who gives content, on the one hand, to the rational powers of man, and on the other endows sublunar nature with purpose and intelligence. It is natural that men, placed in that ordered world, be endowed with abilities to appreciate both the world and its order; so he may consider individual things living each its life and undergoing its particular evolution or he may contemplate the rational principles under which all the processes of growth and decay are arranged. He may reflect on things similar to himself and on creatures possessed of bodies like his own developing his practical reason by such reflections, or he may face upward to the realm of pure rationality and receive wisdom from the angels or the Active intellect, developing in that way his intellectual knowledge.

The beginning of man's existence is the beginning too of his knowledge, for he begins to think at the same moment and for

the same reason as he begins to exist. His first knowledge is a sensitive knowledge of the bodies about him through the intermediary of his own body; he can not be insensitive to things that affect him and he can be affected by anything like himself. Whatever thing is similar to his body is potentially an object of his knowledge; as the human body is the most perfect one conceivable, it bears some similarity to all physical objects and nothing material is beyond the scope of man's knowledge. As ibn Daud put it, the soul is an indivisible form, the first entelechy of the natural body, arising in connection with the body and realizing and actualizing it. The soul of man is exactly suited to the mixture of elements which makes up his body. The early Jewish philosophers held specifically that the human soul can arrive at a great development and a broad knowledge because the human body resembles all manners of plants and animals; in many statements the human body is a microcosm.

Man knows particular things through the encounters of his body with other bodies and through the sensations which are the result of those encounters. This is the beginning of his practical knowledge; in this manner things are known, their courses and sequences may be traced and means of controlling them discovered. In addition to this practical knowledge, there are intellectual powers which the soul possesses through the perfection its body has conferred on it; it is elevated to such perfection that it is the form nearest the eternal forms and it can reach therefore to the system of significations which orders, like laws, the existence of things. The intellect is indebted to sensations and to bodily functions only for the initial ideas it acquires. Sensation and reason are as far apart as body and mind; their functions are as separate as the particular and the universal; sensation perceives the form of the individual thing, while the intellect, inspired by the data of sensations, apprehends the nature which makes things essentially what they are. Here again there is opportunity for disagreement between the Platonist and the Aristotelian, the former holding that all knowledge is derived directly in some fashion from universal ideas innate in the soul, the latter that the intellect works over the data of sensation and abstracts its general ideas. But whatever the solution to that problem, there arise the different ways of knowing: practical knowledge from the fact that we meet and react



to other individuals, intellectual knowledge from the fact that individuals are nevertheless intelligible and have meanings which come from their place in the logical system. The intellect grasps truths immediately, while the practical intelligence forms precepts from experience. So the decision of the intellect concerns truth and falsity; the practical intellect pronounces a thing good and bad, and it can be good or bad, obviously, only as it affects some sensitive being; in the unity of the eternal being such an affection would have no place.

The acquired intellect depends then on the sensitive soul for its existence only; its manner of receiving knowledge is separate from it. It stands to the sensitive soul in much the relation that, till recently, the soul had stood to the body in modern philosophy. But in the Middle Ages the distinctness of the functions was more sharp. The intellect is not receptive in the manner that the senses are; it is not a function of the body. The act of reason is purely immaterial, a proceeding from premise to conclusion or wholly intuitive. Thinking is not done by means of corporeal organs, but just as there is a real and actual object to arouse the senses to perception, so there is an actual intelligible object to arouse the intellect to comprehension. Individual things could no more endow man's rational capacity with actual ideas than a surface could endow his sight with the sensation of color if there were no light. God or the Active Intellect is to the mind what light is to the senses, or to be more Aristotelian, the Active Intellect is the faculty by which sense experience is converted to concepts. So knowledge is possible; the senses are concerned with particular things and their accidents; there can be no knowledge of such things, but reason and intellect perceive essences and are concerned with the universal and the permanent.

The mind passes into actuality through the knowledge acquired from the Active Intellect; the birth of the soul is intellectual. Abraham ibn Daud resorts to the frequent metaphor comparing the soul to sight; without light vision is potential; light makes it actual. So the Active Intellect makes the potential soul actual and gives it first the axioms which are universally certain and hence could not have originated from experience. The transition from imaginative or practical knowledge to the intellectual knowledge is the origin of the soul. Now the mind can recognize the systematic

unity which connects all things into one whole, for it comes upon, not only ideas, but an understanding of their relations one to the other. The principles of the universe are known through the same immaterial power by which they were set. God shows his efficacy at once in the logical principles by which things are understood and in the logical, or even teleological, ordering of events in their actual processes. Particular souls exist only by virtue of a universal soul; particular minds can operate because a universal mind has set down the implications they discover of the Intelligence whence all being absolutely and all intelligibility flow. The mind can know only by virtue of something analogous to it in the things it knows.

In the beginning, then, the soul is only a capacity, a potential intellect, which is so intimately connected with the body that it shares the body's mortality. Sensations, which are bodily activities, are the first intimations of knowledge, and by knowledge the soul comes into being, so that the beginning of knowledge is the first intimation of immortality. The rational soul can attain to the Active Intellect, and having thus become an actual intellect, no longer potential, it is dependent for its ideas, thenceforth, not on its body, but on the Intellect that is the ordering principle of the universe. The rational soul is identical with the ideas it has: there is only one idea in the part and in the whole, in man's intellect and the whole, in man's intellect and the infinite intellect; that idea is equally and at the same time comprehended by man and present perfectly in the Active Intellect. The more perfect the soul becomes, the more closely it cleaves to the Active Intellect and fastens there on the logic of the universe and on all intelligibility, for the Active Intellect bears in itself the form of all existing things. Clearly this process of knowing must be immaterial; there can be no entrance of the body into logical sequences.

The aim of ethical endeavor becomes obvious; to return the soul to the upper world to which it belongs. All things in the world tend naturally to God, and intellect in man is the instrument which permits him to return most completely. So far as the soul succeeds in identifying itself with immaterial Ideas it is indestructible. The aim is obscured by the entrance of the soul into the body. But the body is a necessary incident in the biography of human knowledge; from the knowledge of individuals which the

soul has by its body, it is recalled to the higher knowledge of eternal truths and ceases to be dependent on the body though its thinking began with it. Whether or not there would be any adequate intuition of the absolute truth is a question on which neither Arab nor Jewish scholastics could agree; some philosophers, among them Maimonides, insisted that God could not be known, others, like Avicenna, Algazali and ibn Tofail, that such knowledge was possible.

Whatever the solution to that problem, there was greater unanimity in the answers to the more significant problem of the relations of God's knowledge to man's. In God, thought, thinker and object of thought are one. God knows all things before they come into existence and his knowledge does not change as things appear and disappear. But man in even his most perfect knowledge must remain an individual and so, there must be always a separation of himself as subject from the object of his knowledge. Maimonides held that only the *absolutely* non-existent can not be known; things which only happen not to exist can be known since they have their being in God's knowledge and he brings them into reality. God is the cause of the phenomena which are the data of experience, and those phenomena follow according to the laws and principles of his knowledge. In man, on the contrary, knowledge follows from experience. God knows all things knowing simply himself, and all things conform to and illustrate the efficacy of that self-knowledge. The problem moreover of the relation of man's knowledge to the world has its answer in this action of God's knowledge.

But since God is omniscient man can hardly be free, if freedom is to mean complete indetermination. God knows all things, but there was some hesitation concerning whether he could know the changing individual as well as the changeless principles that govern it. Evil in the world would seem in the presence of God's knowledge a criticism of his goodness, and if man is not free to choose how he will act, the punishment of his transgressions would seem to be little consistent with God's equity. Since it seemed possible to save God's goodness only at the cost of his wisdom, arch-rationalists did not hesitate to leave the opposition unsolved. Maimonides said that God was omniscient and man free and that neither statement should be denied only because it or the relation between it and the other was not understood. Spinoza took a

somewhat similar position in his defense of Descartes' doctrine of the freedom of the soul. His position in his own works was different from the first; "the slavery of a thing," he says in the *Short Treatise*, "consists in its being subject to external causes, while freedom on the other hand consists in its not being subject to them but freed from them." According to Joel, the study of the philosophy of Creskas had brought him to a realization that God's omnipotence is incompatible with man's freedom. Creskas had solved the problem by curtailing the sense of human freedom. The act of will, he said, is in a sense free and in a sense contingent; but it is determined by its causes. The act of will, no more than any other act, is not fated to take place cause or no cause; if the cause is granted the act of will is necessary, but if the cause is removed it can not occur. Spinoza's conception was probably inspired by Creskas' statement, but still his emphasis, as in other problems, was distinct from that made by the Middle Ages. Moreover it is one which he never changed. Even in the *Short Treatise* he defines freedom as the power of the soul by which it is able to develop ideas in itself and produce results outside itself which correspond with its nature and the production of which is not altered by external interference.

Doctrines such as these and the discussions of them must have attracted Spinoza in his study of Medieval Jewish philosophy. It would be purposeless to try to determine from which of them specifically his own thought developed. It is safe to assume that he knew them. Certainly he took up problems that are noticeably similar. His solutions are not always precisely these, but then, almost every doctrine that has been outlined in the preceding paragraphs in the name of Jewish philosophy could be contradicted by some specific text from some philosopher. A comprehensive statement of Medieval Jewish philosophy could no more be made than a comprehensive statement of modern philosophy, and for precisely the same reason that contradictions could be found at every point. Even so general an outline is no more than broadly congruent with Spinoza's conceptions. Spinoza's position was unorthodox in many questions, some of them important ones—the creation of the world in time, prophecy, miracles, God's knowledge, his providence and his attributes, the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, rewards and punishments. But his departures too could be fitted into some orthodoxy if care and erudition were to

be employed so poorly. Many of Spinoza's novelties were anticipated with the Hebrew tradition. Ibn Ezra, ibn Gabirol and Gersonides denied creation *ex nihilo*; the latter two maintained the eternity of matter. Creskas held that God had an attribute of extension, and denied the validity of final causes; like ibn Ezra he taught a complete determinism. Some of the Jewish mystics held that Nature is animated. Maimonides denied personal immortality, insisting instead on the immortality of the single Active Intellect; he also taught the relativity of good and evil. Then too, other influences than Medieval Jewish philosophy entered into the formation of Spinoza's thought; and the logical development he sought, required, for the solution of his problems, mechanisms in which considerations of orthodoxy were irrelevant.<sup>5</sup> But if Spinoza's philosophy is approached without an awareness of this history that lies behind it, it must lose its fine virtues of philosophic pertinence and insight and become, as it does in the hands of most modern critics, a hardly explicable confusion illuminated by only occasional flashes.

<sup>5</sup> Professor Harry Wolfson has announced a book to be entitled *Spinoza, the Last of the Medievals* which will take up the detail of the Medieval antecedents of Spinoza. Three very illuminating chapters have already appeared in the first three numbers of the *Chronicon Spinozanum*.

## SIR RICHARD BURTON

BY DAVIS L. JAMES, JR.

(Concluded)

Isabel Arundell, on whom Burton called immediately upon his return from Africa, gives a gruesome account of his appearance. Even allowing for her genius at exaggeration he must have been a pitiable spectacle. Racked with tropical fevers, worn out from physical exertion, his spirit broken by the treachery of his former companion, the dashing specimen of manhood who had left England three years before, was but the shadow of his former self. Let it be set down to Isabel's eternal credit that she stood by him loyally in his hour of need. Not only did she comfort him and care for him as a lover, but she used all the influence she could muster to swing public opinion in his favor.

Mrs. Arundell's opposition to their marriage continued stronger than ever, and as her health was breaking rapidly the unlucky couple decided to leave the matter in abeyance for a few months. As it was quite impossible for Burton to stay quiet for such a length of time, he determined to visit Salt Lake City, and observe the Mormons, in whom he had always shown a lively interest, in their own surroundings. So off he sailed for America in April, 1860, as usual, without saying good-bye to anyone, even his fiancée. . . .

After an uneventful voyage to New York, and an equally conventional inland journey to St. Jo., Missouri, he struck out overland by stagecoach and wagon to Salt Lake City. His stay was brief but interesting as will appear in his book *The City of the Saints*. He met Brigham Young frequently, and the two got along famously until Burton asked to be permitted to become a Mormon. Brigham, who had already heard of the Brahminical

thread, the title of Master Sufi, and the Pilgrimage to Meccah, smilingly shook his head and replied: "I believe you've done that sort of thing before, Captain". But Burton came away thoroughly convinced of the efficacy of polygamy in undeveloped regions such as Utah.

His visit over, he proceeded by coach and rail to 'Frisco, whence he returned home via Panama, arriving in England just at Christmas.

Isabel, whose mind had been made up for ten years, now consented to marriage despite her mother's objections. She was thirty and Burton forty, and it is doubtful if many couples have had as long and as stormy an engagement. It was ten years since their first meeting, and five since they had plighted their troth. "We will have no show," said Richard, "for a grand ceremony is a barbarous and indelicate exhibition." So they were quietly married in the Bavarian Church, in Warwick St., London, January 22, 1861.

Burton had not been without means, having inherited £16000 from his father's estate, but his explorations and his publishing ventures had drawn heavily upon his resources, and his new responsibilities made it doubly necessary for him to seek employment.

Again his past rose up against him. The Karachi report was not forgotten and its evil influence was swelled by a mass of rumors and stories, some of them so ridiculous that one wonders how they ever could have been given credence; but his occasional insubordination, ungovernable temper, and lack of tact were facts not to be gainsaid. Isabel, however, waged a valiant battle in his behalf. Though superstitious, and even almost ignorant—throughout her entire life she never gained more than a smattering of any knowledge—nevertheless, by dint of unceasing effort, she eventually prevailed upon the public to regard Burton with her own eyes. She wrote letters to friends, enemies, and the press; she called on everyone; she wheedled, coaxed and bullied. She was sometimes woefully indiscreet, but her love and loyalty to her husband were almost sublime. And Burton, at best scarcely a model husband, grew increasingly grateful to her as the years went by. He laughed at her foibles, twitted her on her religion and poked fun at her faulty English, but he came to value the beauty of her disposition

and the goodness of her heart even more highly than the graces of her person.

Despite his own extraordinary services and his wife's blandishments, the best that Burton was able to obtain from Lord Russell was an appointment to the consulship at Fernando Po—commonly known as the white man's grave. As the £700 salary involved was now badly needed he was forced to accept. "They want me to die", he said bitterly, "but I intend to live just to spite the devils". The horrible climate of Fernando Po made it impossible for Mrs. Burton to accompany her husband, and they parted at Liverpool in August, 1861, she returning to London, and he departing into virtual exile.

On the eve of his departure disaster again visited him, in the shape of a fire at Grindleys, which destroyed his entire collection of Oriental books and manuscripts, the fruits of over twenty years of collecting. He bore his loss philosophically, but it was one that he was destined to feel all his life.

Fernando Po was a disheartening sight; it was an island in which man finds it difficult to live and easy to die. But Burton sought refuge at Santa Cecilia, a point 400 metres above the sea, and here he was able to escape the killing heat of the bay and pursue his literary work in comparative comfort. When night fell he would sit down at his table with a box of strong cigars, a bottle of brandy, a bowl of water, and a towel, and he would write until he fell asleep from weariness.

The consular duties were light, and Burton found time to make frequent explorations along the Gold Coast. On one occasion he ventured up the Congo as far as the cataracts, and made several hunting trips into Gorilla Land.

After a year and a half Burton went home on leave. While in London, he founded the "Anthropological Society of London", with the assistance of his friend, Dr. James L. Hunt. Eleven men attended the first meeting, and Burton was elected president. Two years later the society counted five hundred members, and in 1871 it was merged with the "Ethnological Society", to form the "Anthropological Society of Great Britain".

Shortly after his return to Fernando Po, in November, 1863, Burton was appointed commissioner to Gelele, King of Dahomey, with the object of persuading that swarthy Monarch to desist from



the practice of human sacrifice and from the slave trade. This project so fired the proselyting soul of Isabel, back in England, that she begged to be allowed to go along. She wished to prepare a series of magic-lantern slides, depicting scenes from the New Testament, which she argued, would speedily convert the King and his famous band of Amazons, and turn them from their heathenish ways. It is scarcely necessary to add that she remained at home.

The mission proved interesting, but of doubtful worth. Gelele accepted the presents offered him, and as long as the authority of Her Majesty Queen Victoria remained visible in his territory, he behaved moderately well. But the party had scarcely withdrawn when he held an unusually bloody massacre of his subjects.

Burton was writing continually and this period of his life saw the appearance of nine respectably sized volumes containing his observations of the country and the natives of Western Equatorial Africa. *Abcokuta and the Cameroons, Wanderings in West Africa, Two Trips to Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo, Wit and Wisdom from West Africa*, and finally though not published until later. *A Mission to the King of Dahomey*. One followed the other with clock-like regularity, and each, unsuccessful financially, took its toll from the author's private means.

In August, 1864, Burton again returned to England on leave. During his absence Speke and Grant had returned from their expedition to Victoria Nyanza. They had explored the lake thoroughly and had followed the river flowing northward from it for some distance. They claimed it to be the Nile, and future explorations proved them to be correct. But Burton thought otherwise, and offered to debate the matter with Speke in public. The arrangements had all been made, and Burton was already on the platform, prepared to crush his opponent with the force of his logic, when someone rushed in and announced that Speke had been accidentally killed that very morning while out hunting. Burton was overwhelmed with emotion and broke down completely when he reached home. It is a curious commentary on his character that he afterwards circulated the story that Speke had shot himself because he feared that the fallacy of his claims would be exposed in the debate.

In September, 1865, Isabel finally succeeded in having her husband transferred to Santos, Brazil; truly not far superior to Fer-

nado Po as a post, but at least blessed with a climate that she could endure, if not enjoy. They arrived in October of the same year, and found Santos to be a swampy, unattractive place, swarming with snakes, huge hairy spiders, and an unusually varied assortment of tropical vermin. But a sort of alternative residence was finally located at Sao Paulo, on an upland eight miles from the sea, and Isabel was not long in converting it into a comfortable habitation.

The Burtons kept a number of slaves, but Isabel hastens to assure us—"We paid them just as if they were free men", and of course their spiritual needs were well looked after. The chief convert was an inhuman coal-black dwarf named Chico. Chico had just become to all appearances a good, sound Catholic, when Isabel caught him roasting her favorite cat before the kitchen fire. Whenever she went she managed to acquire a servant companion who eventually became an intolerable burden. Chico was only the first of a series.

As usual, Burton had a great deal of spare time which he devoted to rambling about Maritime Brazil, sometimes with his wife, but usually alone. His longest journey was a fifteen hundred mile canoe trip down the Sao Francisco, to the falls of Paulo Alfonso, whose beauties are almost a match for Niagara. He visited Rio de Janeiro frequently and lectured before the kindly Emperor Dom Pedro, who became much attached to him and invited him to dinner. The dinner was a rather gloomy affair, but resulted in the Empress presenting Mrs. Burton with a diamond necklace.

Three years of Santos, however, were as much as Burton could endure, and in July 1868, he resigned with characteristic suddenness. Isabel set out at once for England to find him another job, while he tarried in Rio, trying to inaugurate an exploring expedition to the Andes. This he failed to do, but he was finally commissioned by the war office to make a report on the state of the sanguinary war then raging between Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentine on one side, and Paraguay on the other. The report was later elaborated in his book, "The Battlefields of Paraguay."

While in Rio, Burton fell in with Arthur Orton, the notorious Tichborne claimant, who, though he doubtless took pains to conceal the fact, had himself grown up in Elstree, Burton's childhood home. Burton apparently believed in him, as did everyone in Rio, and the

two became close friends. The following passage from the "Diaries" of Wilfred Scawen Blunt, throws an interesting light on the Burton of this period. Blunt, then a young man of twenty-seven or eight was attached to the delegation at Rio de Janeiro; he recounts his impressions of Burton and Tichborne, whom he had met at dinner at the house of a mutual friend.

"They were a strange, disreputable couple. Burton was at that time, I fancy, at the lowest point of his career, and in point of respectability at his very worst. His consular life at Santos, without any interesting work to his hand, had thrown him into a habit of drink he afterwards cured himself of, and he seldom went to bed sober. His dress and appearance were those suggesting a released convict, rather than anything of more repute. He wore habitually a rusty black coat with a crumpled black silk stock, his throat destitute of collar; a costume which his muscular frame and immense chest, made singularly and incongruously hideous; above it a countenance the most sinister I have ever seen, dark, cruel, treacherous, with eyes like a wild beast's. He reminded me . . . with his close cropped pol and iron frame, of that wonderful creation of Balzac's, the *ex-gallerien*, Vautrin, hiding his identity under an abbe's cassock. Of the two companions, Tichborne was distinctly the less criminal in appearance. I came to know them both well, especially Burton, . . . and I have sat up many nights with him, talking of all things in heaven and earth, or rather listening while he talked, till he grew dangerous in his cups, and revolver in hand, would stagger home to bed."

The mission to Paraguay having been accomplished, Burton and Tichborne set out across the Andes for Peru. While lounging in a cafe at Lima, Burton received word that he had been appointed to the consulship at Damascus, the very pinnacle of his ambition. He set out at once for England via the Straits of Magellan. Isabel's unceasing efforts had prepared the way for him, and on his arrival in England he was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm. He was feted and dined, and spoke before innumerable gatherings, from gay social functions to learned societies. In one leap he had risen from the lowest ebb of his career, to what was, as far as the general public was concerned, its very zenith. For the first time in his life he was basking in the sunshine of official favor.

After a short stay in England, the Burtons repaired to Vichy,

to spend their few remaining weeks taking the "cure" in the company of Algernon Swinburne, Frederick Leighton and Mrs. Sartoris. The "cure" complete Burton set out for Damascus, via Brindisi, while his wife returned to London to "pay, pack and follow."

December 1870 saw Richard and Isabel settled in their attractive quarters at El Salahiyyah, a suburb on the hills above Damascus. The salary of the post, £1200 a year, permitted them to live in some style—in fact their official dignity demanded it. They kept a corps of servants and an excellent stable, to say nothing of Isabel's menagerie, which Burton describes as consisting of "goats, donkeys, lambs, leopards, ducks, street dogs, pigeons, rabbits, and other notions." They were a bit of trouble at first, but they soon simplified matters for themselves by eating each other.

Burton formed a close friendship with the Algerian hero and exile Abd el Kadir, an upright and honest man, and a truly regal figure in his snow-white garments and magnificently jeweled arms. But his honesty in all official matters soon estranged him from the iniquitous Turkish Wali Raschid Pasha; and the two were constantly at swords points.

True to form, Isabel was not long in grappling to her bosom an undesirable female. The present object of her affections was Jane Digby el Mezrab, a truly remarkable woman, but hardly a suitable boon companion. This lady, who began life as Jane Digby, had made her matrimonial debut as the wife of Lord Ellenborough. When he divorced her she sought refuge with Prince Schwarzenberg, with whom she lived as mistress, until he, too, felt constrained to leave her. After that she sojourned with various European gentry without benefit of clergy, until it seemed that she had quite exhausted the continent. Other fields proving barren, she came to Syria where she married a gentleman whom Isabel describes as "a dirty little black Bedawin Shaykh". She was now close on to sixty, but still a fine looking woman, with snow-white hair and a fine figure, and a mind as tortuous as a corkscrew.

This amiable lady succeeded in hypnotizing Isabel completely, but she never deceived Burton, and when on one of the latter's trips into the desert, she tried to hand him and his party over to her tribe for ransom, her plan was speedily frustrated.

Burton made innumerable trips into the surrounding country

and succeeded in exploring practically the whole of Syria, then little known to Europeans. He travelled much with James Tyrwhitt Drake, a young and charming English archeologist, and their friendship lasted until Drake's tragic death a few years later. Their last expedition, in which Isabel took part, led them to Jerusalem and Nazareth, where an unfortunate incident occurred with a crowd of cowardly Greek Christians, who attacked the party near their church. Burton's coolness and courage prevented the affair taking a really serious turn, but the incident was an ugly one and figured largely in the coming catastrophe.

Burton had now been in Damascus for eighteen months, and the clouds were already beginning to gather. Had he been a little less scrupulously honest, a little more tactful, and a trifle more inclined to let things run along as they had always done, the blow might have been averted. Burton's errors were always on the side of righteousness, and even his worst enemies were never able to impugn his personal integrity. However, he managed to draw upon himself, at one time or another, the indignation of nearly every official class in Damascus. Complaints began to pour in to London from the Protestant Missionaries, the Jewish money-lenders, the Greeks, the rascally Raschid Pasha, and even the Shazlis, a curious offshoot from orthodox Mohammedanism who had been goaded to the point of accepting Christianity by Isabel's evangelical fervor. Many of the stories were obviously ridiculous, but what England wanted at that particular moment was peace and quiet, and it was evident that the end was near.

The blow fell at last in a brutal and uncalled for way, on August 16, 1871. Burton was out riding in the desert when a messenger rushed up and handed him a note informing him that he had been recalled, and that his successor was awaiting him at Beirut. All his dreams were shattered, and the one post he had always coveted, that he had learned to love, the one place where he felt that he could serve his country best, was snatched away from him. "After all my service", wrote Burton in his journal, "ignominiously dismissed at fifty years of age."

That it was official apathy at home and abroad that brought about his downfall, and not any inability to understand and to serve the people entrusted to his care, may be seen in the host of letters that poured into his office when news of his recall was made pub-

lic. Perhaps the most touching of all is that of Abd el Kadir, that began as follows—(It might have been taken straight from the Arabian Nights:)

“Allah favor the days of thy far-famed learning and prosper the excellence of thy writing. O wader of the seas of knowledge, O cistern of learning of our globe, exalted above his age, whose exaltation is above the mountains of increase and our rising place; opener of His books of night and day, traveller by ship and foot and horse—one whom none can equal in travel—Thou hast departed leaving us the sweet perfume of charity and noble conduct, and thy name is large on account of what Allah has put into thy nature.”

Burton returned at once to England, leaving his wife, as usual, to pay, pack and follow. When she joined him in London, she found him living in one room in a cheap hotel, in a state of abysmal dejection. He was virtually penniless and his pride had kept him from making any defence of his conduct of affairs at Damascus. The £16000 inherited from his father, together with Isabel's few hundred, were entirely gone, to say nothing of the £1200 a year that the consulship had paid.

With characteristic pluck Isabel set to work to rehabilitate her husband. Though both of them were poor, they both had influential relatives and wealthy friends, and Mrs. Burton's dogged perseverance gradually began to have its effect in official circles, and eventually upon the public. Within a short time after Burton's recall from Damascus, all of his old enemies had been discomfited, and virtually every measure he had recommended had been put into effect. Of course he received no credit for this, but it was pretty generally conceded that he had been fundamentally correct in all he had done. Gradually his spirits began to revive, and his old longing to wander to manifest itself, so when the offer came to examine a sulphur concession in Iceland, just acquired by a wealthy Englishman, he accepted with enthusiasm the opportunity to visit “Ultima Thule.”

Just before departing on this expedition, an event occurred that throws considerable light on Burton's erratic nature. Everyone was now talking about Livingstone, and an attempt was being made to raise funds to send an expedition to his assistance. Isabel was determined to get this post for her husband. Everything was going splendidly and a great luncheon had been arranged, at which a very

illustrious personage was to offer Captain Burton the leadership of the expedition. When soup was being served, the important gentleman in question turned to him dramatically and exclaimed:—"Come, consent, and I'll contribute £500 to the expedition." But the Captain, who was in an unusually vile humor, went on spooning up his soup and mumbled:—"I'll save your Royal Highness that expense." Poor Isabel nearly collapsed, and the expedition was eventually undertaken by Cameron.

While Burton was in Iceland, old Mrs. Arundell, Isabel's mother, died. To the very end she kept up her opposition to her daughter's marriage and just before her death she was heard to exclaim,—"Dick Burton is no relative of mine." Even in her bereavement Isabel continued to labor for her husband, and at last, in July 1872, she succeeded in procuring from Lord Granville, an offer of the consulate at Trieste, just vacated by the death of Charles Lever, the novelist. It was nothing to brag about as a post, but it rated a vice-consul as assistant, and its salary of £700 a year was sorely needed. Burton accepted, and returned shortly from Iceland, vastly improved both mentally and physically. He left for his new post in October of the same year, not without sad thoughts upon his exile. The employees of the British Consular Service disgusted him heartily, and he remarked ironically to his wife:—"Why are Egyptian donkey boys so partial to the English?—Answer, because we employ more asses than any other nation."

Trieste was a rather dismal place in those days, but it must be admitted that the duties were light, and permitted the consul considerable leisure. One cannot help wondering, however, why the British Government could find no better employment for a man who was probably the most accomplished explorer of his day, and certainly the most proficient Oriental linguist. It is difficult to imagine how the author of some forty volumes, some of them monuments of observation and learning, was to serve his country in a post that might have been filled successfully by a youngster of a few years training. But British Imperial politics had descended to depths approached only by our own abysmal, albeit democratic methods of to-day.

Now began the most important period of Burton's literary activity. Not that his exploring days were entirely over, for it remained for him to make at least one more important expedition. In 1877

he persuaded the Khedive of Egypt, always sadly in need of funds, to send him out at the head of an exploring party in search of the lost gold mines of Midian. They spent the better part of two years, —and £9700 of the Khedive's money,—in the search, and returned with thirty tons of samples of ore, and a host of objects of archeological interest. That the ores proved to be of so low a grade that it would not have paid to mine them did not seem to disappoint Burton. One is tempted to believe that it was adventure he was seeking, and that gold was a minor consideration.

In 1880 appeared the *Kasidah*, Burton's first effort as an original poet. Published as a translation from the poem of one Haji Abdu el Yezdi, it is a curious collection of ideas garnered in all quarters of the literary and geographical globe:—from Plato to the Omar of Fitzgerald, from Bombay to Salt Lake City. As might be expected it fell foul of the critics although appreciative admirers were not wanting, but its overabundance of archaic words and its heavy couplets failed to establish his reputation as a poet. Eventually he abandoned the translation story and admitted its authorship.

Next came the translation of the "*Lusiads*" of Camoëns, begun in 1847 when on leave in Goa, worked upon at odd times in Somaliland, Equatorial Africa, Brazil and Damascus, but not actually completed until 1882. It was followed by a life and commentary in the same year, and two years later by the "*Lyrics*"—in all a total of nine volumes. Than Burton no one was better equipped to translate the "*Lusiads*",—he was literally saturated with them. He had visited every place mentioned by the famous Portuguese, and had read his inspiring stanzas on the very ground of which they sang. But his passion for archaic words and phrases, and his lack of real poetic instinct, detract greatly from the artistic value of his work. Though vastly more complete, and more faithfully rendered, his version lacks the robust vigor of Mickle's eighteenth century translation. The book was never a success as a publishing venture, and resulted in considerable pecuniary loss, but its voluminous notes alone are sufficient to render it a work of permanent value.

Space forbids individual mention of all Burton's literary work, but a word must be said concerning the Kama Shashtra Society, before proceeding to his magnum opus, the *Arabian Nights*. This society whose proceedings and membership were carefully shrouded in mystery, seems to have consisted of Richard Burton, F. F. Ar-



buthnot, and Edward Rehatsek, a Hungarian Orientalist, a sort of nineteenth century Diogenes, who though quite well-to-do, lived by himself in a hut outside of Benares. The object of this society was to make available to English scholars certain Oriental erotica of unquestioned sociological and anthropological value. In justice to Burton and Arbuthnot, it cannot be too strongly urged that their attitude towards these works was that of the scholar, and that they did their best to keep them out of the hands of the general public. That they were afterwards pirated by unscrupulous European, English and even American publishers, was no fault of theirs. Such fraudulent editions have resulted only in dragging the work of earnest scholars through the mire of pornography.

In all, about fifteen books were projected, but only five of them actually appeared; the *Kama Sutra* and the *Ananga Ranga* from the Sanskrit, from the Persian the *Beharistan* and the *Gulistan*, and from the Arabic, *The Perfumed*, (or as it is usually called) *the Scented Garden*. In addition to these the Arabian Nights bore the imprint of the society, with Benares as the place of publication, though the volumes were printed and bound in England, and despatched to the subscribers, by Burton's own hand from Trieste. In all of them Burton had some hand, and in two, the *Arabian Nights* and the *Scented Garden* the work was entirely his own. The other ten books were translated by Rehatsek, and exist to-day in manuscript, but they were never published, as the society ceased to function when Burton died in 1890.

Despite all his other literary output—some sixty-four volumes—Burton's claim to immortality rests chiefly on his translation of that gorgeous, imaginative, poetic, bloodthirsty and erotic collection of tales, *Alf Layah wa Layah* which we know as the Arabian Nights. Introduced to Europe by Galland, in a form garbled and abridged to suit the taste of eighteenth century France, translated from French into English, "Bowdlerized" by Scott, and finally re-rendered from the Arabic in emasculated form by Lane, it had never been completely translated into a European tongue until the version of John Payne, which appeared in 1882-4. The reasons for this are obvious to anyone who is familiar with the collection. Burton himself had once remarked that only three fourths of the "Nights" were at all fit for translation, and that not even the most sanguine Orientalist would ever venture to render more than four-

fifths of them. Yet this is precisely what Payne did, and Burton after him, with embellishments in the form of notes that at times would make even the divine Pietro Aretino turn over in his grave. In fact it is his notes that make Burton's edition of superlative value: from a purely literary point of view it is distinctly inferior to Payne. These notes, which cover every conceivable subject, from Oriental astronomy to female circumcision, from necromancy to certain characteristics of Abyssinian women, from devilish rites to the use of precious stones as prophylactics—are the result of his own observations during his long life in the Orient, and as such are of inestimable worth. The entire work consists of sixteen large octavo volumes, of which six are given over to the "Supplemental Nights", a sort of apochryphal collection, and yet an organic part of the remarkable whole. The first volume appeared in 1885, the last in 1888. The venture was a complete success. The edition of 1000 sets was sold out on publication and resulted in a clear financial gain of £10,000.

If Payne's version had been greeted with a stir, Burton's was met by a whirlwind. On one side were admirers so enthusiastic that they could not find words suitable to praise; on the other stood the legions of Comstockery, who racked their brains for epithets sufficiently black to express their indignation. Said one reviewer:—"Captain Burton is not content with calling a spade a spade,—he must have it a dirty shovel. The editions of the *Arabian Nights*," continued this outraged critic, "may justly be assigned as follows: Galland to the Nursery, Lane to the School, Payne to the Library, and Burton to the sewers."

Though fearless in his every word and thought, Burton was well aware of the consequences that might follow the publication of the "Nights", and he had carefully prepared a defense against the possibility of prosecution. In what he called his black book, he had drawn up a list of so-called indecencies in the works considered to be classics of the English Language, and one has visions of the fiery old man, holding his accusers at bay, in one hand a copy of the King James Bible and in the other Sir Thomas Urquhart's Rabelais. But the prosecution never came. For the first time in over forty years of continuous service, the sunshine of public and official favor was full upon him. He had labored incessantly in the interests of England and of Science, he had spent at least £20,000

of his own money in explorations that earned him not even a word of commendation, and he had broken down even his own iron constitution. All his life he had been forced to watch men of vastly inferior ability advanced over him to posts of honor, and it is small wonder that at sixty-four he was an embittered old man.

All this was changed with the appearance of the Nights, and when in 1886, Queen Victoria made him Knight Commander of Saint Michael and St. George, in recognition of his services, the award was greeted with universal acclaim. Though the government obstinately refused to retire him, he was left strictly to his own devices, and he wandered—or rather charged—about Europe and the British Isles to his heart's content. Naturally, his consular affairs got themselves into a hopeless muddle, and thereby hangs an anecdote that admirably illustrates the kindly esteem in which he was held at home.

An Englishman at Trieste who was outraged at the condition of the consular accounts and Sir Richard's continual absence, wrote to the Foreign Office, demanding to know why they put up with such inefficiency and neglect of duty, and suggesting that since the vice-consul did all the work, it would be well to get rid of Burton and let the vice-consul have his place. To this demand he received the following graceful reply:—"Dear Sir:—We look upon the consulship of Trieste as a gift to Sir Richard Burton for his services to the nation, and we must decline to interfere with him in any way."

For some time Burton had contemplated an edition of the *Scented Garden*, which he had intended to be his masterpiece. The nature of this delightful treatise, a sixteenth century work, may be surmised from the sub-title of the earlier editions—*A Manual of Arabian Erotology*, and from the remark that he made concerning it to one of his friends:—"Along side the *Scented Garden*, the *Arabian Nights* is a mere baby-book." It was to have been in two large volumes, annotated in the most lurid Burtonian style. He began actual work on it in March 1890, and kept at it continually, working sometimes eighteen hours a day, until the very eve of his death in October of the same year. Just how much of it was completed at that time can never be definitely known, for the manuscript perished in the holocaust that Lady Burton held after his death, and that consumed, oh most irreparable of

losses, the entire mass of his journals. But it is probable that all of the manuscript he had been able to obtain was translated, and that his own notes and comments,—in volume nearly two thirds of the total, were finished. It is pitiful to think of the broken old man, laboring day and night at a book that he truly believed would make him immortal; hastening his end by refusing to eat and even to sleep, that he might finish a task that could not possibly have added one iota to his glorious memory. He was obsessed with the idea of the importance of this work, and one is almost forced to believe that, in his last days, continued delving into erotic literature had affected his mind with a sort of perversio-mania.

The end came quite unexpectedly on October 20, 1890. Sir Richard had been suffering from a painful heart affection for some months past, but on this particular night he was in excellent spirits. He lay in bed reading a new French novel, and finally dozed off to sleep, looking better than he had for many months past.

Some say that there is a consciousness of impending death, and that before the inward eye of him who soon will leave upon the great adventure, there passes the quick procession of people and scenes once known. And so, perhaps, through the old man's quiet sleep, there moved the phantoms of his crowded life:—The countryside of Italy, blue hills of Goa, the dark beauty of a Persian maid, all vanish and he stands upon the hills above Mohammed's sacred city. The sweat and blood of savages, bearing down upon him at Berbera, are washed away before the cool waters of Tanganyika—and then the white towers and minarets of dear Damascus, with the clear biting desert air in his nostrils, and in his ears the sound of camel bells. And so on through more troubled years, to find at last the peace and quiet of these later days, with kindly friends in England and the soft sunshine of Italian Hills.

“Do as thy own life bids thee do ; from none but self  
 expect applause ;  
 He noblest lives, and noblest dies, who makes and  
 keeps his self-made laws.  
 All other life is living death, a land where only  
 Phantoms dwell ;  
 A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice ; a tinkling of  
 the camel's bell.”

Towards midnight a sudden attack came on, and despite the frantic efforts of his attendant physician, Sir Richard died. At six in the morning a priest arrived, and as his soul had long since departed—who knows whither—perhaps to the bosom of Allah—his body passed to the Church of Rome. It was literally covered with the scars of his battles with mankind.

Isabel took him back to England, and he was laid to rest in an eccentric marble tomb, shaped like an Arab tent, in Mortlake Cemetery. Inside were little camel-bells that tinkled mournfully in the breeze until the door was sealed; and surmounting the curious mausoleum, a many-pointed gilded star.

Lady Burton did not long survive. Her last days were devoted to the preparation of a life of her husband, which appeared in 1893—two monstrous tomes—a noble book, worthless as a biography, but a touching monument to a wife's devotion. She died in March 1896, and her earthly remains were placed with Sir Richard's in the queer mausoleum at Mortlake. When her body had been laid to rest, and the pall bearers left the tomb, the camel-bells within tinkled plaintively for the last time. The marble door was sealed; leaving them lying side by side—the Cross of Rome and the Crescent of Al Islam.

## AN HOUR WITH T'AI SHU, MASTER OF THE LAW

BY CLARENCE H. HAMILTON

IT happened unexpectedly. When my young Chinese friend and I strolled over to the Buddhist Lecture Hall that morning through one of the valleys of the dreamily beautiful Lushan mountains our intent was merely to ask a question and then be off again. For this lecture hall had none of the charms of the ordinary temples of China to lure our fancy. Here were no up-curved gilded roofs nor quiet flag-stone court. No shaven priests paced their solemn procession to the accompaniment of droning chant and fragrance of ascending incense. Here no vast, golden Buddha looked down in passionless pity through half-closed lids from some high altar. No, none of all that. There was only a straight-roofed, single-storied modern building wherein was a plain little hall furnished with rough wooden benches and a speaker's desk. Much like a school-room it was except for the three little images of Buddha that partly converted the lectern into an altar. All that drew us to the place was the knowledge that eminent Buddhist scholars sometimes expound their doctrines here. Our purpose was merely to inquire when they could be heard and then continue our morning's ramble. But, as I said, we ran into an unexpected experience.

The hall was empty when we entered it. But at the sound of our voices there soon emerged from one of the side guest rooms a single young monk clad in the long, grey dignified robe of his order. Evidently he was a student. In answer to our query he informed us that the lectures for the season were over.

"But the chief lecturer," he went on, "is still with us. He is remaining for a while to give some advanced instruction to a few select students. You may not hear him lecture publicly but he is

still to be seen personally. Do the honorable guests wish to meet him? He is T'ai Shu, Master of the Law."

The monk T'ai Shu! The very soul of present-day Buddhist reform! For several years we had heard of this flaming youthful spirit, arising with strange brilliancy from the embers of the ancient faith; of the outcome, so unwonted in monastic circles, of his three years of meditation at the sacred island of Pootoo, whence he emerged to be preacher, teacher, editor, propagandist. We had heard of his schemes for an ideal monastery, for a system of Buddhist schools and colleges, for reforming the priesthood. We had heard and marvelled at so much executive energy evolving from so deeply quietistic a tradition and environment. In days when most of China's youth were pouring thought and effort into the political and social travail of their country T'ai Shu was conspicuous for the devotion with which he lavished the years of his young manhood in the spiritual conflict of spreading Buddha's law. And now to meet him face to face—that would indeed be an experience worth having. But the suddenness of the opportunity was also disconcerting. For before meeting such a personage we would have preferred to have a chance to collect our thoughts and frame a few questions on some of the deep themes of Buddhism. Wang and I looked at each other. Should we go in or not?

The student monk watching us divined our doubt. "Fear not to enter the presence of the master," he said, "T'ai Shu is ever approachable." So saying, without waiting for our formal assent, he signed to a brother monk who had appeared in the meantime, to announce our presence to the teacher.

In a moment more we were ushered into the modest little reception room. The walls were bare. In one corner was a light bamboo frame with shelves whereon rested a few Chinese books and pamphlets. Gracing the center of the room was a plain round table of common wood at which were drawn up the ceremonious straight-backed chairs, uncomfortable reminders of more formal Manchu times. By the side of an inner door opposite the entrance stood our host, T'ai Shu, already present to greet us.

"The Master of the Law is before you," said our guide and retired. The monk returned our bow with courteous dignity. Then as he straightened up his manner took on at once the natural gra-

ciousness that quickly dispelled our first embarrassment and characterized his attitude during our whole time with him.

"Welcome," he said, advancing to meet us, "Let us sit together at the table." After we were seated the servant poured tea, that eternal offering of respect to the guest in China, and we were ready for our conversation. My friend Wang acted as interpreter, for while T'ai Shu and I partly understood each other's language we each used our own to express ourselves.

As the interview progressed we had opportunity to observe the personal appearance of our host. T'ai Shu is a young man, not above forty years of age. A mustache and horn-rimmed spectacles cause him to seem somewhat older than this when seen at a short distance. But near observation reveals an almost boyish youthfulness of countenance. His round cheeks and clear complexion, untouched as yet by signs of weariness and care, suggest the enjoyment of excellent health. He is of medium height and, I should judge, rather robust of build, though this last was not easy to determine on account of the voluminous folds of his monkish robe. The spots burned on the scalp and the rosary about the neck betokened the avowed priest. It was in the eyes chiefly that we could read the maturity of the man. Dark, thoughtful eyes they are, alive with quick intelligence yet ever suggestive of inner repose—the eyes at once of the scholar and the contemplative mystic. In manner he was quiet and composed during the interview, using no gestures. His utterances in clear even tones flowed easily, simply and directly as though from some inner fountain of thought and formulation whose plenitude made it unnecessary to pause and search for appropriate words.

After T'ai Shu had learned that as a teacher of philosophy in the University of Nanking I was interested in Buddhist systems of thought as well as others, our first words were concerning books. The young reformer wanted to know what writings of his faith interested his occidental visitor. Myself, in turn, was interested to learn what he considered the best volumes for a Westerner to read. The interchange was technical and I need not trouble the reader with it further than to remark that he favored the reading of books which deal with the Vijnanavada. Buddhism's highest philosophical school which teaches the doctrine that all that exists is only consciousness. Then I said,



"I understand, T'ai Shu, that you are a leader in the reform of Buddhism." (The monk's head inclined in gesture of deprecating humility.) "Do the ideas of your reform rest back for authority upon any one of these ancient classics?"

The dark eyes glowed for a moment and he smiled, somewhat amusedly I thought, as he answered, "The ideas of my reform are exceedingly simple. They are first, to remove the unnecessary things that have gathered about the original essence of Buddhism and second, to make application of this latter to present-day conditions. For this one hardly needs the authority of a book."

Then, leaning back in his chair and extending from the great sleeve of his robe a shapely hand which he rested lightly upon the table he fixed his deep gaze full upon me and put the question which the mere fact of my presence as a Westerner had evidently stirred in him from the beginning. "Do you think," he said, "that Buddhism will penetrate and spread in the West?"

The question came as a surprise. I did not know that T'ai Shu included the West in his purposes, though I had long known of the universal claims of Buddhism itself. But after all, it was natural, considering that he is an ardent propagandist as well as reformer. I essayed an answer.

"If the truth that is in Buddhism," I said, "can be put in a form that the Western mind can understand it has a chance of spreading, as does all truth eventually." Then I thought of the images and the elaborate ceremonies I had witnessed in the temples and added: "But I do not believe that the forms and rites of the religion as these have been developed in the Orient can ever be taken over by the West any more than it is likely that purely Western forms of Christianity will survive in the East."

"Forms and ceremonies," the monk replied, "are but incidental. It is the truth that matters." I learned afterward that T'ai Shu himself does not believe the temple idols have any power, though he would not do away with them in his reform because he believes it is necessary for the common people to have some image to which they can tie their thoughts.

Then he told us that at the present time in Peking National University where he had given a series of lectures there are seven or eight young men who are carefully studying Western knowledge and languages with the dominant purpose of fitting themselves to

lecture on Buddhism before the people of the West. When I said in reply that Buddhism as a philosophy is already studied in Western university centers, that even as a religion it has some temples in California, and that Japanese monks have already been known to lecture there he replied eagerly, "Yes, that is well known to me. But Buddhism in California is for the Asian peoples residing there. Our purpose is not to spread the doctrine of the Buddha before those who already know it, but to carry it far and wide among the people of the West who yet are ignorant, particularly of the Northern Buddhism such as we have in China and Japan."

"But you say," he went on, his thought still busy with his first question, "that the truth of Buddhism must be made conformable to the Western mind. Let me ask if you think that the Western mind is by nature favorable or unfavorable to Buddhist truth."

This question was a poser, for we were both of us using large terms which we had not defined and I was not sure of what he meant by the real truth or essence of Buddhism. But there swept across my mind the thought of our philosophies of striving, achievement, mastery in which so much that is characteristic of the modern West has found expression. I remembered Fichte's "moral will," Hegel's "Absolute" battling through all the conflicts of the world to self-consciousness, Bergson's *Elan Vitale*, Nietzsche's "Will to Power," and the pragmatic ideal of control through "Creative Intelligence." Against all this rose the thought of Buddhism's emphasis on contemplation, meditation, purification of the heart and the recognition of the emptiness of the phenomenal world as necessary elements in the solution of the problem of life. The two thoughts ground hard against each other.

"I do not think," I said to T'ai Shu, "that the dominant values cherished by the Western mind are very favorable to Buddhism as I understand it. The West values striving, achievement, reformation in the concrete outer world of nature and human affairs. But Buddhism seems to me to exalt contemplation, meditation, the quest for inward peace and poise—a type of achievement indeed, but one which is subjective and mystic, which tends to still the restlessness of endeavour in the external world. That Buddhism could appeal to a majority in the West is most doubtful. There are those, however, in the West who find its dominant tendencies too much for them. Such find the thought of ceaseless striving a

burden and long for peace and rest. Such are likely to have the mystic taste most sensitive to the values of Buddhism."

A graver look deepened on the thoughtful countenance of the monk when my words were interpreted to him, as though some oft-recurring but not very happy reflection were stirred. "But has not Western striving," he said, "resulted in a European War? It would seem to me that after such an experience a larger proportion of the Western people must feel the need for something like Buddhism. Surely after such a catastrophe they will the more willingly listen to us. Mere striving cannot be the final word."

To have replied adequately to this remark would have involved us in a discussion that would take us far afield from T'ai Shu's own remarks concerning the relationship of Buddhism to the problems of the West. There were many things to say about the West's own ideas as to the way out. But I wanted to hear the monk develop his own thoughts, so at this point I remained silent. His next question was not long in coming.

"I understand," he said, "that now the West is troubled at another point, that it feels keenly the conflict between science and religion. How is it? Do the people there believe more in science or in religion?"

"Your question, O Master of the Law," I answered, "is not easy in the form in which you put it and would require many words in reply. But my belief is that the hearts of the people as a whole incline to religion. Among the intellectual classes there is awareness of incongruity between traditional religious dogmas and the scientific view of the world. And it is true that of those deeply versed in science there are some who declare it necessary to discard religion. But there are others of the same group who find that their knowledge of science does but lead them to an insight into yet deeper truth in religion.

T'ai Shu made reply with an air of assurance. "It is my conviction," he said, "that the doctrine of Buddha can heal this wound in the heart of man today. Buddhism and modern science have separate origins but their central view is essentially alike. He who loses religion through science can learn how to find it again through Buddhism. In this also I believe we have a message to the West."

What did he mean? Was it that he traced an analogy between

the popular scientific conception of a universe governed by a system of impersonal laws and the Dharmakaya of the Mahayana doctrine, that "Body of the Law," which is the ultimate being, existent from all eternity, of which the Buddhas of all the aeons, so they say, are but the incarnations although itself is not a person? There might be some similarity there. Or was he thinking that one who had lost confidence in prayer might yet find spiritual poise in the practice of Buddhist meditation? Or was it that reading about certain scientific ideas he had unconsciously transformed them for himself until they were assimilated to Buddhist notions, and hence saw a greater resemblance than a non-Buddhist would? His words aroused a bewildering array of conjectures.

The obvious thing to do would have been to ask him to explain. But this in the nature of the case would have required a great extension of our interview and time for this was lacking. For even while he was uttering the last words the curtain at the door was lifted and the entrance of another guest warned my companion and myself that we must bring our conversation to an end. There was nothing for it but to pass the point. But there was one question which I wished to ask him before we left. So far nothing had been said concerning the relation of Buddhism and other religions and he had passed silently over my single reference to Christianity. I wished to know what would be his feeling, as reformer and propagandist within one of the world's great religions, toward humanity's other systems of spiritual aspiration. To call out his general attitude I framed a rather sweeping question.

"Tell me, T'ai Shu," I said. "What you think will be the condition of religion in the future mingling and interpenetration of the civilizations of the world? Will all religions tend to draw together into one, as some think, or will each preserve its separate identity, friendly indeed to all the rest but ministering particularly to that type of temperament most attracted by it?"

For the first time in our conversation T'ai Shu hesitated. Possibly he sensed the presence of another query behind the highly speculative question asked. "On this point," he replied, "I have no opinion as I have not studied into the matter."

"Of course," I persisted, "no one can know surely what the future will bring forth. But what is your hope?"

His reply was frank and sincere. "It is my belief," he said,

“that Buddhism has enough variety in its many aspects to meet the needs of all temperaments and classes of people. Nevertheless it is possible to think that all religions share in some central core of truth to which each forms in its own way a separate gateway.”

He had answered both my inner and my outer question. As a scholar he might recognize points of reconciliation between the different world religions. But as a practical reformer he believes it his task to be the missionary of his own religion even to the ends of the earth, which for him means the peoples of the West.

With this we rose, paid our parting respects to the gentle Master of the Law, and withdrew from his presence.

## WALKING ON THE WATER IN INDIAN LITERATURE

BY W. NORMAN BROWN

### II. WALKING ON WATER IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN LITERATURE OF WESTERN ASIA AND EUROPE

In the literature of western Asia and of Europe, as far as my observation extends, stories illustrating the magical crossing of water set their scenes in Egypt, western Asia, or India. I speak, of course, only of stories that are pre-Christian or seem to be so. An exception must be made in favor of Poseidon in the opening of Iliad XIII, who drives his chariot across the waves, much as at a later time did King Dilīpa in the Mahābhārata (see above, footnote 3). The deed of Poseidon might possibly be thrown out of court because he, being god of the sea, is by definition its master and may proceed at pleasure on its surface or under it. Yet the incident could not be so lightly brushed aside if it could be shown to be connected with other legends of crossing water magically. Such too, is the case with the later stories of water sprites, wraiths, ghosts which are adduced by Saintyves.<sup>44</sup> Such creatures, being bodiless or immaterial, may also glide across the water or float through the air. The pre-Christian belief in such beings is attested by the very story of Jesus walking on the water: for when his disciples saw him, they did not know him, but mistook him for a ghost and were frightened. There is after all nothing magical in the actions of these unreal creatures any more than there is in that of Poseidon; the magic part is a part of their nature; and the stories would be germane to our investigation only if it seemed that they had in any way inspired the stories that portray men performing the miracle.

The stories west of India are not so easily based upon definite

<sup>44</sup>Essay on the miracle of crossing water in *Essais de folklore biblique*.

metaphysical notions as in India, but they may be assorted according to the manner in which the crossing is effected. There is one group in which the waters divide, another in which they are lowered, and a third in which there is walking on water. Obviously, there is no need to consider stories such as that of Icarus in which crossing the water is purely incidental to some other motif—in that case the motif of flying to heaven and too near the sun.

#### A. THE WATERS DIVIDE

The dividing of the waters so that it is possible to pass between them on dry land is characteristically a Jewish notion. It appears in connection with the exodus from Egypt, the entry into Canaan under Joshua, and the miracles of Elijah and Elisha. The oldest, and the source of the others, is that of Moses conducting the Israelites through the Red Sea.

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. . . . And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. . . . And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.—Exodus xiv. 15-29, with some omissions.

This account is generally taken as a hybrid: one version shows the crossing effected by having the waters divide through the magic

power of Moses' rod; the other and older, rationalistically, by an east wind that drives the water back, apparently leaving the ground dry without division of the waters.

Inspired by this legend is that of Joshua leading the Israelites through the Jordan.

And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, ye shall stand still in the Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of Jehovah your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you. . . . Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, for every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, even the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand in one heap. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over the Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant being before the people; and when they that bare the ark were come unto the Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (for the Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of the harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those that went down toward the sea of Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation were passed clean over the Jordan. And it came to pass, when all the nation were clean passed over the Jordan, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of the Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: and Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of



Jehovah your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; that this may be a sign among you, that, when your children ask you in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall say unto them, Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever. And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, as Jehovah spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; and they carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. For the priests that bare the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan, until everything was finished that Jehovah commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over. And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of Jehovah passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. . . . On that day Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of the Jordan. Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of the Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah were come up out of the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned unto their place, and went over all its banks, as aforetime.—Joshua iii. 7—iv. 18, with some omissions.

This long story is not merely an account of how the Israelites crossed the Jordan through the magic power of the ark of the covenant, but also a "just so" explanation of how the twelve stones came to be set up in Gilgal (Joshua iv. 20).

The third Jewish legend is of Elijah crossing the Jordan before his translation to heaven. He seems to cross it at the spot where the Israelites crossed it under Joshua, for he proceeds from Gilgal to Jericho to the river, reversing the route of their entry.

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither.

so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up in a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they were divided hither and thither, and Elisha went over.—II Kings ii. 8-14.

In all three of these stories the miracle is accomplished by a simple and unreflective bit of folk magic. Certain articles have acquired a magic power, by means of which this and other wonders are achieved. The power does not lie in the individual wielding the articles; there is no higher religious basis for it, no doctrinal authority; nothing but the commonest and most elementary ideas of magic.

This group of legends in the Old Testament is not, as far as I can see, to be traced back to any other stories of crossing water magically. As a group they are independent.<sup>45</sup> But they have had influence on many later legends, one of which is old enough to come under our inspection. This is a Zoroastrian tale found in Yasht 5. 76-78, the Ardvīsūr Yašt, a text which the vicissitudes of the Zoroastrian canon have made undatable, although it would not be unconservative to put it before the Christian era. Vistarav, having escaped the massacre of his family, arrives at the river Vītanjūhaitī; and there he invokes Ardvī Sūra Anāhita.

<sup>45</sup> It seems to me to be futile to try to connect these legends with the ancient Egyptian tale of King Snefru and his magician Zazamonkh. A convenient English rendering appears in Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated from the German by A. M. Blackman (New York: Dutton, 1927), pp. 38ff. One of the girl rowers of King Snefru's barge loses a malachite ornament in the water. The magician Zazamonkh lifts up the water from one side in a block, which he piles upon the water of the other side, recovers the ornament, and then replaces the water. The motivation and incidents are too dissimilar to justify making a connection.

"This is truly, veraciously stated, O mighty, immaculate Ardvī, that as many demon worshippers have been stricken to the ground by me as I have hairs on my head. Therefore, O mighty, immaculate Ardvī provide me then a dry passage over the good Vītanuhaitī."

Up came the mighty, immaculate Ardvī in the form of a beauteous maiden, very strong . . . <sup>46</sup> The waters on one side she made stand still, the others she made flow on. She provided him a dry passage over the good Vītanuhaitī.<sup>47</sup>

Two features of this legend are noteworthy. First, the manner of crossing is between divided waters as in the Hebrew crossing of the Red Sea, or even better that of the Jordan, where, as here, the upper waters stood still, and the lower flowed on. To this degree, therefore, it seems influenced by the Jewish legends; and the borrowing may well have taken place at the time when the Jews were in captivity at Babylon. The Zoroastrain could scarcely be the source of the Hebrew. For one thing we have no evidence that it is as old as the Hebrew; and for another the Hebrew story of the Exodus has such a hold on the Jewish imagination, both in the Old Testament and in the New, as well as in commemorative celebration down to the present that it seems more likely to have been the original than does the Zoroastrian, which cuts very little figure in its environment.

Second, the crossing is by means of prayer, in which respect it differs from the Hebrew. The form in which the prayer is made is almost the formula of the Hindu Act of Truth (see above section "I. B."), and might afford basis for believing that the Zoroastrian tale is partly traceable to Indian sources. The theory would find further support of a negative character in the fact that such a magic use of the truth does not seem to be characteristically Zoroastrian, as it is Hindu or Buddhist or Jain. These considerations are not conclusive, since the Iranian story itself is not to be derived from any Indian story I have seen. Two other explanations offer themselves. Such a use of the truth may be common Indo-Iranian, and may have been preserved independently in the two branches. This is hardly likely on account of two considerations: first, the great infrequency of the idea among the Iranians and second, its relatively late appearance in Indian literature. In the latter it seems to be a development from other notions (see above). The second explanation

<sup>46</sup>Omitting a stock description of Ardvī.

<sup>47</sup>Translation following Wolff, *Avesta . . . übersetzt*, p. 175.

is that it is also an Iranian development from other indigenous notions. In Zoroastrianism, as in the religion of the Veda, prayer as the due repetition of formulae has a magic power.<sup>48</sup> To cross a river in such circumstances one might well resort to prayer, as did Zarathushtra in a story which we shall consider a little later.<sup>49</sup> Also, the act by which Vistarav influences the goddess is one of the greatest piety, namely, the slaughter of demon worshippers, and it may well be the piety of his act more than the truthfulness of the statement that is effective. The question, however, had perhaps better be left unanswered.

An echo of the crossing of the Jordan from about the time of Christ is reported by Josephus, *Antiquities* XX.5.2, concerning a certain Theudas, who induced a large number of people to follow him to the Jordan, claiming that he was a prophet and would divide the waters. But when the test came, the miracle did not take place; so Theudas was captured and carried to the governor in Jerusalem, who had his head struck off.

#### B. THE WATERS BECOME SHALLOW

The stories of rivers or bodies of water suddenly becoming fordable are in western Asia invariably attached to historical personages, and in many cases seem more credible than does the story of crossing the Sutudrī and Vipās in Rigveda 3.33. Some of them seem to have a germ of truth in them, that is, a general with his army found a river, usually the Euphrates, fordable at a time of the year when it usually is not; this lucky coincidence was interpreted as a bit of heavenly favor, and the occurrence was transmuted into a miracle. The whole process is illustrated in Xenophon's *Anabasis* 1.4, when Cyrus and his army crossed the Euphrates at Thapsacus.

And in the crossing, no one was wetted above the breast by the water. The people of Thapsacus said that this river had never been passable on foot except at this time, but only by boats. . . . It seemed, accordingly, that there was divine intervention, and that the river had plainly retired before Cyrus because he was destined to be king.

If this were so, then heaven was merely trying to make mad him whom it meant ultimately to destroy. But the statement of the Thapsacans was not altogether true, "since in the late autumn and

<sup>48</sup>See Moulton, *The Treasure of the Magi*, pp. 89 ff.

<sup>49</sup>For a few references to crossing a river by means of religious act, performed or implied, and even of prayer, see in Jackson, *Zoroaster* p. 40, n. 6.

early winter the river is often fordable. It is to be remembered, however, that the Greeks crossed between the middle and the end of July, at a time when the river is usually at flood height. From the end of May until towards the middle of July the waters stand about thirteen feet above low water."<sup>50</sup> One hardly likes to impugn Xenophon's reliability concerning an occurrence of which he was presumably an eye-witness, and it is not necessary to do so. We need only suppose that the river subsided a little earlier that year; hence the lucky accident that is on the way to becoming a miracle.

But we need not be so charitable in our judgment of a legend concerning Lucullus that appears in Plutarch's life of him (24). Lucullus reached the Euphrates at a time when it was greatly swollen by late rains. But that very evening the floods began to subside and the next morning the river was lower than normal, showing islands that were seldom visible at all. The intervention of the deity in his behalf was evident from the fact that on the opposite bank waiting for him to take and sacrifice was a heifer sacred to the Persian Diana, an animal that Plutarch tells us was as a rule difficult to find. Here the incident, if it ever occurred, has been exaggerated and expanded into a modest miracle.

Tacitus (*Annals* 6.37) tells how Vitellius made a similar crossing of this singularly accommodating river. The final effect of these legends is to leave one a little incredulous of them all. It looks very much as though some ancient legend of crossing the Euphrates—perhaps akin to the story of Vistarav—had colored the accounts of the historians.

Alexander, the hero of much fairy tale, figures in some marvellous affairs with the waters, of which one is the passage of the sea in Pamphylia. Most of the accounts are touched with credibility. Arrian in his *Anabasis of Alexander* 1.26 says that there is no passage along the beach except when the north wind blows: "at that time, after a strong south wind, the north winds blew, and rendered his passage easy and quick, not without divine intervention, as both he and his men interpreted." Plutarch in his life of Alexander (17) refers to the same legend and quotes Menander in connection with it, but adds that Alexander himself made no claim of anything miraculous in the passage. Appian also knew the

<sup>50</sup>Mather and Hewitt, *Xenophon's Anabasis*, Books I-IV, p. 267, quoting from Rogers, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*.

legend and in his *Civil Wars* 2.149, 150, mentions it in connection with an adventure of Caesar's in the Ionian Sea; and Strabo, in *Geogr.* XIV.3.9, says the army was a whole day in passing and was in water up to the navel. Callisthenes, however, according to Eustathius (notes on 3rd Iliad of Homer) says that the sea not only opened for him but even rose and fell in homage, although it is only fair to say that this statement is not necessarily to be interpreted thus literally but may be looked upon as a kind of rhetorical embellishment to something which was actually understood more prosaically. Josephus gives the event an undeniably miraculous touch. In the *Antiquities* II.16.5, having just described the Hebrew crossing of the Red Sea, he cites this legend in confirmation of that in Exodus, and says that the sea divided for Alexander, in an off-hand way referring to the other historians as his authority. The legend is probably independent of any other, being based on an unusual but perfectly natural occurrence, to which later commentators added miraculous interpretation. In the case of Josephus' account, it has been clearly contaminated by the Hebrew legend.

#### C. WALKING ON THE WATER

There are in the West no stories of actually crossing on the surface of the water that can be convincingly ascribed to pre-Christian times, nor even any allusions to the feat at so early a date. Nevertheless there are at least three stories which *might* be that old, if we only knew, and these it is worth while to mention.

The first concerns Alexander again, and is found in the Pseudo-Callisthenes.<sup>51</sup> When Alexander arrived at Babylon, he himself went in disguise as an ambassador to Darius, who received and entertained him, notably with a banquet in the evening. During the course of the banquet a certain Persian lord recognized Alexander and informed Darius; whereupon Alexander, finding himself discovered, fled from the hall, snatching a torch to light him through the darkness. Fortunately, he chanced upon a horse at the door. The Syriac text then says, "Now Alexander by the might of the Gods crossed the river, but when he had reached the other side and the fore-feet of the horse rested on dry land, the water which had been frozen over suddenly melted, and the hind legs of the horse went down into the river. Alexander, however, leaped from the horse to land, and the horse was drowned in the river."

<sup>51</sup>Greek version, Book II.15; Syriac, Book II.7. The latter is translated by Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, p. 74.

This story, being about Alexander and appearing among the fairy tales of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, is at once to be suspected of Indian origin. It might, on the one hand, be a reflection of the Indian stories of magically crossing on the surface of the water, as by King Kappina and Queen Anoja (above in section "I. B.") or by King Dilīpa (footnote 3); or, on the other hand, of Siddhārtha's celebrated leap across the river Anomā on his steed Kanthaka, when he left home on the Great Retirement to become the Buddha.<sup>52</sup> The age of the earliest version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes is probably not greater than 200 A. D.,<sup>53</sup> and no text that we have reproduces the original; yet this incident must be of considerable antiquity, for it is well established in the cycle; and it may even be pre-Christian.

The second story appears in Nonnus, Dionysiaca 23. Although Nonnus flourished about 395-405 A. D.,<sup>54</sup> the legend of a mythical invasion of India by Dionysus, carrying civilization to that country, is pre-Christian. As early as Euripides (prologue to the Bacchae), myth had carried him as far as Bactria, which at that time was both culturally and politically Indian.

Leaving the Lydian and the Phrygian plain  
Teeming with gold, I neared the sun-scorched tracts  
Of Persia and the walls of Bactria.<sup>55</sup>

Arrian, *Indica* 5, 7, 8, 9, reports the invasion, presumably on the authority of Megasthenes, although he says nothing about crossing rivers on the surface of the water. Nonnus, however, uses this, as well as other material which seems attributable, perhaps indirectly, to Indian sources, such, for example, as his distortion of the Indian notions of rebirth (37.3). The incident that interests us is related in a florid, decadent style, with embellishments that doubtless originated with Nonnus, but the substance of it is that the bacchantes, having triumphed over the eastern barbarians, cross the river Hydaspes (the modern Jhelum, the river at which Alexander met Porus) with various nautical wonders. They drive their chariots over the waves, and the feet of the leopards do not sink in:

<sup>52</sup>This incident is thoroughly commonplace among the Buddhists; for a convenient example, see in the *Nidānakathā*, translated by Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 65. Hardly germane are stories of horses that run on water, as in the 1001 Nights, or that go so swiftly they do not sink in water, as in *Jātakas* 254 and 545.

<sup>53</sup>See Budge, *op. cit.*, p. lii.

<sup>54</sup>See Chamberlayne in the North Carolina University *Studies in Philology* 13.41.

<sup>55</sup>See Davis, *The Asiatic Dionysus*, p. 163.

Pan's goat feet run over the waters, which flatten themselves out; and so with many others of Dionysus' army. Similar incidents occur in Nonnus' chapter 24. These incidents all seem quite reasonably to be ascribable to Indian sources, both on account of the nature of the crossing of the water, as well as on account of the Indian setting.

The third story is from a still later text, being an Iranian legend about Zarathushtra, appearing in the Zerdusht Nama, chapter 17, dated 1278 A. D. It tells how Zarathushtra, having arrived with his family at the bank of the Araxes, found no boat. He was grieved lest his wives should be exposed naked to the gaze of the multitude on shore; but he prayed to the Lord, and then they all walked across safely on the water. What the age of this tradition is, no one can hope to guess; for the books of the Parsis suffered such destruction that much original or early material no longer is preserved and we cannot check late reports, such as this, by the first canon. The fact that Zarathushtra and his family *walked on the surface of the water* would lend plausibility to the theory that Indian influence is felt here.

#### D. SUMMARY

So far as concerns the theme of walking on water, the conclusions to be drawn from our discussion of crossing water magically in western Asia are largely negative. The oldest legends show the waters dividing under the control of a magic object; this is varied by prayer; or, again, the waters are lowered. There are no stories exhibiting walking on the surface of the water which can with assurance be considered pre-Christian, while the few which may not unreasonably be so seem with great plausibility to be ascribable to Indian origins.



## THE HUMANISM OF BOCCACCIO

BY BIRGER R. HEADSTROM

**I**N the two distinct periods that combined to give definition to Boccaccio's life, we find that each served to give expression, and to reveal, the sublimity and depth, not only of his genius, but of the quality which has earned him immortality—his humanism. Without the profound mysticism of Dante, or the extraordinary sweetness and perfection of Petrarch, he was more complete than either of them; in his passion, his love, his suffering which defines the first period of his life, he is full of laughter and humility and love,—that humanism which in him alone was really a part of his life; and which later, under profound grief and melancholy, developed into that noble friendship with Petrarch,—a friendship which has become one of the most beautiful things in literature, and in which Boccaccio saw the beauty and glory of an idealism that later became associated with Erasmus.

A poet by nature, sensitive to the influence of love, his passion for the unfaithful Fiammetta controlled his entire life. She had awakened in him the slumbering spark of genius; and years later her memory still continued to be his inspiration. Under the influence of his love for her, he gave expression to his happiness by the development of his creative genius. He wrote for her, first to please her, and then to regain her. Even when she betrayed and deserted him—even though his love affair was at an end, never to be renewed—his love for her gave him hope and inspiration, and found such beautiful expression in the work he wrote for her. Extraordinarily personal, his state of mind is visible in them. One simple thought seems to dominate his mind; he had loved a princess and had been loved in return; and though he had been forsaken by her she remained, in spite of all, the guiding star of his life. To

regain her love, he enchants her with stories, he glorifies her, constantly telling her his own story; but what hopeless means to win back the love of a woman; what folly to suppose she will read his thousands of lines!

"You are gone suddenly to Sammium," he writes to her in the dedication to Filostrato, "and . . . I have sought in the old histories what personage I might choose as messenger of my secret and unhappy love, and I have found Troilus, son of Priam, who loved Criseyde. His miseries are my history. I have sung them in light rhymes and in my own Tuscan, and so when you read the lamentations of Troilus and his sorrow at the departure of his love, you shall know my tears, my sighs, my agonies, and if I vaunt the beauties and the charms of Criseyde you will know that I dream of you."

It is an expression of his love. He wants her to know what he suffers, to tell her of his experiences, his pains, his joys. And though the story serves as a means of self-expression, it is, in its exquisite beauty of sentiment and verse, one of the loveliest of his works.

But his sufferings, his journeyings, were but the progress of preparation for the work which was to give perpetuity to his name. In his travels, he became familiar with the people of his country, their joys, their sorrows, their pleasures, their hardships; and in his own sufferings, he learned life, learned to recognize and appreciate its beauties, its crudities. And then suddenly all the bright world about Florence, among the woods of Vincigliata under Fiesole and the olive gardens and podere of Corbignano, on the banks of Affrico and Mensola so full of voices for Boccaccio, was silenced. The end of the world had come, some said. In a sense it was true. For the Plague was the end of the Middle Age. And at Florence, the vengeance of God, or an outraged nature, had deprived Boccaccio of all those for whom he had cared, or had lived, and now alone, he retired from the world to devote himself to the task of giving to posterity his great immortal work, which some have called the Human Comedy.

It is rather strange that the work which best represents his genius, his humour and his wide tolerance and love of mankind, should be so different to his other works which are so involved with

his own affairs. It can probably be best explained by the transition and change that had taken place in his soul, and which was to serve as an indication to that later period when a nobler and graver bearing gave definition to his friendship for Petrarch, and his interest and zeal in reviving the learning of the ancients.

Even his style had undergone a strange change, a style which, for its beauty and simplicity of expression, was in a certain sense to mark the rise of Italian prose. It is true that Dante's *Vita Nuova* was written before, but its involved sentences, founded essentially on Latin construction, cannot be compared with the infinite suppleness and precision of Boccaccio's prose. For the first time, Boccaccio presents a new idiom, which, like the character of the nation, is flexible and tender, and capable of rendering all the shades of feeling, from the coarse laugh of cynicism to the sigh of hopeless love. Like most progressive movements in art and literature, his remodeling of Italian prose may be described as a "return to nature." Indeed, it is the nature of the Italian people itself which he has made articulate in the *Decameron*; we find southern grace and elegance, blending with the unveiled naivete of impulse which is such a striking and admirable quality of the Italian character. And though the descriptions of low life, with its coarseness and indecency, might seem incomprehensible to the northern mind because of the freedom with which the life of the Italian finds expression, they are so admirable, and the character of the popular parlance rendered with such humour, that one cannot help but feel he is one of them, even though their immorality might seem disgusting.

The *Decameron* is a world in itself, and the effect upon the reader is the effect of life itself, which includes for its own good, things moral and immoral. It is Italy in the fourteenth century, and though with all its looseness, it is a philosophy of the world, with its variety, and infinity of people, dealing with man as life does, never taking him very seriously, or without a certain indifference, a certain irony and laughter. Yet it is full, too, of a love of country, of luck, of all kinds of adventures, gallant and sad; a true and realistic mirror of life in all its forms, among all classes, filled with observations of those customs and types that made up the life of the time. Dramatic, comic, tragic, ironic, philosophic and ever lyrical; indulgent of human error, it is a human book, per-

fect in construction and in freedom, full of people, of living people—that is the secret of its immortality. They live forever. And yet it seems to lack a certain idealism—a certain moral sense—an idealism which would have given it balance, a sense of proportion.

It was inevitable that a style so concise and yet so pliable, so typical and yet so individual, as that of Boccaccio should exert an enormous influence upon the progress of the prose created by it. This influence has persisted down even to the present day, to an extent beneficial upon the whole 'although frequently fatal to individual writers. But it is rather by its humanism that it has earned its place in literature. Even Chaucer, who turned freely to it, is not so complete in his humanism, his love of all sorts and conditions of men; Goethe, Shakespeare, Tennyson and many others looked to it for inspiration but in the literature of the world it stands, for its humanism, alone. Even the Divine Comedy cannot rock it from its pedestal.

In this immortal work is revealed, without the slightest constraint, the width and depth of his humanism, that admirable quality, the richness and beauty of which testifies to the sublimity of his inspiration. For with its completion, Boccaccio is no longer the same man, human, loving and tranquil, but rather sad, melancholy and somewhat cynical, a cynicism that found such terrible expression in that savage and mysterious satire, *Il Corbaccio*. Fiammetta was dead; and with the realization of that stern fact, the passion that had given him inspiration and expression to his creative genius, expired. He had written for her alone; now that she was dead he was sad, and his grief, on which he brooded, served to offer room for imaginative fancies. He had been injured and treated shamefully, woman was an evil creature, a tool of the arch enemy, to torment and destroy mortal man; and he found an outlet for his emotions in that wild invective against Woman, laughable in its wildness and unmeasured malice. But it was merely the reflection of the change that was taking place in his soul; the change that marks the transition from his youth to his maturity; from the freedom and exuberance of the boy to the grave and dignified bearing of the man. And when the storm had subsided and he found comfort in Petrarch, he still continued to cherish her fond memory, for that vain shadow always haunted him, the emptiness in his heart never left him.

In Boccaccio's deep and intimate friendship for the great humanist, it was inevitable that he should become interested in the cause for which his friend was laboring. Partly to forget his grief, and partly to be able to follow in the footsteps of the man whom he so greatly admired, he plunged with energy and enthusiasm into the work of reviving the learning of the ancient masters. Boccaccio was no scholar who saw in the literature of antiquity wisdom and thought, which Petrarch sought to make more profound, but rather, as a humanist, something living and splendid. He was no longer able to create living men and women; but he could find in the vast literature of the past a wealth of material which by industry and spade-work could be restored and given to the world. His devotion to this task, and his success, can be measured by the indebtedness of posterity to the classics of antiquity.

By his industry and interest in reviving the learning of the past, as well as the influence of the austere Petrarch, Boccaccio's humanism gradually grew from the simple love of human nature to adopt a higher and an intellectual significance. Having been far from virtuous, he gradually recognized the need of spiritual enlightenment and comfort, and the preparation for a future life. His conversion was precipitated, or rather hastened by that strange incident of the Carthusian monk which produced such a deep reaction on his impressionable nature. Having often attacked the institutions and servants of the holy mother church, and terrified by the approach of immediate death, he resolved to abandon literature and devote the remainder of his life to penance and religious exercise. Writing to Petrarch to this effect, he is cautioned in words of tenderest friendship not to lose hold of himself.

"No monk is required to tell thee," Petrarch writes in part, "of the shortness and precariousness of human life. Of the advice received accept what is good; abandon worldly cares, conquer thy passions, and reform thy soul and life of degraded habits. But do not give up the studies which are the true food of a healthy mind."

This advice and wisdom Boccaccio heeded; and learned more than ever to look to his friend for guidance and comfort. Their ties of friendship were strengthened; and Boccaccio, already ill and weighed by the grief which he could never throw off, felt

strangely drawn to the great scholar. He survived his friend but a short time.

In summary, we can do no better in fitting tribute to Boccaccio's sublime humanism, than to quote the few lines engraved on his tombstone, an epitaph composed by himself shortly before his death. Calm and dignified, it is indeed worthy of a great life with a great purpose.

*"Hac sub mole jacent cineres ac ossa Joannis;  
Mens sedet ante Deum, meritis ornata laborum  
Mortalis vitæ; Genitor Baccaccius illi;  
Patria Certaldum; studium fuit alma pœsis."*

## MARY AND MARTHA

### An Allegory

BY RUDOLPH KASSNER

Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary.—St. Luke x. 38-39.

Many years have passed over the land since the two princesses, of whom I want to tell, lived and died in the old Castle. You can still see the old Castle lying on the borders of the lake, and when the storm drives into the waves of the lake, the lake roars out loud and shouts rough words which nobody can interpret and which are always the same, and it closes its eyes like a man who is about to dive under the water; and only when the storm has flown and is far away in another country, the lake laughs and opens its eyes once more, and sees the whole sky over-head, and the willows on its banks, and the swallows and eagles, which circle above it.

The two princesses were twins, and on the same day in which their Mother bore them, messengers brought her tidings, that the Duke, her Consort, and father to the new-born twins, had fallen in his fight against Klingsor, the wicked magician. For in those days magicians still lived, and did all they could to disturb the happiness of men and the Wish of God. The people whispered to each other that Klingsor could pour water into fire without extinguishing it; and the Duke had also heard tell of Klingsor, that he could mingle truth and falsehood in such a way, that only he, who killed Klingsor could separate falsehood and truth once more. And that is why the Duke went forth to kill the magician. He had promised God to do so, because otherwise truth would remain in falsehood and falsehood in truth for ever, and no mortal would be able to disentangle them again.

The soul of the Duchess had become confounded by her great sorrow—it had taken away the light of her days. From the moment it happened, the Duchess began to speak words whose meaning her servants could not understand, she wandered about the old Castle from room to room and opened and shut the many windows, and nobody could make out why she did so. Or else she ran round the lake, when the storm lay in the waves and when the lake groaned aloud. As soon as the nurses came towards the Duchess and showed her the little Princesses, fear took hold of her and she ran away without recognizing her children. It was very rare that she stood still and gently touched her children and asked after their names, but when she did so, she mistook them, and called one Princess by the name of the other and laughed out loud.

In this way the two Princesses had never seen their father and were not known to their mother, and that is why they were always alone and played in the park, or else chased the deer out of the bushes, or scared the little squirrels on the trees. The serving-men and maids left them to their own devices, and had only forbidden them strictly to go down to the lake. They said, that a wicked fairy lived in the lake, and that she came up and fetched little children when they went down to its shores. But in spite of this warning, curiosity often led the Princesses quite secretly down to the lake when the servants were not looking, and then the lake laughed and had its eyes wide open, and saw the whole sky overhead and the willows on its banks and the swallows and eagles circling above it, and it also saw the two Princesses when they stepped quite close, and bent their little heads down over its borders.

The names of the Princesses were Mary and Martha. In spite of their Mother having born them in the same hour, Mary was beautiful and Martha ugly. And they were both well aware of this fact; Mary knew that she was beautiful, and Martha knew that she was ugly, for they had both seen their reflection in the lake, on bright sunny days. But Mary and Martha never spoke of that which they had seen in the lake, and loved each other. In fact, Mary and Martha did not only love each other because they were sisters and always alone and because they had never seen their father and were not known to their mother, but Mary loved Martha because Martha was ugly, and Martha loved Mary because Mary was beautiful. Neither the servants in the Castle nor the gardeners in the Park,



nor the fishermen on the lake ever saw Mary without Martha, or Martha without Mary. And he, who could have understood God would have known why God wished just this, that Mary should be in Martha, and Martha in Mary, and why God's Wish never would have parted Mary and Martha.

But the magician Klingsor wanted to part the two, for he hated God, and he only waited for the moment; and the moment for his villainy was soon to come, for without the moment Klingsor could do nothing.

Years had gone by; the Duchess had died without knowing her two children, and Mary and Martha were grown up, when, on a certain day the King's heralds rode up from the town and proclaimed, that the moment had come for the King's son to woo a Princess. All the Princesses in the whole Kingdom were to adorn themselves with roses, like brides, and were to come to the feast by which the King was about to celebrate his son's marriage. And the King's son would present his Mother's veil to that Princess upon whom his choice would fall among the many, and she would then become the Consort of the King's son, and after the King's death she would be Queen of the whole country. Mary and Martha were also commanded to adorn themselves with roses like brides, and to appear before the King's son on the wedding day.

The same proclamation was announced in all the Palaces and Castles of the Dukes and Princes in the whole Empire, and it also reached Klingsor, who hears everything. The magician laughed aloud, for now the moment for which his villainy had waited since the death of the Duke was come. I have told you that the people declared Klingsor knew how to pour water into the fire without extinguishing it, and that he could mingle truth and falsehood in such a way, that only he who killed Klingsor could separate falsehood and truth once more. And this time he again mingled truth and falsehood and took fire and water, and out of these he made two mirrors of truth and falsehood, and both mirrors had the power to show everyone who looked into them that which is not, and by this to make the good bad, and the bad good. And on the day before Mary and Martha, adorned with roses like brides, were to set out upon their journey to attend the marriage of the King's son, Klingsor ordered two of his many invisible servants, who enter and depart through the windows without opening them,

like light and darkness, to carry the two mirrors of truth and falsehood, and to place one in Mary's bed-chamber and the other in Martha's. Now when Mary, decked as a bride, stepped before the mirror of truth and falsehood on the morning of the feast, she, who was beautiful, saw herself ugly; and when Martha, at the same moment, stepped before the mirror of truth and falsehood, decked as a bride, she, who was ugly, saw herself beautiful. And Mary and Martha were frightened, and would not believe the mirrors and wanted to break them, and Mary tried to tell Martha, and Martha tried to tell Mary, that she did not believe in the mirror and wanted to break it. But when Mary spoke to Martha and said: "What is the secret that you are keeping from me, Martha," Martha answered quickly: "I am keeping no secret from you, Mary," and looked onto the ground. And when Martha spoke to Mary and said: "What are you hiding from me, Mary?" Mary looked onto the ground and answered: "I am hiding nothing from you, Martha." For without Mary's seeing it Shame had come to her, and stayed with her by day and by night. And without Martha's seeing it Envy had come to her and stayed with her by day and by night. And while many Princesses out of the whole Kingdom, decked with roses, like brides, stood before the King's son, and the King's son presented the bride upon whom his choice had fallen among the many with the veil of his mother before the eyes of all the people, Mary and Martha sat forgotten in their bed-chambers before the mirrors of truth and falsehood.

And next to Mary, invisible, stood Shame, and Mary saw in the mirror of truth and falsehood that she was ugly; and next to Martha, invisible, stood Envy, and Martha saw, in the mirror of truth and falsehood, that she was beautiful. And Mary and Martha never spoke of that which they saw in the mirror, and Mary and Martha hid the mirrors before each other, and their eyes avoided each other. It is true that there were days in which they both remembered the years of their youth and then they took hold of each others hands, because they had done so as children. But whenever they did this Mary's Shame and Martha's Envy mingled, and when the sisters walked out together in the park, Falsehood stepped quite softly between Mary and Martha, and Falsehood held Mary's hand in Martha's, and spoke not a word. For as the mirror of truth and falsehood was made up by the mingling of fire and water, thus was

Falsehood made up by the mingling of Mary's Shame and Martha's Envy. And when Mary and Martha let go of each others hands, Falsehood quite silently separated herself as well, and Shame led Mary secretly down to the lake and poured many hurried words into her ear, as the storm pours its words into the lake, and when Mary looked into the lake she did not see that she was beautiful; and Envy led Martha secretly down to the lake and poured many hurried words into Martha's ears, as the storm pours its words into the lake, and when Martha looked into the lake she did not see that she was ugly. And thus Shame never left Mary and slept with Mary, and Envy never left Martha and watched with Martha; and Mary and Martha lived for a long time before they were able to tell each other what each of them had seen in the mirror of truth and falsehood; for Falsehood lived with them and watched, and when Mary and Martha should have said the truth Falsehood caught up their words and threw them to the wind.

It was not till many years, one after the other, and many hours, one after the other, had passed away—had flown like big and little birds over the lake and the big forests till there, where Mary and Martha could not see them any more, and only one last little hour for both Mary and Martha remained behind, and even this last little hour wanted to get away, that a youth, beautiful and strong and clothed in a robe of gold and purple like a King's son stood before Mary and Martha, and Mary and Martha knew him immediately for Death. And Mary and Martha also guessed, that God had sent Death to them, as a King sends his son—And Death spoke gently to Mary and told her what Martha had seen in the mirror of truth and falsehood; and Death spoke gently to Martha and told her what Mary had seen in the mirror of truth and falsehood. And Mary and Martha understood Death and forgot Shame and Envy, and without saying a word they embraced each other and were like two children and knew everything. And Death lifted Mary and Martha up in his arms and kissed them, the wings of Death flamed through the blue night like a great conflagration, and Death carried Mary and Martha upwards to God, past the big and the little stars; for God did not want to part Mary and Martha, for God never had parted Mary and Martha. Now Mary's Shame and Martha's Envy remained behind, alone in the Castle, and Shame and Envy mingled with Falsehood, and Falsehood went out of the

Castle and through the Park down to the lake, and threw herself into the lake. Though the night was quite still and no storm was raging—for Falsehood cannot live in the storm—all the waves started up one by one in their fright when Falsehood threw herself into the lake; and one wave fought with the other over Falsehood's body, and one wave tried to rob the other of Falsehood's body, and the waves tore the body of Falsehood to pieces, and each wave swallowed and ate up a piece of Falsehood's body. The fishermen in their huts wondered when they heard the lake roaring so loudly, for no storm was blowing and the night was still and all the big and the little stars were twinkling in the sky. And not till the sun came out over the lake in the morning, was Falsehood quite torn to pieces by the waves, and the lake was filled and still, and it laughed and saw the sky overhead and the willows on its banks, and the swallows and eagles which circled above it.

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