The Path of Vision

by

Ameen Rihani

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BOOKS BY MR. RIHANI

POETRY

"The Luzumiyat," a Translation of Quatrains from the Work of the Arab Poet-Philosopher, Abu'l-Ala. Second Edition.

A Chant of Mystics and Other Poems.

PROSE

The Descent of Bolshevism.
The Book of Khalid.

THE PATH OF VISION

Pocket Essays of East and West

By

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TO MY WIFE

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I

THE PATH OF VISION

WEAK and oppressed nations are fundamentally spiritual; strong nations are, as a rule, chiefly materialistic. The one, cherishing religious ideals, soars to certain spiritual heights and now and then produces a seer to justify its languor and indolence; the other, seeking material things, bores into the earth for its treasures and keeps going down, down till its dynamic forces reach an impenetrable sterility and explode in a sudden, terrible reaction. The life of such a nation is symptomatic of a diseased state of the soul. The life of the other undermines, to say the least, its physical strength. The dwarfing tendency is equally potent in both. But a nation without a soul is more grotesque, more hideous than a nation of ascetics.

It is not my purpose to startle and provoke the reader with sweeping generalities, or to bamboozle him with dogmas old in garments new. The foregoing paragraph imposes, therefore, the necessity of a little

digression. To say that we in America are primarily materialistic is to repeat a commonplace. To say that there is a religious revival in the country,—that we are beginning again to have spiritual needs, aspiring, longing, groping for the higher things of life, is to echo what is but a vague expression of our present state of unrest and discontent.

Before we admit or question the sincerity and the soundness of this spiritual revival, let us inquire first what is meant by the spiritual. Does it consist in turning, for guidance and solace, to the Orient, or to Christianity, or to spiritism, or to the Society for Psychical Research, or to theosophy and mystic lore? There is in all these movements of the present day a common desire, to be sure, to turn from materialism, if only for a spell—and for a change. But every definition of the spiritual that they embody differs substantially from the other.

The question is, Can our spiritual aspirations be realized only by turning to Christ or to Mother Church? Must they,

to be sound, have a scientific basis? Are they, to be genuine, to come only from the Orient? Should they, to be vital and vitalizing, emanate from the hidden sources of mysticism and occultism? Or are they genuine and sound and vital and enduring only when they are articulate in the rapping table or behind the velvet curtains of the medium?

If I were to go out seeking enlightenment on the subject, I would find myself in a haberdashery of spiritual fads, or a maze of spiritual profundities, or a Vantine-shop of pseudo-Orientalisms. No, dear Reader, I am not going to suggest to you such a futile, though sometimes amusing, adventure. Let me assume, therefore, that, like myself, you have doffed the uniform of religion and shaken off the fetters of dogma; that you sometimes go into a museum to see your superstitions and your ancestors' exhibited in glass cabinets, or into a lecture hall to hear a professor dissert upon the protoplasm and the chemical basis of life;—that you even go to church now

and then to rest and relax. Very well. What is there left us then?

If we are not wholly satisfied with materialism, if we do not find sufficient nourishment in the fruits of science, if the church has become a cave of winds and the creeds a desert of sterility, where, I ask you, shall we find the comfort and solace that that unmaterial something within us longs for and craves? In the mystic circles of the so-called Orientalists of our day, whose spiritualities have ever an eye to the newspaper column and another to the cash register? In the platitudes and inanities that are doled out from a pulpit which was once resplendent with the glory and power of the church? In the book of the psychoanalyst or in the records of the Society for Psychical Research, where our restlessness is patted on the back and our crying soul-hunger is silenced with a cheese sandwich from the cupboard of the dissecting room? Or cheated with a toy from the show-case of classified abnormalties? Gramercy, no.

What is the spiritual then? And where-

for do we seek it. I have made it clear, I think, that neither in the religious dogmatism of the past nor in the spiritual gropings and posturings of the present do the higher aspirations of a free-thinking, emancipated being find adequate expression. Once we used to pray: now we philosophize. Once we were good because we believed in a future reward or feared a future punishment; but now, that we neither believe in the one nor fear the other, we are seldom inclined to make the sacrifice that goodness often entails. And in our desire to achieve the good and true—far be it from me to deny the existence, even the sincrity of such a desire—we often choose the line of least resistance. We must be practical, and we must have our creature comforts. Moreover, we expect, we insist upon, our reward within a certain time in the material things of the world, even though it be a column of gossip in the daily press. No checks on heaven, please, no promisory notes—and no ethical evasions. We are a practical people—very busy—in

a hurry. We have no time for ethics.

This is the gospel of trade, which we hold sacred. Barter is one of its cardinal tenets. We are no longer such fools as to throw our bread on the water or to squander our goodness on the wind. Visionaries, to be sure, we are not. Now, it is this attitude, this commercial consciousness, which we have faithfully upheld in precept and practice, that is creating in us a subconscious reaction. This is the source, I maintain, of all our restlessness, our dissatisfaction, our gropings and longings for that something which materialism does not give. The principle of barter leaves us in the end disconsolate, devoid of sympathy, and deploring the lack of sympathy in others.

We are, in a word, drifting away from the path of vision. We no longer find joy, as did the ancients, in pure thought. Pragmatism and utilitarianism are our gods. We would make religion sweep our streets, deodorize our slums. We lament the waste of water in a cataract, the loss of energy

in an electric storm. We deplore the futility of an abstract idea, an intellectual image. We would leave nothing for the soul and mind. Even such ideals as are purely spiritual we would materialize to serve a passing and questionable need.

The Sufi, for instance, has evolved a theory of colors with which to guide his path of vision. It makes very pleasant reading in the book of mysticism. To him colors denote different states of soul, and point the way to different goals—to a union, partial or complete, with humanity or divinity, or a progressive union from one to the other, and so forth. How futile to us these arbitrary denotations. But the Sufi, who sees colors with closed eyes, can distinguish all the variations of a chromatic circle as it develops from a point in vermillion. And he finds ineffable joy in beholding the development and verifying, as it were, his progress in the path of union and vision.

"The soul gives sight to the eyes," says a Sanskrit aphorism, "and he who gives

sight to the soul is Siva." The Sufi accepts this, changing Allah for Siva. With him, colors are as real to the soul as they are to the naked eye. But the scientist and the esthete of to-day, who have also developed a theory of colors, consider only the material, the physical side of the matter. They can see colors only with the naked eye. They have, therefore, divided them into three classes: namely, the palliative, the stimulative, the excitative. And one lady I know, a very charming personality and very erudite, who commercializes the scientific theory of colors, and looses her vision of the beautiful in the process. Personally, I prefer to hear a discourse on the subject than to see the material exteriorizations of it. Indeed, there are things that are purely for the soul and mind. And whatever beauty and charm they may have, is lost entirely in the materialization.

"A body," says Umapati in a chapter on the Soul's Enlightenment, "lives by union with the soul; so the embodied soul lives by union with pure Thought."

This is the highest, noblest form of spirituality;—the divine essence, which can be attained only by those who follow devotedly the path of vision,—those who seek the light that bridges the darkness between eye and soul, and without which there can be no vision. But there is what might be called a workaday spirituality, which is within the reach of all. And we need not be afraid to yield in this to the practical spirit of the times to discover the light within us. For the path of vision, which isolates for a time the individual, brings him in the end, if his patience and devotion do not give way, to complete union, like the Sufi, with humanity and God.

And it will then dawn upon him that to give without expecting a return of any kind, immediate or distant, is as natural as to accept the gifts of the sun and the air and the mountain streams. Indeed, we can be religious without being conscious of it;—we can be religious without religiosity. To invest our heart-capital in the inherent goodness of humanity, to save a drowning

swimmer, as Thoreau says, and go our way;—this is the practical workaday spirituality which either points to us the path of vision or unfolds before us, according to our degree of enlightenment, one or more of its hidden secrets. Which is a reward greater and more enduring than anything the world can give. It is the harmony we achieve within us; the satisfaction we feel in a healthy, strength-giving reaction; the knowledge and power that every noble, unselfish deed affords; the only reward, after all, in our triumphs and our only consolation in defeat.

Nay, there is no such thing as defeat for those who achieve harmony within. There is no such thing as disappointment for those who continue to cherish the selflessness of which is born the noblest inner self. There is no such thing as failure for those who invest in the potentialities of the Ideal of the Soul. And no matter how humble and obscure, how poor or how rich in the material things of the earth, the spiritually-bound and spiritually-directed of men,

though they may not be counted among the great of history, are the true heroes of the race, the agents of the World-Spirit.

II

THE MYSTICISM OF REALITY

EXPERIENCE is knowledge; but knowledge, when it is sought only as a material resource, is not always a blessing. Experience is wisdom; but wisdom, with those who lack vision, is not always power. Experience is tolerance; but tolerance, when it is induced by apathy, is not in the least a virtue. But even though experience often woos cynicism, breeds complaisance, and engenders cowardice, it has in it, nevertheless, the seeds of knowledge and wisdom and power.

Some one, if not ourselves, is better, to be sure, for what we know. Some one, if not ourselves, is wiser for what we suffer. A thought in the crucible of life melts into the thought of the world; the footsteps of a pioneer become ultimately the highway of a nation; the heroism of an individual becomes the trodden path of a race. Every human action, collective or

otherwise, has in it the possibility of a creative or a destructive force. We stop in our work, but we do not know, we can not know, where our work really ends. It may never end, for that matter.

Through the scintellating candor of follies, the mirage of illusions, the unlighted labyrinths of realities, it goes on, with us or without us, perpetuating itself and its fruition. True, we are often lifted by it to cold barren heights, or led into a chamber of horrors. Hence the cowardice that often becomes supreme, the complaisance that often is the harbinger of moral decrepitude.

A diversity of experience, to be sure, enriches life; but its reward, to those who deliberately, self-consciously seek it, seldom measures up with its promise, when our criterion is detached from the higher things of the soul. In spite of which, we continue, after all our realizations or disappointments, to reach for something beyond the realities of experience, in the distances of unknown possibilities. And what were life, indeed, without the horizon of the spirit,

and without an eye to see the horizon? What were life without that potentiality of mystery that holds out to us, across the glamors of the mirage and the dusky opacities of reality, when we awaken from the somnambulism of self-consciousness, the nectar of love and assurance and peace.

But we boast nowadays of being free and untramelled; we glory in the right to pursue the light within us, which, under the exigencies of a highly evolutionized society, seldom leads us outside of Self. And we call it the pursuit of happiness. In which forsooth, through the little heart-thrills and heart-aches of experience, we shatter one illusion after another.

And we seldom stop to ask ourselves whether such a course makes for a greater freedom and a healthier consciousness. We often forget too that in the cult of the Ego the worship of unconventionality becomes itself a conventionality most rigid and austere. It is, in fact, the conventionality of the elect—the conventionality supreme.

Now, if life were as simple as a multi-

plication table, to shatter all its illusions would be the only way to re-form and rebuild it on a sounder and more enduring foundation. By all means, we should begin with realities—at the very bottom of stern, bitter realities. But are not the most obvious facts in life liquid or malleable? Is there such a thing as a bald and finite reality, divested of all spiritual or moral or social or physical associations? Is there such a thing as an isolated material fact, which you could dispose of as if it were a banana peel in your way? Why, even the most degenerate of beings is a vital link in the chain of social and spiritual possibilities.

Indeed, every reality is in itself an undying source of myterious growth and decay. Even the theologian, like the scientist, recognizes the theory of causation and the continuity of the natural law. Neither good nor evil, in this sense, is a hard fact, but a liquid phenomenon. And every individual manifestation, every given fact is related to thousands, millions of its kind that precede and follow. Repentance, for in-

stance, never remedies a wrong act. It only complicates it. For though the wrong may cease, temporarily or permanently, the act continues—becomes a part of the unwritten social law. Likewise, a definite consciousness, blossoming in one individual, may have its roots in a generation that is already extinct, and may waft its seeds to generations unborn. It is because we live mostly in the present, however, that we only see the link in the chain of circumstances, and we often mistake effects for causes. Nevertheless, we pretend to be able to define the confusion within us.

Psychology, we call to our aid. But civilized man has but recently began to study the underlying strata of his intellectual and spiritual make-up. We are still lisping in the hornbook of psychology. Why then put on dionysian airs and bamboozle ourselves and the world with introspective profundities? Or with candor, measured and designed? Or with loud, unreserved avowals of seeking and understanding the re-actions of life upon the Ego?

For this is one of the dominating intellectual passions of the age. We seek experience only to see how it reacts upon us. In other words. we do not give for the sake of giving and the joy in the giving, but only for the sake of studying its effect upon ourselves. We do not seek in experience the hidden and oft times remote agencies of spriritual growth and betterment, but the palpable, material, and immediate returns.

I do not say, however, that this is prompted wholly by selfish motives. On the contrary, the selfishness, if any, springs from an illusory extension of Self—a fictitiousness of our own making. It is the result of an individualism abnormally and artificially developed—an individualism of the hot-house. It is the Ego taking an especial delight in its grotesqueries, revelling in its own madness, boasting even of its morbid, cancerous growth. The soul is turned into a clinic, as it were; the mind, into an asylum. This is the kind of experience that leads into the chamber of

horrors; and it is responsible, even in real art, for the spiritual bankruptcy of the Western world.

We are told that people who disarm us with their candor, who discount our suspicion with a startling confession, are not capable of deceiving. But the eye very often belies the tongue. A delicious candor, a surface sincerity goes little into the soul of things—the hidden springs of reality. When a woman mundane, for instance, tells you that her hair is a wig, her complexion, paste and cream and rouge and art, might not this show of bankrupt pulchritude be designed to avert your eye from the more pathetic bankruptcy within? Might it not be what the military critics call a diversion?

To be sure, we would not allow the world, if we can help it, to peep into our soul, much less to enter it. Our No-Man's-Land is hedged about with a wire entanglement of insincerities. And often we take refuge in a temperament, a pose, or a mystic mood. Like certain animals, we take on

the color of our surroundings in self defense. And often aggressively we color our own passions, oblivious of the native pigment hidden in our own consciousness. We want to be what we are not, and we are petulent, moody, when we fail.

Albeit, moods, howsoever evanescent, have a spiritual significance—a physical import as well. They are the living cells, as it were, of the psychology of our being. Even the most elusive, the most sudden and unaccountable, has in it the potency of perpetuity. It vanishes into our subconsciousness like a waft of perfume or a whiff of smoke, and there, in the alembic of mystery, is invisibly, insensibly transformed or crystalized. It evades in either instances our mortal ken. Its process of growth can not be detected, however keen our perceptive faculty. And a microscope of moods has not yet been invented. Let us then respect the aura of mystery—the etherial,—spiritual and moral,—emanations of every reality. And the trick of candor and sincerity as well. Our psychological analysis

leads us but to the door of knowledge; and there, we must either enter blindly or go our way bravely with our curiosity still unsatisfied.

III

THE HIGHEST IDEAL

THE living spirit of the ages is made up of ideals more or less visionary in their inception, more or less unattainable in their plenitude. And in nations, as in individuals, they are subject to the law of growth and decay—the law that governs the seed in the soil, the star-dust in the planetary system—as well as to the law of conservation.

Like matter itself, an ideal is mutable, but indestructible. It does not die; it only undergoes a change. It expresses itself in art and literature and religion only after it has attained a certain degree of common conception. An idealist is ahead of his time only in the sense that he is articulate. The same is true of a nation. For even primitive people, even effete races have a message for those above or below them. The heritage of the Ideal, however small, can not be exhausted.

That is why in periods of awakening, or of cataclysmic change, the light often comes

from unremembered and unexpected sources—sources that were thought to be exhausted or barren. The ideals of Greece, of Rome, of the Orient, the ideals even of primitive man, come back to us, in the eternal cycle of the spirit, to leaven our own. They often surprise us in moments of depression or exaltation, in our silences, in our subliminal spells, even in our daily grind.

Out of the vague, even vagrant conceptions of the mind an ideal slowly evolves, assumes definite shape and form. Error-bound but truth-directed, we are constantly moving to a certain goal in its unfolding infinitudes. Its fiat is universal, despite its apparent failures. The grocer as well as the poet, at one time or another, must recognize and accept its circulating medium. Whether they squander it or save it or invest it—whether they profit by it or not—is another question. But they are idealists in that they are both dissatisfied with its purchasing power. We are all idealists in that we are ever discontented with the

present state of the Ego and the World.

It is among the poor and obscure, however, that the ideal often finds its sincerest expression; for those who make it their business often speculate in certain tangible concrete forms of it—reform formulas—that are neither useful in a general way nor attractive. The poor man, on the other hand, concerns not himself with reforms; nor does he entertain such visions of a regenerated world as might obstruct the way to his immediate needs. His ideal, it is true, may consist in having a home instead of a slum-hole; in sending his children to school instead of the factory; in being free to work whenever and wherever he please, instead of being a slave to capital or to labor. It is nevertheless an ideal, which, although obviously material, has in it a spirituality that can revolutionnize the world. He sincerely desires to improve his own condition and to give the world better and healthier children. And this desire, though it be only partly realized in a lifetime, is the heritage of the ideal, which

he bequeaths to them.

But the world seldom recognizes the spirituality in the material ideals of the poor. They are ridiculed by those who preach, but do not practice, the higher ethics. They are flouted, called base, worldly, sordid, by those professional idealists of religion and literature and art. And yet, a loaf of bread can regenerate a soul; a loaf of bread can precipitate a revolution. And by the law of reaction, materialism does become sordid, and the vaunted spirituality of its critics loses its vitality and attraction. Hence the epochal outbreaks of doubt, skepticism, heresy, revolt. For the man who is struggling for wealth and power or fame and glory, is no better and no worse, without a lofty ideal, than the man who is struggling for bread. The latter, in fact, is more deserving of respect, is more entitled to the consideration of the world. And the sooner he gets it, the better for the world. For the spirituality of his material ideals, now that he too has become a self-conscious Ego, is fast resolv-

ing itself into a monstrosity of selfishness. He is no longer a poor working man; he is a man of the working poor, who refuses to be poor for ever and refuses morever to work. He is a menace to-day. He will become a scourge to-morrow. No Labor Union can guide him; no Government can deter him. He is a fatality. Spiritually deformed himself, he comes, paradoxical as it may seem, to restore the world to its spiritual ideals. The religion that was given him as a consolation, he rejects; the faith that was perverted to keep him in bondage, to reconcile him to his gilded fetters, he renounces forever. But he will swing back with his masters from the height of a bloody crisis to the highest ideal—to a spirituality that is the common heritage and the cherished treasure of the rich and the poor. For a chastening process leaves its mark even upon our daily grind. It may take away our daily bread, but not the stuff of which our daily bread is made.

Indeed, the spiritual springs from a ma-

terialism intensified, sublimated. It is inherent in the material; and it should inform and illumine and beautify it. True, there is scarcely any evidence of this in the working man of to-day. But his spirituality, which is thought to be dead, is only dormant. And sometimes it betrays itself in a grotesque, spiritual somnambulism. For the working man still goes to church, despite the atheism, expressed or implied, of the two principal agents of his misery—the labor leader and the capitalist. The one in theory, the other in practice are responsible for his spiritual deformity. His leader tells him not to bother, not to worry about his soul; he even doubts its existence. And the capitalist, by his conduct in business and out of business, confirms, gives additional force to the labor leader's advice.

For what proof have we, it is often asked nowadays, of the existence of the soul and of the necessity, in consequence, of a soul-ideal? I go neither to metaphysics nor to spiritualism for an answer. To

those who deny its existence, who make light of the innate divine flame in man, who can not see anything outside of matter, or anything but matter in matter, to these materialists I offer the perfume of the rose, the light of the sun, the emanation of a firefly, the aura of a planet, to say nothing of the human understanding. Are these material? Do they, to go back to fundamentals in physics, occupy the same space with the objects from which they emanate?

The room in which I write, to take a simple example, becomes dark after sunset. It is not, you will concede, a vacuum. It is filled with air. But I turn a switch in the wall and the electric bulbs fill it also with light. The two substances, light and air, occupy the same space simultaneously. Now, if light were matter, it would have a specific gravity; and this specific gravity, were it heavier than that of the air, would chase it out of the room. In which case, I could not continue to write—I would cease forthwith to exist. And what is true of

the light in my room, is true of the perfume of the rose, which hovers around it with the air it breathes and the sunshine it drinks. It is true, in fact, of the whole universe. For the air and the sunshine and the imponderable, intangible ether all occupy simultaneously the same space. How can our simple rule in physics explain this?

Or, to come to man, how can your material philosophy explain that quality in personality which is called magnetism, which I prefer to call spirituality? By chemistry, by the principle of attraction and repulsion in cells or an organic structure of cells? But the person that repels us outwardly, physically, sometimes attracts us by a something he has within—an emanation akin to the light of the sun and the perfume of the rose. What is it? Intellect, intelligence, emotions, social and eductional accomplishments? These are not always attractive. Intellect, on the contrary, might even be repulsive. Intelligence is not the heritage of man alone;

the dumb beasts have a sagacity that sometimes excells our own. And the art of the bird building his nest and the bees making their honey-comb, can not be surpassed by the art of man. What is that mysterious, elusive quality then? Social accomplishments, charm? These may be rendered repulsive by selfishness, conceit,—by an inflated, assertive, aggressive Ego.

What is it, my dear Materialist, that draws you in your unconsciousness to me? I heard you once in Madison Square expounding wholesale the negations of the day; I saw you afterwards feeding the birds in the park. And I see you every day, though your name is not trumpeted in the daily press, giving of your mite to charity. There must be a flaw somewhere in your material philosophy. For if you are in yourself a sort of detached cosmos, why take the trouble to establish these little attachments between you and the outside world?

I think I understand you, forgive the boast, better than you understand your-

self. The human personality, you tell me, is a bundle of intellections and emotions. Granted. But this is true, you will concede, of both primitive and civilized man. And some primitive men, you will also concede, I hope, are more attractive to us than the most developed specimen of civilization. I offer you this explanation, therefore, which you may accept or reject as you list. Your bundle of intellections and emotions,—your intelligence, your highly developed mind,—your passion for truth and justice,—these are cold and chilling and unfructifying, if they are not illumined and warmed by that innate, inherent flame, which is as evident at times in primitive man as well as in you and me. This innate light is the spirituality which is manifest in lesser or greater degree in individuals as in nations, according to the recognition it receives,—according to the ideal of it that is cheriched and upheld.

And this, I maintain, is the highest ideal of an individual or a nation. Complete victory in the struggle to attain it, is not

often attained. But no defeat is richer in new possibilities than this of the spirit fighting for the spiritual ideal. And although no complete victory is often attained, socially conceived, materially considered, there is no such thing in it as complete failure. By a happy dispensation, every one is an object of comfort or of envy to his fellow men. No one is ever low enough, however baldly material he might be, or high enough, however spiritual he might become, to be alone. The ideal itself saves us from this dreary distinction. For we all find some one below us or above us—in most cases below and above us—to afford us a satisfaction and an incentive—to make the arduous ascent a pleasant jaunt. If the working man and the labor leader, the capitalist and the politician all recognized this truth and espoused the ideal it connotes, the social and industrial problems of the times would not seem so hopelessly insoluble, without general strikes and revolutions. For legislation alone is, after all, only a form of

compulsion. And a man without a spiritual ideal will obey the law when he can't help it and break it when he can.

IV

MINDS AND MONOMINDS

WHEN learning was monopolized by the monks in the Middle Ages, people specialized only in warfare and statecraft. And even these were not altogether free from the scholastic influence. Gradually, however, as the monopoly was broken, the guilds came into existence. And the crafts, aided by the printing press, developed and flourished. Even then, the educated man, whether he was a tailor or a monk, a statesman or a cobbler, did not confine himself, in his pursuit of knowledge, to any one particular subject. Vocationalism was a centre that lighted and included many avocations.

This is still true of the Orient, where a tent-maker, for instance, might be a poet; a distiller of perfumes would be an authority on astronomy perhaps or jurisprudence; a professional singer, though he be of the slave cast, as in the Abbaside dynasty, often composes his own lyrics and masters one or more of the crafts as

weaving or dying; and that multi-minded personage, the Father of the Community, who cures the diseases of the body and the soul and administers justice,—who is a good priest, a competent physician and an upright judge, as the occasion requires,—is by no means extinct.

In Europe, though instances of men of genius practicing one or more of the crafts or the sciences, do not abound as in the Orient, Michael Angelo and Benvenuto Cellini were the archtypes of many lesser luminaries who combined two or more of the arts and could discourse entertainingly, if not intellectually, on theology or alchemy orMachiavellism. The sculptor, in other words, was not merely a worker in stone or marble, a master only of lines and curves; the poet often became a statesman; the painter could detach himself from his canvas to study mathematics. And there are instances of musicians as authors and masters, moreover, of a literary style.

People were avid of knowledge in those days; more, indeed, for the pleasure it gave

than the material benefits it afforded. Specialization was not known,—was not, at least, the dominating purpose of life. The tendency, the aim of all education was to produce well-rounded intellects, pleasing personalities, cultured individuals that could be at ease in any drawing room, at court, in the studios, the ateliers and the shops. An educated man was, indeed, a man of accomplishments—of circumambient intelligence. He had a general pass at least to the treasure house of knowledge; and he continued, unlike the university graduate of to-day, to make use of it, to enjoy its many priveleges, even though his calling were of the humblest and most prosaic. An excursion into the world of knowledge, under the exclusive management of men of genius, independent of the schools and universities, was, indeed, an uncommon joy.

For those whose business it was to reach the hidden springs of knowledge, no subject, natural or supernatural, human or divine, was ever too great or too small, too

distant or too near. They were at home in the universe. Theirs was indeed a circumambient intellect. But this quality of the mind, in its colossal form, is a phenomenon in modern history. It appeared in England in the sixteenth century and on the continent in the seventeenth and eighteenth. It found its greatest exponents in Shakespeare, in Carlyle, in Voltaire and Goethe, in Hugo and Balzac.

With the average man of talent, however, a circumambient intellect too soon evaporates or crystallizes, resolving itself into its initial form, or its actual size,—thinning, in other words, into nothing, or settling down to a point. I have mentiond the exceptions. But even in Voltaire and Goethe, how many breaks and how many rusty links do we find in the golden circle of each. And how often, when they can not run or walk erect, do they seem to us as shuffling, limping, chicaning levites in their eagerness to maintain their reputation as the master builders of the Circumambient System of human knowledge? The buckramed man-

ners of the German—Carlyle's fanfaronades of idolatry to the contrary—and the astute Jesuitism of the Frenchman, while betraying the human frailty in genius, have often saved their intellects from spreading into nothingness or settling down to a point. That they refused to specialize, however, was their supreme virtue.

But with the development of the sciences, intellectual circumambulating became a thing of the past. Hugo wrote its epitaph. Now specializing is the vogue, the dominating purpose of life, the supreme virtue. It is indeed the chief characteristic of our civilization. It has its conveniences, to be sure, and its rewards. A specialist gets somwhere, though it be no further than his kitchen or his cellar. And we do not have to tarry and toil to understand the one-sided man. We waste no time in trying to get a side or a back view, much less an inner view of our master Monomind. About face! for our benefit, and we either go our way or stay.

No, we no longer have time for excur-

sions; nor have we patience with the idea of even thinking out for ourselves a pleasure-giving jaunt. To accomplish things in a material way, to succeed, is the dominating passion of the age. And there is no success, the specialists say, outside of a bee line to your goal. And a bee line, we say, does not too often require a superfluity of mind—a bee-mind is sufficient.

But is there no truth in pragmatism? Is the practical philosopher to be wholly ignored, even when his cynicism, undisguised, is held in check? Often his forthrightness has a seductive air. If we want to be decisive, positive, aggressive in our views, we must not ever look, we are told, at both sides of a question. If you want to be an organizer, a master of men, you must be a one-sided, single-minded fanatic. For once you are accessible to evidence, once you are open to reason, you are lost. The fanatics, the monominds, are the great successes of the world. And be sure to have spunk enough to rise and keep going, when, in your blinkers, you stumble or

digress. And whatever you do, avoid the futilities of knowledge, the superfluities of culture.

This is good advice, no doubt, to a plumber, a grocer, or a politician. But is there any truth in it to a man of intellectual and spiritual aspirations? A negation, to echo, Carlyle, never established a government; indifference never founded a religion. Only a well-rounded intellect, a spirit nourished in the eternal sources of intelligence and culture, of justice and wisdom, is a safeguard against both indifference and skepticism.

But have we to-day such well-rounded intellects, such finished personalities, where the mind and the soul are equally developed, where a sheer joy in knowledge is sought and held out as the highest and noblest of all attainments? We have nowadays what might be called, either a hothouse intellect endowed with an adamant will, or a naturally powerful intellect debased by a vulgar soul. There are strong minds wrapt in a limited, dried-up con-

sciousness, or a clear, healthy consciousness harnessed in inherited prejudices or acquired preconceptions. And everywhere is a dislike, a contempt for change. The ruts of life are congested: the highways are almost vacant. And seldom do we, even in a life-time, yield to the impulse that calls us out of the ruts. Safety first, is a false slogan. It should be, Success first. Otherwise, we would cease anon to be strap-hangers and commuters, mere five-cent coupons for the Corporation of Pragmatism. Indeed, we would straightaway change our habit of mind. We would begin to have a mind.

But there is a training of the will against such a change, to say nothing of the interests involved. And that is why, I think, the human will nowadays is more developed than it was in the past. That is why, too, it is often mistaken for power. Why, a man who can burrow a rut in the curb between his home and his office, between his faith and his interest, must surely be endowed with the will to conquer. Presumably

so. But an intractable will is not even the sign or proof of better intellectual metal; gold is more ductile than iron.

V

TOURING AND COMMUTING

THE world of knowledge is honeycombed nowadays with railroads under private control. We no longer have, as in the past, a monopoly of transportation and communication;—not even a Tourist-Agent who will assume the responsibility of a personally conducted tour on all the lines, except it be the Daily Press. And then, you are likely to lose your baggage and find yourself stranded in the wilderness of belief. You begin to doubt, not only the vaunted omniscience of your Guide, but even yourself.

The monks of the Middle Ages, though their system of transportation was not based on dividends or profit-sharing schemes, were good conductors, excellent engineers, faithful and experienced guides. The incidents of the journey were not very agreeable, but accidents were scarce. A traveller risked little or nothing by entrust-

ing himself to the monks; his body and his soul were well served, though not with equal consideration; and his baggage, after a thorough examination, of course, was checked and very carefully handled. Moreover, they agreed to let him stop as long as he wished at every stage of the journey, provided he did not overpraise the Line and thereby reduce its solid comforts. And this, the most attractive feature of their Programme, they guaranteed to bring him back to the Starting Point.

The only condition the monks imposed upon their passengers, was silence. No criticisms, no commendations, no suggestions. Not even such incidents as stopping on the way to burn a conductor alive for taking another course than that prescribed in the Schedule, was even to be questioned. Such outside interference was banned under penalty of a similar death. But the people, on the whole, were satisfied with the System, which worked tolerably well for a century or more; although it was whispered, now and then, at the various

stages of the Journey that, the fire of the Engine having been exhausted, a few of the passengers, who had the temerity to comment upon one of the untoward incidents of burning, were themselves utilized as fuel.

These whispers spread, slowly acquired a cumulative force, and became in the course of time a voice, a cry, an echoing and re-echoing protest. For the monks of the Middle Ages were human. They abused their monopoly of power. And some of the passengers themselves, the more enterprising who did not embark upon the Journey solely for pleasure, had already surveyed certain lands, mapped out a road of their own, and became in time experienced and reliable Tourist-Agents. The novelty of a personally conducted Tour had its appeal. It became the vogue.

The monks, therefore, soon lost the monopoly. And the Luther and Calvin Lines, the Bruno and Galileo Systems, the Erasmuses', the Schoolmen's, the Knox-

Road Limited, the Swedenborg Rapid Transit of the Universe, even the Abu'l-Ala Caravans in the Near East,—all enjoyed a prosperity that made their dividends attractive for a season. But these privately-owned Lines, these personally conducted Tours, continued to increase till it was no longer safe to travel on any of them, because each one went in a different direction and had no connection at all with the others. The transfer system was not known in those days. And the result was that, if you wanted to make a tour of the world, you would be left high and dry in some wilderness, or stranded in some port, if you did not come back to your starting point as often as you had to make a change.

Hence the disappointment and dissatisfaction of the public, who soon began to realize and appreciate again the advantages of the monks' Central and Circumabient System. But we are progressing—we can not go back to the monks, it was urged by some; the commuting habit, its virtues and attractions, were insisted upon by

others. But no one seemed to think of a transfer system, or imagine the possibility of a fusion of interests, or even dared to suggest the construction of shuttles between certain Lines. The confusion soon developed to anarchy and chaos. Private-ownership of the roads of knowledge and faith became a public nuisance. But how was the nuisance to be abated? By going back to the monks. Their circumambient system of roads, was partly destroyed, partly merged in the private Lines; and it was not possible to reconstruct or redeem even a narrow gauge to the nearest junction of skepticism and doubt.

In fact, though the people did not cease to travel, to commute rather, the heads of the private corporations were discredited. People began to lose faith in the Information Bureau; tickets were destroyed; time-tables were burned; and skepticism became the fashion of the day. And like all fashions, it was soon to become the means of another monopoly.

Hence the Voltaires, the Goethes, the

Tom Paines, the Encyclopedists, who revived the World-Tour of the monks, newly mapped out, of course, without imposing any conditions or restrictions on the travelling public. It was a howling success, because the world was then, as in the days of the monks, of a single mind. Only that its mind was no longer prostrate, as it were, on the carpet of faith; it was somersaulting on the trapeze of skepticism.

The Voltaire Merry-Go-Round of the Universe, the Goethe System of Scenic Railways, the Encyclopedists' Federated Roads, even the Rousseau Witching Waves became so popular that the cynical and skeptical world was transformed into a veritable Lunar Park of the Mind. Come, shake up your thinking cells and your bones. A Pamphlet will get you through the gate. And then, slap-dash into the infinity of negations, through the holy precincts of the creeds, across the hunting grounds of the privileged aristocracy, down the narrow lanes of convention, over the mountains and plains of freedom to the

very heart of the radiant, universal Illusion. But these joy-rides were attended by many uncommonly horrible accidents. Thrones and altars were overturned to construct branch Lines and Shuttles; Kings and Queens and Excellencies were beheaded for being in the way; and even the Christ was run over by the Sanculotte Express, engineered by the Heberts and Marats.

This continued for many years until the Circumambient System came under the control of a more responsible Board of Directors presided by such men as Hugo and Mazzini, Balzac and Dickens, Renan and Carlyle. So an era of peace and prosperity followed, which was the mother of many private fortunes. In fact, the giant Corporation was gradually overshadowed and overpowered by limited private Lines, in which the schools, the universities and the daily press invested much of their capital stock.

Now the honorable habit of commuting is resumed; and joy-riding, not through the infinity of negations, but far into the No-

where of indifference, has become again the vogue. Instead of patronizing, however, the privately-owned Lines and entrusting their precious life and time to the precariousness of the shuttle and transfer System, those who place safety above dividends, prefer to walk the while they clamor for public ownership of public enterprises. Meanwhile, the rank of those who have their own "flivvers" is growing day by day. And the crying need of the times is an efficient Police Force to direct the Traffic.

VI

GREEN LOGS AND BRUSHWOOD

OUR ideals are the vehicles of our illusions; our illusions are the motor forces of our desires; our desires are born of an innate, insatiable longing for the Beautiful, the Good, and the True,— for the superlatives, in other words, of what, according to our own light, is the truth; and our own light, that undying spiritual flame in the temple of our being, has its eternal sources in the sun and soil, as in the schools and universities, and the arts and sciences of our time.

That is why, from a pure amber flame in the past, when religion was the supreme dominating force in life, it has developed into a complex, many-colored, spasmodically burning mass of inharmonies. The amber hue is seldom seen nowadays; a green ray filters through the smoke; a golden spark now and then illumines it, but only for a spell; the opalescent rays

fitfully rise and swell only to be eclipsed by the blaze of reddish smoke, akin to the scientist's nebular beginning—the reddish smoke of the chaos of our time.

And why this chaos? The innate eternal flame of the soul is not extinguished in man—his spirituality is not dead. But while in the past it was fed by one stoker, so to speak, it is to-day fed by a hundred, a thousand stokers, indifferent and indiscriminate, who gather their fuel at random in forests young and old, in rocky copses, in distant bogs. Hence the smoking, coruscating, crepitating, fitfully glowing flame. There are many wet logs and green logs in the fire; much brushwood too and peat; and the ash-heap of the ages, which never can be entirely removed.

But the fire is not extinguished, will not be extinguished, can not be extinguished. Gradually the wet and green logs, the brushwood, the peat will all be consumed, and the amber golden flame will become purer, steadier, more enduring and more beautiful than ever. This is my under-

standing of the spiritual and intellectual chaos of our time. The true essence of the flame is still there; the eternal sources of it are still there; and the means of communication are by no means cut off. We still have stokers, although they are not called prophets and priests, who go direct to the sun and soil for their fuel. They can not, to be sure, exclude, like the prophets of old, the wet and green logs from the fire. In a democratic state and a universal state of education, every one has the right to bring his little armful to the pile; but only the good wood in the end will prevail, will dominate with its pure glow and warmth, with its steady flame, the burning mass.

To drop the metaphor, the truth, which rests on the eternal verities of existence, will always prevail. Like the seasons of the year, like history, truth also repeats itself. But we seldom recognize it, when great poets or true artists—the prophets and the priests of our day—present it to us in garments spick and span, following the

fashion of the age, the slant of its fancy, the turn and temper of its mind.

By a trick of the pen or the brush we are cozened into old beliefs; and lest we see through the diapheneities of our new deities, we are forced to put on the smoked glasses of culture, assume a conventional pose, scientific or artistic, and worship at a distance sufficiently safe for our vanities and illusions.

But when a man of uncommon courage, insight and zeal raises a little altar of his own to the old fashioned truths and the old fashioned virtues,—when he comes, to go back to my metaphor, with fuel for our innate fire direct from the sun and soil,—he is banned from the temple of the elect, denounced as a reactionary or, what is worse, poo-poohed as a high-brow. Yes, the builder nowadays, paradoxical as it may seem, is looked upon as a destroyer. But the iconoclast of the past is incarnate in the devote worshipper of the present. This, the little red-eyed iconoclasts of the times, can not see.

Are we not solving the great Riddle, these loud-lunged children of spiritual poverty and squalor, of intellectual anarchy and chaos, cry out. Are we not advancing in the way of new discoveries, we the apostles of the New Freedom, the forerunners of the New Era? Granted that you are, my emancipated Brothers. But dare you approach your new ideals, new truths, new virtues, and divest them of their trappings and their masks? Even the most radical among you, the Bolsheviki of the soul, the Anti-Christs, when they stand on their heads, are but a crude symbol of the Cross reversed.

And the ideals of your superman, as conceived by their Teuton protagonist, not as they are poetized by his interpreters and parroters, find their highest and noblest expression in self-sacrifice. The old fashioned virtue again.

Yes, indeed; even Nietzsche who thought he had murdered Christianity, fled to the forest and brought back a few good logs for the inner fire. Even Nietzsche was

made the sport of his own "blond beast" and sent back to the foot of the cross—a caricature of the Christ.

VII

A FOOTNOTE OF NATURE

THROUGH her own medium, Nature's appeal is not always adequate. Her language is not understood alike by the woodman and the poet. Her secret is often hidden under her articulate charm; and she unveils only to the elect of the soul and mind. That is why we often get more of her through the medium of the interpreter, who pursues his task with the patience and faithfulness of a devotee. But even these translations, whether they be literal or poetic, have a varying degree of merit and interest. John Burroughs, for instance, is an excellent guide; but Thoreau, who knows as well the winding paths, the forest trails, the secret nooks and hidden mysteries, can also entertain us with a song. Even in the idealization of Nature, we have such a variety as ranges from the mirage-like glamor of Turner to the rhythmic delicacies of Corot to the apocalyptic

grandeur of Van Gogh.

But the translator, whether a painter or a maker of manuels or of song, loses or gains in the appeal according to the individuality he infuses into his work. The human touch is unfailing no matter how slight or how strong. It can hold you spellbound before a fern or send you scampering through the fields, chasing a butterfly or a will-o'-the-wisp. For Nature, like man, will tyrannize when she can. And when the translator is conquered by her, he loses the quality that makes his art supreme. He becomes a dryasdust master of definitions and classifications. For to be impersonal as the elements, is unhuman, unnatural. One may be sublime, as Emerson; but it is an arid sublimity void of the one great element of genius—passion.

To copy Nature? A boy with a camera can do that. To get the spirit of Nature? A woodman or a shepherd can follow the trail of the whistling wind to hoarded sunshine in distant wolds. But to interpret Nature and inform it with a human per-

sonality that rises above it, invokes the divine in it, is the work of genius. And this can only be done through the magnifying and intensifying process. Even the eye of the soul can not always see the subtleties that conceal a world of beauty and charm. So the medium of genius, which stands between us and Nature, is necessarily complex, and is endowed moreover with an intense passion. Every note and echo, every line and shade, no matter how minute and distant, is transfigured through it, is intensified, magnified for our common perception.

Passing through a glade, I hear the flitting notes of a bird or smell the elusive aroma concealed in the brush. The poet sits there and, with infinite patience, waits and waits, till he catches the one and identifies the other. The result would be a lyric perhaps, in which both are so intensely reproduced that they are unmistakable. Inversely, and by the same token, there is good reason for magnifying certain situations in literature, on a canvas, or on the

stage in spectacular productions.

Consider, for instance, a simoom in the desert. One feels the intensity and magnitude of even the slightest gust of the sand storm in the vast and trackless waste. There is no need there for magnification. The boundless sea of sands is a sufficient background. But on the stage or on a canvas, with a limited area and an artificial background, how can such a picture be produced with effect unless its elemental features are magnified, intensified? If a traveller, who happens to be in the audience, objects that the simoom seldom reaches such brobdingnagian proportions, the reply is, Bring to play in this circumscribed space in the open desert a compressed simoom, so to speak, and you will have an intensity of effect that can hardly be represented on the stage or on a canvas.

The same thing might be said of a poem in which all the reactions of Nature are translated through the complex medium of the senses as well as the soul. Her voice,

her form, her lights and shades, the very spirit of her whole being breathes and sings in the lines of a Wordsworth or a Shelly. At this height, the painter and the poet are one; or the musician brings them together, is the link between them. For a poem may not only contain a picture, or a picture, a poem, but both are often vibrant with the rythmic harmony, even the melody of song.

This brings us to the tone-poem, of which so much has been written, and little understood. What is a tone-poem? I have heard many such, no doubt; and I have read somewhat of the musical critic's abstruseness on the subject. But not until I stood one day before a mountain stream, was the matter clear in my mind. The rolling waters, the silvery music, the foaming cascades—here is Nature's Footnote, her own simple interpretation of a tone-poem. It is more than that, indeed. It is her hornbook of the arts, a symbol of the holy trinity of genius—Music and Painting and Poetry.

In poetry, however, this treble phase is often inadequately expressed. Only a trained ear can make out its music, can catch the rhythmic beauty of its harmonies; and only a trained eye can appreciate the word-painting. For most people, especially in this age of free verse and realism, read in poetry only the idea it conveys, the sentiment it shrines or burlesques, or the bare facts it gathers and disseminates. But in music is the temple of the trinity of Art for those who can see as well as hear; in painting too, for those who can read as well as see.

Indeed, the three arts are as associated with each other, as related to each other as the tripple phenomenon of a mountain stream. For in its cascade-bedecked currents, breaking into silver spray, singing themselves into cerulean ecstasies, pausing in hollows under daffiodiled banks, flowing in transparent lucid stanzas over the moss-carpeted rocks, we have the sonata, the poem and the picture combined.

And never, as I said, could I fathom the

musical critic's dogmatism and esoteric sidelights thereon, until I beheld this striking and telling symbol of a tone-poem. I shut my eyes and enjoy the music; I open them and enjoy the music and the picture. I behold the waters in their coruscating splendor; I hear them sing as they roll on, meandering to the sea; and with the soul's surgings of color and shade, intensified through my own interpreting medium, I have the poem, the picture, the song—all in one masterpiece.

A tone poem, therefore, is that which appeals to the ear and the eye as well as to the eye of the soul. It is the living, moving, singing incarnation of Poetry, Painting and Music. I offer this, a footnote by Nature, to the esteemed critic's learning. And it is devoid, it will be observed, of the ruffles and flounces of criticism.

The holy trinity of Art symbolized in a mountain stream. For if we can not see a picture in a fine piece of music or hear the strains of a distant song in a picture,—

if we can not drink of the beauty of both with the eye as well as the ear,—we had better seek entertainment in a picture gallery, where hang many a visible palpable specimen of colors rioting in quadrangles of gilded mouldings, of colors clamoring for recognition in the little square horizons of the artist's soul.

VIII

THE MOTHER OF COMMON SENSE

I ONCE knew a dreamer of golden dreams. He was young, handsome, robust and impecunious; and he was betrothed to that fickle, elusive, flirtatious and fascinating creature, Fame. He nursed his genius in a little studio for sevral years, setting up on a pedestal near his typewriter an image of his Beloved, whom he secretly worshipped and openly denounced. He covered her with flowers of his dream at night, and pretended in the open day to be impervious to her wiles and charms. They coquetted and flirted and quarrelled for a couple of years, and were, indeed, periodically estranged. Once he turned her away from his door, because she doubted the value of the dowry he offered her. A trinket, she called it, a brummagem!

But who shall evaluate genius? Who, but Genius, is competent to say whether or not it is a fitting dowry for that elusive

and fickle Mistress? And though it had stood the test-fire of sacrifice, who is qualified to pronounce it genuine or false? My friend answered these questions to his own satisfaction and went one day to the market-place. But the market-men would not listen, would not be detained. The jewellers of art shook their heads; the merciers and the milliners of literature smiled; the grocers were amused; the antiquarians were annoyed. And everywhere the little terracotta gods of the bazaar, like old Buddha himself, gazed eternally upon their navels.

The dreamer of golden dreams returned to his studio and straightway burned the image of his Beloved. And he pinned on the wall, above his typewriter, the following: I lost my faith one morning in the market-place and found it the following day in a cash register.

Even the cash register, as far as he was concerned, would not disclose the secret of the transmutation. Although he invoked it every day for several months, tried to

bribe it with attractive objects from the toy-shop of Cleverness, shook before it the ivory rattle of Flippancy, there was no response,—not the least sign of favor. To him it seemed locked and sealed forever and ever. But one of the little imp-gods that guarded it, once grinned. Which decided my friend. H shook the dust of the bazaar from his feet, the dust of the studio he shook from his soul, and hied him to the solitude of the hills.

There I met him one day sitting under a tree near a running stream, still nursing, as I first supposed, his genius. He was still handsome, but neither robust, did he seem, nor impecunious. In fact, he had solved, he told me, the economic problem, and was, therefore, contemplating suicide.

—But this damned stream is not deep enough anywhere. And I have not the courage to hang myself or put a bullet through my brain. Brain? I don't think I have any left. I'm all nerves, nerves—and white corpuscles. I can't even bear the sight of flowers. And the chatter of

these birds is irritating, exasperating, maddening. What brought you here? On a hike? I wish I could go with you. But my legs can't carry me anywhere beyond my own hell. The solitude of the hills is a hollow mockery—the healing influence of the forest, a fake, a sham—worse than a doctor's prescription . . . . . And this damned stream is not deep enough anywhere.

He got up coughing, a deep, dry, racking cough, which brought the livid glow to his cheeks; and turning his back to me, he waved his hand—a silent farewell. I was, indeed, sorry, but there was nothing to be done. He was beyond the reach of any human solace. I was certain, however, that he had not the courage, even if the stream was deep enough anywhere. But the spark of genius was not extinguished in him. It scintellated in his eyes, and seemed to feed on the tuberculosis germs in his lungs. I wondered which will survive the other, or whether he himself would survive both.

Two years later—miracle of miracles!—I met him again in New York—on a subway train. He recognized me first, hailed me with an exclamation and a slap of the hand. It was the hand of a strong, robust and cheerful being. I confess I would never have recognized him as the Timon of the hills I once met. My first feeling, after the delectable surprise, was one of irresistible curiosity. How did he do it? How, in the eternal vicissitude of fate and genius, did he become reconciled? And a strap-hanger to boot! He looked prosperous, to be sure; but there was in his face and manner an unmistakable something which the city dwellers acquire—a rigidity of expression which marks their pauses and moments of quiescence. They forget, and seem of a sudden to remember, that they are parts, more or less important, of a gigantic machine. My friend seemed eager nevertheless to tell me how he recovered his health and his faith in life.

We walked out of the Subway as hilarious as children coming out of school, and went

to a cafe of his choice. The head-waiter saluted him smiling; the waiters were eager to serve him. But he chose his table with the knowingness and ease of a habitué, and ordered the drinks.

"I suppose," he said, as he laid down his glass, "you are wondering how it came about. I have made a discovery; and what is best, I was the first to profit by it. A disease of the mind is responsible more or less for all our physical ills; egotism is the most pernicious bacillus of the mind; and this bacillus feeds, not only on dreams, ambitions, illusions, but on the general unrest, the social chaos of the times. Is there a cure? There is indeed. At least for the individual. Starve the bacillus first. Find you an anchor, a job. And don't forget, the nearest port in a storm. I found mine in a newspaper office, where I am now writing editorials for the enlightenment and guidance of mankind. My ego? It is dead as far as mankind and I are concerned. But my friends in the office deny that it is; and what is more strange,

it's even relishable, they say, pickled as it is in anonymity. Yes, the work is interesting, though sometimes annoying and often amusing—to myself. An editorial writer is the Keeper, you might say, of the People's Conscience. And his work, from day to day, is a picture gallery of his mind. The variety is infinite and bewildering even to himself. For if he goes through the gallery after a month or two of copy-making, he could scarcely distinguish one picture from another. And yet, they are all his own, made by his hand, after his very image! Anonymity, of course, is his salvation. It's very interesting, very amusing, indeed. And conducive, as you see, of health and cheerfulness. Let's have another drink."

The succession aroused in him a ruminating, reminiscing humor. And our little corner table, as soon as I mentioned the hills, became a confessional.

"We are made or marred," he said, "more often marred by an excess of affection, which develops in us a querulous, petulent, supersensitive nature. If our relatives and

friends would be a little indifferent or even resentful, it would fare better with us. My immediate surroundings in those mountain solitudes were absurdly Christian, to say the least. My mother, my sister, and my brother, with whom I lived, idolized me, idealized even my defects and idiosyncracies. Yes, I have been made a tyrant by my own people; and had I the courage, I might have become an assassin or done violence even to myself. That stream"—this with a chuckle—"was not deep enough anywhere.

"But I too—I invoke your kind consideration—I too have been tyrannized by a principle: tolerance has always been the despot of my conduct. Even freedom has its fetters. For while everything seemed to clash, while I continually found myself out of sorts with everybody around me, I had to suffer them to do as they pleased, because it was my principle always to do as I please. And how much we have to tolerate for a principle, and from it, when we are too conscientious to be modest and

sane. Oh, the tortures I have suffered in those days in suffering those who shared my home and table to have their way. You must have thought me mad, when you saw me that day, or umbrageous to a degree of madness. But I was all nerves, believe me. And nothing seemed to sooth my aching nerves as breaking something.

"And yet, when I threw a plate at the servant, because she came into the dining room in her sabots—we had a French maid from the Midi who would not for the world forgo her wooden shoes—tuk, tuk, tuk on the wooden floor is maddening in the mountain silences—it was because that French slattern, who did as she pleased in her own little way, did not go the length of her desire and throw her sabots in my face. I think, I am certain, that a sabot on the head from that servant would have cured me of my disease.

"For supersensitiveness is nothing but a disease produced by submission in your household and aggravated by fawning or by an excess of affection. Sincerity in

either case did not help to extenuate their fault or mine. But my principle of tolerance would exercise its sway again, and, instead of throwing plates or smashing an earthen pitcher in a dramatic rage before a cowed audience of lovers, I would find myself nibbling at my own soul, eating my very heart in unrighteous anger. My nerves, taught and overcharged, would twitch for hours at a stretch, and I could not for days as much as put two and two together. During which time I could see nothing but evil intentions and malign purposes around me. If my mother prayed at noon, she was doing so to annoy me; if my brother came to the table in his shirt-sleeves, he was doing so to see how much I could tolerate—how true I was to my principle; if my sister had her breakfast in her room, it was not, I imagined, from a delicate regard for the Tyrant of the Establishment, who insisted on the etiquette of the table, but with malice a-forethought. And so, the days tragically dragged and palled, until I adopted the

Trappist system. For a week or ten days at a time, I would go into silence, and all apparently would go well, not with me, however, but with my household. The repression accentuated my trouble, aggravated my disease. The asylum stared me in the face. But I saved myself, as you see. Indeed, only when I left my dear good people and put up again in the cold, hard solitude of the crowd in the city, where toleration is neither a principle nor an article of faith, but simply a matter of necessity, was I cured of my querulous, petulent, acerbic, atrabilious, misanthropic abominations. And cured too of my egotism and all the illusions and all the vanities it engenders. The City hath its healing balm, my friend."

And he raised his glass.

"To the Mother of Common Sense—the rest of her children don't count for much—to the great City."

IX

THE QUESTION OF PONTIUS PILATE

"TRUTH," says the philosopher, answering Pilate's question, "is the unity of universal and subjective will." But who is to elucidate for the Pilates of our time the meaning of universal will? I once made a heroic attempt to unhusk the logic of Schopenhauer and to unravel the metaphysical skein of Hegel. But something forbidding, even obnoxious, seemed to stand between me and my purpose. The husk of generalization was too thick, too hard, and, what is worse, too thorny. It was the exogenous growth, particularly the spinosity, of a purely subjective mind. The philosopher's ego, in other words, adumbrated the universal will. And in following it, we follow a shadow that aspires to Deity.

It aspires, moreover, in conflict, not in harmony. To put it mildly and plainly, there often lurks a personal interest in the generalization of philosophers. It is often

too a personal grudge. For philosophers quarrel, not only with what they understand to be the universal will, but also with each other. Indeed, not infrequently, does the human heart cry out through their bulwarks of reason. To be sure, they quarrel not like the village crones or the town trollops; but their panoply of logic is saturated with gall. And their hatreds, their jealousies, their prejudices, wearing the masks of speculation, seldom fail to recognize each other.

But with their readers, the disguise invariably succeeds. Thus we are often the dupes of an abstract theory stretched out to cover the personal prejudices and heredities of the author. It is not ignorance which our philosopher is cudgeling, but a particular ignorant contemporary; not at error or prejudice does he aim his poisoned shafts, but at an erring and prejudiced colleague.

We have a striking instance of this in Hegel's Introduction to the Philosophy of History, where Schopenhauer is disguised

in one of the theories he tears to pieces; while Schopenhauer, in his Literary Essays, clothes Hegel in transcendental rags, sets him up as a target, and proceeds to exercise upon him his dialectic skill. This, in the way of evolving a noble theory of life, or answering the query of Pilate. For the privilege of philosophers enjoying the respect of the world, is such that they can only flay each other under the deluding assumption that they are flaying Error and Falsehood. Indeed, their generalizations often cover many a sore spot in their hearts. Envy, envy, thou Persephone of this lower world, even philosophers are counted among thy slaves. For instead of the truth, or as much as a taste of its kernel, we get the thorny husks of their egotism. And yet, they are the psychologists and metaphysicians who have tried to approach the Creator in a scientific manner!

Even a popular Handbook on Mind Power, for instance, and How to Get It, I find more satisfactory. For in it are no

bamboozling generalities, no disguised personal grievances, no attempt to elucidate the universal will or discover the truth of the universe. Instead of abstruse dissertations, we get a simple recipe of how to feed and develop the mind. And often, the practical method suggested makes the pursuit a pleasant and sometimes profitable adventure.

Indeed, those Manuels for the People are as wonderful and entertaining, even as transporting as the Movies. Mind and Will Training: What It Is and How It Is Done, Soul-Culture, Psychometry, Phrenometry, Mental and Magnetic Healing: What They Are and How To Get Them In An Hour,—these are improvements, methinks, on the dissertations and lucubrations of acerbic cynics and umbrageous philosophers. They take you into an enchanted land, where no Pilate or shadow of a Pilate ever haunts the scene.

And with a few directions you learn the whole business of miracles. Then suddenly, you leap out of your cribbed and

cramped self, a full-fledged wizard, an extra-cosmic god, with no grudge against any one or any world, into the all-pervasive, all-absorbing, all-knowing. You become, indeed, as omnipotent and wonder-working as a hero or heroine of the Movies. Why then be but a walking protoplasm, why keep your soul in a vitalized cell, when a Manuel on Soul Culture: What It Is and How It Is Done can turn you into an exalted apotheosized ape? Apotheosis for a dollar! Nothing cheaper on or off the earth. With pincers of practical logic the wires that are held by Destiny are, not drawn, but neatly cut, and you are severed from the Tyrant forever. You become a free being, an infinite Mind, a divine Personality. The detachment from the senses, or the protoplasmic definiteness, or the vitalized cell they call the soul, is absolute; and you plunge thereupon clean into the Invisible, where you are certain to lose your tail.

But if you are of those who sneer at the Manuels of Enchantment or scoff at the

generalities of disenchanted philosophers, and continue, like Pilate, to rub their hands and smile skeptically, may I not recommend to your distinguished consideration that Cometographer of the spirit-world, Henrik Ibsen? He it was who turned the pockets of the soul inside out and found in them only a bullet and a little cyanide of mercury.

For the underlying idea of Ibsen's Art and Philosophy seems to be that one should conceive the beautiful and the true in this terrestrial existence and wait to realize them in another. Or, apply the bullet or the cyanide, if you can not wait. Sow in your soul the seeds of the ideal, which is one way of answering Pilate, and let death shield them from the frost of life. In other words, as soon as the ideal begins to germinate, in order to preserve it in its vigor and purity, hasten hence to some more friendly clime beyond the valleys of the moon. I do not think it would be far from the truth to picture those Ibsen souls as comets sweeping through this world to

others far and unseen, leaving in the disturbed atmosphere behind them a sinister portent of coming disaster. That is why I call him the Cometographer of the spirit-world.

And thus, what are called results are only beginnings according to Plato, who answered Pilate by offering him the Magic Carpet of Dreams. Which I, for one, prefer to Ibsen's cyanide of mercury or any other equivalent. For when I saw Brand, his master creation, dying on the snow-covered heights, I wished I were living in another age, when the art of caricature was not known. I thought of Socrates, the master creation of God, dying in prison, and I thought of the Christ dying on the cross. And what avails my philosopher's abstractions, and my Manuel Maker's practical wisdom, and my Dramatist's hectic inventions, in the face of these? Indeed, the world would be richer and happier for a few more seers and sages like Socrates and Tabrizi, who would not condescend to write a book. For not

by the written word, or by mummery on the stage, but silent and head bowed we best answer the query of Pilate. The Christ on the cross, Socrates in prison—that is my answer to the Roman procurator of Judea.

X

"MYSELF WHEN YOUNG DID EAGERLY FREQUENT"

BUT, unlike Omar, I came out of another door, not regretting wholly my adventure. For I have a reverence for Science, which is exceeded only by my reverence for what is beyond Science. The Unknown and the Unknowable, though not always helpful in the ordinary pursuits of life, have a fascination that no knowledge, no discovered mysteries of creation, can ever excell. And yet, I have often gone with my empty bucket to the well of Science only to find that its water, though refreshing, does not quench the thirst. I have often, too, to satisfy my curiosity, thrown stones in the well, thinking that I could sound its depth. The astronomer and the geologist who saw me, smiled and passed on. But the naturalist, who was loath to let me go away unsatisfied, entertained me with one of his wonderful tales.

He told me how varieties in animals gradually develop into species; how certain

causes, which in brief periods produce varieties, in long periods give rise to types; how the colors of animals are useful for concealment from their prey; how they are acquired, transmitted, distributed, and lost. He also discoursed of the hoof of the horse, and how it developed from a thickened nail; of the pest insects and scales threatening the ruin of orchards, and how they can be fought by insect allies; of the grasshoppers, and how they may be killed by a fungus disease cultivated for that purpose; of the colors and scents of blossoms, and how they attract insects and bees; of plants that hold the key to buried wealth, indicating as they do mineral veins. These, and many more fascinating and useful details, Science can relate. But the fact that they are useful soon dispels the fascination. And my learned friend the naturalist was silent when I asked him to explain to me the life-principle of growth and decay in the butterwort, the black scale, the woodchuck, or the lion. I did not mention man, whose romance, as

written in the Book of Evolution, he started to relate.

But I had heard this before, and asked him, therefore, to start where it ended. Not being able to read through the covers of what was to him a closed book, however, he referred me to the horticulturist, whom I found absorbed in the business of "fixing the type." But he had a little time to spare, seeing that I was an interested and earnest seeker of knowledge. And he revealed to me the wonders of Mendel's discovery, which was in itself truly wonderful. He demonstrated—the proof was irrefutable—how the dwarf pea, born of a tall ancestor, breeds true to dwarfness; and how the offspring of rusty wheat, by the aid of Mendelism, has been taught to resist disease. Now, this system, Mendelism, the horticulturist would apply to the breeding of men. "Better teaching and better sanitation," he said, "are but palliatives." Education is to man what a fertilizer is to the pea: the man might profit by it, but not his children. If the progress

of the race is to be permanent, it must depend, therefore, not on education, but on breeding. And as a corollary to Mendel's theory, he gave me this, from the author of the Descent of Man: "There should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs (he might have added, or by education) from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring."

But there are others among us who claim to have made a greater discovery than Science. These people scoff at romance, and extol a social system that would better man and redeem society, not by elimination, which breeding presupposes, but by the levelling process. Human power to them is an unmitigated evil; intellectual ability, a curse; genius itself, a crime. Nevertheless, it was one of their protagonists who wrote the Romance of Equality. But Carl Marx, its author, sees no salvation for humankind, except in political economy, the most uninteresting, to me, of all the sciences and, methinks, the least ennobling.

For it promotes in a nation aggressiveness, sordidness, greed; and it schools the individual in the infinite stupidities of life—in figures, and measures, and stock-taking, and such like. Political economy is the bible of the philistine. And the philistine is one who has neither intellectual nor spiritual needs. Even the theory of evolution is more uplifting.

And Mendelism, in a material sense, is nearer to the truth. For though a votary of Marx, who, we will admit, is a slave under present political and industrial conditions, may succeed eventually in freeing himself, will he be able to transmit this freedom to his offspring? "A dwarf pea, born of a tall ancestor, breeds true to drawfness." And no knowledge in the science of political economy, no mastering of its details of production and consumption, no faith in the laws that govern them, can be of any help to man in combatting heredity and disease. If those who free themselves from the bondage of capital and labor have no other need than to earn

more money and work less, if their needs, in other words, are purely material, no matter how free they might become, they can not, I am certain, ever become the parents of better offspring. They can only transmit to their children the desire, the passion, at best, for freedom and health and comfort. And I am not certain whether they have not handicapped them for the struggle, the battle they have to fight for themselves, in living as they did a purely materialistic life.

For though the children themselves achieve power, they remain, indeed, slaves. And a slave, born of a freed slave, will breed true to slavery. The levelling process, in this way, wreaks its vengeance upon the heads of those who uphold its infallibility—and it perpetuates its curse. Doubt it not. On the whole, the materialistic conception of history, as propounded by Carl Marx,—the conception that the fundamental factor in the development of any nation, is the economic factor, that is the way in which a nation produces and

exchanges its commodities,—is the narrowest, shallowest, most sordid, and most pernicious that ever was conceived by a man with any pretension to learning and wisdom. It is a shallow well, indeed, that of Marx, and its water withal is brackish. I turn away from it, thinking how well it could be filtered, if it were allowed to pass through the channels of religion, at least, and the arts. For these can be of great help, in spite of the breeding theory of Mendel.

More than that. For I believe—holding as I do to the idea of the potentiality of the Unknown and the Unknowable—that religion and the arts can confound Mendel in the end and upset all his demonstrations about the pea, when they are applied to man. Neither science, then, nor education is a panacea. But a reverence for the Unknown, an open mind, a sense of awe before the Unknowable, a quickening hope, an implicit faith in its potentialities,—these will accomplish the miracle that Marx and Mendel and Darwin have only partly dis-

covered and described. For the laborer without a spirituality, without a developed sense for the beautiful and the true,—the laborer, or the capitalist for that matter, without intellectual and spiritual needs, is a slave, and the son of a slave, and the parent of a slave, even though he become the chief of all the soviets of Russia. And neither through Mendelism, nor Darwinianism, nor Socialism alone can he achieve his own redemption and freedom. Doubt not that. And by the way, was it not Wagner who said that the redemption of Society is possible only through music?

THE PATH OF VISION

Part Second

I

FROM CONCORD TO SYRIA

WHAT have I brought with me from the Paradise of the New World, you ask. What have I gained in the country of gold and iron, of freedom and trusts? How much have I accumulated in the land of plenty and profusion—how big a draft do I present at the Imperial Ottoman Bank? Ah, yes. These are pertinent questions, my neighbor. I went to America with a lean purse; I came back, alas, not purseful but purseless. Do not conclude from this, however, that I am poor. On the contrary, I deposit in many banks, including the Bank of Wisdom; and my credit is good in many kingdoms, including the Kingdom of the Soul. And of a truth, the more I draw on my accounts, no matter how big the sum, the bigger my balance becomes. This is, indeed, a miracle of the Soul—a paradox not defined or described in the illustrated catalogues of market-men.

"His best companions, innocense and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth."

I come back to my native country with no ulterior political or maleficent purpose. I am not here to undermine the tottering throne of his Eminence the Patriarch; nor to rival his Excellency the Pasha in his political jobbery and his *éclat;* nor to supersede any decorated *chic* Bey in office; nor to erect a filature near that of my rich neighbor; nor to apply for a franchise to establish a trolley-car system in the Lebanons. "Blameless and harmless the sons of God." And I share with them at least the last attribute, Excellencies and worthy Signiors.

I return to my native country on a little —er—private business,—only, perhaps, to see again the cyclamens of the season. And I have brought with me from the Eldorado across the Atlantic a pair of walking shoes and three books published respectively in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. The good Grey Poet, the Sage of Concord, and the Recluse of Walden are my only companions in this *grand congé.* Whitman and Emerson and Thoreau are come to pay you

a visit, my beloved Syria.

But who are these strangers? I am asked. Why do they come so late? What is their mission to Syria, that is to say, their design upon her? Ah, dear Mother, my companions are neither missionaries, nor tourists, nor philanthropists. They come not to shed tears with you—like the paid mourners of antiquity; they come not to gaze at your ruins and rob you of the remnants of your temples and your gods; they come not to pity your poverty and trim the sacred ragged edges of the garment of your glory. My companions knew and loved you before you became the helpless victim of cormorant hierarchs and decorated obscurants and rogues. Not that they ever visited you in the flesh; but clothed in the supernal and eternal mystery of genius, they continue to live and journey in the world of the human spirit, even like your ancient cedars, even like your sacred legends.

With a little digression I shall endeavor to make my companions better known to

you. The elecampane, that most peculiar of perennial herbs, is not a stranger to your roads and fields. Its odor is strong, acrid, penetrating; the slightest touch of it has an immediate and enduring effect. When you approach it, you must, willy-nilly, carry away with you some token of its love. And one of its idiosyncracies is that it only blossoms when the hills and fields are shorn of every other variety of flower. It is the message of Spring to Autumn—the *billet doux,* as it were, of May to September. It bursts with beautiful yellow flowers, to console the almost flowerless season. And when all the bushes and herbs of the Lebanon coppices and fields are glorying in their fragrance and beauty, the elecampane waves its mucilaginous and wilted branches in perfect self-satisfaction. But when Nature withholds her favors from the wild daughters of Spring, the flowering of the elecampane begins in good earnest. Ay, the life beautiful is not denied even this bold and ungainly plant, which is ubiquitous in these

hills. On the waysides, in the fields, on the high ridges, in the pine forests, over terraces and under grapevines, it grows and glories in its abundance—and its pungent generosity. Ah, how it fans and flatters the thistle; how it nestles round the lilies of the valley; how it sprawls beneath the grapevines; how it waves its pennant of self-satisfaction on yonder height! Here, beneath an oak or a pine, it stands erect in its arrogance; there, it is bending over the humble crocus, or sheltering the delicate and graceful cyclamen.

Walt Whitman is the elecampane in the field of poetry.

The furze, on the other hand, is the idol of your heaths and copses. This plant, of course, is not without its thorn. But its smooth and tender stem, its frail and fragrant yellow blossoms,—those soft, wee shells of amber,—the profusion and the symmetry of its bushes, the delicacy of its tone of mystery, all tend to emphasize its attractive and inviting charms. A furze bush in full bloom is the crowning glory

of your heaths and copses, thickly overgrown. In the *wadis* below, one seldom meets with the furze; it only abounds on hill-tops, among gray cliffs and crannied rocks and boulders, where even the fern and the poppy feel at home. And a little rest on these smooth, fern-spread rock-couches, under the cool and shady arbor of furze-bushes, in their delicate fragrance of mystery, is ineffable delight to a pilgrim soul. Here, indeed, is a happy image of Transcendentalism. Here is Emerson for me—a furze-bush in full bloom.

Now let me go down the valley to introduce to you the third of my companions, the stern and unique Thoreau. You are no doubt acquainted with the terebinth and the nenuphar. They are very rare in your valleys and forests. The terebinth is mantled in a vague and mystic charm; its little heart-shaped pods, filled with gum and incense, bespeak an esoteric beauty. Not that Thoreau ever dealt in incense. What he had of it, he kept for his own beatific self.

Yes, the terebinth is a symbol of the moralist in Thoreau. And the nenuphar, with its delicate and cream-colored blossoms,—the choicest in your dells and dales,—is a symbol of the poet. The first represents for me the vigorous and ruthless thinker; the second, the singer, sweet and quaint. For does not the terebinth stand alone in a pine grove, or beneath some mighty ridge, or over some high and terribly abrupt precipice? And so, too, the nenuphar. The terebinth, moreover, can bear fruits of poetry. Graft upon it a pistachio and it will give forth those delicious and aesthetic nuts,—those little emeralds in golden shells,—so rare outside of Asia.

These, then, are my companions, dear Mother. The terebinth and the nenuphar of your valleys—Thoreau. The flowering furze-bush on your hilltips, with a smooth and mighty boulder for its throne—Emerson. The acrid elecampane in your fields, on your waysides, in your vineyards—Whitman.

And if the symbol does not fit the subject, or the subject is not at ease in the symbol, the fault is not mine; for my American walking shoes are new, and my Oriental eyes are old. But those who slip on the way, believe me, often see deeper than those who do not.

II

MY NATIVE HORIZON

NATURE in Mt. Lebanon is as beautiful as she is exacting. The seasons obey her command and are ever ready to take up their cue when she speaks. What wonder after a million rehearsals and one! They are as punctual as a solar eclipse, as mild as the breath of Olympus, as equable as the humor of an Oriental sage. And never late or in a hurry. Neither impatient are they to enter ere the curtain rises, nor querulous should it ever rise too soon. It seldom does.

And the seasons follow one another with the precision of marching regiments. They do not step on each other's heels, nor do they leave a vacancy between them for the imps of chaos. No, they neither borrow nor steal from each other in these climes. Winter, for instance, has as much respect for the calendar as the moon; he never makes his appearance before Autumn folds his tent and silently steals away. Nor is Autumn so selfish and inconsiderate as to

remain in the lap of Nature, when Winter's steps are heard behind the gate of Mt. Sanneen. Spring is never shy and coquettish in taking up the cue. We do not have to go a-searching for her when the time comes as we often do in other parts of the world, especially in and around New York.

My native horizon is not very far away, O my Brother of Manhattan, and not as alien as it seems. Leave the cloud-draped domes, and the sombre sky, and the sleety streets of our beloved City for a spell and come with me to the Theatre of the Ancient World, to the land of legend and prophecy, to the vine-clad hills of Tammuz and the cedar-crowned heights of Lebanus. Don't look up your geography, or your Bible, or your Baedeker. We are not now concerned with these. Behold! Winter, in giant strides across the hills, makes his way to the Mediterranean. He shakes the snow from his feet at the portals of Mt. Hermon, and, lightly over the new-born cyclamens in the terraced land, he hastens to meet

Nature and say farewell. He utters his last speech and makes his exit with grand Thespian effect. And as his last echo dies away beyond the nascent warmth of the first sun-kissed cedar bough, the footsteps of Spring are heard in every glen, are seen in bud and clove, are sensed in the unsealed spices of copse and dale. She comes anon with her singing gardens and sighing zephyrs, with her verdant fields and dancing bowers. Yea, she is punctual and refulgent in her appearance as Venus or Jupiter in the Lebanon sky. Here is order, equableness, continuity;—a training, indeed, that mars not art;—a discipline that shakes even the incense in its terebinth sack from its sleep and brings the very salamander to attention. Here Nature beautifully performs the Master-Dramatist's masterpiece. And here too the weather prophets are safe in pursuing their business. They can forecast with the utmost precision, without offending either Dramatist or Actors. Between Nature in my native hills and the learned folk who

write the calendar there is the deepest mutual sympathy and respect.

The seasons come and go, but the mark of their footsteps on my native horizon are ineffaceable. Here Time has erected eternal monuments to his departing children. In Mt. Sanneen, rising in the East over a dozen peaks slurred together, we behold Winter shrouded in snow; in the tiger-spotted escarpments, in the grey cliffs, barren and amorphous, forming a huge wall to the deep gorge in which the river flows, we have a fitting monument to Autumn; while in the lowlands facing the Mediterranean, the orange orchards and the olive groves are beautiful monuments to Summer and Spring, wrapped in the light green of the fields and buried in the warm brown soil of life perennial. Indeed, my native horizon is a cyclorama of all the seasons. And the sun rising in Summer over the snow-covered tomb of Winter, from behind the serrate and spotted peaks of Mt. Sanneen, presents a deeply suggestive contrast. It makes me think of the snow

flakes of humanity melting under the sun of life, and flowing in the valley of love and hope, between the deep canyon-walls of pain and joy, to reach the shore of the Eternal. (Now, this is pompous and overwrought, but the Mara of my Arabic is on me—and on my race.)

And I would that the seasons of the year were a fitting background to the human symbol; but what hope is there for a race that lives so close to Nature and profits not by it? Cattle huddle together in a storm. The birds in their migrations follow their leader. Even the bees, even the ants—but the proverbial wisdom of the ages is as futile as the warning of Nature. My poor, proud, distressed and distracted little race, now in its autumn days—will it survive the approaching storms of the coming winter? Will it ever regain the glory of its ancient springs? Will its children, who are still pagans at heart, ever realize again the beauty of art in Nature and the power of Nature in art? Scattered in every continent, looking in every direc-

tion—except the one pointing to Self—for a savior, and chopping commerce, meanwhile, or rhetoric, or gangrened nationalism on their decayed hacklogs of life, will they ever become sensible again of the Awakening? The harbinger of Spring, will they know him should he appear? The herald of Summer, will they receive him should he come? O, ye weak races of Man, what are you going to do with the few soul-Titans that are of you and with you? Will you deliver them as bound captives to a foreign despot? Will you sell them for a decoration? Ye little peoples of the land, ye disinherited and downtrodden children of the earth, the big throbbing heart of the world is with you. So be you with your soul-Titans, and rise to the summits of love and light and freedom and power. (Sometimes I forget that I am writing in English and to people little used to dithyramb and dogma outside a certain form of art.)

But the majestic beauty of my native horizon is marred, alas, by the pitiable

poverty and squalor of human life. And what is one to do with one's heart? Here is a broad verdant slope, rising high to the very feet of Mt. Sanneen; it is studded with clusters of pink gable houses, with pyramids of white and bluish stone;—it is at night a brilliant spectacle—a sight for the gods. And no less beautiful is it in the day. Behold these homes, half-hidden in mulberry and poplar and surrounded with thick pine forests, rising from terrace to terrace, like the steps of an altar with its objects of decoration, its flowers and icons and wax figures. Indeed, this makes a most beautiful altar to Nature.

But the life, think on the life behind this outward show, under these trappings and decorations. Once I likened the village on the breast of that gentle and hospitable mountain to the decorations on the breast of a successful Turkish diplomat. And the diplomat protested Turkish fashion—*Istagferullah effendum*! Which means, in unequivocal language, Allah forgive you, if you have not flattered me--Allah forgive

me, if you have. And it is well at times that ambiguity, like a summer cloud, should temper the noon-day heat of our thought. For what difference is there—the thought was eating into me, while I trifled with the image—what difference is there between the life that deifies a silk rag or a piece of copper and the life that soils its lips and forehead in the dust before them. Here are the people and their decorated nobilities. . . . . .

The Lethean breezes, blowing in the evening from the East, awaken the pagan in man,—the artist,—the lover of sheer beauty. And often, in contemplating this fascinating village, my fancy would westward wing itself. And my fellow man and the destiny of my race would no longer trouble me. The little lights behind the glass casements of the gabled houses, fixed and faint as the distant stars, are like so many diamonds in the crown of some sylvan goddess. And in places where the houses are crowded, piled above each other, a cascade of light in a frame of shimmering

purple foiliated by the bright pink gables, suggests to me the skyscrapers of New York at dusk or the electric legends of its White Way at night. And that renews my hope as well as my anxiety.

The weak races, I ask, why are they so strong in their land of adoption, so weak in their native land,—so bold and daring there, so docile here? And the moon disappears in the clouds, as if she did not care to listen. I look with half-shut eyes and in the seen I see the unseen. Behind the clouds I behold the moon smiling mystically; within the darkness I see the potential spark of the eternal fire; and behind the faint lights of the village I see the moving darkness of the human soul. And so, I say to myself: Depend not always on the known senses; look at things with half-shut eyes. And often I do so. Even with the eye of the soul into things moral and social.

I look out of my northern window in the day on a prospect terrible, wild and majestic. The valley below, the deep

gorge, the dizzy precipices, the escarpments spotted here and there with laurels, terebinths, scrub oaks, the broad slope on the other side of the river, decked with olives and mulberries and terraced homes, and the hill-tops fringed with pines rising behind and above each other,—all this is beautiful to behold, especially through half-shut eyes. Thus seen, the grey of the rugged ridges seems to melt and fuse in the bright green of the fields and the sable of the heaths. And between the brown soil on the breast of the hill and the barren cliffs below there is a bond of common sympathy and mutual affection. Yes, under the soil I can see barren cliffs, and under the barren cliffs I behold arable stretches of land. So with Nature, so with Man and the races of Man. In this sense, at least, my native horizon, methinks, is the horizon of my race, and under the seasons of the year are the seasons of my country. Nor are the monuments and temples lacking. For right behind Mt. Sanneen is the Acropolis of Baalbek, and farther East

are the ruins of Palmyra. The one is a monument to the Spring, the other to the Summer of my country's past.

III

MINE OWN COUNTRY

EVEN to one who loves her and accepts the rigor of her economy as part of her lasting reward, nature is not everywhere in a communicable mood, nor is she always the same. Her disposition often changes with our own; her appeal seldom reaches the discordant heart. Her inner voice is never heard by the passing stranger. To say that we love nature only when we take the pains to understand her, is trite; but we can only partly understand her when we suffer her to impose upon us her supreme will. She unveils for those who linger and wait; and she speaks only to him who stands in reverence before a moss or a fern as before the greatest of the mysteries of the universe. A bird is singing in the branches of a hemlock; a worm is eating into its bark. The ranger passes by indifferent to both, nothing seeing or hearing. But the poet-naturalist lingers,

eager to see and learn; and with an undivided heart, an observing eye and mind, he returns again and again to his schooling, discovers the secret of both bird and worm, informs the music and the silence with a spirit of his own, and actually adds to the idealism and the practical knowledge of man. He saves the tree for the State and he saves the song for the world. Strictly speaking, the pages of nature's book we admire the most are those that bear marginal notes of our own personality and experience.

That is why, I think, Thoreau would not have felt as much at home in the rugged splendors of the ancient Lebanons as he did in the placid solitudes of Walden woods. He might have been a naturalist there, but not a poet; even as a stranger, coming to Concord from a distant land, might only find in the Thoreau-country the visible landscape, not of Thoreau's poetic Soul, but of nature's least poetic moods. This particular page of her book leaves him cold, and the marginal notes are often il-

lusory. It may be that he did not come at the right time, or he did not open the book at an auspicious moment. But more likely his heart had been preempted elsewhere, so that, outside a particular spot, he finds Carlyle's obvious remark, One green field, all green fields, damping his enthusiasm, hopelessly extinguishing in him every poetic rapture.

Such has been my experience when I visited Concord, such, my disappointment in the Catskills that, although a lover of nature in all her moods, I found myself turning from her text to Thoreau's marginal notes and those of his distinguished but less poetic successor John Burroughs. And while I enjoy their chants, I can not be a worshipper at their shrines, nor can I even pretend to share the least intimacy with their goddess, having already pledged my soul at another temple. For though our faith and our rituals too are the same, our gods differ. It is curious, indeed, how the universal spirit sometimes carries us back to the parochial. Like the Ujigami of

Japan, we all have our distinct deities, which we invest with our own personality. In this sense, we are all self-worshippers: the gods of our allegiance, our devotion, are the gods of our pride. Else why should we be so attached to the soil, the plants, the flowers, the cliffs of our native land? There is something even in a familiar fern that leaves in the soul the impress of its own locality.

In my own country the flowers are the toys of our childhood; they are nature's precious presents, which she never fails to bring us on every holiday. Even on Christmas she calls the children to her snow-crowned heights to surprise them with her wild violets. And these they bring to the altar of the local Saint, who promises to fulfill all their desires if they pray for them while picking the flowers in his name. Once I remember, in a fit of envy and anger I prayed for the death of a boy who got ahead of me to a favorite spot under a sheltering rock, where the violets bloomed in abundance. A week later there was an

epidemic of smallpox in our village, and the boy, my playmate, was carried off by the disease. I was so angry with the Saint for answering in this instance my prayer that never after would I pray to him or pick the violets in his name. For if he heard me when I offered the prayer, I argued, he must have heard me also when I took it back. Thus early did I waver in my religious devotion; but nature, nevertheless, continued to bring me her presents, the flowers. Which made me love her the more. I even set up for myself a local Saint of her own,—St. Cyclamen I called him,—in a grove of pines, under the protection of the Cross. Why did I compromise with the Church, I knew not then—I know not now. But there it is, in the pine-grove, my Temple of the Flowers and the Christ. And whether a lover of nature be a poet, or a philosopher, or a child, he can at best only pretend to be indifferent to the call of the flowers of his own locality, which bloom every year on the altar of his faith. Perennially they call, and, although

we be in the farthermost parts of the world, they seldom fail in the calling. Else why should I—and I die a hundred deaths in a sea voyage—cross the ocean again and again to visit my native land?

America too is the land of my birth, my second birth, so to speak, which is more significant, to myself at least, than the first. And here I have often found myself in the bosom of nature, comforted and reassured. Here are daisies as lovely as the soil and sun and rain ever made; but such loveliness is marred for me by a sad-sweet recollection: the daisies that have known the caresses of my infant love, that have heard the lispings of my superstitious heart, are sweeter of breath, stronger of appeal. Here are gardens where the resources and ingenuity of man would surpass the beauty of nature; but wherever I turn my eyes among the elegant variety of their flowers, I can see only the image of the homely sweet-basil, my mother's favorite plant. Here too are cultivated cyclamens hardier and more beautiful than the delicate crea-

tures that peep out of the crannies and crevices of my native rocks and terrace-walls; but whenever I behold them I fain would run barefoot again in the Lebanon hills, ascending and descending the flower-covered terraces, to gather a sheaf on Good Friday of the April harvest and lay it at the foot of the Cross. And the hemlocks of the land of my second birth are as majestic and as generous as the Lebanon pines; but the fact that they have a claim upon my gratitude, having lived with them for a space and profited by their intimacy and healing influence, does not, and can not, alienate my first love for the trees of my boyhood,—of my childly joys,—and my child-faith. Alas, the wrath of my local Deity is upon me!

What is it then that would conquer the cosmic spirit in us and, overcoming all the faculties of reason, attach us in affection to certain spots and objects, which we call Home or Mother-Country? In my own case, it can not be patriotism; for I never had a chance to be a patriot, not even in

the Johnsonian sense of the word. Moreover, in a land where the freedom of the spirit, even the freedom of the citizen, has not yet been realized, one can better serve one's country from a safe distance. I have often given it absent treatment with little or no result. My subject and I are not *en rapport*. Enough said of patriotism.

But whence comes it, this love for one's country? One's language? English to me is as dear, though not as explicable in some of its idiosyncracies, as the Arabic. Domestic life? the customs and traditions of the hearth? I did not love my own home when I lived in it; I little appreciated the domestic peace and beauty of it; and I was glad to say good-bye to mine own people when I left it. Does it consist of one's national faith, of the religion of one's ancestors, this love for one's country? I would not be so irresistably attracted by it, if it did. For my race, ever since the days of Antiochus the Great, nay, back to the times of my fellow-scrivener, Sanchuniathon the Phoenician, never had a real

national faith; and my father's religion was in the pocket of my native robe when I threw it overboard the first time I crossed the Atlantic.

Why then, I repeat, this chronic nostalgia? My local Deity forever calling? I might go there only to find the Temple in ruins. Nature's presents heaped at my door? The heart craves knowledge now, not affection; the torments of the understanding can not be wholly assuaged by the Beautiful. Do the toys of our childhood become in latter days the toys of our souls? Here. I think, I am nearer to the truth. For we must be as children again to be able to enjoy, from purest spiritual motive, our native soil and the enchanted scenes of our childly days and dreams. And the comely simplicity of childhood, its mystic innocense, is incarnate in the trees, the flowers, the streams and the hills of the mother-land. Everything a child touches in his holy years lives afterward in the pious memory a life of its own and is subject, like the flowers, to the vicissitudes

of the seasons. It grows, it blooms, it withers; and withering, it spreads of its petals a rug under the feet of remeniscence. It paints the horizon of the soul a sullen gold,—it fills its resting places with an entrancing perfume. The child-soul is a nursery which afterward often becomes a deserted garden in which we love to stroll. It is a cathedral in which are buried the cherubs of our fancy and the heroes of our dreams.—The cyclamen is going to be my intercessor at the altar of my local Saint. As I draw it gently out of its nich in the rock, to preserve its diapered leaf and every inch of its delicate russet stem, I impart to it a life separate from its own, which I cherish in my dream-moments more than any worldly dream. And our mother's nurseries, how we would rancask them to make a child's holiday! Those same flowers and odoriferous plants that we destroyed in infant rapture, still grow and bloom perennially to diffuse around them such joy and faith in life as mortal man, in his recurring doubts, peren-

nially requires.

These toys of childhood, these spiritual tokens, fragile but unbreakable, live, indeed, in the flowers we used to gather for our local Saint; in the woods where we were often lost or caught by the storm; in the tall grass through which we would wade, playing hide and seek; in the trees we used to climb, whose branches still murmur our songs of joy; in the roaring rivulets whose wintry wrath we defied; in the Summer vineyards whose gold and purple grapes we stole; in the April fields whose lotus and iris and daffodil we gathered for Palm Sunday. The love for the mother-country that does not consist essentially of these, is not spiritually pure enough to engage our thought.

And yet, to be honest with the reader to the end, I must add, having already spoken of a second birth, that in its nursery Concord has sown a pinch of the flower-seeds of transcendentalism. But what chance have these seeds to grow in the cold and sunless habitations of the city? In my ceaseless

search, however, I found a window once through which, now and then, a glint of sunlight came to surprise us. The seeds showed signs of life, which encouraged me to seek a place for them on the outskirts of nature, where they first grew to tenderness and beauty, in confusion and abundance. But they were smitten of a sudden, almost asphyxiated. From all the public highways around us came the fatal breath of the God of Gasoline. Deep into the glen, therefore, and far from the highways of motoring-man, we remove, seeking the virgin soil in the very heart of nature.

But here were wild flowers that reminded me of the roses, the jasmines and the sweet-basils of the homely nurseries of Lebanon. And in the deep silence of the woods the shadows of my native pines arose before me, above the majestic hemlocks, to say salaam. The myrtle and the sage around the scrub oaks beckoned and called. The crocus, the anemone, the cyclamen, blooming everywhere, as by magic, over the pale images of the asters and the goldenrods,

remonstrated with me like true lovers. And yet, in the heart of mine own country the flower-seeds of Concord may not fare better than they did in the cold and sunless habitations of the city or on the outskirts of nature now hardened by the highways of the God of Gasoline. Go to Concord and transplant them there? It is long since the flower first bloomed in that soil that it would not, I'm afraid, be recognized to-day. It might die of neglect. Alas for the nursery of the soul! But our mothers' nurseries remain, my Brothers, to yield us a little solace. And what matters it if *my* Mother be old and crabbed and unsympathetic? What matters it if she is not counted of the young and strong among nations?

True, her history is that of a country without a flag or a national hymn; but her divine message once stirred the innermost heart of the world. True, her traditions are those of a nation without a king, a people without a voice, a soul without a temple; but her ancient spirit still lives and

is still destined to conquer and redeem. And although her garden-walls crumble on one side into desert waste and on the other into barren strands, her heritage is the Cross and a sea of flowers. Syria the land of roses, Syria the cradle and the tomb of the gods! When Byblos adored Tammuz, when Baalbek worshipped Jupitor-Ammon, when Galilee conquered Judea, when Arabia overcame Galilee, thou wert then a Fountain of the Spirit toward which turned a thirsty world. Thy temple was the temple of the universe, thy voice was the voice of God. From the Tigris to the Red Sea, from the Taurus to the Hijaz, thou hast ever been the garden of revelation and the battlefield of the creeds. But if the Prophets no longer thunder on thy mountains, the bulbuls still sing in thy dells and dales, the roses still blow on thy rugged brow, and the cedars, from their snowy heights, still cast their shadows over the golden sands. Syria the land of roses, Syria the cradle and the tomb of the gods, if thou wert to become a howling desert

to-morrow, thou wouldst still be the cheriched of nations and the coveted of empires.

IV

OVER ANCIENT BABYLON

FROM Aleppo to the City of the Abbaside Khalifs, over ancient Babylon and Nineveh!—O seers of Chaldea, did you ever behold this in your visions,—did you ever read of it in your book of stars?

Indeed, the railroad and the aeroplane are rumbling to-day over buried Babylon. And in the golden silence of the desert the modern capitalist, after the Man of Neishapur, will sing,

> Awake! for steam is scattering to flight
> The Beduin tribes into eternal night.

For after all, Nineveh and Babylon might only be asleep. To be sure, wherever there are streams of opalescent water, human life is imperishable, immortal. But sleep is often mistaken for death; and the apoplexy of a nation is of longer duration than that of an individual. Under the magic wand of modern industrialism, therefore, Babylon and Nineveh might rise again and put Paris and New York to

shame. No; they might rise and help to bring the better mind of Europe nearer to the East and the purer soul of India nearer to the West: they might become the connecting link between the Orient and the Occident of the future. Geographically, this is logical; historically, it is possible. Meanwhile, the idealists in both continents, the proclaimers of the confederation of the world, may go on dreaming; and Capital, the pioneer of the children of dreams, will sing in the valley of the Euphrates the song of the dawn of industry.

> Awake! for steam is scattering to flight
> The caravans into eternal night.

And along with them, perhaps, the poetry of the Arab and his horse. But this lament over the passing of the poet might not be wholly justified. For after the nations of the past are resuscitated, after the work of creation, lasting six days or six centuries, is performed, Capital will want to rest and be entertained. She will welcome again the poet; she will build

temples to his Muse. At present, however, the bard must not hover on the horizon of Capital. We must forge ahead. Nothing in the way is sacred.

The Young Turks themselves once spent a few piasters in this business of redemption. They tried to mow down the Arabs to pave the way for the European steam engine. Now the English are conspiring against the lethal but sacred lethargy of the Euphrates. They will dam the river to bless its valley. They will mutilate it, chop it into pools, so to speak, and cage its currents in canals and ditches to make them sing in the wilderness the song of plenty.

Indeed, there is a kind of poetry, deep and elemental as Ossian's, even in the achievements of science, even in the mechanical marvels of engineering. We live in an age, which, in its vast inclusions at least, is the most poetic of all ages. No nation, however far removed from the pivot of its dynamic influence, no people, however stolid and hidebound, is free to shake off its thrall or to reject its boon. A

truth or a fallacy uttered in London is echoed the following day in Baghdad; an idea born in New York soon captures the mind of Damascus; a discovery made in Paris benefits even the silk worms in the shadow of the Lebanon cedars. A marvellous thing this civilization, even to a sophisticated Oriental, who revels in its romance, which the scribes translate from the columns of the American and European newspapers, as he would in the Arabian Nights. Indeed, those who produced the Arabian Nights are to him incarnate in the makers of our civilization. Therefore—but let the logician draw his own conclusions. This international game of Give and Take is as baffling as any other. To lose in it is to gain, and vice versa.

If the poet of Baghdad realized this, he would not waste his soul in lamentations over buried kingdoms.—O Babylon, Europe is desecrating thy sacred dust. O Nineveh, the Franks have come to mock at thy past. Over thy palaces, O Samiramis, over thy grave, O Belshazzar—but let the poet of

Baghdad sit upon the highway and lament. The train will soon be coming.

Meanwhile, the doctors of the Mohammedan law, the ulema of Islam, will scan their sacred books to see if aught therein is mentioned about the railroad and the aeroplane. And if, after straining their theological faculties, they can not find, expressed or implied, a divine sanction of these inventions, they will forthwith curse them from the pulpit. Yes; this has already been done in Nejd. But the Arabs, though they begin by waylaying the trains to Medina, will soon be laying rails themselves across the Nefud. The genius of this industrial age is destined to world conquest and power. And the Koran, that divine encyclopedia of the Muslem, has an elasticity of phrase that can be made to cover any heresy, ancient or modern, speculative or industrial.

Speaking one day with one of the ulema of Damascus of the extravagance of practical science, I mentioned the Meteorological Bureau at Washington, which has two

hundred employees at its central office, and spends over a million dollars a year for the purpose of forecasting the weather. The sheikh held up his hands in horror, exclaiming, "And all this to blaspheme the great Allah! For who but He and His Prophet Mohammed can read in the Book of To-morrow? Is it not writ in the Koran. 'And what is in the bosom of the Heavens, and what is in the bosom of Time, and what is in the bosom of woman, only Allah knoweth?"

But the irate sheikh and the lacrymose poet are gently reminded by the modern editor, who in most cases is in aladinist, a free-thinker, that the times have changed, that the Prophet himself has said, Every Age hath its Book, and that the fabulous wealth and prosperity of America, for instance, are the natural outcome of co-operation. — They are the fruits of organized industry, O my Brothers,—they are the legitimate offspring of the Trust. Let us, therefore, co-operate like the Americans: let us organize the Trust. Science

will yet resuscutate Arabia.—Steam and Electricity will be the servants of her virtue and glory. But let us organize the Trust, and straightway. In the Trust, O my Brothers, is our salvation. . . . . .

And my friend the social reformer will find, methinks, herein some food for thought. A distant view of the question, an Oriental view, is not unworthy of consideration. For when a people hail what another people spurn, when a nation blesses what another nation is cursing, then there must be still room on one side or the other for the deeper truth, the sounder view of the matter. Some people among us will find these between the curse and the blessing. I, for one, refuse to peep with the radical reformer into the boudoir of the Trust; and I admire her not, as do the aladinists of Damascus, in her travelling toggery. But in her workaday clothes I behold her walking with the people, and I dare say she is tolerably human.

For in spite of what is set down in the Criminal Code, I am convinced that the

Trust hath a soul. Else how could she be so fair and so wicked, so voracious withal and so bounteous? Indeed, the soul of the Trust is accumulative, even like her capital. It is a somatic soul, as it were, which you might not find mentioned in the book of metaphysics, but which the skeptic might see, and touch, and even steal thereof. Behold it exteriorized in these monumental marvels of materialism. The Soul of the Trust!—it broods in the mines; it sings in the mills; it cries in the Stock Exchange; it sweats in the fields; it throbs in the engine room; it vibrates in the electric wire; it poetizes in the Marconi mystery; it hitches its aeroplane to the dog-star.

Ay, the Trust hath a soul, believe me, and it is as good as all the other trust-in-Mammon souls of the present day, which were once divine and immortal. True, it has no sentiment. But who has, in this beautiful iron age? Neither Darwin nor Carl Marx ever worried about sentiment. Capital and Thought, these are the living principles of

the Trust. Of these is composed the duality of her somatic soul.

And Capital and Thought will dance in triumph over the tombs of ancient kingdoms and in the valleys of sacred rivers, even as they do in the mills and mines and around the palaces and temples of Modern Industrialism. Thus sayeth my aladinist friend of Damascus, who never tires of repeating, In the Trust, O my Brothers, is our salvation. But let us hope he will be able to find the truth somewhere between his blessing and the curse of the social reformer. Or better still, beyond both. For the Trust, like all other human institutions, must soon or late outgrow its usefulness. Meanwhile there is something suggestive and useful in the enthusiasm of the Oriental. And if Europe gives Arabia a railway, Arabia gives Europe an idea. Which, I think, balances the account.

V

OF CHURCH AND MOSQUE

OF all the places of worship I know,—and I have lugged my unshrived soul and my weary limbs into many a foreign temple,—the mosque has always impressed me as being by far the most democratic and the most unstinted in its varied hospitalities. There is nothing in it or in its economy to flatter the rich, or offend the poor, to repel the weary, or distract the devout. The welcome it extends is not of the two-by-two pew order; the solace it affords is no bread-and-cheese affair. And the Friday sermon, if you should care to hear it, is often taken bodily from the Koran and is, therefore, never extraneous; —a ringing and harmless bit of eloquence that charms the ear and lulls the senses in celestial revery. The mosque is always big enough to hold the declaiming preacher and the sleeping worshipper in an incommunicable vacuity; for the pulpit is never

too near the enchanted corners, which offer a shelter to the body of the Muslem as well as to his soul. And here you often find a mumbling fakir, a blind beggar, a wayworn hammal, or a wayfaring Arab. In the most informal spirit of devotion, they drop in for a rest or a snooze; and they prostrate themselves before a mihrab or stretch themselves on the cool marble under the arches, while a great sheikh or a prince of the blood in another corner is genuflecting on a precious Persian rug and swinging his torso to and fro in prayer. *Bism illah ir-rihman irrahim!* (In the name of Allah the most Merciful and Compassionate). The fakir telling his beads chants himself into a state of coma. The beggar yawns out, Ya-Allah, ya-Karim! and drops off as he kneels. The Beduin is stretched under the huge arch like a corpse. And no one is there ill-bred or impious enough to intrude upon any one in his holy occupation. The mosque is a haven of rest to beggar and prince, a temple of democracy to the Faithful, a divine hostelry for the

children of Allah. Here the outcast finds a stone, at least, on which to lay his head. And the calm flows from the vast domes above him and fills the airy spaces all around. Only now and then it is interrupted by a sigh of ya-Allah, ya-Karim! For though the mosque be in the tinkers' bazaar seldom a sound from the outer world reaches even its court or violates its hallowed silence. And in this vastness of spiritual repose the soul may loaf and invite the body, and the mind may doze and invite the soul. Without cymbals and bells, without organ and choir, without icons and statues, but with the lamps of faith and devotion ever burning, the soul is left to itself to find its way through an infinity of unworldly calm and silence to the divine infinities of the One Supreme—Allah.

One day at noon, after a long tramp through the country, I went into the little mosque of a village to rest. I doffed my shoes at the door, realizing then the deep wisdom in the tradition. There are practical as well as spiritual reasons for

it. If it is a sacrilege to come booted into the House of God, it is worse than a sacrilege to soil with the dust and mud of the road its precious rugs. Aside from these considerations, my shoes pinched, and I was only too glad to conform. Many others, I suppose, find in the custom a like relief. Inside the mosque there were but two at prayer—a venerable old man in one corner and a wizened half-naked beggar in another. I sat down on a straw mat under an arch, leaning my back against the pillar, stretching my weary limbs,—feeling sweetly at home. Rest and relaxation, in these are the roots of purest devotion: and these you will always find in a mosque at any hour of the day, at any hour of the night. I prayed after my own fashion, and walked out with my two companions, my Brothers, praising Allah. The beggar happened to be a hammal who left his burden at the door, and being too heavy for him to lift alone, the venerable Sheikh, tucking his long silk sleeves, hastens to his assistance. Bismillah! and the hammal

bowed in piety under his load, stiffens his neck to the rope around his head and, heavy but firm of step, walks away in the assurance of Allah.

"You are not a Muslem," said the distinguished Sheikh, detecting in me an alien manner.

"I too worship Allah," I replied, lacing my shoes, "and honor the Prophets."

Whereupon he invited me to his house for lunch. Strangers meeting in the mosque become brothers.

This reminds me of a visit to that American Mecca of fashion, Newport, where I went to pray in the Church of the Rich. A quaint, little wooden, barn-like building, outwardly a fitting symbol of the original spirit of Christianity, which was brought over, together with its first minister, from England. It was set up, not built, in Newport, a century ago. And this is considered very old in New England. But the stained glass windows, a distressing anomaly, with nothing in them to arrest the eye or tax the imagination, are absurdly new and

whole. Not one of them is broken and cemented to give it the semblance of antiquity or to preserve a historic or a pious legend. Made in America, I presume. And like everything indigenous to this wonderful country, their value is measured with a golden rod. One of them was pointed out to me as being 'the thousand-dollar window' presented to the church by Mrs.——; another, even more costly, by Mr.——. It were uncharitable, indeed, to remember names in such a blaze of munificence; but I wonder how it is that those who are responsible for disfiguring the walls of this quaint and unpretentious church, have not tried to conceal their identity. I say 'disfigure' advisedly. For I can not conceive of a stained glass window set in a thin wooden wall, without some outward device of architecture to subdue the effect of the sunlight upon it,—to shade the refulgence of its beauty. But Philanthropy can not live in the shade; Philanthropy will blow its trumpet on the roof-tops in the noonday sun. Thou Brass

Trumpet, never in those airy mosques of the silent East have I heard the faintest echo of thy shrillings. Nor did the Puritans, I suppose, ever hear it in their days.

No doubt the stained glass windows would have been tabooed by them as was the organ, which was brought over with the church. Music, like our modern brass-trumpet philanthropy, shocked their sense of piety. They could not associate it with worship. It interfered with the digestion of the soul—it promoted impiety. If the organ, which was subsequently restored, is the one I heard, than I am, too, a Puritan. And the fact that it has now an electric action, does not make it less objectionable to those who seek peace in the House of God. I may be wrong, foolish, narrow in my idea of worship; I may not have an ear for music: but I submit that no two of our poor jaded senses can be occupied simultaneously with equally good purpose and effect. The shrill cymbals of an Oriental church may tear the ear, but they do not reach the soul;

the *daf* and the tomtoms of the dancing dervishes are innocuous, because of the fundamental absurdity of their scheme of salvation; the music in a modern restaurant, and though it interferes with digestion and promotes dyspepsia and profanity, has no real spiritual after-effects: but when I hear a *Miserere* in a Church—and all Church music to me is a variation more or less of the same theme—and think that the salvation of my soul depends upon it, I can not go on and pray. The sepulchral notes seem to dance before my eyes in their winding sheets, and the invisible choir, alas, becomes a lugubrious joke. Judge if I was sacrilegious in the Church of the Rich. Instead of praying, or following in the wake of devotion, I was counting the 'thousand-dollar' stained glass masterpieces, or marvelling at the amazing sounding board that hung above the minister's head as by a spider's thread. One day in the nick of service—Allah forgive me for the wanton vision! But the precariousness of the situation held me for

a spell in a mingled sense of fear and excitement. What if this huge sounding board should crash upon his Reverence when he is lashing the air with his potent words. And yet, by a freak of chance, it may be the last thing to remain intact if the church were struck to-morrow by a thunderbolt or destroyed by an earthquake.

Remarkable, too, are the quadrangular pews, which are big enough to hold a few arm chairs and a rocker, and which are so arranged that the worshippers can sit in them facing each other as in a drawing room. 'The vulgar rich,' the 'lazzaronis of wealth' as they are called in America by those, I suppose, who have failed to accomplish the miracle of riches or to attain the 'lazzaronic' state, must feel at home and quite at ease in these little drawing rooms of their church. Not with them, however, or those who denounce them, but only with the pews am I now concerned. Why should a place of worship, I venture the question, be parcelled into lots? Why not, as in a mosque, a clear

open space, unencumbered and untaxed, where you can come and stay when you please and as long as you please? Pews mean an imposed long service, an imposed tax, an imposed restriction on one's freedom. You may want to go to church for five minutes of spiritual stimulation or for five hours of spiritual repose; in which case, locked in a pew, you must either disturb or be disturbed in following your desire.

But the pews of this Newport church, I was told, are neither to be sold, nor rented, nor given away: they must be acquired. Even as an estate or a mansion or a throne, they are hereditary. No stranger, therefore, can come into this church to pray, unless, by gracious suffrage, he stand at the door. His, then, is the better chance of salvation. I shared the pew of mine host, which he must have acquired by right of conquest. For on the fly-leaf of the hymn book was written a name other than his own,—a name of one of the distinguished families of the early

settlers, who might have descended of old England's wearers of the purple. The pew had gone through one of those social revolutions that result only in a change of name. And thus, no other name will be written on the fly-leaf of that hymn book in the future, except by the suffrage of the nobility of wealth. Snobbery this, indeed.

But those who suffer from the disadvantage of riches, of whom even the Founder of Christianity has said a few mean things, —shutting them out of heaven with a parable,—ought not be grudged the right of making a little quadrangular heaven for themselves in a little church on earth, where they can commune with their God uninterrupted and undisturbed. Here, the poor rich lock themselves up for a brief spell, and no one in all the world has a right to intrude upon them in their devote moments. And they sit down in their arm-chairs, snug and serene, and sing the 176th hymn or the 61st psalm in perfect assurance, imbibing religion at every pore and feeling at peace with themselves, with the

world, and with God. Even with the Minister, who hurls from his pulpit no Nazarine-parables of Dives and Lazarus or the Needle's Eye and the Camel. No; the Most Right Reverend respects the attitude and peace of mind of his congregation, wherefore his tenure sacerdotal would seem less precarious than the pew-priveleges of its richest member. But that colossal sounding board is hanging above him as by a spider's thread, and some day, when, in the very nick of his sermon, he is applying the divine salve, it might give the congregation a different interpretation of his Mortal Text.

Allah forgive me for what I have here set down. I came to this church to pray, not to cavil. And for those, distant and near, in present or past incarnation, who might have caused this unhappy turn of mind, I also invoke Allah's forgiveness and mercy.

The service is over. But the essential part of it we behold in the narrow street in front of the church where a squad of

police are directing the high-lackered traffic. Slowly from many corners and by-ways invisible, it drags its length along, a train of sumptuous equipages, multicolor, multiform;—refulgent limousines adorned with classic-faced chauffeurs; shimmering victorias drawn by high-stepping, full-blooded steeds; liveried and cockaded footmen leaping from their seats to open and close carriage doors;—a bustle of vanities, a flutter of conceits,—a dazzling array of outward splendor.

Come, my Christian Brother,—come with me to the mosque.

VI

THE ORIENTAL HERITAGE

SLOWLY but eagerly, like a child, the Orient is moving towards an object of irresistible attraction. Nay, modern thought is gradually lifting it from the depths of hebetude and pious contentment up to the heights of progress and unrest. But whether progress will eventually overcome its unrest or unrest will soon or late disenchant it with progress, remains to be seen.

One thing, however, is certain. The Orient can not keep up with the modern pace of science. Swathed in cant, saturated with tradition, given to abstractions, lulled in magnifications of speech and thought, the Oriental mind can not grasp the infinity of detail as well as the scope of scientific vision. The grafting of modern ideas upon it may prove, in certain instances, the contrary; but the elements hostile to its growth and development, though not visible always on the surface, are as vital, as potent in the liberal thinkers,

who are making an honest effort to keep abreast of the times, as in the straitlaced conservatives.

Moreover, the psychology of the Orientals is essentially deductive. Which gives them, it is true, a certain sweep of vision, but deprives them of the faculty of co-ordination. They have yet to acquire the scientific habit of mind and to reconcile themselves to certain elemental truths about this planet, which have also a sociological and moral application. Evolution, conservation, even the law of gravity has not yet attained a decent footing among them. For they live not in the world; they live in the universe. They can see what is behind a mountain, but they can not see what is before their eyes. That is why, I think, they can better bear the burden of life. From the vantage of a sublimated resignation they see life as a whole. But that is why, too, when their vision fails or their resignation loses its divine support, they become irreconcilable, irrepressible, and absolutely irrational.

As subjects of the State, for instance, they have behind them centuries of submission checkered by anarchy and assassination. Blindly they adhere to authority, blindly they rebel against it. Their obedience and their insurgency are both born of religion,—prompted by the fanaticism of one faith or another. To be sure, they have often risen against tyrants, but against tyranny itself, seldom or never. They can see a throne, but not the things of which a throne is made.

On the other hand, they seldom lose, entirely and forever, their heritage of spiritual wisdom. And when they find it, after a religious upheaval or a period of political devastation, it soon becomes again a vital and vitalizing power. This is true of the past. But are they now in danger of losing it forever? I said that the Oriental mind, in its present state, can not encompass the vision of science. And the Orientals today can only see in science, in spite of all its seductions and promised blessings, a searchlight revealing distant material goals.

And they are beginning to see also that in the rush to reach these goals thousands fall at the first spreading point of light. Which is true. For if people have the will to strive, have they the power to sustain the will?

I doubt whether the Orientals have. And I doubt too whether the Occidentals, having the power, have also the wisdom to see when that power becomes an instrument of destruction instead of progress. For even as human machines fed from the inexhaustible power-house of Civilization, there is a course which the Orientals and the Occidentals can safely pursue,—a course that will save one people from the destructive effects of rust and another people from the more destructive effects of abrasion. For indolence and strenuosity are the two poles of one evil. And if a machine in disuse is a loss, an abused machine is the forerunner of losses manifold.

But who in the Western world to-day, where accident risks are reduced to a minimum or covered by an insurance

company, prefers to go at a reasonable, rational pace to his goal, if only to enjoy the scenery or to better enjoy the leisure moments of life?—or to be able, at least, to hear a fellow traveller who might be calling on the way for help? Who, indeed, when science, like the horned Gentleman in Faust, holds out before us every day a new temptation?

And even the Oriental stands bewildered, bewitched. He would turn back, if he could. He would follow, even to the end, if he did not have to run. But he will learn to read the directions—begin even with the hornbook—and take his time about it. If he fails eventually, however, in mastering the details of science or in grasping the immense scope of its vision or in the practical use of the machinery of progress, his failure should not be looked upon as a sign of hopeless incompetence or degeneration. His failure is the triumph of something innate in him, which, in spite of his yielding to the material seductions of the times, prevents him from becoming a

human machine. And in this failure is a lesson for the people of the West, if they would profit by it.

I said that the Oriental mind is saturated with traditions. But the Occidental mind, no matter how modern, how insurgent, is not wholly free from it. Nor can it or should it be. In fact, every nation has its traditions, which illumine its history and enrich its life. From tradition springs the flower of culture. On it chiefly depends the cultivation of the character, the customs and manners, of a people. There is this difference, however, between the Oriental and Occidental nations: the first allow their traditions to grow to seed, to run wild and impoverish the soil, while the latter seldom neglect its cultivation. In other words, the Eastern people allow their traditions to accumulate throughout the centuries, without ever attempting to reduce or overhaul the pile, while the Western people seldom hesitate to abandon what has become more or less effete in the process of acquiring or creating new traditions.

And in this eliminating and sifting process is a lesson for the Orientals, if they would profit by it.

VII

CHANGE AND EXCHANGE

WHATEVER the characteristics of the age we live in, its principal tendency is one of exchange—exchange of culture as well as commodities. We give of our surplus for what we receive of the surplus of others. And not infrequently our own products, whether of the mind or the machine, undergo, as they pass from hand to hand, a modification, a transformation, which makes them welcome again at our door. Our luxuries come back to us as necessities; our enthusiams, as firm resolutions; our ideals, as practical standards of living.

And consciously or not, something is always being done to guard against a break in the circle. One wave is followed by another and the circling stream is ever flowing between the civilized nations of the world. Apparently it dries up sometimes in certain places; but in reality it has only

changed its direction. And now and then is a new source of abundance and overflow. And now and then too, by a mysterious interaction of forces, the stream reverses its course.

The new source to-day is America; and the mighty currents, which flowed from the East to the West in the past, are now flowing from the West to the East. There is always too a counter-current of different temperature which tempers the stream and moderates its speed. And in this is the essense of exchange; in this is the assurance of the balance, the sanity, in fact, of nations.

When the stream of civilization flowed in the past from the East, the cradle of religion, the counter-currents flowed from Venice, the cradle of trade, from Cordova, the cradle of reason, from Geneva, the cradle of intellectual freedom. But these in time so increased in volume and power that they dominated, overwhelmed the original westward flowing currents. The stream, therefore, not only changes its

course, but also its quality, its temper, its spirit.

In other words, it once flowed from the fountain head of the soul—it was essentially all soul. It flows to-day from the fountain head of the mind—it is essentially all mind. But just as it was tempered in the past with material and intellectual counter-currents, it is tempered to-day with a counter-current of spirituality.

This interaction of forces has curious results. For while the Western world is experiencing at present a spiritual revival, the East is going through the puerperal pains of nationalism and freedom. But there is a tendency in both worlds of adopting measures that the other has renounced, of accepting what has been proven to be false or impractical, of renovating and wearing what has been long discarded. Moreover, in their eagerness to imbibe the spirit of the times or to harness for their benefit both its currents and counter-currents, the Orientals are in danger of losing the most precious heritage of their civiliza-

tion and their culture.

I spoke in the preceding chapter of the wisdom, the necessity of constantly cultivating our national traditions, of applying to them even the eliminating process. But there are certain old traditions which never become effete and which no nation can abandon with profit to itself and to the world. As the tradition, for instance, of the handicrafts in the East, which is being rapidly undermined by the introduction of modern machinery. Orientals do not realize that even in the West there is a growing protest against the universal use of the machine,—against the lethal effects of purely mechanical power. And in their eagerness to imitate us in all things, to rival us in production, they are depriving the world of the artistic and beautiful things of the Orient. Japan, where everything is being foreignized, Europeanized, is a noted example. The machine there is fast replacing the dexterous hands of the artisan; the atelier is being transformed into a factory; the merchant is usurping

the place of the man of talent; the quaint bazaar is becoming a market-place of brummagem; the mould is destroying the spirit of invention; and uniformity will ultimately banish the creative genius of the race. It would be a pity, a calamity, indeed, if the soul of the Oriental, which he puts into his work, were to be destroyed by the hustling, strenuous, money-making spirit of the present day West.

And it would be disastrous were we in the West to abandon that noble tradition of the mind, which is the heritage of scientific research, the fruit of intellectual evolution, in an effort to grasp and acquire the stuffy and oft times pernicious occultism of the Orient. Our intellectual emancipation, with its panoply of rationalism and its bulwarks of freedom, can be preserved, however, without having to go to the extremes of pragmatism or to become absolutely material.

Machinery, or the machine-made system of living is defeating of the higher purpose of life. And to impose it upon the Orient

is to rob its people of the principal source of all their treasures. And also of their finer qualities, their patience, ease and contentment as well as their soft and gentle manners. For even a thick layer of traditions, which may be productive, among better things, of tropic indolence and fatality, is better than no tradition at all. And as between a modern Oriental who has lost his astractive qualities, his native virtues, who has relinquished the purer spiritual heritage of his race and an Oriental of the old type, however steeped in superstition and religious cant, I, for one, prefer the latter.

But both will find new inspiration and power, if they turn, not to the gods of materialism, not to the masters of the Machine, but to the torch-bearers of intellectual and spiritual progress lighted by the higher mind and fed by the purer spirit of Europe and America. This is the noble tradition, which, in every social and political upheaval, should be preserved and upheld. It is a tradition that never becomes effete; and though only a few uphold it in

times of stress and storm, it never fails ultimately of its purpose.

For the national spirit in its purity and vigor, is the spirit of individuals representative of its traditions and its culture. This is so even in America, despite the deafening noise of its colossal machinery. Like Greece and Rome, America is developing itself from a conflux of various nations and antithetical elements. The Melting Pot certainly has a soul. And this soul will certainly have a voice. And the voice of America, it can safely be said without exaggerating potentialities, is destined to become the voice of the world. Its culture, too, its arts and its traditions, which, in spite of the present passion of Americanization, are being colored and shaded, impregnated with alien influences, will embody the noblest expression of truth and beauty that the higher spirit of the Orient and the Occident combined is capable of conceiving. They will embody also a universal consciousness, multifarious, multicolor, prismatic.

"Every nation," says Renan, "called to higher destinies ought to form a complete little world including within it the opposite poles." And while every people has its own traditions, which differ more or less according to the national, social and historical influences acting upon them, they all find a common soil in America and an uncommon hospitality. And from these traditions, developing gradually into a homogeneity all-embracing, will spring the culture and the consciousness that will make America, not only a great national power, but, what is greater, an international entity.

The Oriental will better recognize himself in it as well as the European. They will find their spirit reflected in its prismatic nationalism. And the American, by the same token, will be mistaken for an Oriental in the Orient, for a European in Europe, though not for any other but an American at home. For his national traditions, guided by a superior international purpose, will represent the wholesome and

vital traditions of all the civilized people of the world. And a nation with a thick layer of traditions, is, as a rule, richer in customs and more refined in manners. Hence the cosmopolitanism of the American of the future. Hence too his culture, which will harmonize with, nay, re-inforce, the culture of every race. This may take a hundred or two hundred years, but it is bound to come. It is the ultimate destiny of the Melting Pot—its future soul and voice.

VIII

CITIZEN AND YOGI

FROM the revolutionary turmoil and shifting, transitory conditions that are common to-day to both the Orient and the Occident, something is bound to arise to bridge the gulf that otherwise exists between them. The backgrounds of popular movements are different, to be sure, but the central settings are the same. The starting points are not identical, but the end in view is unmistakable in both worlds. The Oriental, under a staggering burden of traditions, is suffering from too much conformity; the Occidental, under an ever increasing burden of legislation, is suffering from too much restraint. And while the one would reform his religion, the other, his laws, the object sought by both is the freedom of the individual.

But there is this difference in the aspirations of both people: the freedom of the individual is still the supreme end with the Oriental, in spite of all his present-day nationalist movements, while with the Oc-

cidental it is only a means to an end. Self-conscious to a degree of violence, we in the West proclaim our material needs; but the people of the East, in spite of their growing revolt, remain sub-consciously spiritual.

We have done away with religion, or the formulas, at least, of religion, which fettered and stunted the mind; we shall do away with the laws that impose upon us any material limitation or restraint. And thus, in absolute freedom only shall we succeed in the 'pursuit of happiness.' But the Oriental, however rebellious, will never look upon happiness as an object of pursuit. He is not capable of ever becoming downright material or absolutely unreligious.

Now, if we do not, though enjoying absolute freedom, succeed completely in the pursuit of happiness, if we should even fail, which is a common experience, what have we, having destroyed the bridges of the soul behind us, what have we, I ask to turn to for comfort and consolation?

Obviously, in this sense, the Oriental has the advantage. The Mohammedan, for instance, who is seeking to-day political and religious emancipation, may cease to go to Mecca on a pilgrimage, may deny the authority of the Khalif of Islam, may become a monogamist and a free-thinker, but he will continue to go to the mosque and though he has to stuff his ears with cotton against the pulpit pulings of a fanatical sheikh. He will continue to believe in Allah the author and the border-guard, so to speak, of human freedom. And should he 'pursue' happiness, instead of walking indifferently in its path, he will do so in his usual manner, that is casually, leisurely, and even circuitously. And should he fail, he has always something higher to pursue. In reverence and awe he will continue to seek the divine, which even in the darkest depths of fatalism, never loses for him its potency and grace.

In India the antithesis is more pronounced—the parallel more interesting. The Hindu says, I am a part of the whole,

which is God. The European is a part of the whole, which is the social system or the political machine. But whether as a citizen or a yogi, the individual has ceased to exist. And of the two absorbing, non-entitizing mediums, the political and the religious, no two right-thinking people will disagree as to which is nearer to the ideal of the soul. Personally, if I am to be effaced as a human entity, I prefer to submit to the spiritual process, whether it be based on a dogma, a vision, or a truth. And in this, I am not contenting myself with an illusion, as it might be supposed; on the contrary, I am pursuing the practical course of wisdom.

But complete effacement is not possible in either case. Nature is against it; supernature, or the supreme source of the light within us, frowns upon it. I am a part of the All, but I am free. And my freedom ends necessarily where the freedom of the All, whether God or the State, begins. This deep truth, which the Mohammedan recognizes, has been overlooked

in India and is scorned to-day in Europe and America. The anarchy of caprice prevailing in that part of the world is not better nor worse than the anarchy of thought prevalent in the western world. And strange as it may seem, the tendency of both people is to succeed each other in their failures as well as their triumphs. But the manifest destiny of the world is fortunately bound with the spirit of enlightenment and culture.

Hitherto, the political state with the Hindu, like the divine state with the European, has been more or less negligible. Hence the material supremacy of the one and the spiritual abnormalities of the other. Hence, too, the failure of both as individuals. For whether in Nirvana, in Fatalism, or in the State, the dwarfing and effacing tendency is the same. If the citizen, therefore, could be taught to appreciate the yogi's abstractions and the yogi, the citizen's political creed,—if a compromise between them and a rapport are possible,—there is hope for the accession

of the individual to his primal state, where he will retain his pristine dignity and maintain himself as a human entity in the divine and political systems of the world, without being below or above them, subordinate or superior. He will build within their boundaries, the castle, the fortress of his freedom.

But to build it on a political fiction is as bad as building it on a religious chimera. For whether as an instrument in the hands of a government or in the hands of a spiritual hierarchy, man is equally a slave. Indeed, the 'part-of-the-whole' idea, when announced and accepted as a dogma or a law, is a libel upon humankind, an insult to its innate nobility. No, the individual is not a means to an end.

What avails it to know that I am free, if I can not realize this freedom in a definite, specific existence? But can it be realized wholly by a revolt only against a hierarchy or a state? It depends upon the nature and scope of the revolt. If we are concerned in breaking the fetters that

are fastened upon our bodies and souls by external agencies only, we are doomed to failure. But if we become aware of the fetters, which we, in the sub-consciousness of centuries of submission, have fastened upon the spirit within us and strive to free ourselves of them first, then we are certain to triumph.

For freedom of the spirit is the corner-stone of all freedom. And this can be attained only by realizing its human limitations and recognizing its divine claim. It might be said too that freedom is to spirit what gravity is to matter. It is inherent in it and limited, yea, fettered by it. To know and recognize this truth, is to rise to the highest form of freedom. Epictetus the slave was free. Socrates in prison was nevertheless free. Jesus on the cross was absolutely free.

But this transcendentalism, some will object, is not practical with the modern spirit of progress. It is the metaphysical philosopher's idea that freedom of the spirit is only the consciousness of freedom.

If this were so, to follow the objection, then the Hindu has attained the ideal state and our modern civilization is a hollow mockery. In a sense, this is true. But the freedom of the Hindu, who is steeped in spiritual cant and quackery, is nothing now but a sublimated resignation. Nor would he be better off, if, in his triumph of revolt, he substituted it for political freedom. His salvation, the salvation of man, is in the recognition of the divine link between the two. To detach them or to seek only the realization of one of them, has the tendency of making of man either an ogre or a myth. If the one is made the complement of the other, however, nay, if spiritual freedom is recognized as the basis of political freedom, the highest degree of emancipation is then possible.

Further, to make my meaning plain. I am free to go the length of my freedom, I admit. But is it not a common human experience that doing so, I reach a point where I find myself powerless, where I realize that I am imprisoned in time and

space? Here are my material limitations; and only knowledge or the recognition of my spiritual potentialities, can save me from the pangs of sorrow and disappointment. Indeed, there is in man an infinite possibility of spiritual development. And if only for this reason, he should not be sacrificed to the state or to a spiritual hierarchy or to the species.

IX

THE CURIOSITY OF THE OCCIDENTAL

CURIOSITY with the Occidentals, though it degenerates at times into a vulgar inquisitiveness, is a commendable quality of the mind. It is accepted as a shiboleth of culture; it is condoned as an avowal of ignorance; it is welcomed as a bid for intellectual or even social intimacy: but it is seldom looked upon as a breach of etiquette.

But with the Orientals, curiosity is decidedly bad manners. Accept the exterior and divine the interior, is generally the prevailing humor. Indeed, the curious one is invariably looked upon with either suspicion or disdain. He is shunned as a beggar, rebuked as a thief. For the Oriental would prefer a man to pick his purse than to pick his heart or mind. Where the impulse, however, is irresistible, defying, the custom is to apply the subtle, circuit-

ous method. That is why, I suppose, so much more is accomplished in a given time by the people of the western world.

The tendency in one case is to overtax the imagination, in the other, to overtax the mind. The Oriental, it might be said, grows by repression, the Occidental, by expression. But both methods, to be sure, do not exclude the possibility of a morbid growth. On the contrary, they stimulate it.

The Oriental's curiosity about nature, for instance, is transformed into superlatives of admiration. He approaches it ecstatically, poetically and revels in its external beauty and loveliness. The Occidental approaches it designedly, scientifically and tries to get at the secret of its power to transform it into material well-being. The difference is not only in the point of view, but in the procedure as well.

The reaction is not always startling, nor always agreeable. A Persian and a Parisian were dining one day with a French woman in a Paris restaurant. She was of a reticent beauty, affecting the mysterious.

She spread a banquet of her studied demure charms before both her admirers, but was very careful not to unveil her soul. The Parisian talked to her in the *argot* of the French novel, which she understood and accepted at its face value; the Persian addressed her in a language of repressed emotions, which she likely misunderstood, but better appreciated. The Parisian amused her with his undisguised curiosity, the Persian attracted her with a silent something that was burrowing perhaps under her feet or secretly fingering the forbidding veil of her mystery.

And she was least likely to mistake the motive that wore a mask. She feared the Oriental, it is true, but she was fascinated by him. For she felt that to him she was, above all and beneath all, a woman and, therefore, a mystery. And as such, she should be reverently approached or austerely eschewed. The Persian's curiosity, if he had any, permitted of no other alternative. The result was that her fear and suspicion, although he did not recognize her

intellectual attainments and her brilliancy of mind, were not devoid of a certain quality of respect, secret or expressed. And that is because he was, though obviously incurious, unquestionably sincere. The Parisian, on the other hand, though his curiosity was engaging, animating,—though he delighted in the banquet she spread before him of her intellectual charms and was lavish in his adulation,—could not but betray the insincerity that wore for its secret purpose the mask of culture.

Even with the occidentals, curiosity may be complex in its origin and significance. It is the instigator of all shades of moods and manners. For whether direct or artful, it may be innate or acquired or assumed. And it may be actuated by self-interest, by pride, and sometimes by snobbery. In the first, one wishes to know and to profit by the knowledge; in the second, one seeks knowledge only to know what others ignore; while in the third, the curious one is but the slave of fashion.

There is still another phase to this peck-

ing tendency of the mind. Often in society, curiosity is but a kind of espionage; it is indisputably the handmaiden of gossip. But clothed in good manners, it passes as one of the excellences of human intercourse; and not infrequently it engenders scandal and brings about the ruin of an established home or fortune.

On the other hand, there is the individual that affects an incuriousness only to impress upon us a real, or to flaunt a fictitious, superiority. When one is well travelled, well read,—has had a varied and rich experience,—has tasted of all the cups and courses of life; is as familiar amidst the superstitious squalor of Calcutta as in the high-lackered halls of London or New York; is terribly at ease with the fallaheen of Egypt as with the dons of Oxford, one's curiosity is seldom moved. But even in its latencies and repressions, in its immobility, however serene, it can be provoking, irritating. And what is worse, it can be insincere.

The gentleman in the centre of the

drawing room, surrounded by a knot of admirers, has wonderful dignity and poise, is to the manner born. Yes, indeed. He is one of the celebrities of the day:—a poet, scholar, diplomat and an illustrious citizen of the Republic. But when you are relating in his presence some curious instance of racial degeneracy or superiority in the aborigines of Yucatan, or some idiomatic vernacular enormities of a religious revival in America, or some anthropologic anomalies in the Bulus of Central Africa, he listens patronizingly and nods with an all-knowing brow, to be sure; but when he gets back to his library, he will hasten, I promise you, to the dictionary or the encyclopedia to look up a word or a name he deliberately remembered which had escaped his circumambient comprehension. His lack of curiosity is commendable, indeed; but you wish, after having politely unbuttoned your mind and bowed before the image of his sublime reserve, that he would condescend at least to an interrogation.

The incuriousness of the Oriental is only partly akin to this. For while the absurd gravity of the venerable sheikh might sit amidst profundities unmoved, indifferent, serene, there is little or nothing behind it to spur him to a dictionary or an encyclodia or even a book of travel. Whether in the East or in the West, there is something unpleasant, indecorous—I had almost said indecent—in the attitude of these culture-conscious princes of dignity and poise. Even at best, it is an attitude that provokes hostility. It argues against the 'sweetness and light' of culture. And when you are certain that your words in the end will cozen out of the lips of reserve but an exclamation of *mashallah,* you turn with alarcity to a *hammal* or a *fakir* instead; or to a dapper clerk or a grocer, when you know that your remarks are to be punctuated by Solemn Dignity with the vapidities of 'how-curious' or the vaguenesses of 'how-interesting'.

X

THE LYING ORIENTAL

THERE is a parasite in man, which no amount of energy and labor can wholly exterminate. It creeps through the complex structure of modern life, clings instinctively to every available thread of human intercourse, and finally, like a silk worm, weaves its own cocoon in the heart only to emerge from it better armed.

For no matter how abounding our energy, how productive our labors, we find at a certain stage of our achievements that external agencies, often, it is true, of our own making, are unremittingly assiduous in our service. A man of fortune can not stop his money from doing his work; a successful man of genius can not place a ban upon his reputation; an inventor is helpless against the ever increasing activities of his invention; and even a laborer, with recognized honesty and skill, can not tell how much of his savings he actually earned with the sweat of his brow.

Thus we live more or less upon our own

reputation or upon the reputation of our people. And often we suffer from the reactions of moral and material forces, which, passing out of our hands, become uncontrollable or are distorted in the hands of others. We give, we produce, we create; but what we receive in return is either rediculous or fabulous. Something is abroad that contributes materially to our triumph or defeat—that makes the one grotesque, the other tragic

A truthful man, for instance, may be of a people that is noted for lying and equivocation; a dishonest man may be of a race that has earned a reputation for truthfulness. Herein the parasite thrives. For to succeed, the one need not overtax his ingenuity, the other need not adhere strictly to the traditional virtue of his people. Both find resources or a name, at least, which they can freely utilize. The Oriental, though he be of the lowest quality of mind and soul, is credited with imagination and intuitive wisdom; while the Occidental's integrity, though he be a jail bird, is often

taken for granted.

Moreover, certain Occidental minds acquire a kind of candor which is more insidious than the craftiness of Orientals. And it has the gesture of finality that characterizes the advertisement or the poster of modern times. It is an asset which no Oriental subtlety and chicanery can equal. For what is so profitable as a reputation greatly advertised? Or even so damning?

The Oriental, when he tells the truth, is seldom believed. The Occidental, when he tells a lie, is seldom doubted. The naive truthfulness of the one goes for nothing, while the specious frankness of the other seldom fails of its purpose. Thus, we pay dearly for our prejudices as for our illusions. But even though we concede that truth-speaking with the Occidental is the rule, with the Oriental, the exception, we must not fail to observe the discrepancies in both standards. We are on our guard against craftiness however cleverly concealed; but we are often duped by a frank-

ness ingeniously conceived and practiced.

Indeed, we suffer more from the implicit confidence we repose in the slyboot who has earned a reputation for candor and straightforward dealing. We feed the parasite in him. And it is a poor and unprofitable skepticism that only works one way. Honesty itself ceases to be a virtue when it is made a means to an ignoble end. And the Oriental, whose craftiness is often practised in self-defense, negatively, seldom regards it as a positive method, a material virtue, an instrument of success.

It was Bismark, I think, who conceived the idea of sometimes speaking the truth to deceive his antagonists. An originality in political tactics which the Oriental diplomat might well imitate, and to better advantage. And when the Orienatl merchant takes to advertising, he will further realize the advantage of lapsing periodically into truth. His wonted subtlety will then become more subtle, more complex, more confounding. And the people of the West, in changing their point of view regarding

his veracity, will be adding to his capital while he lounges resignedly upon his divan.

For what virtue can not be distorted by a motive, debauched by an end? To lie in self-defense is certainly more pardonable than to lie in defending or promoting our material interests. Besides, no one is capable of pursuing an unchanging course in this or that direction: neither equivocation nor forthrightness can be made elastic enough to cover our shame or our honor. Silence alone can do that. It is certain, however, that intermittent honesty is worse than unremitting rascality; for a man who now and then is truthful that he might the better palm off his pinchback on the world, is more detestable indeed than he who lies instinctively and only incidentally tells the truth.

And the parasite is active in them both, for they both depend more or less on the fiat of an assumption. Indeed, we are all disposed to sit back at times and let our reputation do our work—the work rather of a commercial traveller, a press-agent or

a drudge. How much, in fact, we pay for a name. And yet, a good name is a partnership between the individual and society. Nay, it is too often a Trust whose stock is watered with gumption and gullibility.

The business man, the opera singer, the moving-picture actor, who start by making a high bid for our confidence or admiration and succeed in getting it, invariably end by boasting in electric superlatives on the house-tops of the city—they convert our confidence into cash. And in the end, we find ourselves paying more for the claptrap and flamboyancy than the real object they herald—more for the 'blurb' than the song.

It is not so bad in the Orient, where a name is not a substantial element in values. A Persian rug, for instance, is a Persian rug and not one made by the great Mirza of Shiraz. But the Orientals, as I said, are fast acquiring the trick of sophistication. And what is worse, they are inclined now and then to make truth-speaking an overture, at least, to their dealings. But

whether with them or with us, a certain degree and form only of the truth, is more pernicious indeed than falsehood itself.

Once in Damascus I saw a merchant selling an English tourist some ancient coins, which were probably made in Germany. Their patina seemed authentic and real. They even smelled of the earth. But the merchant sorted them out into two lots, carefully sifting and examining, and finally said, These are false, my Lord, these are genuine. And he swore by Allah and the Prophet that he was speaking the truth. Which was quite unexpected by the tourist, who was much impressed. He was in fact taken in. For by admitting that some of the coins were not genuine, the wily shop-keeper was able to sell to mylord some of the others, which were equally false. I spoke with him afterwards and he admitted to me—told me the other half of the truth—that the European who sold him the antiquified coins taught him also the trick.