

The Modern Mystic

AND MONTHLY SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol. 2 No. 10

NOVEMBER 1938

2/-

A MONTHLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF MYSTICISM AND THE OCCULT SCIENCES

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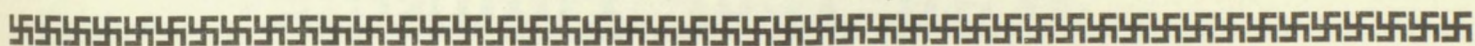
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OUR POINT OF VIEW. POEM. FRENCH.

The December Modern Mystic

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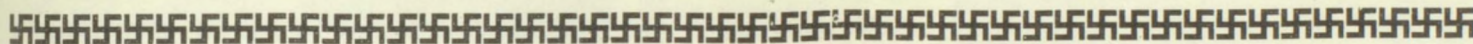
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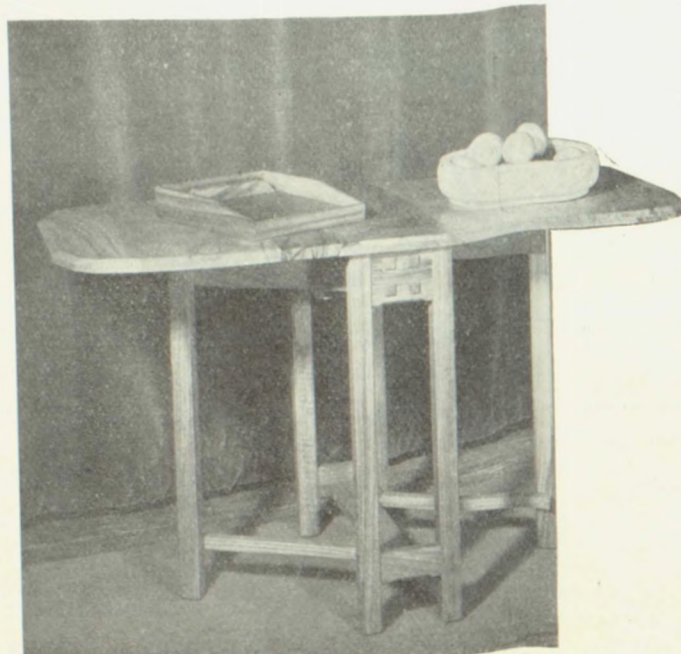
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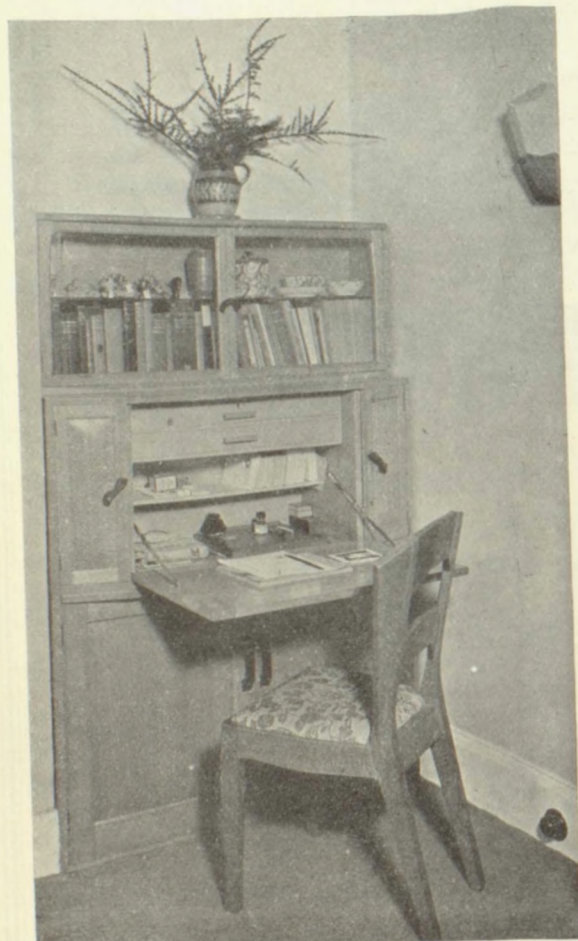
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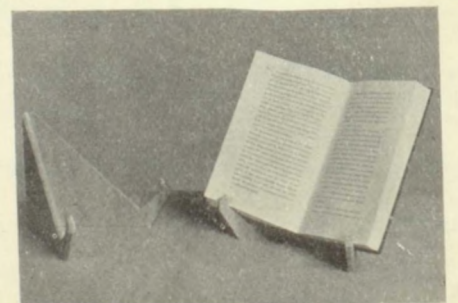
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Our Point of View

AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK SHOULD BE OF interest to those who have studied the works of Dr. Steiner, and especially those who are intrigued by the actual architecture of the Goetheanum at Dornach, Switzerland, is holding an exhibition of paintings in London. Herr Arild Rosenkrantz was associated with Dr. Steiner in the building of the first Goetheanum, which differed in many respects from the present structure. Nevertheless, it was accounted a most unique building. Herr Rosenkrantz's work is on view until November 28th at the Beaux Arts Gallery, 7 Bruton Place, Bruton Street, London, W.1.

Readers who are members of the Rosicrucian Order (A.M.O.R.C.) and who live near Birmingham, England, should note that meetings are now being held on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. at 22 Rotten Park Road, Edgbaston. Lectures and discussions have been arranged. Those requiring further information should write to Mr. B. B. Joseph at the above address.

The Bacon Society, because of the recent attempt to locate in Westminster Abbey the tomb of Spenser, has come in for a certain amount of publicity. Not all of it was as intelligent as we could have wished. Although for us the question of who wrote the Shakespeare plays is still an open one—and, we must add, a quite unimportant one—there are no grounds for the opposition, either open or implied, with which the proposal was met. The *Daily Telegraph*, usually sane and conservative in its expression of editorial opinion, on Saturday, November 5th, offered the following comments :

“It is a relief to all who hold the memory of Edmund Spenser in honour to know that the attempt to open his grave has been abandoned, though it be for the sufficient reason that the exact site of his sepulture has not been determined. The hypothesis which inspired this enterprise was altogether too unsubstantial to justify it. After more than 300 years, was it to be supposed that such perishable things as pens and papers would survive the processes of decay? And if by a miracle they did, is it credible that writing would remain legible—so legible that the signature of William Shakespeare (if such a signature were found) could be compared with the authentic signature of Francis Bacon, and a conjectural identity established? Not that such a result would settle the question the resurrectionists wished to solve.

“It is now urged that the wrong grave was opened; but it is to be hoped that in response to that contention no further excavations in the Poets' Corner will be undertaken. Otherwise we may presently be confronted with a demand for the opening of Shakespeare's tomb at Stratford, in defiance of the curse invoked on anyone 'that moves my bones'—a curse which certainly helped to keep the tomb inviolate in a more superstitious if not a more reverential age. *In the opinion of most people, these exhumations of the immortal*

dead savour of an impiety which no archaeological or literary curiosity can justify. As Horatio said, in answer to Hamlet's graveyard speculations, 'that were to be too curious.'”

How very English! It is true that some of our failings that are the joy of foreigners happen also to be symbols of our very real strength, but for unconscious hypocrisy could this editorial be bettered? The italics are of course ours. Firstly, the curse on anyone “that moves my bones” is a pretty strong argument in favour of the Baconians for a reason too obvious to need mention. But the prize goes to the pious admonition aimed at the archaeologists. For we have the clearest remembrance of the laudatory notices given to our Egyptian excavators whose defiance of Pharaohs' curses resulted in additions to our knowledge of the ancient civilisation. Why is it right to unearth Tutankamen and wrong to disturb Spenser? Or perhaps the curse of Shakespeare is considered more efficacious than that of a Pharaoh? Whilst we still consider that Francis Bacon did more than sufficient to ensure his immortality, and that whether he wrote the plays is a question of no great moment, we cannot resist the thought that the difficulties experienced in locating the tomb of Spenser on which such great hopes rested is not without significance.

A month or so ago we referred in these notes to a new book by Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, which is as “occult” a book as any written since the war. Its significance cannot be over-rated, for here we have the phenomenon of a first-class scientific mind, the scion of a nobly scientific family, suddenly doing what amounts to a right-about-face. The author of *Brave New World* has joined the ranks of that small company which includes Dunne, Eagle, and others who, via objective science, are infusing into our civilisation a turn of thought that cannot fail to be beneficial. And to these we must now add the name of J. B. Priestley. It is true that Priestley's plays, *I Have Been Here Before* and *Time and The Conways* are inspired almost solely by Mr. Dunne's *Experiment with Time* and *The Serial Universe*—books with which neither the professional mathematicians nor occultists are in full agreement—yet they have great significance. It is quite true that both Huxley and Priestley would object to being labelled “occultists,” nor have we any desire to drag them reluctantly into the fold. We are merely happy to recognise their work.

The foregoing paragraph is the result of a visit to this office by a publisher's representative who courteously enquired why we had not found space to review two books sent to us by his firm. The fact is that very few good books are being published. Opening *Time and Tide* (issue of November 5th) and turning to “Notes on the Way” contributed by Mr. Priestley, we read this :

“The creative writer is now in a dreadful hole. . . . If he is a novelist and wishes to work on a fairly large scale, he does not know where to find his subject. He cannot take the world as it is to-day, because it is changing so rapidly.

If he decides to turn to the past, which at least will stay still long enough to be thought about, he knows he will be called an 'escapist.' These are the reasons why so little important work is being done. Even the greatest cannot find a way out.

"Thus, however much one may admire Thomas Mann (as I do, most fervently), it would be useless to deny that his last book, *Joseph in Egypt*, is far below the level of *The Magic Mountain*, or even *Buddenbrooks*. How could it be otherwise? A novelist cannot work in an earthquake. Those people who grumble because no new masterpieces are arriving should keep the world quiet long enough for a masterpiece or two to be written. And don't let anybody try to counter this with the theory that in a time of great change and stress the creative writer ought to be dashing off the most astonishing pieces of literature. This is pure theory, not borne out by history at all. What was the age that produced the most great fiction? The Mid-Victorian."

In the *Sunday Dispatch* for November 6th, Mr. Priestley enlarged on the subject, "When I am dead." His rejection of Theosophy is based solely upon the fact that the theory of Karma and Reincarnation really do solve his problem. He says:

"Had I the space I could produce reasons why I do not believe in it, but I will content myself with saying that I have never *felt* it to be true, and that it seems to me too neatly logical, too obviously a product of our own minds, to fit the scale of this vast and complicated universe."

However illogical it may appear to be, Mr. Priestley's is the standard objection offered by every intelligent sceptic. He is not willing to believe that the infinite can be comprehended by the finite. He disposes of the materialistic concept with the ease common to all artistic folk. The real illogicality only appears when we find him accepting the time-series of Mr. Dunne. For is it not clear that if Mr. Dunne is right, then Mr. Priestley is merely accepting a theory which satisfies him and in that respect cannot be differentiated from the reincarnation concept? But if, as we suspect, Mr. Priestley has confined himself to the *letter* of the karma-reincarnation theory, and has failed to apply it to the cycles of history, then he has merely examined one of the cases for survival which varies in attractiveness according to the temperament of the enquirer. For reincarnation looked upon only in that way has nothing to offer in explanation of the abnormal times in which Mr. Priestley, in common with the rest of us, has incarnated. He could ask himself by what arbitrary law he is here now instead of say in the heyday of Victorian literature. The answer at which he may conceivably arrive, if not scientifically demonstrable, he may at least *feel* to be true, and that, despite the ingeniousness of Mr. Dunne, is something that numerical symbols have not yet succeeded in evolving.

• • •

We are perfectly aware that our frequent references to the work of those (contemporary and otherwise) who have no claim to be called "mystics" and "occultists" is dangerous, because there are certain "die-hards"—members of various recognised occult societies—whose minds are incapable of appreciating what is implicit in the teachings they espouse—viz., that *all* phenomena is capable of "occult" explanation, and that occultism alone is capable of explaining ALL phenomena. And the word "all" includes not only human activities—work, the arts, sciences,

economics—but human beings, their thoughts, psychologies, conduct. We are also aware that our insistence on contemporary events, their cyclic and historical importance are inseparably connected with those human beings who stand responsible for them, that they, too, are working out a karmic destiny, and that it is our business to try and understand them. When Blavatsky pointed out that her work is not for good Christians whose faith is pure, all-embracing and sufficient, she undoubtedly meant it literally and in the best possible sense. Neither is this journal published for those students of occultism who believe that all truth is contained in the letter of the teachings to which they owe allegiance. The Theosophical Society, the Anthroposophical Society and Rosicrucian Order are in no need of our assistance. This journal is published only for such of their respective members as are sufficiently interested in current events to wish in some measure to understand them in the light of those teachings; to acquaint them with the relative value and present-day significance of the work of other societies, and to make them realise that world events to-day are vastly more important than the political figures on whom attention is centred. For the rest, the principal object of this journal is to offer the intelligent layman an alternative way of life, richer, fuller, than that offered by a church and science both of which have crumbled before the onslaught of events which neither can adequately explain. Whether as a result of reading this journal he decides that his naturally scientific or artistic turn of mind inclines to an inlet of the spirit by way of Dr. Steiner, or that an acceptance of the *Secret Doctrine* resolves his hitherto incompatible ideas of modern "progress" and the wisdom of the East and of antiquity, or that the psychological import of the Rosicrucian rituals leads to an expansion of the understanding, then we shall have considered our self-imposed task justified.

• • •

If the societies mentioned above are not grateful to the MODERN MYSTIC, then they ought to be. Two of them, doubtless because of a recognition of a very grave danger, are not against publicising their activities and books. "Magic" is being boosted in the United States quite openly. And if it is replied that many queer things succeed in gaining a footing in that young country, we answer that in this case the protagonists have either gone there personally from Europe, or have written their screeds on this side of the Atlantic. No one but a fool would seriously accept the statement of a so-called "magician" that he teaches only "white magic"; unfortunately, before the initiations are ended it is too late for the student to do much about it. There is nothing known to so-called "white magic" that cannot be obtained less furtively by intelligent study of the teachings of the societies we have mentioned. That simple text, "By their deeds shall ye know them," is the student's most trusty guide. The occultist whose *only* qualifications are intellectual is almost disqualified by the fact. Close adherence to the simplicity of Christ's teachings, kindness, and the determination to do as we would be done by, is the first and last qualification. All else is vanity.

• • •

Miss Grace Moore's concert at the Albert Hall on November 1st was a great triumph—for Hollywood publicity. The newspapers almost without exception went into ecstasies as they described the quite competent though very small voice which, had it never been heard on the sound-film, would have had to be content with a Wigmore Hall recital. But Miss Moore knows the

public. The fact that her performance was in the Albert Hall and not "on the set" in no wise deterred her from using the spotlight. This recital would not have warranted notice in this journal had not Miss Moore shared the evening with one of the world's finest piano virtuosi—Walter Rummel. This splendid artist chose a programme more or less suited to the occasion, but the applause which greeted the Chopin group compared with that given to the *Rigoletto Fantasia* by Liszt gave us the measure of the audience. Ninety per cent. were film fans who had probably never before listened to a front-rank pianist. Miss Moore's voice has a commendable lack of vibrato, but it has little warmth. If the public likes it sufficiently well to encourage her to continue making operatic films, that is all to the good.

Mr. W. J. E. Binnie, in his presidential address to the Institute of Civil Engineers on November 1st, imparted a little ancient history. Speaking of Hero who lived at Alexandria 2,000 years ago he said (as reported by the *News Chronicle*):

"Hero knew how to get comic effects from distorting mirrors. He knew the trick of throwing an image on to a stage by arranging parallel, horizontally-inclined mirrors and anticipated the famous 'Pepper's Ghost' trick. His books on 'Pneumatics' and 'Catoptrics' showed that he was a conjuror who would have rivalled Maskelyne and Cook. A fire engine was also built by Hero, as a sideline. It differed little from those in use not so long ago. The steam engine he invented was, it is true, merely a hollow sphere on an axle through which steam was admitted into pipes bent at right angles causing the sphere to revolve. Drills were known in Egypt 5,000 years ago. The world is round, we know, and so did Eratosthenes, Librarian of Alexandria, who died in 250 B.C. He also estimated its circumference. Cylinders, pistons, and valves were in use 2,000 years ago. Leonardo da Vinci, the great fifteenth-century painter, was also a distinguished military and civil engineer. He was the first man to experiment with flying. When his favourite mechanic was killed he abandoned his tests with flying machines of the heavier-than-air-type."

We feel that those readers who have expressed interest in the articles on music which from time to time have appeared in the MODERN MYSTIC will welcome the contribution in this issue from Mr. Havergal Brian, most of whose major orchestral compositions—excepting the *Gothic Symphony*—have been published by the famous German firm, Brietkopt and Hartel of Leipzig.

Our next issue completes Volume Two. It will be entirely different in format, profusely illustrated, and will be devoted to Stonehenge and Avebury. The size will be the same as usual. There is certain to be a larger demand for it, so please place an order with your newsagent at once for only a few extra copies will be printed. It will contain a complete cross index to the volume. Attention is drawn to the announcement elsewhere in this issue referring to binding cases for Volume Two. It may interest readers to know that during our second year of publication only 2 per cent. of the first year's subscribers failed to renew their subscriptions, whilst of course many entirely new readers have made the acquaintance of the journal. The MODERN MYSTIC has without any question a larger circulation than any other

(Continued in page 459)

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Christ in Flanders

by Honoré de Balzac

T A TIME SOMEWHAT INDETERMINATE in Brabantine history, connection between the island of Cadzant and the coast of Flanders was kept up by a boat used for passengers to and fro. The capital of the island, Middleburg, afterwards so celebrated in the annals of Protestantism, counted then hardly two or three hundred hearths. Rich Ostend was then an unknown harbour, flanked by a village thinly peopled by a few fisherfolk, and poor dealers, and pirates who plied their trade with impunity. Nevertheless, the borough of Ostend, composed of about twenty houses and three hundred cottages, cabins, and hovels—made with the remains of wrecked ships—rejoiced in a governor, a militia, a gallows, a convent, and a burgomaster, in fact, all the institutions of advanced civilisation. Who was reigning at that time in Brabant, Belgium, and Flanders? On this point tradition is mute.

Let us admit that this story is strangely imbued with that vagueness, indefiniteness, and love of the marvellous, which the favourite orators of Flemish vigils love to intermingle in their legends, as varied in poetry as they are contradictory in detail. Told from age to age, repeated from hearth to hearth, by grandmothers and by story-tellers night and day, this chronicle has received each century a different colouring. Like those buildings planned according to the architectural caprice of each epoch, whose dark crumbling masses are a pleasure to poets alone, this legend would drive commentators, and wranglers over facts, words, and dates, to desperation. The narrator believes in it, as all superstitious souls in Flanders have believed in it, without being for that reason either more learned or more weak-minded. Only in the impossibility of harmonising all the different versions, here is the story, stripped perhaps of its romantic *naïveté*—for this it is impossible to reproduce;—but still, with its daring statements disproved by history, and its morality approved by religion, its fantastic flowers of imagination, and hidden sense which the wise can interpret each to his own liking. Let each one seek his pasture therein and take the trouble to separate the good grain from the tares.

The boat which served to carry over the passengers from the island of Cadzant to Ostend, was just about to leave the village. Before undoing the iron chain which held his boat to a stone on the little jetty where people embarked, the skipper blew his horn several times to call the loiterers, for this journey was his last. Night was coming on, the last fires of the setting sun scarcely gave enough light to distinguish the coast of Flanders or the tardy passengers on the island wandering along the earthen walls which surrounded the fields or among the tall reeds of the marshes. The boat was full. "What are you waiting for? Let us be off!" they cried. Just then a man appeared a few steps from the jetty. The pilot, who had neither heard nor seen him approaching, was somewhat surprised. The passenger seemed to have risen from the earth on a sudden. He might have been a peasant sleeping in a field, waiting for the hour for starting, whom the horn had woken up. Was it a thief? or was it some one from the Custom

House or police? When he arrived on the jetty to which the boat was moored, seven persons who were standing in the stern, hastened to sit down on the benches, in order to have them to themselves and prevent the stranger from seating himself among them. It was a sudden instinctive feeling, one of those aristocratic instincts which suggest themselves to rich people. Four of these personages belonged to the highest nobility of Flanders.

First of all, there was a young cavalier, with two beautiful greyhounds, wearing over his long hair a cap decked with jewels. He clinked his gilded spurs, and now and again curled his moustache, as he cast disdainful looks at the rest of the freight.

Then there was a proud damosel, who carried a falcon on her wrist and spoke only to her mother or an ecclesiastic of high rank, a relative, no doubt. These persons made as much noise talking together as if they were the only people on the boat. All the same, next to them sat a man of great importance in the country, a fat merchant from Bruges, enveloped in a large mantle. His servant, armed to the teeth, kept by his side two bags full of money. Beside them was a man of science, a doctor of the University of Louvain, with his clerk. These people, who all despised one another, were separated from the bows by the rowers' bench.

When the late passenger put his foot into the boat he gave a swift look at the stern, but when he saw no room there he went to seek a place among the people in the bows. It was the poor who sat there. At the sight of a man bareheaded, whose brown cloth coat and fine linen shirt had no ornament, who held in his hand neither hat nor cap, with neither purse nor rapier at his girdle, all took him for a burgomaster—a good and gentle man, like one of those old Flemings whose nature and simple character have been so well rendered by the painters of their country. The poor passengers welcomed the stranger with a respectful demeanour, which excited mocking whispers among the people in the stern. An old soldier, a man of toil and trouble, gave him his place on the bench, and sat himself at the end of the boat, keeping himself steady by putting his feet against one of the transverse beams which knit the planks together like the backbone of a fish.

A young woman, a mother with her little child, who seemed to belong to the working-class of Ostend, moved back to make room for the new-comer. In this movement there was no trace either of servility or disdain. It was merely a mark of that kindness by which the poor, who know so well how to appreciate a service, show their frank and natural disposition—so simple and obvious in the expression of all their qualities, good or bad.

The stranger thanked them with a gesture full of nobility, and sat down between the young mother and the old soldier. Behind him was a peasant with his son, ten years old. A poor old woman, with a wallet almost empty, old and wrinkled, and in rags—a type of misery and neglect—lay in the prow, crouched upon a coil of ropes. One of the rowers, an old sailor, who had known her when she was rich and beautiful, had let her get in for what the people so beautifully call "the love of God." "Thank you kindly, Thomas," the old woman had said; "I will say two *Paters* and two *Aves* for you in my prayers this evening."

The skipper blew his horn once more, looked at the silent country, cast the chain into his boat, ran along the side to the helm, took the tiller, and stood erect; then, having looked at the sky, called out in a loud voice to the rowers, when they were well in the open sea, "Row hard, make haste; the sea smiles evilly—the witch! I feel the swell at the helm and the storm at my wound." These words, spoken in the language of the sea—a tongue only understood of those accustomed to the sound of the waves—gave to the oars a hastened but ever-cadenced movement, as different from the former manner of rowing as the gallop of a horse from its trot. The fine people sitting at the stern took pleasure in seeing the sinuous arms, the bronzed faces with eyes of fire, the distended muscles, and the different human forms working in unison, just to get *them* the quicker over this narrow strait. So far from being sorry for their labour, they pointed out the rowers to each other, and laughing at the grotesque expressions which their exertion printed on their anxious faces. In the prow, the soldier, the peasant, and the old woman, regarded the mariners with that kind of compassion natural to people who, living by toil, know its hard anguish and feverish fatigue. Besides, being accustomed to life in the open air, they all divined by the look of the sky the danger which threatened them; so *they* were serious. The young mother was rocking her child to sleep, singing to it some old hymn of the church.

"If we *do* get over," said the old soldier to the peasant, "God will have taken a deal of trouble to keep us alive."

"Ah! He is master," said the old woman; "but I think it is His good pleasure to call us to Himself. Do you see that light, there?" and by a gesture of the head she pointed out the setting sun. Bands of fire streaked vividly the brown-red tinted clouds, which seemed just about to unchain a furious wind. The sea gave forth a suppressed murmur, a sort of internal groan, something like the growling of a dog whose anger will not be appeased.

After all Ostend was not far off. Just now the sky and the sea showed one of those sights to which it is impossible for words or painting to give longer duration than they have in reality. Human creations like powerful contrasts, so artists generally demand from nature its most brilliant aspects, despairing perhaps to be able to render the great and beautiful poetry of her ordinary appearance, although the human soul is often as profoundly moved by calm as by motion, by the silence as much as by the storm.

There was one moment when every one on the boat was silent and gazed on the sea and sky, whether from presentiment or in obedience to that religious melancholy which comes over nearly all of us at the hour of prayer, at the fall of day, at the moment when nature is silent and the bells speak. The sea cast up a faint, white glimmer, but changing like the colour of steel; the sky was mostly grey; in the west long narrow spaces looked like waves of blood, whereas in the east glittering lines, marked as by a fine pencil, were separated from one another by clouds, folded like the wrinkles on an old man's forehead. Thus the sea and the sky formed a neutral background, everything in half tints, which made the fires of the setting sun glare ominously. The face of nature inspired a feeling of terror. If it is allowable to interweave the daring hyperboles of the people into the written language, one might repeat what the soldier said, "Time is rolling away," or what the peasant answered, that the sky had the look of a hangman. All of a sudden the wind rose in the west, and the skipper, who never ceased to watch the sea, seeing it

swell towards the horizon, cried, "Ho, ho!" At this cry the sailors stopped immediately, and let their oars float.

"The skipper's right," said Thomas. The boat, borne on the top of a huge wave, seemed to be descending to the bottom of the gaping sea. At this extraordinary movement and this sudden rage of the ocean the people in the stern turned pale, and gave a terrible cry, "We perish."

"Not yet," answered the skipper quietly. At this moment the clouds were rent in twain by the force of the wind exactly above the boat. The grey masses spread out with ominous quickness from east to west, and the twilight, falling straight down through a rent made by the storm-wind, rendered visible every face. The passengers, the rich and the noble, the sailors and the poor, all stopped one moment in astonishment at the aspect of the last comer. His golden hair, parted in the middle on his tranquil, serene forehead, fell in many curls on his shoulders, and outlined against the grey sky a face sublime in its gentleness, radiant with divine love. He did not despise death; he was certain not to perish. But if at first the people at the stern had forgotten for an instant the tempest whose implacable fury menaced them, they soon returned to their selfish sentiments and lifelong habits. "It's lucky for him, that dolt of a burgomaster, that he does not know the danger we are all in. There he stands like a dog, and doesn't seem to mind dying," said the doctor.

Hardly had he completed this judicious remark when the tempest unchained its legions; winds blew from every side, the boat spun round like a top, and the sea swamped it.

"Oh, my poor child! my child! who will save my child?" cried the mother, in a heartrending voice.

"You yourself," replied the stranger. The sound of this voice penetrated the heart of the young woman, and put hope therein. She heard this sweet word, in spite of the raging of the storm, in spite of the shrieks of the passengers.

"Holy Virgin of Perpetual Succour, who art at Antwerp, I promise you twenty pounds of wax and a statue if you will only get me out of this," cried the merchant, falling on his knees upon his bags of gold.

"The Virgin is no more at Antwerp than she is here," replied the doctor.

"She is in heaven," said a voice which seemed to come forth from the sea.

"Who spoke?"

"The devil," said the servant; "he's mocking the Virgin of Antwerp."

"Shut up with your blessed Virgin," said the skipper to the passengers; "take hold of the bowls and help me get the water out of the boat. As to you," he continued, addressing the sailors, "row hard, we have a moment's grace, and in the devil's name, who has left you in this world until now, let us be our own Providence. This little strip of water is horribly dangerous, I know, from thirty years' experience. Is this evening the first time I have had a storm to deal with?" Then standing at the helm, the skipper continued to look alternately at the boat, the sea, and the sky.

"The skipper mocks at everything," said Thomas, in a low voice.

"Will God let *us* die with these wretched people?" asked the proud damsel of the handsome cavalier.

"No! no! Noble damsel, listen to me." He put his arm round her waist, and spoke in her ear. "I can swim—don't say

anything about it ; I will take you by your beautiful hair and bring you safely to the shore ; but I can save you only."

The damosel looked at her old mother ; the dame was on her knees asking absolution from the bishop, who was not listening to her. The cavalier read in the eyes of his beautiful mistress some faint sentiment of filial piety, so he said to her in a low voice, " Submit yourself to the will of God ; if He wishes to call your mother to Himself, it will be doubtless for her happiness—in the other world ;" he added, in a voice still lower, " and for ours in this."

The dame Rupelmonde possessed seven fiefs, besides the barony of Gâvres. The damosel listened to the voice of life, to the interests of love, speaking by the mouth of the handsome adventurer, a young miscreant who haunted churches, seeking for prey—either a girl to marry or else good ready money.

The bishop blessed the waves and ordered them to be calm, not knowing exactly what to do ; he was thinking of his concubine awaiting him with a delicate feast, perhaps at this moment in her bath perfuming herself, or arraying herself in velvet, and fastening on her necklaces and jewels. So far from thinking of the powers of the church, and consoling these Christians, and exhorting them to trust in God, the perverse bishop mingled worldly regrets and words of lust with the sacred words of the Breviary.

The light, which lit up the pale faces, showed all their varying expressions, when the boat was borne up into the air by a wave, or cast down to the bottom of the abyss ; then, shaken like a frail leaf, a plaything of the autumn wind, it cracked its shell, and seemed nigh to break altogether. Then, there were horrible cries alternating with awful silence.

The demeanour of the people seated in the prow of the boat contrasted singularly with that of the rich and powerful in the stern. The young mother strained her child to her bosom every time that the waves threatened to engulf the frail bark ; but she held to the hope with which the words of the stranger had filled her heart : each time she turned her eyes towards this man she drank in from his face a new faith, the strong faith of a weak woman, the faith of a mother. Living by the divine word, the word of love, which had gone forth from this man, the simple creature awaited trustfully the fulfilment of the sort of promise he had given her, and scarcely feared the tempest any more. Sticking to the side of the boat, the soldier ceased not to contemplate this singular being, on whose impassibility he sought to model his own rough, tanned face, bringing into play all his intelligence and strength of will, whose powerful springs had not been vitiated in the course of a passive mechanical life. He was emulous to show himself tranquil and calm. After the manner of this superior courage, he ended by identifying himself in some measure with the secret principle of its interior power. Then his imagination became an instinctive fanaticism, a love without limit, a faith in this man, like that enthusiasm which soldiers have for their commander when he is a man of power, surrounded with the glory of victories, marching in the midst of the splendid prestige of genius. The poor old woman said in a low voice, " Ah ! what a miserable sinner I am ! Have I not suffered enough to expiate the pleasures of my youth ? Miserable one, why hast thou led the gay life of a Frenchwoman ? why hast thou consumed the goods of God with the people of the Church, the goods of the poor 'twixt the drink shop and the pawn shop ? Ah ! how wicked I

was. Oh ! my God ! my God ! let me finish my hell in this world of misery. Holy Virgin, Mother of God, take pity on me."

" Console yourself, mother, God is not a Lombard ; although I have killed here and there good people and wicked, I do not fear for the resurrection."

" Ah ! Sir, how happy they are, those beautiful ladies who are near the bishop, holy man !" the old woman went on ; " they will have absolution from their sins. Oh ! if I could only hear the voice of a priest saying to me, ' Your sins are forgiven you,' I could believe him."

The stranger turned towards her, and his look, full of charity, made her tremble. " Have faith," he said, " and you will be saved."

" May God reward you, good sir," she answered. " If you speak truly, I will go for you and for me on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto, barefooted."

The two peasants, father and son, remained silent, resigned, and submitting to the will of God, as people accustomed to follow instinctively, like animals, the convulsions of nature.

So on one side there were riches, pride, knowledge, debauchery, crime, all human society such as it is made by arts, thought, and education, the world and its laws ; but also on this side, only shrieks, terror, the struggles of a thousand conflicting feelings, with horrible doubt—naught but the anguish of fear. And, towering above these, one powerful man, the skipper of the boat, doubting nothing, the chief, the fatalist king, making his own Providence, crying out for baling bowls and not on the Virgin to save him, defying the storm, and wrestling with the sea, body to body.

At the other end of the boat, the weak :—the mother, holding to her bosom a little child, who smiled at the storm :—a wanton, once gay, now given over to horrible remorse :—a soldier, scarred with wounds, without other reward than his mutilated life, as a price for indefatigable devotion ; he had hardly a morsel of bread, steeped in tears ; all the same he laughed at everything, and marched on without care, happy when he could drown his glory at the bottom of a pot of beer, or was telling stories thereof to wondering children. He commended gaily to God the care of his future. Lastly, two peasants, people of toil and weariness, labour incarnate, the work on which the world lives ; these simple creatures were guileless of thought and its treasures, but ready to lose themselves utterly in a belief ; having a more robust faith, in that they had never discussed or analysed it ; virgin natures, in whom conscience had remained pure and feeling strong. Contrition, misery, love, work had exercised, purified, concentrated, disculpated their will, the only thing which in man resembles that which sages call the soul.

When the boat, piloted by the marvellous dexterity of the skipper, came almost in view of Ostend, fifty paces from the shore, it was driven back by the convulsion of the storm, and suddenly began to sink. The stranger with the light upon his face then said to this little world of sorrow, " Those who have faith shall be saved ; let them follow me." This man stood up and walked with a firm step on the waves. At once the young mother took her child in her arms and walked with him on the sea. The soldier suddenly stood to attention, saying in his rough language, " By my pipe ! I follow you to the devil." Then, without seeming astonished, he marched on the sea.

The old prostitute, believing in the omnipotence of God, followed the man, and walked on the sea. The two peasants said

"As they are walking on the sea, why should not *we*?" So they got up and hastened after the others, walking on the sea.

Thomas wished to do likewise; but his faith wavered, and he fell several times into the sea, but got out again, and after three failures, he too walked upon the sea.

The daring pilot stuck like a leech to the bottom of his boat. The merchant had faith, and had risen, but he wanted to take his gold with him, and his gold took him to the bottom of the sea. Mocking at the charlatan and the imbeciles who listened to him, at the moment when he saw the stranger proposing to the passengers to walk on the sea, the man of science began to laugh, and was swallowed up in the ocean. The damosel was drawn down into the abyss by her lover. The bishop and the old lady went to the bottom, heavy with sin perhaps, heavier still with unbelief and confidence in false images; heavy with devotional practices, light of alms and true religion.

The faithful troop, who trod with firm dry feet on the plain of the raging waters, heard around them the horrible howling of the storm; great sheets of water broke in their path; irresistible force rent the ocean in twain. Through the mist, these faithful ones perceived on the shore a little feeble light, which flickered in the window of a fisherman's cabin. Each one as he marched bravely towards this light seemed to hear his neighbour crying through the roaring sea, "Courage." Nevertheless, absorbed each in his own danger, no one said a single word. And so they reached the shore. When they were all seated at the hearth of the fisherman, they sought in vain the guide who had a light upon his face. Seated upon the summit of a rock, at the base of which the hurricane had cast the pilot, stuck to his plank with all the strength of a sailor in the throes of death, the MAN descended, picked up the shipwrecked man almost dashed to pieces; then he said, as he held out a helping hand over his head, "It is well this once, but do as thou *hast* done no more; the example would be too bad." He took the mariner on his shoulders, and carried him to the fisherman's cottage. He knocked for the unfortunate man, that one should open to him the door of this humble refuge; then the Saviour disappeared.

In this place the sailors built the Convent of Mercy, where was long to be seen the prints that the feet of JESUS CHRIST had, it was said, left on the sand.

Afterwards, when the French entered Belgium, some monks took away with them this precious relic, the testimony of the last visit JESUS ever paid to the earth.

OUR POINT OF VIEW (continued from page 455)

independent occult journal in the world. Every effort has been made to maintain the standard of production and editorial content. We have continued to turn away undesirable advertising, a policy which will be strictly adhered to. New features are being arranged for Volume Three. Mr. Bernard Bromage, commencing in the February issue, will contribute a series of articles on Tibetan Yoga; Mr. Ion Aulay will also contribute regularly throughout 1939, whilst our regular contributors, Mrs. Merry, Dr. Kolisko, Mr. G. S. Francis, Mr. Raymund Andrea and others will continue to uphold the general interest and integrity of the journal. Our sincere thanks are offered to all our readers for their support during the past year.

The Editor

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Christmas in Liturgy and Literature

by Bernard Bromage, M.A.

CHRISTMAS IS A concept and an occasion which has a diverse meaning for diverse persons. It has, during the last three centuries, tended to lose its meaning and real significance in what it inspires as a sop to our sense of comfort—a general undifferentiated term for the period of unrestricted gluttony and picture-postcard friendliness which characterises even the most unsociable among us during the last days of the month of December.

To the really sincere Christian it also implies a period of considerable devotion, in which the suffering of Christ is recalled with all its attendant benefits to humanity. Many visits are paid to churches, and every effort is exerted to recall the mind to the fact that that which was lost has been saved.

To children and scattered families it stands for reunion, play-making and the cosy joys of the sheltered chimney-side. Most of us are well content to forget our modern superiority in the apotheosis of "ye olde English home" which goes with a roaring fire, a plethora of edibles and a pleasant "Rückblick" on the snowed-up stage-coaches and Hessian boots of our great-grandparents.

But very few people are aware of the real nature of the Christmas festival. Very few, to start with, are able to dissociate the whole event from the trappings of history and piety with which it has been overlaid (and indeed, to some extent, destroyed).

Popular literature and sentimental religiosity are to be blamed for much of the misunderstanding. The sacrificial aspect of the subject has largely been swamped and deluged in the dissemination of two main types of story. First there is the Literature of Creeps, where the whole purpose of the author seems to be to excite the mind to an apprehension of the dark powers and presences which hover around us. (For some reason best known to themselves, these gentry are always most active and formidable in the middle of the winter season!) Unfortunately, such writers never keep up a sustained level of horror. They are the direct descendants of the Walpole of *The Castle of Otranto*. Just when we are about to swoon with the intensity of the incidents described—the clanking chains and hidden groans, we are whisked back to dire normality by being told quite flatly that the Lady Ermytrude was not, after all, ravished away by the spirits of the other world; and that the demon monk was foiled in his dreadful scheme just in the nick of time.

Other authors have obscured the issues, by seeing the thing from an entirely opposite angle. Instead of concentrating on the art of making our flesh creep, they have pleased a multitude of readers by pointing out how "hearts are soldered and welded" once again by the general contagion of good-will and happiness



Bernard Bromage, M.A.

which radiates from every decent human being on the day which celebrates the birth of Christ. But there is much more in Christmas than either factitious horror or indiscriminate charity.

There is, in fact, all the power and strength which comes from retaining and possibly reinforcing that rhythmic and cosmic ecstasy which is at the root of the great pagan festivals of the past. Christmas is in no sense a new institution set up by the success of the teaching of Christ. It is a symbol, in new clothes, of the sense of exultation attendant on universal participation in rites as old as the earth, and of a tried and salutary healing power.

Dr. Karl Pearson once put the case as succinctly as possible. "What the missionary could, he repressed, the more his church grew in strength: what he did not repress he adopted or simply left unregarded. What the missionary tried to repress became medieval witchcraft: what he judiciously disregarded survives to this day in peasant weddings and in the folk-festivals of the great changes of season."

Robertson Smith pointed out that the ancients had, for the most part, no creed. They were bound by no particular set of regulations in their habit of homage to the powers that govern this world. They refused to tie themselves to any fixed rules of morality and convention. Sufficient for them to feel that, in reproducing in themselves the joy that inhabits the heart of the earth, they were fulfilling the best in nature and in themselves.

So it is that we can trace through the most tortuous tracts of antiquity a consistent thread of sacrificial and ceremonial worship which acts as the best prolegomenon to an understanding of the nature of Christmas liturgy as we know it in Christian times.

The ceremony which especially influenced the Christian Church was probably the Roman festival of the winter solstice, celebrated on December 25th (*Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*). The choice of this time of the year was probably due to the general recognition that the winter solstice was the turning-point of the year; all things seem to prepare then for a fresh period of life and activity after the winter sleep of death.

The literary records of this event tell us a great deal concerning the emotional tone attendant on this offering to the Gods. In the *Cronia* of Lucian we can find ample testimony to the concentration on joy involved in the holiday. "Drinking and being drunk, noise and games and dice; appointing of kings and freeing of slaves; singing naked, clapping of tremulous hands, an occasional ducking of corked faces in icy water." He goes on to say that slaves had licence to revile their lords and all signs of caste distinction were for the time abrogated.

Sir James Frazer, that greatest of scholarly anthropologists, has evolved a rather sinister theory with regard to this feast of the Saturnalia (*sigillarium celebritas*). According to him the Mask of Kings which formed a prominent part of this festival was not so harmless as it seemed. He reads into it the actual sacrifice of a human being, offered up to placate the powers of the netherworld. But it is only fair to say that this view has met with considerable opposition from other scholars, notably from Professor Warde Fowler, who contended that, if this were the case, some mention of such an important element in the day's work would have been made by chroniclers.

But certainly the element of sacrifice did most indubitably play a part in some of the Roman mysteries. One has only to recall the letter written by Pope Gregory to the Abbot Melitus in 601 to realise that the Christian Church was very fully aware of the ambiguous nature of some of its antecedents.

This missive, of great importance in the history of ecclesiastical tact, may cause the ironist to smile. It recognises to the fullest possible degree the curious appeal which is inherent in the notion of sacrifice. It points out that human nature demands this aspect of ceremony. But, in place of the dreadful sin involved in offering up a fellow human being, it suggests that the animal may be killed as a harmless compromise and substitute!

The feast of the "Vota" held on January 1st as described to us by Libianus, a Greek sophist of the fourth century, was especially significant with regard to later developments, in that much stress was laid on the cult of the Dead. Food and drink were laid for the departed, and every effort was made to inculcate in the attendant revellers the dignity and potency of ancestor-worship. Also, there is full evidence in this record of the spirit of carefree jollity which has descended to our own day. "Everywhere carousals and well-loaded tables. . . . An impulse to spend seized everyone. . . . People were not only generous to themselves but to their fellow-men. From children and young people two kinds of dread were removed, of schoolmasters and of stern pedagogues."

The liturgy of the Christian Church is full of interest to any student of the psychology of the religious instinct. Springing as it does from the very depths of man's antiquity, it contains many of the same elements that characterised much older faiths. It also contains much added beauty of its own. It is this strong æsthetic appeal which captured the imagination of Adrian Fortescue and Walter Pater.

A word must first be said on the subject of the dating of the Christian Christmas. Whether or not the birth of Christ occurred on this day, ancient authorities are not agreed. Clement of Alexandria mentions the opinion of some who placed it on the 20th of April, and of others who thought it took place on the 20th of May, while Saint Epiphanius and Cassian state that in Egypt Christ was believed to have been born on the 6th of January. For a long time the Greeks had no special feast corresponding to Christmas Day, and merely commemorated Christ's birth on the Epiphany. St. Chrysostom in a Christmas sermon, delivered at Antioch in the year 686, says, "it is not ten years since this day [Christmas Day on December 25th] was clearly known to us, but it was familiar from the beginning to those who dwell in the West. The Romans, who have celebrated it for a long time, and from ancient tradition, have transmitted the knowledge of it to us."

The Catholic Mass is a mine of interest for those who can

sense or trace the natural sequence of developed and imitated ritual. It relies for its effects not only on certain psychological and psychic laws inherent in the whole apparatus of veneration, but also on a gorgeousness and elaborateness of vestments and trappings which make it one of the most striking æsthetic pageants in the whole history of the world's devotion.

On Christmas Day the Mass is especially rich in significance. The colour for vestments is white. On the day (beginning at midnight) every priest may say Mass three times. At all sung Masses on Christmas Day the celebrant and his ministers kneel at the Epistle side at the lowest step while the choir sings the words "*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine; et homo factus est.*" If they have not yet left the altar they descend to the second step and kneel on the edge of the foot-pace. A special clause is inserted in the *Communicantes* prayer of the Canon. In this clause the celebrant says *Noctem Sacratissimam celebramus* at the first Mass; at the second and third Masses and during the Christmas octave he says *Diem sacratissimum*.

The Graduals and Collestas for this occasion are especially moving and strike a note of adoration very strongly reminiscent in tone of certain esoteric rituals which have come down to us from the most secret sources of the past. The ancient formulæ concerning the "Body of Light" will occur to anyone with the requisite scholarship in these matters.

Turning to Keltic and Northern rites we find that the early Keltic and Germanic tribes held the season in veneration from the earliest times, and the Norsemen believed that personal evidence could be obtained of the existence and works of their deities in that time, as they were supposed to be present and active on earth from December 25th to January 6th. "The Saviour and Avenger comes in great glory, testifying to the ever-watchful powers of Heaven" says one old Swedish chronicle.

The mediæval world gradually consolidated into its psyche a literature of very great beauty based on the concept of Christmas. There are very few anthologies and chapbooks of this period which do not contain some tribute to the associations and elemental reverences of this season. In particular, the carols of the period are redolent of a sense of simple joy, simply and exquisitely expressed, which makes these lightly etched things partake of the quality of the highest art.

No one knows whence grew these flowers of reverence. They probably were built up by a process of accretion from the spontaneous heartflow of a number of persons, delicately attuned to the overtones of spiritual love. Some of the best of them are full of an ecstasy which comes from the mingling of sorrow with pain. They have the quality of the best paintings of Fra Angelico, the same feeling which absorbs us when we read the "Amour" and the "Sagesse" of Paul Verlaine. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." Here is one of the finest:

"He came all so still
to his Mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.
Mother and maiden
Was never none but she!
Well may such a lady
Goddess mother be."

Shakespeare inherited some of this sense of the piety and gaiety of the old world. His plays are impregnated with much of

the grace and charm of the age of faith and acceptance. A famous lyric from *Love's Labour's Lost* testifies to his vision into the heart of the English winter and the English Christmas. Icicles hanging by the wall; Tom bearing logs into the hall; birds sitting brooding in the snow, and Marion's nose that looks so red and raw—what pictures do these conjure up of a time before a rather undirected discontent had seized hold on men's minds and made their way muddled and unhappy. And, although "a sad tale's best for winter," *The Winter's Tale* is full of a fragrance which gives the lie to the statement.

The Reformation did away with much of the old order of things. It substituted formalism for mysticism and insisted more on performance than on faith. Nevertheless it is interesting to trace all through the course of Protestantism a strong strain of adherence to the counters of the past. In my possession is an old chapbook bearing the title *The Wonderful Work of God*. One of its items is a sermon by a clergyman, with the following caption: "Shewing the Difference between the Old Christmas and the New. Which appears by the Holy Thorn that grows in Glastonbury Field in Somersetshire; which upon the 5th of January last, 1753, being old Christmas Day was in the full Bloom, and there was a great many gentlemen and ladies from all Parts of England to see its beautiful thorn where Joseph of Arimathea pitched his Staff within two miles of Glastonbury, to the great surprise of the Spectators, to see it bud, blossom and fade at the Hour of twelve, on old Christmas Day where a Sermon was preached at the same time by one Mr. Smith."

This divine proceeds as follows: "Tho the time of Popery in this Kingdom is now abolished, yet do thousands of people of different opinions go once a year to see it; it being a most miraculous Curiosity, and brings many people from beyond Sea to see it, at its usual time of budding, it being a wonder Supernatural as being a matter contrary to the course of nature, and may make us cry out with the Psalmist, O Lord, how wonderful are Thy Ways!"

To return to poetry. The whole of the seventeenth century is marked by the appearance of a certain richness of thought and imagery, sporadic enough, but testifying to the persistence in the blood of the nation of the need for a strong and more luscious emotionalism than the drably consolidated state of society permitted. The outbreak of the Metaphysical Movement, the success of a new type of lyricism is no mere accident, but the outcome of nature's abhorrence of a vacuum when its lakes of feeling are dried up by the exigencies of the outer world.

Even in the time of the persecution the voice of ecstasy made itself heard above the confusion of the jarring voices of men. A most significant contribution to the literature of Christmas is found in Southwell's magnificent "Burning Babe." Here the flame at the centre of all dynamic religion is expressed in the very accents of divine compassion.

" My faultless breast the furnace is,
The fuel, wounding thorns,
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke,
The ashes, shame and thorns."

Even the dour and fatalistic spirit of John Milton inherited from the past sufficient voltage to enable him to import into his "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity" something of the feeling of the old pagan beauty which was rapidly retreating underground with the increasing pressure of materialism.

" The Lares and Lemures moan with midnight plaint,
In urn and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint,
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted seat."

With the real "Metaphysicals" it was another matter. Their frequent gongorisms and affected verbiage gave way at their best to a genuine expression of the impulse which drove them into their movement—the feeling that subtlety could be combined with intensity to form a new string in the poetic lyre.

Crashaw, that unusual type of English ecstatic, has written in praise of Christmas in tones that have no equal in their vibrant rhapsody and joy. It was not for nothing that this poet had sat at the feet of the great Spanish Saint Teresa of Avila, and had absorbed from her vision much of its rich colouring and velvety sumptuousness of texture.

" Proud world, said I, cease your contest,
Let the mighty Babe alone.
The Phoenix builds the phoenix' nest
Love's architecture is his own.
The Babe whose birth embraves this morn,
Made His own bed ere He was born."

The exotic Spanish influence is found, too, in less ambitious circles of the time. In the Library of Christ Church College, Oxford, there exists a MSS. of anonymous origin which endeavours to capture the stark and sombre intensity of the school of Donne and Lope de Vega.

" Set me fine Spanish tables in the hall
See they be fitted all;
Let there be room to eat
And order taken that there want no meat.
See every sconce and candlestick made bright,
That without tapers they may give a light."

It is a far cry from this sedate and punctilious reverence to the nostalgia and whimsicality of Herrick, that spiritually unfrocked parson, who yearned in Devonshire for the gaieties and frolics of London. Temperamentally pleasure-loving and "aesthetic" he contributes little to philosophy, but much to pure lyricism. His is a spirit that denies the deeper issues, but seizes with avidity on the more picturesque aspect of tradition:

" Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe,
Down with the holly, ivy, all,
Wherewith ye dressed the Christmas Hall
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind
For look, how many braves there be
Neglected there (maids trust to me)
So many goblins you shall see."

Among the great literary personalities which sprang like towers of strength out of the dead wastes of Victorianism, Robert Browning must be given pre-eminent place. To a burning and constructive intellectual passion rare enough in poets he added a great sensitiveness of perception and a restless ardour

The January

MODERN MYSTIC

and Monthly Science Review

Out on December 23rd

AVEBURY &

STONEHENGE

The January issue of the *Modern Mystic and Monthly Science Review* will be devoted exclusively to articles on Avebury and Stonehenge, profusely illustrated. Alexander Keiller, Esq., Director of Excavations at Avebury, has kindly consented to contribute an article which will review from the purely scientific standpoint the other articles by our authoritative contributors, who will base their observations on the accepted occult explanations of the remains. This number will be of exceptional interest, so order your copy in advance.

SOME OF THE CONTRIBUTORS

H. P. Blavatsky

- "Megalithic Monuments, Their Origin and Purpose: The Answer of Theosophy." An article composed of extracts from the Works of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, collated by a student of Theosophy

Dr. Eugen Kolisko

- "The Origin of Megalithic Monuments." Dr. Kolisko's thesis is via research rather than dogma, and is a valuable commentary on the many monuments found scattered over the earth's surface

Mrs. Eleanor C. Merry

- "Science, Art and Religion in Ancient Beliefs." The author is well qualified to study from the standpoint of Mythology, the remains of what many believe represent man's earliest culture and mystery religion

Dr. W. J. Stein

- "King Arthur and Stonehenge." A scholarly article by Dr. Stein whose knowledge of ancient history is generally acknowledged as authoritative

Alexander Keiller

- Mr. Keiller is the Director of Excavations at Avebury. He is a scientist and archaeologist—not an occultist. Mr. Keiller's article will take the form of a commentary on the articles by our other contributors and will represent the latest views of empirical science on the important excavation work now in progress at Avebury. Mr. Keiller's courtesy enables our readers to compare, side by side, the esoteric significance of these ancient monuments with the latest scientific beliefs. We believe that the intelligent student of occultism will be grateful to Mr. Keiller for an authoritative scientific exposition of what must always be, for most laymen, the most fascinating branch of science

Ion D. Aulay, Bernard Bromage, M.A. and other writers

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whose effects can still be traced in the spasmodic, fashionable despair of our day.

Browning refused to "wear the livery of the creeds." But he never wearied of tracking to their lair the secret springs of logic and emotion which force most people into acceptance of one set of religious rules rather than another. Also he possessed in full the rare gift of being able to practise that most valuable of all spiritual exercises, the putting of himself into other person's shoes. In his "Christmas Eve and Easter-Day" we see argument made flesh.

In the first part of the poem the narrator recounts a spiritual experience, a vision in which he is taken first to a dissenting chapel:

"I very soon had enough of it.
The hot smell and the human noises.
Of the preaching-man's immense stupidity,
As he poured his doctrine forth, full measure,
To meet his audience's avidity."

Then he finds himself in St. Peter's Church at Rome, and sees:

"The whole Basilica alive
With popes and kings in their porphyry wombs,
All famishing in expectation
Of the main-altar's consummation."

Lastly, his spiritual guide leads him into a lecture-room where a German professor is investigating the origin of the Christian myth and lastly back to the dissenting chapel. He concludes that his "Heart does best to receive in meekness" this last mode of worship, where earthly props are set aside and God "appears serene with the thinnest human veil between."

Although this piece may seem somewhat dreary as a reminder of the cheerful season, yet a close perusal of its "message" will repay the attention of the Christmas reader. Robert Browning was a profound thinker, fully aware of the enormity of the evil in this world; yet he has something positive and vital to offer as an antidote. Like Mr. Somerset Maugham in our own day, he came to the conclusion that the only ultimately valuable thing which arises out of all experience is the virtue of "loving-kindness." If this quality is present, every religion is justified and every sect can hold up its head proudly in the face of any criticism:

". . . Love is the ever-springing fountain:
Man may enlarge or narrow his bed
For the water's play, but the water-head—
How can he multiply or reduce it? . . ."

One of the most delightful of all literary tonics is a sympathetic and well-executed parody. Mr. Max Beerbohm, in his inimitable *Christmas Garland*, has given us a whole series of "pastiche" which it would be difficult to surpass for pungent analysis and deft play upon idiosyncrasy. All the great literary figures of the Edwardian era come in for his merciless microscope. Henry James, Rudyard Kipling, Arnold Bennett, Shaw and Wells—all these lilies of culture are slightly overpainted in order to tickle the epicure's palate. One of the most delightfully malicious of these Christmas skits is that put into the pen of Mr. H. G. Wells. "On General Cessation Day, therefore, the gates of the lethal chamber will stand open for all those who

shall in the course of the past year have reached the age-limit. You figure the wide streets filled all day long with little solemn processions—solemn and yet not in the least unhappy. . . . You figure the old man walking with a firm step in the midst of his progeny, looking around him with a clear eye at this dear world which is about to lose him. He will not be thinking of himself. He will be filled with joy at the thought that he is about to die for the good of the race—to 'make way' for the beautiful young breed of men and women who, in simple, artistic, anti-septic garments, are disporting themselves so gladly on this day of days. . . . You figure him at the gate, shaking hands all round, and speaking perhaps a few well-chosen words about the Future. . . ."

And here is the very voice of Henry James. "The mote in the middle distance? . . . Oh, it's believe me, of an obsessiveness! But his sense of the one thing it didn't block out from his purview enabled him to launch at Eva a speculation as to just how far Santa Claus had, for the particular occasion, gone."

It is difficult nowadays to write of Christmas without a sigh of relief. The very word transports us to a state of consciousness in which the sense of physical, mental and emotional elation is complete. We forget the possible wreckage of our world, the precarious balance of our hopes on the things they hold most dear. And we are wise in this reaction; for the notion of Christmas is succulent with the uninhibited joy of many centuries, and it is good for man that he should relax.

It is for this reason that the Christmas pictures of Washington Irving and Dickens are still read perennially by old and young. The *Sketch Book* of the American author embodies some of the best impressions in existence of the English festival—the stage-coach, the junketings, the religious celebrations. Above all, with an admirable frankness which ranks him with Cobbett, he points out the dangers of a too excessive break with our past. "One of the least pleasing effects of modern refinement is the havoc it has made among the hearty old holiday customs. It has completely taken off the shop touchings and spirited reliefs of these embellishments of life, and has worn down society into a more smooth and polished, but certainly a less characteristic, surface." [Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, p. 218.]

Dickens, too, has much to give. His canvas has the broad, uproarious sweep of the best in Breughel, and his sympathy with the whole rollicking Bacchanal of human life is irresistible and very contagious.

Charles Dickens is one of the greatest masters of atmosphere in the world. The fog-bound London streets, the ineffably intimate London personalities and byways—how these things have inherited eternal life because they appear in his pages. He has produced no *Canterville ghost* because there is no real cleavage of sympathy between any of the possibilities of his characters.

Into the Christmas scenes of *Pickwick Papers* he has packed as much creative energy as the theme will hold, and a great deal more as well. He has given us, in fact, not only the account of one Christmas, but a spiritual concentration involving all the

* *Perkins and Mankind*, by H. G. Wells [*A Christmas Garland*, by Max Beerbohm, pp. 45-6.]

(continued in page 476)

Winter Moods

by Eleanor C. Merry

I

Scorpio

Strength of Self
In darkness strive with self ;
And with Desire, achieve
The losing of Desire.
Let self in Self
Enjoy the Light through Darkness,
And through the Darkness, Light—
To find that fruit of Death
Is seed of Worlds.

II

Sagittarius

O Self, in sunlessness
Preserve thy light
And dwell alone
In cosmic night.

Banish from sight
Seeds, and the fire of Love,
And with celestial might
Thrust Life down deep
Where Sphinx and Death
Lie quiet and still
Upon the rock of Will.

III

Capricorn

Ferment of Fire and Frost,
Come, Winter's Pentecost !
Form in the womb of Night
Unconquerable Light !

Above, below,
Your festal glow
Warms the chill Past
And smelts it fast
Unto the Future's Will
Your destined Present to fulfil.

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The Christmas Tree

by Eleanor C. Merry

"I HAVE BECOME LIKE A GREEN FIR TREE; OF ME IS THY FRUIT FOUND."

THE MODERN CHRISTMAS TREE, AT ANY rate in this country, has fallen from its original simplicity and beauty and has become a garish thing, covered with many-coloured electric bulbs, quantities of glittering glass and tinsel, fantastic and often monstrous-looking toys. How little of its brooding darkness and lovely form is to be seen! No longer are there little wax candles, carefully lighted one by one, and looking like stars in the darkened room—but at the touch of a switch there is a sudden bewildering dazzle of red and blue and green and yellow, and the Christmas tree stands shamed in its gaudy finery, like a painted harlot in the impertinent glare of the lighted streets.

But I think what brings a heart-ache to some of us who remember the old-fashioned charm of the Christmas tree is not the vulgarity of its modern decoration, but that the true spirit of Christmas itself has nearly vanished from Christendom. We know it has. We know it will have to be invoked again, but in humility. The true Light of the Tree of Life has been quenched in the distrust, the ill-will, the arrogance, the "expediences," and the pain of our peaceless time.

The custom of the Christmas tree is by no means a very old one. The first actual record of it comes from Strasbourg in 1642. It was introduced—or its introduction encouraged—in this country in the last century by Prince Albert.

That the Christmas tree originated in Strasbourg seems to be like a witness of the ineradicable influence of the Christian Mysticism of the great Master Eckhart and of his disciple Johannes Tauler, who had lived and worked there 300 years earlier. Strasbourg and its neighbourhood were like a vessel into which the martyrdom of the one and the wonderful preaching of the other had been poured. Such influences are—though perhaps forgotten—certainly undying; and the fruit of them appears. Tauler, banished for a time from Strasbourg, went to Basel where he joined the "Friends of God," a group who aimed at the deepening and intensifying of Christianity as against the more formal expression of it in the Catholic Church. It is said that with them he gained his great mystical experience, and afterwards returned to his native Strasbourg. In any case, it has been definitely established that the very first Christmas tree was of Alsatian origin and appeared in Strasbourg in 1642.

Both history and mythology tell us of innumerable customs and legends which had to do in one way and another with the triumph of the Sun over the dark days of mid-winter. The ancient sages taught that the physical Sun, shining in greatest splendour at mid-summer, and seemingly coming nearer to the horizon of the Earth in mid-winter, concealed another Sun that was *spiritual*. This spiritual Sun was more than the mere source of light, it was

Life itself—a God—surrounded by other Gods. This God mediated His divine power to the physical Sun through yet another Sun that had the qualities not of Spirit but of Soul. This teaching was the substance of the so-called Mystery of the Threefold Sun, and was guarded as the greatest secret of the world. The Emperor Julian was the "apostate" because he could not reconcile this Mystery with Roman Christianity. He proclaimed the Threefold Sun (1) as the Good, (2) as Ruler over the Hierarchies, and (3) as the visible disc of the Sun whose dying forces, on the 25th of December, must be brought to resurrection.

John of Crysostom, preaching his great Christmas sermon in the fourth century after Christ says that nothing could have saved mankind if He had not been *born*. St. Paul preached that there can be no salvation without the fact of His *Resurrection from death*. The Gospels tell us of His *life*. Here in another form is the triple mystery.

Tauler, preaching in the seventeenth century says: "Three times is God born unto men: Firstly He descends from the Father—from the great All-World; again when having reached humanity He descends into flesh; and thirdly, when the Christ is born within the human soul and enables it to attain the possibility of uniting itself to the Wisdom of God—enabling it thus to give birth to the higher man."

Many many centuries before the expected coming of the Sun-God to the Earth His advent was foretold in the Persian Zend-Avesta:

"He will descend to Earth. He will overcome age, death, decay. He will create free decision; and then, when the time is ripe for the resurrection of the dead, He will have the victory of Life. He will be the victorious Saviour, surrounded by Apostles."

According to this prophecy the approach of the Sun-Spirit to the Earth and His entry into terrestrial matter, would create "free decision," therefore it shows that His coming was not regarded only as a cosmic event taking place between the Sun and the Earth, but that it would bring with it a personal experience for human beings. This personal experience, which was like an awakening or inner spiritual "birth," could be pre-lived by chosen individuals who went through the trials of initiation in certain Mystery Schools. Symbolically expressed, they would find Life and Light in the Darkness.

Remote though it appears to us now, this has nevertheless something to do with our familiar symbol of the Christmas tree. So we can consider it further.

It is interesting (though not entirely material to our subject) that those chosen individuals, or Initiates of the Mystery Schools, who had attained the complete experience of this spiritual rebirth, and saw how the physical world is interpenetrated by the spiritual world, were long ago almost universally alluded to as "trees."—"I am become like a green fir tree" . . . or a "cedar

of Lebanon" . . . could be said by one who had been fully initiated. He knew "Life" shining through "Death."

The Bard Taliesin (6th century A.D.) in his strange poem about the *Battle of the Trees*, describes the fir-tree as "seated in the porch" in "the seat of the leader of enterprise"; and as one who "acquired renown in the presence of princes." So this is an obvious hint that the "fir-tree" stands as a symbol of a leader of the people; and in the past all great leaders or kings or priests were initiates.

The old legend of Seth's re-entry into Paradise (of which more presently) tells how he found there that the two Trees—of Knowledge and of Life—were not separated from one another, but intertwined; the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the whole material world of Nature, planted in the midst of the Garden; and within it, the Tree of Life, the image of *spiritual* Nature. In Mythology, trees, with their power of victory over recurrent death, were a natural symbol for those who had experienced "spiritual re-birth."

The "night of initiation" in many great Mystery centres of ancient times, in the northern half of the world, was a *mid-winter* night, just when the Sun was beginning to lengthen the days. But as "the spiritual world interpenetrates the physical world," so what was a cosmic-terrestrial occurrence, the winter solstice, must reflect itself—or I would rather say be mirrored back to the Heavens—by some great inner religious experience on the part of man.

In Egypt by ritual and symbol and picture, the younger pupils in the Mystery Schools were prepared for this eventual great experience. They were taught how once the Sun had been united with the Earth as one cosmic globe, and how at that time humanity had been *inwardly* illumined by the presence of the Sun in the Earth. (This of course must be so understood that the "humanity" of that epoch of evolution was still "spiritual.") The pupils were then shown how the Sun was afterwards separated from the Earth and shone upon it from outside only, and that the result of this was that man became inwardly "dark"—the spiritual Sun was withdrawn in the physical Sun.

All this was shown to them in symbols and "models" of the events. Then, at the midnight hour in the last preparatory stage of instruction, the pupils saw how a rose-violet circle appeared where *the image of the dark Earth-globe* had previously been pictured before their eyes. And on the circle stood a word. "This word" says Steiner (from whose vivid description this is taken) "was different according to the different peoples in whose midst these Mysteries could be conducted. In our language to-day, we should call this word *Christos*. Those who saw it knew that it was the Sun, which became visible to them in the midnight hour when all the surrounding world was plunged in darkness. . . . Most blessed moment is it in the evolution of humanity when a man really *experiences* that he is set free from darkness and lives in the eternal light! And this moment was pictorially represented in the ancient Mysteries, year after year, at the midnight hour of the winter's night of initiation."

It is important to link up these far-off mystical events with our present subject for the following reason.

Human beings of so-called pagan times were under the rule of an instinctive will and an instinctive moral sense (differing in different ages and countries), but were without the full development of *self* or *ego*-consciousness. Certainly they had the power of choice in their actions; but their decisions were dependent upon

their inborn half-conscious reliance upon a supernatural guidance or impulsion which could be "good" or "bad." That they were not ego-conscious in the modern sense is shown—for one example—by the fact that love and marriage was ruled by the blood-tie, or otherwise by some natural elemental urge which had nothing to do with "free decision." Many records provide evidence of this.

But when Zoroaster's prophecy was fulfilled in the appearance of Christ Jesus, the latter's whole life and teaching stressed the power of *self-reliance*—brought it down into human consciousness. It was the awakening of the independent power of the "I." At last the "free decision" foretold by Zoroaster could arise in the Ego, consciously. The limitations inseparable from the old ties of blood were to be overcome. All men were to be regarded as "brothers and sisters." This power could only gradually become universal in humanity, and like the Sun, which is universal in its shining. Moreover, in developing the Ego man also separates himself more and more from the old dependence upon, or immersion in, Nature. But strangely enough the possibility of a new kind of union is brought by this separation: the "I" learns to distinguish itself from those who are not "I," but are his "neighbours." In other words, whatever external differences may exist between men, there is equality in the Spirit. And in the Spirit is Love. You can only give love to what is "apart" from yourself.

Here is the seed for the growth of the *Higher Self*, which Paul described as "Not I, but Christ in me." The sequence is from Life, to Light, and to Love. The final fulfilment of the old prophecy—which of course is only one of many—would be that the terrestrial darkness would be vanquished and the Earth would become like a Sun; but only if human love, as "free decision," would will to bring it about. The means thereto would be, at any rate for its full and perfect development, the possibility of an inner awakening on the part of every human being.

The Christmas tree is a modern symbol for this awakening of the Higher Self, foreshadowed in the birth of the "Sun-Being" on the Earth. As I have said, the Christmas tree is a comparatively new custom, and seems to have emerged just at a time when the modern scientific (and later quite materialistic) view of the Universe was beginning to take hold of the civilised world.

Such things happen. That out of the forgotten wisdom of the past, something seemingly new arises as though from "nowhere"—not necessarily in any sense as a relic or remembrance of that past, but rather as something prophetic. As the Gospel of Christ is not a statement made once for all, but is the beginning of a continuing revelation, so I am sure it has ways of preparation for every deeper realisation of its truth which succeeding ages will desire.

The Christmas tree, in its original purity of conception, seems to me to be one of these prophetic preparations for the future.

The Christmas tree is also linked with the festival of Adam and Eve which falls on December 24th. Among old Christmas customs, as everyone knows, was the performance not only of Nativity plays but also of plays representing Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Paradise, and from the Tree of Life, and continued to describe what took place afterwards. There are slight variations in the form of the legends. The substance of them is as follows:

After the Fall, Adam took with him from Paradise three

seeds from the Tree of Life. Or—when Adam was dying, he implored his son Seth to find his way back to Paradise and beg from the Angel of the Flaming Sword, the oil of mercy. Seth, following in Adam's unobliterated footsteps, reaches Paradise and gains admission, and there he sees the Tree of Life and seated within it the Virgin and the Child. The Angel gives Seth three seeds from the Tree and tells him to put them in Adam's mouth. This he does.

Or, in other versions, Adam has the seeds already, and they are buried with him in his grave. Then, out of his grave there grows a wondrous flaming bush. Though always burning, it is never consumed. It puts forth ever new leaves and fruits. And in its aura of fire appear the words: "I am that which was, and is, and will be." As the ages roll on, the flaming bush yields the wood for Moses' staff, the beams for the doorway of Solomon's Temple, and at last the wood for the Cross.

It is certainly true that all through the ages men have longed in the depths of their hearts for the "Tree of Life"—that continuing principle and purpose of evolution which can only be discovered through knowledge gained by the "higher self." And to many the realisation of its presence has come when they thought of the Cross not as the instrument of death but as the bearer of the promise of immortality. And this promise is, for the Christian (and in other ways in other confessions) heralded first by the Nativity.

In the MODERN MYSTIC for October (1938) Dr. Charlotte Sturm gives a lucid account of Rudolf Steiner's exposition of the old doctrine of the two Jesus children, and shows how the Jesus child described in the Gospel of St. Luke was overshadowed by the "Tree of Life." It is explained that this Tree of Life is understood to be the pure, innocent, and divine part of the soul of the original "Adam." It did not incarnate upon Earth, but was preserved as a celestial and untouchable Power until it could at last descend upon the Jesus Child in the "multitude of the heavenly host" that the shepherds saw and heard. The *other* part of the soul of Adam was that which incarnated in him and the Adamic race, and this Adam was tempted, and partook of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This was the "old Adam"—humanity—who was destined to be redeemed by the power and the love of the "new Adam," "the man from Heaven." The Tree of Life appeared on Earth on Christmas night.

II

Mid-winter has always been felt as a time of "smallness," of contraction. The darkness of the days draws men together. It is a fact that everyone can experience for himself, that winter brings with it into our natural human awareness of things, a certain feeling of being strongly connected with the Earth. Winter is "social," Summer is "anti-social." In summer we feel drawn away from the Earth. Then, everything seems to rise heavenwards into the increasing light. We tend to become dreamers. In winter it is the opposite. The light has descended and we feel, so to say, its "pull" from the antipodes. The seeds have fallen into the Earth and carried with them the generating warmth of the summer's Sun. Then we feel it is natural to be physical men and women, to have gathered together all the fruits of the harvest and to store them up for our future nourishment as plain earthly beings.

But in the midst of this, there is always a longing for the return of the light and for the expansion of our interests into wider spheres. For this reason, we feel that in the "darkness"—drawn in like a breath into ourselves—there is the possibility of inner light. Christmas can be a festival of *inspiration*.

There are innumerable relics of old mid-winter customs which are all associated in one way or another with darkness that is turned into light, or death that is overcome by life, or a past that bears the seed of the future.

So you will always find that Christmas-time—the "turn of the year"—stimulates memory. We become Janus-faced at Christmas—looking backwards and looking forwards. Ghosts and ghost-stories lurk in the shadows. Ghost-stories, even if they are true, are really a "pretending" which masks what is hidden in our sub-conscious life as regrets, remorse, unsatisfied longings, hauntings of the soul; they are our dim sense of something purgatorial which must appear on the threshold of the new dawn. Profoundly immersed in all our forgettings are these phantoms of memory. But the sunrise of Christmas banishes them.

Therefore the old winter traditions contain warnings of lurking evil; and these are always so to say neutralised by an increase in social fellowship between human beings. Men could feel themselves somehow isolated from the cosmic life, and hence exposed to temptations, and so had a longing to find happiness and joy in one another.

In Roman times this social feeling was expressed in the Saturnalia, but degenerated into licence. Nevertheless, the feeling in itself is a reality. It cannot die. We still desire to set aside all social barriers, and feel that everyone must somehow be made happy at Christmas. In miniature, every year, the Fall and Redemption cast their magic over our unconscious souls.

The Roman Saturnalia was partly a festival to celebrate the memory of the "Golden Age," partly a festival of the God Saturnus, who was the patron of seed-time and harvests. These belong to all men equally. In them there should be no distinction between class and class. And such a state of "equality" they thought, had surely belonged to the Golden Age when the Gods still walked the Earth.

Saturn was, besides, the great preserver of memories; and when the harvests were gathered and seeds stored for a new sowing, a brief flash of the memory of the Golden Age could once more be invoked in the winter darkness.

Always the past appears side by side with the future in the Christmas season! On the one side—Adam and Eve. On the other, the Holy Child. On the one side, our memories; on the other our hopes. What was death is a new birth. The Fall of man and the birth of the New Adam are brought to us in memory again and again. Christmas is a constant reminder of what each individual human soul must discover for itself in its own centre: the seed of the Tree of Life.

III

The Christmas tree is the fir-tree.

Have you ever wandered in a forest of firs? Have you felt the soft yet stubborn carpet of dead brown needles under your feet—seen the immense trunks, all lower growth upon them dry and bare, towering into the scented darkness overhead? No sky

is visible. There is hardly any undergrowth; the soil hides itself under a shroud. And have you seen the seedling fir-trees, planted out in the sunshine? Even their young branches have a hint of rigidity and darkness. They stand like aliens among their brighter companions.

Every tree and plant has its direct connection with the stars. This is no poetical fancy, but may now be demonstrated scientifically.* Compare the oak with the silver birch, the fir-tree with the plane-tree. Quite different cosmic influences overshadow and penetrate them. This is an ancient wisdom which we are re-discovering. And it tells us that the fir-tree's planet is Saturn. Something about its growth suggests an undeviating *will* to reach the stars and to overcome the death it continually sheds upon the Earth beneath.

In this country the fir-tree is not known in all its grandeur. Few of us see it laden with immense and dazzling cushions of snow, its almost invisible green looking starkly black against the white landscape. If we could often see it like that, or great forests of it, we should feel far more than we do the magic of its unearthly beauty.

One can imagine a young sapling of these trees of life and death—carried one day 300 years ago into a house in Strasbourg, and set down no doubt beside some simple reproduction of the cradle and the Child. And decorated? Perhaps with toys for that pictured Child. Perhaps with the gifts that the Kings and Shepherds had brought—the fleece of wool, the little cake, the gold. . . . Perhaps with little figures, Jacob, Mary, and the ox and ass, and surely with ears of corn and barley. And it was lit I am certain, with candles of the wax of honey-bees, those wise mythological “priestesses” who knew all the secrets of the Sun.

It was always customary at Christmas, or before, to bring into the house bare branches that the warmth would encourage to bud and grow green. That was their *own* life, springing from within. But who thought of the Christmas fir-tree?—Who first bestowed upon it images of life and light that were *not* its own, but bestowals conceived in the heart of man through divine inspiration?

Among the significant revelations of spiritual thought and activity given to the world by Rudolf Steiner, was one which seems at first sight not so very important: he gave suggestions for a new way of decorating the Christmas tree. These suggestions have been carried out during many years by thousands of people, and I propose to describe them here. Their real importance and beauty will certainly be realised by anyone who puts them into practice.

Seven symbolic signs, their size suited to the size of the Christmas tree, are made out of thick cardboard or thin ply-wood, and painted on both sides with gold paint. A small hole is pierced at the top for a fine wire by which they are hung on the tree. Some people also add the signs representing the seven planets.

Thirty-three red roses are also fastened to the tree. These should be real roses if they can be procured. Otherwise they may be made of rose-red paper. The illumination of the tree should be by *white* wax candles only. That is all. The only other decoration may be the long very fine tinsel threads popularly known as “angels' hair.” As both this and the white candles are now not so easy to procure, they should be ordered in good time. If the angels' hair is properly hung, rather lightly, all over the tree, it

* Through the experimental work of Mrs. L. Kolisko, often mentioned in these pages.

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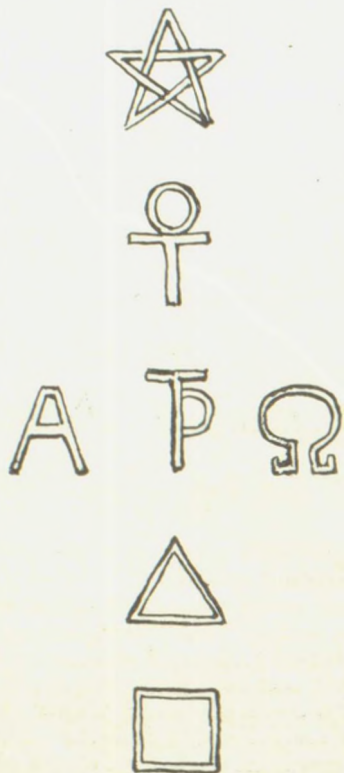
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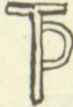


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has a most lovely effect. The roses are the symbols of the blossoming of life out of death. There are thirty-three of them. The number is the number of the years of a generation. It is also the number of the years of Christ's life; and has other meanings too. But what do the seven primary symbols stand for?

The Square  stands for the fourfold nature of man—his physical body, etheric body, astral body, and Ego.

The Triangle  represents the three higher principles of human nature which all men are ultimately, through the strength of their Ego, destined to unfold out of the three lower. Steiner calls them the Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit-Man. (Or Manas, Buddhi, and Atma.)

Above these hangs the symbol of the Tarok  or "book of Thoth," the ancient occult script of the progression of world-evolution from the beginning to the end, represented by the two signs Alpha  and Omega . This wisdom was attainable by the old Initiates who learnt how to "read" the given numbers and signs. The sign of the Tarok is placed at some point between the signs Alpha and Omega.

Above these hangs the Tao .

The Tao is the sign for the universal language of Nature. It was the word, sounding deeply into men's sensitive understanding (in Atlantean times and in the immemorial wisdom of the East), from out the mists and rainbows of the atmosphere—in

wind and waves and rustling trees, in thunder, and in every movement of the world. If we could translate "Tao" it would be: "That am I." Through Tao, man was bound to the Eternal.

The last of these seven symbols, placed at the summit of the tree, is the five-pointed star.



Out of the deepest darkness comes the triumph of the light. The whole meaning of the Earth's evolution shines in the Star which is Man, who, when he grasps and fulfils his appointed destiny is revealed as the bearer of the purpose of God which permeates the whole of evolution. It points to a time when it can no longer be said that the "darkness cannot comprehend the light," but when the words are changed into: "The darkness turns from itself to comprehend the Light which shines towards us as the Star of Humanity."*

If the signs of the planetary system are added, they are those of Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. They should be hung in a kind of spiral up the tree.

Thus we have in the seven ascending symbols a picture of the Light which ascends again from Earth to Heaven. There is first the human being as he lives in the world and aspires to understanding. He finds himself placed within the great mysteries of the totality of evolution from its beginning to its end; but he is not separated from this evolution nor from its purpose; for this purpose can resound to him through all created things as the Word of the World, which is also the Word of himself—I am; and the Light pours through his understanding from the Star of his spiritual and immortal destiny.

This then, is the new Christmas Tree, born in the 20th century. Readers may perhaps think that, presented in this form, it loses its "festive" character, would make no appeal to children, and would be regarded by grown-ups as something even they cannot fully understand or explain.

But I would like to urge upon you all to try it. Have your presents and the children's toys and the crackers set out somewhere a little apart from the tree. See the tree first in the darkened room and watch the little candles being lighted one by one. Have no other lights there. At last it will stand before you—in its delicate shimmer of silver and gold and darkest green, with its red roses like little glowing fires of life—as a holy thing, which for a few moments sheds a sudden silence upon you; and with the silence brings a gladness into your heart which every child will feel too, and will never forget.

The influence of this beautiful custom, saved from garishness and vulgarity, might well be incalculable! Because the Easter festival—and that means the festival of sustained and noble aspiration and effort—will become real to mankind just in proportion as the Christmas festival finds its true place in Christendom as a Festival of Wonder. And without Wonder at the great World-Mysteries there can be no peace.

NOTE.—Fear of fire may be an obstacle to the use of candles. But these decorations are not inflammable, and the tree, if not rootless and dry, is quite safe if not left unattended while the candles are alight. Very small white electric bulbs may be substituted. But they should not be too bright.

* Steiner.

Inductive Biographies

by Eugen Kolisko, M.D. (Vienna)

II. JOAN OF ARC

IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT Joan of Arc was the maker of France. But I shall hope to show in this article that she also made England, and what is more, created the shape of modern Europe.

What she really achieved was to separate England from France. Throughout the Middle Ages these two had been more or less inseparable from one another. First, the Norman conquest of England meant that the flower of French Knighthood conquered the Saxon element. Secondly, descendants of the Norman Kings of England conquer nearly the whole of France: Henry II, the first Plantagenet's, Empire, included more than half of the present France. When his son John lost it, England had to withdraw, but it was just at the time when the Magna Charta laid the first foundation of Anglo-Saxon independence and therewith of modern England. Thirdly, Henry V of England reconquered France just two centuries later; his accession to the throne in 1413 coincided almost exactly with the date of the birth of Joan of Arc in 1412. When he died in 1422 he left the two united kingdoms to his infant son Henry VI. The King of France, Charles VI, was mad, and had died at the same moment as Henry V. "*Vive Henri de Lancastre, Roi de France et d'Angleterre!*" proclaimed the heralds. France as an independent nation no longer existed.

There was not the slightest probability that this state of affairs could be altered. The Dauphin, a man without any initiative or self-confidence, had withdrawn himself to a remote corner of the Kingdom. Orleans was the last stronghold of his followers, and was in a state of siege. The European nations had become quite familiar with the idea that France had come to an end.

In this most critical moment there occurred the most incredible event—the appearance of Joan of Arc. This girl of seventeen, born in the most remote village on the borders of Lorraine, was suddenly inspired to journey 300 miles to visit the Dauphin, and to deliver Orleans. We still possess her exact words spoken when she arrived: "Gentil Prince, it is you and no other. May God give you good life: I am Joan the Maid. I have journeyed three hundred miles to bring help to the Kingdom and to you. And you are commanded by the King of Heaven through me to be consecrated and crowned at Reims. And that you are to be God's lieutenant who is the true King of France. Employ me, gentil Sire, and the fatherland will soon be wholly loyal to you."

Since her twelfth year she had seen visions and heard voices. They were never indefinite. She knew exactly what she had to do. The Voices were constantly saying to her: "Go! Go! Go! into France and raise the siege of Orleans, and lead Charles to his coronation at Reims!" At the first communication she saw a sudden light and a Voice was heard saying: "I come from God to aid and guide you Joan. Be good, and God will help you." She came to know that the voice came from Michael the

Archangel. And later St. Catherine and St. Margaret appeared to her also—not once, but hundreds of times. Quite clearly, she saw multitudes of angels and spiritual beings. She knew them by name, and they gave her instructions. We know this from the most minute details given by her during her trial. For four years—from the age of twelve to sixteen—she resisted this tremendous influx of revelation. "I am a poor girl, I know not how to manage a horse, far less can I conduct a war," she said, when she was told again and again what she had to do.

When Joan came to Chinon where the Dauphin was, the news that a prophet had appeared spread miraculously immediately over the whole of Europe. In a fortnight, she had convinced the Prince, and persuaded him to put her in command of the army to deliver Orleans. In eleven weeks she had achieved the whole plan: Orleans was delivered, the English army, under Talbot and Falstaff, was defeated at the battle of Patay; and the Dauphin was brought in triumph to Reims and crowned. All this was done solely by the tremendous impetus of the Maid's actions. Generals, Councillors, the Archbishop, the Dauphin himself, did all they possibly could to hinder; but they were swept onwards as though by an irresistible power. The Maid, leading her soldiers on horseback, went from town to town, wearing her armour and carrying her banner, painted with the words *Jesus—Maria*.

These eleven weeks are one of the most amazing moments of history. They really changed the face of Europe.

What happened after Reims is nearly as astonishing as this triumph. Joan wanted immediately to conquer Paris, but the intrigues in the French camp became continually worse. The bridge over the Seine, which leads from St. Denis to the town, and which had been constructed on Joan's orders, was removed by the Councillors of the King himself during the night, in order to prevent the carrying out of the plan. A section of the French Generals were in rebellion against Joan. So valuable time was lost. From this moment Joan was only a mascot in the army, and the Court wanted to get rid of her. These intrigues finally led to her imprisonment at Compiègne. When the French were returning to the fortifications after a sortie, the drawbridge was raised by the French and Joan and a small band of her followers were left outside and taken by the Burgundians.

Although there is some controversy on this point, a study of the whole circumstances makes it quite clear that the Court had lost all interest in the Maid and wanted to be rid of her. This is also shown by the fact that for months Joan remained a prisoner of my lord of Luxembourg who was quite ready to release her for a ransom; and even made the proposal to Charles. But nothing was done. And it was only after a considerable time that the English took the opportunity of bargaining with her captors for her. So she was handed over to the English and the trial in Rouen began.

I should like to emphasise that the French did not treat Joan any better than the English. The questions, for instance,

that she had to answer before the Ecclesiastical Commission at Poitiers, which included the most famous theologians of France—before she was first acknowledged as a prophetess—are very similar to those she had to reply to at the trial. If one reads the account of this most searching examination at Poitiers, both physical and spiritual, and her answers, one feels there was very little difference between the French and the English inquisitors, and her naïve reaction to both was the same.

She was asked: "Do you believe in God?"

"A good deal more than you do," was the reply.

"In what language did the voices speak to you?"

"In a better language than yours."

And further: "There is more in God's Book than in all your books." "God has a Book," she added, "in which no cleric has ever read, however good or learned he may be."

And at the trial: "Do you know if you are in the Grace of God?"

"If I am not in the Grace of God," she said, "may He put me there. If I am in the Grace of God, may He keep me there." Is this not a sublime answer given by the genius of humanity to the tortuous insinuations of theological subtlety?

It makes very little difference to what nationality the theologians belong.

All the answers given by Joan, which are still preserved intact, if they were collected together and edited would form the substance of a new Christian revelation. I am sure I am not saying too much. John Lamond, author of a most remarkable book, *Joan of Arc and England* (Rider, 1927), says: "She was both Catholic and Protestant—one of the greatest of the Catholic Saints as is now fully acknowledged; and one of the most original of all the Protestants, seeing far more clearly into the essence of spiritual truth than modern Protestants will acknowledge."

The Christianity which she professed is without doubt a direct continuation of something which lies at its very root—and has nothing to do with any particular denomination. She always insisted on the fact that the original revelation has not ceased and that she was the channel through which it could continue for the fulfilment of her mission.

Joan of Arc cannot really be claimed by any Church or any nation as their own. This especially applies to France and England. She made France—of this there is no doubt. She prophesied that seven years after her death, the English would have to leave France, and the main points of this prophecy were fulfilled as she had said: Paris was conquered, and in 1435 at the Congress of Arras, where nearly all the nations of Europe were represented, the change in public opinion became evident. France's existence was definitely acknowledged. And twenty years later—when the same number of years as the length of her life had elapsed—France was what it is to-day. England, on the contrary, entered upon the worst period of its history: the Wars of the Roses began.

How can we picture this War of the Roses? It is the extermination of that nobility and knighthood which was really the aftermath of the old state when France and England were one.

In the Hundred Years War (1337-1437) between France and England, which came to an end through Joan of Arc, the English had the modern arms (gunpowder, etc.) while the French had the arms of the age of chivalry. The modern age really defeated the medieval. When the English had retired to their island, the

medieval type of struggle continued in the Wars of the Roses (to put it bluntly) until the whole of the old knighthood, decadent as it had become, was finally extinguished. When it was over, modern England was born.

But this would never have been possible except through the entire withdrawal of the English from the continent; and this withdrawal was the result of the mission of Joan of Arc. Lamond* says: "In the fifteenth century the Middle Ages were about to give place to our modern world, and their noblest representative is found in the person of Joan. No other figure stands out against the past at that period in such bright effulgence. After her advent France became a regenerated France, the land in which law and science and art had their appointed place. After her advent England became a new England, the England of Shakespeare and Milton, the England that was to rule the seas."

Modern England is intimately connected with the foundation of modern experimental science, of political democratic liberty, and the modern world-economic Empire. But this England is bound to be a spectator of continental affairs and culture. For this purpose it must start from an isolated position—its own island. France, on the other hand, became the model of the modern state. Joan of Arc's Dauphin—Charles VII—was the first King to have real absolute power, and centred this power in Paris. He was the first to introduce the standing army, with paid soldiers. That he did not gain his power by his own ability is clear; he never did anything at all, but all was done for him by the power which had inspired the Maid.

So both countries, England and France, were brought to their *real mission* for the modern age, by the deed of Joan of Arc. We have to distinguish between what is the real mission of a nation in respect of the whole of humanity, and what seems at any moment to arise as a nationalistic impulse. The two nations had to be separated. This could only happen, just at that moment, through the victory of France. This also shows that, with such a mission, the Maid had really to become a martyr of both nations.

But what of the whole of Europe? The real effect of the Treaty of Arras (1435) was that Burgundy, which had always been a buffer so to say between England and France, became a great independent state. It included Western France, Holland, Belgium and parts of the present Switzerland and Germany. All the wealth and culture of the Netherlands was included in Burgundy. It was the richest state in the world. Brabant was its capital.

Later, it was inherited by the Hapsburgs, so that at the threshold of the modern age it made the link between Austria and Spain; in short the Empire of Charles V of Germany became one "where the sun never sets," as even America, discovered from Spain, was included in it.

So Burgundy became the nucleus of this vast Empire. But for this purpose it had to be withdrawn, at that particular moment, both from French and English influence. And this was accomplished by the Maid of Orleans.

Under the shadow of this Burgundian-Hapsburg Empire, there appeared what we can call the development of the *German cultural life*. The Reformation was nowhere so inward—as in its beginnings quite mystic—as in Germany. Meister Eckhart, Tauler, Silesius, Boehme, and even Luther himself, could never have found the right atmosphere for their development if the

* *Joan of Arc and England.*

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How the "Gothic" Symphony Came to be Written

by Havergal Brian

I WAS BORN IN THE LITTLE VILLAGE OF Dresden, Staffordshire, just over sixty years ago. The village was on the verge of lovely country, and at only a short distance from where I lived there might be seen on a clear day the "sugar loaf" Wrekin in Shropshire forty miles away, and on occasion even the more distant Malvern Hills in Worcestershire—smokeless expanse of some of the loveliest rural and river scenery in England. Behind, only two miles away, were the Potteries.

Among my earliest recollections were picture books given to me by my mother—pictures of that other Dresden in Germany, and of Leipzig. Mentally, I lived in the world of my own imagination—in the greater Dresden, and I believed that Leipzig was only just behind the distant gravel-pits. My passions as a very small child were music and books. Long before the mystery of musical notation was solved for me by a friendly rent-collector, one of my dearest possessions was a battered copy of the *Messiah*. My favourite books were Chambers's *Miscellany*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and a tale translated from the German called the *Hartz Boys*; incidentally, all these books had been given to my father as prizes for regular attendance in Dresden Parish Church choir.

In November 1886 I entered St. James' School, Longton, Staffs. It was an initiation for me, because my favourite music was treated as a serious subject, and staff notation was taught as a subject in the fourth standard. All the assistant masters were members of the parish church choir and the treble boys were selected from the school. It was really a school of choristers, with friendly competitions in school hours for solo singers and sight-singing. No accompaniment was supplied; each student was taught to get his note from a pitch-pipe or tuning fork.

A few months after my entrance into the school I was selected for admission as a treble boy for the parish choir. This meant a few indulgences at school. I ran home breathless to tell my grandmothers and parents.

Probably at no time in its history has this country been so excited as in 1887—the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Festival thanksgiving services were held in all churches and cathedrals in June of that year. The actual preparatory work for the Festival I do not remember, but what I do vividly remember is that on the morning of going to Lichfield Cathedral I was awake at three o'clock in the morning, too excited to sleep and rambling through the fields and lanes. The piece of music which made the deepest impression on me was the *Te Deum* by the Prince Consort—sung with full orchestral accompaniment. I remember the solo "He remembering His Mercy" was sung with the tenderest appealing expression by the solo boy of the Cathedral choir. I wonder where he is now?

I also remember that owing to my sleepless night before the Festival I kept falling asleep in the Cathedral, where I was amongst scores of other treble boys in the Cathedral transept. Each time I awakened I saw in front of me the black head of a negro boy—a treble belonging to Tamworth Parish Church choir. The transept was filled with surpliced choristers. The orchestra in the choir—

here and there were sub-conductors taking their beat from the principal conductor of the Festival, Mr. J. B. Lott, organist of Lichfield Cathedral. I retained an impression of something on a vast scale, much of it due to my childish, impressionable mind, because, when many years afterwards I ran down on a visit to Lichfield with friends and went into the cathedral I did not discover what it was that had overawed me as a child. The transept is magnificent and imposing, but not to the extent of my imaginative impression. Another thing that impressed me at the Festival of 1887 was the face of a kindly-looking man wearing glasses who played the bassoon. I was destined to meet or see him many times afterwards playing in the Burton-on-Trent Military Band, the Halford Orchestra (Birmingham), and many orchestral concerts conducted in those days by Swinnerton Heap. His name was Mr. Edwin, and I never saw his name or face without being reminded of the Jubilee service in Lichfield Cathedral in June 1887. Another thing to remember of that year is the glorious weather throughout the year and a phenomenal hot summer.

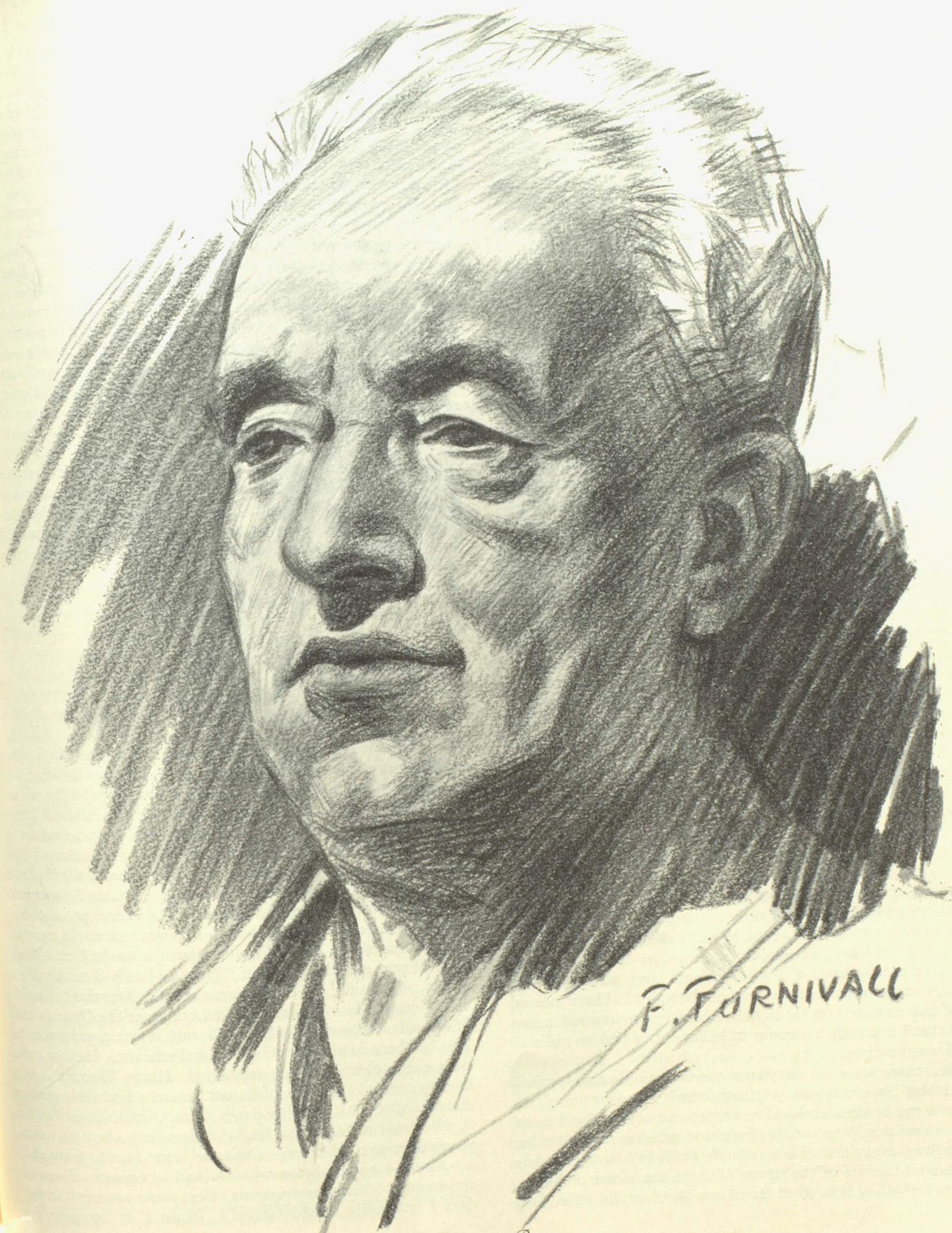
I remember that at the Lichfield Festival we children were not allowed in the sun; in the procession through the close into the cathedral we were kept in the shade of the trees. The heat under the Cathedral was as hot as a furnace.

When the Festival was over I did not return my copy of the music. Its possession was an incentive to playing it, for long before my voice broke I was deputy to the organist of St. James' Parish Church, Longton. Before I was sixteen, although he was much older than my father, he became very jealous of my playing and used to "lose" the key of the organ to rob me of my organ practice. This was the reason why, at the age of eighteen, I accepted the post of organist at Odd Rode Parish Church, Cheshire, a rather inaccessible place twenty miles from where I lived, in order to get organ practice and further experience.

* * * * *

Up to now I have nothing to recount beyond ordinary experience, though the process of development of any child of musical gifts tending to composition must perplex the observing psychologist in magnitude according to the extent of the talent. I studied the piano and organ hard and long. My first instrument was the violin. I disliked it. Afterwards I seriously took up the cello and eventually gained a great deal of experience by playing in the theatre and local orchestras. And it was the orchestra at the festival at which Elgar's "King Olaf" was produced in 1896 that turned me against the organ as I had years before been turned against the violin. Orchestras of sorts I had heard and played in, but this was the first really good one. The sounds of that festival orchestra in Elgar's cantata, Dvořák's "Spectre's Bride" and Beethoven's Choral Symphony in D Minor haunted me and drove me away from the organ. I hereafter concentrated on the cello and composition.

Also I was compelled by force of circumstances to plan my career as composer unaided. I don't know now which is worse—to be like Gustav Holst the pupil of a teaching genius like Stanford and to be met with the criticism of "It's all wrong, my boy!" or to sit unaided grasping for the light. In every case a composer gets



F. FURNIVALL

Flavergal Brian

on by fighting in retreat or, shall we say, discouragement. The original quality of Elgar's "King Olaf" was for me a spiritual uplift. At that time my heroes were Schumann and Grieg. Elgar was to me bigger than both with all their fascinating qualities plus something more. Who but Elgar could have written the first half-dozen bars of the cantata—so full of music that seems to dissolve into weeping? The same week I heard Elgar's work, I also heard three Wagner operas performed by the Carl Rosa Opera Company with Philip Brozel as "Lohengrin." What days of glorious ecstasy and spiritual revealing. But Elgar's work persisted stronger than ever, he rose beyond all other composers. So in an inspired moment I sent him, after having ascertained where he lived, a short composition of my own—an anthem, how could it be anything other than an anthem as I was still a church organist? Elgar's reply was austere and guarded, but he did say my work was original if involved, and I had a great gift of expression. I remember he closed his letter by remarking that his words were after all but cold comfort. Elgar's letter gave me hope.

There is no doubt that in those days, the spiritual quality of Elgar was clearly reflected in his personality. Years afterwards when I first met him, I was overwhelmed by the brilliance of his flashing eyes and impetuous non-stop high-tension conversation. He and his wife were most kind and encouraging to me. Several years before his death I attended a meeting convened to meet Elgar. I had not seen him for twenty-five years. I was thankful that due to eye trouble I was wearing dark glasses and as soon as I saw Elgar at the far end of the room I involuntarily felt, "Is that the Elgar I once knew, who wrote 'King Olaf,' 'Caractacus,' 'Gerontius'—never!" and I fled like someone badly disillusioned. He looked like a prosperous colonel or a retired brigadier-general. I know what Theosophists say about these changes, and we all go through them. I remember a few years ago when the Editor of the MODERN MYSTIC was kind enough to write musical criticisms for me, I said to him one day after a certain notice he had written of a concert, "You seem to have a splendid grasp of the Brahms Symphonies!" He replied, "Yes, I can't get along without them. Do you know each night before going to bed I put a Brahms Symphony on my gramophone."

Yet when I spoke to him the other day about gramophone records he confessed he had given both records and gramophone away.

I have during my life studied many books on Napoleon; his career fascinated me no less than Bach's B minor Mass or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and I have many books about him. Some few years ago this Napoleonic study threatened to become an obsession, so much so that I had two or three books about him going at once (the Editor of the MODERN MYSTIC can vouch for this) and when I have got into bed late and so tired as to be half asleep, I have wakened a couple of hours later, fresh and wide awake, tormented by some query about Napoleon. I have jumped out of bed, switched on the light and become so absorbed in him again that I was only conscious of being out of bed by realising that I was intensely cold.

It is three years ago since I got out of this obsession, or shall I put it that Napoleon gradually withdrew? I look up at my row of Napoleon books and wonder, where is he now? There again it is not the later Napoleon, the Emperor, who fascinates me, but that young eagle-like visionary with an X-ray mind, the boy commander-in-chief of the army of Italy, the victor of Rivoli, Marengo, the boy who freed Italy from the Austrian yoke. It is

the young winged-heel Napoleon who never lost a battle and taught his enemies a new art of war which held them all at bay until they knew how to fight him with his own weapons. And though in that period referred to above, I metaphysically speaking have been so close to him as to have lived in his shadow, I have never seen him. And though in the spirit I have seen Frederick the Great, John Sebastian Bach, Hector Berlioz, I have never seen any manifestations of those who were nearest and dearest to me, my parents or my mother's mother.

My own opinion is that the nearness or distance of a manifestation is a type of inspiration through which the mind concentrates on one point until there is sudden contact creating high tension, an effect not unlike sudden sunlight dissolving shadows. It has been argued that inspiration and prayer are the same. Though I am convinced that great work of any kind is impossible without inspiration, I no less hold the belief that the only practical prayer is that of the inner voice and urge such as in the old fable of Hercules and the Wagoner, who, when his wagon got stuck in the mud, prayed to Hercules to come to his aid. The voice replied, "Man help thyself." *Ergo*, on this occasion did Hercules manifest through the Wagoner?

* * * * *

In 1906 John Coates gave a series of song recitals at the Bechstein Hall and included my setting of a short mystical poem by the Persian poet, Hafiz. The story is that Hafiz lost his favourite boy at the age of ten, and each year of the anniversary of the boy's birth, visited the grave and prayed. I give the first verse of Richard Le Gallienne's translation:

Little Sleeper
The spring is here:
Tulip and Rose
Are here again.
Only you
In the earth remain,
Sleeping dear!

There are two more verses which gradually convey in the subtlest manner the overwhelming sorrow of the poet. When the opportunity of publishing this and other songs by Breitkopf and Hartel came to me it was necessary to obtain Le Gallienne's permission to use his translation. Arnold Bennett took the matter in hand but could not discover Le Gallienne's whereabouts. The suspension of publication was avoided by Gerald Cumberland writing another poem to fit the music. Unfortunately it cannot be compared with the wonderful lyric by Le Gallienne. Cumberland did his best and was chivalrous to attempt it. In 1907 an orchestral work of mine had its first performance in Leeds Town Hall. It was an "English Suite," and the Leeds Saturday night audience enjoyed it. So did I. Seven months later this "English Suite" had its first performance in London at the Queen's Hall Promenade concerts under Henry Wood. It was a great success. This had been foreshadowed at the final rehearsal, because at the close the orchestra heartily applauded. Henry Wood was very kind to me and the night of its performance I was his guest at dinner. Afterwards in going down to the Queen's Hall with him in his familiar "four-wheeler," he drew my attention to the possibilities of another kind of suite and asked me to think about it. A suite for an orchestra which would incorporate all modern and ancient orchestral instruments. Here was a venture! In those days I frequently visited Granville Bantock at Broadmeadow,

King's Norton, Birmingham, and on one occasion discussed with him the proposed suite. Bantock threw cold water on it, and advised me not to do it. His argument was that it would take several years to prepare and score, and afterwards it would have one performance at Queen's Hall and that would be all. Somewhere about this time (1909) I had the most extraordinary and vivid dream I've ever experienced. I was in an old-world town (I felt sure it must be Nuremberg), walking by the side of a drowsy, narrow river. I remember the curious gables which appeared to intrude on the river path. I left the path and turned into a medieval church with a lovely Gothic interior. I sat down near the entrance to study it. As I did so I saw an extraordinary sight in the distant chancel. There in front of me was a magnificent-looking horse with its head towards the altar; on one side was a lady in riding habit, on the other side a man also dressed in riding habit. The decorative colours of the horse's saddle and the riding habits were strange and bizarre. I got the impression that the two people wanted to talk to each other and they were trying to touch hands but could not do so because of the horse's unusual height. I then left the church and made for the house where I was apparently living. I opened the door and walked inside a wide spacious hall. The wide staircase ran up one side of it and across the top which gave it an appearance of a verandah. As I walked up the ancient stairs, the vibration from my ascending steps shook particles of dirt off the ceiling which as they fell on me became phosphorescent, making an uncanny effect in the gloomy hall. As I left the verandah the phosphorescence ceased. I entered my bedroom, undressed and got into bed. I was awakened from my sleep by a brilliant white light and as I pulled myself up in bed I saw an open panel before me with the unflinching, inscrutable face of Beethoven, the flames rising and curling over it. In my consternation at this sight, I fell sideways from the bed and saved myself by putting my hand out on the floor. As I did so, I felt something thick and hairy brush past my wrist, and saw a dog, a black retriever. This fright woke me up, and I found myself with my body half out of bed resting on my right hand on the floor, but not at Nuremberg, but at Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent.

The mention of Hartshill reminds me that all my early works so far as "Doctor Merryheart" were written in the house in which I had that strange dream.

The months following my first success at Queen's Hall, Henry (now Sir Henry) Wood produced my overture "For Valour" for the first time. It produced a post-card from Joseph Holbrooke,* on which he wrote me that he left Queen's Hall after "For Valour" feeling he had been scalped! Soon afterwards the Norwich Triennial Festival Committee offered a prize for a setting of a libretto called "Cleopatra" by Gerald Cumberland. I went in for it, and shall I ever forget the difficulties under which it was written! From the day I commenced working on Cumberland's libretto, someone started playing glissandos on the piano in the adjoining house. My domestic arrangements also were upside down, and my wife was in hospital awaiting an operation. So I turned night into day to dodge the piano fiend, and managed to finish the full score just in time for the competition. Seventy young English composers sent in settings of the same libretto. In the March of 1908 when the result was announced in the *Daily Telegraph*, the winner was Julius Harrison, and a note underneath

* Joseph Holbrooke, a contemporary composer whose output has been colossal covering almost every conceivable combination of instruments. Piano solos, operas, symphonies—even a concerto for saxophone and orchestra.—Ed.

said the adjudicators felt compelled to mention my setting. Later, although there was no second prize, I received a letter from the Secretary of the Norwich Festival Committee asking me to accept a cheque in view of the adjudicators specially mentioning my work, and he would like to inform me that the conductor of the Festival, Henry J. Wood, had been a most generous subscriber to the cheque. A few months later my "Vision of Cleopatra" was selected for performance by the Southport Triennial Festival Committee for its 1909 Festival. I sold the publishing rights to Arthur Bosworth of Bosworth & Co. for the sum of £40. In the autumn of 1909 I won a double honour. My setting of "By the waters of Babylon" for chorus and orchestra was selected for performance at the first Musical League Festival, in September 1909. Liverpool did the young composers of the Musical League well and the Lord Mayor banqueted us in most sumptuous style. I suppose it was the first and only occasion on which young British composers were treated so generously. When I went down to Liverpool for a rehearsal of my work with the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, I expressed astonishment at such emotional singing, such dramatic fire. I was told that all Welsh people had an affection for that Psalm and my setting of it had stirred them deeply.

The performance at the Festival was overwhelming. Elgar left his box to congratulate me, and though he was visibly affected by it, when he went on to the platform and addressed the audience, he missed or forgot his opportunity to say anything about my work. Had he said only what Frederick Austin said who sang it. In October, the following month, my "Vision of Cleopatra" had its first performance at the Southport Triennial Festival. The principals were John Coates (tenor), Phyllis Letts (contralto), Hallé Orchestra, choir master Arthur Speed; conductor, Landon Ronald. I have never yet been let down by a conductor although everyone knew that I was a rank outsider and a freelance.

If ever a conductor was rattled to the point of throwing up his job, it was Landon Ronald at Southport. The Festival had taken on my work without realising that it needed expert playing as well as many rehearsals. When I arrived in Southport I met Landon Ronald and Maurice Spielmann (principal viola of the Hallé Orchestra) in Lord Street. Ronald was troubled with lumbago, and said my work was killing him, because he could not get sufficient rehearsals. If he couldn't get more separate rehearsals for wind and strings, he would throw it up! Anyhow he got a wonderful performance and I obtained a column of publicity in the *Daily Mail*. As this is the first article I have ever written about my work, and I most decidedly will not write again, I should like to say that such a work as the "Gothic Symphony" would have been impossible but for the kindnesses I've received from Elgar, Bantock, Delius, Wood, Beecham, Ronald, Canon Gorton, John Coates, and Ernest Newman. My visits to them in their homes, sitting chatting, smoking a pipe before the fire, the warmly vitalising effect of a glass of wine at dinner, a flash of the eyes and a smile across the table—they are over now, but my big works would not have been written but for these good fellows.

I will give one instance of this kindness. During the war (1915) I was in London on leave. I had no right to be in mufti, but I was, and walking one afternoon along Regent Street, to a concert at Queen's Hall. I met Thomas Beecham, whom I hadn't seen since he conducted my "For Valour" at a Strauss concert in the Town Hall, Birmingham, in 1911. He said in his usual droll,

dry manner, "Why are we not performing your works now?" I hadn't time to reply before he told me that he and Landon Ronald were to give a series of Promenade Concerts at the Albert Hall; would I leave him a work to perform with his factotum, Donald Bayllis, at the Aldwych Theatre? So I did, and heard nothing more until the programmes were out; he had put down my "Festal Dance" for its first performance. I remember it was done on a Saturday night and my work was the only one that roused the audience. After its performance I went to the artists' room to see why Beecham wasn't taking the "call." I found him in a corner eating an apple. I said, "Why don't you go on and take the call?" He said, "Tacet."

* * * * *

At the close of the war, I left Birmingham. I had had an adventurous time, working by day in munition factories and composing by night. When I left I had the complete sketches of a three-act opera which I had long ago promised Thomas Beecham and some song settings of Blake's poems of which I was particularly proud.

For several years I lived in Lewes and worked in a little room at the top of a house with a dormer window through which I could see the South Downs rolling towards Eastbourne. And it was in Lewes that I discovered the "scene" of my strange dream of many years ago at Hartshill. Lewes has many houses centuries old and the atmosphere is most congenial for thinking, or so I found it. I never felt the slightest hindrance to composition in Lewes, and of no other place can I say the same. I have often wondered if some of the hindrances were imposed and malicious! Unknown to me the landlord, Christopher Masterman, from whom I rented a flat in Brighton, was a poet, linguist, and philosopher. We soon "discovered" each other, particularly in German, music, and poetry.

I was then working as a hack for several music publishers, so those who have had any experience of hack work will admit that I deserved all the intellectual indulgence I could get. But my flat was never large enough and after much searching I settled on a small house on an estate seven miles from Brighton, and on the edge of the Downs, property built by the Brighton Corporation. My first impression of my new dwelling was somewhat alarming. I arrived at the house on a Saturday afternoon, just when it was a shell with a roof. I was compelled to shelter in it from a storm, and I remember how the water raced down the hill at the back of the house through a door entrance, rushed right through the house and out at the front door with the energy of a Northern stream. The locality was Moulsecoomb and its setting ideal. From my back door there was a climb through the garden up the field beyond and then I was on the South Downs. Every morning I used to be up to do that walk, across the downs with my Irish terrier, Pete, who was as fleet as a highly trained greyhound. We had great fun together. I mention these walks because those who have not had experience of the South Downs cannot realise their mental stimulation. I used to walk over the land rented by a farmer named H. J. Bates. We had much pleasant intercourse and I worked for a time amongst the fruit pickers in his orchards. I can think of nothing more mentally invigorating than gazing at miles of freshly made ploughed furrows, uniform and symmetrical, glistening purple red in the autumn morning light, unbroken by a single hedge, over the vast rolling downs. This I have always felt to be the pivot of the Gothic Symphony—a work which I was compelled to write. At Hillside, Moulsecoomb, hack work from

London publishers became frequently intermittent, but I did not waste my time. I remember the morning that a parcel of second-hand German books arrived from Oxford. I instinctively felt I was at the beginning of the biggest quest of my life. And it was written in the deep silences of the night, long after the family had retired to bed, usually between eleven p.m. and two and three a.m. And I was down by eight o'clock for my morning walk before breakfast. Each work presents a new problem in technique, a process evolved during its creation and never repeated, and it is beyond the intelligence of any composer to describe what that process is. The composition of the Gothic Symphony presented no problems beyond the usual vexatious one of the finale—should it be instrumental or choral. As the first part (orchestral) was largely coloured by Goethe's *Faust* (Part I), I had an idea of setting to a chorale finale a large portion of the last act of *Faust* (Part II). The "Te Deum" had never been out of my mind as a work to be done. As it pushed itself forward as the only possible finale for a Gothic Symphony, I got to work at it very quickly, and it was written as stated. A rainy night or a howling wind with rain driving on the panes is an inspiration. I always work with a green-shaded table-lamp; in the days of writing the Gothic the shade was extra thick, so that the rest of the room away from my table was in darkness. If in those midnight hours I sometimes saw Frederick the Great, a shrunken figure at the end of a long life of fighting, John Sebastian Bach, Goethe, Berlioz, sitting in an armchair in the darkness by the fire, I attached no importance to the phenomenon. I was more disturbed by what sometimes happened to my manuscripts after I went to bed. For years, I have sealed my manuscripts, because I could never understand how, when they were not accessible to anyone, they became frequently disturbed. During the composition of the Gothic I sealed the sketches with paste and sealing wax every night before going to bed, only to find sometimes on opening them, within the next twenty-four hours, that the pages were not in the order I put them. Such happenings must drive others off their mental balance. I have always felt that I, being the only person interested in my work, would discover a solution to all the mysteries about it. The actual composition of the Gothic Symphony was a matter for its composer only. When, after the three purely orchestral movements were written I wrote to Henry Wood and reminded him of the time when he asked me to think of writing a suite and utilising all the ancient and modern instruments, I told him I was projecting a large symphony for those same instruments. He asked to see the score, and I sent it to him. When he returned it before his visit to Hollywood, he referred to it as an important work and also to the cost of rehearsals. When, a long time afterwards, I had completed the sketches of the "Te Deum" finale, at Sir Henry's request I met his wife on Brighton Station personally to hand over the work for him to look at. And I remember that night, for it was one of the worst foggy nights I ever remember, and I had to walk in the fog from Moulsecoomb to Brighton Station carrying "my precious music"—the words used by Lady Wood, when I met her with her father. Curious that in the "Te Deum" I was helped by two musicians of the name of Allen, and I believe unknown to each other. Mr. Allen, music master at Brighton College, wrote out for me and then had typed the "Te Deum Laudamus" in English and Latin, side by side, and this was most helpful. Years afterwards, when at the Royal College of Music, where I had been teaching, I told Sir Hugh

(continued in page 485)

The Times We Live In

II.

by G. S. Francis

ALTHOUGH SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL activities in the modern age have become dangerously subordinate to economic interests and technique, the need for separate organisation and administration of these three main aspects of human activity becomes more urgent than ever.

The spiritual or intellectual powers of the peoples of the western world are virile and creative in the sphere of economic invention and development, but they are more sterile in the spheres of education and politics in which we mainly perpetuate the cultural and social impulses inherited from the civilisation of Greece and Rome.

The cultural impulses we received from Greece were mainly aristocratic in character, for the cultural life of Greece was almost exclusively the prerogative of a small, superior class. The Hellenes were conquering invaders, therefore the population of the Grecian peninsular which they invaded and occupied was sharply divided into two dissimilar strata, the conquerors and the conquered, the free and the enslaved. It was the free citizens alone who had any real share in the treasures of Greek culture, a fact which also had the effect of depressing the worth or dignity of human work, for it was only the lighter and more interesting occupations that were considered worthy of free citizens, the heavier and coarser forms of toil being left to the slaves. This Grecian attitude of mind still exerts undue influence over our ideas concerning education, for the very type of scholastic structure we provide and the type of juvenile instruction we conduct, tend to perpetuate those older forms of class distinction which we clearly preserve in the church and army and in real but less definite ways in our general structure of society. The ordained hierarchy and the lay workers in the church, the commissioned officers and the non-commissioned ranks in the army, are examples of social structure that have survived from earlier times in which the two main social classes are separated by an abyss which, in practice, is exceedingly difficult to cross.

In like manner the notions and ideas concerning personal and property "rights" which we inherit from Rome are abstract and legalistic rather than human in character. Among the Romans social rights did not belong to the people as such, they only belonged to the "citizens" of the State. A human being was not regarded as a "person" until he was registered as a citizen. Thus the fact of being born was not enough to make him "a man"; he had first to obtain the privilege of having his name recorded in the State registers, for social rights only belonged to those who held the requisite documentary qualifications. This Roman concept still influences many of our notions of law and justice in which mere legal rights too often predominate over human and moral rights. A potent revival of this old Roman notion in these post-war times can also be observed by noting the increasing numbers of human individuals who are being forced into circumstances in which the possession of the "right" papers or documents is of far greater importance than the possession of good personal character or socially useful abilities. Contrast the position

of increasing numbers of Europeans to-day who are unable to obtain passports through circumstances over which they have no shadow of control, with the position of the same type of persons say 30 years ago when human individuals of good character could move freely about the world without any official interference whatever, and without needing any papers to their name.

Both in personal faculties and social needs western humanity has now evolved beyond these older concepts and for this reason current political and cultural life is often felt to be unreal and unsatisfactory. The cultural activities and the political life of to-day both need to be disentangled from the all-embracing grip of contemporary economic interests and given independent status so that they too can be moulded into accurate expression forms of the spiritual powers and social needs of the people of to-day. The nature and social effects of this entanglement are not widely recognised as yet but they are nevertheless very real. The western democracies evolved from feudalism under conditions of economic freedom in which it was understood that the State would not interfere in economic activity, but while those who were concerned with political development gave reasonable respect to this arrangement, those engaged in economic activity did not. They increasingly interested themselves in politics until, through the exercise of their economic power, financiers and employers on the one hand and Trade Unions on the other came to dominate politics entirely. Thus the proper relationships between social rights and economic interests have never been settled by reason but only on a basis of lockouts and strikes, civil strife and general disorder. One of the social consequences of this anarchical state of affairs is the problem of unemployment, a result of an unbalanced ratio between production and consumption, rendered still more acute by the unregulated power of banks to increase or diminish the total volume of money at will without any regard to the human consequences of their actions. How little the real nature of "unemployment" is understood can be seen from the fact that it is regarded and treated simultaneously as a social nuisance, an economic disease, a political counter or as an occasion for charity.

Present-day economic life is modern and creative, it expresses the dynamic spirit of this age, but our spiritual life and political life express themselves in forms that belong to earlier times and are now archaic and ineffective. They need to be disentangled from purely economic interests which tend to crystallise and preserve those older forms, they need to be set free to evolve expression forms more consistent with the nature of the times in which we live. They need to become modern too.

In order to get some notion of the nature of the expression forms these three human activities ought to take in the social life of to-day, it is essential to remember that the natural unit of all spiritual life is the human individual, the natural unit of all political life is the nation, while the natural unit for modern economic life is the whole earth and the whole human race.

Post-War Nationalism

The exaggerated sentiments of Nationalism that have appeared in the post-war years stand as a very real obstacle to the immediate development of any effective system of World Economy. To people of a certain outlook their Nation is felt to be so sacred that no sacrifice could be too great to maintain its prestige or to extend its influence. In some quarters this exaltation of the State involves the severe suppression or systematic dragooning of individual values. "Du bist nichts, das Volk ist alles" expresses one aspect of this tendency. "Alles muss gleichgeschaltet sein" expresses the other.* In view of this tendency to exaggerate the importance of National States in the general scheme of things, it appears necessary to present another aspect by way of comparison.

In his book *We Europeans* Julian Huxley says "A nation is a group of people inhabiting a common tract of country, united by a common government, a common history, common sentiments and traditions, a common social organism and usually, but not always, by a common language. (Belgium and Switzerland are exceptions.) It is a unit to which its members feel they belong . . . while individuals belonging to other similar units are regarded as foreign or alien to them. This sense of solidarity with co-nationals and separateness from other nationals is the essence of nationality."

"The nation, however, is only a particular phase in the evolution of human groups. It does not represent anything permanent or inherent in human nature, it is a product of the last 300 years and is quite different in nature and organisation from other units . . . such as class, tribe or empire.

The idea of a blood tie is sometimes used to strengthen national sentiment, but mass migration, conquest, legal adoption of foreigners, marriage with foreigners, etc., make the thesis of a common descent impossible to uphold. The idea that there is any such thing as a British, French, German or Italian race is a political fiction and a dangerous one at that."

This post-war exaggeration of national feeling, while dangerous in the political sphere, becomes a real menace when extended to cultural or economic affairs. The anxiety to discourage or to prohibit all cultural development that is not orthodox and home-made, the political attempts to make nations into self-centred and self-sufficient economic entities (autarchy), are direct attacks upon the spiritual and physical necessities of our time.

Havelock Ellis says, in *My Confessional*: "In the old days insularity represented a blameless national sentiment and a workable national policy. It has ceased to do so to-day. The various countries of the world are gradually becoming an economic unity. Production and consumption, when left to chance, just run into chaos. The country that produces at random, without regard to the circumstances of other countries, is already beginning to be regarded not only as an enemy of the human race but also the agent of its own destruction."

"The United States of America were originally founded by stout-hearted, puritanic Robinson Crusoes determined to make their own large island self-supporting and separate from the rest of the world. . . . But now the world and America have shrunk alarmingly. You can get half-way across it in a few hours when formerly it took several months. You can see and hear what is

* In the sense that thought, education, public opinion, etc., must be made uniform.

going on everywhere . . . in so small a world it is impossible for any one country to keep the rest of the world at a distance."

But despite the physical changes that have been wrought in the world by modern science and technique, much of the old mentality still persists. Conflicts between facts and false ideas about the facts produce crisis after crisis, yet some people still believe that it is possible and desirable to make nations economically self-dependent. Physical facts and human needs both deny this conclusion. Whatever political form the separate nations may desire to take, we require, for economic health and sanity, a point of view that is able to perceive the whole earth and all the people on it as a natural economic unit. This would be a true "autarchy" with this advantage over all illusionary national autarchies, that it has the whole realm of nature as its basis for the earth, as a whole, is a complete organism and the whole has enough for all that live upon it.

National Psychologies

The present world situation is not determined by physical and economic factors alone, spiritual and psychological differences between national groups also play their part. In addition to the conflict between two similar but conflicting ideologies (Fascism and Communism) that trouble the peace of the world to-day there are deeper, more silent, but nevertheless quite real differences that play their part in the interaction of nations and affairs of the world. There are nations whose people like an easy, carefree life and whose wants are few and simple. Others are willing to work harder and longer and take upon themselves far-reaching responsibilities in order to achieve a higher standard of living. The people of one nation work quickly by nature, others can only do their best when working more deliberately.

Because of the general choleric temperament of the people of North America they succeed best when pursuing methods of mass production, because of their more introspective nature. Germans are well known for the technical excellence of their products, owing to their more phlegmatic nature the English produce their best results when making goods of solid and enduring worth, while owing to their more sanguine temperament the French people are renowned for their ability to produce goods that please the mode of the moment—fashionable goods.

Once we are able to evolve a technique for disentangling political from economic affairs there is no earthly reason why these psychological differences should occasion any difficulty, for the world, as a whole, needs all these different types, and a system of World Economy will naturally arise when the peoples of the different nations learn that, while they can still continue to develop as distinct political or national entities (there is no need for anything like a World State), nevertheless, in economic affairs they are partners in a great world plan within which their different psychologies, their differing powers and faculties, will be able to play their proper parts just as the different instruments within an orchestra play the scores that are appropriate to them.

It is important to begin to speak about such things now because, despite immediate appearances, the approaching destiny of mankind is bringing peoples together within a sphere of action that is common to all mankind. To this world activity the peoples of the different nations will only be able to bring their proper contribution when they have achieved a real understanding of the nature and purpose of their nationality.

It is of course not easy, with our current mode of thinking, to see just how the separate, competing systems of national economy can be transformed into a co-operative system of world economy. National economic systems are self-centred and competitive by nature, but a system of world economy requires, not merely on moral grounds but also for technical reasons inherent in its structure, that all trading and economic interchange should be mutually profitable and beneficial, in other words it must be altruistic rather than egoistic in practice, unselfish rather than selfish in purpose. Is this asking too much of human nature? Many do not think so. The late Sir Patrick Geddes is reported to have said during an interview :

"Society should naturally be constituted on the basis of whatever is best for human nature. There is no other intelligent foundation. Whatever is best for your health and happiness is best for the community in which you live. A society is never stronger than the health and vigour of its members. Personal welfare is a social as much as an individual question and some day human communities will realise the wisdom and the necessity of considering the well-being of their individual components."

A New Science

In order to accomplish the new tasks that the present age demands new knowledge will be required. We can, of course, still learn something from the past for history, rightly regarded, is a mirror in which we can observe human mistakes in the past and take warning therefrom. The ruin of Babylon lay in the ways of Babylon, the unbending rigidity of Egypt caused it to snap and break under pressure, it was internal corruption rather than the invading Goths that finished Rome. We ourselves are now passing through difficulties that will test our wisdom and our stamina and if we would only look closely into the mirror of history and note how human despotism and commercial selfishness have always destroyed the peoples who practised or permitted them, we might be guided to act so as to avoid much trouble in the days to come. But past knowledge can only protect it cannot create, for creation we need new knowledge.

The present mechanical, power-driven civilisation was created out of the scientific knowledge of the physical world and the laws of number that had been slowly building up for over 300 years. The next order of civilisation will depend upon our human ability to supplement this scientific knowledge of the material world with an equally exact knowledge of the facts and laws of the spiritual world, we need to bring a *spiritual science* to the aid of physical science. Just as we are linked in body to the three physical kingdoms of mineral, plant and animal, so also are we linked in soul and spirit to the three spiritual kingdoms of the Angels, Archangels and Archai. The appropriate technique for acquiring this knowledge* has already been given to the world and we must learn how to use this technique to develop a knowledge of these three kingdoms of the Spiritual World in just the same real and objective manner as we have already developed the technique for acquiring knowledge of the three kingdoms of the physical world. When this has been done we shall be able to recognise that :

Angels	are	the	guardians	of	Personal	development
Archangels	"	"	"	"	National	"
Archai	"	"	"	"	World	"

* Knowledge of Higher Worlds and how to attain it, by Rudolf Steiner. 4/6.

We human beings are the only creatures on earth capable of developing this double knowledge, for by our very nature we constitute a bridge between the physical and the spiritual worlds, having part of our being in each.

Future human evolution now depends upon the ability of men and women to evolve the courage and the insight to study and investigate the phenomena of the spiritual world, as revealed through personal experiences or the researches of competent and trustworthy clairvoyants, until our knowledge of this new world is as accurate and practical as is our present knowledge of the physical world.

HOW THE "GOTHIC" SYMPHONY CAME TO BE WRITTEN —(continued from page 482)

Allen that the finale of the Gothic would *never* be scored as I could not find paper large enough for it either amongst the Paris or Leipzig music paper printers, Sir Hugh said "What must it be, then?" I said "Oh, fifty-four staves altogether." He quickly replied, "Why not gum twenty-eight and twenty-six stave paper together?" Through his help I solved a problem in a moment that had troubled me for several years. Moreover here is another remarkable circumstance connected with the finale of the Gothic. Before I could start scoring, it was necessary to have the paper bound in one large volume. So I had to calculate and allow for every change in instrumentation, for in a few cases a whole page would be used for three or four bars, whereas there might be a half a dozen changes of instrumentation on one page. The calculation was made to such a nicety that I finished on the very last sheet of the bound volume. I don't think I could do this again for a fortune. Wagner did *Die Meistersinger* in exactly the same way. The inspired moments of writing such works are rare and they never come twice.

U.L.T. Lectures

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The Christian Community

A PREPARATORY EXPRESSION OF THE FUTURE
UNIVERSAL RELIGION, WHOSE BASIS WILL BE
ESOTERIC AND SUPERPHYSICAL SCIENCE

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Note

The author wishes to make it clear, that while accepting full responsibility for the statements contained in this article, it is NOT intended as propaganda in favour of any one society. It is to be regarded as entirely an outside study; and if certain emphasis is placed on authentic acts of Steiner, it is because the significance and implication of these have by no means been accorded their full recognition.

I

THOSE WHO READ MY ARTICLE LAST month on IONA should bear in mind what was said there about the Johannine-Rosicrucian esoteric Christianity, for that has really to serve as a kind of prelude, an introduction to everything now to be said. Indeed, the subject of this study is intimately connected with what I stated in that Iona article; because what I am now saying is one (there are others) of those spiritual "Iona" impulses which are being re-born in our century.

But before proceeding, I should like to make it clear, particularly to Eastern friends, that this is not an attempt at subtle propaganda for Christianity; I have never had any sympathy with "orthodox" Christianity—churchianity is the better term for those perversions of the Gnosis which have become the religion of the West. Any personal bias has lain in the direction of the Vedanta and certain ideas which many people would describe as Buddhistic, simply because of all the great religions, Buddhism has retained more of the fundamental esoteric wisdom which is expressed in such diversity of manner in all the teachings of the great Masters. What is said here is the outcome of certain observations which are of course personal and therefore liable to error, and opportunities for contact with a movement which may have an extremely important task and future, should everything go well with the world.

II

When at first we hear of a new religious movement, we are often somewhat sceptical, and we ask ourselves whether with all the many churches and sects and occult societies in existence there is any room for more. Modern humanity is fertile in the production of movements and parties. But we have to remember that humanity and the earth are undergoing a continual metamorphosis and evolution, slow as this appears to be from the standpoint of the ordinary consciousness; different aspects of spiritual truth are developed in correspondingly different periods of human culture and development. It is with this in mind that I wish to describe what appears to me to be the embryonic stage of the Christianity of the future, and even the "church" of the future. I say Christianity, because this more than any other religion requires to be purified and revitalised. It is only when the West has put its house in order that the East will consider that the West *may* have something worth-while to contribute to the spiritual treasury of mankind, something, moreover, that *may* have value for the East and for a further understanding and deepening

of the great religions of the East. Up till now the antics of missionaries expounding narrow, sectarian, crude and often materialistic doctrines under the label of "Christianity" (the one thing it is *not*)—which we know are only the perversions of unilluminated minds—have antagonised the East to the word "Christianity" and to any teaching originating from the West, except possibly certain conceptions of physical science, although this is also suspect when the nature of Western civilisation is considered. Therefore the word Christianity as used here has nothing in common nor can it be identified in any way with the popular, and ecclesiastical, meaning and idea attached to it.

We have to bear in mind that a distinction must be made between movements founded out of the will-impulses of a single human being (whether such a human being works merely egotistically in this manner, or, being possessed of "genius" or real inspiration truly understands the karmic necessity of launching a "movement" at a given moment of time, be it religious, occult, artistic, or anything else)—and those which seem to arise spontaneously as a kind of inner necessity experienced among many individuals, perhaps brought together through destiny, who in other respects differ widely in their make-up. In the first case, the society, or church, or group is very dependent upon the personality of the founder or leader; and when the latter is no longer physically present as guide or director, the movement in question generally splits up into numerous sects and sub-divisions, as the result of the clash of ideas, of wills, of ambitions of those who would aspire to the leadership. This is the fate that overtakes all occult societies, churches, groups which have nothing that serves them as a focal point; and the vast majority of them, almost all (as far as the West is concerned) lack in fact that which brings unity. I suppose the chief exception is the Roman Catholic Church and the Jesuit Order in particular. In the second instance, the starting point is from a *communal spirit*, and success or failure depends on finding something which really links people of the most diverse characteristics together, because that something lies far in evolution beyond the merely human; that is to say it lies in the realm of unity, or at-one-ness, beyond the separateness of human life. It may be, of course, that even in the latter case, the movement would choose as its leader and guide a particular individual; but owing to a greater elasticity and freedom, the danger of shipwreck is less.

III

It is with such ideas in mind that I wish to speak about a religious movement, as yet little known in England, but which has the possibility of a tremendous future, even the possibility of being the "church" of the future, should its development remain true to its fundamental principles.

The Christian Community (Christengemeinschaft), for such is its name, arose in German Middle Europe in the year 1922, as a result of the coming together of forty-five men and women, who had experienced the Great War, and who felt the necessity for a

real religious renewal. They came from the different Christian Churches. Among them was the late Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer (whose obituary notice appeared in the May issue of the MODERN MYSTIC). Dr. Rittelmeyer was one of Germany's foremost Protestant preachers. This in all probability would not by itself have produced a movement with anything more than a local interest. But it happened that the work of the great Austrian occultist Dr. Rudolf Steiner was attracting the attention of many thinking people of all professions and different nationalities though the majority of them were central Europeans. Dr. Steiner had by this time become a public personality for people of German language and culture. Steiner's teaching, based on his spiritual researches, had been (and still is) productive of many fertile and genuine results in the most varied departments of knowledge and activity, results that have become well-established facts; and among his pupils were many highly gifted specialists in different branches of human knowledge—science, medicine, art, agriculture, education, etc. Now, if there are indeed such people as Initiates or Adepts in reality, beings possessed of vast knowledge and occult powers, attributes quite above the ordinary ruck of humanity, then we can quite justifiably claim such a designation for Steiner. The evidence is abundant, and perhaps the greatest proof is the *extent* of his life-work, and what those who knew him intimately have described as the astonishing nobility of his character, and his humility, in spite of his surpassing knowledge of everything. This is not said in partisanship of any group or society claiming the monopoly of Steiner's teaching. Steiner's work lies above and outside any such claim, on a plane of its own, and cannot be the special property of any group. In this it conforms to the standard by which we can test all real teaching. (One can apply these remarks, incidentally, to Blavatsky.)

It came about that the necessary guidance as to the form and development to be taken by such a religious movement which should satisfy the needs and thought of twentieth-century humanity, which should be universal and all embracing, understanding all points of view, not only of Christians, but also of the other great religions, was sought from that source which alone could understand these things in all their depth and value, namely Rudolf Steiner himself. Thus Steiner became the adviser and helper of this new religious movement, the Christian Community, though the actual *leadership* was in the hands of Rittelmeyer until his recent death. But it has to be strongly emphasised that "anthroposophical" knowledge and teaching does *not form a dogmatic basis*, it serves only as a help to a deeper understanding of religion, and is offered only as an open gift which the individual is free to accept or reject as he or she pleases. This is a very important point and should in no way be overlooked. If this be disregarded, misunderstandings and false criticisms arise.

IV

The very first statement of a leaflet wherein the Christian Community explains its position, ideals and aims runs thus:

"The Christian Community is a FREE union of men and women who are seeking to live in true religion. The aim of the Union is to realise a living public worship and communal life founded on the base of *Christianity Universal*, in which *thinking* people of to-day can take part in full sincerity. It is therefore *not a union of those who accept a common belief*, but a union of those who experience together the *working of the Spirit*. Such a foundation, such a life, *modern, free from DOGMATIC, POLITICAL, and ECONOMIC CHAINS*, becomes a possible attainment

through the new form of the Sacrament with which the Christian Community has been entrusted."

Could any ideals be more truly "theosophical"?

Because of the Spiritual Connection with Steiner, misunderstandings have arisen, and do arise. It is often thought that the Christian Community is a "branch" of the Anthroposophical Society, that it is an "anthroposophical church," supported by and recruiting its members among anthroposophists. Nothing could be more incorrect and really misleading. There are anthroposophists who are members of the Community, or friendly to it, and who like to attend its meetings and services. There are others who are hostile to it, and some who believe it to be a kind of Roman Catholicism in disguise! And again others who never approach it, except to use its rites to get themselves married or buried! So in no sense is the Christian Community an anthroposophical church. In this connection Statement VI of the aforementioned leaflet says:

"The founders of the Christian Community had won by the knowledge given by Rudolf Steiner in Anthroposophy a new understanding for Christianity and a new hope for its future working in mankind. This knowledge alone gave them courage for a new announcement of Christianity, for in it they found a view of the Universe and of Man in which the great Christian truths no longer appeared as in conflict with the genuine understanding of modern thought and discovery.

"This knowledge given through Rudolf Steiner does not live in the Christian Community as dogma, it serves as a *free spiritual gift*, which the individual can take if and when he wants to; *It is not forced upon anyone who can*, without its help, approach Christianity in a living way.

"The Christian Community is not connected FINANCIALLY or as an ORGANISATION with the Anthroposophical Society, and MEMBERSHIP OF THE ONE DOES NOT IMPLY MEMBERSHIP OF THE OTHER; any member of the Christian Community who wishes to join the Anthroposophical Society (and vice versa) does so as a matter of individual choice."

It may seem somewhat precious to insist on these distinctions; but they are of fundamental importance, and it is absolutely essential that perfect clarity should be maintained on these points for reasons which may become apparent later on. All that need be further said here is that by being perfectly clear on these points, things detrimental to both movements can be avoided.

"Anthroposophy," says Rudolf Steiner in *Leading Thoughts*, "is a path of *knowledge* to lead the spiritual in man to the spiritual in the universe." It is *NOT a religion*, but a path of *knowledge* whereby the method we call the scientific method is extended so as to lead into the spiritual realm. Certainly they who follow such a path can acquire religious deepening and a "devout" and profound outlook on the world and nature. But it is primarily a path of knowledge and does not concern itself with any idea of a cult, a ritual, a form of worship. An Oriental would describe it as corresponding to Raja Yoga, and Gnani Yoga.

The Christian Community starts at once from the *religious* basis, the aspect of devotion and worship, and leads from *there* into spiritual knowledge. Thus it corresponds more to the aspect of "Bhakti Yoga." But at the same time it concerns itself *de facto* with the building of community life. The goal may ultimately be the same, but the starting point and means are different. The task of the Christian Community is to bring the living experience of Christ and Resurrection, not merely in an individual way, through personal effort, but by means of a sacramental

system and a cult, in which a community of individuals can take part. *Thus, that which can unite them, is something which is over and above merely personal and human effort, which, in the present epoch of human development, can only be contacted when there is a suitable and valid vehicle for it to be manifested on the physical plane.* This is the fact underlying the use of certain sacramental and ritual forms; and they can be found in every religion that is a religion, ancient and modern. It will be said, yes, but this is "magic." "Magic," as the word is popularly understood, has come to be regarded as superstition, in our age, and from the point of view of popular ideas regarding it, no other definition would be possible. But the definition is wrong. Magic merely means the bringing about of certain results, through the application of knowledge of certain laws, by means which are not entirely understood by those who have not been fully trained or initiated into that knowledge, its scope and application. Thus many present-day scientific achievements can certainly, as far as the ordinary man is concerned, be defined as magic; while the feats and powers of the true Yogis can likewise be described by the same word. So we can certainly vindicate the use of the term. The only thing that matters is the purity of the "magic," that it works in the direction of human evolution and emancipation, and conforms to that moral standard as exemplified by Christ and the great Masters who preceded Him.

V

The ancient rite which the Christ Himself renewed and purified, to which He added His own Being, will always remain as the centre-point of the Christian Cult; but since this has, during the course of centuries, become formalised and corrupted, and no longer understood in all its depth, and, worse still, even rejected as superstition by bodies who profess the name Christian—it is essential that a new approach be found, and a new understanding awakened to it. For the *Eucharist* is in truth an Occult Rite, partaking of the nature of the Greater Mysteries, and is not merely a pious memento of a very sacred act before the events of Golgotha. In this connection the Christian Community, in its Second Statement which concerns Festivals of Life, and Sacraments, says:

"It is the desire of the Christian Community that these Sacraments, as true Festivals of Life, shall be accessible to *everyone* in the present age.

"They are free and open to all who desire to draw near to them in sincerity, and are always celebrated in the native language of each country; participation, moreover, in no case demands or amounts to membership.

"The heart of the Christian Community and of the seven Sacraments in their new form, is the ACT OF CONSECRATION OF MAN, in which the Holy Communion is celebrated. All those who discover through their own experience, that these sacraments are a source of spiritual power, and realise thereby that **THEY DO NOT EMANATE FROM ARBITRARY HUMAN WILL**, may become members."

So it is possible once again for "Festivals of Life" to enter, as they did in former ages, into the general life of mankind, but in such a way that they do not merely work *instinctively*—a method now unsuitable—but much more in the realm of the waking consciousness, as this is experienced by mankind to-day. And, instead of inducing a more dream-like condition, in which feeling predominates (and much contemporary psychism and mysticism is but a luxuriating in the realm of emotion), they enhance and activate a greater wakefulness and awareness, so

that we are led more into a state of free spiritual activity—starting from the life of thinking and passing thence through the emotional life into the Will activity. And so the *freedom* of the individual is preserved and guaranteed, and his consciousness protected from the intrusion of powers that can only too easily seize upon it, a condition now very general, owing to the weakness and immaturity of the developing ego; and the persistence with which certain churches and spiritual movements still cling to the use of traditional formulæ that in times past were of true service and value. These have since frequently become corrupted, and being largely outgrown, only serve to bind where the true object should be to *liberate*.

VI

Whatever school of occultism or mysticism we may favour, we often chide and criticise the narrow outlook of the various religious "orthodoxies." Narrow sectarianism brings more discredit to the cause of religion than downright "pia fraus." Christians seems to offend most of all in this respect, while Buddhists least. That is because the central truths have never been lost sight of, however corrupt certain practices may have become. With Christianity this has been quite different. European humanity developed mostly in a direction which brought about a gradual extinction of all that had formerly linked man to the spiritual world. Had this not been the case, no creation of a "modern civilisation" with its exact sciences and technology would have been possible. This depended entirely upon the almost complete oblivion, even denial, of the spiritual, a state of affairs which many people to-day feel of extremely doubtful value. An objective examination of the course of history, especially the history of Christianity, will reveal certain events of great importance; these will serve as lamps to illumine much that has happened.

The whole of ecclesiastical history is a welter of confusion; a most complicated muddle. Almost from the beginning Christianity seemed to split up into a variety of societies. But a great deal of unnecessary unravelling can be avoided if we bear in mind that historical Christianity developed along three main streams, from one of which developed at a much later date a fourth. There were other smaller and subsidiary streams, but these do not play an over important part. We shall return to a consideration of these three chief historical branches later. At the present juncture it is necessary to concentrate the attention on certain salient facts and events which are passed over in the ordinary way; for an examination of the credentials of historical Christianity in their light by no means renders more secure the already tottering foundations of traditional ecclesiastical pretensions. These facts and events are as follows:

I. Christ had twelve apostles, and each had a different aspect of him and each a different mission. The two outstanding contrasts are Peter "the Rock" and John, the disciple "whom Jesus loved." (This has already been mentioned.) Peter, as his name implies, has to do with the Earth. He founds an *exoteric* organisation which spreads through the world *externally*. The means whereby this is accomplished is provided by the existence of that political and economic unit, the Roman Empire, which attained its greatest extent in the third century A.D. It then reached from the Vallum Antonini (between the firths of Clyde and Forth in Scotland) to the Persian Gulf, from the mouths of the Rhine to the Sudan, from Morocco to the Caspian Sea. At the beginning Christianity was a persecuted faith hiding in the Catacombs, and

it is to the Catacombs that we have to turn for any *reliable* evidence as to what Christianity *was* in its beginning. When, however, later on Christianity became the religion of the Empire (under Theodosius the Great 379-95), had triumphed over what had remained of the older religions—which owing to the highly cosmopolitan nature of the Roman Empire, were numerously represented—had closed the Schools of Philosophy, and defeated its greatest rival Mithraism (which it could do only by incorporating into itself most of the ideas and much of the ceremonial of the latter), something took place which was really a subversion. The real nature of the early and therefore pure Christianity is supplied by the Catacombs. As such it could never attain the position and power of a world religion. This could only be accomplished by stealing wholesale the symbolism of the old Mystery schools and their ritual and perverting and corrupting it to suit the ambitions of emperors and ecclesiastical hierarchs, under whose sway much of the empire had now passed. The result was the historical Catholic church which is neither the ORIGINAL Christianity nor the old Mystery teaching in their purity, but a kind of hybrid. In his Introduction to *The Catacombs: Pictures of the early life of Christianity*, Dr. Alfred Heidenreich sums up most pithily this fact in the following words:

“The fact should never be hidden,” he says, “that the fusion of the early Christian Church with the Roman Empire meant the END OF THE ORIGINAL COMMUNITY OF CHRIST. IT SIMPLY IS NOT TRUE THAT THERE IS A CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN TRUTH FROM THE BEGINNING UNTIL NOW. A BREAK IN THE DEVELOPMENT OCCURRED WHICH IS ALMOST EQUAL TO A SUBVERSION. . . . In all these considerations our knowledge of the true nature of Christianity is of the greatest moment. Besides the New Testament, and the earliest Apostolic fathers, the catacombs afford the largest and the most direct source of evidence. . . .”*

We can here place our finger on the place where historical Christianity begins to grow increasingly more complicated in development. *It is the fusion of spiritual with temporal power.*

We can contrast with all this that which flows into the world under the inspiration of John. Those movements which preserved the esoteric content of Christianity and which were banned as “heretical” as soon as the external church became formal and dogmatic, a condition which is further advanced in the Western and Latin section than in the Græco-Byzantine section (which preserved much of the philosophy of the older Greek culture), those movements are inspired by Johannine teaching, which is concerned with the Logos, the “Word becoming flesh.” In the deeply esoteric fourth Gospel (it is quite immaterial whether John actually penned the original document or not), chapter 21, verses 21 to the end (Revised Version), we read the following:

“Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, ‘Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?’

“Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, ‘Lord, and what shall this man do?’

“Jesus saith unto him ‘If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou Me!’

“Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die, but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

“This is the disciple which testifieth of these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

“AND THERE ARE ALSO MANY OTHER THINGS WHICH JESUS DID, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

The passages quoted above make it perfectly clear that John stands in a very special relation to Christ. John is in reality the guardian of the esoteric teaching of Christ, he is the highest initiated pupil of Christ. Certain esotericists maintain that John is none other than Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead, i.e. the last individual to receive the old initiation, and at the hands of Christ himself. Thus it is to John and not to Peter that we must look for the inner and therefore true, Christianity. These things are kept in the background by the Petrine organisation. It is highly probable that John in his turn had his own pupils, who received the Mysteries, which were again entrusted to others, who were the representatives of those movements already mentioned.

2. A second important fact is that the year A.D. 333 marks the very centre of the fourth post-Atlantean civilisation epoch, generally called the Græco-Roman, and therefore of the seven post-Atlantean epochs as a whole. The last of the old Mysteries died away during this time. Julian the Apostate (A.D. 331-63) was among the last who knew of Christ as a Cosmic Power, recognised and understood in the old Mysteries. He could not understand Christianity as externally represented by the Christians of his time, and the already dogmatising church. Therefore he is to be regarded, paradoxical as it may seem, as a true Christian. Julian’s successors ruthlessly exterminated all that remained of the Gnosis. Yet not quite all, for there were still places where a linking on of the old to the new mysteries was possible. But from a wider view-point the year 333 indicates that from henceforth the Gnosis formed no longer a part of developing external Christianity. This was now, as has already been indicated, rapidly spreading through the Empire and absorbing much of the “imperial” spirit.

In the pre-Christian millenia, when human development proceeded out of the impulses of the ancient Mystery schools that were the centres of all the different civilisations of the different countries, a kind of fusion between temporal and spiritual power had been right and possible. Humanity had to find its way to the earth, kings were priests and priests were initiates. Only they could be leaders on Earth who were also fit to be the recipients of high spiritual powers. The Cosmic Christ, as a Power and Being revealed Himself in the Mysteries to the Initiates, and this experience was known as the seeing of the “Sun at Mid-night.” In the Mysteries the pre-earthly deeds and existence of this Power were known, though the names given were manifold. In ancient India Vishvakarman, among the Persians Ahura-Mazdao, in Egypt Osiris, in Greece Apollo, among the Celts, Hu, Hesus, Cengus, these were the names by which this Cosmic Power was known. Julian understood this, but could not understand the “Word become flesh.”

The Mystery schools, with certain exceptions, fell into decadence and their powers could no longer work aright. According to Steiner, great confusion was also caused by some of the Roman Emperors “violating” them, causing themselves to be initiated into the dying Mysteries. It is fairly clear therefore that when the fusion of temporal and spiritual power took place in the Christian Church, the latter became infected with all those corruptions which were resultant upon the abuses arising out of

* I recommend this book to all interested in this question.

the acts of the Roman emperors. There is often a remarkable parallelism between Popes and Cæsars.

In the Celtic West, however, in Ireland, parts of Scotland, Britain and Gaul, owing to special circumstances of place and the qualities of soul and spirit that were developed in these regions, the Christian mystery was realised as a fact that had happened, independently of any external report. It was the unique experience of the Hibernian Mystery Schools, which had their "colonies" in different parts of the Celtic regions, to perceive the event of Golgotha, clairvoyantly, "in the Spirit," at the time of its actual happening, and knowing it independently of any external report as to its having taken place. The roots of the Celtic church are embedded in what resulted from this knowledge. This was spoken of in the article on Iona, itself an establishment of the Hibernian Cult. (Another centre where the old mysteries passed over to the new was in the place where Chartres with its magnificent cathedral now stands. There the Druidic cult was centred round the "Virgo Partitura" the Virgin about to give birth to the Divine Child. A statue, said to be the original Druidic one of the "Virgo Partitura," is, or was, still to be seen in the crypt of the great Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres, with many lights burning round it. Later Chartres became a great mediæval spiritual school founded out of the Inspirations still working there.) In the Celtic West, then, the Hibernian Mystery schools were the only ones to retain their purity. This was why, according to Steiner, it was possible for them to experience such a sublime Imagination.

3. The third outstanding event of importance is the 8th Œcumenical Council which took place in the year A.D. 869. This denied the threefold Pauline definition of man as a being of Spirit, Soul and Body (i.e. the microcosmic trinity) and declared man to be a being only of soul and body, although his soul could have certain spiritual qualities. Whatever we may think of Paul, whether he did more to pervert the original teaching than to preserve it (as some thinkers hold), or whether he was a great initiate, his definition of man as a three-fold being, with its direct implication of the Divine Immanent God (Atman) shows him to be in complete accord with the fundamental doctrine of every esoteric school. Thus, by denying the Spirit—the Immanent Divinity in Man, the very foundation of spiritual knowledge, the church paved the way for a further perversion of religion. Materialistic ideas could then enter into theological speculations. And having permeated theology, they could, when the time came for the development of the *intellectual powers* (in the modern sense—i.e. those particular faculties that have brought about the modern scientific outlook which is everywhere present to-day in all departments of life), they could also penetrate most deeply into this sphere of the intellect. The Materialism of the nineteenth century was derived in part from theological materialism, and this was the outcome of that momentous 8th Œcumenical council of A.D. 869. (There were other influences, but these need not be considered here.) Ecclesiastics pass over the decisions of this council with the utmost ease. The perversions which are the inevitable outcome of *theological* (as distinct from *scientific*) materialism have been decisively underlined by both Blavatsky and Steiner.

VII



Mention was made earlier of three chief currents of historical Christianity. They found their expression in what we call the


Greek or Eastern Church, the Roman or Western Church, and the Celtic Church, about which certain things have already been said.

The estrangement between the Eastern and Western was of gradual growth. But it was inevitable, for the Greek mind was quite different from the Latin. The final break occurred in A.D. 1054, when Pope Leo IX excommunicated Cerularius and the whole of the Eastern Church. The ostensible cause was the introduction by the Latins of the "filioque" cause into the Nicene Creed (the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father *and* the Son), which clause the Easterns rejected on certain grounds. But the real reasons lie deeper. The Eastern Church never entered so deeply into materialistic conceptions as the Western, in spite of all those ills that attacked Christianity, and which have been described. Its theology had its roots in Greek philosophy, while much of Western theology was based on Roman Law. It was a renewal of the old struggle of Greek culture and Greek idealism versus Roman Imperialism and Roman Discipline. The Eastern Church retained a spirituality, an Intellectuality (using this word in its Platonic sense) that placed it in a different category from the Western. It was never aggressive, nor was it ever much of a proselytising church; and yet extremely conservative of its practices and traditions. At the present time it has lost much of its former glory, through the persecution of its Russian section by the Soviet. With its gorgeous ceremonial, far more elaborate than that of Rome, its extreme conservatism, its somewhat contemplative intellectual, even mystical theological outlook, it survives as a kind of strange anachronism in a world of stucco-fronted cinemas and chromium plate. Nevertheless, even the Eastern Church is a considerable step away from the catacombs.

The Roman Church became filled with the whole spirit of Rome. It materialised everything. It interpreted Christianity in terms of the law-courts. Innocence, guilt, reward, punishment; Judge, mediators, advocates; penances, the intense pre-occupation with certain practices in order to be "let off" a certain amount of punishment, the continual attempts at "hoodwinking" the Deity—all these are the essence of Romanised Christianity. It is right down on the Earth. It has a rigid hierarchical system, and a rigid command to "obey orders." Someone has aptly described the Roman Church as a "holy fear" (unholy would better describe it) and the Eastern Church as a "holy love." The Roman Church is the supreme example of Imperialism, even militarism in religion. Curiously enough it has had also its mystical side, and within its fold great mystics have flourished, and great "saints." That this was the *result* of the Roman system is scarcely credible, it managed to happen in spite of it. We can get some idea of the contrast between the two churches, when we consider the symbol of the crucifix. This began to come into general use about the sixth century A.D. The crucifix brings to our consciousness the *physical* nature of Christ, His suffering and agony. (Note how this conception comes into prominence about the same time A.D. as a similar lapse of time backwards to the sixth century B.C. brings us to the insistence upon suffering, sorrow, and the extreme transitoriness inherent in all earthly life, as taught by the Lord Buddha. Certain thinkers see a correspondence here.) The crucifix as a symbol appears also in the Eastern Church, but is not nearly so general or so prominent. It is the resurrected, glorified Christ that is the key-note of Eastern Christianity, rather than the dying agonised Christ of the Western

Church. Here is an indication of the difference in the two psychologies. Another indication is to be seen in the symbol of the

“Latin” cross, with its long shaft  a realistic representation of the “tree of execution” and the “Greek” Cross, idealised, with shaft and arms of equal length, so that they are really the two diameters of a circle intersecting each other at right angles. 

(If the diameters be projected *beyond* the circle, so as to point into infinite space, then we have the “Celtic” cross.) 

The Eastern Church (and with it must be included the lesser and independent Eastern churches—the Nestorian, Egypto-Coptic, Assyrian, and Abyssinian churches) and the Roman Church represent traditional and historical Christianity in a very special manner. They have ceremonial practices and conceptions which have their origin in the pre-Christian Mystery cults. These have in the course of time become formalised, and in the case of the Latin Church corrupted into materialistic dogma, through which certain ends have been attained which otherwise would have been impossible of attainment.

The third current of historical Christianity is the one about which we have already spoken in certain other connections. In spite of what has been said from those points of view, it is a definite historical phenomenon. Only, it disappears. This, too, has been described. The last “rays” of it disappear in Scotland, just a few years before the final separation of the Eastern and Latin Churches. The Celtic Church was really at its height in those days prior to the separation of the Eastern and Latin communions. But there is no evidence extant of what its external practices were, or even its ritual. There is nothing, except one or two prayers of Columba, some of his hymns and poems, and of course the famous Book of Kells, and one or two other fragments. There are some who maintain that the usages resembled those of the Eastern Church, to which it had more affinity, and there are reasons which make this a plausible theory. In any case several parallelisms have been noted between Celtic and Hellenic conceptions, as well as affinities in mythology and idiom. Steiner says that during the third post-Atlantean Epoch Ireland received certain Greek colonists from Melos. These were not colonisations in the modern sense, but were undertaken by Initiates of Mystery schools for spiritual reasons. Thus there had been definite intercourse from an early date between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Celtic West; and descriptions of Celtic peoples and customs are furnished by Greek and Latin writers. But one thing is certain, and that is that the Celtic Church had nothing of the Roman spirit, in spite of what modern Roman Catholic apologists maintain. That Romanism eventually triumphed was owing to circumstances of an entirely political nature. In that respect also Rome never changes.

The peculiar blend of “paganism” with Christianity is a feature that has puzzled many who have attempted investigations into the Celtic Church. In the light of esoteric interpretation, this can be accounted for on the basis of the descriptions given. It still survives in Gaelic song and folk-lore. I will give here an example of an old “Duanag,” a kind of chant, used on special festal occasions. This one is “Duan Nollaig” (Christmas Duanag)

sung at a kind of blessing of the bannocks at Christmas. The words are to be found in the first volume of Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica* and Marjory Kennedy-Fraser collected the chant from the island of Eriskay, and published it in her first volume of Hebridean songs. Note how Christ is connected with the elements and powers of Nature!

“Heire Bannag, Hoire Bannag,
Heire Bannag, air a' bheo,
G'innse duinn gu'n d'rugadh Criosd
Righ nan Righ, a' Tir na Slaint.
Mac na Niula, Mac na Neula,
Mac na Runna, Mac na Reula,
Mac na Dile, Mac na Deire,
Mac na Spire, Mac na Speura.
Heire Bannag etc.

“Hey the bannock, Ho the bannock, Hey the bannock
On the Living,
Telling us that Christ was born,
King of Kings, of the Blessed Realm.
Son of Dawn, Son of Clouds,
Son of Planets, Son of Stars,
Son of Rivers, Son of Dew,
Son of Welkin, Son of Sky.
Hey the bannock etc.”

Here Christ is depicted as King and Son of the Elements! Such references are scattered throughout these old invocations. How utterly different this is from the whole tone of Romanism and Protestantism! (It must be admitted that most of the old customs and folk-rituals did survive longer in districts predominantly Roman Catholic.)

VIII

The fourth chief current of historical Christianity, and the final one in our present consideration, is that which also developed in the West out of Roman Catholicism, and which had its rise and origin in the religious and social upheaval of the sixteenth century, known as the Reformation. This is what we can describe as Protestantism. It split up into many churches and sects, holding the utmost diversity of opinions and views, yet completely united on three major issues. (There are one or two exceptions, but they need not be discussed here.) These three issues are:

1. Not merely the rejection of Papal supremacy but the complete rejection of an apostolic Hierarchical system.
2. The rejection of a sacramental system as the “scala Cœli” which system is dependent upon a hierarchical order.
3. The abolition of all rites and ceremonies, all the externals of cultus, which are inseparable from sacramental religion.

All this is a complete departure from what had until now prevailed.

The more one considers it, the more astonishing does the phenomenon of Protestantism become. From one aspect it appears like a kind of rebirth of Judaism, with its worship of the Old Testament, and its denunciations of Popes, kings, and Emperors, and the pleasure and beauty of the world.

This comminatory attitude seems like an echo of the Old Testament prophets. From the point of view of its rabid iconoclasm, Protestantism reflects very strongly the Jewish aspect of religion, but a Judaism shorn of all its Mosaic ceremonial, and therefore a “pseudo-Judaism.” When it came to aggressiveness, intolerance and persecution, Protestantism was not one whit any better than Catholicism. In these qualities they were at least equal. But Protestantism is an indication in the *religious* sphere of the

beginning of the fifth-post-Atlantean epoch, our own age. It was but a step towards the modern way of viewing the world. It marks the step away from priestly guidance, into a sphere of individual choice and responsibility. Therefore Protestantism belongs to the more Northern countries of Europe (it could only be born there), because in these countries is the fifth epoch really begun. The whole life of the fourth or Græco-Roman epoch lies round the Mediterranean, and this period draws to its close just before Protestantism begins as a real social influence. And so it is the countries of northern Europe which foster Protestantism, and in so doing they prepare for the scientific age, and the fifth or present-day civilisation epoch. The most "advanced" countries are unquestionably the Protestant countries, using this word in a somewhat utilitarian sense. And the most Catholic are the most "backward" (again from a more materialistic standpoint). I suspect that one reason why all the beauty and ceremonial was swept away by Protestantism lay in this fact (it has to do with the development of the intellectual faculties in the modern sense and without which, according to Steiner, there could be nothing in the way of what we call Science) that rituals which are no longer experienced in their full meaning and reality, and which have become merely formal and traditional, and therefore no longer properly understood, are able to take hold of our consciousness, and even enslave it, so that we get into a kind of "occult prison." The same thing could happen, if without having acquired sufficient activity and independence in our thinking, we were to read badly-written occult books. We then might easily fall, without knowing it, under the domination of ideas, into a kind of prison.

A strong subconscious feeling for the actuality of this danger must have really activated the different Protestant groups to cast aside all rituals, in the belief that they were really getting back to "first things." Thus was the new age built up step by step. Generally speaking, the conception of a spiritual side to life is far more barren and abstract, vague and nebulous (almost unreal) to the Protestant than to the Catholic. The Catholic through his very practices is brought much nearer to the unseen. For him the spiritual universe is not a vague unity, but a world of hierarchies and saints, and fallen spirits. For the Catholic, as for the Eastern Orthodox, the most important bridge between the Superphysical and Physical worlds lies in the sacramental system, the valid existence for which is in having maintained without a break in practice and intention a special stream of spiritual power, from the first Apostles down to the latest ordination, which is known as the Apostolic succession. Without this there is neither priest, nor sacrament, nor any possible means of grace, except through a special dispensation of Divine favour. And the one thing that matters is the Mass, everything centres round and is subservient to that. It is the focal point. Crude and dogmatic as this appears, certain occult truths lie behind it, which will be spoken of later. Because of it, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Churches retain a unity, while Protestantism, having rejected root and branch all such ideas, is split up into an endless variety of sects. This is the inevitable outcome of setting up the minister's desk and pulpit in place of the altar. On the other hand by sacrificing unity and *instinctive* spiritual feelings, the Protestant was able to advance to a more *individualised* status. And individualities are as numerous as the stars in heaven and as different as numerous. From the foregoing it will be easily seen that Catholicism is an earlier stage and Protestantism a later stage of development, and correspond

exactly with the development of the different parts of the soul-powers and with the evolution of consciousness as given by Steiner. Therefore, however unattractive are some of its features, Protestantism was a step that was inevitable and necessary on account of all that happened to the exoteric Christian organisation, from the time of its subversion through the fusion of the Church with the Imperial power, as has already been described. But when the age of rationalism and scientific materialism dawned, Protestantism suffered a defeat, while Catholicism, through its whole psychology, survived and without much injury. Consequently, Protestantism, if it wished to be thought worthy of any attention from educated and thinking people, had to come to terms eventually with the modern outlook. Hence arose that strange contradiction in terms, "modern theology." In this school, in its most advanced development, every vestige of traditional Christianity has disappeared; and so anxious are the exponents of this school to keep "in the good books" of the scientists, that they are willing to part entirely with any super-human attributes of Jesus, and all those acts which, on account of our imperfect knowledge of occult laws, we designate "miracles," and simply concern themselves with an abstract ethical teaching which they imagine to have been the only "reliable" fact about the "simple man of Nazareth." Such a miserable compromise is, of course, mostly disregarded by both those who see in secularism and science all that they need for the journey through life and for the satisfaction of their various needs and of their quest for truth and reality, and those who, intuitively convinced of the reality of the spiritual side to the universe and life, turn to those sources of information from which they can learn to know how to acquire personal evidence of all those things which, in a dim way, they feel to be true.

And so the man of to-day who feels the need for spiritual experience is impelled to two possible alternatives:

1. He falls back into mediævalism, and seeks what he needs in the Catholic Church, and gives himself up to its guidance (and there is no doubt about results being obtained along this path);
2. He follows the indications given by one or other of the Occult schools, which also lead to results. Generally speaking the most popular are certain of the Eastern paths; these, for the English-speaking peoples have a special fascination. The Eastern religions are so obviously based on an occult foundation, that it is not surprising that Westerners should turn to them for information on spiritual questions.

IX

In the foregoing paragraphs (VI-VIII), an attempt has been made to trace the exoteric Christian stream through its most important events in a brief sketch. But throughout all these centuries something of the esoteric side was preserved in the teaching and traditions of secret brotherhoods and closed circles. Here and there the veil is lifted as to the actual existence of these brotherhoods; here and there a fragment of teaching appears, and an individuality who becomes the centre of public attention. But it was not until the latter third of the nineteenth century, through activities of that remarkable and much abused personality, H. P. Blavatsky, that anything like a comprehensive statement of the esoteric philosophy, as known and traditionally preserved, was available for the general public. Humanity was then in danger of being wrecked either on the Scylla of ecclesiastical dogma and formalism or engulfed in the Charybdis of scientific materialism.

Whatever her limitations Blavatsky was a lamp that lighted the feet of many in that time of darkness, and the means whereby many were led into an enquiry and search after those things that alone give meaning to existence. Blavatsky hated more than anyone all those perversions and falsities which masqueraded as religion (what honest mind would not?) and by bringing back to our minds the truths inherent in all religious systems, and especially the oldest of all, the Aryan Wisdom-Religion, she laid a foundation for much, that without her, would probably have been left unaccomplished. Fairness and justice demand such an acknowledgment.

X

It is now possible to return to further considerations of the aim and task of the Christian Community. The foregoing will give us the means to approach the spiritual background of the movement, and this is something that deserves special attention. On the implications that arise out of this background, each must form his own judgment.

As occultist, the Roman Catholic Church always interested Dr. Steiner. He was not interested in Protestantism (from this point of view), because Protestantism has no occult background. Steiner said the Mass was never meaningless, although what took place therein was by no means always a real Christian impulse. For the Roman Catholic Church is a powerful occult society, and it regarded and still regards Steiner with the utmost enmity, as one who has revealed secrets which only the "inner circle" of the Church may possess.

From childhood Steiner possessed open spiritual vision. As a schoolboy he was obliged to take part in the services of the Church as chorister and acolyte, although his father was a "free-thinker" (see *The Story of My Life*, by Rudolf Steiner, pp. 15 and 16 of the English edition). In this connection he says:

"The instruction in the Bible and the catechism imparted by the priest had far less effect upon my mental world than what he accomplished by means of liturgy in mediating between the sensible and supersensible. From the first this was to me no mere form, but a profound experience. It was all the more so because of the fact that in this I was a stranger in the home of my parents."

Later on, in order to help the Christian Community build itself on a sure foundation, he undertook the investigation of the reality of what is known as the "Apostolic Succession," which has already been mentioned. There was actually a real foundation for this, but in the course of centuries and owing to all those things which tarnished the Christian stream externally, this had for the most part died out and was no longer working, except in a few individuals and places. Steiner, who in his other work always saw the necessity of linking on to all that had gone on before in the way of esoteric teaching and practice—which according to the needs of the respective centuries and ever new factors in evolution has always to be adapted to meet these conditions, was here faced with the necessity of obtaining a renewal of that spiritual power as possessed in the very first period of the Apostolic church. He declared that it necessitated the greatest courage on his part to approach the Spiritual World and the Powers who further evolution, for a renewal of this "spiritual outflowing"; and he was not sure whether it would be vouchsafed. But it was, and the new Liturgy was given through Steiner, with explanations, stage by stage; and through him the new ordination. Steiner indicated also the form of the vestments, and

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the colours of them, and these change with the different seasons of the year, as do also the altar frontals, which correspond in colour with the vestments. Steiner explained all the procedure of the ritual, and the lay-out of the altar. The ritual and altar are of dignified simplicity; and every act has a meaning. The Liturgy is not printed or published, as it is felt that this is something which belongs to the *spoken word*, and the sense of *bearing* as well as seeing. The Celebrant, who is attended generally by two servers, one on the right and left, speaks the words of the Liturgy in a clear, deliberate, and audible manner, and in full consciousness of their meaning. As far as is possible the elements used in the Celebration, the Bread and the Wine, are made from wheat grown according to Steiner's agricultural indications, and unfermented grape juice grown according to similar indications; while the incense used is of a special kind, which does not act so as to interfere in any way with the retention of a clarity of consciousness; and the wax altar candles are also a special fabrication. Thus through the Altar service do the Earth and the elements of the Earth receive their meaning and consecration, through the Power united with them through whom they can alone evolve into higher forms of development. And so in the altar service many aspects of Steiner's work and many practical results of his indications unite together in furtherance of the Divine Will.

This new Eucharistic Service is known as "The Act of Consecration of Man," and forms the central service of the Christian Community. It takes place at an altar which has a coloured frontal and upon which lies a white linen altar-covering.

Upon the altar stand seven candlesticks or a seven-branch candlestick with seven wax candles, which are lighted by a server, before the commencement of the Celebration. There is no crucifix or cross upon the altar, for we have now to understand the real meaning of the words "*Christ is Risen*." On the wall at the back of the altar, which corresponds to the place where a *retodos* usually is, hangs a picture of Christ after His Resurrection. This is generally a copy of an early Italian work by an unknown artist, and sometimes described as "*Il Redentore*." It depicts the head of Christ round which is an aura, and the right hand upraised in blessing. On the right side of the altar stands a credence table; and perhaps on each side of the altar a vase of flowers.

The congregation *sit* right through the celebration, except at the reading of the Gospel, when they stand up. Those who wish to receive the Holy Communion, do so *standing*, but in a semi-circle formation at the foot of the few steps leading to the dais on which the altar usually stands. The standing position for Holy Communion signifies the self-responsibility of the modern man, and his independence of old traditional spiritual forms and leadership.

The service is celebrated in the native language of each country in which there is a congregation. There are Congregations in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, England, Holland, Norway, Finland, Czechoslovakia. And the congregations are composed of individuals holding the most diverse and even opposite opinions. They are united entirely by the reality of the Service into a "congregation" (which is the real meaning of the Greek work "*ecclesia*"). And the different congregations form a "community." This sense of unity is possible, because the Eucharist is not hedged round with doctrinal barriers, but is an *open gift*.

And so the Christian Community is able in truth to declare the object of her existence in her third Statement:

"The Christian Community seeks for those who will enter her circles of their own free will; any form of proselytising would necessarily work against her life by robbing the decision and activity of the individual of their essential worth.

"No obligations are demanded of anyone within her circles; They are not asked to conform to a creed, nor to give any money except out of their free decision, nor are they required or asked to give up their connections with other churches.

"Beyond the circle of Members, there is a larger one of those who are regarded as Friends, and beyond that a circle of those interested, but who for one reason or another, have not had opportunities for closer contact or experience.

"All these circles, working together with the circles of priests, and aware of sacramental power, collaborate in providing an earthly basis for what is striving to bring healing and help in the form of a free spiritual life in our modern age."

It is quite clear that Steiner's intention was to *re-found the ORIGINAL UNIVERSAL APOSTOLIC "church"* in a form suitable to our time, and upon a basis of spiritual *knowledge* as distinct from *belief*. It is also a re-founding of the "Celtic Church," for this too was but an *independent* and later expression of early Christianity. The two are really one. It is quite clear that Steiner would not have given all he did give in this connection, had it been merely an alternative for those who "do not wish to come into Anthroposophy," or a local religious affair, or a small sect "petering out in a suburban villa." The original Christian foundation began in an upper room with only Twelve present.

However valuable personal meditations may be, they do not provide the basis on which a *community or social life* can be built; if that were so, all our esoteric societies would be expressions of mutual charity, tolerance and trust; and our churches could then with justice be criticised for their similar shortcomings. But the fact is that the Eucharistic rite, so far from being a thing out of date, has not yet even *begun* to work with full power. If those churches which still hold to it in form are not all that they should be, it is because they have hedged it round with all kinds of doctrinal barriers and materialistic corruptions, thus weakening it, while those that reject it have cast away a "pearl of great price" of the value of which they have not the slightest understanding. Further, as Steiner pointed out, the Eucharist is a service in which, if correctly celebrated, the earth and the spiritual powers working therein (i.e. the whole realm of Nature) can take part. The words "DO this" (Christ did not say talk or argue about it, but *do it*) and "When two or three are gathered together in My Name" acquire greater significance.

For those who follow the Christian stream this is the supreme link. Other religions have other practices, but the underlying idea is the same. So far from giving up external rites we need to cultivate them, but objectively. We can have our personal meditations as well. In the central service of the Christian Community there is a source of power, which is not merely personal. It can provide the vehicle for the manifestation of much that is now needed in the world. We can never dispense with Religion. We can give up adherence to religions, churches, sects and societies. But if Christ be our centre-point, we can best find Christ by those means which are obviously the ones by which He knew we would find Him best, the ones by which He intended us *collectively* to find Him, since we cannot live to ourselves alone—and that is by celebrating His Act of Consecration as counselled by Him, at those rhythmic intervals we find of most value. And the possibility of doing this in a way really suited to our own age is provided by the existence of the Christian Community.

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More about Electricity

by René Pontoise

IN THE JULY ISSUE of the MODERN MYSTIC, Mr. G. S. Francis, a practical electrician, had some interesting and valuable things to say about electricity. He appears, however, to accept the general view that before the nineteenth century very little was known about the phenomenon, and that which was known was merely a collection of isolated and disconnected facts in nature. It is the purpose of this article to show that a great deal more was known about the actual nature of electricity in ancient times than is usually imagined. It is the present writer's view—offered entirely for what it is worth and without the slightest claim to authority—that the real difference between magnetism and electricity exists solely in the minds of those whose profession, needs, or preconceived opinions lead to a study of one or of the other. Electricity or magnetism is a force complete in itself and yet abstract—for the sake of analogy let us say—like the Occult. It is capable of sub-division according to the mind of the student into a right and a “left” (or black) path. Magnetism is very similar to, if not absolutely identical with, electricity. It represents the “white” path; electricity as it is used and misused to-day represents the “black” path. In certain hands it is demoniacal. It belongs entirely, and against popular opinion, to the earth. The cosmic manifestation of the force is purely magnetic.

In the first place, everyday mechanical electricity is of vastly greater antiquity than is generally assumed. A Hindu scientist* has declared (but with a regrettable lack of evidence) that both dry and wet electric batteries were constructed by the East Indians more than five thousand years ago.

If some means could be found of tracing the previous incarnations of notabilities we should probably discover that Tarchon and Benjamin Franklin were closely connected with each other, for the life and work of the founder of the Etruscan Mysteries were curiously similar to those of the American. Tarchon invented what, so far as we know, was the first successful lightning-rod. Ancient history and mythology is full of allusions indicative of a knowledge of the properties of electricity and magnetism. Objective science agrees that Thales, six hundred years B.C., discovered the curious properties of rubbed amber, but it is very clear that long years before Thales was born the Etruscans—or at any rate their Priest-Philosophers—were in possession of much greater powers. Numa the Philosopher, who eventually became king of Rome, without doubt obtained his powers from the Etruscan Mystery Schools. Unlike Romulus, he was no warrior, his activities—the foundation of the vestal colleges among them—being evidence of his association with the Mysteries. He is credited with imprisoning Jupiter's fire (*Jupiter Elicius*) and of exhibiting it at will. Indeed this Numa was one of the very greatest of teachers, being possessed of a quality of mediumship not inferior to that of Zoroaster or Mohammed. There is little reason to doubt that he was capable, by virtue of his

initiations into the Etruscan Mysteries and a blameless life, to “produce” lightning, i.e. electricity, by methods compared with which our modern resources are infantile. The ancient practice of placing naked sword-blades on the temple roofs was merely the equivalent of our modern lightning-conductors. According to the classical dictionaries, Tullus Hostilius was murdered by Ancus Martius while performing magical experiments, but there is good reason to believe that he died as the result of invoking lightning after the method of Numa, and was therefore in all probability the first man to be electrocuted.

In Samothrace, the “sacred isle,” the people were perhaps the most religious of their time. In their mystery schools, according to Pliny, it is easy to see that they understood electricity perfectly well.

It has been said that Numa had been the pupil of Pythagoras, but the mythical legend respecting him—that he married the nymph Egeria—clearly refers to his “marriage” to the Mysteries. It is recorded that in the sight of “a large public assembly, the god, veiling himself in the splendour of lightning, sent down from heaven the Ancile, or sacred shield of Mars. . . .” The cursory reader of history will of course dismiss Numa as a purely mythological figure. There is however the admitted facts of the events of his reign, of the institutions, civil and religious, introduced by him, together with those very awkward books written by Numa, buried with him, and rediscovered four hundred years after his death. Both the acts and the books must have had an author, and so far historians are reluctantly obliged to accredit them to the Initiate.

The Norse legends can only properly be interpreted by assuming that the old Norsemen had a working knowledge of electricity. As Blavatsky has pointed out*

“. . . take the conception of Thor, son of Odin. Whenever this Hercules of the North would grasp the handle of his terrible weapon, the thunderbolt or the electric hammer, he is obliged to put on his *iron* gauntlets. He also wears a magical belt known as the ‘*girdle of strength*,’ which, whenever girded about his person, greatly augments his celestial power. He rides upon a car drawn by two rams with silver bridles, and his awful brow is encircled by a wreath of stars. His chariot has a pointed iron pole, and the spark-scattering wheels continually roll over rumbling thunderclouds. He hurls his hammer with resistless force against the rebellious frost-giants, whom he dissolves and annihilates. When he repairs to the Urdar fountain, where the gods meet in conclave to decide the destinies of humanity, he alone goes on foot, the rest of the deities being mounted. He walks, for fear that in crossing Bifrost (the rainbow), the many-hued Æsir-bridge, he might set it on fire with his thunder-car, at the same time causing the Urdar waters to boil. Rendered into plain English how can this myth be interpreted but as showing that the Norse legend-makers were thoroughly acquainted with electricity? Thor, the euhemerisation of electricity, handles his peculiar element only

* Shunkar Bisey.

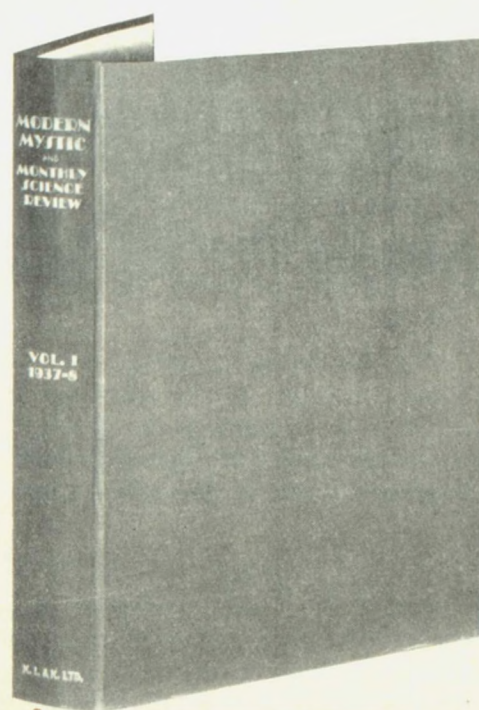
* *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, p. 161.

when protected by gloves of *iron*, which is its natural conductor. His belt of strength is a closed circuit, around which the isolated current is compelled to run instead of diffusing itself through space. When he rushes with his car through the clouds, he is electricity in its *active* condition, as the sparks scattering from his wheels and the rumbling thunder of the clouds testify. The pointed iron pole of the chariot is suggestive of the lightning-rod; the two rams which serve as his coursers are the familiar ancient symbols of the male or generative power; their silver bridles typify the female principle, for silver is the metal of Luna, Astartè, Diana. Therefore in the ram and his bridle we see combined the active and the passive principles of nature in opposition, one rushing forward, and the other restraining, while both are in subordination to the world-permeating, electrical principle, which gives them their impulse. With the electricity supplying the impulse, and the male and female principles combining and recombining in endless correlation, the result is—evolution of invisible nature, the crown-glory of which is the planetary system, which in the mythic Thor is allegorised by the circlet of glittering orbs which bedeck his brow. When in his active condition his awful thunderbolts destroy everything, even the lesser other Titanic forces. But he goes afoot over the rainbow-bridge, Bifrost, because to mingle with other less powerful gods than himself, he is obliged to be in a *latent* state, which he could not be in his car; otherwise he would set on fire and annihilate all. The meaning of the Urdar fountain, that Thor is afraid to make boil, and the cause of his reluctance, will only be comprehended by our physicists when the reciprocal electro-magnetic relations of the innumerable members of the planetary system, now just suspected, shall be thoroughly determined. Glimpses of the truth are given in the recent scientific essays of Professors Mayer and Sterry Hunt. The ancient philosophers believed that not only volcanoes, but boiling springs were caused by concentrations of underground electric currents, and that this same cause produced mineral deposits of various natures, which form the curative springs.”

*I saw the Samothracian rings
Leap, and steel-filings boil in a brass dish
So soon as underneath it there was placed
The magnet stone; and with wild terror seemed
The iron to flee from it in stern hate. . . .**

The Bible story of Elijah clearly refers to lightning, not coincidental, but called down by the prophet. History is full of such allusions to the “heavenly fire.” The automata of Pope Gregory, Roger Bacon and others were probably not unconnected with the inventors’ knowledge of electricity. It is said that St. Thomas Aquinas broke the machine of Bacon which actually talked. It is then probably safe to conclude that the ancients had a knowledge of electricity different from our own, a difference that probably lay in their conception of the force. It is clear that our modern elaborate machinery could by them be dispensed with. Actually, inventions have been patented already which would provide for the lighting by electricity without conductor wires, the only thing which prevents their application is the difficulty of a meter! For is it not unreasonable to expect science to hand over its benefits for the good of humanity without also inventing a contrivance which would ensure the collection of the profits?

* Lucretius, 6th Book.



BINDING CASES FOR THE MODERN MYSTIC

A binding case is being prepared for Volume Two. It is in “mystic” blue cloth with gold-embossed spine uniform with the case for Vol. I. A full index will be incorporated in the January issue (Published December 23rd), the final number of Volume Two. Readers who wish us to do the actual binding should forward their copies to this office not later than January 30th. Orders for cases can be received now and will be executed during the first two weeks in January.

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THE MODERN MYSTIC
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Havergal Brian's Second ("The Gothic") Symphony

by the Editor

"The real men of progress are those who begin with a profound respect for the past. All that we do, all that we are, is the outcome of immemorial labour."

Ernest Renan.

SINCE THE WAR, music has not escaped the general downward slide either in public taste or in the new compositions offered for hearing. The modern standard is so consistently bad that the professional critics, completely bewildered and having no real norm by which to judge new works, flounder hopelessly about, being only too glad to have as many concerts as possible composed entirely of classical and romantic music. In recent years they have been so often wrong in their judgments, that *critiques* are no longer genuine criticisms but merely a string of evasive platitudes capable of the desired interpretation at any time in the future.

That such a state of things is possible is attributable to the fact that the art of criticism is based on a number of falsities, the principal one being that it is of necessity progressive, and that its basis is purely (on the technical side) scientific. The failure of science to provide a comprehensive rationale of existence, of nature, of its own specialised subjects and particularly the complete breakdown of psycho-analyses as a satisfactory extension of a general psychology, should provide sufficient proof that only a science capable of uniting itself with art can be considered as applicable to artistic creation.

In a previous article we referred to the conceptions of life held by certain modern composers, and suggested that a knowledge of these conceptions on the part of the listener was sufficient, without musical knowledge, to arrive at an estimate of the music. Is it not clear that a rank materialist who purports at the same time to be in the front rank of composers is an obvious contradiction? Ravel, who died recently, is a case in point. There are many admirers of the French composer in the ranks of our greatest modern technicians, but his music can never have any relation, even remote, to the highest art. His popular *Bolero* will not stand analysis. It is merely a monotonous repetition of a short and quite deadly rhythm, the precursor without any doubt of the present vogue of the "Rumba," despite the alleged "Spanish" source of the composer's inspiration.

As in other fields of activity, so in music, there is always the "smart" one with the Press Agent following close behind; the composer who sinks to the level of the patent-medicine manufacturer has nothing much to say. But in case these lines should meet the eye of a concert soloist, let us hasten to add that he is not

included, for the state of the concert stage, being as much in need of reform as most other things, makes the Press Agent indispensable to him. And unless the interpreter takes measures to get himself a hearing during his life-time, unlike the composer, he stands no chance afterwards. And indeed this state of affairs is also traceable to the bewilderment of the critics. For of technicians, *qua* technicians, there is no end. Liszt would be astonished by the spate of individuals whose manual dexterity is no less accomplished than was his own. But more than dexterity is needed, and the critics are often hard put to it to determine whether a given exponent of keyboard gymnastics, interpreting a piece not worth performance in the first place, is not after all an artist of unusual depth and penetration throwing new light on what is admitted all round to be a particularly obscure subject!

The modern composers who are more representative of music than of the time they are living in are quiet and unsung. Such recent figures as Elgar, Delius, Holst, were all "remote" men. In England to-day there are known to us only two comparably "remote" men—Havergal Brian and Sorabji.

The second ("Gothic") symphony of Brian is in all respects a notable work. The score has been read by a few of the world's great conductors who have tried to secure performances of it, but the huge forces required and the vast auditorium necessary to hold them, make the expense of production prohibitive.

The work is divided into two parts. The first part, which consists of three movements (1. *Allegro assai*; 2. *Lento espressivo*; 3. *Vivace*), is scored for 4 flutes; 2 oboes; oboe d'amore; cor anglais; bass oboe; E-flat clarinet; 2 B-flat clarinets; corno di bassetto; bass clarinet; 3 bassoons; contra-bassoon; 6 horns; E-flat cornet; 4 trumpets; 3 trombones; 2 tubas; tympani; cymbals; percussion; celeste; 2 harps, organ and strings.

The second part is one of the finest conceptions in the whole literature of the orchestra; a *tour de force* unequalled in sheer magnitude since Berlioz. It is a setting of the *Te Deum* for double chorus, orchestra, and four extra brass orchestras, each consisting of trumpets, horns, trombones; tuba and 3 tympani.

Eighty-two string players are required in addition to 2 piccolos; 4 flutes; bass flute; 4 oboes; 2 cors anglais; oboe d'amore; bass oboe; 2 E-flat and 3 B-flat clarinets; 2 corno di bassetto; 2 bass clarinets; pedal clarinet; 3 bassoons; 2 contra bassoons; 8 horns; 4 E-flat cornets; 5 trumpets; bass trumpet; 3 tenor trombones; bass trombone; contra-bass trombone; 2 euphoniums; 2 bass tubas; 4 tympani; 2 harps; organ; celeste; glockenspiel; xylophon; long drum; 2 bass drums;

side drum; tambourine; cymbals; gong; thunder machine; tubular bells; chimes in E-flat; chains and bird scare. The score is inscribed "Meinem geliebten Freund und Meister Dr. Richard Strauss gewidmet" and was published some years ago by Craz of Vienna.

The composer himself, if obliged to admit any influence, would probably suggest that of Strauss, but even that authority would not prevent our seeing much more of Berlioz in this symphony, not merely in the vastness of the conception, but in much of the scoring, whilst the idea of using the *Te Deum* as a finale was doubtless, consciously or unconsciously, inspired by Berlioz.

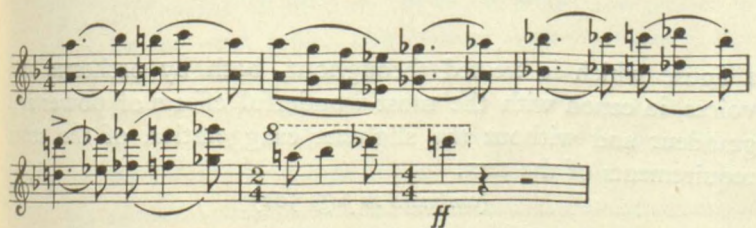
The work has form, but not of the kind easily recognised by the College student of Prout. Its harmonies are sometimes surprising, yet profoundly "right." An ending could be made with the last bar of the third movement, but the addition of the *Te Deum* is pure inspiration. The whole hangs together as inevitably as fate. As an artistic whole the work is an essay in form; its harmonies, whether ingratiating or barbaric, have roots embedded in the beginnings of the art. For Brian knows and loves his masters. Here is no trace of rash youth determined at all costs to upset the traditional apple-cart, but a patient and matured art replete with extraordinary craftsmanship, making a quiet but momentous contribution to music.

Every extra instrument asked for has a job. A necessary job. The parts for E-flat cornets, E-flat clarinets, bass flute and other instruments foreign to the normal orchestral score could not be omitted or placed elsewhere without damage to the intended effect.

The first movement occupies 39 pages of full-score. Tonality is fixed by a FFF tonic chord (D minor) at bar 3, preceded and followed by two bars of a quaver figure tonic-mediant which creates a rhythm characteristic of the movement throughout. In the first case it is given to low strings, bassoons and tubas over a horn pedal; in the second it is allotted to tympani only. At bar 9 (*pesante*) this rhythm becomes more insistent, preparing for a motif given out by strings, oboe d'amore and cor anglais:



This serves to confirm the impression of the rhythmic opening, and after treatment which includes some brilliant and extraordinarily difficult passages for brass instruments, the effect of which must be overwhelming, a new theme:



followed by a solo violin over ppp chords for strings, harps, and celeste:



This theme reappears in various guises and contains the nucleus of much that follows. Four chords (bassoons and harps) confirm the transition to D-major suggested by the violin, when the oboe d'amore and cor anglais give out a partial re-statement which Brian proceeds to treat with the utmost contrapuntal skill:



The music now becomes increasingly dramatic and passionate during which the rhythmic figure of the first section reappears, leading to yet another variant of the violin solo (*poco largamente*) again given out by cor anglais and oboe d'amore, but this time doubled by the corno di bassetto and B-flat clarinet, under



for strings. The commencing rhythm of tonic-mediant in the bass now reappears and the material used in "A" developed in the most ingenious way in 2/4 over a quickly moving bass that insists on the rhythm in the most dramatic and deadly way, at the close of which the oboe repeats a varied form of "B" over a tympani roll (ppp) in octaves and stopped horn chords.

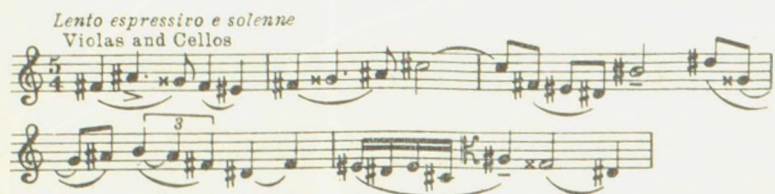
The closing section utilises all the resources of the large orchestra. The material already used is again employed, a feature being the magnificent writing for horns, an instrument for which Brian appears to have a great fondness. The addition of the organ 3 bars before the end of the movement will have a mighty effect, preceding as it does two bars of the tonic-mediant quavers for tympani, the movement ending in a brilliant and frenzied crescendo to D-major.

The second movement is marked *Lento espressivo e solenne*.

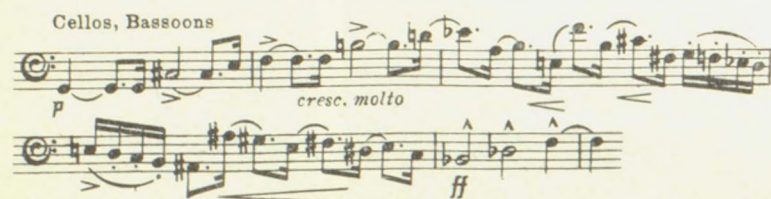
As in the case of the first movement, the second will attract for its rhythmic qualities. Tschaikovski in the "Pathétique" and Borodin in the scherzo of his unfinished symphony each uses a 5/4 time signature, and in both cases (these come readily to mind, but there are many others to which the same applies) the rhythm after a while becomes monotonous.

In the second movement of the Gothic, also in 5/4, Brian effectively counteracts this possibility by ingenious changes of

accent. After three bars of introduction (tympani and tubas) the violas and cellos, in octaves, give out :



which is later on treated canonically, circular variety, the return to the theme marking the beginning of a variation during which a bass is added that presently is given out independently and in a modified form as :



This soon leads to a return to "E" in a form that could be termed "first cousin, half a tone removed." That is to say that half a tone lower the theme is restated entirely in crotchets by strings divided, and harp, tubas doubling the basses at the third bar, the whole to be played as a solemn march over a horn pedal.

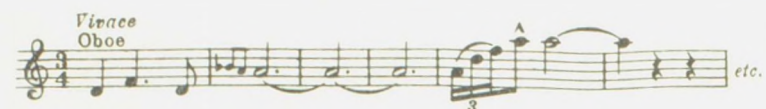
A semi-quaver figure for wood-wind is added to a return in the bass of "F" in the development of which the whole orchestra is included. Again Brian shows his complete mastery of orchestral technique, the brilliance of which is only exceeded by the wonderful way in which he sustains interest in a particularly intricate medium, right up to the last bar.

A final return to "E" treated as in the last case but this time half a tone higher than originally and to which is added wood-wind, E-flat cornet, trumpets, trombones and tubas, gives way to a coda of singular beauty for 3 horns and tubas (*ppp*), the movement ending with six bars solo for bass clarinet.

We have never been able to outgrow a perfectly child-like enthusiasm for the scherzo. It may be true that the slow movement reveals the comparative depth of your composer's mind, but if in middle or old age he can write a scherzo to prove that after all one is only as old as one feels, then we will gladly listen to him! There is an underlying melancholy about the true jester, whether merely suggestive or utterly poignant that also betrays depth of mind, whether the artist be Beethoven or Bruckner, Mr. Charles Chaplin or Walt Disney.

Brian's third movement is the only one in which to us there appears to be an absence of the Berlioz influence. That of Bruckner is suggested by the introduction to the opening bars of the *Te Deum*.

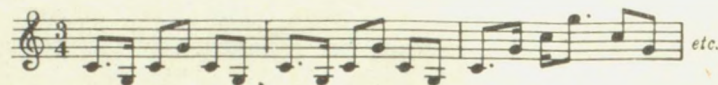
Six bars for tympani open the movement. At bar 7, strings are added (*ppp* ponticelli). A fine effect is secured at bars 11 and 12 by the addition of double basses, *pp-ff-pp* pizzicato. The next three bars, violins, violas, cellos and tympani, *ppp*, continuing the rhythmic figure precede a motif for oboe :



throughout the statement and development of which the strings continue (ponticelli) the figure that opened the movement, until the oboe theme is taken over by horns only, a bass being supplied by tympani and double-basses pizzicato, at the conclusion of which a new theme appears :



This from the outset is treated contrapuntally with the oboe theme "H" now given out by cellos, basses, tubas and horns, the succeeding pages being among the most interesting in the whole work. A restatement of the first theme is now given out (*f*) by horns (*grandioso*) over a rhythmic variation of the commencing figure for tympani :



reinforced by side-drum and full wood-wind. The movement closes with a varied form for horns of the oboe theme.

The fourth movement is a setting of the *Te Deum*. Bach contrived to write a whole movement of 270 bars on three words; Brian in the *Judex* of the *Te Deum*, a movement of some 500 bars, uses only five words. The opening is an unaccompanied figure for boys' and girls' voices in unison :



followed by a brilliant fanfare for eight horns and side-drum, to which after some time are added trumpets. At a change of tempo to $\frac{4}{4}$, the opening melody is transferred to the basses of choirs and orchestra, where it is treated canonically, all the voices being doubled in various departments of the huge orchestra. The same (opening) theme is now divided between trombones and tubas against horns and trumpets in canon.

The *Sanctus* is based on :



a figure which is treated throughout, both by orchestra and voices, in canon with the most wonderful effects of power and grandeur and without the slightest exaggeration of the strict requirements of the text.

(continued in page 502)



THOUGHTS HAVE WINGS

You Can Influence Others With Your Thinking!

TRY IT SOME TIME. Concentrate intently upon another person seated in a room with you, without his noticing it. Observe him gradually become restless and finally turn and look in your direction. Simple—yet it is a *positive demonstration* that thought generates a mental energy which can be projected from your mind to the consciousness of another. Do you realize how much of your success and happiness in life depend upon your influencing others? Is it not important to you to have others understand your point of view—to be receptive to your proposals?

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How many times have you wished there were some way you could impress another favorably—*get across to him or her your ideas*? That thoughts can be transmitted, received, and understood by others is now scientifically demonstrable. The tales of miraculous accomplishments of mind by the ancients are now known to be fact—not fable. The method whereby these things can be *intentionally*, not accidentally, accomplished has been a secret long cherished by the Rosicrucians—one of the schools of ancient wisdom existing throughout the world. To thousands everywhere, for centuries, the

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HAVERGAL BRIAN'S SECOND ("THE GOTHIC") SYMPHONY—(continued from page 500)

The second part of the last movement, the *Judex*, opens unaccompanied (*Adagio Molto solenne e religioso*) $\frac{3}{2}$ on an E-minor chord which precedes a soprano solo, sung from a distance and which in various guises supplies the thematic material for the movement. The writing is in sixteen vocal parts no two of which are doubled! Here again, Brian shows his unflinching orchestral sense, for the score gives the impression that the writing for strings, wood-wind and horns, is designed to convey the colours of a vast organ. In the third part of the choral movement the composer's respect for words is clearly portrayed in the sequential tempo of successive bars. There is not the slightest attempt to mutilate vowels or consonants by forcing them to conform to a pre-arranged time-signature, a freedom of rhythm which he even accords to the simple "Ah" for two choirs.

It may be correct to say that Brian represents the conjunction of French and German musical aspects. Were his work subjected to an analysis closer than is either possible or desirable in a journal of this character, it could be shown that his use of voices, the severity of his outlines, and his innate religious sense are derived more from Bach than from any other composer. But the freedom of his form and vastness of the whole conception are very obviously inspired by Berlioz.

Undaunted by the difficulties of securing a performance of the "Gothic," the composer is engaged on a setting of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* for equally large forces.

READERS' LETTERS—(continued from page 503)

apart from that, wonderful fragments could thus be brought within the reach of hundreds, and even thousands, who could not afford the whole monthly feast.

In conclusion, may I add the following:

Sixteen years ago I happened to be present in a room in a certain University college where Dr. Rudolf Steiner was talking to some friends. It was at a time when there was a famine in Russia, and a money-box for collections was on the table. There was a lively discussion going on about world-conditions and the spiritual life, when someone mentioned Russia. Dr. Steiner pointed to the money-box: "Collecting money is of course very good," he said, "but it is not enough. We have to work so that there is no longer any need for it."

He said it in such a way that it was impossible not to feel not only conscience-stricken, but also entirely confident that it was possible to bring about the triumph of spiritual intelligence and action over materialistic intelligence and action . . . and that quickly.

The MODERN MYSTIC HAS an unique opportunity.

Yrs. etc., "PHILALETHES."

• • •

Douglas, Ontario.

To the Editor of MODERN MYSTIC.

DEAR SIR,

Please find enclosed money-order for \$7, another year's subscription to the MODERN MYSTIC. It's the one magazine I wouldn't be without, and I hope you can keep the good work up. It's a joy to come home after a day's work on the farm and sit down to read an article or two; it takes one's mind off the material things of every day life. I have enjoyed every one of the MODERN MYSTICS I have received. With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

WALLACE JOHN PERCIVAL.

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Readers' Letters

From Professor Edward Dent

To the Editor of MODERN MYSTIC.

Cambridge.

30 October 1938.

DEAR SIR,

I must beg leave to correct an error—Busoni's mother would have been most indignant at being called "an Austrian Jewess." She was an Austrian subject, it is true, but she was brought up to regard herself as an Italian. She was certainly not a Jewess, according to Mme Gerda Busoni, who knew her well, and she was a most devout Catholic. Her father, Giuseppe Weiss, was certainly of German descent, but I have no reason to suppose that he was a Jew; his father was a painter and gilder at Laibach—the sort of man who painted pictures of saints for churches, etc. Giuseppe Weiss's wife was pure Italian, Caterina de' Candido, and a most devout Catholic.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD DENT.

To the Editor of MODERN MYSTIC.

Scriabin and Sibelius: A Contrast

DEAR SIR,

I remember once reading in a book purporting to deal with the occult side of Music a statement to the effect that the Russian composer Scriabin was the "greatest exponent of Deva-music that has hitherto appeared." I can't remember the exact words, but it was a statement to that effect, and an intended emphasis was put on the words by implying that they were the utterance of a Master.

I have since become extremely sceptical of much that certain types of mystic declare to be the utterances of Masters, particularly when an objective examination of the subject in question (as in this case) leads inevitably to a contrary point of view on the part of those who have no special desire to exaggerate a composer's merit on the ground of his adherence to a particular school of thought.

There can be no doubt about the excellence of much of Scriabin's pianoforte music until that period when he disappeared into a kind of psychic fog. I used to be very interested in his work, and remember being thrilled by "Le Poeme de l'Extase." And yet neither this work nor "Prometheus," with all their elaborate scoring for a vast orchestra with all kinds of exotic additions has lived. It is all much ado about nothing; almost banal. Scriabin scarcely ever figures on a concert programme to-day. He excited a short-lived interest, and has been dropped as quickly as he was taken up. And yet there was no doubt about his talent as a composer and pianist, any more than there is about that of his contemporary, Rachmaninoff.

The fact is that Scriabin was an intensely subjective composer, and a "luciferian" personality if ever there was one. Towards the end of his life he really believed himself to be a Messiah. But it was all "up in the air," and one reason why he seems to have failed is that he persisted in making his work fit into Theosophical programmes, instead of being content to write good music. And this intense pre-occupation with fitting "inner meanings" to his music, or vice-versa caused his already strong egocentricity to become a complete mania, and really spoilt all his later work.

No one can deny the real spiritual inspiration of Bach and Beethoven. Their music lives and will always live. It was not made to fit "esoteric programmes."

Personally, I find that the best trend in musical development is to be found in Sibelius, who seems really to have an affinity with the "Deva-Evolution." Sibelius' musical training was severely classical; there is nothing in his work overstated, but an extreme economy of material; no unnecessary detail put in for the sake of mere effect, or that does not bear some significance to the whole. Sibelius seems to say "This is what I perceive; whether it pleases you or not, that is

quite beside the point; you can take it or reject it as you will." He makes no attempt to win you; you have to bring everything out of yourself to it. Is there any other composer at the present time who stands so aloof from all the petty ambitions, desires, and emotions which ensnare the unfortunate human species?

In listening to Sibelius I find myself wondering whether he has not been a great Initiate of the Greek mysteries.

I am, Yours, etc.,

ION D. AULAY.

London, W.1.

October 26th, 1938.

London, W.1.

Nov. 6th, 1938.

To the Editor of MODERN MYSTIC.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I have been a regular reader of the MODERN MYSTIC since its first appearance.

Let me say first of all that I want the MODERN MYSTIC to achieve all the success it so abundantly deserves; also, because I feel it can meet an ever-growing need. And it is about the latter point that I have something to say.

It happens that I have work to do which for many years has kept me in constant and close touch with a very large number of people, old and young, of different classes and occupations; and conversations with them reveal that practically without exception they are longing—even desperately sometimes—to find some well-established avenue leading to a realisation of spiritual truth. I know very well the different lines of thought that are open to them, for I myself have "experimented" with many. I need not enumerate them, nor their various literary productions, nor the other current (and past) magazines which have dealt with such matters independently. But I think that my own experience has been typical of that of hundreds of people. It is that none of it really does much more than provide a kind of personal panacea (which in most cases wears off after deeper analysis and testing); or else it remains philosophically aloof from life. And so on.

About two years ago I was fortunate enough to attend some classes in the School of Spiritual Science advertised in your pages (now the Rudolf Steiner Institute) and I was astonished at the enthusiasm displayed by all the students, of whatever age or occupation, for what was taught there as "practical applications" of a genuine spiritual knowledge. A few months later, and independently of the above, the MODERN MYSTIC made its first appearance. It struck me that here was an ideal combination of events.

But, having some practical knowledge of these things, it seemed to me there was a slight danger that the most excellent material contained in the MODERN MYSTIC would not find a large enough field of expansion unless its *purpose* were backed up by (a) the flourishing existence of such an independent School or Institute, and, (b) by a group of enthusiasts (like myself) who would perceive the immense value of the well-established existence of such a magazine in the same country where efforts at the "applications" of spiritual knowledge were also beginning to be made.

My work has shown me that often the most far-reaching spiritual possibilities exist not among the so-called "intelligentsia" (who can afford to pay 2s. for some forty-eight pages) but among hard-working teachers and business folk, young people earning very small salaries, a host of really earnest and clear-thinking persons, as well as members of the working classes who are often so astonishingly gifted, and so alive to the need for a spiritual outlook on life.

Can anything be done? Can those of us who feel that this universal hunger is a reality, help to satisfy it? Would it be possible—at least as one step—to reduce the price of the MODERN MYSTIC? Or would it be possible to issue reprints, on inexpensive paper, of one article a month out of back numbers (either single ones or series) which could be sold for 3d.? Or could some of the *series* of articles be reprinted together as pamphlets in paper covers, at 1s.? All would advertise the MODERN MYSTIC; and possibly any institute or school that is working at the "practical applications"; but

(continued in page 502)

GIVE BOOKS THIS CHRISTMAS!

The Books listed below in subjects are all approved works. They can be bought in complete confidence as being authoritative expositions of their subjects. The Theosophical, Anthroposophical, and Swedenborg Societies have given their approval to the selections which concern them, as have also the Rosicrucian Order. American readers will find a convenient money table on another page. We will gladly post to any address, together with your Christmas greeting, the book(s) ordered. Please send orders intended for Christmas as early as possible, especially for posting abroad.

Please also see the usual "Bookshelf" feature in next page.

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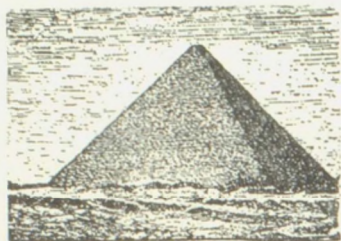
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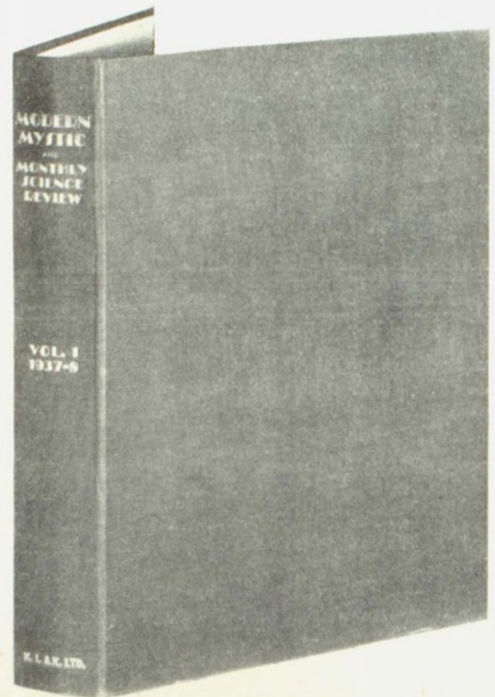
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