

P. R. S.



NEWS

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BIOGRAPHY OF AN IDEA

BY MANLY P. HALL

Some years ago, the public mind took a sudden and avid interest in the predictions of Michael Nostradamus. I was approached by the head of a large New York publishing house to prepare a new translation and commentary on the celebrated *Quatrains*. In the course of several luncheon meetings, the publisher unfolded a pet idea of his own. "You know," he said, "someone should write a book about the men behind the men who change the course of history." He enlarged on the theme by making reference to several mysterious persons who appeared to be moving spirits in the background of unusual events. We arrived at no final conclusion, but agreed that the project might be worth further thought.

Shortly after this conversation, several congenial souls gathered one evening in a beautiful penthouse at the top of a skyscraper on upper Riverside Drive. Among those present was Talbot Mundy, the novelist, Claude Bragdon, the architect-mystic, Sviatoslav Roerich, the Orientalist and artist, and myself. I happened to mention my talk with the publisher and the substance of his observation. As a result, there was a several-cornered discussion that extended far beyond fashionable hours. Numerous anecdotes were exchanged, for we had all had unusual experiences in common, and it was agreed that the philosophical undercurrents of history had too long been neglected. The pressure of circumstances did not permit the immediate development of the theme, but I was more or less unofficially appointed as a committee of one to see that something was done.

In due course, punctuated with numerous interruptions, the outline for a series of essays on the Adept Tradition took form. There were certain immediate difficulties. Obviously, it would be an arduous labor to restore a sequence of events which had been perfectly and ingeniously concealed. Records, if they ever existed, would have been well hidden, and prosaic historians and biographers would have had neither inclination nor incentive to preserve apparently meaningless landmarks, hints, and intimations.

One humorous little item is indicative of the general state of the field. Appended to an early edition of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes is a short work

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THE SAGES OF CHINA

By Manly Palmer Hall



To Western man, China has long been a land of mystery. We appreciate its wonderful paintings, beautiful ceramics, and fantastic imagery. Unfortunately, however, the wisdom of China, its prodigious literature, its religions, philosophies, and sciences, remain comparatively unexplored. In this writing, Mr. Hall seeks and finds the enduring landmarks of China's spiritual and mystical traditions, the lives of great Sages, and the schools they founded. The elusive Taoist Immortals, the "men of the mountains," who retired from the world to cultivate the graces of the soul, the magicians, the alchemists, the poets and scholars of this great empire, must be included among enlightened and inspired truthseekers. Their teachings have lasting value. For a pleasant adventure in an unfamiliar region where Saints walked the earth and Immortals cultivated the

peach of eternal life, and secret societies initiated candidates with impressive rituals, we recommend this colorful essay.

The material is arranged under the following headings: *The Sages of China — The Ancient Masters — Buddhism in China — The Taoist Adepts — The Eight Immortals — Christian Influence in China — Chinese Secret Societies — Oriental Alchemy*. The text is thoroughly documented and there are numerous illustrations from rare early works.

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NOTE: *The Sages of China* is Part III of the Eastern Section of Mr. Hall's survey of the Adept Tradition as it has descended through the mystical associations and fraternities of Europe and Asia. It is the eighth part of the complete work to appear in print. If you have not secured the other available sections, you have missed some of Mr. Hall's most unique and valuable writings. Why not order the entire series, as set forth in the list at the right? The eight sections complete to date, \$12.00.

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But Not For Long

In the last issue of the P. R. S. NEWS we announced a new edition of

THE PHOENIX

This handsome folio volume containing 19 of Mr. Hall's unusual writings, with 91 amazing illustrations, was issued to assist the Building Fund of our Society. Many friends who had waited for years to secure a copy of this work hastened to purchase same, and two thirds of the available copies have already been sold. Due to the present cost of printing, it may be some time before it can be reprinted; therefore, we strongly recommend that you place your order immediately.

Outstanding articles in *The Phoenix* include: *The Story of the Great Pyramid*, *The Practice of Meditation*, *The Sorcery of Asia*, *When the Dead Come Back*, *The Wheel of Pythagoras* and *The Holy Men of India*. The last time this book was out of print, second-hand copies were offered at \$20 and \$25. Just a word to the wise.

(Bound in cloth, 175 pp., \$10.00)

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BY CYRIL SCOTT

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(Continued from p. 1)

entitled, "The Complete History of an Unknown Man." This learned little gem relates to a stranger who appeared in a small German town and included among his attainments the ability to whistle rats out of houses. His biographer went into great detail to make certain that his history was truly complete. The substance of the biography was that no one knew where the stranger came from; his name had not been discovered. His purpose for being in the community was a total secret, and no one could even conjecture why he left. And to complete the record, there was not the slightest indication where he had gone. Such documentation is highly frustrating.

In some matters, however, we were more fortunate, and this issue of the P. R. S. NEWS announces the eighth section of a project which will ultimately be complete in fifteen parts. Gradually, the framework of a secret program of human progress emerges from the confusion and inconsistency of historical records. We sincerely hope that our explorations will inspire others to shed the light of further research. In this way, what the school boy has long regarded as a rather dull subject can be brought to life. The philosophy of history can be vitalized, and we can all be heartened by a faithful record of the heroic sacrifices and sincere dedication of men and women bound together under a broad deep plan which must continue until the ultimate security and enlightenment of humanity is achieved.

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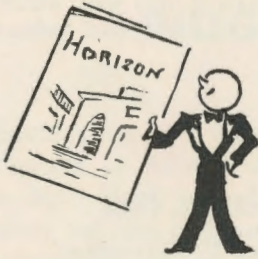
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BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO STUDENTS OF MASONRY AND SYMBOLISM

Religious and philosophical studies naturally include a thoughtful examination of the lore and legendry of Freemasonry as these have descended to us in the rites and rituals of the Craft. Many of Mr. Hall's writings have Masonic interest, but the following books deal most directly with the subject.

THE LOST KEYS OF FREEMASONRY, or *THE SECRET OF HIRAM ABIFF*. Now in its sixth edition, this book explains the basic symbolism of the three Degrees of the Blue Lodge. In his foreword, Reynold E. Blight, 33° K. P., referring to Manly P. Hall, writes: "With vivid allegory and profound philosophical disquisition, he expounds the sublime teachings of Freemasonry, older than all religions, as universal as human aspiration." This volume appeals to Masons and non-Masons alike.

(Cloth bound, illustrated, 100 pp. - Price \$2.00)

We all know that esoteric Orders practicing secret rites flourished in Egypt at a remote time. It is also common knowledge that elements from these ancient ceremonies are incorporated into the higher degrees of the Scottish Rite. Mr. Hall's book *FREEMASONRY OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS* includes an interpretation of the fable of Isis and Osiris, which has been called "the passion-play of Egypt." There is a section on magical practices, and another on the evidence of a secret doctrine known to the initiates of the temples. To this is further added an interpretation of the *Crata Repoa Initiation Rite*, a work of unknown origin first published in Germany in 1770. Students of Greek and Egyptian philosophy, and those interested in the restoration of the old doctrine in Europe in the days of Cagliostro and St.-Germain, will find this book useful and informative. (Paper bound, illustrated, 157 pp., \$2.00)

Speaking of the elusive Comte de St.-Germain, the most baffling personality of the 18th century, -it is not generally known that two manuscripts attributed to him have been discovered. Usually referred to as Illuminist, Rosicrucian, and Freemason, St.-Germain prepared his *Trinosophia* for the instruction of his disciples in the Cabalistic, Hermetic, and Alchemical mysteries. This unique work, translated and published from the original manuscript at the Bibliotheque de Troyes, is available under the title *THE MOST HOLY TRINOSOPHIA of the Comte de St.-Germain*, with introductory material and commentary by Manly P. Hall. Included is a complete photostatic facsimile of the original manuscript. This is an advanced text, but the explanation which accompanies it indicates the key to its interpretation. The first section of the book sets forth the principal biographical information available on St.-Germain. This is followed by a discussion of his manuscripts and teachings in general.

(Cloth bound, profusely illustrated, 149 pp., \$5.00)

The early landmarks of Freemasonry are so few and scattered that Masonic historians have great difficulty in tracing their Order earlier than the European Guilds. The *Sketch of the History of the Dionysian Artificers* by da Costa is therefore an important book, for this work is an attempt to prove that modern Freemasonry derives its origin from the philosophical and religious associations of the ancient Greeks. The work, though brief, is so thoroughly annotated as to be an extremely valuable outline of the opinions of ancient authors on this important subject. The present reprint of the *DIONYSIAN ARTIFICERS* includes an introductory essay by Manly P. Hall in which he interprets the central myth of the Dionysian Mysteries, explaining the secret metaphysical doctrine of this cult. Although he distinguishes between the Dionysian Mysteries of the Greeks and Dionysian Artificers of later centuries, he points out that "nothing short of an extraordinary philosophy could have inspired the Dionysian artisans in the worship of the Great Architect of the Universe through the medium of architecture." In this account and interpretation of the Myth of Dionysius, Mr. Hall unites legend, history, and psychology so that the reader will enrich his understanding not only of human culture, but also of himself.

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