

The Signs of the Times and Our Cycle and the Next

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Reprinted from Lucifer Magazine 1887-9

Published by The H.P.B. Library, Toronto, On. Canada

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

[Page 1] IT is intensely interesting to follow season after season the rapid evolution and change of public thought in the direction of the mystical. The educated mind is most undeniably attempting to free itself from the heavy fetters of materialism. The ugly caterpillar is writhing in the agonies of death, under the powerful efforts of the psychic butterfly to escape from its science-built prison, and every day brings some new glad tidings of one or more such mental births to light.

As the New York "Path" truly remarks in its September issue, when "Theosophical and kindred topics are made the text for novels", and, we may add, scientific essays and *brochures*, "the implication is that interest in them has become diffused through all social ranks". That kind of literature is "paradoxically proof that Occultism has passed beyond the region of careless amusement and entered that of serious enquiry". The reader has but to throw a retrospective glance at the publications of the last few years to find that such topics as Mysticism, Magic, Sorcery, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Mesmerism, or, as it is now called, Hypnotism, all the various branches in short of the *Occult* side of nature, are becoming predominant in every kind of literature. They visibly increase in proportion to the efforts made to discredit the movements in the cause of truth, and strangle enquiry — whether on the field of theosophy or spiritualism — by trying to besmear their most prominent heralds, pioneers and defenders, with tar and feathers.

The key-note for mystic and theosophic literature was Marion Crawford's "Mr. Isaacs". It was followed by his "Zoroaster". Then followed "The Romance of Two Worlds", by Marie Corelli; R. Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"; "The Fallen Idol", by Anstey; "King Solomon's Mines" and the thrice famous "She" by Rider Haggard; [Page 2] "Affinities" and "The Brother of the Shadow", by Mrs. Campbell Praed; Edmund Downey's "House of Tears", and many others less noticeable. And now there comes a fresh outburst in Florence Marryat's "Daughter of the Tropics", and F. C. Philips "Strange Adventures of Lucy Smith". It is unnecessary to mention in detail the literature produced by avowed theosophists and occultists, some of whose works are very remarkable, while others are positively scientific, such as S. L. Macgregor Mathers' "Kabbalah Unveiled", and Dr. F. Hartmann's "Paracelsus", "*Magic, White and Black*", etc. We have also to note the fact that theosophy has now crossed the Channel, and is making its way into French literature. "La France" publishes a strange romance by Ch. Chincholle, pregnant with theosophy, occultism and mesmerism, and called *La Grande Prêtresse*", while *La Revue politique et littéraire* (19 Feb., 1887, et seq.) contained over the signature of Th. Bentzen, a novel called *Emancipée*, wherein esoteric doctrines and adepts are mentioned in conjunction with the names of well-known theosophists.

Literature — especially in countries free from government censorship — is the public heart and pulse. Besides the glaring fact that were there no demand there would be no supply, current literature is produced only to please, and is therefore evidently the mirror which faithfully reflects the state of the public mind. True, Conservative editors, and their submissive correspondents and reporters, still go on slashing occasionally in print the fair faces of mystic spiritualism and theosophy, and some of them are still found, from time to time, indulging in a *brutal* personal attack. But they do no harm on the whole, except perhaps to their own editorial reputations, as such editors can never be suspected of an exuberance of culture and good taste after certain ungentlemanly personal attacks. They do good on the contrary. For, while the theosophists and spiritualists so attacked, may view the Billingsgate poured upon them in a true Socratean spirit, and console themselves with the knowledge that none of the epithets used can possibly apply to them, on the other hand *too much* abuse and vilification generally ends by awakening the public sympathy for the victim, in the right-minded and the impartial, at any rate. [Page 3]

In England people seem to like fair play on the whole. It is not *bashiboozook* like actions, the doughty deeds of those who delight in mutilating the slain and the wounded, that can find sympathy for any great length of time with the public. If — as maintained by our lay enemies and repeated by some *naïf* and too sanguine missionary organs — Spiritualism and Theosophy are “dead as a door-nail” (sic, Vide American Christian periodicals), — aye, “dead and buried”, why, in such case, good Christian fathers, not leave the dead at rest till “Judgment Day”? And if they are not, then editors — the profane as well as the clerical — why should you still fear? Do not show yourselves such cowards if you have the truth on your side. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*, and “murder will out”, as it always has, sooner or later. Open your columns to *free* and fearless discussion, and do as the theosophical periodicals have ever done, and as Lucifer now preparing to do. The “bright Son of the morning” fears no light. He courts it, and is prepared to publish any inimical contributions (couched, of course, in decent language), however much at variance with his theosophical views. He is determined to give a fair hearing in any and every case, to both contending parties and allow things and thoughts to be judged on their respective merits. For why, or what should one dread when fact and truth are one's only aim? *Du choc des opinions jaillit la Vérité*, was said by a French philosopher. If Theosophy and Spiritualism are no better than “gigantic frauds and will-o'-the-wisp of the age” why such *expensive* crusades against both? And if they are not, why should Agnostics and searchers after truth in general, help bigoted and narrow-minded materialists, secretarians and dogmatists to hide our light under a bushel by mere brutal force and usurped authority? It is easy to surprise the good faith of the fair minded. Still easier to discredit that, which by its intrinsic strangeness is already unpopular and could hardly be credited in its palmiest days.

But, beloved enemies, “the light of Lucifer” may, after all, dispel some of the surrounding darkness. The mighty roaring voice of denunciation, so welcome to those little spites and hates and mental stagnation in the grasp of the unsocial respectability it panders to, may yet be silenced by the voice of truth — “the still small voice” — whose destiny it ever was to first preach in the desert. That cold and artificial light which still seems to shine so dazzlingly over the alleged iniquities of professional mediums and the supposed sin of commission and omission of *non-professional* experimentalists, of free and independent theosophists, may yet [Page 4] be extinguished at the height of all its glory. For it is not quite the perpetual lamp of the alchemist philosopher. Still less is it that “light which never shone on sea or land”, that ray of divine intuition, the spark which glimmers latent in the spiritual, never-erring perceptions of man and woman, and which is now awakening — for its time is at hand. A few years more, and the Aladdin's lamp, which called forth the ministering genius thereof, who, making three salutes to the public, proceeded forthwith to devour mediums and theosophists like a juggler who swallows swords at a village fair, will get out of order. Its light, over which the anti-theosophists are crowing victory to this day, shall get dim. And

then, perhaps, it will be discovered that what was claimed as a direct ray from the source of eternal truth was no better than a penny rush-light, in whose deceitful smoke and soot people got hypnotized, and saw everything upside down. It will be found that the hideous monsters of fraud and impostures had no existence outside the murky and dizzied brains of the Aladdins on their journey of discovery. And that, finally, the good people who listened to them, had been all the time seeing sights and hearing things under unconscious and mutual *suggestion*.

This is a scientific explanation, and requires no black magicians or *dugpas* [The Red Lamas of the Tibetan borderlands, who practice the worst forms of sorcery and black magic.] at work; for “suggestion” as now practised by the sorcerers of science is — *dugpaship* itself, *pur sang*. No Eastern “adept of the *left hand*” can do more mischief by his infernal art than a grave hypnotiser of the Faculty of Medicine, a disciple of Charcot, or any other scientific *light* of the first magnitude. In Paris, as in St. Petersburg, crimes have been committed under “suggestion”. Divorces have occurred, and husbands have nearly killed their wives and their supposed co-respondents, owing to tricks played on innocent and respectable women, who have thus had their fair name and all their future life blasted for ever. A son, under such influence, broke open the desk of an avaricious father, who caught him in the act, and nearly shot him in a fit of rage. One of the keys of Occultism is in the hands of science — cold, heartless, materialistic, and crassly ignorant [Page 5] of the other truly psychic side of the phenomenon: hence powerless to draw a line of demarcation between the physiological and the purely spiritual effects of the disease inoculated, and unable to prevent future results and consequences of which it has no knowledge, and over which it has, therefore, no control.

We find in the “Lotus” of September, 1887, the following: —

A French paper, the *Paris*, for August 12th, contains a long and excellent article by G. Montorgueil, entitled, *The Accursed Sciences* from which we extract the following passage, since we are, unfortunately, unable to quote the whole: —

“Some months ago, already, in I forget what case, the question of 'suggestion' was raised and taken account of by the judges. We shall certainly see people in the dock accused of occult malpractice. But how will the prosecution go to work? What arguments will bring it to bear? The crime by suggestion is the ideal of a crime without proof. In such a case the gravest charges will never be more than presumptions, and fugitive presumptions. On what fragile scaffolding of suspicions will the charge rest? No examination, but a moral one, will be possible. We shall have to resign ourselves to hearing the Solicitor-general say to the accused: 'Accused, it appears from a perquisition made into your brain, etc.'

Ah, the poor jurymen! it is they who are to be pitied. Taking their task to heart, they already have the greatest difficulty in separating the true from the false, even in rough and ready cases, the facts of which are obvious, all the details of which are tangible and the responsibilities clear. And are we going to ask them on their soul and conscience to decide questions of black magic! Verily their reason will not hold out through the fortnight; it will give way before that and sink into thaumaturgy.

We move fast. The strange trials for sorcery will blossom anew: somnabules who were merely grotesque will appear in a tragic light the coffee grounds, which so far only risked the police court, will hear their

sentence at the assizes. The evil eye will figure among criminal offences. These last years of the XIXth century will have seen us step from progress to progress, till we reach at last this judicial enormity: a second Laubardemont prosecuting another Urbain Grandier.

Serious, scientific, and political papers are full of earnest discussions on the subject. A St. Petersburg "Daily" has a long *feuilleton* on the "*Bearing of Hypnotic Suggestions upon Criminal Law*". "Cases of Hypnotism with criminal motives have of late begun to increase in an ever progressing ratio", [Page 6] it tells its readers. And it is not the only newspaper, nor is Russia the only country where the same tale is told. Careful investigations and researches have been made by distinguished lawyers and medical authorities. Data have been assiduously collected and have revealed that the curious phenomenon, — which sceptics have hitherto derided, and young people have included among their evening *petits jeux innocents*, — is a new and terrible danger to state and society.

Two facts have now become patent to law and science: —

(I) *That, in the perceptions of the hypnotised subject, the visionary representations called forth by "suggestion", become real existing actualities, the subject being, for the moment, the automatic executor of the will of the hypnotiser'; and —*

(II) *That the great majority of persons experimented upon, is subject to hypnotic suggestion.*

Thus Liebeault found only *sixty* subjects intractable out of the *seven hundred* he experimented upon; and Bernheim, out of 1,014 subjects, failed with only *twenty-six*. The field for the natural-born *jado-wala* (sorcery-mongers), is vast indeed! Evil has acquired a play-ground on which it may now exercise its sway upon many a generation of unconscious victims. For crimes undreamt of in the waking state, and felonies of the blackest dye, are now invited and encouraged by the new "accursed science". The real perpetrators of these deeds of darkness may now remain for ever hidden from the vengeance of human justice. The hand which executes the criminal suggestion is only that of an irresponsible automaton, whose memory preserves no trace of it, and who, moreover, is a witness who can easily be disposed of by compulsory suicide — again under "suggestion". What better means than these could be offered to the fiends of lust and revenge, to those dark Powers — called human passions — ever on the look out to break the universal commandment: "Thou shalt not steal, nor murder, nor lust after thy neighbour's wife?" Liebeault *suggested* to a young girl that she should poison herself with prussic acid, and she swallowed the supposed drug without one moment's hesitation; Dr. Liégois *suggested* to a young woman that she owed him 5,000 francs, and the subject forthwith signed a cheque for the amount. Bernheim *suggested* to another [Page 7] hysterical girl a long and complicated vision with regard to a criminal case. Two days after, although the hypnotist had not exercised any new pressure upon her in the interim she repeated distinctly the whole suggested story to a lawyer sent to her for the purpose. Had her evidence been seriously accepted, it would have brought the accused to the guillotine.

These cases present two dark and terrible aspects, From the moral standpoint, such processes and *suggestions* leave a indelible stain upon the purity of the subject's nature. Even the innocent mind of a ten year old child can thus be inoculated with vice, the poison-germ of which will develop in his subsequent life.

On the judicial aspect it is needless to enter in great detail. Suffice to say that it is this characteristic feature of the hypnotic state — the absolute surrender of will and self consciousness to the hypnotiser — which possesses such importance, from its bearing upon crime, in the eyes of legal authorities. For if the hypnotiser has the subject entirely at his beck and call, so that he can cause him to commit any crime, acting, so to say, invisibly within him, then what are not the terrible “judicial mistakes” to be expected? What wonder then, that the jurisprudence of one country after the other has taken alarm, and is devising, one after the other measures for repressing the exercise of hypnotism! In Denmark it has just been forbidden. Scientists have experimented upon sensitives with so much success that a hypnotized victim has been jeered and hooted through the street on his way to commit a crime, which he would have completed unconsciously, had not the victim been warned before hand by the hypnotizer.

In Brussels a recent and sad case is well-known to all. A young girl of good family was seduced while in a hypnotized state by a man who had first subjected her to his influence at a social gathering. She only realised her condition a few months later, when her relatives, who divined the criminal, forced her seducer to make the only possible reparation — that of marrying his victim.

The French Academy has just been debating the question: — how far a hypnotised subject, from a mere victim can become a regular tool of crime. Of course, no jurist [Page 8] or legislator can remain indifferent to this question; and it was averred that the crimes committed under *suggestion* are so unprecedented that some of them can hardly be brought within the scope of the law. Hence the prudent legal prohibition, just adopted in France, which enacts that no person, save those legally qualified to exercise the medical profession, shall hypnotize any other person. Even the physician who enjoys such legal right is permitted to hypnotise a person only in the presence of another qualified medical man, and with the written permission of the subject. Public *séances* of hypnotism are forbidden, and they are strictly confined to medical *cliniques* and laboratories. Those who break this law are liable to a heavy fine and imprisonment.

But the keynote has been struck, and many are the ways in which this *black art* may be used — laws notwithstanding. That it will be so used, the vile passions inherent in human nature are sufficient guarantee.

Many and strange will be the romances yet enacted; for truth is often stranger than fiction, and what is thought fiction is still more often truth.

No wonder then that occult literature is growing with every day. Occultism and sorcery are in the air, with no true philosophical knowledge to guide the experimenters and thus check evil results. “Works of *fiction*”, the various novels and romances are called. “Fiction” in the arrangement of their characters and the adventures of their heroes and heroines — admitted. Not so, as to the *facts* presented. These are *no fictions* but true *presentiments* of what lies in the bosom of the future, and much of which is already born — nay corroborated by *scientific* experiments. Signs of the times! Close of a psychic cycle! The time for phenomena with, or through mediums, whether professional or otherwise, is gone by. It was the early season of the blossoming, of the era mentioned even in the Bible; [It shall come to pass that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions”] the tree of Occultism is now preparing for “fruiting”, and the Spirit of the [Page 9] Occult is awakening in the blood of the new generations. If the old men only “dream dreams”, the young ones see already visions, [It is curious to note that Mr Louis Stevenson, one of the

most powerful and imaginative writers, stated recently to a reporter that he is in the habit of constructing the plots of his tales in *dreams* and among others that of Dr Jekyll. "I dreamed", he continued, "the story of 'Olalla'... and I have at the present moment two unwritten stories which I have likewise dreamedEven when fast asleep know that it is I who am inventing". . . . But who knows whether the idea of "invention" is not also "a dream"] and — record them in novels and works of fiction. Woe to the ignorant and the unprepared, and those who listen to the syrens of materialistic science! For indeed, indeed, many will be the unconscious crimes committed, and many will be the victims who will innocently suffer death by hanging and decapitation at the hands of the righteous judges and the *too innocent* jurymen, both alike ignorant of the fiendish power of "SUGGESTION". [Page 10]

OUR CYCLE AND THE NEXT

"The world's great age begins anew,
The golden days return;
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn".
— Shelley

"My friend, the golden age hath passed away,
Only the good have power to bring it back. . ."
— Goethe.

WHAT had the author of *Prometheus Unbound* in his mind's eye when writing about the return of the golden days, and the new beginning of the world's great age? Has his poetical foresight carried his "*Vision of the Nineteenth Century*" into the "One Hundred and Nineteenth", or has that vision revealed to him in gorgeous imagery the things to come which are the things that were?

Fichte assures us it is "a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, particularly in past ages", that "what *we shall become* is pictured by something which *we already have been*; and that what we have to obtain is represented as something which we have formerly lost". And he adds, "what Rosseau, under the name of the state of Nature, and the old poets by the title of the Golden Age, place *behind* us, lies actually *before* us".

Such is also Tennyson's idea, when he says:

"Old writers push'd the happy season back —
The more fools they — we forward: dreamers both. . . ."

Happy the optimist in whose heart the nightingale of hope can still sing, with all the iniquity and cold

selfishness of the present age before his eyes! Our century is a boastful age, as proud as it is hypocritical; as cruel as it is dissembling.[Page 11]

Oh, ye gods, how dissembling and truly sacrilegious in the face of every truth, is this, our century, with all its boastful, sanctimoniousness and cant! Verily, "Pecksniffian" ought to be thy name, oh, *nineteenth* of thy Christian series. For thou hast generated more hypocrites in a square yard of thy civilized soil than antiquity has bred of them on all its idolatrous lands during long ages. And they modern Pecksniff, of both sexes, is "so thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of falsehood that he is *moral* even in drunkenness and canting even in shame and discovery", in the words of the author of "Martin Chuzzlewit".

If true, how dreadful Fichte's statement! It is terrible beyond words. Shall we then expect at some future recurring cycle to *rebecome* that which "we already have been", or *that which we are now*? To obtain a glance into the future cycle we have thus but to examine the situation around us in the present day. What do we find?

Instead of truth and sincerity, we have propriety and cold, cultured politeness; in one plain word, *dissembling*. Falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food and the same falsification of eatable food. *Margarine* butter for the soul, and margarine butter for the stomach; beauty and fresh colours without, and rottenness and corruption within. Life — a long race-course, a feverish chase, whose goal is a tower of selfish ambition, of pride, and vanity, of greed for money or honours, and in which human passions are the horsemen, and our weaker brethren the steeds. At this terrible steeplechase the prize-cup is purchased with the hearts' blood and sufferings of countless fellow-creatures, and won at the cost of spiritual self-degradation.

Who, in this century, would presume to say what he thinks? It takes a brave man, nowadays, to speak the truth fearlessly, and even that at personal risk and cost. For the law forbids one saying the truth, except under compulsion, in its courts and under threat of perjury. Have lies told about you publicly and in print, and, unless you are wealthy, you are powerless to shut your calumniator's mouth; state facts, and you become a defamer; hold your tongue on some iniquity perpetrated in your presence, and your friends will [Page 12] hold you as a participator therein — a confederate. The expression of one's honest opinion has become impossible in this, our cycle. The just lost bill repealing the "Blasphemy Laws", is a good proof in point.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* had, in its issue of April 13th, 1889 some pertinent lines on the subject; its arguments, however presenting but a one-sided view, and having, therefore, to be accepted *cum grano salis*. It reminds the reader that the true principle in the Blasphemy Laws "was long ago laid down by Lord Macaulay", and adds:

"To express your own religious or irreligious opinions with the utmost possible freedom is one thing; to put forward your view offensively, so as to outrage and pain other people, is another thing. You may wear what clothes you please, or no clothes at all in your own house, but if a man were to assert his right to walk down Regent Street clad solely in his shirt the public would have a right to object. Suppose some zealous man were to placard all the hoardings of London with "comic" pictures of the Crucifixion, that surely ought to be an offence, even in the eyes of those who do not believe the Crucifixion ever

happened”.

Just so. Be religious or irreligious, in our age, as much as you like, but do not be offensive, and dare not “outrage and pain other people”. Does *other* people mean here Christians only, no other persons being considered? Moreover the margin thus left for the jury's opinion is ominously wide for who knows where the line of demarcation is to be drawn. To be entirely impartial and fair in their verdict in the particular matters, the jury would have to be a mix of and consist of six Christians and six “infidels”. Now have been impressed in; youth that Themis was a blindfold goddess only in antiquity and among the heathen. Since then — Christianity and civilization having opened her eye — the allegory allows now of two versions. But we try believe the best of the two inferences, and thinking of it most reverentially, we come to the following conclusion *in law*, that which is sauce for the goose *must be* sauce for the gander. Therefore, if administered on this principle, the “Blasphemy Laws”, must prove most beneficent to all concerned , “without distinction of race, colour or religion”, we say in theosophy.

Now, if law *is* equitable, it must apply impartially to all. Are we then to understand that it forbids “to outrage

and pain”[Page 13] *anyone's* feelings, or simply those of the Christians. If the former, then it must include Theosophists, Spiritualists, the many millions of *heathens* whom merciful fate has made Her Majesty's subjects, and even the Freethinkers, and Materialists, some of whom are very thin-skinned. It *cannot* mean the latter, *i.e.*, limit the “law” to the God of the Christians alone; nor would we presume to suspect it of such a sinful bias. For “blasphemy” is a word applying not only to God, Christ and the Holy Ghost, not merely to the Virgin and Saints, but to every God or Goddess. This term, with the same criminal sense attached to it, existed with the Greeks, the Romans, and with the older Egyptians ages before our era. “Thou shalt not revile the *gods*” (plural), stands out prominent in verse 28 of chapter xxii. of *Exodus*, when “God” speaks out from Mount Sinai. So much admitted, what becomes of our friends, the missionaries? If enforced, the law does not promise them a very nice time of it. We pity them, with the Blasphemy Laws suspended over their heads like a sword of Damocles; for, of all the *blasphemers* against God and the Gods of other nations they are the foremost. Why should they be allowed to break the law against Vishnu, Durga, or any fetish; against Buddha, Mahomet, or even a spook, in whom a spiritualist sincerely recognizes his dead mother, any more than an “infidel” against Jehovah? In the eyes of Law, Hanuman, the monkey-god, has to be protected as much as any of the trinitarian god-heads: otherwise law would be more blindfolded than ever. Moreover, besides his sacredness in the eyes of the teeming millions of India, Hanuman is no less dear to the sensitive hearts of Darwinists. We grant that he who makes “comic pictures of the crucifixion”, commits an offence against the law. But so does he who ridicules Krishna, and misunderstanding the allegory of his Gopi (shepherdesses) speaks foully of him before Hindus. And how about the profane and vulgar jokes uttered from the pulpit by some ministers of the gospel themselves — not about Krishna, but Christ himself?

And here steps in the comical discrepancies between theory and practice, between the dead and living letter of the law. We know of several most offensively “comic” preachers, but have hitherto found, “infidels” and *atheists* [Page 14] alone sternly reproving for it those sinning Christian ministers, whether in England or America.

The world upside down! Profane blasphemy charged upon gospel preachers, the orthodox press keeping silent about it, and an Agnostic alone raising his voice again such clownish proceedings. It is certain that

we find more in truth in one paragraph of "Saladin's" [The fine poet and witty editor of the late *Secular Review*, now *Agnostic Journal*, Mr W Steward Ross ("Saladin")] . . . writings than in the daily papers of the United Kingdom; more of reverent and true feeling, to whatsoever applied. But *Karma* having nought to do with the dead letter of human laws, of civilization or progress, provides on our spinning ball of man an antidote for every evil, hence a truth-worshiping *infidel* for every money-making preacher who desecrates his god.

History repeats itself. Religious feeling is dying and reverence is replaced by emotionalism. The Salvationists glorifying Christ on the "light fantastic toe," and Spurgeon's "tabernacle" is all that remains of this Christian land, the Sermon on the Mount. Crucifixion and Calvary are solely represented by that weird combination of hell-fire and "Punch and Judy show," which is preeminently Mr Spurgeon's religion. Who, then will find these lines by "Saladin" strong?

Edward Irving was a severe mystic and volcanic Elija Charles Spurgeon is a grinning and exoteric Grimaldi. Newly returned from Mentone and gout, he presided over the annual meeting of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Church Auxiliary; held in the Tabernacle, at the commencement of the proceedings he remarked to those about to pray: "Now, it is a cold night, and, if anybody prays very long somebody will be frozen to death. (Laughter). I remember that he preached a long sermon once, and a young man tumbled out of the window and killed himself. If anybody gets frozen tonight, I am not like Paul, and cannot restore him, so please don't render a miracle necessary, as I cannot perform it. (Laughter).

Such a jester as this, if he had been alive and in Palestine, even temporary with the "blessed Lord" out of whom he makes such profit, would have poked the said "blessed Lord" jocularly in the rib with a "Well, and how are you, old boy from Nazareth?" There would have been Judas, called Iscariot, who carried the bag, and Charles called Spurgeon, who wore the cap and bells. [Page 15]

I make light of the Galilean fables, because to me they are simply fables; but to Mr. Spurgeon they are "the very word of very God", and it is not for him to make light of them, even to please the holy mediocrities of the Tabernacle. I venture to recommend to Mr. Spurgeon's devout attention a sentiment to be found in Cicero's *De Legibus*, and which runs thus: *De sacris autem haec sit una sententia, ut conserventur*. As Mr. Spurgeon has all his life been so prayerfully absorbed that he has had no time for study and knows no language save a voluble gush of washerwoman English, I may tell him and his that the words mean, *But let us all concur in this one sentiment that things sacred be inviolate*. — (*Agn. Journal*, April 13.)

Amen, we utter, from the bottom of our soul, to this noble advice. "But his pen is dipped in sacrilegious gall!" we heard a clergyman say to us the other day, speaking of "Saladin". "Aye", we answered. "But his is a diamond pen, and the gall of his irony is clear as crystal, free as it is from any other desire than to deal justly and speak the truth". In view of the "blasphemy law" remaining on hand, and the equitable law of this country which makes a libel *more libellous* in proportion to the truth it contains, and especially with an eye to the pecuniary ruin which it entails upon at least one of the parties, there is more heroism and fearless self-abnegation in speaking the truth *pro bono publico*, than in pandering to public hobbies. With the exception, perhaps, of the brave and outspoken editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* there is no writer in England whom we respect more for such noble-minded fearlessness, and none whose fine wit we admire more than "Saladin's". [Among the appreciations of H.P.B "By Some of Her Pupils", there is none finer

than that by Saladin.]

But the world, in our day, judges everything on appearance. Motives are held as of no account, and the materialistic tendency is foremost in condemning *a priori* that which clashes with skin-deep propriety and encrusted notions. Nations, men, and ideas all are judged according to our preconceptions, and the lethal emanations of modern civilization kill all goodness and truth. As observed by St. Georges, the savage races are fast disappearing, “killed by the mere contact of civilized man”. No doubt, *it must* be a consolation to the Hindu and even the Zulu, to think that all their surviving brethren will die (thanks to the missionary effort) linguists [Page 16] and scholars, if not Christians. A theosophist, a colonial born in Africa, was telling us the other day that a Zulu had offered himself to him as “a boy”. This Caffre was a graduate of a college, a Latin, Greek, Hebrew and English scholar. Found unable with all these achievements to cook a dinner or clean boots, the gentleman had to send him away — probably to *starve*. All this has inflated the European with pride. But, as says again the above-quoted writer, “he forgets that Africa is fast becoming Mussulman, and that *Islam*, a kin of granite block which in its powerful cohesion defies the force of the waves and winds, is refractory to European ideas which, so far, have never seriously affected it. Europe may yet awaken one day to find itself Mussulman, if not in “duance vile” to the “heathen Chinees”. But when the “*inferior* races” have all died out, who, or what should replace them the cycle that is to mirror our own ?

There are those, also, who with a superficial eye to ancient as also to modern history, slight and disparage everything ever achieved in antiquity. We remember reading about heathen priesthoods who “built proud towers”, instead of “emancipating degraded savages”. The Magi of Babylon were contrasted with the “poor Patagonians” and other Christian missions, the former coming out second best in every such comparison. To this it may be answered that if the ancient built “proud towers” so do the moderns; witness, the present Parisian craze, the *Eiffel* Tower. How many human lives the ancient towers cost, no one can tell, but the *Eiffel* cost in the first year of its existence over one hundred workmen killed. Between the latter and the Babylonian Tower, the palm of superiority in usefulness belongs by rights to the *ziggurat*, the Planet Tower of Nebo's Temple of Basippa. Between a “proud temple” built to the traditional God of Wisdom, and another “proud tower” constructed to attract the children of folly - unless it is urged that even modern folly is superior to ancient wisdom - there is room for diversity of opinions. Furthermore, it is to Chaldean *astrolat* that modern astrognosy owes its progress, and it is the astronomical calculations of the Magi that became the ground work of our present mathematical astronomy and has guided discoverers in their researches. As to mission, [Page 17] whether to Patagonia or Anam, Africa or Asia, it is still an open question with the unprejudiced, whether they are a benefit or an evil which Europe confers on the “degraded savages”. We seriously doubt whether the “benighted” heathen would not profit more by being left severely alone than by being made (in addition to treason to their earlier beliefs) acquainted with the blessings of rum, whiskey and the various ensuing diseases which generally appear in the trail of European missionaries. Every sophistry notwithstanding, a moderately honest *heathen* is nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than a lying, thieving, rascally Christian convert. And — since he is assured that his robes (*i. a.*, crimes) are washed in the blood of Jesus, and is told of God's greater joy “over one sinner that repenteth” than over 99 sinless saints — neither he, nor we, can see why the convert should not profit by the opportunity.

If we have to become in the future cycle *that which we already have been*, let this be as in the days of Asoka, not as it is now. But we are reproached with forgetting “*Christian* heroism”. Where will you find, we are asked, a parallel to the heroism of the early martyrs and that displayed in our day? We are sorry

to contradict this boast like many others. If casual instances of heroism in our century are undeniable, who, on the other hand, dreads death more, as a general rule, than the Christian? The idolater, the Hindu and the Buddhist, in short every Asiatic or African, dies with an indifference and serenity unknown to our Western man. As for "*Christian heroism*", whether we mean mediaeval or modern heroes or heronies, a St. Louis, or a General Gordon, a Joan of Arc, or a Nightingale, there is no need of the adjective to emphasize the substantive. The Christian martyrs were preceded by the idolatrous and even godless Spartans of many virtues, the brave sisters of the Red Cross by the matrons of Rome and Greece. To this day, the daily self-tortures submitted to by the Indian Yogi and the Mussulman Fakir, tortures often lasting through years, throw entirely into the shadow the unavoidable heroism of the Christian martyr, ancient or modern. He who would learn the full meaning of the word "heroism" must read the "Annals of Rajistan" by Colonel Tod . . . [Page 18] "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the thing's that are God's", is a golden rule, but like so many others from the same source, Christians are the first to break it.

Pride and conceit are the two hideous cancers devouring the heart of *civilised* nations, and selfishness is the sword handled by evanescent *personality* to sever the golden thread that links it to immortal individuality. Old Juvenal must have been a prophet. It is *our* century that he addresses when saying:

"We own thy merits; but we blame beside

Thy mind elate with insolence and pride!"

Pride is the first enemy to itself. Unwilling to hear any one praised in its presence, it falls foul of every rival and does not always come out victorious. "I am *the* ONE, and God's elect", says the proud nation. "I am *the* invincible and the foremost; tremble all ye around me!" Behold, then comes a day when we see it crouching in the dust, bleeding and mangled. "I am the ONE," croaks the private crowing peacock's feathers. "I am *the* ONE - painter, artist, writer or what not - *par excellence*. . . . On whomsoever I shed my light, he is singled out by the nations; on whomsoever I turn my back, he is doomed to contempt and oblivion".

Vain conceit and glorification. In the law of Karma; and in the truths we find in the gospels, he who is the first will be the last - hereafter. There are those writers whose thoughts, however distasteful to the bigoted majority, will survive many generations; others which, however brilliant and original, will be rejected in the future cycles. Moreover, as the cowl does not make the monk, so the external excellence of a thing does not guarantee the moral beauty of its workman, whether in art or literature. Some of the more eminent poets, philosophers and authors were historically immoral. Rousseau's ethics did not prevent his nature being far from perfect. Edgar Poe is said to have written his best poems in a state verging on *delirium tremens*. George Sand, her magnificent psychological insight, the high moral character of her heroines, and her elevated ideas notwithstanding, could never have claimed the *Monthyon* prize for virtue. Talent, moreover, and especially genius, are the development of any one's present life, of which one ought [Page 19] to feel personally proud, but the fruition of a previous existence, and its illusions are dangerous. "Maya", say the Orientals, "spreads its thickest and most deceitful veils over the most lovely spots and objects in nature". The most beautiful serpents are the most venomous. The *Upas* tree, whose deadly atmosphere kills every living thing that approaches it, is — the Queen of Beauty in the African forests.

Shall we expect the same in the "coming cycle"? Are we doomed to the same evils then that befall us

now?

Nevertheless, and though Fichte's speculation will have proved correct and Shelley's "Golden Age" will have dawned upon mankind, still Karma will have its usual way. For we shall have become "the ancients" in our turn, for those who will come long after us. The men of that period will also believe themselves the *only* perfect beings and show scorn to the "Eiffel" as we shown scorn to the Babel-tower. Slaves to the *routine* — the established opinions of the day; what they of the next cycle will say and do, will alone be well said and done.

"Wolf! wolf!" will be the cry raised against those who, as we defend the ancients now, will attempt to say a good word for us. And forthwith the finger of scorn and every weapon available will be directed at him who falls off from the beaten track, and at the "blasphemers" who may dare to call by their right names the gods of that cycle, and presume to defend their own ideals. What biographies shall be written of the famous infidels of today; one can foresee in reading those of some of England's best poets; e.g., the posthumous opinions passed on Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Yea, he is now accused of what he would have otherwise been praised for, because, forsooth, he wrote in his boyhood "A Defence of Atheism!" *Ergo*, his imagination is said to have carried him "beyond the bounds of reality", and his metaphysics are said to be "without a solid foundation of reason". This amounts to saying that his critic alone know *all* about the landmarks placed by nature between the real and the unreal. This kind of orthodox trigonometrical surveyors of the absolute, who claim to be the only specialists chosen by their God for the setting of [Page 20] boundaries and who are ever ready to sit in judgment over independent metaphysics, are a feature of our century. In Shelley's case, the metaphysics of the young author of "Queen Mab", described in popular encyclopedias as a "violent and blasphemous attack on Christianity and the Bible, must, of course, have appeared to his infallible judges without "a solid foundation in reason". For them, that "foundation" is in the motto of Tertullian, "*Credo qnia absurdum est.*"

Poor great young Shelley! He who laboured so zealously for several years of his too short life in relieving the poor and consoling the distressed, and who, according to Medwin would have given his last sixpence to a stranger in want, he is called an *Atheist* for refusing to accept the Bible *literally*. We find, perhaps, a reason for this "Atheism" in the *Conversations Lexicons*, in which Shelley's immortal name is followed by that of Shem, "the eldest son of Noah . . . said in Scripture to have died at the age of 600 years.' The writer of this encyclopedic information (quoted by us *verbatim* had just indulged in saying that "the censure of extreme presumption can hardly be withheld from a writer who, in his youth, rejects all *established* opinions", such as Biblical chronology we suppose. But the same writer passes with out a word of comment and in prudent, if not reverential silence, the cyclic years of Shem, as indeed he may!

Such is our century, so noisily, but happily for all preparing for its final leap into eternity. Of all past centuries it is the most smilingly cruel, wicked, immoral, boasting and incongruous. It is the hybrid and unnatural production the monstrous child of its parents — an honest mother called "mediaeval superstition" and a dishonest, humbugging father a profligate imposter, universally known as "modern civilization".

Those who are not to be moved by either hysterical emotion or a holy fear of the multitudes and propriety those, whom the voice of their conscience — “that still small voice” which, when heard, deafens the mighty roar of the Niagara Falls itself and will not permit them to lie to their own souls — remain outside. For these there is no hope in this departing age, and they may as well give up all expectations. [Page 21] *They are born out of due time.* Such is the terrible picture presented by our present cycle, now nearing its close, to those from whose eyes the scales of prejudice, preconception and partiality have fallen, and who see the truth that lies behind the deceptive appearances of our Western “civilization”. But what has the new cycle in store for humanity? Will it be merely a continuation of the present only in darker and more terrible colours? Or shall a new day dawn for mankind, a day of pure sunlight, of truth, of charity, of true happiness for all? The answer depends mainly on the few Theosophists who true to their colours through good repute and ill, still fight the battle of Truth against the powers of Darkness.

An infidel paper contains some optimistic words, the last prophecy by Victor Hugo, who is alleged to have said this:

“For four hundred years the human race has not made a step but what has left its plain vestige behind. We enter now upon great centuries. The sixteenth century will be known as the age of painters, the seventeenth will be termed the age of writers, the eighteenth the age of philosophers, the nineteenth the age of apostles and prophets. To satisfy the nineteenth century it is necessary to be the painter of the sixteenth, the writer of the seventeenth, the philosopher of the eighteenth, and it is also necessary, like Louis Blanc, to have the innate and holy love of humanity which constitutes an apostolate, and opens up a prophetic vista into the future. In the twentieth, war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, animosity will be dead, royalty will be dead, and dogmas will be dead, but man will live. For all there will be but one country — that country the whole earth; for all, there will be but one hope — that hope the whole heaven.

“ All hail, then, to that noble twentieth century which shall own our children, and which our children shall inherit!”

If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy is Altruism, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unanswering devotion to Truth. If once men do but realise, that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, [Page 28] possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark cloud will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the Golden Age will be there, indeed.

But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.

EDITOR'S NOTE. —The last two paragraphs constitute a remarkable prophecy written over twenty years before the Great War which has shaken modern civilization to its foundations. Some allusions to contemporary events, no longer of interest, have been omitted from this reprint.