

Great Women
Initiates



Hélène
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GREAT WOMEN INITIATES



AMORC

by Hélène Bernard

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Dedication

I dedicate this book:

—to the eternal and profound, just, pacifist, generous, altruistic, and open woman who will always know how to say YES but also how to say NO

—to all the women who do not appear in this book and in this dedication ...

CONTENTS

Introduction

1 Jeanne Guesdon

2 Esclarmonde de Foix

3 Tiy and Nefertiti

4 Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

5 Hildegarde de Bingen

6 Mâ Ananda Moyî

7 Lady Pernelle

8 Maria Deraismes

9 Tiphaine de Raguene

10 Joan of Arc

11 Dona Béatrice

12 Mary

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

WITHOUT LITERARY PRETENSIONS, this book is by no means a philosophical work or a complex and refined mystical analysis; it is not even one of those veiled messages so pleasant to decipher. Echoing all that has been written on and in favor of women, I am only trying to say that in the mystical and initiatory world “they do exist” also.

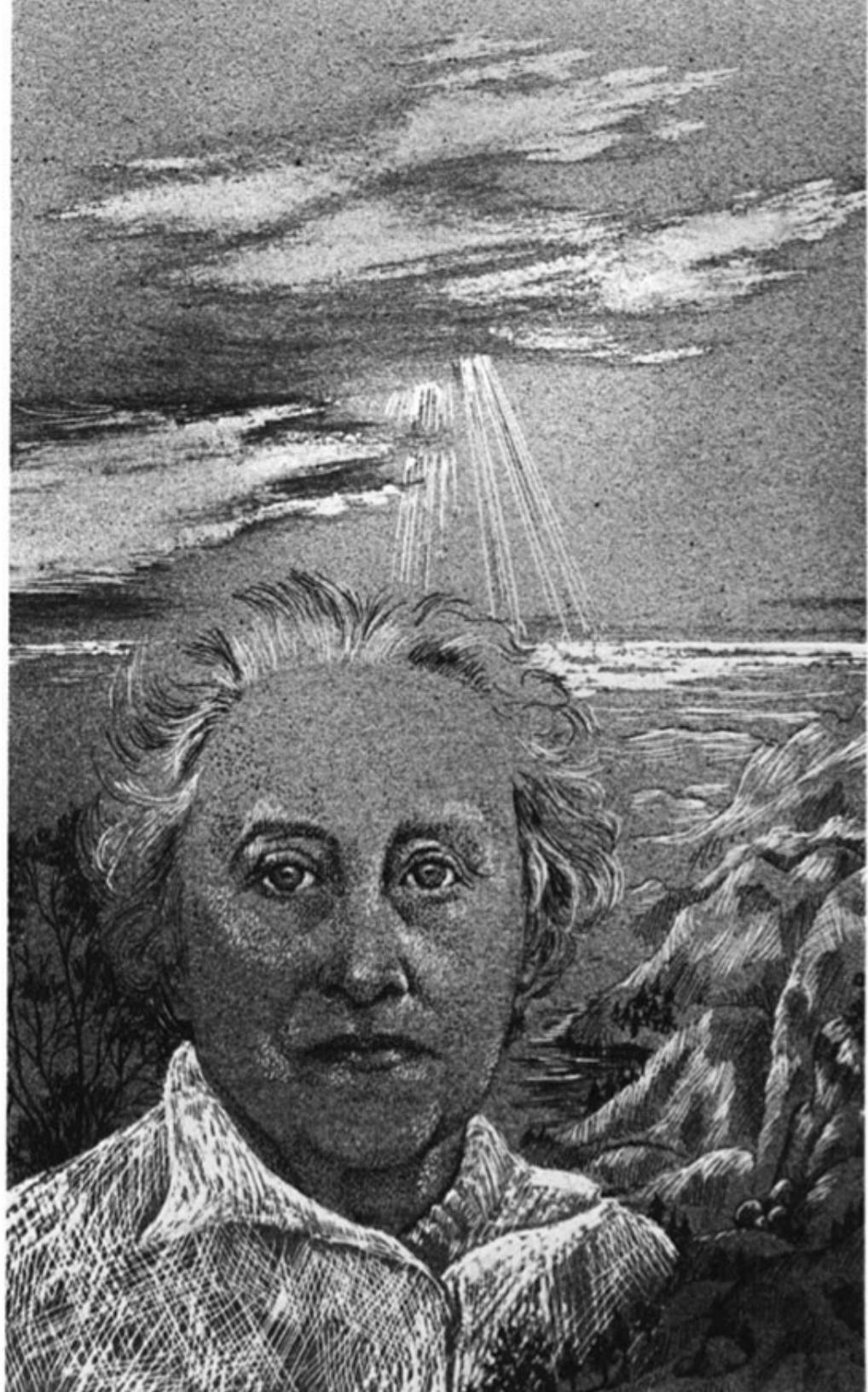
If, to the sincere mystic and intelligent being, barriers between races, social classes, and human beings in general have never existed, among so-called traditional and initiatory organizations there has been, and still is, a rejection of the female polarity. This situation perhaps explains “the great emptiness” that one feels near the adepts of these societies. Behind pale, uninteresting, and senseless phrases and attitudes, they hide their great ancestral fear of the power of the female principle. Since fear, like many mental illnesses, can be cured, I suggest to them that they begin the treatment as soon as possible, so that together we may then catch a glimpse of the *Golden Age*. These ideas and this book are a continuation of a short article that I wrote some time ago and which will be my introduction:

At all times and in every field, women have been misunderstood or intentionally ignored. But it is in religion and mysticism that they have had the greatest difficulty in asserting themselves. We fight what we fear. Men have always feared the great strength and the occult power that women exhibit. One cannot reject one polarity of life and expect everything to go well. Each cell is composed of two polarities. When one of them is fed better than its counterpart, an imbalance results, which causes a great discomfort, often illness, and sometimes death. When male supremacy understands that everything is easier with two,

the world will live in peace. But, will it be soon? Certainly not, for in every country the women who give life are often under the control of those who destroy it.

Many are the writers who recognize the definite role of woman in history, but she is always in the background. In antiquity, woman was worshiped, but of course such did not go beyond mythology. Then the Catholic Church came with God the “Father,” its popes and its bishops. Between wars or tax collections, all these clergymen were asking themselves: “Has woman a soul?” Upon meditating, they thought it desirable to concede to her a soul, no matter how inferior it may be; for otherwise, how could they pretend that the devil may take possession of it? Later, this decision permitted the Church to sell a great many indulgences to these evil female creatures, black with sin, who should undergo a “washing of the soul.” The witches’ hunt, you know? Men called themselves most often *alchemists*. The Middle Ages also witnessed the birth of a great many secret societies and sects of all kinds. Were they going to take into consideration *misogyny*, that ailment the world has been suffering from for millennia? Not at all! Opposed to church and kings in matters of politics and interest, most of these orders became the allies of the government to disparage and degrade woman.

Alone, through the centuries, ideas, and fashions, the Order of the Rose-Croix, despite the opposition and mockery directed against it, has undertaken to preserve this natural and desirable balance that constitutes equality between man and woman. It is most regrettable to notice in this day and age that, in certain fraternities, misogyny has remained one of the bases of outdated teachings, ignorant of the Cosmic energies, vibrations, and other principles that could lead to a better understanding between “male and female” and to the uniting of the two polarities of expression, somewhat different on this Earth, but blended one into the other in the heart of Cosmic Unity—our *Mother*.



1 JEANNE GUESDON

(1884-1955)

IT WAS IN Dossainville, in the Loiret, that Jeanne Guesdon “chose” to be born. Her important destiny began in the residence of Anatole Gibier, her uncle on her mother’s side, in the sign of Aquarius, on February 10, 1884, at 2:00 p.m. It was in the middle of winter, but for a few days the spirit of Candlemass had prevailed and, despite the cold and the snow, spring was in the air. In this French hamlet, an exceptional soul personality had arrived, registered at the town hall under the name of Jeanne Marie Julie Justine Guesdon, daughter of twenty-five-year-old Louise Gibier and forty-year-old Arthur Guesdon. She was baptized by the parish priest of Engenville on February 17, 1884, in the presence of her godfather, Anatole, and her godmother, Justine Bohivens, her grandmother on her father’s side. Her parents lived in Vitry-aux-Loges, a small village in the region where Arthur Guesdon was a tax collector.

Jeanne had a brother, Charles, who was born in 1882 and died at the age of thirty. Jeanne’s father passed away some time after the birth of his daughter, and Louise Guesdon had to leave the Loiret in order to find work and bring up her two children. She took up residence in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. There, she bought a small house at 56 rue Gambetta and found a job in Paris. Therefore, it was between her native country home and the capital of France that Jeanne grew up, a little girl with blue eyes and light hair.

At a very tender age, Jeanne wished to learn and to understand the universe in which she had been placed, to first further her own evolution, then later that of others. She persevered in her studies, which was neither easy nor in good taste for a young girl at the end

of the nineteenth century. On July 1, 1899, at fifteen years of age, she successfully passed her *Brevet de capacité à l'enseignement primaire* (primary education, diploma of ability); then, on November 14, 1901, she received a superior diploma in the same education. The diplomas she had received were not enough for Jeanne, who had great innate potential and a prodigious yearning for more knowledge. After her Master's degree, she studied and mastered English and Spanish, then received a stenographer-typist diploma that entitled her to work as a secretary for the *Société Française de Gramophone* (French Society of Gramophone) from September 1903 to August 1912, at which date she left this firm of her own accord to go to England, where she could perfect her English.

Parallel to her professional life, Jeanne was attracted to mysticism. She knew that intellect and intelligence were not an end, but merely a means to better understand and find an answer to the great questions that mankind has always been asking. Esotericism and secret societies attracted her. She had some interesting encounters and gathered documentary evidence, always on the lookout for books or some sign capable of showing her the way.

Soon the door opened; she got in touch with traditional organizations of the time, and especially with the French Rose-Croix and the Synarchical Martinist Order. And when Dr. H. Spencer Lewis went to Toulouse to find the Rose-Croix, and to Paris to protect it and give it the impetus it now has, Jeanne left for London where, beginning in September 1912, she worked at Baldwin Locomotive Works. In May 1913, she left England for Cuba, where she remained until July 1930. During those years, Jeanne was successively a secretary, a legal representative, then a manager of the *Brandière Compagnie* in La Habana. There, she helped to establish the Rose-Croix, AMORC, which she officially joined on January 12, 1926. She served as an interpreter between Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, Imperator of the AMORC, and the other active or inactive authentic organizations.

In the year 1930, she returned to her native country where her mission was to continue. In the mystical world, Jeanne was known for her integrity and her great abilities; that is why, when the F.U.D.O.S.I.

(Fédération Universelle des Ordres et Sociétés Initiatiques) was established, Jeanne was appointed secretary. She contributed to the establishment of the Rose-Croix in several countries of the world, as well as to that of Martinism, to which she had belonged for a long time and which was then disorganized. Jeanne translated the necessary documents from French into English and sent them to the United States, her translations being first approved by the Martinist officers in Europe. Now was the time to reactivate the Rose Croix in France, but to do so secretly, waiting for the end of the great war that was devastating the European continent. And so, in a France put to fire and the sword, in spite of the turmoil and misery it was going through, the Rose-Croix, through the intermediary of Jeanne Guesdon, laid its foundation. Contacts continued and work was being done, waiting for the day when the light of the Rose-Croix would be able to shine forth brighter than before, and strong, like the fervor of the few who had safeguarded it.

Finally that day came. Little by little, Jeanne translated the literature, the initiations, and the monographs from English into French, and, after having completed all the necessary formalities for the legal establishment of the office of the French jurisdiction of the AMORC, on January 1, 1949, the official existence of the Rosicrucian Order in France began.

Jeanne never married. She devoted her whole energy and time to her ideal. She lived with her mother in their house in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. It was there, in a tiny 12-square-meter room, that the first monographs were sent, that the *Rose-Croix* magazine was edited, and that Jeanne, appointed Grand Secretary and later Grand Master, welcomed the members. Jeanne was very fond of Nature; she tended her flowers, doves, and chickens with care, and it was with great emotion that she sacrificed part of her garden to erect a new administration building upon it. With the help of the Emperor, Ralph M. Lewis, and a few loyal members, she continued the work which Dr. H. Spencer Lewis—who had passed away on August 2, 1939—had entrusted to her a few years before. She fulfilled her mission well; the French jurisdiction expanded considerably—everything was ready.

In 1955, two years after her mother had passed away, seventy-one-year-old Jeanne, in spite of a hectic life, enjoyed perfect health. She had only one minor ailment—a kind of a bunion on her foot, which hurt her. She decided to go through surgery to set her mind at ease, and went to a Parisian clinic. The surgery was very successful. The monograph mailing was due. She knew that members were waiting for it, so she decided to return home as soon as possible. The doctors prescribed anti-coagulants, but probably too large a dose. She left the clinic on Monday, March 28, prepared a few papers, and put a small chest containing a few pieces of jewelry and souvenirs in her attic. She went to bed, hemorrhaged, and passed through transition. Her last moments were very difficult, and she was aware of her passing. Before the few persons present at that final moment, a small silver insect, seemingly coming out of Jeanne's last breath, spiraled up to the ceiling and disappeared. If no one in her entourage had been able to foresee this parting, she, Jeanne, was expecting it. She had many written contacts with the members, and in the course of her numerous exchanges of correspondence, she had discovered the person capable of rekindling the torch she was soon to lay down. A few weeks before her transition, she wrote her will to the Imperator, in which she stated her wish to bequeath to the Order her property on Gambetta Street, and asking him to entrust the Rose-Croix in France to a young member from Isère whom she had never met physically but with whom she had exchanged very good letters and wonderful spiritual contacts. According to Jeanne, that young man was quite capable of carrying on the work that had been started, but this is another story....

A HEROIC AND BLOODY EPISODE IN FRENCH SPIRITUALITY

by Jeanne Guesdon

Grand Master of the A.M.O.R.C. for France

Western civilization would have taken a completely different turn, and the face of the world would have been changed, if Catharism had not been suppressed. In this substantial article, Jeanne Guesdon states precisely what Catharism was and infers from it a lesson applied to our troubled era. It is a text that should be read over and meditated upon.

Much has been said about the Cathari, those mystics about whom so much ink is still being spilled. We have studied their history, their possible origin, and their connection with other sects called “heretical.” Some historical texts, however, give reliable information, and we can find some also among writers who are considered authorities on the subject of medieval legends. Also, reports of the Inquisition, cleverly interpreted, enlighten us on the history of these mystics.

Initiatory rituals and ceremonies were discovered in a manuscript preserved in the archives of the city of Lyon—a manuscript of the New Testament upon which the Catharist rituals were based, and an Apocryphal Gospel according to St. John, more commonly known as *Holy Communion*, giving details on some of their ceremonies and prayers. We can also find some interesting details in the work of R. Sacchoni, a Catharist bishop, who gave up his earlier faith to become an Inquisitor.

By studying and comparing these various texts with those that have been deposited in the Lyon library, a certain light can be shed on the life and doctrines of those mystics.

Manes and His Teachings

Their traditions go back to the time of Manes, who lived in Persia around the third century A.D. He had studied Buddhism and Chaldean philosophy, and had also delved into the mysteries of the Egyptian schools. Later on, he became a convert to Christianity and, out of the vast knowledge acquired from various spiritual sources, he worked out a synthesis upon which he based his teachings, trying, through various paths, to reach the great Universal Truth. His disciples, the Manichaeans, spread his doctrine based both upon the spirit of renunciation of the great Eastern religions and on the great law of Love and Compassion of Christian inspiration.

Interesting documents were discovered shortly before the war of 1914 in Turkestan and China, and in the Fayum in Egypt writings by Manes and his disciples were also found. Some of these documents escaped destruction by fire when Manes' disciples were persecuted. These disciples left the East for Europe, settling mostly in Bulgaria. According to some authors, their teachings spread from there to Italy and later, in a large promotional campaign, to the West, to France, where they were found at the end of the eleventh century under the name of *Cathari*—from the Greek *Katharos*, meaning pure.

They believed in a single god, but acknowledged the existence of two opposite principles, this duality manifesting in matter as light and darkness, good and evil; or as the constructive, positive principle with its opposite, the destructive, negative principle—the latter corresponding to the devil of the Catholic doctrine.

Through matter, the divine principle in man—that is, his soul—is plunged into darkness, from whence it must painfully emerge in quest of its salvation through successive incarnations on this Earth plane; through suffering and the practice of love, it must free itself from the illusion of matter and, leaving darkness, unite with the Divine Light, the First Principle, its Creator.

In the ritual of the Cathari, the seal of the Christian origin of their knowledge can be found, while their ballads and songs unquestionably

bear the mark of Buddhistic influence. In turn, their songs and ballads probably had a great influence upon the intellectual and literary development of the time, as well as on the exquisite poetic inspiration of the troubadours.

It was through initiations that the Cathari helped the slow and progressive development of the soul of their disciples; however, the latter, to prove worthy of it, had to purify themselves through a gradual ascesis: fasting, abstinence, and a sincere desire for perfection. Poverty was also considered a means of deliverance from the shackles of matter. To them, hell did not exist. Satan's realm was upon this Earth, and the fire of the lower regions of the forces of Darkness was none other than the suffering in this world, here and now, and not in another life! Through the tribulations of this earthly existence, the souls of men could be redeemed and saved.

The Perfect Ones

Their teachings were not dogmatic; the task of the Catharist ministers was not to *impose* a blind faith, but to convince the faithful through persuasion and the living example of their purity and probity. Some of them had attained a high spiritual development, and they were called the *Perfect Ones*, or the *Pure*. Such had to be the ministers, but there were of course more humble followers, who worked and prayed under the leadership of the Perfect Ones, who gradually instructed and guided them toward spiritual knowledge. The release of the soul from the shackles of matter, and the love of one's neighbor—fraternity—were the fundamental tenets of their doctrine, in addition to the triunity of man's nature.

Their leaders devoted themselves to the study of philosophy and were generally registered at universities where they took an active part in all the discussions and controversies that might enlighten them. But academic schooling was not their only source of knowledge; through concentration and meditation, they attempted to attune to the divine powers, or Christ Consciousness. To this end, they practiced fasting before initiation and often afterward; also before great religious festivals.

A Few Catharist Rites

One of the peculiarities of their rites consisted in the laying on of hands, which was called *Consolation*, or more often *Consolamentum*, and which, in certain cases, was considered as a baptism, for they did not recognize the efficacy of baptism by water, as established by John the Baptist. For them, there was only one true baptism—that of the Spirit, as Jesus had received it. It was the only way to receive the Holy Spirit of Life within, the Cosmic Radiation infusing man's soul, thus performing the alchemical transmutation of the gross elements of matter.

This sacrament was considered a means of redemption as well as a consecration of the state of purity attained by the disciple after a long period of fasting and meditation. The minister, through the laying on of hands upon the disciple, put the latter into contact with Cosmic Consciousness, with the Spirit of God.

This rite was also practiced upon dying persons to help the soul in its astral journey. In that case, the *Consolamentum* could also be given by a family member or by a woman, provided that he or she had received that sacrament; that is, the mediator, no matter of which sex, had to be fully qualified spiritually to confer it upon the dying person.

The Ordination was also conferred by the *Consolamentum*, even upon women who were then consecrated deaconesses. Every community of Christian Cathari had at least one deaconess.

The Cathari were all individualists, and they believed that the only path to evolution was personal work and effort. Whatever one's standing in society might be, the same consideration was granted to all, from the most humble laborer to the bishop. The only things that mattered were purity and perfection. The most humble neophyte could therefore aspire to the highest spiritual development, to divine communion and ecstasy, or "Vision."

On Marriage

Their beliefs about marriage were especially distorted through the false reports and misunderstanding of their adversaries. It was claimed that they were opposed to that institution, that they preached abstinence and celibacy, which is inconsistent with their belief in reincarnation. In fact, how could man come back to Earth if marriage and family were condemned? It is true that they recommended celibacy, but only for the Perfect Ones, that is, for those who had attained a certain degree of purity, and as a means to free oneself from the control of the senses, as well as to shorten his karma of reincarnations. But they did acknowledge the necessity of marriage for the one who had to live the mundane life, though to them, in this case, the only valid sacrament was the true union of two souls. What they condemned was not marriage itself, but the licentiousness it could shield.

To those who had received the *Consolamentum* and who were married, the authorization could be given either to the husband or the wife, depending on the case, to break the matrimonial bond so as to devote themselves more fully to purification, to a total asceticism.

Such was their probity that their word was sufficient bond, and they saw no need of taking oaths in that they adhered strictly to the spirit of the second and eighth commandments.

In France

In the South of France where the blending of several races tended to produce strong and independent personalities, the Cathari found a very propitious soil for the dissemination of their teachings, thus leaving their imprint upon these eager and unusual personalities. The sum of their knowledge was therefore translated into the *langue d'oc*.*. All that region was still impregnated with the refinement of ancient Roman civilization. The noblemen and the knights, the counts of Toulouse, and the lords of Bziers and Foix were refined, cultured people, and the middle class themselves were highly educated. Esclarmonde de Foix, a romantic figure in medieval lore, the daughter of Roger Bernard,

Count of Foix, had been initiated into the Catharist faith, the same as Philippa, wife of Ramon-Roger, another lord of Foix. Although he had not adopted their doctrine, Raymond VI of Toulouse promoted it openly, even at times against the Catholic clergy.

**Regional dialect of the South of France*

It is possible that pilgrims coming from the Orient, from Jerusalem, either directly or indirectly facilitated the spreading of the Catharist doctrine, both in France and in Italy. The first great centers were established in the South of France, at Montpellier, Béziers, and Narbonne. Thence, crossing the Pyrénées, they spread to Spain. Later on, the Cathari selected Toulouse as their headquarters and had several bishops in *Albi*; in fact, it is from the name of that town that they were called *Albigenses*, as well as Cathari. This name, *Albigenses*, has remained linked to the terrible persecutions they had to endure in several towns such as Béziers, Carcassonne, Agen, and Montségur.

The perfect purity of the Cathari's life offered a contrast to the extreme licentiousness that prevailed at that time even among the members of the clergy where simony was current coin. While the Cathari devoted themselves entirely to the welfare of the people, attended to the sick and healed them, the ministers of the church sold sacraments and behaved like the merchants of the Temple.

We have therefore, on the one hand, men and women adhering as closely as possible to the Christian code of life, who were renowned as weavers, agricultural workers, devoted physicians, and educators; on the other hand, we find corruption and materialism. Besides, the prelates of Rome were often temporal lords, the owners of large and important estates, who worried more about their own power and welfare than about that of the people or their spiritual health; also more about political issues than about the protection of the Church. Consequently, it is not surprising that all the sympathy of the people leaned toward the Cathari, because of the corruption of a great majority of the clergy driving the people away from the Catholic Church. On the other hand, there was open hostility between the clergy and the barons, the latter preferring to help those whose extreme purity of life and great unselfishness commanded the barons' respect.

The Albigenses, or Cathari, were, socially and spiritually speaking, several centuries ahead of their time. The popularity of Guilabert de Castres, one of their most renowned ministers, was to the Church a source of serious trouble at the beginning of the thirteenth century. He severely condemned the corruption of the spiritual heads in authority; indeed, to the Cathari, an unworthy minister had no right to hold office. In their eyes, the title meant nothing; they considered only the intrinsic value of the individual. The most humble worker, if he was honest and had reached a high spiritual level, was more qualified to be a minister of the cult than the one who had merely been ordained a priest, since ordination, as we have said before, meant nothing to them. This way of looking at things, therefore, was an attack against Roman dogma; the very simplicity of their life, their disinterestedness, were looked upon as revolutionary symptoms, and their teachings, as dangerous heresy. And the fact that they followed the doctrine of Manes, whose disciples had always been more or less persecuted, seemed pretext enough for the Crusades and the persecutions that were directed against them.

Roman Hostility

While using coercive measures against the Cathari, Pope Innocent III also tried to convert them, and in order to persuade them he sent the Cistercians, who were famous dialecticians. According to the extremely strict rules of their Order, those monks had to live in absolute poverty, and their asceticism equaled that of the Cathari. The same virtues were being practiced by both groups. However, whatever the method of persuasion of such worthy adversaries might have been, the faith of the Albigenses in their doctrine was too deep and sincere for them to forsake it. It could not be attacked by cold reason or by dialectics, and, as that of Jacob Boehme, for example, it did not originate in knowledge acquired from books, but from the heart—and it was from their heart that the Cathari drew such a great fortitude.

Although we cannot enter into a detailed account of the persecutions they had to endure, some of the most salient episodes will help to throw some further light upon their history. At the end of the twelfth century, they were condemned by a Council held in Toulouse. The

Pope solicited the help of the lords of the South of France to fight the Cathari, promising plenary indulgence as a reward, and the ecclesiastical authorities anathematized them as "heretics." At the same time Innocent III was asking for the help of the princes and the lords, he also wrote to the archbishops of the region, trying to arouse their zeal. His Legate, Pierre de Castelnau, unable to convince Raymond VI of Toulouse to fight with the Church against the heretics, for whom Raymond had a strong liking, excommunicated him. The Pope confirmed the sentence in terms so forceful and violent that Raymond yielded. But this submission was only a pretense, and, after a stormy controversy in Saint-Gilles, Pierre de Castelnau excommunicated him again. Some time afterwards, in January 1208, the Legate was killed; according to some historians, he died by the hand of one of Raymond VI's servants. Innocent III then appealed to the King of France, Phillippe-Auguste, and asked "the barons of the North to go and fight against the barons of the South." Philippe-Auguste refused, and Innocent III began the Crusade with the help of the lords of the North only, to whom he had also promised plenary indulgences in addition to the hope of gaining new estates. Raymond was forced to yield to the Church and to part from the other lords of the South.

North Against South

According to historical accounts, the army of the Crusaders was composed of 20,000 knights and 200,000 bondmen. Although the lords of the South, fighting for the Cathari, had about 100,000 men under their command, the fight was uneven, and it is not surprising that Raymond VI, irresolute of character, once again submitted to the authority of Rome. All the while doubting his sincerity, the Pope was only too happy to weaken his adversaries, and, for the time being, he was satisfied with separating Raymond from the other lords.

The mighty army of the Crusaders pursued the reformers who, under the leadership of Raymond Roger, Viscount of Béziers, took refuge in that city. But, in spite of their courageous efforts, Béziers and, shortly after, Carcassonne were captured and ransacked.

Massacre

Before the slaughter, the conquerors had asked the Abbot of Citeaux how they could distinguish the Albigenes from the other inhabitants. "Kill them all," the Abbot replied. "God will recognize His own"

"Then," an anonymous author wrote, "the greatest massacre of all ages took place; neither young nor old were spared, not even children at the breast—all were annihilated. Upon seeing this slaughter, the people took refuge in the big church of Saint-Nazaire. There, the priests were to ring the bells when all the heretics were dead. . . . But the bells were never heard, for not a priest nor a clergyman was left alive; they were all put to the edge of the sword—not one escaped. First the town was pillaged, then burnt to the ground; no living creature was left in it."

Such was the spirit that animated the Crusaders. Such were the crimes perpetrated in the name of God and religion. However, a few of those who persecuted the so-called heretics were of good faith and sincere in their belief; the monks of Citeaux, the Cistercians, were devout followers of their religion; and so was Saint Dominic also, whose asceticism could be compared to that of his very enemies.

This is one of the consequences of intolerance, when the Powers of Darkness, through their subtle artifices, blind the reasoning and understanding of those who believe in their own righteousness. If ideological conflicts have changed their theme—we fight less in the name of religion, and even God seems to be ignored by some—they are nonetheless fierce, and the massacres of the Middle Ages have no common measure with those of the Atomic Age of our so-called civilization. But is it not always pride that destroys men, that sets them against each other?

During the Crusades, luck often changed sides; a few Cathari succeeded in escaping from the conquered cities with the help of the people and the lords who rebelled against the cruel fanaticism of the Inquisition. A few among them remained hidden for a long time and were thus able to even make proselytes. This state of affairs lasted till the siege of the formidable citadel of Montségur.

The Tragedy of Montségur

Montségur was a very ancient place of worship; it is said that a temple dedicated to the Sun had been erected there several centuries before the Christian era. In the Middle Ages, the castle became the fortress where the Cathari fought their last battle.

As early as 1209, refugees were sheltered there by Raymond of Perelha, lord of Montségur, before the crucial phases of the great crusades. In 1232, he welcomed Guilabert de Castres there, with several other Catharist chiefs. Montségur then became the center of the Catharist Church and, at the end of the Crusades, was their last stronghold when Raymond VII, who had succeeded his father in the County of Toulouse, agreed, under the influence of Blanche de Castille—mother of Louis IX, King of France—to help fight the last Cathari and to destroy their final refuge. In March 1244, 205 Cathari were burnt alive with their bishop.

From that time on, the few surviving Cathari took shelter in grottos and caves; a few others emigrated toward Northern Italy. Such had been the horrors of the Inquisition that in many places the people rebelled against the fanatical domination of certain priests. For a few years, around the end of the thirteenth century and under the leadership of P. Autier, a few Cathari still held out, but in 1309 Autier was killed, and their last known minister, Bélibaste, was burnt in 1321. After this, the Albigenses fled and hid in the wild region of Sabarthez, where all seemed to have disappeared, either because they had been killed, or because they had fled to other countries.

A Wonderful Doctrine

Indeed, the quality of the Cathari's faith was so high that it can only be compared to that of the early martyrs of Christianity. Their doctrine was truly inspired by the pure spirit of pristine Christian idealism before it became distorted by wrong interpretations. They suffered

death by fire with the same courage as the martyrs during the Roman Empire; however, their beliefs were so distorted by the Inquisitors that they were accused of condoning suicide as a desirable act.

In some cases, they willingly submitted to what they called the *endura*, either before receiving the sacrament of Consolamentum, or when they were imprisoned. In the former case, the *endura* was a very strict fast, not at all practiced with the idea of committing suicide, but as a means of liberation from the sway of the senses. In the latter case—that is, when they were imprisoned—they underwent it in order to escape the tortures of the Inquisition or death by fire, and they would then let themselves die of starvation.

Every era has experienced a contrast of Light and Darkness. In the midst of the unbridled licentiousness of a degenerate Rome, appeared the great Star of Light, Compassion, and Love—Jesus. In the dark medieval era, the sincere efforts of the Cathari for the liberation of the spirit, in a more humble manner showed the way to true spirituality, thus affirming that however insurmountable the obstacles may appear, the course of evolution continues its inexorable movement throughout the ages. Each action has its reaction, and the power of the popes, after these bloody fights, was greatly weakened. Because of the cruel violence and fanaticism of the Inquisitors, and their persecution against those opposed to them, the people of the Western world rejected the spiritual authority of the Church.

In conclusion, we may say that traces of the Cathari still remain, even though they seem to have completely disappeared, that they still have faithful admirers, and that their teachings and doctrine have been secretly preserved. In fact, the Cathari have been looked upon as the forerunners of the Templars, and, if we compare their traditions with those of the Rose-Croix, we shall note that they are based upon the same fundamental truths, upon an intense yearning for spiritual unfoldment, and upon a real and true comprehension of man's final destiny.



2 ESCLARMONDE DE FOIX

(1155-1240)

IN THE YEAR of grace 1155, in the heart of the *Occitan* country, in a majestic castle overlooking the Ariège, a second child was born to Lady Zébélia Trencavel de Carcassonne, and Roger Bernard, Count of Foix. It was a little girl, and the wonderful and predestined name of Esclarmonde was given to her. It was from this haunt, a real eagle's nest that looked inaccessible, that her father, a strong and loud man, managed his estates. The house of Foix, of Iberian origin, went back to Adcantuan, who fought against Caesar; heir to the manor of Foix through the counts of Comminges of Merovingian stock, it became, under the names of Counts of Carcassonne and Couserans, titular to the county of Foix around 1068. The feudal rule of the counts of Foix crept into the Ariège Valley and consisted of many manors, the majority of which were established under the reign of Charlemagne. Through Andorra and Urgel, the county was directly connected with the Iberian Peninsula. In the central Pyrénées, its sentinels on the steps of Spain were called *Montcalm*, *Vil-de-Soc*, *Signer*, *Aston*, and *l'Hospitalet*, while Aulus and Luchon led to Gascony. Confident in the motto *Custos Summorum*, "guardians of the high plateaus," and under the protection of powerful armories, the walls of the monumental and solitary dwelling sheltered the happy childhood of Esclarmonde.

In 1162, when Esclarmonde was seven years old, her father married off his oldest daughter, born from his first marriage to Cécile de Barcelone. On the occasion of these magnificent wedding nuptials, the little girl saw for the first time the best of *Occitan* chivalry. Among all these proud people, the preference of Esclarmonde and of her parents went to the members of the Pèrelhe family, lords of Roquefixade and

of Montségur. Esclarmonde's radiant beauty blossomed forth in this cultured and sparkling southern court, between her brother, Ramon-Roger—nicknamed the *druz*, that is, the initiate, the pure, the future troubadour—and her little sister Zébélia. In summer as in winter, the days were spent in hunting and feasting. Travelers came and left, always enjoying the open and warm hospitality of Roger Bernard and his family. Immediately after sunset, with a fire crackling in the fireplace, one feasted; then, affected by the soft glow of candlelight, he listened, with open mind and soul, to the sacred texts and hidden words that the troubadours sang and declaimed from castle to castle in a secret language called *gaye science*. Troubadours! This name alone rouses us: 'Trovare-Trouve (found).... They had found a truth and, garbed in the hermetic colors green, yellow, and red, they spread their knowledge. Secret ambassadors and bearers of news between influential people, these initiates, called *fidèles d'amour*, became the disciples and secret propagators of Catherist theories in Occitania. "Courts of love" flourished in Foix, in Aragon, in Cerdagne, in Gascony, and in Languedoc. Divine sciences and asceticism were discussed in them. Borrowing from Druidical teachings, they honored the law of numbers. The seekers of secrets of the hereafter were the keepers of thousand-year-old teachings transmitted from mouth to ear. This ancient tradition had its origin in the "mystery" initiations that the first pharaohs, heirs to the wise Atlanteans, spread throughout the Mediterranean basin. After a long filiation, extending through the Greeks and the Essenes, the Arabs became the keepers of this "science of the magi," and it was to seek this knowledge that the first Crusaders started on their way. Pyrenean Catharism was born. But the proud knights also brought back from the Orient a taste for luxury, to which the Church of Peter and its servants succumbed. The bishops and the abbots lived in wealth and prosperity. Esclarmonde heard about the weaknesses of the clergy and the unvirtuous life of some Catholics.

Her adolescence was marked by the coming of the heretical Bulgarian bishop Nicetas. The "missioné" gave a structure to Catharism. He organized the priesthood and the statutes of the dissident Catholics. The House of Foix welcomed him, and young Esclarmonde and her brother Ramon-Roger were highly impressed by his personality. Esclarmonde was too young to play a role in the management of a

religion which called for nothing less than perfection. Nevertheless, she had much influence at the court of Foix. She was intelligent and refined, and had famous troubadours as teachers—witty and talented. At twenty years of age, her reputation as a woman of superior intelligence and knowledge attracted many admirers and suitors to her, but like many of her equals she sacrificed herself to a union ruled by politics. In 1175, she married Jourdan III de l'Isle Jourdain, related to the counts of Toulouse. The name *Jourdain* (Jordan) was a reminder of his crusading ancestors, who had probably been impressed with the river of Palestine.

Jourdan's education was based on most fervent Catholicism. Esclarmonde was a Catharist. Perhaps she hoped to convert her husband. If their marriage was not a complete spiritual union, it was nevertheless a very fruitful one! Six children were born in the family home where Jourdan ruled by the letter and Esclarmonde by the intellect. First, there were two daughters, Escarone and Obisca; then three boys, Bernard, Jourdan, and Othon; and finally a little girl, Philippa. For twenty-five years Esclarmonde led a perfectly dignified life with Jourdan. She had given up trying to convince her husband of the cogency of Catharist doctrine, but she was watching very closely the development of the situation in Occitan. She conducted courts of love and remained in touch with the greatest "heretical" personalities of that time. The Roman Church tried in vain to reclaim the noble lost sheep. At Albi, in 1176, a council reminded them of their capital sins, and a little later, the archbishop of Lyon condemned them and accused the future Raymond VI of protecting them. Finally, on March 20, 1179, Pope Alexander III solemnly excommunicated them.

In 1180, her little sister Zébélia married Roger I of Comminges, son of Bernard III and Laurence of Toulouse. Their paths were different, but the two sisters respected each other and several times helped one another. In 1181, Cardinal Henri of Albano openly declared war on the "sinners." Jourdan was dragged into this repressive crusade. An insane torrent of hatred and violence raged in the region. Esclarmonde did not hesitate. She protected and led the people to the County of Foix. The Cardinal of Albano was furious and continued his cruel deeds designed to eradicate evil. The monks spread the rumor that Esclarmonde was

responsible for “this ravage by fire and the sword.” They had not forgiven her for her firm stand and sought to influence her husband against her. During these difficult times, Esclarmonde displayed an unusual strength and especially feelings of social solidarity—a very rare thing in the twelfth century. Till 1185, Pope Luce III allowed the wounded country to heal its wounds. Esclarmonde resumed her life as lady of the manor and attended to her children.

In the months that followed, she had the great joy of seeing her brother, Ramon-Roger, whom she loved very dearly, take for a wife the delightful Philippa de Moncade. Philippa was an absolute admirer of her sister-in-law, and she followed in her footsteps on the perilous path of Catharism.

For many years, in spite of the turmoil, the Count of Foix, Roger Bernard, maintained peace in his estates and, in the year 1188, he gave up his old worn-out body. On the threshold of the thirteenth century, the Roman Church welcomed a new pope, Innocent III. The first years of the new century were trying for Esclarmonde.

In 1203, her friend and brother, Ramon-Roger, was taken prisoner, and in 1204, Jourdan de l'Isle Jourdain died away from her. Having never ceased loving his wife, in spite of her subversive ideas, the clauses of Jourdan's will were in favor of Esclarmonde. All his family was loyal to Catharism. Children, sons-in-law, and daughters-in-law felt a deep affection and a great admiration for Esclarmonde. Completely unmaterialistic, Esclarmonde left to her children all the wealth and huge estates of their father, then returned to her native mountains and remained in Foix to rule there in her brother's absence. Free to assert herself in her faith, she surrounded herself with officers and friends of Ramon-Roger, and proclaimed herself dedicated to the Paraclete. The knights and the people from the surrounding area responded to her appeal to unity for a single faith. She selected trustworthy tutors for her nephews and devoted herself, body and soul, to her vocation.

The one who was called the “Dove of the Paraclete” established social institutions, workshops, centers of apprenticeship in various branches, and especially hospitals for the elderly and those wounded in the war; as well as lodging places for the ever-increasing number

of refugees. Under her leadership, convents for “Perfect Ones” and schools, where poor children were taught the new spirit, were founded. Led by her, the “Perfect Ones” went to every home. They assisted the outcasts and took care of the sick. Unconstrained, the people were won over by their true charity and pure mysticism.

In 1206, after three years in captivity, Ramon-Roger rejoined his court. At last Esclarmonde could devote herself to the life she had been yearning for. She retired to Castellar de Pamiers. The high Catharist officers had nothing more to teach her, and Guilabert de Castres, her teacher and very faithful friend, deemed her worthy to be raised to the rank of “Perfect One” and Archdeaconess. Accompanied by Auda de Fangeaux, Fais, Countess of Dufort, and by Ramonda Miro, Esclarmonde received the “Consolamentum” in Fangeaux. This purifying ceremony strengthened the new Archdeaconess in her faith, and she devoted all her time and vitality to the establishment of Catharist communities. Along with her activities, Esclarmonde undertook, with Ramon de P  relhe, her knight-servant, and other dignitaries such as Guilabert de Castres, the reconstruction of the fortress of Montsegur. Relations with the Church were becoming bitter. Innocent III issued a sharp anathema against the innovators. Esclarmonde could not see the South being so badly treated. The papal malediction only strengthened her convictions. In April 1206, for nearly one month, the seventh contradictory cross-examining council was held in Pamiers.

The Church had the fiery new bishop of Toulouse as its main representative. Esclarmonde, surrounded by Philippa and her beautiful daughters, Ermessinde and Indie de Fangeaux, participated passionately in these debates. She demanded complete equality between men and women, an established fact in the “rebellious” religion. Already prejudiced against the feminine sex in general through his religious training, the prelate of Toulouse, annoyed by the intellectual abilities of his rival, challenged her: “Madam, go and spin your wheel; it does not become you to argue in such debates!”

On November 17, 1207, the Holy Father ordered the King of France to arm his soldiers and to have them march against the infidels. Indulgences and promises of salvation were granted to them.

Esclarmonde got ready to make Montségur the center of resistance. She escorted the treasure of the Paraclete up to the high rock. Surrounded by the deacons and the “Perfect Ones,” she often looked down toward the forests of Bèlèna (a reminder of the Celtic god of Light) and of Quier (the priest of the mistletoe). Soon, files of refugees arrived, fleeing from the barbarians led by the cruel chief, Simon de Montfort.

For years, terrible repressions succeeded one another. The bishop of Foulques founded a brotherhood whose members were recruited among the most fanatical and violent enemies of the Cathari. Simon de Montfort murdered heretics by the thousands in a bloody frenzy, sparing none.

The village occupants took refuge in a church upon the arrival of the tyrant and his mercenary abbots. It was then that the abbot of Citeaux cried out: “Kill them all, God will know His own!” And there, in that place of worship, these unfortunate people were burned, like so many others. Finally, the King of France became disenchanted with the bloody and less than honorable way in which Simon de Montfort and his acolytes led the crusade. Innocent III remained caught between his personal temperance and the growing ambitions of his subjects. The principle of the Holy War could not hide reality—a policy of conquest. For years, pillages, murders, and oppositions all succeeded one another. In 1227, Occitania experienced a period of respite.

Esclarmonde, almost an octogenarian then, having weathered the bloody hours, believed the time was ripe to restore good order within the Catharist organization. She helped and cared for the faithful adepts, and reorganized the priesthood. Catharism rose again from its ashes.

Communities, hospices, and workshops were distributed throughout the whole area. The Archdeaconess conferred the *Consolamentum* and baptism, and supervised numerous convents.

As late as 1229, the Cathari continued to be persecuted, and many lived deep in the woods or as discreetly as possible. Some found sanctuary with sympathizing noblemen; a great solidarity was established despite the ceaseless repression. In August 1232, Guilbert de Castres and Esclarmonde deemed it prudent to return to Montségur.

The Dove of the Paraclete was spared the pain of the fall of her beloved castle, the sight of the final defeat, the martyrdom of her friends, and the subjection of her free Occitania.

In 1240, at Montségur, the Catharist princess journeyed to the stars. Guilabert de Castres had the mystical joy of secretly burying the great Esclarmonde, his faithful companion in good and bad days.

“Great Esclarmonde! A dove has flown away, but in the Catharist country thy name remains forever engraved.”—Eclair-monde



3 TIY AND NEFERTITI

(Eighteenth Dynasty)

TWO STARS AROUND a Sun; two exceptional personalities for an exceptional being; two great complementary forces in the service of one of the most extraordinary pages of the history of Pharaonic Egypt: Queens Tiy and Nefertiti. Honored with the titles of “Divine Father” and “Royal Ornament,” Yuya and Tuja—Tiy’s father and mother—played their role in the great fresco of Egyptian society in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Their important offices, he as a priest of the god Min (god of regeneration and fertility), and she as the head of Min’s and Amon’s harems, gave to this couple devoted to religion a rank highly regarded by the royal etiquette. What was their origin? Oriental, Lebanese, Syrian, Nubian, or just Egyptian? Their lineage mattered little, since their worth was acknowledged by Amenophis III, who married their daughter Tiy. With this choice, it was more than defiance that the nonconformist Pharaoh hurled at the worship of Amon. It was through women that royal legitimacy was transmitted, and it was through this same filiation that the Holy Spirit and new and salutary inspiration manifested. Through this unconventional union shrouded in mystery, Tiy was raised to the rank of royal consort, great heiress, royal daughter and sister. Tiy was recognized by the government officials and by the nation. She was then able to rule and influence the grandiose Egyptian civilization with her thoughts and actions.

Amenophis “The Magnificent” and Queen Tiy wisely governed their empire, which stretched from the Nile Valley to the distant shores of the Dead Sea and the Persian Gulf, and from the Lebanese desert to the remote frontiers of India. They resided in Thebes, the

city of one hundred gates, the unique and marvelous city—the world center of trade and religion. Amenophis III and Tiy loved each other deeply, and the attentions and thoughtfulness that they showed toward each other proved it. The Pharaoh offered Tiy a magnificent palace built especially for her on the West bank of the Nile. And the wise and determined Tiy ruled efficiently at her husband's side over the most powerful and advanced people since the fall and collapse of the Atlantean civilization. Tiy was not content with just a secondary role in the shadow of her mighty Master. From the very beginning, she revealed herself as a zealous politician and asserted her authority and competence in every governmental subject. If, in Egyptian society, women had the possibility to have access to the highest responsibilities in every field,* a queen of Egypt usually remained in the background in comparison to the Pharaoh, unless she was herself vested with the highest office of the kingdom. With Amenophis III and Tiy, it was different. Tiy was really the equal of her sovereign husband. Foreign nations and the local nobility acknowledged this right to Tiy, whose efficiency and intelligence were brilliantly made manifest during every moment of her public and private life.

*As symbolized by sculptures and paintings

Through the centuries, mighty queens have wisely ruled the fertile land of the Nile. During the flourishing Eighteenth Dynasty, Queen Hatshepsut was an eminent example of this. To Amenophis III, Tiy was more than a faithful and devoted companion.

She was his only confidant; no decision was taken without her advice and no law was enacted without her being informed of same. It was not because he was weak or lacked initiative that the Pharaoh shared his responsibilities with Tiy, but because the male ego did not blind him. He sensed in his wife an exceptional soul, a refined and open mind capable of supporting him, and he did not hide that fact. Several daughters were born to them, and Amenophis III hoped and thought: "Later, one of them will succeed me to the throne. The lineage will not die and no foreigner will rule over the people of Egypt." But Tiy knew that the successor to the Pharaoh was not among her daughters. Not that she thought they were unworthy or unfit to protect the holy

empire, to keep it strong and wealthy, to conquer new lands, and to build magnificent structures; but, more than a premonition, Tiy KNEW! Notwithstanding forty years of exciting and active living, and twenty-six years of a happy marriage, Tiy knew that another child must be born from her blood and that of Amenophis III, and that this child would rule over Upper and Lower Egypt, upsetting a whole world of superstition where the human being is only the puppet of capricious and unstable half-gods, supported by unworthy and profiteering priests. No more lying, cheating, or obstacles when it came to the great mysteries of life. The blending of light and knowledge was the revolution that Tiy was secretly preparing, which germinated in her and came into being in Thebes, in the year 1388 B.C. in the Age of Aries.

The Son of the Sun had incarnated!

Tiy reached her secret sanctuary dedicated to Aton, the God in whom she believed and that Thebes rejected. Alone, the City of the Sun, *Ann*, or *On* (later Heliopolis), sheltered this dissident religion. It was in this sacred spot, deep in the heart of the imperial gardens, away from the sumptuous palace of Maikata—always in effervescence—that Tiy awaited her instructions.

“Oh Aton! Oh Sun-God! Thou, the All-Powerful! Thou, the Only One! Thou, the Creator of all life! Inspire me. Thou knowest that one of thy faithful servants has just been born. Help me to guide him wisely on the path of knowledge. Help him in the great task Thou expectest from him.”

And Tiy awakened Amenophis, “the Peace of Amon,” to his future role. Parallel to the traditional education he received as a young prince, Amenophis was educated and initiated into the mystery schools founded by his illustrious ancestor, Thutmose III.

The frail-looking and refined youth passionately pursued the mystical path that Tiy and the teachers chosen by her had prepared for him.

The dreamy prince loved nature; he observed its transformation and became imbued with its benefits. He questioned the mysteries of

creation and tried to understand the characteristics and impulses of his brothers. A fervent mystic, he concentrated on sacred texts and found therein a secular tradition and mysticism.

A few millennia ahead of her time, the altruistic Tiy transmitted to her son more than advanced ideas. She hoped for the creation of a cosmopolitan world into which every people would bring its culture and its science. She wished for the awakening of Egypt, and the return of the ancient belief in a single god. She did not condone the state of servitude and superstition that the priests of Amon maintained with regard to the Sun people. All these revolutionary ideas filled the childhood of the future *Akhnaton* and prepared Egypt for a great upheaval. Imbued with rebellious ideas and endowed with an unswerving will and an absolute faith in the Creator, at about twelve years of age Amenophis acceded to the throne which he shared for a while with his father, Amenophis III.

The coronation ceremony was held at Hermonthis and was presided over by a high priest of the Sun, Tiy's brother. In the solemn quietude of the temple, the royal insignias were transmitted to him and his names were publicly announced: Powerful Taurus, Favorite of the Two Goddesses, Wearer of Diadems in South Heliopolis, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, High Priest Ra-Hor-Hkti, Son of Ra, Amenhotep, Divine Head of Thebes, Living Forever, Lord of Eternity, Beloved of Amon-Ra.

In Egyptian symbolism, the Pharaoh was always incarnated as the divine and white power, the higher element, the untiring foe of the dark forces. It was one of the most formidable struggles ever to be attempted by a son of Ra which Amenophis, the pacifist, began against the imposing structure of religion strengthened by 2000 years of abusive power and practices. For two years already, the prodigal little prince had prepared room for the idealistic pharaoh and the beloved husband of the beautiful Nefertiti.

Nefertiti (the beautiful has come) was here, in this palace of Thebes, the young wife of the new ruling pharaoh with whom she shared a life of complete love and constant spiritual attunement. Through the young queen, Tiy saw her dearest dream come true. She was the one

who had chosen her, knowing her to be trustworthy and devoted to the cause of Aton, and capable of sharing the power with the pure-hearted pharaoh, as she herself had done for nearly forty years at Amenophis III's side.

Nefertiti was eight years old when she married Amenophis, who was two years older than she. Nefertiti was a very remarkable person, due to her delicate and classical features and to the indomitable power emanating from her since her childhood. For a while, Tiy guided Nefertiti's steps. Very soon, the maturity of the young girl who had become a young lady allowed Tiy to transfer administrative and occult powers to her. Now it was the divine Nefertiti who held in her hands a torch intended for just a few masters and which would be in her keeping for many years. More than a conventional marriage, the union of Nefertiti and Amenophis was a constant collaboration in which friendship and a tender complicity dominated.

In the fourth year of their reign, the mystical dream of the poet-pharaoh and of his wife came true. During a "magical" ceremony, the monarch divested himself of the name Amenophis and officially claimed for himself that of *Akhnaton*—the one who delights in Aton.

Under Tiy's urging, the revolution secretly germinated; under that of Nefertiti, it exploded. The glorious rays of the divine star, symbol of the ancient god Ra of Heliopolis, rekindled faith in the hearts of the royal couple and their supporters. Under the protection of Aton, the Only One, Master of the Universe, and through the will of two exceptional young people, the magnificent city of the horizon of Aton, Tell-elAmarna, rose from the sands. It took three years to erect and dedicate their new universe, located about 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Thebes. Akhnaton the Mystic was not content with just dreams. He undertook many reforms in various domains, especially in art. No more pharaohs with frozen features, going through life and centuries under a funerary mask! Art was liberated. Conjugal love and happiness, parental affection, walks, meals, joys and sorrows existed, even in a palace; therefore, they were depicted. Akhnaton was affectionate. He deeply loved Nefertiti and his daughters, Meryt-Aton, Maket-Aton, Ankhsenp-Aton, Nefrenoferu-Aton, Setepen-Re, and

Nefrenoferure. Seldom had a pharaoh paid so much attention to his family, especially to his daughters.

Like Tiy, who reunited with the Hereafter, Nefertiti was the equal of the Pharaoh. As a high priestess, she directed sacred ceremonies and did not hesitate to make important decisions for the good of the city and of Egypt. The artists enjoyed depicting her in scenes usually reserved for Pharaoh alone: Nefertiti as a warrior, Nefertiti wearing a crown, Nefertiti sailing on the sacred barque of Pharaoh ...

As the first consort, Nefertiti asserted herself at the side of the heretic with a sublime soul and thought. Nefertiti was one of the thinking heads of the Amarna movement, as well as its heart and soul.

The dream of the Absolute of two children of light—a queen and a king of love—ended with their departure. Which of the two first gave up their earthly shell? ONE soul in TWO personalities to span forever humanity. A physical symbol of androgynism— Akhnaton, a poet and a pacifist, and Nefertiti, a leader and a fighter, merged one into the other, accomplishing the transmutation into gold in its most perfect expression.

“And it was only a fleeting moment—a time of a rose named Nefertiti.”

Excerpt From THE HYMN TO ATON

“When thou, O Sun, settest in the Western horizon of the heavens, the world is in darkness like the dead.

“Bright is the earth when thou risest on the horizon; when thou shinest forth as Aton by day the darkness is banished. When thou sendest forth thy rays the two worlds are in festivity.

“Thou seest thy peoples awake and standing upon their feet, for THOU HAST RAISED THEM UP! Their limbs bathed, they make ready their clothing, their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning. Then in all the world of light, they do their work.

“All the trees and plants flourish, the birds flutter in their marshes, their wings uplifted to thee in adoration; all sheep dance upon their feet; all winged things fly; they live when thou hast shone upon them.

“The barques sail upstream and downstream alike; every highway is open because thou hast dawned; the fish in the sea leap up before thee, and thy rays are in the midst of the great sea.

“Thou art he who createth the manchild in woman, who maketh the earthly seed in man, who giveth life to the child in embryo, who sootheth him that he may not weep, who giveth breath to animate everyone that he maketh. When the child cometh forth from the body on the day of his birth thou openest his mouth that the soul may speak and then thou suppliest his necessities.

“How manifold are thy works! They are hidden from before us, O mighty symbol of the sole God, whose powers no other possesseth, beside whom there is no other!

“Thou, sole God, didst create the earth according to Thy desire whilst Thou wast alone: Men, all cattle, large and small, and all that are upon the earth, that go about upon their feet; all that are on high, that fly with their wings.

“Thou settest every man in his place; Thou suppliest his necessities. Every one has his possessions, and his days are reckoned. Their tongues are diverse in speech, their forms and skins likewise, for Thou, Divider, hast divided Thy peoples into mansions of many tribes.”



4 HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

(1831-1891)

IN THE TRADITIONAL Russia of the czars, in Ekaterinoslav, Helena Petrovna made her noisy entrance into this world which, till her last breath, remained for her an occult, supernatural, and exciting world. A cholera epidemic raged over the country, and it was in a family several times in mourning that she was born prematurely on the strange night of July 30-31, 1831—a magical night, according to Russian tradition. Her weak and frail appearance left her parents little hope of seeing their child live, and in the hours following her birth, the rite of orthodox baptism was conferred upon her. Already, Helena's fiery nature made itself manifest; amidst the large crowd of godparents, friends, and serfs, one of the many candles set fire to the pope's long robe. According to an ancient superstition, such an eventful start in a new life doomed Helena to a malignant and unhappy life. From the time of her early youth, her powers of mediumship gave her a tyrannical influence over her entourage. Helena delighted in the company of the serfs of the family estate who, acknowledging her "unusual" powers, initiated her into the ancient popular beliefs. She talked with fairies, undines, and goblins; blessed her favorites, and denied her protection to those who displeased her. Some persons suffered greatly from their mockery toward this young girl gifted with an unusual personality and whose impressive powers quickly developed. Her father, Colonel Peter Hahn, and her mother, Helena Fadeef, worried about the direction of their oldest daughter's thinking. They entrusted her education to an English governess, Miss Jeffries, who was not frightened at all of elves and sorcerers. A few weeks were

enough to discourage this strong person who, disheartened, gave up her efforts to guide the incomprehensible Helena on the right path.

At about eleven years of age, having lost her mother, Helena and her little sister were raised by their grandmother in Saratov.

Bold, headstrong, and unmanageable as well as kind, affectionate, and spiritual, Helena rebelled daily against the outdated prejudices and customs of the decadent nobility. Her high birth did not prevent her from truly loving the people, and her disregard for "public opinion" drove her family to despair. Helena was happy in the ancestral home of her grandparents, which was said to be haunted, and whose dark recesses sheltered the mysterious thoughts and first magical experiences of Helena. Her playmates, small and big, listened to her with fear and respect. Her bizarre tales and unpredictable reactions impressed everyone. She openly got in touch with the Hereafter, and the servants often found her in deep passionate conversation with invisible beings. Through mysterious means, she was able to leave rooms that were locked and stayed in the most remote and almost inaccessible spots. On the threshold of adolescence, in 1844, her father took her to London. There, she perfected her natural talent as a musician before returning to Russia and resuming there her inner exciting life, and her wild rides on her cossack horse.

In 1848, Helena was seventeen years old. Altogether studious and versatile in her studies, she spoke several languages fluently with a rather special ease. Her independent disposition became accentuated, and affectation was the very least of her worries. Possessing little charm and much intelligence, Helena could not care less whether she remained single or not. She even hoped to never experience the yoke of matrimonial bonds. Only after having been challenged by her governess did she accept the marriage proposal of a friend of the Hahn family. On July 7, 1848, Helena became Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the wife of a respectable sixty-year-old man. This did not make her very happy, and, after having promised herself to obey none of the wifely duties imposed by holy matrimony, she ran away. Her passion for adventure impelled her to clandestinely sail to Constantinople. After many vicissitudes characteristic of sailing and of

a most unusual passenger, Helena Blavatsky met a Countess she knew, and they traveled together through Egypt and Greece. This return to the sources helped her in her ideas. At last she was able to blossom forth spiritually, free from all shackles.

In Cairo, a revered “magician” initiated her into his knowledge. Unusual encounters followed one another, daily adding a new stone to the inner edifice of the great seeker. After many adventures, the new initiate of Isis returned to Europe, where she became acquainted with great occultists. Each of them hoped to keep her as his pupil, but her innate longing for change and freedom made her decide to travel once again. In the summer of 1851, in search of Indian tradition and wisdom, she left for Canada where, for a while, she remained in close contact with the great sorcerers of the Indian tribes. After a brief contact with the Mormon sect in Missouri, she left for New Orleans and became interested in voodoo, which was prevalent among the Black people there. Protected and guided by her “master” since birth, she continued her extraordinary journey. After crossing Texas, she was led to Mexico. Always seeking new knowledge, she attempted the moral study of the human species, never hesitating to mix with bands of violent and wild bandits. Her American adventure was interrupted for a few months. Upon the advice of her spiritual guide Kut-Hu-Mi, she decided to meet the greatest masters of spirituality and went to India. She was accompanied by an Englishman who was also on the mystical path, and by a Hindu, a disciple of the masters of Eastern occult knowledge. It was at the end of the year 1852 that the three traveling companions arrived in Bombay, where they separated, each having to continue alone on their spiritual quest. Entering Tibet was not possible for Mme. Blavatsky, and in 1853 she went back to England. Thence, she set out again for America, but to New York and Chicago this time, stopping for a while in San Francisco. Two years thus elapsed before she undertook her second journey to India. Going by way of Japan, where she spent several months in temples, she finally arrived in Calcutta in 1855. In 1856, a German friend of her father and a sincere student of Eastern mysticism, joined her. The two pilgrims traveled through Kashmir and reached a Buddhist monastery where many marvelous phenomena were revealed to them. With the help of a shaman, Helena Blavatsky crossed the Tibetan frontier. Just prior

to 1857, Kut-Hu-Mi directed her to leave the region. She returned to Europe in 1858. After an absence of ten long years, she rejoined her family in her native Russia.

A decade was enough to fully develop her psychic faculties, which were already very impressive in her early youth. Powers ascribed to mediumship were made manifest everywhere and in all circumstances. At times, she controlled the supernatural manifestations she brought about (knocks, apparitions, etc.) and attributed their origin to her role as a medium between her and the master-teachers she had met during her initiatory journey throughout the world and civilizations. The eccentricities witnessed by her relatives convinced the skeptical Colonel Hahn of the existence of parallel planes. From that time on, he watched his daughter Helena with interest and passion in what was now to him a new world. He became her greatest admirer and her most fervent supporter. For two years, Madame Blavatsky lived with her sister's family in Pskoff. Her fame spread; people came from all over to consult her. During all those months, with only the help of the astral world, she restored the genealogical tree of the Hahn family, whose deep roots went back to the First Crusades. This quiet family life was interrupted by illness. A wound she had received either during one of her solitary outings in the Asiatic steppes or during one of her dangerous rides in the Far-West, opened up and caused her much suffering and pain. It was then that the "miracle" occurred. The wound that had brutally opened, healed up as suddenly three days later. The doctor declared he saw a brown hand coming between himself and the wound while a dreadful uproar resounded in the bedroom.

In 1860, as soon as the nice weather returned, Helena Blavatsky left for Caucasus. After a three-week journey during which many unusual things happened, she arrived at her grandparents' home, where she stayed for three years. With the family residence as her home base, she roamed the country and got in touch with Persian magi and Armenian sorceresses. Her dislike of social events and fashion exhibits won her the antipathy of a section of the upper class and the friendship of the populace, who looked upon her as a "kind fairy." For several months she had been suffering from a painful and strange illness. States of half-coma interspersed with moments of lucidity, an extreme fatigue,

and a slight fever characterized this mysterious illness. This almost constant state of split personality weakened her extremely, but once this difficult initiation was over, a mighty power emanated from her whole being. Having regained her health, Mme. Blavatsky left Caucasus for Italy. Her trips throughout Europe lasted for another three years and were followed by three more years in the Orient. She arrived in China, traveled through India, stayed in Tibet, then Persia.

During all that time, her occult knowledge increased. In 1870 she left these fabulous countries, worthy of their legends, where over "one thousand and one" secrets were revealed to her. After a terrible shipwreck from which she was one of the few survivors, Mme. Blavatsky arrived in London. The time of the penetration of Eastern wisdom into the West was drawing near. After a first difficult attempt, Helena Blavatsky returned to Egypt, where she continued her apprenticeship with the greatest mystics of the "two worlds," sent to her so as to prepare her for her important mission. In 1872, after having failed in her attempts to establish a spiritualistic society, she returned home, passing through Jerusalem in Palestine. One year later, Mme. Blavatsky left Russia for Paris, where she received the necessary instructions to go to the United States, where her work must take a practical form. In 1874, an important meeting for the establishment of the future Theosophical movement took place. Helena Blavatsky made the acquaintance of Colonel Olcott. In October 1875, Mme. Blavatsky and her new friend founded the Theosophical Society in New York. A program was set up and the goals of the Society were officially published: awakening of man's spiritual powers, war against intolerance and sectarianism, creation of a fraternal bond between all nations, and teaching men about natural, scientific, and philosophical laws. An important place was also given to education free from all religious and political restrictions.

Helena Blavatsky was a loyal friend. Her generosity and her sense of hospitality were unanimously recognized. Broad-minded and a liberal thinker, laughing at the frivolous established customs, she was impulsive and did not hesitate, if she felt so inclined, to swear like a cossack. Her stoutness made her look indolent, but her quick intelligence and brilliant conversation more than compensated for this handicap. In a

few years Mme. Blavatsky utterly influenced the esoteric world. Plain and unpretentious, her various residences had one common feature: half in-between a bazaar and a museum, everything therein was peculiarly quaint. The most surprising things were crammed there—souvenirs from her travels, stuffed wild animals, pipes and cigars, and a host of the most bizarre objects rather unusual in the parlor of a great lady from the Russian aristocracy. Guided and inspired, she undertook a laborious and exciting work, and it was during her stay in America that under her pen the masterly work, *Isis Unveiled*, was born. In 1879, after six years in America, Mme. Blavatsky finally received orders from the invisible hierarchy to go back to India, the land whence the philosophy of the Theosophical Society originated. Immediately upon her arrival, Helena Blavatsky could not control herself in the face of the injustice of the Anglo-Hindu government and its segregationist attitude against the natives. She got all excited with the very intensity that characterized her and which earned her the distinction of being looked upon as a troublemaker.

She was constantly under police surveillance, but, with time, the Theosophists and their goals were acknowledged to be harmless. During all that time, Colonel Olcott, although officially appointed President of the Society, applied himself as a studious and disciplined neophyte of his friend. From lectures to private meetings, the Theosophical Society pursued its work, and Mme. Blavatsky, the earthly instrument of occult forces, pursued her task. Besides her work within the organization, she labored for many hours on literary articles she wrote for Russian newspapers in order to materially support the Theosophical Society, which had no financial means. Due to the help and energy displayed by its founder, the spiritualistic movement took root and quickly expanded. However, Mme. Blavatsky suffered a great deal from various wounds. Upon her master's summons, she left Bombay to return there a few days later, revitalized and temporarily cured. It was a hard struggle, and the newspapers daily criticized her. She courageously resisted the numerous slanderous campaigns but was consumed inside. In December 1882, the headquarters of the Theosophical Society was transferred to Adyar, Madras, in a house acquired through donations. During the farewell ceremony given in honor of the departure of their leaders, the Theosophists of Bombay paid a moving tribute to Mme.

Blavatsky. In Madras, relations with some Europeans were excellent, and the Society continued to expand. In the house located on a large estate in a suburb of Madras, Mme. Blavatsky reserved for herself an "occult room." In this private sanctuary the masters contacted her and invested her with the mission to give to the world an esoteric work, *The Secret Doctrine*, a manuscript to guide and stimulate the sincere seekers. In December 1883, during the Convention of the Theosophical Society, a positive balance sheet was prepared. There were seventy lodges in India and eight in Ceylon. A trip to Europe was planned. Still ailing, Mme. Blavatsky returned to France.

After a stay in Nice and Paris, she went to London, where she hoped to settle the crisis upsetting the English Lodge and all the European sections. The uneasiness within the organization became intensified and manifested itself in the form of two tendencies: investigation of spectacular phenomena and the mastering of occult forces, on the one hand; and progressive philosophical research and application of "Know Thyself," on the other hand. Parallel to this internal conflict, Mme. Blavatsky had to face the more and more virulent attacks from outside sources.

A Madras magazine, a supporter of Christian propaganda, undertook a fierce disparaging campaign. The most vile blows were dealt to the Theosophical Society, and especially to the integrity and honesty of Helena Blavatsky. A couple of Judases, former employees at the Society's headquarters who had been fired because of theft, lent themselves to the sordid game of the missionaries. Fraud, hoax, swindling—accused Mme. Blavatsky's enemies! Slander, jealousy, conspiracy—retorted the accused! The largest Western newspapers, among them *The Times*, were the privileged stepping-stones of this unusual controversy.

In 1884, she went back to Madras where she was greeted by the college students of the city and received a moving ovation from all those young people. The painful struggle in which she was engaged, body and soul, brought her much agony. She had to remain in bed, and her faithful friends feared her transition was near. But the Mahatmas decided otherwise, and once again Mme. Blavatsky set out on the

extraordinary path of her destiny. In the spring of 1885, she left India, the country of her heart, forever. After a brief stay in Italy, she reached Germany, where she finally was able to begin the writing of one of the masterpieces of esotericism, *The Secret Doctrine*. More inspired than ever, she hoped to make this book a proof of her sincerity and a final reply to the world that crushed her. She remained in Ostende, Belgium, for a while, before going back permanently to the English capital. There, she met another unusual person—Annie Besant. She opened the doors of Theosophy to her and prepared her for her future work.

Despite the turmoil, the Theosophical Society was growing in various parts of the world, and Mme. Blavatsky worked fully toward the protection of the fundamental ideals of the Theosophical Society. Guided by the Cosmic Masters, she protected the “white” mission of the movement she had established from all evil, and led the students toward the mystical path. Although labeled by a certain segment of the press and some individuals as a “charlatan”—just as Cagliostro, Saint Germain, and Paracelsus had been in their day—she remained surrounded by faithful friends, and her house on Road Avenue, St. John’s Wood, was invaded daily by visitors.

On May 8, 1891, in this London house, surprising her dear friends for the last time, the great traveler, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, undertook her last journey. Her unusual and exciting life, as well as her divine thoughts, have inspired the greatest spiritual figures at the beginning of the twentieth century. Krishnamurti, Annie Besant, Rudolph Steiner, Alexandra David Neel, Gandhi, and so many others were disciples of the doctrines of the “Great Universal Lady.”



5 HILDEGARDE DE BINGEN

(1098-1179)

AT DAWN, ON September 17, 1179, the mild autumn Sun rose and greeted for the last time the abbess of the Benedictine monastery of Rupertberg who, as she had predicted, undertook at that time “her great journey.” In this new-born day, Hildegarde left the Roman Germanic Holy Empire in which she had arrived eighty-one years earlier and had played a preponderant part in the background.

Around 936, The Germanic Carolingian Empire, under the impetus of Otto I of Saxony, became the Roman-Germanic Holy Empire. The strong personality of its ruler and his innate political sense conferred upon this kingdom a prestige that could not be equaled. He made Germania the political and religious center of a vast empire stretching from the North Sea to Italy. In 996, the Emperor Otto III, an admirer of ancient Rome, hoped to restore the Roman Empire.

Immediately upon his accession to the imperial throne, the court was established in the city of the Caesars. Convinced, like his grandfather, of an emperor’s divine power, Otto assumed control over the church and the right to appoint popes and bishops. But the attempt to have the Roman Empire rise again turned out to be ineffectual. Accused of treason by the Germans, and of tyranny by the Romans, Otto III had to flee. It was in this unfortunate situation that death took him by surprise in January 1002. He was twenty-two years old. The feudal anarchy that followed seriously split the German structure. Henry II

succeeded the young monarch and pursued the excessive dreams of his ancestors. From 1024 on, starting with the Emperor Conrad, a new dynasty acceded to power—the Saliens. This new blood contributed to the restoration of the Germanic Empire. With the annexation of the kingdom of Burgundy, the empire expanded. The zenith of the Holy Roman Germanic Empire occurred during the reign of Henri III. The emperor increased his authority and played an active role in the West. The church hoped to free itself from the shackles of the laity and exhibited a longing for deliverance. The crisis between the church and the dictatorial state, known as “quarrel of the investitures,” exploded in 1073. Immediately upon his accession to the Holy See, Gregory VII declared: “The pope is above all the princes on earth. He is their judge. If he deems them unworthy of ruling, he may excommunicate them, remove them from office, and free their subjects from their oath of loyalty.” The imperial throne was then occupied by Henry IV, who proclaimed Gregory VII fallen from his Pontifical See. But the Germanic Empire was defeated in this long struggle that ended in 1122, with the official renunciation of the investitures by Henry V: “I, Henry, surrender to the Holy Catholic Church all investitures, by ring and crozier. I agree that in all the churches of the empire the appointment will be done according to the canons and that the ordination be free. . . .”

Soon after this serious crisis through which the Church freed itself and the empire dreamed of by Otto I declined, the Middle Ages in Germany were influenced by neighboring countries. Coming from France by way of the Orient where, through the medium of the Crusaders, two civilizations blended, “the courteous ideal” triumphed. Henceforth, it was through verse and song that the petty and the higher German nobility reconciled the temporal with the non-temporal.

The First Christian Crusade was coming to an end when, in Bermershein, a small village in Spanheim County, Hildegard was born. Being of noble birth, Hildegard received the education befitting little girls of high rank. As soon as she reached seven years of age, she was entrusted to Jutta, a pious nun on Mount Saint Disibode. From that time on, her whole life was under the direction of that ascetic. Jutta

taught her literature, Latin, a few rudiments of medicine and natural science, and guided her footsteps on the pure and difficult path of a fervent and absolute mystic.

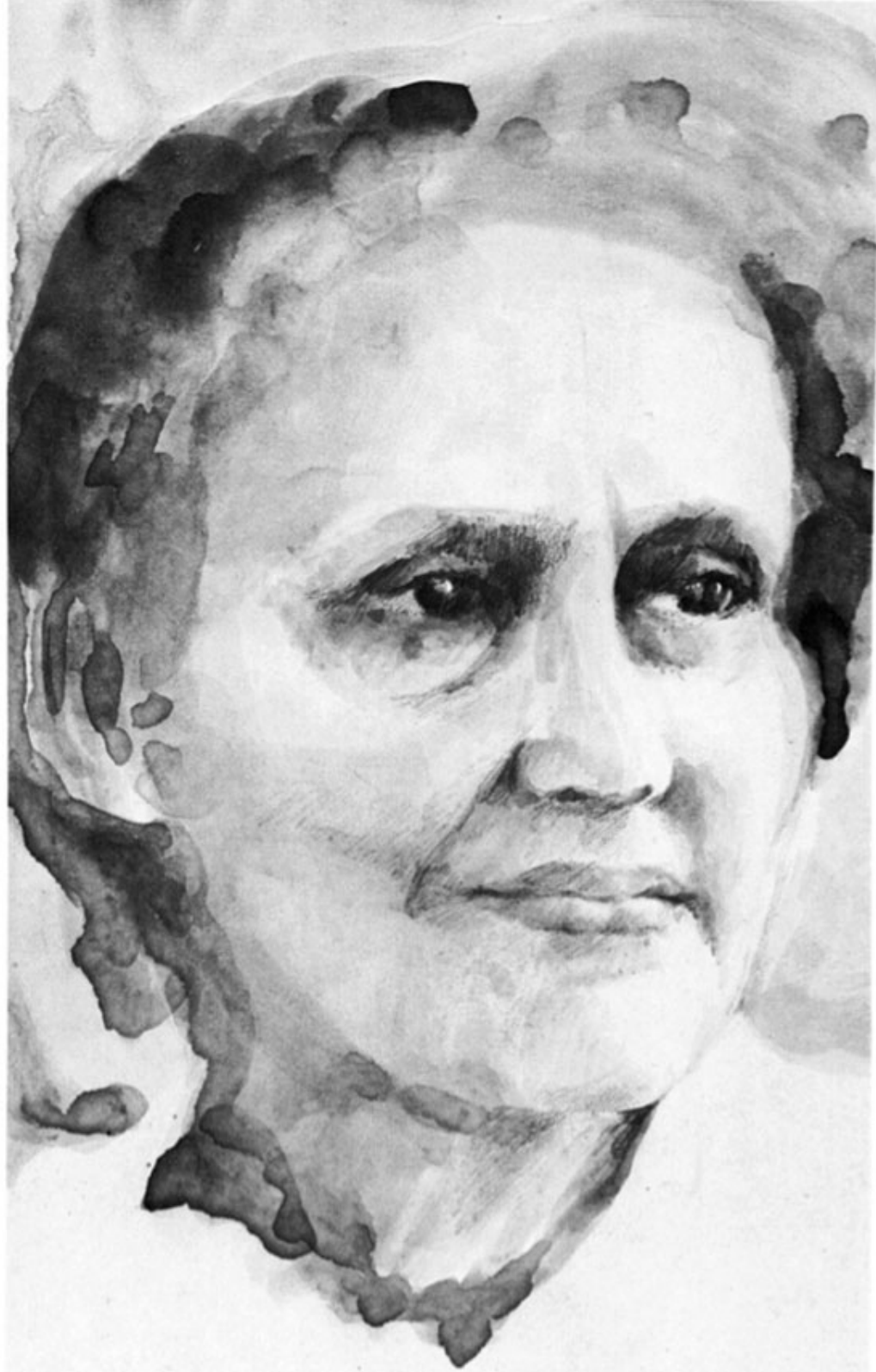
At the age of fifteen, Hildegarde took the veil of the cloistered nuns. Her profound personality asserted itself. The three great principles—concentration, meditation, and contemplation—seemed to be a permanent state with her. This state of so-called “apathy,” however, did not prevent her being active. For years, she improved her knowledge in various fields.

Upon Jutta’s death in 1136, she ruled the small religious community that formed itself around the nun. In spite of her devotion and obedience to the sacrosanct laws of her church, Hildegarde could not submit to this vegetative and uninteresting life. After much difficulty, she broke away from this obedience and founded in 1147 an independent Benedictine monastery on the Rupertberg near Bingen, then another in Eibingen near Rüdesheim. Although a daughter of the church and submissive to its spiritual superiors, Hildegarde did not conceal her “natural and supernatural” talents. She devoted herself to all kinds of research in the fields of physics, chemistry, and medicine. And she did not hesitate to rush headlong into theological and moral controversies. Hildegarde was above all a medium. Her frequent visions varied from black to white. As in an open book, the future was revealed to her, and her contacts with the Divine sometimes went beyond the clerical medieval understanding. One day, while meditating, a voice commanded her to write down all the things that God had revealed to her. She obeyed, and the result was the *sci vias* (*The Voices of the Lord*), a strange and unquestionably great book. Her works and knowledge were known, but were they recognized? The manuscript and its author were the object of an exceptional council held in Treves in 1148, and presided over by Pope Eugene III and eighteen cardinals. In this work, visions, symbols, and their interpretation, as well as moral advice, reprimands, and exhortations were transcribed. A saint or a sorceress? Imagination or imposture? The highest Catholic authority and his acolytes acknowledged the inspiration of the Holy Spirit within those pages and accepted the prophetess Hildegarde as a messenger of God and a faithful servant of the Church. This

approbation spread abroad. Ste. Hildegarde was born. In spite of her frail appearance and failing health, Hildegarde traveled much. Cologne, Treves, Metz, Bamberg, and many other cities served her as rostrums. She harangued the common people and explained herself to the clergy. She met the greatest contemporary figures and maintained with them a correspondence full of mystery, secrets, and helpful advice. Hildegarde wrote two other manuscripts: *The Book of Merits*, which presented the ideas of Christian morality through symbolic imagery, and *The Book of Divine Works*, essentially scientific. The very pious St. Bernard, the Emperor, and the Pope listened to the woman who they knew was all wisdom and common sense. For many years, the abbess Hildegarde used her gentle authority to rule over the West and its masters, never hesitating to lecture the Emperor Barbarossa: "O King! Triumph with the scepter of mercy over lazy, strange, and unruly morals. Thou hast a glorious name, for thou art King of Israel. Be careful, therefore, not to be found guilty of not having performed thy duties well and not to have to blush when the great King gazes upon thee..."

Intervening in disputes between states, Hildegarde played the role of mediator. Through her wise counsel tinged with discernment, several conflicts among European powers were avoided. "The white eminence" of the German court distributed remedies to theology, philosophy, and politics, as well as to people who daily requested her assistance. She healed them, appeased them, and often predicted their future.

And on the 17th day of the month of September, in the year 1179, one of her predictions came true at sunrise.



6 MÂ ANANDA MOYÎ

(1896-1982)

IN TIPPERAH (BANGLA-DESH), a small village mostly Moslem, Srî Bipin Bihari Bhattâchârya and Srimatî Mokshadâ Sundarî Devî met, married, and under the high protection of “Shiva” gave birth to the most respectable figure of Hindu mysticism, the most revered of all the great contemporary sages—Nirmalâ Sundarî Devî, nicknamed Khushir (the happy one) and better known under the name of Mâ Ananda Moyî. Her birth, on April 30, 1896, just prior to sunrise, was exactly like her life—serene and tear less. Obedient, obliging, and kind toward everyone, Nirmalâ helped her mother in her daily chores and devoted more time to her brothers and sisters than to studying. Although she loved to intone sacred chants with her father when she accompanied him to mystical ceremonies, her religious education remained rudimentary. What did she learn from the god *Shiva*? That he depicted one of the principles of the Hindu Trinity; that he was the pure and the impure, the non-temporal and the absolute, the destroyer and the creator, the inevitable transition and the rebirth to the infinite; that he was the master of nature and life, of time passing and of procreative magic; that he was the whole being, harmonious and superior; that he was the cross and the lotus.

“Nature is magic, and the Lord Shiva is its master. All beings emanate from him, the Lord of Majesty, the Magician. In knowing him, one gains peace, he who rules over time, he who nestles in the hearts of beings, Shiva of a thousand forms. He is beyond the visible, none can see him; those who see him with the eye of the heart become immortal.”*

*Excerpt from a sacred Hindu text

At birth, Nirmalâ possessed her mystical personality and characteristics. Very often, while fully engrossed at work or in a game, her eyes would suddenly look far away and her features would stiffen into an inert mask. She thus meditated for a long time, and when her soul seemed to have reunited with her body and her face came back to life, her silence, respected by her companions, seemed to say: "I was far and yet so near. I was no longer here but I was everywhere."

Early in 1909, without showing any sign of discontent or rebellion, always full of omnipresent joy and communicative, she married Ramani Mohan Chakravarty, a young man from an important Brahmin family, thus fulfilling her parents' wish and that of the Supreme Deity. The wedding ceremony over, Nirmalâ returned to her childhood home where she resumed the imperturbable life she had led there for almost thirteen years because, according to custom, one year had to elapse before she could reunite with her husband and move into her new home.

Time marched on. For four years, Nirmalâ led, with Bholanâth (the name usually given to her husband) and her in-laws, the same life as at her parents' home, in strict obedience and submission to her elders, without ever uttering a complaint or a wish. She amazed, she aroused, she soothed. Bholanâth was the first one to recognize the reflection of the Deity in her, and he looked upon her as his guru. Asceticism gradually became Nirmalâ's way of life, and her faithful disciple followed her with devotion on this path of unselfishness.

In 1914, Nirmalâ reached eighteen years of age. She was very attractive and her outward personality was as dazzling as her inner self. An inner light radiated from her being, and many were those who saw a halo of light surrounding her body and extending greatly outward. Often wrapped in a white or red sari, Nirmalâ looked more like the reincarnation of a goddess than a young Hindu girl destined to a life similar to that of millions of women populating the great land of India. Another four years went by in Ashtagram where the young couple lived from 1914 to 1918, the year in which Bholanâth was called to Bajitpur for professional reasons. At that time, Nirmalâ became fully involved with strict asceticism and devoted herself to an

intense spiritual life. Illiterate, without any knowledge of sacred texts and without ever having applied any concrete form of spirituality, Nirmalâ undertook a long preparation for the realization of the Self (*sâdhanâ*). At dawn, seated in a room bathed with incense, Nirmalâ pronounced inspired mantras and cried out the names of the Supreme Being; thus, days and months went by.

In her innocent ignorance of what to do, Sâdhikâ Nirmalâ subconsciously did what should be done.

On August 3, 1922, Nirmalâ received "The Initiation," and, during that unusual night, took a great step forward. For the next three years, she rarely left the state of illumination acquired during that Initiation. During this time, she came to be looked upon as a venerated Mâ, intoning only a few incantations and chants whose interpretation was made impossible not only by the quick rhythm but also by the lack of knowledge of the language she used. True and complete happiness of the heart was the sublime characteristic of Nirmalâ. Everything in her emitted a deep gaiety, and her friend and disciple Bhaiji gave her the name Ananda Moyî (imbued with joy). In January 1923, she initiated Bholanâth and, in 1924, they left for Dacca. Her parents came to stay with her, under the names of *Didimâ* (grandmother) and *Dadamasai* (grandfather). In 1925, her long period of meditation having come to an end, she began a fast that lasted almost five months and during which she only drank four tablespoons of water and ate nine grains of rice a day. This prolonged fast did not harm her health in any way, as she fed on the vital essence of water, of cereals, and of air. If Mâ often fasted with an obvious well-being, she could as well eat a huge quantity of food without feeling the least harmful effect from it. That same year, urged by a multitude of disciples, she agreed to publicly celebrate "the cult of Kali." After having crowned herself with sandalwood flowers intended for the statue of the goddess, she appeared for the first time to everybody under Kali's features.

As the years went by, ceremonies became more frequent, and Mâ did not hesitate to upset tradition by refusing animal sacrifices, which she replaced by a symbolic fire, and by persuading women to intone chants reserved for men. At each manifestation, a spectacular metamorphosis

occurred. Mâ now assumed the features of the dreadful Kali or of Krishna, or even those of Dûrgâ (feminine principle of Shiva). Mâ Ananda Moyî became to all the very incarnation of the Holy Mother. At the end of 1926, Mâ was thirty years old and she entered a new phase in her life, which she then devoted to traveling. Journeying from the north to the center—even to the south—of India, she traversed this large country, lingering only for a few days or a few weeks at any one place. Her presence unleashed a wave of intense spirituality. Everywhere the crowd saw in her a gift of the “Divine” and, through the medium of this blessed messenger, an incentive. Ananda Moyî often loved to withdraw and to seclude herself as a recluse for a few days, far from it all. In 1929, Bholanâth became ill. Mâ took care of him and, in her turn, contracted the disease. Bholanâth, worried about her, implored her to recover, and Mâ replied: “I did not tell you to go away, so why should I say it to the disease? It will leave me when the time comes.” And the time came. Mâ and Bholanâth recovered. After this ordeal, they resumed their journeys. They usually settled in old dismantled and abandoned temples. Often arriving incognito, she would leave “recognized,” sometimes even without having left her place of meditation or having said a single personal word to those people who had come to prostrate themselves before her. At other times, Mâ blessed the homes, healed, or brought a solution to the inner problems of some. She spoke to each person according to his degree of understanding and in the dialect he could comprehend. She could recite a verse from the Koran to a Moslem as well as a passage from the Bible to a Christian.

More and more Europeans were giving up everything to receive Mâ’s teachings and to partake of her vibrations. Mâ belonged to all races, to all religions, to all countries. SHE WAS. Under no circumstances would Mâ accept money; only a little fruit or rice—and more to please the giver than because of need, as she still followed her lifestyle: very little earthly food, very little sleep, and sometimes neither for several days. Like a Hindu monk, she continued her wandering life, and to those who felt despondent when she left, she would say: “I am going nowhere; I am always here.”

In 1938, Bholanâth ended his journey. He discarded his “earthly garment” and, according to Divine Will, reunited with the “One.”

“Where does the departed go, and whence does he come? For this body, there is no going or coming. What existed before exists now. What does it matter whether one dies or remains alive? Even after death, he still lives! Then, why be upset? Under the appearance of union and of separation, he remains the Supreme Self.”

Under the impetus of her disciples, ashrams were established, and people from all walks of life came to meditate in these places—heads of state, scientists, churchmen, rich and poor, humble seekers, and curiosity seekers. All hoped to meet Mâ and to benefit from her teachings and wise counsel. It happened that the faithful saw Mâ appear whereas she was hundreds of kilometers away. Life in an ashram, like any form of community life, is far from being easy. The negativity buried deep within the self surfaces, and personalities clash. To some discouraged disciples, Mâ remarked: “It is when one tries to clean a pool that it emits its most putrid odor.” Believed to be born without karma, free from all shackles and desire, Ananda Moyî sought nothing and owed nothing. Mâ saw all, knew all, and the veil fell before her. The self appeared to her in all its radiance and transparency.

A total surrender to the Divine Will, strength, energy, effort, and joy have been the key words of the thoughts and teachings of the greatest woman-mystic of India (and perhaps of the entire world).

The sands of the hourglass slip away and Mâ is still among us. A severe or angelic attitude, a firm voice or a soft one like that of a little girl, a twenty-year-old or sixty-year-old face depending on the time, place, and person she speaks to, make of Mâ the earthly expression of “Shiva with a thousand forms.” Imperturbable, Mâ is already eighty-five years old* and still acts, thinks, and especially laughs the same way:

*This was written in 1981.

“Go cheerfully!”

The incarnation of joy, Mâ impregnates all her words with it, and this high vibration emanating from all her chakras radiates beyond her luminous aura.

“The Supreme Being is joy incarnated, and that is why all creatures aspire to joy. Always seek to live in joy, to express joy in your thoughts and actions; feel its merry presence in all you see or hear; that will bring you true happiness. Sadness is fatal to man; banish it from your thoughts.”

When Mâ leaves, she surely will say, as she loves to teach it to her disciples:

“Jo Ho Jâye”

(Whatever will be, will be).



7 LADY PERNELLE

(1326-1397?)

JUSTICE BEING MOST often administered in heaven, very rarely on earth, and still less in history, Lady Pernelle had a famous husband: Nicolas Flamel. Within these pages there are no great alchemical treatises or magical formulae, but only a few lines on the life of one of the most mysterious couples of the fourteenth century and perhaps even of past and future centuries.

Born in Pontoise, in the year 1330, young Nicolas Flamel opened a shop in Paris on the right bank, near the Cemetery of the Innocents, where many of his colleagues were established. But very soon an epidemic of the black plague forced the writers' guild to leave the neighborhood of the cemetery, then overpopulated, and to settle in the district of the Church *Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie*. It was in this agitated Paris that a "damned" science called *alchemy* thrived. One night, an angel, all clad in white, appeared to Flamel, presenting to him a richly illustrated ancient manuscript and saying: "Flamel, look at this book, thou dost not understand it at all, but the day will come when thou shalt see therein what no other could even catch a glimpse of."

Time passed, and one day, in 1357, he was given the opportunity to buy, for two florins, a strange book in which he recognized the obscure language he had seen in his initiatory dream. This large golden book puzzled Flamel. The finely engraved copper cover concealed enigmatic illustrations and beautifully formed letters. During that same year, the eminent writer courted Lady Pernelle, twice a widow of rich merchants in the district—Raoul Lethas and Clement Menigues. Four years his elder, the well-to-do and pretty Pernelle took a deep interest in the new sciences. More than a devoted companion, both a patron

of the arts and letters and an adviser, she transformed young Flamel, a simple bookseller and copyist of the *Petit Marais*, also a zealous student of hidden knowledge, into one of the most famous masters of divine magic. Like a queen, her first name was also her last. The name *Pernelle*, from “perpetual” or “perpetuity,” had a highly symbolical meaning for this “immortal” personage. Married in Saint-Jacques Church around 1360, the couple led a simple life in their home bearing the sign of “La Fleur de Lys.” Trade and good deeds occupied their days, while they devoted part of their nights to the search for the “philosopher’s stone.”

In 1372, husband and wife officially willed their property to each other, as Pernelle’s family looked with a suspicious eye at the eventual heritage that her two husbands had left her and that she exclusively devoted to research and mysticism. Only altruism, love for science, and the perfection of the philosopher’s stone motivated Pernelle’s and Flamel’s devotion. To decipher the great book of Abraham the Jew—to be able to understand and become imbued with each sign and each symbol of the mysterious pages—this was what these two people (living questions marks) aspired to! The building of *Notre-Dame de Paris* was completed, and this monumental temple was an inexhaustible source of inspiration to these adepts of light, condemned to act in the darkness of night and secret caves. Beginning in 1378, Pernelle encouraged her husband to undertake the initiatory journey leading to *Saint-Jacques de Compostelle* in Spain. A coat of cloth, a large hat, a scroll, and a stick constituted the outfit of the pilgrim Nicolas Flamel, starting from the parvis of *Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie* Church, on his way south, around Easter in the year of our Lord 1379. Inside his cloak, adorned with shells—symbols of his station as a devoted pilgrim to Saint-Jacques de Gallice—he had sewn copies of the precious pages of his book. He hoped to meet, in the course of his journey, the person capable of enlightening him on the meaning of these hermetic messages. The meeting took place in the province of Léon in Spain, through the agency of a merchant in *Boulogne-sur-Mer*, who introduced him to Master Canches, a learned man whose knowledge seemed to be boundless. Enthused by the few sketches that Flamel showed him, Master Canches decided to undertake the journey to Paris in order to see, consult, and press to his heart the sacred book whose existence

he had heard about, and which he believed was lost. The two traveling companions returned to France. All during their long trek throughout the kingdom, Master Canches revealed to his fortunate friend the meaning of the ancient symbols. Alas, the old Master Canches did not have the chance to fulfill his dream: to examine the divine manuscript. After seven days of agony during which his faithful disciple did not leave his side for one minute, he died in Orleans. The Sainte-Croix Church in Orleans received his body while his soul walked beside Nicolas Flamel, who sadly went on his way.

During all that time, what was the bookseller pilgrim's wife doing? She too was working for science. The alchemist Pernelle was busy studying the book and deciphering one hundred secrets therein. In December, after a few months' absence, Flamel was back, rich with experiences and a newly acquired knowledge. The union of two individual but similar quests, and the power of the alchemical combination formed by the magic couple, guided these two seekers toward the apogee of Hermes' science.

In the spring of 1380, Charles V, upon the advice of the Church fathers, forbade the practice of alchemy. By no means did this decree prevent Lady Pernelle and Nicolas Flamel from continuing their experiments. After three years of working together, of ceaseless efforts, of joys and disappointments, on January 17, at noon, in the year of the restoration of the human lineage 1382, the couple had the great happiness to accomplish their first transmutation: a strange projection upon mercury, and the element was transmuted into half a pound of silver. On April 25 of the same year, at 5:00 p.m., the ultimate experiment of the "magi" Pernelle and Flamel took shape. After the white stone, the red stone was born from their fingers and their inspired minds. Awed, Pernelle did not tire of gazing at and touching this pure gold, a wonderful product from divine nature and their labor. The lure of profit was not the goal of these true alchemists. After having repeated their great feat three times, the Flamels intensified their good deeds already started, owing to Pernelle's dowry. In spite of their new resources, they continued to lead a modest but fascinating life. Like all the French people at that time, they went through the troubled and dark Middle Ages. Cruelty and intolerance were evident

at all times about them, and if it had not been for Pernelle's prudent vigilance, "La Fleur de Lys" would have been ransacked like a great many of the neighboring homes, and their sanctuary profaned.

Under the benevolence of these two "gold-makers," fourteen hospitals were established in the city of Paris, and several churches, chapels, and cemeteries benefited from their generosity. The poor from the nearby parishes, as well as from other districts in the country, gained from their kindness. Hieroglyphs, paintings, and carvings appeared in various parts of the old city. The benefactors of the street of the writers thus hoped to perpetuate, in an initiatory language, the knowledge whose key they withheld during these years of obscurity. More determined than ever to see truth and the happiness of others blossom forth, Lady Pernelle drew up her last will and testament in 1386, in favor of her mystical companion. Her sixty years did not seem to have altered her vitality, and her face did not show the stigma of old age. Had they discovered the elixir of eternal youth? It was declared so at the end of the fourteenth century. If the kings officially rebelled against the "alchemists," they nonetheless were very much interested in their research, from which they hoped to benefit. But nothing can turn away the sincere seekers of the philosopher's stone from the right path. The discovery of the philosopher's stone was different and much superior to the plain transmutation of common elements into precious metals. Their true wealth was not of this world, but they actively contributed to mankind's acceptance of it.

On September 11, 1397, Lady Pernelle and Nicolas Flamel's "alchemical marriage" ended in its earthly expression. To Flamel, only the continuance of their common work filled the void created in his home and heart by the passing of his better half, the wise Pernelle. Upon her tomb, in the Cemetery of the Innocents, the bereaved Nicolas erected a pyramid in her memory.

For him initiation continued. Alone, he lived another twenty long years. He went through transition on March 22, 1417:

“From dust I have come, to dust I return.”

Where did immortal Pernelle go? Did she, as a few traveling witnesses stated, retire with her beloved companion to the high plateaus of an Eastern land? Perhaps she has returned to the Cosmic Oneness where she now reigns.

History ends, legend begins



8 MARIA DERAISMES

(1828-1894)

ON AUGUST 13, 1828, the birth of a new child, Maria, was being celebrated at the Deraismes' home, a small liberal and anticlerical middle-class family, an enemy of the Bourbons and a friend of Voltairean thought. That summer, as almost every day since the Great Revolution, the people of Paris were restless. Charles X, after an obsolete coronation in Reims Cathedral, was in a very unfortunate position. His devout and narrow mind displeased the Parisian bourgeoisie more and more, and the latter did not conceal their disappointment and ill feelings. Great social reforms were imperative. Gradually, nondenominational education was organized to the detriment of the Jesuits, and in that year, 1828, the politicians, the opposition, and the students became restless. Riots broke out. Along with a growing restlessness, another revolution inflamed minds. In the literary circles, romanticism was born with Alfred de Musset, Georges Sand, Gerard de Nerval, Theophile Gautier, Alfred de Vigny, and Victor Hugo as protagonists.

At a very young age, Maria was placed in the custody of her elder sister, who taught her how to read and saw to her education until she reached the age of eighteen. From then on, Maria studied on her own. Her open mind guided her research toward the difficult subjects of Oriental and Christian philosophy, and the study of Greek and Latin helped her to better understand the philosophical works of the sages of antiquity. She loved art and devoted part of her time to it, divided between painting and the study of piano. Maria progressed through life with a good deal of knowledge, strengthened by a keen intuition

and a few natural talents. Above all, Maria was an excellent writer, coupled with an orator's ability; beautiful sentences, written or spoken, came easily to her.

This talent enabled her to serve the feminist cause efficiently. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, female emancipation became an actuality. The disciples of the philosopher Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, a forerunner of socialistic thought and a staunch supporter of the equality of all the members of the human species, spread ideas termed "subversive" and dared to demand the equality of the sexes. Already, during the Revolution, Condorcet had initiated this "strange" idea which the defenders of "freedom" categorically rejected. And yet, are not women citizens the best elements of this revolution against "one" oppression? In 1791, Olympe de Gouges had published *The Declaration of Women's Rights*. This daring initiative had given him the honor of ascending the scaffold, just as had another feminist, Théroigne de Méricourt. If the riots of 1848 and the abolition of the monarchy brought no change in women's condition, the feminist wave could not be dammed up, and it was in this stream of thought that Maria Deraismes militated.

She was moving in the literary and journalistic circles in full expansion when, in 1866, she was urged to give a series of lectures for the Grand Orient. Maria was about to refuse when, one morning, her attention was attracted to a newspaper article degrading *literate* women. Maria, shocked at this masculine insult to women, changed her mind and accepted the assignment.

Her first lecture was a success, and from then on she gave up writing for speaking. Until 1870, Maria improved her speeches on a variety of subjects, always influenced by her innate spirit of freedom and her consideration for the Supreme Being. If the war stopped the propagandist Maria, it could not hold back her good will and altruistic devotion. Assisted by her sister, she organized an ambulance service in a district of old Paris and financed this operation all during the hostilities. Despite the service that detained her in the French capital, her failing health forced her to leave. Maria moved to Brittany where she found the peace and rest necessary to improve her health.

Maria's forced silence lasted for many months. With the storm over and having regained her strength, Maria got involved body and soul in the republican conflict. She launched a powerful propaganda campaign in favor of democratic principles and put all her hopes of absolute justice into the young republic. *Children's Rights*, *Universal Suffrage*, and *Art in Democracy* were the main subjects chosen by the brilliant orator who relentlessly worked in the service of justice and people's social equality. In 1876, Maria founded the Society for the Improvement of Woman's Fate. Meetings being forbidden, she did not hesitate to receive supporters at her home and founded a newspaper, *Le Républicain de Seine-et-Oise*. An idealist and a fighter, Maria Deraismes understood that social improvement could not blossom forth with the clericalism that prevailed in France at that time, and in 1881 she organized the first anticlerical congress of the Grand Orient of France. Important suggestions in favor of secularity were expressed. The harmful clerical influence being unfair to women especially, Maria submitted a proposal in agreement with all the members of the congress. "The congress" expressed the wish that men, especially the free thinkers, make their wives their companions in meetings and club circles, and work toward having them legally acknowledged as their equals. The congress ended with a brilliant expose by Maria on the social role of woman. That same year, elementary education was declared free, and a law on freedom of the press was passed.

On January 14, 1892, while Gambetta laid upon the desk of the assembly a project for a partial revision of the constitution, another important event was taking place in the penumbra of a temple. In the Masonic Lodge of free thinkers of the Orient du Pecq, Maria received the Masonic light. During the initiation, the master declared: "By initiating a woman into our mysteries, we have proclaimed the equality of the two human beings who contribute physically to the propagation of our species; we want to elicit on her behalf the intellectual and moral emancipation in which, by virtue of the brutish axiom, 'might makes right,' man has never been interested. We are imbued with the idea that the moral state of society cannot improve effectively without the assistance of woman, the first educator of the child, and that to destroy prejudices within her by combating them with light, is to peacefully prepare true social emancipation."

Maria warmly thanked her courageous brethren, now dissenters, who by this act infringed upon Masonic laws and suffered heavy reprisals on the part of the Freemasons who, although they criticized the clergy, had at least one point in common with them— *misogyny*. Denied by a great many of those she had helped through her lectures, Maria accepted the silence imposed upon her. Despite her disappointment, she did not give up her noble ideas. For over ten years, she was supported by a few brethren convinced of the divine and earthly legitimacy of the initiation received by their sister, as true defenders of the great principles of equality they had been taught.

A fervent admirer of Maria Deraismes and of the feminist cause, the Freemason Georges Martin had tried for many years to have women admitted into Freemasonry. In view of the various existing jurisdictions' flat and narrow-minded refusal, he offered his assistance to Maria, who was determined to see at least part of her dream come true. These two beings united their experience and knowledge, and finally, after months of work made difficult by the daily attacks and barriers created by some Freemasons, but illumined by the torch of legitimacy and justice, Maria Deraismes achieved her "philosopher's stone." From an open mind and the protective power of higher elements, on April 4, 1893, the symbolical Scottish Grand Lodge of France —*The Human Right*—was officially born.

On February 6, 1894, having completed her work, Maria Deraismes reunited with the Great Architect of the Universe, in the great eternal lodge whence she now keeps watch over her work and over her brethren and sisters.

In her sixty-three years, Maria had known two kings, Charles X and Louis-Philippe; a prince, a citizen and president who had become Emperor Napoleon III; and four presidents of the Republic—Thiers, Mac Mahon, Grevy, and Carnot. At the end of the nineteenth century, the ideal of 1789 materialized. Under the protection of eventful reigns, of two republics, of a war, and of a few revolutions, Maria witnessed the birth of many social and political reforms for which she had

militated, despite a terrible illness, such as the severance between the Church and the State, secular education, the abolition of the death penalty for political offenses, the suppression of slavery, the freedom of the press, and the free and legal establishment of unions.

Notwithstanding the taboos and segregation, she broke through a wall and removed the grey mask of intolerance by demanding that the most misogynous initiatory Order not only give a little knowledge, but receive much in return.



9 TIPHAINE DE RAGUENEL

(1335-1373)

“Beautiful Lady, the wisest that ever was in France, noble and high-born Lady . . .”

Tiphaine the fairy, Tiphaine the sweet, the learned, the mysterious Pretty words are not lacking, and the troubadours and observers of the fourteenth century did not miss any when it came to describing Tiphaine de Raguenel.

She was born in 1335 in the Château de la Bellière, the residence of her father, Robin de Raguenel, Count of la Bellière. Her mother, the very beautiful Jeanne de Dinan, was the heiress to one of the most powerful feudal families of Brittany. Tiphaine was a well educated young lady. Her erudition and great mind, as well as her wisdom and her kindness, were widely known. Tiphaine was not only intelligent, but she also had charm and a beauty that made her into a perfect being. Her company was sought after, and more than one knight tried in vain to win her love. She refused all marriage proposals. Tiphaine was wise and patient. She preferred to acquaint herself with the prophecies of Merlin the Magician, or to pore over parchments containing many a secret.

Astronomy, astrology, and alchemy were no longer a mystery to her. She studied those subjects with the great teachers of the time, and the signs of the heavens were a part of her life. The initiations she received strengthened her knowledge and her convictions. If it is true that “the eyes are the windows of the soul,” then Tiphaine must have had a very

beautiful soul. Big grey eyes, with green reflections and a deep magical expression, made her look not only serious but also very seductive. Her whole being radiated a power that attracted Bertrand Duguesclin, also an unusual personage—a power of nature hewn out of the mass, courageous, worthy, and as plain as Tiphaine was pretty. “Tiphaine the Initiate” knew her mission and prepared for it. Bertrand Duguesclin, on the other hand, had begun his, which took him to Dinan where he was to meet the person responsible for helping and supporting him in the great work he was destined to do.

Bertrand learned that his young brother Olivier, whom a few years previously he had put under the protection of the ramparts in Dinan after the death of his mother, Jeanne Duguesclin, was a prisoner of the British who were laying siege to the town. Sir Thomas of Canterbury had kidnapped the young lad while he was picking flowers outside of the city walls, defying the enemy. Bertrand arrived, beside himself, in the English camp and created so much disturbance that the British agreed to free his insolent younger brother. But Sir Thomas did not see it that way, and his wounded pride compelled him to demand satisfaction from the Knight Duguesclin for this humiliation. The combat was to take place in the marketplace of Dinan, where Bretons and English gathered, all excited at the idea of an encounter that promised to be interesting, considering the strength, impetuosity, and fury of the two opponents. The people of Dinan were certain of Duguesclin’s victory, for Damsel Tiphaine had foretold it. The fight was about to begin, when a squire approached the Breton Knight and told him that Tiphaine de Raguene, a noble maiden from Dinan, had seen in the stars that the day was propitious for him and that he could fight, certain of the victory.

Bertrand openly laughed at that prediction and at Tiphaine, whom he imagined to be an old woman, somewhat of a sorceress and not very interesting. Perhaps he had forgotten that another woman had already revealed to him his great destiny when, as a child, he had endured the ridicule of his parents and his brothers who had taken a dislike to him because he was so homely and clumsy—he, the ugly, the good for nothing, the violent, whom a converted Jewish nun had taken under her wing, declaring to everyone that this awkward boy was destined to

a brilliant future. At the close of the combat from which, of course, he emerged victorious, Bertrand was introduced to Tiphaine. He was quite surprised at seeing a twenty-four-year-old maiden whose beauty and seriousness intimidated him. Tiphaine examined his hand and told him all the things she read in its mysterious lines. Then she took him to a large open book that contained Merlin's prophecies and pointed out some verses with her fingertips. But Bertrand could not read them, and, noticing the discomfited look on that great Knight's face, Tiphaine understood and read aloud: "Twice, the golden fleur-de-lis will be flung into the dust, and twice it will be picked up—once by a maiden coming from the East, once by a black eagle coming from the West."

As she was speaking, Tiphaine laid the palm of her beautiful white hand upon Bertran's escutcheoned eagle. Very touched, Duguesclin left Dinan, carrying over his heart the tablets or ephemerides specifying the lucky and unlucky days—the work and gift of Tiphaine. At each battle, whether a victory or a defeat, he would look at his parchments and remark: "She had foretold it to me."

Tiphaine followed his campaigns in the stars and waited. Bertrand, who never stopped thinking about her, did not dare to confess his love to her. He was afraid to be rejected by this noble maiden, so beautiful and cultured. But the Cosmic Masters and the great brotherhoods had undoubtedly decided otherwise for the destiny of France. In 1360, Damsel Tiphaine de Ragueneil married the Knight Duguesclin in the cathedral of Pontorson. Bertrand was a captain of Pontorson. Later on, he became a captain of Mont Saint-Michel. Duguesclin's fame spread beyond Brittany; his men were greeted everywhere with the cry: "Notre Dame Guesclin" (Our Lady Guesclin). He was asked to serve the regent of France. He was also asked to serve a foreign country. Wasn't the struggle against a common enemy? Was it better to support the tree of France with his broad shoulders than to let it fall and rely only upon oneself to protect the Duchy of Brittany? He confided his problem to Tiphaine who told him: "Go!" Duguesclin met the regent during the siege of Melun. He boldly looked at the royal offspring that Tiphaine had told him to serve. Bertrand received the command of one hundred lancers and, accompanied by his faithful Bretons,

accomplished many feats in Normandy. He captured many towns and castles, and the thought of Tiphaine followed him everywhere. While Duguesclin waged war in the green Norman region, the great companies were doing the same in the remaining states of France. After battles and treaties, things quieted down with the English and, had it not been for the brigands, peace would have reigned in the country. Relieved from active duty, Bertrand hurried to his home on Mont Saint-Michel which, as captain of the fortress, he had built for Tiphaine. It was a small three-story house, because space was scarce and very much in demand on the slopes of Mont Saint-Michel. Mont Saint-Michel was not only a mystical spot, but it was also a strategic and military location. The citadel was in a state of siege during the One-Hundred-Year War, but its geographical location, its tides and quicksands, made it a very protected and practically unassailable place. In the narrow spiraled staircase, Lady Tiphaine greeted Bertrand, her husband. She undertook the unbelievable feat of initiating him into the magic of writing and, for Tiphaine's sake, Bertrand spent long hours poring over parchments, with a reed feather in his hand. He put all his fervor into the letters and paragraphs she so easily traced out. His new peaceful pursuits monopolized him so much that he forgot about the outside world. But Tiphaine heard and saw for him. For hours, she labored over astronomical computations and, one day, when her conscientious student was struggling in his writing, she took his hand, looked at it, and said again: "Go!"

The black eagle and his companions pounced upon Brittany. After a few quarrels with Guillaume Felton, who accused him of treachery and cowardice in a story of ransom, Bertrand, always the winner, went to war against the people of Navarre. At the head of 1500 warriors, all brave and excellent fighters, Duguesclin, a great strategist, stole the victory from the enemy in Cocherel. By the grace of King Charles V, he was raised from a simple Knight to the title of King's Chamberlain, Marshall of Normandy and Count of Longueville—one of the oldest and noblest titles of France. The monarch learned of the victory of Cocherel the very same day of his coronation in Reims cathedral from an emissary who fell to his feet, exhausted but happy, stammering: "Sir Duguesclin . . . Cocherel."

In 1364, Brittany became restless again, and Duke Charles called Bertrand back to his native country. Before fighting, Bertrand wanted to see Tiphaine again, but this time she did not tell him: "Go!" but "STAY!" In Auray, under the bright Sun of autumn, the battle raged. Alas, Duke Charles was killed, and the black eagle found himself all alone behind the Breton banner. All his courage and strength unfolded as the Bretons shouted: "Bold Bertrand!" But defeat followed and Bertrand was taken prisoner. Tiphaine, who already knew, was at the window. She scrutinized the dark night and cried. A ransom was agreed upon, and Bertrand, released, thought of Tiphaine and remarked: "There is no greater fool than the one who does not listen to his wife."

In exchange for the help he received from Charles V for his release, Duguesclin took it upon himself to free France from the brigands who ravaged the kingdom. It was no easy task. He confided in Tiphaine, who reopened the book of Merlin and pointed out the following verses to him: "An eagle shall be born in Brittany who will go to Spain in large company. . . ." To kill thousands of brigands was not easy, but to persuade them to leave France for a richer and more beautiful kingdom seemed feasible. Duguesclin negotiated with their leaders and succeeded in convincing them. The Spanish Crusade began in 1365. Bertrand was absent for five years, at the end of which Charles V called him back, for hostilities with the English were starting again. For five years, Duguesclin arbitrated the quarrels of six kings, one pope, and a whole nation. From that country where everything he undertook left traces, memories, friends, enemies, and great renown, Bertrand came back materially poor but rich in titles. His fame was such that from North to South, from Brittany to the Pyrénées, his exploits were known. Bertrand Duguesclin was not only man of France, but man of Europe also. Upon leaving the mild climate he had grown fond of, in a country where the greatest opportunities were offered to him, Bertrand thought of his wife and of her mysterious powers. He hoped to return to that country, but before doing so he must get the advice of his good fairy. Tiphaine de Raguene, Viscountess de la Bellière, Countess de Longueville, Duchess de Molina, wife of the High Constable de Castille, was waiting at home.

All the titles bestowed upon her by her husband did not prevent her from pursuing her mystical quest. And Tiphaine counseled him. In October 1370, Bertrand Duguesclin officially received the safekeeping of the kingdom. Charles V appointed him High Constable of France, that is, commander-in-chief of the French troops, the highest office in the kingdom after that of the king.

This sword could only return to Bertrand the Breton, who from then on became His Lordship, The High Constable—French greatness and strength personified. The King believed that his faithful servant, who until then had managed very well without the help of the State Treasury, could continue to do so. Knowing that her husband was much troubled about his soldiers, Tiphaine decided to sacrifice her wealth. She was of noble birth and owned tableware and jewelry received from Bertrand during his brief returns—a small fortune, which she brought to Caen, where Bertrand and his men were preparing to wage a fierce battle against the invader. She brought to the troops not only enough to prevent the plundering that the poorly paid soldiers usually laid waste to in their wake, but also her knowledge and wisdom. She laid at the High Constable's feet all her gold and silver dishes—a humble offering or a kingly gift—without regret, aware of her deed and happy because of it. That very same evening, she offered to all the nobility in Caen a sumptuous banquet served in the precious dishes which afterwards were broken to pieces, ground, and melted so that the French troops could be paid. Thus it was that Tiphaine understood the role which was assigned to her at birth and which, knowingly, she accepted. With the troops equipped, Duguesclin took leave of Tiphaine.

“Remember that at one time you did not take heed of my words. Remember all that I have informed you of lately.”

“I would be very foolish not to listen to you; my repentance would not suffice.”

What message did Tiphaine transmit to him? What is certain is that Bertrand Duguesclin no longer let his eyes wander toward the South. Bertrand concentrated his whole energy to fighting the unwanted English visitors.

For many years Tiphaine enlightened Bertrand with the torch of wisdom. Like an angel, she had come to devote her knowledge and powers to a predestined being. She had supported the wings of the eagle. She had lifted up a corner of the veil. She had used the knowledge of the heavens to initiate the Earth. She had protected the “égrégoire”^{*} of France and had known how to use messages left by other masters in the past, such as the prophecies of Merlin the Magician. She knew that earthly people needed material supports; her books, maps, parchments, and crystal balls allowed her to make those willing to listen benefit from some of her inner knowledge which these instruments veiled. Tiphaine was never harassed, even during her youth when she did not know Duguesclin and when every suspect—noble or commoner, innocent or guilty—went to meditate on the crimes of witchcraft at the stake. She had what humans call *luck*. “Tiphaine the sorceress” never superseded “Tiphaine the sweet fairy.”

^{*}The positive and beneficial energy field to which every member of a traditional initiatory organization is linked as long as he remains an active member of that organization

In a divine breath she came; in a divine breath she departed in the year of our Lord 1373, at her home on Mont Saint-Michel. Her earthly shell was laid down to rest at the Jacobin friar’s convent in Dinan. In 1380, in a silver casket, the heart of Bertrand Duguesclin, who had not been able to forget his beautiful Tiphaine, came to reunite with her. That same year, King Charles V recovered in Saint-Denis the body of his brave and faithful Duguesclin, whom he always wanted at his side, notwithstanding Bertrand’s wish to be buried next to Tiphaine. Merlin the Magician had foretold the coming of the two deliverers of France during the One-Hundred-Year War—that of a black eagle and of a young shepherdess from the East. But should he not have foreseen the coming of two women instead?



10 JOAN OF ARC

(1412-1431)

THE LIFE OF Joan of Arc is an inexhaustible and classical subject. The military, civilian, and religious feats of this young maiden have been the subject of several dozen books, articles, and lectures. Some, more than others, have dealt with Joan's spirituality.

In the esoteric world, few people accept the manner in which the Catholic Church, after having assassinated this great initiate, monopolized her life through later demagoguery and desire for propaganda.

For the last five centuries, many theories have been advanced, but whether Joan was a royal bastard, as some claim—a great strategist politically and therefore religiously exploited—or just a plain “enlightened” native of Lorraine, one fact is certain: Joan, after telling everyone what she must do, did it. Upon coming to Earth, she had to adapt to the customs, principles, and laws of her time. However, her evolution and power exceeded by far any formal notions of the time. It was in the hope of making herself understood that she chose to follow the almost obligatory path that a few impose upon everybody.

Most of her words having been interpreted from the very beginning by insincere persons, what we think we know about Joan's thoughts can only be acknowledged as a supposition among so many others. But to understand Joan, we must let what we call our imagination run wild and use all of our inner faculties. A little journey into time and space, with a good synthesis of our knowledge—allowing our intuition to speak—can make us understand and accept the coming of Joan, the Savior of France.

It was a village in the Meuse Valley, Domrémy, which had the good fortune to welcome this famous French heroine on January 6, 1412 (Epiphany Day). Her being born into a family of well-to-do farmers allowed her a happy childhood, free from want. Like all country children, she worked. She took grazing the sheep that her father, Jacques of Arc, had entrusted to her; her mother, Isabelle Romée, taught her everything a young girl should know: spinning, sewing, and praying. With friends of her own age, she loved to go through the woods where fairies reigned, and to participate in the somewhat magical village festivities that their ancestors, the Gauls, had bequeathed to them, the origin of which is lost in the mists of time. But what Joan liked best was to listen to the parish priest speak about the lives of the saints. Situated in the East of the kingdom, Domrémy borders a road used by merchants, soldiers, and of course travelers bearing news—a few scholars and many poets—who, in exchange for a meal or a stable corner in which to sleep, entertained their hosts with fabulous stories where soldiers and angels, blood and holy water mixed in due honor to the greatest glory of God and of His subjects. The peace and silence that surrounded Joan in her walks through the fields and the hills were conducive to thought and meditation.

At the age of thirteen, the time when teenagers tend to be mediumistic, her contacts with the Beyond began. At the time of the great transition, did she forego the trial of forgetfulness as any other human being, or did she retain the faculty of memory? What she perhaps did not know clearly, she felt. In this tragic period when strength and courage were necessary, prayers were offered to Archangel Saint-Michel, patron saint of the famous Mont Saint-Michael that valiantly resisted the English since the beginning of the war. It was, therefore, through the intermediary of Saint-Michel that the custodians of the world contacted her officially. Joan's faith was boundless. For three years, she kept secret the revelations and orders received from Saint-Michel, accompanied by the martyrs Sainte Catherine and Sainte-Marguerite.

At the age of sixteen, everything became clear to her. She must free the kingdom from British rule, and in order to do so she must go to

Vaucouleurs to see the captain in charge there, Robert Baudricourt, who would lend her his support. It took one year for her to convince this skeptical soldier.

She was then seventeen years old and the orders were definite. She must introduce herself to the legitimate Dauphin Charles to transmit to him the divine instructions. And perhaps because “what God wills, woman can do,” on the thirteenth day of the month of February, in the year 1429, Joan was equipped, due to the generosity of the people of Vaucouleurs, and left for Chinon, where the Dauphin resided with his court, accompanied by a few soldiers that Robert Baudricourt had finally granted her as an escort. Her first meeting with this inhibited Dauphin, whom she recognized in spite of the arranged deception, and their long private conversation from which the future Charles VII emerged, beaming and convinced, marked the beginning of the end of the One-Hundred-Year War.

Behind a white-and-gold banner, with her armor and the sword that was discovered according to her directions behind the altar of Sainte-Catherine de Fierbois Church, near Tours, Joan raised the siege from Orleans on May 8, 1429. These victorious campaigns succeeded one another. Her fame spread, and Christine de Pisan—like dozens of astrologers, seers, and scholars—saw in her and through her the second part of Merlin’s prophecy come true: “A maiden coming from the East, picking up the golden lily that had fallen into the dust.”

After Duguesclin’s death, followed by that of Charles V, the custodian and protector of the kingdom, King Charles VI, did not know how to protect this Lily, and it was an unhappy and submissive country that he bequeathed to his eleventh son, the amiable Dauphin who, since 1422, shared his inaccessible throne with the English. Joan wanted to open the road to Reims: “Madness,” whispered the army. Joan insisted; the Dauphin must be anointed with oil from the holy phial in the cathedral where all the kings were crowned. Charles, not very bold, hesitated. Joan warned him: time was getting short; the moment which separated her from the betrayal that would lead to her death was near. On the way to the Coronation, several times Charles was ready to give up, but Joan stood by him.

The Loire Valley and all the towns as far as Reims surrendered to Joan's sword. And, on July 17, 1429, what nobody dared to imagine happened: Charles the Dauphin became, by the Grace of God and of Joan of Arc, King Charles VII, in front of a bewildered crowd amazed at the unexpectedness and swiftness of the event, but whose joy still resounds today under the vaults of the cathedral. Throughout the centuries, this holy place has seen a great many coronations—all solemn, majestic, and dazzling—but its stones sheltered as their most moving memory the pure face of Joan standing by the King with her banner waving as she said: "Having been tested, it is only fitting that this banner be held in honor."

Within a few months, Joan gave strength and confidence back to the people and to the army. She was worshiped, and miracles were attributed to her. People followed her; they wanted to fight at her side. The King raised her, along with her whole family, to the rank of the nobility. But all that did not make Joan forget the task she must accomplish: to drive out the undesirable English invaders who, for many years, had occupied France. Joan had predicted all these events: Orléans, the Coronation in Reims, all her victories, and even her wounds about which she had warned her comrades in arms. She knew that the time allotted to her to carry out her mission was very short. With the Duke of Alençon, she undertook the liberation of Paris, but she was wounded, and the army preferred to give up the attack. On May 23, 1430, while attempting to raise the siege of Compiègne, Joan was taken prisoner by the Duke of Burgundy, allied with the enemy.

The archbishop of Reims, who then administered the reconquered provinces for Charles VII, calmed down the good people of Reims, alarmed by the news. He wrote to them to fear naught, that nothing was changing, since a young shepherd from Gévaudan had already appeared on the scene, and that he would do just as well as Joan. Ingratitude seems to be very prevalent among kings, and Joan was forsaken in her prison, a situation which very well suited the clergy, who agreed with the English to bring her before the tribunal of the Inquisition in Paris that would try her as a heretic.

Therefore, Joan's trial was a trial by the Inquisition. She was accused of wearing masculine clothes, which fell within the provisions of a canonical interdict; she was blamed for her clairvoyance and clairaudence, and her insubordination to the Church. But was it a religious trial only? That soul had dared to incarnate into a woman's body! What could be more conspicuous than this female capable of saving a kingdom, of restoring confidence to a weak Dauphin, of organizing resistance in a country entirely under English and clerical rule? What could be more provoking than this chit of a girl who, within a few weeks, had upset the sacrosanct ideas that the clergy, through murders and sermons, was pounding into the heads of its sheep, who accepted such precepts as long as they lived without complaining, having no right whatsoever to question their validity?

Joan arrived in the midst of a desperate situation, in an occupied and divided country in the throes of utter anarchy, in a dying France where only calamities survived: famine, starvation, epidemics, ceaseless cruelty, and ever-increasing taxes. If Joan came, it was because some people had asked her to. Always, in spite of the turmoil and especially at times like this, freethinkers have contributed to changes on our planet—the great visible brotherhood in conjunction with the great invisible brotherhood.

A savior was requested—Joan was sent! A woman soldier! This smelled somewhat of heresy, and such was needed to arouse the submissive kingdom. Of course, the Church had already recognized as “saints” a few women for their extreme kindness and piety, who had in no way shaken the pedestal upon which man had placed himself of his own accord.

In 1429, fearing that the great light Joan was bequeathing to a subjugated people would enlighten the obscurantism intentionally maintained by the Church and not wanting to live in its shadow, the officials of the “only faith” decided to extinguish it.

On May 30, 1431, in Rouen, Joan, a young 19-yearold maiden from Lorraine, was burned as a heretic—she who succeeded in accomplishing within a few months what it had taken Duguesclin a few years to do; the kings of France, 100 years; and the Church, never.

Joan experienced the life and death of many initiates. She followed the path of Socrates, Pythagoras, Jesus, and a host of others who, through their powers, could have escaped a cruel death. But all accepted it as if their messages and deeds could only manifest at the moment of this ultimate earthly initiation. Do we have the right to draw a parallel between their lives?

An exact knowledge of the past and of the future, no language nor communication problems in times when a different dialect was spoken every few kilometers, a very limited time for action, a vibratory field so radiant that instinctively the masses felt its impact and the memory of which did not get blurry with the passing of time, a touching youth, a sham trial staged in concert by the invader and the local religious authorities—so many parallels between two destinies—that of Jesus and Joan of Arc's! The manner in formulating a message and its importance differ according to the needs of the times, but the end result is the same, regardless of the messenger and his work. To arouse people and countries out of their torpor, to help them climb one step higher on the great ladder of evolution, to initiate beneficial and inevitable changes within society—this is perhaps what caused Jesus, Joan of Arc, and so many others to be accused of being revolutionaries. Perhaps the word “evolutionary” still remains to be invented!



11 DONA BÉATRICE

(1684-1706)

IN 1704, ON the continent of Africa, a twenty-year-old flower was blossoming—exciting, determined, and burning with faith. She is known in the annals of history as the “Congolese Joan of Arc.”

It all began over two centuries previously, with the arrival of the first Portuguese explorers. In 1482, a strange adventure began with Diégo de Cao. The baffling sympathy of King Zingha in Nkuwu toward the invader encouraged the Portuguese court to establish a strong, exclusive, and definite foothold. The religion of the popes of Rome was quickly established in the Congolese kingdom at the same time as the slave trade, most often conducted by the missionaries themselves. The local customs were officially prohibited, making room for Portuguese royal *étiquette*. Thus the nobility inherited titles of princes, dukes, and marquis, which was the proof, according to the messengers of the crown, of the understanding and equality existing between two great nations, Portugal and her new ally, the future country of Zaire. The newly made and devout Catholic King, Mani Kongo, was as happy as his brother from Lisbon and as the Supreme Head of the Church, who was winning over many faithful. Some received honors and a taste for novelty which was quite exciting, while others drew freely from the inexhaustible source of Congolese wealth. As time passed, the classical colonial trilogy was established—missionaries, soldiers, and merchants.

After 1500, clouds darkened the beautiful blue sky, for Zingha was fond of his many wives, for whom the missionaries reproached him. They advised him to choose an official wife and gave him the assurance that they would overlook his mistresses. The king, along

with his son Mpanzu, preferred to reject the new religion, which he found too hypocritical. In 1506, all worked out well for the colonizers. Zingha died, and his oldest son, Nuwnba, baptized Affonson I, succeeded him. For thirty-seven years, the kingdom was put under the protection of the Holy Cross, upheld by the very pious Affonson I and his Portuguese acolytes. On the surface, everything seemed to happen for the best in this country where churches and schools multiplied and where all the strata of Portuguese society (already separated from the natives) were represented. However, all was not so pink and rosy as sung in the praises to Affonson I. Indeed, peace and harmony had vanished with the arrival of the white man. Among the masses, as among certain dignitaries, rebellion was continuous. Even the ones who were baptized accepted their fate only to please the King and to curry favors. And thus, as the years passed, kings succeeded one another on a puppet throne. Standing loftily amidst the rocks, the capital Mbanza Kongo, renamed San Salvador, was no longer the throbbing heart of the kingdom. In 1667, after a slow disintegration and a brutal tribal conflict, the city was plundered and deserted. Only a vast deserted field of ruins remained of the royal hill!

Thirty years of indescribable turmoil followed before a few strong state personalities proclaimed Pedro IV King. As his parents were members of two rival tribes, they hoped to put an end to the division that reigned throughout the kingdom. Pedro IV, whose African name was Agua Rosada, settled his court in the natural fortress of Mount Kibangu.

Ten years before the accession to the throne of Pedro IV, in 1684, Kimpa Vita, a Bakongo of high nobility, was born north of Natamba. The attribution of a name was a matter of very special care in the Bakongo society. In the name chosen, the events the members of the family were subject to at the time of the child's birth always showed through. Kimpa Vita's parents undoubtedly led a hard life among the aristocracy in a state of crisis, and that was why their little girl was named Kimpa (*mystery*) and Vita (*trap*). Years passed and, upon her baptism, Kimpa received the Christian name of Dona Béatrice.

The year was 1704, and Dona Béatrice was about to enter her twenty-first year. She was very ill and her entourage awaited the coming of death. But, miraculously, Dona Béatrice got up and announced to all that Saint Anthony had helped her so that she might contribute to the rebuilding of the kingdom. From that time on until her work was finished, the Saint dwelt within her. Parallel to the mission which Dona Béatrice undertook, a prophetess by the name of Fumaria was traveling throughout the country, announcing that the time had come when everything must change, when a Savior was expected—it was the Virgin Mary who had told her so. At the echoing sound of the tam-tam, Dona Béatrice's words spread like wildfire, and when Fumaria met her they recognized each other immediately. The people adhered strongly to the ideas propagated by Dona Béatrice, who preached the return to unity and the fight against moral confusion and slavery. She refuted common superstitions and opposed fetishism, just as the Church of the White Man did. She heralded the return to the Golden Age of Congo. A new religion was born—the Anthony Sect—with Saint Anthony at its head, a divine protector, and Dona Béatrice as its spiritual and earthly leader. Dona Béatrice and her followers undertook the rebuilding of San Salvador. The time had come for the revival of a stable government in a fortified capital. Congolese came from everywhere; walls were erected and plantations expanded from day to day. The ghost town came back to life and, in the midst of this whirling life, Dona Béatrice, moved by an exalting fervor, ruled as an empress whose faith eagerly picked up the stones that had previously fallen.

Accompanied by Fumaria and the crowd, she went to the palace of Pedro IV on Mount Kibangu. She urged him to leave his retreat and go to San Salvador which awaited him, and she proposed a program of restoration. The king and the queen were receptive to anything that might rectify the disastrous state of the kingdom. Only the fear of Rome prevented them from following Dona Béatrice; nevertheless, they protected her. The considerable scope of the movement and the fanaticism of the people worried the missionaries, who could not check the enthusiasm for the Anthony cause. They succeeded in convincing the weak and influenceable Pedro IV, still awaiting the

papal decree from the Holy Crown to confirm his royal legitimacy, to have the devil's daughter undergo an examination in the Catholic fashion. Dona Béatrice came out of it stronger; the missionaries, more frightened. Dona Béatrice's prestige increased. She was venerated by the whole population and by the notables of the kingdom who had been converted to the new faith. Miracle upon miracle followed. It was said that the reclining trees stood up as she passed by, and that any food touched by her hands was blessed and effected cures. At last there was a unity in Congo, a unity around a maiden who was a noble Bakongo, strong and gifted with all the qualities of leadership. It was a unity around a pure-hearted goddess living very simply in a poor hut, surrounded by her companions, each wearing a holy crown made of the bark of the "munda," the tree of power. The Capuchin Bernado de Gallo, a fierce enemy of Dona Béatrice, demanded her arrest. The King refused. Everywhere *Salve Antonia* instead of *Salve Regina* was being sung, and "little Anthonys" could be seen, emissaries chosen by Dona Béatrice, who were responsible for informing the Congolese of the existence and principles of the Anthony movement. Dona Béatrice no longer felt secure with the members of the royal family, whom she knew were moody. Accompanied by many adepts, she left San Salvador with Fumaria and her sincere friend Barro, called Saint John. She sought refuge in Boula dia Lemba, another stronghold, where John II, a candidate for Pedro IV's throne, reigned. Through the voice of the people, she demanded the delivery of the royal insignia, kept in the city. Everything turned out well for her, but she had not entirely won over the sympathy of the suspicious John II. She returned to San Salvador, while converting on her way the majority of John II's followers. From her fief, she continued to heal and to predict. She openly and passionately accused the Catholic Church of "dividing in order to rule." That was too much for the servants of the Pope, who decided, whether authorized or not, to rid themselves of the heretic. The first months of the year 1706 gave them the perfect opportunity to put an end to the she-devil's actions. Dona Béatrice was expecting a child from her beloved Barro. She was said to be a virgin, the Immaculate Conception, Barro being her Joseph. Taking advantage of Dona Béatrice's condition and temporary weakness, the King gave his

consent to the ecclesiastical authorities to arrest the Congolese heroine and to bring her before the tribunal of the Inquisition. The unavoidable and banal trial got under way—questioning, threats, torture; all to no avail. True faith does not submit, and that of Kimpa resisted Vita.

Condemned as a heretic, Dona Béatrice was burned at the stake, with her beloved Barro at her side. Her valiant soul reunited with the great Universal Soul on July 2, 1706. Her last cry was a total surrender to Jesus, who, she was convinced, was a Black African Savior, the brother of the people she had loved and liberated. At the very spot of the unyielding Congolese's martyrdom, two deep wells were sunk, in the center of which two brilliant stars twinkle—one symbolizing the soul of Kimpa Vita, and the other, that of Barro, now reunited.

Dona Béatrice's message remains forever engraved in the hearts of the vast forests and on the tops of the high mountains. The African people remember this cool and beneficial storm; no one ever really dies.



12 MARY

ANNE, THE WIFE of Joachim, the High Priest of the Essene Temple of Helios in Jerusalem, was expecting a child.

“If, as foretold by the magi, a daughter is born to us, we shall consecrate her to the holy sanctuary. ...”

The Sun rose in the sign of Libra, and Anne gave birth to a little girl, whom she named Mary. As early as six months old, Mary was introduced to the dignitaries of the high temple to have her previous incarnation revealed. Seated in the sanctuary facing the East, Mary looked at her mother standing by the vestal fire and listened to her renewing her promise to make a “Colombe” of her child in this holy place. At home, Anne set up a small Sanctum where Mary rested, shielded from the impure and the vulgar, under only her surveillance or that of the temple virgins.

The name of Mary was officially given to her on her first birthday, under a shower of rose petals, while her mother and the high dignitaries of the great Essene Brotherhood, the representatives of the twelve temples of the twelve kingdoms, sang a hymn of joy.

At the age of three, Mary, accompanied by Anne and the vestals’ radiant torches, proceeded once again to the threshold of the sacred Sanctum where she was greeted by the officers of Helios. A heavenly chant rose, and, by the light of the symbolic fire, Mary knelt before the “Shekinah.”

Years passed, and Mary reached her thirteenth birthday. It was now time for her to fulfill her parents’ wish, which was also hers. Mary became a sacred Colombe in the great temple of Helios. In keeping with tradition, the new Colombe was placed under the care of a widower of

the Essene community. His name was Joseph the Galilean, a carpenter by trade. Time passed; one day, the High Priest entrusted the weaving of part of a curtain for the temple to Mary. Chosen by fate, she wove purple and scarlet, while her lady companions were busy working on fabrics and silks of different colors. While she was weaving, a Master appeared to Mary and announced that the time had come for her to fulfill the prophecy of the magi:

“Thou shalt conceive through the word of God.”

For many days, the master of the temple talked with Mary, and she decided to go to her cousin Elizabeth's home. On a small hill, not far from Jerusalem, stood the house of Elizabeth and Zachariah. In this secluded spot, the couple waited in peace and silence for the coming of the prophet; then she returned to the intimacy of her family sanctuary where she rejoined Joseph, whose work had kept him away from home for a few weeks. Joseph's anguish and remorse were great when he saw Mary's condition. He believed he had failed his mission as a “guardian angel,” but a voice confirmed what Mary and the high officials of the community were trying to explain to him. In order to better protect this precious gift, Joseph and Mary preferred to leave. Feeling the great moment was near, they reached a cave-hospital in Bethlehem, one of the many shelters that the Essenes owned in various parts of Palestine. Protected by heavy stone walls, Mary waited. Suddenly, a bright light pierced the darkness and illumined her whole being before slowly fading away.

“Thus was the Word born.”

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.

—*The Gospel according to St. John.*

Chapter 1 : 1-10

CONCLUSION

A YEAR HAS passed since I first conceived the idea of relating the life stories of remarkable women who have influenced our world, thus serving the Supreme Plan. Through chance travels, meetings, and dreams, wherever and whenever necessary, without seeking or demanding, I have “met” the thirteen personalities, whose main traits of one of their incarnations —chosen or assigned, but always accepted and assumed—I have recounted in twelve brief chapters. They are just a few examples among millions of similar or parallel cases that have spanned humanity. In spite of the desire and pleasure I had in writing these biographies, it is only with “the eye of the heart” that you will truly discover these great women mystics and their achievements. Then is this an unnecessary book? Perhaps, but written with so much joy that this vibration alone justifies its publication. After finishing the last chapter, I, of course, hoped for inspiration to write this conclusion, and it came in the form of an English book entitled *Letters of Helena Roerich*. One passage corresponds exactly to my thoughts and sums up the spirit I wanted to impart in this book, which can be found in the short article I chose for my introduction and which I wrote at a time when I had no knowledge of Helena Roerich’s existence nor her books. What follows is the translation of one of the letters included in that book, especially dedicated to women, their power and capabilities.

—Hélène Bernard

Normandy, February 5, 1981

“LETTER” OF HELENA ROERICH

March 1, 1929

THE APPROACHING GREAT epoch is closely connected with the ascendancy of woman. As in the best days of humanity, the future epoch will again offer woman her rightful place alongside her eternal fellow traveler and co-worker, man. You must remember that the grandeur of the Cosmos is built by the dual Origin. Is it possible, therefore, to belittle one Element of It?

All the present and coming miseries and the Cosmic cataclysms to a great degree result from the subjugation and abasement of woman. The dreadful decline of morality, the diseases and degeneration of some nations, are also the results of the slavish dependence of woman. Woman is deprived of the greatest human privilege—complete participation in creative thought and constructive work. She is deprived not only of equal rights, but, in many countries, of equal education with man. She is not allowed to express her abilities in the building of social and government life, of which, by Cosmic Law and Right, she is a full-fledged member. But a woman slave can give to the world slaves only. The proverb “great mother, great son” has a Cosmic, scientific foundation. As sons mostly take after their mothers, and daughters after fathers, great is Cosmic justice! By humiliating woman, man humiliates himself! This explains today the paucity of man’s genius.

Could the terrors and crimes of today be possible if both Origins had been balanced? In the hands of woman lies the salvation of humanity and of our planet. Woman must realize her significance, the great mission of the Mother of the World; she should be prepared to take responsibility for the destiny of humanity. Mother, the life-giver, has every right to direct the destiny of her children. The voice of

woman, the mother, should be heard amongst the leaders of humanity. The mother suggests the first conscious thoughts to her child. She gives direction and quality to all his aspirations and abilities. But the mother who possesses no thought of culture can suggest only the lower expressions of human nature.

The woman who strives to knowledge and beauty, who realizes her lofty responsibility, will greatly uplift the whole level of life. There will be no place for disgusting vices which lead to the degeneration and destruction of whole countries.

But in her striving toward education, woman must remember that all educational systems are only the means for the development of a *higher* knowledge and culture. The true culture of thought is developed by the culture of *spirit* and *heart*. Only such a combination gives that great synthesis without which it is impossible to realize the real grandeur, diversity, and complexity of human life in its Cosmic evolution. Therefore, while striving to knowledge, may woman remember the Source of Light and the Leaders of Spirit—those great Minds who, verily, created the consciousness of humanity. In approaching this Source, this leading Principle of Synthesis, humanity will find the way to real evolution.

And woman is the one who should know and proclaim this leading Principle because from the very beginning she was chosen to link the two worlds, visible and invisible. Woman possesses the power of the sacred life energy. The coming epoch brings knowledge about this great omnipresent energy, which is manifested in all immortal creations of human genius.

Western woman is awake and realizes her powers. Her cultural contributions are already evident. However, the majority of Western women—as with all beginners—start with imitation, whereas, it is in original self-expression that real beauty and harmony are found. Would we like to see man losing the beauty of manhood? The same is true about a man who has a sense of beauty. He certainly does not wish to see a woman imitating his habits and competing with his vices. Imitation always starts with the easiest. But we hope that this first step will soon be outlived and that woman will deepen her knowledge of

Mother Nature and will find true, original ways of self-expression.

The Cosmos manifests unity of law, but there is no repetition in its variety. Why then does humanity alone strive toward uniformity in everything, while at the same time it violates the fundamental unity of law? Uniformity of perception, uniformity of life, and especially uniformity of thought is cherished by man. It is forgotten that uniformity of expression leads toward stagnation and death. Life and its power are in perpetual change of form. It is necessary to apply this life giving principle in all the expressions of our life.

Let us collect the most beautiful, heroic images of all times and countries, and with creative imagination let us apply their achievements in our life, taking into consideration the peculiarities of our epoch. Only such imitation will give the correct foundation for further progress.

I shall finish my address to woman with a page from *The Teaching of Life*:

“When nations started disunity, the result was self destruction. Only a return to balance can stop this self-destruction. Humanity does not apply the principles of creativeness in right proportion and thus violates the foundations of Being. When by the law of the Cosmic Magnet the lower forms are subordinated to the higher, this concerns only the energies which should be transmuted. But when the Origins are called to create and give life, it is impossible to remove one of the Origins without self-destruction. Therefore, humanity will start its real evolution only when both Origins are affirmed in life. All principles which do not include the understanding of the dual Origin can only increase the lack of balance. Humanity must understand the law of the Cosmic Magnet. Much can be done for evolution by the realization of the grandeur of the dual Origin which is the basis of Life.”

Even this simple truth still does not find its place in the consciousness of man! Our scientists—biologists, chemists, physicists—should know the truth about the dual Element, or polarity, but they are silent. And such truth, in its most sacred and vital application, is scorned, and the rights of the strong selfishly dominate. The trouble is that the mind of man is disconnected from its source—the Cosmic Mind. Being part of

the Cosmos, the human being yet does not see his solidarity, his unity with the Cosmos. And his observations of the manifestations of nature do not suggest to him any analogies. However, only in observations and comparisons with human nature is it possible to find the keys to all the mysteries of life, and therefore the solution to many problems of everyday life. People, like parrots, love to repeat the favorite ancient formula "Macrocosm is microcosm"! Much is said, much is repeated, without the proper attention to its meaning! The enforced dogmas, human laws, and the standard of life have caused humanity to neglect the process of thinking, and the human mind, with rare exceptions, has become an automaton. Everybody is preaching various freedoms, but the most opposite schools of thought agree in one thing— they all are afraid of freedom of thought!

Therefore, woman must defend not only her own rights but the right of free thought for the whole of humanity! Through the development of thinking, our abilities will expand. Let us think with the broadest, the purest thoughts. It is said:

"The kingdom is not made up of royalties or of subjects, but is created by Cosmic ideas. Let us create our own cities, our countries, our planets! But let such thought be created by the heart, as only thought born of the heart is vital. The heart is the greatest Cosmic Magnet. All Cosmic energies are attracted to the heart, and the heart assimilates them. The heart manifests in life all aspirations. The fire of space is attracted to the heart and the whole Cosmic process lies in this principle. Therefore, the Cosmos exists in the attraction of the heart. Only the energies which are based on the attraction of the heart are vital. Thus, infinitely, the chain of life is forged by the heart."

Have you listened to your heart? Does it beat in rhythm with the Perfect Heart which embraces all of you?

Thus, I shall finish with the words about the heart. Let woman affirm this great symbol, which can transfigure the whole of life. Let her strive to transmute the spiritual life of mankind.

The mother, the life-giver, the life-protector—let her become also the Mother, the Leader, the All-Giver, the All-Receiver.

THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

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