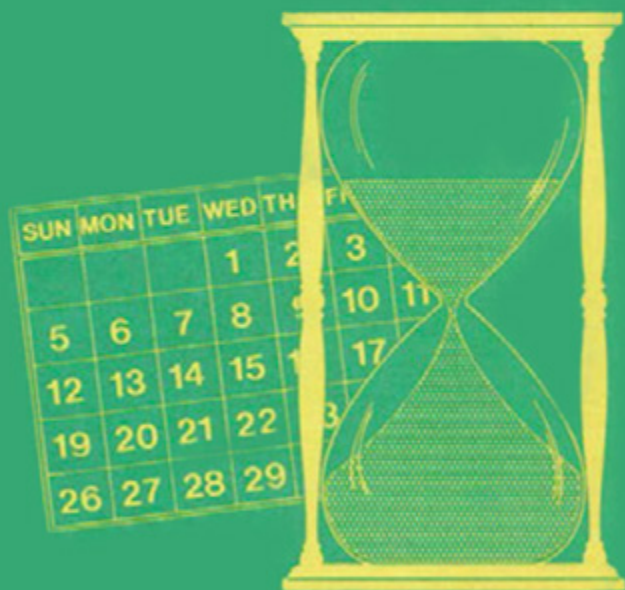


# *Yesterday Has Much To Tell*

By Ralph M Lewis, F.R.C



# YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL



by Ralph M. Lewis

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## DEDICATION



TO THE MUSEUMS  
OF ANTIQUITIES THROUGHOUT  
THE WORLD

In such institutions are preserved not  
mere artifacts, but evidence of human  
idealism, cultures, and of mans struggle  
upwards. They provide a continuity  
of human brotherhood.

*R.M.L.*



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RALPH M. LEWIS

January 1973

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# PREFACE

Poets have referred to life as a stage. Upon it they relate that we each play a part. With some it is melodrama, with others dire tragedy or the mockery of comedy. But with most mortals life is an intermingling of the whole gamut of emotions. The confrontation with the realities of existence produces a myriad of experiences. Some we relive with joy and pride; there are others we would prefer that time and age would veil from our consciousness.

The past was once a fleeting present. Most often its events were thrust upon us. As a result what we may have learned from them was often obscured by the activity in which they engaged us. To reminisce, then, is not to escape the demands and responsibilities of tomorrow. It may provide a better and more intimate perspective of our lives. It points out the course we have followed. For whatever regrets it reveals, it may not be too late to make amends. Sometimes the reflection of our experiences can be seen as a microcosmic mirror of all human hope, aspiration, achievement, and error.

True advice is born out of the knowledge gained from experience. There is something in everyone's life that can be a gainful factor in the life of another. It may inspire or be an ideal to emulate or a sober admonishment. I have been most fortunate in the varied vicissitudes that life has afforded me. In the performance of my duties for an international organization with its numerous and diverse functions, I have gone down trails not commonly trod by others. They have led me not only to the far corners of the earth but to its remote areas. I have seen the manner in which peoples of many cultures have sought their God. And I have seen the innate purity of those who have been demeaned as being primitive and barbaric. As well I have witnessed the hypocrisy, the intolerance, and the stagnation of religions, customs,



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and social orders that have kept men in the bondage of superstition and ignorance.

I may be presumptuous in relating to others some of the highlights of these fifty years of personal experiences, for each man has his own cherished memories. But perchance something here told of my *yesterdays* may bring pleasure and, I hope, enlightenment to the reader. This, then, is my apology for this work

## Chapter I

# MYSTICAL INITIATION

IT WAS DARK when we finally roared to a stop in the great metropolis of Brussels, a city having a population of more than seven hundred thousand. We were pleased to learn that our hotel was a few steps from the railroad station; in fact, located on the same great cobblestone square which the station itself faced. Several times before, large parties of Rosicrucians from America and various sections of Europe had gathered at this hotel while attending important conclaves in Brussels. The Rosicrucians were well known to the management as an orderly, congenial group of guests, and his hospitality was accordingly responsive. Our party had adjoining suites, ones that had been occupied by the Emperor's party but two years previously.

I was late for an important engagement, how important I did not fully realize. I called Mademoiselle Guesdon on the telephone. She was residing at the same hotel, having come from Paris for the same conclave and to kindly act as my official interpreter. She excitedly asked that Mrs. Lewis and myself meet her in the main lobby at once. To meet Mademoiselle Guesdon, who was then Grand Secretary of the AMORC in France, was to know an exceedingly intelligent and highly efficient woman with much administrative experience. With all of her firmness and ability to accomplish what seemed the impossible at times, she was refined, kindly, and most considerate. Years of intimate association with the commercial world in an executive capacity had not lessened her mystic insight and her philosophic trend of mind. She has performed innumerable services for the AMORC of America and its Supreme Officers.

Speaking in perfect English and in a hushed voice, she told us that Hieronymus, the Rosicrucian Emperor of Europe, could only attend that night's secret conclave of the FUDOSI, the great federation of the arcane, mystic Orders of the world. He must leave early the next day for another city in Belgium. In fact, he had been in conference for a day before we arrived and had waited and was NOW waiting for us. We felt grieved that we had been a cause of delay, but Mademoiselle Guesdon hastened to assure us that our schedule had been proper, but that sudden unexpected affairs made it necessary for Hieronymus to depart sooner than he had anticipated.

Since we must leave at once, there was no time for preparation. Mrs. Lewis and I hastily informed the other members of our party where we were going and then hurriedly joined Mademoiselle Guesdon at the street curb. We frantically signaled a taxi, and in my excitement I called to the driver in English, which amused the early evening sidewalk cafe patrons. To them we were running true to form, like all Americans, in a constant rush. We feel that the speed with which we travel through life is the cause of our accomplishments, and that these accomplishments are the worthy ends of life.

Our Belgian friends shrug their shoulders and admit that Americans accomplish stupendous things, but "are these things the true end of life?" is their query. "Do they bring the American any greater happiness and contentment than the quiet enjoyment of every hour of living which the Belgian ordinarily experiences?" Speaking rapidly in French to our rotund chauffeur who looked none too comfortable crammed into the very limited space between the wheel and the hard, upright seat back, Mademoiselle Guesdon gave directions for reaching our destination.

Concerning exactly where we were going and what was to occur, I was still very much in the dark. I ventured to quiz Mademoiselle Guesdon and finding her noncommittal on this point dropped the matter. This attitude only quickened my imagination and further stimulated my enthusiasm. No further words were spoken. We, Mrs. Lewis and myself, sat in suspense, each keeping to his or her own thoughts. We drove across great plazas walled in by massive stone buildings having

medieval-looking turrets and high iron gates. Walking rhythmically before them were uniformed sentinels carrying regulation rifles with bayonets fixed. I could only conjecture that they were guarding public buildings. The dignified solemnity of these settings was broken by the clanging bells of high, narrow, but short-length electric trams which rocked from side to side as they clattered along.

Suddenly Mademoiselle Guesdon tapped loudly on the glass partition separating us from the driver. Bringing his cab to a stop, he inquired in French as to her desires. After much hand waving on the chauffeur's part he was finally convinced by Mademoiselle Guesdon that he was not taking us in the right direction, and he turned to traveling a direction from which it seemed to me we had just come. I did not know what to look for, but I was surprised when our cab stopped in a semi-residential shopping district. I hesitated before leaving the cab. "Do we get out here?" I inquired. "Yes," Mademoiselle Guesdon replied, smiling at my bewilderment.

We walked rapidly about a block, passing many attractive little shops. Mademoiselle Guesdon stopped in front of one and looked in the doorway. I walked closer and looked into the large plate glass window front. There were platters of cakes and large green bowls of delicious-looking salads. I looked at the large block letters painted on the glass above me. The establishment was a restaurant catering to those who preferred vegetarian and fruit dishes. "But why are we stopping here?" I wondered. I turned and looked in the direction of Mademoiselle Guesdon. She beckoned to us to enter. "This is 'strange,'" I thought. She had been anxious to reach our destination—was in a hurry, in fact—and now we were dining before proceeding. She apparently realized my confusion and enlightened me. "We are here," she said. "The conclave" I began, and she motioned for me not to speak, for a genial hostess with a voluminous colored apron was approaching us. The hostess was about to accept us as patrons, usher us to a table in the large room in which there were several tables already occupied by diners, but Mademoiselle Guesdon stepped up to her quickly, and in a manner that attracted no attention, spoke to her in a whisper which I could not overhear.

The woman turned, looked at us intently for a moment, and then nodded her head in the direction of a small door at the opposite end of the room. We followed her in single file toward it. Upon reaching the door she bowed, turned, and left us. Mademoiselle Guesdon, turning to us, said: "Wait here, please; I shall return shortly." The patrons, eating in the leisurely manner which is the custom of the country, paid us no attention, for which we were grateful, for our faces must have revealed our pent-up emotions.

It seemed an age, but in reality the passing of time must have been but three minutes before Mademoiselle Guesdon returned. "You shall follow me," she said solemnly. We did. We entered a short, dark hallway. As I recall, it had a turn in it, because I could not see the other end until suddenly I was standing in an oblong chamber. The room was about thirty-five feet in length and about eighteen feet wide. It had, if memory serves me well, a plank floor and a low-hanging plastered ceiling. It was lit by candles located at the far end of the room. Shadows danced about us on the wall with each flicker of the candle flames, adding to the enigmatic atmosphere of the occasion. Our eyes were rooted to the scenes which the candles illuminated. There was a long but narrow U-shaped table with the open end toward us. The table in reality consisted of a series of small tables placed together and covered with crisp and brilliant white (in contrast to the yellow candlelight) tablecloths.

Around the outer side sat a group of impressive looking men. None were eating, although they obviously had been. They looked straight at us. Their faces were expressionless but not cold and steely. We felt, standing there in the part shadows, as though we were apparitions being looked upon by a solemn committee of investigators into psychic phenomena. I stepped forward and then stood hesitating. As though this had been a given signal, the gentlemen all arose as one, stood erect, motionless, waiting. Waiting for what, I did not know.

Again Mademoiselle Guesdon came to our aid. In a low voice she said, "Permit me to introduce you." I was fascinated by one personage. He stood behind the closed end of the U-shaped table in the exact center. His position was directly in front of me. I had tried turning my eyes from him. I did not wish to stare discourteously, and yet, as

if magnetically drawn, I would become conscious that I had turned again to hold his eyes. He would have attracted attention anywhere. He was tall, stately, well-groomed, conservatively attired. He had a neatly trimmed, white beard which gave him an air of distinction without being conspicuous. His complexion for a man of his age—and he must have been at least sixty years—was startlingly youthful, a healthful pink. I could not detect the color of his eyes from where I stood. They were to me two radiant, scintillating gems; points of light would perhaps better describe them.

Slowly Mademoiselle Guesdon led us down the center aisle formed by the opening of the “U,” directly toward him. When but three feet from him she stopped. Slowly, and in a quiet tone of voice, Mademoiselle Guesdon spoke to him in French. She was introducing me; then he spoke. I do not recall his words; in fact, I did not, as I now recollect, remember hearing words at all, but it seemed as if I were hearing a voice calling from a great distance, indistinct but melodious, soothing, some what like a chant. I seemed to understand inwardly what was being said, rather than objectively perceiving it. He was extending greetings, then he smiled and put forth his hand in welcome. As he smiled, his whole face lit up with a beautiful glow. I realized then what the master painters sought to capture on canvas when they wished to have their subjects—saints, mystics and great philosophers of old—appear to radiate the esoteric light which had dwelt within them. It is something which the chemical elements of paint and pigments can never portray. In fact, it is more sensed than seen.

This man before me was the Emperor of Europe, known only by his symbolic name, Hieronymus.\* He was one of the three Rosicrucian Emperors of the world, of which Dr. H. Spencer Lewis of our jurisdiction was one. I was not awed by the occasion, but rather a great wave of humility swept over me. I felt a keen sense of devotion to the Order which it is my privilege and honor to serve. There Hashed in my mind a vivid picture of my obligations and duties, and the thought of the many who had gone before me and had made possible what we hold so sacred today.

\*This occurred . three years before the higher initiation and transition of Dr. H. Spencer Lewis. Hieronymus has also since passed through transition.

We were now led to our places at this table; then each of the gentlemen filed by us and was introduced to us in turn. We played with our food, hungry as we were and delicious as it was. Somehow we thought that giving time to eating on such an auspicious occasion would be nothing short of profane, though it would have been in proper order. A few moments later, all arose at the sound of the gavel and quietly retired from the room. I was about to leave when a young man of about thirty-three or thirty-four years of age, slender, wiry, with high forehead and the facial characteristics of one who is distinctly a student and devoted to a mental life, came forward and said in English, "Kindly wait with Mademoiselle Guesdon. You shall be admitted later."

I felt a liking for this frater. He was personable and understanding. He was a noted frater in the legal profession of his country and a moving spirit in the administrative affairs of the FUDOSI. I had corresponded with him on numerous occasions relative to official matters of our Order. In fact I had with me at this time secret and confidential documents to deliver to him. He left us and joined the others.

Once again we were alone—Mademoiselle Guesdon, Mrs. Lewis and myself. I turned to Soror Guesdon questioningly. Before I could speak she anticipated my thoughts. "You are about (referring to Mrs. Lewis and me) to be inducted into the thirteenth traditional historical degree of our Order." (Referring to AMORC.) "Only a few members of every jurisdiction are eligible to receive its honors, secrets, and wisdom." We were more than elated and grateful. A few moments later a frater came through the portal which led to the chamber into which all the others had retired. He spoke hurriedly in French to our interpreter and guide, and returned. Once again Soror Guesdon bade us follow her, which we did. This became an unforgettable evening in our lives.

We crossed the threshold and dwelt within for nearly an hour, though we were not conscious of time. What transpired there must be sealed in my heart and mind. I can only impart my experiences to those who are prepared to receive them, and like me, they will never know when they will be considered prepared until the invitation has

been extended to them to receive this knowledge at a proper time and at a proper place.

My next day was an exceptionally busy one; no time for sight-seeing, no tours or ramblings. There was too much to be accomplished. By appointment I met a FUDOSI official at his office, to which Mademoiselle Guesdon took me. There important documents concerning the welfare and extension of the AMORC in America were signed and sealed. Official communications from the Imperator of AMORC in America were personally delivered to proper authorities for the consideration of FUDOSI officers. The mutual plans and problems of the Rosicrucian Order of the International Jurisdiction and the Order of Europe were discussed, and constructive ideas exchanged. For the first time I heard the phrase, "And it shall be the duty of America to preserve this for future generations." I thought it strange but passed it by without question.

Later, Mrs. Lewis, Soror Guesdon and I were the luncheon guests at the home of the official. A delicious repast was enjoyed in most pleasant surroundings. Immediately following luncheon, Mademoiselle Guesdon and I attended the meeting of a special FUDOSI Convention Committee some distance from the official's home for a further consideration of organization matters of importance.

Several days had elapsed since our arrival in Brussels, but this night was to be an eventful one in this very eventful city. Mrs. Lewis, Frater Brower, who accompanied us from America, and myself were to be inducted into the Order of the M\_\_\_\_\_, one of the oldest arcane Orders of Europe. For centuries it had been a contemporary of the Rosicrucian Order, a body of preliminary training and preparation for the higher degree studies of the Rosicrucian Order, perpetuating many noble traditions and ideals. It had numbered among its membership many learned men throughout Europe whose names are milestones in history.

Frater Brower, who had never been abroad before, and had not previously had the pleasure and privilege of meeting the dignitaries of these august Orders of Light, was in a high state of expectation and enthusiasm. For him the hours of the day slowly waned as he waited



for the evening, when we were to go to our place of initiation. We had been advised to dress semi-formally for the occasion, and we were dressed considerably in advance and waiting with undue impatience in the foyer of our hotel for Mademoiselle Guesdon, who, as usual, was most punctual.

It was dark and rainy when we left in a chugging taxi for our destination. The streets, for so large a city, were quite deserted. The evening was one that induced a melancholy mood. Reflections of the odd-shaped street lamps cast grotesque patterns of light on the slippery pavements. No one spoke. Each treasured silence. To me it was an intriguing adventure. Some of the streets through which we passed were so narrow that the shadows of the houses on either side intensified the darkness so that we seemed to be riding through deep canyons. The streets twisted to such an extent that neither end could be visible, which added to the realism of the impression.

I could not help but think of the sagas of the neophytes of our beloved Order who, in the Middle Ages, seeking Light as we, crept from their homes in the dead of night—such a night as this—and pulling closely over their heads the cowls of their cloaks so as to partly conceal their faces, flitted along in the shadows like things of another world, seeking others who would, in the deep shadows of the eaves of some home, meet them. Together they would secretly enter and surreptitiously conduct a conclave of our Order, fearing any moment to hear the crash of the door and find in their midst officers of church and state who would arrest them for daring to go beyond, in their studies and thoughts, the prescribed confines of the ecclesiastical and state laws of what should constitute knowledge. Though I was to experience no such danger, I thrilled with the thought of the danger they experienced to gain what we, of the jurisdiction of America and the allied jurisdictions, enjoy so freely and sometimes unappreciatively.

After a ride of about ten minutes we came to an abrupt stop on a slight hill. Stepping from the taxi so as to avoid pools of muddy water, we stood on the sidewalk in front of a brown stone building that resembled the mental picture one gains from the descriptions of homes in French novels, architecture of the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. It was quaint, intriguing—the sharp pointed roof, the garret windows, the well worn steps leading to the main entrance, and the small doorway at the left, below, with its heavy wooden door and small grated windows.

Presuming that this was the place we were to enter, because it seemed to have an atmosphere of mystery and secrecy, I started in advance of the others to walk up the steps toward the large doors which were closed, and through small glasses in the upper portion of which was shining a faint light. Mademoiselle Guesdon called out to me to return. I said, upon reaching her, “Is not this the place?” “Yes,” she said, “but not the entrance.” She turned, and we followed her. She approached the small door at the left. In fact, to reach this door we had to go down two or three steps. To me it had seemed like a servants’ or delivery entrance. We stood behind her, our coats drawn about us tightly. It was still raining and miserably uncomfortable. Not a soul was to be seen on the street. It was exceptionally dark because there was only a faint street lamp at either end of the long block. She knocked three times. I recalled the symbolic knock in one of our rituals.

We waited what seemed to me a great length of time. No one spoke. She made no further effort to knock. Finally I heard a bolt being drawn in the door, and the door must have been heavy and not used frequently, for it opened slowly as though the one who was opening it found it an effort to do so. It creaked. We looked in. There was a hallway, a short one, well illuminated by an odd electric fixture hanging on the high ceiling, casting a peculiar pattern on the floor. To the right of the entrance in front of which we stood was a stairway that led upward, only one flight of it being visible. The hallway was inviting. It radiated a spirit of friendliness, warmth, light, cheerfulness.

Immediately before us stood a frater, tall, well proportioned, and wearing a flowing white gown, and a black mask which concealed all of his face but just a slight portion of his forehead and his mouth and chin. He said but one word: “Enter.” We did. We filed in and lined ourselves against the wall of the hallway. He closed the door, bolted it, spoke nothing further, turned at right angles, walked slowly up the long stairway, we following him with our eyes as he did so. Again silence

reigned, and no one made the effort to speak. Speaking seemed to be out of order. No one seemed to want to shatter his impressions with words.

In a few moments this frater returned, and smiling, and speaking in English, asked us to please follow. Mademoiselle Guesdon led. The robed frater took up the rear. We climbed the flight of stairs to another passageway identical with the one below, except that in this hallway were two doors. We waited outside one. The robed frater opened it just enough to pass into the chamber, but we could not see in and knew not what to expect. He returned a few moments later and had in his hand three large white silk handkerchiefs. We were asked to remove our coats and hats, and then each of us was blindfolded, and each of us was led through the open doorway into the chamber of initiation. The masks were not removed until we had had such experiences as made it seem that we had lived for centuries and traveled to other worlds. And thus concluded my first initiation in the Order of the M\_\_\_\_\_. I was to have still others.

## Chapter II

# HISTORIC PARIS

THE TEMPLE OF Justice is visible for quite some distance before you arrive at it. It is a large, imposing building. Each corner of it is flanked with a tower-like turret so that it looks like a medieval castle. It apparently has never been cleaned by sand blasting as are many of our old stone buildings in this country, for its walls are extremely black as though they had been coated or painted with a black pigment. One gets a chill in looking at it, a sort of dread feeling. In the center of the square building between the two large turrets or towers is a great gateway, massive, composed of an iron grill. The bottom of the grill has spikes, and the whole gate itself is studded with bolts which are apparently hand-riveted.

This Temple of Justice, as it is now called, was used during the French Revolution as the place where royalty was confined, where aristocrats were imprisoned before their trials or, as we might say, “mock trials,” and before they were led to the guillotine. As you approach the large gateway, you feel your spirits ebbing, whether it is the suggestion of the building itself, its cold atmosphere, or whether it is knowledge of the fact that thousands were confined there before they lost their lives through political upheaval. Many were tortured there. Most all were led from thereto their deaths. Political prisoners during the French Revolution who were led into that gateway knew it meant the end of freedom and the end of life. It was like crossing the threshold from this life to another.

We passed through the gateway into the courtyard. The courtyard consisted of cobblestones irregularly laid and not even uniform in

height. About the small quadrangle were the four walls of the structure, all of the same cold-appearing stone. One felt oppressed, as though it were even difficult to breathe, though of course the courtyard was open above. The only openings in the walls of the building were long narrow apertures about three feet in length and perhaps eight or ten inches in width. Behind these apertures were little alcoves in which a man could stand and lookout through the narrow slit, and shoot through it if necessary without exposing himself too greatly. If one looked up at these apertures which were dark, because of the shadows of the interior, one almost felt as if eyes were piercing him, as if he were being scanned by an invisible person. We quickly crossed the cobblestone courtyard to a low arched doorway typical of Gothic architecture.

We stepped down three well-worn steps and pushed heavily against a plank door with its strap iron braces, which creaked on its rusty hinges as it opened. We looked into what seemed to be an enormous subterranean chamber with a vaulted ceiling, with many squatty columns of enormous circumference. These columns supported the entire structure in the manner of Gothic buildings. The columns were joined at their tops by arches forming a series of pockets or vaults in the ceiling. It was very dark, except for the yellow light of a small gas jet. One could easily see that the gaslight had been added some time later, for the pipe was strung along and fastened to the columns. The flame was flickering considerably because of the drafts that came from this large underground area. We closed the door behind us, which left us alone in this great chamber.

For no reason whatsoever we spoke in hushed voices as though we were afraid of awakening someone or attracting attention to ourselves. Finally, realizing that there must be an attendant in the place, I called out. The echo of my voice seemed to spring back toward us from every corner as it resounded throughout the stone floor, from the many pillars. It was as though we had awakened a thousand demons who were jeering at us. It was a startling effect.

However, it had the desired result, for there approached us an attendant in a tattered uniform who, though he was there for that

purpose, and must have received visitors frequently, seemed rather curious because we were there. We explained the best way we could in rather crude and broken French what we desired; that we wanted to be shown about; particularly did we want to see the famous cell of Marie Antoinette. He motioned us to follow him, which we did, and we wended our way among the forest of massive columns to a circular stone staircase.

At the bottom of the stone staircase was another heavy plank door with an enormous bolt and chain, crude but very substantial. In the upper center of the door was a grill or aperture about ten inches square with three stout bars in it. They were so rusty that the metal was crystallizing or flaking away. Over the grill opening was the remains of a small shutter, which apparently could be closed so that the prisoner in the cell could not see out. This, the attendant explained, was the cell of the famous and beautiful Marie Antoinette. She was confined for quite some time before she was taken from the cell and led in a rough, high, wooden-wheeled cart through the streets of Paris before the shouting, screaming throngs to the guillotine. There was her stone couch, and the little shrine at which she prayed daily. The vibrations were intense, acute.

We had engendered within us in that cell mingled feelings of fear, hatred, and of remorse. There in the cell also were big iron rings driven into the stones, to which unruly prisoners could be chained. Then we were led to another cell, and still another, and finally again back into the great subterranean chamber, the dungeon-like vast hall. It was in this great chamber that the aristocrats, the ladies and gentlemen, the counts and the countesses, sat about playing cards, talking in low voices, weeping, consoling each other, praying, hoping, while several times a day the bolts and chains would rattle on the outer gate, and in would come officers of the Citizens' Guard who would read from a long scroll the names of those who were next to be tried in a court composed of the Revolutionaries.

When their names were read, shrieks would rend the stone chamber, for all knew that those that were led before the tribunal could expect no mercy and no justice, for there was no trial. They were all condemned

to death, and it was just the formality of passing in review before the judges the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker. And almost before the name of a defendant left the lips of the clerk of the court a cry would arise from the court, "Guilty—the guillotine.

"There is a fascination about a gruesome place such as the Temple of Justice. One would imagine that he or she would be anxious to leave, flee from the place, seek the fresh air outdoors, or that even the rain would be welcome and refreshing. But instead you are drawn to investigate further. The horror of it seems to grip the mind, draw you on and on.

The third day was in our favor, photographically speaking. The sun shone bright and the atmosphere was unusually clear of the customary smoke. We set out in search of the quarters of the famed Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, prominent in the annals of the Eighteenth Century. We could not describe to our driver that we wanted to go to the former residence and garret laboratory of the renowned alchemist and mystic *Cagliostro*, for he is not even known to the average Frenchman except for those who have studied mysticism and philosophy and the history of that period thoroughly. So we had to give him the name of the rue or street.

It was quite a drive; it took us approximately half an hour to reach there. We found ourselves in the heart of bustling, noisy Paris. It was a light wholesale district. The houses of the street were all one hundred to two hundred and fifty years old. Most of them had been converted into factories for manufacturing of fabrics. It was now strictly a commercial district.

We immediately found the place we sought because of its unusual appearance. The building was recessed, surrounded by a high cement wall. On top of the cement wall, which was about twelve or fourteen feet in height, was an iron railing, and back from that iron railing we could see the upper two stories of the building. The garret story was quite eerie looking. It consisted of a series of super-imposed windows, that looked as though they were fastened or attached to the store building, and extended from the face of it.

But what principally caught our attention and definitely identified it as the place we sought was the garret balcony. It was a little porch that extended out from the edge of the top story. Over this porch which had a simple iron railing about it was a low narrow roof, and projecting from the edge of the roof was a metal bar about four feet in length from which hung a pulley, and from that dangled a strand of cable. It was from that balcony that Count Alessandro di Cagliostro hoisted from the cobblestone courtyard below his kegs of chemicals and boxes of instruments used in his secret alchemical experiments.

Cagliostro in his youth had gone to the Orient and studied in the mystery schools there, and became well versed in the secret laws of nature. Returning again to Europe, he became renowned as a healer. He effected miraculous cures. He seemed always to be in possession of great wealth, jewels and gems, and he was lavish in his contributions to the poor and needy. His demonstrations of natural law gained for him the reputation, on the one hand, of being an astute philosopher and alchemist, and on the other hand he was accused by those who feared his powers of being a black magician and of practicing the arts of Satan.

From where his tremendous wealth came, which seemed endless, no one quite knew. It was said that he had discovered the means of transmuting the baser metals into gold and thus could make gold at will. Because of the great cures he effected, it was said that he had also found the elixir of life. Kings and potentates sought his counsel and his help, but as his fame spread, so did also jealousy and fear of him. It is said he entered Paris riding in a great golden coach laden with gems and with chests of gold. Cagliostro was charged with many crimes and successfully defended himself against them. Some of his greatest accusers were those who held high positions in the church. The persecution became more intense, and finally he was dragged bodily from his garret home and wrongly imprisoned for life.

For years the only historical accounts were those which came down to us from prejudiced persons, declaring him to be a charlatan, a mountebank, a fraud, and an imposter. Since that time other facts have been found which reveal that he was not a charlatan, not a fraud, but



a true mystic. He was a person who used his wealth for the benefit of others and most certainly had a mastery of natural law which he sought to teach and which caused mingled feelings of respect and fear toward him.

With these thoughts in mind we entered the courtyard and looked about. Everything was disillusioning. Along the three sides of the courtyard were doorways that originally had perhaps led into private chambers of his residence. Now they were doorways leading into shops, and over the doorways hung either brass or wooden signs, and through some of the partly open doors we could see women working at sewing machines manufacturing garments. From some of the windows overhead, wearing apparel was hanging and modern household utensils were evident.

There seemed to be no appreciation of the fact that they were living in what was at one time the center of the greatest mystery of Europe—the residence and the garret laboratory of Cagliostro, the man who held the respect, fear, and admiration of the crowned heads of Europe. Most of them did not even know that this old building had been the property of Cagliostro. As we stood looking about, a man approached us from one of the shops. He appeared to be the superintendent and asked us what place we wished. We explained that we were merely visitors and desired to take a few photographs.

He seemed puzzled as to why we wished to photograph these small places of business or shops. We explained that we were here because of its historical interest, that we knew, in fact, that this was the former residence of the mystic and alchemist Cagliostro. He looked quizzically at us for a moment and replied that it was, but that no one except himself and one other of the attendants knew anything about it, and they said nothing about it as they did not want to attract visitors who would interfere with the business activities. He said we could not enter the garret because it was occupied by a tailoring establishment and the tailor himself had never heard of Cagliostro and did not, of course, know that he was occupying the laboratory of the alchemist. It seemed such a travesty that nothing was done to respect the memory of this renowned character. At least—we thought—a brass plate could have been erected to his memory somewhere in the courtyard.

I had known from my studies and from our Rosicrucian archives that there was a secret passageway and stairway which led to the garret. The passageway also led out from this court for several blocks to some other residence in the city that Cagliostro would use when desiring to evade the curious throngs who used to collect about the outer wall, either waiting to see him or to solicit his gold. My attention was attracted to one of the doors in the corner of the courtyard. It was a little smaller than the rest, but particularly was it noticeable because it was not wooden like the others, but was all metal, a solid sheet of metal. It looked like a fire exit, such as we use in buildings today, with a metal door to prevent the spread of fire from one building to another. I pointed to it. "And that?" I said.

He seemed to sense what I thought and he said, "That is not in use any longer. It used to be a tunnel or passageway that led out somewhere into this district, but long ago a portion of it caved in and so it has fallen into disuse. We keep the iron doorway closed so that it will not be used by anyone, thus they will not be injured. "

Cagliostro's?" I asked. He replied, "Most likely, as no one remembers when it was constructed, and apparently it was made at the time this building was erected several centuries ago." We had all the information we needed, and we immediately took photographs.

## Chapter III

# WORKSHOP OF SIR FRANCIS BACON

THE VERY NAME *London* thrills the imagination. For centuries this capital of a once vast empire had a tremendous influence upon the history of the world. The visitor who is at all familiar with history cannot resist recalling great events and lives whose setting was this teeming city of millions. The Rosicrucian history, the modern formation of the Order, has also felt the impact of London and its great personalities of the past. Robert Fludd, Dr. John Dee, Sir Francis Bacon—these are but a few of those who lent their thoughts and personalities to the Rosicrucian Order, direct or indirect, and whose activities were centered in and around London.

Though but a few minutes from the heart of London; Islington has a quaintness about it that is reminiscent of a quieter age. We stood in the public square, one that might have been the center of any soporific village. Huge shade trees fringed the walks, their boughs nearly brushing the passerby. High stone walls surrounding nearby buildings suggested once cloistered estates. The peace and quietude as well as the illusion of yesteryear was occasionally shattered by lumbering lorries which would suddenly make their appearance. It was shocking to the imagination. It brought yesterday into conflict with today.

Like a sentinel, or a somber judge looking down from his high bench upon our times, stood the *Canonbury Tower*. It was both impressive and forbidding in its stark simplicity. It dominated the square as if guarding it against the encroachment of modernity.

Not long after 1509 A.D., Prior Bolton of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield “builded of new the Manor of Canonbury at Islington which belonged to the Canons of this house. . . .” The tower is part of Bolton’s original building. History relates that after the dissolution of the monasteries, Canonbury was occupied by various court favorites. Some of these were Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex; John Dudley, Earl of Warwick; and Lord Wentworth. In 1570 Sir John Spencer, Lord Mayor of London, acquired Canonbury and elaborately renovated its interior. From 1616 to 1625 *Sir Francis Bacon*, eminent philosopher and Rosicrucian, leased the Canonbury property. He was then attorney general.

Behind the tower, surrounded by a rustic stonewall, is a typical English garden. Against the somber and dull color of the tower and wall, the garden is refreshing in its vividness of color and its precise landscaping.

We approached the entrance to the structure with an air of reverence. We had been given special permission to photograph the exterior and interior and to occupy ourselves upon the premises as we desired. As we climbed the worn stone steps to the massive door, we thought of it as a veritable cradle of concepts. Once located within the security and privacy of this aged edifice, illuminated minds had given expression to their ideas. From this place thoughts went forth which gave tremendous impetus to the intellect of the times.

We ascended a narrow spiraling stairway. Immediately upon our entrance into the Canonbury Tower we had sensed an atmosphere of adventure. It was like peering behind the curtain of time. What eminent personalities had trod these stairs in the centuries past! Assassination had also been attempted in this very edifice. The plotter must have slunk in these very shadows against these curved stone walls, as he stealthily made his way upward to the scene of his intended crime. On our way to the first floor or stage of the tower was a small plank door, ill-fitted, we thought. It had at one time been latched. Well worn grooves indicated the path of the bolt that had since been removed. I was intrigued by this door covering an aperture in the otherwise unbroken plane of the wall’s masonry. Why a door there on such a

narrow twisting stairway? It was not large enough for one to enter upright. To crawl in would have been difficult while balancing oneself on the slippery treads of the circular stairway.

The whole experience had a certain psychological impact. It portrayed how newly perceived objects and circumstances are often symbolical of latent ideas or experiences acquired in devious and often forgotten ways. For some reason the stairway and mysterious door aroused ideas of horror and the recollection of events whose settings paralleled this present experience. With reluctance and some repugnance, I tugged at the small door and it creakingly opened. Behind it was an aperture like a closet, actually a deep niche in the tower wall. Only the crepuscular lighting of the stairway, which the grey stonewalls reflected from below, entered the crypt-like closet. There was evidence that it had been remodeled since its original construction. The whole appearance within was now quite innocuous. It had been in comparatively recent times obviously used for storage. However, as I peered within and inhaled the dank air, which was thoroughly expelled by opening the door, I had the strong impression—or was it imagination?—that its function had at one time not been so innocent.

A few more steps and we were on the first landing. The floors were solid oak, random planks. They had been worn to wax like smoothness, perhaps by both the wear and care of former residents. Before us was a huge wooden door, an excellent representation of the craftsmanship of the Seventeenth Century. The wrought-iron hinges and latch made it a thing of beauty. It stood ajar. The open crack was like a golden streak from the light within. In contrast to the crypt on the stairway, it had a welcome atmosphere. Boldly pushing open the door, we were met by a flood of sunlight streaming through leaded glass windows on two sides of the expansive room. The large windows reached from the beamed ceiling to the planked floor.

The room had exquisite heavy oak paneling. It is said that Sir John made these improvements nearly four hundred years ago! From the ceiling was suspended a massive chandelier in an excellent state of preservation. Whether this, too, was intact from the time of Sir John or had been installed more recently we did not know. It bore the effects

of our times, however, as it had been electrified. From the windows on one side a vista of the square could be seen. Through opposite windows one looked down upon the garden with its mulberry tree laden with delicious fruit, and the tree, too, was hoary with age.

Slowly we turned about for a full appraisal of these inspiring quarters. Behind us, unnoticed as we entered, was a large fireplace. It commanded attention in the room, as it must have been the focus of all who had meditated within this chamber. We were in what had once been the library and principal study of Canonbury Tower. As such it was, for some nine years in all probability, the *workshop* of Sir Francis Bacon. Were these very surroundings the stage on which his mind produced the Shakespearean plays so often attributed to his genius? What affinity was there between the high windows, the light that poured through them, the strong security of the paneled walls and the planked floors, the quiet garden without, and the ideas that arose to the fore of consciousness of those who had meditated here?

We sat in rustic chairs before the immense fireplace, our legs stretched before us and our feet naturally finding the smoothly worn grooves which time and other feet had left in the floor. Though we did not speak, it was the unexpressed desire to try to capture something of the atmosphere of an age forever gone. It was like trying to live in retrospect, for a few minutes, the life of another.

Every chamber on each succeeding floor was likewise beautifully and impressively paneled, adding dignity to its history. From the tower's top one gained an impressive view of the surrounding countryside. At night, alone, gazing into the starry vault of the heavens from this vantage point, the experience must have contributed to the stimulation of the reason and inspiration of the great minds who had stood there. Our leaving Canonbury Tower was like a return to wakefulness from a pleasant dream.

## Chapter IV

# LAND OF THE NILE

ONE TIRES OF sea journeys, especially after several days of *mal de mer* or, in other words, seasickness. The sea had suddenly changed one night to a plunging, swirling fury which tossed the fairly large ship about with ease. Raising it to heights, the sea would let it slide with a sickening shiver to wallow in a deep trough, the next moment to boost it up, suspended, it seemed, in mid-air, and then to let it fall again, it rolling dizzily all the while as if trying vainly to steady itself.

All this was now past. The sea had quieted except for choppy waves which were whipped by a brisk breeze. We were recuperating, finding pleasure in the thought that in a little more than an hour we were to come in sight of the shores of Egypt. The very word "Egypt" electrified us. We went below to prepare our baggage for custom inspection, expecting considerable difficulties with the customs because of the great amount of professional cinema equipment and films. After tedious packing and a lapse of considerable time, we returned to the deck. The ship had slowed her speed. We peered southeastward and thrilled at the sight. There was a long sandy strip of land hardly above the surface of the sea. It was the entrance to the port of Alexandria. On this sand strip there stood a moderately tall lighthouse. It was in this vicinity that the famed island of Pharos was located.

On that island in the entrance to the mouth of the Nile, during the Hellenistic period about 300 B.C., was erected the first lighthouse of the world. A great structure, it rose to a height of some 370 feet, or about thirty stories, equaling many of our skyscrapers. The ancient

mariners could see its great light far out at sea, and were guided safely in with their strange cargoes. Its oriental design later became the basis of the Mohammedan minarets commonly seen today as a part of the architectural structure of their great mosques or temples. It finally fell in 1360 A.D. It was the last of the great tower structures influenced by the Babylonian tower builders.

We thought of the thousands of ships through the centuries that must have approached this port as we were doing. We imagined Cretans laden with finely carved, earthen vessels and vases, and beautiful necklaces and bracelets of gold and of bronze; Greek ships with statuary and marble; Egyptians returning after trading hardwoods from up the Nile, and papyrus from the delta, and copper from the ancient mines on the peninsula of Sinai. At that time, Alexandria was not only a seat of learning but was the New York or Liverpool of the ancient world—a great shipping or trading center.

As the ship maneuvered into position for tying at the dock, a motley crowd gathered to welcome it, shouting, screaming, jumping up and down, waving their hands. They were anxious for their prey—the passengers. Egyptian fellahs who served as porters, Nubians, Arabs, Jews from Palestine, and Syrians, either wishing to act as guides or assistants, jostled each other for vantage positions. Some wore tarbooshes (fezzes), others low turbans of loosely wound and much soiled linen. Still others were bareheaded. Some were clothed in awning-like striped gowns and barefooted. The majority wore what appeared to be flannel nightgowns open at the neck, which nearly trailed in the dust of the waterfront street.

Native police were finding it difficult to maintain any semblance of order, though they were freely applying bamboo-like canes to heads, backs and shoulders. After much explanation, annoyance, and a liberal distribution of bakshish (native vernacular for money), we were seated in a modern, comfortable railroad coach which sped southward along the great Nile toward Cairo.

The Nile is one of the greatest rivers in the world. It begins three degrees south of the equator, and flowing northward attains a length



of some four thousand miles. It, the White Nile, is joined by two tributaries—the Blue Nile, its affluent from the east, and one hundred and forty miles below this union the Atbara joins it. The volume of the Nile is not great, but it has influenced the destiny of man more than any other river in the history of the world. For centuries it carried its alluvial soil to the sea from equatorial Africa, each season periodically overflowing its channel and depositing on either side, on top of the parched Libyan and Arabian desert sands, a black, smooth film of the most fertile soil of the world. Inch by inch, year by year it grew deeper, pushing the desert back from the river channel itself. Vegetation flourished in this black rich soil; it grew right up to the edge of the desert itself.

Here in this valley the early Stone Age man, who in some manner crossed the Mediterranean from Central Europe ahead of the great glacial descents, found himself in an ideal environment. Egypt is not visited by any severe storms. There are no frosts or snows. Having once arrived in Egypt, he was protected from the ice, from the glacial movements, by the great natural barrier of the Mediterranean. On either side of this Nile's trip were great almost uncrossable deserts which protected him from enemies, and he was at peace with the world for a considerable time. What he was able to accomplish within each decade and century remained. Civilization was able to build on the accomplishments of those who had gone before, instead of having all torn asunder by ravishing hordes or the destruction of nature, and being forced to begin again. Thus civilization prospered, flourished, at a time when the rest of the world was either wholly barbarian or extremely primitive.

As we sped southward, we found that in many respects the customs of these simple people had not changed with the years. On either side of us was a network of small irrigation canals. Irrigation began in the Nile Valley and was developed to a science at a time when men in other parts of the world were still chipping Hint implements. We could see small, brown-skinned men standing knee-deep in the water close to the banks and working lifts—long poles, each having a mud basket fastened on one end, and on the other end a mud ball as a counter weight. By manipulating this sweep or pole they would lift baskets of

water from the Nile up to the level of the irrigation ditches, keeping a steady flow running through the intensely cultivated lands.

Further on we could see the application of the simplest mechanical form of pumping water, waterwheels, to which were fastened buckets which would scoop up the water, and which were kept in motion by docile water buffalo—the great beast of burden of the Egyptian. They walked about in a circle, blindfolded to keep from becoming dizzy from the incessant circular motion. In the days of the Pharaohs taxes began with this system of irrigation. It was an intricate system. The ditches and dykes had to be constantly protected and maintained. The Pharaohs and the nobles maintained a corps of what we may call engineers and constructors to build new irrigation dams and ditches and to maintain those in existence. They in turn exacted taxes from the peasants in return for the use of the canals and the water. These taxes amounted to a certain portion of their crops which had to be delivered at a given time. If they were not, officers of the nobles or the Pharaoh would seize the peasant and bring him to the royal or feudal court for reckoning.

Frequently we passed beautiful groves of tall, swaying palm trees, native to the country. All about us was green, though not many miles away on either side was the lifeless glaring desert. All this life, this coolness, this vegetation, was dependent upon this one source, *the Nile*.

It is not surprising that the ancient Egyptians worshiped the Nile. They regarded it as the god of fertility and life itself. It provided them with food, with drink; its rise and fall made it possible for them to tell the passing of time. It carried them to the sea. Their whole existence was bound up in it.

The Egyptians were not always a united people, however. There were at one time many little kingdoms that spread along the Nile. Then, in a later period, these kingdoms united into two great ones—the kingdom of the Upper Nile and the kingdom of the Lower Nile. Many wars were waged for the conquest and sole control of this fertile valley.

Occasionally as we concentrated on what we were passing, we would have a fleeting glimpse of native mud villages, houses constructed

much like the early California adobe ones, bricks made of the thick alluvial soil, reinforced with straw, which would become baked by the sun, hard and resisting. As Upper Egypt, in particular, is never subject to rain they were quite durable, and an insulation against the terrific heat of the summer months. Domesticated animals, poultry, and children freely walked in and out and around the houses of the village. The streets were but deep ruts in the soil. Soon we were to reach Cairo. It is said that before reaching Cairo and just as one is approaching, the great Pyramids of Gizeh can be seen rising above the flat tablelands of the desert. However, we were not favored with seeing them at this time.

Cairo is a large city and is affected greatly by European customs, architecture, dress, methods of transportation, etc. In modern Cairo one feels as though he were in a city such as Paris, Naples, or some other metropolis of the world. Street cars jangle by, taxis are honking, people are well-dressed in the Occidental sense, streets are well paved. One finds a tremendous modern influence in architecture. Beautifully designed apartment houses, towering several stories, are to be seen in various sections of the city. They are mostly occupied by wealthy persons who spend two or three months of the year in Cairo, taking advantage of its salubrious climate.

The only suggestion in modern Cairo of the Orient are the robes and tarbooshes worn by native Egyptians and by visiting Arabs. Most of these robes are worn by dragomen, that is, the Egyptian guides who adopt native costume in Cairo to attract the attention of tourists and travelers. Their robes are highly ornamental, made of heavy silk, with beautiful linings, and artistically embroidered brocades. Most of the Egyptian business men in Cairo have adopted the western style of dress. A few still cling to the tarboosh because it is the symbol of Mohammedanism. It is more than just a hat; it designates one's religious belief.

After locating at our hotel, we immediately proceeded to make inquiries about the city itself. The first point of attraction is naturally the native section of the city. One feels that he must not be disappointed. He must not remain in the modern section of Cairo, for it is too much

like his home country, his own city. He does not want to spoil the mental picture he had of Cairo, and so he quickly seeks out the native section, which more conforms to his concept of what Cairo should be like.

The native bazaars are little changed by the years. The shops on either side of narrow streets, many of them covered by dome-like roofs, are but small cubbyhole-like rooms. In the front of these are suspended on chains and ropes or stacked on wooden shelves attached to the wall on either side of the doorway, samples of all of the merchandise which the shopkeeper has for sale. Naturally, as you walk through the streets you are immediately recognized as a foreigner, as a European, if not an American, and the hawkers begin crying their wares and their prices. They rush out to grab you by the elbow, trying to escort you into their shops, proclaiming to you that their wares are the best if not the most reasonable.

We returned quite late to our hotel, dining on the terrace and watching Cairo move by. Tomorrow was to be a busy day—a thrilling one. Tomorrow was the eventful *September 16th, 1936*, the day recorded in symbolism in the *Great Pyramid* itself, the day, it was claimed, that might shape the destiny of the world. And we were to visit that edifice upon that day, after arranging for the special concession. The sense of responsibility that rested upon us, the realization that the world, through the press, was considering the significance of this date prophesied in the Great Pyramid, occupied our thoughts until we lost consciousness in restful sleep.

## Chapter V

# PROPHECY DAY IN THE GREAT PYRAMID

**T**HROUGH AN EXTREMELY inviting breakfast had been prepared for us, we were not in a mood for the consideration of food. What lay ahead of us occupied our thoughts. All through our travels there had been in the back of our consciousness the thought of the Great Pyramid and September 16, 1936, the eventful day prophesied by the pyramid itself to have a tremendous future effect upon the races of mankind and our present civilization. Even as we hurriedly ate and glanced through a Cairo newspaper we observed that the press of that city had taken cognizance of September 16 and, in along article, quoted different authorities' interpretations of the symbolism of the Great Pyramid with respect to this particular day.

Of course, from what one has read and pictures one has seen, one realizes that the pyramids are the greatest edifices ever built by ancient man—as far as we now have knowledge of the past—and that they are massive structures today, even in comparison with the skyscrapers and big buildings of our modern cities. But this realization is nothing to the actual experience of seeing them. As one approaches they grow monstrous and seem to loom out of the very sands upon which they are erected. Most paintings of the great pyramids make them seem very colorful, yet in the glaring sun, even in the early morning, to the eye they are white with just a slight tint of yellow. They reflect the brilliant sunlight on the sands.

The pyramids are built on a great high plateau—the plateau of the Sahara. They are not on the delta region of the Nile. In a sense, in their present state of preservation they appear crude, like an enormous pile of gigantic blocks tumbled upon each other and assuming, it seems by accident, the general shape of the pyramid. But this impression is only gained when one is close to them. From a position close to them there seems to be little difference in size between the Great Pyramid of Cheops and the Pyramid of Chephren.

As one starts to walk about the base of the Cheops Pyramid, there soon dawns upon him the realization that it does, as estimated, cover an area of some thirteen acres. The great sandstone blocks of which it is composed are about the shoulder height of an average man. For a height of about fifty or sixty feet around the entire pyramid, the great blocks are quite jagged and protrude. Above that, with the exception of the one corner or side of the pyramid which is exposed toward the open desert, the sides are quite smooth and almost inaccessible. The exposed corner, however, has been whipped by the elements and the sands for years, and it is so jagged that its blocks form a natural stairway or steps to the apex. It would seem as though it would be quite simple to ascend the pyramid by this means, yet to the inexperienced it is a tedious task. Native Arab boys for a few piastres willingly race to the top and return in the short time of seven minutes.

The top of the Great Pyramid is now flat, but originally had a gold apex, portions of which were removed at different intervals in the past. It is said that the remainder of the gold was removed during Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. In fact, from below one can see a slender mast rising from the top. This steel mast, it is said, was affixed to the top of the Great Pyramid by Napoleon, and from it flew the French flag during his occupation of Egypt.

One of the mysteries of the Great Pyramid for a considerable time, even in late centuries, was the location of its entrance. There was nothing visible from the outside to indicate the proper entrance to it. The Caliph, El Mamoun, made a false entrance, and this false entrance is still used today as the main entrance to the pyramid. It was through this false entrance that we made our entry, climbing up to it over two

or three of the large blocks, each weighing two and a half tons, which is the average weight of all of them, and of which there are some two million, three hundred thousand in the Great Pyramid—enough, Napoleon claimed, to form a four foot stone wall around France!



#### GATEWAY TO ILLUMINATION

The entrance to the Grand Gallery of the Great Pyramid of Egypt. The massiveness of the structure, which contains approximately 2,300,000 huge blocks of stone weighing about 2 1/2 tons each, may be judged by comparing it with the figure who is seen waving to Rosicrucians assembled below, having just exited from the King's Chamber high in the mammoth edifice.

February, 1954 – Egypt

We entered the jagged aperture of the mammoth structure, and then our party of four cautiously walked along a semi-dark and narrow, stone passageway which led to the ramp of what is known as the Grand Gallery. After walking along this passageway for a short distance we were obliged to stoop and crawl through a circular-like tunnel for a distance of about twenty-five or thirty feet. When we stood erect again we were at the beginning of the Grand Gallery. It was a most awe-inspiring spectacle.

We thrilled to the thought, as we looked upward along this steep narrow passageway and saw above us and on either side massive, highly polished stone blocks. Mystery of mysteries! One feels helpless, surrounded by this wall of stone. He feels insignificant, humble. It is peculiar but true that the Great Pyramid inspires in man that same feeling of humility as do some of the great works of nature. Slowly we began our ascent up the rough, stone ridges in the form of steps which are the only means of reaching the top of the Grand Gallery. It is a steep ascent and you feel, after five or ten minutes of climbing, that the height of the Great Pyramid is underestimated and certainly must exceed by several hundred feet the nearly five hundred feet accredited to it.

Suddenly your attention is called to an almost obscure, hole-like aperture to your right as you ascend. As you look at it, it seems as though it was not an intentional opening but perhaps the result of damage in later years, but you are advised that this is the true entrance to the Great Pyramid. As you peer into the inky blackness and feel a cool draft of air upon your face, you think of the hundreds of neophytes of the mystery schools of the past who were led up from the Chamber of Darkness below after taking their original obligation at the altar between the paws of the Sphinx and after having performed certain rites in the allegorical world of darkness depicted by the lower chamber. They were then permitted to ascend the very narrow and low passageway into which we looked and to enter the Great Pyramid itself through this jagged opening. How pleasing it must have been to them to know that they had attained that degree of illumination and understanding and worthiness which permitted them to travel further, physically, mentally and spiritually!



So with the most solemn spirit and in utter silence we proceeded. The entire experience invited silence. Ordinary conversation and comments would have seemed so absurd, so meaningless in contrast to the thought that was put into this stupendous structure, the wealth of knowledge it represented, the experiences of those who had gone before us in this same place. Finally, with gratitude, we came to a rest at a level stage. Walking along this level pathway, which was considerably more narrow than the Grand Gallery, we entered a portal, an opening seemingly cut through a sheer block of limestone, of about seven feet in height and three feet in width. Passing through this we came into a large chamber known as the Queen's Chamber, about twenty-five feet in length and sixteen or twenty feet in width, with a comparatively low ceiling, absolutely plain, no inscriptions, no symbolism, nothing to indicate either the life or death of its builders.

It must be explained at this point that the prophecies of the Great Pyramid are not based upon inscriptions found on the walls or in papyrus scrolls, for there was practically nothing left or found in the Great Pyramid to reveal anything of the times or of the pyramid prophecies. The prognostications are based upon the dimensions of the Great Pyramid, its passageways, their height, length, and breadth of the stones, the distances from one passageway to another. There is a numerical uniformity to the dimensions, and this uniformity has given mathematicians, scientists and others a mathematical key. With this key the different proportions and mathematical arrangements of the Great Pyramid have been used by theorists to predict events of the future. This is not altogether speculative or fantastic, because certain events have definitely come to pass, one after another. It is one more indication of the fact that the Great Pyramid was used not only as a temple of learning but as an archive of learning to inform future generations of the knowledge of the basic sciences had by the mystery schools at that time.

Other facts related are that the pyramid is in the exact center of the land surface of the earth; that the weight of the pyramid is the same as the weight of the earth in proportion to its size; and further, that it was used as an astronomical observatory, revealing considerable

knowledge of astronomy. Any engineer knows that the builders of the Great Pyramid must have been possessed of exceptional engineering skill and ingenuity to build the structure. Its great blocks of stone are perfectly mathematically proportioned. Their ends are fitted together so perfectly and held by such a thin and yet exceptionally adhesive mortar that not even a sheet of paper can be inserted between them. They were hewn out so accurately that each block of stone does not vary from a straight line and an accurate square more than a hundredth of an inch in a length of six feet.

After leaving the Queen's Chamber we returned to the Grand Gallery once again and continued our ascent for a few minutes longer. Except for the feeble torch-like light every fifteen or twenty feet, fastened by metal brackets to the smooth stone sides in recent times, the passageway would have been inky black. Finally the uneven flooring, which really consists of stone blocks of which the pyramid itself is built, with niches to keep one from slipping because of the steep incline, leveled.

A few feet ahead of us it appeared as though the passageway with the walls converging to a width of about four feet was blocked by a huge stone, one of the masonry blocks upended. As we went up to it we noticed that there had been carved through it also a tunnel-like passageway, the deeper shadow of the entrance not having been noticeable further back. The height of this tunnel-like passageway was not sufficient to allow us to walk erect, and we were again obliged to crawl on hands and knees. We crawled a length of about sixteen feet, then stood upright in a large chamber, the height of which was about twelve or fourteen feet, length about thirty feet, width about twenty feet.

This was the King's Chamber, known as the *Hall of Illumination*. It, too, was perfectly bare of all furnishings, inscriptions, hieroglyphics—in fact, everything with the exception that at the end opposite from which we entered was a large sarcophagus of stone. The sarcophagus, in fact, was one of the blocks of masonry of which the Great Pyramid is constructed, and it was lying in a horizontal position in the center

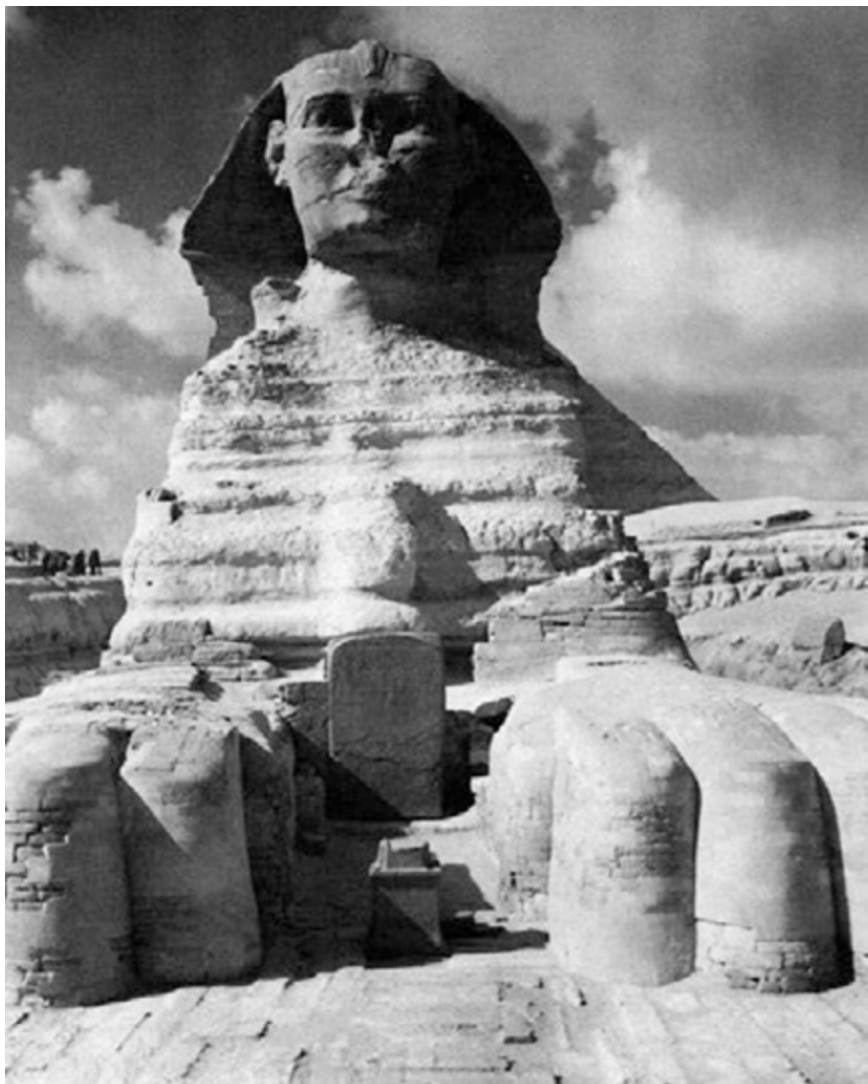
of the end of the chamber. The upper portion of the block had been sawed or cut away, and the reminder had been hollowed out to conform to the general contour of the human body, and thus it formed the sarcophagus or coffin of some pharaoh or eminent person—so relate the sagas.

Many believe it was the burial place of the Pharaoh Cheops. However, there is nothing in the sarcophagus at this time, nothing inscribed upon it that would confirm this theory. Further, there never has been found anything that would definitely establish the fact that the Great Pyramid was built solely as a burial place, with this tomb room as its final purpose. One immediately gains the impression, which supports legends that have come down through the ages as well as the more recent discoveries of which we will speak later, that this sarcophagus was used for *initiation*.

In this Hall of Illumination, this King's Chamber, there met at intervals only the highest adepts and the most highly developed and learned of the members of this mystery school, this early Egyptian Brotherhood of learning. According to legend it was in this King's Chamber that the council meetings were held, where policies were decided which shaped the course of many human lives at that time. It was in this chamber that all the facts of reality, all the knowledge which man had acquired by virtue of experience and investigation, were classified and related and made into an understandable, livable philosophy of life.

In the lower chambers the students were taught facts, the result of inquiry and investigation, made to prove the laws, made to apply them to their own lives. As they learned these lessons they advanced, degree by degree, chamber by chamber, until eventually they were permitted to share in the council meetings of the Hall of Illumination. From there they went forth in the world to spread the knowledge they had learned, to gather about them other neophytes whom they sought out and to teach them as they had been taught.

Legend relates that all around this great temple of learning, this pyramid, at that time greed, fear, avarice, ignorance and superstition prevailed. These dual conditions have always existed. The learned men of that time—those who had attained the Hall of Illumination—could not go out among the multitudes and immediately convert them to understanding. They would only have lost their lives if they had attempted it, and nothing would have been gained. So the real purpose of the Great Pyramid was kept secret. To many at that time it was considered merely a place of worship where mysterious religious rites took place. The ambassadors of light and wisdom of that period were forced to seek here and there one who was ready or worthy to take the vows at the altar between the paws of the Sphinx at a certain hour at night, and then be led through the secret passageway, discovered in recent time by Selim Hassam, eminent archaeologist, to have led into the Great Pyramid itself.



SENTINEL OF THE AGES

Through the centuries, conquerors, explorers, sages and travelers have stood in awe before the great Sphinx of Egypt. Since the reign of the Pharaoh Khufu of the IVth Dynasty, it has witnessed the rise and fall of civilizations. It is carved from a single outcropping of stone on the desert plateau near Cairo and was the largest statue of ancient Egypt.

September, 1961 – Egypt

We stood about, none of us speaking, just thinking, each within the world of his own thoughts trying to visualize what had occurred in this very stone chamber, in this heart of a past civilization centuries ago. There also flashed through our minds the fact that many occult and mystical organizations, so proclaiming themselves, had prophesied a dire event for the world upon this very day, September 16, 1936. They had contended that it meant, if not the end of the world, a serious catastrophe which would shatter civilization, that it would mean the ruination of humanity, or perhaps the very atoms of the Great Pyramid itself would fly asunder. We recalled, all of us, to ourselves, articles we had read within the last forty-eight hours in magazines, in newspapers, setting forth these prophecies by leaders of various sects and cults from every part of the world. The eyes of the world were on this pyramid!

With all of this, we had a sense of satisfaction that we alone had been chosen as representatives by one of the largest of the mystical organizations who took the position that September 16, 1936, was to see the fulfillment of a prophecy of the Great Pyramid. BUT instead of disaster and destruction and ruination it was to be a constructive transition. It was to begin a change in business and in international outlook. The AMORC, the Rosicrucian Order, to show its faith in its interpretation of the prophecy of the Great Pyramid, sent its representatives to be present in the very heart of it upon that day. No other organization had done so.

There was no feeling of depression, but a feeling of elation, of intense excitement, like the minute of lull before a great storm when the boughs of trees are motionless, when not even a leaf can be seen to move, when all nature seems in suspense, waiting for a signal to release her fury. This suspense did not instill fear, but rather expectancy that something stupendous of a Cosmic nature was taking place, or would, shortly.

It was then that there was performed a ceremony that none of us shall ever forget, and it was the first time that it had been performed since the days of the activity of the Great Pyramid itself the time

when the mystic brotherhoods held their regular ceremonies in it. This ceremony was the intonation of the mystic vibratory vowel sounds. Frater Brower stepped forward and turned so that his back was to the center of the great sarcophagus. The rest of us stood on either side of the chamber, and then he proceeded to intone these sacred vowel sounds, the vibrations of which have a definite effect upon the emotional and psychic natures of man.

The vibrations under ordinary circumstances are intended to, and do, excite these centers of man's sympathetic nervous system and have a tendency to elevate his consciousness, to exhilarate him, lift him above the ordinary, mundane feelings and sensations which he experiences daily. But none of us expected the result. We heard, not alone Frater Brower's intonations, but it seemed the chorus of a million voices besides. With the very utterance of the first vowel it seemed as though he had struck a key which unlocked voices that had been imprisoned in stone for centuries awaiting a magic word or tone for release.

The sounds came back to us from the walls and the floor and the ceiling like a chorus of cries of freedom, as though we had liberated imprisoned beings. It was startling. He continued the vowel sounds for a period of at least five minutes. We seemed to sway. We lost sense of time and space. We were swept along with this strange current of psychic emotionalism, and it seemed for several minutes (it must have been just seconds) after he ceased his intonation the sounds continued to reverberate from wall, ceiling, and floor. Then all was quiet; the silence was deeper by contrast than it had been before.

We felt rejuvenated. Fatigue from the ascent was gone. Any fear that any of us may have had with respect to the stories of what was to occur in the Great Pyramid seemed absurd to us now. We felt secure, and a sense of contentment and peace came over us as though, unwittingly, we had accomplished a great good, which we may come to realize in this lifetime or we may not.

## Chapter VI

# TEMPLES AND TOMBS

I HAD, IN my semi-conscious state of half sleep, a sensation of choking. It was undoubtedly this laborious breathing, with the addition of stifling heat, that awakened me at an early hour. I lay still for a moment trying to swallow; my mouth was parched, and a deep inhalation made me sneeze. The compartment was filled with a fine dust. I could feel it in my ears and on my hands.

Kicking off the remaining cover, I sat up and, leaning forward, raised the blind at the window. The sight that greeted my eyes made me forget the discomfort of an Egyptian train in the late summer. Paralleling the track, one hundred yards distant, was a twisting brown ribbon of water. Bowing gracefully on either side of it were palms, bending far over the embankment as if admiring their beauty in the water below. Beyond, the sand stretched into the distance and finally disappeared at the horizon into the rosy radiance of the morning sun. It was a scene that would tax your credence if it were upon canvas. Egypt was beautiful in a wild sort of way. Its beauty lay in its extremes; there was no attempt at compromise. Each element gave vent to its powers, and the aggregate was the majestic splendor of uncontrolled nature.

As we rushed and swayed along, eddies of air sprayed the windowpane with sand, which clung for a few seconds and then dropped away revealing new charming vistas. Beautiful islets dotted the center of the Nile, crowded to the water's edge with tall palm trees. Water buffalo looked lazily up at us as the river lapped at the ridges of their backs; and little naked brown skinned boys pulled at ropes



fastened to the animal's nostrils. Little girls stopped in their tracks and, turning, unconsciously posed with earthen water-jars on their heads, to stare with mingled expressions of curiosity and perplexity at this modern invader of the land of their ancestors of which we, from another land, knew more than they.

On either side of this road of steel upon which we traveled, the scene was little changed from the time the Pharaohs had thundered over the same sands in chariots, or haughtily surveyed them from royal barges which were leisurely propelled along the Nile. What little inroad the centuries had made—the progress of five thousand years—was symbolized and embodied in this metallic, speeding serpent, this Cairo-to-Aswan Express. Like a single thread of different color in a great fabric, it was noticeable, but other than that, there was little effect upon the surroundings. The deluxe trains of Egypt were as yet untouched by such improvements or embellishments as air conditioning, ice water, or club cars. You either remained confined to your own red-plush, heavily laced, and French-mirrored compartment, or stood swaying in the narrow aisle outside. It was with welcome relief that we arrived at Luxor.

We were escorted to a row of four or five waiting, dilapidated, single-horse and team-drawn surreys. It was not the state of the conveyances that attracted our attention, but the wretched condition of the animals themselves. They were a greater evidence of the poverty and deplorable state of welfare of the Egyptian fellah than his own personal appearance. The horses were not all aged, but were mere frames, covered with tightly-drawn flesh. The whole skeletal structure was, it seemed to us, visible. Most of the unfortunate beasts suffered from mange, and large areas of their bodies contained cankerous sores over which the large, leech-like flies of Upper Egypt hovered. The spirit of dejection of the animals was contagious, and it was several minutes before we felt inclined to comment on our surroundings.

After riding for a few minutes, we stopped before a high stucco wall in which there was a large arched portal. We literally had to push our way through a throng of peddlers of scarabs, necklaces, beads, counterfeit amulets, and relics. Once having passed through the

gateway, we were free, for apparently a well established law or custom exacting some severe penalty of which we were not aware, forbade them to enter. We were in a charming garden and grove. Tall stately palms, grouped closely, cast a pleasing shade. Strange foliage offered relief from the glaring white of the sandy road outside. We recalled the story of "The Garden of Allah," the legendary site of which existed but a scant mile from where we were. The ground was moist, having been watered recently.

The hotel hallways were like those one imagined the hostelryes of the tropics would have—irregular-tiled floors and glazed-tile walls, with exceptionally high, white, plastered ceilings. The crepuscular lighting made them invitingly cool. Behind us a native attendant glided silently. The manner in which he appeared suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, and almost anticipating our needs in advance, was uncanny. In contrast to the natives of the village—and those who waited outside the courtyard below—these attendants were immaculately groomed and spoke excellent English.

Our first duty was to obtain the necessary permits to take professional cinema photographs of the monuments. ("The monuments" is the official term given to all ancient ruins now supervised by the Department of Antiquities in Egypt.) The one who held supreme authority here was the Inspector of Antiquities of Upper Egypt—Labib Habachi. After a brief respite, we drove to his office—a low, one-story, gray stone and stucco building, exceedingly quaint, surrounded by a spacious garden in which stood statuary, busts of Egyptian figures of different dynasties. They, of course, immediately aroused our interest.

This personal office consisted of a random-sized plank floor, high ceiling, and French windows. At the opposite end from which we entered, seated behind a well-worn, Hat-topped desk, and framed by bookcases, facing us, sat Inspector Labib Habachi.\* He was a surprisingly young man in his late thirties, medium height, close-cropped black, curly hair, deep-set, dreamy eyes; and the heavy, dark-rimmed glasses he wore gave him the look of a scholar—which we found him to be. He was so different from the others we had met that in our minds we likened him to the ancient Egyptian nobility

or the scribes of the past. Lying open before him were textbooks on Egyptian hieroglyphs and archeology. Apparently he had been identifying inscriptions on small bronze statuettes which stood before him on the desk when we entered. He was exceedingly gracious, and spoke in the soft, mild voice of the cultured Egyptian. He was a graduate of the University of Cairo, spoke several languages fluently, and was specializing in the study of archeology, which made it possible for him to hold his present responsible position. It was, however, more than a professional interest; this one could easily ascertain from his conversation, for he had a deep reverence for the achievements of his ancient progenitors.

\*(Dr. Labib Habachi is now an Egyptologist of note and has visited the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum.)

When he learned that we, too, had a love for the accomplishments of past great Egyptian personalities, and were not there to exploit his country, but to make her former glories known throughout America by means of motion pictures we hoped to produce, he was exceedingly congenial. He spent nearly an hour in comparing for us certain hieroglyphics with the later hieratic or demotic writing. In addition to his studies, he had, fortunately, the hobby of photography, but he was just a beginner, he stated, and the science of photography was still quite a mystery to him. Our complex equipment interested him immensely. He had apparently never before had the opportunity to examine sound cinema apparatus. This interest made him, after a careful examination of our credentials, enthusiastic in his desire to obtain from his superiors in Cairo the permits which we needed.

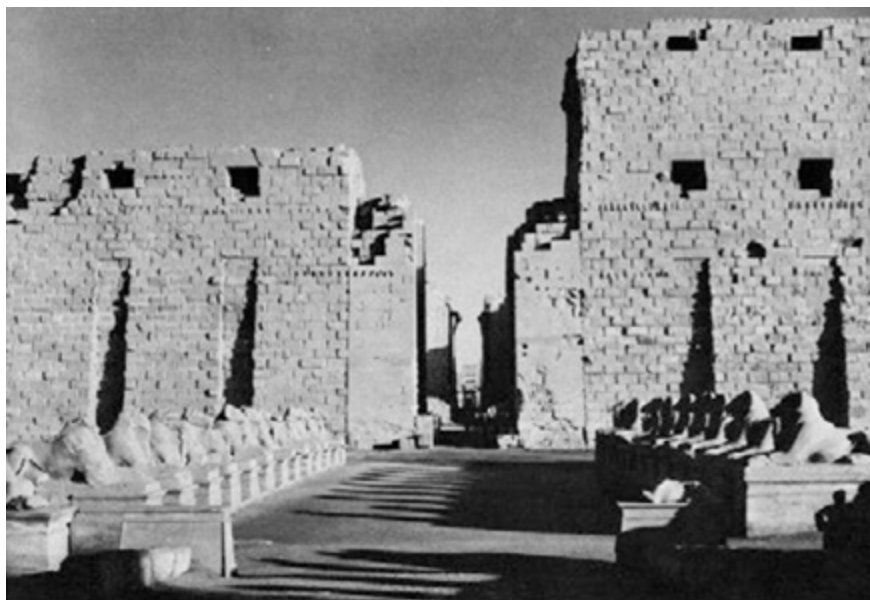
The following morning we were presumptuous enough to have our guide instruct the native porters to load our cinema equipment in the old model American automobile which was to serve as our conveyance to the Inspector's house. We hoped the permission had arrived, and if so, we were prepared to proceed immediately. The morning light was best for photography, affording more contrast than the glaring midday sunlight. Inspector Habachi met us in the courtyard and, smiling, said in a quiet manner, "Your wish has been granted. The Minister of Antiquities, my superior in Cairo, has granted you permission to photograph all the monuments with your cinema equipment. I have

here the official permit." We gratefully accepted it, and our spirits were jubilant.

Turning to Frater Brower, Inspector Habachi said, "I ask of you one personal favor. May I accompany you on your expedition? I feel I could profit by watching you operate your equipment and in turn I may be useful in explaining more thoroughly the monuments to you and reading different inscriptions which have not been generally translated."

We were elated, and gladly accepted this most satisfactory arrangement.

The present city of Luxor is located on the east side of the Nile. Eastward, looking toward the horizon, one sees the distant Arabian desert, and beyond lies the Red Sea. Westward, one looks toward a range of limestone mountains-the mysterious and famed Valley of the Kings. Where are now located the city of Luxor and the temples of Luxor and Karnak, there was once the major portion of the great city of Thebes, the former capital of the great empire. The city of Thebes also spread over to the west bank of the Nile.



AVENUE OF RAMS

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

This Avenue of the Sacred Rams flanks a portal to the magnificent hypostyle of Karnak Temple, Egypt. The Avenue of Rams once led to Luxor Temple some distance away along the banks of the Nile. The remainder of the statues have not yet been excavated.

January, 1962 – Egypt

Our first site to be photographed was the mammoth Karnak Temple, which beggars description. The actual significance of the word *Karnak* is not definitely known; it is said the literal translation means windows. This splendid edifice was built from the wealth accumulated from the early Egyptian campaigns in Asia. The entire length of the temple—or shall we say, series of temples—is a quarter of a mile, and it took some two thousand years to complete construction! The oldest portions of it were begun by the early kings of the feudal age of Egypt. Later portions were completed by the Greek kings, or the Ptolemies. The first Ptolemy was a former general in the army of Alexander the Great. Originally, the entire structures were done in magnificent colors and gold. They were the most beautiful and decorative of all the architectural works of ancient man.

In the center of one of the temples stands the enormous obelisk of Egypt's most famous queen, Hatshepsut. Its size can better be realized by the fact that its base is eight and a half feet thick. The most impressive edifice of this collection of edifices is the great colonnaded hall or Hypostyle. This hall is 338 feet wide and 170 feet deep. Each one of the enormous columns rises to a height of 69 feet; and the capitals of the columns, which are ornamented after the shape of the lotus flower, are sufficiently large to accommodate on their tops 100 men standing in close formation.

The entire floor area of this colonnaded hall is equal to that of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. The center aisle, or nave, consists of twelve columns in two rows, seventy-nine feet in height. They rise slightly higher than the rows of columns of the aisles on either side and thus really form the first clerestory which was finally incorporated as part of the later Greek basilica. This style comes down to us in our Gothic church architecture of today. The clerestory, by rising higher than the halls on either side of it, permits light to enter through the elevated sides and thus enter the lower halls.

The walls around this colonnaded hall are deeply etched with inscriptions and reliefs dealing with the early campaigns and wars of the past kings and pharaohs. Here, cut out of mammoth stone blocks, weighing from eighty to a thousand tons, are colossal portraits of these rulers of a past civilization. It would be a considerable engineering task today to quarry and dress in one piece such enormous blocks, and to move them from the quarry, intact, to the place of their erection. One is forced again to admire the skill and ability of these ancient builders.

As we stood at one end of the nave of this great temple and looked upward, we saw, high above our heads at the opposite end, a stone lattice window—the only remaining one of several windows which originally surrounded that portion of the nave which rose above the halls on either side of it. It is believed that from these windows or grills the temple gained its present name of Karnak

We profited greatly by the detailed descriptions and explanations of our eminent companion, Inspector Habachi. We were able to make many notes to incorporate in the dialogue of our motion picture.\* Furthermore, we were permitted to enter and set up our equipment in places, inner sanctuaries of this Karnak Temple, usually forbidden the average tourist or traveler.

\*The Amorc films of Egypt, in sound and color, have been shown throughout the world. They are available free under certain conditions.

With the passing of each hour, the heat increased. The late summer temperature rose to nearly 115 degrees Fahrenheit. Our native porters whom we had engaged to carry our equipment were reluctant to continue, as it is their custom to take a siesta from noon until four in the afternoon. Our time was limited; we were allowed just one week; and so we had to disappoint them and oblige them to continue.

We entered the beautiful little temple of Thutmose III, who was related to the early foundation of the mystery schools from which eventually, in later centuries, the Rosicrucian Order came into existence. There, outside of the portal, in pure white in contrast to the gray stone columns and pylons about it, was a little altar. It all seemed like a dream—so quiet, so peaceful, and yet representing a people and a

time of thousands of years ago. It did not seem possible that all these structures, constructed so long ago, could be in such a perfect state of preservation.

In this ideal climate of Upper Egypt, where rain falls every thirty or forty years (which makes of the land a warehouse kept at a constant temperature, free of moisture) all antiquities will remain in an excellent state of preservation perhaps for centuries to come. Approximately 4,000 feet of film were ground out within this one edifice alone. We reluctantly returned to our hotel, but were assured that we would find additional splendor in Luxor Temple on the morrow.

The next morning at the same hour we were once again accompanied by Inspector Habachi, and went immediately to Luxor Temple, also known as El Aksur, or “the castles.” The length of Luxor Temple, from front to back, is three hundred yards. It was mainly built under the direction of that famous builder, Amenhotep III. During the campaigns of Alexander the Great, it was partially destroyed, and temples of the Greeks were set up within its midst. At a still later period, the Christians entered this magnificent structure and defaced portions of its beauty by chiseling hieroglyphics and inscriptions from its walls, and covering them with crude, coarse plaster on which they painted even more crude murals depicting incidents of the Christian Bible.

To us, this seemed a sacrilege, not because Christianity established itself in Egypt and attempted to further its ends, but because there was more to these temples than the worshipers’ religion, their beliefs in the hereafter, or their interpretations of a god. There was also their physical beauty, their architecture, their art. These things belong to all religions and not to any sect. It is the duty of religion to preserve beauty, because, as Plato has taught us, through beauty of the external world man can come to have greater appreciation of the better life—those things which represent the beauty of his inner nature or his soul. And we felt that this desecration on the part of the early Christians was not to their credit.

Our companion also showed us other chisel marks on the side of a great stone wall. These marks were made during the time of the

venerated traditional Rosicrucian Grand Master, Amenhotep IV. Centuries before Christianity, as we know, he expounded the first monotheistic conception, the belief in a single or sole God. He was so inspired by this thought that he attempted at once to reform the religions of the land, to make all the peoples of his empire realize THE ONE GOD, a mighty and a just God. He ordered the destruction of the pagan gods, idols, and statues in the temples, and even ordered the immediate eradication from the walls of the great temples of prayers of adoration to the false gods.

These chisel marks, deep etchings into the stone wall before us, were made by those acting under his command to remove the tribute to the false gods. Nothing else did he destroy; all other art he preserved. We could not fail to admire the courage of a man who dared to change overnight, one might say, the religion of the people, to lift them boldly from their superstition and ignorance to a higher and loftier plane, who incurred the hatred of the priesthood by these acts, and who eventually brought about the ruination of his power.

An entire day was spent at Luxor Temple, an insignificant period to appreciate properly its history or even to attempt a careful study of its architecture and its inscriptions, but sufficient time, with the ideal lighting Egypt affords, for considerable photography. Leaving Luxor Temple, we turned again to look westward. Ever since our arrival, we seemed to have been drawn to those purple hills, rugged cliffs across the Nile. Although they were foreboding in appearance, we always felt a strange fascination for them as the sun set behind their crowns.



## Chapter VII

# ANCIENT PHOENICIA

THE MEDITERRANEAN WAS exceptionally blue, rather of the colored postcard hue, almost unbelievably brilliant. The sunlight seemed to dance upon its glass like surface. This coastline of ancient Phoenicia, now Lebanon, was amazingly like that of California. The mountains seemed to plunge into the sea—no gradual approach, but an abrupt demarcation, a bold precipice submerging itself in the waters. It was as if the parched desert far inland had, by a series of undulations, sought to reach the sea and, suddenly coming upon it, one of its crests had slipped beneath the water.

The surrounding terrain was little changed. Nowhere for miles along this coast were evidences of human progress, except for the pavement upon which we traveled. The coastal hills were uncultivated, although spotted with verdure, but, unlike our California Coast range, they were unfenced. Beautiful sandy beaches marked the erosion of the rocky shore by the sea; beaches which in a more commercialized land would have been marred by gaudy concessions.

Little harbor bays were formed by jutting rugged arms of the coast. In these still waters, about 1,000 B.C., floated the sturdy but small craft of the Phoenicians. At that time black-bearded men, who but a few centuries previous had been desert wanderers, nomads, directed the loading of the boats. They carried cargoes of mother-of-pearl inlay furniture, ivory combs, household utensils, gold trinkets, frankincense and other luxuries with which to barter with the peoples of distant countries bordering the shores of the Mediterranean.

They were at that time the greatest navigators of the world. They ventured as far west as what is now Spain and carried on an extensive trade with the early Greeks who were greatly influenced by the Phoenician dress and customs. It is said that the early Greeks borrowed their style of costume from the Phoenicians. As they prospered in their trade, they colonized many towns along the coast of the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

Cars were now passing us rather frequently going in the opposite direction. We were approaching Beirut, the principal seaport of Lebanon. In a few moments we were slowly moving through the streets of this city, which was quite evidently influenced by western ideas and practices. The change in the appearance of shop windows from those of Egypt and Palestine, the large paved thoroughfares, elaborate cafes, spacious lawns, even public trams, did not give us the impression of the Western World attempting to invade the East, but rather that it had already arrived, and the East was trying to survive the influence.

The city of Beirut had been exceptionally Americanized because of the great American University established there, whose faculty members were mainly from the United States. These instructors brought with them their manner and methods of living, and, with their families, gradually impressed the natives with their way of living to which many have taken readily.

Our stay in Beirut was brief, for it was not our immediate destination. We were bound for the inland. Leaving the sea level, we began a very steep ascent, winding our way over the high mountains. Lebanon is renowned for being the site of the once famous cedar trees, by the same name, for centuries used extensively by peoples whose countries bordered the Mediterranean. But one small grove of the great trees still remains, and it is preserved as a monument of the past. Centuries before Christ, the Egyptians put out expeditions to this coast to fell the great trees and float them back to the mouth of the Nile, thence up the great river for hundreds of miles. The writer recently had the opportunity of examining thoroughly several sarcophagi (mummy coffins) being installed in the new addition of the Rosicrucian Egyptian

Museum. These sarcophagi date back to approximately 1,000 B.C. Each of them was made, as practically all of them were during that time, from planks of cedar brought from Lebanon centuries ago. Even though they were about thirty centuries old, they were yet in a fair state of preservation. Many of the early fleets that plied the waters of the Mediterranean were built of the cedars of Lebanon. It was a rare wood and much sought after.

Toward the south end of the Lebanon mountains towers Mt. Hermon, reaching a height of 9,000 feet. The mountain is frequently mentioned in the Christian Bible by other names. Around its base are to be found the ruins of the Temples of Baal. Generally speaking, Baal is an ancient sun god, but generically speaking, Baal was the Syrio-Phoenician word meaning God. The ancient Sidonians had named this mountain Syrian. It is without vegetation of any kind, except a plant life resembling North American sage brush.

To this point in our travels, our roads had been remarkably well paved and graded. Now, they narrowed and were frequently pitted. The hills were growing brown, as though they needed rain badly. The country was becoming more desolate and had its effect upon our moods, and our conversation became less frequent. About two hours after having left Beirut, and having just made a turn on a high mountain pass, we looked down from an altitude of several thousand feet upon a broad plateau stretching into the distance. Far below our road continued, like a gray ribbon stretching for miles across the waste. Toward the horizon a great green patch was visible. Soon we were entering this patch, the outer edge of a fertile area and the age-old city of Damascus, which is on the fringe of the great Mesopotamian desert.

Damascus is the oldest inhabited city in the world! In the Tel-el-Amarna tablets or letters, the first letters of state in the history of the world exchanged between the Egyptian Pharaoh and Queen Nefertiti and the rulers of their subordinate states or colonies in about 1350 B.C., Damascus is mentioned. At that early time, according to translations, it was termed Dimashka. The same name, referring to the same city, is found inscribed on the walls of the Temple of Rameses III in Upper Egypt.

It was the scene of many wars mentioned in biblical literature. David had campaigned against it, but without a great deal of success. French troops were garrisoned there as elsewhere in Syria, but were unsuccessful in accomplishing much with Damascus, or any of Syria in fact, because of an antipathy held toward them by the native Syrians.\*

\* Syria was then a French mandate.

Our hotel was more than a mere hostelry; it was used as an administration building by government officials and political parties, and in fact all of the principal affairs of state were conducted there. As soon as lunch was finished, the guests all crowded into the hallways, lounge and foyer to congregate in groups, gesticulating wildly with their hands, which is customary among a very highly emotional people such as they are.

Suddenly, while we were studying these people, who, although mainly dressed as we were, yet were so different in manner, a hush came over the entire assembly. Everyone stood rigid as though for an inspection and immediately ceased talking. We looked about to see the cause of the sudden suspension of activities and conversation. All eyes were fastened upon a large French doorway that led into the dining hall from whence we had just come. The doors were thrust open and a dramatic entry was made, in ceremonial fashion, by a person whose very appearance indicated a regal position and birth.

He was an Arab prince, we learned. He had traveled several hundred miles from a desert area over which he had dominance, to participate in these conferences and the election. He was in fact, a royal nomad, a desert chieftain. He had control and direction over some 15,000 Bedouins. His costume was impressive and picturesque. He wore a heavy silken robe, full at the bottom, and the conventional Bedouin sandals inlaid with sterling silver. His turban was of a brilliant hue and affixed to his head with the argila. Around his girth he wore a twisted silk cord from which hung, on his left side, a beautiful dirk which, although highly ornamental, undoubtedly was quite practical. His wearing of large sun glasses was unusual.

Typical of the Bedouin, his hands were quite large and gnarled. His face was long, slender, and with a large aquiline nose characteristic of the Arabian race. He spoke with a soft, vibrant voice and was very graceful in his walk. He had a definite positiveness and self-assurance, and reflected the attitude of one accustomed to respect and obedience to his least command or wish. He had descended from a long line of nobility. In the open desert his word was absolute law. He was the highest court of appeal and made decisions which would shape the course of the lives of those who depended on him.

In this election which was now taking place, he could have easily influenced the thousands who were his followers and subjects to vote as he wished for either candidate. Looking neither to the right nor left, he strode out of the hotel toward a waiting carriage, followed by his personal bodyguards, two huge members of his race, dressed like himself, but not having such ornamentation because of their lesser station. In addition to carrying dirks, the bodyguards also wore, crisscrossed over their chests, cartridge belts having large calibre shells, and slung across each of their backs was a modern rifle.

Becoming more curious about the situation, we determined to learn further facts. Later that evening we made the acquaintance of the British Vice Consul of Damascus, who frequented our hotel because it was the center of local social life, and because the few foreigners or Europeans who visited Damascus for a brief stay, whether on business or pleasure, located there.

## Chapter VIII

# ACROSS THE MESOPOTAMIAN DESERT

THE HOUR WAS early, the sun already uncomfortably warm, and the streets filling with garrulous Arabs when a motor bus rumbled up. This was to be our mode of transportation to distant Baghdad, the glamorous city of Arabian Nights' fame. Upon a first examination, it was a typical motor coach, such as one sees racing along the modern highways of the larger nations of the world. This symbol of the Twentieth Century dampened our spirit of adventure for the moment, and jarred the mental picture which we had of ourselves reliving the experiences of ancient travelers to Baghdad. A motor coach does not compliment a Marco Polo mood. Frater Brower called my attention to the exceptionally large wheels of the coach—over four feet in height, and having tires with a peculiar lateral tread which I had never seen before. We conjectured that they were designed to afford traction in the soft sands we expected to encounter.

After securing our seats and supervising the careful loading of our camera equipment, still having a few moments before departure, we carried our examination further. The windows, we now observed, were smaller than the conventional ones of other busses. Surprising was the fact that they were hermetically sealed, and we were to travel in desert heat—not a pleasant thought. Small louvers, above each window, afforded the only ventilation when the car was in motion.

The driver and his relief assistant had not entered, so we took the opportunity of inspecting the driving and control panel. Just above the

panel, and on a line with an aperture in the windshield, now closed, was a metal turnbuckle, mounted on a swivel and ratchet, much after the kind used as a machine gun mounting in the cockpits of military aircraft. This was ominous and we looked at each other significantly. The thought had passed through my mind that perhaps the journey would not be so uneventful after all.

We retired to our fairly comfortable, individual reclining seats upon the entrance of the drivers. The drivers now received our attention. Both were obviously English. Not only was this apparent from their accent, but from their fair complexions by contrast with the dark-skinned Syrians and the Bedouins of Damascus. They were dressed in khaki shirts and shorts, exposing bare knees above woolen socks, a customary tropical attire for the British, but one which the American never quite seems to get accustomed to. They were tall, about thirty-five years of age, robust and deeply tanned, with eyes that squinted—the result of a continuous attempt to keep out the glare of the desert sun. Traveling slowly to avoid striking indifferent children and animals that straggled down the center of the twisted streets, we headed toward the desert.

Nairne, an Englishman, so we had learned, had left the comforts and conveniences of his homeland to promote this modern transportation in a land whose history dates back to the earliest civilizations. He had become particularly impressed with the American advance in the automotive industry and had used American-built motor coaches exclusively. This coach was built in Philadelphia from his own specifications. He had been advised that attempting to operate a passenger line across this desert would be risking human lives as well as property. Marauding bands of Arabs and Bedouins would pilfer and lay to waste each caravan. He made the attempt, it is said, and found the predictions true. Unable to secure adequate protection, it was reputed, he was compelled to pay tribute to certain Bedouin chieftains who in some “mysterious” manner influenced the marauders to give his drivers and property immunity to attack and seizure.

For the last few minutes we had been whisking through the outskirts of this ancient oasis-like city. Suddenly our speed was so quickly

checked that the momentum carried us forward in our seats. Looking ahead for the cause, we saw the pavement's end. Here was no graded road or winding ruts stretching out toward the horizon, but a vast expanse of hard, table surface, giving little indication, even at this close proximity to the city, of any vehicular travel. We craned our necks, looking out of either side of the coach. There was no telltale mark of our destination or direction.

In a moment we were again traveling, attaining a speed of about forty miles an hour over this open desert, heading due east—but where was the road? There were no sign posts or even tire tracks. The driver caused the coach to weave from side to side occasionally, to avoid depressions in the surface. The riding was not uncomfortable; in fact, more comfortable than over some of the pitted streets of Damascus. Our curiosity was great, but the timidity of revealing our inexperience with this sort of travel kept us from questioning the driver at first—this, and the fact that his relief assistant had reclined his chair and from all appearances was sleeping.

Turning, we looked over our fellow passengers with the intent of questioning one of them. Six other men shared the bus with us; four seemed to be Syrians or possibly Arabs or Iraqians. Their faces were immobile. All were looking across the wastes buried in abstraction. The other two men were Europeans. They were, in fact, Englishmen. One, we later learned, was an army officer returning from leave to a post near Baghdad, and was not a very sociable chap, compared to British officers we had met in Palestine. The other young man in his twenties, was bound for the wells of a British petroleum company east of Baghdad. He had made this journey before, and from him came the answers to our questions. We were “navigating” our way across this desert. The driver was guiding the car by compass as a mariner does a ship at sea. These motor caravans, then, were truly ships of the desert.

The Mesopotamian desert at this point was some six hundred miles wide. Unlike our deserts of North America, it was absolutely barren. No cacti, sagebrush, or even birds or reptiles were visible. Except for an occasional swell, it was as level as if graded by man. The surface was so hard that walking hardly made the impression of footprints.



Unlike the Sahara, here there were no sand dunes. As the great car rolled along, now traveling a mile a minute, it caused a fine dust to swirl around the windows and we were thankful that they were sealed. Small, almost perfectly round gravel, as though shaped by hand, was scattered on the desert floor. The striking of this gravel by the fast revolving wheels caused the pieces to ricochet against the heavy window glass with startling revolver-like cracks.

Just as the sameness of the scene began to become monotonous and the steady hum of the motor lulled us into drowsiness, we saw what looked to us like little dots in the distance, slowly bobbing up and down. Three or four minutes later and we were approaching them. It was the first of many camel caravans which we were to see on this journey. Walking in single file, with their peculiar, forward lurching gate, were a dozen giant dromedary camels. To us they were enormous in comparison with the riding camels we had seen and used in Egypt. These were pack camels, far larger and much stronger.

Lashed to their backs and suspended on either side, swayed their great cargo packs, done in huge bales. Dangling from the lead camel was a hand hammered brass bell, having a clear and more melodious note than our cow bells. Immediately preceding the lead camel on a fast-trotting burro, which appeared exceptionally diminutive in contrast to the size of the camels, rode the leader of the caravan, a heavily black-bearded Arab. On one side of the line of camels rode three of his companions, also astride patient little burros.

They were following the ancient caravan trail that had led for centuries from Damascus to Baghdad, thence to Persia and Arabia. Even at this time, nearly all of the freight between these cities and countries is transported via camel caravan in the same manner as in antiquity. Camels, although considerably slower than motor trucks, are far more economical and dependable on the desert. In this great open space there are no service stations or repair shops, and the hauling of fuel is a considerable item. The camels require little food or water for their journey. The products of the Western World were being carried in this primitive manner to the East in exchange for the things in which the cryptic East still excels.

Each night, the cumbersome burdens are removed from the camels' backs and stacked in a large pile. The camels are sometimes tethered. Drivers pitch low tents of goat skins into which they crawl to sleep on crudely made, but richly designed hand-woven rugs. As soon as the sun drops beneath the horizon, the desert begins to cool, and late at night the temperature drop is considerable. Bedouin encampments can be detected by flickering camp fires. To approach them unannounced in the dark would mean death, for during the long hours of the night, some keen eyes are keeping vigil and steady hands grasp high calibered rifles. Even today, as in the centuries past, the law of the desert is mainly an individual interpretation of what is right, and might still rules.

An unusually sharp veering of the bus from its course caused us to look ahead, and on the horizon straight before us was a dark cloud, rising from the floor of the desert to a great height and moving with rapidity in the direction we had been traveling. We were now going at nearly right angles to our previous course. The driver, whom we had finally engaged in conversation, knowing our interest, said laconically, "Dust clouds."

"Can we avoid them," we asked?

"These we can, we will drive around them, but it will put us about ten miles out of our way," he replied. Here, then, was an advantage in not being obliged to travel a road or definite course. We could cruise at will, in any direction, without thought of roadway or embankment. "When we are caught in these storms, we are sometimes forced to wait for a relief caravan to aid us. The dust, despite our precautions, chokes our motor," the driver further volunteered.

For the first time, the thought of food entered our minds. I glanced at my watch, and it was nearly noon. We were not due in Baghdad, if on schedule, until tomorrow morning. Certainly food must be provided some way. How foolish not to have thought of it before. Suppose, I thought, we had been expected to bring our own. Mentally, I was reproaching myself when the bus came to a stop. The relief driver stretched, and then, standing in a stooped position facing us, said, "We will eat here." Frater Brower and I looked at each other and in unison

looked out of the windows at the glaring desert, white with the noon-day sun, the heat radiations visibly rising, no habitation, no sign of life, no shelter, no water. Where were we going to eat? Why stop here?

We were soon to learn. Lifting a trap in the door of the driver's compartment, the assistant removed a number of cardboard containers, like the commercial size workman's lunch boxes. In fact, they were specially packed, individual lunches. This, and exceedingly cold water from a refrigerator tank, constituted our noon repast. When the car was not in motion, the heat became intense, as very little air entered through the louvers. We stepped out, but the sun's direct rays made the comparative cool of the car's shade welcome. We were about to climb aboard again when we heard the distant sound of a motor. Coming from the north, still several miles distant, was a dark spot. A few moments later an open, specially built automobile came to a stop a few feet from us. It was evidently very high powered and was armored with light steel plates. In what would be the tonneau of the car, was mounted a light cannon for firing one pound shells. Attached to a steel plate on the back of the driver's seat was a heavy calibre machine gun.

Solemnly the three occupants got out and approached the bus. Through the white dust that covered them, we recognized that they wore the French regulation army uniform. They also wore the French Legion cap which has a heavy cloth fastened to it that drapes down over the nape of the neck and sides of the face. Removing their goggles which made them appear grotesque—for the area around their eyes was the only portion of their faces which appeared white—they looked at each of us, then peered into the bus windows and under the coach. Without a word or further ceremony they climbed aboard their car and roared away toward the south in a cloud of dust. They were certainly symbols of the silence of the desert.

Our driver explained that they were members of the French Desert Patrol. This area was still under a French Mandate. Seeing our bus stopped, and believing that it might be attacked, or in some trouble, they came to investigate. Seeing no difficulty, they did not find it necessary to converse. This desert patrol is to a great extent ineffectual, because there are an insufficient number of these armored cars to patrol the

vast area, and travelers can be attacked, robbed, and murdered, and hours, even days, pass before their remain are located.

We had been riding for hours, passing only an occasional camel caravan. As it grew dusk, we saw lights far ahead. "A town," I said to Frater Brower. "Can't be," he said. His clipped sentence reminded me of the disinclination of anyone aboard the bus to converse freely. "Nothing between here and Baghdad," he continued. It was not really a town we came to, but a great desert fortress, a frontier post manned by French officers and Singhalese troops. This mud-brick, one-story building, with high walls and corner watchtowers surrounding it, was known as *Rutba-Wells*. Here in this sea of sand was the only well of drinking water for miles around! The water had produced no natural oasis, but man had created one.

To make the water available to caravans and the nomads of the desert, and to prevent marauders from seizing or despoiling it, the French had built this fortress. It was really a garrison in the middle of the desert. The water made it possible for French troops—before the advent of the motor car or airplane, which could now bring military relief quickly—to hold out against a siege for many days. Completely surrounding the fortress, whose white walls glistened in the sun, were barbed wire entanglements, the only entrance through them being a narrow path to the heavily barricaded gates.

Sentries peered down at us from the corner towers in which we could also see menacing rapid-firing guns. Behind the parapet of the walls within the gates was a catwalk, on which troops could stand and fire through apertures if the fortress were attacked. In the center of the enclosure was a short-wave radio antenna mast. It was the only means of dependable communication with the outside world. Outside of the barbed wire were sprinkled the black-skinned, crude tents of the desert wanderers. They were allowed to stay as long as they desired but were permitted to enter the enclosure only to fill their earthen vessels from the single well. An armed sentry always accompanied them and waited while they pumped the water into jug or vase.

We were besieged by the vain sentries when they saw our photography equipment. We were about to photograph one, when the

corporal of the guard came forward and abruptly shoved away our subject and posed himself in their place. It was his photograph which we finally took. Within the cool walls of the officers' dining quarters we finally enjoyed a meal which would have done credit to prominent American hostleries. The prices were exorbitant, but, considering the circumstances, we offered no complaint.

Nowhere do stillness and quiet enchant, as in a desert night under a full moon. The car swept along with a steady drone of which we finally became no longer conscious. The floor of the desert was bathed in moonlight which looked surprisingly like a blanket of snow. The stars were so bright that many had auras which enveloped each other to cause the sky to shine with irregular, luminous patches. We had left Rutha-Wells several hours ago and would in a short while reach the Euphrates, one of the great twin rivers.

More than alluvial soil had been swept along the Euphrates and its sister river, the Tigris. Barques of many nations had sailed down these rivers. Races had died by their sides; civilizations had lifted their proud heads from the black mud that was regurgitated on the surrounding plain. Like two great arms these rivers had entwined and held humanity in a protective embrace for centuries. Here, according to many archaeologists and historians, was the cradle of civilization, the site of the original Garden of Eden. The plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, formed by the alluvial soil brought down from the north, forms the south end of a great fertile crescent which fringes the desert. The greatest distance between the two rivers hardly exceeds forty miles.

It was not until about two thousand years B.C. that this plain received the name Babylonia. Before, it was known as the Plain of Shinar. In the dim past, no one knows just when, persons of the great white race of the highlands, far to the north, came southward and followed these rivers to their outlet at the mouth. Perhaps they were driven southward by the descending glaciers that swept all life before them. These peoples we call the *Sumerians*, and they were not of the Semetic race. They were even thought by some to antedate the earliest Egyptians. Gradually they crept north again, along the banks of these

twin rivers, building thriving towns and developing the land in between into a great and thriving agricultural center.

We had now crossed the Euphrates. It was dawn, and we were encouraged that we were ahead of our schedule, for we had encountered no severe dust storms. The distance between here and Baghdad was but twenty-five miles. The Tigris and Euphrates veered sharply toward each other from this point southward. The desert was now intermittently broken by spots of green, where irrigation canals brought the life-giving water to the parched soil. Soon we began to bounce through ruts which followed the contour of a road and to see straggling riders on burros and camels. Baghdad was now a matter of minutes away.

## Chapter IX

# THE CITY OF ARABIAN NIGHTS

**A** HEAD OF US, on the east bank of the Tigris, lay Baghdad, a strange skyline indeed. The structures were of no particular design; they were not definitely Oriental, Byzantine, Moorish, or European, but a sort of conglomerate as though they were going through a transition of eastern architecture into western. The hotels, so-called, had strange and crude balconies superimposed, which hung, so it seemed to us, precariously over the banks of the river. Most of the structures were very low, shanty-like, and sprawling, without any particular design, and even at this distance suggested neglect and perhaps filth. Originally, Baghdad lay entirely on the eastern bank of the river, but for the past thousand years it has been partly on the east and partly on the west.

A traveler who visited it in 1583, said of it, "A town not very great, but very populous, of great traffic between Persia, Turkey and Arabia." Time has not changed this. Baghdad is the gateway for caravans to Persia, the border of which is not many miles distant. Southward lies Arabia and northward Turkey. In the Eighth Century it was purely an Arab town; in the Ninth Century it had reached the height of its power under an enlightened Caliphate and was a center of power and learning. It was rich in silks and tile buildings. It was of the Baghdad of the Ninth Century that the glamorous tales of the Arabian Nights were written. Its downfall came about in 1258 when Hulaku and his Mongols swarmed over it and ruined the network of magnificent irrigation canals which had converted the parched land around it into a

rich and fertile plain. In the Fifteenth Century it succumbed to Turkish invasion. The nearby, little village, Hilla, preserves more of the original, truly Oriental nature of the ancient city than does Baghdad, which is a hodgepodge of influences, the result of numerous conquests and migrations.

Perhaps one of the most impressive things to see in Baghdad is what is known as a Caravanserai, which operates in the form of a bank, and in which money, customs and trade are carried on in the same manner as they have been for centuries. To visit one of these places is to be transplanted backward, in point of time, for centuries. On the outside it is just another mud-brick building, substantial, somewhat resembling the large warehouses in Europe and America. When you enter, it takes you a moment or two to get adjusted to the darkness inside, in contrast to the glaring light from which you entered.

There before you is a great area—no partitions or rooms, just high posts, at intervals of a few feet around the wall, which support a mezzanine floor about half the height of the entire building. In this great area before you are piled bales, wrapped in skins of animals, or in what looks like coarse burlap. A pungent odor prevails, a mingling of pleasant spices and not-too-pleasant scents. Up above on the mezzanine floor are little, dingy booths—we might term them “offices”—in which banking operations are carried on, using the same primitive methods of several centuries ago.

These men are financiers, and they loan money for the organization of caravans to go to distant lands—perhaps Persia or Arabia—there to purchase, as cheaply as possible, and bring back such cargoes as they feel can be sold to the best advantage. When the cargo is returned, it is brought into this huge building and sold to the highest bidder. From the receipts, the banker or financier takes his principal and his interest, if there is sufficient to meet both, and the caravan organizer receives what is left, if any. If he is fortunate, he makes a substantial profit; if unfortunate, he not only makes no profit but finds himself still indebted to these financiers, most of whom are Persians (Iranians). Here one sees trade and barter and business undisturbed by the modern methods of the Western World.



No attempt was made in any of the primitive native markets to keep the food clean or to protect it from filth. Hawksters sold their bread and cakes from curbs, stacking them on the walks and peddling them with their filthy hands.

The craftsmanship of these people, however, is remarkable and is extremely educational to watch; especially is this so in the copper bazaar. This bazaar is really like a street covered with an arched roof. It is divided into little pens. In each of these little pens, or booths, some craftsman sets up his shop in which he manufactures his wares. All of the wares in this bazaar or street are made of copper. Here one finds magnificent copper samovars, copper teakettles, basins and bowls, ornaments and candlesticks. The copper work is rustic and very substantial.

Walking down this alley-street, one can see copper being fashioned in every form and see it in different stages of manufacture. Back against the wall, in the darkness of the booth, at midday—which is ordinarily extremely hot even in the open—are little boys, not more than eight or nine years of age. They are earning their apprenticeship by pumping the bellows of charcoal fires to keep tools hot or to heat copper plate. One can hardly see them for the smoke and metal fumes which, even where we stand, cause us to turn our heads away so as not to inhale them and irritate our throats. We can understand when we see this why so many of these people die of tuberculosis early in life. It is remarkable that anyone survives these conditions to reach manhood.

After having taken a number of still photographs of unusual places and scenes in Baghdad, we entered a small doorway on Rashid Street and found in the dim interior the most magnificent display of Persian and Arabian rugs we had ever seen. There was no attempt at ostentation; the rugs were piled high upon the floors and hung on pegs around the walls. A brass, hand-hammered, ancient oil lamp was the only means of illumination. The rugs were covered with dust, yet were in excellent condition. Pricing a large rug of beautiful design, I was surprised to learn that all the rugs were thirty-five years and older.



AN ANCIENT CRAFT

These Iraquian goldsmiths in a bazaar in old Baghdad practice a trade dating far into antiquity. In a primitive setting and with apparently crude implements, they fashion jewelry which, in design and intricate workmanship, is the equal of that found in most modern shops.

June, 1950 – Iraq

More surprising still were the unbelievably cheap prices. The large rug before me cost but \$20.00. In America, England, or Canada it would have brought easily twenty-five times that price. Seeing that

I was interested, the gracious proprietor drew the rug out from the others and bade us follow him which we did. Going through a little passageway, we suddenly came out on another of the splendid little gardens which are in back of the home of each fairly prosperous merchant in Baghdad. No matter how dark, how filthy, or how squalid his place of business or his living quarters, if he can at all afford it you will find in back of them a gem of a little Persian garden—mosaic tiling, running water, fountain, and an artistic array of green shrubbery, open to the blue sky above.

Clapping his hands in Eastern fashion, he summoned his assistants and ordered them in Arabic to clean the rug. This they did by filling their mouths with water from a pail, and then spraying it out on the rug. Then, taking their hands, they rubbed the nap vigorously, which brought back the brilliance of the colors. The rugs were all made from camel hair, and in broken English he explained that most of these rugs are not made by factories or any place organized for the commercial production of rugs, but are a pastime and a family or tribal industry. The rugs are brought in by the Kurds or the Bedouins, desert wanderers, two or three at a time, and for these they receive a paltry sum. This merchant exported his rugs to various parts of the world where they would sell at fabulous prices.

By this time we had visited a number of mosques, but no mosque was more splendid, more lavish, more like a jewel set in squalor, than the Gold Mosque of Kadhimain. The towers and minarets, and the central dome itself, were all of *pure gold* and fascinated the impoverished natives—a symbol of wealth and riches surrounded by poverty, disease, and fifth. It was something, however, to lift the thoughts of the people from their circumstances, to give them some appreciation of the beautiful and the sublime, something they could not bring into their own lives, something that could not exist in their homes. We stood and listened to the intriguing wail and prayer of the muezzin (a Mohammedan acolyte). It was with extreme difficulty that we were able to take cinematographic pictures of this mosque, as one must avoid offending the religious principles of these people.

At night the scene changes. Peaceful side streets have lurking assassins in them. A person who dares to venture down them unarmed

will be slain and robbed. The Iraqi police force, efficient in many ways, is incapable of policing the entire area. Many of the people are nearly barbarian in their manner, and seem strangely attired even when they do wear Western clothes. The Bedouins who bring cargoes across the desert, or who came to trade with the city dwellers, enter the city nightly for entertainment. They visit the native cabarets or cafes in which dancers go through sensuous gyrations which, in addition to the native liquor, help intoxicate their senses. The Bedouins are powerfully built men, all of six feet or more in height, large bones; typical of their racial characteristics they have large aquiline noses, big bony hands, and large feet. Ordinarily they are mild mannered and extremely generous, but temperamental and easily offended. Frater Brower and I visited a native eating place one day and were the only Westerners present; had we known this, we would not have entered. All the rest were Bedouins attired in flowing robes, sandals and armed with dirks. Looking us over curiously, they immediately came forward, proffered us cigarettes and cups of thick Arabian coffee for which one must acquire a habit over a long period of time. Since I had not been in Baghdad that length of time, I could not become accustomed to the molasses-like substance and quinine-like taste.

Another scene is the river with its strange modes of transportation. Very few motor craft are seen, mostly barges that are moved by long skiffs or poles. The strangest boat of all seen anywhere in the world is the *gufah*. It is a sewing-basket-like boat, about six feet in diameter, woven of a river reed; being perfectly circular it has neither bow nor stern. It is guided by a pole, and it is indeed an amusing sight to see these basket vessels floating downstream, loaded with cargo and with their one-man crew.

These strange boats have navigated the Tigris River for centuries. *Herodotus*, ancient historian, in his accounts of his travels through Babylonia, mentions these gufah boats and explains how the natives far north of Baghdad make them, put on board their wares and a burro, and sail downstream with them for miles to market. When they sell their wares they break up the boat, sell it as firewood, and ride home again on the burro.

Burros are not common in Baghdad, and neither are trucks. Human beings are the cargo bearers. Here we see coolies for the first time in the East—white men staggering along under unbelievable burdens, enormous timbers which must weigh at least 300 pounds or more. These men will carry anything that it is humanly possible to carry. For a few cents a mile they carry coal, iron, or cans of petroleum. The muscles of their legs and backs are abnormally developed, and unless they cease their activities of carrying these tremendous weights day in and day out early in life, they soon die. Most of them become afflicted with varicose veins, the result of over-development of the muscles and causing an exceptional flow of blood through the arteries.

It is pitiful to see a human being competing with animals as burden bearers. You can hire a human being to carry cargo—furniture, case goods, anything—cheaper than you could possibly hire either a camel or a burro for short hauls in and around the city. They live on rice and water—unclean water. Their income hardly exceeds 35¢ or 40¢ a week if they work steadily, and yet they seem much more intelligent than peoples we had seen in other lands. They do not have the vacuous look in their eyes, that hopeless, despairing gaze. They are bright and cheerful. Their fathers and grandfathers before them have carried loads as they do. A steady stream of them cross pontoon bridges from one bank of the river to the other, like ants, carrying for a mile or more what an ordinary man could hardly lift.

But Baghdad was not our final destination in this country. We were to go southeast to *Babylon*—the Babylon of biblical times—the Babylon of history. It was with enthusiasm and expectancy that we prepared for our next adventure. We found it difficult to secure porters to accompany us. Always enthusiastic, hoping to earn some extra money, until they learned that our destination was Babylon. They would then offer excuses that seemed strange to us; no they did not wish to go to Babylon. We tried to draw out of them “why.” We would pay them well; it was not a great journey; our equipment was not unusually heavy. They avoided making any explanation; they would merely suggest someone else who, perhaps, would go instead. We puzzled over this as we prepared for another highlight of our journey.

## Chapter X

# A STRANGE EXPERIENCE

WE HAD LEFT the Tigris River and were heading westward toward its twin, the Euphrates, on whose banks the city of *Babylon* was originally located. With the waters of the Tigris we left behind us all vegetation, all vestiges of life, even color. Before us was a flat terrain covered everywhere with a whitish dust. It was, strange to say, not desert-like in appearance, not like a land that had always been barren, but like a place that had been laid to waste. I thought of it as some vigorous being that had been trapped and, after life had ebbed from its form, had gradually crumbled until its impalpable parts, flung free, had settled down on all things around.

In my imagination I visualized that a deluge of water here would cause not only a cohesion of these dust particles, but a magical reassembly and restoration of the magnificent forms that once composed the civilization of this region.

The stillness, when we stopped for a few moments, was appalling and hung heavy about us. We felt as though we were shut within a glass sphere which the slightest sound might shatter, permitting the inrush of strange cries, freakish laughter, and the wails of the millions who had lived and died here centuries ago. Ominous as the quiet was, we contributed to it by not speaking, because the human voice sounded unnatural, even hideous, like a cry from the depths of a cavern.

I was not unmindful of the predictions of the Hebrew prophets taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar when he destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. that the splendor and glory of Babylon would so crumble

that future man, looking at its utter desolation and ruin, would marvel that such a place could have ever been a site of power and beauty. It truly was as though the land had been visited by the wrath of a god. We were not alone in our feelings, for our native porter and driver was strangely quiet as well. He seemed to have a reluctance to reach our destination quickly, and even when the roadway permitted he did not accelerate the car speed. Was there, I wondered, any connection between this combination of sentiments which we had about the land and the difficulty we had experienced in engaging a porter for the journey?



ISHTAR GATE

Through these portals passed the magnificent religious processions of the ancient Babylonian civilizations, held in honor of “The Goddess of Love”—Ishtar. This famous gate rose to a height of eighty feet and was the entrance to the avenue known as “The Sacred Way” which led to the palaces of the kings and the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon.” Babylon is about sixty miles south of Baghdad, Iraq.

August, 1950 – Iraq

Rising suddenly into view about a mile to our right were a series of mounds. At this distance they never would have attracted the attention of tourists or casual travelers, but to us who knew of their existence they were the remains of Babylon which we sought. We both concentrated our digging and probing on the one place in which we had made our discovery. We were soon rewarded for our efforts, and we turned up brick after brick, each weighing about ten pounds, all deeply and clearly inscribed in cuneiform, some bearing the cuneiform inscription of *Nebuchadnezzar's* name.\* Turning them over, we saw that they had a sticky, black substance smeared on them. "Looks and smells like asphaltum," said Brower.

\* The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in its Babylonian and Assyrian gallery has original barrel cylinders which are proclamations by Nebuchadnezzar.

"It is," I replied, "the Babylonians had asphalt or bitumen pits, and they used this substance to coat their bricks just as we use the same material today as a preservative on our roads and highways. And you will observe," I continued, "that it has done an excellent job." We hurried, for the hour was getting late, to reduce the size of the bricks—because of their weight—with a hammer we had for the purpose. We knocked away all except the area containing the inscriptions. We soon had a very representative collection, and one quite heavy. (We avoided damage to surrounding material.) We intended to take the bricks back with us to America for the Rosicrucian Museum. In fact, they are now part of the large collection to be seen in the Babylonian and Assyrian gallery of the Rosicrucian Museum.

In this same palace where we were making our discoveries an outstanding tragedy had happened. Alexander the Great, after successfully putting to rout the army of Darius, the Persian king who occupied Babylon at that time, and taking over Babylon himself, died in this palace at the height of his power, and, it is said, while in a drunken stupor.

Near here, in this series of earth mounds, was the ruins of a library. Ashurbanipal, last Assyrian king, and grandson of Sennacherib, built himself a great library at *Nineveh*, Assyrian city located north of the present city of Baghdad. This was centuries before the great Alexandrian



Library of the Greeks. He had thousands of clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform writing placed in jars. These stone books, for this is what they were, were placed in rows on shelves, properly classified. There were thousands of them devoted to the subjects of science, history, various phases of literature and religion. Hanging from the top of each was a little straw tag giving the title of the tablet, or the subject of the book. Some of these books were later filed in a library built in Babylon, and they have not yet been discovered.

The great library of Nineveh has been found; that is how we know of these books and their classification. Most of its stone books which lay in a heap when the building crumbled are now in the British Museum in London. On some of these tablets are found parts of the story of the flood mentioned in the Old Testament. The legend, as it also appears in the Old Testament, tells of the hero building a large boat on which he took his wife and a pair of each of the animals, and that all other humans and animals were destroyed by the deluge, and that finally when the flood subsided, he and his wife and the animals were left to perpetuate themselves as the only living things. This story is undoubtedly based upon an actual local flood within that region. It was thought by the early writers to have been a deluge of the whole world. It was passed perhaps by word of mouth, or even by tablet, to the Hebrew captives of the Babylonians, and it was finally incorporated in the Christian literature.

We loaded our camera equipment into the car, also the inscribed stones, for our porter would not help us with them. They were to him taboo; that is, untouchable. A curse, so the natives believed, would be inflicted upon those who disturbed the property of the dead. The Assyrians, like the Egyptians, threatened trespassers and those who would violate their sacred precincts with oaths of vengeance. Ashurbanipal, for example, declared in cuneiform writing on each stone tablet of his library (each book, in other words), that *"whosoever shall carry off this tablet or shall inscribe his name upon it side by side with my own, may Assur and Belit (gods) overthrow him in wrath and anger, and may they destroy his name and posterity in the land."*

Now we began to realize why the porters feared to visit this site. Strange, too, since working in the palace rooms, I felt rather ill. Beads

of cold perspiration stood out on my forehead, unusual for the climate at this time of the year. I felt exceptionally tired. My head throbbed slightly. I laughed to myself, and said, "the power of suggestion."

Relieved of our burdens we climbed over several mounds to another large pile of crumbling brick. It is referred to by some authorities as the remains of the Tower of Babel, mentioned in the Old Testament. The Babylonians, contrary to popular knowledge, built many large towers. The one to which the Old Testament refers was just one of many similar structures. The predecessors of the Babylonians were the Sumerians, a people who came from a mountain land far to the north, and finally settled on this plain which they named the plain of Shinar.

In their homeland they worshiped in temples on mountain tops a god named Enlil. He was the god of the earth. To simulate the mountain temples they built great tower temples which were cube-like in shape. The base was nearly as large in area as the height of the structure. Surrounding the base was a great stone courtyard. On one side three large inclines or ramps made it possible to reach the first two levels of the tower, and from there a gradual incline continued around the entire structure, making it possible to reach the tower top. On the top was the actual temple itself in which dwelt the priests, and in which the ceremonies were conducted.

Koldewey, German excavator and archaeologist, has reconstructed, from the plans he made of the ruins of Babylonian tower temples models showing how they actually appeared in ancient times. The highest of these towers was probably some four hundred feet, which, like the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, looked by comparison to the surrounding level terrain much greater. Of course, to the captive Hebrews, this god of the Babylonians was a false one. The worship of him on such a high edifice, reaching, it seemed, into the clouds, was a defiling of the sanctuary of their own god; consequently the story of the Tower of Babel. These tower temples contributed to later architecture and were first copied during the Hellenistic period. The world's first lighthouse, on Pharos Island, outside the ancient port of Alexandria, Egypt, was a copy of these tower temples. It, in turn, became the model for the Mohammedan minarets.

As we pondered among these ruins, in our mind's eye we could see the Hebrew slaves, naked except for loin cloth, with matted hair and beards, fettered with bronze chains and anklets, toiling, sweating, and stumbling in their misery and near exhaustion, in the blazing sun under the lash of the whips of their Babylonian captors, making and carrying the brick which was raising a tower for the worship of the god of their oppressors. We could see them offering prayers silently for their deliverance—prayers, the echo of which still ring in the chapters of the Old Testament.

Cruelty, yes. Unnecessary—yes, also. But the custom neither began with the Babylonians nor did it end with them. This much can be said of the Babylonians: Their persecution of the Hebrews was not primarily a religious one, but a political one. Judea being a subordinate state and a rebellious one, its warriors became political prisoners of the Babylonians, not religious ones. Persian, Lydian, and Assyrian prisoners were treated likewise by them. Today, NOW, the Jews suffer persecution again, but in this day and age it is not principally political persecution but religious or racial persecution. This is a far greater reflection upon the level of intelligence of an age than the punishment of a people because of political uprising.

I found it difficult to draw myself back into my immediate surroundings. My thoughts seemed so easily to restore these ruins into the gloriously beautiful structures they once were. Ethereal throngs pushed by me, jostled me; strange sounds came to my ears. It seemed that the citizenry of this ancient place were again going to and fro, attired in their costumes of yore, occupied with their interests of four thousand years ago. I was an unseen spectator of their daily life. My own life and times became a vague dream, difficult to realize. To think of the present was an effort. In fact, the present was unreal.

I was slipping back into the past where I felt, somehow, I rightly belonged. Further, I felt as though I were relieved of a burden, like one returning from a journey of responsibility in a distant land. I was now among friends, yet something continually annoyed me, a voice, faint, distant, but distinct, kept calling me. I could not avoid it. If I listened, this joyous procession, this Babylon of which I was now a

part, became hazy. I decided to get away from this voice, to move along with these ethereal people about me, to enter into their spirit and mood. I rose, but I seemed to float; surprising to me, yet a pleasure was the sensation.

Then the sound of my name crashed down upon me like a bolt of lightning. It shattered the vista before me; towers, palaces, streets, peoples, slaves, they all fell into mere parts like a jigsaw puzzle dropped abruptly on pavement. They melted before my eyes, and through the mist there appeared the face of Frater Brower. He was speaking, but his voice was still distant; then it gradually grew stronger as though it were approaching me from afar. He was shaking me by the shoulder and saying, "What is the matter with you? Why don't you answer me? We must get back. Are you ill? You are extremely pale." I realized now I must have fainted momentarily while seated on the sub-foundation wall of this tower temple. And yet, how clear had been my experience, how vivid in all its details, hardly like an hallucination that comes from an ordinary lapse of objective consciousness. I was ill, extremely so; I burned with fever. My mouth was parched and I was badly nauseated.

Over and over again, like a leer, the words of the Babylonian execration imploring the gods to punish despoilers coursed through my mind. I attempted to ridicule myself as I lay in the back of the bouncing car heading again toward Baghdad. I thought of the dozen or more volumes I had read quoting the authorities of the world, and of the Rosicrucian teachings, all of which discredited this superstitious belief. Yet mocking me was this ailment, the discomfitures of which gave the oaths a more vivid realism to my semi-delirious mind than anything which I could recall having read or studied. Reason gave way to fantasy. I pictured myself as the victim whose life was to be given to prove the mysterious potency of these ancient curses. I had been chosen to vindicate the Babylonians, to discredit the stigma modern science had placed upon the forces which they were said to invoke!

Several days of quiet, after a diagnosis of my case as mild tropical fever combined with intestinal influenza, fever caused possibly by an insect bite on the desert, saw me rally sufficiently to prepare for the trek back across the desert.

## Chapter XI

# LITTLE LANE OF THE DEAD

THE DAY WAS overcast with a leaden sky. The atmosphere was depressing to one's spirits as well. The whole was like a dramatic setting in which the playwright and the stage designer had combined their skill to adduce mingled feelings of suspense and awe in the audience. The twisting alley like and centuries old street which we had entered was known as the *Little Lane of the Dead*.

To assist in the ascent, the street, in sections, consisted of a series of low, broad flagging steps. It was serpentine in its formation. Some of the turns were so abrupt that they constituted a ninety degree angle. Looking ahead, it would seem at times that all advance would be obstructed by one of the bleak buildings that lined the street. Some were almost menacing in their appearance as they towered in front of us. Walking toward the deep shadows of such turns, one's imagination was stimulated by the thought of what might lie just around them. It was like following along the floor of a cavern, drawn on by some mysterious influence that led one deeper into its maze.

The macabre title of this street in Basel, Switzerland, was derived from an innocent enough circumstance in the past. On an eminence at the top of the street is an old cathedral which has, within the last century, been renovated. At the back of this cathedral and now surrounded by a high iron fence is the original cemetery of the parish. From this cemetery, where moss-covered headstones lean as with the weight of years, a little lane straggled down to the city proper. It

was used only for funeral processions, principally after the last rites at the grave, when the mourners were returning to their homes. It was from this custom that the lane derived its morbid appellation. In those days it was unpaved-dusty in summer and a mire of mud in the winter. It was then, as now, surrounded on either side by homes and the little medieval shops. Most of these earlier buildings remain. Their alterations, as concessions to the modern era, were slight. Evidences of these changes are to be found mostly in signs announcing the business of the occupants.

What had brought us to this lane was partly the fascination of its title and the history of one of its early residents. For here was located the print shop of the renowned Johannes Froben, a publisher and printer through whose facilities rays of illumination penetrated a Europe still quite dark in mind. In 1491 Froben opened his print shop and not long thereafter made the acquaintance of Erasmus, noted scholar and humanist. In this shop on the Little Lane of the Dead, he printed the Greek translation of the New Testament. It was this work which Martin Luther used for his translation. Erasmus not only had Froben print his books which caused a literary stir in Europe, but he also superintended the works which Froben issued. As a result of this activity, this modest house, now designated by a simple sign, became the center of the book trade in Europe.

It was while returning from our visit to Froben's former print shop and while walking down the huge stone steps that we noticed, to the left of it, a door which was ajar. The building was a typical early century structure. It was tall and quaint in its oddity, and not particularly inviting. Its only attraction was its contrast to the more drab surroundings, being lighter in color as though, in more recent years, it had been exposed to the painter's brush. Looking through the partly open door, we could see but the dark wall of a brick hallway. It had at some time been plastered, for the formation of the bricks beneath could be seen. It amounted to trespassing, but nevertheless we gave way to our instinctive curiosity and entered. Gingerly, we pushed the door slightly with our hands until it swung fully open with an eerie creaking sound. At the other end was a blaze of light and color. The hallway terminated in an inner courtyard. Even though it was a dismal

day, the exterior lighting was intense in comparison to the dungeon-like darkness of the interior.

The first impression was that of a large private home, whose rather bleak exterior concealed more radiant inner quarters. As we withdrew our gaze from the deep interior, we suddenly became aware of a sign, none too visible, on the wall to our right. The position in which we first stood had put it behind us. It announced that the structure housed the Pharmaceutical Institute and Museum. We thought it rather strange for a modern pharmaceutical institute to be located in such an old building. The fact that a museum was associated with it aroused our interest and justified us in boldly continuing.

Passing along the hallway, we noticed windows, partly obscured by being painted on their inner surface or having blinds drawn over them. Through one, however, we could see that such looked into small areas which were now used as storage chambers. The courtyard, open to the sky, was flanked by three wings of the building itself. At the open end there was a low stone wall with a fountain at its base. From the wall there sloped upward a formal garden.

In one wing of the building were the offices and laboratories of the modern pharmaceutical institute. It was here that its administrative and research activities were conducted. The air was infused with the poignant scent of various chemicals. An attendant directed us to the wing at our right across the courtyard and to the second floor where the museum proper was located. We were the only visitors. In fact, the visitors' register revealed that few attended this museum. Those who came were mostly professional people from Europe as indicated by their degrees and the addresses following their names. What was particularly gratifying, in an examination of the exhibits, was to note the acknowledgment of the special debt of modern pharmacists to the ancient alchemists—and to the early *Rosicrucian* experimenters. Old etchings in wood and block prints of the alchemists were framed, each with laudatory comments about them. These were of such personages as Raymond Lully, Roger Bacon, Paracelsus, Holbein, Cagliostro, and Albertus Magnus.

In cases beneath these masters were the actual alchemical apparatus and devices of their period. There were typical clay *pelicans*, so named from their shape. Some, however, had two handles like large ears on each side of the vessel for the accumulation of vapors. There was also an *athanor*, a crude but effective digesting furnace. There were various-shaped *alembics* which are round still-like tops for flasks used in the process of distillation. It was in their methods of distillation that the alchemists made discoveries that contributed to chemistry and medicine alike. Tall and cumbersome were the *aludels*. They looked somewhat like a pagoda temple consisting of three round detachable ovens one placed above the other and all resting on a small square base.

The careful observations of these early researchers, showing the development of the scientific spirit, was to be noted in their symbolism which they associated with the changing colors of heated metals. This symbolism had an esoteric significance, but the physical changes were carefully recorded. For example, *black* was called a crow's head; it "sheweth the beginning of the action of fire. . . . Blackest midnite sheweth the perfection of liquefaction (being liquified) and confusion of the elements." *White* "succeeded the black-wherein is given the perfection of the first degree, and of white Sulphur,"—this is called the blessed stone—"wherein philosophers sow their gold." Third is *orange* or the passage of the white to the red. It is the middle or transitory stage of the alchemical process of refinement of the base metals. They referred to it as "a forerunner of the sun." The latter referred to the pure substance being sought. The fourth was the "ruddy sanguine," which is extracted from the white fire only.

A small ramp led to an extreme end of this wing. This section of the edifice had been the ruins of a church dating back some six hundred years. A portion of the old Gothic architecture had been preserved with its rustic timbers forming supports for the ceiling. The formation looked like the ribbing of an umbrella. The walls were of the original stone masonry, and the floor was of random oak planking fastened with dowels and uneven from the wear of centuries. The small chamber had been arranged as the exact reproduction of an alchemical laboratory. Every effort had been made to add realism to the exhibit. In fact,



all of the apparatus, the furnace, retorts, pelicans, alembics, even the salamander, were originals. The atmosphere was such as to transport one back to the time of the alchemist monk, Roger Bacon, of the Thirteenth Century.

By this time we were imbued with the spirit and sacrifice of these past contributors to modern science, who were so often scorned, ridiculed, and *persecuted*.

The Pharmaceutical Museum in Basel, Switzerland, through its exceptional exhibits and old setting, revealed many pages of the past to us. However, there was, as yet, one chapter of its history that remained unknown. We had just completed our inspection ( and with keen interest) of the reconstruction of the full-sized alchemist's laboratory. Just a few steps beyond, as we were about to depart, we came upon a sign of startling information. There, to our left was a simple placard over a protective railing of a steep stairway leading to a basement. As the language of the city of Basel is German, it read: "Cagliostro machte hier das Gold." (Cagliostro made gold here.) This was a positive statement about the accomplishment of the mystery man, Cagliostro. It was not the affirmation of a romanticist or one encouraging his imagination to embellish facts to suit his fancy. It was instead the official declaration of a scientific institute in one of the largest cities in progressive Switzerland.

Excitedly we peered over the railing and down the stairway into the dark shadows below. We could barely see the old, partially subterranean chamber, which had been used by the famed Cagliostro during his sojourn in Basel. There he had, as in France, by a method of transmutation, produced gold. The fact was apparently not disputed by the authorities of the institute, for they proclaimed it. By some circumstance, the offspring of alchemy, modern pharmacy, had erected its museum adjoining the very building in which one of its earliest predecessors had labored.

The making of gold in Basel, Switzerland, was one of the concluding events in the life of a man which reads like the most fanciful fiction. In fact, much fiction has been built about his life. Alessandro di Cagliostro

was born at Palermo, Sicily, in 1743. Most of the early biographers declared that he was called *Giuseppe Balsamo*. These biographies are, however, based principally on the elaborate account of an Italian biographer who had *papal* inspiration. There is every reason to believe the account to be a fabrication of mendacious statements intended to libel the character of the man. A further contribution to this erroneous information is the alleged memoirs of Cagliostro. Now considered spurious by many literary authorities, these memoirs have nevertheless influenced encyclopedias and historical references for nearly two centuries. Modern encyclopedias, as the Britannica and others, still perpetuate these accounts.

Cagliostro journeyed to Greece, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, the Isle of Rhodes, and throughout Europe. In Egypt, he often declared, he had been initiated into the mystery schools, having such rites conferred upon him in the Great Pyramid of Cheops and the great temples along the Nile. He related that there was imparted to him, while in Egypt, the great *gnosis* or wisdom of the ancient Egyptians. That he was a scholar and possessed of unusual knowledge, even his false biographers conceded. On the Isle of Rhodes he studied alchemy and the occult sciences of the Greeks. He was likewise made a member of the Maltese Order. Through the friendship of the Grand Master of that Order, he later was introduced to many prominent families in Rome. He returned again to Europe, visiting several of the capitals. His fame as an alchemist, Rosicrucian, philosopher, and healer, became widespread.

The biographers, referring to him as Giuseppe Balsamo, have made him a contemptible rogue and charlatan. There was such a difference between the two characters that it is almost obvious that they were two different men and not one man with two names. In his early life, according to his biographers, Cagliostro was perverse and exceedingly immoral. However, in relating his later years in Paris and Strasbourg, Cagliostro's biographers, with a few exceptions, though they intended to debase his character further, cannot fail to show an undercurrent of admiration for his powers and his miraculous acts. In other words, beneath their defamation of him, one senses their secret wonder at the

feats of the man and their doubt of the earlier adverse comments. As an example, Waite, in his short sketch of the life of Cagliostro, whom he libels as Balsamo, just as did those others, quotes profusely from the Italian biographer. Then, as if suddenly conscious of the incongruity of the acts of morality and immorality alike attributed to the man in the accounts, he says: "The veracity of this account is not, however, beyond suspicion-." \*

\* "Refer back to Chapter II for description of Cagliostro's home and garret laboratory in Paris.

## Chapter XII

# HOW CIVILIZED ARE WE?

GLANCING DOWN, THERE sprawled beneath us the great metropolis of Los Angeles. Its principal streets and boulevards, even at that hour, were outlined by what appeared at our height like little illuminated pearls. In fancy, it seemed as though some genie had begun to arrange them geometrically, and then in confusion or abandon had just scattered them.

This was not a new experience for me. I had flown many times before. Our destination, however, what we hoped to accomplish, the hazards which we might encounter, the sheer mystery of it, heightened our excitement. I could feel my face flush, as I let my imagination dwell upon the possibilities. Our goal was the heart of the old *Inca Empire* in the vast Andean region of Peru, a journey to the sites of culture of an enigmatic people in a setting of grandeur, which I was then incapable of realizing. For approximately 5,000 miles we would fly southward to Arequipa, Peru, and then begin our surface journey inland.

Aboard the plane with Mrs. Ralph Lewis and myself were especially made metal cases of 150 pounds or more of motion picture and still camera equipment, films, and accessories. We had used the maximum baggage weight allowance for these, and were forced to sacrifice our personal luggage. Somewhere en route we would need to outfit ourselves with clothing suitable for the rugged country we would encounter and in which we would spend several weeks.

Our mission was not one which the Supreme Grand Lodge or we as individuals had originally conceived. It really was the fulfillment of an old Rosicrucian tradition. It was the principle that the Rosicrucian

Order perpetuate as a heritage, through its officers and members, the culture of the ancients, their arts, crafts, and inspired ideals. In fact, the Rosicrucian teachings of AMORC today are a synthesis of the gleanings of the sages of the past, and the investigations and researches of the progressive minds of the present. One must be familiar with the past, or he can never be quite certain that what he undertakes or plans for the future will not be just a recurrence of what others have done well before him, under a different name or system. To many persons it seems that a profound consideration of the lives and achievements of peoples who lived from twenty to forty centuries ago could not possibly produce any useful information or knowledge which we of the Twentieth Century need or could use effectively in our living.

This conclusion is formed upon the reasoning that our present-day civilization, with its industries, arts, sciences, literature, and culture generally, by comparison, reveals how far we have come from antiquity, the progress we have made. In answer to such persons, we say, as Rosicrucians, it must be realized that progress is not alone indicated in change or in existing differences, but in the direction taken; even refinement of a process does not signify progress. Lopping off human heads with a broad bronze sword in China, as a method of execution, was improved upon in France by the invention of the guillotine, yet the function of execution still exists; the refinement of its method hardly indicates progress in civilization.

For further consideration, what were men seeking during the time of Hammurabi, Solon, and Julius Caesar? How much closer have we come to their goal today? Have we all through the centuries been traveling in the same direction as they, making true progress, perhaps even inspired to excel them, or have we been going through just a series of mock refinements which have not led us far during the past ten or more centuries? Change alone is not sufficient. For analogy, during the Fourth and Fifth Centuries of the Roman Empire, the period of decline, history relates a considerable change affecting the economic life of the peoples.

Continual conquest by the Romans had brought into the capital great numbers of prisoners who had become slaves. They were put

upon large estates owned by the nobles and wealthy. They were able to produce at very low cost farm products which flooded into the cities. The small, free Roman farmer, with his few acres of land, depending upon his own labors, could not compete with this mass farm production and slave labor. He abandoned his few acres, which were absorbed into the larger estates of the wealthy, and he, with thousands of his kind, came to Rome to seek a livelihood. They became disinclined to work at very menial and laborious duties, such as the slaves did, for that would have put a stigma upon them. Consequently the Roman state, through ever-increasing taxation, started various projects at high wages to keep them occupied, such as the building of amphitheatres, extensive roads, aqueducts, etc.—some of the things needed, most of them not.

Political parties at Rome vied with each other to keep these masses of the people appeased by pretentious entertainments and doles of free grain and even clothes. (How much like today.) This class of people obviously became pampered and subsequently more and more arrogant in their demands upon the government. At the time, however, none of them gave any evidence that they saw in what was occurring any menace to their civilization. In fact, they were confident that the Roman Empire would go on indefinitely.

The point I wish to bring out here is, to them times were only *different* and *changing*, and they made the great error of conceiving difference and change only as aspects of progress. As we look around us today, we can draw parallels between that period of the ancient Roman Empire and our present world. All too often those who are not students of the past erroneously accept an actual decline as a *new order*.

It is readily and proudly conceded that in a *strictly material sense*, man's world has advanced. The environment, under his control, has correspondingly developed with his objectivism. His greater application of reason is reflected in his ability to meet and conquer what were once insurmountable physical barriers. The elaboration of old and addition of new sciences have made it possible for him to pyramid his worldly accomplishments of the past. The aqueduct of Rome falls into insignificance, for example, beside the colossal reservoir lakes and dams of today. Our irrigation systems make those of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans elementary by comparison.

At no time in history, not even during the glorious Age of Pericles, had art, in one expression or another, the common appreciation it now enjoys. Further, at no time was there such a great percentage of a populace participating in art as a hobby or otherwise. Time has heightened the ability of man to coordinate his innate sense of beauty with what he objectively conceives to harmonize with it. He looks upon or sees a thing, and instinctively he finds a gratifying response to it. Further, he has come to materialize his ideals of beauty more, to force them to have an external, independent reality.

*What of the psychic nature of man?* Have we substantially progressed beyond the motivating inner forces had, for example, by the ancient Greeks? Can we conscientiously say we have mystically, or spiritually (if you prefer that term) transcended the Egyptian of the Memphite Period nearly 6,000 years ago? It is not a question of whether we have more complex or highly elaborate rites, ceremonies, philosophies, and religions today. Further, it is not a question of what greater perspicuity our religions and philosophies have in comparison to those of antiquity. Rather, it resolves down to whether we—*mankind as a whole*—have been able to abandon today any fundamental urge or sentiment upon which were founded the early religious, mystical, and philosophical concepts—or whether we have developed even one or more immanent sentiments as causes for new spiritual perceptions.

All religions today, systems of mysticism, and other than physical philosophies, no matter how diversified their tenets, are rooted in the same unutterable sentiments which have always been within the breasts of men. Fifty centuries ago man had an undeniable *realization of self*. Today he has the same. Fifty centuries ago man also conceived what amounted to a *doctrine of immortality*, that that which is not the body is not corruptible and in some manner must survive so called death, and today millions still believe likewise.

Also, in the past men were faced by *conscience*. Within their minds they could see paths plainly designated as to the right and wrong course of human action, and conscience still remains today. Throughout the centuries men have clung tenaciously to the belief prompted inwardly that some Being, Intelligence, Mind, God, or Force governs and

directs all. Our Twentieth Century has still not shorn that intuitive impulse of its outer declarations. We have greatly intellectualized our conceptions of these psychic sentiments. We have tried to rationalize and make them conform to broader experience, but *they persist* and in their intangible substance have remained unchanged by time or our objectivity.

Because of a realization of this, for some time back, I had formed the opinion that the homogeneity of many well-developed and complex religions of the primitive peoples was not due to them having a common origin as often thought. Many writers, some historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists have speculated upon the remarkable similarity of the rites and ceremonies of ancient or primitive peoples living remotely from each other. The cosmological explanations of those early peoples, where man originated, and how the world began are startlingly alike, as is also their veneration of some of the cardinal virtues.

These modern writers, in their speculations, presume that such sacred knowledge was transmitted by couriers from one people to another, or that there was a migration of a people from one continent to another, and the newcomers introduced their old concepts to the inhabitants of the new land. In a few instances possibly such physical contacts were established, accounting for a merging of religious customs. On the other hand, there are primitive peoples having extremely highly developed religious customs, strikingly similar to those had by another people in a remote section of the world, and they have not even had a legend or a myth suggesting that their knowledge came through another race of peoples, or that they even knew of others.

If, after thousands of years, the psychic or *inner self* of man has in essence and effect remained unaltered by environment or objective culture, then the *theurgical* and *sacerdotal* practices which are always associated with it are only the consequence of the mental state or *quickening of the consciousness* through which man is passing at the time. For further analogy, a white light looked at through red glasses may appear red, while through blue, it will seem blue. No matter, therefore, with what men are concerned, where they are located in the world, or



to what period of time they belong, and whether they have ever known each other or not, if using the same glasses when peering into the same light they will all have the same experience of color sensation.

This quickening of consciousness is a progressive development. One must rise step by step. Some may climb faster, but none can avoid any step in the ascent. Therefore, men in remote sections of the world, removed also possibly by centuries in time and having ascended to a certain stage of mental development and *quickenings of consciousness*, will manifest nearly identical outer expressions in the rhythm of their bodies, in the meanings of their words—uttered or inscribed—which indicate their realization of the mysteries of their psychic selves.

If this hypothesis could be further confirmed in the land of the Incas, it would disclose no exact or perfect religion, and no philosophy as a complete panacea for all human errors. It would show man no closer to God as a reality than he was 6,000 years ago in the Nile Valley, nor any further removed, but would make emphatic the necessity of understanding self, of a full unity between the intellectual and psychical aspects of man. It would disclose the real beauty of mysticism, for God would always be perfect, as perfect as the human consciousness could conceive Him. Man could never transcend his God, for any change would be of conception only, not in his true relationship to the Supreme Being.

When it will be realized that there will never be a final step or stage where a man now, or a million years hence, will absolutely know the Supreme Being in all its Cosmic magnitude, for the conceptions of God are as Infinite as his nature, men will then discard religious intolerance. The words of Max Muller, "There never was a false God, nor was there ever really a false religion, unless you call a child a false man," will then become a maxim all will take to heart. These then were the principal reasons and hopes for fulfillment, for which we were flying southward via Pan American.

The passengers were again fastening their safety belts. The plane was dipping and rapidly dropping altitude in preparation for landing at the Mexico City airport. After several hours of flying, we were completing but the first lap of the long journey and adventure.

## Chapter XIII

# THE INCA EMPIRE

**T**WO PARALLEL MOUNTAIN ranges extend the full length of Peru. They begin far to the north of the country and continue well down into Chile. Their eastern range is the Andes, and the western, the Cordillera. The latter is divided into the Cordillera Blanca (white or snow-capped), and the Negra (black or devoid of snow or vegetation). From these gigantic ranges, with some peaks attaining an altitude of 23,000 feet, numerous rivers and streams flow into the Amazon, Plata, and Orinoco.

Between the coastal range and the western Cordilleras is a highland slope, which descends into an arid land of varying width, and extending for hundreds of miles along the coast. This coastal region receives either no rain at all or, in portions, about an inch a year, and is consequently absolute desert. As one looks out from his airplane and down upon it, he sees a dry, cracked, parched land. Great fissures caused by numerous earthquakes are seen. It is a desolate and dismal region. No life of any kind exists or could exist there, as it is. It is inept to support even the cacti and reptile life common to our Arizona, Texas, and California deserts.

In some regions the desert is hard surfaced with loose pebbles or natural gravel strewn about it. In still other areas, this terrain consists of rolling sand dunes, as one sees in the Sahara of North Africa. Ironically, from a moderate altitude they appear to have clear water flowing over them, stirred into ripples by the wind. These ripples are indeed caused by the winds and give the sand dunes a corrugated appearance.

The desert, by a gentle upward slope, sometimes attains a height of 200 feet above the beach. Such desert plateaus are transversed by irregular narrow valleys, more properly called gullies, reaching far into the highlands. Most of them are parched, and a few have their lower slopes covered with verdure, in which small pathetic Indian villages are situated. The vegetation indicates that the little valley was caused by an erosion of some river, which forced its way to the sea from the distant Andes, or the comparatively near Cordillera Range. The current green is caused by a periodic stream from the mountains, following the old course, and watering the lower slopes of the desert plateau, or the walls of the valley canyon. One cannot help but be impressed with the idea of how tenaciously life, both animal and human, clings to these patches of green, and how it follows the waterways.

The beach from the air is superb, as it actually is at the surface, and is almost continuous for hundreds of miles. As far as the eye can see north and south, even at an altitude of 12,000 feet, there is a ceaseless roll of breakers. The beach at places is sometimes nearly a half mile wide and never less than several hundred feet. Here in the calm tropical sun the water is an intense blue, which mirrors the whiteness of the beach and breakers. It is sufficient to accommodate all peoples in the world who love bathing; a great natural playground resort, and yet for hundreds of miles, or nearly its entire extent, not a living thing may be seen, for behind it is the ever foreboding, merciless, and trackless desert. Only from the air could such topographical relationship be discerned, and such a vista unfolded.

All of the coastal range of the great Andes, and in fact, that land comprising the Andean area, or what are now the countries of Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and most of Chile, was once *The Inca Empire*. It was one of the greatest empires of all times, and especially of what might be termed a barbarian people, or early civilization, and, of course, the most extensive empire of the Western World. All we know of the Peruvians before the Incas, or the prehistoric Indians, is to be found in their megalithic remains, in other words, the great stone cities, which remain as mute evidence of their existence and culture. Two outstanding examples of this culture are to be found in

the ruins of Tiahuanaco, high in the Andes, bordering Bolivia; and those comprising the fortress of Sacsahuaman.

It is theorized that the Incas conquered these two megalithic peoples, those who were established at Tiahuanaco and those located in the Urubamba Valley region. Later the two cultures were joined, or absorbed into the empire of the superior Incas. This conclusion is reached by a study of their pottery in the regions referred to above and comparing it with that found in the later Inca ruins. The latter pottery bears inscriptions and designs of the two pre-Incaic peoples. It is concluded that the coastal Indians of northern Peru were undoubtedly brought under Inca dominion about the year 1,400 A.D. This was only about 132 years before the Spanish conquistadors, under Pizarro, in turn conquered them.

The religion of the Incas is one of the most important aspects of their civilization. In fact, we know that the religious and theurgical practices of the early civilizations fashioned and influenced almost all of their cultures, and was often the paramount motivating force of the peoples' lives. It must be understood at the outset that all we know of the Incas' religion is determined only from two sources; conclusions borne out by archaeological research and studies of their art, weaving, pottery making, painting, and architecture, on the one hand; and the accounts of early chroniclers, on the other. These early chroniclers were Roman Catholic priests, who accompanied Pizarro and those who later undertook to convert the Incas to Christianity.

With all of their remarkable achievements and high degree of civilization, *the Incas did not develop any system of writing*. Unfortunately, therefore, unlike the Egyptians and Assyrians, they left no direct personal record of their activities. Their religion quite patently was a highly complex system of *mysticism* and philosophy. Their ceremonies were elaborate, well organized, and having a cogent purpose. The performance of these religious rites and offices necessitated an extensive priesthood. Most of our knowledge of their concepts, supported by archaeological artifacts, comes from such early chroniclers as *Cieza de Leon*.

The principal deity of the Incas was a solar god (or sun god). This parallels a conception of many earlier peoples and religions. To the ancient Egyptians during the time of Amenhotep IV, the sun, or Ra, was not conceived as a personal deity but a symbol of the Divine creative force. The Incas, however, conceived the sun as a personalized god and the first cause of all. There were a number of minor deities as well; for example, the moon, whom they called *Quilla* and whom they thought to be the sister-wife of the sun. Also Venus who was the page of the parent god, or the Sun, and thunder and lightning who were his dread ministers.

Though the Incas were worshipers of natural phenomena, they cannot be called thoroughgoing naturalists or pantheists. Only certain of the cosmic bodies were apotheosized and all nature was not held to be imbued with the spirit of God. In other words, the Divine Powers were personalized and limited to certain natural phenomena. These gods, as in the religion of the early Greeks, composed a kind of theogony. There was a veneration as well of many of the lesser gods that amounted to a system of phylactery worship.

For example, since maize was the principal source of food, each home had some pottery vessels made in the form of an ear of corn, to which prayers were offered in the hope of bringing forth an abundant crop. It was believed that this amulet or vase contained the spiritual essence of the maize. These objects were called *Sara Mana*. Homes also had their *Llama Mana* pottery. These were fashioned in the form of a llama, in the top or back of which was an aperture into which coins could be deposited, like a small bank. This constituted an offering to the spirit of the llamas, with the hope that their flock would increase. This practice corresponds to the Babylonian custom of having household gods which were also made of baked clay in a great variety of forms. A number of the latter odd-shaped little objects now repose in the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum.

Opposing the Divine and beneficent solar god known as "Yuti," was the personification of evil or sin, referred to as "Supay." There were also many holy amulets which were purely the product of superstition and were not related to the elaborate religious system. Thus, any

bright or odd-shaped object, such as a pebble, which might attract the attention of the individual, might become one of the “Conopas,” or fortunate pieces. If an Inca came across such an object, he would immediately consult a priest to determine whether it was “Huaca” or holy. If it was declared to be, it was kept in the home of the finder, or worn upon his person as a sacred object.

Not much is known about the religion of the early prehistoric peoples, but it is known that the coastal Indians worshiped fish, upon which they personally depended for sustenance, since extensive agriculture in their region was practically impossible. As the great expanse of the Pacific was ever before them and fish were plentiful, they became an object to be deified. Their influence on Inca art is seen in the pottery and weaving, where the outstanding element or motif of design is forms of marine life.

One of the impressive religious customs of the Incas was the selection of Virgins of the Sun. These virgins were girls of tender age, selected from families of the higher caste. They dedicated themselves to the service of the solar deity. They had to be chaste and exceptionally intelligent. They were housed in special edifices, under the care of an elderly matron, known as the “Mamaconas.” Their conduct at all times typified *purity* and *morality*, and they were secluded from such worldly contacts as might profane or contaminate them. Since their religious duties occupied but a portion of their time, they were taught the arts and crafts of spinning, weaving, and painting, in which they excelled. In fact, some of the finest examples of Inca basketry and weaving are the products of these Virgins of the Sun.

Their lives and their religious purpose may be compared to the Roman Vestals or “Vestal Virgins.” Since the *Inca*, the title of the great chieftain and leader of the peoples, and from whom they derived their name, was believed to be the son of the sun, these Virgins of the Sun were permitted to marry him—and no other mortal. Those whom he did not select as brides were eventually retired to their native village, on what amounted to a religious pension provided directly by the Inca. They lived the remainder of their lives in ease, and were venerated by their villagers. It was forbidden that they ever marry. Any indiscreet

youth who became their lover, if detected, would be burned to death and his village razed. The Virgin of the Sun would herself be buried alive.

Our plane now landed at the Arequipa Airport. The landing field was built upon the desert proper, in fact, on the edge of the great plateau, down which a road gradually winds to the city, which is located in this ditch-like, narrow canyon valley. Orchards and small farms cling to either wall of the canyon, like something in desperation, holding fast to a last support needed for life. Three magnificent peaks, like three great sentinels, stand in a row from north to south and form a background for the over 400-year-old city.

The nearest of these is but a few miles to the northeast, and is the towering El Misti, attaining an altitude of 19,250 feet—,000 feet in excess of Mt. Whitney in California, the highest mountain in the United States! Its brothers, Chochani and Pichu-Pichu, are respectively 20,000 and 18,600 feet in height. It is the symmetrical form of El Misti which adds to its majesty. It is nearly conical and its peak is crowned all year round with glistening white snow and ice fields. These extend far down its slopes in graceful streamers, like a cap to which flowing ribbons have been attached. To add to its awesomeness, a filmy cloud hangs continuously above it, suspended between it and the blue vault of the heavens.

Our whole beings tingled in this atmosphere. Each inhalation was scented with peculiar fragrant odors. In fact, the air produced that intoxicating sensation which one experiences on a beautiful spring morning. It was not the stimulation of brisk or cold air, but rather a soothing, calming effect that caused all aggravating conditions, physical and mental, worry or concern to drop away. Of one thing you were dominantly conscious, you were very much alive. Each cell of your being seemed to have been revitalized, and you were aware of a pleasing sense of comfort—an at-peace-with-the-world sensation gripped you. Your senses quickened and you had that disarming feeling of expectancy of thrilling, joyful experiences ahead, and that after all troubles are but illusions to be quickly dispelled.

There was a physical reason for this reaction. Arequipa even though it lies in a crevice-like canyon of a plateau, is itself at an altitude of 7,600 feet. This tempers what otherwise would be almost unbearable heat. In other words, its tropical location is mitigated by its height above sea level. The result is a *perpetual spring*. The rainfall in this area, or the vicinity of Arequipa, is an inch or less annually. Occasional mountain streams alone water the canyon slopes, and they are pumped from the soil into which they have percolated.

Arequipa is Peru's second largest city, and a goodly portion of the population are Indians. The houses are principally one story structures made of stucco, painted a glistening white, which reflects the almost continuous, brilliant sunlight. With the exception of two or three main thoroughfares, which are macadamized, all streets are of cobblestone. Stone is abundant in Peru, and native labor, though not exceptionally industrious, is comparatively cheap, even on the basis of the value of Peruvian money.

The Plaza de Armas in the heart of the city is of striking interest. It once was a political and religious center of the old Inca Empire, though not as conspicuously important as others. Its ancient Inca name was *Huacay Pata*. This public square is flanked on three sides by a row of low buildings, some of which are of stone, containing shops. Extended over the sidewalks and attached to the buildings is a continuous, sloping canopy, supported by a series of stone and wooden pillars at the curb, giving the facade of these buildings the appearance of an old basilica. The sun is rarely really warm, and snow very seldom ever falls, so the canopy has really very little utilitarian value.



## Chapter XIV

# LAND IN THE SKY

OUR STAY IN Arequipa upon our arrival was to be brief. We were anxious for the adventure ahead and our ultimate destination, the sacred cities and shrines of the ancient Incas. We devoted our entire day, until late in the evening, the hour of our departure, in outfitting ourselves. Having come by air and sacrificed the weight of personal luggage, as said previously, for camera equipment and paraphernalia, we had none of the necessary clothes required for the rugged journey ahead. The proper size native-made hobnail shoes was my principal problem at the moment. In the hinterland into which we were to go, the Indians who principally occupy it, outside of the small towns and villages, go barefoot or wear a sandal which requires one to toughen his feet before it affords any degree of protection. Further, the Indians, in the main, are quite small in stature though broad, heavy-set and strong. Their feet, though of almost unimaginable width, are quite short in length. The Peruvians themselves are not tall people, and their feet are small. Consequently several hours were lost in finding a pair of shoes of what in America would be considered an average size.

When the hour of departure had come, we were ready to board a train of the only railroad in southern Peru. This line runs from Mollendo through Arequipa, to the capital of the ancient Inca Empire, namely, *Cuzco*, a total distance of about 506 miles. It attains *the highest altitude* of any standard gauge railroad in the world. It principally follows an old Indian and Spanish Conquistador pack trail into the high *Cordillera de los Andes* and the *Andes Mountains* proper.

The first leg of our journey was to be *Juliaca*, where we were to arrive early the next morning, there to change trains and continue on the same line to Cuzco, reaching there the following night.

We afterwards learned that this southern division of the National Railroad of Peru had been operating at a considerable loss for the past several years. At least the scarcity of passenger travel must have been one of the contributing factors, as the sleeping car had but four other passengers. The day coaches were fairly well filled with Indians and native Peruvians, their packages, their blanket rolls, and wicker-like baskets containing food and personal possessions; the windows of these cars they kept open throughout the journey. For many hours, in fact, until late the next day, our journey was to be a continual climb. The engine, however, of antique British manufacture, was similar in size and capacity to the small yard engines used for mere switching purposes in the railroad terminals of America. The compartment which we occupied, though standard for that type of equipment, was very small, and we were considerably crowded, what with our camera, tripods, film, and accessory cases.

It was apparent before long why so much time was consumed to travel such a relatively short distance. The engine snorted, wheezed, and virtually shuddered as she began her ascent from over 7,000 feet *upward*. Shortly we had reached the plateau, having climbed from out of the crevice in which the city of Arequipa is situated. We were then exposed to the unhampered wind, which gathers tremendous momentum as it passes over the great arid area of the western slopes of Peru. The single windows were no barriers to the impalpable dust particles which clogged our nostrils and irritated our throats.

I do not know how long I had been asleep, perhaps for several hours, but I felt myself struggling desperately for air like a drowning man. I was not entirely awake. It was as though I sought to penetrate a swirling, dense fog which engulfed and choked me. I was becoming panic-stricken, for I was experiencing pain as well. It was as if the contact with the fog were sufficient to produce pain, as though it were a hard substance and inflicted blows on my head. As I sought to push through it, or push it away, it pressed down upon me and seemed

particularly to crush my head. I could actually feel the equal pressure on the top and sides of my cranium. Finally making a last effort to free myself, I plunged into this enveloping mass—and then I *awoke*, with a start, to a seated position in my berth.

Beads of cold perspiration stood out on my forehead. A pulsating pain made the cutaneous surface of my head supersensitive to the slightest touch. My breathing was labored, as if I had been participating in some strenuous exercise. I managed to dress and reach the platform of the car, which had swayed and jerked to a stop. Each motion of my body aggravated the severe headache. Mrs. Lewis was also experiencing laborious breathing, but as yet no other discomfort. A most picturesque sight greeted our eyes. Here *was Juliaca*! In reality it was nothing but a junction change with a shed like depot and one or two clapboard houses, one of which had the distinction in name only of being a hotel. Juliaca was likewise one of the highest altitudes reached en route, being 13,200 feet. During the night we had crossed the Continental Divide, through *a pass between mountains*. The pass itself was over 13,600 feet.

What we were experiencing as discomfort was mountain sickness, or as the Indians called it “Saroche.” It is the result of high altitude, with its consequent lack of oxygen, which affects the entire organism. Its effects may last an hour or a month. They may become very severe with nausea, headache, palpitation of the heart, change in blood pressure, etc. It may repeat several times after interims of apparent normalcy, or the individual may rapidly become acclimated to it. The head pain caused me to squint my eyes, as all facial nerves were sympathetically responsive, and the early morning light, though not strong, was painful to my eyes.

I looked out on the scene before me. I felt as though, regardless of the incongruity of a train in this setting, I had been transported in point of time back several centuries. Indian women and men (many direct descendants of the old Incas, and not differently attired from their traditional costumes) stood in groups, either motionless, studying us, or running up to us and dangling their wares before us.

The men were about five feet six inches in height, heavy-set, and broad shouldered. Almost all were barefooted. Many wore knitted caps of wool, which snugly fitted their heads, with Haps that covered their ears, not unlike skating caps in appearance. Others wore over that what looked like a high-crowned panama hat with the brim turned down. These were made of a native reed which grew along the banks of streams and the Andean lakes. Almost all wore the common but beautifully designed *poncho*. These are like two oblong blankets of varying lengths, of pure llama wool, sewn together with an interstice through which the head is put. Thus one panel of the poncho hangs down the back and the other down the front. A side is often draped over the left shoulder in the fashion of the Roman toga.

The colors are principally brilliant reds, blues, and greens, and are made of fast earth dyes by the Indians themselves. The designs represent the things in their lives, their animals, their flowers, themselves, ancient Inca symbols, and religious characters, as well as geometrical patterns. They constitute a very definite protection against the biting wind and cold of the high plateaus and mountain slopes. Some of the men also wore ornate vests made of heavy wool, dyed a deep blue, the edges of which were fringed with a knitted material of a different color and without buttons.

Boys dressed similarly to the men, minus the hat or sandals, and wore small ragged and filthy ponchos. Some peddled flat pancake-like buns. These buns in themselves seemed clean and inviting. A hole was pierced through each, and a dozen or more were carried on a stick which was inserted in the holes. As they ran about shouting their wares to other Indians who leaned out of the train windows, to bargain with them, as also did some of the other Peruvian passengers, the plenitude of dust they kicked up was settling on the food. Each prospective customer, as well, fingered the assortment with unclean hands before he made any purchase—if he did at all. When all possible sales were made, the stick with the remaining unsold buns was propped up against the depot platform, exposed to further dirt and dust.

These Indians, though picturesque in their dress and mannerisms were in the main quite unkempt. They were, of course, ignorant of

even the rudiments of hygiene and sanitation. Germs, infections, and disease—these meant little to them. If they became ill (and the mortality rate is high), they have native medicines which they use quite effectively, made from herbs indigenous to the terrain, and which do alleviate pain. Some of these effect definite cures. On the other hand, they have a paucity of knowledge of the prevention and spread of contagious diseases. Superstitious practices, indulging the use of amulets and fetishes, intermingled with such Christian doctrines as have been taught to them, are used in the attempt to drive away disease; and it is mainly in those things that they take their pitiful refuge.

## Chapter XV

# THRESHOLD OF THE PAST

OUR LOCOMOTIVE WAS creating for us an ever changing panorama, for on this comparative level, it was attaining a speed of approximately forty-five miles an hour, and as if in glee, punctuated the silence with frequent shrill blasts. The locomotive engineer was a man of great importance in this high Andean plateau region. He was a symbol of the outside world and of the age of machinery, even if the equipment he used was quite old and dilapidated. At each occasional water tower, he descended from his cab to acknowledge the tacit ovation of the curious Indians who walked about him and his engine with an air of bewilderment.

Here on a slight knoll as we rolled past was a Peruvian shepherd, similar to many we had seen during this day. They would turn and stare after us. They were nearly all dressed alike, in short knee length, stovepipe-shaped, dark blue, woolen trousers, their heads thrust through colorful ponchos, much soiled by continuous usage—slept in, in fact. Their heads were almost always enclosed in the typical skull-fitting knitted cap, with its ear flaps. This chap was in the act of playing a reed flute, which shepherds almost always carry somewhere on their persons. Perhaps no more primitive instrument can be found. Made of a stalk of native grass, it is so constructed as to emit five or six shrill notes. The quaint selections they play upon it haunt your memory, and you eventually find yourself humming or whistling them. It is the most common musical instrument seen among the Indians, and its origin may be found in the musical instruments of their Inca forebears.

The flocks these shepherds tend at this altitude consist of a mixture

of sheep and llamas. The llama is a cameloid ruminant and has all of the malevolent characteristics of the camel. He displays that austere indifference to all humans. Upon very little provocation, he becomes vicious, spitting upon those near him and kicking straight forward on a level with his body with his sharp front hoofs, which can be a serious blow. One must approach these creatures with caution, unless he thoroughly understands them. When full grown their backs may attain a height from the ground of some four feet. Many of them are beautiful animals to behold, their coats being either pure white, tan, or black, or a blending of them.

The wool of the llama is far longer and exceedingly finer than that of sheep. In fact, it is silky and is highly valuable as an export product, especially when mixed with that of the alpaca, a sheep-like ruminant, indigenous to South America. The Indian also eat the flesh of the llama, which is said to be quite palatable, and many of their garments are made from its wool and hide. The average price of the full-grown llama in American money was about \$8.00 or \$12.00. These Hocks usually number from a half dozen to twenty and represent the principal wealth of the Indian.

The Incas are said to have been the first to have domesticated this animal. Contrary to popular conception, it is practically useless for transportation purposes. It is not a burden carrier. The Indians, however, place upon it small pouches or bags, never in excess of fifty pounds weight, although they themselves are able to carry considerably more. Further, these animals do not thrive in altitudes below 6,000 feet. They display no more intelligence than the sheep with which they mingle freely, and in an apparently peaceful relationship.

Some hours had now elapsed, and we were far into the valley plateau. Indian villages were becoming frequent and of a picturesqueness almost defying description. Such villages usually consist of two irregular rows of mud brick dwellings. Usually adjoining the village is the "plant" for the manufacture of such bricks. This plant in reality is nothing but an open field, in which have been built and laid upon the ground wooden forms (sometimes made of stone), or molds to shape the various sized blocks or bricks desired, of which there are no more than two or three sizes. Shallow pits are dug, in which the clay like soil is mixed with

water and churned or kneaded, and then mixed with dry grass or reeds to reinforce it. Then this substance is compressed into the molds and exposed to the sun for dehydration.

The hut-like homes consist of one room, sometimes two, are squat and one story in height. They are usually never in excess of seven feet in height and are all uniform in color, namely, the natural reddish brown of the soil. The roofs, some pitched and others merely sloping, like that of a lean-to, consist of thatch, that is, woven balsa or similar reeds. There is a doorway, but no door. The "windows" consist of but one aperture, perhaps a foot square, with no covering of any kind. Though rain on this fertile plateau is much more plentiful than along the arid coastal slopes, there is apparently no way of preventing it from entering these apertures.

The rolls of reeds that compose the roof, however, are exceptionally absorbent. The rainfall would need to be extremely heavy before it would penetrate the interior of the dwelling from the roof. The street, if it is to be so designated, consists of but a path between the short rows of homes. It is gutted with ruts and holes made by the domestic animals, dogs as well, that are allowed to burrow dust holes in it for themselves. Children, dogs, pet sheep, and young llamas freely go in and out of the huts together.

Near the village small patches of ground are cultivated. Corn is one of the principal commodities. The method of cultivation is by means of a wooden plow, which consists of but a natural crook of the limb of a tree, the point of which is suitable to make a shallow furrow. The beam of the plow is part of the same limb, which is attached to the yoke of a team of lumbering oxen. Fortunately the train passes these villages slowly. Unoccupied Indian men, sitting in a soporific mood, in the dust and in the shade of the dwellings, lift their heads and follow the train with their eyes.

Indian women come to the doorways with their ponchos bulging, indicating that they are carrying infants on their backs, like small sacks of grain. Even the heads, feet, or hands are not visible. They stare with expressionless faces after this link with the outside world, which they may never see and about which they know little or nothing.



Unlike Egypt or northern Africa generally, where Arab villages of a similar nature exist, there is no deluge of disease-bearing, repulsive, sticky Hies. The high altitude makes them a rarity, as are most all wing-borne insects. Each of these villages, some with their pitiful, small, impoverished appearing church, with its traditional tower, and its old wooden cross almost always askew, and with its single bell, becomes an artist's and photographer's delight.

Since we were now but a matter of minutes from Cuzco, the Sacred City, our minds dwelt upon the centuries-old legend of its founding. The origin of the Inca religion centered around Lake Titicaca, which we were later to visit. According to this legend, one of the islands in its center was a sacred precinct upon which lived the children of the Sun deity. The man's name was Manco Capac, and his wife, who was likewise his sister, was Mama Ocllo. One time they were commanded by the Sun to depart from the sacred island and to go and instruct the savage tribes who inhabited the country in religion and in the arts. It is further recounted that Manco was given a golden wedge, with the instruction that wherever it would fall from his hand and sink into the earth, that was where he and his wife were to establish a great city, devoted to perpetuating and expounding the religion of the Sun deity.

This version of the legend continues by relating that Manco and Mama Ocllo journeyed northward along the shore of the nearly three-mile high lake, finally departing from it and entering what is now Cuzco Valley. In this valley the golden wedge slipped from Manco's hand and sank into the earth, and there these two children of the Sun began to build the city of Cuzco, which became one of the greatest religious capitals of the world.

Manco, it is further related, in the fulfillment of his mission, became the sole leader of the Incas, and taught the savages to worship the Sun. He likewise instructed the men how to fish and how to hunt. He also taught them to cultivate the rich soil of the valley, which is protected by the high mountain ranges, from being continually covered with snow. Mama Ocllo taught the women how to weave and how to spin.

Here also began one of the two distinct languages which are still spoken today. It is known as *Quechua*, and prevails in the Cuzco and

Lake Titicaca regions among the Indians. It is often referred to as the language of court, as it was spoken in the palaces of the Incas in Cuzco. This and its companion tongue, known as *Aymara*, which is spoken in the northwest and south of Lake Titicaca, were the common tongues of the Incas at the time of the Spanish Conquest. Quechua is not infrequently spoken as far north as Quito, Equador.

It had now become dark, and we welcomed the gestures of the half-Indian train attendant, whose duties were to serve as a combination porter and chef, for the preparation of such meals as the train could afford, that we should gather together our baggage. We looked forward to a night's sleep, after a tedious but most interesting day's journey. The next morning showed bright and warm. We had not by any means become accustomed to the ordeal of the altitude. The slightest exertion, like walking up a small incline, caused much panting and a warning head pain lest we incur another raging headache. Engaging the assistance of the proprietor of the principal, really the only, lodging place in the city that could be graced with the title of hotel, and which was owned by the railroad which terminated at Cuzco, we prepared to go to an important archaeological site of the region.

From now on, we were to be extremely busy photographing each object and each site of historical and of mystical interest. Cuzco is a city of stone. Stone is its most plentiful building material. Lumber is a scarcity and costly. Almost all soft lumber, imported before World War I, came from Canadian forests—some from Sweden, and very little from the United States, because its production costs were too high for competition. The streets of this old city, with one exception, are quite narrow, and all paved with cobblestone. The sidewalks consist of great slabs of granite, reminding us of the slabs of pure marble used on many sidewalks in Athens, where such material was common even in antiquity. The buildings are of two distinct types. The larger ones, the better homes and business establishments, are made of solid stone blocks, some twelve or fourteen inches long and ten inches wide, many of them erected upon foundations of original Incaic ruins, which are still visible. The roofs are mainly of corrugated iron, painted red, or of tiling once imported from Spain. This massiveness and the monochrome of the stone gives the city a somber appearance.

Cuzco is wired for electricity, for which there is a hydroplant not far distant in the mountains surrounding Cuzco Valley. The lighting is very elementary, however, using low wattage bulbs or lamps, giving a depressing yellow glow. Some of the bulbs even use the obsolete carbon filament. A shade or reflector which would intensify the light or cause it to be indirect is a novelty. In other words, almost all users of the electric bulb use it as they would a candle, without any accessories, merely inserting it in the socket.

Automobiles are very few in number, because all must be imported from other countries, at that time principally the United States, and upon them is placed a very high duty, far beyond the reach of most of the inhabitants of Cuzco. Gasoline is also expensive. Horses are rare because grain for them is as well. Hardy burros are quite common, though not so much so as in Egypt and the lands of the Levant.

Humans here again are burden carriers. Peruvian Indian coolies carry tremendous loads upon their stooped backs, staggering along bowlegged showing signs in their bare legs of varicose veins, caused by the excessive weights they must carry. The load is partly supported by a band about their foreheads, and the arteries of their necks stand out like knotted cords under the strain. For such a load being transported for a distance of a half mile, they may receive less than one sole, or about twelve or thirteen cents in United States' money. It was also quaint to see a flock of llamas being driven by a shepherd down one of the principal streets, toward a bazaar or market place. Civilians in modern dress wended their way in and out among the haughty beasts.

We had left the city and were now climbing one of the hills of the range which bordered Cuzco. Our vehicle struggled up the steep grade. As we rose above the city, we looked back upon it. It sprawled beneath us. There in the center rose in majesty the cathedral tower, built upon the ruins of the once magnificent sacred Temple of the Sun. In our mind's eye, we could see those Incas of old who had made lengthy, fatiguing journeys on foot from throughout the extensive empire to visit it once in their lifetime. We could see them falling prone upon the ground as their gaze for the first time fell upon this symbol of the sanctuary of their deity. And now—well, we withhold our opinion. We must first visit it.

## Chapter XVI

# CITY OF THE GODS

**W**E HAD FINALLY negotiated the precipitous road. To our backs was the sloping remainder of the hills which rise above the sacred city of Cuzco. In the foreground was a narrow valley, devoid of all vegetation. What held our attention was a huge structure in about the center of a large level area. Even at a distance of about one-half mile from us, these remains appeared stupendous. They were the ruins of ancient Sacsahuaman, used by the Incas as a fortress to protect the approaches to the city of Cuzco.

We descended the rock-strewn banks, to the valley floor, tugging and perspiring under the weight of our camera equipment. This floor itself was at an altitude of about 12,500 feet. As we approached the fortress, it loomed greater with each yard, and our admiration of the feats of these people grew proportionately. The walls are now truncated. What had been their tops have long since disappeared. Great causeways or stairways approach the various angles of the walls, and lead to where one time the Inca's legions assembled at the top of the fortress to meet attack.

The size of the stones used in construction may be appreciated by the fact that one of them exceeds 150 tons in weight, and is thirty-eight feet long, eighteen feet wide, and six feet through. They were drawn from quarries four to fifteen leagues distant! They are not indigenous to the immediate vicinity. Further, in bringing them from the quarries, they had to be transported over deep ravines and up and down the sides of gorges. This accomplishment itself is worthy of our times, with all of the modern equipment which we possess. It must be

again repeated that the Incas and their predecessors, of course, had no knowledge of the wheel, so that most useful and important implement was not employed in such transportation.

The remains of Sacsahuaman represent two distinct cultures. The lower part of the walls is principally megalithic. These colossal stones are not skilfully fitted and shaped. They are considered the work of a prehistoric people, the Indians preceding the Incas. This work resembles the megalithic ruins and Tiahuanaco culture, in evidence principally on the shores of Lake Titicaca high in the Andes. In fact, the northern wall, almost in its entirety, is of this very old culture. How old it is, archaeologists have not yet determined.

The southern walls were entirely erected by the Incas and show their greater skill in masonry, such as the intricate shaping and fitting of the stones, one angle ingeniously engaging another. The joints were perfectly fitted and equal to the masonry of which we are capable today. The stones were also all laid in regular courses, as we lay brick. It is surmised that the first part of the southern walls was erected by Inca Copac, about 1482 A.D. Legend relates that he founded the city of Cuzco by letting slip from his hand a golden wedge given him by the Sun God. One end of the southern wall is of very late Incaic style. Part of these walls of Sacsahuaman date from the time of Inca Pachacutic who is related to have built the magnificent citadel of *Machu Picchu*, which we were later to visit.

What manner of warriors were these Incas who defended these walls and the great empire which they created in the Western World? According to the Spanish chroniclers, the Incas had an extensive military organization, the personnel well trained and high in courageous spirit. It is these very facts, however, which confound historians today. How could a mere handful of Spanish conquistadors, regardless of how dauntless they were and the fact- that they carried simple firearms, defeat a military machine of thousands of warriors? It is held today by military experts that even by the sheer weight of numbers, the charges of the Inca warriors could have overwhelmed the conquistadors, even though they might have paid for their bravery in hundreds of lives. The Spanish military force that reached Cuzco numbered a few hundreds

of tired, homesick, and ill men, surrounded on all sides by thousands of well-fed and armed Inca warriors.

I recall seeing a beautiful mural on the walls of what is now a Roman Catholic school in Cuzco. Though partially exposed to weather, it is still quite brilliant in coloring. One of the brothers of the religious order took special pains to point out this mural. It is the Church's answer to the historians's question. It depicts a pitched battle between the conquistadors and the Inca warriors. It takes place on a great plain, possibly meant to be the valley of Cuzco. In the immediate foreground are the few Spanish soldiers, firing their muskets point blank into the human walls of Inca warriors.

As far as the eye can see, they have entirely surrounded the Spanish. The Incas, in turn, are shooting a virtual deluge of arrows into the small group of conquistadors. In actuality, there are enough arrows coming their way to cause each Spanish warrior, if they took hold, to look like an animated pincushion. In addition, each Inca warrior carries his shield, and either a spear or a war axe. Hovering over the heads of the conquistadors are cherubs who, with their bare hands, are deflecting the arrows back to the Incas who are dropping in great numbers from them, mortally wounded. Thus the Church has made it appear that the conquistadors were victorious because of "divine intervention" in their behalf, as depicted by the flying cherubs.

An Inca youth had to undergo severe training and military preparation to prove his strength, courage, and fitness to take part in the government and defense of the vast empire. The judges who were selected to pass upon the prowess of the youths were men who themselves had been famous in war. Each youth, before the tests and trials began, had to fast for six days. His only food consisted of a few handfuls of uncooked corn and a small jug of water to quench a thirst that was heightened by such a diet. The first test required was to run over a distance of a league and a half, about five miles. The course was exceptionally rough terrain. This course might require fording a river, or climbing over boulders at high altitudes. Each youth was in competition with the others.

Parents would intercept the lads along the course as they began to falter, and beg of them to break their hearts rather than to come off in dishonor. Those who succeeded in these strenuous tests proceeded to others, inherent with danger. The number of youths was then divided. One half of them were given a village to protect. The others had to storm it. Then the next day the procedure would be reversed, the former defenders attacking, and the attackers defending. Each was provided with a short, stout staff. They fought with such fervor in these sham battles that many suffered severe injury, and the casualties often ran high. During this military preparation and training, the Inca youths were obliged to learn to make all of their own implements, clothing, and weapons.

The afternoon was well advanced, and a cold, biting wind came from the glacial slopes of the distant Cordillera range, when we had finished photographing the fortress. Before returning to Cuzco below, there was one more site of historic interest to examine and to photograph. Popularly it is termed "The Royal Inca Baths." Some distance from the fortress are the remains of a wall that by its masonry is Incaic. Immediately in front of it are two stone terraces, one rising above the other, about four feet in height. The top surface is about three or four feet in width. In the center of each of the terraces—and directly above each other, and partially buried in the ground—is a patera-like stone. That is, this stone is ground so that it is saucer-like. The top one is filled with pure spring water, conveyed to it through a stone trough.

Near the top of each of these saucer-like bathtubs, one of which is above the other, are two oblong stones out of which troughs have been hollowed. These constitute overflow "pipes" for the water. Thus the surplus water of the upper "bath" flows into the one beneath it, and that in turn to the lower one. If three persons were taking a bath simultaneously (and that is what must have been intended), it is problematical how clean would be the one in the lower bath when he finished bathing, since the water of the two "tubs" above would have overflowed into his. Some huge stones had been fashioned into right angles so that they made fairly comfortable and yet massive stone chairs. These were evidently used by the bathers.

It was a day most well spent in study and photography. It wearied us considerably, however, and we retired early, the high altitude and cold night air inducing sleep as well.

The next morning it was with joyous realization that we were to pay our respects to the Sun Temple— the mecca of hundreds of thousands of devout votaries of the Sun God in the past centuries. We set out on foot.

Here and there along the way, seated on the curbs, feet in the gutters, were Indian men, not many, but conspicuous enough to make us study them. Leaning back against wooden posts which supported porticoes in front of the little shops, their ponchos were disarranged, their faces more filthy and their clothing more unkempt by far than the average Indian's. They had their large feet flat upon the cobblestones and spread apart, their legs bare to their knees and appearing emaciated, their eyes having a glassy, vacuous look. They were obviously, so far as consciousness was concerned, out of this world, unaware of our presence. At times, they would leer, an idiotic smile fleeting across their faces. We would hear a gurgling in their throats like a deep chuckle.

Most repulsive was a greenish-gray liquid which trickled from the comers of their mouths, apparently uncontrollable, or of which they were not conscious as they chewed incessantly. These unfortunates were narcotic addicts. They were chewing coca leaves from which cocaine is a derivative. Since the days of the Incas, chewing coca leaves has been a habit among the Indians and is the bane of Peru today. Some, of course, are more addicted to it than others. Openly exposed on the laps of some of these unfortunates could be seen the dry, green coca leaves.

The common beverage of the Peruvian Indian is chicha. It was made in the same manner by the Incas, and called by them "aca." It is a beer made of maize grains. These are chewed by old women and children who spit them into a warm, brackish water. We are told that the more brackish, the better. There it remains until it ferments. On a journey far into the hinterlands, we saw examples of the dispensing of this chicha.



A large earthen vessel, somewhat on the amphora style, exposed to the warm, midday sun, was filled with this chicha. In appearance, to give a homely description, it looked like a dirty soapy water that had been used for scrubbing purposes. An obese Indian woman sat cross-legged upon the ground behind the vessel. When she had a customer, she took another earthen vessel which had a handle, and which held about a pint of liquid, and dipped it into the larger vessel to fill it. Often her hand and wrist entered into the contents and came out dripping. This sort of service was not in the least offensive to her purchaser. The dregs or remaining drops contained in the dispenser were sometimes left therein, and at other times thrown upon the ground. Each purchaser drank from the same container which was never cleansed. Chicha has a fairly high alcoholic content which is the saving grace, for it destroys the bacteria which such methods of dispensing would ordinarily rapidly increase.

There before us in the plaza was the church and convent of Santa Domingo. It occupies the site of the present Temple of the Sun. In fact, it is built upon the original foundations of the Inca Temple. Some of the remaining Incaic walls rise to quite a height, and compose part of the walls of the present edifice. It must be realized that during the time of the ascending Inca power, the entire city of Cuzco was a sacred precinct. At that time, about the huacopala or central square, now known as the "Place Principal," and in which we now stood, there were twelve wards or districts of the city. Each of these wards was inhabited by natives of as many provinces of the empire. In other words, each ward was occupied by representatives of the peoples of the vast empire. Each ward in Cuzco, in fact, represented a section of the empire at that time.

The people in each ward wore distinctive dress, so that when they went about the sacred city they displayed by this means the section which they represented. This, in itself, discloses the astute political organization of the Incas. The principal buildings in the district during the reign of the Incas were the royal residences and the convent of the Virgins of the Sun.

The entrance into the cathedral is through usual large wooden doors, studded with bronze rosettes, which lead into a rather dismal, cold, austere and ill-lighted foyer. It is not unlike the foyer of many other church edifices of Latin-America and Europe. When we crossed this corridor and passed through another portal, a pleasing transformation greeted us. The church was built on the order of a basilica. The ambulatories formed a quadrangle; the latter was open to the sky. It was, in effect, a beautiful patio. In it was a magnificent array of finely cultivated flowers and carefully trimmed shrubs. The vividness of their color, the delicateness of their scent, contrasted these living things with the depressing majesty man had sought to attain in his architecture which surrounded them. Perhaps I was pantheistic in my view, but I was more conscious of the divine in these growing things and in the brilliant sunlight which played upon them, than in anything which was suggested or represented by the present edifice itself.

The Temple of the Sun originally combined the residence of the Inca and his royal family and what amounted to a virtual *pantheon*. The Temple of the Sun can be called a pantheon, because it was not alone a single temple of the solar deity, but included the temples of all the more important lesser deities as well. Thus as one walks around the ambulatory, he sees great doors leading from it. Many of them are the entrances to the temples of these other deities.

Let us enter one. The present doors, of course, are not the original ones, yet nevertheless they were brought from Spain over two hundred years ago. Around the entrance may be seen a portion of the original masonry of the Incas, the great stone blocks magnificently fitted. Against them has been constructed by the Spanish, as a later contribution, an ornately carved stone arch. This is definitely of the Spanish colonial period, as the Incas did not employ the arch in their architecture.

The temple is oblong, perhaps thirty feet in length, twenty feet in width, and about the same in height. The walls consist of regular courses of the original Incaic stones, excellently preserved. This is the Temple of the Thunder and Lightning Gods, the dread ministers of the Sun God Ynti. The floor is likewise of stone, and the entire temple

is without furnishings of any kind. Recessed in the wall, about eight or ten feet apart, are niches, about three feet in height, one foot in width, and about eight inches deep. In these, the Inca votaries were required to deposit their offerings of silver. No images, it is related, were ever found in them, so this explanation as to their use is perhaps a verisimilitude.

Most impressive is a rather faint painted strip about four inches in width that extends around the entire temple walls at a height of about seven feet from the floor surface. Legend relates that the devout Incas who entered the temple to pray and to make their offerings were forbidden to reach or touch the walls of the temple above this strip, the color of which is now fragmentary. Above the strip was the realm of the gods, their sacred precinct. It was man's most contiguous point to their divine sphere. They in turn never descended, in their association with mortals and mortal things, below this colored band. Consequently, it was a dividing line between man's and the gods' realm.

Psychologically, it must have had a desired effect upon the Incas. It caused them to conceive the gods as being close to them—as close as they could reach and touch with their hands extended above their heads. It made the gods intimate, yet kept them from being profaned by being upon the same level as man. Most certainly it brought the gods closer than they were to man outside of the temple, in the conception of the Incas.

The Incas exercised great religious tolerance. When they conquered the aborigines of Peru, who preceded them, they did not interfere with the religion of these peoples, a lesson we can learn from them today. Pachacamac was the chief deity of these prehistoric peoples. When the Incas subdued them, they built a House of the Virgins of their religion and a Temple of the Sun, also of their religion, adjacent to the Temple of Pachacamac.

We sat upon the wall of the ambulatory, the warm sun heating our backs and feeling like a gentle, relaxing caress. We mused that about two months ago, or the occasion of the summer solstice, was the anniversary of the greatest religious ceremony of the Incas. On each

such occasion, the Inca nobles gathered from throughout the empire in Cuzco, coming in all the splendor and finery at their command. The populace fasted for three days preceding the ceremony, during which time fire was not allowed in the houses. At the appointed time, the Inca arrived.

On the screen of our consciousness we could see him, proud, and of regal bearing. Due to generations of culture and breeding, the color of his skin was many shades lighter than that of his subjects. His nose was only slightly aquiline, his chin and mouth quite firm, his whole face majestic. He was quite evidently conscious of his religious and political position and as well his responsibility to his people. He wore a semicircular miter of gold. Rising above the miter were white and black plumes. On his forehead he wore a red frieze. He held in the crook of his left arm a scepter which was more like a gold war axe attached to a carved wooden handle. Attached to the lobes of his ears were very large, circular gold disks into which had been cut symbols of the gods. On his feet he wore sandals. He also wore breeches to his knees, and these were in folds. Where his highly colored, woven collar formed a "V" at his neck, there was affixed a larger gold disk, perhaps six inches in diameter, out of which had been beautifully cut a symbolic solar disk depicting the Sun God of which the Inca himself was thought to be the son. From the disk radiated fourteen triangular rays.

The entire populace of the city had followed him. All then stood waiting impatiently for the rising of their deity, the sun. As the first rays were seen, a great shout broke forth from the multitude and rolled across the valley, resounding through the hills. This ecstasy, then, took the form of songs and the playing of barbaric instruments. Next began the numerous ceremonies of adoration. The Inca then offered a libation to the sun, with the fermented liquor made of maize. Then he drank of the same. Subsequently he passed it to each of the royal family, who sipped it as well. After this, began the great processional to the Coricancha, or the Sun Temple and royal residence, as they were called.

Each in the processional was obliged to remove his sandals before entering the temple, as is still a custom among the Mohammedans,

for example. Within the court of the temple, a llama was sacrificed. The priests or principal men of the city who were called Orejones examined the arrangement of the viscera of the llama and from it sought to read the future. We recall that the ancient Sumerians and Babylonians also studied the configurations of a sheep's liver likewise to predict the future. We know, too, that the Incas never sacrificed anything but animals in any of their religious ceremonies.

Now in our mind's eye we could see that the people were working themselves up into a religious frenzy, crying, praying, drinking aca, breaking the fast, and gorging themselves. It was with difficulty that we returned in consciousness to the present, and solemnly and reflectively departed from the Temple of the Sun. As I passed one of the ancient walls, I removed a few small stones from them and placed them in a camera case. I had a symbolical purpose in mind in doing this. I was to use them in an important event.

Already we were thinking of Machu Picchu. We were strangely, in a mental way, drawn to it. We were to have experiences there which we would never forget. We anxiously awaited the time when we could begin our journey to it, deep in the hinterlands of this beautiful, mysterious, and primitive land.

## Chapter XVII

# WHERE DEATH REIGNS

THE DISTANCE IN miles from Cuzco to Machu Picchu was about one hundred and twenty-five. The means of transportation were to require at least eight hours before we finally reached our destination. The major portion of the distance would be covered by the ferrocarril. This railroad consists of a narrow gauge track on which, at this time, there was operated a motor bus to which there had been attached standard railroad iron wheels. On the top of this bus, rather precariously perched, was strapped our equipment, which gave us some concern.

Cuzco has to its north, as we have described, a range of hills upon the near summit of which is located the old fortress of Sacsahuaman. These hills must be traversed before the floor of the plateau is again reached. To avoid extensive tunneling and a prohibitive grade there is a series of switchbacks, one paralleling the other, but each slightly higher. Thus, for nearly an hour this single car travels several miles back and forth, each time attaining a slightly higher elevation. The method is most crude, but where time is not a factor of importance, it does not distract the passengers.

Finally we were away. At no time did we travel in excess of thirty miles an hour. This was partly due to the many sharp curves and comparatively short straightaways. For many miles across the plateau north and east of Cuzco the immediate terrain and surrounding country is not unlike our approach to the sacred city of Cuzco.

Spring planting was underway; oxen slowly trudge along—animals so patient that they seem completely devoid of spirit. The rustic plow, its shear and beam both of unfashioned timber, turned up a small furrow. The Indian brought the oxen to a halt, stopped and rested against their side, gazing after us as long as we are visible, perhaps an excuse for the temporary stay of his labors. The passing of our vehicle was a daily event, and most certainly could not invoke such great interest. Here and there an obese Indian woman with a colorful, wide-brimmed hat, and with a voluminous, coarse llama wool skirt would excitedly drive off the rails ahead of us several llamas. These llamas were being herded along the track, for it was the only road of any kind in the vicinity. There was a bond of amity between these indigenous Indians and the crewmen of this railroad, for the latter never remonstrated with the former.

The transformation of the terrain was quite sudden. We had been rapidly descending for some time, the gasoline train-car swaying from side to side as it negotiated the turns. The little villages with their adobe huts—or hovels—and patches of cultivated land had disappeared. We now entered a series of small canyon-like gorges and traveled precariously along roaring mountain streams to clatter over narrow trestles. At times the walls of the gorge were so close or tortuous as to shut out light except that which penetrated from directly overhead.

At one point we thrilled to see suspended from a rocky ledge upon which we traveled, and crossing a roaring stream, one of the original Inca suspension bridges about wide enough for a man to cross. It was extremely dilapidated and we hoped in disuse. The Inca engineering skill in suspending these bridges across gorges and canyons at great height is a matter of marvel. Even though originally they were quite safe, they would test the courage of an inexperienced traveler. They swayed and bobbed up and down with each step as the traveler walked across, causing a most insecure feeling. However, without such a means this country of canyons and gorges could not have been linked into an empire as it was by the Incas.

We had now emerged from the series of gorges and were making a gradual yet rapid descent. The change in altitude was again noticeable.

Within a space of a comparatively short time we had dropped from 11,500 feet to 6,000 feet. The air was now pressing in upon us. The sensations were about the same as that of high altitude—difficulty in breathing. It amused us that we had become so accustomed to high altitude that 6,000 feet was now considered low and discomforting.

The transition in vegetation was also quite apparent; there was no more the bleakness of the plateau. Instead there was a tangle of verdure—palms, great ferns, trees whose leaves were brilliant in coloring, all entwining to form a matrix. High grasses, many with colorful plumes, reached up to block our vision below the virtual roof formed by the trees themselves. Here on either side was a wall of foliage so dense it seemed that no man could penetrate it. The fragrance was really intoxicating. One's nostrils were assailed by the pleasing scents.

As suddenly as it began, another change took place. The jungle growth receded on either side of the narrow roadbed upon which we coursed. To our left, like a gigantic serpent freed from the undergrowth, there broke into view a wide stream, best described as a shallow but swiftly flowing river. Abruptly from its opposite bank arose the steep sides of the foothills of one of the lesser ranges. Its sides from the water's edge to a great height were stepped-terraced.

These terraces consisted of stone walls laid in regular courses of small rocks in sizes varying from the human fist to the head, and rising to a height of about four feet. The width of the top of each terrace was also about four feet. These terraces had been built by the Incas centuries ago. On them they had cultivated their vegetables and herbs. Mile after mile we traveled by these terraces which were interrupted only for short distances. The majority were, insofar as their structure was concerned, as excellent as the day they were constructed. Narrow valleys here in the Andes compelled the Incas to utilize the steep sides of the mountains for their planting; thus the terraces. Actually throughout the former Inca empire hundreds of miles of such stone walls were erected. The task of building them must have been tremendous; the patience they required inexhaustible. Even though the country may be said to be literally a great quarry, the work of gathering these stones must have been herculean.



We were entering a small valley, and around us were towering mountain peaks. The verdure crept up their sides toward the snow line making them more appealing. These great masses of matter were literally crowding in on us. The temperature was quite warm, for we were entering the downstream section of the mysterious Urubamba Valley.

Hundreds of years ago Inca Pachacutec found it necessary to make important conquests in this region. The frontiers of his empire at that time were at Ollantaytambu, which is now under archaeological excavation, and which we had passed but an hour ago. The incursions of savage tribes of aborigines from the near Montanas compelled Inca Pachacutec to set forth against them. The Montanas are the great forests which slope from the Andes eastward down into the Amazon region. At their highest altitude they constitute the world's greatest stand of hardwood. Further down they merge into dense, almost impenetrable jungles in the region of the headwaters of the Amazon.

The Montanas were entered only for a short distance by the Incas, and even today only a minute portion of them has been traversed by a white man. In their tropical area, they are infested with snakes, poisonous insects, wild animals, and tribes of savage head-hunters and pigmies. Sometime in the distant future it may be worth the tremendous cost to construct a railroad into them and to haul their timber the several hundred miles over the Andes through high altitude passes to the Pacific.

At this point, also, the water was flowing eastward, away from the Pacific, down to the Amazon basin because we had now crossed the great continental divide.

It was from out of these dismal dark forests that the savages emerged to attack viciously the civilization of the Incas, so we are told by Spanish chroniclers. These aborigines burnt their captives. They kept bits of the burnt skin as trophies. Furthermore, they made drumheads out of the hides of their slain enemies. They had a strange cult of dog worship. That worthy friend of man was, on the one hand, apotheosized, and yet, on the other hand, paradoxically, they esteemed eating its flesh as a delicacy as well. They also had a revolting custom

of making a trumpet out of a dog's skull. These trumpets were used alike for their own music and to terrify their enemies.

It was against these aborigines that Inca Pachacutec set forth with an army of thirty to forty thousand. He succeeded in pushing them back into the Montanas. Then he established *Machu Picchu* as a great citadel on the edge of the Montanas which was to compose his new eastern frontier. Machu Picchu rises in the heart of this region and commands a narrow canyon of the Urubamba River. It clings to the side of a precipitous mountain forming a natural fortress.

We finally had reached the end of the narrow gauge line. From here there was no further means of transportation except one's own feet, or by horse, or burro. The surroundings were spectacular. Around us was the tremendous mass of the mountains, the peaks of which seemed to scrape the azure blue of the skies. The Urubamba River rushed past and soon lost itself in a gorge.

We discovered that we would have to carry our equipment for a mile to where the saddle and pack horses could be obtained. We secured the services of two Indian boys, and together with them we carried the heavy camera equipment, which under the hot sun seemed to increase in weight. On reaching the horses we found that only one pack animal was available. The other two were to carry us. This left for disposition two small cases which, however, were too much for one boy to carry. We engaged the two boys to pack them on foot to the summit. They were grateful for the opportunity of earning the two soles each.

The journey was now straight up. From where we stood, our trail was not even visible a few feet distant, lost in a tangle of brush. Machu Picchu, *the lost city*, was up there on top—somewhere. Back and forth we zigzagged as we ascended. The horses had no difficulty with the continuous ascent, being used to the altitude. Soon the Urubamba Valley River lay like a silver thread far below us—yet no sign of Machu Picchu. All about us was the most magnificent mountain grandeur possible, the Andes at their rugged best. The sun was beginning to dip behind one of the peaks, and we knew from the purple coloring creeping up the canyon walls that night would come quickly.

A sharp turn in the trail, and we found that we were nearly at the summit—and there was Machu Picchu! It clung, it seemed, to the peak of this mountain. Erected on the near summit by the Peruvian government was a small stone building, maintained by an Indian attendant who lived there in isolation. He prepared coarse but wholesome meals for us and provided army cots and bedding.

After dinner we stood looking out on the mystery of it all. The air was growing cold at this higher altitude. Like steam, clouds of vapor rose from the tropical vegetation below and slowly settled down upon the ruins covering them like a protective blanket. Above it all, however, remained just the tip of the peak Huano Picchu like a sentinel guarding a lost world.

The form of Huano Picchu is like that of a gigantic, recumbent, prehistoric beast, giving the entire mountain an eerie appearance. To the Incas it was almost animated, and they related many strange tales about it which have come down as legends. The mists, the sun, the shadows would actually confer upon it many moods that would have an effect upon the mind. You had that inexplicable feeling that you were constantly being observed. As you looked upon Huano Picchu, you were compelled to fight the imaginative impression that the animal-like head of the formation of the mountain did not actually move and follow your very footsteps with unseen eyes. It was with suppressed excitement that we finally slept that night.

We were up early, anxious to put in a full day photographing. We had, however, not reckoned with the mountain mists. The sun was obscured by a deep fog which penetrated and covered all. The river far below could not be seen. Just a portion of the centuries-old city was visible at a hundred yards. The sun, so Alonosus, a bright Indian lad of twelve, informed us, would not disperse the mist until about ten o'clock at least. We set out to get our bearings.

Machu Picchu was not a tumble of stones as were most of the ruined cities. It was in an excellent state of preservation even when first found. It was truly a lost city until 1912 when it was discovered by an expedition from Yale University. In comparison to other sites, not a great deal of restoration had to be done. There were the usual great

stone terraces with short stairways leading from one to another, and along which we walked on a cushion of early spring grass. The Indian lad, Alonosus, frequently stopped to pick luscious wild strawberries and to point out native wild flowers. Here, also, were stone streets on either side of which were the houses of the former residents who disappeared so mysteriously. Here, too, was a magnificent carved stone tower used by Inca sentinels to command a view of the approaches to the city. Here, also, were elaborate homes of the once great noblemen. Here, too, were the stone baths, cold spring water still running in them.

The edifices were of a variety of stone masonry, some very crude—and all without roofs. The original roofs, the weakest point in Inca architecture, were thatched. Machu Picchu had no regular plan for its construction as a city. It just grew from a citadel to a thriving city housing several thousands of inhabitants. Consequently, as in our cities today, side by side were representations of the various styles of architecture which developed in it throughout the years. The oldest structures were of uncut stones; the later, excellently executed works of masonry. The latter were principally occupied by the nobles and wealthy class.



BUILT WITHOUT THE SOUND OF HAMMER

An example of the excellent masonry and craftsmanship of the Incas. The precise curvature of the megalithic blocks of the tower displays the skill of the Incas in fashioning the hard rock of their stony land. Each block was previously prepared in quarries so that it could later be fitted into its specific place as one assembles the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

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The poorer types of residences, of course, originally had thatched roofs as did the most expensive ones. During the time of the Incas, these thatched roofs teemed with vermin which bred in them. Cuy-Cuna, or guinea pigs, ran in and about their earthen floors during the time of the occupancy of the Incas. Cooking at that time was done out-of-doors except in bad weather; when indoors the smoke added to the many other smells, and the preparation of food further cluttered the small area. At night the family of those Inca peasant-like subjects and their domestic animals, the dog, for example, and uninvited rodents all slept together.

The larger dwellings for the more prosperous class often accommodated two families. The doorways were about six feet in height. The sides were not exactly perpendicular, but oblique—that is, the distance between the sides at the base or threshold was wider than at the top. A large capital stone or headpiece was fitted across the top to support the wall above. The stairways approaching the entrances were sometimes hewn out of one large rock. The walls were composed of large blocks of stone perfectly fitted and laid in regular courses. The windows were fairly large and uniformly placed, each window looking out upon a scene that appeared like a magnificent painting.

Let us step inside one of these homes. It all seems so bleak and uninviting within—cold monochrome stone. Originally these edifices were equally as colorful as the stone baronial manors and castles of medieval Europe. The walls of these Inca abodes were once covered with beautiful llama skins. The flooring was covered with brilliantly dyed, woven patterns of llama wool with their plant, fish, and animal designs arranged in geometrical order. Beautiful painted pottery once was situated in the different corners or suspended from the wall by cords.

Later, and for several days, we photographed the many streets, towers, homes, baths, terraces, and other points of interest concerning the lives of those peoples who had left the city centuries before. Our greatest fascination was experienced at the highest point in the city, the absolute summit of the mountain—the *great sun altar*. The summit was a sheer rock forming a circle about thirty feet in diameter. It had been leveled except for a cone that projected from the center like a shaft. It was fashioned out of the same rock, and at the base of the shaft were two ledge-like steps to kneel upon when the ancient supplicants came to offer their prayers. Legend relates that the adherents would kneel before this altar just before the sun, whom the Incas called Ynti, would pass into the west, and they would seek to tie it fast to the shaft while they offered it their prayers.

The vista from here was soul stirring. From the thirty foot arena we could look straight down thousands of feet to the Umbamba River. Ahead of us, possibly five miles, was a north-eastern approach to the canyon between two great mountain walls. To the southeast, about the same distance, we could see the other small entrance into this valley from one point of vantage. Both entrances we could see in our mind's eye easily fortified by short rows of stalwart Inca warriors. If they had been forced back, they could have retreated to this mountain's sheer walls and to this city of Machu Picchu, the citadel, and here stand a siege indefinitely. Inca Pachacutec had chosen I well a site for his fortress. The river below flowed from this point into the great, dismal forests and the headwaters of the Amazon—a region in which no white man has ever deeply set foot—and returned.

This altar shaft before us and the others throughout the empire were also used for time determining purposes. The Inca year was called *Huato*. Spanish chroniclers, such as Garcilasso, say the Incas reckoned the length of the solar year and period of the solstice by noting the shadow cast by such specially constructed towers and by taking observations from them. This reminded us of the great megalithic structure at Stonehenge, England, on the Salisbury Plains with its massive slaughter stone facing the east used for a similar as well as ritualistic purpose. Such structures as these in Peru were called Intihuantana, which is equivalent to “the place where the sun was tied up.”

Time after time we climbed to the summit to this sun altar, and there sat, disinclined to speak, looking out upon this cathedral of nature. We would feel the grooves in the stone about the altar formed by the muffled shuffling feet of the thousands who had come there in past centuries when it was a thriving city to offer prayers. We thought of the priests who performed their liturgies and offered libations to the Sun God himself. However, often as we visited it, something was absent; we sensed a lack of some kind. I was not quite satisfied. I was like one who sips cool water when he has a craving thirst.

One night there came the experience that quenched this thirst within. This was not a prosaic night—not just another time for early retirement. The heavens were clear; for some inexplicable reason the usual night mist was absent. A full moon shone down with unbelievable luminosity. Suddenly I decided to go into the ruins. We set forth. Nighttime in this city of old is hazardous; darkness obscures the way. Loose stones which could be avoided during the day but not seen at night might throw one off a terrace or tumble one against a wall, causing a serious injury. Slowly we wended our way over the terraces and began our approach down one of the stone thoroughfares.

Fantastic patterns of light and shadows lay before us. They were grotesque, exciting. Quietly we passed edifices once occupied by Inca families; courtyards in which children and their pets tumbled and cried centuries ago. The inky, black shadows of the windows and open portals allowed our imaginations to frame images within them.

On we walked in this city of the dead. We hesitated a moment before the great sentry tower and looked up at its truncated top. Our hearts bounded. Some sort of bond existed between it and ourselves. We felt as though eyes which we could not perceive were scrutinizing us, as though we were desecrators disturbing the peace of the night—and of the centuries. Certainly during the reign of the Incas we would not have dared to so stealthily invade Machu Picchu or to walk about unchallenged. For the moment our memory of the past and our consciousness of the oppressive silence made us feel contrite, and then the wave of hesitancy disappeared. We were here for no purpose of ridicule, no derision of the Incas and their ways of life, rather to honor

them and further reveal their contributions to the progress which humanity had made. By this reasoning a burden was lifted from us, and we walked freely along, the only sound our own heavy breathing and our footsteps.

Finally we came to the sacred way and began our ascent, for the sun altar was our destination. We climbed the time-worn stone steps that led to it. As though it symbolized the inner light of a people, it was bathed in white, so luminous was the moonlight. Its details, its worn parts, its crevices, and depressions were lost in the uniformity of the light. We stood in reverential silence and looked toward the ominous shadows cast by Huano Picchu, neighboring mountain sentinel.

We were but a few days from the fall equinox, a time of great occasion to the Incas. In the month of March, centuries ago, when they reaped their maize or Indian wheat, they celebrated the occasion, the harvest, with joy and festivities, as many Oriental peoples celebrate the equinox in March, and as do we Rosicrucians. However, the September equinox was also one of the four principal feasts to the sun held by the Incas. It was called Citua Raymar.

To denote the precise day of the equinox, they would erect pillars of marble in an open area adjacent to a temple of the sun, or an altar to the sun such as this one before which we stood. When the sun came near the line, the priests daily watched and attempted to observe what shadow the pillars cast. To make it more exact, we are told that they fixed a gnomon to a pillar, like the pin on a sun dial, so that the sun at its rising would dart a direct shadow by it! When at its height, or midday, the sun caused the pillar to cast no shade and to be enlightened on all sides, the Inca priests considered that the sun had entered the equinoctial line.

This day in the past would have been one of great preparation for the Incas. Even at night, at this hour, the priests would have been getting the altar in readiness, and Machu Picchu would have been festooned for the coming occasion.

These thoughts placed us in attunement with the past. We felt imbued with the hopes and beliefs of the lost peoples in whose city



we were now the sole occupants at this late hour at night. This altar before us was a symbol of the soul of a past people. It was at this altar they gave expression to the higher sentiments of self. Time may have changed what they once believed. Man has moved on in thought, but he has not altered that immanent force which motivated the Incas, and which has likewise caused the plane of human consciousness to rise century by century. That which caused the Incas to believe as they believed and to leave behind monuments to their spiritual conceptions still exists deep within man. I felt, as I sat before this altar, not as one at worship, but as one in humility, reflecting upon the course of mankind. To me the occasion was one of initiation; I had crossed another threshold, a threshold of understanding, of a greater communion with my fellowman. Certainly I had been raised at the altar of my consciousness by this experience. This experience was also the climax of my journey to the sacred cities of the Andes-and another milestone in my life.



INCA SUN ALTAR

Atop Machu Picchu, sacred mountain of the Incas, in the heart of Peru. This great altar of living rock is surrounded by the ruins of a vast citadel once occupied by thousands of devout persons. Imperator Ralph M. Lewis illustrates in the photograph the manner in which the altar was used and the ancient form of salutation.

January, 1942 – Peru

## Chapter XVIII

# THE LAND OF PAGODAS

**T**HE CHINA COAST was bleak and forbidding. It stood out in sharp relief against the greenish waters of the China Sea. As we winged southward through a cloudless sky, the mysterious terrain held a fascination for us, even at an altitude of over 10,000 feet. Here was the coastline long famed in historical accounts and legends. This was the refuge for China's swashbuckling pirates. Here, too, was the center of the smuggling trade that sapped her economic strength.

Rivers could be seen coursing through great canyons, their sources lost to the eye in the rugged hills on the distant horizon. High rocky islets, which blended with the sweep of the monochrome coastline, stood before the mouths of these rivers. They concealed inlets and bays from any casual surface observer, especially since at most times a heavy fog hung low over the waters. For decades behind these natural barriers, there have lain in wait the buccaneers who preyed on the trade of the Orient. Far up these waterways in the wild country of the interior were the small empires of these ruthless men. The accounts which have leaked out have come to form the fabric of numerous tales of adventure.

We were bound for south Asia, Siam (Thailand). Bangkok, its capitol, even in the favorable month in which we arrived, meets one's expectation of a tropical climate-hot, steaming, sticky. The atmosphere seems to force back upon you your own perspiration, not being able to absorb any more moisture. Clothes stick to your person.

The city is low and flat. It is surrounded by a network of rivers and canals, of which the major portion of the country consists. Outside the teeming Bangkok, with its constant chattering of people and the raucous cries so common to an Oriental city, the homes are mostly built on piles.

The streams flowing beneath these homes serve a multitude of purposes. Through apertures in the floor of the homes refuse is disposed of. Likewise, from the same openings the family obtains a plentiful supply of edible fish.

The combination of high temperature and heavy rainfall provides an abundance of flora. The rice crops flourish and even the least industrious of the natives can, with little effort, find ample food. Wild fruits abound. Bananas of numerous varieties may be had just for the effort of beating a path into the foliage to obtain them. The children are always to be seen munching on bananas, papayas, and the most luscious varieties of tangerines. Thus food is not a problem to the Siamese people.

The fact that there is ample sustenance has its psychological and sociological advantages. The people are happy, friendly and carefree, at least insofar as the economic problems of most Oriental people are concerned. The vivid color of the Hora, the deep tan of the people, the high-peaked, wide brimmed straw hats, which they wear, and the myriad-colored skirts make Thailand a photographic and artistic dream come true. The constant and intense sunlight, with the azure skies, heightens the opportunity to capture on film the exotic and primitively picturesque life of these people.

A journey up one of the numerous canals, which are mostly rivers carrying off the excess of the heavy annual precipitation brought on by the monsoons, reveals the real native life. This journey may be made in a sampan, a rustic type of boat with a thatched canopy amidship and poled by a half-naked boatsman, or a small motor launch may be engaged. Though the latter covers more miles in a shorter period of time, it also has its disadvantages. It attracts the attention of the rural people and causes them to become shy in the presence of foreigners.

The people up the rivers and along the canals virtually live in the water. As children in Occidental cities play in the streets, so the Siamese boys and girls are almost continuously swimming in the water which flows behind and under their homes. They dive from the steps and from the family sampans which are moored to posts in the front of their homes. They wrestle and chase objects in the water as other children would on a school playground. Most of the children are absolutely naked, and their brown little bodies are firm and well fed.

Twice weekly the *Klang Bangluang* (floating market) may be seen. It is a spectacle of color and Oriental atmosphere that is a long remembered event to the Western visitor. Boats—in fact, almost every object that will float and carry a cargo larger than a man can carry—take part in the event. These vessels come from the interior. They are manned by Siamese farmers, and each is bringing to market some produce to sell. Some of the vessels are heaped high with beautiful flowers; others have great bunches of bananas or baskets of tropical fruit. Still others are laden with vegetables of various kinds, and the variety of color constitutes a bouquet of floral beauty. The “market place” is an assemblage of these boats in a confluence of a river and canals.

The colorful boats bob up and down rhythmically as the water is agitated by the innumerable paddles of the prospective customers who work their way in and out of the maze of floating vendors. The laughing, the good-natured bargaining, the carnival spirit that prevails, all under a brilliant tropical sun, make the whole event not unlike a pageant of old. To these people it is not an exhibition but rather a function of necessity. Almost everyone has something to sell. The price he obtains determines whether he can buy what his neighbor has to offer. Here, then, is an example of the basic laws of economy in operation and at least inherently understood. If a man cannot freely sell his goods, he cannot buy freely of another.

From 1:00 to 2:30 P.M., siesta prevails. A soporific and serene atmosphere is noticeable. Almost magically the congestion of boats melts away. The only reminder of the former floating market is some refuse still on the water, such as the discarded leaves of vegetables and stalks of flowers. Up the canals, men and their families lie stretched

on the plank porches of their thatched dwellings. Hats are pulled over their faces to keep out annoying insects. Children lie in the shade of the boats, their hands over the side rippling the cool water. Dogs and cats lie near each other in an amity induced by lethargy from the midday warmth.

The dogs of the countryside are well fed, principally the result of foraging for themselves. The dogs of the city, where food is more difficult to obtain, show neglect and indifference to their welfare. They are gaunt and half-starved. Their ribs plainly show, and the flesh is stretched so taut over them that it looks as though it might split at the least exertion. Some have become so infected with mange that they are completely hairless and are covered with huge scars and scabs.

In the late afternoon, life returns to rural Siam. Peddlers pole their small boats from one home to another. They sleep and eat in their floating shops. In the bow of some of these boats is a small brazier or charcoal burner upon which may be simmering hot foods, as banana and rice cakes. These boats are actually floating restaurants. Women busy themselves with weaving and performing household tasks, while the children renew their games with vigor.

The prevailing religion of Thailand is Buddhism. As with Christianity and Judaism, Buddhism eventually emerged far stronger in other lands than in the place of its origin. In India, (actually Nepal) the birthplace of Buddhism, it is far less a potent force than the religions introduced there from elsewhere. Everywhere in Bangkok and its environs may be seen the bright yellow robes of the bhikkhus or monks. The robes are always clean, neat in appearance, and worn according to the traditional fold. They seem to blend in with the vivid colors of Thailand. The heads of these bhikkhus are shaved and their feet sandaled. They live in viharas or Buddhist monastic centers.

Unlike the clergy of many other religious sects, they are less concerned with secular matters and more with the spiritual doctrines of their faith. I do not mean to imply that the Buddhist monk has no interest in the welfare of human society. He is as anxious as any religionist or member of the clergy of any sect to propagate

his teachings by preachment and to emulate their ideals in practice. However, he does not resort to pressure methods. He does not resort to infiltration into the political structure of his government or into civil functions. He does not try to build a fulcrum and lever by which to compel religious adherence on the part of the masses. He does not try to control departments of finance, state, or education, the military and the police, so as to exercise temporal compulsion.

The Buddhist wants the votaries or adherents to choose the *eightfold path*, not to be driven along it by political force. Thus, Buddhist monks or high priests will, generally speaking, not be found involved in intrigues of government. They do not, by *sub rosa* means, inveigh against one political candidate and in favor of another who they may believe will forward Buddhism's temporal interests. It is not that the bhikkhus are naive, or that there is a nescience on their part of the subversive methods used by the clergy of other sects. Rather, it is their honest conviction that such methods by any religion are a sign of doctrinal impotence. If a religion must control the political and physical forces of the state to maintain its supremacy, it admits its lack of human appeal.

The various magnificent pagodas or tower-like temples throughout Thailand, as elsewhere in South Asia, are known as *wats*. Their appearance has all the mysterious allure and lavish splendor that one imagines of the Orient. One of the principal wats or Buddhist temples in metropolitan Bangkok is what is popularly known as the Temple of the Dawn. Its official name is *Pra Buddha Prang*. In the year B.E. 2363 (1820 A.D.), a great celebration was held in honor of the older monastery on the site of this present *wat*. King Rama II, then ruling, took it upon himself to reconstruct the temple and give it greater grandeur. At the very outset of the operation the king died, but the task was resumed by his successor, King Rama III.

The height of the central tower is over two hundred twenty-four feet. Around the base of the central "prang" or pinnacle, four other "prangs" were erected. These contain niches on all sides. In each of these niches there is an image of Phra Bai (God of the Winds) riding on his horse. The main "prang" or pinnacle in appearance resembles the

upper stories of some of our modern skyscrapers which have resorted to appropriating Oriental architectural designs for their towers.



SYMBOL OF BELIEF

This ornate Wat (Temple) in Siam is consecrated to the religio-philosophy of Buddhism. It seeks to combine the qualities of physical beauty with the beauty of spiritual truths. On each of the pavilions in the lower terrace are images of Buddha representing the four important episodes in his life. Rows of “Heavenly Birds”—half human and half bird—depict the gradual ascent of the consciousness of the devout.

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In front of the central chapel and vihara (monastic building) of this *wat* stand two large figures, representing mythological giants facing each other. They depict the protective forces surrounding the great temple. The whole structure glistens with brilliant mosaics and gold ornamentation. An observer is awed by its harmony of structural and artistic beauty.

The mosaics in part carry in their design images of the “Heavenly Birds”—half-human and half-bird. To the mystically unenlightened, these may seem to be a religious fantasy or perhaps nothing more than an aesthetic ornament. To the mystic and to the Buddhist, however, they depict the “ascent of consciousness.” It is a representation of the Hight of self to the higher levels of illumination and of mystical unfoldment, a soaring into the *oneness* of being.

When the structure was finally completed, the king held another ceremony, and a huge image of Buddha was placed in the chapel where it still is. The imposing figure makes a definite impression upon even the casual visitor. In this chapel it holds the same significance to the advanced Buddhist as does the image of Christ in a cathedral to a Christian or the image of Moses to a Jew.

Another *wat* is known popularly as the Marble Temple. It is of fairly recent date. It is a structure of white marble with a brilliant, red tiled roof and with a plenitude of gold ornament on the eaves. It is situated in extensive and well kept grounds. The verdure of the grass and foliage, the borders of red and blue flowers, and the even infinity of blue sky make the whole as ethereal-like as a divine visitation. The lawns are traversed by small streams kept within low uniform banks. The pellucid waters reflect the perfect image of the inspiring surroundings as would a highly polished mirror. One crosses these streams over small, arched bridges just wide enough to allow the passage of one person.

The Oriental knowledge of psychological principles, whether expressed in textual form or not, is ever present in their religion—even in its physical aspects. One cannot, for example, enter this *wat* directly, that is, by immediately climbing the series of low steps to its portals. The visitor is obliged to follow a long approach down narrow



walks, flanked by religious images. The approach is long enough so that the magnitude of the temple and its intricate design and splendor produce an increasing stimulus upon the visitor before he actually enters. He is humbled by the grandeur. His respect, if not reverence, has been heightened. Further, by the time he enters, he is thoughtful, if not meditative, about the significance of the edifice, artistically and symbolically. In other words, psychologically an attitude of receptivity has been induced within him.



GUARDIAN OF THE SANCTUARY

One of the two large figures representing giants who guard the Chapel of the Wat Arun Rejvaram in Bangkok, Siam. This temple of splendor is popularly known as The Temple of Dawn. Its golden prangs (pinnacles) shimmering in the brilliant sunlight and the soft pastel coloring of its mosaics assume the harmonious hues of a tropical dawn.

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Even the non-religious or non-mystically inclined will not be disappointed by the vista that he finds within. The first sight that greets the eye is the colossal image of a seated Buddha in burnished gold. Unlike most statues of Buddha, this one has not just a complacent expression. An intriguing, whimsical smile seems to flash over the visage, depending upon how intently one looks upon his expression. It is reminiscent of the *Mona Lisa* in this regard.

The floor consists of exquisite handmade tile in which the art of the Orient has excelled for centuries. Here and there, in a geometrical order, are placed huge urns of incense. Wisps of smoke coil lazily upward to find one's nostrils. Before the altar is an array of candles, some of which are electrically lighted, the only modern and incongruous touch. The atmosphere breathes and imparts a reverence which even the most insensible person cannot help experiencing.

The caste system in Thailand is exceptionally strong with all its inherent evils. An offense against one's caste or social status results not only in his becoming socially ostracized, but it also dishonors his family. Thus, to lose caste adumbrates almost all social evils. This caste system arrogates strict observances. One of these proscribes funerals such as would be beneath the dignity of one's social level. Those of each caste *must* meet the requirements of their caste. This includes funeral expenses considered appropriate for members of the families and as outlined by tradition.

Those of the aristocracy must have pretentious funerals. Though cremation is customary and a religious rite for all castes, there is a gradual elaboration on the extent of the actual services as one moves up in caste. The minimum cost for the funeral for one of the higher castes is approximately one thousand United States dollars. The Thailand equivalent of this amount is about ten thousand dollars of their money. We met a young chap, a Thai, cultured, intelligent and of

the aristocracy. He was employed as an interpreter. He was forced into this work by family financial reverses. His wife had passed through transition over a year before. He could not afford a funeral service for her in accordance with the requirements of his caste, and so her body was kept in a casket in a mortuary awaiting the time when he would have accumulated the minimum sum of one thousand United States dollars for the proper funeral ceremony. In the meantime, there was the expense of preserving the body.

We were permitted, through the connections of this young man, to witness one of these ornate ceremonies. The funeral shrine, where the casket is placed for the ceremony, was of white granite, austere in its massiveness. It consisted of a platform with a gradual stairway of four flights of stairs of seven steps each. A stone peaked roof is supported at each corner by four square granite pillars. A red plush carpet leads up the steps to the funeral bier. The casket is placed on a bronze support, and against it are banked large and ornate floral pieces. The relatives and friends in turn must personally place their flower contributions against or near the casket.

The spectators then retire to a low, roofed grandstand in one corner of which are the musicians. There is then a procession of the officiating Buddhist priests up the stairway. They carry the sacerdotal regalia with them. The casket itself is very ornate. It is made of expensive, carved woods. Costly incense is burned at this ceremony, and fees charged for all services rendered are expensive. After this ceremony, the cremation rites follow.

Thailand was afflicted with the opium scourge. It had innumerable addicts as have most of the countries of the Orient. While we were in Bangkok, the government had adopted an optimistic five-year plan for the eradication by degrees of the smoking of opium. At the time, opium smoking was permitted by *licensing* certain dens or establishments. These, in theory at least, were subject to a periodic inspection. Of what this inspection consisted we could not determine. Though we were told that there were one hundred such dens in Bangkok alone, there were also an average of five in the other sixty-nine provinces. The closing of these dens, if it does come to pass, is admittedly an

altruistic step on the part of the government. The closing will mean a sizeable financial loss to the government in revenue derived from the importation of opium.

We paid a visit to one of these licensed opium dens to determine prevailing conditions. We were, in fact, curious as to what kind of compromise the then existing governing licensing made with the evils and horrors that must attend such practices. This particular establishment was located in obviously a slum district. Gutters were filled with filth over which droves of flies hovered. Stench assailed our nostrils as we entered the cobbled street. The houses on either side of the narrow street were of a drab clapboard type. They were not unlike the ones seen in the old ghost towns of California and other far-western states of America. The shops were of the older bazaar type—dark alcoves in which were suspended from the ceilings the heterogeneous collection of objects offered for sale.

We stopped midway down the cobbled street before two swinging half-doors reminiscent of the old saloons prior to America's prohibition era. We had to push our way through a throng of little street urchins who were playing noisily before the entrance of this depressing structure. Once inside, we were in a semi-dark corridor. We hesitated for a moment in order to become accustomed to the darkness, having entered from the bright glare of the sunlight.

Walking a few steps ahead, we saw that there were small rooms off each side of the corridor. The partitions between the rooms consisted of heavy wire-mesh screens. Against these wire screens were erected tiers of crude bunks, three high. The inmates whom we saw—there were some private rooms not accessible—were all men. They were naked except for a trunk like garment. They assumed grotesque postures while apparently under the influence of the narcotic. Their arms and legs were twisted into unnatural positions. Some of them were half crouching with their heads twisted in a way that would seem a most uncomfortable position. This was perhaps due to an involuntary response of the muscles to the stimuli which the nerves were receiving. Their distorted facial expression added to the nefarious

setting. There was an intermingling on our part of the emotions of profound sympathy and revulsion for these human derelicts.

Some of the men—they were mostly young, being under thirty-five—were fully conscious, even *self-conscious*. They smiled sheepishly and turned their faces from us. This caused us to regret that we had intruded upon their private vices and weaknesses. What was strikingly pathetic was their emaciated bodies. Their arms were as thin as those of a small child. Their ribs were prominent and their skin had a dry, unnatural appearance. Some had their eyes wide open, producing the effect of a haunting stare.

The all-consuming craving of the drug subordinates the natural desire for food. The addict must be compelled to eat, or he will starve. Concomitant with their desire for the drug is an intense thirst. Attendants continuously bring in small cups of tea for those who are not wholly under the influence of the drug.

In the small room at the entrance of the corridor, the attendants are “cooking” the opium which resembles small ball-like pills. These are placed in pipes, and the pipes are hung from racks, awaiting those who can afford the fees. It is asserted that after five indulgences in the drug one becomes a confirmed addict.

Let us not forget that certain of the white or Occidental nations encouraged for years the smoking of opium in Oriental countries because of the profitable returns it afforded and the political control which it would make possible over a shattered people.

## Chapter XIX

# INDIA, THE MYSTIC MAZE

**S**WEEPING ACROSS THE northern end of the Bay of Bengal and up the Hooghly River, we touched the soil of India at Calcutta. The great city of Calcutta has no glamorous historical or archaeological background as, for example, have Delhi, Lahore, or Madras. Calcutta was once one of several modest mud villages scattered along the Hooghly River. Tradition relates that Joe Charnock, an English merchant, while attempting to escape the intense summer heat and smoking an Indian hookah under the shade of a peepul tree, conceived the idea of establishing a British settlement at the little mud village. For many years the famous founder's tree stood where there is now a traffic intersection.

Calcutta, during the days of Joe Charnock, was mostly jungle and tanks (huge depressions of rain water forming lakes). At its best today Calcutta, though a great port and outlet for northern and central India, through which huge quantities of jute and tea pass, is *drab*. In contrast to the vivid hues of the tropical foliage which crowds in upon the city at its edges, the structures are soiled, unpainted, and mostly unmaintained. This is the first impact upon the visitor from the West. It is his first realization of the economic differences between his country and this land of sprawling millions of human beings. Each hour after that while in India the visitor must make many adjustments between his own environmental experience and the age-old customs and traditions of India.

The encroachment of extremes of living standards, one upon the other, makes the realities of differences stand out in brutal contrast.

In the center of the great city, whose population is actually at the moment unknown, but which exceeds its normal number of about four millions by perhaps nearly that many more, are to be seen *modern* office buildings. Next to them are rough plots of ground upon which shacks have been built to constitute deplorable slums.

These shacks consist of strips of rusty, corrugated iron standing on edge to comprise walls and are erected by the people themselves from whatever they may find. Over them are patched discarded paper, burlap, straw matting and other debris of the great city. They reach a height of about three feet, resembling an elongated doghouse. The floors of the shacks are mostly the contaminated ground, strewn with refuse and vermin-infected rags.

In defense of such conditions or at least to mitigate them, it must be explained that the political partitioning of India, into what are now sections of Bangladesh and West Pakistan, caused one of the greatest migrations of people in modern times. Millions of Hindus left Moslem Pakistan, taking with them in their hands and upon their backs the remnants of their worldly goods, having been forced to leave much behind, even their savings. Calcutta had received several millions of these refugees. They jammed into her streets. These homeless persons slept wherever there was an area to lie in. They were found upon the sidewalks of the great thoroughfares. Their once white dhotis (sheetlike trousers and skirt) were torn and dirty. They covered their faces with their filthy clothes to keep flies from crawling into their mouths and ears while they slept. Dust; kicked up by pedestrians and traffic, littered them. Where else could they go? What other refuge could they find?

What would America do if, shall we say, within a matter of months, the major portion of the people west of the Mississippi River were to suddenly shift because of some catastrophe or circumstance and then pour into the Atlantic seaboard? Simultaneously with such an avalanche of refugees, suppose America were to have lost all of the territory west of the Mississippi River from whence these refugees came, all of the great fertile lands, industries, and transportation.

It would mean that the remaining portion of the United States would be obliged to try to feed and house the equivalent of the

whole population on drastically reduced resources. Even though, in comparison to relatively economically impoverished India, America is extremely wealthy, such a catastrophe would stagger the United States. Consequently, India was almost helpless in appreciably remedying the situation which confronted her. It is the religio-philosophy of the people themselves which alone prevented national demoralization.

The people of India may be said to be religion intoxicated as compared with the Occidental. To them religious idealism and the urges of the emotional and subjective self are the *real*. It is a world in which they can take refuge from the monotony and squalor of the temporal existence in which they find themselves. All real beauty and unchangeable happiness which the Indian has found is not in his mortal existence but in his spiritual consciousness.

At best, then, life to these persons is to serve their religious convictions, as the body is said to serve the beatitudes of the soul. There are not only numerous sects in India, into whose pattern of teachings one may fit his personal spiritual evolverment, but varying interpretations of the same creeds as well. As in the great bazaars where merchandise is offered to fit everyone's purse, so a variety of religious consolation is offered in accordance with the spiritual concepts of the individual.

One has only to visit a few of the several temples in Calcutta to observe the extremes between religious culture. One of the most famous temples, historically, is the Kali Temple. The goddess *Kali*, in Indian mythology, was the wife of the deity, Siva. In the *Puranas* it is related that this goddess was destroyed. Parts of her remains were scattered from the heavens. Calcutta is one of the fifty-one "piths" or sacred places upon which these remains were broadcast by Siva. It is the little toe of the right foot of Kali which is said to have fallen upon the site of *Calcutta*. It is speculated that the word Calcutta is but a corruption of *Kalikata*, meaning the abode of Kali.

Kali Temple is situated along the water's edge and is supposed to have been erected by a member of the Sabarna Chudhury family, purported original owner of Calcutta. Here one may find the most superstitious indulgence of the Hindu doctrines. In justice to Hindu



literature and hagiography, let it be said that they suffer from a too literal interpretation, as does the Bible by some of our Christian sects. The temple is now located in an area of *bustees*, or the poor native section. One enters the courtyard with a jam of chattering, perspiring, indigent people. Throngs of beggars, the afflicted, the poor, and the faithful press to enter and participate in the age-old ceremonies. The heat of the morning sun causes faces to shine and thus invites swarms of flies. The blind and crippled stand about waiting an opportunity for spiritual solace.

There is a stench arising from the filth, including animal and human excrement, which litters the ground. One tries to keep his head high, almost instinctively seeking to avoid inhaling the clouds of dirt and dust carried through the nostrils. A high priest, who functions in a managerial capacity, collects fees from all. The devotees pay what they can, perhaps an *anna* or two. We are looked upon with great curiosity. Our Western attire makes us stand out against this backdrop of Indian life. As we set up our elaborate camera equipment, both still and cinema, we are immediately hemmed in by the young and old. It is with extreme difficulty that we keep these curious people from deliberately staring into the lens of the camera at a most unpropitious moment and thus ruining many feet of expensive color film.

It is interesting to note the basic elements of human nature manifesting themselves. Here in the pronaos of this old temple, with a setting remote from anything suggesting Western culture, the human ego remains true to form. The high priest, evidently flattered by the attention being shown his sphere of influence and himself, immediately began ordering his subalterns about in an especially officious manner. It was indeed reminiscent of the officious attitude of some of our own countrymen upon whom some civil authority has been conferred.

A line was forming to enter the temple proper. To one side a group was standing. Pushing my way unobtrusively into the group, I observed a little niche in the side of the temple wall. From an aperture in it, a slimy, milky liquid was flowing. Apparently this liquid came from somewhere in the interior of the sacred precincts. Men and women, young and old, dipped their hands into this slowly flowing stream and

applied it to their sores and afflictions. It was apparently believed that it had curative properties because it came from within the holy edifice. Some of the persons even cupped their hands so as to drink it.

The procession was now moving into the temple. All who wore shoes or slippers removed them in a gesture of reverence, as a Christian would his hat. The costumes were exotic to us, though indigenous to the country. Some women wore metal rings in their noses, and those whose financial status permitted wore colorful saris. Still other women had red streaks painted along the line of the hair part. This signified that they were married. This painting in red was a marital rite performed by their husbands. Still others had a white streak painted in the same place, indicating that they were widows.

Our attention was now attracted to the quiet dignity of a personage moving about with the others. He had a face that held one's attention by the evident force of character and nobility. The forehead was high, the eyes large but not distorted in their appearance. The chin and mouth were firm and yet had a softness at the corners that suggested kindness. His long hair was piled high upon his head, and he affected a black beard that was neat and showed meticulous care. He wore a loincloth, but his legs and feet were bare. About his arms were several brass bracelets, and on either cheek was a series of oblique marks about an inch and a half in length. These were ritualistic incisions depicting his caste. This was a *Brahman priest*. He was one of the intellectuals of Hinduism. Though transcending in understanding the devotion of the other votaries, he displayed no aloofness nor any disdain of their elementary practices. His was the attitude that each shall lend the color of his understanding to his surroundings.

Not unlike the ancient Hebrews and other religious sects, the more primitive Hindus still practice animal sacrifice. A kid had been sacrificed just a few minutes before our arrival, and the gory evidence remained. A heavy wooden stake, the upper portion of which was V-shaped so that the whole formed a Y, had been driven in between two heavy flagstones. The kid had been so tied that its head rested in the V. After appropriate sacerdotal ceremonies, the animal's throat had been slashed. The heavy crimson blood was still moist upon the stone.

A few of the devotees were filing past and dipping their fingers into the blood and then touching various parts of their bodies as in the form of a benediction. It was indeed a sanguinary sight and wholly barbarian. If we were inclined to think ill of these persons, who killed for ritualistic motives, we were reminded of the great slaughterhouses in our own and other Western countries where millions of animals are killed for food-in which most of us indulge. However, we overcame our compunctions and, as a matter of doctrinal record, the sacrificial post and surroundings were filmed.

Not far from the scene of sacrifice, four bamboo poles had been erected to support a canopy of cloth. This was a temporary shade for one of the religious subalterns who sat beneath it. Half naked and sitting cross-legged, and with matted hair, he was dispensing amulets in exchange for coins. We presume that the revenue from the sale of these charms was intended for the coffers of the temple and not for the individual. Examination proved that the amulets consisted of small metal images of Hindu gods and goddesses. As talismans and amulets, they were intended to impart a certain efficacy from the deity they represented to the wearer. Thus, by the wearing of it, one might be protected from drowning or a woman could be assured of healthy children and the like.

This was indeed a reminder of the indulgence of a similar practice of phylactery by a large Christian sect of the Western world. The medallions, which the Christian sect permit to be sold, are of human personages whom the church has apotheosized or canonized, thus attributing to them certain exceptional spiritual powers. The majority of its followers who make such purchases and wear these medallions on their persons, not unlike the Hindus, believe that they are ensconced in a superficial protective influence. Hindu or Christian, the superstitious connotations remain the same.

In contrast to this squalor and primitive rites is the magnificent Badri Das Jain Temple. The Jains are an ancient sect dating from before the time of Christ. Their religious traditions relate that the sect was founded by *Mahavira*, which literally means "great leader." Jainism, like Buddhism and Parsiism, is one of the three great refining influences

on the religious culture of India. In fact, Jainism sought to elevate Hinduism, and it has done so by numerous prohibitions, including animal sacrifice.

Because Jainism has attempted to exorcise certain objectionable elements of Hinduism, it has made a strong appeal to the intellectuals and the progressive-minded of India. The sect is, numerically, one of the lesser ones of India, but it does include many wealthy merchants among its followers.

This particular Jain Temple was the result of large donations upon the part of a wealthy merchant of Calcutta. It has become a symbol of the beauty which the human mind can perceive in the harmony of sensible things when under spiritual stimulus. The temple was obviously the attempt by this grateful merchant to objectify or materialize the ecstasy which he experienced *within* as a result of the Jain teachings.

The basic material of which the temple is constructed is white marble. This marble is covered with a mosaic of brilliant small stones, gems, and colored glass. The whole is a most dazzling fantasy in the brilliant sunlight. In fact, as one gazes at it in awe, he is reminded of some magnificent jewel, having a natural setting in spacious lawns of multicolored flowers. The gardens alone are one of the show places of Calcutta. The experience of this temple after the depression of the Kali Temple is like a fresh breeze from distant mountains.

Inside the temple is an ornate alcove in which sacrosanct relics and images are placed. This constitutes a *sanctum sanctorum*, or holy of holies. In this area have been deposited those elements that represent the spiritual precepts of the faith of the devotees. In this sense, it is not unlike Roman Catholic cathedrals in Europe, in which are found relics, proclaimed holy because they were once the possession of those now recognized as saints.

Before this holy of holies knelt four barefooted girls, attired in pure white saris, which constituted a frame for the aesthetic or spiritual qualities of their facial expressions. As they softly and sweetly chanted, they swayed in rhythm to the cadence of their voices. As we gazed, almost reverently, at this scene of devotion, it seemed to us that the

flames of the candles, which were arranged in a semicircle behind them, pulsated in unison with their swaying. They were reciting age-old liturgies or prayers. Their voices were the Jain equivalent for the soft melody of an organ in a cathedral. The vibrations of the human intonations were, at least to us, much more effective than would have been the mechanical means of producing them.

The Brahman cow, or famous *sacred cow*, of India is everywhere in evidence. The Westerner may believe, before traveling in India, that the animal is immured only within the sacred or private areas of temple grounds. It is, however, given *carte blanche* to the whole Hindu social life. The cows are seen strolling the main streets of Calcutta with an air of immunity. They lie upon the sidewalks before the entrance to shops. Every deference is shown them by carefully walking around them. They walk between vehicles and even before trams, while drivers frantically avoid injuring them—knowing the consequences if they do. These animals invade private gardens, relentlessly crunching flowers and shrubs, while the owners of the gardens strive to distract them without causing any offence to their religious precepts.

These animals, through centuries of breeding and the exceptional domestication which they have received because of their place in Hinduism, have acquired an unusual gentleness. There is something almost uncanny about the appealing expression in their large, limpid brown eyes. Their gaze seems to penetrate the depths of your being. You have a sense of uneasiness, extreme self consciousness. You feel that there is something very much like the light of human eyes. The feeling is even heightened when the animal strolls up and places its damp muzzle in your hand or nudges you. It is quite comprehensible that one reared in the traditional Hindu beliefs and devoted to its doctrines could well conceive of this animal as being endowed with some ethereal qualities.

The belief in the sacredness of the cow came to the Hindu religion from prehistoric times. It is in no sense limited to India. In the Rig Veda, ancient Aryan hymns which constitute the foundation of Hindu religion, there are many references to the mystical relationship between the cow and the universe. The cow has come to symbolize many things,

not only generation and fruitfulness, but certain fundamental human relations as well. The *milk* of the cow, in the Vedic hymns, depicts the basic food of the soul, compassion or kindness upon which the spiritual life feeds.

Among primitive peoples similes were often drawn from everyday life to illustrate mystical principles. For analogy, Christ used fishermen and their activities in his parables so that the truths he expounded might be understood by the humble people of Galilee. So, too, in antiquity, the cow, a prominent element in the economic life of a simple people, was used by the writers of the hymns of the Rig Veda to depict mystical concepts. Eventually such allegories came to be taken literally by the masses of the people, perhaps because they lack a true mystical conception. The mystical connotations with respect to the cow have been more or less lost among the lower caste of Hindus. To them the cow itself is intrinsically a sacred being and not because of any mystical significance.

It is a heinous sin to kill or eat the flesh of the cow. One of the verses of the Rig Veda reads: "All that kill, eat and permit the slaughter of the cow, rot in Hell for as many years as there are hairs on the body of the cow so slain." Cows are not only considered sacred but, as well, the products which they create.

While we were in India, a *non-Hindu* railroad locomotive engineer inadvertently killed one of the sacred cows which had strolled into the path of the train—why this does not occur more frequently is a mystery to us. The indignation caused by this rose to a high pitch. A whole division of Hindu railroad employees went on a strike until the guilty employee had been severely reprimanded by the court for his inexcusable "negligence." Thus the ramifications of India's religions reach far and deeply into the everyday modes of living of its people.

## Chapter XX

# BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

THE STARK REALISM of India, its struggling humanity, poverty, pestilence, and isolated extreme wealth is accentuated by a transcendental idealism. These constitute two worlds between which man fluctuates. He tolerates the one, physical existence, so that he may realize the other, religious experience. Perhaps nowhere as in India are two cultures, materialism and abstract idealism, brought into such prominent juxtaposition. Even the casual observer is afforded the opportunity by constant comparison of noticing the virtues and vices of both.

It seems most appropriate that in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, a society should exist for its *revival*. Buddhism has suffered as a result of the fanatical interpretation of its doctrines throughout the centuries—just as have Christianity and other large religious sects. In nations where Buddhists are in a minority, this corruption of their teachings has been used against them. Perhaps there is no greater example of this prejudice than in the United States. With these conditions in mind, the Maha Bodhi Society was established in 1891. Literally, its name means *Great Enlightenment*. According to its journal, its principal aims are “to revive Buddhism in India; to disseminate Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist literature; to educate the illiterate people in domestic science, as hygiene, technical industries.” These objectives are accomplished by the establishment of schools and libraries, and the publishing of ancient Buddhist literature.

The principal center of the Maha Bodhi Society in India is Calcutta. Most of these centers are called *viharas*, and, in reality, are a kind of

monastic establishment where those who wish to devote their lives to the cause eventually don the yellow robes, shave their heads, and give of their services. These monks are known by the traditional title of *bhikkhu* which, in ancient times, meant that they were mendicant devotees of Buddha. The religio-philosophy of Buddhism, its objective of spiritual attainment through mental discipline, has appealed to simple as well as highly educated persons. Thus the Maha Bodhi Society has bhikkhus whom the world recognizes as intellectuals. Many of these have donned the robes and devoted themselves to the simple life and the serving of the purposes of the society after attaining high academic degrees in notable institutions of learning.

We were privileged, as a member of the Maha Bodhi Society and by invitation, to visit the temple in Calcutta, the Reverend Neluwe Jinaratani Thera acting as our host. From the editorial offices and library we were finally escorted to the temple proper. We were continually conscious of the immaculate condition of the entire premises. In India, where ordinarily a lack of facilities and a traditional acceptance of dirt and filth were common, this place was an oasis. Here then was an impressive demonstration of the observance of principle. The temple itself was constructed as a replica of the ancient rock temples of India. Though small by comparison, it had caught the spirit of the originals. Removing our shoes in conformity with custom, we were greeted by the other bhikkhus in solemn fashion but with a radiant sincerity. We were truly welcomed as brothers in a sympathetic understanding of their cause.

Before us was the magnificent high altar with its sacerdotal appurtenances. The image of Buddha was treated with reverence but wholly as a sacred symbol. Only a mind warped by religious prejudice would interpret the ceremonial as idolatry.

The bhikkhus, resplendent in their saffron robes and with the soft swish of their bare feet upon the polished plank floors, assumed a crescent formation before the altar. At a command they sat cross-legged. We were then requested to take our positions on either end of the semicircle. Slowly the chant began. It was in the ancient Pali language which, it is related, was the tongue of Buddha. The voices



in cadence were offering age-old prayers for us. First of low pitch and then swelling forth vibrantly, the whole effect was most stimulating upon our psychic selves. Our beings responded to the sound impulses as effectively as if each had pressed within him an invisible key releasing surges of power through his nervous systems.

It was an ecstatic experience. One found himself rhythmically swaying with the bodily motion of the bhikkhus and in harmony with their voices. The subjective state was easily induced. Objective concerns, distractions, problems, seemed to drop from the mind as inconsequential. The whole consciousness seemed to revel in this momentary freedom from its usual occupation. The mind was clear. Though there was no intention to contemplate or formulate ideas, nevertheless a surge of thoughts passed in mental review. Though they were not necessarily original concepts, they seemed to assume a radiant perspicuity as though they had been purged of former obscurities. The sensations of the experience remained vivid long after we had departed from the temple.

The journey to Caya was one we shall long remember. In point of distance it lies approximately 269 miles northwest of Calcutta. Railway travel into the hinterland of India was in sharp contrast to the air travel which we had so far enjoyed. The rolling stock, the equipment, was far from modern. Added to its archaic state was the fact that it had been subject to extreme abuse by British and American troops during World War II, when invasion of India by Japan was feared. Many cars were dilapidated. Fixtures were either absent or not in operating order. The Indian railway officials had to cope with the fact that such things as electric-light sockets, brackets, and even the hardware on the interior doors of the "wagons" or coaches were often stolen. Some of the interior equipment was intentionally removed by the authorities during the war and had not been replaced. The upholstery was often in shreds with interiors protruding. Most cars were, of course, not air-conditioned, and with windows open in a short time passengers and the compartments in which they were seated were alike covered with a thick layer of dust.

The accommodations provided were first, second, and third class. The cars of all classes were mostly of the old European style. In fact, most of the equipment was of English origin. The third-class compartments, as in many countries of Europe, provided nothing more than wooden benches. Into this the indigent Indians crowded in their tattered dhotis. With them they carried sacks of farm produce and virtually everything but the sacred cow. We have seen a farmer with a goat and its kids leave one of these compartments in which were other passengers. Posted regulations set forth, in both the Bengali dialect and the English language, what things may be brought aboard. Little or no enforcement of these provisions was made.

There was absolutely no difference between first- and second-class accommodations except in fare which was *double* for the first class. For night travel there were no blankets or pillows. The passengers must provide their own. Even then, if one had an upper berth, caution must be exercised not to fall from it because of its narrow girth. Perplexed as to the reasons for first- and second-class separation, when fixtures were the same, we were informed that the English instituted the idea. The Indians claimed that the British made the first-class fare in excess of the means of the average Indian so as to exclude him from such compartments.

It was indeed a rare occasion when the trains were on schedule. Even for relatively short distances, a hundred miles or more, the trains might be two or five hours late. The explanation had been *inefficiency* as well as *depleted equipment*. We do know that during this period of adjustment, when India was endeavoring to become a sovereign power, corruption had laid its hand heavily on many spheres of government activity. Railroad clerks solicited contributions for making reservations. Conductors could be bribed—and encouraged the practice—to exclude all other passengers from a compartment so that one may have it to himself. The amazing revelation was that fares for corresponding distances were far in excess of what they were in Europe and the United States.

The countryside was very pictorial. It was apparently very fertile, for crops and harvesting were in evidence. These were a series of low

rolling hills with small stones covering certain regions. Here and there we passed clusters of thatch-roofed huts constructed of mud brick. These primitive dwellings all follow the pattern common to many parts of the world. Nomadic tribes lived in skin tents. These were so low that the occupants had to crawl in order to enter them. Everywhere there was evidence of the tropics in this "lower shelf" of India. Deep, slow-moving streams were lined with palms and mango trees. Water buffaloes, a species of oxen, lumbered along, pulling a primitive plow consisting of a forked limb of a tree attached to a still larger one which became the beam. Sometimes these were in one piece, a T-shaped limb.

Weary, dusty, perspiring after a sleepless night, we arrived with our extensive photographic equipment at Caya. The city had a population of about 25,000 and is seven miles distant from the famous Buddhist shrine of *Bodhi Gaya* which was our destination. It was later related to us that Caya has the infamous reputation of being the most unclean city in India. Whether this is true, we do not know. However, its uncleanliness was almost unspeakable. Most of the homes, whether of brick or wood, must go under the appellation of *hovels*. Even most of the brick structures had no glass in their windows, which become but gaping holes revealing the dismal interior.

What was most noticeable—and offensive—was the stench as you passed through the narrow twisting crowded streets. In most of these alley-like thoroughfares, sewage was deposited in the gutter, over which flies swarm. The people, gaunt and mostly in tatters, seemed more than usually impoverished, yet there was no evidence that their physical plight had depressed or lowered their morale. They were active and apparently indifferent to their surroundings. Most pathetic were the droves of gaunt, starved, hairless, mangy dogs. The thin layer of flesh upon their skeletal forms was often covered with sores, from which matter exuded. They were allowed to multiply and were far too plentiful for their food supply. It was interesting, however, to note the camaraderie among these forlorn animals of heterogeneous ancestry. They never fought among themselves except when a morsel of food appeared. There was no bullying or abuse, but there was the constant foraging for food.

The temperature in this area in May and June reaches 120 or 130 degrees Fahrenheit! In November, the favorable period of the year—the time of our arrival—it was a springlike 80 degrees. The excessive temperature, combined with lack of hygiene and nourishment, constituted a veritable incubator of pestilence. Three months before our arrival hundreds of persons had died of cholera in Caya and vicinity. Shortly after our departure an epidemic of the plague was announced. The prevailing economic condition of the Indian government at the time and the traditional conception of life combine against any large-scale remedy of these serious conditions.

It was a relief to enter the countryside. Here are little knolls, the slopes of which are natural lawns shaded by the large spreading peepul trees, inviting, tranquil. Everywhere are pastoral scenes, meadows with bubbling streams, cattle grazing unmindful of human presence. The road on which we traveled was paved but narrow, hardly wide enough for two vehicles to pass. On either side was a large graded area. Along these strips, Indians, men and women, carried their wares to the bazaars of Caya. Most of them carried huge baskets upon their heads. The more fortunate ones pulled two wheeled carts in which small children were seen sleeping or peering over the edge. The less industrious ones lay along the roadside, wrapped in their dhotis, enjoying the mild early morning sun. It was rejuvenating to inhale the fresh breeze, laden with the fragrance of flowers and growing things—and to be away from the region which man had polluted by his habitation.

Bodh Caya in this magnificent setting is the most sacred shrine to Buddha throughout the world. It was here that the sacred bo tree was located, under which Cotama, prince of the Sakya clan, sat in profound meditation until his enlightenment. Though fable relates that Cotama was a wealthy prince, whose name was Siddhartha, later disclosures by the Maha Bodhi Society throw doubt on this point. They do concede, however, that he was a prominent member of the Sakya clan, which was a vassal group.

Tradition relates that originally the whole vicinity was a forest occupied by Brahman sages. An offshoot of the venerated tree, where the Great Enlightenment descended upon Buddha and he realized the

bliss of Nirvana, still exists. It is related that this phenomenon occurred during "the full moon in the month of May." After the emancipation or the Great Enlightenment, he sat alternately underneath seven trees, for a period of seven days beneath each, enjoying the supreme ecstasy. While there, two merchants saw him and offered him food "in the form of rice cakes and lumps of honey in a stone bowl." These two merchants became Buddha's first disciples.

A translation from a Pali manuscript, given me a few years ago by a Maha Bodhi member who was also a Rosicrucian, relates that Gotama was at first in a quandary as to whether or not to disseminate the great truths which came to him. He mused, "I have penetrated this doctrine which is profound, difficult to perceive and to understand, which brings quietude of heart, which is exalted, which is unattainable by reason, abstruse, intelligible only to the wise. But this people (the populace at large), on the other hand, are given to desire, entered upon desire, delighting in desire ... Now, if I proclaim the doctrine, and other men are not able to understand my preaching, there will result but weariness and annoyance to me." Fortunately, it is related, he was induced by Brahma Sahampati to "open to the whole world the doors of Immortality."

To the east of the bo tree lies the great temple which is the first sight that greets the visitor. It is a massive structure of stone and mortar, rising to a height of 160 feet. It resembles greatly the prangs or pinnacle-type wats (temples) of Siam and Burma. These are commonly known as pagodas and are pyramidal in shape.

The temple is said to have originated during the time of the Enlightenment, 563-433 B.C. The Hindus, however, declare that the first temple was erected to commemorate Vishnu, the Hindu deity. Nevertheless, in the second century it was rebuilt by a Brahman converted to Buddhism. In 1306-9, it was further restored by Buddhist pilgrims from Burma. In 1884 (A.D.) restoration was instituted by the government.

The bo tree is to the Buddhist what St. Peter's is to a Roman Catholic, Kaaba to the Arabs, and Mount Sinai to the Jews. The bo tree occupies a lower area which is approached by a path leading from

a series of broad steps. We saw pilgrims, with great solemnity and evidence of extreme emotion, walking slowly to the tree, the object of their veneration. The leaves cause the brilliant sunlight to throw geometric patterns about the circular stone at the tree's base. The cool shadows, with their symbolic formation, the imposing awesome temple in the background, combine to create a psychological effect upon the pilgrim. The whole tradition, the doctrines, and his faith crowd in on his consciousness. He is in the *presence* of all that is sacred in life to him. I have seen the same extreme devotion manifested by Christians entering for the first time the Place of the Nativity in Bethlehem. It is to them the culmination of a mental state, the actualizing of a reality.

Along the northern side of the temple is found a narrow platform of masonry which is raised about four feet above the ground and is fifty feet in length. This is known as the "Buddha Promenade." Tradition relates that here Buddha "spent seven days walking up and down in meditation after obtaining enlightenment and realizing the bliss of Nirvana." At the points where he set his feet along this promenade, there are sculptured ornaments in the shape of flowers representing "miraculous blossoms which sprang up under his footsteps."

While photographing this site, we noticed a Hindu approaching. His hair was piled high in the manner of the Brahman. He wore a long blue black beard. About his neck were suspended prayer beads. His features were as regular as though sculptured. A benign expression spread across his face as he observed that we were watching him. He bowed slightly in the manner of the Oriental. His eyes were very penetrating. His gaze seemed to enter us as we continued to stare at him with fascination.

We learned that he spoke English and with a soft, almost benedictional inflection. He was of the learned Brahman sect and known as Swami Bodri Gire. He was, in fact, a guru or teacher of mystical philosophy. The title, Swami, is an honorary one which is bestowed upon a learned person. He was very much pleased when he heard of our purposes and thoroughly enjoyed discussing with us the significance of the sacred precincts. Though not a Buddhist, he accepted Buddha as a Great Venerable. There was a tranquility and charm about this individual that

had a magnetic quality. He graciously consented to pose for motion pictures while we engaged him in conversation. His personality dominated the monumental structure before which he stood.

Around the temple are erected a number of stupas, which are, in reality, historic tombs containing religious relics. It is related that they were erected by King Asoka many centuries ago. On entering the principal chamber of the temple, the visitor or devotee is confronted by a gilded Buddha in the Bhumispara or "witness" attitude. This refers to the posture of the figure. Votaries purchase flowers which, as symbols of life, are laid in the lap of the Buddha. Thence, we ascended a narrow winding stone stairway, led by an attendant, finally entering upon a balcony-like ledge of the tower temple. From here an excellent view of the beautiful, historic countryside was gained. Adjacent to the temple precincts are the "seven sites" where Buddha passed "seven" tranquil weeks in enjoyment of Buddhahood. The repetition of the use of the numeral *seven* and its multiples in Buddhist Dhamma or teachings, as in the exegetical accounts of Christianity and Judaism, is further indication of its mystical significance.

About the balcony are small niches in the walls in which are placed statues of the "enlightened ones," Buddha's wife, children, etc. A particular distraction to the Buddhists at this time was the fact that these precincts sacred to them were not in their control. It appeared that the property on which this historical temple is located was owned by a wealthy Hindu. The Maha Bodhi Society, which has a resthouse nearby for its bhikkhus and visitors such as ourselves, was then endeavoring to have the government give them exclusive control of this sacred shrine and archaeological monument.

The attendants, who are not Buddhists, continually solicited coins from us. The money is ostensibly used for the maintaining of the premises. Daily, as well, a portion of it, according to religious custom, is thrown to the beggars who scramble for it in the thick dust, not unlike chickens after grain. It is a rite dating back into the vague past, perhaps indicative of the virtue of giving to the poor.

One is inclined to be indignant at the indifference displayed toward the beggars by many Indians and even by Occidentals of long residence.

One learns that the great majority of India is poverty-stricken. The condition cannot be remedied at once or, in fact, for considerable time because of economic circumstances, though the government is making noble efforts to do so. Further, with many, begging has become "a time-honored profession." In the larger cities, young girl beggars hired infants or small children by the day to be carried about to invoke sympathy, particularly of the visiting Occidentals.

Here in Bodh Caya was a professional group of beggars. Though pathetic in their filthy rags and with their actual afflictions, there was something whimsically appealing about them. They had formed their own society. This particular ragged tribe, consisting of grandparents to infants and including the blind and the crippled, was led by an elderly man. He was the patriarch. He ruled them like a chieftain. His judgment was final. He determined the rank or the place which they should assume in queuing up when gratuities were to be given them. In a scramble for coins thrown on the ground by the temple attendants at a definite hour each day, the old patriarch would demand from the others that the children and the crippled be given their share. When begging they had a very ingratiating manner, soft-spoken and plaintive in their speech.

Curious as to our photographic equipment—and ourselves—they would sit on their haunches in a circle about us, raucous and argumentative among themselves. Then, one would whisper to another something about us that amused him. They would pass the comment along to the enjoyment of even the most forlorn of the group. There was also a chivalry among them. When seeing a stranger they would fly in his direction for possible coins. Always, however, some member of the group would grasp the hand of the blind and pull the unfortunate one along as they leaped ahead.

In the Dhamma, Buddhist sacred law or teaching, Buddha is quoted after his enlightenment at Bodh Caya as saying "I have gained coolness (by the extinction of all passion) and I have attained Nirvana. To find the Kingdom of Truth, I go to the city of Kasis (Benares). I will beat the drum for the Immortal in this blind world." Thus we, too, took our departure and journeyed to Benares, the Twice-sacred City.



## Chapter XXI

# RIVER OF PIETY

UPON ONE OF the many slopes of the vast Himalayan range is an ice cave. It is not unique; it is but one of innumerable glacial pits. This cave's altitude of 10,300 feet is relatively low in contrast to the great peaks towering above it. From the heights of the cave, there has been trickling a stream for eons of time. Through untold centuries it has cut gorges and channels through hills and plains alike. It has widened and deepened as it sought the sea at the Bay of Bengal, some 1,500 miles distant.

To millions of people this stream is more than another river that quenches the thirst of parched lands. It is the great *Ganges*! It is the river of piety, a symbol of the purification of man's moral nature. Numerous villages and towns cling to the banks of the Ganges, as cities do to all great rivers. However, of all these towns, Benares, resting on the river's northern bank, is the most important city to the Hindu because of its religious traditions.

Benares or Kasi is the Holy City of the Hindus. Hsian Tsang, Chinese pilgrim of the Seventh Century A.D., relates that at that time there were thirty Buddhist monasteries in the city, having some three thousand monks. In the same period there were one hundred Hindu temples to various deities. Hinduism has long supplanted Buddhism, the latter having its birth but a few miles distant at Sarnath.

In contrast to Calcutta and Bombay, Benares is not a vast city. Its numbers at the time were but 300,000 population. The sacred area of Benares is bounded by a road fifty miles in circumference. It is the

hope of every devout Hindu to travel this road once in his lifetime, just as every Mohammedan seeks to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The population of the city fluctuates with the influx of devotees on the occasion of great religious holidays.

To understand the rites and customs of a people, it is necessary to know the motive or intent behind their acts. Hinduism is perhaps the most complex of all the living organized religions. Indeed it is also the oldest of them. It is conservatively estimated to have begun in 1500 B.C. Undoubtedly its roots go back still farther. It is one of the largest religions as well, having, it is estimated, more than 260,000,000 members and increases at the rate of 1,000,000 each decade. It is principally concentrated within the confines of India. Its theological concepts would obviously be affected by changing conventions and by contact with other thought. In most instances it would seem that Hinduism has absorbed these other concepts within itself, and that the result is evident in the varied and often confusing nature of its practices. However, do we not see this eclectic condition also reflected in Christianity with its numerous sects and varying interpretations?

The main source of the authority of Hinduism is the Vedas, which literally means Books of Knowledge. There are four main Vedas: the *Rig Veda* (psalms and prayers); the *Yajur Veda* ( sacred formulas); *Sama Veda* (the chants); and *Atharva Veda* (charms). These are written in Sanskrit, which is one of the Indo-European languages. Of the four Vedas, the *Rig Veda* is the oldest and most important, having been written perhaps 1200 B.C.

The *Rig Veda* consists of nature worship. Its prayers are to about seventy-six objects of natural power, such as the sun, moon, stars, and the fertility of the soil. There are appeals to these forces and, as well, theurgic rites by which such powers are to be invoked for the benefit of man. This aspect of Hinduism is polytheistic, the worship of many deities. In justice to the *Rig Veda*, let us recall that all early religions had their primitive beginnings in the adoration of impressive natural phenomena upon which man was conscious that he depended. The function and efficacy of things to the primitive mind constitute its vital qualities, its *spirit*. It is natural to respond and even to pay homage

to the qualities of that upon which our own existence seems to be so dependent.

Hinduism has not been just polytheistic or theistic; it is likewise *pantheistic*. Its main theological belief is the omnipresence of a Divine Being known as *Brahma*. This Divine Being, as a world soul, permeates all and supersedes all. It is the divine essence which is the thread of continuity woven through all being. The word *Brahma* was used in the earliest scriptures of the Rig Veda without having the same import. Subsequently, with the development of Hindu culture, metaphysical speculation began about the origin of the universe and the nature of being.

The Vedas were synthesized into a system of Hindu philosophy known as the Upanishads. It is within them that Brahma assumes the nature of the *Absolute Reality*, the Supreme Being. The metaphysical abstractions of the Upanishads are a profound and stimulating thought equal to anything which the ancient Greeks offered. Human intellect, given equal opportunity, regardless of time and place, seems with like profundity to probe the depths of existence.

Hinduism likewise provides for a caste system or a succession of classes of society. This concept stems, in part, from the Hindu scriptures or the Vedas. Since this social regulation is interwoven with religious principles, it has been faithfully adhered to by every devout Hindu. It is not uncommon for religious scriptures, as the Mosaic laws of the Hebrews, to lay down codes for the social relations of their followers. Such edicts are, of course, more likely to be obeyed if it appears that they are the mandates of a Divine Power.

Hinduism prescribes four main castes. These are in successive subordinate order: The *Brahman*, the priestly or intellectual caste; the *Kshatriyas*, the rulers and warriors; the *Vaisyas*, the agriculturists and artisans; the *Sudra*, the lowest caste. Members of a caste are not permitted to marry out of it or even to eat with those of another caste. There are many modifications of these main castes; in all there are over 2,000 subdivisions. Each member of society inherits his caste from his parents.

How this caste system began is not known. It probably dates back to the Aryan invasion of India and the attempt by the invaders to control the conquered indigenous peoples. The intention was undoubtedly to regulate society, to provide each man with certain inalienable or birth rights within the limits of his social background and training. Each man thus would never be deprived of his status in society. One might not himself have the qualities of an intellectual, but he would be eligible to such a status among his fellows because of his birth.

Perhaps an unanticipated result was the thwarting of initiative and the suppression of the expression of talents or abilities that went beyond the particular caste of the individual. Thus it often imprisoned the individual instead of securing his place in life. The religious philosophy of the Hindu is perhaps the reason why the caste system endured so long. One may violate almost any other part of the scripture and still be considered a Hindu, but to violate one's caste is a grave offense. Though the caste system has been abolished comparatively recently, its psychological effect upon the Hindu still remains. The older Hindus 'are reluctant to change caste. They are deeply imbued with the centuries-old influence on the lives of their countrymen.

Inadvertently, we arrived in Benares on the occasion of a great religious holiday. The day which we selected to film the Ganges was one venerated by women. The weather was exceptionally warm, especially so for the month of November. It was more like a mid-summer day. We took a conveyance along a well-paved thoroughfare, passing bustees; or native districts, en route. Even at that early hour, throngs were headed in the direction of the Ganges. The multitude soon milled into the center of the roadway. We were obliged to abandon our conveyance and, with the help of our interpreter, engage bearers, that is, coolies, to carry our equipment.

These bearers are not accustomed to carrying weight in their hands or suspended at arm's length at their sides. They balance everything on their heads. We watched with trepidation as they raised our heavy cinema camera cases to their heads, supporting them at precarious angles with one hand. We were now caught up in a sea of humanity that surged around us. We desperately but unsuccessfully tried to

remain together, as we sought each other by looking over or across the turbaned heads. We knew only one thing. These people pushing relentlessly forward were going where we were, to the Ganges. There was no escape. We moved with them. Their bare and sandaled feet stirred up clouds of dust which choked our nostrils. Dogs excited by the event chased each other, running between our legs, and making progress even more difficult.

The more affluent individuals rode haughty camels that looked down upon the struggling humanity with an air of utter contempt. Aside from the fact that this was a religious event, it was an occasion of festivity for man. Those who could afford it had engaged bearers to carry food stuffs and clothing or to pull them in rickshas. The wheels of the rickshas passed over the bare feet of many in the processional, bringing forth cries of anger and pain.

Here was every stratum of society. Mothers partly dragged or carried wide-eyed or crying children through the melee. Beggars from everywhere had converged upon Benares. Devotees lavished large sums of money upon charity on such occasions as these. This attracted deformed and often repulsive mendicants from afar. They were the lame, the blind, the lepers, and the hideous eccentrics representing the lower types of Hindu adherents. The latter were devotees of the popular Hindu sects which were a corruption of the higher aspects of the religion.

We were conscious of the fact that ours was a risky venture. The breath of the many persons about us, the dust and dirt, the exposure to contagious diseases—all of this was endangering to one's health. The fact that we had been legally compelled to receive several inoculations to immunize us, gave us no particular sense of security. Cholera and the plague were both prevalent. All of this, however, meant nothing to the Hindus. They were going to the Sacred River, the Mother of India! At the end of the road was a series of steps. These were slimy with mud from the river bank deposited on them by thousands of feet. We pushed our way through the throng into the sucking mud littered with all kinds of filth.

There was the Ganges! Broad and flowing majestically southward! The water at the edge was a slimy greyish color. The sights that greeted our eyes on this day were almost unbelievable and beggar full description. Here was a wall of humanity, men, women, and children. Those in splendid health came to the water's edge as a religious rite to bathe, a spiritual ablution in the "blessed waters." There were those who came to indulge in its divine curative properties. There is no greater experience that a Hindu may have in this lifetime than to bathe in the Ganges as part of a traditional rite and to be sanctified as a result, especially here in Benares, the Holy City. Among many, the ecstatic experience had produced a mass hysteria. They were crying, shouting, and waving their hands.



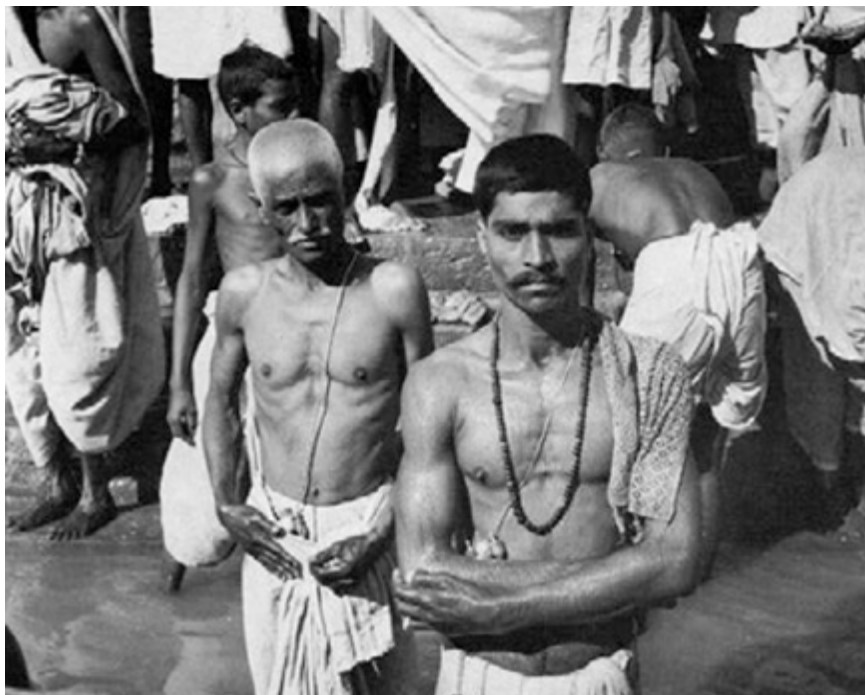
### THE SACRED GANGES

On the occasion of a holy day, thousands of Hindus participate in spiritual ablutions in the Ganges. Many Hindus, like those of other religious faiths, believe that sacred water purges one of moral taint. To many other Hindus, it is but a symbolic rite of lustration depicting purification of the mind.

September, 1949 – India

We succeeded in engaging a primitive barge just large enough to accommodate our party with our camera bearers. The means of propulsion was long poles. Setting up our equipment under the glorious blue sky, with its constant brilliant light, we slowly moved in and out from the shore. We could come as close to the devotees as though we were actually in the water, and yet we were free from any encumbrance. Our position on top of the water prevented any obstruction of our view.

With due respect for the religious rites, we watched and filmed the happenings—just as they have occurred for centuries along the banks of this sacred river. Here were men bathing, standing waist-deep in the murky waters. Beside them, others were dipping their fingers into the river and applying the water to sores upon their bodies or heads. Others, obviously of higher caste, solemnly and with dignity—both men and women—knelt down and drank the sacred water. Still others filled small brass urns and turned to leave, taking the “holy waters” with them.



THE DIGNITY OF FAITH

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

This intelligent Hindu, with ritualistic beads about his neck, stands in the water of his sacred Ganges. He reflects pride in his faith,—the world's oldest living religion and one of the largest. To him, and to millions of his countrymen, Brahma a divine omnipresence, is the universal essence which imbues all reality.

September, 1949 – India

The refuse which was in the water, the filth being deposited in it by thousands of persons, meant nothing to them. Was this not the Sacred Ganges? Hindu religious tradition relates that the Ganges is imbued with the essence of sanctity, capable of cleansing the pious bather of all sin and moral taint. Water from the Ganges is sent and taken in bottles to all parts of India as healing medicine and for sacramental purposes. In this latter regard, the water is used as it is by other religious sects, including Christianity. Thousands of Hindus come each year as pilgrims, if their circumstances permit. Others come with the definite intention of dying at Benares and having the last rites performed on the ghats of the Ganges. This assures them, according to the Vedas, “salvation and eternal bliss.”

Hindu scripture relates that to follow the entire course of one of the sacred rivers, the Ganges or the Jumna, in a “sun-wise direction,”—that is, always keeping the sun at one's right hand—is an act resulting in salvation. Obviously, to follow down one side of the river in such a manner and then up the hundreds of miles on the other bank (often through jungle terrain) requires years, if not a lifetime to accomplish.



## Chapter XXII

# PREPARATION FOR IMMORTALITY

A SERIES OF wide steps descends from the Benares side of the Ganges into the river. These are the famous bathing and burning or cremation ghats of Benares. As we moved along the river's edge, filming the picturesque skyline, we observed a number of funerals and cremations underway. On the lower platform of the steps, attendants had already erected a funeral pyre consisting of short lengths of wood. Those whose means make it possible purchase for this purpose a certain wood which is fragrant when burned. The processional to the particular ghat which we were observing had begun.

The relatives and mourners approached, walking in single file. The body was covered with a white cloth wound closely about it, showing its contours. It was strapped on a stretcher of bamboo poles and carried by six men, three on each side. About the corpse were entwined golden flowers which indicated that it was that of a high caste person. The pallbearers carried the body to the murky waters of the Ganges and let it lie there a few minutes partly submerged. This is a form of sacerdotal immersion in the holy waters. The family and friends simultaneously began to chant. The men and women separated into two groups on either side of the wide steps of the ghat. The body was then laid on top of the funeral pyre which is about chest height.

The nearest of kin, which in this particular instance was the widow, was attired in a simple white sari. She was instructed by the attendant to ignite the pyre. This igniting is a rite in itself. The attendant gave

her three long reed-like tapers which were already burning at the end. Slowly and with great dignity, she walked thrice about the pyre, the third time igniting the extreme corners of it. Then she gave the tapers back to the attendant and gracefully retired up the steps, not once again looking behind, and masterfully concealing her grief. The whole company fell in behind her, chanting as they departed.

All along the area were bodies in various stages of cremation. At first the blunt reality of the disintegration of the body by this means of disposal is rather shocking to the Occidental. With the full understanding of the desire to return the ashes to the Ganges, where they may be borne to the sea with the other elements, the act loses its awesome aspects. The realities of birth, life, and death are frankly met by the Indian. They are not submerged beneath mawkish sentimentality as is so often done in the Occident.

The poorer classes, or those whose bodies have been shipped to Benares for cremation, have no friends attending. The attendants observe the ritual—as would any undertaker—in a completely impersonal manner. The body is submerged while they prepare the funeral pyre. As they do so, the sacred Brahman cow may gingerly step down to the body, snatch a garland of flowers from atop the corpse and benignly munch them. If the attendant observes this, he may gently ward off the cow. If he is busy, he pays no attention.

As we journeyed down the river again, we observed an ill and feeble old man seated on one side of the steps of the ghat with the water of the Ganges lapping over his ankles. Two younger men were seated on either side of him busily placing garlands of golden flowers about his neck and supporting him as they did so. His head bobbed back and forth and his ashen face was visible as we drifted close by. We commented that he was evidently quite ill. Our interpreter laconically said, "Not ill, *dead*." He had just died. Rigor mortis had not yet set in. He was a priest, a *Brahman*. They are not cremated as those of other castes, but are adorned with flowers. Then they are strapped to a bamboo raft and just floated downstream. The body gradually disintegrates and, of course, is probably partially devoured by scavenger birds en route—a further pollution of the waters of the Ganges at this point in its course.

The return from the Ganges was still another ordeal. We had to penetrate the wall of pilgrims which had increased with the passing of the hours. One sight deeply moved me. On the end of an abutment over the water sat a Brahman priest. He had entered into a meditative state. He was seated cross-legged on a small rug which he had apparently brought for the occasion. His long black hair was done up in a knot piled high on the top of his head. He was naked except for a loin cloth, and his body glistened in the sun. Open on his lap was a large book, perhaps containing the Brahmanas or the sacred Upanishads. The rays of the sun beating down on his exposed head, the Hies, the raucous cries of the teeming humanity about him, swimming and bathing within arm's length or going through their ablutions—to all of these he was oblivious. He stared with wide, unseeing eyes out upon the waters of the Ganges. His countenance, however, was one of absolute serenity. There was no evidence of a trance like state, no rigidity of muscles. We were in this world of objectivity, but he was in another, wholly within the consciousness of self.

To the Brahman, the finite world, the world of phenomena, is an illusion called maya. Brahma, the universal soul, is the only reality. The atman or human soul must rise above its limitations. The body with its illusions, transitions, and desires, must seek to contact the ultimate, the Brahma. Salvation, then, to this caste, is the striving to free one's real self, the soul (atman) from all change, moods, passions, and from the need of rebirth in physical form. Complete salvation is an *absorption* into Brahma, the universal soul.

This liberation of the self from the body is furthered by many practices, especially those set forth in that aspect of Hindu philosophy known as Yoga. These methods attempt to suppress sense activity, to cause the mind to rise above ideas having their origin in the sense experiences. The state of final absorption is an ineffable one. There are no determinate qualities, as forms, substances, or even feelings by which to describe this *at-oneness*. The only description at all possible is to say that it is a state of bliss which can only be experienced and not told.

In contrast to the noble concept of this Brahman priest, who sought escape within the realm of the mind, was the practice of an *ascetic*, whom we saw as we returned. He was in a cavity underneath the end of the ghat where the paving ended. The area was perhaps not more than seven feet long and three or four feet wide. There on the mud and sand was this human being living like a rodent. He was rolled in a filthy blanket with his back turned toward the opening of the cavity and against the glare of the sun. We bent down and peered into the dank shadows, calling to him, as we wished permission to film him. He finally condescended to turn and look toward us. His appearance was very repulsive. His hair and beard were matted with dried mud. His forehead was smeared with patches of color consisting of caste and ritualistic marks. His body gave the appearance of being emaciated, so unlike the Brahman priest we had seen a few minutes before.

As an ascetic, he was practicing *self-mortification*, a form of abuse of the body to indicate disdain for it and temporal existence. His was a perverted concept of an approach to spirituality. Unless we think too harshly of his kind, let us recall some of the Christian sects who resort to flagellations and other torture of the body to simulate the suffering of Christ during the crucifixion. These Christian sects imagine that such practices further salvation. Like some shy animal in its lair, the ascetic could not be called out for conversation or for photographs. But at least he displayed an independence and the sincerity of his convictions.

This day was like a dream; experience upon experience crowded into our consciousness with great emphasis. Eccentrics of all kinds gave vent to their conceptions and obsessions upon this religious holiday. Psychologically many were *exhibitionists*, having no definite religious practices but taking advantage of prevailing circumstances to draw attention to themselves by extremes of conduct. I recall being nudged in the middle of my back as I moved through the throng. This was repeated a number of times. Finally, feeling annoyed, I turned to see the cause of it. I was confronted by a grinning young man in rags who that by knowing which everything in this universe is known?" The answer is said to be found in the concept of God and Brahma.

We must remember that the end which the East seeks is to be obtained quite differently from that of the West. The Occident is positive, aggressive, dynamic. We of the West attempt mastership by physical and intellectual force. We wrestle with existence as though it were an opponent desirous of conquering us. Further, we presume to know the order which is conceived as the Cosmic ideal, and we try to make all the realities of our objective existence conform to this ideal.

The East has a *passive* attitude toward mortal existence. It seeks to avoid conflict with life and thus not experience perturbation. To the Hindu the final order is in the universe itself, not to be set up as an idealism within man's own mind. Consequently, it is necessary that one be drawn into the whole of the universe to experience it. This oneness is expressed as "from whom indeed these beings are born, through whom they live, and unto whom they return and merge in." The Hindu insists that men should not presume to know the ultimate but to go beyond the realm of thought, for Brahma or God is above mind. The westerner calls this escapism. However, the western "mastery" of life brings as much misfortune as it does peace of mind and in the end, as individuals, are we any happier?

One eastern sage has said of the West that we try to "reduce all things to a machine." It is true that psychologists and psychiatrists are now endeavoring to mechanize even the mind, that is, reduce it purely to the functioning of a mechanism. Each emotion or thought is tied fast to some external stimulus or inherited biological one. Pure individualism and self-motivation are gradually becoming lost. Even our western educators decry the fact that modern man finds it increasingly impossible to sit alone and *think*. He has to be activated by the condensation of news articles and opinions of others—or even by pictures in popular magazines or by radio and T.V. commentators.

If the East and West in their philosophies could truly meet, this would be most beneficial to both. As it is, they are each functioning at extreme ends: the East has its subjective world, a world of non reality; the West has its objective world of ever-increasing reality, and a materialism that enslaves the spirit.

## Chapter XXIII

# HEIGHTS OF THE HIMALAYAS

**B**EFORE US STOOD the Himalaya range, like a vast citadel rising abruptly from the plains of India. Forbidding, yet intriguing in its shroud of fog, it recalled the age-old legends which have descended from its rugged heights. Southern and central India are virtually walled off by this great chain of mountains. The contrast between the lowlands, stretching out as far as the eye can see, and the sheer upthrust of the Himalayas, has an awe-inspiring effect on the observer.

The topographical demarcation also indicates radical climatic, religious, and social changes. The almost inaccessibility and remoteness of the land pocketed between the stupendous peaks has created an isolated world. The influences of time, the vicissitudes of passing civilizations, like waves of the sea, have shattered themselves upon this region, leaving little impression by their impact. Thus, to enter into the heart of this region is to experience in our times a living page from the book of life of a thousand years ago.

We were on our way to Darjeeling, India's most *modern* outpost, the link between today and yesterday. The ascent from Siliguri, the end of the standard gauge railroad, was gradual. The paved road, winding in and out of passes and ever upward, was reminiscent of travel through the Sierras in California. The foliage was vividly green, and here and there a spring burst through, seeming to sing in its liberation as it coursed over the rocks to find the canyons far below. Like some

giant invisible scene shifter, the upper wind currents would push aside momentarily the mist, and there would be revealed to us a little village clinging precariously to some high slope. As we spiraled toward these villages, we found them mostly composed of low huts of wood and stone composition, the stone being indigenous rock. The pastoral scenes of cattle and sheep, grazing peacefully and lifting their heads lazily to gaze curiously after us, gave the impression of some old Flemish masterpiece.

Our spirits ascended as we did. The cool, clear air, combined with the fragrance of lush vegetation and moist earth, was invigorating after the heat and dust of the lowlands. We sensed adventure ahead, and our imaginations responded. Our greatest concern was the absence of sunlight, for everywhere were tempting photogenic views. The heavy mist hanging low over the dark peaks would teasingly swirl, displaying a patch of blue sky beyond, only to quickly close again.

The city of Darjeeling is small in population and lies at a moderate altitude of 6,300 feet. The people are an admixture of various Mongolian tribes and Europeans. The former come to Darjeeling from Nepal and Sikkim, neighboring independent states. Because of its altitude, Darjeeling is a summer resort for those Indians, and the English and other Europeans, who can afford to escape the terrific heat of the plains. The distance from Calcutta, Bombay, and New Delhi is considerable, especially in terms of train travel and cost to the average person. The wealthy have built permanent homes which are relatively pretentious. The very few hotels which appeal to Americans and Europeans simulate the Swiss Alpine establishments in appearance and accommodations.

In the modern section of Darjeeling there is a heterogeneous collection of articles of Western manufacture to be had and the crude products of native craftsmanship. The western goods are exorbitantly high priced because of Indian tariff regulations combined with the expense of the transportation to Darjeeling. The appeal to the wealthy class of occidentals who patronize this city in the summer is another governing price factor. Cleaner than most Indian cities, partly because of the climatic conditions, Darjeeling is in no sense like an American or Mediterranean luxury resort as, for example, Miami, Florida, or the

French Riviera.

For several days we waited patiently to film snow-capped Mount Kinchinjunga which towers to a height of 28,146 feet, being slightly less in altitude than the famed Mount Everest. From Darjeeling on a clear day, this peak is etched against blue sky; but the gods, said to dwell thereon, had decided otherwise. For not once, while we were in Darjeeling, did Kinchinjunga bare his head. The time, however, was profitably used. We had to organize our expedition into Sikkim, the neighboring northland. Permission from high authority must first be obtained before we could venture into the interior.

The restrictions were not only political—that is, requiring necessary passports, visas and the like—but there must also be an assurance that accommodations are available to the traveler. Unless it can be shown that you carry sufficient food stuff and bedding, are provided with a guide and, as well, have access to the remote *dak* houses, you are not permitted to enter. These dak houses are primitive stone “bungalows” of one or two rooms, built in the mountain fastness for the purpose of accommodating the occasional traveler, that is, where he may find shelter. The usual indifference of the political subaltern, from whom the necessary credentials were obtained, was eventually overcome.

The guide for such an expedition is known as the *sirdar*, which literally means *headman*. With every mile into the interior, you realize your dependence upon such individuals. There is an increasing admiration for their amazing versatility. The sirdar must know five or six different Mongolian dialects, which are likely to be encountered en route, as well as English and French. He must be entirely familiar with clothing requirements and must engage coolies, pack animals, and any other necessary transportation. Most of the food must be acquired by him from natives on the way. He must constantly think in terms of the health and safety of his charges, so he alone makes all food purchases. This food he personally prepares, thereby assuring himself of its cleanliness.

The sirdar’s culinary ability is worthy of great approbation. The unique dishes of Oriental cuisine prepared by him have the most fascinating eye appeal, revealing his artistic sense, as well as being



delicious. Sometimes this food is prepared over an open fireplace, or, at best, on a crude iron stove, further indicating the ingenuity of the sirdar.

Our sirdar's personality particularly interested me. Here was a man of keen native intelligence following a humble calling. He held the purse strings and was the superior of the coolies, as well as being responsible for all bargaining in our behalf. In his dealings with these people, he always spoke in a soft voice; his manner was never arrogant or threatening. In his relations with us, however, he assumed no obsequious attitude but was always courteous and retiring.

This man's talents and his character were wasted here. How much the "higher" civilizations needed such a fundamental *gentleman* as this man! He might rise to great heights in the Western World with his attributes. Yet he showed no inclination to even inquire about America or England. Would he be corrupted by the tempo of the West? If contentment in the means of earning one's livelihood, if the pleasure in the day's activities were in themselves the highest rewards of life, then the West could offer him nothing. The prominence and responsibility his talents might win for him in the West would likewise exact a compensating toll of strife and personal distraction.

Downward we coursed from Darjeeling, happy in the thought that we were leaving its dismal mists. In nearly three days, if we were fortunate, we would arrive in Gangtok, capital of Sikkim. Our course was northeast of Darjeeling and high over the range ahead. First, we must descend into valleys from which the mist seemed to boil forth like smoke from a cauldron. As we descended, the temperature rapidly changed. We were forced to discard our heavy army jackets and sweaters which were so welcome in Darjeeling. As if by magic, the sky was suddenly swept clear of mist and a great cloudless vault of blue appeared.

The whole countryside seemed transformed. Here and there the lower slopes of the mountains were planted with tea. Oddly enough, these huge plantations covering many acres are referred to as "tea gardens." At a distance the little tea bushes reminded us of the great California vineyards with their stubby, pruned grape trunks which are

also intentionally grown on the slopes of mountains.

Most of the larger gardens are owned by foreign syndicates. They are staffed with native help presided over by an English overseer. All sorts of inducements, mostly to their sensuous pleasures, are made to keep these overseers at their remote posts. Many of them have not been home to England for decades. To meet them is like looking at a woodcut engraving of a pompous man-about-town of the gay nineties—or at least a character out of a Kipling novel.

The road gradually worsened and the pavement ended. From there on, the roads were steep without regard for grade or width. Frequently we pulled to one side along the slippery edge of a precipice to allow tongas, or two-wheeled carts, drawn by bullocks to pass. The latter are the main means of transportation in this area. The carts are laden with great basket like containers filled with tea which will sometime find its way to your tea-cup. As there is no railroad, no telegraph or telephone into northern Sikkim, these vehicles bring in wares and often news from the outside world.

We were now in a heavily forested, tropical land. There are giant teakwood and rubber trees whose limbs are festooned with great cable like vines. The atmosphere is perfumed with a fragrance from the large ferns and flowers in a myriad of colors. The air is alive with sounds, such as chirps, screeches, and what even resemble agonized screams. It is estimated that between five and six hundred species of birds have been recorded in this region. To us it seemed that the whole number were at one time expressing themselves vocally. Nearly six hundred species of butterflies have also been tabulated here where life is so prolific.

Our attention was drawn to a number of monkeys who, in family groups, sat along the dusty road or on the overhanging limbs of trees. When seated on their haunches, they were nearly two feet high and, when standing, were quite tall. They were covered with a coat of coarse, red hair, and were exceedingly curious about us. It appeared as though they came out of the heavy forest through which we passed to observe us in the same manner as humans in a rural district go to the railroad depot to watch the trains pass.

Those who think of these primates as relatively insensate have not observed them closely. The females led their children by their human like hands or clasped them to their breasts. When they saw us, they stared; and then, as though commenting on us, they turned and chattered, looking occasionally in our direction as they did so. They evinced no fear of humans, moving casually out of our way to a lofty perch on the bulwarks of a stone bridge or to a fallen log.

We were now winding along the Rangit River, a wide torrential stream pouring from the melting snow of the peaks which loomed in the distance. Its translucent waters, shoals, and deep shaded pools made it indeed a fisherman's paradise. Our sirdar confirmed the fact that the stream had a plentiful supply of edible fish-and yet not even one angler was in sight.

At last the frontier of Sikkim! A river constituted the boundary. The bridge spanning it was high, with space for just one vehicle to pass at a time. Some doubt was cast by us upon its strength, as only one bullock cart was permitted to cross at a time. The rough planks clattered loudly as it did so, and the supporting stringers creaked ominously. This frontier post was in reality but a niche in the wilderness. There were two or three clapboard structures in which the local border patrol and authorities were housed. Each of us had to register and present credentials to now enter Sikkim or to go beyond to Tibet.

Here was a nomad encampment. These nomads were traveling, as their forefathers had done for centuries. They were, in fact, counterparts of their people for centuries back. They shifted from one mountain region to another with their tribal family and small herd of goats and burros. They were *Tibetans*. They wore tall woolly hats. Their boots were also of wool having a colorful design and were made by the womenfolk. The soles of these wool boots were made of coarse leather. The men wore blanket like trousers, whose texture and patterns matched the skirts of the women. The trouser legs were perfectly round, stovepipe in shape.

Each man carried a large dirk, thrust in the top of his trousers. The handles of these knives were made of bone and were often quite ornate, being inlaid with colored glass and stones. They are for utility and for

## YESTERDAY HAS MUCH TO TELL

protection against the wild animals in which the terrain abounds, such as the snow leopard, at higher altitudes. They were huddled about a community campfire, resting their backs against huge bales unloaded from the burros. These also served as windbreaks. The unfettered little burros, hard-worked animals, grazed nearby.



TIBETAN NOMAD

As did his forbears for centuries, this nomad had trekked through the las (mountain passes) of the Himalayas from inner Tibet. His long hair and his exotic attire make it difficult to determine his sex. At this bazaar in Gangtok, Sikkim, portal to Tibet, he bartered wares from his primitive two-wheeled cart.

November, 1949 – Tibet

The children, barefooted and with tousled hair, but with gleaming white teeth framed by a charming smile, walked around us in circles. We were objects of curiosity. They would point to our army jackets and boots, and whisper among themselves, find something humorous and laugh goodnaturedly. They could not speak English but by gesture finally begged coins from us.

At times one of the men would rise and order the most persistent children away so that we would not be annoyed, but not once did any of the adults attempt to beg. These Tibetan nomads are quite large and bony, usually thickset, and have a far more robust physique than the Indians. Their chests are barrel-like, indicating that they live in the mountains where the rarity of air and consequent deep breathing develop the chest. Their long hair, which sometimes is braided like a woman's or hangs down in straight strings beside their deeply tanned and furrowed faces, gives them a most ferocious appearance.

Sikkim, now a kingdom, is about seventy miles from north to south and forty miles from east to west. It is about the same area as the state of South Carolina or the country of Wales. The climate ranges from tropical heat in the valley to the icy cold of the eternal snows. The people were originally Lepchas or Rong-pa, which has been defined as ravine folk. They are of Mongolian extraction, quite primitive and simple in their wants and exceedingly superstitious. As most primitive people, many are still animists; that is, they adhere to the belief that all things are alive, imbued with an invisible spirit or entity. Thus many of them practice idolatry.

We had chosen the month of November to travel into Sikkim after considerable investigation of the climatic conditions. It is one of the few months when the limited roads are passable. During the monsoon season, Sikkim experiences one of the greatest rainfalls in the world. In fact, the annual precipitation is in excess of one hundred inches! The torrential fall of water causes rivers to overflow and numerous springs to virtually spurt from the surrounding crags and hills. The roadbeds are completely washed away, and large landslides engulf sections of the only road through the country.

We were traversing this region during the period of the annual repairs. The most crude but picturesque methods were being employed. The laborers were principally women and children who welcomed the pittance they received for this work. There were two women or girls to a shovel. One pulled a rope attached to the lower part of the shovel handle, which helped to lighten the load. The other pushed the shovel beneath the local rock. At a given signal they pulled and lifted together. The excavated soil was put into baskets and carried to dumps on the backs of women and children.

An amusing incident was the adapting of manpower to the circumstances. In other words, there were various sizes of baskets. Little boys and girls, who could not have been over seven or eight years of age, had small baskets adapted to their size, with which they cheerfully trudged to the dumps along with their elders. The rock for grading was crushed by hand with the use of sledge hammers. This was indeed a grueling task. The crushed rock was carried in baskets and distributed along the roadbed. The actual surfacing was done by pulling a huge cylindrical tank filled with water to give it weight. To this was attached a long rope, and the tank was pulled over the crushed rock, leveling it. The rope was pulled by nearly a hundred women and children, boys and girls, who sang as they bent beneath the weight of the roller.

We could not reach *Gangtok* that day, and it was now quite dark. To negotiate these rough roads at night was dangerous, as sections still remained partially obstructed. We presently stopped at the dak house for which we had been searching, that is, one of the government, bungalows." This was located on the road in the inky blackness of vegetation. It was a crude stone structure of two small rooms to provide facilities and protection for travelers such as ourselves. Though primitive, it was a protection against the cold winds that come as soon as the sun drops behind the mountains. The floors were roughhewn planks; there was plenty of sleeping space on them.

When we lighted our oil lamps and looked about outside, we saw a profusion of giant poinsettias which grew wild. There were also orange trees and banana trees. The bananas were most delicious in

their ripened state. It was a variety which grew wild in this region and which never finds its way to Western markets. The amazing fact to us was that tropical plants and fruit could be found at such high altitudes.

After a succulent chicken dinner conjured up by our sirdar in the midst of the wilderness, we gathered about the only table to study a map of the area which had been hanging on the wall. This map was of the terrain of Nepal, Sikkim, and Tibet. It consisted of age-stained paper fastened to round sticks like a scroll. It was tattered and torn. Its markings revealed old *las* or passes in Tibet, the once forbidden land. The full moon now broke through the clouds and silhouetted the mountain crags against the sky like the jagged teeth of a colossal saw. These were once the barriers that landlocked a people and their beliefs from the outside world.

## Chapter XXIV

# TIBETAN TRAILS

WE PAUSED FOR a moment. Each stood silent, immured within his own thoughts. Like craftsmen, who stop to view with pride their handicraft, we drank in the beauty and import of the locale we had finally attained. We stood as though in the center of a sphere. Sloping upward from us were green pastures patched with wild flowers of brilliant hues. The rims of the pastures were joined, at a distance, by the Himalayan Range which surrounded us.

Across the seemingly sheer sides of these mountains, slowly and majestically moved great panels of purple and blue shadows, caused by clouds passing before the sun. It was like a great kaleidoscope, whose patterns were being continuously changed by some invisible being. How conducive, I thought, to imagining these mountains as actually alive, as if animated by some supernatural entity. After all, the religious belief of animism, so prevalent among primitive peoples, must seem plausible to them in the absence of any other explanations. In fact, one finds himself continuously obliged to call upon his reason to reject the idea of animism which such a visual and emotional experience as this one suggests. Strange as it may seem, the superstitions which our emotions at times are wont to conjure have a stronger appeal for us than the rectitude of our reasoning.

In a matter of minutes, we were entering Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, which is on the extreme north of India. The designation of *capital*, perhaps engenders the idea of a metropolis. Actually, however, Gangtok has but one street. It is, in fact, a continuation of the roadway



which leads to the various *las*, or mountain passes, by which one reaches the very heart of Tibet. The little primitive town reminds one of the gold-rush towns of early California. The houses are of one or two stories, constructed mostly of weather-beaten clapboards. The second stories have superimposed balconies which sag precariously in the middle.

The entrances to these balconies are through a very small door or more often through a window. The majority of the structures are actually small shops or bazaars, the proprietors living upstairs. Like the early markets of America's Old West, the merchandise was suspended from every available display position. Hanging from the posts which support the balconies and from underneath the ceiling of the latter, were Tibetan wool boots, saddles, harnesses, and a mixture of metal cooking utensils imported from England.

Apparently, if business was not progressive enough, vicarious methods of appealing to prospective customers were adopted. One of these was to set up shop in the mud roadway that constituted the "street" of Gangtok. Blankets were thrown down upon the road and on top of them were placed little piles of such wares as sweetmeats, spices, handmade jewelry, and native shoes.

Since Gangtok is a trading center for products from Tibet, caravans of burros move along the roadway hourly. The lead burro is decorated with bells and tassels commensurate with his prominent position. With care these animals having the lead position guide their laden mates around the displays of merchandise in the roadway. Such "advertising" methods would seem to be effective, for the Tibetans accompanying the caravan often cannot resist stopping, as they pass these piles of merchandise in their way, and making a purchase.

There are no hotels or rooming houses in Gangtok. Its visitors are principally nomadic traders and lamas on a pilgrimage from one lamasery to another. Such persons pitch their skin tents along some hill in the shade of a great tree. Our sirdar (one who arranges for travelers) managed to negotiate accommodations for us in the home of one of Gangtok's merchants. He and his family were Mohammedans. Through our sirdar, who served as interpreter, the old merchant constantly

reminded us that he was the only Mohammedan in Gangtok which is principally Lamaistic. He thought that such gave him a transcendental social status. Obviously, however, it appeared to have no effect upon his relations with his neighbors.

Our quarters were on the second floor of this merchant's ramshackle but quaint home. In occupying his entire upper floor, consisting of two small rooms, we wondered where he and his family dwelt during our sojourn. Though the fees we paid for our lodgings were exceedingly small, we were impressed by the fact that our host considered himself a most fortunate man to have made such a deal with us.

The floors of the small but clean rooms were teakwood planks. The beds were actually low couches, similar to Arabian ones and covered with garish tapestry-like blankets. The larger of the two rooms, into which we crowded to dine, had a low table quite customary in the Orient. We sat at the table cross-legged on the floor, a rather difficult feat for the Westerner. If fortunate, at some meals one or two of us would be seated on small hassocks upon which we could elevate our legs a little more comfortably and be seated a little closer to the table.

The oldest of our host's children, a little girl of eight, was remarkably intelligent. She possessed all the native curiosity of a child of her age and was without the slightest inhibition. There are no schools in Gangtok as we know them; there are tutors who teach those who can afford their services. The little girl, whose radiant personality shone through an obscurity of an almost always dirty face and dress, had learned some English. She had acquired a child's primer printed in English and delighted in reading to us from it by the flickering oil lamp. When encouraged, her little eyes shone with intense pride. Her father and his woman servant avoided us. This was partly due to their inability to speak our language and to their obvious awe of strangers from a land which, so far as their contact with it was concerned, might as well have been situated on Mars. The father was pleased that his young daughter could so freely meet us and that she in turn was so readily accepted.

Coal is crudely mined in the Himalayas in the vicinity of Gangtok. The means of transporting it from the mines high on the mountain

slopes to Gangtok is very primitive. It is brought in baskets on the backs of women coolies or bearers. The Tibetan woman is small but chunkily built. Since childhood she has become accustomed to carrying heavy loads. It is pathetic to come across even small girls, perhaps not over eleven or twelve years of age, walking down the steep mountain trails along the rim of a heavily wooded sector with the head bowed and a large basket upon the back heaped high with coal. They partly support the weight, which must be sixty or seventy pounds, with a woven belt looped about their foreheads, the ends of which are fastened to the basket.

On treks up into the mountains with our own bearers, the sirdar was inclined to engage some of these women to carry the heavy pieces of camera equipment. We objected and he remonstrated with us, stating that they needed the annas, that is, the small coins which they would be paid. We compromised by giving these women a gift of part of the fee they would have earned and insisted on male bearers or coolies.

The Maharajah of Sikkim has his palace but a short distance from Gangtok. It is on an eminence overlooking a beautiful valley with terraced farms and their cluster of thatch-roofed buildings. As a customary gesture to his subjects and to his traditional religion of Lamaism, he has built a pretentious lamasery but a few hundred feet from his palace. There are approximately one hundred lamas who are, by religious obligation, bound to this lamasery and pledged to a monastic life. The Maharajah has erected, almost directly across from the lamasery, the customary school for the lamas. Here they spend the greater portion of the day, studying and reciting age-old liturgies from Sanskrit writings.

This seems an appropriate place to briefly explain the relation of Lamaism to Buddhism. Prior to the Seventh Century A.D., Tibet used to follow the Bon religion. Bon is somewhat similar to Taoism of China. According to Buddhist accounts, in the Seventh Century A.D., there appeared a powerful chieftain, named Namri Srong-Tsan, who gained some authority over the wild tribes. His son and successor desired to enlarge the empire for his dynasty. He eventually conquered all of Tibet and the two neighboring kings, one of Nepal and the other

of China. This son, generally known as Srong, married the daughters of the conquered kings who were Buddhists. Subsequently, Srong was converted to Buddhism. Influenced by the culture of Buddhism, he desired to introduce it into Tibet and sent emissaries to India to contact influential Buddhists.

About the Eighth Century, Khri-Srong, a descendant, ascended to the throne. Born of a Chinese Buddhist mother, he was converted to the faith by a visiting monk, Santarakshita. As yet there were no monasteries or lamas in Tibet. Khri-Srong sent invitations to India for Buddhists to visit his land. One Padmasambhava responded in A.D. 747. "Padmasambhava was familiar with exorcisms and magical spells." These magical practices appealed to the superstitious minds of the native Mongol peoples of Tibet. Padmasambhava established the first lamasery in Tibet. One by the name of San-Yas became the first *lama*. The word lama is the Tibetan name for a Buddhist monk.

The Buddhist scholars adapted Buddhism to the indigenous customs and beliefs of the Tibetan. This resulted in a form of corrupt Buddhism known as Lamaism. In fact, Lamaism has been defined as "a priestly mixture of Sivaite mysticism (Siva is one of the Hindu trinity), magic and Indo-Tibetan demonology, overlaid with a thin varnish of Mahayana Buddhism."

Subsequently, Lamaism flourished with varying degrees of success. During the beginning of the Eleventh Century, hundreds of monks from all over Asia were pouring into Tibet. One of these was the Bengalese monk, Atisa. With him began "the second period of Tibetan Buddhism." This period might be called the *reformation*. Each of the numerous Lamaistic sects sought the reformation of all others by insisting upon the domination of their particular doctrines and traditions. It is said that Atisa was outstanding among these because of his "coherence of doctrines." He brought about a transformation and a consolidation of political and religious factions.

About the Fifteenth Century, the doctrine of *successive reincarnation* was introduced. This doctrine, still in effect, proclaims that a great teacher is *reborn* into each person who successively occupies the position of Grand Lama. This doctrine was a masterful diplomatic stroke. It

conferred indubitable supremacy upon the Grand Lama-the addition, in other words, of a spiritual gnosis as well as temporal power.

By 1640 A.D., the Ge-Lug-Pa sect had swept into power over all of its rivals. Tibet at the time was divided into three provinces, the Eastern, the Western, and the Central. In Central Tibet, the Ge-Lug-Pa was the recognized representative of Lamaism. Envy of its power resulted in warfare by sects from the other provinces. The Grand Lama or Abbot appealed for help to the Mogul prince, Gushi Khan, who was a follower of the Ge-Lug-Pa. Gushi Khan promptly responded by invading and finally conquering the whole of Tibet. Khan then granted full authority to the Grand Lama, Nog-Wan of the Ge-Lug-Pa sect.

The Grand Lama after this period was not only the supreme ecclesiastical head of Lamaism in Tibet but temporal ruler of the country as well. The followers of Lamaism recognize him as their *pope*.

Gushi Khan further honored the Grand Lama by conferring the noble title of *Dalai* upon him. This means vast as. The Western World refers to him as the Dalai Lama. Tibetans, however, know him as Gyalwa Rin-Po-Che, meaning the Great Gem of Majesty.

Nog-Wan increased the power of his sect and built for himself the great palace-temple of Potala near Lhasa, which to many Westerners is the symbol of Tibetan mystery and secrecy. The Ge-Lug-Pa sect, in modern times, is said to continue its strict observance of celibacy and abstinence, as well as to preside as the ruler of Tibet. It is also regarded to have somewhat retrogressed from its high plane of doctrinal exactitude.



The occasion was an unforgettable one. We were to film rites and ceremonies rarely witnessed by one from the Western World. It was with great difficulty that we kept our minds on the details of our work. The rhythmic cadence of the lamas reciting their age-old lessons in their school had a peculiar effect on our emotions. It was more like the chanting of a liturgy. We strolled over to the lama school to observe them. The structure itself was situated, as was the lamasery and the

Maharajah's palace, on the same high plateau. All about us at a distance were the snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas reaching up into the azure sky.

On either end of the school, which was one story in height and open on the side facing us, were two slender poles. To the tops of these were attached what appeared as narrow white cloths flapping in the strong breeze. They were prayer flags! They designated this place as holy ground, as a sanctuary. Upon these flags there originally were printed, from hand-carved wooden blocks, inscriptions in the ancient Sanskrit language which constituted prayers. The wind and rain had long since faded out these inscriptions. As we looked about at the mountain slopes, we could see here and there, rising above the varicolored foliage, other such flags, all designating some shrine.

As we approached the open side of the school, the lamas stopped chanting for a moment and curiously observed us. They wore red caps and cloaks and were seated in rows on benches facing us. Before some on low benches, which served as desks, were parchment scrolls. In front of this class and with his back to us, was the preceptor. Though some of the lamas appeared shy in our presence, the preceptor retained his dignity. He rapped loudly for attention and then he began, with the same cadence as before, the recitation of archaic affirmations from sacred scriptures. They were esoteric truths which had to be learned by rote. The lamas repeated aloud after him much in the manner of the responsory of Christian churches.

Two lamas quietly left their benches and walked abreast across the grounds separating the lamasery and the school. At the far side of this plateau—in fact, on the very edge overlooking a gully—two drums were fastened to stakes in the ground. Slowly and rhythmically, the lamas began to beat them. The deep tones resounded throughout the area, causing a corresponding pulsation within our solar plexus. These were the *signal drums*. The lamas were being called from their recitations to prayer. The prayers were always held in the lamasery or temple proper. Unceremoniously, the lamas came from the school, talking and laughing as would children during a recess. The drums had now ceased, and the lamas crowded around our cinema equipment

curious as to its function. In their Tibetan dialect they joked with the drummers who obliged us by being filmed.



CALL TO PRAYER

The deep vibrant tones of these Tibetan horns reverberate throughout the surrounding peaks and crags. Though not loud, the sound of these horns, calling the lamas to prayer, may be heard for a considerable distance. To the left, in front of this lamasery temple, may be seen a series of the bronze mani (prayer wheels) which are ceremoniously revolved upon occasion.

January, 1950 — Tibet

The abbot or chief lama, having been authorized by the Maharajah to grant us permission to exclusive motion pictures because of our cultural and mystical affiliations, was most gracious and willing to oblige. He waited until we were ready before giving his signal for the lamas' customary processional into the temple to begin. Upon a nod from him, the great ceremonial drums began to roll their beat. The lamas assembled and marched, two abreast, past our grinding cameras and entered the imposing edifice. It was indeed oriental pageantry: the treading feet, the ancient and melodious chanting accompanied by the shrill blasts of the reed pipes of the musicians, the colorful and exotic garb of the lamas.

A lamasery is known in Tibetan as a *gompa*. As do most of the Christian churches, it follows a traditional architectural design. Likewise, its ceremonial arrangements and accoutrements adhere to a pattern. There are usually several dwellings for the lamas. The most prominent and central building is the temple. The front of the temple is frequently of colored frescoes, murals depicting the four kings of the quarters. They symbolically guard the universe in all directions of the compass against the invasion of malevolent spirits.

Let us follow behind the lamas into their sacred precinct! We enter the great central door and are in the pronaos of the temple. This is like a small vestibule. There before us are the *manis*, or sacred prayer wheels. The smaller ones are in niches. The larger ones, some four feet in height, stand upon the stone flagging.

Now, thrilled and excited by our exceptional privilege and conscious of the fact that we would be able to give a firsthand account of our experience to thousands of Rosicrucians, we entered the *inner temple* doors. Before us was a fairly high nave or central aisle. On either side of the interior and at an extreme height were the windows which caused a crepuscular lighting in the nave. These in effect were like the clerestory of a cathedral. On either side of the threshold to the inner temple were two huge ceremonial drums. Beside them were vessels holding "holy" water.

Slowly and with the attitude of one on a great exploration and not wishing to miss a single element of the experience, we walked



down the nave. At the far end was the *high altar*. It was very ornate, consisting of filigreed gold in symbolic design. Colored glasses were artistically set into the filigree, forming a kind of mosaic. The color arrangement of the glass had an esoteric meaning and was not just an artistic arrangement. Upon the altar were several statues of entities or personalities immortalized in Lamaism. To lamas these have the same theological significance as the saints to Christians. The figurines or statuettes appeared to be of pure gold.

On a rack in front of these treasures were ecclesiastical appurtenances familiar to Christians! There were the seven vessels of holy water, the incense bowls, and the like. In ancient times the general arrangement was borrowed from the Buddhist temples in India. Was the similarity between this high altar and the ones seen in Christian cathedrals purely coincidental? *Most certainly not*. Since these arrangements had been in existence long before Christianity, they were but another example of the syncretic practices of Christianity. Unfortunately, many Christians blindly close their minds to the credit due other religions for many of the rituals and regalia which they cherish in their own faith.

Paralleling the nave or central aisle were rows of long, low benches. The lamas, or monks, sat upon these and were quietly spinning their hand manis, that is, prayer wheels, or gazing with curiosity upon us. At the right side near the altar and upon an elevated seat, sat the chief lama or abbot. He bowed in a solemn manner as we approached. On the floor in front of the benches were several small boys who grinned at us as small boys will. These boys were novices and eventually would become lamas.

In honor of our visit, the abbot permitted us another exceptional privilege. He instructed the monks to recite one of their ritualistic chants and to play their ceremonial musical instruments. The thumping of the drums done with the flat of the hands, accompanied by the shrill pipes and the melodious chanting of the red-robed and barefooted lamas, had the effect of our being transported behind the veil of the centuries. It was as if we had been reborn into another life.

To the left of the "East" or high altar and behind the benches of the lamas stood a large rack containing shelves and bins. It reached

almost to the ceiling. To the casual observer it would seem as though they contained bolts of dry goods to which price tags were attached. In fact, however, these were the *sacred archives* of the lamasery. In each of the bins was a parchment scroll attached to two wooden poles. The scrolls were about three feet in length. For protection against dust and the ravages of time, they had been placed in linen sacks now yellow with age. To the end of each sack was affixed, as has been the custom for centuries, a label identifying the contents of the scroll.

These scrolls contain archaic liturgies and the dharma (the sacred law) from early Buddhist writings. The scrolls, as well, contain esoteric principles and rites concerning healing, the revelation of natural laws, spiritual attainment, and the like. The chief abbot took down several of these and related their origin and nature to me.

As a special concession, the chief lama posed with one of these rare scrolls to be photographed. I was then reminded of that great illuminating book published by the Order, entitled *Unto Thee I Grant*. The contents of this exceptional book were originally translated from such scrolls as these by the authority of the Gyalwa Rin-Po-Che or Dalai Lama himself. Here, then, inside of the frontier of old Tibet we had encountered one of the many sources of such wisdom.

## Chapter XXV

# THE LOST INDUS PEOPLE

AT LAST, AFTER eighteen hours of hot and dirty traveling, we completed the three hundred miles. We were now at Dokri. This consisted of a wooden shed, the friendly one-man station staff and a small waiting room. About a mile away we could see the monotonous mud-brick dwellings of the little village of Dokri. Eight miles from here was Mohenjo-Daro, ruins of the oldest civilization in what had been India. After some negotiation, we engaged a tonga for the last eight miles. The tonga is a two-wheeled, horse-drawn cart. Actually it has but one seat which, by crowding, accommodates but three persons—this includes the driver. In the rear of the cart there is an extension of its floor, and that provides space for but one more person to sit, with his feet dragging along in the thick dust of the unpaved road.

Only one tonga was available for the journey. There were three of us with our considerable heavy camera equipment, including batteries, motor cases, and the like. We were dressed for the occasion with rough boots and clothing similar to that we had worn in the Himalaya area. Our personal luggage was negligible. However, when the equipment was loaded on the back of the tonga with the addition of the one person, it tilted in that direction so greatly that it seemed as though the small thin horse would be lifted by the shafts into the air. It was with considerable difficulty that we adjusted the weight so that it would be distributed equally over the wheels in the center of the tonga. During our travels, this weight shifted back and forth creating a seesaw motion.

For nearly two hours, we rode in a swirl of hot choking dust which coated our clothing. We had insisted that the driver give the heavily burdened animal frequent rests. This attitude of compassion seemed both to puzzle and amuse him. At times we were completely walled in on each side by the network of dust-laden foliage of the jungle. The jungle was watered here by the overflow of the Indus River. In this tangle of vegetation were wild boar, crocodiles, numerous poisonous reptiles and insects. It seemed an appropriate introduction to what we sought just ahead.

A sudden turn in the road, and there it lay before us—*Mohenjo-Daro*! The remains of a great cosmopolitan city of 5,000 years ago! Little was known of it until the excavation in 1927 under the direction of Sir John Marshall. As we looked upon the site, white with sand and dust, more than a mile from the river which had changed its course with the centuries, it was difficult to believe that, in a remote period, this ghost city was said to have existed in the “Garden of the Sind.” From the extent of the great city, it must have had a teeming population. Thus food at the time must have been produced on a large scale. The Indus River, through a network of vanished canals, must have provided a method of irrigation.

The remains of Mohenjo-Daro may be divided into two general classes. The first is the stupa area, and the second is known as the DK area. The stupa is a large mound situated on a hillock in the center of the city. It is really a round tower-like structure erected at a much later period by the Buddhists, upon the site of what had been perhaps a citadel of these ancient Indus people. At the bottom of the stupa has been found the original mud-brick platform, oblong in shape. It is speculated as to whether this was the site of the palace or some other prominent public building of this well planned and organized but forgotten city.

The DK area consists of what were the town houses, shops and streets of the lost people. Most imposing is the Great Bath. This is a quadrangle, having remains of verandahs on either side. About the quadrangle are galleries in which were ancillary rooms, perhaps dressing chambers or ones used for ceremonials. There are also the

remains of a fenestrated wall. From its windows the people of this lost civilization once peered down upon the large pool which occupied the quadrangle and is still in an excellent state of preservation.

On two sides of the pool are steps, its full width, which lead down to it. Was this pool used for ritualistic ceremonies or merely as a public bath? It is suggested that it might have been for hydropathic purposes, a now unknown curative method by water.

Our imagination was stimulated as we walked along the straight, well-paved and excellently planned streets of this mystery city. It was thrilling to realize that these streets were the same ones that the Indus people trod 2,300 years before Christ! They were a thriving, industrious people. As one home would deteriorate, it would be torn down to its foundations, and another would be erected upon it. We walked into the brick homes which, if roofs were restored, would be far more habitable than the hovels seen in many of the villages of poverty-stricken Asia and elsewhere today. Unlike most ancient cities of Asia, the homes of Mohenjo-Daro were as well constructed as were those structures which are thought to have been the public buildings. The sizes of the homes, which varied considerably, were indicative of the personal wealth of the occupants. The fact that modest and elaborate homes were situated together indicated a democratic spirit.

The streets follow a geometrical arrangement which shows definite planning and a high degree of civilization. Most remarkable is the excellent drainage system, perhaps one of the finest of the ancient world known to man. Each house had its drainage system, consisting of mud-tile "pipe" which led to the street. In the street is a sewerage system which carried the refuse out of the city. Circular brick wells tower high above some of the homes. At first these are rather puzzling to the observer. Why were they constructed so much higher than the homes? Was it not inconvenient to climb to the top of them to draw water from their depth of about twenty-five feet?



MOHENJO-DARO

The mound of death—remnant of the mysterious civilization located on the Indus plains, Pakistan. A highly developed city of over 5000 years ago! Whence came these people who reached a pinnacle of culture before the Aryans invaded India? They left an undeciphered language. At the apparent height of power, they vanished as strangely as they came.

April, 1950 – Pakistan

The reason for this height is that each time a home was dismantled in the thousand years that this civilization existed, the ground level about it, the result of the debris, would rise higher. This would necessitate an extension to the height of the well to keep it open above the surface. Now that the debris has been cleaned away, the wells reveal their total height and extend considerably above the levels of the remaining walls of the homes. The water in these wells is, after nearly 5,000 years, still clear, wholesome and refreshing, fed by deep springs. The few natives who travel into these ruins, which are feared by many because of superstition, drink the water with no noticeable bad effects.

The ancient Indus people left some telltale evidence of their mode of life, though it is regrettable that there is no language which we can comprehend. Specimens of wheat and barley have been found. How they cultivated their fields is not known. Circular grindstones were unknown, so perhaps the more primitive method of the "saddle quern and muller" was used. Their food also consisted of beef, mutton, pork, and poultry. In the houses have been found remnants of bones and shells. These indicate that their fare also included turtles, fish from the local Indus and dried fish from the sea. Undoubtedly they had vegetables, fruits, and milk as well.

Figurines and statuettes, which have been found in abundance in bronze and terra cotta, suggest the dress of the people. Two statuettes show a male figure with a long shawl thrown up over the left shoulder and under the right one, leaving the arm free. Whether a tunic or loin cloth was worn under this is not known. There are terra cotta male figures which are nude except for a headdress. There are also nude female figures. It is thought that these nude figures were probably representative of deities, as a mother goddess. The religion of the people, however, is well hidden behind the veil of time.

The jewelry of these Indus people was extensive and varied. It consisted of necklaces, amulets, finger rings for men and women, bangles, bracelets, and nose rings. These were of gold, silver, and ivory, with semiprecious stones. The poorer type were of shell, bone, or terra cotta. There are toy shops in which dolls were found and also some representations of what appeared to be boats and carts. There are numerous toy replicas of domesticated animals. There is no evidence, however, that these people had any knowledge of glass.

This site, one of the richest sources of archaeological treasure in the world, is as yet hardly scratched. With a few probings in the sand which had drifted against one of the inner walls of a home, we were able to uncover many artifacts. We picked up bits of ceramic bangles, pieces of terra cotta rings, and beads of necklaces. In the summer such probings are dangerous. The place is infested with cobras.

We sat in the shade of one of the ancient buildings to rest from our exertion. We had climbed, with our bearers who aided us with the

equipment, to the top of various structures so as to better film this lost city. In our mind's eye we could visualize these people moving in throngs through these streets, some carrying terra cotta jugs filled with water from the wells, others being laden with fish, flour, and vegetables purchased at the market; still others, in a lighter vein, as upon a frolic, would be singing as they went in the direction of the Great Bath perhaps to bathe in the cool water at the close of another fiercely hot day.

Whence came these people? Why did they establish a great civilization in the midst of an indigenous, primitive people? What caused the sudden collapse of their culture? Only theories have been advanced, some having reasonable support. Historically, nothing is known of the beginnings of these people. It is believed that they were of a Mesopotamian origin, perhaps of ancient Sumer. They long preceded the Aryans who were the predecessors of the Hindus.

One conception advanced is that they were migratory communities that settled in southern Baluchistan and then finally came southward to the present site. However, they may have been a branch of the Sumerians who, for some reason or other, traveled by boat down the coast of the Persian Gulf and thence along the coast of the Arabian Sea. If we study a map of the site of Sumer, the first great river one would confront, after leaving the Persian Gulf and traveling southward along the coast, would be the Indus. Traveling up the Indus would bring the people to the site of Mohenjo-Daro. But why did they establish themselves there?

The only difficulty in supporting this latter conception as to the origin of these Indus people is that the Sumerian cuneiform language has been deciphered, whereas these people, we repeat, have left no comprehensible language. Some of their seals, however, contain intaglio designs of an apparently heroic male deity shown in conflict with a lion. This shows a great similarity to the Babylonian mythological king and hero, Gilgamesh, found inscribed with cuneiform notations on mud bricks in the library of Assurbanipal.

Another mysterious factor is that, though the city dates back, so far as archaeologists can determine, to 5,000 years ago, it appears



to have no progressive culture. The art, as evidenced by the jewelry, and even the architecture is of the same type from the earliest period of Mohenjo-Daro to the time of the collapse, covering a period of approximately 1,000 years. These Indus settlers were not a primitive people who slowly, as with other civilizations, evolved their culture. They began on a very high plane. For some unknown reason this culture seemed to crystallize and not transcend itself.

The genius displayed by these people at such an early date should have had momentum to go beyond its first steps. Further, if, after establishing themselves at the present site, the civilization had gradually begun to decline through degeneration, such would be reflected in their later art and architecture. Actually, the artifacts of the later period have all the excellence of their early achievements. These people, by their location, were isolated from the great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Persia. This may account for their not copying the culture of these other eras. But what arrested and yet preserved the powers of their intellect and imagination?

If these Indus people had been conquered by invaders of India, as the Aryans for example, the city would reveal the ravages of armed forces as do many of the temples of ancient Egypt. The excellent state of preservation of the city would almost suggest an exodus of the people and an abandonment of the great city—but for what reason? And where did the teeming thousands go?

As we lay in our bunks in the little house provided by the guardian of the site, hundreds of miles from the nearest modern city, we realized that we had experienced another lost chapter in the book of human events.

## Chapter XXVI

# AFRICAN TRAILS

**W**E ARE ACCUSTOMED to making a distinction between what we consider as primitive culture and civilization. It is as though, when certain conditions have been complied with or exist, there abruptly begins that society which we call civilized. As a noted anthropologist has remarked, there is no society which is without culture. Consequently, all peoples are civilized to a degree if, by that designation, we mean variation of refinement of their natural desires and impulses.

It is not so many decades ago that America was referred to, in certain European cultural circles, as a land whose customs and peoples, by contrast, were primitive. Each society, then, is considered less civilized in relation to those whose standards are accepted as higher. From the sociological and philosophical points of view, what constitutes a civilized society? Shall it consist only of its technological progress, its electronic devices, transportation and communication facilities, its mass production of commodities?

For centuries—and today—there has been an implication that the religion of a people was indicative of their cultural superiority. The superior religion in the West, of course, was conceived as being Christianity. However, the art of Christianity, for example, as well as many of its doctrines, is syncretic. These have been borrowed outright from the East and from the religions of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and the early mystery schools. Civilization, then, is the moving development of mankind. This development is the refinement of man's circumvention and discipline through application

of the reason. Civilization is a gradual cultivation of the intellectual powers and what we term conscience, or the moral sense. The distinction between man and the lower animals is the fuller expression of the former's *self consciousness*, with its consequent moral, ethical, and aesthetic idealism.

This idealism is not necessarily concomitant with material and scientific progress. Among people who are economically impoverished and almost wholly lacking in scientific achievement, there may often be found strong moral impulses and aesthetic values. They may be termed pagan or even primitive, and yet in no sense are they wholly uncivilized. As we observe and study these less developed cultures, the primitive, we see reflected our own past, and we are often proud of what we have since achieved. We are likewise at times made very much aware of those natural heritages which we have sacrificed to gain what are said to be the rewards of our civilized society.

Kenya in British East Africa was to afford us still another opportunity for the study of man in his indigenous habitat. Kenya is now an *independent* nation. It was formerly an East African protectorate. It was held by Britain under concession of the Sultan of Zanzibar to the Imperial British East Africa Company from 1888 to 1920, subsequently becoming a crown colony. Its capital and principal city is Nairobi which is situated in the highlands. The altitude of Kenya varies from sea level on the Indian Ocean to a plateau of 9,000 feet. Nairobi, being on the highlands, is not only healthful but, in having normally sufficient rainfall and being adjacent to fertile lands, it also holds a strategic place in Kenya.

The city, though having a population of 130,000, gives the visitor the impression of being much smaller. Its modern facilities, paved streets and shops of international wares, however, contrast with customs and conditions which have changed little with the passing of centuries. There is a graduation of European culture, diminishing toward the city limits and abruptly stopping thereafter. The center of the city is representative of Western culture. However, as one approaches the limits of Nairobi, one sees such stratum of society and standards of living as constitute a hybrid of the cruder methods with those which are more prosperous and progressive.

So far as the white, or European, population of Nairobi and surrounding territory is concerned, the city is a kind of oasis in a thinly populated area. Only four miles from Nairobi is the great national park by the same name. This park is actually a large undeveloped area in which droves of game roam and live in their natural state. Herds of zebras, thousands of gazelles, impalas, and wildebeests, giraffes, and lions are to be seen, as well as innumerable species of smaller game. A huge wire fence, extending for several miles, alone keeps these animals from entering the city. In years past, hungry beasts attacked unarmed natives and children within the bounds of Nairobi.

The principal tribes of Kenya, the Kikuyu and the Masai, like most primitive people, are pastoral and nomadic. The more primitive is the man, the more he is inclined, like the animals about him, to accept the bounties and adversities of nature as he finds them. This is, of course, mostly due to the lack of knowledge of the phenomena of nature and how to employ them to his needs. The primitive mind, in its first ascent, may become familiar with a phenomenon, know when to expect its effects, and yet be quite ignorant of its causes. This ignorance, usually combined with a terrifying assumed knowledge of the causes, prevents an early harnessing of the natural forces. Consequently, the primitive human lives off the land, its flora and fauna, not greatly unlike the beasts around him. Driving herds of cattle and flocks of sheep before them, the primitive peoples are always in search of better pasturage. The natives for centuries have led such nomadic existence. Having no permanent dwelling, art, architecture, and handicraft products of a more stable existence, they are slow in developing.

In Kenya and the Tanganyika territory (now Tanzania), the latter being immediately to the south of the former, the dwellings and living areas of the natives are of two general kinds. One of these, and the crudest, is known as a *boma*. It consists of a large oval area fenced with brush varying in size. The brush is usually stacked to form an enclosure six feet in height and about two or three feet in thickness. The brush is cut from the dry shrubs which abound on the African veldt in this region. Those shrubs which contain long sharp thorns are preferred. When stacked, the brush makes a formidable barrier, the primitive equivalent of the military barbed wire entanglements.

In one section of the oval enclosure is the opening, beside which is placed a movable stack of the brush to form a gate. The enclosure is intended to keep out large predatory animals such as the lion. At night the opening to the enclosure is blocked with the gate.

In the center of this oval, which varies with the size and number of families, the Masai, for example, build their huts. Each of these provides accommodations for one or two families. These huts are constructed of mud and cow dung, held together, or rather reinforced, with long strands of dry grass. The structures vary in height from four to five feet. They are, therefore, only high enough for a man to kneel or to be seated on the ground. The entrance is small with no door, requiring one to crawl or stoop low to enter. A few feet inside is a part wall which is directly in front of the entrance, forming a barrier to partly keep out the rain and, incidentally, much of the air. As one looks in, it is dark, foul in its odors, and far less inviting than the kennel of the average dog in Europe or America. The boma at night serves as a corral for the cattle as well as a protected area for the natives. The cattle are rounded up and driven through the aperture in the brush enclosure. The natives crowd into their dark huts, and the bellowing cattle are herded into the compact area against and between the foul-smelling dwellings.

We well recall our first intimate association with a boma. Heavy ominous rain clouds hung low over the slightly rolling terrain. The soil was a rust red. The long drought had made it powdery. We were on safari. Our station wagon was loaded high with camera equipment, sound recorder, sleeping bags, food supplies, and numerous incidentals. The available space cramped us and our native Kikuyu guide, Johannes. We welcomed the sudden stopping by Johannes because it was a relief from the constant jarring caused by the unpaved and corrugated roads. As we stopped, the cloud of swirling, red dust, which moved in the vacuum of our wake, engulfed us. We were already ochre in color, and this deepened the layers of red dust on our faces and clothing. "Boma," said Johannes laconically and pointed with one sweep of his arm. It was some distance away, perhaps a quarter of a mile. At first it was difficult to distinguish it from the wild brush, scrub trees, and dead limbs scattered about the terrain as far as the eye could see. The

vista had not changed for the last hour. It was the same view we had seen for miles.

Standing now upon the ground, we stretched and enjoyed the liberation from our cramped position in the station wagon. We started from the roadside out across the terrain to the brush enclosure. Our first realization of the filth in the boma came to us on the wings of the breeze while yet some distance away. The stench from animal and human excretion increased in proportion to our approach.

Cattle in the region are tormented by virtually .clouds of Hies and other winged insects which descend upon them, particularly in the dry season. Since the cattle are kept in the boma, that and the accumulation of filth in the enclosure cause these insects to breed there in tremendous quantities and hover over the animals. When we were within twenty feet of the opening in the brush oval, we were detected by the Hies, and in a few seconds we were sheathed in a buzzing, sticky, stinging, crawling mass of them. They had risen like a cloud from the foul refuse on the ground within the boma to light upon us. They are not warded off by striking at them. One brushes or, perhaps a better verb would be, peels them off in handfuls from his face. They seek moisture and try to crawl into the mouth and the corners of the eyes. Since one species of these flies, the *tsetse*, is the transmitter of lethargic encephalitis, or sleeping sickness, which is prevalent in certain areas, the experience had its threat as well as being repugnant.

The Masai occupants, who stood staring at us or who pushed out from their huts to look at us with the same curiosity as we did at them, were covered with crawling insects. They, however, seemed impervious to them. Small children and inf ants barely able to walk had clusters of them at the corners of their eyes and Hies were actually crawling in and out of their mouths. The children would occasionally blink when the flies entered the eye proper, but neither they nor their parents sought to prevent them. We were forced to put our equipment on the ground, to free our hands, in a futile attempt to rid ourselves from this repugnant assault. Our gestures were amusing to the natives.

The Masai, in their primitive state, live mostly on milk and meat. The container in which the milk is placed is a narrow, elongated, leather

sack, similar to ones used for thousands of years for like purpose. In the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum may be seen illustrations from tomb walls of nobles of 2,000 B.C., where workers on their estates carry elongated, leather pouches similar in appearance to the ones possessed by the Masai natives to contain milk and other liquids. There is no attempt at sanitation. Flies are naturally attracted by the milk which splashes down the edges of the pouch, and they cluster about its top. A parent, in offering a child milk, merely takes her unclean hand and brushes off the flies and then allows the child its fill.

The wealth of a native anywhere in Africa who is still quite primitive is not determined by land but the number of cattle he possesses. As a consequence, the natives neglect the land by overgrazing it and then proceed to abandon it. This accounts for the numerous deserted bomas we found scattered throughout Kenya. During the day the cattle are guarded by statuesque Masai warriors or young lads to whom this great responsibility is entrusted. They are usually seen standing erect, holding an assagai, a short spear like a javelin for throwing, or a much larger and heavier one like a lance. These are intended to be used in killing predatory animals which would attack the cattle. Wild game are not the only threat to the herds. Marauding tribesmen will steal the cattle at every opportunity. Such acts constitute a serious menace as they are likely to precipitate an intertribal war.

The other form of native dwelling is commonly referred to as a *banda*. It is a more evolved type of structure. Some of them definitely show the influence of European associations. The banda is either round or square but with a thatched roof. It is the one commonly shown in fictional motion pictures simulating African native dwellings. The boma is too primitive and perhaps too repulsive for the average cinema production to present to its audiences. The banda has an actual but narrow door; there are no windows except in those which adjoin European or white communities where the influence of evolved architecture is stronger. The floor is usually the natural earth which, from continual usage, becomes hardpacked. A banda is high enough for the occupants to stand erect. It is not lighted except for what daylight enters through the door. The whole family occupies the *one-room* banda. This kind of dwelling is principally occupied by the non-

nomadic tribes, those who have become localized and till the soil. In other words, they show the effect of their European associations. The women may wear dresses, and the men trousers and shirts, but rarely shoes.

The Masai are more physically appealing—that is, attractive—than, for example, the Kikuyu. They are tall—six feet or more—slender and lithe and generally muscular in build. Their features are sharp and reflect intelligence. If they were in Western attire and properly groomed, they would be acceptable in any cultured liberal society insofar as their appearance is concerned. However, the Masai are generally not concerned with how much dirt they have accumulated upon their person. In the dry season they are often covered with the indigenous red dust.

We recall, on occasion, when back in the bush, being hailed by a lone Masai. We stopped to determine his needs. He wanted to ride some little distance to his boma. He carried on a conversation with Johannes, our native guide, in Swahili, a dialect understood by all the tribes. His hair was worn long and plaited and was coated with a kind of ochre paste, giving it a hideous appearance. He wore a woven cloth which hung from one shoulder—which never gets laundered. His legs, feet, arms, and right shoulder were bare. He had smeared some substance, as a shiny paste, on his face and the flies swarmed around it and his head like a halo. When he put his head into the station wagon to speak, the flies followed. The fact that we were valiantly trying to drive them away without success did not impress him. We were very much relieved when Johannes pointed out to him that there was absolutely no accommodation for extra passengers. He withdrew and raised his arm in a salute of farewell as we departed in a cloud of dust and flies.

The Kikuyu, having overspread their reservations, had come into conflict with the Masai who are not as aggressive a people. Cattle stealing from each other by the tribes had become a dangerous sport in which the young warriors liked to indulge. The authorities had not been successful in suppressing the practice. The cattle were not branded by the natives with any insignia or mark to indicate ownership. It was difficult, therefore, for the guilt to be determined unless the thieves were detected in the act.



We had departed from the unpaved road and were now crossing open terrain. The only road before us, if it could be designated by that appellation, consisted of the tracks of previous vehicles in the soft red soil. Nowhere was there any sign of habitation—not even a boma. Low shrubs, like the sagebrush of the prairies of the western United States, formed a checkered pattern extending to the distant horizon on every side. Here and there was a savannah, an elevated area, treeless and desolate. The trees that were to be seen were typical of those throughout this region, relatively short and with foliage clustered at the top of the trunk. They are so even at the top that the trees give an appearance of having been cropped uniformly by some instrument.

Being early spring and at a comparatively high altitude, the temperature did not exceed at any time 80° F. The dust was extremely irritating to the nasal passages and the eyes. We had to moisten handkerchiefs and hold them over our noses to filter out the clouds of dust. We could not wear goggles because the dust would obscure our vision. The color of such foliage as did exist was hard to determine, unless one vigorously shook a plant or shrub to remove its coating of soil. We were entering *Amboseli*, a large game reserve. It is an area set aside for the game in its natural habitat. The game was not nearly as plentiful as in Nairobi National Park. The drought had severely affected the water holes, most of which in this immediate region had dried to a mere cracked soil cavity. The animals, as the zebra, giraffe, gazelle, and baboon, had retreated to the distant mountains where rainfall was more plentiful.

The dark clouds suddenly parted and there, like an island in the sky, with an aura of light about it, its lower extremities not visible, was Mt. Kilimanjaro. Its *flat* crown is covered with snow. It is not nearly as fascinating or majestic as the great peaks to be seen in Switzerland, the American Rockies, the Andes, or the Himalayas. An extensive volcano in the remote past, it had erupted and blown off its conical top. Mt. Kilimanjaro has an altitude of about 19,500 feet and is the highest point on the African continent. We looked at it quizzically, but to the thousands of eyes before our time and to the thousands of natives who could see it when the sky is clear, it was a supernatural personality. Its height, attaining majesty as it towers above the plateau, to them was

ominous, suggested perhaps by the rugged mystery of its great mass. About it, to these simple peoples, there was an eternal aura of legends, myths, and tales of terror.

## Chapter XXVII

# CROSSROADS OF CIVILIZATION

TO MOST PERSONS the word *Africa* conjures visions of savagery and primitive life. To them it is a world as yet untouched or unscathed, depending on one's concepts of the developments of the present era. Actually, the traveler to South Africa, to the Transvaal in particular, finds a *contrast* fully as striking as that offered by the metropolises of Europe. There is the primitive culture whose tempo and objectives have defied the vision and will of modern man. Sharply defined against such a backdrop is every progress which is attributed to civilization.

There is no more effective example of this contrast than the large city of Johannesburg. It is affectionately called by some of its citizenry "The New York of Africa" to depict its similarity to the mode of architecture common to that American city. The visitor finds it difficult to believe that this city of towering skyscrapers, blocks of massive stone and concrete buildings, and ultra-fashionable shops is but a little over sixty years old. It is a monument to this age, begun in the Nineteenth Century and built in what at that time was generally a savage subcontinent.

As one stands gazing from his hotel window, the principal industry of Johannesburg and of the country is evident to him. All about the perimeter of the city may be seen what appear as the foothills of some mountain range. Actually the city is located on a plateau at an altitude of slightly over 5,000 feet. These hills are unattractive and at a distance

are gray, drab, and without any vestige of growth. They accentuate the architectural beauty of the buildings and the modernity of the streets crowded with American and other foreign automobiles. These foothills, one soon learns, are *man-made*. They are mine dumps!

“The world’s richest gold fields lie in the Witwatersrand, ‘the ridge of the white waters.’” The main reef discovered in 1886 extends for almost sixty miles. Johannesburg is situated on this gold-bearing rock—its very foundation is gold. Shafts along this reef have penetrated to a depth of 10,000 feet where mining is effectively carried on. The mining industry in South Africa employs more than 330,000 persons, 40,000 Europeans and 290,000 “non-Europeans.”

“Forty-odd companies recovered 11,500,000 ounces of gold from over 57,000,000 tons of rock milled. The annual value of this production is well over \$435,000,000.” In the process the waste material is piled high to form huge dumps. These have not added to the aesthetic quality of Johannesburg. The mining and civil authorities are very conscious of this deplorable situation and for years sought a way to profitably make use of these huge mounds of crushed rock.

At one time they were to be used for highway construction. The chemical ingredients in the waste material which were used in the process of extracting the gold were found to be harmful for such constructive purposes. The same cause prevented the planting of vegetation on a satisfactory scale to beautify the dumps. Any attempt to refine the waste material would have been too costly. The armament race, particularly the building of atomic weapons, brought about an amazing discovery. The big powers were most anxious to locate new sources of uranium, or fissionable material, for their atomic weapons. An analysis revealed that the “waste” dumps had a high content of radioactive ore, or *uranium*. This provided a new source of wealth to the already prosperous Union of South Africa. It indicates that waste is relative only to need and demand.

The gold-mining industry exports to the United States in excess of one hundred and fifty million dollars in gold bullion annually. After coming from the deep mines of the Rand, the United States of America again buries the gold at Fort Knox in its subterranean

treasury vault. The interest shown in American goods—customs and fashions—has created a strong bond of good will between the two nations. The gold-mining industry of South Africa pays tribute to the enterprise of American mining engineers who played a prominent part in its early development.

The mines are worked by native labor. The company provides for the housing of these workers. The recruited laborers are drawn from native territories inside the Union of South Africa, as “Basutoland, Swaziland, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate; also from border areas, Mozambique and the Rhodesias.” A journey to these living quarters, or *compounds*, is an entertaining, as well as instructive, experience.

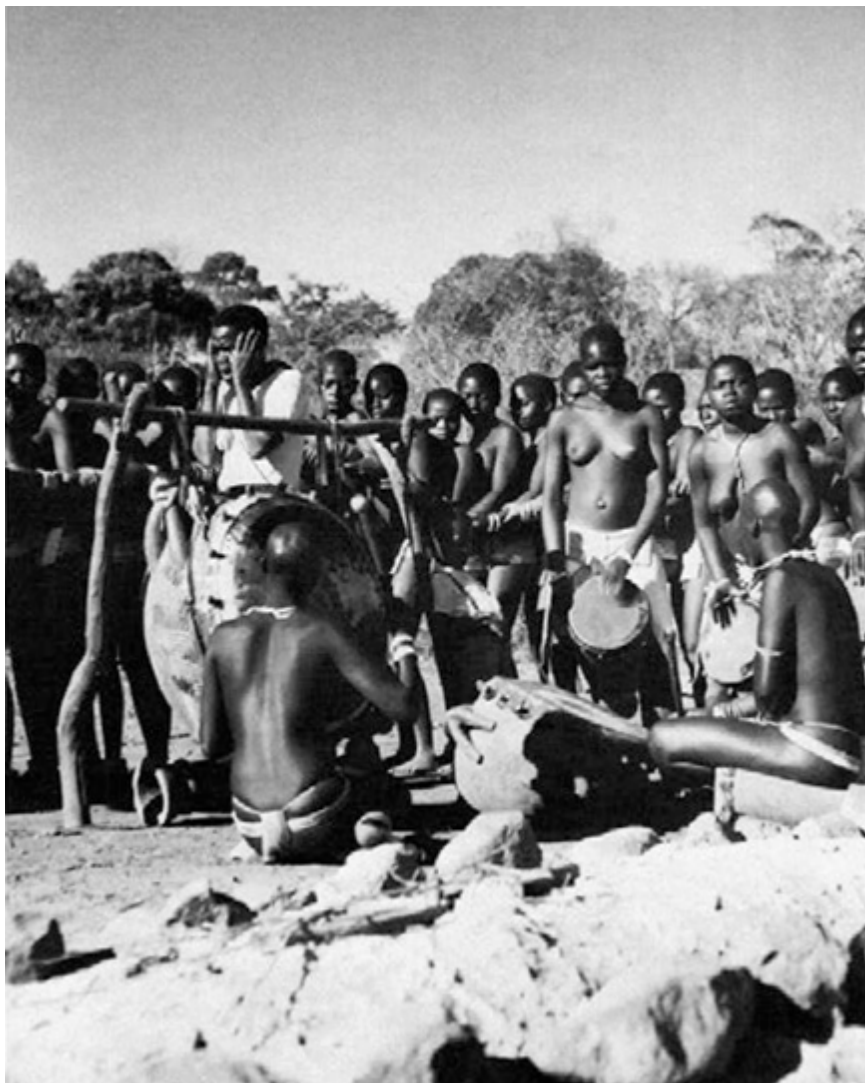
Traveling along a well-paved highway, we approached what at first seemed a walled and fenced military reserve. Long, low gray buildings confronted us. They were quite utilitarian in appearance, there being no attempt to ornament them or to conform to any architectural style. After military scrutiny our party was interrogated by native police as to our purpose for entering the compound. These native police are organized by the mining company for the enforcement of regulations “mutually established by themselves and the civil authorities.”

The particular compound visited by us was in the form of a quadrangle, the various buildings surrounding an open area. The structures consisted of dormitories for the natives arranged in barracks style. They were simple, immaculate, and orderly. Most of the natives, or Bantu as they are collectively called, are quite primitive and retain many of their customs and rites. They wear amulets, indulge in magical rites, which, of course, are discouraged, and in tribal ceremonies.

Peering into the kitchens, we found them preparing meals for their fellow workers. They are prohibited, however, from a diet such as they are accustomed to in their tribal homes. Government inspection insists, as well, on sanitary measures, for the spread of an epidemic among these thousands of natives would jeopardize the welfare of the other races in the nearby cities. In addition, we were advised that dietitians prepare special food which is necessary for them to have in order to undergo the hard labor in the wet, the cold, and artificial light of the mines.

This was a Sunday. Natives from the different tribal areas loitered about the compound enjoying the blue sky and brilliant sunshine as a respite from the depths of the earth where they labor daily. As we passed them, they gazed at us curiously, as we did at them. Their attire was a fascinating admixture of European work clothes and headpieces and articles of native origin. Though the men were from different tribal areas, they had a common dialect in which they cheerfully conversed. We entered an amphitheatre-like structure, more like a small sports stadium. An air of expectancy prevailed. On to the stone step-like seats of the structure surrounding the earthen oval, spectators, mostly Europeans or whites, were crowding. Every Sunday intertribal dances are performed by the native workers in this compound. The unpaved ground of the oval on which these dancers were to perform was of a reddish clay. Even though it had been moistened, those who walked across it set up a fine spray of dust which lightly coated those seated nearby.

Opposite us across the oval, in a section apparently assigned to them, native spectators and workmen at leisure began a chanting and a drumming of their feet which had an appealing and exciting rhythm. Suddenly from the side into the center of the oval or arena ran a native who functioned in the manner of a master of ceremonies. He announced that the first dance which was to be performed would be by the *Nguni* group. Some of these dancers simulated their native costumes by using scrap materials found in the compound. Others wore a clean version of their daily work clothes. The dancing of this group was characterized by a stamping action. They likewise used sticks which were clapped together to very effectively resemble a musical instrument. It was very obvious that the dancers enjoyed this display of their tribal dance as much as did the spectators.



#### PREMARITAL DANCE

In South Africa many picturesque, native ceremonial dances, centuries old, are perpetuated. Here these young women in the interior of the Transvaal are participating in premarital rites which consist of what is termed The Python Dance. It derives its name from the fact that each prospective bride grasps the arms of the one in front of her. The rhythmic motion of all their arms to the beat of the drums simulates the movement of the reptile.

March, 1968 – Africa

The Zulu group, the second on the extensive program, were the most impressive. Their correct dress "includes the use of skins, particularly a calfskin apron and tufts of angora goat skin." They carried sticks and small dance shields. The music was provided by their own number and consisted of singing and clapping. The dance leader began the dance by a stamping of his feet after preliminary songs. The enthusiasm of the dancers produced a kind of ecstasy. They stared out across the amphitheatre. One wondered if, in consciousness, their selves were not projected far beyond the confines of this compound and the dismal depths of the mines. Were they again, if but for the moment, out once more in the bush, perhaps before the campfire with their bandas to their backs and their families swaying and chanting a response to their stamping feet?

As the time wore on, I was moved to frequent reveries by the primitive rhythm of the music and the gyrations of dancers' bodies. Suddenly I was informed by the Secretary of the Rosicrucian Chapter of Johannesburg, who accompanied us, that I was to be honored upon this occasion. Performing in the center of the arena were lithe tall dancers. They were attired in their tribal costumes of skins draped across one shoulder and falling down back and front to about knee length. Their hair was plastered down with some greasy substance and colored metal bangles glistened on their wrists or snugly clung to their muscular upper arms.

One leaped forth in a cloud of dust to the beat of the drums. Before him he held a shield of dried leathery skin stretched taut by thongs across the skeletal framework. To this was attached a *knobkerrie*. This latter is a stick, one end of which is fashioned into a large knob about the size of a man's fist. This is used in ceremonial dances but also as a war club in combat. In his other hand he brandished an *assagai*, or short spear. He alternated in his movements between a crouch-like position bending his head almost to a point between his knees and then leaping suddenly into the air, simultaneously thrusting his spear skyward. This would be followed by a series of short steps backward with the shield held before him in a protective manner. His actions depicted combat, the advance and then the defensive retreat, this imitative series comprising the elements of the dance. All movements



were accompanied by chanting, a repetition of three or four low and high pitched notes in time with the stamping of the feet, the clapping of hands and the drums.

I was requested to enter the arena, which I did. I stood waiting. The dancer approached. The stamping of the feet grew louder. After each retreat the dancer would advance closer and closer. Suddenly, one leap brought him within an assagailength of me. Extending before him the sharp spear and shield, he danced about me. I was to accept these; they were mementos of the occasion. But just when should I accept them? Should I extend my hand or should I wait? I decided upon the latter course.

The tempo of the stamping now almost reached frenzied heights. I scrutinized the face of the young man, for he must be only in his early twenties. His features were sharp and well defined, his eyes, large and clear. His face was, as well, exceptionally intelligent. Beads of perspiration ran down his forehead; his arms and legs glistened in the hot sun where the skin was free from the red dust. With a loud crash, like the cymbals in a symphonic orchestra, the clapping of the sticks and stamping suddenly ceased. The tribesman stood motionless before me with shield and spear proffered. He was almost rigid. That was my cue. I took them and bowed as graciously as possible. He stood staring at me, scanning my face in a friendly way. It was a moment not to be forgotten.

## Chapter XXVIII

# MYSTERY AND MAGIC

**I**T WAS DUSK when we had arrived. It had been several days since we left the little farms of the natives. For hours this day we had traveled through the bush country of South Africa. It was aptly named. For miles about, a tableland is seen, occasionally framed by a stark low-lying range of mountains. Trees, scrubby in height, seemingly parched in the dry late winter or early spring, are a monochrome gray, few being of the evergreen variety. Thickly scattered between the trees are various types of shrubs, averaging a height of eight feet. As we stopped, the dust swirled about the cars of our safari caravan.

This was the Shingwedzi district. It was the outpost of a supervisor of the Department of Native Affairs. Here in the midst of the bush on the frontier of the greatest game preserve in the world, he lives in comparatively comfortable, though dangerous, surroundings. His home from the outside was not unlike a simple farm dwelling such as might be seen in Canada, Australia, or the United States. A few fruit trees were scattered about.

The gentleman typified the cinema portrayal of the white hunter. He was jolly and loquacious as men often are who live in isolated places in the world and have but few visitors. He was of medium height and stockily built, and perhaps in his middle fifties. His physique, as a whole, might be termed rugged. He had known of our coming, and though we were strangers his welcome was like that of most frontiersmen, as if we were old friends. His shirt, open at the neck, and his soiled trousers with generous creases had that casual appearance that invites informality. His voice was deep and his guffaw contagious. It prompted a joyous response to his remarks.

We had just stepped from the heavily screened sleeping-porch, where provisions had been made for us to stay, to the interior of his home. Here was an atmosphere that would thrill and make enthusiastic any Hollywood producer—in fact one had been considering a film revolving about the supervisor's life. The floors were random plank—where they could be seen—for over them were scattered the huge skins of lions and other wild game. The walls were lined with the trappings of the hunt. Huge elephant tusks, worth a small fortune in ivory, were draped between assagais and other weapons and implements of the local tribes. Corners of the large room, in the center of which was a refectory-like table, were cluttered with native drums, ceremonial implements, and magical appurtenances. Photographs, aged by time, showed him as a leader of expeditions and safaris into the surrounding hinterland.

During dinner we were served by barefoot, grinning male natives, the personal servants of our host. They live on the premises and raise for him the fresh vegetables and fruits he served us. Our host took pride in his culinary art, having prepared the meal. The relationship between him and his "boys" was one of mutual affection. He boasted in their presence of their various abilities. They, in turn, revealed their glowing esteem for him.

As we cleaned our camera equipment during the evening, preparatory for the next day's events, our host regaled us with accounts of his experiences during many years in the bush and in contact with big game. He related that recently a Transvaal lioness had killed five natives in two days but ate only one of the five—a baby. He had, but the day before, killed, not more than a hundred yards from this dwelling, two lions that had attacked one of his boys. He further remarked, "The lion is a gentleman in many ways and even in a charge will sometimes give one a sporting chance by pulling up when he sees you are not out to hurt him. I do not say that this is general," he continued, "but it happened to me. A man-killer is usually an emaciated lion, one in such poor condition that he cannot overtake wild game and thus he becomes a man-killer."

Witchcraft is a practice frowned upon by the South African authorities, and yet it cannot be successfully suppressed for it dates back to the dawn of human society. In every society, no matter how primitive, there are members who are thought to possess faculties and arts for invoking supernatural power. These men individually or as a class, such as priests, are accepted as intermediaries between man and his gods or the impersonal forces of nature.

The manner in which such persons are designated, as medicine men, as shamans or witch doctors, is varied. Principally their acceptance is because of one of the two following causes: either they inherit the authority and secret rites from a predecessor, or some affliction or disability lends distinction to them in the eyes of their fellows. Often an epileptic is chosen as the witch doctor in some primitive cultures because of his gyrations during a seizure and the strange noises he utters at the time. These things set him off from his fellows. The shrewd individual takes advantage of this superstition to enhance the mystery that is attached to him.

In some primitive societies, magic is a profession which rivals in authority that of the chief. Such individuals have an inquiring mind and guard well those secrets of nature their predecessors have passed on to them, adding to them the results of their own personal observations. They, of course, exploit the credulity of their tribesmen. They often have an excellent knowledge of the medicinal and drug properties of plants. They also have a deep insight into human relations and human reactions under various conditions. They, in a sense, thus constitute practical psychologists. They know the fears, hopes, and beliefs of their people and how best to utilize them. They have discovered many fundamental laws of nature by means of which they perform feats mystifying to the other tribesmen.

In justice to many of these *mganga*, as they are called in the Swahili dialect, they strive to further the welfare of their people. At times they issue edicts which they imply come from a supernatural intelligence and by means of which they direct their people to conform to certain practical requirements. Actually the decision is one made personally by the witch doctor for which he, with his often superior intelligence,

knows to be best for his fellows. He realizes that his people would resent an arbitrary order as issuing from him but will abide by what they presume to be a higher authority. Thus these witch doctors are not unlike some of the ancient messiahs who proclaimed hygienic laws in the name of the divine. The civil authorities have tried to discourage witchcraft, first, because in the majority of instances it encourages savage and barbarous customs in which human lives may be sacrificed and, second, because the activities of the witch doctors often counter the influence and the laws of the white man.

In this village, to which the following day brought us, there was a *mganga*. The *kraal*, or village, was situated on high ground. It was but a clearing in a tangle of bush and wind-blown trees. The small community numbered four *bandas*, that is, circular huts with thatched roofs. At our approach members of the respective families poured out of the *bandas*—from infants to aged persons. The warm sun shone upon their perspiring and glistening bodies. They were both shy and curious as to our sudden descent upon them. Our native interpreter spoke in their dialect to one who functioned as their spokesman. He knew these natives and stated that we were prepared to give them gifts if we were permitted to witness and photograph their witch doctor while performing some of his traditional rites. The matter being finally agreed upon and after a general shaking of hands, we were introduced to the *mganga*. He was tall and lithe and perhaps in his early thirties. He, too, was shy at the presence of so many white visitors. He was obviously reluctant to perform his secret and, as he knew, forbidden rites before us. However, with further persuasion, he consented.

The *mganga* then retired into one of the *bandas* to emerge shortly in the traditional regalia of his office. At his appearance, the other natives, who sat nearby, gave a low awesome cry. He then sat cross-legged facing a tanned skin which was stretched in the dust before him. In his cupped hands he held a collection of small ivory pieces and fragments of animal bones. Many a *mganga* has been known to use the bones of humans who have been sacrificed for the purpose. In the vernacular of the white man he was “to throw the bones.” This consisted of tossing these objects upon the hide stretched before him. One of these objects, in the dialect of the natives, is called “the talker.”

The position that this latter object assumes, when falling, in relation to the bones and ivory pieces, is thought to have special significance. The witch doctor interprets the position in accordance with his presumed exalted insight.

In diagnosing a disease, the talker's position indicates the malady and the type of remedial measure which must be pursued. Actually, the interpretation is merely the personal opinion and experience of the witch doctor. Undoubtedly he does have at times a subconscious or psychic impression about the malady from being in close contact with the patient. This impression then enters into the diagnosis. The ritual of throwing the bones is merely an impressive ceremony to objectify the intuitive impression or what at times is but the shrewd guess of the mganga.

To test the procedure, I asked our native interpreter to have him tell something about me. The members of the kraal seated nearby were listening intently as the guide spoke in their tongue to the witch doctor. The qualification and powers of their medicine man were being tested. It was crucial for him as well. If he failed, his prestige would suffer, his influence would be greatly diminished. He had heard me talking to my associates, and he studied me critically all the while.

Then he began a chanting, the principal word of which sounded, phonetically, like *avoova*. The tribal members, men, women, and children, responded: "Avoova, avoova, avoova." The tempo increased. It had a tremendous psychological impact upon the emotions. The chanting grew louder and louder. Their bodies swayed in rhythm with it. Every fibre of one's being seemed to pulsate in response to the vibrations of the intonation. One could feel it in the region of the solar plexus as well as hear it. Literally translated, we were informed that "avoova" meant, "You must do it." The powers and forces which the witch doctor was thought to have under his control were being commanded to prove themselves through his mediumship. In other words, they were to answer the challenge which we had offered.

At the peak of the frenzy, he suddenly threw the bones in a jerky movement. They rolled and bounced over the rough tanned skin. The chanting abruptly ended. All eyes were focused on "the talker." An

odd small black object, it lay at one end of the heterogeneous row of ivory and bone fragments just where they had fallen. The eyes next focused on the mganga's face. Everyone waited breathlessly for his words. Looking down at the bones before him, he spoke as though the words were issuing from afar and were merely being transmitted by him. The guide then interpreted for me. He said: "The mganga says that you are not of this land. Your people are far away across the great water. You will return to your people soon."



AFRICAN WITCH DOCTOR

Sitting before his banda, this medicine man, or mganga, in the Shingwedzi district of South Africa, is "throwing the bones." In the dialect of the natives, one of the devices is called "the talker." By means of the talker's relation to other bones on the hide, the witch doctor diagnoses the ailments of his patients shown seated at his right.

August, 1954

We were now the center of attention. Would we confirm what he had said and thereby acknowledge the powers of the witch doctor or would we deny his conclusion? He was, of course, correct. We were from overseas. We were not of his land nor were we directly of English descent. We informed the interpreter that the mganga was right in his statement. We heightened the dramatic effect by appearing very surprised at the accuracy of his powers. When the interpreter conveyed our remarks, the tribesmen all uttered low exclamations of awe at the uncanny powers of the witch doctor. He had again vindicated himself. He had proved his worthiness to them.

Actually the mganga had but shown that he was a keen observer of human nature and of circumstances. He had heard our talking to the fratres who accompanied us and who were South Africans. Obviously, we had an American accent quite unlike these other fratres. It was probably different from any other accent the mganga had ever heard. It was a logical conclusion that I and my associate were not of the people of South Africa. We were from afar, from some other white man's land across the sea. That we had cameras and an interpreter taking us back into the bush would imply that we were on safari, that we were not to be permanent, and relatively soon we would return to our home land. It is this application of native intelligence which makes these witch doctors leaders of their people, for they exercise a tremendous influence over them by just such displays as this.



## Chapter XXIX

# ELEPHANT COUNTRY

THE TALL, DRY grass, stirred by an occasional breeze, rippled in wavelike motion. There beyond was a clearing and grazing in it, like domesticated cattle, were a number of zebras. The sound of our approach electrified them. They raised their heads, abruptly sniffed the breeze, and pointed their ears in our direction. The human scent disturbed them. Those nearest us trotted toward the center of the herd, and there they all stood motionless, peering at our approach. Since we passed them at a distance of one hundred yards, they did not take fright but looked after us curiously and cautiously.

In a way it was strange to call this area, in which we were, a park; it is so unlike most of the other national parks to be found elsewhere throughout the world. Kruger National Park is actually the largest *game reserve* in the world. It was established in 1898 by the last president of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger. The extent of this reserve is tremendous. It is more than 8,000 square miles—larger, in fact, than the states of New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Delaware, and almost as large as Massachusetts. In this vast game reserve there may be found, living in their natural habitat as they have existed for untold centuries, hyenas, lions, wildebeests, giraffes, warthogs, cape buffaloes, elephants, impala, hippopotami, baboons, crocodiles, cheetahs, and many other species. It is a zoo without bars, without artificiality, where wild game offers the thrill of observation, and the element of *danger* if approached too closely.

We blinked our eyes a moment. Had a tree moved? Could the heat waves rising above the terrain have caused an optical illusion? We

waited a few seconds until the swirling red dust had cleared. Yes, there was movement, but it wasn't the tree. It was a giraffe. The natural camouflage that nature has assigned this exotic beast had made him almost indiscernible as close as one hundred feet. He stood beneath the tree, his elongated neck reaching high into its branches. His coloring was tawny like the grass and mottled like patches of shadow from the foliage.

The male giraffe, incidentally, reaches a height of some eighteen feet. He loped off with his head held high and a sort of supercilious expression common to this animal. He was then joined by a female of the species, always somewhat smaller and lighter in color and markings than the male. Plentiful in the area and not easily frightened, they commonly travel in pairs, male and female, with offspring. Sometimes such families may be found together. Notwithstanding their awkward appearance, the giraffe is not lacking in dexterity. Throughout this large area, various types of game mingle. The different species select regions best suited for their natural state. Unpaved roads penetrate the region from which can be seen miles of wild terrain. In the rainy season of the summer, most of such roads are impassable.

One soon learns to identify the *elephant country*, even before the animals may be seen. The terrain looks somewhat like a forest region that has been the site of an artillery duel. Trees are seen with huge limbs broken off or dangling by their peeled bark. Likewise whole trees are uprooted with huge balls of soil still clinging to them. All foliage has been stripped from them. This must not be laid entirely to a vandalistic custom on the part of these huge mammals but rather it is a feeding practice. Though it seems to be and is destructive, this damage has been going on for untold centuries without denuding the land.

We stopped abruptly on a high stony ridge. Above it was a rocky eminence. Laboriously we unloaded our camera equipment and climbed the sharp boulders to a vantage point. The vista was enthralling. Far below, stretched out like a yellow carpet, lay miles of typical African veld. A muddy river, like an uncoiled lariat, wound its way sluggishly through the grass and the gnarled trees that clung to its banks. One of

our party pointed out what seemed to be large boulders at a distance, forming an ellipse. Looking through our binoculars, we saw that it was a herd of elephants approximately fifteen in number. The bulls or larger ones were on the outside and apparently the females and young ones in the center.

We were anxious for a closer view—and possible photographs. Returning to our cars, we went down the roadway which led to the river's edge and to the elephant country. Turning a sharp curve in the roadway and jouncing over the ruts, we were rewarded in our search. A hundred yards ahead, a giant bull elephant was slowly lumbering from the brush on to the road. He was flapping his enormous ears and swinging, pendulum-like, his massive trunk. The eyesight of the elephant is reputed to be poor, and they are not able to see with certainty relatively small objects which are more than fifty feet away. The bull raised his trunk slightly in our direction, having caught our scent, showing, however, no annoyance at our presence—so long as we remained at a distance. We were now treated to a close view of the elephant's feeding practice and to what causes the terrain to be called *elephant country*.

Crossing the narrow ungraded road, the huge beast reached upward with his trunk and pulled down branches from a tree, stripping off some of their leaves. The tree had a girth of ten or twelve inches. Not satisfied with the leaves, the elephant bent his massive head and, with the aid of his great tusks, pushed the tree over slowly and without seeming effort. He just walked against the tree and it fell, uprooting a great ball of soil. He then proceeded casually, disregarding our presence, to eat the tender roots he had exposed. This completed, he walked to the place where the top of the tree lay and, with his trunk and head, upended it so that it would fall again and the other side of the roots would be exposed. These too he munched with apparent satisfaction. Having completed this, he lumbered on again to be joined by another bull and two females, making a small herd.

There is considerable danger for a safari in approaching too closely to these animals. The elephant dislikes the scent of human beings and is enraged if they come near him. A bull will suddenly charge a safari

car, turning it over several times as one would an empty tin container. Then, in his rage, he will trample it with his two or three tons of weight, flattening it. While we were in this vicinity, we learned of such a fate to individuals who had disregarded precautions.

There is something awe-inspiring in looking upon these animals, the largest land creatures in the world. They are a reminder of the time when the mammalian age was at its height. In the game reserves, such as Kruger and in Amboseli in Kenya, East Africa, where we had been, the hunting of these animals for ivory or sport is prohibited. Heretofore they were slaughtered by white men and natives alike. Hunting, of course, is still permitted in certain areas by license but greatly restricted. It is hoped that this kind of "sport" will soon be permanently prohibited. There is as much danger and thrill in stalking wild game with still or cinema cameras and without extinction of the beasts.

In most tales about wild game, whether truth or fiction, the lion seems to have captured the imagination perhaps because of so long being heralded as the "king of beasts." The huge cats are magnificent physical specimens, lithe and rhythmic in their motion. The males average ten feet in length from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail and weigh about four hundred pounds. The females are about one hundred pounds lighter. The manes of the males may be black or tawny yellow. It is stated that these are not different species but merely variations of the same one. In their wild state, lions are usually not ferocious unless annoyed or engaged in hunting prey. They are generally indolent and of mild disposition, but unreliable as to change of mood, thus making for danger. It was necessary for us to depart early in the morning, just after sunrise, to find them. Lions are not inclined to travel through the long grass in the heat of the day. With their families they lie in the shade, perhaps beneath a tree, and remain there until four o'clock in the afternoon.

We stopped abruptly this particular morning, almost passing by a pride of four lions, a huge male, two lionesses, and one half-grown and very young male. The large male was seated, sphinx-like, looking at us. We were about twenty feet distant! The large female was lying

on her side and raised her head casually and glanced at us. The half-grown male was on his back with paws extended in the air, rolling like a domestic kitten in a playful mood. They had apparently had their kill the night before and were not inclined to move from their location until the heat of the day was over, when once again they would go on the prowl for food. There was certainly nothing ferocious in their demeanor; one must not get out of the safari car and approach them, however. One blow from the huge paw of the lion or lioness would either decapitate a human or disembowel him.

We were working furiously with our professional cinema cameras, taking advantage of the opportunity of such a "good shot." At the sound of our movement and the clicking of the camera apparatus, the large male flicked his ears in evident annoyance. Our scent, as well, told him we were *despised humans*. He finally rose, turned toward the female and, looking back over his shoulder, gave a low growl of annoyance. Then he stalked away through the tall grass and, we presume, to a more secluded spot. He was almost immediately concealed by the surrounding bush, so perfect was his natural camouflage. At this, the rest of his family joined him.

A shortage of water in the region most of the year, and periodic droughts as well, make the remaining *water holes* gathering places for game of all kinds. These water holes are depressions, some not more than fifty yards across, which are fed from deep springs or what is left of once large streams. In the early morning, and just before sunset, herds of zebras, antelopes, giraffes, hyenas, and wildebeests may be seen gathering in peaceful communal spirit because of common need for the life-giving water. The elephants, too, like to gather at water holes and even wallow in them, their thrashing about often disturbing and frightening away the more timid game. It affords the photographer, who is seeking wild game for still or cinema camera, an excellent opportunity if the light is sufficient. If he gets too close and the wind is blowing from his direction, most of the game will suddenly dash off. At night, game goes to the water holes as well, but it is too dangerous for man—and certainly the inky blackness or patches of moonlight through the foliage avail him little.

We were reliably informed that, when game is gathering to go to the water holes, the lion avails himself of his evening meal. The manner of their effecting their kill is most interesting. When the impala, medium-sized antelopes, gather and move in a large number toward some adjacent water hole in the late afternoon, the male lion arranges the lionesses in a fan like position out of sight of the approaching herd of impala. The lionesses are not windward so that the impala do not detect their scent and become alarmed. The males then flank the impala to their rear. They are windward and their scent is soon detected. When the lions perceive that their presence is known, they proceed with ferocious roars. These terrify the impala, and they charge ahead in panic into the waiting trap of lionesses. The latter strike out at the terrified impala killing as many as they can. They are then devoured by the pride of lions who joined in the hunt. The lion will rarely attempt to chase the impala, they being too fleet for him. The trap method accomplishes much more with less effort.

It was dusk. It had been a long and hot day. From shortly before sunrise, we had cruised trails in search of big game with our motion picture cameras. Our camp site was still a few miles away. We were anticipating a refreshing shower and evening dinner and early retirement. It was one of those intervals when no one talks. Each was enjoying his own reverie. We made a bend in the dusty road and then bolted to attention. Just ahead of us, walking single file, were four huge lions, two black-maned males and two lionesses. They must have heard us coming but disdained even a glance in our direction. We could not pass them, because of the tangle of brush on either side of the road. We thought we would follow slowly and, perhaps in a few minutes, they would turn off in the grass for they were on their evening prowl. Glancing behind, one of our party excitedly called our attention to three other lions that were now following behind us. We were caught in a pride of seven lions. It was a thrilling but not exactly enjoyable prospect. Unfortunately, it was now dusk and the photographic opportunity was lost. The safari car was slowly accelerated with the hope that this might discourage the lions ahead and cause them to allow us to pass the plan failed. The bumper of the car was but six or seven feet from the last of the lions walking in single file.

We were warned not to blow the horn which might enrage the animals. Once the leader or foremost lion turned to look in our direction, and gave a vicious growl of annoyance. Those behind trotted along not permitting us to stop, and we did not wish them to stand on their hind legs peering into the windows which we had closed. The heat in the closed vehicle was now almost unbearable. Suddenly the leading lion stepped off the road on the embankment. Turning his maned head, he looked at us with large yellow eyes, raised a great paw menacingly, snarled, and then plunged into the brush, followed by the others. We dashed ahead into the darkness, having completed another adventure for the day.

## Chapter XXX

# THE RAIN QUEEN

THE WAY HAD now become more mountainous. The narrow road wended its way tortuously through the bush above which occasional palms rose in solitary majesty. Vegetation was plentiful, but it was copiously covered in places with a reddish dust. Here was evidence of drought in a land accustomed to rain periodically. Notwithstanding our increasing altitude, the air was hot and dry and one could almost feel his own dehydration taking place. There was a paucity of game, only the smaller varieties being seen. There was an air of suspense as though one were entering a land deserted because of some catastrophic cause which might again be experienced momentarily.

We had just passed along one of the ranges of the Vulovedu Mountains. In this region the natives produced maize, or corn, and laboriously tilled the soil in small areas cleared of brush.

A steep downward grade in the roadway gave us a more distant view. There, some hundred yards ahead and at our right was a well-trodden trail. Following it with our eyes, we saw that it led into a small grove of trees to a stockade fence made of small logs and about seven to eight feet in height. Through this entrance natives were coming and going carrying calabashes and baskets upon their heads. Above the stockade, as we approached, we could see the conical thatched roofs of the bandas. This was a *kraal*, or native village. It was the village of the Balobedu tribe, of the Basuto nation.

This kraal was surrounded with a halo of mystery, legend, and strange facts, many of which had found their way into renowned



fiction and other literature. This was the capital of the celebrated Rain Queen, *Mujaji III*. Among the tribes and the villagers in the area, it was reputed that she possessed a supernatural faculty for producing rain. She transformed the hovering clouds into sheets of water by ritual formulae, thus saving the land and its people from the ravages of drought. In one hundred and forty years there have been only three such Queens, each ruling over this little wilderness empire most autocratically, with the power of life and death unquestionably lying within her domain.

By tribal custom, the Queen is destined to die by her own hand. She is not a ruler primarily, but a *rain maker*; that is, her political authority and council would cease if she were to lose her virtue in commanding this phenomenon of nature. The men rely upon her powers to make rain, thus preserving their crops and life—and also, upon her withholding her secret from their enemies. She is also known to them as a *transformer of clouds*. It is not that she brings rain into existence from an amorphous state, but rather that she has the ability to release the moisture from the clouds that rest upon the nearby mountains, and which might otherwise pass over the parched lands. Since the coming of the rains is related to the change of seasons, the Queen is likewise known as the *changer of seasons*.

It is the opinion among the Balobedu tribe that when the Rain Queen is upset or emotionally disturbed she fails to exercise her power to produce rain; the great drought of 1934-1935 is attributed to Queen Mujaji's daughter's relations with a foreigner—an outsider. The Rain Queen is unmarried and "she cannot have a formal husband, but does have 'wives.'" A number of attractive girls of the tribe are designated as her "wives" and a ritual is performed establishing their marital status. These wives are, however, a kind of royal retinue. They, in turn, may have children by one of the tribesmen. These children, by a complicated religio-political system, become the Queen's daughters; most of the boys die before maturity, so it is related.

Queen Mujaji has what may be termed "rain doctors" who assist her in the performance of the traditional rite. It is the custom just before the Rain Queen's death that she impart her secrets to her successor.

Likewise, she transfers her own secret vessels and their ingredients as well as information about the beating of the drums used in the ceremony. At the start of the rain-making rites the Queen anoints the base of the sacred tree in the center of the kraal with the tribe's home brewed beer. Traditionally, if the Queen failed to make rain she was put to death.

One of the local rumors about the origin of the first Rain Queen appears in the book, *The Bush Speaks* by Dicke. It relates that she was a crafty woman of mixed white extraction. She had come from West Africa and with diabolical cunning created the belief among the Basuto of the region that she had supernatural powers that "created clouds so often resting upon the mountains." Her apparent success in deceiving the natives, or in some manner inducing the rain, gained her considerable fame. As a result of homage paid her and the awe instilled into the natives by her powers, she formed a great kingdom "without force of arms," over which she presided as queen. The account further relates that she used malevolent intrigues to hold her domain. Her female ancestors were said to be white women sold to the Arabs in slave markets of West Africa "who enchanted their masters with their sexual attractions." Hence, she used this device to rule her councilors and remained unmarried. It is further stated that this is why many girls were selected to become wives of the Queen for "it was their duty to captivate foreign chiefs and spies." Dicke's work would lead one to believe that intrigue, deception, debauchery, and immorality reigned supreme in this capital of the Bush. Nevertheless, it is historically certain that the tribal councilors did *and do* prefer being ruled by a woman. H. Rider Haggard's famous work, *She*, was based upon the legends and facts surrounding the life of this mysterious first Rain Queen.

Our arrival had attracted considerable attention. Little boys, naked or wearing but a loin cloth, crowded about us, curious as we unloaded our equipment. They smiled and whispered to each other just as most primitive people do on finding something amusingly incongruous in the dress and mannerisms of outsiders. However, a foundation of friendship with the juvenile population of Queen Mujaji's kraal was established at once by our generous dispensing of candy. Members

of our safari had thoughtfully availed themselves of large sacks of miscellaneous sweets which both the women and children relished.

The male tribesmen preserved their dignity by either disdaining to receive the proffered gifts, or taking the candy and placing it in their mouths with the solemnity of a sacred ritual. These preliminary formalities over, we tramped unceremoniously through the outer gate of the kraal to find that we were now in a semicircular area of hardpacked ground. Fifty feet beyond was still another enclosure of wooden posts; this was *the inner kraal*. Within it was the "palace," the domicile of Queen Mujaji and the bandas of her councilors and wives.

We were most graciously and diplomatically met by the Queen's chief adviser, her prime minister. His concession to civilization was that he was attired in a pair of work trousers and a faded blue shirt. He was an intelligent Basuto and spoke excellent English. It was here that the protocol of our audience with the Queen was explained, and we were advised to observe its details rigidly. Any violation of the provisions would create an embarrassing situation for the local officers of the Department of Native Affairs. The latter wish to maintain most amicable relations with the Rain Queen. Her influence upon the natives in the region is considerable. To offend her might destroy the delicate bond of confidence the Department had built between the government and Queen Mujaji's empire.

It was likewise impressed upon us that no photographs within the inner kraal were to be taken without the permission of the Rain Queen. Such permission would be given (if it were to be granted at all) only after the formal reception in her palace. Under no circumstances were photographs of the Queen to be taken. A number of years ago a safari had visited Queen Mujaji's capital and had taken her personal photograph under some pretext, and then had published it with a defamatory story about her reign. The news of this had in some way reached her and she was greatly offended. The white officers of the Government avoid any circumstance which might arouse the displeasure of the Queen and her subjects.

With these admonishments in mind, we marched in single file to the inner enclosure. Her subjects were first obliged to remove their foot

coverings before they could set foot upon this sacred precinct. About us were all the furnishings and appurtenances to be seen in almost any kraal. There were earthen vases, calabashes, poles for grinding the maize and the like. Plaited grass mats were to be seen before the entrances to the thatch-roofed bandas. Perhaps the only distinction was that this kraal was more clean in its appearance than was usually the case. There was less littering of refuse. Before us was the palace! Its prominence was that it resembled a small, simple, wooden, bungalow-like dwelling. Unlike the bandas, it was given eminence by being raised upon piles. This necessitated a climb of several steps to reach the porch or verandah. We stopped, undecided, at the lower step, placing our heavy photographic equipment upon the ground and standing in a group awaiting further developments. The Prime Minister, who was our immediate host and interpreter, preceded us to confer with the Queen.

After a few moments, the Queen's minister again appeared and beckoned to us to ascend the steps. When we had done this some of our party were about to sit down, but we were advised that this must not be done until Queen Mujaji made her appearance and had become seated. Here, then, in the African bush, hundreds of miles from a city of size, this woman of a tribe of primitive peoples prescribed a decorum and demanded its respect from European and foreign visitors-as significant in its social import as that of the royalty of any white nation. At first the ceremony seemed a mockery. Then the significance of the circumstance was realized.

Within her sphere of power the Rain Queen was supreme. Her purposes and the ideals and customs of her subjects were as meaningful to them as are those of any nation of the world to their respective peoples. Their culture, measured by that of the white man, was crude. Therefore, to the white man, any resemblance they had to the dignity of his own officialdom seemed absurd. The error of the white man's thinking is in his evaluation of standards. A difference in standards does not lessen the spirit behind them, nor should it detract from the dignity one displays toward what he conceives or believes.

Can one say that the spiritual devotion of a worshiper of nature is less than one who kneels before a cross in a vast cathedral? The motive, the impulse must be taken into consideration and not the objective procedures, the rituals and ceremonies by which it is expressed. For further analogy, one dressed in the clothes of a beggar may have all the refined gestures and speech of a Member of Parliament. Such culture is not to be depreciated by its setting.

The door opened and there appeared a native woman, advanced in years. Unlike the others, she did not wear the native costume, or a dark red solampare draped about her bosom and hanging from her hips. Instead, she wore a simple gingham dress and was barefooted. She was the Queen's lady in waiting. She took no notice of us as she placed upon the floor in our midst one woven grass mat and a leopard skin. She then stood behind one attentively. Again the door opened; *Queen Mujaji* made her entrance. She was aged-over eighty, and quite wrinkled. Her eyes, however, were alert and piercing. In one glance she surveyed and scrutinized our party. She posed a moment at the threshold of the door awaiting our acknowledgment of her presence. There was in her leathery-like visage a regal expression.

Almost unconsciously we responded to her by standing erect and bowing slightly as if we were in the court of European royalty. She then crossed over and seated herself on the leopard skin—her lady in waiting being seated at her left. The Prime Minister stepped forward and, in the tribal dialect, explained our mission and then formally introduced each of us in turn.

Later it was explained to us that the writer had been introduced as being a "chief" of a people living far across the water who had heard much of her, and who had come to pay his respects and to bear gifts to her. We in turn stood before her and she looked up at us. In the depth of her eyes was the soul of primitive Africa—in a sense, the expression of a lost people, an age-old people who were seeking to cling to a life and a way of living that was falling before the assault of the white man and his civilization. Gazing at each other, we understood each other far better than if we had spoken the same tongue.

Apparently reassured, Queen Mujaji gestured for us to be seated. She then clapped her hands twice loudly; she gave instructions to a male native who appeared and bowed low before her. He went away to reappear in a few moments with a large earthen vessel filled with the traditional beer. This was placed before the Queen, and she was likewise provided with several small calabashes resembling a cup with a long handle. Beer plays a prominent part in the ceremonies—social, religious and political—of these people. The drinking is marked with decorum; it must be lingered over; it is never to be bolted down. Beer is considered a nourishment and the food of the gods, as well. It is made of fermented corn, or maize. It is a whitish substance, very unappealing to the sight. To the taste it is somewhat like a strong cider. It has a high percentage of alcohol. To offer beer, as on this occasion, is a social gesture of generosity. The function is called *valejana*—"those who eat together." Of course, it would be an insult not to imbibe the beer. Each of us drank from the same calabash as had the Queen, it being passed from one to another after being refilled. The Europeans or whites who have had the experience, relate that the beer is noted for its relief from various disorders.

While looking at the writer, Queen Mujaji was apparently asking questions of her minister about him. What answers he gave we did not learn. As the time advanced so did the position of the sun; we noted with apprehension that shadows were creeping into areas which we were anxious to photograph. Accordingly, we asked the prime minister whether Her Majesty would now grant permission for photography. Protocol, however, still prevailed. It was necessary that we first proffer our gifts to the Queen—not in consideration of her permission, for there was no assurance that even then she would grant it. The lady of our safari had obtained the gifts in advance. We stepped forward and laid the larger package at the feet of the Queen. She never glanced at it or evinced any interest in it. A smaller package was then laid before the lady in waiting. The latter was not so stoic. She beamed widely, showing her few remaining teeth. But she, too, made no attempt to open her package and examine its contents.

The conversation continued several minutes longer, and yet we did not know whether our journey to this remote place was in vain or not.

Suddenly, Her Majesty began opening her package. Her lady in waiting did likewise and gleefully. From Queen Mujaji's expression there was no indication of any satisfaction derived from the gift. However, our safari had been advised what to present to her, and we felt confident that it would be to her liking. She abruptly arose and instantly we also stood. She then spoke to her prime minister. He informed us that Her Majesty accepted our gifts and we were permitted to photograph the precincts of the palace and the kraal. We bowed to her aged Majesty, and she acknowledged this gesture with a light nod of her head. Then she left our presence, walking very erect, to enter her palace, leaving the bearing of the gifts to the lady in waiting.

While our photographic equipment was being placed in readiness, the writer looked back upon the door through which Queen Mujaji had just passed. He mused upon the little drama simply and touchingly enacted by this woman of mystery. For the moment there pulsed within him, like the rhythmic beats of the native drums, the fears, devotions, and beliefs of the generations of these people. Africa had been for us another portal by which to enter the recesses of the human mind and personality.

# THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER, AMORC

## *Purpose and Work of the Order*

The Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is a philosophical and initiatic tradition. As students progress in their studies, they are initiated into the next level or degree.

Rosicrucians are men and women around the world who study the laws of nature in order to live in harmony with them. Individuals study the Rosicrucian lessons in the privacy of their own homes on subjects such as the nature of the soul, developing intuition, classical Greek philosophy, energy centers in the body, and self-healing techniques.

The Rosicrucian tradition encourages each student to discover the wisdom, compassion, strength, and peace that already reside within each of us.

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