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THE SECRET SOCIETIES OF ALL  
AGES AND COUNTRIES

“Dalla straordinarietà degli effetti certo può indursi la straordinarietà, la grandezza, l’insistenza delle cagioni ; ma l’ intreccio e l’ alterno prevalere di queste, l’ attrazione che esercitano, sfuggono all’ analisi. Il mistero precinge la notturna fecondazione. Dai più disparati sentimenti trae vigore la setta. Le materie più preziose ed insieme le meno elette concorrono a formare questo gigante, rifusione ciclopica e tetra di quanto s’ agita, ribolle e schiuma nelle viscere sociali.”—G. DE CASTRO.

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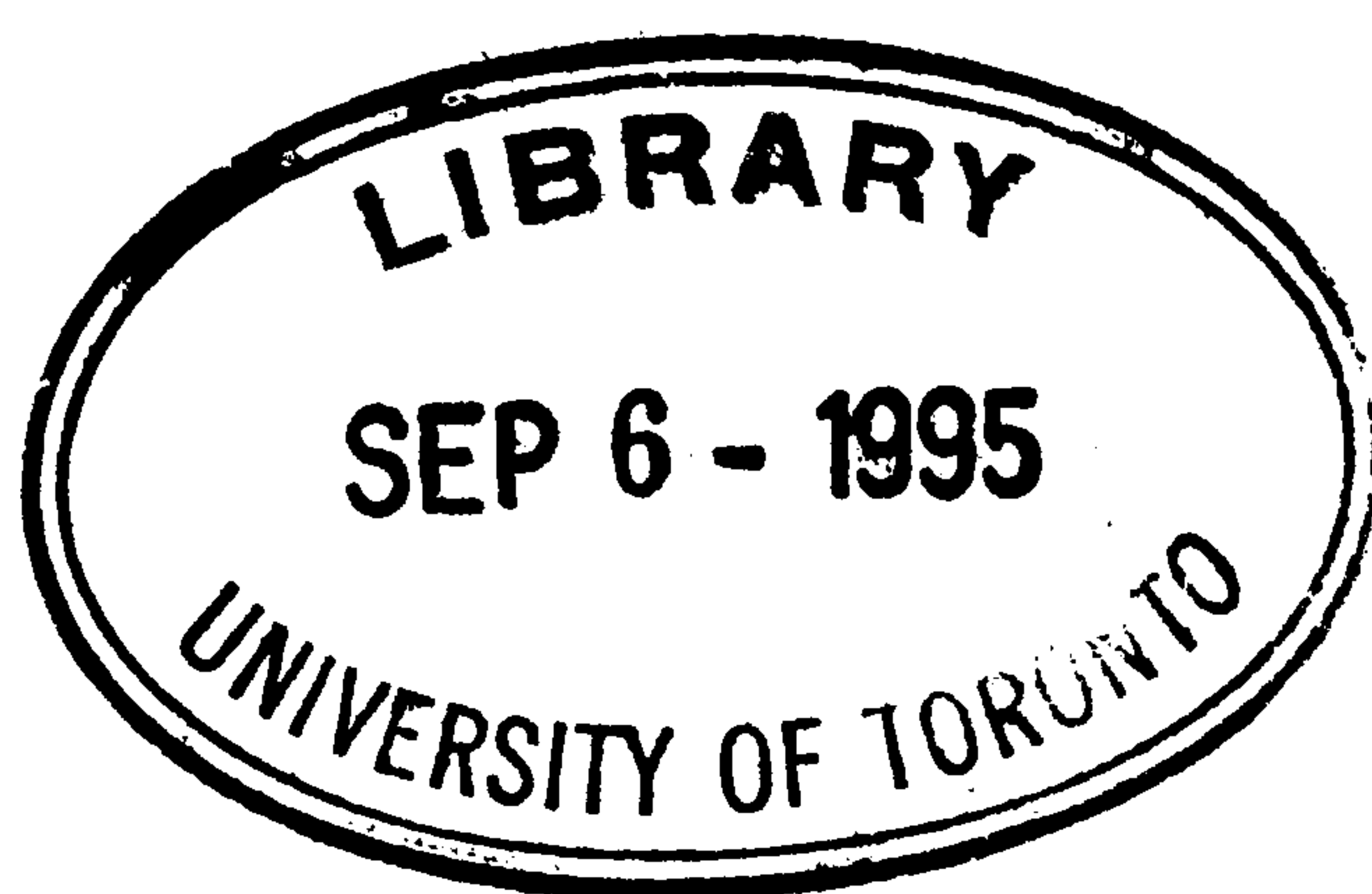
BY  
CHARLES WILLIAM HECKETHORN  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. I

*NEW EDITION*  
THOROUGHLY REVISED AND GREATLY ENLARGED

LONDON  
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1897





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# PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

THIS is not so much a second edition of my book on Secret Societies published in 1875 as an almost entirely new work.

When the first edition was published, some of the societies had scarcely any history. Of the Nihilists, for instance, the account now given, recording their doings within the last eighteen years, fills many pages of this work. The story of other societies, active even then, such as the Fenians, had to be brought down to date, and yielded much new matter.

I have thought it desirable to give fuller particulars of certain societies than I had given in the first edition, such as the Jesuits, for instance—the new matter having either been kept back, or being the result of further research.

Accounts of societies not included in the first edition will be found here. I may instance “Crata Repoa,” “Rosheniah,” and “Skopzi.”

A few of the articles of the first edition have been reduced; such, for instance, as that on the Paris Commune, which has not now that immediate interest its then recent activity imparted to it.

Great changes have also been made in the arrangement of the matter.

Secret Societies may be arranged either chronologically, or locally, or topically. Each arrangement has its advantages and disadvantages; the former are obvious, the latter may be stated thus:—

By arranging societies according to chronology, those which are topically connected or identical will sometimes be placed at so great a distance as to impair the continuity of interest. By arranging them locally, the chronological connection must suffer; and by arranging them according to subjects or topics, the reader obtains no clear view of the sequence of events. I have therefore endeavoured to combine the three modes of representing the great drama of Secret Societies by making the topical arrangement its basis, and on that marshalling the societies first according to locality, and lastly according to time. Thus

in the first Book of the work the topic is Ancient Mysteries and Religious Societies ; they are arranged according to localities, and the third consideration is the time. Therefore the Eastern Societies come first, in chronological order ; then the Western, in the same order ; so that the Magi of Persia form the first, and the Scandinavian Drottes of Europe the last in the list.

A full list of authorities consulted being given, it has not been considered necessary to encumber the pages with foot-notes ; the general reader does not want them, and the student will know what work to refer to for verification.

The work, as now presented to the public, is the result of twenty-five years' study and research, involving the acquisition and collation of the English and foreign literature on the subject, and therefore claims to be a cyclopædia of Secret Societies, giving concise, but quintessential, details of all worth recording, and omitting only those whose duration was ephemeral, and action trivial.

C. W. H.

*October, 1896.*



# PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

FOR many years the fascinating subject of Secret Societies had engaged my attention, and it had long been my intention to collect in a comprehensive work all the information that could be gathered from numerous, often remote, and sometimes almost inaccessible, sources concerning one of the most curious phases of the history of mankind—those secret organisations, religious, political, and social, which have existed from the most remote ages down to the present time. Before, however, I had arranged and digested my materials, a review in the *Athenæum* (No. 2196) directed my attention to the Italian work, “*Il Mondo Segreto*,” by Signor De Castro, whom I have since then had the pleasure of meeting at Milan. I procured the book, and intended at first to give a translation of it; but though I began as a translator, my labours speedily assumed a more independent form. Much, I found, had to be omitted from an original coloured by a certain political bias, and somewhat too indulgent to various Italian political sects, who, in many instances, were scarcely more than hordes of brigands. Much, on the other hand, had to be added from sources, chiefly English and German, unknown to the Italian author; much had to be placed on a different basis and in another light; and again, many societies not mentioned by Signor De Castro had to be introduced to the reader, such as the Garduna, the Chauffeurs, Fenians, International, O-Kee-Pa, Ku-Klux, Inquisition, Wahábees; so that, with these additions, and the amplifications of sections in the original Italian, forming frequently entirely new articles, the work, as it now is presented to the English public, though in its framework retaining much of its foreign prototype, may yet claim the merit of being not only essentially original, but the most comprehensive account of Secret Societies extant in English, French, German, or Italian, the leading languages of Europe; for whatever has been written on the subject in any one of them has been consulted and put under contribution. In English there is no work that can at all compete with it, for the small book



published in 1836 by Charles Knight, and entitled, "Secret Societies of the Middle Ages," embraces four societies only.

The student who wishes for more ample information will have to consult the lists of authorities given at the head of each Book, as it was thought best not to encumber the text with foot-notes, which would have swelled the work to at least twice its present extent. The reader may rest satisfied that few statements are made which could not be supported by numerous and weighty authorities; though dealing as we do here with societies whose very existence depended on secrecy, and which, therefore, as a matter of policy, left behind them as little documentary evidence as possible, the old distich applies with peculiar force:—

"What is hits is history,  
And what is mist is mystery."

Again, bearing in mind that the imperative compass of the work exacted a concise setting forth of facts—ranging as the subject does over a surface so vast—I have been careful to interrupt the narrative only by such comments and reflections as would seem almost indispensable for clearing up obscurities or supplying missing historical links.

It may at first appear as if some societies had improperly been inserted in this work as "secret" societies; the Freemasons, for instance. Members of secret associations, it might be objected, are not in the habit of proclaiming their membership to the world, but no Freemason is ashamed or afraid of avowing himself such; nay, he is rather proud of the fact, and given to proclaim it somewhat obtrusively; yet the most rabid Celt, who wishes to have a hand in the regeneration of his native land by joining the Fenian brotherhood, has sense enough to keep his affiliation a profound secret from the uninitiated. But the rule I have followed in adopting societies as "secret" was to include in my collection all such as had or have "secret rites and ceremonies" kept from the outer world, though the existence of the society itself be no secret at all. In fact, no association of men can for any length of time remain a secret, since however anxious the members may be to shroud themselves in darkness, and remain personally unknown, the purpose for which they band together must always betray itself by some overt acts; and wherever there is an act, the world surmises an agent; and if none that is visible can be found, a secret one is suspected. The Thugs, for instance, had every desire to remain un-





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# INTRODUCTION

“ Ignis ubique latet, naturam amplectitur omnem ;  
Cuncta parit, renovat, dividit, urit, alit.”





# SECRET SOCIETIES

## INTRODUCTION

1. *Intelligibility and Nature of Secret Societies.*—Secret Societies once were as necessary as open societies: the tree presupposes a root. Beside the empire of Might, the idols of fortune, the fetishes of superstition, there must in every age and state have existed a place where the empire of Might was at an end, where the idols were no longer worshipped, where the fetishes were derided. Such a place was the closet of the philosopher, the temple of the priest, the subterranean cave of the sectary.

2. *Classification of Secret Societies.*—Secret societies may be classed under the following heads:—1. Religious: such as the Egyptian or Eleusinian Mysteries. 2. Military: Knights Templars. 3. Judiciary: Vehmgerichte. 4. Scientific: Alchymists. 5. Civil: Freemasons. 6. Political: Carbonari. 7. Anti-Social: Garduna. But the line of division is not always strictly defined; some that had scientific objects combined theological dogmas therewith—as the Rosicrucians, for instance; and political societies must necessarily influence civil life. We may therefore more conveniently range secret societies in the two comprehensive divisions of religious and political.

3. *Religious Societies.*—Religion has had its secret societies from the most ancient times; they date, in fact, from the period when the true religious knowledge—which, be it understood, consisted in the knowledge of the constitution of the universe and the Eternal Power that had produced, and the laws that maintained it—possessed by the first men began to decay among the general mass of mankind. The genuine knowledge was to a great extent preserved in the ancient “Mysteries,” though even these were already a degree removed from the first primeval native wisdom, since



they represented only the type, instead of the archetype; namely, the phenomena of outward temporal Nature, instead of the realities of the inward eternal Nature, of which this visible universe is the outward manifestation. Since the definition of this now recovered genuine knowledge is necessary for understanding much that was taught in the religious societies of antiquity, we shall, further on, enter into fuller details concerning it.

4. *Political Societies*.—Politically, secret societies were the provident temperers and safety valves of the present and the powerful levers of the future. Without them the monologue of absolutism alone would occupy the drama of history, appearing, moreover, without an aim, and producing no effect, if it had not exercised the will of man by inducing reaction and provoking resistance.

Every secret society is an act of reflection, therefore, of conscience. For reflection, accumulated and fixed, is conscience. In so far, secret societies are in a certain manner the expression of conscience in history. For every man has in himself a Something which belongs to him, and which yet seems as if it were not a thing within him, but, so to speak, without him. This obscure Something is stronger than he, and he cannot rebel against its dominion nor withdraw himself, or fly, from its search. This part of us is intangible; the assassin's steel, the executioner's axe cannot reach it; allurements cannot seduce, prayers cannot soften, threats cannot terrify it. It creates in us a dualism, which makes itself felt as remorse. When man is virtuous, he feels himself one, at peace with himself; that obscure Something does neither oppress nor torture him: just as in physical nature the powers of man's body, when working in harmony, are unfelt (11); but when his actions are evil, his better part rebels. Now secret societies are the expression of this dualism reproduced on a grand scale in nations; they are that obscure Something of politics acting in the public conscience, and producing a remorse, which shows itself as "secret society," an avenging and purifying remorse. It regenerates through death, and brings forth light through fire, out of darkness, according to eternal laws. No one discerns it, yet every man may feel it. It may be compared to an invisible star, whose light, however, reaches us; to the heat coming from a region where no human foot will ever be placed, but which we feel, and can demonstrate with the thermometer.

Indeed, one of the most obvious sentiments that gives





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quintessence of that copious Nature, was one with it, and therefore able to apprehend it and its fulness. For as the powers of Nature have brought forth plants and animals of different degrees of development and perfection, so they have produced various types of men in various stages of development; the most perfect being, as already mentioned, the Aryan or Caucasian type, the only one that has a history, and the one that deserves our attention when inquiring into the mental history of mankind. For even where the Caucasian comes in contact and intermingles with a dark race, as in India and Egypt, it is the white man with whom the higher and historical development begins.

8. *Causes of high Mental Development.*—I have already intimated that climatic and other outward circumstances are favourable to high development. This is universally known to be true of plants; but man is only a plant endowed with consciousness and mobility, and therefore it must be true of him; and, in fact, experience proves it. The organs, and especially the brain of the Caucasian, attain to the highest perfection, and therefore he is most fully able to apprehend Nature and understand its working.

As to how long it took man to arrive at a high state of mental development, it is sheer waste of time and ingenuity to speculate about—how long did it take the spider to learn how to construct his web so skilfully?—as it is a vain attempt to discover the time of man's first appearance and condition on earth; even the stale cabbage of protoplasm, warmed up by Darwin, will not help us to solve the riddle. The only certainty we have from monumental and quasi-literary remains, is that many thousand years ago man possessed high scientific knowledge, which, originally arisen in the East, gradually travelled westward, and on the journey to a great extent was lost. It may seem strange that such knowledge should be lost; but as we have a striking instance of such loss in historic times, the strange phenomenon becomes credible. What succeeded the splendours of classic erudition, science and art, but the mental night known as the Dark Ages!—the outcome of priestly prejudice, oppression, and obscurantism. It will suffice to quote one fact in support of our argument. Thousands of years before our era the Chaldeans were acquainted with the roundness of the earth, and that its extent from east to west was greater than that from north to south; they also knew its circumference, which they fixed by saying that a man, if he walked steadily on, could go round it in one year of 365 days. Now, reckon-



ing the circumference at 24,900 miles, it is easily seen that a man, walking at about three miles an hour, would perform the journey within very little of a year. What had become of this knowledge when the learned(?) friars, disputing at Salamanca with Columbus, maintained the earth to be flat?

I have lying before me a map of Africa, printed in 1642 (in Blaew's *Novus Atlas*), in which the lakes in the interior of that continent, together with its rivers, towns, and villages, which are supposed to have been discovered in this century only, are accurately laid down—how came this knowledge, more than 250 years old, to be lost? But lost it was, for on maps issued in the early part of this century the interior of Africa is a blank.

Therefore I am justified in saying that in prehistoric times man possessed a true knowledge of Nature and her workings, and that this is the reason why the mysteries of the most distant nations had so much in common, dogmatically and internally, and why in all so much importance was attached to certain figures and ideas, and why all were funereal. The sanctity attributed in all ages and all countries to the number seven has not been correctly explained by any known writer;<sup>1</sup> the elucidations I shall offer on this point, will show that the conformity with each other of the religious and scientific doctrines of nations far apart must be due to their transmission from one common source, though the enigmatical and mystical forms, in which this knowledge was preserved, were gradually taken for the facts themselves.

The reader will now see that these remarks, the object of which he may not have perceived at first, are not irrelevant; we cannot understand the origin and meaning of what was taught in the mysteries without a clear apprehension of man's primitive culture and knowledge.

9. *Primitive Culture*.—As a rule, prehistoric ages seem obscure, and men fancy, that, at every retrogressive step, they must enter into greater darkness. But if we proceed with our eyes open, the darkness recedes like the horizon, as we seem to approach it; new light is added to our light, new suns are lit up, new auroras arise before us; the darkness, which is only light compacted, is dissolved into its original, viz., light; and as outwardness implies multiplicity, and inwardness unity—there are many branches, but only one root—so all religious creeds, even those most

<sup>1</sup> Except, of course, the one from whom I derive my information, Jacob Böhme, concerning whom see *infra*.



disguised in absurd and debasing rites and superstitions, the nearer we trace them to their source, appear in greater and greater purity and nobility, with more exalted views, doctrines, and aims. For as Tegner says—

“ . . . känslan's grundton är ändå densamma.”

The fundamental tone of feeling is ever the same.

And as the same poet expresses it, antiquity is

“ . . . det Atlantis som gick under  
Med högre kraft, med adlare begär.”

. . . That Atlantis that perished  
With higher powers and nobler aims.

Thus the ethic odes of Buddha and Zoroaster have been regarded as anticipations of the teaching of Christianity; so that even St. Augustin remarked: “What is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came, from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian.”

Again, through all the more elevated creeds there ran certain fundamental ideas which, differing and even sometimes distorted in form, may yet in a certain sense be regarded as common to all. Such were the belief in a Trinity; the dogma that the “Logos,” or omnific Word, created all things by making the Nothing manifest; the worship of light; the doctrine of regeneration by passing through the fire, and others.

10. *The true Doctrines of Nature and Being.*—But what was the knowledge on which the teaching of the mysteries was founded? It was no less than that of the ground and geniture of all things; the whole state, the rise, the workings, and the progress of all Nature (16), together with the unity that pervades heaven and earth. A few years ago this was proclaimed with great sound of trumpets as a new discovery, although so ancient an author as Homer speaks, in the 8th book of the “Iliad,” of the *golden chain* connecting heaven and earth; the golden chain of sympathy; the occult, all-pervading, all-uniting influence, called by a variety of names, such as *anima mundi*, *mercurius philosophorum*, *Jacob's ladder*, the *vital magnetic series*, the *magician's fire*, &c. This knowledge, in course of time, and



through man's love of change, was gradually distorted by perverse interpretations, and overlaid or embroidered, as it were, with fanciful creations of man's own brain; and thus arose superstitious systems, which became the creed of the unthinking crowd, and have not lost their hold on the public mind, even to this day keeping in spiritual thralldom myriads who tremble at a thousand phantoms conjured up by priest-craft and their own ignorance, whilst

“Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas;  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.”

II. *Fundamental Principles of true Knowledge possessed by the Ancients.*—From what was taught in the mysteries, we are justified in believing that thousands of years ago men knew what follows; though the knowledge is already dimmed and perverted in the mysteries, the phenomena of outward Nature only being presented in them, instead of the inward spiritual truths symbolised.

(i.) All around us we behold the evidences of a life permeating all things; we must needs, therefore, admit that there is a universal, all-powerful, all-sustaining life.

(ii.) Behind or above the primeval life which is the basis of this system may be beheld the “Unmoved Mover,” the only supernatural *ens*, who, by the Word, or “Logos,” has spoken forth all things out of himself; which does not imply any pantheism, for the words of the speaker, though proceeding from him, are not the speaker himself.

(iii.) The universal life is eternal.

(iv.) Matter is eternal, for matter is the garment in which the life clothes and renders itself manifest.

(v.) That matter is light, for the darkest substance is, or can be, reduced into it.

(vi.) Whatsoever is outwardly manifest must have existed ideally, from all eternity, in an archetypal figure, reflected in what Indian mythology calls the Eternal Liberty, the mirror *Maja*, whence are derived the terms “magus,” “magia,” “magic,” “image,” “imagination,” all implying the fixing of the primeval, structureless, imperceptible, living matter, in a form, figure, or creature. In modern theosophy, the mirror *Maja* is called the Eternal Mirror of Wonders, the Virgin Sophia, ever bringing forth, yet ever a virgin—the analogue and prototype of the Virgin Mary.

(vii.) The eternal life which thus manifests itself in this



visible universe is ruled by the same laws that rule the invisible world of forces.

(viii.) These laws, according to which the life manifests itself, are the seven properties of eternal Nature, six working properties, and the seventh, in which the six, as it were, rest, or are combined into perfect balance or harmony, *i.e.*, paradise. These seven properties, the foundation of all the septenary numbers running through natural phenomena and all ancient and modern knowledge, are: (1) Attraction; (2) Reaction or Repulsion; (3) Circulation; (4) Fire; (5) Light; (6) Sound; (7) Body, or comprisal of all.

(ix.) This septenary is divisible into two ternaries or poles, with the fire (symbolised by a cross) in the middle. These two poles constitute the eternal dualism or antagonism in Nature—the first three forming matter or darkness, and producing pain and anguish, *i.e.*, hell, cosmically winter; the last three being filled with light and delight, *i.e.*, paradise, cosmically summer.

(x.) The fire is the great chymist, or purifier and transmuter of Nature, turning darkness into light. Hence the excessive veneration and universal worship paid to it by ancient nations, the priests of Zoroaster wearing a veil over their mouths for fear of polluting the fire with their breath. By the fire here, of course, is meant the empyrean, electric fire, whose existence and nature were tolerably well known to the ancients. They distinguished the moving principle from the thing moved, and called the former the igneous ether or spirit, the principle of life, the Deity, You-piter, Vulcan, Phtha, Kneph (18, 24).

(xi.) All light is born out of darkness, and must pass through the fire to manifest itself; there is no other way but through darkness, or death, or hell—an idea which we find enunciated and represented in all the mysteries. As little as a plant can come forth into the beauty of blossoms, leaves, and fruit, without having passed through the dark state of the seed and being buried in the earth, where it is chymically transmuted by the fire; so little can the mind arrive at the fulness of knowledge and enlightenment without having passed through a stage of self-darkening and imprisonment, in which it suffered torment, anguish—in which it was as in a furnace, in the throes of generation.

12. *Key to Mystic Teaching.*—That the first men possessed the knowledge of the foregoing facts is certain, not only from the positive and inferential teachings of the mysteries, but also from the monuments of antiquity, which in grandeur



of conception and singleness of ideal aim, excel all that modern art or industry, or even faith, has accomplished. By bearing this in mind, the reader will get a deeper insight into the true meaning of the dogmas of initiation than was attainable by the epopts themselves. He will also understand that the reason why there was so much uniformity in the teaching of the mysteries was the fact that the dogmas enunciated were explanations of universal natural phenomena, alike in all parts of the earth. In describing the ceremonies of initiation, I shall therefore abstain from appending to them a commentary or exegesis, but simply refer to the paragraphs of this introduction, as to a key.

13. *Mystic Teaching summarised.*—It was theological, moral, and scientific. Theologically, the initiated were shown the error of vulgar polytheism, and taught the doctrine of the Unity and of a future state of reward and punishment; morally, the precepts were summed up in the words of Confucius: "If thou be doubtful whether an action be right or wrong, abstain from it altogether;" scientifically, the principles were such as we have detailed above (11), with their natural and necessary deductions, consequences, and results.

14. *How true Knowledge came to be lost.*—Though I have already on several occasions (*e.g.*, 10) alluded to the fact that the true knowledge of Nature possessed by the first men had in course of time become corrupted and intermixed with error, it will not be amiss to show the process by which this came to pass. It is well known that the oldest religious rites of which we have any written records were Sabæan or Helio-Arkite. The sun, moon, and stars, however, to the true original epopts were merely the outward manifestations and symbols of the inward powers of the Eternal Life. But such abstract truths could not be rendered intelligible to the vulgar mind of the multitude, necessarily more occupied with the satisfaction of material wants; and hence arose the personification of the heavenly bodies and terrestrial seasons depending on them. Gradually the human figure, which in the first instance had only been a symbol, came to be looked upon as the representation of an individual being, that had actually lived on earth. Thus, the sun, to the primitive men, was the outward manifestation of the Eternal, all-sustaining, all-saving Life; in different countries and ages this power was personified under the names of Chrisna, Fo, Osiris, Hermes, Hercules, and so on; and eventually these latter were supposed to have been men that really existed,



and had been deified on account of the benefits they had conferred on mankind. The tombs of these supposed gods were shown, such as the Great Pyramid, said to be the tomb of Osiris; feasts were celebrated, the object of which seemed to be to renew every year the grief occasioned by their loss. The passing of the sun through the signs of the zodiac gave rise to the myths of the incantations of Vishnu, the labours of Hercules, &c., his apparent loss of power during the winter season, and the restoration thereof at the winter solstice, to the story of the death, descent into hell, and resurrection of Osiris and of Mithras. In fact, what was pure Nature-wisdom in one age became mythology in the next, and romance in the third, taking its characteristics from the country where it prevailed. The number seven being found everywhere, and the knowledge that its prevalence was the necessary consequence of the seven properties of Nature being lost, it was supposed to have reference only to the seven planets then known.

15. *Original Spirit of the Mysteries, and Results of their Decay.*—In the mysteries all was astronomical, but a deeper meaning lay hid under the astronomical symbols. While bewailing the loss of the sun, the epopts were in reality mourning the loss of that light whose influence is life; whilst the working of the elements, according to the laws of elective affinity, produces only phenomena of decay and death. The initiated strove to pass from under the dominion of the bond-woman Night into the glorious liberty of the free-woman Sophia or Light; to be mentally absorbed into the Deity, *i.e.*, into the Light. The dogmas of ancient Nature-wisdom were set before the pupil, but their understanding had to arise as inspiration in his soul. It was not the dead body of science that was surrendered to the epopt, leaving it to chance whether it quickened or not, but the living spirit itself was infused into him. But for this reason, because more had to be apprehended from within by inspiration, than from without, by oral instruction, the mysteries gradually decayed; the ideal yielded to the realistic, and the merely physical elements—Sabæism and Arkism—became their leading features. The frequent emblems and mementos in the sanctuary of death and resurrection, pointing to the mystery that the moments of highest psychical enjoyment are the most destructive to bodily existence—*i.e.*, that the most intense delight is a glimpse of paradise—these emblems and mementos eventually were applied to outward Nature only, and their misapprehension led to all the creeds





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does not mean an individual, but the universal man, mankind, and his companion, Eve, which means life, having passed spring and summer in the Garden of Eden, necessarily reached the season when the serpent, Typhon (51), the symbol of winter, points out on the celestial sphere that the reign of Evil, of winter, is approaching. Allegorical science, which insinuated itself everywhere, caused *malum*, "evil," also to mean an "apple," the produce of autumn, which indicates that the harvest is over, and that man in the sweat of his brow must again till the earth. The cold season comes, and he must cover himself with the allegorical fig-leaf. The sphere revolves, the man of the constellation Boötes, the same as Adam, preceded by the woman, the Virgin, carrying in her hand the autumnal branch laden with fruit, seems to be allured or beguiled by her. A look at a celestial globe will render this quite plain. A sacred bough or plant is introduced into all the mysteries. We have the Indian and Egyptian lotus, the fig-tree of Atys, the myrtle of Venus, the mistletoe of the Druids, the golden bough of Virgil, the rose-tree of Isis;—in the "Golden Ass" Apuleius is restored to his natural form by eating roses—the box of Palm-Sunday, and the acacia of Freemasonry. The bough in the opera "Roberto il Diavolo" is the mystic bough of the mysteries.

17. *Astronomical Aspects continued—The Mysteries Funereal.*—In all the mysteries we encounter a god, a superior being, or an extraordinary man, suffering death, to recommence a more glorious existence; everywhere the remembrance of a grand and mournful event plunges the nations into grief and mourning, immediately followed by the most lively joy. Osiris is slain by Typhon, Uranus by Saturn, Sousarman by Sudra, Adonis by a wild boar; Ormuzd is conquered by Ahrimanes; Atys and Mithras and Hercules kill themselves; Abel is slain by Cain, Balder by Loke, Bacchus by the giants; the Assyrians mourn the death of Thammuz, the Scythians and Phœnicians that of Acmon, all Nature that of the great Pan, the Freemasons that of Hiram, and so on. The origin of this universal belief has already been pointed out.

18. *Uniformity of Dogmas.*—The doctrine of the Unity and Trinity was inculcated in all the mysteries. In the most ancient religious creeds we meet with the prototype of the Christian dogma, in which a virgin is seen bringing forth a saviour, and yet ever remaining a virgin (11). In the more outward sense, that virgin is the Virgo of the



zodiac, and the saviour brought forth is the sun (17); in the most inward sense, it is the eternal ideal, wherein the eternal life and intelligence, the power of electricity, and the virtue of the tincture, the first the sustainer, the latter the beautifier of apprehensible existence, are, as it were, corporified in the countless creatures that fill this universe—yea, in the universe itself. And the virgin remains a virgin, and her own nature is not affected by it, just as the air brings forth sounds, the light colours, the mind ideas, without any of them being intrinsically altered by the production. We certainly do not find these principles so fully and distinctly enunciated in the teaching of the ancient mystagogues, but a primitive knowledge of them may be inferred from what they *did* teach.

In all the mysteries, light was represented as born out of darkness. Thus reappears the Deity called now Maja Bhawani, now Kâli, Isis, Ceres, Proserpina; Persephone, the Queen of Heaven, is the night from whose bosom issues life, into which the life returns, a secret reunion of life and death. She is, moreover, called the Rosy, and in the German myths the Rosy is called the restoring principle of life. She is not only the night, but, as mother of the sun, she is also the aurora, behind whom the stars are shining. When she symbolises the earth as Ceres, she is represented with ears of corn. Like the sad Proserpina, she is beautiful and lustrous, but also melancholy and black. Thus she joins night with day, joy with sadness, the sun with the moon, heat with humidity, the divine with the human. The ancient Egyptians often represented the Deity by a black stone, and the black stone Kaábah, worshipped by the Arabs, and which is described as having originally been whiter than snow, and more brilliant than the sun, embodies the same idea, with the additional hint that light was anterior to darkness. In all the mysteries we meet with the cross (53) as a symbol of purification and salvation; the numbers three, four, and seven were sacred; in most of the mythologies we meet with two pillars; mystic banquets were common to all, as also the trials by fire, water, and air; the circle and triangle, single and double, everywhere represented the dualism or polarity of Nature; in all the initiations, the aspirant represented the good principle, the light, overcome by evil, the darkness; and his task was to regain his former supremacy, to be born again or regenerated, by passing through death and hell and their terrors, that were scenically enacted during the neophyte's passage through seven caves, or ascent of seven steps.



All this, in its deepest meaning, represented the eternal struggle of light to free itself from the encumbrance of materiality it has put on in its passage through the first three properties of eternal Nature (11); and in its secondary meaning, when the deeper one was lost to mankind, the progress of the sun through the seven signs of the zodiac, from Aries to Libra, as shown in Royal Arch Masonry, and also in the ladder with seven steps of the Knight of Kadosh. In all the mysteries the officers were the same, and personified astronomical or cosmical phenomena; in all, the initiated recognised each other by signs and passwords; in all, the conditions for initiation were the same—maturity of age, and purity of conduct. Nero, on this account, did not dare, when in Greece, to offer himself as a candidate for initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries. In many, the chief hierophant was compelled to lead a retired life of perpetual celibacy, that he might be entirely at liberty to devote himself to the study and contemplation of celestial things. And to accomplish this abstraction, it was customary for the priests, in the earlier periods of their history, to mortify the flesh by the use of certain herbs, which were reputed to possess the virtue of repelling all passionate excitements; to guard against which they even occasionally adopted severer and more decided precautions. In all countries where mysteries existed, initiation came to be looked upon as much a necessity as afterwards baptism among Christians; which ceremony, indeed, is one that had been practised in all the mysteries. The initiated were called *epopts*, *i.e.*, those that see things as they are; whilst before they were called “*mystes*,” meaning quite the contrary. In all we find greater and less mysteries, an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine, and three degrees. To betray the mysteries was everywhere considered infamous, and the heaviest penalties were attached to it; hence also, in all initiations, the candidate had to take the most terrible oaths that he would keep the secrets entrusted to him. Alcibiades was banished and consigned to the Furies for having revealed the mysteries of Ceres; Prometheus, Tantalus, Œdipus, Orpheus, suffered various punishments for the same reason.

19. *Most Ancient Secret Society*.—The very contents of this work show that the records of ancient secret societies have come down to us in pretty full detail; yet on looking at a map of the ancient world we are struck by a fact, which can only be explained by assuming the existence, at a remote period, of a secret society of which no record, except the one



supplied by the map, exists. This secret society, whose existence, it is true, can be proved inferentially only, must have been that of Benjamin and his ten sons. We know from Gen. xlvii. that Joseph delegated to the Benjaminites the keeping of all the cattle of Egypt, which conferred on them vast powers their warlike spirit knew how to utilise for their own aggrandisement. And that they must have acted in concert is proved, inferentially as stated above, by the names of European and other countries. The proof is founded on etymology; this science is not always reliable, when we have only one or two roots to guide us, but when we come to five or more, a suspicion of mere coincidence must be dismissed from the mind. The subjoined names of Benjamin and his ten sons, together with those of the countries or localities named after them, will make the matter clear :—

Benjamin or Benymn, Benym, Benoni			
Pannonia, the ancient name of Austria ;			
Geras	Achi	Adeiel	Apphein
Greece	Achaia	Italy	Apennines
Adar	Saophein	Adam	Bacher
Etruria	Spain	Numidia	Picardy
	Bela	Ros	
	Poland	Russia.	

That all these countries should have Benjaminite names proves an identity of purpose at some long-past period ; and as no Benjaminite sovereignty has ever been proclaimed over Europe, it is clear that the above result must have been brought about by a powerful secret society, the leaders of which were Benjamin and his ten sons. And to carry out their scheme, and to do so without the kings and politicians, not associated with them, detecting its origin, they must have had signs and passwords known only to the initiated. It is indisputable that pneuma, the Greek word for spirit or ghost, is derived from Benymn or Benjamin, as Christ is derived from Geras; hence Christ is said to have been begotten by the Holy Ghost.

20. *Secret Societies no longer needed.*—Thanks to secret societies themselves, they are now no longer needed, at least



not in the realms of thought. In politics, however, circumstances will arise in every age to call them into existence; and though they seldom attain their direct object, yet are they not without influence on the relations between ruler and ruled, advantageously for the latter in the long run, though not immediately. But thought—religious, philosophical and political—is free—if not as yet in every country, it is so certainly in the lands inhabited by the Saxon races. And though the bigot and the fool would crush it, the former because it undermines his absolutism, and the latter because it interferes with his ease, yet shall it only grow stronger by the opposition. Science becomes the powerful bulwark against the invasion of dogmatic absurdities; and there is growing up a scientific church, wherein knowledge, and not humility, labour, and not penance and fasting, are considered essentials. Various phenomena in modern life are proofs of this. Man during ages of intellectual gloom annihilated himself in behalf of the great deified All; now he studies and respects himself, destroys the fetishes, and combats for Truth, which is the true deity.

In ancient times the mind rose from religion to philosophy; in our times, by a violent reaction, it will ascend from philosophy to religion. And the men whose religion is so arrived at, whose universal sympathy has cast out fear—such men are the true regenerators of mankind, and need neither secret signs nor passwords to recognise each other; in fact, they are opposed to all such devices, because they know that liberty consists in publicity. In a despotically ruled country, as Russia, for instance, secret societies are even now the only means of stirring up the people to fight for freedom; but wherever liberty rules, secrecy is no longer necessary to effect any good and useful work; once it needed secret societies in order to triumph, now it wants open union to maintain itself. Not that the time is come when every truth may be uttered without fear of calumny and cavil and opposition, especially in religious matters; far from it, as some recent notable instances have shown. The words of Faust still have their application:

“Who dare call the child by its right name?  
The few that knew something of it,  
And foolishly opened their hearts,  
Revealing to the vulgar crowd their views,  
Were ever crucified or burnt.”

Certes, bodily crucifying or burning are out of the question



now, but statecraft, and especially priestcraft, still have a few thumbscrews and red-hot irons to hold a man's hands or sear his reputation; wherefore, though I doubt the policy, and in most cases the success, of secret associations, yet I cannot withhold my tribute of admiration for those who have acted or do act up to the words of the poet Lowell:

“They are slaves who dare not speak  
For the fallen and the weak ;  
They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think ;  
They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three.”



...and this is the only way  
...and this is the only way  
...and this is the only way  
...and this is the only way  
...and this is the only way

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# THE MAGI

21. *Derivation of the term Magus.*—Magus is derived from *Maja*,<sup>1</sup> the mirror (11) wherein Brahm, according to Indian mythology, from all eternity beholds himself and all his power and wonders. Hence also our terms magia, magic, image, imagination, all implying the fixing in a form, figure, or creature—these words being synonymous—of the potencies of the primeval, structureless, living matter. The Magus, therefore, is one that makes the operations of the Eternal Life his study.

22. *Antiquity of the Magi.*—The Magi, as the ancient priests of Persia were called, did not constitute a doctrine or religion only; they constituted a monarchy—their power truly was that of kings. And this fact is still commemorated by the circumstance that the Magi recorded to have been led by the star to the cradle of Jesus are just as frequently called kings as Magi. As sages, they were kings in the sense of Horace:

“Ad summam, sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,  
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum.”

—*Epist.* i. 106, 107.

Their pontifical reign preceded the ascendancy of Assyria, Media, and Persia. Aristotle asserts it to have been more ancient than the foundation of the kingdom of Egypt; Plato, unable to reckon it by years, computes it by myriads. At the present day most writers agree in dating the rise of the reign of the Magi five thousand years before the Trojan war.

23. *Zoroaster.*—The founder of the order was Zoroaster, who was not, as some will have it, a contemporary of Darius, but lived nearly fifty centuries before our era. Nor was his home in India, but in Bactriana, which lies more to the east,

<sup>1</sup> Littré derives magus from *mahat*, great; but according to Indian mythology, *mahatit* and *pirkirti* are brought forth by *jotna*, power, the offspring of *Maja*, so that the latter truly is the etymon of “Magus.”



beyond the Caspian Sea, close to the mountains of India, along the great rivers Oxus and Iaxartes; so that the Brahmins, or priests of India, may be called the descendants of the Magi.

24. *Doctrine of Zoroaster*.—His doctrine was the most perfect and rational of all those that in ancient times were the objects of initiation, and has more or less survived in all successive theosophies. Traces of it may be found in the ancient “Zendavesta”—not the book now passing by that name, which is merely a kind of breviary—which entered into all the details of Nature.

This doctrine is not the creed of the two opposite, but equally powerful, principles, as has been asserted; for Ahrimanes, the principle of evil, is not equal with Oromazes, which is good. Evil is not uncreated and eternal; it is rather transitory and limited in power. And Plutarch records an opinion, which anon we shall see confirmed, that Ahrimanes and his angels shall be annihilated—that dualism is not eternal; its life is in time, of which it constitutes the grand drama, and in which it is the perennial cause of motion and transformation. This is the doctrine of the “Everlasting Gospellers,” so violently opposed by the Church, for the abolition of the devil. What would it not entail?

The Supreme Being, or Eternal Life, is elsewhere called *Time without limits*, for no origin can be assigned to him; enshrined in his glory, and possessing properties and attributes inapprehensible by our understanding, to him belongs silent adoration.

Creation had a beginning by means of emanation. The first emanation from the Eternal was the light, whence issued the King of Light, Oromazes. By means of speech Oromazes created the pure world, of which he is the preserver and judge. Oromazes is a holy and celestial being, intelligence and knowledge.

Oromazes, the first-born of Time without limits, began by creating, after his image and likeness, six genii, called *amshaspands*, that surround his throne, and are his messengers to the inferior spirits and to men, being also to the latter types of purity and perfection.

The second series of creations by Oromazes was that of the twenty-eight *izads*, that watch over the happiness, innocence, and preservation of the world; models of virtue, interpreters of the prayers of men.

The third host of pure spirits is more numerous, and forms that of the *farohars*, the thoughts of Oromazes, or the ideas



conceived by him before proceeding to the creation of things. Not only the *farohars* of holy men and innocent infants stand before Oromazes, but this latter himself has his *farohar*, the personification of his wisdom and beneficent idea, his reason, his logos. These spirits hover over the head of every man; and this idea passed over to the Greeks and Romans, and we meet with it again in the familiar spirit of Socrates, the evil genius of Brutus, and the *genius comes* of Horace.

The threefold creation of good spirits was the necessary consequence of the contemporaneous development of the principle of evil. The second-born of the Eternal, Ahrimanes, emanated like Oromazes from the primitive light, and was pure like it, but being ambitious and haughty, he became jealous. To punish him, the Supreme Being condemned him to dwell for twelve thousand years in the region of darkness, a time which was to be sufficient to end the strife between good and evil; but Ahrimanes created countless evil genii, that filled the earth with misery, disease, and guilt. The evil spirits are impurity, violence, covetousness, cruelty; the demons of cold, hunger, poverty, leanness, sterility, ignorance; and the most perverse of all, *Peetash*, the demon of calumny.<sup>1</sup>

Oromazes, after a reign of three thousand years, created the material world in six periods, in the same order as they are found in Genesis, successively calling into existence the terrestrial light (not to be confounded with the celestial), the water, the earth, plants, animals, and man.<sup>2</sup> Ahrimanes assisted in the formation of earth and water, because the darkness had already invaded those elements, and Oromazes could not conceal them. Ahrimanes also took part in the creation and subsequent corruption and destruction of man, whom Oromazes had produced by an act of his will and by the Word. Out of the seed of that being Oromazes afterwards drew the first human pair, *Meshia* and *Meshiane*; but Ahrimanes first seduced the woman and then the man, leading them into evil chiefly by the eating of certain fruits. And not only did he alter the nature of man, but also that of animals, opposing insects, serpents, wolves, and all kinds of vermin to the good animals, thus spreading corruption over the face of the earth. But Ahrimanes and his evil spirits are eventually to be overcome and cast out from

<sup>1</sup> All these traditions show already a very great departure from, and decay of, the original knowledge possessed by the primitive men. See Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Or rather a being compounded of a man and a bull.



every place; and in the stern combat just and industrious men have nothing to fear; for according to Zoroaster, labour is the exterminator of evil, and that man best obeys the righteous judge of all who assiduously tills the earth and causes it to bring forth harvests and fruit-bearing trees. At the end of twelve thousand years, when the earth shall cease to be afflicted by the evils brought upon it by the spirits of darkness, three prophets shall appear and assist man with their power and knowledge, restoring the earth to its pristine beauty, judging the good and the evil, and conducting the first into a region of ineffable bliss. Ahri-manes, and the captive demons and men, shall be purified in a sea of liquid metal, and the law of Oromazes shall rule everywhere.

It is scarcely necessary to point out to the reader the astronomical bearing of the theogony of Zoroaster. The six good genii represent the six summer months, while the evil genii stand for the winter months. The twenty-eight *izads* are the days of a lunar month. But theosophically, the six periods during which the universe was created refer to the six working properties of Nature.

25. *The Light worshipped.*—We have seen that Zoroaster taught light to be the first emanation of the Eternal Life; hence in the Parsee writings, light, the perennial flame, is the symbol of the Deity or uncreated Life. Hence the Magi and Parsees have been called fire-worshippers. But the former saw and the latter see in the fire not a divinity, but simply the cause of heat and motion, thus anticipating the most recent discoveries of physical science, or rather, remembering some of the lost knowledge. The Parsees did not form any God, to call him the one true God; they did not invoke any authority extrinsic to life; they did not rely on any uncertain tradition; but amidst all the recondite forces of Nature, they chose the one that governs them all, that reveals itself by the most tremendous effects. The modern Guebres are the descendants of the ancient Magi.

26. *Origin of the word Deus, God.*—In this sense the Magi, as well as the Chinese, had no theology, or they had one that is distinguished from all others. Those Magi that gave their name to occult science (magic), performed no sorcery, and believed in no miracles. In the bosom of Asiatic immobility they did not condemn motion, but rather considered it as the glorious symbol of the Eternal Cause. Other castes aimed at impoverishing the people and subjecting it to the yoke of ignorance and superstition; but



thanks to the Magi, the Indian Olympus, peopled with monstrous creatures, gave place to the conception of the unity of God, which always indicates progress in the history of thought. The text of the most ancient Zend literature acknowledges but one creative *ens* of all things, and his name, *Dao*, signifies "light" and "wisdom," and is explained by the root *daer*, "to shine," whence are derived all such words as *deus*, *dies*, &c. The conception of Deity indeed was primarily that of the "bright one," whence also the Sanskrit *dyaus*, "sky," which led to so many mythological fables. But the original idea was founded on a correct perception of the origin and nature of things, for light is truly the substance of all things; all matter is only a compaction of light. Thus the Magi founded a moral system and an empire; they had a literature, a science, and a poetry. Five thousand years before the "Iliad" they put forth the "Zendavesta," three grand poems, the first ethical, the second military, and the third scientific.

27. *Mode of Initiation*.—The candidate for initiation was prepared by numerous lustrations with fire, water, and honey. The number of probations he had to pass through was very great, and ended with a fast of fifty days' continuance. These trials had to be endured in a subterranean cave, where he was condemned to perpetual silence and total solitude. This novitiate in some instances was attended with fatal effects, in others the candidate became partially or wholly deranged; those who surmounted the trials were eligible to the highest honours. At the expiration of the novitiate, the candidate was brought forth into the cavern of initiation, where he was armed with enchanted armour by his guide, who was the representative of Simorgh, a monstrous griffin (28), and an important agent in the machinery of Persian mythology, and furnished with talismans, that he might be ready to encounter all the hideous monsters raised up by the evil spirits to impede his progress. Introduced into an inner apartment, he was purified with fire and water, and put through the seven stages of initiation. First, he beheld a deep and dangerous vault from the precipice where he stood, into which a single false step might throw him down to the "throne of dreadful necessity"—the first three properties of Nature. Groping his way through the mazes of the gloomy cavern, he soon beheld the sacred fire at intervals flash through its recesses and illuminate his path; he also heard the distant yelling of ravenous beasts—the roaring of lions, the howling of



wolves, the fierce and threatening bark of dogs. But his attendant, who maintained a profound silence, hurried him forward towards the quarter whence these sounds proceeded, and at the sudden opening of a door he found himself in a den of wild beasts, dimly lighted with a single lamp. He was immediately attacked by the initiated in the forms of lions, tigers, wolves, griffins, and other monstrous beasts, from whom he seldom escaped unhurt. Thence he passed into another cavern, shrouded in darkness, where he heard the terrific roaring of thunder, and saw vivid and continuous flashes of lightning, which in streaming sheets of fire rendered visible the flitting shades of avenging genii, resenting his intrusion into their chosen abodes. To restore the candidate a little, he was next conducted into another apartment, where his excited feelings were soothed with melodious music and the flavour of grateful perfumes. On his expressing his readiness to proceed through the remaining ceremonies, a signal was given by his conductor, and three priests immediately made their appearance, one of whom cast a living serpent into his bosom as a token of regeneration (57); and, a private door having been opened, there issued forth such howlings and cries of lamentation and dismay, as struck him with new and indescribable emotions of terror. On turning his eyes to the place whence these noises proceeded, he beheld exhibited in every appalling form the torments of the wicked in Hades. Thus he was passed through the devious labyrinth consisting of seven spacious vaults, connected by winding galleries, each opening with a narrow stone portal, the scene of some perilous adventure, until he reached the Sacellum, or Holy of Holies, which was brilliantly illuminated, and which sparkled with gold and precious stones. A splendid sun and starry system moved in accordance with delicious music. The archimagus sat in the east on a throne of burnished gold, crowned with a rich diadem decorated with myrtle boughs, and habited in a tunic of bright cerulean hue; round him were assembled the præsules and dispensers of the mysteries. By these the novice was received with congratulations, and after having entered into the usual engagements for keeping secret the rites of Zoroaster, the sacred words were entrusted to him, of which the Tetractys, or name of God, was the chief. The Tetractys of Pythagoras is analogous to the Jewish Tetragrammaton, or name of the Deity in four letters. The number four was considered the most perfect, because in the first four properties of





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## II

### THE MITHRAICS

29. *Mysteries of Mithras*.—Upon the trunk of a religion so spiritual and hostile to idolatry, which undertook iconoclastic expeditions into Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, and Libya, which vindicated the pure worship of God, destroying by means of the sword of Cambyzes the Egyptian priesthood, which overthrew the temples and idols of Greece, which gave to the Israelites the Pharisees, which appears so simple and pure as to have bestowed on the Parsees the appellation of the Puritans of antiquity, and on Cyrus that of the Anointed of the Lord—on this trunk there were afterwards ingrafted idolatrous branches, as perhaps the Brahminic, and certainly the Mithraic worship, the origin of which latter Dupuis places at 4500 years before Christ.

30. *Origin of Mithraic Worship*.—Mithras is a beneficent genius presiding over the sun, the most powerful of the twenty-eight *izads*, or spirits of light, invoked together with the sun, and not at first confounded with it; the chief mediator and intercessor between Oromazes and man. But in course of time the conception of this Mithras became perverted, and he usurped the attributes of divinity. Such usurpation of the rank of the superior Deity on the part of the inferior is of frequent occurrence in mythology; it suffices to refer to Siva and Vishnu in India, Serapis in Egypt, Jupiter in Greece. The perversion was rendered easy by confounding the symbol with the thing symbolised, the genius of the sun with the sun itself, which alone remained in the language, since the modern Persian name of the sun (*mihr*) represents the regular modification of the Zend *Mithras*.

The Persian Mithras must not be confounded with that of India, for it is undoubted that another Mithras, different from the Zendic, from the most ancient times was the object of a special mysterious worship, and that the initiated knew him as the sun. Taking the letters of the Greek word “Meithras” at their numerical value, we obtain the



number 365, the days of the year. The same holds good of "Abraxas," the name which Basilides gave to the Deity, and further of "Belenos," the name given to the sun in Gaul.

31. *Dogmas, &c.*—On the Mithraic monuments we find representations of the globe of the sun, the club and bull, symbols of the highest truth, the highest creative activity, the highest vital power. Such a trinity agrees with that of Plato, which consists of the Supreme Good, the Word, and the Soul of the World; with that of Hermes Trismegistus, consisting of Light, Intelligence, and Soul; with that of Porphyry, which consists of Father, Word, and Supreme Soul.

According to Herodotus, Mithras became the Mylitta of Babylon, the Assyrian Venus, to whom was paid an obscene worship as to the female principle of creation, the goddess of fecundity, of life; one perhaps with Anaitis, the Armenian goddess.

The worship of Persian Mithras, or Apollo, spread over Italy<sup>1</sup>—at Rome, in fact, it superseded the Greek and Roman gods—Gaul, Germany, Britain; and expiring polytheism opposed to the sun Christ, the sun Mithras.

32. *Rites of Initiation.*—The sanctuaries of this worship were always subterranean, and in each sanctuary was placed a ladder with seven steps, by which one ascended to the mansions of felicity. The initiations into this degree were similar to those detailed in the foregoing section, but, if possible, more severe than into any other, and few passed through all the tests. The festival of the god was held towards the middle of the month of Mihr (October), and the probationer had to undergo long and severe trials before he was admitted to the full knowledge of the mysteries.

The first degree was inaugurated with purifying lustrations, and a sign was set on the neophyte's brow, whilst he offered to the god a loaf and a cup of water. A crown was presented to him on the point of a sword, and he put it on his head saying, "Mithras is my crown."

In the second degree the aspirant put on armour to meet

<sup>1</sup> Underneath the church of St. Clement, at Rome, a singularly well-preserved temple of Mithras was discovered some years ago. When the monk who had, on my visit to Rome, shown me the church above, said that he would now take me down to the pagan temple of Mithras, I could not help saying to myself, "If you but knew it, Mithras is above as well as below!" A well-preserved temple of Mithras was discovered at Ostia in 1886, displaying in mosaics all the symbols of the worship of the Persian sun-god.



giants and monsters, and a wild chase took place in the subterranean caves. The priests and officers of the temple, disguised as lions, tigers, leopards, bears, wolves, and other wild beasts, attacked the candidate with fierce howlings. In these sham fights the aspirant ran great personal danger, though sometimes the priests caught a Tartar. Thus we are told that the Emperor Commodus on his initiation carried the joke too far, and slew one of the priests who had assailed him in the form of a wild beast.

In the next degree he put on a mantle on which were painted the signs of the zodiac. A curtain then concealed him from the sight of all; but this being withdrawn, he appeared surrounded by frightful griffins. After passing through other trials, if his courage did not fail him, he was hailed as a "Lion of Mithras," in allusion to the zodiacal sign in which the sun attained his greatest power. We meet with the same idea in the degree of Master Mason. The grand secret was then imparted. What was it? At this distance of time it is difficult to decide, but we may assume that the priests communicated to him the most authentic sacerdotal traditions, the best accredited theories concerning the origin of the universe, and the attributes, perfections, and works of Oromazes. In fact, the Mithraic mysteries represent the progress of darkness to light. According to Guignault, Mithras is love; with regard to the Eternal, he is the son of mercy; with regard to Oromazes and Ahrimanes, the fire of love.

33. *Thammuz*.—The ceremonies connected with the myth of Thammuz, the Chaldean sun-god, were another phase of solar worship. M. Lenormant was the first to demonstrate, from the Assyrian tablets, that Thammuz was the prototype of Adonis, and of all the subsequent sun-gods worshipped in various countries and under various names. On those tablets also is found the story of Istar, the prototype of Astarte, Isis, and the other female deities, who afterwards, under various names, represented cosmically the female principle, and astronomically the moon. The great festival of Thammuz was held at the summer solstice (even now in the Jewish calendar the month of July goes by the name of Tamuz); it lasted six days, and in the functions ascribed to each day we find a curious agreement with the corresponding properties of eternal Nature (11). For the first day was a day of rest, motionless, inactive; the second and third days celebrated the struggle of the imprisoned life to become free—they were days of grief and suffering; the fourth day was dedicated



to the conquest over lions and serpents; that is to say, the fire; the fourth property began the conquest of the first three or dark properties; the fifth day was considered favourable for sacrifice, the happy influence of the newly-risen sun, or light, became perceptible; and on the sixth, the conjunction of Sol with Istar was celebrated with joyous songs. The eighth chapter of Ezekiel comprises the day of mourning and that of rejoicing at the recovery of Tammuz (107).

There is one circumstance connected with the story of Istar referred to above, which though not strictly within the scope of this work, is yet of so striking a character that the reader will readily excuse my referring to it. That story is comprised within a short poem entitled "Istar's Descent into Hell." Its opening lines are:

"Towards the country without return, the land of putrefaction,  
Istar, the daughter of Sin, has set her mind.

. . . . .

Towards the dwelling, into which you enter, whence never to issue  
again.

Towards the path from which there is no return,  
Towards the habitation at whose entrance all light is withdrawn."

Who, on reading these lines, is not inevitably reminded of the "Inferno" of Dante, who, of course, never had heard of this Chaldean poem?

Another remark, which may fitly be introduced here, has reference to Tammuz. In Chinese his name is Tomos; and to this circumstance is due the fable that St. Thomas had been in India and China. The first Roman Catholic missionaries took Tomos for Thomas, who had there preached the Gospel; wherefore the first Christians in those countries called themselves the Christians of St. Thomas, telling wonderful stories of the doings of St. Thomas, and that at last he was put to death by the Brahmins, whose trade he spoiled.



### III

## BRAHMINS AND GYMNOSOPHISTS

34. *Vulgar Creed of India.*—The Indian religion, whether we look on it as an adulteration of Magism, or as the common trunk of all Asiatic theosophy, offers so boundless a wealth of deities, that no other in this respect can approach it. This wealth is an infallible sign of the mental poverty and grossness of the people, who, ignorant of the laws of Nature, and terrified at its phenomena, acknowledged as many supernatural beings as there were mysteries for them. The Brahmins reckon up 300,000 gods—a frightful host, that have kept Indian life servile and stagnant, perpetuated the divisions of caste, upheld ignorance, and weighed like an incubus on the breasts of their deluded dupes, and turned existence into a nightmare of grief and servitude.

35. *Secret Doctrines.*—But in the secret sanctuary these vain phantoms disappear, and the initiated are taught to look upon them as countless accidents and outward manifestations of the First Cause. The Brahmins did not consider the people fit to apprehend and preserve in its purity the religion of the spirit, hence they veiled it in these figures, and also invented a language incomprehensible to the vulgar, but which the investigations of Oriental scholars have enabled us to read, and to perceive that the creed of India is one of the purest ever known to man. Thus in the second chapter of the first part of the “Vishnu Purana,” it is written: “God is without form, epithet, definition, or description; free from defect, incapable of annihilation, change, grief, or pain. We can only say that He, that is, the Eternal Being, is God. Vulgar men think that God is in the water; the more enlightened, in celestial bodies; the ignorant, in wood and stone; but the wise, in the universal mind.” The “Mahanirvana” says: “Numerous figures, corresponding with the nature of divers powers and quality, were invented for the benefit of those who are wanting in sufficient understanding.” Again, “We have no notion of how the Eternal



Being is to be described; he is above all the mind can apprehend, above Nature. . . . That Only One that was never defined by any language, and gave to language all its meaning, he is the Supreme Being . . . and no partial thing that man worships. . . . This Being extends over all things. He is mere spirit without corporeal form; without extension of any size, unimpressionable, and without any organs; he is pure, perfect, omniscient, omnipresent, the ruler of the intellect . . . he is the soul of the whole universe."

36. *Hindoo Cosmogony*.—The Hindoo cosmogony certainly is the most ancient we possess; the laws of Menu, embodying it, were written before Moses was born, and may thus describe the Creation.

"This universe existed only in the first divine idea, yet unexpanded, as if involved in darkness. . . . Then the sole, self-existing power . . . appeared with undiminished glory, expanding his idea."

"He, having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first created the waters."

"From that which Is, the first cause, . . . was produced the divine male."

"He framed the heaven above, and the earth beneath; in the midst he placed the subtile ether."

"He framed all creatures."

"He, too, first assigned to all creatures distinct names."

"He gave being to time, and the divisions of time to the stars also and the planets."

"Having divided his own substance, the mighty power became half male, half female."

"He, . . . having created this universe, was again absorbed in the spirit, changing the time of energy for the time of repose."

It will be seen that the author of Genesis has given us a faint echo of those grand utterances, as a child feebly attempting to repeat the teachings of a sage.

37. *Buddhism*.—A dangerous antagonist to the Brahman priesthood, and the literature and traditions, on which they rested their claims to power, sprang up in Buddhism. Buddha preached the equality of all men, and denied the value, much more the necessity, of the Vedic system. The new gospel of universal charity and brotherhood was eagerly received by men, who were groaning under the yoke of Brahmanical tyranny, and it found an ally in the half-expressed scepticism of some of the Vedic schools of philosophy. It was in the south of India especially that Buddha's



doctrines found a ready welcome, while Ceylon became converted to Buddhism as early as 240 B.C. In India, Buddhism was exterminated by its sanguinary persecution by the Brahmins. Ceylon is now the only part of India in which the religion of Buddha still survives.

38. *Buddhistic Teaching*.—Buddha, or to give him his real name, Sakyamuni—for Buddha is a title, and means a “Sage”—is said to have been born in the sixth century B.C. But of his real existence there is no proof; the most recent researches show that the story of Buddha is a solar myth, first told of Krishna, and afterwards transferred to Buddha. The most sacred Buddhist symbols, and the most frequent Buddhist similes, have their Vedic analogies, with the distinction that Brahminism resolves the individual into a (personal) god, Buddhism into the (universal) Nothing, or Nirvana. For Buddhism teaches that the original matter, or *prakriti*, is the only existing divine *per se*. In this matter there are immanent two forces, which produce two different conditions—quiescence and activity. In one state it remains quiescent with consciousness in an absolute inactive vacuity, and this is the state of bliss of the original Nothing. In another state the matter steps out of itself by its activity, and is shaped into limited forms. In doing so it loses its consciousness, which it re-acquires in becoming man, and there is in this manner an original and a born consciousness. The aim of man is to reproduce the original consciousness. On arriving at it he learns that there is nothing real beside the original matter; his spirit then becomes identical with the original conscious Nothing; that is to say, his individual soul, set free from the body, in which it was imprisoned, returns into the universal soul, just as the solar light, imprisoned in a piece of wood, when this is burnt, returns into the universal ocean of light. On this doctrine was afterwards engrafted the false belief in the metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, and the misanthropic system of self-renunciation, which in India led to the self-torturings of fakirs and other fanatics; and which finds its analogies in Christian communities in the asceticism of fasts, penances, macerations, solitude, flagellation, and all the mad practices of monks, anchorets, and other religious zealots.

39. *Asceticism*.—This asceticism, founded on the above notion, viz., that the Absolute or All is the real existence, and that individual phenomena, especially matter in all its forms, are really nothing, *i.e.*, mere phantasms, and to be





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by climate and partly by the same circumstances that gave rise to Indian fetishism, we cannot help admiring that colony of thinkers which long resisted the progress of despotism, and whose destruction was the revenge of intolerance and tyranny.

41. *Places for celebrating Mysteries.*—The mysteries, as in other countries, were celebrated in subterranean caverns, here excavated in the solid rock, and surpassing in grandeur of conception and finish of execution anything to be seen elsewhere. The temples of Elephanta, Ellora, and Salsette, consisting of large halls and palaces, chapels, pagodas, cells for thousands of priests and pilgrims, adorned with pillars and columns, obelisks, bas-reliefs, gigantic statues of deities, elephants, and other sacred animals, all carved out of the living rock, are especially noteworthy. In the sacellum, only accessible to the initiated, the supreme Deity was represented by the lingam, which was used more or less by all ancient nations to represent His creative power, though in India it was also typified by the petal and calyx of the lotus.

42. *Initiation.*—The periods of initiation were regulated by the increase and decrease of the moon, and the mysteries were divided into four degrees, and the candidate might be initiated into the first at the early age of eight years. He was then prepared by a Brahmin, who became his spiritual guide for the second degree, the probationary ceremonies of which consisted in incessant occupation in prayers, fastings, ablutions, and the study of astronomy. In the hot season he sat exposed to five fires, four blazing around him, with the sun above; in the rains he stood uncovered; in the cold season he wore wet clothing. To participate in the high privileges which the mysteries were believed to confer, he was sanctified by the sign of the cross, and subjected to the probation of the pastos, the tomb of the sun, the coffin of Hiram, darkness,—hell, all symbolical of the first three properties (11). His purification being completed, he was led at night to the cavern of initiation. This was brilliantly illuminated, and there sat the three chief hierophants, in the east, west, and south, representing the gods Brahma, who was painted red to represent substance, Vishnu, painted blue to symbolise space, Siva, painted white, in contrast to the black night of eternity, surrounded by attendant mystagogues, dressed in appropriate vestments. The initiation was begun by an apostrophe to the sun, addressed by the name of *Pooroosh*, here meaning the vital soul, or portion of the universal spirit of Brahm; and the candidate, after some



further preliminary ceremonies, was made to circumambulate the cavern three times, and afterwards conducted through seven dark caverns, during which period the wailings of Mahadeva for the loss of Siva were represented by dismal howlings. The usual paraphernalia of flashes of light, of dismal sounds and horrid phantoms, were produced to terrify and confuse the aspirant. Having arrived at the last cavern, the sacred conch was blown, the folding doors thrown open, and the candidate was admitted into an apartment filled with dazzling lights, ornamented with statues and emblematic figures richly decorated with gems, and scented with the most fragrant perfumes. This sacellum was intended to represent Paradise, and was actually so called in the temple of Ellora. With eyes riveted on the altar, the candidate was taught to expect the descent of the Deity in the bright pyramidal fire that blazed upon it; and in a moment of enthusiasm, thus artificially produced, the candidate might indeed persuade himself that he actually beheld Brahm seated on the lotus, with his four heads and arms, representing the four elements and the four quarters of the globe, and bearing in his hands the emblems of eternity and power, the circle and fire. The symbol of initiation was a cord of seven threads knotted thrice three.

The reader will have noticed in one case I say Brahm and in the other Brahma; the latter is the body of the former, which is the Eternal Life. The terms correspond with those of Abyssal Deity and Virgin Sophia of Christian theosophy.

43. *The ineffable name Aum.*—The candidate was now supposed to be regenerated, and was invested with the white robe, tiara, and the sacred belt; a cross was marked on his forehead, and a tau (53) upon his breast; the salagram or marginal black stone (18), to insure to him the perfection of Vishnu, and the serpent stone, an antidote against the bite of serpents, were delivered to him; and lastly, he was entrusted with the sacred name, which signified the solar fire, and united in its comprehensive meaning the great Trimurti, or combined principle on which the existence of all things is founded. This word was OM, or in a trilateral form AUM, to represent the creative, preserving, and destroying power of the Deity, personified in Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, the symbol of which was an equilateral triangle. To this name, as the Royal Arch Masons to that of Jabulon, they attributed the most wonderful powers; and it could only be the subject of silent but pleasing contemplation, for its pronunciation was said to make earth and heaven tremble, and even the



angels of heaven to quake with fear. The emblems around and the aporreta of the mysteries were then explained, and the candidate instructed that by means of the knowledge of OM he was to become one with the Deity. With the Persians the syllable HOM meant the tree of life, a tree and a man at the same time, the dwelling-place of the soul of Zoroaster; and with them also, as with the Indians, it was forbidden on pain of death to reveal it. In this secret name, involving the rejection of polytheism, and comprising the knowledge of Nature, we have the golden thread that unites ancient and modern secret societies.

44. *The Lingam*.—One of the emblems found in the sacellum, and which in fact is found everywhere on the walls of Indian temples, was the lingam, which represented the male principle, and which passed from India to Egypt, Greece, and Scandinavia. The worship of this symbol could not but lead to great abuses, especially as regarded the gymnosophists.

45. *The Lotus*.—The lotus, the lily of the Nile, held sacred also in Egypt, was the great vegetable amulet of eastern nations. The Indian gods were always represented as seated on it. It was an emblem of the soul's freedom when liberated from its earthly tabernacle, the body; for it takes root in the mud deposited at the bottom of a river, vegetates from the germ to a perfect plant, and afterwards rising proudly above the waves, it floats in air, as if independent of any extraneous aid. It is placed on a golden table, as the symbol of Siva, on the top of Mount Meru, the holy mountain of India, the centre of the earth, worshipped by Hindoos, Tartars, Montchurians, and Mongols. It is supposed to be in Northern India, to have three peaks, composed of gold, silver, and iron, on which reposes the trine deity Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Geographically, this mountain is evidently the tableland of Tartary, whose southern boundary is formed by the Himalayas. This custom of accounting a three-peaked mountain holy was not confined to India alone, but prevailed also among the Jews. Thus Olivet, near Jerusalem, had three peaks, which were accounted the residence of the Deity—Chemosh, Milcom, Ashtoreth (2 Kings xxiii. 13). In Zechariah (xiv. 4) the feet of the Almighty are placed on the two outer peaks of this mountain during the threatened destruction of Jerusalem; while the mountain itself is made to split asunder at the centre peak from east to west, leaving a great valley between the divided parts.

46. *The Jains*.—They form a Buddhistic sect, but differ



from the Buddhists by having retained the division of castes; they agree, however, with them in denying the divine authority of the Vedas. The Jains are divided into four castes, the first of which is that of the Brahmens, or priests, who pass through a ceremony of *upanayana*, or initiation, but of what it consists we have no reliable information. The term *jain*, or *jina*, means a conqueror, and is used by genuine Buddhists in that sense; but with the latter man becomes a Jina through meditation, whilst with the Jains he becomes a “conqueror” through austerity. They have a magnificent temple, the most superb of all temples in India, on Mount Abu, in the territory of Serohee, in Rajpootana. It is built of marble, in the form of a cross, and is said to have been fourteen years building, and to have cost £18,000,000. It is a celebrated place of pilgrimage for the Jains, who also have a large rock-temple at Karlee, in the Presidency of Bombay.



## IV

### EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES

47. *Antiquity of Egyptian Civilisation.*—All Egypt is an initiation. A long and narrow strip of land, watered by immense floods and surrounded by immense solitudes—such is Egypt. Very high and steep rocks protected it from the incursions of the nomadic tribes, and thus a valley, a river, and a race sufficed to create, if not the most ancient, at least one of the most ancient and illustrious cultures, a world of marvels, at a time when Europeans went naked, and dyed their skins, as Cæsar found the ancient Britons, and when the Greeks, armed with bows and arrows, led a nomadic existence. The Egyptians, many thousand years before the Trojan war, had invented writing, as is proved, for instance, by the hieratic papyrus of the time of Rameses II., full of recipes and directions for the treatment of a great variety of diseases, and now in the Berlin Museum. They also knew many comforts of life, which our pride calls modern; and the Greek writers, whom the Egyptian priests called *children*, are full of recollections of that mysterious land, recording the father Nile, Thebes with its hundred gates, the Pyramids, Lake Meroe, the Labyrinth, the Sphinx, and the statue of Memnon saluting the rising sun.

48. *Temples of Ancient Egypt.*—Egyptian chronology, the reproof and paragon of all others, is graven on imperishable monuments. But those obelisks, sacred to the sun, by their conical form like that of the flame; those labyrinths; those human-headed birds, typifying the intelligent soul; those scarabei, signifying creative power; those sphinxes, representing force, the lion or sun, and man; those serpents, expressing life and eternity (70); those strange combinations of forms; those hieroglyphics—they long remained secrets for us, and perhaps always were a secret for the Egyptian people that in fear and silence erected the pyramids—all these symbols constituted the language of one of the vastest and most elaborate secret societies that ever existed. Pene-



trating into those gigantic temples which seem the work of an extinct race, different from ours, as fossil quadrupeds are different from those now living; traversing those cloisters, which after many windings lead to the innermost sanctuary, we are seized by a singular thought—that of the silence and solitude which ever reigned within those edifices into which the people were not allowed to penetrate; only the few were admitted, and we moderns are the first profane that have set foot within the hallowed precincts. The temple of Luxor is the vastest on earth—six propylæa with long files of columns, and colossi and obelisks and sphinxes; six cloisters—every new generation of kings for seventy centuries added some new portion and inscribed on the walls the history of its deeds, and every new addition removed the faithful further from the seat of the god; the marvel and mystery increased. The sixth propylæum is not finished; it is a chapter of history broken off in the middle, and will never be completed. The walls and pillars of the temples were covered with religious and astronomical representations, and from the fact of many of these pictures showing human beings in various states of suffering and under torture, it has been assumed that the Egyptian ritual was cruel, like the Mexican (85–89); but such is not the case; the pictures are only representations of the punishments said to be inflicted on the wicked in another life.

49. *Egyptian Priests and Kings.*—The priestly caste, possessing all the learning, ruled first and alone; but in its own defence it armed a portion of the population; the rest it kept down by superstition, or disarmed and weakened it by corruption. To Plato, who saw it from a distance, this government seemed stupendous, and he idealised it; it was for him the “city of God,” the pattern republic. Nevertheless, as was inevitable, might rebelled against doctrine, the soldiery broke the reign of the priesthood, and by the side of the pontiffs arose the kings, or to speak more correctly, the two series proceeded in parallels; that of the priests was not set aside, it had its palaces, the temples, strong like fortresses, along the Nile, which were at the same time splendid abodes, agricultural establishments, commercial dépôts, and caravan stations; its members appointed and ruled the kings themselves, regulating the most minute acts of their daily conduct; they were the depositaries of the highest offices, and as the learned savans, magistrates, and physicians, enjoyed the first honours. Their chief colleges were at Thebes, Memphis, Heliopolis, and Saïs; they possessed a great



portion of the land, which they caused to be cultivated; paid no taxes, but collected tithes. They formed indeed the elect, privileged, and only free portion of the nation.

50. *Exoteric and Esoteric Doctrines*.—The priests were no followers of the idolatrous faith of the people; but to have undeceived the latter would have been dangerous for themselves. The true doctrine of the unity of God, therefore, which was their secret, was only imparted to those that after many trials had been initiated into the mysteries. Their doctrines, like those of all other priesthoods, were therefore exoteric and esoteric; and the mysteries were of two kinds, the greater and the less, the former being the mysteries of Osiris and Serapis, the latter those of Isis. The mysteries of Osiris were celebrated at the autumnal equinox; those of Serapis at the summer solstice; and those of Isis at the vernal equinox.

51. *Egyptian Mythology*.—Though want of space does not allow me fully to enter upon the vast subject of Egyptian mythology, yet a few words thereon are necessary to render its bearing on the mysteries clear, and also to show its connection with many of the rites of modern freemasonry.

That all the symbols and ceremonies of all the ancient creeds originally had a deep and universal cosmic meaning, has already been shown (9, 10); but at the time when the mysteries were most flourishing that meaning was to a great extent lost, and a merely astronomical one substituted for it, as will be seen from the following explanations:—

Osiris, represented in Egypt by a sceptre surmounted by an eye, to signify him that rules and sees, symbolises the sun. Osiris is evidently derived from *Iswara*, an epithet of Brahma, and means the Supreme Lord; it is therefore a title, and not a proper name. The same adventures are attributed to Osiris that are related of Brahma. Osiris is killed by Typhon, a serpent engendered by the mud of the Nile. But Typhon is a transposition of Python, derived from the Greek word *πύθω*, “to putrefy,” and means nothing else but the noxious vapours arising from steaming mud, and thus concealing the sun; wherefore in the Greek mythology Apollo—another name for the sun—is said to have slain Python with his arrows, that is to say, dispelled the vapours by his rays. Osiris having been killed by Python—to which, however, the wider meaning of the sun’s imaginary disappearance, or death, during the winter season, was attached—Isis, his wife, or the moon, goes in search of him, and at last finds his body, cut into fourteen pieces;





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die upon the altar of the sun, and that out of its ashes there arose a little worm, that gave birth to a bird perfectly like the preceding.

53. *The Cross.* — Among the astronomical symbols we must not omit the Cross. This sign really signifies the fire, as we have seen (II, ix.), but in Egypt it was simply the Nilometer, consisting of an upright pole with a cross-bar, that was raised or lowered according to the swelling or decrease of the river. It was frequently surmounted by a circle, typifying the deity that governs this important operation. Now, the overflow of the Nile was considered the salvation of Egypt, and hence the sign came to be looked upon with great veneration, and to have occult virtues attributed to it, such as the power of averting evil; wherefore the Egyptians hung small figures of the cross, or rather the letter T, with a ring attached to it, the *crux ansata*, round the necks of their children and of sick persons; they applied it to the string or fillets with which they wrapped up their mummies, where we still find it; it became, in fact, an amulet (*amolitio malorum*). Other nations adopted the custom, and hence the cross or the letter T, whereby it was symbolised throughout the ancient world, was supposed to be a sign or letter of more than ordinary significance. In the mysteries, the *crux ansata* was the symbol of eternal life. But the cross was worshipped as an astronomical sign in other countries. We have seen that in India the neophyte was sanctified by the sign of the cross (42), which in most ancient nations was a symbol of the universe, pointing as it does to the four quarters of the compass; and the erection of temples on the cruciform principle is as old as architecture itself. The two great pagodas of Benares and Mathura are erected in the form of vast crosses, of which each wing is equal in extent, as is also the pyramidal temple of New Grange in Ireland. But the older and deeper meaning of the cross is shown in (II); it refers to the fire, and the double quality everywhere observable in Nature. The triple tau is the Royal Arch Mason's badge.

54. *Places of Initiation.* — In Egypt and other countries (India, Media, Persia, Mexico) the place of initiation was a pyramid erected over subterranean caverns. The pyramids, in fact, may be looked upon, considering their size, shape, and solidity, as artificial mountains. Their form not only symbolically represented the ascending flame, but also had a deeper origin in the conical form, which is the primitive figure of all natural products. And the Great Pyramid, the



tomb of Osiris, was erected in such a position, and to such a height, that at the spring and autumnal equinoxes the sun would appear exactly at midday upon the summit of the pyramid, seeming to rest upon this immense pedestal, when his worshippers, extended at the base, would contemplate the great Osiris as well when he descended into the tomb as when he arose from it triumphant.

55. *Process of Initiation.*—The candidate, conducted by a guide, was led to a deep, dark well or shaft in the pyramid, and, provided with a torch, he descended into it by means of a ladder affixed to the side. Arrived at the bottom, he saw two doors—one of them barred, the other yielding to the touch of his hand. Passing through it, he beheld a winding gallery, whilst the door behind him shut with a clang that reverberated through the vaults. Inscriptions like the following met his eye: “Whoso shall pass along this road alone, and without looking back, shall be purified by fire, water, and air; and overcoming the fear of death, shall issue from the bowels of the earth to the light of day, preparing his soul to receive the mysteries of Isis.” Proceeding onward, the candidate arrived at another iron gate, guarded by three armed men, whose shining helmets were surmounted by emblematic animals, the Cerberus of Orpheus. Here the candidate had offered to him the last chance of returning, if so inclined. Electing to go forward, he underwent the trial by fire, by passing through a hall filled with inflammable substances in a state of combustion, and forming a bower of fire. The floor was covered with a grating of red-hot iron bars, leaving, however, narrow interstices where he might safely place his feet. Having surmounted this obstacle, he has to encounter the trial by water. A wide and dark canal, fed by the waters of the Nile, arrests his progress. Placing the flickering lamp upon his head, he plunges into the canal, and swims to the opposite bank, where the greatest trial, that by air, awaits him. He lands upon a platform leading to an ivory door, bounded by two walls of brass, into each of which is inserted an immense wheel of the same metal. He in vain attempts to open the door, when, espying two large iron rings affixed to it, he takes hold of them; but suddenly the platform sinks from under him, a chilling blast of wind extinguishes his lamp, the two brazen wheels revolve with formidable rapidity and stunning noise, whilst he remains suspended by the two rings over the fathomless abyss. But ere he is exhausted the platform returns, the ivory door opens, and he sees before him a



magnificent temple, brilliantly illuminated, and filled with the priests of Isis clothed in the mystic insignia of their offices, the hierophant at their head. But the ceremonies of initiation do not cease here. The candidate is subjected to a series of fastings, which gradually increase for nine times nine days. During this period a rigorous silence is imposed upon him, which if he preserve inviolate, he is at length fully initiated into the esoteric doctrines of Isis. He is led before the triple statue of Isis, Osiris, and Horus,—another symbol of the sun,—where he swears never to publish the things revealed to him in the sanctuary, and first drinks the water of Lethe, presented to him by the high priest, to forget all he ever heard in his unregenerate state, and afterwards the water of Mnemosyne, to remember all the lessons of wisdom imparted to him in the mysteries. He is next introduced into the most secret part of the sacred edifice, where a priest instructs him in the application of the symbols found therein. He is then publicly announced as a person who has been initiated into the mysteries of Isis—the first degree of the Egyptian rites.

56. *Mysteries of Serapis*.—These constituted the second degree. We know but little of them, and Apuleius only slightly touches upon them. When Theodosius destroyed the temple of Serapis there were discovered subterraneous passages and engines wherein and wherewith the priests tried the candidates. Porphyry, in referring to the greater mysteries, quotes a fragment of Cheremones, an Egyptian priest, which imparts an astronomical meaning to the whole legend of Osiris, thus confirming what has been said above. And Herodotus, in describing the temple of Minerva, where the rites of Osiris were celebrated, and speaking of a tomb placed in the most secret recess, as in Christian churches there are calvaries behind the altar, says: “It is the tomb of a god whose name I dare not mention.” Calvary is derived from the Latin word *calvus*, “bald,” and figuratively “arid,” “dried up;” pointing to the decay of Nature in the winter season.

57. *Mysteries of Osiris*.—These formed the third degree or summit of Egyptian lay initiation, for there was yet the higher initiation into the priesthood, described in the following section. In these the legend of the murder of Osiris by his brother Typhon was represented, and the god was personated by the candidate. (As we shall see hereafter, the Freemasons exactly copy this procedure in the master’s degree, substituting for Osiris Hiram Abiff, one of



the three grand-masters at the building of Solomon's temple.) The perfectly initiated candidate was called *Al-om-jak*, from the name of the Deity (43), and the dogma of the unity of God was the chief secret imparted to him. How great and how dangerous a secret it was may easily be seen when it is borne in mind that centuries after the institution of the mysteries, Socrates lost his life for promulgating the same doctrine. According to Iamblichus, all initiated into the highest esoteric mysteries became, as it were, dead to their own selves; they were absorbed in the Deity; they enjoyed the beatific vision. Neither fire nor steel could hurt them; no natural obstacles could stand in their way; the afflatus of the Divine spirit encompassed them. We have, in fact, in those ancient pagan imaginations all the fancied privileges of the Christian mystics, all the raptures of canonised saints of the Roman Catholic Church.

58. *Isis*.—The many names assumed by Isis have already been alluded to. She was also represented with different emblems, all betokening her manifold characteristics. The lucid round, the snake, the ears of corn, and the sistrum represent the titular deities of the Hecataean (Hecate, Goddess of Night), Bacchic, Eleusinian, and Ionic mysteries; that is, the mystic rites in general for whose sake the allegory was invented. The black palla in which she is wrapped, embroidered with a silver moon and stars, denotes the time in which the mysteries were celebrated, namely, in the dead of night. Her names, to return to them, are given in the following words, put into her mouth by Apuleius in his "Golden Ass," which is a description of the mysteries under the guise of a fable: "Behold, Lucius, I, moved by thy prayers, am present with thee; I who am Nature, the parent of things, the queen of all the elements, the primordial progeny of the ages, the supreme of divinities, the sovereign of the spirits of the dead, the first of the celestials, the first and universal substance, the uniform and multiform aspect of the uncreated essence; I who rule by my nod the luminous summits of the heavens, the breezes of the sea, and the silence of the realms beneath, and whose one divinity the whole orb of the earth venerates under a manifold form, by different rites, and a variety of appellations. Hence the early Phrygians call me Pessinuntica, mother of the gods; the Attic aborigines, Cecropian Minerva; the floating Cyprians, Paphian Venus; the arrow-bearing Cretans, Diana Dictynna; the three-tongued Sicilians, Stygian



Proserpine ; and the Eleusinians, the ancient goddess Ceres. Some also call me Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate, and others Rhamnusia. The Ethiopians, the Arii, and the Egyptians, skilled in ancient learning, honour me with rites peculiarly appropriate, and call me by my true name, Queen Isis." From this it is quite clear that Isis was not simply the moon to the initiated. In the sanctuary the multifarious forms are reduced to unity ; the many idols are reduced to the one divinity—*i.e.*, primeval power and intelligence.



## CRATA REPOA, OR HIGHEST DEGREE OF EGYPTIAN INITIATION

59. *Preparation.*—But there was a still higher degree into which Egyptian kings and priests only were initiated. It was known by the above title. Whoso wished to enter this degree had to be specially recommended by one of the initiated. This was usually done by the king himself introducing the aspirant to the priests. These first directed him from Heliopolis to the priests at Memphis; thence he was sent to Thebes; eventually he was circumcised; then he was forbidden to eat pulse or fish and to drink wine, though in the higher degrees leave to do so was occasionally granted. He was then left for several months together in a subterranean cave to his own reflections, which he was invited to write down. Afterwards he was led into a passage, supported by Hermes' pillars, on which were graven moral sentences he had to learn by heart. As soon as he knew them, the Thesmophorus, or introducer, came to him, carrying in his hand a stout whip, to keep away the profane from the gate through which the aspirant was to pass. He was blindfolded, and his hands tied with cords.

60. *First Degree.*—The candidate having been led to the "Gate of Men," the Thesmophorus touched the shoulder of a Portophorus, or apprentice, who guarded the gate, which latter thereupon knocked at the gate, which was opened. On the aspirant's entrance he was questioned on various matters by the Hierophant, after which he was led about the Birantha in an artificial storm of wind, rain, thunder and lightning, and if he showed no signs of fear, Menies, the expounder, explained the laws of the Crata Repoa, to which he had to give his assent. He was then led before the Hierophant, before whom he had to kneel down on his bare knees, and, with a sword pointed at his throat, had to vow fidelity and secrecy, calling sun, moon, and stars to witness. His eyes were then unbandaged, and he was placed



between two spare pillars, called Betilies, where lay a ladder of seven steps, behind which were eight doors of different metals, of gradually increasing purity. The Hierophant then addressing those present as Mene Musæ, or Children of the Work of Celestial Investigation, exhorted them to govern their passions, and fix their thoughts upon God. The candidate was then instructed that the ladder, whose steps he had to ascend, was the symbol of the wanderings of the soul; he was told the causes of wind, thunder, and lightning; he was also instructed in anatomy and medicine, in the symbolical language, and the ordinary hieroglyphic writing. The Hierophant further gave him the password by which the initiated recognised one another, and which was Amoun, signifying secrecy; and with it was given the grip, a cap shaped like a pyramid, and an apron called Xylon. Around his neck he wore a kind of collar, fitting closely to the chest. He wore no other clothes, and it was his duty to guard the Gate of Men, whenever it came to his turn.

61. *Second Degree.*—The Portophorus having given proofs of proficiency, he was, after a long fast, taken into a dark chamber, called Endimion, meaning an invitation grotto. He now was raised to the degree of Neocoris. Handsome women brought him dainty food; they were the wives of the priests, who endeavoured to excite his love. If he resisted the temptation, the Thesmophorus again visited, and, having catechised him, led him into the assembly, where the Stolistæ, or water-bearer, poured water over him. Then the Thesmophorus threw a living serpent on him, and drew it away again from under the apron. The whole room was, moreover, full of serpents, to test the courage of the Neocoris. He was then led to two high pillars, between which stood a griffin, driving a wheel before him. The pillars symbolised east and west, the griffin the sun, and the wheel with four spokes the four seasons. He was taught the use of the level, and instructed in geometry and architecture. He received a rod, entwined by serpents, and the password Heve, meaning serpent, and was told the story of the fall of man. The sign consisted in crossing the arms over the chest. His duty was to wash the pillars.

62. *Third Degree, or The Gate of Death.*—On being initiated into this degree, the Neocoris received the name of Melanophoris; he was led into an anteroom, over the entrance to which was written: "Gate of Death." The room itself was full of representations of embalmed bodies and coffins. And





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torches and serpents, and attacking them, whilst crying "Panis!" The Thesmophorus encouraged him to defend himself bravely. At last he was taken prisoner by them, his eyes were bandaged, and a cord was put round his neck. Then they dragged him to the hall, where he was to be initiated into a new degree, and the spectres or shades disappeared. He was led into the assembly, his eyes were unbandaged, and he beheld a magnificent hall, hung round with fine paintings. The king and the demiurgos, or highest officer, were present. All wore their Alydei, an Egyptian order (Truth), consisting of a figure formed of sapphires. Around them were seated the Stolistes, the Hierostolista, or secretary, the Zacoris, or treasurer, and the Komastis, or master of feats. The Odos, or orator, then made a speech, congratulating the Christophorus—his new name—on his resolution. He was then given a drink, called Cyce (probably the same as the *κῶκεών*, a drink mixed of gruel, water, wine, milk, or honey), which he had to drink to the dregs. Then he was given the shield of Isis. He put on the boots of Anubis, and the cloak and cap of Orcus. He received a sword, with which he was to cut off the head of the person he was to meet in a cave, and to bring it to the king. Every member exclaimed, "Niobe, there is the cave of the enemy!" In the cave there was an exceedingly beautiful woman, who seemed to be alive, but was artificially formed of fine skins. The Christophorus had to seize her by the hair, and cut off her head, which he brought to the king, who praised him for his daring, and said he had cut off the head of the Gorgon, the wife of Typhon, who had been the cause of the death of Osiris. He received permission always to wear the dress which had been given to him, and his name was entered in a book as one of the judges of the land. He could freely communicate with the king, and received his daily board from the court. He also was invested with an order, which, however, he could only wear at the initiation of a Christophorus, and which represented Isis in the shape of an owl. He was further told that the name of the great lawgiver was Joa, which was also the password. The Christophori held chapters called Pyxon, at which the password was Sasychis, the name of an ancient Egyptian priest. He had to study the Ammonite language, the secret language, because he was now very near acquiring the whole secret.

64. *Fifth Degree: Balahate*.—The Christophorus was entitled to this degree: it could not be refused him. He was led into a hall, where a theatrical representation took place,



at which he was the only spectator. A Balahate, styled Orus, with other balahates, all carrying torches, went about the hall, as if seeking something. After a while Orus drew his sword. Typhon was seen sitting in a cave, surrounded with flames. Orus approached Typhon, who rose up; he had a hundred heads, and his body was covered with scales, and his arms were of extraordinary length. Nevertheless, Orus slew him. The new Balahate was then told that Typhon signified fire, one of the most terrible elements, without which, however, nothing could be done on earth. The password in this degree was Chymia, the instruction being in chemistry.

65. *Sixth Degree: Astronomers at the Gate of the Gods.*—The candidate, on entering the hall of assembly, was bound with cords or chains. The Thesmophorus then led him back to the Gate of Death, which had many steps, leading to a cave full of water. There he saw many corpses of traitors to the society. He was threatened with the same fate, and led back to take a fresh oath. He was then instructed in astronomy, and warned against astrology and horoscopy, which were detested as the sources of all idolatry and superstition. The professors of these false sciences had for their password the word Phœnix, at which the astronomers laughed. He was then conducted to the Gate of the Gods, which was opened, and he beheld all the gods painted on the walls. The Demiurgos told him their history, and showed him a list of all their members, scattered over the whole world. He was taught a priestly dance, symbolising the courses of the heavenly bodies. The word was Ibis, the symbol of watchfulness.

66. *Seventh Degree: Propheta.*—The last and highest degree, in which all the secrets were revealed. It could not be conferred without the consent of the king and of all the higher members of the order. Public processions were held, called Pamylach, the circumcision of Osiris, *i.e.*, of the tongue. When these were over, the members secretly left the city at night, and retired to some houses built in a square, and surrounded by pillars, by the sides of which were placed alternately a shield and a coffin, whose rooms were painted with representations of human life. These houses were called maneras, for the people believed them to be visited by the *manes* of departed men. On their arrival at these houses, the new member, now called prophet, or Saphenath Pancah, *i.e.*, a man who knows the secrets, was given a drink, called oimellas (probably consisting of wine and honey), and told that now



all trials were over. He received a cross of peculiar significance, which he was always to wear. He was clothed in a wide, white-striped dress, called *etangi*. His head was shaved; he wore a square cap. The usual sign was crossing his arms in his wide sleeves. He could peruse all the sacred books written in the Ammonite language, to which he had the key, which was called the Royal Beam. His greatest privilege was his having a vote in the election of a king. The password was Adon.

67. *Concluding Remarks.*—Such is the fanciful account of the Crata Repoa. I confess my ignorance of the meaning of these two mysterious words. The order itself seems not to have been known before the year 1785, when the account the reader has just been perusing was published in a German pamphlet of 32 pages (30 pages text) in 12mo, with no name of place or printer. Ragon, who gives a French translation of the above in his “*Franc-Maçonnerie: Rituel du grade de Maître*,” Paris, N.D., calls his translation an extract from a pamphlet of 114 pages in 8vo, taken from a large German MS. by Brother Köppen, with an interlinear translation into French, which was purchased by Brother Antoine Boilleul, and in 1821 edited by Brother Ragon. But as Ragon’s translation agrees word for word with the German pamphlet, published in 1785, the German MS. by Brother Köppen was either the original composition or a copy of it. Ragon supposes the Crata Repoa to be a concoction by learned Germans of all that is to be found in ancient writers on initiations. And the authorities on which the statements in the German pamphlet of 1785 are founded are given therein, and are: Porphyry, Herodotus, Iamblichus, Apuleius, Cicero, Plutarch, Eusebius, Arnobius, Diodorus Siculus, Tertullian, Heliodorus, Lucian, Rufinus, and some others.



## METAMORPHOSIS OF THE LEGEND OF ISIS

68. *Spread of Egyptian Mysteries.*—The irradiations of the mysteries of Egypt shine through and animate the secret doctrines of Phœnicia, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. Cadmus<sup>1</sup> and Inachus brought them into Greece at large, Orpheus into Thrace, Melampus into Argos, Trophonius into Bœotia, Minos into Crete, Cinyras into Cyprus, and Erechtheus into Athens. And as in Egypt the mysteries were dedicated to Isis and Osiris, so in Samothrace they were sacred to the mother of the gods, in Bœotia to Bacchus, in Cyprus to Venus, in Crete to Jupiter, in Athens to Ceres and Proserpine, in Amphissa to Castor and Pollux, in Lemnos to Vulcan, and so to others in other places; but their end, as well as nature, was the same in all—to teach monotheism and a future state.

69. *Dionysiac or Bacchic Mysteries.*—These were divided into the greater and the less. The latter were celebrated every year at the autumnal equinox, and females were admitted to them, wearing the creative emblem suspended round their necks. They ended with the sacrifice of an unclean animal, which was eaten by the worshippers. Then aspirants and initiated proceeded with sacred dances towards the temple. The Canephoroi, carrying golden vases full of the choicest fruits, were followed by the bearers of the creative emblem, who were furnished with long poles, and were crowned with ivy, a herb sacred to Bacchus, or the sun personified. Now came other celebrants habited as women, but performing all the repulsive actions of drunken men. The next night the ceremonies of initiation were performed, in which the fable of Bacchus slain by the Titans was scenically represented, the aspirant acting the part of Bacchus.

The greater mysteries were celebrated every three years at

<sup>1</sup> Cadmus is not to be understood as signifying a man. The Phœnician word “cadm” means the East, hence the meaning is that the mysteries and learning came from that quarter.



the vernal equinox, in the neighbourhood of a marsh, like the festival of Saïs, in Egypt. On the night preceding the initiation the spouse of the hierophant sacrificed a ram. She represented the spouse of Bacchus, and when seated as such on the throne, the priests and initiated of both sexes exclaimed: "Hail spouse, hail new light!" The aspirant was purified by fire, water, and air, passing through trials similar to those described elsewhere (*e.g.*, 42), and finally, was introduced into the sanctuary crowned with myrtle and dressed in the skin of a fawn.

70. *Sabazian Mysteries*.—Sabazius was a name of Bacchus, probably derived from Siva, whose astronomical meaning is the planetary system of countless suns and stars. The mysteries were performed at night, and represented the amours of Jupiter, in the form of a serpent, and Proserpina. A golden—others say a living—serpent was introduced into the bosom of the candidate, who exclaimed, "Evoe! Sabai! Bacchi! Anes! Attes! Hues!" Evoe or Eve in most languages of antiquity meant both serpent and life; whence Adam's wife was so called, and whence the origin of the serpent-worship of the ancient world. When Moses lifted up a brazen serpent in the Wilderness, the afflicted Hebrews knew that it was a sign of preservation. Sabai has already been explained; Hues and Attes were other names of Bacchus. These mysteries continued to be celebrated to the last days of paganism, and in the days of Domitian, 7000 initiated were found in Rome alone.

71. *Mysteries of the Cabiri*.—The name of the Cabiri was derived originally from Phœnicia; the word signifies "powerful." There were four gods — Aschieros, Achiochersus, Achiochersa, and Cashmala, answering to the Ceres, Pluto, Proserpina, and Camillus of the Greeks. The last was slain by his three brothers, who carried away with them the reproductive organs; and this allegorical murder was celebrated in the secret rites. Camillus is the same as Osiris, Adonis, and others, all subject to the same mutilation, all symbolising the sun's loss of generative power during winter. The chief places for the celebration of these mysteries were the islands of Samothrace and Lemnos. The priests were called Corybantes. There is much perplexity connected with this subject; since, besides what is mentioned above, the mysteries are also said to have been instituted in honour of Atys, the son of Cybele. Atys means the sun, and the mysteries were celebrated at the vernal equinox, and there cannot, therefore, be any doubt that, like all the other



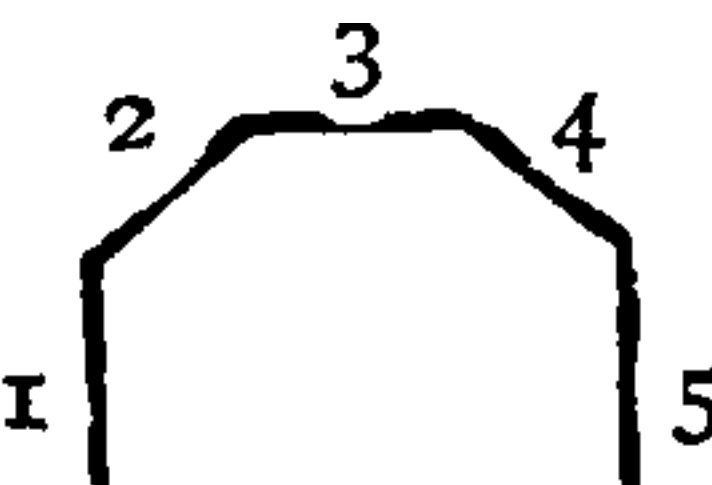
mysteries in their period of decay, they represented the enigmatical death of the sun in winter and his regeneration in the spring. The ceremonies lasted three days. The first day was one of sadness: a cruciform pine with the image of Atys attached to it was cut down, the mutilated body of Atys having been discovered at the foot of such a tree; the second day was a day of trumpets, which were blown to awaken the god from his deathlike sleep; and the third day, that of joy, was the day of initiation and celebration of his return to life.

72. *Eleusinian Mysteries*.—The Eleusinian mysteries were celebrated in honour of Ceres, the Isis of Greece; whilst Osiris appears as Proserpine—for the death of Osiris and the carrying off of Proserpine to the infernal regions symbolise the same thing, viz., the sun's disappearance during the winter season. The mysteries were originally celebrated only at Eleusis, a town of Attica, but eventually extended to Italy and even to Britain. Like all other mysteries, they were divided into the greater and the less, and the latter, like the Bacchic and Cabiric rites, lasted nine days, and were merely preparatory, consisting of lustrations and sacrifices. The ceremonies of initiation into the greater mysteries were opened by the herald exclaiming: "Retire, O ye profane." A flat piece of wood, such as in England is called a whizzer, or bull-roarer, or a wheel (the *ρόμβος*), was whirled round, at the same time, so as to produce a roaring sound. (For a curious parallel see "Miscellaneous Societies.") The aspirant was presented naked, to signify his total helplessness and dependence on Providence. He was clothed with the skin of a calf. An oath of secrecy was then administered, and he was asked: "Have you eaten bread?" The reply was "No." Proserpine cannot return to the earth because she has eaten of the fruit of the infernal regions; Adam falls when he tastes of earthly fruit. "I have drunk the sacred mixture, I have been fed from the basket of Ceres; I have laboured; I have entered into the bed." That is to say, he had been placed in the *pastos*, in which the aspirant for initiation was immured during the period of his probation (42). He was then made to pass through a series of trials, similar in character to those adopted in other mysteries, after which he was introduced into the inner temple, where he beheld the statue of the goddess Ceres, surrounded by a dazzling light. The candidate, who had heretofore been called a *mystes*, or novice, was now termed *epoptes*, or eye-witness, and the secret doctrine was revealed. The assembly was then



closed with the Sanscrit words, "*Konx om pax.*" According to Captain Wilford, the words Canscha om Pacsha, of which the above is a Greek corruption, are still used at the religious meetings and ceremonies of the Brahmin—another proof, if it were needed, that the mysteries are of Eastern origin. *Canscha* signifies the object of our most ardent desires; *om* is the monosyllable used at the beginning and end of a prayer, answering to our word amen, and *pacsha* is equivalent to the obsolete Latin word *vix*, meaning change, turn, or fortune.

We know very little of the mysteries of ancient Yucatan, but from what has come down to us through the Maya, or native language, we know this remarkable fact, that the priests dismissed their mystic congregations with the words "Con-ex Omon Pault!" meaning "Strangers, depart." It is also noteworthy that they used the symbols of ancient Egypt, and that the doors of their temples devoted to the mysteries, such as those at Labnah and Uxmal, had the same

shape  as those of the Chaldean temples, or of the

Great Pyramid of Ghizeh. It will be noticed that in this figure, the two ends being closed with doors, you have an apartment with seven plane surfaces, exclusive of the floor.

73. *Doors of Horn and Ivory.*—The sixth book of the "*Æneid*," and the "*Golden Ass*" of Apuleius, contain descriptions of what passed in the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries. In the former work, Æneas and his guide, having finished their progress through the infernal regions, are dismissed through the ivory gate of dreams. But there was another gate of horn through which the aspirant entered; for all caverns of initiation had two gates, one called the *descent* to hell, the other the *ascent* of the just. The ancient poets said that through the gate of horn issued true visions, and through the gate of ivory false. Now from this, and the fact that Æneas and his guide issue through it, it has been inferred by some critics that Virgil meant to intimate that all he had said concerning the infernal regions was to be considered a fable. But such could not be the poet's intention. What he really implied was that a future state was a real state, whilst the representations thereof in the mysteries were only shadows. The ivory gate itself was no other than the sumptuous door of the temple, through which the initiated came out when the ceremony was over.

74. *Suppression of Eleusinian Mysteries.*—These mysteries





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to the spirit of antiquity, which consisted in the total resignation and surrender of the individual to the influences of the All. Pythagoras was one of the first representatives of this new tendency. He divided his followers into exoterics and esoterics. After his death the latter joined the Orphic league, so called after the fabulous singer Orpheus. The hymns attributed to him were probably composed by Onomakritos (*circa* 516 B.C.). They breathe the spirit of what in modern phraseology would be called pietism, though representing the worship of Dionysius instead of that of Christ. The Orpheothelestes, as the vagabondising priests of the league were styled, became notorious as mountebanks and cheats.



## CHINESE AND JAPANESE MYSTERIES

77. *Chinese Metaphysics*.—In Chinese cosmogony we discover traces of the once universally prevailing knowledge of the properties of eternal Nature. Matter—the first material principle—is assumed to act upon itself, and thus to evolve the dual powers. This first material principle is called *Tai-Keik*, and described as the first link in the chain of causes; it is the utmost limit in the midst of illimitableness, though in the midst of nonentity there always existed an infinite *Le*, or “principle of order.” The *Le* is called infinite, because it is impossible to represent it by any figure, since it is the “Eternal Nothing.” This undoubted fragmentary tradition of the most ancient metaphysical system in the world has been ridiculed by many modern writers; but any reader will see that, however imperfectly expressed, it is the theosophic doctrine. It appears very strikingly in the great veneration in which the Chinese hold the number seven, which is the number of death, of destruction, as the material end, and the celestial beginning (11).

78. *Introduction of Chinese Mysteries*.—The Chinese practised Buddhism in its most simple form, and worshipped an invisible God, until a few centuries before the Christian era. From the teaching of Confucius, who lived five centuries before that era, it appears that in his time there were no mysteries; they only became necessary when the Chinese became an idolatrous nation. The chief end of initiation then was an absorption into the deity O-Mi-To Fo. *Omito* was derived from the Sanscrit *Armida*, “immeasurable,” and *Fo* was only another name for Buddha. The letter Y represented the triune God, and was indeed the ineffable name of the Deity, the Tetractys of Pythagoras, and the Tetragrammaton of the Jews. The rainbow was a celebrated symbol in the mysteries, for it typified the reappearance of the sun; and this not only in China, but even in Mexico (85).

79. *Parallel between Buddhism and Christianity*.—The



general resemblance between Buddhism and Romanism is so marked, that it is acknowledged by the Romanists themselves, who account for this fact by the supposition that Satan counterfeited the true religion. This correspondence holds in minute particulars.

Buddha descended, as the legend says, from heaven to be born as a man, the avowed purpose of his mission being to give peace and rest to all flesh, to remove all sorrow and grief from the world, and to preach the truth. At the time of his birth a bright light shone through the universe, and the devas who announced his entrance into the world, saluted his mother with the words: "All joy be to you, Queen Maya! Rejoice and be glad, for the child you have borne is holy!" We have seen in II that Maya is a virgin—the worship also of Simon in the Temple finds its reflection in the adoration paid by the venerable Axite to the infant Buddha. Further, the Buddhist and the Christian (Roman Catholic) Church have a supreme and infallible head; we find in both the celibacy of the priesthood, monasteries, and nunneries, prayers in an unknown tongue, prayers to saints and intercessors, and especially, and principally too, a virgin with a child; also prayers for the dead, repetition of prayers with the use of a rosary, works of merit and supererogation; self-imposed austerities and bodily inflictions; a formal daily service, consisting of chants, burning of candles, sprinkling of holy water, bowings, prostrations; fast days and feast days, religious processions, images and pictures and fabulous legends, the worship of relics, the sacrament of confession, purgatory, &c. In some respects their rites resemble those of the Jews; they propitiate the Supreme Deity with the blood of bulls and goats, and also offered holocausts. The resemblance is easily accounted for. Romanism and some other creeds are only modernised Buddhism; and many religions are but superstitious perversions of the knowledge of natural phenomena. The tradition about Prester John has its origin in this resemblance between Buddhism and a corrupted Christianity. In the twelfth century there was in China a great Mongol tribe professing Buddhism, which by travellers was mistaken for an Oriental Christian religion. The Nestorian Christians, dwelling among the Mongols, called its head *John the Priest*, and hence arose the tradition that in the heart of Asia there was a Christian Church, whose popes bore the title of *Prester John*.

80. *Lau-Tze*.—Confucius was the religious lawgiver of China, but Lau-Tze was its philosopher. He excelled the



former in depth and independence of thought. The word *Lau*, or *Le*, is difficult to render; the Chinese itself defines it as “a thing indefinite, impalpable, and yet therein are forms.” Lau-Tze himself seems to make it equivalent to “intelligence.” His philosophy is peaceful and loving, and in this respect presents various commendable points of resemblance to Christian doctrine.

81. *Japanese Mysteries*.—The Japanese held that the world was enclosed in an egg before the creation, which egg was broken by a bull—the ever-recurring astronomical allegory, alluding to the Bull of the zodiac, which in former times opened the seasons, the vernal equinox. It is the same bull Apis which Egypt adored (51), and which the Jews in the Wilderness worshipped as the golden calf; also the bull which, sacrificed in the mysteries of Mithras, poured out its blood to fertilise the earth. The Japanese worshipped a deity who was styled the Son of the Unknown God, considered the creator of sun and moon, and called Tensio-Dai-Sin. The aspirants for initiation were conducted through artificial spheres, formed of movable circles, representing the revolutions of the planets. The mirror was a significant emblem of the all-seeing eye of their chief deity (11). In the closing ceremony of preparation the candidate was enclosed in the pastos, the door of which was said to be guarded by a terrible divinity, armed with a drawn sword. During the course of his probation the aspirant sometimes acquired so high a degree of enthusiasm as to refuse to quit his confinement in the pastos, and to remain there until he literally perished of famine. To this voluntary martyrdom was attached a promise of never-ending happiness hereafter. Their creed indeed is Buddhism slightly modified. “*Diabolo ecclesiam Christi imitante!*” exclaimed Xavier, on seeing how the practices of the Japanese resembled those of the Romanists in Europe; and, as has been observed of Buddhism in China and Thibet, all the practices of the Japanese ritual are so tinged with the colour of Romanism, that they might well justify the exclamation of Xavier, who was neither a savant nor a philosopher.

82. *Japanese Doctrines*.—The god Tensio-Dai-Sin has twelve apostles, and the sun, the planetary hero, fights with monsters and the elements. The ministers of the Temple of the Sun wear tunics of the colour of fire, and annually celebrate four festivals, the third day of the third month, the fifth day of the fifth, the seventh day of the seventh; and the ninth day of the ninth month respectively; and at one of these festivals



they represent a myth similar to that of Adonis, and Nature is personified by a priest dressed in many colours. The members of this society are called *Jammabos*, and the initiated are enjoined a long time to abstain from meat and to prepare themselves by many purifications.

83. *The Lama*.—The Grand Lama, the god of Thibet, becomes incarnate in man; thus much the priests reveal to the people. But the true religion, which consists of the doctrine of the supposed origin of the world, is only made known in the almost inaccessible mysteries. The man in whom the Grand Lama has for the time become incarnate, and who is the pontiff, is held in such veneration, that the people eat pastilles, accounted sacred, and made from the unclean remains of the food which had contributed to the sustenance of his body. This disgusting practice, however, with them is simply the result of their belief in the metempsychosis—parallel with the Indian doctrine of corruption and reproduction, symbolised by the use of cow-dung in the purification of the aspirant; and its real meaning is to show that all the parts of the universe are incessantly absorbed, and pass into the substance of one another. It is upon the model of the serpent who devours his tail. The dignity of the Lama dates from the thirteenth century. In the fourteenth a portion of the clergy seceded and formed a rival sect; the two religious bodies are distinguished and known by the titles of the Red Tassels and the Yellow Caps, from their headgear.



## MEXICAN AND PERUVIAN MYSTERIES

84. *American Aborigines*.—Ethnologists can tell us as yet nothing as to the origin of the earliest inhabitants of the American continent; but if the reader will accept the theory propounded in the introduction to this work (6–9), he will be at no loss to answer the question. As Nature in Asia brought forth the Caucasian races, so in the western hemisphere it gave birth to the various races peopling it. That one of them was a highly civilised race in prehistoric times is proved by the ruins of beautiful cities discovered in Central America; and all the antiquarian remains show that the religion of Mexico and Peru was substantially the same as that practised by the various nations of the East; and naturally so, for the moral and physical laws of the universe are everywhere the same, and, working in the same manner, produce the same results, only modified by climatic and local conditions.

85. *Mexican Deities*.—The religious system of the Mexicans bore a character of dark and gloomy austerity. They worshipped many deities, the chief of which were Teotl, the invisible and supreme being; Virococha, the creator; Vitzliputzli or Heritzilopochtli, the god of mercy, to whom the most sanguinary rites were offered (which proves that the Mexican priests were quite as inconsistent in this respect as the priestly bigots of Europe, who, in the name of the God of mercy, tortured, racked, and burnt millions that differed from whatever creed had been set up as the orthodox and legalised one); Tescalipuca, the god of vengeance; Quetzalcoatl, the Mexican Mercury, whose name signifies the “serpent clothed with green feathers”; Mictlaneiheratl, the goddess of hell; Tlaloc-teatl, or Neptune; and Ixciana, or Venus. To Vitzliputzli was ascribed the renovation of the world, and his name referred to the sun. He was said to be the offspring of a virgin, who was impregnated by a plume of feathers, which descended from heaven into her bosom,



invested with all the colours of the rainbow (78). He was represented in the figure of a man, with a dread-inspiring aspect. He was seated on an azure globe over a lofty altar, which was borne in procession during the celebration of the mysteries on a litter of sky-coloured blue; he had a blue forehead, and a blue streak across his nose, as blue was the dominating colour in the Jewish tabernacle, showing an astronomical signification in both cases. We have already seen (42) that Vishnu was painted blue. His right hand grasped a snake, the symbol of life, and representations of this reptile are found on all the temples of Mexico and Peru. Traces of the serpent-worship of the Western world are also found in the States of Ohio and Iowa, where serpent mounds, formed of earth, 1000 feet long or more, are still to be found. The office of Tescalipuca was to punish the sins of men by the infliction of plagues, famine, and pestilence. His anger could only be appeased by human sacrifices—thousands of men were frequently immolated to him in one single day.

86. *Cruelty of Mexican Worship.*—The temples of Mexico were full of horrible idols, which were all bathed and washed with human blood. The chapel of Vitzliputzli was decorated with the skulls of the wretches that had been slain in sacrifice; the walls and floor were inches thick with blood, and before the image of the god might often be seen the still palpitating hearts of the human victims offered up to him, whose skins served the priests for garments. The revolting custom, as a legend says, arose from the fact that Tozi, the “Grand Mother,” was of human extraction. Vitzliputzli procured her divine honours by enjoining the Mexicans to demand her of her father for their queen; this being done, they also commanded him to put her to death, afterwards to flay her, and to cover a young man with her skin. It was in this manner she was stripped of her humanity, to be placed among the gods. Another disgusting practice arising from this legend will be mentioned hereafter.

87. *Initiation into Mysteries.*—The candidate had to undergo all the terrors, sufferings, and penances practised in the Eastern world. He was scourged with knotted cords, his flesh was cut with knives, and reeds put into the wounds, that the blood might be seen to trickle more freely, or they were cauterised with red-hot cinders. Many perished under these trials. The lustrations were performed, not with water, but with blood, and the candidate’s habit was not white, but black, and before initiation he was given a drink, which was said to dispel fear, which, indeed, it may have done in some





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and this latter set on fire. The new fire, received with joyful shouts, was carried from village to village, where it was deposited in the temple, whence it was distributed to every private dwelling. When the sun appeared on the horizon the acclamations were renewed. The priests were further taught the doctrine of immortality, of a triune deity, of the original population, who—led by the god Vitzliputzli, holding in his hand a rod formed like a serpent, and seated in a square ark—finally settled upon a lake, abounding with the lotus, where they erected their tabernacle. This lake was the lake in the midst of which the city of Mexico originally stood.

89. *Human Sacrifices*.—No priest was to be fully initiated into the mysteries of the Mexican religion until he had sacrificed a human victim. This horrible rite, which the Spaniards, who conquered the country, often saw performed on their own captive countrymen, was thus performed: The chief priest carried in his hand a large and sharp knife made of flint; another priest carried a collar of wood; the other four priests who assisted arranged themselves adjoining the pyramidal stone, which had a convex top, so that the man to be sacrificed, being laid thereon on his back, was bent in such a manner that the stomach separated upon the slightest incision of the knife. Two priests seized hold of his feet and two more of his hands, whilst the fifth fastened round his neck the collar of wood. The high priest then opened his stomach with the knife, and tearing out his heart, held it up to the sun, and then threw it before the idol in one of the chapels on the top of the great pyramid where the rite was performed. The body was finally cast down the steps that wound all round the building. Forty or fifty victims were thus sacrificed in a few hours. Prisoners of rank or approved courage might escape this horrid death by fighting six Mexican warriors in succession. If they were successful, their lives and liberty were granted to them; but if they fell under the strokes of their adversaries, they were dragged, dead or living, to the sacrificial stone, and their hearts torn out.

90. *Clothing in Bloody Skins*.—We have already seen that the priests were clothed in the bloody skins of their victims. The same horrid custom was practised on other occasions. On certain festivals they dressed a man in the bloody skin just reeking from the body of a victim. Kings and grandees did not think it derogatory to their dignity to disguise themselves in this manner, and to run up and down



the streets soliciting alms, which were applied to pious purposes. This horrible masquerade continued till the skin began to grow putrid. On another festival they would slay a woman and clothe a man with her skin, who, thus equipped, danced for two days together with the rest of his fellow-citizens.

91. *Peruvian Mysteries*.—The Incas, or rulers of Peru, boasted of their descent from the sun and moon, which therefore were worshipped, as well as the great god Pacha-Camac, whose very name was so sacred that it was only communicated to the initiated; it means, “He who sustains or gives life to the universe.” No temples were erected to this deity. They also had an idol they termed Tangatango, meaning “One in three and three in one.” Their secret mysteries, of which we know next to nothing, were celebrated on their great annual festival, held on the first day of the September moon, the people watching all night until the rising of the sun; and when he appeared the eastern doors of the great temple of Cuzco were thrown open, so that the sun’s radiance could illuminate his image in gold placed opposite. The walls and ceiling of this temple were all covered over with gold plates, and the figure of the sun, representing a round face, surrounded with rays and flames, as modern painters usually draw the sun, was of such a size as almost to cover one side of the wall. It was, moreover, double the thickness of the plates covering the walls. The Virgins of the Sun, who, like the Vestals of ancient Rome, had the keeping of the sacred fire entrusted to them, and were vowed to perpetual celibacy, then walked round the altar, whilst the priests expounded the mild and equitable laws of Peru; for, contrary to the practice of their near neighbours, the Mexicans, the Peruvians had not their sanguinary rites; though some Spanish writers, who, of course, could see no good in non-Catholics and pagans, charged them with sacrificing young children of from four to six years old “in prodigious numbers,” and also with slaying virgins. The Spaniards, no doubt, alluded to some ill-understood symbolical rite. But the Peruvians did on rare occasions, to celebrate a great public event, for instance, immolate human beings, a child or young maiden being usually selected. Everywhere we find the priesthood delighting in blood!

92. *Quiches Initiation*.—In § 79 we have seen that the people speaking the Maya language had their mysteries. Another tribe of that same people, the Quiches of Xibalba,



in the heart of the mountains of Guatemala, had an initiation of their own. Popol-Vuh, their sacred book, says that the applicant had to pass two rivers, one of mud, and the other of blood, before reaching the four roads leading to the place where the priest awaited him. He was then told to sit down, but the seat was burning hot. In the Dark House he passed the night and underwent two trials; the third he underwent in the House of Spears, where he had to produce flowers without bringing them, and to fight spearmen; the fourth trial took place in the Ice House, the fifth in the Tiger House, the sixth in the Fiery House, and the seventh in the House of Bats, the House of Camazotz, god of the Bats, where the god himself appeared and beheaded the aspirant if off his guard.





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95. *Places of Initiation*.—The adytum or ark of the mysteries was called a cromlech or dolmen, and was used as the sacred pastos, or place of regeneration. It consisted of three upright stones, as supporters of a broad, flat stone laid across them on the top, so as to form a small cell. Kit Cotey's House, in Kent, was such a pastos. Considerable space, however, was necessary for the machinery of initiation in its largest and most comprehensive scale. Therefore, the Coer Sidi, where the mysteries of Druidism were performed, consisted of a range of buildings, adjoining the temple, containing apartments of all sizes, cells, vaults, baths, and long and artfully contrived passages, with all the apparatus of terror used on these occasions. Most frequently these places were subterranean; and many of the caverns in this country were the scenes of Druidical initiation. The stupendous grotto at Castleton, in Derbyshire, called by Stukeley the Stygian Cave, as well as the giants' caves at Luckington and Badminster, in Wilts, certainly were used for this purpose.

96. *Rites*.—The system of Druidism embraced every religious and philosophical pursuit then known in these islands. The rites bore an undoubted reference to astronomical facts. Their chief deities are reducible to two—a male and a female, the great father and mother, Hu and Ceridwen, distinguished by the same characteristics as belonged to Osiris and Isis, Bacchus and Ceres, or any other supreme god and goddess representing the two principles of all being. The grand periods of initiation were quarterly, and determined by the course of the sun, and his arrival at the equinoctial and solstitial points. But the time of annual celebration was May-eve, when fires were kindled on all the cairns and cromlechs throughout the island, which burned all night to introduce the sports of May-day, whence all the national sports formerly or still practised date their origin. Round these fires choral dances were performed in honour of the sun, who, at this season, was figuratively said to rise from his tomb. The festival was licentious, and continued till the luminary had attained his meridian height, when priests and attendants retired to the woods, where the most disgraceful orgies were perpetrated. But the solemn initiations were performed at midnight, and contained three degrees, the first or lowest being the Eubates, the second the Bards, and the third the Druids. The candidate was first placed in the pastos bed, or coffin, where his symbolical death represented the death of Hu, or the sun; and his restoration in the third



degree symbolised the resurrection of the sun. He had to undergo trials and tests of courage similar to those practised in the mysteries of other countries (*e.g.*, 27), and which, therefore, need not be detailed here.

The festival of the 25th of December was celebrated with great fires lighted on the tops of the hills, to announce the birth-day of the god Sol. This was the moment when, after the supposed winter solstice, he began to increase, and gradually to ascend. This festival indeed was kept not by the Druids only, but throughout the ancient world, from India to Ultima Thule. The fires, of course, were typical of the power and ardour of the sun, whilst the evergreens used on the occasion foreshadowed the results of the sun's renewed action on vegetation. The festival of the summer solstice was kept on the 24th of June. Both days are still kept as festivals in the Christian Church, the former as Christmas, the latter as St. John's Day; because the early Christians judiciously adopted not only the festival days of the pagans, but also, so far as this could be done with propriety, their mode of keeping them; substituting, however, a theological meaning for astronomical allusions. The use of evergreens in churches at Christmas time is the Christian perpetuation of an ancient Druidic custom.

97. *Doctrines*.—The Druids taught the doctrine of one supreme being, a future state of rewards and punishments, the immortality of the soul, and a metempsychosis. It was a maxim with them that water was the first principle of all things, and existed before the creation in unsullied purity (11), which seems a contradiction to their other doctrine that day was the offspring of night, because night or chaos was in existence before day was created. They taught that time was only an intercepted fragment of eternity, and that there was an endless succession of worlds. In fact, their doctrines were chiefly those of Pythagoras. They entertained great veneration for the numbers three, seven, nineteen (the Metonic cycle), and one hundred and forty-seven, produced by multiplying the square of seven by three. They also practised vaticination, pretending to predict future events from the flights of birds, human sacrifices, by white horses, the agitation of water, and lots. They seem, however, to have possessed considerable scientific knowledge.

98. *Political and Judicial Power*.—Their authority in many cases exceeded that of the monarch. They were, of course, the sole interpreters of religion, and consequently



superintended all sacrifices; for no private person was allowed to offer a sacrifice without their sanction. They possessed the power of excommunication, which was the most horrible punishment that could be inflicted next to that of death, and from the effects of which the highest magistrate was not exempt. The great council of the realm was not competent to declare war or conclude peace without their concurrence. They determined all disputes by a final and unalterable decision, and had the power of inflicting the punishment of death. And, indeed, their altars streamed with the blood of human victims. Holocausts of men, women, and children, inclosed in large towers of wicker-work, were sometimes sacrificed as a burnt-offering to their superstitions, which were, at the same time, intended to enhance the consideration of the priests, who were an ambitious race delighting in blood. The Druids, it is said, preferred such as had been guilty of theft, robbery, or other crimes, as most acceptable to their gods; but when there was a scarcity of criminals, they made no scruple to supply their place with innocent persons. These dreadful sacrifices were offered by the Druids, for the public, on the eve of a dangerous war, or in the time of any national calamity; and also for particular persons of high rank, when they were afflicted with any dangerous disease.

99. *Priestesses*.—The priestesses, clothed in white, and wearing a metal girdle, foretold the future from the observation of natural phenomena, but more especially from human sacrifices. For them was reserved the frightful task of putting to death the prisoners taken in war, and individuals condemned by the Druids; and their auguries were drawn from the manner in which the blood issued from the many wounds inflicted, and also from the smoking entrails. Many of these priestesses maintained a perpetual virginity, others gave themselves up to the most luxurious excesses. They dwelt on lonely rocks, beaten by the waves of the ocean, which the mariners looked upon as temples surrounded with unspeakable prodigies. Thus the island of Sena or Liambis, The Saints, near Ushant, where Merlin was said to have been born, was the residence of nine of these priestesses, who delivered oracles to sailors; and there was no power that was not attributed to them. Others, living near the mouth of the Loire, once a year destroyed their temple, scattered its materials, and, having collected others, built a new one—of course a symbolical ceremony; and if one of the priestesses dropped any of the sacred materials, the





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## SCANDINAVIAN MYSTERIES

101. *Drottes*.—The priests of Scandinavia were named Drottes, and instituted by Sigge, a Scythian prince, who is said afterwards to have assumed the name of Odin. Their number was twelve, who were alike priests and judges; and from this order proceeded the establishment of British juries. Their power was extended to its utmost limits, by being allowed a discretionary privilege of determining on the choice of human victims for sacrifice, from which even the monarch was not exempt—hence arose the necessity of cultivating the goodwill of these sovereign pontiffs; and as this order, like the Israelitish priesthood, was restricted to one family, they became possessed of unbounded wealth, and at last became so tyrannical as to be objects of terror to the whole community. Christianity, promising to relieve it from this yoke, was hailed with enthusiasm; and the inhabitants of Scandinavia, inspired with a thirst for vengeance on account of accumulated and long-continued suffering, retaliated with dreadful severity on their persecutors, overthrowing the palaces and temples, the statues of their gods, and all the paraphernalia of Gothic superstition. Of this nothing remains but a few cromlechs; some stupendous monuments of rough stone, which human fury could not destroy; certain ranges of caverns hewn out of the solid rock; and some natural grottos used for the purpose of initiation.

102. *Ritual*.—The whole ritual had an astronomical bearing. The places of initiation, as in other mysteries, were in caverns, natural or artificial, and the candidate had to undergo trials as frightful as the priests could render them. But instead of having to pass through seven caves or passages, as in the Mithraic and other mysteries, he descended through *nine*—the square of the mystic number three—subterranean passages, and he was instructed to search for the body of Balder, the Scandinavian Osiris, slain by Loke,



the principle of darkness, and to use his utmost endeavours to raise him to life. To enter into particulars of the process of initiation would involve the repetition of what has been said before; it may therefore suffice to observe that the candidate on arriving at the sacellum had a solemn oath administered to him on a naked sword, and ratified it by drinking mead out of a human skull. The sacred sign of the cross was impressed upon him, and a ring of magic virtues, the gift of Balder the Good, delivered to him.

103. *Astronomical Meaning Demonstrated.*—The first canto of the Edda, which apparently contains a description of the ceremonies performed on the initiation of an aspirant, says that he seeks to know the sciences possessed by the Æsas or gods. He discovers a palace, whose roof of boundless dimensions is covered with golden shields. He encounters a man engaged in launching upwards seven flowers. Here we easily discover the astronomical meaning: the palace is the world, the roof the sky; the golden shields are the stars, the seven flowers the seven planets. The candidate is asked what is his name, and replies Gangler, that is, the wanderer, he that performs a revolution, distributing necessaries to mankind; for the candidate personates the sun. The palace is that of the king, the epithet the ancient Mystagogues gave to the head of the planetary system. Then he discovers three seats; on the lowest is the king called Har, sublime; on the central one, Jafuhar, the equal of the Sublime; on the highest, Tredie, the number three. These personages are those the neophyte beheld in the Eleusinian initiation (72), the hierophant, the daduchus or torchbearer, and the epibomite or attendant on the altar; those he sees in Freemasonry, the master, and the senior and junior wardens, symbolical personifications of the sun, moon, and Demiurgos, or grand architect of the universe. But the Scandinavian triad is usually represented by Odin, the chief deity; Thor, his first-born, the reputed mediator between god and man, possessing unlimited power over the universe, wherefore his head was surrounded by a circle of twelve stars; and Freya, a hermaphrodite, adorned with a variety of symbols significant of dominion over love and marriage. In the instructions given to the neophyte, he is told that the greatest and most ancient of gods is called Alfader (the father of all), and has twelve epithets, which recall the twelve attributes of the sun, the twelve constellations, the twelve superior gods of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Among the gods of the Scandinavian theogony there is Balder the



Good, whose story, as already hinted above, formed the object of the initiatory ceremonies. Balder is Mithras, the sun's love. He foresees the danger that threatens him; he dreams of it at night. The other gods of Valhalla, the Scandinavian Olympus, to whom he reveals his sad forebodings, reassure him, and to guard against any harm befalling him, exact an oath from everything in Nature in his behalf, except from the mistletoe, which was omitted on account of its apparently inoffensive qualities. For an experiment, and in sport, the gods cast at Balder all kinds of missiles, without wounding him. Hoder the blind (that is, Fate), takes no part in the diversion; but Loke (the principle of evil, darkness, the season of winter) places a sprig in the hands of Hoder, and persuades him to cast it at the devoted victim, who falls pierced with mortal wounds. For this reason it was that this plant was gathered at the winter solstice by the Druids of Scandinavia, Gaul, and Britain, with a curved knife, whose form symbolised the segment of the zodiacal circle during which the murder of Balder took place. In the Edda of Snorro we have another legend of Odin and Freya, the Scandinavian Isis or Venus, giving an account of the wanderings of the latter in search of the former, which, of course, have the same astronomical meaning as the search of Isis for Osiris, of Ceres for Proserpine, &c. One of the chief festivals in the year, as with the Druids, was the winter solstice; and this being the longest night in the year, the Scandinavians assigned to it the formation of the world from primeval darkness, and called it "Mother Night." This festival was denominated "Yule," a corruption of the Greek word *helios*, the sun, and was a season of universal festivity.





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## THE CABBALA

104. *Its Origin.*—The Cabbala (from the Hindoo Kapila, the inventor of the philosophy of numbers) is the summary of the labours of the sects of Judaism, and is occupied in the mystical interpretation of the Scriptures, and in metaphysical speculations concerning the Deity and the worlds visible and invisible. The Jews say that it was communicated to Moses by God Himself. Now, although it is not at all improbable that the writer, to whom history has given the name of Moses, did leave to his successors some secret doctrines, yet the fantastic doctrines of the Cabbala concerning angels and demons are purely Chaldean; at Babylon the Jews ingrafted on Monotheism the doctrine of the Two Principles. Daniel, the pontiff of the Magi and prophet of the Jews, may be considered as the chief founder of the Cabbala, which was conceived at Babylon, and received as the forbidden fruit of the strange woman. The ancient Jews had some idea of angels, but did not ascribe to them any particular functions, though to each patriarch they assigned a special familiar spirit. The Alexandrian School made many additions to that foreign importation; Philo supplemented Daniel. The speculative portion of the Cabbala, whose foundation consists in the doctrine of Emanation, was developed in that School; the philosophical systems of Pythagoras and Plato were combined with Oriental philosophy, and from these proceeded Gnosticism and Neo-platonism.

105. *Date of Cabbala.*—The first documentary promulgation of the Cabbala may roughly be stated to have taken place within the century before and half a century after our era. The greater culture of the Jewish people, the supreme tyranny of the letter of the law and rabbinical minuteness, furthered the spread of occult theology, whose chief text-books are the “Sepher-yetzirah,” or Book of the Creation, probably by Akiba, and the “Zohar,” the Book of Light, attributed to Simon-ben-Joachai, the pupil of Akiba,



consisting of fantastic commentaries on the books of Moses. What farrago the book contains may be inferred from the representation it gives of God. His head is that of a very old man, wearing one thousand millions and seven thousand curls of white wool; his beard is as white as snow, reaching to his navel, and has thirteen divisions, each of which comprises the greatest mysteries. The Jews did not become acquainted with it before the end of the thirteenth century. Akiba was a Jewish rabbi and teacher of the Mishna (107). He was executed for having taken part in the insurrection of Bar-Cochba (Son of the Star, Numb. xxiv. 17) in A.D. 135.

106. *The Book of the Creation*.—In this work Adam considers the mystery of the universe. In his monologue he declares the forces and powers of reason, which attempts to discover the bond which unites in a common principle all the elements of things; and in this investigation he adopts a method different from the Mosaic. He does not descend from God to the creation, but studying the universe, seeking the unity in variety and multiplicity, the law in the phenomenon, he ascends from the creation to God—a prolific method, but which leads the Cabbalists to seek fantastic analogies between superior and inferior powers, between heaven and earth, between the things and the signs of thought. Hence arose all the arts of divination and conjuration, and the most absurd superstitions. According to Cabbalistic conception, the universe, which to Pythagoras is a symbol of the mysterious virtues of numbers, is only a marvellous page on which all existing things were written by the supreme artificer with the first ten numbers and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The ten abstract numbers are the general forms of things, the “supreme categories of ideas.” Thus, number one represents the spirit of the living God, the universal generative power; number two is the breath of the animating spirit; three is the aqueous, and four the igneous principle. The imprint of the letters on the universe is indestructible, and is the only character that can enable us to discover the Supreme Cause, to recompose the name of God, the Logos, written on the face of the world. Nor are all the letters of equal virtue; three, called the *mothers*, have the precedence, and refer to the triads found in various physical and mental orders; seven others are called *double*, because from them arise the things constantly opposed to one another; the remaining twelve are called simple, and refer to twelve attributes of man.

107. *Different Kinds of Cabbala*.—It is of two kinds,





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discover therein profound mysteries. Maimonides reduced those visions to the astronomical ideas of his time; the Cabbala surrounded them with its innumerable hosts of angels. Besides the angels that preside over the stars, elements, virtues, vices, passions, the lower world is peopled by genii of both sexes, holding a position between angels and men—the elemental spirits of the Rosicrucians. The good angels are under the command of Metatron, also called Sar Happanim, the angel of the Divine countenance. The evil angels are subject to Samual, or Satan, the angel of death. Besides the Indian metempsychosis the Cabbalists admit another, which they call “impregnation,” consisting in a union of several souls in one body, which takes place when any soul needs the assistance of others to attain to the beatific vision.

109. *The Creation out of Nothing.*—The primitive Being is called the Ancient of Days, the ancient Ring of Light, incomprehensible, infinite, eternal, a closed eye. Before he manifested himself all things were in him, and he was called The Nothing, the Zero-world. Before the creation of the world the primitive light of God, Nothing, filled all, so that there was no void; but when the Supreme Being determined to manifest His perfections, He withdrew into Himself, and let go forth the first emanation, a ray of light, which is the cause and beginning of all that exists, and combines the generative and conceptive forces. He commenced by forming an imperceptible point, the point-world; then with that thought He constructed a holy and mysterious form, and finally covered it with a rich vestment—the universe. From the generative and conceptive forces issued forth the first-born of God, the universal form, the creator, preserver, and animating principle of the world, Adam Kadmon, called the macrocosm; whilst man, born out of and living in it, and comprising, in fact, what the typical or celestial man comprises potentially, is called the microcosm. But before the Ensoph or Infinite revealed Himself in that form of the primitive man, other emanations, other worlds, had succeeded each other, which were called “sparks,” which grew fainter the more distant they were from the centre of emanation. Around Adam Kadmon were formed the countless circles of posterior emanations, which are not beings having a life of their own, but attributes of God, vessels of omnipotence, types of creation. The ten emanations from Adam Kadmon are called Sephiroth, the “powers” of Philo, and the “æons” of the Gnostics.



110. *Revival of Cabbalistic Doctrines.*—As among Christians the Apocalypse, so among Jews the Cabbala has always had its devoted students. Such a one was Löbele (d. 1609), who was chief rabbi at Prague, and considered such a saint, that no being born of woman was thought fit to wait on him; he was attended by a servitor produced by magic, or a slave formed of clay. Being deeply versed in all the mysteries of the Cabbala, he was endowed with supernatural powers, but he, wisely perhaps, kept his knowledge to himself; he did not even have pupils. But about the middle of the last century Jacob Franck, originally a distiller in Poland, collected around him a crowd of Jewish followers in Podolia, who, abjuring rabbinical dogmatism, adopted the mystical teaching of the Cabbala. The book Zohar (105) was the basis of their doctrines, whence they were called Zoharists, the Illuminated. The Roman Catholic clergy, who in these doctrines saw an approach to Christianity, at first protected them; but on the death of the Bishop of Podolia they were persecuted by the rabbis, so that they had to disperse, and Franck himself was imprisoned until 1773, when he was released by the Russians. He then tried to establish himself at Vienna, but being driven thence found a refuge at Offenbach, near Frankfort, where he gathered many followers, and lived in great style, as he received liberal subsidies from the Jews. He died in 1791, when the society was dissolved; a few remnants may still be found in Poland, where they are known as Christian Jews. They form a kind of religious order, practising certain Jewish rites, and professing mystical doctrines, kept secret from outsiders.

Another Cabbalistic sect was formed about the same time (1740) by Israel of Podolia, calling themselves the “New Saints”; they professed to work miracles by using the Cabbalistic name of Jehovah. Israel had great success, and left forty thousand followers.

Frederick Bahrdt and C. Frederick Nicolai, the former in his “Introduction” to Cornelius Agrippa’s Cabbala, and the latter in his “Travels through Germany and Switzerland, 1781,” both mention the Cabbala of the Capucin Father Tertius of Ratisbon, written in Latin, which he utilised for fortune-telling. A somewhat similar Cabbala was published (circa 1790) in the “Delphic Oracle,” edited by Professor K. [anne?].

“For Humbug never waneth  
When Folly lends its help.”



The Cabbala was estimated at its true value by the Jesuit Pererius (1535–1610), who in his book “De Magia” calls it an “unscientific, silly, and ridiculous system.” And yet in the last quarter of this century Alphonse Louis Constant, who wrote under the pseudonym of Eliphas Levi Zahed a number of books which are highly esteemed by modern students of “occult” matters, performed, by means of Cabbalistic power, the ceremonial evocation of Apollonius of Tyana, and was patronised, among other people of note, by Lord Lytton, who had him down to Knebworth! Some forms of superstition do die hard.





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and resolved to profit thereby, masking Gnostic and Cabbalistic ideas under Christian names and rites. In order to establish this Christian revelation, he called himself the Paraclete announced by Christ to His disciples, attributing to himself, in the Gnostic manner, a great superiority over the Apostles, rejecting the Old Testament, and allowing to the sages of the pagans a philosophy superior to Judaism. A.D. 270.

113. *Manichæism*.—The dismal conceptions of a dualism, pure and simple, the eternity and absolute evil of matter, the non-resurrection of the body, the perpetuity of the principle of evil—these preside over the compound that took its name from him, and confound Mithras with Christ, the Gospel with the Zend-Avesta, Magism with Judaism. The Unknown Father, the Infinite Being, of Zoroaster, is entirely rejected by Manes, who divides the universe into two dominions, that of light and that of darkness, irreconcilable, whereof one is superior to the other; but, great difference the first, instead of conquering the latter into goodness, reduces it to impotence, conquers, but does not suppress or convince it. The God of light has innumerable legions of combatants (æons), at whose head are twelve superior angels, corresponding with the twelve signs of the zodiac. Satanic matter is surrounded by a similar host, which, having been captivated by the charms of the light, endeavours to conquer it; wherefore the head of the celestial kingdom, in order to obviate this danger, infuses life into a new power, and appoints it to watch the frontiers of heaven. That power is called the “Mother of Life,” and is the soul of the world, the “Divine,” the primitive thought of the Supreme Ens, the heavenly “Sophia” of the Gnostics. As a direct emanation of the Eternal it is too pure to unite with matter, but a son is born unto it, the first man, who initiates the great struggle with the demons. When the strength of the man fails him, the “Living Spirit” comes to his assistance, and having led him back to the kingdom of light, raises above the world that part of the celestial soul not contaminated by contact with the demons—a perfectly pure soul, the Redeemer, the Christ, who attracts to Himself and frees from matter the light and soul of the first man. In these abstruse doctrines lies concealed the Mithraic worship of the sun. The followers of Manes were divided into “Elect” and “Listeners”; the former had to renounce every corporeal enjoyment, everything that can darken the celestial light in us; the second were less rigorously treated. Both might



attain immortality by means of purification in an ample lake placed in the moon (the baptism of celestial water), and sanctification in the solar fire (the baptism of celestial fire), where reside the Redeemer and the blessed spirits.

114. *Life of Manes*.—The career of Manes was chequered and stormy, a foreshadowing of the tempests that were to arise against his sect. After having enjoyed the unstable favour of the court, and acquired the fame of a great physician, he found himself unable to save the life of one of the sons of the prince. He was consequently exiled, and roved through Turkistan, Hindostan, and the Chinese Empire. He dwelt for one year in a cave, living on herbs, during which time his followers, having received no news from him, said that he had ascended to heaven, and were believed, not only by the “Listeners,” but by the people. The new prince recalled him to court, showered honours on him, erected a sumptuous palace for him, and consulted him on all state affairs. But Barahm, the successor of this prince, at the instigation of the Magi, made him pay dearly for his short happiness, for he put him to a cruel death: he had him flayed alive.

115. *Progress of Manichæism*.—The government of the sect, already existing with degrees, initiatory rites, signs, and passwords, was continued by astute chiefs, who more and more attracted to themselves the Christians by the use of orthodox language, making them believe that their object was to recall Christianity to its first purity. But the sect was odious to the Church of Rome, because it had issued from rival Persia; and so for two hundred years it was banished from the empire, and the Theodosian Codex is full of laws against it. Towards the end of the fourth century it spread in Africa and Spain. It had peace, and flourished under the mother of the Emperor Anastasius (491–518); but Justin renewed the persecution. In the ninth century that female fiend, Theodora, the wife of the Emperor Theophilus, caused more than one hundred thousand Manichæans to be slain. But changing its name, seat, and figurative language, Manichæism spread in Bulgaria, Lombardy (Patarini), France (Cathari, Albigenses), &c., united with the Saracens, and openly made war upon the Emperor, and its followers perished by thousands in battle and at the stake; and from its secular trunk sprang the so-called heresies of the Husites and Wyckliffites, which opened the way for Protestantism. In those gloomy Middle Ages, in fact, arose those countless legions of sectaries, bound by a common pact, whose exist-



ence only then becomes manifest when the sinister light of the burning pile flashes through the darkness in which they conceal themselves. The Freemasons undoubtedly, through the Templars, inherited no small portion of their ritual from them; they were very numerous in all the courts, and even in the dome of St. Peter, and baptized in blood with new denominations and ordinances.

116. *Doctrines.*—The sacred language of Manichæism was most glowing, and founded on that concert of voices and ideas, called in Pythagorean phraseology the “harmony of the spheres,” which established a connection between the mystic degrees and the figured spheres by means of conventional terms and images; and it is known that the Albigenses and Patarini recognised each other by signs. A Provençal Patarino, who had fled to Italy in 1240, everywhere met with a friendly reception, revealing himself to the brethren by means of conventional phrases. He everywhere found the sect admirably organised, with churches, bishops, and apostles of the most active propaganda, who overran France, Germany, and England. The Manichæan language, moreover, was ascetic, and loving, and Christian; but the neophyte, after having once entered the sect, was carried beyond, and gradually alienated from the Papal Church. The mysteries had two chief objects in view—that of leading the neophyte, by first insensibly changing his former opinions and dispositions, and then of gradually instructing him in the conventional language, which, being complicated and varied, required much study and much time. But not all were admitted to the highest degrees. Those that *turned back*, or could not renounce former ideas, remained always in the Church, and were not introduced into the sanctuary. These were simple Christians and sincere listeners, who, out of zeal for reform, often encountered death, as, for instance, the canons of Orleans, who were condemned to the stake by King Robert in 1022. But those who did not turn back were initiated into all those things which it was important should be known to the most faithful members of the sect. The destruction of Rome, and the establishment of the heavenly Jerusalem spoken of in the Apocalypse, were the chief objects aimed at.

117. *Spread of Religion of Love.*—The religion of love did not end with the massacre of the Albigenses, nor were its last echoes the songs of the troubadours; for we meet with it in a German sect which in 1550 pretended to receive a supernatural light from the Holy Spirit. In Holland, also,





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## THE GNOSTICS

118. *Character of Gnosticism.*—The leading ideas of Platonism are also found in the tenets of the Gnostics (*i.e.*, “Those who know,” *coloro che sanno.*—*Inf.* iv. 131), and they continued, during the second and third centuries, the schools that raised a barrier between recondite philosophy and vulgar superstition. Under this aspect Gnosticism is the most universal heresy, the mother of many posterior heresies, even of Arianism, and reappears among the alchemists, mystics, and modern transcendentalists.

119. *Doctrines.*—The Gnostics assumed an infinite, invisible Being, an abyss of darkness, who, unable to remain inactive, diffused himself in emanations, decreasing in perfection the further they were removed from the centre that produced them. They had their grand triad, whose personifications—Matter, the Demiurgus, and the Saviour—comprised and represented the history of mankind and of the world. The superior emanations, partakers of the attributes of the Divine essence, are the “æons,” distributed in classes according to symbolical numbers. Their union forms the “pleroma,” or the fulness of intelligence. The last and most imperfect emanation of the pleroma, according to one of the two grand divisions of Gnosticism, is the Demiurgus, a balance of light and darkness, of strength and weakness, who, without the concurrence of the unknown Father, produces this world, there imprisoning the souls, for he is the primary evil, opposed to the primary good. He encumbers the souls with matter, from which they are redeemed by Christ, one of the sublime powers of the pleroma, the Divine thought, intelligence, the spirit. For humanity is destined to raise itself again from the material to the spiritual life; to free itself from Nature, and to govern it, and to live again in immortal beauty.

According to the other party of the Gnostics, the Demiurgus was the representative and organ of the highest God,



who was placed by the Divine will especially over the Jewish people as their Jehovah. Men are divided into three classes: the terrestrial men, of the earth earthy, tied and bound by matter; the spiritual men, the Pneumatikoi, who attain to the Divine light; the Psychikoi, who only rise up to the Demiurgus. The Jews, subject to Jehovah, were Psychikoi; the Pagans were terrestrial men; the true Christians or Gnostics, Pneumatikoi.

120. *Development of Gnosticism.*—Simon Magus; Menander, his successor; Cerinthus, the apostle of the Millennium, and some others who lived in the first century, are looked upon as the founders of Gnosticism, which soon divided into as many sects as there arose apostles. This may be called the obscure period of Gnosticism. But at the beginning of the second century the sect of Basilides of Alexandria arose, and with it various centres of Gnosticism in Egypt, Syria, Rome, Spain, &c. Basilides, who corrupted Gnosticism with Indian and Egyptian fancies, assumed 365 æons or cycles of creation, which were expressed by the word *abraxas*, whose letters, according to their numerical value in Greek, produce the number 365. By “*abraxas*” was meant, in its deeper sense, the Supreme God; but the reader will at once detect the astronomical bearing, and remember the words Mithras and Belenus, which also severally represent that number, and the Supreme God, viz., the sun. Valentinus also is a famous Gnostic, whose fundamental doctrine is that all men shall be restored to their primeval state of perfection; that matter, the refuge of evil, shall be consumed by fire—which is also the doctrine of Zoroaster; and that the spirits in perfect maturity shall ascend into the pleroma, there to enjoy all the delights of a perfect union with their companions. From the Valentinians sprang the Ophites, calling themselves so after the serpent that by tempting Eve brought into the world the blessings of knowledge; and the Cainites, who maintained that Cain had been the first Gnostic, in opposition to the blind, unreasoning faith of Abel, and therefore persecuted by the Demiurgus, Jehovah. On this idea is founded the Masonic Legend of the Temple. The Antitacts (opponents to the law), like the Ishmaelites at a later period, taught their adepts hatred against all positive religions and laws. The Adamites looked upon marriage as the fruit of sin; they called their lascivious initiation “paradise,” held all indulgence in carnal delights lawful, and advocated the abolition of dress. The Pepuzians varied their initiations with the apparition of phantasms, among



whom was a woman crowned with the sun and twelve stars, and having the moon under her feet—the Isis of Egypt and the Ceres of Greece. They found in the Apocalypse all their initiatory terminology. A gnostic stone, represented in the work of Chifflet, shows seven stars of equal size, with a larger one above; these probably mean the seven planets and the sun. There are, moreover, figured on it a pair of compasses, a square, and other geometrical emblems. Thus all religious initiations are ever reducible to astronomy and natural phenomena.

121. *Spirit of Gnosticism*.—The widely opposite ideas of polytheism, pantheism, monotheism, the philosophical systems of Plato, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, together with the mysticism and demonology that after the Jewish captivity created the Cabbala—all these went towards forming Gnosticism. And the aristocracy of mind, powerful and numerous as none had ever been before, that arose in the first centuries of our era, even when adopting the new faith, could not but loathe the thought of sharing it completely with the crowd of freed and unfreed slaves around them—with the low and poor in spirit. The exclusiveness of Gnosticism, which was one of the causes why it was violently persecuted by the Fathers of the Church as damnable heresy, was undoubtedly, next to the attractiveness of its dogmas, one of the chief reasons of its rapid propagation and its lasting influence on modern religious systems.

It is said that the Gnostics recognised one another by slightly tickling the palm of the person with whom they shook hands.





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from corporeal influences, submitted to fastings and maceration; the Therapeutæ, living in Egypt, endeavoured to reconcile the doctrines of the East with the ancient traditions of Greece, wherefore the picture Philo, who strongly sympathised with them, has left us of their society, abounds with Eastern and Pythagorean ideas. It is, however, doubtful whether the work was really written by Philo; by many it is supposed to be the work of a Christian monk, as a panegyric on ascetic monachism. Some writers have attempted to derive the Essenians from the Ephesian priesthood, and tracing some resemblance between the Orphics of Thrace, the Curete of Crete, and the Ephesian priests, the existence of an ancient common doctrine, submerged like a philosophical Atlantis, was suspected, the Grecians being looked upon as a powerful offshoot; but it seems certain that the Essenes had very little of Greece in their rituals, whilst the Therapeutæ had a great deal. The Essenes may, with great probability, be derived from the Assideans (1 Mac. ii. 42), who, in consequence of the perfidy of Alcimus (1 Mac. vii. 13–16), severed their connection with the Temple. In our English Apocrypha, the Assideans are called (1 Mac. ii. 42) “mighty men of Israel,” but the meaning of the original is, “adherents of the old faith.” They were not warriors, as has been supposed; they were the first to seek peace (1 Mac. vii. 13), for they formed a religious and not a military community.

124. *Their Tenets and Customs.*—The Essenes were renowned for their moral and virtuous lives. They dwelt in villages, far from towns, tilling the land, owning no slaves, and having all their goods in common. They made no vows of celibacy, but most abstained from marriage, dreading the infidelity and fickleness of woman. They cultivated the physical sciences, and especially medicine. No one was admitted into their community, except after having passed through graduated probations lasting several years. And why they are reckoned among secret societies is, because they may be considered as the opponents of the Jewish priesthood at a time when that priesthood was all-powerful, and any opposition to it was attended with the utmost danger. Now the doctrines of the Essenes were necessarily opposed to the Hebrew faith, and to escape the persecution which they otherwise might have incurred, they in the first instance adopted a name calculated to disarm suspicion, viz., that of Essenes, from the Essen or breastplate worn by the Jewish high-priest, and further took every possible precaution in



the admission of members into their secret order, which was divided into four degrees, and the process of initiation was so arranged that a candidate, even after having entered the third, did not know the grand secret, and if not found trustworthy to be admitted into the innermost sanctuary, remained totally unconscious of its real nature, and only saw in it the governing ranks, highest in rank, but not otherwise distinguished in point of doctrine. A perfect parallel of this system is found in Freemasonry; the members of the first three degrees are not initiated into the grand so-called secret of Masonry; only in the Royal Arch they are informed of it). The four degrees above referred to were respectively called the "Faithful," the "Illuminate," the "Initiated," and the "Perfect." The Faithful received at their initiation a new or baptismal name, and this was engraved with a secret mark upon a white stone (probably alluded to in Rev. ii. 17, which, as we shall hereafter see, was not Christian in its origin), which he retained as a voucher of his membership. The usual sign was the cross, though other signs also were employed.

125. *Distinction between the two Sects.*—The Therapeutæ were more addicted to contemplation and less to labour; they might be called speculative Essenes. They were less opposed to the admission of women, and at some of their festivals they performed dances, in which the fair sex were allowed to join. But whilst not denying themselves the society of women, they banished wine from all their meals; they were afraid, it seems, of the conjunction of Bacchus and Venus. They alone had, or professed to have, the key to the right interpretation of the writings of Moses, a true knowledge of the Cabbala, and according to tradition, Christ was born of parents belonging to the society, who brought up and trained the child in the part he was to play.

The Essenes and Therapeutæ resided chiefly in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea and in Egypt, and their existence was prolonged into the fourth century of our era.



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## CHRISTIAN INITIATIONS

126. *Myth of Horus Christianised*.—When the story of the Egyptian Horus had, by a concatenation of circumstances too long to be described here, in Alexandria, been elaborated into the myth of Christ, the latter was at once fitted out with mysteries and initiations thereinto. Traces of them may be found in all the evangelists, but most in St. Paul; and the trials of Christian initiation, as some suppose, are described in Luke xiv., and according to others, Matthew xvii. contains a full declaration of the mysteries made to the elect or initiated. If so, they are conveyed in language as enigmatical as that of the Alchymists. But the story of the Transfiguration on the Mount is an imperfect description of the holding of a quasi-masonic lodge of association in the highest degree. The more the society extended, chiefly by the ambitious schemes of Cerinthus, the more such initiations increased, and thus there gradually arose in the Church the secret discipline. The Cerinthus just mentioned, and who was also ironically called Merinthus—*i.e.*, the “rope”—was really a Gnostic. St. John held him in such abhorrence, that on one occasion he would not bathe with him in the Baths of Ephesus for fear the vault would crumble over the heretic. The primitive Church believed that the Gospel of St. John had been written against Cerinthus, who, to revenge himself, attributed the Apocalypse to St. John.

127. *Christian Mysteries*.—In the writings of the Fathers the mention of mysterious designations and distinctions becomes more frequent. St. Augustin gives the reason why the secret discipline was adopted by the new believers: Firstly, because the mysteries, so incomprehensible to human intellect, and their simple rites, should not be derided by the Gentiles and those not fully initiated; secondly, to secure greater veneration for those rites; and thirdly, that the holy curiosity of the catechumens should be excited to obtain a perfect knowledge of them.



128. *Similarity of Christian with Pagan Rites.*—At least twenty different incarnate gods were celebrated in the East and West, to each of whom was attributed a history, similar in general details to that of the Christian Messiah, and these various incarnations were all supposed to have preceded Christ in point of chronology; the miracles attributed to Him had been sculptured in temples hoary with age before the date assigned to His birth. In all the ancient mysteries we have seen a representation of the death of the sun; according to some writers, this ceremony was imitated in the Christian mysteries by the symbolical slaying of a child, which, in the lower degrees, of course meant the death of Christ. We may here mention, just to show how old is the custom of the followers of an ancient religion to attribute horrible practices to the professors of a new creed, that the Romans asserted that, on being initiated into the Christian faith, the aspirant had placed before him a male child, covered with flour, whom he had to stab till he was dead, whereupon all present greedily licked up the blood, tore the body to pieces, and ate them, by which ceremony they were bound to one common silence. The initiated were divided into three classes: hearers, catechumens, and faithful. The hearers formed a noviciate, and were prepared to be instructed in the Christian dogmas. One portion of these dogmas was hidden from the catechumens, who after the prescribed purifications, received baptism or initiation into the theogenesis (divine generation); they then became servants of the faith, and were admitted into the temples, and recognised each other by the sign of the cross. Solemn dances were performed in all the initiations, and the expression, “to come from the ball,” which, for instance, we meet with in Ælius Aristides, the rhetorician (circa 150 A.D.), meant “to betray the mysteries.”

129. *Christian Symbols taken from Pagan Symbols.*—Most of the hieroglyphics and symbols of Paganism passed into Christianity. The vine, and the processes of converting its fruit into the most universal of beverages, all belonging among the heathens to the rites of Bacchus, were by the first Christians rendered symbolical of the labours in the vineyard of faith. The ear of corn of Ceres furnished the emblem for the bread which Christ divided among His disciples. The palm and crown, which denoted worldly victories, among the Christians signified spiritual triumphs. The wings of the doves were given to the angels and cherubim; the dove of Venus became the Holy Ghost;





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His first miracle is turning water into wine, which the sun does every year; His agony in Gethsemane was the juice of the grape put in the wine-press; His descent into hell was the sun in the winter season; His crucifixion on Calvary (*calvus* = bald = shorn of His rays) His crossing the equator in the autumn; and His crucifixion in Egypt (Rev. xi. 8) His crossing it in the spring. The beheading of John the Baptist was shown to them to be John, Janus, or Aquarius, having his head cut off by the line of the horizon on the 29th August, wherefore his festival occurs on that day. They knew the Virgin Mary to be the *Virgo* of the zodiac, the goddess Ceres, who holds out to Adam, or man, the produce of the harvest; the Virgin, wedded to Joseph, astronomically Bootes, which constellation always rises and sets with her. These analogies might be pursued still further, but enough has been said for our present purpose.

132. *Prometheus Bound*.—The myth of Christ had been foreshadowed 500 years before our era in the tragedy of Æschylus' "Prometheus Bound." Hence the disinclination of the Athenians, to whom this tragedy was familiar, to believe in a Jesus, crucified amidst the most astounding terrestrial and astronomical phenomena, of which, however, no one except the propounders of the new doctrine had ever heard.

The name Prometheus deserves attention; it is a compound word: *Proma-theos*, *i.e.*, *Brahma-theos*. In the Tamul, a language derived from the Sanscrit, *Brahma* is pronounced *Prahma*. The Indian *a* has also been turned into *o*, for *navam*, nine, is undoubtedly the etymon of *novem*; *pada*, *poda*, &c. The converse of the change of *B* into *P* is found in *Baphomet*, from *Papa* and *Mahomet*. To return to Prometheus: he and Christ perish on a hill; both submit to the law of another god to save mankind; both have their right sides pierced, Prometheus by a vulture, Jesus by a lance, the former on a rock, the latter on a cross; and in the moment of death both expiatory victims utter the same sentiments, that is to say, the Gospels repeat the words put into the mouth of Prometheus 500 years before Christ. What strengthens the identity is the fact that Prometheus has a friend called Oceanus, who in the ancient mythologies is also called *Piereus* (*Pierre*), Peter. Now in the tragedy of Æschylus we read that Oceanus denied his friend at the moment when the anger of God made him a victim for the sins of the human race. St. Peter, who lived by the ocean or sea, did the same under similar circumstances.



133. *Abolition of Mysteries.*—The number of the faithful having greatly increased—the Christians from being persecuted having become persecutors, and that of the most grasping and barbarous kind—the Church in the seventh century instituted the minor orders, among whom were the doorkeepers, who took the place of the deacons. In 692 every one was ordered thenceforth to be admitted to the public worship of the Christians, their esoteric teaching of the first ages was entirely suppressed, and what had been pure cosmology and astronomy was turned into a pantheon of gods and saints. Nothing remained of the mysteries but the custom of secretly reciting the canon of the Mass. Nevertheless in the Greek Church the priest celebrates divine worship behind a curtain, which is only removed during the elevation of the host, but since at that moment the worshippers prostrate themselves, they are supposed not to see the holy sacrament.



## THE APOCALYPSE

134. *The Apocalypse*.—This book, hitherto accepted as one of genuinely Christian authorship, is now by competent critics received in its main substance, and throughout by far the greater part of it, as a purely Jewish composition; in fact, as a Jewish Apocalypse put into a Christian dress after the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. The first three chapters are Christian, of course, but in the fourth chapter the book begins again, and from that to the end, with the exception of a few short passages, which are interpolations, all is purely Jewish, or rather a medley of occidental, Judaic, and sectarian doctrines. The bulk of the work is a description of the Pagan mysteries, which the Christianising adapter transforms into those of the Christian myth; to the latter it is what the “Golden Ass” of Apuleius and the “Sixth Book” of Virgil is to the Pagan mysteries, from which its whole machinery is borrowed. The woman clothed with the sun, standing upon the moon, and symbolising the true Church, is the Egyptian Isis; the attack upon the woman and her offspring by the deluging serpent, which is frustrated by the earth’s absorption of the water, is perfectly analogous to the attack of the diluvian serpent Python upon Osiris, or Latona, or Horus, which is similarly frustrated by the destruction of that monster; the false Church, bearing the name of Mystery—of course, referring to the Pagan Mystery—floating on the waters, or riding on a terrific beast, and ultimately plunged into the infernal lake, exhibits the very same aspect as the Great Mother of Paganism sailing over the ocean, riding on the lion, venerated with certain mysteries, and during their celebration plunged into the waters of a sacred lake, denominated the lake of Hades. St. Paul himself personates an aspirant about to be initiated, and accordingly the images presented to his mind’s eye closely resemble the pageants of the mysteries. The prophet first beholds a door opened in the magnificent temple of heaven,





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ancient aspirants, while without the holy gate of admission are the whole multitude of the profane, sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth or maketh a lie; but first of all dogs, *i.e.*, the uninitiated, the cowans (κύων) of Freemasonry. For some modern thinkers the Apocalypse has neither meaning nor value.

135. *Pagan Impostors*.—The spread of Christianity produced also many opponents to it, either avowed or secret; the latter, however, in most cases desired to see Paganism reformed, not abolished; though rejecting Christianity, they attempted to form a sort of Christianised Paganism. Clever impostors in those days reaped a rich harvest from the credulity of mankind, and sects without end sprang up. Two of the most successful leaders of such were Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonoteichos. Their doctrines, ceremonies, and tricks in mystery-mongering were largely founded on the religious and philosophical charlatanism of Pythagoras; they had their day, and passed away, to be constantly resuscitated.



# BOOK IV

## *ISHMAELITES*

“And he will be a wild man ; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.”—GEN. xvi. 12.



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The seven imams of Ali's posterity are the seven interpreters of the hidden sense of Mahomet's religion, and the forerunners of the most perfect doctrine, whose triumph is at hand: the doctrine of Mohammed, the son of Ismael. And as seven imams succeeded Mahomet, so there always were seven pontiffs after every previous prophet, and so there will be seven pontiffs after Mohammed. I am the first of these pontiffs. The pontiff's office is to explain to the initiated that every religion has two meanings, the one apparent, intended for the vulgar crowd, the other secret, and only true one, showing that all religions have but one aim.

138. *Origin of Quarmatites*.—Mohammad-ben-Hosain, surnamed Zaidan, a rich and patriotic Persian, was so captivated by the plan of Abdallah, that he made him a present of two millions of pieces of gold. But being persecuted by the governor of Susiana, Abdallah made his escape to Syria, where one of his missionaries converted, about 887, a certain Hamdan, famous under the name of Quarmat, who formed the sect known as the Quarmatites, whose power, rapidly developed during two centuries, caused the Khalifs to tremble on their thrones.

139. *Origin of Fatimite Dynasty*.—On Abdallah's death he was followed in the pontificate by one of his sons, Saïd-ben-Hosain-ben-Abdallah, who asserted that he was the expected Fatimite Messiah, the Mahdi; and when he was informed that numerous partisans were anxiously expecting him in Africa, Saïd, adopting the name of Obaid Allah the Mahdi, passed into Africa, overthrew the dynasty of the Aghlabites, ruling in Tripoli and Tunis, and founded the famous dynasty of the Fatimites (A.D. 909). His great-grandson, Moizz li dinillah, drove the Khalifs of Bagdad from Egypt, and laid the foundations of Cairo, which he made his capital.

140. *The Lodge of Cairo*.—Here he founded the Lodge of Cairo, which might correctly be described as a university; it contained many books and scientific instruments; science was the professed object, but the real aim was very different. The course of instruction was divided into nine degrees. The first sought to inspire the pupil with doubts, and with confidence in his teacher who was to solve them. For this purpose captious questions were to show him the absurdity of the literal sense of the Koran, and obscure hints gave him to understand that under that shell was hidden a sweet and nutritious kernel; but the instruction went no further unless the pupil bound himself by dreadful oaths to blind faith



in, and absolute obedience to, his instructor. The second inculcated the recognition of the imams, or directors, appointed by God as the fountains of every kind of knowledge. The third informed him of the number of those blessed or holy imams, and that number was the mystical seven. The fourth informed him that God had sent into the world seven legislators, each of whom had seven coadjutors, and who were called *mutes*, whilst the legislators were called *speakers*. The fifth informed him that each of these coadjutors had twelve apostles. The sixth placed before the eyes of the adept, advanced so far, the precepts of the Koran, and he was taught that all the dogmas of religion ought to be subordinate to the rule of philosophy; he was also instructed in the systems of Plato and Aristotle. The seventh degree embraced mystical pantheism. The eighth again brought before him the dogmatic precepts of the Mohammedan law, estimating it at its just value. The ninth degree, finally, as the necessary result of all the former, taught that nothing was to be believed, and that everything was lawful.

141. *Progress of Doctrines.*—These were the ends aimed at—human responsibility and dignity were to be annihilated; the throne of the descendants of Fatima was to be surrounded with an army of assassins, a formidable body-guard; a mysterious militia was to be raised, that should spread far and wide the fame and terror of the caliphate of Cairo, and inflict fatal blows on the abhorred rule of Bagdad. The missionaries spread widely, and in Arabia and Syria partisans were won to whom the designs of the order were unknown, but who had with fearful solemnity sworn blind obedience. The nocturnal labours of the Lodge of Cairo lasted a century; and its doctrines, which ended with denying all truth, morality, and justice, necessarily produced something very extraordinary. So terrible a shock to the human conscience led to one of those phenomena that leave a sanguinary and indelible trace on the page of history.

It remains to be noticed that Hakem Biamrillah, the founder of the sect of the Druses (157), was originally a member of the Lodge of Cairo.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Mahdists have come to the front again in the present troubles in the Sudan. But according to the *Times* correspondent (5th June 1896), their power is at an end. Abdullah el Taaisha, who called himself the Khalifa of the Mahdi, now styles himself the Sultan of the Sudan, but his followers seem decreasing, and as they no longer form a secret society, their doings do not enter into the scope of this work.



## THE ASSASSINS

142. *Foundation of Order*.—Only Arabia and Syria could have been the theatre of the dismal deeds of the *Old Man*, or rather *Lord of the Mountain*. Hassan Sabbah was one of the *days* or missionaries of the School of Cairo, a man of adventurous spirit, who, having greatly distinguished himself, acquired much influence at Cairo. This influence, however, excited the envy of others, who succeeded in having him exiled. He had been put on board a ship to take him out of the country, but a storm arising, all considered themselves lost. But Hassan, assuming an authoritative air, exclaimed, "The Lord has promised me that no evil shall befall me." Suddenly the storm abated, and the sailors cried, "A miracle!" and became his followers. Hassan traversed Persia, preaching and making proselytes, and having seized the fortress of Alamut (1090), on the borders of Irak, and Dilem, which he called the "House of Fortune," he there established his rule.

143. *Influence of Hassan*.—What kind of rule? The history of his time is full of his name. Kings in the very centre of Europe trembled at it; his powerful arm reached everywhere. Philip Augustus of France was so afraid of him that he dared not stir without his guard around him; and perhaps the otherwise implacable Lord of the Mountain forgave him because of his fear. At first he showed no other intention but to increase the sway of the caliphate of Cairo, but was not long before throwing off the mask, because his fierce character submitted with difficulty to cunning and hypocrisy. He reduced the nine degrees into which the adherents of the Lodge of Cairo were divided to seven, placing himself at the head, with the title of *Seydna* or *Sidna*, whence the Spanish *Cid*, and the Italian *Signore*. The term *Assassins* is a corruption of *Hashishim*, derived from *hashish* (the hemp plant), with which the chief intoxi-





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stabbed him a second time; and then expired, without a complaint, amidst refined tortures.

146. *The Imaginary Paradise*.—How was such devotion secured? The story goes, according to Marco Polo, that whenever the chief had need of a man to carry out any particularly dangerous enterprise, he had recourse to the following stratagem:—In a province of Persia, now named Sigistan, was the famous valley Mulebat, containing the palace of Alladin, another name of the Lord of the Mountain. This valley was a most delightful spot, and so protected by high mountains terminating in perpendicular cliffs, that from them no one could enter the valley, and all the ordinary approaches were guarded by strong fortresses. The valley was cultivated as the most luxurious gardens, with pavilions splendidly furnished, their sole occupants being the most lovely and charming women. The man selected by the lord to perform the dangerous exploit was first made drunk, and in this state carried into the valley, where he was left to roam whithersoever he pleased. On coming to his senses sufficiently to appreciate the beautiful scenery, and to enjoy the charms of the sylph-like creatures, that kept him engaged all the time in amorous dalliance, he was made to believe that this was Elysium; but ere he wearied or became satiated with love and wine, he was once more made drunk, and in this state carried back to his own home. When his services were required, he was again sent for by the lord, who told him that he had once permitted him to enjoy paradise, and if he would do his bidding he could luxuriate in the same delights for the rest of his life. The dupe, believing that his master had the power to do all this, was ready to commit whatever crime was required of him.

147. *Sanguinary Character of Hassan*.—In that inaccessible nest the vulture-soul of its master was alone with his own ambition; and the very solitude, which constituted his power, must at times have weighed heavy upon him. And so it is said that he composed theological works, and gave himself up to frequent religious exercises. And this need not surprise us; theological studies are no bar to ferocity, and mystical gentleness is often found united with sanguinary fury. But he killed with calculation, to gain fame and power, to inspire fear and secure success. He impressed on his followers the belief that he could see things happening at a distance, and having established a pigeon-post, he was frequently informed of distant events with a surprising



rapidity. A Persian caliph thought of attacking and dispersing the sect, and found on his pillow a dagger and a letter from Hassan, saying, "What has been placed beside thy head may be planted in thy heart." In spite of years he remained sanguinary to the last. With his own hand he killed his two sons; the one for having slain a *day*, and the other for having tasted wine. He did not design to found a dynasty or regular government, but an order, sect, or secret society; and perhaps his sons perished in consequence of badly disguising their desire to succeed him.

148. *Further Instances of Devotion in Followers.*—The obedience to the faithful did not cease with Hassan's death, as the following will show. Henry, Count of Champagne, had to pass close by the territory of the Assassins; one of the successors of Hassan, Rishad-ad-din, invited him to visit the fortress, which invitation the Count accepted. On making the round of the towers, two of the "faithful," at a sign from the "Lord," stabbed themselves to the heart, and fell at the feet of the terrified Count; whilst the master coolly said, "Say but the word, and at a sign from me you shall see them all thus on the ground." The Sultan having sent an ambassador to summon the rebellious Assassins to submission, the lord, in the presence of the ambassador, said to one of the faithful, "Kill thyself!" and he did it; and to another, "Throw thyself from this tower!" and he hurled himself down. Then turning to the ambassador, he said, "Seventy thousand followers obey me in the same manner. This is my reply to your master." The only exaggeration in this is probably in the number, the whole number of followers being never estimated above forty thousand, many of whom, moreover, were not "faithful ones," but only aspirants.

149. *Murder of Raschid-addin's Ambassador.*—The Knights of the Temple had possessions in the neighbourhood of those of the Assassins, and their superior power had enabled them, at what time is uncertain, to render the latter tributaries to the amount of 2000 ducats per annum. Raschid-addin, to whom all religions were alike, conceived the idea of releasing himself from this tribute by becoming, together with his people, Christians. He therefore sent in 1172 an ambassador to Amalric, king of Jerusalem, offering to embrace Christianity, provided the king would engage the Templars to renounce the tribute. The king readily assented to this, and at the same time assured the Templars that they should not be losers, as he would pay them the 2000 ducats annually



out of his treasury. The Templars made no objection, but on his way home the Ishmaelite ambassador was murdered by some Knights of the Temple, who, it would appear, acted by the orders of their superior, who probably did not consider the royal promise good for the tribute. At all events, when Amalric, full of indignation at the perfidious conduct of the Templars, insisted on their being punished, Adode St. Amand, the Master of the Temple, contented himself by saying that he had imposed penances on the murderers. The king, however, got hold of Du Mesnil, the leader in the assassination, and threw him into prison; but the king soon after dying, Du Mesnil regained his liberty. All hopes of the conversion of the Ishmaelites, however, were at an end.

150. *Suppression of Assassins.*—Raschid-addin died in 1192. His successors had neither his genius nor his prestige. The days of the sect were counted. In 1256 Hoolagoo, the brother of Mongoo, the Great Khan of Mongolia, invaded Persia, and exterminated all the Assassins he could seize. Rokn-addin, the last Master of Alamut, was put to death; most of his fortresses fell into the hands of Hoolagoo. But the Mameluk Sultan of Egypt having in 1260 defeated the Mongolians, the fortresses were restored to the Ishmaelites. But this was only a respite; in 1265 they were forced to pay tribute to the Sultan of Egypt. Sarim, the then chief of the Assassins, in 1270 made one more effort to throw off the Egyptian yoke, but he was defeated, and in 1273 the Assassins had surrendered all their strong places to Baibars I., Sultan of Egypt. But this ruler had no intention, like Hoolagoo, of exterminating the Assassins; his object was to turn them to account. Ibn Batoutah, the traveller, in 1326 found them residing in their ancient towns and fortified places: they are, he says, the arrows of the Sultan, with which he reaches his enemies. And from the preface to a collection of anecdotes regarding Raschid-addin, made by Abou Firas about the year 1324, we learn that the doctrines of the Assassins continued to be openly professed.

151. *Modern Assassins.*—The sect is still in existence, both in Persia and Syria. The Persian Ishmaelites dwell chiefly in Roodbar, but they are to be met with all over the East, and even appear as traders on the banks of the Ganges. A. Drummond, British Consul at Aleppo, in his “Travels through Several Parts of Asia” (London, 1754, fol.), says (p. 217), “Some authors assert that these people [the Assassins] were entirely extirpated in the thirteenth





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Christian princes were suspected of conniving at the deeds of the Assassins. Richard of England is one of them; but we have seen (145) that he is free from the charge of having instigated the murder of that Conrad of Montferrat spoken of above. There also existed for a long time a rumour that Richard had attempted the life of the king of France through Hassan and his Assassins. The nephew of Barbarossa, Frederick II., was excommunicated by Innocent II. for having caused the Duke of Bavaria to be slain by the Assassins; and Frederick II., in a letter to the king of Bohemia, accuses the Duke of Austria of having by similar agents attempted his life. Historians also mention an Arab who, in 1158, was discovered in the imperial camp at the siege of Milan, and on the point of stabbing the emperor. Who had armed that Assassin? It is not known. Mutual distrust existed amongst the rulers of Europe, and the power of Hassan and his successors increased in accordance with it.



## THE ROSHENIAH

154. *The Rosheniah Sect and its Founder.*—Another sect which grew out of that of the Ishmaelites was that of the Rosheniah. It was founded by Bayezid Ansari, the son of Abdullah, an Ulema of the tribe of Vurmud in Afghanistan. This Bayezid, though his father wished to bring him up to the priesthood, preferred traffic to learning, and took to the business of a travelling dealer in horses. Once, when staying on business in the district of Calinjir, he fell in with a *malhed*, which is a common epithet by which Moslem writers denominate the Ishmaelites. From him Bayezid imbibed a new religious creed, and began to profess and inculcate it on his return home. But neither his father nor his neighbours favouring it, he left his native country, and found for a while a refuge with Ahmed, Sultan of Ningashar in Afghanistan. But meeting with much opposition on the part of the people, he left Ningashar, and took up his residence among the Afghans of Gharihel, in the vicinity of Peshawur, where he had little difficulty in gaining proselytes, whom he initiated into his doctrines. They were graduated into eight degrees of knowledge, each of which are termed *zeker*, and his disciples were in the same manner arranged into eight classes, which he denominated *Khilwat*. He composed for his followers formularies of instruction; to the Afghans he delivered his instructions in the Afghan, to the Hindoos in Hindi, and to the Persians in the Persian language; and such was the versatility of his genius, that even his enemies admit his writings to be composed in the most attractive style. When his disciples had reached the eighth mystic degree, he informed them that they had now attained perfection, and had nothing more to do with the ordinances or prohibitions of the law. He then collected his most trusty followers into a body, took up his residence in the steep mountains of Afghanistan, plundered merchants, levied contributions, and propagated his doctrines by force of arms.



It was said that the female sex were his most ardent votaries, and he employed them to seduce the young men of the Afghan tribes. In the first stages of their initiation the young men and young women were classed separately, but as they advanced in illumination these restrictions were removed, and they were allowed to mix in promiscuous assemblies. As his power increased the expression of his doctrines became more bold; he totally denied the doctrine of a future state, and directed his most perfect disciples to follow their pleasures without reserve, and gratify their inclinations without scruple. He also inculcated on his followers an absolute right to dispose of the lives and properties of all who did not adhere to his sect. He eventually removed to the district of Hashtnagar, which the Afghans consider the region of their original settlement in Afghanistan, where he founded a city, and assumed the title of *Pir Roshan*, which may be translated the 'Father of Light,' whence his followers took the name of Rosheniah, or the Enlightened.

155. *Death of Bayezid*.—The Moghul Government became alarmed at the spread of Bayezid's doctrines. Mahsan Khan Ghazi, an officer of great merit, who was then governor of Cabul, made a sudden irruption into the district of Hashtnagar, and having seized Bayezid, conducted him to Cabul, where he exhibited him as a spectacle to the populace, with his hair shaven on one side of the head, and left untouched on the other. But Bayezid is said to have bribed Mahsan Khan's religious instructor, whereby he regained his liberty. Bayezid then retreated with his followers to the almost inaccessible hill country of Tirah, where he set about retrieving his late disgrace, and prosecuted his plans with such vigour and policy, that his sect began to assume a national character, and his doctrines to be considered as the peculiar religion of the Afghans. Bayezid announced his design of conquering Khorasan and Hindustan, but on descending with that view into the plains of Ningashar, he was again met by Mahsan Khan Ghazi, who routed his irregular forces, and the leader himself with difficulty made his escape; but the fatigues he underwent and the distress he suffered within a few days put an end to his life.

156. *Extinction of Sect*.—But his followers were numerous and enthusiastic; on his death his eldest son addressed them thus: "Come on, my friends; your Pir is not dead, but has resigned his place to his son, Sheik Omar, and conferred on him and his followers the empire of the whole world." But





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## THE DRUSES

157. *Origin of Sect of Druses.*—The Ishmaelites of Egypt and Syria may be found even to this day in some of the sects of Islam. Their primitive physiognomy reveals itself but faintly ; but their profile is seen in the lineaments of some of the heretical families wandering in the wilderness or on Mount Lebanon ; objects of inquietude to the Turkish Government, of wonder to travellers, and of study to science. Of these, the Druses, living in Northern Syria, and possessing about forty towns and villages, are perhaps the most remarkable. Their sect may be said to date its rise from the supposed incarnation of God in Hakem Biamr Allah, publicly announced at Cairo in 1020. This Hakem was the sixth caliph of Egypt ; and Darazi, his confessor, took an active part in promoting the imposture, which, however, was at first so badly received that he was compelled to take refuge in the deserts of the Lebanon, where, receiving liberal pecuniary support from Hakem, he found hearers among the Arabs, and soon made converts. According to other accounts, Darazi was killed for preaching his doctrine, and thus became the first martyr to the new religion. A footing thus gained, correspondence was opened with Egypt, and Hamzé, a Persian mystic and vizier of Hakem, who had from the first been a zealous supporter of Hakem's divinity, hastened to avail himself of the favourable opening. Ten years did not elapse before the two clever rogues or fiery fanatics had converted nearly all the Arab tribes inhabiting the Lebanon, while one portion of them were set apart and initiated into the mysteries of the doctrines of Hamzé. But he did not give his name to the sect ; by a natural etymology the disciples of *Darazi*, the first teacher, obtained the name of Druses, though they reject it, and call themselves Unitarians. We may thus look upon the Fatimite Caliph Hakem, the Persian Hamzé, and the Turk Darazi as the founders of the Druse system, Hakem being its poli-



tical founder, Hamzé its intellectual framer, and Darazi its expositor and propagator.

158. *Religious Books of the Druses*.—Hamzé associated with himself four assistants, to whom, as well as to himself, he gave high-sounding names. He called himself, for instance: Universal Reason, the Centre, the Messiah of Nations, Jesus, the United, *i.e.*, He who is ever united with the god Hakem. He had, moreover, 159 disciples, who went about preaching. The Druses call their religious books, “The Sitzings of the Rulers and their Learned Men;” they are comprised in six volumes: the first has the title, “The Diploma;” the second, “The Refutation;” the third, “The Awakening;” the fourth, “The First of the Seven Parts;” the fifth, “The Staircase;” and the sixth, “The Reproaches.” In 1817, the Druses obtained a seventh volume from a Christian, who alleged to have found it in an Egyptian school, and which they call “The Book of the Greeks.”

159. *Murder of Hakem*.—Hakem was one of the most cruel monsters on record, a Saracenic Nero. Amidst carnage and the most revolting persecutions he spread his doctrine. But in Egypt, where he resided, his heresy outraged the true believers, and his savagery the whole people. Sitt El Mulk, his own sister, headed the malcontents, and one evening when, according to his custom, he took his ride on a white ass, she caused him to be assassinated by some trusty followers, who, after having despatched him with their daggers, undressed him and securely concealed the naked body. They then carefully fastened up his clothes again, by order of his sister, who did not wish the belief in his divinity to be destroyed. At last, when the caliph did not return, and those sent to look for him returned with the news that they had found his clothes but not his body, it was said that Hakem had simply rendered himself invisible, to test the faith of his followers, and to punish apostates on his return. And the Druses, to explain the miracle, say that Hakem possessed a body of a more subtile substance than the usual human body, and could go forth out of his clothes without opening or tearing them. The dagger cuts in them are explained away as mysterious indications of certain purposes of their deity.

160. *Hakem's Successor*.—Hakem left two sons, but the sect did not acknowledge them as such. Ali Ess Ssahir, who succeeded his father as caliph, is reported to have said to Hamzé, “Worship me, as you worshipped my father;” but Hamzé replied, “Our Lord, who be praised, neither



begat nor was he begotten." Ali replied, "Then I and my brother are illegitimate?" Hamzé answered, "You have said it, and borne testimony against yourself." Thereupon the enraged Ali ordered the wholesale murder of the Unitarians unless they returned to the true Moslem faith. Those who refused were either slain or fled to Syria to their co-religionists. Ali, to conciliate the people, who had by his father's despotism and oppression been greatly embittered against his dynasty, gave up all title to divine honours and the rights it implied.

161. *Doctrines*.—The Druses believe in the transmigration of souls; but probably it is merely a figure, as it was to the Pythagoreans. Hakem is their prophet; and they have seven commandments, religious and moral. The first of these is veracity, by which is understood faith in the unitarian religion they profess, and the abhorrence of that lie which is called polytheism, incredulity, error. To a brother perfect truth and confidence are due; but it is allowable, nay, a duty, to be false towards men of another creed. The sect is divided into three degrees, *Profanes*, *Aspirants*, and *Wise*. A Druse who has entered the second, may return to the first degree, but incurs death if he reveal what he has learned. In their secret meetings they are supposed to worship a calf's head; but as their religious books are full of denunciations against idolatry, and as they also compare Judaism, Christianity, and Mahommedanism to a calf, it is more probable that this effigy represents the principle of falsehood and evil, Iblis, the rival and enemy of Hakem. The Druses have also been accused of licentious orgies; and are said by Bespier in his "Remarks on Ricaut" [an English diplomatist (d. 1700)] to marry their own daughters; but according to the evidence of resident Christians, a young Druse, as soon as he is initiated, gives up all dissolute habits, and becomes, at least in appearance, quite another man, meriting, as in other initiations, the title of "new-born." The initiated are known by the appellation of Ockals, and form a kind of priesthood in the midst of the general population. According to their traditions, the world was at the appearance of God in the form of Hakem, three thousand four hundred and thirty million years old, and they believe, like the Chiliasts of England and America, that the millenium is close at hand. The Wise often retire into hermitages, whereby they acquire great honour and influence. When discoursing with a Mahommedan, the Druses profess to be of the same creed; when talking with a Christian, they





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occupying in the Lebanon upwards of forty large towns and villages, and nearly two hundred and thirty villages with a mixed population of Druses and Christians, whilst in the Anti-Lebanon they are also possessed of nearly eighty exclusively Druse villages.

163. *Druses and Maronites*.—The Druses were frequently at war with the Maronites, a neighbouring Christian sect, so called after Maro, its founder (*circa* 400 A.D.), originally fugitive Monothelites, who had settled on Mount Lebanon after the accession of Anastasius II. (496–8), who persecuted them as long as the Turkish Government favoured the Druses, in order to keep down the influence of the Maronites. The former, though the less warlike people, generally prevailed against the latter, but when the ruling Emir, Bence-Schihab, with his family, seceded from Mahommedanism and became Maronite Christians, the Maronites were for a time masters of the situation. In 1860, however, when the Maronites, for the promotion of Christianity, declared war against the Druses, Turkey again assisted the latter. True, the Porte afterwards changed sides, and supported the Maronites, partly because Europe insisted on the Christians being protected, and partly because it suited Turkish policy to so protect them; for the Maronites had by that time been so weakened, that Turkey considered the opportunity favourable to break the power of the Druses also. Since then the latter are under a governor appointed by the Porte.<sup>1</sup>

164. *The Ansaireeh or Nuseiriyeh*.—This is another Syrian sect, who worship a mystic Triad, consisting of Ali, Moham-mad, and an early companion of the latter, Selman el Farsi, whence their mystical name, *Ams*, formed from the initial letters of the three names. This Triad is ultimately resolved into Light, or the Sky, the Sun, and the Moon, the first being illimitable, the second proceeding from the first, and the last proceeding from the other two. Their religion is largely made up of Christian, Jewish, and Mohammedan elements, but there cannot be a doubt that beneath them all are remnants of the old Sabæan faith. Some of their doctrines, which have become known, advocate the most licentious practices, especially between the priests and the female members of their congregations. They invoke the Deity under extraordinary appellations, such as “Prince of Bees,” “Lion,” “End of Ends.” They are supposed to be the aborigines of Northern Syria, and to have remained in the

<sup>1</sup> At the present time (July 1896) the Druses are in rebellion against the Turks.



mountain chain stretching from Mount Cassius to the Lebanon, while successive tides of conquest have swept along the valleys on either side. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the details of their religion, both because it is secret and ill-digested, and because few among them understand it, or have fixed points of agreement or disagreement. They number about two hundred thousand, and derive their name from a sectary called Nusāiri. Burckhardt, in his "Travels in Syria and Palestine," gives some curious particulars concerning them, which will not bear transferring to these pages.



## THE DERVISHES

165. *Dervishes*.—Also called Fakirs, and a monastic order of Islamism. Mahomet prohibited the introduction of monks into his religious system; but thirty years after the death of the Prophet, monks made their appearance, and it is supposed that there are now seventy-two orders of them. But twelve of them are undoubtedly older than Islamism.

The four chief orders are: 1. The Rifajeh, who carry black flags and wear black or dark-brown turbans. They practise jugglers' tricks, such as swallowing daggers, eating fire, charming serpents, &c. 2. The Kaderijeh, with white flags and turbans; they are chiefly fishermen. 3. The Saïd Bidani, whose founder is the greatest saint of the Egyptian Moslems, Saïd Achmed El Bidani. Their colours are red and white, and they are divided into several sects. They wear an absurd costume and act as buffoons. 4. The Saïd Ibrahim, with green flags, and turbans. All that is known of them is that they have a monastery at Alexandria.

166. *Shiites and Sunnites*.—The Dervishes are, moreover, divided into two grand bodies, named as above, the former being Egyptian, the latter Turkish Dervishes. These latter are our great enemies in India. The pilgrims from that country propagate at Constantinople antagonism to our rule, and return to India strengthened with the sympathies of the Mussulman world. It is a remarkable circumstance, that though the Ulema are opposed to the Dervishes, they being looked upon as heterodox, men of great intellect, orthodox in their principles, and occupying high positions in the state, should enrol themselves in the order. The only explanation may be found in their study of the Persian Soofee poets, whose doctrine, which is that of the Dervishes, is that form of spiritualism which ends in Pantheism, teaching that God is, or may enter into, all things spiritual, and which approximates to that materialism of which Buddhism is the exponent.

167. *Doctrines*.—The Dervishes have their "Paths," which





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# BOOK V

## *HERETICS*

“The heretic foxes have various faces, but they all hang together by their tails.”—POPE GREGORY IX.



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horizon which, lit up by the dawn, casts light around his feet, while his head is yet in darkness. Henceforth secret societies are popular and religious, not in the sense of the constituted and official church, but of a rebellious and sectarian church ; and since at a period when the authority of the church is paramount, and religion circulates through all the veins of the state, no change can be effected without heresy, so this must necessarily be the first aspect of political and intellectual revolt. This heresy makes use of the denial and rejection of official dogmas, in order to overthrow the hated clerocracy, and to open for itself a road to civil freedom.

170. *The Circumcellians*.—The Papacy was necessarily the first cradle of the new conspirators, who at an early date arose out of it. In the second century the Adamites became conspicuous. They asserted that by Christ's death they were as innocent as Adam before the Fall, and were accused of praying naked in their assemblies. We may incidentally mention that the sect was renewed in the fifteenth century by one Picard, a native of Flanders. But a more important sect which arose in the first century of Christianity was that of the Circumcellians, who were a branch of the Donatists, the followers of Donatus, the schismatic Bishop of Carthage (A.D. 311), who at that early age already preached against the corruptions of the Romish Church. By the violent persecution they experienced, some of the Bishop's adherents were turned into fanatics, and bands of them roamed about the country (hence their name, compounded of *circum cellas*), preaching reformation and redressing grievances, setting free slaves, and remitting debts, without consulting the parties most interested, and occasionally committing greater crimes. Some of these fanatics, in a mistaken zeal for martyrdom, threw themselves down precipices, leaped into the fire, or cut their own throats. The sect existed some thirteen or fourteen years, when it was suppressed by the magistracy. A heretical sect, bearing the same name, existed also in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Germany, denying the authority of popes, bishops, and priests, and the legality of ecclesiastical interdicts.

171. *The Albigenses*.—One of the most extensive and active heresies was that of the Albigenses, so called after their chief town, Albi, whence they spread all over Southern France. The sect was the offspring of Manichæism ; it fructified in its turn the germs of the Templars and Rosicrucians, and of all those associations that continued the struggle and fought against ecclesiastical and civil oppression.



172. *Objects of the Albigenses.*—It is to be noticed that the object of the Albigenses in so far differed from that of all posterior sects, that its blows were intended for Papal Rome alone ; and wholly Papal was the revenge taken through the civil arm, and with priestly rage. The Albigenses were the Ghibellines of France, and combined with all who were opposed to Rome, especially with Frederick II. and the Arragonese, in maintaining the rights of kings against the pretensions of the Papal See. Their doctrines had a special influence on the University of Bologna, wholly imperial ; Dante was imperialistic, tainted with that doctrine, and therefore hated by the Guelphs.

173. *Tenets of the Albigenses.*—Toulouse was the Rome of that church, which had its pastors, bishops, provincial and general councils, like the official church, and assembled under its banners the dissenters of a great portion of Europe, all meditating the ruin of Rome and the restoration of the kingdom of Jerusalem. The rising in Provence gathered strength from the circumstances in which it took place. The Crusaders had revived Eastern Manichæism, placing Europe in immediate contact with sophisticated Greece, with Mahomedan and Pantheistic Asia. The East, moreover, contributed Aristotle and his Arab commentators, to which must be added the subtleties of the cabala and the materialism of ideas. Philosophy, republicanism, and industry assailed the Holy See. Various isolated rebellions had revealed the general spirit, and wholesale slaughter had not repressed it ; the rationalism of the Waldenses—so called after Peter Waldo, the founder of the sect—connected itself with the German mysticism of the Rhine and the Netherlands, where the operatives rose against the counts and the bishops. Every apostle that preached pure morality, the religion of the spirit, the restoration of the primitive church, found followers ; the century of Louis IX., or the Saint (1226–70), is the century of unbelief in the Church of Rome, and the *Impossibilia* of Sigero foreshadowed those of Strauss.

174. *Aims of the Albigenses.*—The heresy of the Albigenses made such progress along the shores of the Mediterranean, that several countries seemed to separate from Rome, while princes and emperors openly favoured it. Not satisfied with already considering impious Rome overthrown, the Albigenses suddenly turned towards the Crusaders, at first looked at with indifference, hoping to make Jerusalem the glorious and powerful rival of Rome, there to establish the seat of the Albigenses, to restore the love of religion in its first



home, to found on earth the heavenly Jerusalem, of which Godfrey of Bouillon was proclaimed king. This was the man who had carried fire and sword into Rome, slain (15th October 1080) the anti-Cæsar Rodolphe, "the king elected by priests," and thrust the Pope out of the holy city, deserving thereby, and by the hopes entertained of him, the infinite praises for his piety, purity, and chastity bestowed on him by the troubadours, who originally appeared in the first quarter of the twelfth century, in the allegorical compositions known by the name of the "Knight of the Swan." The project of making Jerusalem the rival of Rome assigned an important part to the Templars, who perhaps were aware of and sharers in it.

175. *The Cathari*.—Italy, though watched by Rome, nay, because watched, supported the new doctrines. Milan was one of the most active *foci* of the *Cathari* (the Pure); in 1166 that city was more heretical than Catholic. In 1150 there were Cathari at Florence, and the women especially were most energetic in the dissemination of the dogmas of the sect, which became so powerful as to effect in the city a revolution in favour of the Ghibellines. At Orvieto Catharism prevailed in 1125, and was persecuted in 1163; the persecution was most fierce at Verona, Ferrara, Modena, &c. In 1224 a great number of these sectaries met in Calabria and Naples, and even Rome was full of them. But Lombardy and Tuscany were always the chief seats of this revolt.

176. *Doctrines and Tenets*.—But we have only scanty notices of this sect, because, unlike other heretical associations, it sought to conceal its operations. It bore great resemblance to Manichæism and the dogmas of the Albigenses, like which latter, it concealed its doctrines not only from the world at large, but even from its proselytes of inferior degrees. They believed in the metempsychosis, assuming that to attain to the light, seven such transmigrations were required; but, as in other cases, this was probably an emblematic manner of speaking of the degrees of initiation. They attributed the origin of the visible and of the invisible world to different creators; the former was the creation of the evil spirit, wherefore they rejected the Old Testament account of the creation, as also the incarnation of Christ, purgatory, hell, &c. They had communistic tendencies, and were averse to marriage; philanthropists, above all they led industrious lives, combined saving habits with charity, founded schools and hospitals, crossed lands and seas to make proselytes, denied to magistrates the right of taking





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178. *The Waldenses or Vaudois*.—This sect arose in the twelfth century, and was so named after its founder, Peter Waldus, a rich citizen of Lyons. Its aims were, to a great extent, similar to those of the Albigenses. Persecuted by the Church, its members spread over a great part of Europe. In the thirteenth century the Pope instituted a crusade against them, the details of which belong to general history. The principles of the Vaudois, however, remained unsubdued, and at the Reformation their descendants were reckoned among the Protestants, though they differed, and continue to differ, from them in many doctrinal points, and they remain as a distinct sect in many parts of Europe. But it was only in 1848 that by the edict of the king of Sardinia they were granted religious liberty and equal civil and political rights with the Roman Catholic population of that kingdom. According to Rulman Merswin, who wrote between 1370–80 at Strasbourg, a community of Vaudois then lived hidden in the mountains of Switzerland, calling themselves by the name of “Friends of God.” The Anabaptists, Lollards, Beghards, and Beguines all sprang from this sect.

179. *Luciferians*.—Another sect which sprung from the Cathari was that of the Luciferians, which must not be confounded with that so named after Lucifer, Bishop of Cagliari, and which existed for a short time under Theodosius the Great. The Luciferians, or Devil-worshippers, to be spoken of here arose in the twelfth or thirteenth century; their chief seats were in the principality of East Friesland. The Frieslanders, having refused to pay tithes to the archbishops of Bremen, they were proclaimed heretics. Konrad von Marburg, infamous for hypocrisy and cruelty, took the part of the Church, and nothing shows the mental besottedness of the clergy of those days better than the report sent to the Pope, Gregory IX., and adopted by this latter as a true statement of facts, as is apparent from his Bull, published in 1233. According to Konrad’s report, as reproduced in the Pope’s Bull, the Luciferians, when initiating a candidate, first caused a frog or toad to appear to him, which he had to kiss, or to draw its tongue and saliva into his own mouth. This animal usually appeared in its natural size, sometimes as large as a goose, but more generally as large as a baker’s oven!

Then a pale man, consisting of only skin and bone, appeared to the novice, who had to kiss him, after which the novice lost all recollection of the Catholic faith. A black tom-cat then descended through a statue, which was always found



in the meeting-place of these heretics, and when they all had kissed the animal's hinder quarters, the lights were extinguished, and the most licentious practices indulged in. The candles having been re-lighted, a man appeared, more glorious than the sun in his upper parts, while the lower part of his body resembled that of a cat, who received a piece of cloth torn off the novice's clothes, as a pledge that henceforth the new initiate belonged to him. These heretics further said that God unjustly cast Lucifer into hell, but that eventually the devil would be restored to his former glory and happiness.

180. *Origin of Devil-worship.*—Now it is certain that in the dark ages, when men were crushed under superstition and cruelty, when cleric and secular oppressors—the former the worse of the two—rendered life almost unbearable to the serf and the bondsman, these, seeing themselves forsaken by God and his saints, naturally appealed to the Devil for protection, and hence a kind of Devil-worship arose; wherefore we may accept the charge brought against the Luciferians of believing in the Devil's eventual restoration as true; nor is it a serious one: very pious people such, as the Everlasting Gospellers, held that belief. But the other charges are too absurd to require serious refutation.

We are told that the Luciferians had their signs of recognition, and used to accost one another thus: "Lucifer, who has been wronged, greets thee." To prevent an uninitiated to enter their assemblies, they would put the question, "Do thorns prick to-day?" the answer to which is not recorded, but of course was known to the initiated only. The places where they held their meetings were called "cellars of repentance." The charge of committing unnatural crimes brought against them was one brought by the Church against all heretics; but the Luciferians were not so accused till late in the thirteenth century, when the sect had ceased to exist, having been exterminated by the word and fire of Holy Mother Church.

There existed numerous other sects, named either after their founders or the localities in which they arose, such as the Messalians, the Bogomiles, supposed to be sprung from the latter, the Cainians, the Encrafites, and others; yet none of them were of such importance as those spoken of above. But whatever might be their determination, the members of all these sects in the course of several centuries supplied many victims to the torture-chambers and faggots of the Inquisition, the Church cunningly mixing up heresy



with witchcraft. Thomas Stapleton, who during the reign of Queen Elizabeth emigrated to Holland, to escape the persecution of the Roman Catholics in this country, wrote a book on the question why clergy and witchcraft spread simultaneously to such an extent, which two evils he called the twin-children of the Devil. The author died in 1598. Even after this date it was damnable heresy to deny the existence of witchcraft. In 1725 the principality of Hohen-zollern Hechingen in Würtemberg by public decree promised five florins reward to any one bringing in, dead or alive, a goblin, nixy, or other spook of the kind!

181. *Religion of the Troubadours*.—Troubadours and Albigenses drew closer together in persecution; their friendship increased in the school of sorrow. They sang and fought for one another, and their songs expired on the blazing piles; wherefore it appears reasonable to consider the troubadours as the organisers of that vast conspiracy directed against the Church of Rome, the champions of a revolt which had not for its guide and object material interests and vulgar ambition, but a religion and a polity of love. Here love is considered, not as an affection which all more or less experience and understand, but as an art, a science, acquired by means of the study and practice of sectarian rites and laws; and the artists under various names appear scattered throughout many parts of Europe. It is difficult, indeed, to determine the boundaries within which the Gay Science was diffused. The singers of love are met with as the troubadours of the Langue d'Oc and the Langue d'Oui, the minnesängers and minstrels.

182. *Difficulty to understand the Troubadours*.—The singers of Provence—whose language was by the Popes called the language of heresy—are nearly unintelligible to us, and we know not how to justify the praises bestowed upon their poetry by such men as Dante, Petrarch, Chaucer; nor dare we, since we do not understand their verses, call their inspiration madness, nor deny them the success they undoubtedly achieved. It appears more easy and natural to think that those free champions of a heresy who were not permitted clearly to express their ideas, preferred the obscure turns of poetry and light forms that concealed their thoughts, as the sumptuous and festive courts of love perhaps concealed the “Lodges” of the Albigenses from the eye of the Papal Inquisition. The same was done for political purposes at various periods. Thus we have Gringore's *La Chasse du Cerf des Cerfs* (a pun designating Pope Julius II., by allusion to





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# BOOK VI

## CHIVALRY

“Chivalry was more a spirit than an institution . . . the ceremonial was merely the public declaration that he on whom the order was conferred was worthy to exercise the powers with which it invested him ; but still, *the spirit* was the chivalry.”—JAMES’S *History of Chivalry*.









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before the eleventh century, that issued from the womb of Manichæism and Catharism, and was altogether hostile to Rome. But even at that period the Papal Church acted on the principle afterwards so fully carried out by the Jesuits, of directing what they could not suppress; and having nothing more to fear than spiritualism, whether mystical, Platonic, or chivalric, Rome, instead of opposing its current, cunningly turned it into channels where, instead of being destructive to the Papacy, it became of infinite advantage to it.

188. *Tenets and Doctrines.*—Those who composed the romances of the Round Table and the San Greäl were well acquainted with the Gallic triads, the mysteries of the theological doctrines of the Bards and Celtic myths. These romances have their origin in the phenomena of the natural world, and the San Greäl is only a diminutive Noah's Ark. From Chaucer's "Testament of Love," which seems founded on the "Consolation of Philosophy" by Boëthius, it has been supposed that the love of chivalry was the love of woman, in its highest, noblest, and most spiritualised aspect. But the lady-love of the knight in the early period of chivalry was the Virgin Sophia, or philosophy personified. The phraseology employed in the rites of initiation, the religious vows taken on that occasion, the tonsure to which the knights submitted, with many other circumstances, sufficiently indicate that the love so constantly spoken of has no reference to earthly love. This applies especially to the knights who may be called Voluntary Knights, and whose charter is the curious book called "Las Siete Partidas," by Alfonso XI., king of Castile and Leon. Their statutes greatly resembled those of the Templars and Hospitallers; they were more than any other a religious order; bound to very strict lives; their clothes were of three colours, and—strange coincidence—analogous with those with which Dante beheld Beatrice clothed, and the three circles he describes towards the end of "Paradise." They had two meals a day, and drank only water, a regimen scarcely fit for a militia whose duties were not always spiritual; for, besides their special duties, they were also subject to all the rules of chivalry, and bound to protect the weak against the strong, to restore peace where it had been disturbed, to serve their body (the Lodge), and protect the (evangelical) religion. They are said to have branded their right arms in sign of their fraternity; but this is perhaps only a figure of the baptism of fire and the Spirit, one of the most essential



rites of the Religion of Love. A green glass vase, said to be the original San Greäl, is preserved in the cathedral of Genoa, and considered so valuable that it requires a special permission from the municipality to see it. It was “by authority” said to be cut out of a gigantic emerald; but the ungodly French, who during the rule of the first Napoleon had carried it to Paris, chemically tested, and proved it, as stated above, to be only green glass.



## THE TEMPLARS

189. *Foundation of the Order.*—It was founded in 1118, partly on a more ancient order, as would appear from a MS. in the library of the Louvre, entitled *Hostes sur les Frères Mages ecristes par un Contemporain des Chevaliers Templiers qui en estes*. In the above year nine valiant and pious knights formed themselves into an association which united the characters of the monk and the knight. They selected for their patroness “*La douce Mère de Dieu*,” and bound themselves to live according to the rules of St. Augustine, swearing to consecrate their swords, arms, strength, and lives to the defence of the mysteries of the Christian faith; to pay absolute obedience to the Grand Master; to encounter the dangers of the seas and of war, whenever commanded, and for the love of Christ; and even when opposed singly to three infidel foes not to retreat. They also took upon themselves the vows of chastity and poverty, promised not to go over to any other Order, nor to surrender any wall or foot of land. King Baldwin II. assigned them a portion of his palace, and, as it stood near the Church of the Temple, the abbot gave them a street leading from it to the palace, and hence they styled themselves “Soldiery of the Temple” (*militia templi*).

190. *Progress of the Order.*—The first nine years which elapsed after the institution of the Order, the Templars lived in great poverty; Hugh des Payens and Godfrey of St. Omer, the founders, had but one war-horse between them, a fact commemorated on the seal of the Order, which represents two knights seated on one charger. Soon after, Pope Honorius confirmed the Order, and appointed a white mantle—to which Eugenius III. affixed a red cross on the breast—to be the distinguishing dress of the Templars. The Order also assumed a banner formed of cloth, striped white and black, called *Beauséant*<sup>1</sup> (in old French a piebald

<sup>1</sup> Preserved in the Scotch dialect, with its original meaning, in the form *fawsent* or *bawson*.





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felt their own power. The English Templars had dared to say to Henry III., "You shall be king as long as you are just;" portentous words, which supplied matter for meditation to that Philip of France who, like many other princes, wished to be unjust with impunity. In Castile, the Templars, Hospitallers, and Knights of St. John combined against the king himself. Perhaps they aimed at universal dominion, or at the establishment of a Western sovereignty, like the Teutonic Knights of Prussia, the Hospitallers in Malta, or the Jesuits in Paraguay? But there is scarcely any ground for these imputations, especially the first, considering that the members of the Order were scattered all over the earth, and might at the utmost have attempted to seize the government of some individual State, as that of Arragon, for instance, but not to carry out a scheme for which even the forces of Charlemagne had been inadequate. Accusations better founded were, that they had disturbed the kingdom of Palestine by their rivalry with the Hospitallers; had concluded leagues with the infidels; had made war upon Cyprus and Antiochia; had dethroned the king of Jerusalem, Henry II.; had devastated Greece and Thrace; had refused to contribute to the ransom of St. Louis; had declared for Arragon against Anjou—an unpardonable crime in the eyes of France—with many other accusations. But their greatest crime was that of being exceedingly wealthy; their downfall was therefore determined upon.

193. *Plots against the Order.*—Philip the Fair had spent his last sou. The victory of Mons, worse than a defeat, had ruined him. He was bound to restore Guyenne, and was on the point of losing Flanders. Normandy had risen against a tax which he had been obliged to withdraw. The people of the capital were so opposed to the government, that it had been found necessary to prohibit meetings of more than five persons. How was money to be obtained under these circumstances? the Jews could give no more, because all they had had been extorted from them by fines, imprisonment, and torture. It was necessary to have recourse to some grand confiscation, without disgusting the classes on whom the royal power relied, and leading them to believe, not that booty was aimed at, but the punishment of evil-doers, to the greater glory of religion and the triumph of the law. At the instigation of Philip the Fair, libels were published against the Order of the Knights Templars, in which the most absurd charges were made against the members, accusing them of heresy, impiety, and worse crimes. Great weight was attached



to the statements made against the Templars by two renegades of the Order, the Florentine Roffi Dei, and the Prior of Montfaucon, which latter, having been condemned by the Grand Master to imprisonment for life for his many crimes, made his escape and became the accuser of his former brethren.

194. *Attentions paid to Grand Master.*—Bertrand de Got, who, by the influence of the French king, had become Pope under the title of Clement V., was now urged by the former to fulfil the last of the five conditions on which the king had enabled him to ascend the chair of St. Peter. The first four conditions had been named, but Philip had reserved the naming of the fifth till the fit moment should arrive; and from his subsequent conduct there can be no doubt that the destruction of the Order of the Temple was the condition that was in the king's mind when he thus alluded to it. The first step was to get the Grand Master, James de Molay, into his power. At the request of the Pope that he would come to France to concert measures for the recovery of the Holy Land, he left Cyprus and came to Paris in 1307, accompanied by sixty knights, and bringing with him 150,000 florins of gold, and so much silver that it formed the lading of twelve horses, which he deposited in the Temple in that city. To lull him into false security, the king, whose plan was not yet quite ripe for execution, treated the Grand Master with the greatest consideration, made him the godfather of one of his sons, and chose him with some of the most distinguished persons to carry the pall at the funeral of his sister-in-law. The following day he was arrested with all his suite, and letters having in the meantime been sent to the king's officers in the provinces on the 13th October 1307 to seize upon all the Templars, their houses and property, throughout the kingdom, many thousand members of the Order, knights and serving brothers, were thus made prisoners.

195. *Charges against the Templars.*—The Templars were accused of denying Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints, and of spitting and trampling on the cross; of worshipping in a dark cave an idol in the figure of a man covered with an old human skin, and having two bright and lustrous carbuncles for eyes; of anointing it with the fat of young children roasted; of looking upon it as their sovereign God; of worshipping the devil in the form of a cat; of burning the bodies of dead Templars and giving the ashes to the younger brethren to eat and drink mingled with their food. They were charged with various unnatural crimes, frightful



debaucheries, and superstitious abominations, such as only madmen could have been guilty of, and as could only be thought of in an age of frightful ignorance, stupidity, and superstition. To make them confess these crimes they were put to the torture, not only in France, but also in England, for Edward II. leagued with Philip to destroy the Order. Many knights in the agonies of the torture confessed to the crimes they were charged with, hundreds expired under it without making any confession, many starved or killed themselves in other ways in prison. The trial was protracted for years; the persecution extended to other countries; in Germany and Spain and Cyprus the Order was acquitted of all guilt; in Italy, England, and France, however, their doom was sealed, though for a moment there seemed a chance of their escaping, for the Pope, seeing that Philip and Edward had seized all the money and estates of the Templars, and seemed inclined to deprive him of his share of the spoil, began to side with the Order. But on some concessions being made to him by the two kings, he again supported them, though in the end we find him complaining of the small share of the booty that came into his hands.

196. *Burning of Knights*.—The tedious progress of the sham trial was occasionally enlivened by the public execution of knights who refused to acknowledge crimes of which they were not guilty. Fifty-nine gallant knights were led forth in one day to the fields at the back of the nunnery of St. Antoine, where stakes had been driven into the ground, and faggots and charcoal collected. The knights were offered pardon if they would confess; but they all refused and were burned by slow fires—that is, clear charcoal fires. At Senlis nine were burned, and many more in other places. On all these occasions, as well as in the awful scenes of the torture-chamber, the Dominican friars were the mocking witnesses.

197. *James de Molay*.—The Grand Master remained in prison five years and a half, and there is no doubt that he was repeatedly put to the torture. The confession he was said to have made was probably a forgery. Finally, on the 18th March 1313, he and Guy, the Grand Preceptor of the Order, were burnt by a slow fire on a small island in the Seine, between the royal gardens and the church of the Hermit Brethren, where afterwards the statue of Henry IV. was erected, both to the last moment asserting the innocence of the Order.

198. *Mysteries of the Knights Templars*.—Without laying too much stress on confessions extorted by violence, or de-





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in which the East, in invasions, armed and unarmed, with the science of the Arabs, with poetry and heresies, had turned upon the West.

200. *Initiation*.—Much has been said about the mode of initiation—that it took place at night in the chapel, in the presence of the chapter, all strangers being strictly excluded; that licentious rites attended it, and that the candidate was compelled to deny, curse, and spit upon the cross—that cross for which they had shed so much of their own blood, sacrificed so many of their own lives. We have seen that this was one of the chief accusations brought against the Order. Was there any truth in it? It seems most probable there was; but the practice may be explained as in the following paragraph.

201. *Cursing and Spitting on the Cross Explained*.—Such a practice need not surprise us in an age in which churches were turned into theatres, in which sacred things were profaned by grotesque representations, in which the ancient mysteries were reproduced to do honour, in their way, to Christ and the saints. The reader may also bear in mind the extraordinary scenes afterwards represented in the Miracle Plays. Now the aspirant to the Templar degree was at first introduced as a sinner, a bad Christian, a renegade. He denied, in fact, after the manner of St. Peter, and the renunciation was frequently expressed by the odious act of spitting on the cross. The fraternity undertook to restore this renegade, to raise him all the higher the greater his fall had been. Thus at the Festival of the Idiots, the candidate presented himself, as it were, in a state of imbecility and of degradation, to be regenerated by the Church. These comedies, rightly understood at first, were in course of time falsely interpreted, scandalising the faithful, who had lost the key of the enigma. The Templars had adopted similar ceremonies. They were scions of the Cathari (175) and Manichæans. Now the Cathari despised the cross (176), and considered it meritorious to tread it under foot. But with the Templars this ceremony was symbolical, as was abundantly proved during their trial, and had indeed reference to Peter's thrice-repeated denial of Christ.

202. *Charge of Licentious Practices*.—As to licentious rites, if any such ever were practised, they were confined to certain localities and certain degrees of initiation; for it appeared at the trials that many knights had never even heard of the practices they were charged with; that they had never seen the bust of the Baphomet; that they had never been invited



or asked to take part in licentious or blasphemous rites. If certain members of the Order were cognisant of, and participated in such, their offences were individual offences, and not crimes which the Order and its teaching could be reproached with. Unnatural crimes, however, were so common in the days of the Templars that they might safely be charged with them, without at once raising a cry of indignation, and a sense of incredulity at the mere accusation itself; for in the age of the Templars it was customary on the election of a bishop to insist on the candidate swearing that he was not guilty of sodomy, seducing nuns, or bestiality! Had these vices not been very common, every honest man would at once have exclaimed, *Nolo episcopari!* All the charges brought against the Templars had been previously made against the Cathari, the Albigenses, and against the Hospitallers; and Clement, in a bull dated but four days after that of the suppression, acknowledged that the whole of the evidence against the Order amounted only to suspicion.

203. *The Templars the Opponents of the Pope.*—But there may have been another and special reason for introducing this ceremony, and ever keeping the treachery of Peter before the minds of the members of the Order. We have seen that the Templars, during and in consequence of their sojourn in the East, attached themselves to the doctrines of the Gnostics and Manichæans—as is sufficiently attested, were other proofs wanting, by the Gnostic and Cabalistic symbols discovered in and on the tombs of Knights Templars, which appeared to them less perverted than those of the priest of Rome. They also knew the bad success the proclamation of Christ's death on the cross had had at Athens, in consequence of Æschylus' tragedy, "Prometheus Vinctus," wherein Oceanus denied his friend, when God made him the sacrifice for the sins of mankind, just as Peter, who lived by the ocean, did with regard to Christ. The Templars, therefore, came to the conclusion that all these gods, descended from the same origin, were only religious and poetic figures of the sun; and seeing the bad use made of the doctrines connected therewith by the clergy, they renounced St. Peter, and became Johannites, or followers of St. John. There was thus a secret schism, and according to some writers, it was this, together with the opposition to Roman Catholicism which it implied, as well as their great wealth, which was among the causes of their condemnation by the court of Rome.

204. *Baphomet.*—The above explanation may also afford



a clue to the meaning and name of the idol the Templars were accused of worshipping. This idol represented a man with a long white beard, and the name given to it was *Baphomet*, a name which has exercised the ingenuity of many critics, but the only conclusions arrived at by any of them as to the meaning of the name, and deserving consideration, is that of Nicolai, who assumed that it is composed of the words *βαφή* *μῆτις*, the “baptism of wisdom,” and that the image represented God, the universal Father. As to the meaning of the head itself, we have already referred to the Gnostic and Cabalistic doctrines and symbols adopted by the Templars (198), and the head worshipped by them certainly was one of these symbols. We know that the Cabalists represented God *in abstracto* by a head without a beard, whilst the creative God was represented by a bearded head. The former symbolised unchangeableness, the latter the constant growth seen in the world. To the Templars the bust was the One God; when it was shown to the initiated, the hierophant pronounced the Arabic word *yalla* (corrupted from *yh alla*), the “Light of God,” and the new member was addressed as a “friend of God.” But a denial of the Trinity in those days involved racks and faggots; hence it became sufficiently plain why the secret was looked upon as inviolable, and was so well kept by the Templars that we can only conjecture its import.

205. *Disposal of the Possessions of the Templars.*—The Order having been suppressed by a Papal bull, dated 6th May 1312, the king and the Pope converted to their own use the movable property of the Order under their respective jurisdictions, the king keeping, as we have seen, the lion’s share. Its other possessions in France and Italy were, sorely against the will of the king, assigned to the Order of the Hospitallers, who were, however, obliged to pay such large fines to the king and Pope as completely impoverished them for the time. A portion of their German estates was assigned to the Teutonic Knights; the Spanish possessions of the Templars, consisting of seventeen towns and castles, were secured by the king for the foundation of the Order of Our Lady of Montesa, whose object was as barbarous as any Christian Pope or king could devise, namely, to combat the Moors; and the king of Portugal, who did not violently suppress the Order, made it change its name to that of the Order of Christ, which exists to this day, and, since 1789, consists of three classes: Grand-Cross, Commander, and Knight.





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## THE HOLY VEHM

206. *Origin and Object of Institution.*—In this book we are introduced to an order of secret societies altogether different from preceding ones. Hitherto they were religious or military in their leading features; but those we are now about to give an account of were judicial in their operations, and the first of them, the Holy Vehm, or secret tribunals of Westphalia, arose during the period of violence and anarchy that distracted the German empire after the outlawry of Henry the Lion, somewhere about the middle of the thirteenth century. The supreme authority of the Emperor had lost all influence in the country; the imperial assizes were no longer held; might and violence took the place of right and justice; the feudal lords tyrannised over the people; whosoever dared, could. To seize the guilty, whoever they might be, to punish them before they were aware of the blow with which they were threatened, and thus to secure the chastisement of crime—such was the object of the Westphalian judges, and thus the existence of this secret society, the instrument of public vengeance, is amply justified, and the popular respect it enjoyed, and on which alone rested its authority, explained.

207. *Places for Holding Courts.*—Romance writers have surrounded the Vehm with darkness, mystery, and awe, but sober history shows the institution to have been, before the date of its corruption, the fairest, and perhaps the only fair tribunal in the country where it existed, and that its only secrecy consisted in the justice and rapidity with which it discovered crime and executed its sentences. As to its meetings, they were not usually held in subterranean vaults or dimly lighted caves, but more frequently in the open air; at Nordkirchen the court was held in the churchyard; at Dortmund in the market-place. The favourite place for holding the courts was near or under trees; nor were they



held at night, but in the morning, soon after the break of day<sup>208</sup>.

*Officers and Organisations.*—The Westphalia of that period comprehended the country between the Rhine and the Weser; its southern boundary was formed by the mountains of Hesse, its northern by Friesland. *Vehm* or *Fehm* is, according to Leibnitz, derived from *fama*, as the law founded on common fame. But *fem* is an old German word, signifying condemnation, which may be the proper radix of *Vehm*. But the old German word *Fehm* also meant “company,” “society,” “separation,” “something set apart;” thus pigs put apart for the purpose of fattening were called fehms-pigs (*Fehmschweine*); the mark that was set on them to distinguish them was called the fehms-sign (*Fehmmahl*). The word *Vehm* having this general meaning, we may understand how the society of Free Judges, to distinguish it above other associations, acquired the epithet of “holy.” The courts were also called *Fehmding*, *Freistühle*, “free courts,” *heimliche Gerichte*, *heimliche Achten*, *heimliche beschlossene Achten*, “secret courts,” “free bann,” and *verbotene Gerichte*, “prohibited courts.” No rank of life prohibited a person from the right of being initiated, and in a Vehmic code discovered at Dortmund, and whose reading was forbidden to the profane under pain of death, three degrees are mentioned: the affiliated of the first were called *Stuhlherren*, “lords justices;” those of the second, *Schöppen* (*scabini*, *échevins*); those of the third, *Frohnboten*, “messengers.” Two courts were held, an *offenbares Ding*, “open court,” and the *heimliche Acht*, “secret court.” Any uninitiated person found in the “secret court” was invariably hanged lest he might warn the accused, condemned *in contumaciam*, of the sentence passed upon him. The members were called *Wissende*, “the knowing ones,” or the *initiated*. The clergy, women and children, Jews and heathens, and as it would appear the higher nobility, were exempt from its jurisdiction. The courts took cognisance of all offences against the Christian faith, the Gospel, and the Ten Commandments.

209. *Language and Rules of Initiated.*—The initiated had a secret language; at least we may infer so from the initials S. S. S. G. G., found in Vehmic writings preserved in the archives of Herfort, in Westphalia, that have puzzled the learned, and by some are explained as meaning *Stock*, *Stein*, *Strick*, *Gras*, *Grein*—stick, stone, cord, grass, woe. At meals the members are said to have recognised each other by turning the points of their knives towards the edge, and





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accuser had to bring forward seven witnesses, not to the fact charged against the absent person, but to testify to the well-known veracity of the accuser, whereupon the charge was considered as proved, and the Imperial ban was pronounced against the accused, which was followed by speedy execution. The sentence was one of outlawry, degradation, and death; the neck of the convict was condemned to the halter, and his body to the birds and wild beasts; his goods and estates were declared forfeited, his wife a widow, and his children orphans. He was declared *fehmbär*, *i.e.*, punishable by the Vehm, and any three initiated that met with him were at liberty, nay, enjoined, to hang him on the nearest tree. If the accused appeared before the court, which was presided over by a count, who had on the table before him a naked sword and a withy halter, he, as well as his accuser, could each bring thirty friends as witnesses, and be represented by their attorneys, and also had the right of appeal to the general chapter of the secret closed tribunal of the Imperial chamber, generally held at Dortmund. When sentence was once definitively spoken for death, the culprit was hanged immediately.

211. *Execution of Sentences.*—Those condemned in their absence, and who were pursued by at least a hundred thousand persons, were generally unaware of the fact. Every information thereof conveyed to them was high treason, punishable by death; the Emperor alone was excepted from the law of secrecy; merely to hint that “good bread might be eaten elsewhere,” rendered the speaker liable to death for betraying the secret. After the condemnation of the accused a document bearing the seal of the count was given to the accuser, to be used by him when claiming the assistance of other members to carry out the sentence; and all the initiated were bound to grant him theirs, were it even against their own parents. A knife was stuck in the tree on which the person had been hanged, to indicate that he had suffered death at the hands of the Holy Vehm. If the victim resisted, he was slain with daggers; but the slayer left his weapon in the wound to convey the same information.

212. *Decay of the Institution.*—These secret tribunals inspired such terror that the citation by a Westphalian free count was even more dreaded than that of the Emperor. In 1470 three free counts summoned the Emperor himself to appear before them, threatening him with the usual course in case of contumacy; the Emperor did not appear, but



pocketed the affront. By the admission of improper persons, and the abuse of the right of citation, the institution—which in its time had been a corrective of public injustice—gradually degenerated. The tribunals were, indeed, reformed by Rupert; and the Arensberg reformation and Osnaburgh regulations modified some of the greatest abuses, and restricted the power of the Vehm. Still it continued to exist, and was never formally abolished. But the excellent civil institutions of Maximilian and of Charles V., the consequent decrease of the turbulent and anarchic spirit, the introduction of the Roman law, the spread of the Protestant religion, conspired to give men an aversion for what appeared now to be a barbarous jurisdiction. Some of the courts were abolished, exemptions and privileges against them multiplied, and they were prohibited all summary proceedings. The last Vehm court was held at Celle in 1568. But a shadow of them remained, and it was not till French legislation, in 1811, abolished the last free court at Gemen, in the county of Münster, that they may be said to have ceased to exist. But it is not many years since that certain citizens in that locality assembled every year, boasting of their descent from the ancient free judges.

213. *Kissing the Virgin*.—There is a tradition that one of the methods of putting to death persons condemned to that fate by the secret tribunals was the following:—The victim was told to go and kiss the statue of the Virgin which stood in a subterranean vault. The statue was of bronze and of gigantic size. On approaching it, so as to touch it, its front opened with folding doors, and displayed its interior set full with sharp and long spikes and pointed blades. The doors were similarly armed, and on each, about the height of a man's head, was a spike longer than the rest, the two spikes being intended when the doors were shut to enter the eyes and destroy them. The doors having thus opened, the victim by a secret mechanism was drawn or pushed into the dreadful statue, and the doors closed upon him. There he was cut and hacked by the knives and spikes, and in about half a minute the floor on which he stood—which was in reality a trap-door—opened, and allowed him to fall through. But more horrible torture awaited him; for underneath the trap-door were six large wooden cylinders, disposed in pairs one below the other. There were thus three pairs. The cylinders were furnished all round with sharp blades; the distance between the uppermost pair of parallel cylinders was such that a human body could just lie between them;



the middle pair was closer together, and the lowest very close. Beneath this horrible apparatus was an opening in which could be heard the rushing of water. The mechanism that opened the doors of the statue also set in motion the cylinders, which turned towards the inside. Hence when the victim, already fearfully mangled and blinded, fell through the trap-door, he fell between the upper pair of cylinders. In this mutilated condition, the quivering mass fell between the second and more closely approaching pair of cylinders, and was now actually hacked through and through on the lowest and closest pair, where it was reduced to small pieces which fell into the brook below, and were carried away, thus leaving no trace of the awful deed that had been accomplished.





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may be considered the only document concerning this family of Avengers, who at the extreme end of Italy reproduced the struggles and terrors of the Westphalian tribunals. This writer says:—"In the year 1185, at the nuptials of the Princess Constance, daughter of the first King Roger of Sicily, with Henry, afterwards Henry VI., Emperor of Germany, there was discovered the existence of a new and impious sect, who called themselves the Avengers, and in their nocturnal assemblies declared every crime lawful committed on pretence of promoting the public good. Of this we find an account in an ancient writer, who does not enter into further details. The king ordered strict inquiry to be made, and their chief, Arinulfo di Ponte Corvo, having been arrested, he was sentenced to be hanged with some of his most guilty accomplices; the less guilty were branded with a red-hot iron. The belief exists among the vulgar that this secret society of Avengers still exists in Sicily and elsewhere, and is known by the name of the Beati Paoli. Some worthless persons even go so far as to commend the impious institution. Its members abounded especially at Palermo, and Joseph Amatore, who was hanged on December 17, 1704, was one of them. Girolamo Ammirata, comptroller of accounts, also belonged to this society, and suffered death on 27th April 1725. Most came to a bad end, if not by the hands of justice, by the daggers of their associates. The famous *vetturino*, Vito Vituzzo of Palermo, was the last of the wretches forming the society of the Beati Paoli. He escaped the gallows, because he turned in time from his evil courses, and thenceforward he passed all day in St. Matthew's Church, whence he came to be known by the surname of 'the church mouse.' The preceptors and masters of these vile men were heretics and apostates from the Minor Brethren of St. Francis, who pretended that the power of the pontiff and the priesthood had been bestowed on them by an angelic revelation. The house where they held their meetings is still in existence in the street *de' Canceddi*, and I paid it a visit. Through a gateway you pass into a courtyard, under which is the vault where the members met, and which receives its light through a grating in the stone pavement. At the bottom of the stairs is a stone altar, and at the side a small dark chamber, with a stone table, on which were written the acts and sentences of these murderous judges. The principal cave is pretty large, surrounded with stone seats, and furnished with niches and recesses where the arms were kept. The meetings were held at night by candle-



light. The derivation of the name, the Beati Paoli (Blessed Pauls), is unknown; but I surmise that it was adopted by the sect, because either the founder's name was Paul, or that he assumed it as that of a saint who, before his conversion, was a man of the sword, and, imitating him, was, during the day, a Blessed Paul, and at night at the head of a band of assassins, like Paul persecuting the Christians." Such is the author's account, which I have greatly abbreviated, omitting nearly all his invectives against the sect, of which very little is known, and whose existence evidently, in its day, was to some extent beneficial; for Sicilians, on suffering any injury or loss, for which they cannot apply to justice, are often heard to exclaim—"Ah, if the Beati Paoli were still in being!"



## THE INQUISITION

217. *Introductory.*—The earth in the Colosseum at Rome is said to be soaked with the blood of Christian martyrs. Some pope—I forget which—to convince a heretic, is reported to have taken up a handful of the earth, squeezed it, and caused drops of blood to fall from it. Supposing, for argument's sake, the legend and the assertion on which it is founded to be true, the Christian Church has well avenged her martyrs. To accomplish her ends, the Romish Church established the Inquisition.

218. *Early existence of an Inquisition.*—From the earliest days of Christianity the Inquisition existed in the *spirit*, if not in the *form*. The wretched pack of controversial wolves, the so-called Fathers of the Church, when not flying at one another's throats, were ever busy in spewing forth their fanatical venom upon all not of their ilk. When Polycarp, on being challenged by Marcion, the Gnostic, to "own him," replied, "I own thee to be the first-born of Satan," we may be certain he would, had he possessed secular power, not have been satisfied with giving that polite answer, but would gladly have burnt him alive; and yet the Gnostics were people superior in intelligence and morals to the rabble composing the early Christians, as even their enemies had to admit. When that monster Constantine had made the Christian Church all-powerful, heretic baiting began in full earnest. One of the first victims was Priscillian, the founder of a Gnostic sect in Spain, who, at the instigation of St. Augustine, was accused of Manichæism—the saint must have known, for he had been a Manichæan himself during ten years! Priscillian was executed at Trier in 385. The next five or six centuries were too much occupied with war and bloodshed and political intrigues to give much attention to heretics; in fact, from the eighth to the eleventh centuries they hardly existed. But when, towards the end of the latter century, the papal system of Hildebrand attained its full development,





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But these were persecuted not in France only, but wherever the power of the popes could reach them, first of all, of course, in Italy, where one of the most distinguished victims, Arnold of Brescia, had some time before the above-mentioned occurrences been strangled in prison, and his body publicly burnt at Rome in 1155. His heresy consisted in having preached against the crimes of the Papal See.

220. *Establishment of the Inquisition.*—We have elsewhere more particularly spoken of the heretical sects which in the tenth to the twelfth century existed in Italy and the south of France (168–185). Peter of Castelnau having been sent to preach against the Albigenses, was slain by them. As soon as his death became known he was canonised, and the fourth Council of the Lateran, in 1228, at the instigation of Pope Honorius III., sanctioned and organised the Inquisition, the original idea of which was due to Dominique de Guzman, who also founded the order of Dominican friars. The Council, or rather the Pope, decreed that all heretics should be delivered over to the secular arm and their property confiscated. Sovereigns were called upon to drive all heretics from their states; in case of non-obedience, the Pope would offer their territory to whosoever could conquer them. Persons who had favoured heretics or received them into their houses were to be excommunicated and declared infamous, incapable of inheriting property, and not entitled to Christian burial. Guzman, rightly considering that the foul band of preaching friars, whom he had associated with himself, were not the sort of people to further his views—for those men were too fanatical not to be violent, which would have been injurious to the new institution—further organised his “Militia of Christ,” a religious police, composed of bigoted men and women, belonging to all classes of society, even to the highest—the head of the house of Medina-Coeli down to 1820 enjoyed the high privilege of carrying the standard of the Faith in all *autos-da-fé*, and other solemnities of the Inquisition—of criminals, as we shall see in the account of the “Garduna” (Book IX.); of fools and knaves. The invisible troop of spies and denouncers, these familiars of the Inquisition, as they afterwards called themselves, formed the *secret* portion of the Inquisition, and were none the less formidable on that account. From 1233, when the Inquisition was established in Spain, to the beginning of the next century, it made rapid progress, spreading into Italy and Germany. In 1308 the Inquisition persecuted the Templars *à outrance*; *autos-da-fé*,



“acts of faith,” as the burning of heretics was called, shed their lurid light over many a Spanish city, at which the royal family frequently were present. In 1415 the Inquisition burnt John Huss at Constance; Platina, a papal writer, in his “Lives of the Popes” thus pleasantly speaks of it:—“In the same Council, John Huss and Jerome were burnt, because they affirmed, *among other errors*, that ecclesiastical men ought to be poor . . . *matters being thus composed*,” &c. Burning your opponents certainly is *composing* matters; but the author was a Papist.

221. *Progress of Institution*.—Until the joint reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Inquisition in Spain had been confined to the kingdom of Arragon. But about 1481 the queen established it in Castile, and the king gradually extended its jurisdiction over all his states. Like James of Scotland, the king of Spain always wanted “siller;” the Inquisition offered him a third of all the property it confiscated, and promised him a large share of the riches of the thousands of Jews then living in Spain; the nobles of Arragon and Castile were always conspiring against him, the Inquisition would quietly and secretly get hold of their persons, and thus rid him of these enemies; heaven was to be gained by putting down heresy; here surely were reasons enough for protecting the Inquisition and investing it with full powers. The queen also—alas, that it has to be said of her!—was greatly in favour of it, and even requested the Pope to declare the sentences pronounced in Spain to be final and without appeal to Rome. She complained at the same time that the people accused her of having no other view in establishing the Inquisition than that of sharing with its officers the property of those condemned by them. The Pope, Sixtus IV., granted everything, and appeased her conscientious scruples as to confiscations. A bull, dated 1483, named Father Thomas de Torquemada, an atrocious fanatic, Grand Inquisitor of Spain. For eighteen years he held the office, condemning on the average ten thousand victims annually to death by fire, starvation, torture. In the first six months of his sanguinary rule 298 *marranos*—Moors or Jews that had been converted to Christianity—were burnt at the stake in Seville alone, and seventy condemned to imprisonment for life. During the same space of time 2000 *marranos* were burnt alive in various other places; a greater number, who had been fortunate enough to make their escape before they were seized—for when once in the power of the terrible tribunal there was little chance of evasion—



were burnt in effigy ; and about 17,000 persons, accused on the charge of heresy, underwent various other punishments. Upwards of 20,000 victims in half a year ! Torquemada was so abhorred that he never stirred abroad without being surrounded by 250 familiars, and on his table always lay a horn of the unicorn, which, according to Moorish superstition, was supposed to possess the virtue of discovering and nullifying the force of poison. His cruelties excited so many complaints that the Pope himself was startled, and three times Torquemada was obliged to justify his conduct. During the fifteenth century so many executions took place at Seville, that the prefect of that city had the diabolical idea, in order to expedite the process, to erect, outside the city, a permanent scaffold in stone, on which he placed four gigantic statues in plaster, hollow inside, into which New Christians, accused of having relapsed into their old faith, were forced, and slowly calcined to death, as in a kiln. This scaffold was called *quemadero* (the burner), and the ruins of it could be seen as late as the year 1823.

222. *Judicial Procedure of the Inquisition*.—Before proceeding with our historical details, let us briefly state the mode of procedure adopted by the execrable tribunal of the Inquisition.

A denunciation, verbal or in writing, and it little mattered from what impure source it proceeded, formed the starting-point. Every year, on the third Sunday in Lent, the “ Edict of Denunciation ” was read in the churches, enjoining every person, on pain of major excommunication, to reveal within six days to the Holy Office, as the Inquisition was now styled, facts opposed to the purity of faith that might have come to their notice. Denunciation also had its rewards. Plenary indulgence was granted by the popes to whoso was good Christian enough to denounce his father, son, brother, or other near relation. Charles V. relieved every one who had denounced ten heretics, or became a familiar of the Inquisition, from all taxation and statute labour. And the most trifling acts exposed persons to the charge of heresy ; to put a clean cloth on the table on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, smelled of Judaism ; to put on clean linen on a Friday, the Mahometan Sunday, betrayed Mahometanism. The opinions of Luther, casting horoscopes, eating with Jews, dining or supping with friends on the eve of a journey, as the Jews do, these and a hundred other things equally innocent might lead to the stake. William Franco, a citizen of Seville, whose wife had been seduced by a priest, which he dared not resent, having casually observed





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the poisonous gases arising from the utensil above referred to. The prisoners had been charged with being Freemasons. Sometimes a prisoner was left to die of starvation, or kept for years in his dungeon, whilst no one dared to raise a voice in his behalf. People disappeared, and their relations and friends only surmised, and cautiously whispered among themselves their suspicions, that they were languishing, or had perhaps died, in the prisons of the Inquisition. Some of the prisoners, however, were brought before their judges, in whose presence they were compelled to sit on the sharp edge of a triangular piece of wood, supported by two X; this mockery of a seat was called a *potro*. The trial was supposed to be public, but the audience was packed; none but good Catholics, who could be depended on, were *invited* to attend. That the publicity was a mere delusion, is proved by the fact that the New Christians offered King Ferdinand the sum of 600,000 ducats to let the trials be public; but Cardinal Ximenes, the Grand Inquisitor, induced the king to decline the offer, as he also persuaded Charles V. to refuse the still higher offer of 800,000 ducats made by the same New Christians for the same privilege. The prisoner, when before his judges, was exhorted to confess his crime, but he was not informed of the charge against him; and if he did not know what to confess, or if his confession did not agree with the secret information against him, he was taken to the torture chamber, to extort what was wanted. As the Inquisitors were profoundly religious men (!), regulating their conduct by the teaching of Christ, which forbids the shedding of blood, they had with hellish ingenuity contrived their instruments of torture so that they should avoid that result, and yet inflict the greatest suffering the human body can possibly bear, without having the vital spark extinguished in it. It is true that the pendulum torture—which certainly was applied, as the instrument was discovered as late as the year 1820 in the prison of the Inquisition at Seville—proved that the rule was broken through; but the modern Inquisitors, it appears, were not so conscientious as the ancient! The Inquisitors, whilst admitting that innocent persons might sometimes die under torture, maintained that still it ought to be applied, for if a good Catholic died under their hands he went straight into paradise, which no doubt was very consolatory to the victim!

223. *Palace of the Inquisition*.—The palace of the Inquisition contained the judgment hall, offices for the employés, torture chambers, cells of mercy and penitence, and dungeons,



besides the private apartments of the Grand Inquisitor. A rich prisoner was first taken to a cell of mercy, and if he could be persuaded to surrender all his property to the Inquisition, he was, after some months of seclusion, allowed to issue forth, as poor as Job, but rich in the gifts of grace. The cells of mercy were on the first floor. The cells of penitence, to which victims less ready to be converted were taken, were generally situate in small round towers of about ten feet diameter, just under the roof. They were white-washed, and the only light they received was through a small opening in the vaulted ceiling. The only furniture were a stool and a truckle bed. If a prolonged stay in this terrible solitude did not have the desired effect, the victim was consigned to a dungeon, with walls five feet thick, and double doors, in almost total darkness, with an earthen vessel for the excrements, which was emptied once in four days. What the prisoners' food consisted of, may be inferred from the fact that something less than a penny a day was allowed for it—and, of course, the poor gaoler had to make his profit out of it! The next move of the prisoner was to the torture chamber.

The torture chamber in the papal palace at Avignon was constructed with diabolical ingenuity. To cause the shrieks and groans of those tortured to remain confined within the hall, each wall projects and recedes in such a manner as to exhibit a face in a different direction to that of the wall on the opposite side, and in this way the solid mass of masonry of each wall is carried upwards, the result of which peculiar structure is that shrieks were thrown back from wall to wall, and thus never could reach the outside, nor disturb the pope, toying with his concubines in the adjoining palace. The place where the victims were burnt is a vast circular chamber, shaped exactly like the furnace of a glass-house, terminating at the top in a narrow chimney of a funnel form. Up to about the year 1850 these chambers were shown to strangers, but since then the superior ecclesiastical authorities of Avignon have caused them to be dismantled and shut up—they showed the Church in too hideous a character.

224. *Tortures*.—There were three modes of torture chiefly in use. The first was that of the cord. The prisoner's arms were tied behind him with one end of a long rope, which passed over a pulley fixed in the vault of the chamber; he was then raised from the ground to a considerable height, which, by twisting his arms backward and above his head, was sufficient to dislocate the shoulder joints; the rope was



then suddenly slackened, so that he fell to within a foot or so from the ground, by which his arms were nearly torn out of their sockets, and his whole body sustained a fearful concussion. In some cases the back of the victim, in being drawn up, was made to press against a roller, set round with sharp spikes, causing, of course, fearful laceration. At Rome this mode of torturing was of half-an-hour's duration; in Spain it was continued for more than an hour. Another mode of applying the cord torture was by fastening the victim down on a sort of wooden bed and encircling his arms and legs in different places with thin cord, which by means of winches could be so tightened as to cut deep into the flesh. If these tortures found the prisoner firm, and extorted no confession, it was generally in the above position that he was subjected to the torture by water. His mouth and nostrils were covered with a thick cloth, and one of the Satanic brood of Dominican friars would sit by him, and through a funnel pour water on the cloth, which speedily became soaked, and then more water being poured on, the latter would enter the mouth of the unfortunate wretch lying there in fearful agony, undergoing all the pangs of slow suffocation, while his brow was covered with the cold sweat of death, and the blood started from his eyes and nostrils; and all the time the fiend by his side exhorted him, "for the love of Him who died on the Cross," to confess. The third mode of torture was by fire. The victim was stretched and fastened on the ground; the soles of his feet were exposed and rubbed with oil or lard, or any other easily inflammable matter, and then a portable fire was placed against them; the intense torture the burning of the greasy matter spread on the soles caused to the unfortunate prisoner may be imagined. When, in consequence of it, the prisoner declared himself ready to confess, a screen was interposed between his feet and the fire; on its withdrawal, if the confession was not satisfactory, the pain was even more frightful than before. Ingenious Inquisitors would sometimes vary the mode of torturing. Thus John de Roma, a monk attached to the Inquisition, caused some of his victims to be forced into boots filled with boiling tallow, and the tonsured monster laughed over the cries of the wretched sufferers. The wretches who, at the Inquisitor's command, executed all these terrible operations on their fellow-creatures, wore long black gowns with hoods covering their heads, having holes for mouth, nostrils, and eyes.

Another diabolical device of the Inquisitors consisted in





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dying, and inhaling the flavour of their burning flesh with intense satisfaction. One trait of mercy the monkish demons showed consisted in first strangling those that died penitent before burning them, whilst those who maintained their innocence to the last were burnt alive. These bloody recreations at last became so fashionable, that in Spain and Portugal the accession of a king, a royal marriage, or the birth of a prince, was celebrated by a grand *auto-da-fé*, for which as many victims were reserved or procured as possible.

226. *Procession of the Auto-da-fé*.—The night before the *auto-da-fé* a procession of wood-cutters, Dominicans, and familiars started from the building of the Inquisition for the open space where the sacrifice was to take place. On their arrival there they planted by the side of an altar, already erected there, a green cross, covered with black crape. This cross was symbolical of the grief of the Church for the heretics who were going to be burnt. After having set up the cross the procession returned, *minus* the Dominicans, who remained behind to pray and chant psalms. The procession of the *auto-da-fé*, which started early in the morning for the place of execution, was opened by a company of lance-bearers, then came priests, then men carrying the effigies of such heretics as had made their escape, and could therefore not be bodily burnt or degraded; these men were followed by such as carried coarse coffins or shells, containing the bones or corpses of heretics who had died while in the prisons of the Inquisition. After these marched those who had repented, who were followed by the relaxed, or those condemned to be burnt, and wearing the hideous *san benito*. Such as it was feared might speak heretical words to the bystanders were gagged. Each victim carried a lighted taper, and was accompanied by two friars, to urge him either to be converted, if obstinate, or to give him such spiritual comfort as Dominican friars could bestow. Behind these victims walked the familiars—and, as already stated, grandees of Spain deemed it an honour to be such—after these came the Inquisitors with their Council, the whole procession closing with the standard of the Tribunal carried aloft. When the dismal train had arrived at the place of execution, and those who were condemned to a less punishment than death had had their different sentences read to them, the great treat of the day, the burning, began. As soon as the victims had been placed on the piles of wood, and chained to the posts erected in the middle of each pile, the devout people called



out, "Let the dogs' beards be made!" which was done by the executioners thrusting staves, to which burning heather had been tied, into the faces of the victims, till they were black and singed. With

"The foolish people gazing  
Upon a scene, in which some day  
Each might himself the victim play."

But the Inquisitors were not always satisfied with a simple burning; they sometimes superadded diabolical tortures, as, for instance, gagging by means of a piece of wood, cleft so as to let the tongue be held by it, or actually tearing out the tongue, to prevent the victims uttering heresies while being led to the stake; or worse still, flaying them alive, and then strewing brimstone and salt over the skinned body, and burning it slowly suspended by chains over live coal. The Inquisitors gave Francis I., king of France, in 1535, six times in one day the treat of seeing a heretic drawn up and down by chains over the flames, till the partly-consumed body of each fell into the burning pile beneath. That madman, Charles V., whom courtly historians call a "great" prince, ordered female heretics to be buried alive!

227. *History continued.*—The monster Torquemada was still Inquisitor-General. The people of Aragon, who had from the first violently opposed the establishment of the Inquisition in their territory, were exasperated when *autos-da-fé* began to be celebrated among them, and in order to intimidate their butchers slew the most violent of their oppressors, one Peter Arbuès of Epila, at the altar. The Church immediately placed him among her martyrs; Queen Isabella erected a statue to him; his body wrought miracles, and Pope Pius IX. canonized him. The just death of the Inquisitor of course led to increased cruelty and persecution on the part of the Holy Office; the men who slew Arbuès unfortunately were captured; they had their hands cut off before being hanged, and their bodies were cut up in pieces, which were exposed on the highways. Torquemada next urged on the king and queen to expel the Jews from their states, as enemies of the Christian religion. The Jews, informed of their danger, offered the king 30,000 ducats towards the expenses of the war with Granada, on condition that they were allowed to stay. Ferdinand and Isabella were on the point of acceding to this proposal, when Torquemada, a crucifix in his hand, presented himself to the sovereigns, and thus addressed them: "Judas



was the first to sell his master for thirty pieces of silver. Your highnesses intend selling him a second time for thirty pieces of gold. Here he is, take him, and speedily conclude the sale!" Of course the proud king and equally haughty queen cringed before the insolent friar, and the decree went forth on the 31st March 1492 that by the 31st July of the same year all Jews must have quitted the states of Ferdinand and Isabella on pain of death and confiscation of all their property. Some 800,000 Jews emigrated, momentarily saving their lives, but scarcely any property, since the time was too short for realising it at its value. 'Thousands of men, women, and children perished by the way, so that the Jews compared their sufferings to those their forefathers underwent at the time of Titus. When, shortly after this expulsion of the Jews, the kingdom of Granada was conquered by the Spanish arms, the conquest was considered as heaven's special approval and reward; and Ferdinand, to show his religious zeal, committed every kind of cruelty his soul could invent. After the capture of Malaga, twelve Jews, who had taken refuge there, underwent by his direct orders the terrible death by pointed reeds, a slow but fatal torture, like being stabbed to death with pins.

Torquemada died in 1498; his successor, the Dominican Deza, introduced the Inquisition into the newly-conquered kingdom of Granada; 80,000 Moors, preferring exile to baptism, left the country. He also introduced the terrible tribunal into Naples and Sicily; and though the Sicilians at first rose against it, and expelled the Inquisitors, they had afterward, overcome by Charles V., to submit to its re-establishment. Deza, during his short reign of nine years, caused 2592 individuals to be burnt alive and 829 in effigy, and condemned upwards of 32,000 to imprisonment and the galleys, with total confiscation of property. He was succeeded by the mild Ximenes, after whom came Adrien Boeijens, who was as cruel a persecutor as Torquemada; the Lutheran doctrines, now gaining ground, gave him and his successors plenty of occupation, and the bonfires of the Inquisition blazed not only in Spain, but at Naples, Malta, Venice, in Sardinia and Flanders; and in the Spanish colonies in America the poor Indians perished in hecatombs, for either refusing to be baptized, or being suspected of having relapsed into their former idolatry, after having adopted and professed the mild and gentle creed of Christianity.

228. *General History of Institution continued.*—We need





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Spanish fiends? Well, Philip of Spain had made her an offer of marriage, and even a queen does not like to offend an unsuccessful suitor.

230. *History continued.*—Philip II. extended the jurisdiction of the Inquisition throughout the Netherlands, and in spite of the resistance of the inhabitants, met with such success, that his noble executioner, the Duke of Alva, could boast of having within five years sent to the stake and gallows 18,000 persons for the crime of heresy. But the oppression at last became so great, that the Netherlands revolted again, and this time successfully; they for ever threw off the Spanish yoke. It was during this Dutch war of liberation that the mysterious catastrophe of Don Carlos, Philip's son by his first wife, occurred. Romance asserts that the tragedy had its origin in the love passages said to have taken place between Don Carlos and Philip's second wife, Elizabeth of France, who, before becoming his stepmother, had been his affianced bride. But history explains the facts in this way: Don Carlos conspired against his father, a gloomy tyrant, who deprived him of every scrap of power and influence, keeping him in the perfect subjection of a child; the prince thought of assassinating the king, or flying to the Netherlands, which he hoped to erect into an independent kingdom for himself. While he was hesitating, the Inquisition discovered both incipient schemes, revealed them to the king, and pronounced either deserving of death. Don Carlos was seized, imprisoned, and killed by poison. It is difficult to imagine a moral monster such as Philip II. was. He caused the works of Vésale, his own physician, who first taught the true facts and principles of anatomy, with their illustrations by Titian, to be publicly burnt, and the doctor himself was compelled to make an involuntary pilgrimage to Jerusalem to expiate his impious attempt of prying into the secrets of nature. This, we may say, was simply absurd on the part of the king; what follows is atrocious. In 1559 he learnt that an *auto-da-fé* had taken place in a distant locality, where thirty persons had perished at the stake. He besought the Inquisitors to be allowed to witness a similar spectacle; the Dominican devils, to encourage and reward such holy zeal on the part of Heaven's anointed, sent out their archers, who searched with such diligence for victims, that on the 6th October of the same year the king was able to preside at Valladolid at the burning of forty of his subjects, which gave him the most lively satisfaction. One of the condemned, a person of distinction, implored the royal mercy, as he was



being led to the stake. "No," replied the crowned hyena, "if it were my own son, I would surrender him to the flames if he persisted in his heresy."

In 1566 the Grand Inquisitor Espinosa began his crusade against the Moors that still remained in Spain. For a long time the persecuted race confined themselves to remonstrances, but when it was decreed that their children must thenceforth be brought up in the Christian faith, a vast conspiracy was formed, which for nine months was kept secret, and would have been successful had not the Moors of the mountainous districts broken out into open rebellion before those of the country and towns were prepared to support them. The Christians scattered among the Moorish population of course were the first victims of the long pent-up rage of the Mussulmans. Three thousand perished at the first outset; all the monks of a monastery were cast into boiling oil. One of the insurgents, the intimate friend of a Christian, knew of no greater proof of affection he could show him than transfixing him with his lance, lest others should treat him worse. The Marquis of Mondejar, captain-general of Andalusia, was appointed to put down the insurrection. As he was too humane, his reprisals not being severe enough, the Marquis de Los Velez, called by the Moors the "Demon with the Iron Head," was associated with him in the command, and he carried on war in the most ferocious manner. At the battle of Ohanez blood was shed in such quantities, that the thirsty Spaniards could not find one unpolluted spring. One thousand six hundred Moors were subjected to a treatment worse than death, and immediately after Los Velez and his band of butchers celebrated the feast of the Purification of the Virgin! And in the end the superior number of the Christians triumphed over Moorish bravery, and the Inquisitors were busy for weeks holding *autos-da-fé* to celebrate the victory of the true faith.

Under the long reign of Philip II., called the "Demon of the South," six Grand Inquisitors carried on their bloody orgies. The Reformed Creed of course supplied the greatest numbers of victims; at Seville on one occasion eight hundred were arrested all at once. At the first *auto-da-fé* of Valladolid, on 12th May 1559, fourteen members of one family were burnt. The Inquisition was established in the island of Sardinia, at Lima, Mexico, Cartagena, in the fleet, army, and even among custom-house officers. By the original documents in Trinity College, Dublin, it appears that in the



three years from 1564 to 1567 the Inquisition at Rome passed 111 sentences on heretics.

231. *History continued.*—Philip III. of Spain was early taught the power of the Inquisition; for when, at the beginning of his reign, he was obliged to be present at an *auto-da-fé*, and could not restrain his tears at seeing two young women, one Jewish and the other Moorish, burnt at the stake, for no other fault than that of having been brought up in the different creeds of their fathers, the Inquisitors imputed to him his compassion as a crime, which could only be expiated by blood: the king had to submit to being bled and seeing his blood burnt by the executioner. The Inquisitors, in fact, were above the king. At *autos-da-fé* the Grand Inquisitor's throne was more lofty than that of the king. The Inquisitor Tabera kept the arch-priest of Malaga for two years in prison, because that ecclesiastic, whilst carrying the viaticum to a dying person, had not stopped to let the Inquisitor pass.

Philip IV. inaugurated his reign by an *auto-da-fé* (1632). The Inquisitor-General gave to the show of the *auto-da-fé*, whose interest began to decline, a new zest by causing the sentence of death against ten *marranos* to be read to them, while each of them had one hand nailed to a wooden cross.

The marriage of Charles II. with the niece of Louis XIV. (1680) was celebrated with an *auto-da-fé* at Madrid. On the 12th April 1869 some workmen, employed in digging up the earth in the chief square of Madrid, came upon a layer of coals and ashes, mixed with bones, which proved to be human bones; moreover, iron collars and other things were found, which left no doubt that the spot had been the scene of the *auto-da-fé* of 1680, a full account of which was published, by “express desire of the king and of the Grand Inquisitor, Valladares, to the honour and glory of Spain,” by Joseph del Olmo, who was one of the familiars of the Inquisition. This *auto-da-fé* was even a grander affair than that of 1632. There were 118 victims, one-and-twenty of whom were burnt alive in the presence of the young king and queen and the nobility of the court, besides a vast concourse of less exalted spectators. On the previous day the wood-cutters, to the number of 290, had defiled before the royal palace, every one with a log of wood on his shoulder. Their leader stopped at the gate of the palace, where a duke was in waiting to receive the log, which he reverently carried up to the king, who took it from him, carried it to the boudoir of the queen, placed the piece of wood, on which two days after a human being was to be





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a short distance from Madrid, summoned the authorities of Madrid to surrender. The Grand Inquisitor refused. Napoleon wrote on a piece of paper: "The Inquisitors are to be made prisoners. The Holy Office has ceased to exist. Its revenues are confiscated." Colonel Lumanuski, acting under the immediate orders of Marshal Soult, was sent to seize the palace of the Inquisition at Madrid. The building was surrounded by a strong wall, and guarded by 400 soldiers. The Fathers were summoned to open the gates, instead of which they shot the herald. The order to attack was given immediately. The Spanish soldiers were protected by their walls, the French troops were exposed, in an open plain, to their fire, and had no ladders. Some trees were cut down, turned into battering-rams, and soon a breach was made in the wall, through which the French entered the building. Then the priests left their cells, pretending to be surprised at the garrison having offered any resistance to their friends, the French! But Lumanuski, not to be deceived, ordered them to be closely guarded; the soldiers were all made prisoners. The French then examined the building; they found splendid halls and rooms, but no prisons, torture rooms, or any of the horrors usually associated with the dread tribunal. Lumanuski was about to retire, when Colonel di Lilla suggested that the marble floor of the ground floor should have water poured on it, to see if it would flow off anywhere. Speedily it was seen to disappear through a crack between two slabs of marble. In trying to raise one of the slabs a soldier touched a hidden spring, and the slab rose up, revealing a staircase, descending which the French first came to a large hall, the judgment hall, with appropriate furniture; then they discovered a number of cells, in some of which bodies of men, in various states of decay, were found—prisoners who had been left to die in solitary confinement. In others they found prisoners still alive, men, women, and children, all perfectly naked, and numbering about one hundred persons. These, of course, were clothed, the soldiers giving them their cloaks or coats, and restored to liberty. All the cells having been visited, the French next came upon the torture chambers, containing all the diabolical instruments invented for racking human bodies. At this sight the fury of the French soldiers was not to be restrained; they declared that the holy fathers should themselves undergo the tortures they had inflicted on their victims; and Lumanuski states that he saw the torture applied in four different ways on as many of the Inquisitorial



fiends—a very slight retribution for all the evil they had done.

234. *Restoration and Final Abolition.*—But Ferdinand VII. on his restoration—alas! with the help of England—in 1814, re-established the Inquisition, and appointed Francis Thiéry Campilla, Bishop of Almeria, its forty-fifth Inquisitor-General. Immediately the prisons, galleys, and penal colonies were filled with prisoners, Freemasons forming a preponderating number amongst them. But in 1820 all the Spanish provinces combined again in a general insurrection, broke the bonds of Absolutism, again crushed the Inquisition and its familiars, set free its prisoners, demolished its palaces and prisons, and burnt its instruments of torture. But in 1823 a fresh reaction set in; French troops, led by the Duke of Angoulême, restored Ferdinand VII. to the throne, and the king, at the “earnest desire of his subjects,” set up the Inquisition once more; and “if the Spanish nation was anxious for its restoration,” as Dr. Brück, the apologist of Absolutism, both political and priestly, in his “History of the Secret Societies of Spain” observes, “it is a proof that this tribunal was neither cruel nor unpopular.” But the tribunal *was* unpopular, and the feeling was so strongly expressed, that the English ambassador, Sir Henry Wellesley, siding with the nation, threatened to leave Spain if the Inquisition were re-established with all its former authority. But though shorn of its once absolute power, the institution was still strong enough to send people to the scaffold: in 1826 it burnt a Jew; and a schoolmaster, accused of Quakerism, was hanged at Valencia on the 31st July of the same year. True, the last victim did not wear the *san benito*, but his own clothes; the Inquisitors could no longer render their prisoners ridiculous; and the barefooted Carmelite friar, who accompanied the Quaker, could not, even at the last moment, win him for the heaven he promised him if he recanted. The Quaker died impenitent.

The Inquisition still exists in Portugal, though in a modified form. It also still exists at Rome: its palace stands to the left of St. Peter's, but its dungeons are empty, and the once murderous Inquisition is now merely a tribunal of clerical discipline.

235. *The False Nuncio.*—I have in the foregoing account spoken of the Inquisition chiefly as it existed in Spain. It was, however, not confined to that country; its fearful octopus arms embraced every nation it could reach. The way it was introduced into Portugal was peculiar, and worthy



of that tribunal. In 1539 there appeared at Lisbon a papal legate, who declared to have come to Portugal, there to establish the Inquisition. He brought the king letters from Pope Paul III., and produced the most ample credentials for nominating a Grand Inquisitor and all other officers of the sacred tribunal. This man was a clever swindler, called John Perés, of Saavedra, who was an adept at imitating all kinds of writing and forging signatures and seals. He was attended by a magnificent train of more than a hundred servants, and to defray his expenses had borrowed at Seville enormous sums in the name of the Apostolic Chamber at Rome. The king was at first surprised and angry that the Pope should send an envoy of this description without previous notice, but Perés haughtily replied, that in so urgent a matter as the establishment of the Inquisition and the suppression of heresy the Holy Father could not stand on points; and that the king was highly honoured by the fact that the first messenger who brought him the news was the legate himself. The king dared complain no more; and the false nuncio the same day nominated a Grand Inquisitor, set up the Holy Office, and collected money for its working expenses. Before news could come from Rome, the rogue had already pocketed upwards of two hundred thousand ducats. But he could not make his escape before the swindle was discovered, and Perés was condemned to be whipped and sent to the galleys for ten years. But the best of the joke was, that the Pope confirmed all the swindler had done; in the plenitude of his divine power, Paul III. declared the slight irregularities which attended the establishment of the Portuguese Inquisition not to affect its efficacy or moral character, and that, now it was established, it should remain so.

236. *The Inquisition in various Countries.*—Other countries where the Inquisition was established were the Spanish Netherlands, the Spanish colonies in America, in the East Indies, the Papal States, Venice, Germany, where for some time it raged with particular ferocity; the Dominican fiends had scarcely been three years at Strasbourg when they burnt eighty Waldenses, and the demon, Konrad von Marburg, travelled up and down the country burning heretics with diabolical joy. He met with a well-merited reward by being killed by Count Sayn, near Marburg. In some of the countries named above the Inquisition was abolished before it ceased to exist in Spain and Italy. In 1557 an attempt was made to introduce the Inquisition into England, but, fortunately for this country, unsuccessfully. But, even without its help, Bloody





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# BOOK VIII

## *MYSTICS*

“There is great abundance of chaff and straw to the grain, but the grain is good, and as we do not eat either the chaff or straw, if we can avoid it, nor even the raw grain, but thrash and winnow it, and grind it and bake it, we find it, after undergoing this process, not only very palatable, but a special dainty of its kind. But the husk is an unsurmountable obstacle to those learned and educated gentlemen who judge of books entirely by the style and grammar, and who eat grain as it grows, like the cattle.”—Rev. J. SMITH.



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in astrological practice; and a great number of astrological works, the writings of Christian Gnostics and Neo-Platonists, were attributed to him, and he was considered the father of the art from him called *hermetic*, and embracing astrology and alchemy, the rudimentary efforts of two sciences, which at first overawed ignorance by imposture, but, after labouring for centuries in the dark, conquered for themselves glorious thrones in human knowledge.

240. *Scientific Value of Alchemy*.—Though Alchemy is no longer believed in as a true science, in spite of the prophecy of Dr. Girtanner, of Göttingen, that in the nineteenth century the transmutation of metals will be generally known and practised, it will never lose its power of awakening curiosity and seducing the imagination. The aspect of the marvellous which its doctrines assume, the strange renown attaching to the memory of the adepts, and the mixture of reality and illusion, of truths and chimeras which it presents, will always exercise a powerful fascination upon many minds. And we ought also to remember that every delusion that has had a wide and enduring influence must have been founded, not on falsehood, but on misapprehended truth. This aphorism is especially applicable to Alchemy, which, in its origin, and even in its name, is identical with chemistry, the syllable *al* being merely the definite article of the Arabs. The researches of the Alchemists for the discovery of the means by which transmutation might be effected were naturally suggested by the simplest experiments in metallurgy and the amalgamation of metals; it is very probable that the first man who made brass thought that he had produced imperfect gold.

241. *The Tincture*.—The transmutation of the base metal was to be effected by means of the transmuting tincture, which, however, was never found. But it exists for all that; it is the power that turns a green stalk into a golden ear of corn, that fills the sour unripe apple with sweetness and aroma, that has turned the lump of charcoal into a diamond. All these are natural processes, which, being allowed to go on, produce the above results. Now, all base metals may be said to be imperfect metals, whose progress towards perfection has been arrested, the active power of the tincture being shut up in them in the first property of nature (11). If a man could take hold of the tincture universally diffused in nature, and by its help assist the imprisoned tincture in the metal to stir and become active, then the transmutation into gold, or rather the manifestation (11) of the hidden life, could be effected. But this power or tincture is so subtle that it cannot possibly



be apprehended; yet the Alchymists did not seek the non-existing, but only the unattainable.

242. *Aims of Alchymy*.—The three great ends pursued by Alchymy were the transmutation of base metals into gold by means of the philosopher's stone; the discovery of the panacea, or universal medicine, the elixir of life; and the universal solvent, which, being applied to any seed, should increase its fecundity. All these three objects are attainable by means of the tincture—a vital force, whose body is electricity, by which the two latter aims have to some extent been reached, for electricity will both cure disease and promote the growth of plants. Alchymy was then in the beginning the search after means to raise matter up to its first state, whence it was supposed to have fallen. Gold was considered, as to matter, what the ether of the eighth heaven was as to souls; and the seven metals, each called by the name of one of the seven planets, the knowledge of the seven properties really implied being lost—the Sun, gold; Moon, silver; Saturn, lead; Venus, tin; Mercury, iron; Mars, mixed metal; Jupiter, copper,<sup>1</sup>—formed the ascending scale of purification, corresponding with the trials of the seven caverns or steps. Alchymy was thus either a bodily initiation, or an initiation into the mysteries, a spiritual Alchymy; the one formed a veil of the other, wherefore it often happened that in workshops where the vulgar thought the adepts occupied with handicraft operations, and nothing sought but the metals of the golden age, in reality, no other philosopher's stone was searched for than the cubical stone of the temple of philosophy; in fine, nothing was purified but the passions, men, and not metals, being passed through the crucible. Böhme, the greatest of mystics, has written largely on the perfect analogy between the philosophical work and spiritual regeneration.

243. *History of Alchymy*.—Alchymy flourished in Egypt at a very early age, and Solomon was said to have practised it. Its golden age began with the conquest of the Arabs in Asia and Africa, about the time of the destruction of the Alexandrian Library. The Saracens, credulous, and intimate with the fables of talismans and celestial influences, eagerly admitted the wonders of Alchymy. In the splendid courts of Almansor and Haroun al Raschid, the professors of the hermetic art found patronage, disciples, and emolument. Nevertheless, from the above period until the eleventh

<sup>1</sup> New arrangement: Venus, copper; Mercury, mixed metal; Mars, iron; Jupiter, tin.



century the only alchymist of note is the Arabian Geber, whose proper name was Abu Mussah Djafar al Sofi. His attempts to transmute the base metals into gold led him to several discoveries in chemistry and medicine. He was also a famous astronomer, but—*sic transit gloria mundi!*—he has descended to our times as the founder of that jargon known by the name of gibberish! The Crusaders brought the art to Europe; and about the thirteenth century Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, and Raymond Lully appeared as its revivers. Edward III. engaged John le Rouse and Master William de Dalby, alchemists, to make experiments before him; and Henry VI. of England encouraged lords, nobles, doctors, professors, and priests to pursue the search after the philosopher's stone; especially the priests, who, says the king—(ironically?)—having the power to convert bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, may well convert an impure into a perfect metal. The next man of note that pretended to the possession of the *lapis philosophorum* was Paracelsus, whose proper name was Philip Aureolus Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombastus, of Hohenheim, and whom his followers called “Prince of Physicians, Philosopher of Fire, the Trismegistus of Switzerland, Reformer of Alchymistical Philosophy, Nature's faithful Secretary, Master of the Elixir of Life and Philosopher's Stone, Great Monarch of Chymical Secrets.” He introduced the term *alcahest* (probably a corruption of the German words “*all geist*,” “all spirit”), to express the universal solvent. The Rosicrucians, of whom Dr. Dee was the herald, next laid claim to alchymistical secrets, and were, in fact, the descendants of the Alchymists; and it is for this reason chiefly that these latter have been introduced into this work, though they cannot strictly be said to have formed a secret society.

244. *Still, Alchymists formed Secret Societies.*—Still, in the dedication to the Emperor Rudolph II., prefixed to the work entitled *Thesaurinella Chymica-aurea tripartita*, we read: “Given in the Imperial City of Hagenau, in the year 1607 of our salvation, and in the reign of the true governor of Olympus, Angelus Hagith, anno cxcvii.” The author calls himself Benedictus Figulus. The dedication further mentions a Count Bernhard, evidently one of the heads of the order, as having been introduced to a society of Alchymists, numbering fourteen or fifteen members, in Italy. Further, Paracelsus is named as the *monarcha* of this order; that is, the monarch, a local head, subject to the governor of Olympus, the chief of the Italian society. The author also, beside the





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talent for finding out enigmas if they were able to elicit a meaning from these mysterious directions; still, the language was understood by the adepts, and was only intended for them. Many statements of mathematical formulæ must always appear pure gibberish to the uninitiated into the higher science of numbers; still, these statements enunciate truths well understood by the mathematician. Thus, to give but one instance, when Hermes Trismegistus, in one of the treatises attributed to him, directs the adept to catch the flying bird and to drown it, so that it fly no more, the fixation of quicksilver by a combination with gold is meant.

247. *Personal Fate of the Alchymists.*—The Alchymists, though chemistry is greatly indebted to them, and in their researches they stumbled on many a valuable discovery, as a rule led but sad and chequered lives, and most of them died in the utmost poverty, if no worse fate befell them. Thus one of the most famous Alchymists, Bragadino, who lived in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, who obtained large sums of money for his pretended secret from the Emperor of Germany, the Doge of Venice, and other potentates, who boasted that Satan was his slave—two ferocious black dogs that always accompanied him being demons—was at last hanged at Munich, the cheat with which he performed the pretended transmutation having been discovered. The two dogs were shot under the gallows. But even the honest Alchymists were doomed—

“ To lose good days that might be better spent,  
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent ;  
 To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,  
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;  
 To fret their souls with crosses and with cares,  
 To eat their hearts through comfortless despairs.  
 Unhappy wights, born to disastrous end,  
 That do their lives in tedious tendance spend ! ”



## II

### JACOB BÖHME

248. *Parallel between Mystics and Sectaries.*—All secret societies have some connection with mysticism, secret itself, delighting in mystery, as the loving soul delights in surrounding the beloved object with mystery. Sectaries to some extent are the parents of mystics. The silent adoration of the Infinite, in which mystics delight, has its counterpart in the worship of progress, liberty, and truth, to which sectaries devote themselves. Progress, liberty, truth, are attributes of the highest humanitarianism. The mystics are the men of thought, the sectaries the men of action. However remote the thoughts of the former may seem from application to everyday life, from political strife, they yet have a positive influence on human belief and will. The mystics behold in paradise that same ideal, transfigured, enlarged, and perpetuated, which the sectaries pursue on earth.

249. *Character and Mission of Mystics.*—The mystics continue the school of ancient initiations, which to many nations were their only philosophy, science, and liberty. They are the priests of Infinity; in their tenderness they are the most tolerant of men, pardoning all, even the devil; they embrace all, pity all. They are, in a certain sense, the rationalists of prayer. By means of syntheses, trances, and raptures, they arrive at a pure and simple understanding of the supernatural, as popularly understood, which they adore more with their imagination and affection, than with the learned and sophisticated conceits of theology. Therefore the mystics of all creeds resemble each other; theirs is a region common to all religions, the universal home of the soul—a height from which the innumerable horizons of conscience are seen to meet.

250. *Merits of Böhme.*—The prince of mystics is without contradiction Jacob Böhme; in fact, compared with him, all other mystics sink into utter insignificance, as *mere* vision-



aries, whose rhapsodies, though sometimes poetical, were always fantastical and useless to the world, because not founded on the truths of Eternal Nature. Böhme was a visionary, but a visionary of the stamp of Columbus; to him also it was given to behold with his mental eye a hidden world, the world of the Properties of Eternal Nature, and to solve the great mystery, not of this earth alone, but of the universe. He was emphatically a *central* philosopher, who from his standpoint could survey the whole sphere, within and without, and not merely an outer segment of its shell. He could therefore see the *causes* of things, and not their effects only. There is, I do not deny it, much in the writings of Böhme that cannot be maintained or proved, much that appears as pure alchymistical and cabalistic *réverie*, the disease of the age in which he lived. But though he may often be wrong in his deductions, he is always right in fundamentals. And even after rejecting all that is doubtful or absolutely erroneous, there is left so much which science and experiment demonstrate to be absolutely true, that it is hard to remember that all this was enunciated by a man who had no learning and never made an experiment in his life, and at a time when none of the scientific truths he put forth were even dreamt of by scientific men. Even if he had made known nothing but the Seven Properties of Nature (11), the key to all her mysteries, he would for ever rank among the greatest lights of science. I confess I am at a perfect loss to account for this extraordinary knowledge in an untutored shoemaker, such as Böhme was. If there were any work extant, or known to have been extant before or at his time, in which an account of the Seven Properties was given, I should say, he must have copied from that, though this theory would still leave the original discoverer unknown; but no trace either actual or traditional of any such work, or of the knowledge of these properties—except of such as is implied in the universal veneration in which the number seven has ever been held—is anywhere discoverable. True, Böhme's terminology is chiefly borrowed from the alchemists, but not his knowledge. Whence then did he derive it? No one who has studied its details can doubt of their truth. No one before him has put them forth. Is then intuition possible? Was Böhme endowed with that gift? This is in fact a greater secret than any handed down in any secret society, ancient or modern. Of course scientific men, as they are called, laugh at Böhme as a mad dreamer, just as the Royal Society laughed at the electric discoveries of Franklin





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are distinctly permeated by his spirit—but none sufficiently, and hence no one of their systems is satisfactory. Goethe was well versed in Böhme, and many allusions in his writings, which the critics can make nothing of, may be explained by passages from Böhme. Thus the commentators and translators of “Faust” have made the most ridiculous guesses as to the meaning to be attached to the “Mothers,” to whom Faust is to descend in his search for Helen. The “Mothers” are the first three properties of nature (II), and all the instructions given by Mephistopheles to Faust before his descent *ad inferos* form a highly poetical, and at the same time philosophical, description of them. If scientific men, instead of laughing at Böhme, would study his works, we should have no Darwinism, no theories of the sun’s refrigeration, and no President of the British Association propounding the monstrous doctrine that life on this earth had its origin in the life carried hither on fragments struck off other planets and celestial bodies and falling on this globe—a theory which, even could it for one moment be entertained, would still leave *the* question, “Whence came life?” unanswered. Nor should we have the Huxleys and Tyndalls assuming that life can be put into a creature, after its material body is made, which is no better than assuming that a circle and its roundness are two separate things—that first comes the figure and afterwards its roundness. Böhme, whom they look upon as a dreamer, would show them, the real dreamers, that life makes the body to manifest itself; when a growing acorn puts forth sprouts, it is the life creeping out, feeling its way, and clothing itself in matter as it goes along, and in order to go along. Let scientists read that magnificent chapter beginning with: “We see that all life is essential; it manifests itself by the germinating of the essences.” What theology might learn from Böhme cannot be comprised in a few words: the vexed questions of the origin of evil, predestination, Christ’s flesh and blood which are to regenerate man, their nature and action, are all profoundly and pseudo-scientifically expounded in the writings of this author. But as he had no academic title, nor even common education, they despise him; and yet some of these very men will put faith in equally illiterate spiritualists.

252. *Sketch of Böhme’s Life*.—Jacob Böhme was born at Görlitz, in Upper Lusatia, in 1575. In his childhood he was engaged in tending cattle. In this solitary life and the constant contemplation of nature he felt himself a poet, and, as he imagined, destined for great things. He saw an occult



meaning in all the voices of the country ; and, believing that therein he heard the voice of God, he lent his ear to a revelation he regarded as coming from God Himself through the medium of nature. At the age of fifteen or sixteen he was apprenticed to a shoemaker at Görlitz. The sedentary occupation increased his tendency to mysticism. Severe and zealous for good manners and morals, and quite wrapped up in himself, he was considered proud by some, and mad by others. And indeed, having received no education whatever, his ideas were necessarily confused, obscure, and disconnected. In 1594 he married. Though a good husband and good father, he did not cease from being a visionary ; and, driven to it by frequent dreams, which he attributed to the influence of the Holy Spirit, he finally decided on writing. His first work was the “Aurora,” the best known, but the most imperfect, of all his writings, both as regards style and matter. It brought upon him the persecution of the clergy, at whose instance the magistracy of Görlitz prohibited his writing any more—an order which he obeyed for a number of years ; but eventually the promptings of his spirit were no longer to be withstood, and he entirely gave himself up to the composition of his numerous writings during the last six years of his life, in which he produced among other works the “Mysterium Magnum,” the “Signatura Rerum,” the “Threefold Life,” the “Six Theosophic Points,” the “Divine Contemplation,” the “Supersensual Life,” all of which contain, amidst much that is incongruous, whimsical, obscure, and unintelligible, passages of such profound knowledge and comprehensive meaning that no true philosopher dares to despise them, and which in fact will yet be recognised as the only solid bases of all true science. Now and then we meet in his writings with passages of such poetic beauty, such lofty views of Deity and Nature, as surpass all the conceptions of the greatest poets of all ages. His works, written in German, during his lifetime circulated only in manuscript ; they were afterwards translated into Dutch, and from this language they were rendered into English. The German edition of his works, full of errors, did not appear until 1682. In France, St.-Martin, *le Philosophe Inconnu*, translated some of them into French. His greatest commentator was Dionysius Andreas Freher, a German, who lived many years in this country, and whose works, all written in English—with the exception of two, written in German, and translated into English by the present writer—exist only in manuscript, copies of some of them being in the British Museum, whilst the originals were



in the possession of the late Mr. Christopher Walton, of Highgate, who, before his death, presented them, together with his unique collection of books and MSS. relating to mystical topics, including the translations made by the present writer, to Dr. Williams' Library, London, for public benefit. William Law, the learned English divine, who had the use of these MSS., is his greatest English commentator; his "Appeal," "Way to Divine Knowledge," "Spirit of Prayer," and "Spirit of Love," show how well he had seized the leading ideas of Böhme's system. Böhme died in 1624, his last words being, "Now I am going into paradise."

253. *The Philadelphians*.—Böhme himself never founded any sect. He was too much wrapt up in his glorious visions to think of gathering disciples and perpetuating his name by such means: like the sun, he shed his light abroad, because it was his nature to do so, unheeding whether it fell on rich or barren ground, leaving it to fructify according to its own inherent qualities. And the fruit is to come yet. For the society of the "Philadelphians," founded towards the close of the seventeenth century by Jane Lead, whose vain visions undoubtedly were the result of her study of the work of Böhme, never led to any results, spiritual or scientific. The society, in fact, only existed about seven years, and its members had but vague and imperfect notions of the meaning and tendency of the writings of their great master.





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## EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

254. *Emanuel Swedenborg*.—A mystic, who as yet has made much more noise in the world, though totally unworthy of being compared with Jacob Böhme—for this latter has left to the world solid and positive scientific knowledge, founded on an extraordinary insight into Nature and her operations; whilst the former has left it nothing but some poetical ideas, with a farrago of nonsensical rubbish, such as hundreds of confessed madmen have written—is Emanuel Swedenborg. Still he was a man of great parts. In him were combined the opposite qualities of scientist, poet, and visionary. The desire of knowledge made him master the whole cycle of the sciences of his age, and when twenty-eight years old he was one of the most learned men of his country. In 1716 he visited the English, Dutch, French, and German universities. In 1718 he transported for Charles XII. a number of vessels over land from one coast to another. In 1721 he visited the mines of Europe, and wrote a description of them in his great work “*Dædalus Hyperboreus*.” Then he gave himself up to theology, and unexpectedly turned to mysticism, often the denial of theology. He was fifty-five years old when he began to look within himself and to discover the wonders of the ideal world; after the mines of the earth, he explored the depths of the soul, and in this later exploration he forgot science. His pretended revelations drew upon him the hatred of the clergy, but he enjoyed such consideration in his own country that they could not injure him. At the Diet of 1751 Count Hopken declared that the most valuable writings on finance proceeded from the pen of Swedenborg. A mystical financier was what the world had never seen, and perhaps will never see again.<sup>1</sup> He died in London. There is an English society which prints and circulates his works, filling

<sup>1</sup> Yet in the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant it again saw a character closely resembling that of Swedenborg—the sharp, shrewd man of business and of the world, and the mystic. History repeats itself.



about fifty large volumes; and he has many followers in this country. He moreover made many discoveries in astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, and was the forerunner of Gall in phrenology.

255. *His Writings and Theories*.—Much in his writings is no doubt absurd; but still we think a sense, not at once apparent, but which turns nonsense into sense, may be discovered therein. Whoso attentively reads the “New Jerusalem,” or the “Journey to the Astral Worlds,” must see that there is a hidden meaning in his abstruse language. It cannot be assumed that a man who had shown so much vigour of mind in his numerous works on poetry, philosophy, mathematics, and natural history—a man who constantly spoke of “correspondences,” wherein he attributed to the least thing a hidden sense—a man whose learning was unbounded and acute—that such a man wrote without attaching some real meaning to his illusory language. The religion he professes is philanthropy, and consequently he gives to the abstract idea of the perfect man the name of Man-God, or Jesus Christ; those who aspire to it are angels and spirits; their union becomes heaven, and the opposite, hell.

256. *Rationale of Swedenborg's Writings*.—From the most remote antiquity we meet with institutions—as the foregoing pages have sufficiently shown—ever aiming at political, religious, and intellectual reform, but expressing their ideas by speaking allegorically of the other world and the life to come, of God and angels, or using architectural terms. This practice, which is permanent, and permeates all secret societies, aims at morality in conduct, justice in government, general happiness and progress, but aims at all these according to certain philosophical ideas, viz., that all men are free and equal; but understanding that these ideas, in the various conditions of actual society, in its different classes, and in the heads of government and worship, would meet with powerful opponents, it takes its phraseology from an imaginary world successfully to carry out its objects. Therefore its external worship resembles ours, but by the science of correspondences it becomes something different, which is thus expressed by Swedenborg: “There is in heaven a divine cultus outwardly similar to ours, but inwardly different. I was permitted to enter into the celestial temple (perhaps the lodge), where are shown the harmonised divinity and the deified humanity.”

257. *The New Jerusalem*.—One of the chief conceptions of Swedenborg, as expounded in the “New Jerusalem,” is the divine in the heart of every man, interpreted by humanity,





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plants, fruits, stones—all is corresponding, just as in masonic lodges. As there are three degrees in life, so there are three heavens, and the conditions of their respective inhabitants correspond with those of the initiated of the three masonic degrees. The “New Jerusalem” may be considered also as a protest against the papal rule, hated by Swedenborg, as by all sectaries. He sought its fate in the Apocalypse, as formerly did the Albigenses; and declared that the corrupt Roman clergy must make way for a better priesthood, and the decayed and idolatrous church for a new temple. To increase the authority of his words he adds: “What I tell you, I learned in heaven,” probably the sectarian heaven, into which he had been initiated. Extracts might be multiplied, but the above will suffice to show the spirit that animates the writings of Swedenborg; they will suffice to show that to enter into the hidden thoughts of most emblems, rites, and secret societies, it is necessary to consider the twofold, and even threefold, sense of the different figures. Every symbol is a mystery; nothing is done or said in secret assemblies that is not worthy of scrutiny—names, members, forms, all are indications, hints of hidden truths, dangerous truths, and therefore covered with double and triple veils.

259. *Various Swedenborgian Sects.*—From these writings arose various sects, one of them composed of men who await the New Jerusalem, believing in the marvellous prophecies, the conversations with angels, the seraphic marriages of the elect, and considering themselves the true disciples of Christ, because Swedenborg called the Sun of Mercy, which spreads light and warmth throughout the universe, the Saviour of the world. This sect has most followers in England. The other sects boast of possessing the greatest secrets of their master. Of these sects the following may be mentioned.

260. *Illuminati of Avignon.*—Pernetti, a Benedictine monk, and Gabrianca, a Polish nobleman and a Mason, were the first to surround with whimsical rites and ceremonies the knowledge and reveries of the Swedish mystic. In 1760 they established at Avignon a society of Illuminati, not to be confounded with the Illuminati of Bavaria, nor with any other Illuminati. The city of the popes became a sectarian stronghold, with affiliated lodges in the chief towns of France. The members occupied themselves with philosophy, astronomy, and that social chemistry, which then subjected to a formidable examination all the elements of which political society is composed.



261. *Illuminated Theosophists*.—Paris wanted to have its own Swedenborgian rite, not satisfied with having introduced that of Perneti. The Freemason Chartanier, who in 1766 was the master of the Parisian lodge “Socrates,” modified the rite of Avignon, and called the new order the “Illuminated Theosophists,” and after an active propaganda in France, crossed the Channel and opened a lodge in London, where at first he met with much success; but the rite was soon abandoned.

262. *Philosophic Scotch Rite*.—Another modification of the Avignon rite was one introduced in 1770 by the Abbé Perneti, who was entirely devoted to alchymy. He called the rite the “Hermetic” rite; but, as its name implies, it was more alchymistical than masonic. Boileau, a physician of Paris, and zealous follower of Perneti, remodelled the Hermetic rite, rendered it more purely masonic, and gave it the name of the “Philosophic Scotch rite.” The two rites were afterwards united into twelve degrees, the last of which is the “Sublime Master of the Luminous Ring,” which boasted of being derived from Pythagoras. In 1780 an Academy of the Sublime Masters of the Luminous Ring was established in France, the initiation into which consisted of the presumed philosophic doctrines of the sage of Samos.

263. *Rite of the Philalethes*.—Another rite founded on the masonic speculations of Swedenborg was one invented in the lodge of the “United Friends,” in Paris. The members, among whom were Condorcet and Antoine Court de Gébelin, the author of the “Monde Primitif,” called themselves “Philalethes,” or “Searchers after Truth,” and the founder was Lavalette de Langes, Keeper of the Royal Treasury. It was divided into twelve classes or chambers; the first six degrees were styled Petty, and the last six High Masonry. Like almost all societies founded on Masonry, the Philalethes endeavoured to lead man to his pristine virtue and liberty; they felt the approach of the Revolution, and kept themselves *au fait* of events and aspirations. The lodge of the *Amis Réunis*, the centre of the system, possessed a rich collection of works and MSS. on secret societies, a large chemical laboratory, a cabinet of natural history, all under the care of De Langes; but at his death, in 1788, the precious collection was dispersed and the lodge dissolved.

A lodge, in imitation of the above, was founded at Narbonne in 1780, but with considerable modifications. The brethren called themselves Philadelphians, who are not to be confounded with the Philadelphian Society founded in



London about a century before, though they professed to derive their rites from England. They were divided into three categories or temples, and ten classes or circles. After the first three masonic degrees came the "Perfect Master," the "Elect," and the "Architect," forming the fourth. The fifth comprised the "Sublime Scotch," the sixth the "Knight of the East" and the "Prince of Jerusalem." The four remaining degrees were supposed to be the depositories of masonic knowledge, philosophical and physical, and of mystic science, fit to fortify and exalt the mind of man. These four degrees were called the first to the fourth chapters of Rose-Croix.

264. *Rite of Swedenborg*.—What is properly known as the rite of Swedenborg was another modification of the order of the Illuminati of Avignon (260), effected by the Marquis de Thome in 1783, wherein he endeavoured to restore the true meaning of the doctrines of the Swedish mystic. It was a critical labour of some value, and the rite is still practised in several lodges of Northern Europe. It consists of six degrees: Apprentice, Companion, Master Theosophite, Illuminated Theosophite, Blue Brother, Red Brother.

265. *Universal Aurora*.—In the same year, 1783, there was founded in Paris the Order of the "Universal Aurora," whose chief object was the support of Mesmerism. Cagliostro took an active part in it.





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where least expected. From 1768 to 1778 Paschalis resided either at Paris or at Lyons. Then he suddenly crossed the ocean, and died at St. Domingo in 1779. These sudden appearances and disappearances were perhaps needed to maintain his prestige. De Maître, who had much intercourse with his disciples, states it for certain, that the Order founded by him, and called the "Rite of the elected Cohens or Priests," had superior degrees unknown to the members of the lower grades. We know the names of nine degrees, though not their rituals: they were—Apprentice, Fellow-Craft, Master, Grand Elect, Apprentice Cohen, Fellow-Craft Cohen, Master Cohen, Grand Architect, Knight Commander. The zeal of some of the members, among whom we find Holbach, Duchamteau, and St.-Martin, caused the Order to prolong its existence some time after the death of the founder.

267. *Saint-Martin*.—We have seen that St. Martin was a disciple of Paschalis; he was also, for his day, a profound expounder of the doctrines of Böhme, some of whose works he translated. He to some extent reformed the rite of Paschalis, dividing it into ten degrees, classed in two temples. The first temple comprised the degrees of Apprentice, Fellow-Craft, Master, Ancient Master, Elect, Grand Architect, and Master of the Secret. The degrees of the second temple were Prince of Jerusalem, Knight of Palestine, and Knight of Kadosh. The order, as modified by him, extended from Lyons into the principal cities of France, Germany, and Russia, where the celebrated Prince Repnin (1734–1801) was its chief protector. It is now extinct.



## ROSICRUCIANS

268. *Merits of the Rosicrucians.*—A halo of poetic splendour surrounds the order of the Rosicrucians; the magic lights of fancy play around their graceful day-dreams, while the mystery in which they shrouded themselves lends an additional charm to their history. But their brilliancy was that of a meteor. It just flashed across the realms of imagination and intellect, and vanished for ever; not, however, without leaving behind some permanent and lovely traces of its hasty passage, just as the momentary ray of the sun, caught on the artist's lens, leaves a lasting image on the sensitive paper. Poetry and romance are deeply indebted to the Rosicrucians for many a fascinating creation. The literature of every European country contains hundreds of pleasing fictions, whose machinery has been borrowed from their system of philosophy, though that itself has passed away; and it must be admitted that many of their ideas are highly ingenious, and attain to such heights of intellectual speculation as we find to have been reached by the Sophists of India. Before their time, alchymy had sunk down, as a rule, to a grovelling delusion, seeking but temporal advantages, and occupying itself with earthly dross only: the Rosicrucians spiritualised and refined it by giving the chimerical search after the philosopher's stone a nobler aim than the attainment of wealth, namely, the opening of the spiritual eyes, whereby man should be able to see the supernal world, and be filled with an inward light to illumine his mind with true knowledge. The physical process of the transmutation of metals was by them considered as analogical with man's restoration to his unfallen state, as set forth in Böhme's *Signatura Rerum*, chapters vii., x.—xii. The true Rosicrucians, therefore, may be defined as spiritual alchemists, or Theosophists.

269. *Origin of the Society doubtful.*—The society is of very uncertain origin. It is affirmed by some writers that from



the fourteenth century there existed a society of physicists and alchemists who laboured in the search after the philosopher's stone; and a certain Nicolo Barnaud undertook journeys through Germany and France for the purpose of establishing a Hermetic society. From the preface of the work, "Echo of the Society of the Rosy Cross," it moreover follows that in 1597 meetings were held to institute a secret society for the promotion of alchemy. Another indication of the actual existence of such a society is found in a book published in 1605, and entitled, "Restoration of the Decayed Temple of Pallas," which gives a constitution of Rosicrucians. Again, in 1610, the notary Haselmeyer pretended to have read in a MS. the *Fama Fraternitatis*, comprising all the laws of the Order. Four years afterwards appeared a small work, entitled "General Reformation of the World," which in fact contains the *Fama Fraternitatis*, where it is related that a German, Christian Rosenkreuz, founded such a society in the fourteenth century, after having learned the sublime science in the East. Of him it is related, that when, in 1378, he was travelling in Arabia, he was called by name and greeted by some philosophers, who had never before seen him; from them he learned many secrets, among others that of prolonging life. On his return he made many disciples, and died at the age of 150 years, not because his strength failed him, but because he was tired of life. In 1604 one of his disciples had his tomb opened, and there found strange inscriptions, and a MS. in letters of gold. The grotto in which this tomb was found, by the description given of it, strongly reminds us of the Mithraic Cave. Another work, published in 1615, the *Confessio Fraternitatis Rosæ Crucis*, contains an account of the object and spirit of the Order.

270. *Rosicrucian Literature*.—The *Thesaurinella Chymica-aurea*, already referred to (sect. 244), may have been a Rosicrucian work, as also *Raymundii Lullii Theoria*. In 1615, Michael Meyer published at Cologne his *Themis Aurea, hoc est, de legibus Fraternitatis Rosæ Crucis*, which purported to contain all the laws and ordinances of the brotherhood. Another work, entitled "The Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosenkreuz," and published in 1616, in the shape of a comic romance, is really a satire on the alchymistical delusions of the author's time. Both works were written, as we learn from his autobiography, by Valentine Andreaë, a Lutheran clergyman of Herrenberg, near Tübingen. But instead of being taken for what the author intended them—satires on the follies of Paracelsus,





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to them, and gradually turned their tendencies in the very opposite direction. Andreä perceiving this withdrew from Rosicrucianism, and endeavoured by the subsequent writings, mentioned above, to disavow his former connection with it. With the same object also he, during his second residence in Austria, founded the “*Fraternitas Christi*,” to which many members of the Protestant Austrian nobility sought admission. Three years after the society was prohibited by the Government, and its final suppression hastened by an opposition society, founded by the Catholics, with the sanction of the Pope, first at Olmütz and then at Vienna, the leaders being the Counts Althan, Gonzaga, and Sforza; the order was called that of the “*Blue Cross*.” The Rosicrucians, being no longer under the influence of Andreä, broke up into a number of independent lodges, which quickly degenerated into mere traps to catch credulous dupes and their money; hence the duration of most was short. But on the accession of Joseph II., whose liberal principles were known, the Rosicrucians, as well as other secret societies, sprang into life again. Freemasonry became the fashion of the day. Masonic implements were worn as “*charms*,” the ladies carried muffs of white silk edged with blue, to represent the Mason’s aprons, and so on. The Emperor found it necessary to regulate the conduct of these secret societies. He suppressed all except that of the Freemasons, to whom in 1785 he granted a patent, which began thus: “*Since nothing is to exist in a well-regulated state without proper supervision, We deem it necessary thus to declare our will: The so-called Masonic Societies, whose secrets are unknown to us, since we never were curious enough to inquire into their juggleries (gauckeleien),*” &c. This edict, which abolished the other societies, but allowed the Freemasons to continue their “*juggleries*,” as the Emperor called their ceremonies, threw many of the suppressed societies, including the Rosicrucians, into the arms of the Masonic Fraternity; the Asiatic Brethren, as we shall see further on (281), transferred their activity from Vienna to Sleswick.

272. *Ritual and Ceremonies*.—The “*juggleries*” of the Rosicrucians, whom the Emperor suppressed, were those of the “*constitution*” of 1763, and as follows:—The apartment where the initiation took place contained the *tabella mystica*, presently to be described. The floor was covered with a green carpet, and on it were placed the following objects:—A glass globe, standing on a pedestal of seven steps, and divided into two parts, representing light and darkness;



three candelabra, placed triangularly; nine glasses, symbolising male and female properties; the quintessence, and various other things; a brazier, a circle, and a napkin.

The candidate for initiation is introduced by a brother, who takes him into a room where a light, pen, ink, and paper, sealing-wax, two red cords, and a bare sword are laid on a table. The candidate is asked whether he firmly intends to become a pupil of true wisdom. Having answered affirmatively, he gives up his hat and sword, and pays the fees. His hands having been bound, and his eyes bandaged and a red cord put round his neck, he is led to the door of the lodge, on which the introducer gently knocks nine times. The doorkeeper opens it and asks "Who is there?" The hierophant answers, "An earthly body holding the spiritual man imprisoned in ignorance." The doorkeeper, "What is to be done to him?" The introducer, "Kill his body and purify his spirit." The doorkeeper, "Then bring him into the place of justice." They enter, place themselves in front of the circle, the candidate kneeling on one knee. The master stands at his right hand, with a white wand, the introducer at his left, holding a sword; both wear their aprons. The master says, "Child of man, I conjure you through all degrees of profane Freemasonry, and by the endless circle, which comprises all creatures and the highest wisdom, to tell me for what purpose you have come here?" The candidate, "To acquire wisdom, art, and virtue." The master, "Then live! But your spirit must again rule over your body; you have found grace, arise and be free." He is then unbound, steps into the circle, the master and the introducer hold the wand and sword crosswise, the candidate lays three fingers thereon, and as soon as the master says "Now listen," the candidate repeats the oath propounded to him, which is simply a declaration that he will have no secrets from his brethren, and will lead a virtuous life. Then he is invested with the title of the order, the seal, password and sign, hat and sword, and has the mystical table interpreted to him, after which, like the Masons, he and the other brethren go from "labour" to "refreshment."

This mystical table is divided into nine vertical and thirteen horizontal compartments. The first column of nine divisions gives the numbers, the second the names of the different degrees. The lowest comprises the *Juniores*, who know next to nothing; the highest the *Magi*, from whom nothing is hidden, who are masters over all things, like Moses, Hermes, Hyram. Their jewel is an equilateral triangle. According-



to the table, the different degrees have meeting-places all over Europe and Asia; the *Magi* meet at Smyrna every ten years; the *Magistri*, a degree below, at Camra, in Poland, and Paris, in France, every nine years; the *Juniores* every two years at such a place as may be most convenient. The admission fee to the degree of *Magus* is ninety-nine gold marks; to that of *Junior*, three marks. The *Minores*, who know the “philosophical sun,” and “perform marvellous cures,” pay what they choose.

273. *Rosicrucianism in England in the Past*.—The works of Andreä excited much attention in England, where mysticism and astrology at that time had many adherents, as Wood’s “*Athenæ Oxonienses*” fully shows. Robert Fludd in this country was the great champion of the Rosicrucians. His two most important works concerning them are “*Apologia et Compendiaria Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce suspicionis et infamiae maculis aspersam, veritatis quasi Fluctibus abluens et abstergens.*” Leyden, 1616. “*Tractatus Apologeticus integritatem Societatis de Rosea Cruce defendeus.*” Lugdvai Batavorum, 1617. This latter is really a duplicate of the former with a new title.

Fludd was followed by one Heydon, born 1629. Strange to say, an attorney, who, among other works on the Rosicrucians wrote “*An Epologue for an Apilogue,*” wherein occur passages such as this: “I shall tell you what Rosicrucians are, and that Moses was their father. Some say they were of the order of Elias, some of Ezechiel, others define them to be the officers of the generalissimo of the world; that are as the eyes and ears of the great king, seeing and hearing all things, for they are seraphically illuminated as Moses was, according to this order of the elements, earth refined to water, water to air, air to fire.” Such gibberish as this was served up for the reading public some centuries ago, and, I suppose, satisfied them. In another of his works Heydon maintained that it was criminal to eat—though he did not abstain from the practice himself—but that there was a fine fatness in the air quite sufficient for nourishment, and that for men of very voracious appetites, it was enough to place a cataplasm of cooked meat on the epigastrium to satisfy their hunger.





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gorical *chef d'œuvre* of their sect. It is undeniable that this was coeval with chivalry, and had from thenceforth a literature rich in works, in whose titles the word *Rosa* is incorporated; as the *Rosa Philosophorum*, of which no less than ten occur in the *Artis Auriferæ quam Chemiam vocant* (Basilea, 1610). The connection of the Rosicrucians with chivalry, the Troubadours, and the Albigenses, cannot be denied. Like these, they swore the same hatred to Rome; like these, they called Catholicism the religion of hate. They solemnly declared that the Pope was Antichrist, and rejected pontifical and Mahomedan dogmas, styling them the beasts of the East and West.

275. *Statements concerning themselves*.—They pretended to feel neither hunger nor thirst, nor to be subject to age or disease; to possess the power of commanding spirits, and attracting pearls and precious stones, and of rendering themselves invisible. They stated the aim of their society to be the restoration of all the sciences, and especially of medicine; and by occult artifices to procure treasures and riches sufficient to supply the rulers and kings with the necessary means for promoting the great reforms of society then needed. They were bound to conform to five fundamental laws:—  
1. Gratuitously to heal the sick. 2. To dress in the costume of the country in which they lived. 3. To attend every year the meeting of the Order. 4. When dying to choose a successor. 5. To preserve the secret one hundred years.

276. *Poetical Fictions of Rosicrucians*.—These are best known from the work of Joseph Francis Borri, a native of Milan, and it is to them the “poetic splendour which surrounds the Order,” which, in fact, gave real existence to it, is due. Having preached against the abuses of the Papacy, and promulgated opinions which were deemed heretical, Borri was seized by order of the Inquisition and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. He died in the Castle of St Angelo in 1695. The work referred to is entitled “The Key of the Cabinet of Signor Borri,” and is, in substance, nothing but the cabalistic romance entitled “The Count de Gabalis,” published in 1670 by the Abbé de Villars. What we gather from this work is, that the Rosicrucians discarded for ever all the old tales of sorcery and witchcraft and communion with the devil. They denied the existence of incubi and succubi, and of all the grotesque imps monkish brains had hatched and superstitious nations believed in. Man, they said, was surrounded by myriads of beautiful and beneficent beings, all anxious to do him service. These beings were the elemental spirits; the



air was peopled with sylphs, the water with undines or naiads, the earth with gnomes, and the fire with salamanders. These the Rosicrucian could bind to his service, and imprison in a ring, a mirror, or a stone, and compel to appear when called, and render answers to such questions as he chose to put. All these beings possessed great powers, and were unrestrained by the barriers of space or matter. But man was in one respect their superior: he had an immortal soul, they had not. They could, however, become sharers in man's immortality, if they could inspire one of that race with the passion of love towards them. On this notion is founded the charming story of "Undine;" Shakespeare's Ariel is a sylph; the "Rape of the Lock," the Masque of "Comus," the poem of "Salamandrine," all owe their machinery to the poetic fancies of the Rosicrucians. Among other things they taught concerning the elemental spirits, they asserted that they were composed of the purest particles of the element they inhabited, and that in consequence of having within them no antagonistic qualities, being made of but one element (11), they could live for thousands of years. The Rosicrucians further held the doctrine of the *signatura rerum*, by which they meant that everything in this visible world has outwardly impressed on it its inward spiritual character. Moreover, they said that by the practice of virtue man could even on earth obtain a glimpse of the spiritual world, and above all things discover the philosopher's stone, which, however, could not be found except by the regenerate, for "it is in close communion with the heavenly essence." According to them the letters INRI, the sacred word of the Order of Rose Croix, signified *Ignis Natura Regenerando Integrat*.

277. *The Hague Lodge*.—In the year 1622, Montanus, or, by his real name, Ludwig Conrad, of Bingen, was expelled from an order of Rosicrucians which then existed at The Hague, where they had a grand palace. They held their meetings by order of the master, called "imperator," in great cities, such as Amsterdam, Danzig, Nuremberg, Hamburg, Mantua, Venice, besides such as were held at The Hague. They publicly wore a black silk cord, but at their meetings they put on a gold band, to which were attached a golden cross and rose. Their card of membership was a large parchment, with many seals affixed with great cere-



mony. When holding a public procession, they carried a small green flag. This Montanus, who wrote a book entitled "Introduction to the Hermetic Science," says, that he spent his patrimony and his wife's fortune, of eleven thousand dollars, for the benefit of the society, and that when he was totally impoverished he was expelled, being, however, bound over to keep their secrets, "which latter, indeed, I kept, as women do not reveal anything where there is nothing to reveal." These pretended secrets are supposed to be contained in a book entitled "Sinceri Renati Theophilosophia Theoretico-practica," but I have not been able to obtain or see a copy of this work. The society is supposed to have become extinct at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

278. *A Rosicrucian MS.*—According to a statement made by Dr. von Harless in his "Jacob Böhme and the Alchymists" (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1882), a society of Rosicrucians must have existed in Germany in the year 1641. Dr. von Harless says, "I have recently had an opportunity of inspecting a Rosicrucian MS. hitherto unknown. It was probably written about 1765, and contains the statutes of an order of Rosicrucians, with the title *Testamentum*. The original must date from the middle of the seventeenth century, as is proved by a special warning given to members to observe secrecy, especially towards Roman Catholic ecclesiastics, two members having, from not attending to this caution, been great sufferers in 1641. The MS., besides the statutes, also contains instructions for alchymistic operations. The Order, according to the MS., had one chief, called *imperator*; its chief seats were Ancona, Nuremberg, Hamburg, and Amsterdam. The members were to change their residence every ten years, and maintain the greatest secrecy as to their existence. The apprenticeship lasted seven years. Their mode of addressing one another was: *ave frater*; the answer: *roseæ et aureæ*. The first: *crucis*; then both together: *Benedictus Deus qui dedit nobis signum*. Then the mutual production of the *signum*, consisting of an engraved seal, a specimen of which was also shown to Dr. von Harless."

On taking steps to obtain further particulars from Dr. von Harless himself, I learnt to my regret that he had died in 1878; and as he had given no intimation in the above-named works where the MS. is deposited, I am unable to report further thereon. But it would seem that the society referred to in the MS. was the same as the one spoken of in the "Thesaurinella," mentioned towards the end of sect. 244.

279. *New Rosicrucian Constitution.*—In 1714, or one





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made so much pretence to secret and exclusive knowledge, that the Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick and the Duke of Courland—by whose order Schroepfer had once been flogged—invited him to Dresden, where they openly patronised him, while he deluded them with the apparitions of ghosts and magical phantasma—really produced by magic-lanterns and concave mirrors. But his conduct eventually so disgusted his patrons that they refused him further supplies of money, whereupon he shot himself in a wood near Leipzic.

But this vulgar cheat left credulous disciples behind. John Rudolph Bischofswerder (1741–1803), a major, and afterwards Prussian Minister of War, who had almost been a witness of Schroepfer's death, and John Christopher Wöllner (1732–1800), a clergyman, and afterwards Prussian Minister of Public Cult, continued what Schroepfer had started. Under the patronage of the Crown Prince, Frederick William of Prussia, the nephew of Frederick the Great, whom he succeeded in 1786 as King Frederick William II., established at Berlin a Rosicrucian lodge, and the enlightened views which had been introduced by, and had prevailed during the reign of, old Fritz were quickly suppressed by religious persecution. At that time Bahrdt had considerable success with his resuscitated order of Illuminati. The two highly-placed rogues saw in this plebeian a man who might some day compete with them for the king's favour; so whilst they, in league with his mistress, the Countess Lichtenau, more than ever amused their silly royal patron with the calling up of ghosts and drunken orgies, they induced him to put forth the notorious Religious Edict of 1788, which was to stem the ungodly advances of the Illuminati, and which also restored the censorship of the Press. The book (in German), entitled "The Rosicrucian in his Nakedness," published by Master "Pianco," an ex-member of the society, in 1782, was a violent attack and *exposé* of the Rosicrucians; but the delusion continued to flourish.



## ASIATIC BRETHREN

281. *Origin of the Order.*—This Order originated probably about the year 1780, though its chiefs were not known in 1788; it was, however, suspected that Baron Ecker and Eckhofen was one of them. He resided at first at Vienna, but afterwards settled at Sleswick; he distinguished himself by his writings, but the superstitious proclaimed him a terrible *Cacomagus*. The order spread from Italy to Russia. Its basis was Rosicrucian, its meetings were called Melchisedeck lodges, and Jews, Turks, Persians, and Armenians might be received as members. The masters were called the Worshipful Chiefs of the Seven Churches of Asia. The full title of the Order was, “Order of the Knights and Brethren of St. John the Evangelist from Asia in Europe.” The teaching of the Order was partly moral, that is to say, it instructed how to rule spirits, by breaking the seven seals; and partly physical, by showing how to prepare miraculous medicines and to make gold. It inculcated cabalistic nonsense, and was greatly detested by Rosicrucians and Freemasons—two of a trade cannot agree. The names of the degrees were taken from the Hebrew, and were symbolical of their characteristics. The Order did not profess Rosicrucianism, yet in the Third Chief Degree the members were styled “True Rosicrucians.” The results of the scientific researches of the masters were not communicated to aspirants; these had to discover them as they could. The fact seemed to be that the masters had nothing to communicate, but this admission would have been fatal to the Order; its secrets appearing to exist in the credulity of outsiders only.

282. *Division of this Order.*—The Order was divided into five degrees, viz., two probationary and three chief degrees. The first probationary degree, that of the “Seekers,” never consisted of more than ten members. The period of probation was fourteen months. They had lectures delivered to them every fortnight, and the costume they wore at their



meetings consisted of a round black hat with black feathers, a black cloak, a black sash with three buttons in the shape of roses, white gloves, and sword with a black tassel, a black ribbon, from which was suspended a double triangle, which symbol was also embroidered on the left side of the cloak.

The second probationary degree, consisting of ten members, was called that of the "Sufferers." Its duration was seven months. Whilst the "Seekers" were theorists only, the "Sufferers" were supposed to make practical researches in physical science. They wore round black hats with black and white feathers, black cloaks with white linings and collars, on which double triangles were embroidered in gold, black sashes with white edging and three rosettes, white gloves, and swords with black and white tassels.

The First Chief Degree styled its members "Knights and Brother-Initiates from Asia in Europe." They wore round black hats with white, black, yellow, and red feathers, black cloaks with white linings and collars and gold lace; on the left breast of the cloak there was a red cross with four green roses, having in their centre a green shield with the monogram M and A. The same cross, of gold, and enamelled, was worn on a red ribbon; the member further wore a pink sash round the body edged with green and with three red roses, white gloves with a red cross and four green roses; the tassels of the swords displayed the four colours of the feathers.

283. *Initiation into this Degree.*—On the reception of a "Sufferer" into this degree he was led into a room hung with black; the floor and furniture were covered with black cloth. The room was lit up with seven golden candlesticks, six of which had five branches each, whilst the seventh, standing in the centre, represented a human figure in a white dress and golden girdle. The chair of the master stood in the centre of the room on a dais of three steps, under a square black canopy; the back wall was partly open, but held back with seven tassels, and behind it was the Holiest of Holies, consisting of a balustrade of ten columns, on the basement of which was a picture of the sun in a triangle, surrounded by the divine fire. Under the centre candlestick was the carpet of the three masonic degrees, surrounded by nine lights, a tenth light standing a little further off at the foot of the throne. There stood, on the right, a small table, on which were placed a flaming sword, with the number 56 engraved thereon, and a green rod, with two red ends; to the left lay the Book of the Law.





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highest authority, for in this degree began the revelation of secrets. What they were has never become known to outsiders. We may assume them to have been wonderful, considering the wonderful costume the knights were entitled to wear in this degree, viz., a red hat with stripes of the four different colours mentioned, in a red cloak, with a green cross and roses, having in their centre the monogram J and C embroidered in gold on a red field; the same cross in gold, and enamelled in the same four colours, attached to a green ribbon, edged with red, and three green roses; white gloves, decorated with red crosses and green roses inside and out; sword, with green and red tassel.

285. *Third Chief Degree, or Royal Priests, or True Rosicrucians, or the Degree of Melchisedeck.*—This degree also could be obtained from the Sanhedrim only. The number of its members was restricted to seventy-two. Solomon in all his glory was nothing compared with the True Rosicrucians in their official costume. Here it is: a hat, gold, pink, and green, the brim turned up in front, and the name Jehovah embroidered thereon in gold, and surmounted with white, red, yellow, black, and green feathers; a long pink undergarment, fitting closely to the body, the cuffs of the sleeves being made of materials similar to those composing the hat, as also the sash, worn round the waist, whereon were embroidered three roses, one white, one red, and the centre one the colours of the sash; the stockings or hose and shoes were of pink silk. The cloak consisted of materials similar to those of the hat, and was lined with green; on the left breast was seen a point with many rays issuing from it. Round the neck the knight wore a gold chain, having alternately between the ordinary links shields with the monograms M and A and J and C, and the representation of a tree, having on the right hand a man, and on the left a woman, who with one hand cover the *pudenda*, and touch the tree with the other; to the end of the chain the Urim and Thummim were attached. White gloves, decorated with green and red roses within and without, completed this gorgeous apparel.

286. *Organisation of the Order.*—The Sanhedrim exercised the highest authority, which it could delegate to committees appointed from among its members. The authority next under the Sanhedrim was the General Chapter, after which came the Provincial Chapters. All these various departments had every one their own officials, with high-sounding titles, which need not be given here—the reader will find



enough of them among the Freemasons; but on reading a list of them, one cannot help exclaiming—

“ And every one is Knighted,  
And every one is Grand;  
Who would not be delighted  
To join in such a band ? ”

But to join in this band was somewhat expensive; the Order was a fee-trap of no mean order, something like a few of the spurious degrees in Masonry. On his initiation into the order of the Asiatic Brethren the candidate paid a fee of two ducats; when he took it into his head to found a Master Lodge, he had to pay seven ducats for the privilege, and two ducats for the carpet; for every folio of the Rules of the Lodge, ten kreuzer, or about twopence-halfpenny. The foundation of a Superior Master Lodge cost twelve ducats; of a Provincial Chapter, twenty-five ducats; of a General Chapter, fifty ducats. Every Brother paid to the Superior Master a monthly contribution of eightpence, and for extraordinary expenses and correspondence a fee proportionate to his means on the days of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. These fees and subscriptions must annually have amounted to a goodly sum. What became of it? Rolling, a member, in 1787, published the laughable secrets of the Order.

287. *Rosicrucian Adventurers*.—In 1781 there appeared at Vienna “An Address to the Rosicrucians of the Ancient System.” The Order seems to have been revived about that time by Fraxinus—evidently a fictitious name—who was Provincial Grand Master of the four united Masonic Lodges at Hamburg. The Masons did not know that Fraxinus was a Rosicrucian, but *he* evidently knew how to fleece his dupes. We learn from one Cedrinus, who was a member of one of the Hamburg lodges, that for the initiation into the Rosicrucian degrees he was by instalments mulcted in the sum of nearly 150 dollars. When Cedrinus began to express dissatisfaction at these continual extortions, Fraxinus, to quiet him, made Cedrinus keeper of the Great Seal of the Hamburg lodges. This gave the latter an opportunity of gaining an insight into the way in which degrees were manufactured, and how Masonry was corrupted by them. He fell out with Fraxinus, and everywhere proclaimed the machinations of the Rosicrucians. Fraxinus expelled him as a perjured brother.

Another Rosicrucian who obtained notoriety at about the same time was Brother Gordianus, who resided at Tübingen.



He was supposed to be a Rosicrucian and an alchymist, since he lived well without having any visible means of subsistence. A schoolmaster, known by the initial L. only, had long desired to become a Rosicrucian ; he consequently paid Gordianus a visit, who informed him, amongst other matters, that the object of the Order was to carry out the intentions of Valentine Andreä ; that certain conditions were imposed on every member, viz., eternal silence on all concerning the Order, the introduction within six weeks of another member, to show that he was capable of winning the confidence of his fellow-men, and the payment of an initiation fee of fifty dollars. The poor schoolmaster after a time raised the money, and received the subjoined receipt, on a small blue card :—

SUB RATIFICATIONE VENERAND.  
SUPERIOR

TETTara Receptionis in minum Gradum  
Ordinis Philosophorum incognitorum, Fratr.  
A. LL et R.C. Systematis antiquioris.

A 4077. s. 8	I. GORDIANUS
M.L.3 - + - C.	Fr. Inspector
- l - g. - + - b	Circuli II.

On the back of the card was the following :—



Prævia sancta promissione religiosæ.  
Ad impletionis Articuli fundamentalis.  
I. et II. et rite ad impleto  
Articulo III.

Gordianus then proposed to L. that he should translate hermetical and magical writings from Latin into German, which L. did. Gordianus published these translations in a





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about twenty dollars. There is a ninth degree, the initiation fee to which is ninety-nine gold marks, for which the member becomes a true *Magus*, knowing all the secrets of nature, with power over all angels, devils, and men; the philosopher's stone is the least of his possessions.

289. *Spread of Rosicrucianism.*—These Rosicrucians assert that they had lodges in various countries. Vienna, according to their statements, was the seat of the Grand Master of the eighth degree;<sup>1</sup> Königsberg, Stettin, Berlin, and Danzig, meeting places of the Brethren of the fifth degree; at Breslau and Leipzig the Brethren of the fourth degree assembled; at Hamburg the Brethren of the sixth degree had a lodge, which cost nine thousand marks. The Order, moreover, had lodges at Nuremberg, Augsburg, Innsbruck, Prague, Paris, Venice, Naples, Malta, Lisbon, Bergen-op-Zoom, Cracow, Warsaw, Basle, Zurich in Europe, and at Smyrna and Ispahan in Asia. The sect was also known in Sweden and Scotland, where it had its own traditions, claiming to be descended from the Alexandrian priesthood of Ormuzd, who embraced Christianity in consequence of the preaching of St. Mark, founding the society of Ormuzd, or of the “Sages of Light.” This tradition is founded on the Manichæism preserved among the Coptic priests, and explains the seal impressed on the ancient parchments of the Order, representing a lion placing his paw on a paper, on which is written the famous sentence, “*Pax tibi, Marce Evangelista meus,*” from which we might infer that Venice had some connection with the spreading of that tradition. In fact, Nicolai tells us that at Venice and Mantua there were Rosicrucians, connected with those of Erfurt, Leipzig, and Amsterdam. And we also know that at Venice congresses of Alchymists were held; and the connection between these latter

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat curious fact may be mentioned here: The Rosicrucians generally adopted sidereal or alchymistic pseudonyms. In the seventeenth century, under the Emperor Ferdinand III., one John Konrad Richthausen came to Vienna. He was a Rosicrucian, and as such bore the name of Chaos, and eventually was ennobled as Herr von Chaos. In 1663 he erected an institution for the sons of poor or deceased parents. When, three years after, the Plague raged in Vienna and attacked some of the youths in the institution, the executors of Richthausen's will—the testator having died—quickly erected in the district of Mariahilf, almost in the centre of Vienna, another building, to separate the youths attacked by the disease from the others. Gradually the building was enlarged, so that in 1773 it could receive 145 pupils. It was known as the Chaos Foundation (*Chaosische Stift*). In 1752 the Empress Maria Theresa purchased the house for a military academy, which purpose it still serves; but it continues to be called the *Stift*, and the street facing it is still called the *Stiftgasse*.



and the Rosicrucians has already been pointed out. Nevertheless the Scotch and Swedish Rosicrucians called themselves the most ancient, and asserted Edward, the son of Henry III., to have been initiated into the Order in 1191, by Raymond Lully, the alchymist. The Fraternity of the Rosy Cross is still flourishing in England (see 293).

290. *Transition to Freemasons.*—From the Templars and Rosicrucians the transition to the Freemasons is easy. With these latter alchymy receives a wholly symbolical explanation; the philosopher's stone is a figure of human perfectibility. In the Masonic degree called the "Key of Masonry," or "Knight of the Sun," and the work "The Blazing Star," by Tschudi, we discover the parallel aims of the two societies. From the "Blazing Star" I extract the following portion of the ritual: "When the hermetic philosophers speak of gold and silver, do they mean common gold and silver?"—"No, because common gold and silver are dead, whilst the gold and silver of the philosophers are full of life." "What is the object of Masonic inquiries?"—"The art of knowing how to render perfect what Nature has left imperfect in man." "What is the object of philosophic inquiry?"—"The art of knowing how to render perfect what Nature has left imperfect in minerals, and to increase the power of the philosopher's stone." "Is it the same stone whose symbol distinguishes our first degrees?"—"Yes, it is the same stone which the Freemasons seek to polish." So also the Phoenix is common to Hermetic and Masonic initiation, and the emblem of the new birth of the neophyte. Now, we have already seen the meaning of this figure, and its connection with the sun. We might multiply comparisons to strengthen the parallelism between hidden arts and secret societies, and trace back the hermetic art to the mysteries of Mithras, where man is said to ascend to heaven through seven steps or gates of lead, brass, copper, iron, bronze, silver, and gold.

291. *Progress and Extinction of Rosicrucians.*—After having excited much attention throughout Germany, the Rosicrucians endeavoured to spread their doctrines in France, but with little success. In order to attract attention, they in 1623 secretly posted certain notices in the streets of Paris, to this effect: "We, the deputies of the College of the Rosy Cross, visibly and invisibly dwell in the city. We teach without books or signs every language that can draw men from mortal error," &c. &c. A work by Gabriel Naudé gave them the final blow. Peter Mormio, not having succeeded in reviving the society in Holland, where it existed in 1622,



published at Leyden in 1630, a work entitled “*Arcana Naturæ Secretissima*,” wherein he reduced the secrets of the brethren to three—viz., perpetual motion, the transmutation of metals, and the universal medicine.

292. *Rosicrucians in the Mauritius*.—I am indebted to Mr. Waite’s “*Real History of the Rosicrucians*” (published by George Redway, 1888) for the following particulars:—

It appears that a society of Rosicrucians existed in 1794 in the island of Mauritius. “My authority,” says Mr. Waite, “gives at length a copy of ‘the admission of Dr. Bacstrom’ into that society by Le Comte de Chazal. In that document Dr. Bacstrom promises, among other things, ‘never to reveal the secret knowledge he receives,’ ‘to initiate such persons as he may deem worthy,’ including women, seeing that ‘Leona Constantia, Abbess of Clermont, was actually received as a practical member and master into the society in 1736 as a Soror Crucis;’ that he will ‘commence the great work as soon as circumstances permit,’ that he ‘will give nothing to the Church,’ that he will ‘never give the fermented metallic medicine for transmutation to any person living, unless he be a member of the Rosy Cross.’” To this document is appended the philosophic seal of the society, representing a man standing in a triangle, enclosed in a square, and surrounded by a circle. At the head and feet of the man are various cabalistic signs. The whole resembles some of the diagrams which may be found in the “*Magical Works of Cornelius Agrippa*,” in the chapter treating of the proportions, measures, and harmony of the human body.

293. *Modern English Rosicrucians*.—Mr. Waite further states that a pseudo-society existed in England before the year 1836, because Godfrey Higgins says that “He had joined neither the Templars nor the Rosicrucians.” The present Rosicrucian Society was remodelled about thirty years ago. A previous initiation into Masonry is an indispensable qualification of candidates: “the officers of the society shall consist of three Magi, a Master-General, a Treasurer-General, a Secretary-General, and seven Ancients. There is also an Organist, a Torch-bearer, a Herald, a Guardian of the Temple, and a Medallist. The members are to meet four times a year, and dine together once a year. Every novice on admission shall adopt a Latin motto, to be appended to his signature in all communications with the Order. The jewel of the Supreme Magus is an ebony cross, with golden roses at its extremities, and the jewel of the Rosie Cross in the centre. It is surmounted by a crown of gold for the Supreme





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# BOOK IX

*ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIETIES*









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Ishmaelites in India, under the name of Borahs, was known before the existence of the Thugs as an organised sect had been detected. Now the Thugs in the Ramasee, or cant of the Thugs, always call themselves Borahs, which they do probably for the purpose of disguising their real pursuit; for there is a sect, numerous in Hindustan, known by the name of Bohras, and whose members are chiefly peaceful traders. Some sect of Thugs call themselves *Aulæ*.

296. *Practices and Worship of Thugs*. — One common mode of decoying young men having valuables upon them is to place a young and handsome woman by the wayside, and apparently in great grief, who by some pretended tale of misfortune draws him into the jungle, where the gang are lying in ambush, and on his appearance strangle him. The gang consists of from ten to fifty members; and they will follow or accompany the marked-out victim for days, nor attempt his murder until an opportunity offering every chance of success presents itself. After every murder they perform a religious ceremony called *tupounee*; and the division of the spoil is regulated by old-established laws—the man that threw the handkerchief, or *roomal*, gets the largest share; the man that held the hands, called the *shumseea*, the next largest proportion, and so on. In some gangs their property is held in common. Their crimes are committed in honour of Káli, who hates our race, and to whom the death of man is a pleasing sacrifice.

Káli (derived from Kala=Time), or Bhowany—for she is equally well known by both names—was, according to the Indian legend, born of the burning eye which Shiva, one of the persons of the Brahmin trinity, has on his forehead, whence she issued, like the Greek Minerva out of the skull of Jupiter, a perfect and full-grown being. She represents the Evil Spirit, delights in human blood, presides over plague and pestilence, and directs the storm and hurricane, and ever aims at destruction. She is represented under the most frightful effigy the Indian mind could conceive; her face is azure, streaked with yellow; her glance is ferocious; she wears her dishevelled and bristly hair displayed like the peacock's tail, and braided with green serpents. Round her neck she wears a collar, descending almost to her knees, composed of golden skulls. Her purple lips seem streaming with blood; her tusk-like teeth descend over her lower lip; she has eight or ten arms, each hand holding some murderous weapon, and sometimes a human head dripping with gore. With one foot she stands on a human corpse. She has her



temples, in which the people sacrifice cocks and bullocks to her; but her priests are the Thugs, the "Sons of Death," who quench the never-ending thirst of this divine vampire. An engraving, slightly differing in some of the above details, may be seen in the first volume of the "Asiatic Researches," p. 265.

297. *Traditions.*—Like all similar societies, the Thugs have their traditions. According to them, Káli in the beginning determined to destroy the whole human race, with the exception, however, of her faithful adorers and followers. These, taught by her, slew all men that fell into their power. The victims at first were killed by the sword, and so great was the destruction her worshippers wrought, that the whole human race would have been extinguished, had not Vishnu, the Preserver, interfered, by causing the blood thus shed to bring forth new living beings, so that the destructive action of Káli was counteracted. It was then this goddess, to nullify the good intention of Vishnu, forbade her followers to kill any more with the sword, but commanded them to resort to strangulation. With her own hands she made a human figure of clay, and animated it with her breath. She then taught her worshippers how to kill without shedding blood. She also promised them that she would always bury the bodies of their victims, and destroy all traces of them. She further endowed her chosen disciples with superior courage and cunning, so as always to ensure them the victory over those they should attack. And she kept her promise. But in the course of time corrupt manners crept in even among the Thugs, and one of them, being curious to see what Káli did with the dead bodies, watched her as she was about to remove the corpse of a traveller he had slain. Goddesses, however, cannot thus be watched on the sly. Bhowany saw the peeper, and stepping forth, thus addressed him: "Thou hast now beheld the awful countenance of a goddess, which none can behold and live. But I shall spare thy days, though as a punishment of thy crime I shall not protect thee as I have done hitherto, and the punishment will extend to all thy brethren. The corpses of those you kill will no longer be buried or concealed by me; you yourselves will be obliged to take the necessary measures for that purpose, nor will you always be successful, though I leave you the *kussee*, or sacred pickaxe, to dig the graves; sometimes you will fall under the profane laws of the world, which will be your eternal punishment. Nothing will remain to you but the superior intelligence and skill I have given



you, and henceforth I shall direct you by auguries only, which you must diligently consult." Hence their superstitious belief in omens. They study divination by birds and jackals, and by throwing the hatchet, and as it falls so they take their route. Any animal crossing the road from left to right, on their first setting out, is considered a bad omen, and the expedition consequently is given up for that day. The first murder on an expedition is called *sonoka*; the leader gives the *jhirnee*, or sign for strangling; the place of burial is called *beyl*; the victim to be strangled is called *bisul* if the operation presents difficulties; if easy, he is called *coosul*; a pair of victims are distinguished by the name of *bhitree*. *Bungoos* are river Thugs, passing up and down the Ganges, pretending to be going to or coming from holy places. They inveigle people on board their boats, and then strangle them, and throw them through holes, purposely made in the sides of the boats, into the river, after having broken the spines of their victims to prevent their recovering. This class of Thugs at one time numbered between two and three hundred members.

298. *Initiation*.—To be admitted into this horrible sect required a long and severe novitiate, during which the aspirant had to give the most convincing proofs of his fitness for admission. This having once been decided on, he was conducted by his sponsor to the mystical baptism, and clothed in white garments, and his brow crowned with flowers. The preparatory rite being performed, the sponsor presented him to the *guruhù*, or spiritual head of the sect, who, in his turn, introduced him into a room set apart for such ceremonies, where the *Hye-mader*, or chiefs of the various gangs, awaited him. Being asked whether they will receive the candidate into the Order, and having answered in the affirmative, he and the *guruhù* are led out into the open air, where the chiefs place themselves in a circle around the two, and kneel down to pray. Then the *guruhù* rises, and lifting up his hands to heaven, says: "O Bhowany! Mother of the world!" (this appellation seems very inappropriate, since she is a destroyer), whose worshippers we are, receive this Thy new servant; grant him Thy protection, and to us an omen, which assures us of Thy consent." They remain in this position until a passing bird, quadruped, or even mere cloud, has given them this assurance; whereupon they return to the chamber, where the neophyte is invited to partake of a banquet spread out for the occasion, after which the ceremony is over. The newly-admitted member then takes the appellation of *Sahib-*





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they should at once enter paradise. The only favour they asked was to be strangled or hanged; they have an intense horror of the sword and the shedding of blood; as they killed by the cord, so they wished to die by it.

299. *Suppression*.—When the existence of the society was first discovered, many would not believe in it; yet in course of time the proofs became so convincing that it could no longer be ignored, and the British Government took decided measures to suppress the Thugs. A Thuggee school of industry in connection with the Lahore gaol was established, but closed again about 1882, the prisoners being allowed their freedom under ticket-of-leave. The crimes some of them had committed, indeed, almost exceed belief. One Thug, who was hanged at Lucknow in 1825, was legally convicted of having strangled six hundred persons. Another, an octogenarian, confessed to nine hundred and ninety-nine murders, and declared that respect for the profession alone had prevented him from making it a full thousand, because a round number was considered among them rather vulgar. But in spite of vigorous measures on the part of Great Britain—there is a regular government department in India for the suppression of Thuggism—the sect could not be entirely destroyed; it is a religious order, and as such has a vitality greater than that of political or merely criminal associations. It was still in existence but a few years ago, and no doubt has its adherents even now, though the modern Thugs resort to drugging and poisoning, instead of strangling. It always had protectors in some of the native princes, who shared their booty, and such may now be the case. The society has a temple at Mirzapore, on the Ganges.

A Thug, who during the Indian rebellion turned informer, confessed to having strangled three women, besides, perhaps, one hundred men. Yet this fellow was most pleasing and amiable in appearance and manners; but, when relating his deeds of blood, he would speak of them with all the enthusiasm of an old warrior remembering heroic feats, and all the instincts of the tiger seemed to reawaken in him. In spite of this, however, he caused some two hundred of his old companions to be apprehended by our government.

When the Prince of Wales visited the portion of Lahore gaol allotted to the Thugs, a hoary old criminal, named Soba Singh, admitted with a sort of pride that he had strangled thirty-six persons. Two of the prisoners showed His Royal Highness how Thuggee was performed.

300. *Recent Instance of Thuggism*.—Sharfu, *alias* Sharif-



ad-din, was hanged in the Punjab on January 6, 1882. He had become a Thug about the year 1867, and from that date to 1879 he lived by poisoning travellers. He pleaded guilty to ninety-six charges. The Punjab police published his biography, with notes, to assist officers in arresting the members of the gang who were then known to be at large.



## THE CHAUFFEURS, OR BURNERS

301. *Origin and Organisation of Society.*—The *Chauffeurs* or Burners formed a secret society formerly existing in France, and only extinguished at the end of the last century. Its members subsisted by rapine and murder. According to the slender notices we have of this society, it arose at the time of the religious wars which devastated France during the days of Henry III. and IV. and Catherine of Medici; and as the writers who searched into its history were Roman Catholics, they charitably assumed the original *Chauffeurs* to have been the defeated Huguenots, who took to this brigand life to avenge themselves on their conquerors. But the fact that the religious ceremonies of the society included the celebration of a kind of mass, strongly militates against this assumption of their origin. It is more probable that, like similar fraternities formed in lawless times, it consisted of men dissatisfied with their lot, ordinary criminals, and victims of want or injustice.

The *Chauffeurs* constituted a compact body, governed by a single head. They had their own religion, and a code of civil and criminal laws, which, though only handed down orally, was none the less observed and respected. It received into its fraternity all who chose to claim admission, but preferred to enrol such as had already distinguished themselves by criminal deeds. The members were divided into three degrees; the spies, though affiliated, did not properly form part of the society. The initiated were again subdivided into *decuriæ*, each with its *guapo* or head.

Though, as we have said, any one could be initiated, yet the society, like that of the Jesuits, preferred educating and bringing up its members. Whole families belonged to the fraternity, and the children were early taught how to act as spies, commit small thefts and similar crimes, which were rewarded more or less liberally, as they were executed with more or less daring or adroitness. Want





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old book, took a stick, which he sprinkled with holy water, and after having placed it into the hands of the two chief witnesses, who held it up between them, he invited the bridegroom to leap over it, while the bride stood on the other side awaiting him. She received him in her arms, and held him up for a few moments before setting him down on the ground. The bride then went in front of the stick, and took her leap over it into the bridegroom's arms, whose pride it was to hold her up in the air as long as possible, before letting her down. Auguries were drawn of the future felicity and fecundity of the marriage from the length of time the bride had been able to hold up her spouse, whilst both seated themselves on the stick, and the priest put on the bride's finger the wedding-ring. The navvies' ceremony therefore of "jumping over the broomstick" is no new invention.

Divorces were granted not only for proved or suspected infidelity, but also on account of incompatibility of temper—which proves the Chauffeurs to have been, in this respect at least, very sensible people—after the priest had tried every means to bring about a reconciliation. The divorce was pronounced in public, and its principal feature was the breaking of the stick on which the pair had been married over the wife's head. After that, each was at liberty to marry again.

303. *The Grand Master*.—The sect was spread over a great part of North-western France; made use of a peculiar patois, understood by the initiated only; and had its signs, grips, and passwords like all other secret societies. It comprised many thousand members. Its existence and history first became publicly known through the judicial proceedings taken against it by the courts of Chartres during the last decade of the preceding century. Many mysterious robberies, fires, and murders were then brought home to the Chauffeurs. Its Grand Master at the time was Francis the Fair, so called on account of his singular personal beauty. Before his initiation he had been imprisoned for robbery with violence, but managed to escape; the Order sought him out and enrolled him amongst its members, and at the death of their chief, John the Tiler, unanimously elected him in his place. Taken prisoner at the above-mentioned period, he again found means to give his gaolers at Chartres the slip—probably with their connivance—and was not heard of again. A rumour was indeed current at the time that he had joined the *Chouans*, and eventually perished, a



victim to his debaucheries. Some hundreds of Chauffeurs were executed at Chartres; but the mass of them made their escape and swelled the ranks of the above-named *Chouans*.

It was chiefly during the Reign of Terror that the Chauffeurs committed their greatest ravages. At night large bands of them invaded isolated houses and the castles of the nobility, robbing the rich and poor alike. During the day children and old women, under various disguises and pretences, penetrated into the localities where property worth carrying off might be expected to exist, and on their reports the society laid its plans. Sometimes, disguised as national guards, they demanded and obtained admission in the name of the law. If they met with resistance they employed violence; if not, they contented themselves with robbery. But sometimes they suspected that the inmates of the dwelling they had invaded concealed valuables; in that case they would tie their hands behind their backs, and casting them on the ground apply fire to their feet, at the same time cutting them open with their daggers or knives—whence the name *chaffeurs*, “burners”—until they revealed the hiding-places of their treasures, or died in frightful agony. Such as did not die were generally crippled for life.

304. *Discovery of the Society*.—A young man who had suffered in this fashion from some of the members of the society, determined to be revenged on them, by betraying them into the hands of justice. He revealed his plan to the authorities of Chartres, and then set about its execution. In broad daylight, in the market-place of Chartres, he picked the pocket of a gendarme. The gendarme, having his instructions, of course saw nothing, but a Chauffeur, some of whom were always prowling about, noticed the apparently daring deed, and reported it to his fellows and to his chief. That so clever and bold a thief should not belong to the brotherhood seemed unnatural; very soon therefore he was sought out, and very advantageous offers were made to him if he would join them. At first he seemed disinclined to do so, but eventually yielded, and then showed all the zeal usual with neophytes. He attended all the meetings of the society, and speedily made himself acquainted with all their secrets, their signs, passwords, modes of action, hiding-places, &c. Their safest retreat and great dépôt, where the booty was stored, was a wild wood in the neighbourhood of Chartres. When the false brother had made these discoveries, and had also ascertained a day when nearly all the members of the



society would be assembled on the spot for planning an expedition, he managed to evade their vigilance, hastened to Chartres, and gave the necessary information to the authorities, who had held a large number of men in readiness in the expectation of this chance. These were at once despatched to the locality indicated by the guide, the wood was surrounded, and the Chauffeurs being taken unawares, either perished fighting or were taken prisoners. This was in 1799. Some of the Chauffeurs managed to escape, and under the leadership of Schinderhannes (John the Flayer), continued their criminal practices on either side of the Rhine, until the band was seized in 1803, and Schinderhannes and many of his followers were executed at Mayence, from which time the Chauffeurs were no more heard of.

305. *Death of an old Chauffeur.*—The French papers in November 1883 reported the death, near Cannes, of Yves Conédie, at the age of 105, one of the ancient leaders of the Chauffeurs. He had spent the latter part of his life in “respectable retirement.” He had started on his adventurous career at the period of the wars of La Vendée; later on, on arriving at Chartres, in quest of his wife, who had fled from him, taking with her all the money she could lay hands on, he joined a band of Chauffeurs. Having discovered his wife’s retreat, it is recorded that he flayed her alive, and the leader of the band to which he belonged being executed, he assumed his place, and carried off a Government commissary who had been instrumental in causing the brigand chief to be guillotined, keeping him as a hostage until a heavy price was paid for his ransom.





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destroyed, he left the free-lances to shift for themselves, which they did in their fashion, by returning to their former occupation of brigandage. Now, although during the much-vaunted reign of Ferdinand the Catholic, as lying and servile writers have called him, and Isabella, who was too much under the influence of a set of demons in priestly garb, and hence did all she could to increase the power of the Inquisition, nearly two millions of subjects—Moors and Jews—were driven from the realm, yet a great many remained who belonged to the one or the other race, and had, in order to be allowed to stay in their native country, adopted the Christian faith. Yet with such contempt were they looked upon by the genuine Spaniards, that they never spoke of them but as *marranos* (hogs), though many of them were the heads of, or belonged to, rich and influential families. The king and his Satanic crew of inquisitors were ever anxious to convict such persons of having relapsed into heresy, in order to burn them at the stake and confiscate their property. The brigands, well aware of this, selected the houses of the *marranos* for the scenes of their operations; and as long as a good share of the booty passed into the hands of priests, inquisitors, and the royal exchequer, Justice winked at the proceedings. But when the brigands grew tired of these heavy exactions, and refused to pay tribute, Justice suddenly woke up and resolved on exterminating the brigands, who snatched away spoil which legitimately belonged to the king and Inquisition, as the reward of their virtue in rigorously putting down heresy. It was then—when gendarmes and soldiers were sent out in all directions to catch or disperse the bands of brigands that infested the country—that these bands, which had hitherto acted independently of each other, determined for their greater safety to unite and form one large secret society. It was thus the *Garduna* arose, which soon provided itself with the whole apparatus of secret signs, passwords, initiatory ceremonies, and all other stage “property” necessary in such cases. Their connection with the Holy Inquisition was not severed thereby, but established on a business-like footing, though of course it remained secret—a sort of sleeping partnership. With such high protection at Court and in the Church, it is not surprising that the association soon counted its thousands of members, who actually made Seville their headquarters, where all great plundering, burning, and murdering expeditions were planned and prepared.

307. *Organisation*.—The society had nine degrees, arranged



in three classes. To the inferior classes belonged the novices or *Chivatos* (goats), who performed the menial duties, acted as explorers and spies, or carried the booty. When on the watch, during any operation of their superiors, they imitated, in case of danger, the cry of an animal. At night they imitated that of a cricket, owl, frog, or cat. In the daytime they barked like dogs. The *Coberteras* (covers), abandoned women, who insinuated themselves into private houses to spy out opportunities for stealing, or acted as decoy-ducks, by alluring men into retired places, where they were set upon, robbed, and frequently murdered by the brigands. For the latter purpose, however, the *Garduna* generally employed young and handsome women, who were called *Serenas* (syrens), and usually were the mistresses of leading members. Lastly, the *Fuelles* (bellows), or spies, chiefly old men of what is called venerable appearance—whatever that may mean—sanctimonious in carriage, unctuous in speech, haunting churches, in fact, saints. These not only disposed of the booty already obtained, but by their insinuating manners and reputation for piety wormed themselves into the secrets of families, which were afterwards exploited for the benefit of the band. They also acted as familiars of the Inquisition. In the next class were the *Floreadores* (athletes), men stained with every vice, chiefly discharged or escaped convicts from the galleys, or branded by the hand of the executioner, whose office consisted in attacking and robbing travellers on the high-road. Then came the proud *Ponteadores* (pinkers, *i.e.*, bullies, expert swordsmen), sure to kill their man. Above these were the *Guapos* (heads, chiefs), also experienced duellists, and generally appointed to lead some important enterprise. The highest class embraced the *Magistri*, or priests, who conducted the initiations, preserved the laws, usages, and traditions of the society. The *Capatazes* (commanders), who resided in the different provinces through which the *Garduna* was spread, represented the *Hermano Mayor* or Grand Master, who exercised arbitrary and absolute power over the whole society, and ruled the members with a rod of iron. He often was an important personage at Court. Strange that men, who will not submit to legitimate authority, yet will bow to and be tyrannised over by a creature of their own setting up! The Thugs, Assassins, Chauffeurs, and all similar lawless societies, surrendered their will to that of one man in blind and slavish fear; but perhaps this is the only condition on which such societies can exist.



308. *Spirit of the Society*.—The Thugs or Assassins killed to rob, but the Garduna, having learnt its business, so to speak, in a more diabolical school, that of the Holy Inquisition, considered itself bound to perform any kind of crime that promised a chance of gain. The priests had drawn up a regular tariff, at which any number of members of the society could be hired to do any deed of darkness. Robbery, murder, mutilation, false evidence, falsification of documents, the carrying off of a lady, getting your enemy taken on board a ship and sold as a slave in a foreign colony—all these could be had “to order;” and the members of the Garduna were exceedingly conscientious and prompt in carrying out such pleasant commissions. One-half of the price paid for such services was generally paid on giving the order, and the other half on its completion. The sums thus earned were divided into three parts; one part went into the general fund, the other was kept in hand for running expenses, and the third went to the members who had done the work. That for a considerable period the affairs of the society were in a very flourishing state, is proved by the fact that they were able to keep in their pay at the Court of Madrid persons holding high positions to protect and further the interests of the members. They even had their secret affiliates among judges, magistrates, governors of prisons, and similar officials, whose chief duty lay in facilitating or effecting the escape of any member of the society that might have fallen into the hands of justice.

309. *Signs, Legend, &c.*—It was mentioned above that the Garduna had its signs and passwords of recognition. When a Garduna found himself in the company of strangers, to ascertain if a brother was present, he would as it were accidentally put his right thumb to his left nostril; if a brother was present, he would approach him and whisper the password, in reply to which another password would be given; then, to make quite sure, there would be grips and signs *à la* Freemason, and the two might talk at their ease in a jargon perfectly unintelligible to outsiders on their mutual affairs and interests. Their religious rites—and the Garduna insisted much on being a religious society—were those of the Papal Church, and as that Church is founded on legends innumerable, so the Garduna had *its* legend, which was as follows:—“When the sons of Beelzebub (the Moors) first invaded Spain, the miraculous Madonna of Cordova took refuge in the midst of the Christian camp. But God, to punish the sins of His people, allowed the Moors to





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commit some other similar crime, the Bible was ostensibly referred to for guidance.

310. *Suppression of the Society.*—The laws of the society, like those of nearly all secret societies, were not written down, but transmitted by oral tradition; but the Garduna kept a kind of chronicle in which its acts were briefly recorded. This book, which was deposited in the archives of the tribunals of Seville by Don Manuel de Cuendias, who, with his mountain chasseurs, exterminated the sect, and which book, with other documents, was seized in the house of the Grand Master Francis Cortina in 1821, formed the basis of the indictment of the society before the courts of justice. From this it appeared that the Garduna had its branches in Toledo, Barcelona, Cordova, and many other Spanish towns. It also revealed their close connection with the Holy Inquisition up to the seventeenth century, and it showed that the “orders” given by the holy fathers amounted in 147 years—from 1520 to 1667—to 1986, which had yielded the Garduna nearly 200,000 francs. Of their list of crimes, the carrying off of women, chiefly at the instigation of the holy fathers of the Inquisition, forms about one-third, assassinations form another third, whilst robbery, false testimony, or denunciation, complete the list. The book further was the means of enabling the authorities to arrest many of the members of the society, who were tried without delay, and on the 25th November 1822 the last Grand Master and sixteen of his chief followers expiated their crimes on the scaffold erected in the market-place of Seville, and the Garduna in Europe only survives in the bands of brigands who are yet to be occasionally encountered in the recesses of the Spanish mountains.

311. *Bandits insuring Travellers' Safety.*—These bandits, like the Garduna, continued to keep in every town, and most of the *ventas*, or isolated inns on the high-roads, agents or “insurers,” who, for a certain sum, insured travellers against the attacks or exactions of other brigands. In 1823 every traveller who wished to avoid trouble on the journey from Madrid to Cadiz had only to travel in one of the waggons of Pedro Ruiz; the fare was three times that of the stage coach, but the bandits never attacked the waggons of Ruiz. At Merida, in Estremadura, the host of the Three Crosses gave a password for forty francs. Don Manuel de Cuendias, the editor of Féreal's “History of the Inquisition,” relates in that work that he, in 1822, paid Father Alexis forty francs for the password, *Vade retro*, which, on his arrival at the “Confes-



sional," the place where a traveller might be killed without even seeing his murderers, turned four brigands, who made their appearance, into four peasants more inoffensive than lambs.

The Garduna was reorganised in South America, where it existed in 1846, in Brazil, Peru, the Argentine Republic, and Mexico, and where for a few dollars a hired assassin will rid you of an enemy.



## THE CAMORRA

312. *Origin of the Camorra.*—This society, probably the most pernicious association which has ever existed in Europe, was, or is—for we have no proofs that it has ceased to exist—an association of blacklegs, thieves, extortioners, rogues and villains of every kind, infesting Naples and the Neapolitan territory. The origin of the name is involved in doubt, but most probably it is simply a Spanish importation; for the word *camorra* exists in that language, meaning quarrel, dispute, and a *camorrista* is a quarrelsome, cantankerous person, and as the word was not known in Italy before the Spanish usurpation, we may reasonably assume that the word and the thing were introduced into Naples by the Spaniards, especially as we know from old Spanish authors that associations like the Italian Camorra existed in Spain long before the latter appeared in Italy. To quote but one instance: In the account of what happened to Sancho Panza on the island of Barataria, we are told that on going his rounds one night he met two men fighting; on inquiring the cause of the quarrel, it appeared that one of the combatants had won a large sum of money at a gambling-house, that the other, who had been looking on, and given judgment for him in more than one doubtful case, “though he could not well tell how to do it in conscience,” had claimed from the winner a gratuity of eight reals, but the latter would only give four, and hence the quarrel. To make such claims always was the practice of the Neapolitan gaming-house Camorrista. The enforced gratuity was in Spain called the *barato*; in Naples, *barattolo*.

History says nothing as to the origin of the Camorra; tradition goes no further back than the year 1820; let us see what is known of its organisation.

313. *Different kinds of Camorra.*—There is the “elegant” Camorra, the swell mob of the society, who levy taxes on gamblers, as already mentioned; the Camorra, which extorts





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*otto di sgarro*. He underwent a noviciate of three to six years, during which he had to bear all the charges of the association without sharing in its benefits. He generally belonged to a Camorrista, who assigned to him all the hardest tasks, occasionally giving him a handful of coppers. He was always chosen when blood had to be spilt. When a blow had to be struck, the *picciotti* were eager to deliver it in the hope of advancement. The one chosen by lot sometimes incurred six to twenty years on the galleys, but he became a Camorrista. All these murders were committed, not for the sake of lucre, but for that of honour; for the Neapolitan conscience bowed down before the knife, as more civilised countries still do before the sword.

315. *Ceremony of Reception*.—On the reception of a *picciotto* into the degree of Camorrista, the sectaries assembled around a table, on which were placed a dagger, a loaded pistol, a glass of water or wine, supposed to be poisoned, and a lancet. The *picciotto* was introduced, accompanied by a barber, who opened one of the candidate's veins. The latter was then, in some circles, called a *tamurro*. He dipped his hand in his blood, and extending it towards the Camorristi, he swore for ever to keep the secrets of the society, and faithfully to carry out its orders. He then took hold of the dagger and planted it firmly in the table, cocked the pistol, and brought the glass to his mouth to indicate that he was ready, at a sign from the master, to kill himself; but the latter stopped him, and bade him kneel down before the dagger. He then placed his right hand on the head of the candidate, and with the left he fired off the pistol into the air, and shattered the glass containing the supposed poisoned liquor on the ground. He then drew the dagger from the table, presented it to the new companion, and embraced him, which example was followed by all the others. The *tamurro*, henceforth a Camorrista, became entitled to all the rights, benefits, and privileges of the society. His election was announced to all the sections. But this ridiculous ceremony was not always observed. Sometimes the candidate only swore fidelity to the society over two crossed daggers. The reception was generally followed by a banquet in the country, or in the prison itself if the reception took place among prisoners.

316. *Centres*.—The Camorristi were divided into centres. There were twelve at Naples, and every centre was divided into *paranze* or sub-centres, each one of which acted independently of the others and on its own account, though



during a certain period all the centres, every one of which had its chief, acknowledged the chief of the Vicaria centre as their supreme head. (The Vicaria was originally the Castle Capuano, which became afterwards the palace of the Spanish Viceroy, hence the change of name, and eventually the Courts of Law.) The last of these supreme heads was one Aniello Ausiello, who eventually disappeared and was never apprehended by the police. The chief of every centre was chosen by the members; he could take no important step without consulting them. But all the earnings of the centre were paid to him, which invested him with considerable power, for he distributed the Camorra—for this word designates not only the society, but also the common fund. The chief was allowed a *contarulo* or accountant, a *capo carusiello* or cashier, and a secretary. Among the other employés of the Camorra were a *capo stanze* or caterer, and a *chiamatore*, literally, the caller, because he called the prisoners wanted in the prison parlour. The division of the *barattolo* (312) took place every Sunday, the chief always retaining for himself the lion's share.

317. *Cant Terms of the Camorra*.—The chief is called *masto*, or *sì masto*, master, or Sir master. When a companion, as all the affiliated are styled, meets one of his chiefs in the street, he raises his hand to his cap, and says, “*Masto, volete niente?*” Master, do you want anything? A companion is simply addressed as *sì*, an abbreviation of *signore*. An *ubbidienza*, obedience, means an order. *Freddare*, to make cold, means to kill; the *dormente*, the sleeper, the dead body. The man who is robbed is called *l'agnello*, the lamb; *soggetto*, subject, or *mico*. The stolen object is called the *morto*, or *ruffo*; the fence, the *graffo*. These latter words are pure slang. The knife is called *martino*, *punta* (point), or *miseriordia*; when quite flat and double-edged, a *sfarziglia*. A gun is a *bocca* (mouth), *tdfa*, or *buonbas*; a revolver, a *tictac*, or *bo-botta*; the patrol are *gatti neri*, or *sorci* (black cats or mice). The commissary of police is nicknamed *capo lasagna* (*lasagne* are a kind of long and flat macaroni); the *lasagnaro* (dealer in *lasagne*) means a sergeant of police, and a simple policeman is an *asparago* (asparagus); the *palo* (Pole) is a spy; the *serpentina* means a piaster. When a *picciotto* took upon himself the crime of another, *l'acollava*, he embraced him. Camorristi belonging to the lowest class of the people are called *guappi* (meaning unknown); those who are pickpockets, and to facilitate their sleight of hand have lengthened the fore-finger by violent stretching, or by a



machine made for the purpose, till it is of the same length as the middle finger, are curiously enough called *Chirurgi*.

318. *Unwritten Code of the Camorra*.—It is not probable that the Camorristi ever had a written code of laws; but they had an orally-transmitted code, containing twenty-four articles. It would extend this book too much were we to give them all: we select a few. Article 2 declares that no member of the police is ever to be admitted; but article 3 allows a Camorrista to join the force in order to keep his brethren informed of anything the authorities may be planning against them; article 5 stipulates that offences against the society are to be tried by the Grand Master and six *Camorristi proprietari* (that is, Camorristi who have others under them); by article 8 any member who has betrayed his oath of secrecy is condemned to death; articles 9 and 10 award the same punishment for omissions or commissions of acts endangering the security of the society. By article 15 the lowest Camorrista may kill any member who has committed any act injurious to the society, but he must do so in the presence of two companions, who must witness to the facts. Article 16 condemns any one who attempts to become personally acquainted with the Grand Master to death. By article 20, Camorristi, who have reached the age of fifty to sixty years, or who have been injured in the cause, are entitled to temporary or permanent support; their widows also in certain cases receive pensions. Article 24 secures to prisoners gifts in money, arms, or whatever they may be in need of, without any restriction.

It was also an unwritten law among Camorristi to mutually assist one another if unlucky at play; an offence committed against a member of the *Camorra elegante* was an offence committed against all, and any one of them could avenge it; these latter gentry also generally dressed alike, wore their hats in the same way, and carried their walking-sticks horizontally suspended between two fingers of the right hand. Stealing was allowed, but the objects stolen must be of some value, so as not to bring disgrace on the Camorra!

319. *The Camorra in the Prisons*.—We have already mentioned that the Camorra was ubiquitous, that, in the time of the Bourbons, it invaded the prisons even. A prisoner on his arrival was accosted by a Camorrista, who asked for money for the lamp of the Madonna. On all the prisoner ate, drank, smoked, on any money he received from friends, on necessities and superfluities, on justice and privileges, the Camorra





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on the lower classes. A beggar could not occupy his accustomed post without feeing the Camorrista. In the low taverns found in many parts of Naples, where ragged beggars would sit all day, nay, all night long gambling, the Camorrista would stand by and levy his tax on every game. By what right did he claim it? No one could tell: suffice it to say, no one disputed it. The tax on gamblers was one-tenth of the winnings. A rich man, known to be about to bid for a house sold by auction, would be waited on by a Camorrista and informed that unless he paid a certain sum to the society the latter would outbid him; of course he had to yield. From houses of ill-fame the Camorra drew a large revenue, as also from smuggling. The police being very badly organised under the old *régime*, leading merchants were glad to engage the Camorra to superintend the loading and unloading of merchandise; Camorristi were found at every town-gate, the offices of the *octroi*, the custom-house, the railway station, taxing coachmen and porters; nurserymen bringing fruit into the town were mulcted in one *sou* the basket. The Camorristi also kept illegal lottery offices: the profits must have been large, for a woman who was apprehended was shown to have gained one thousand francs a week. In fact, the Camorra speculated on every weakness and vice of mankind. Under the Bourbons it even infected the army; but when it attempted to corrupt the Italian army, such members as were detected were publicly exposed with a placard suspended from their necks, bearing the henceforth infamous word—Camorrista.

321. *Social Causes of the Camorra*.—These must be looked for in the abject state of slavery in which the Neapolitan people were kept by the Bourbon dynasty, which protected common malefactors to secure their loyalty, whilst the intelligence of the country, aiming at liberal institutions, was persecuted with the utmost malignity. The clergy bravely helped the king to keep the people in a condition of the grossest ignorance and superstition. Hence no vigorous association for good could arise against evil; fear kept down the few who stood at a higher moral level, hence the power of the well-organised and flourishing Camorra, just as we find, at the present day, Chinese beggars forming powerful guilds and exacting donations from the shopkeepers in every city of the empire. The Camorra had never been a political society before 1848, therefore government did not interfere with it; nay, sometimes they were useful to the police, and were, in fact, taken into their service, every one of the twelve



heads of sections receiving a hundred ducats (425 francs) a month from the secret police fund, whilst the higher employés of the force received one-third of the monthly proceeds of the swindling transactions of the society. Sometimes the latter would detect crimes which the police could not discover.

322. *The Political Camorra*.—After 1848 the conspirators against the government, unable to stir up the people, endeavoured to win over the Camorristi, but all they gained by this injudicious step was to be heavily blackmailed by them. Some of them, having attempted honestly to earn their money, and fallen into the hands of the police, were sent to prison. Then the sect became political. In June 1860 Francis II. was compelled to grant a constitution; the prisons were opened, and a crowd of Camorristi came forth. Their first act was to attack the commissaries of police, to burn their papers, and beat the gendarmes to death with cudgels. The *Sanfedisti* or the rabble in favour of the king and divine right, threatened to pillage the town—they had already hired store-rooms to deposit their booty. Don Liborio, the new Prefect of Police, threw himself into the arms of the Camorristi to save Naples from pillage—and they prevented it. They were formed into a civic guard, which kept order in the town until the arrival of Garibaldi. But they remained Camorristi at heart. They largely engaged in smuggling, and forcibly took the *octroi* of the town gates, so that government on a certain day received at all the gates together but twenty-five *sous*. This led to vigorous measures. Ninety Camorristi were arrested in one night; the next day the *octroi* yielded 3400 francs. On the establishment of the regular monarchy, Silvio Spaventa, a patriot of the year 1848, became Minister of Police; one of his first measures was to deal with the Camorra. He had not long to wait for an infraction of discipline on their part; in one night he caused more than one hundred Camorristi to be arrested; at the same time he abolished the civic guard, replacing it by a guard of public security, organised beforehand.

323. *Attempted Suppression of the Camorra*.—But in spite of the energetic measures of Signor Spaventa, the Camorra was not destroyed; it existed not in a group of men only, it was deeply rooted in the morals of the country. Though the chiefs were removed, the sect retained its organisation under other chiefs. Such Camorristi as had been sent to prison after a time regained their liberty, and resumed their



malpractices; they were transported to various islands in the Mediterranean, whence many of them made their escape, returned to Naples, and raised tumults in the streets, crying, "Death to Spaventa!" They became powerful at elections, and with their cudgels directed the religion and politics of the electors. Peaceful citizens were nightly assaulted and robbed in the streets of Naples; burglaries became quite common. This state of things lasted till 1862. The Southern States had been declared in a state of siege, and General La Marmora and the Questor Aveta determined to take this opportunity of exterminating the Camorra. In September 1862 three hundred of the most notorious Camorristi were in prison; some of them were sent to the cellular prison, the Murate, at Florence; others were shut up in the islands of Tremiti. Yet the Camorra seems irrepressible. Occasionally there would be an apparent lull in its activity, to break out again with renewed vigour. It would be tedious to relate its doings from year to year, for it continued to flourish when the new kingdom of Italy was firmly established: a few episodes may suffice.

324. *Renewed Measures against the Camorra.*—In September 1877 the government made another determined effort to suppress the Camorra. The market of St. Anna della Paluda was the spot chosen for the attack. No peasant could bring and sell there his vegetables and fruit before having paid a tax to the Camorristi. Besides the guards in plain clothes, the market had been surrounded early in the morning by police and carabinieri, while a tolerably strong force of Bersaglieri was in attendance close at hand. On a sudden every gate and way of exit was closed; flight or resistance was out of the question, and fifty-seven of the most notorious of the Order were seized, bound together by a long rope, and carried off to the nearest police station, where they were soon committed and sent off to prison in parties of ten. There was the *picciotto* without dress and in his shirt sleeves, and the full-blown Camorrista, dressed as a gentleman, with his fingers covered with rings, and a gold chain round his neck. This *razzia* was followed a few days after by another in the fish market, when fifty-nine of the worst characters were caught. Yet so tenacious are the Camorristi of their pretended rights, that two days after the descent on the fruit market some of them made their appearance and usual demand, which, however, was resisted, and the fellows were arrested. The wives, too, of those whom the police had seized entered the market, alleging that their husbands had





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find that in 1885, under the present Italian Government, the Camorra survives in prisons in the same form and vigour which distinguished it under the Bourbon despots. But what progress or improvement can be expected among the lower classes of Italy as long as a Pope occupies the Vatican, and a German Emperor insults the intelligence of civilised Europe by kneeling to that Pope, who is the representative of an ecclesiastical system which has always fostered and protected brigandage, with its robbery and murder?



## MALA VITA

326. *The Mala Vita*.—The society known by this name seems to be an offshoot of the Camorra, since the highest grade in it is that of *camorrist*, and the second that of *picciotto*; the third was that of *giovannotto*, or novice. The chief of the Camorristi held the title of “Wise Master,” whilst the Camorrist was nicknamed “Uncle.” The society first came prominently before the public in April 1891, when 179 persons were arrested and tried at Bari, in the Neapolitan territory, as members of it. The title of the society, *Mala Vita*, which signifies “Evil Life,” is said to be taken from a novel by Degia Como, which, at the time of its publication, was tremendously popular in Italy. The discovery of the conspiracy was due to the disclosures of nine members of the society who became informers. It appears that admission to the ranks of the organisation was only procurable after numerous preliminaries. A person wishing to become a member had to be introduced by a member to the chief of the society, who would then instruct another associate to institute a rigorous inquiry as to whether or not the applicant was worthy of admission. All these negotiations were conducted in a species of thieves’ slang. There were, as already mentioned, three grades of members, each possessing a separate head, and, to a certain extent, separate accounts.

When the admission of a new associate had been resolved upon, a meeting of the sect in which he was to be enrolled was convened, and the formality of taking a vote upon the question having been gone through, the candidate was led into the place of meeting. An interrogatory and interchange of declarations, conducted in the secret dialect of the body, next ensued. The novitiate was finally sworn in with great mystery. He took the oath with one foot in an open grave, the other being attached to a chain, and swore to abandon father, mother, wife, children, and all that he held dear, in order to work out the objects of the association.



Humility and self-abnegation were also imposed upon the novitiate by the terms of the oath. After the ceremony of initiation, the chief delivered a fantastic harangue, intended to intimidate the new member by impressing him with a due sense of the fearful pains and penalties which would certainly attend any betrayal of the society's secrets or interests. No one was allowed to join the organisation who had been a gendarme, a policeman, or a custom-house officer. The principal object of the society appears to have been brigandage. The booty obtained in all predatory expeditions, and the ransoms derived from the capture of unlucky travellers, were thrown into a common stock, a certain proportion being, however, specially set apart for division among the Camorristi, whose duty it was, within eight days, to divide the remainder among all the members of the organisation, an exceptionally large share being claimed by the chief.

Breaches of the society's rules and disobedience to orders were punished by torture and death, the whole society sitting in judgment, and the executioners being selected by lot. In the event of any person so deputed failing to carry out the society's decree, he had to undergo the same punishment he had been ordered to inflict. The member was obliged to have certain designs tattooed on his body, by which he could at any future time be identified. Some of these designs were extremely curious, representing angels, devils, serpents, dancing women, Garibaldi's portrait, and the Lion of St. Mark.

At the trial, informers explained how, when in prison, they, by order of the Camorristi, conveyed letters or money to other prisoners belonging to the society; or how the decrees of the Camorristi, involving outrages upon prisoners, warders, and others, were communicated to those chosen for their execution. The evidence adduced revealed a thoroughly-organised system of outrage and exaction pursued against innocent persons, and of revenge committed upon such as were suspected of communicating with the police. Severe sentences of imprisonment were passed on most of the accused; but the society evidently continued to exist, for in March 1892, about one hundred and sixty persons, mostly young men between the ages of twenty and thirty, were arrested as members of it. Their chief was a man of sixty, who had spent some twenty-five years in penal servitude on the galleys. His followers were all persons guilty of various crimes, such as robbery, assault, and other acts of violence. They were, of course, sentenced to various terms of imprisonment; but the Mala Vita Society still exists.





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of the Royal troops, holding the King's commission to stamp out the sect, was directly accused in the Italian Chamber of acting in collusion with the Mafia, if, indeed, he was not a Mafiose himself. The stormy discussions which followed led to no result, and the Mafia was left to pursue its course in unhappy Sicily.

328. *Origin of the Mafia.*—The origin of the Mafia must be sought for in the former political conditions of the island. Since the middle of the last century, when Sicily was united with Naples, and with it formed the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the island was under the government, or rather misgovernment, of viceroys. The few years of the First Republic and First Empire of France alone formed an exceptional period, during which the Court of Naples, expelled by Napoleon, took refuge in Sicily, where it was protected by England, which sent an army under Lord Bentinck, and a fleet under Nelson, to ward off the French from the island. There existed at that time in Sicily a numerous class of armed vassals, dependents, and retainers, in the service of the feudal nobility, clergy, and large landowners. The King of Naples, having upon the advice, or rather compulsion, of England granted the Sicilians a constitution, this measure involved the abolition of all feudal rights. The retainers and vassals thus set free being mostly reckless and daring fellows, nearly all turned brigands, whom the Bourbon king had no means of suppressing. He therefore, to restore a little order and security on the island, took the chiefs of these robbers into his service, and organised the bandits into *compagnie d'armi*, or rural gendarmes, who, however, while pretending to prevent robberies and extortion, themselves committed these crimes. They grew very powerful, and daily affiliated new members. The respectable inhabitants, rather than expose themselves to the risks of the vendetta, quietly submitted to the exactions of the society; the lower and uneducated classes began to look on it as a terrible power, superior to that of the government, and ended by considering it an honour, as it certainly was an advantage, to be received among its members. The causes of the continuance of the Mafia may be found in the sulphur mines of Northern Sicily, and in the agricultural conditions of the whole island. Tens of thousands of labourers of both sexes, and of every age, are employed in the mines, and their condition is one of abject poverty, and unremitting, dangerous toil. In the agricultural districts the peasantry are ground down by the "middlemen,"



who rent the estates of the great landowners from these latter, and under-let them in small portions, and at exorbitant rates, to the peasants, who, unable to live on the produce, are driven into crime. The true seat of the Mafia is the neighbourhood of Palermo; no one can go a mile beyond the gates without risk of being robbed or murdered. In September 1892 about one hundred and fifty of these malefactors were arrested at Catania, most of them, on being examined, proving to be old offenders.

The *Mano'fraterna*, another secret association, discovered in Sicily in 1883, was an offshoot of the Mafia, though its members repudiated the idea of being robbers and extortioners; they called themselves the instruments of universal vendetta.

329. *Origin of the term Mafia.*—What is the meaning of the word *Mafia*? and whence comes it? The invention is attributed to Mazzini; it certainly was unknown before 1859 or 1860, the time when that agitator made his appearance in Sicily. It is well known that he had no faith in any class of society except its very dregs, and his having formed the vagabonds and thieves, who then swarmed all over Sicily, into a secret society of his own, seems well borne out by facts. The allegation is that he first formed a secret society called the *Oblonica*, which word was coined by Mazzini from the two Latin words *obelus*, a spit, and *nico*, I beckon, which being joined and contracted became *oblonica*, the word meaning, “I beckon with a spit;” “spit” being taken in the sense of dagger, as no doubt the sect understood it, we should get the sense of I beckon, or threaten with a dagger, which was the usual occupation or practice of the vagabonds enlisted by Mazzini. But within this sect he formed an interior, more deeply initiated, one, the members of which were called *Mafusi*, from *Mafia*, composed of the initials of the five following words:—*Mazzini, autorizza, furti, incendi, avvelenamenti*. Mazzini authorises thefts, arson, poisoning. And the *Mafusi* were accustomed to call these crimes their *pavi*, or bread, since it was by them they lived.

330. *The Mafia in the United States.*—In October 1890 Mr. David Hennessy, chief of police at New Orleans, was assassinated. The subsequent legal inquiry showed the murder to have been the work of the Mafia, which had been introduced into New Orleans about thirty years ago. In May 1890 a band of Italians, residing in that town, surprised another band belonging to another society called the *Stop-*



*paghera* in an ambush, and riddled the entire party with bullets, killing and wounding six persons. The authorities thereupon determined to take extreme measures to end the vendetta, which had already resulted in more than forty murders among Italians and Sicilians in New Orleans. Six persons were arrested and tried, but during the trial all the witnesses were assassinated. The men charged were, however, convicted, but their counsel succeeded in securing an order for a new trial, which was still pending when the chief of the police, Mr. Hennessy, was assassinated. He had thoroughly investigated the doings of the opposing societies, and was in possession of information which, it was thought, must lead to the conviction of the European cut-throats. He had received frequent warnings to beware of assassins, and had for some time travelled with an escort night and day. Nothing happened, however; he, on Sunday, dismissed his guard, believing it to be no longer necessary. On the following Wednesday, at midnight, he left the police headquarters for his home. It was raining and very dark, but, as he had not far to go, Mr. Hennessy determined to walk. As he turned the corner of Basin and Girod Streets, where an electric light threw down its strong rays upon him, a volley of bullets was fired at him from a passage a few feet away. Though severely wounded, Mr. Hennessy turned, drew his pistol, and emptied it in the direction of the dark entrance of the alley. Altogether fully twenty shots were exchanged. A policeman who was standing on the opposite corner ran to assist his chief and was shot in the head. Mr. Hennessy having exhausted the contents of his revolver, fell to the ground from loss of blood, and as he did so, four of his assassins sprang from the alley and ran down the street, while four others emerged a moment later and went off in the opposite direction. In their flight the murderers dropped three guns. They were muskets, sawn off behind the trigger, and with the butts hinged on, so that the guns could fold into the pocket. These are used only by Italian and Sicilian desperadoes. Eleven Sicilians were arrested on suspicion; and from the confession of one of them it appeared that the murder of Mr. Hennessy was determined on at a secret meeting held on the Saturday preceding the day of the assassination; ten members were chosen by lot to do the deed.

In spite of the overwhelming evidence against the accused, the jury, intimidated by threats of assassination by the countrymen of the Italians implicated, found six of them





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## BEGGARS, TRAMPS, AND THIEVES

331. *Languages and Signs*.—The vagabonds included in the above designations occasionally formed themselves into associations which were not strictly secret, but held together by secret languages and signs, adopted for one common object, as is now the case with the Jesuits, and as was done by the Garduna, the bands of Schinderhannes at the end of the last and beginning of the present century, and is done by the more modern brigands and thieves. In the Middle Ages France was infested with a band of itinerant beggars, usually known as *Truands*, whence our word truant. They had their king, a fixed code of laws, and a language peculiar to themselves, constructed probably by some of the debauched youths who, abandoning their scholastic studies, associated with the vagabonds. This language in course of time came to be called *argot*, which *may* be derived from the Greek ἀργος, an idler, lazy fellow, and the *truands* were then known as *argotiers*. Cartouche (born 1693, broken on the wheel in 1721), the famous robber, also formed his band into an association, having a language and laws of their own. In England, beggars' and thieves' slang is known as cant or pedlars' French; tinkers have a language peculiar to themselves, but extensively understood and spoken by most of the confirmed tramps and vagabonds. It is known as "shelta," is pure Celtic, but quite separate from other tongues. In French slang is known as *argot*, in German as *rothwälsch*, in Italian as *gergo*, in Spanish as *Germania*, in Bohemian as *Hantyrka*, in Portuguese as *calaõ*. Circassian thieves and robbers make use of a secret language known as *schakopsé* and *forschipsé*. Among the Asiatics there is a cant language known as *balaïbalan*, formed chiefly of corrupted Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words.

The vagabonds who hang about the Hottentots use a jargon which is called *Cuze-cat*. The vulgar dialect of the Levant is known as *Lingua franca*, or bastard Italian, mixed



with modern Greek, German, Spanish, Turkish, and French. European cant consists largely of Hebrew and gipsy slang, together with terms borrowed—and generally distorted and perverted from their true meaning—from the languages of the countries to which the speakers belong. Cant words usually turn on metaphor and fanciful allusions, and frequently display great ingenuity, wit, nay, sometimes poetical fancy, as when French thieves call the iron bars in their cell windows a “harp.” Certain forms of superstition are common to the vagabonds of the most distant countries, and many of these superstitious beliefs are as curious as they are revolting. Thieves and beggars recognise one another by certain signs, such as placing the fingers so as to form the letter C of the deaf and dumb alphabet, shutting one eye and squinting with the other when looking at a supposed colleague. Tramps on begging expeditions inform their brethren of the results of visits paid to houses or villages by signs chalked on walls or doorposts, or cut in trees, or traced on the snow. The begging fraternity have their patron saint, St. Martin, born about 316, who was at first a soldier, but afterwards became a priest. When a soldier, he passed a beggar standing, with scarcely any clothing on, at the gate of Amiens Cathedral. He immediately drew his sword, and cutting his mantle asunder in the middle, gave one half to the beggar; hence his becoming their patron saint. But such beggars as are, or pass themselves off for, cripples acknowledge St. Giles as their patron.

The fraternity of thieves individually are not fraternal in their intercourse; they prefer working alone, or, at most, in couples. But they have their secret language and signs, of course varying in every country, though foreign terms are occasionally introduced; thus *argot*, the French for slang, is a term by which London thieves designate their own secret language. Some of their expressions are curious: “cat and kitten stealing” is stealing quart and pint pots; “chariot buzzing,” picking pockets in an omnibus; a “diver” is a pickpocket. Why do they call the treadmill “cockchafer”? Whence comes “flummuxed”—sure of a month in prison?

332. *Italian and German Robbers.*—Among associated bands of robbers, the brigands of Italy are best known. The band led by Schinderhannes, mentioned above, existed at the end of the last and beginning of this century on both banks of the Upper Rhine; it was broken up by the execution of their leader and eighteen of his companions in November 1803. A very



large band of robbers about the same date infested the neighbourhood of Aix-la-Chapelle, and were known as the band of Mersen, a small village near Eupen, which they made their headquarters. But they were universally spoken of by the nickname of the goat-riders, because the superstition of the time supposed them to ride on goats—devils in disguise—when engaged in some robbing expedition. Their secret chief was one Kirchhof, surgeon and steward of the monastery of Herzogenrode (?), who about the year 1804 was arrested, tried in the monastery, and died under torture. Of the band, about the same time, fourteen were hanged in Germany and Holland, eighteen died by the guillotine in France; the rest escaped and joined other bands, or were separately captured afterwards. Kirchhof bound his followers by a formal contract to keep their secret firmly, and rather to take it into the grave with them than reveal it from cowardice or treachery. Whoso did so was to be killed with all imaginable tortures. And this was no idle threat. Christopher Pfister, for instance, was, for such alleged betrayal, attacked by his comrade Hannickel, who smashed all his bones, cut off his nose and upper lip, and poured dung-water over him to increase his sufferings. Many similar and even more cruel acts of vengeance might be mentioned. But what else could be expected from such outcasts of society, when educated judges vied with one another in inflicting the most hideous tortures on their prisoners. In 1719 a sacrilegious Jewish band of robbers were, as the criminal Judge Schölin reports, comfortably tortured by each man being tied down on a bench adjoining a stove kept red-hot, compelled to eat excessively salt fish, so as to suffer the greatest torments of thirst, and if he fell asleep, he was to be prodded with pointed iron rods. “This is a good way of getting at the truth,” says the judge complacently.





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they had acquired unexampled influence, they formed in Italy and France, in 1563, several "Congregations," *i.e.*, clandestine meetings held in subterranean chapels and other secret places. The Congregationists had a sectarian organisation, with appropriate catechisms and manuals, which had to be given up before death, wherefore very few copies remain. In the National Library of the Rue Richelieu at Paris there is a MS. entitled *Histoire des Congrégations et Sodautés jésuitiques depuis 1563 jusqu'au temps présent* (1709).

335. *Initiations*.—From this, as well as other works, we gather some of the ceremonies with which aspirants were initiated into the Order. Having in nearly all Roman Catholic countries succeeded in becoming the educators of the young, they were able to mould the youthful mind according to their secret aims. If, then, after a number of years they detected in the pupil a blind and fanatic faith, conjoined with exalted pietism and indomitable courage, they proceeded to initiate him; in the opposite case they excluded him. The proofs lasted twenty-four hours, for which the candidate was prepared by long and severe fasting, which, by prostrating his bodily strength, inflamed his fancy, and just before the trial a powerful drink was administered to him. Then the mystic scene began—diabolical apparitions, evocation of the dead, representations of the flames of hell, skeletons, moving skulls, artificial thunder and lightning, in fact, the whole paraphernalia and apparatus of the ancient mysteries. If the neophyte, who was closely watched, showed fear or terror, he remained for ever in the inferior degree; but if he bore the proof well, he was advanced to a higher grade. There were four degrees. The first consisted of the *Coadjutores Temporales*, who performed the manual labour and merely servile duties of the Order; the second embraced the *Scholastici*, from among whom the teachers of youth were chosen; the third was composed of the *Coadjutores Spirituales*, which title was given to the members when they took the three vows of the Society. The *Professi* formed the fourth and highest grade; they alone were initiated into all the secrets of the Order.

At the initiation into the second degree the same proofs, but on a grander scale, had to be undergone. The candidate, again prepared for them by long fastings, was led with his eyes bandaged into a large cavern, resounding with wild howlings and roarings, which he had to traverse, reciting at the same time prayers specially appointed for that occasion. At the end of the cave he had to crawl through a narrow



opening, and, while doing this, the bandage was taken from his eyes by an unseen hand, and he found himself in a square dungeon, whose floor was covered with a mortuary cloth, on which stood three lamps, shedding a feeble light on the skulls and skeletons ranged around. This was the Cave of Evocation, the Black Chamber, so famous in the annals of the Fathers, and the existence of which has repeatedly been proved by judicial examination before secular courts. Here, giving himself up to prayer, the neophyte passed some time, during which the priests could, without his being aware of it, watch his every movement and gesture. If his behaviour was satisfactory, all at once two brethren, representing arch-angels, presented themselves before him, without his being able to tell whence they had so suddenly started up—a good deal can be done with properly fitted and oiled trap-doors—and observing perfect silence, bound his forehead with a white band soaked with blood, and covered with hieroglyphics. They then hung a small crucifix round his neck, and a small satchel containing relics, or what did duty for them. Finally, they took off all his clothing, which they cast on a pyre in one corner of the cave, and marked his body with numerous crosses, drawn with blood. At this point the hierophant with his assistants entered, and having bound a red cloth round the middle of the candidate's body, the brethren, clothed in blood-stained garments, placed themselves beside him, and drawing their daggers, formed the steel arch over his head. A carpet being then spread on the floor, all knelt down and prayed for about an hour, after which the pyre was secretly set on fire; the further wall of the cave opened, the air resounded with strains, now gay, now lugubrious, and a long procession of spectres, phantoms, angels and demons defiled past the neophyte, like the "supers" in a pantomime. Whilst this farce was going on, the candidate took the following oath:—"In the name of Christ crucified, I swear to burst the bonds that yet unite me to father, mother, brothers, sisters, relations, friends; to the king, magistrates, and any other authority to which I may ever have sworn fealty, obedience, gratitude, or service. I renounce . . . the place of my birth, henceforth to exist in another sphere. I swear to reveal to my new superior, whom I desire to know, what I have done, thought, read, learnt, or discovered, and to observe and watch all that comes under my notice. I swear to yield myself up to my superior, as if I were a corpse, deprived of life and will. I finally swear to flee temptation, and to reveal all I succeed



in discovering, well aware that lightning is not more rapid and ready than the dagger to reach me wherever I may be.” The new member having taken this oath, was then introduced into a neighbouring cell, where he took a bath, and was clothed in garments of new and white linen. He finally repaired with the other brethren to a banquet, where he could with choice food and wine compensate himself for his long abstinence and the horrors and fatigues he had passed through.

336. *Blessing the Dagger.*—Blessing the dagger was a ceremony performed when the society thought it necessary for their interests to assassinate some king, prince, or other important personage. By the side of the Dark Chamber there usually was a small cell, called the “Cell of Meditation.” In its centre arose a small altar, on which was placed a painting covered with a veil, and surrounded by torches and lamps, all of a scarlet colour. Here the brother whom the Order wished to prepare for the deed of blood received his instructions. On a table stood a casket, covered with strange hieroglyphics, and bearing on its lid the representation of the Lamb. On its being opened, it was found to contain a dagger, wrapped up in a linen cloth, which one of the officers of the society took out and presented to the hierophant, who, after kissing and sprinkling it with holy water, handed it to one of the deacons, who attached it like a cross to a rosary, and hanging it round the neck of the alumnus, informed him that he was the Elect of God, and told him what victim to strike. A prayer was then offered up in favour of the success of the enterprise, in the following words:—“And Thou, invincible and terrible God, who didst resolve to inspire our Elect and Thy servant with the project of exterminating N. N., a tyrant and heretic, strengthen him, and render the consecration of our brother perfect by the successful execution of the great Work. Increase, O God, his strength a hundredfold, so that he may accomplish the noble undertaking, and protect him with the powerful and divine armour of Thine Elect and Saints. Pour on his head the daring courage which despises all fear, and fortify his body in danger and in the face of death itself.” After this prayer the veil was withdrawn from the picture on the altar, and the elect beheld the portrait of the Dominican James Clement, surrounded by a host of angels, carrying him on their wings to celestial glory. And the deacon, placing on the head of the chosen brother a crown symbolic of the celestial crown, added: “Deign, O Lord of Hosts, to bestow a propitious





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their property.—VIII. How to induce the children of widows to adopt a life of religious seclusion.—IX. Of the increase of College revenues.—X. Of the private rigour of discipline to be observed by the society.—XI. How “Ours” shall conduct themselves towards those that have been dismissed from the society.—XII. Whom to keep and make much of in the society.—XIII. How to select young people for admission into the society, and how to keep them there.—XIV. Of reserved cases, and reasons for dismissing from the society.—XV. How to behave towards nuns and devout women.—XVI. How to pretend contempt for riches.—XVII. General means for advancing the interests of the society.

339. *Authenticity of “Secreta Monita” Demonstrated.*—The Jesuits deny the authenticity of this work, but they have never been able to disprove the history of its discovery, which is as follows:—

When the society was suppressed by Clement XIV. in 1773, it possessed in the Low Countries, among other property, a college at Ruremonde. Government had appointed a Commission to liquidate the affairs of the Company, and Councillor Zuytgens was specially appointed at Ruremonde to draw up the inventory; but being suspected of having abstracted, in order to favour the Fathers, certain documents, he received a peremptory command to forward all the papers found. Among these the MS. of the *Secreta Monita* was discovered. The proof of this may be seen in the “Protocol of the Transactions of the Committee, appointed in consequence of the Suppression of the Society of Jesus in the Low Countries,” which is deposited in the archives of Brussels. The above MS. was collated, and found to agree with a Latin MS. left by Father Berthier, the last librarian of the Society in Paris, before the Revolution. It also agrees with the edition of the *Monita*, printed at Paderborn in 1661.

340. *Jesuitic Morality.*—And even if these *Monita* were not drawn up by a Jesuit, they yet fully exhibit the actual principles on which, as we know from history, the society has always acted, and that every kind of deception, assassination, regicide, poisoning, seduction, unnatural crimes, spoliation, perjury have ever been practised and approved by them, whenever their doing so could promote their own ends, *ad majorem Dei gloriam!*

When, in 1760, the Jesuits, in consequence of the bankruptcy of Lavalette, a member of the society, were compelled to produce their “Constitutions,” such doctrines as the following were found to be contained in them:—



According to Father Taberna, a Jesuit, "If a judge has received money to give an unjust judgment, *it is probable* that he ought to keep the money; for this is the judgment of fifty-eight Jesuit doctors."

In answer to the question on what occasion a monk may leave off his monk's dress without incurring excommunication, his reply is: "He may leave it off if it is for a purpose that would cause shame; to go, for instance, incognito into places of debauchery."

Emmanuel Sa, another Jesuit teacher: "Promises are not binding if, in making them, you have no intention of keeping them."

"Potest et foemina quæque et mas, pro turpo corporis usu pretium accipere et petere, et qui promisit tenetur solvere."

"Christian children," says Fagundez, "may accuse their parents of heresy, though they know that their parents will be burnt."

One quite recent instance of Jesuit morality may close these quotations. In 1852 the Jesuits of the rue de Sèvres in Paris had determined to build a splendid Gothic chapel on their land. One day money ran short; every expedient had already been tried to raise some, when one of the fathers, the youngest, the most in demand in the noble faubourg, the most popular confessor, proposed a lottery, and himself as the prize. He wrote a hundred tickets, and made it known in a discreet manner that the female penitent who had the winning number should for three days dispose of Father Lefèvre at her discretion. The ladies fought for the tickets, and, in spite of the laughter and sarcasms of the sceptics and heretics, the chapel was completed.

The public history of the Jesuits, revealing a system of turpitude such as has never been equalled, does not enter into the scope of this work; but as our government endeavours to exterminate dynamiters, so, in the opinion of many, it ought to crush the Jesuitical fraternity—the "Black International," as it has justly been called.



## THE SKOPZI

341. *Various Russian Sects.*—As Russia has always been a hotbed of political secret societies, so it has always been overrun by secret religious sects. Among these we may name the *Soshigateli*, or Self-burners, who regard voluntary death by fire as the only means of purification from the sins and pollution of the world. They abound in Siberia; within the last twenty years groups of such fanatics, numbering fifteen, twenty, fifty, yea, a hundred men and women, burned themselves in large pits or solitary buildings filled with brushwood. About the year 1867 no less than seventeen hundred are reported to have voluntarily chosen death by fire near Tumen, in the Eastern Ural Mountains. Another sect with similar tendencies, the *Morelstschiki*, or Self-sacrificers, prefer iron to fire, and consider it a religious duty to kill one another. In 1868 such a mystical sacrifice took place on the estate of a Mr. Gurieff, on the Volga, when forty-seven men and women massacred one another with daggers. Another mad sect are the *Flagellants*, whose fanaticism sometimes becomes dangerous to other members of the community. In the summer of 1869 the Flagellants of Balashoff (government of Saratoff), to the number of several hundred, on returning from a field where they had practised their fanatical rites, suddenly attacked the lookers-on, and so belaboured them with their scourges and knotted ropes as to kill several of them. Others were trodden to death, and others driven between carts loaded with wood, to which the wretches set fire, so that their victims were suffocated and burnt to ashes.

342. *The Skopzi.*—But the sect which has during the last generation attracted most attention are the Skopzi or Castrated; and whilst the sects mentioned above consist almost wholly of ignorant, wild fanatics, the Skopzi reckon among their members men of comparative culture and position, as we shall show further on.





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protected by the sometime chamberlain of the Polish court, the state councillor Alexei Michailoff Jelanski, who was himself a Skopez, and an operator.

343. *The Legend of Selivanoff*.—The house which Selivanoff occupied was by his followers called the “House of God,” the “Heavenly Zion,” the “New Jerusalem,” for they believed that Christ had reappeared in the person of Selivanoff, who, they asserted, was really Peter III., born of the immaculate virgin, who, as Empress, was known as Elizabeth Petrowna. This Empress ruled for two years only, then she transferred the government to a lady of the court resembling her, and taking the name of Akulina Ivanovna, she retired, first to the province of Orel, where she lived at the house of the Skopzi prophet Filimon, and then to Bjelogrod, in the province of Kursk, where, invisible behind a garden wall, as late as 1865 she enjoyed the adoration of the faithful. The “Redeemer,” as Selivanoff is also called by his adherents, is supposed to have been born in Holstein; that, on reaching manhood, he castrated himself, performed the operation on many others, and wrought many miracles. Called to the throne, he was obliged to marry, but his spouse, Catherine II., in consequence of the “baptism of fire” he had undergone, despising him, she tried to have him assassinated; the Emperor being warned of the conspiracy, made his escape in the clothes of a sentinel, who was murdered in his place. Though Catherine II. was aware of the mistake, she ordered the body of the sentinel to be buried with imperial honours. Peter III. disappeared, to reappear after a while in the person of the peasant Selivanoff, as which he continued his former practices, making many converts. He was then accompanied by Schiloff, whom the Skopzi call the forerunner of the Redeemer. But the government at last interfered; Selivanoff was seized, knouted, and sent to Siberia; Schiloff was imprisoned at Riga. The book of his “Passion” further tells us that the Emperor Paul I., on his accession, having heard of him, had Selivanoff brought back to Russia, as he considered him his father, to surrender the crown to him; but when Selivanoff made self-mutilation the condition of his acknowledging Paul as his son, the latter grew wroth, and ordered Selivanoff, as well as Schiloff, who had also been sent for from Riga, to be imprisoned in the fortress of Schlüsselburg. Under Alexander I. Selivanoff was set free, and the Emperor and his Empress joined the elect. Selivanoff lived at St. Petersburg, where the Skopez Sladownikoff found him an elegant residence, where he convinced many that he was



Christ, the true God. But eventually the government thought it necessary to put a stop to the ravages of the baptism of fire, and Selivanoff was confined in the monastery of Suzdal. The Skopzi firmly believe him to be still alive, and that in his own time he will take possession of the throne of Russia, whereupon castration will become universal. But as before the second appearance of the Redeemer, according to Christian belief, Antichrist is to appear, the Skopzi maintain that he has already appeared in the person of Napoleon, who is a bastard of Catherine II. and the devil, and at present living in Turkey, whence, converted to the true faith, he also will come to Russia as a Skopez.

344. *Historical Foundation of the Legend.*—The reason why the Skopzi identify the Redeemer with Peter III. is this: Peter III. was the grandson of Peter I. the Great, and a son of the Duke Charles Frederick of Holstein and Anna Petrowna, Peter's daughter; he ascended the throne in 1762. Before him the "people of God," especially the Flagellants, were cruelly persecuted and tortured—their tongues were torn out, and they were burnt alive—but Peter III., immediately on his accession, granted them a complete amnesty and the fullest religious liberty. Hence they looked upon him as their saviour, and he, being a divine person, could not die. The real reason why he was murdered—Count Orloff is said to have strangled him with his own hand—was the Empress' dissatisfaction with the innovations he introduced. He ascended the throne on the 5th January, and was killed on the 14th July 1762. The Akulina Ivanovna, mentioned in the previous section, who was worshipped as the mother of God, and who pretended to have been the Empress Elizabeth, was born of humble parents in the town of Lebedjan, in the province of Tamboff; her real name was Katassanova. In the year 1820 Selivanoff was, from Suzdal, transferred to the monastery of Spasso-Euphemius, where, in 1832, he died at a great age. At the same time, many of the most fanatical adherents of the sect were shut up in the monastery of Ssolovetski, and among them the Skopez captain Ssostonovitch, who, repenting of his former delusions, revealed to the archimandrite of the last-named monastery the deepest secrets of the Skopzi doctrine.

345. *Diffusion of the Sect.*—According to maps prepared by Dr. Pelikan, during the period from 1805 to 1839 Skopziism prevailed in most parts of Russia, its greatest intensity being at St. Petersburg, Kursk, and on the Black Sea. It also existed to some extent on the White Sea and in the



Ural. A considerable increase of the practice took place in Kherson and the Crimea about the year 1822. About the same time many gold and silver smiths of St. Petersburg belonged to the sect.

From 1840 to 1859 Skopziism seemed to be dying out around the White Sea and St. Petersburg, though in that town it remained as prevalent as ever. The Emperor Nicholas took very severe measures against the sectaries, and many of them were banished to Siberia. Others fled to the Danubian principalities, settling at Galatz and Bucharest, but mostly at Jassy, where nearly all hackney-coach drivers are said to belong to the sect.

From 1860 to 1870 the Skopzi increased greatly in numbers, and spread to parts of the Russian empire where formerly they were scarcely known; for they are zealous proselytisers, though they will only admit Russians to the sect—or is it, that they can in no other nationality find people mad enough to submit to their rites?

In 1865 the Russian inhabitants on the shores of the Sea of Azoff made great complaints of the spread of Skopziism. Investigation proved the fact: many mutilated men and women were discovered. The chief offenders, including the peasant woman Babanin, who had presided at the meetings of Skopzi at Militopol, and was revered as a prophetess, were banished to Siberia. But it was soon found that the Azoff society formed but a branch of the sect. Its centre was the town of Morschansk, in the province of Tamboff. On the last night of the year 1869, says an account which, besides much exaggeration, contains a solid foundation of truth, the head of the Police of that town was at a party. About midnight he was called out of the room, and a servant of the merchant Ploticyn handed him a letter, asking that three women then in custody might be allowed to go free till the morning, when they would return to their prison. Ten thousand roubles in bank-notes were enclosed in the letter. The head of the Police handed the letter and notes to the Criminal Department. Ploticyn was arrested, and on searching his residence it was found to consist of a cluster of houses, having four cellars underground, where a large amount of treasure in cash and bank-notes—perhaps two millions of roubles in value—was discovered, together with an extensive correspondence, implicating many rich merchants in various Russian towns, including the millionaire Tretjakoff of St. Petersburg. Ploticyn was deprived of his civil rights and honours, and banished to Siberia, and with him





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come to the Redeemer, and to be determined to keep secret from the Czar, the princes, father, mother, relations and friends, all that relates to these sacred matters, and to submit to persecution, torture, fire and death, rather than reveal their mysteries to enemies."

Their meetings are usually held late at night, and last till daybreak. The localities usually are the secret prayer-rooms found in the dwellings of all Skopzi, which generally are built at as great a distance from other houses as possible. In the centre there is a courtyard, surrounded by barns, cart-sheds and living-rooms, from which, beside the main entrance, some secretly-contrived doors open on to the cattle-yard, which is connected with a third enclosure, where stands a bee-house, which latter is surrounded with high palings, whence there are secret openings to the garden, from which there is an exit into the fields. During the meeting watchers are stationed at various distances, who, at the approach of any suspicious-looking stranger, warn their friends by signs, upon which the meeting breaks up, and those who are specially afraid of being discovered make their escape through the cattle-yard into the bee-house, and thence through the garden into the fields.

When engaged in their devotions the men wear long, wide, white shirts of a peculiar cut, tied round the waist with girdles, and large white trousers; the women are also dressed in white shirts; in the villages they wear blue gowns of nankeen, in the towns, of chintz; they, moreover, cover their heads with white cloths. Both sexes put on white stockings, though sometimes they are all barefooted, and carry in their hands handkerchiefs, which they call "flags." The as yet uncastrated members of the sect are called "donkeys" or "goats," whilst those operated on are styled "white lambs," "white doves."

They have a kind of eucharist, at which small pieces of bread, which are consecrated by being put for a while in openings in the monument erected at Schlüsselberg to the Skopez Schiloff, are distributed. A priest, Ivan Sfergejeff, who, by order of his superiors, insinuated himself into the confidence of a leading Skopez, and thus became cognisant of all the secrets of the sect, gives details of a "communion of flesh and blood," which is nothing less than a charge of cannibalism, and of the most horrible, revolting kind, against the sect; it has not, I think, been juridically proved; but people who are mad enough to become Skopzi, are mad enough for anything. Legal documents in the archives of



the Holy Synod show that among the Flagellants such a "communion of flesh and blood" existed; the Skopzi arose among the Flagellants, so it is possible that the practice of the latter was adopted by the former. Its details are too revolting to be given here.

347. *The Baptism of Fire*.—As already stated, it is of two kinds, respectively called the "lesser" and the "great seal." The chief point of Christ's teaching, the Skopzi say, was that man to be saved must undergo the "baptism of fire," that is, castrate himself by means of a red-hot iron. Christ, they say, set the example in his own person, which was followed by the apostles and the early Christian Church, including Origen and all the saints, who in the traditional painting of the Oriental Christians, are always represented without beards. Out of regard for human weakness, it was afterwards allowed to substitute a sharp knife for the hot iron. But zealous Skopzi are not particular as to the instruments they use. In 356 instances of mutilation of men, we find a knife employed 164 times, a razor 108 times, a hatchet 30 times, a scythe 23 times; pieces of iron, glass, tin, &c., 17 times. As varied are the localities where the operation has been performed. Of 620 cases, we find that 96 took place in peasants' houses, 19 in prisons, 12 in privies, 6 in cellars, 41 in baths, 32 in barns, 14 in coach-houses, 4 in kitchen gardens, 8 in yards, 136 in woods, no less than 223 on high-roads and in fields, 1 under a bridge, 8 in boats, 1 in a churchyard, &c. Though we have hitherto spoken of men only as the victims—voluntary and the contrary—of their cruel fanaticism, the other sex are sufferers from it in the proportion of about four women to ten men. With them, too, the operation is as fearful as it is revolting; the earliest records of such operations on women dates from 1815. And yet we find women among the operators. Among 43 peasant women who acted in that capacity, 5 had actually operated on men. The Skopzi, as already intimated, include men of rank and position; thus there were found among them 4 ladies and 4 gentlemen belonging to the nobility, 10 military officers, 5 naval officers, 14 officials in the civil service, 19 priests, 148 merchants, 220 citizens, 2736 peasants (including 827 women), 119 landowners, 443 soldiers and soldiers' wives and daughters: 515 men and 240 women were between the years 1847 and 1866 transported to Siberia as convicted Skopzi. Their real number in the empire cannot be ascertained on account of the secrecy of their proceedings. In 1874 it was known to be at least 5444,



inclusive of 1465 women; of these, 703 men and 160 women had performed the operation on themselves; 79 men and 11 women underwent the operation twice, first the "lesser" and then the "great seal." The male members of the sect may be recognised by their puffy, corpulent exterior, and their wrinkled and beardless faces.

348. *Failure of the Prosecution of the Sect.*—The state is bound to prosecute and, if possible, suppress the active participators in what is an abominable crime against public policy and humanity; but experience has shown that all the measures hitherto taken have failed to put a stop to Skopziism. The very means adopted for its suppression frequently led to its extension; thus Skopzi shut up in monasteries actually converted monks to their schism. State prosecutions induced men and women to mutilate themselves to join the noble army of martyrs. Even the so-called "moral" measure, which was introduced in 1850, of dressing Skopzi in women's clothes, and putting fools' caps on their head, and thus leading them, accompanied by a policeman, about the villages, to the derision of the inhabitants, often had an effect opposite to that aimed at. The Russian clergy are too universally despised to have any influence in stemming the evil; and some of the highest placed of the hierarchy wink at it, in consideration of the large sums given by wealthy Skopzi for the erection or decoration of orthodox churches. The only direct way to arrest the progress of Skopziism is to transport all detected members to distant and thinly-populated localities, where they must be kept under strict supervision till they die out. And indirectly their fanaticism must be extinguished by a better education of the Russian people.

One of the most recent trials, accounts of which have reached civilised Europe, is that of a banker and his niece, held with closed doors at St. Petersburg, in December 1893. The banker, a man of sixty, was condemned, as belonging to the sect of the Skopzi, to fifteen years' hard labour for self-mutilation, and his niece to ten years' hard labour for having allowed herself to be operated on, and thus conniving at a criminal offence.





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their propensities to the fullest extent. Eva was a second Messalina in her excesses; in fact, her male companions were taught that perfect sanctification was only to be arrived at by carnal intercourse with herself. But the birth of a child in the community—in spite of the cruel and hideous precautions which had been taken to prevent such an occurrence, precautions we are not allowed to describe—and the sudden death of the child, at last induced the Duke to have the doings of the saints watched through openings made in the walls of the rooms occupied by them, and the gross profligacy, which was then revealed, and eventually confessed by the inculpates, was such, that we cannot give the details, though they were all proved in a court of law. But most of the ringleaders made their escape from custody, and eventually settled in the small town of Luyde, the vicinity of which to Pyrmont, with its rich and aristocratic visitors to the baths, promised many proselytes, who, in fact, did not fail to present themselves, so that a new society was soon formed. But in consequence of the statements made by one Sebastian Reuter, who by revealing the practices of the sect hoped to get an appointment from the government of Paderborn, under whose jurisdiction Luyde was placed, about twenty members of the association were arrested, including Winter and Eva; but both again managed to escape. What became of them afterwards is not precisely known. Some of the other prisoners were ordered to be publicly whipped, others acquitted.

350. *Schönherr's Sect.*—Another association of the same character as the above, calling itself Theosophers, but nicknamed Muckers by the public, was discovered at Königsberg in 1835. Its founder was John Henry Schönherr, born at Memel in 1771, died at Königsberg in 1826. Two of his followers, the pastors Ebel and Diestel, declared the dualistic-gnostic doctrines of Schönherr to mean that the flesh was to be sanctified by sexual intercourse, and they formed a secret association, to which women, of course, were admitted. Their practices eventually led to a judicial inquiry, which, however, was not pursued to the end, as many persons of good position were found to be implicated in the sect. But Ebel and Diestel were degraded from their official positions, and the latter was moreover sent to the house of correction. And thus another chapter, not of historical, but of hysterical theology, was closed for a time.



# BOOK X

*SOCIAL REGENERATION*









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entered the Order; but when they found that Weishaupt meant real work and not mere play, they hung back. The society was instituted for the purpose of lessening the evils resulting from the want of information, from tyranny, political and ecclesiastical.

353. *Organisation*.—The society was by its founder divided into classes, each of which was again subdivided into degrees, in the following manner:—

Nursery . .	{	Preparation.
		Novice.
		Minerval.
		Illuminatus Minor.
Masonry . .	{	Symbolic . {
		Apprentice.
		Fellow-Craft.
	{	Master Mason.
		Illuminatus Major, or Scotch
Mysteries .	{	Novice,
		Illuminatus Dirigens, or Scotch
	{	Knight.
		Epopt, or Priest.
		Prince, or Regent.
Mysteries .	{	Magus, or Philosopher.
		Rex, King, Homme Roi, or
		Areopagite.

In the Nursery and Masonry degrees, the candidate was merely tried and prepared for the Mystery degrees. If he was found unreliable, he was not allowed to go beyond; but if he proved an apt scholar, he was gradually initiated into the latter, where all that he had been taught before was overthrown, and radical and deistic theories and plans were unfolded, which were in nowise immoral or subversive of public order, but only such as, at the present day, are held by many men of just and enlightened views.

354. *Initiation into the Degree of Priest*.—The candidate for the priesthood, the first degree in the Lesser Mysteries, was taken, with his eyes bandaged, in a carriage, following a roundabout way, to the house where the initiation was to take place. On his arrival there his eyes were unbandaged, and he was told to put on the apron of the Scotch Knight, the cross of St. Andrews, and the hat, take the sword into his hand, and wait before the first door till summoned to enter. After a while he heard a solemn voice calling, “Enter, orphan, the fathers call thee, and shut the door behind thee.” On entering he beheld a room, the walls of which were covered with rich red hangings, and splendidly illuminated. In the background stood a throne under a canopy,



and in front of it a table, on which were placed a crown, sceptre, sword, valuables, and chains. The priestly vestments were displayed on a red cushion. There were no chairs in the room, but a stool without back stood at some distance from the throne, facing it. The candidate, on being introduced, was told to choose between the things on the table or the vestments on the cushion. Should he, contrary to all expectation, declare for the crown and its concomitants, he would at once be expelled; but if he chose the priestly dress, he was addressed with, "All hail, thou noble one!" and invited to take a seat on the stool and listen to the explanation of his future duties, which, as intimated above, were simply to act as an instructor of the uninitiated. The lecture being ended, a door at the back was opened, and the friend who had introduced the candidate entered in the priest's dress, which consisted of a white woollen toga, descending to the feet; the neck and sleeves were edged with scarlet silk ribbons, a silk girdle of the same colour encircled the waist. The deacon alone had, moreover, a red cross, about a foot long, on his left breast. The candidate was led into the inner room, the door of which had in the meantime been opened, and in which was seen an altar, covered with red cloth; above it hung a painted or carved crucifix. On the altar itself were placed the book of the ritual, a Bible bound in red, a small glass dish with honey, and a glass jug with milk in it. A burning lamp hung over the head of the deacon, who faced the altar; the priests sat on both sides, on red-cushioned benches. The candidate was admonished, and promised to renounce the enemies of mankind, evil desires, the spirit of oppression, and deception; having done this, he was divested of his masonic clothing, and having promised in presence of the crucifix to be faithful to the Order, the assistants put on him the priestly dress, and then let him eat some of the honey and drink some of the milk, as a sealing of their covenant. The priest's sign was laying both hands in the form of a cross flat on the head; the grip consisted in presenting a fist, with the thumb held straight up; the other would then make a fist, pressing it on that presented to him, but so as to enclose the vertically presented thumb. The word was INRI. Then followed a long lecture of a moral and scientific character.

355. *Initiation into the Degree of Regent.*—This degree was conferred only on such persons as by high intellectual attainments, social position, and tried fidelity, were considered capable of advancing the objects of the Order. The place of



reception consisted of three rooms. In the last there stood a raised richly-decorated red throne under a canopy for the Provincial; to the right stood a white column, about seven feet high, on which was placed a crown, resting on a red cushion; suspended from the column were a shepherd's crook of white wood and an artificial palm branch. On the left hand stood a table with a red cover, on which were placed the garments of the Regent, which consisted of a kind of cuirass made of white leather, with a red cross on it. Over this was worn a white cloak, with another red cross embroidered on it. The collar and cuffs were red. The Regents wore tall white hats with red feathers, and red laced half-boots on their feet. The cross on the cuirass of the Provincial was irradiated with golden rays. The room was hung with red, and well lighted up. The Provincial alone occupied it, seated on the throne; the other Regents were in the middle room. The first room was set aside for preparation; it was hung with black, and in its centre, on a platform, stood a complete human skeleton, at whose feet lay a crown and a sword. The candidate was led into this room; his hands were manacled, and he was left alone for a little while, during which time he could hear the conversation carried on in the middle room. Who has brought this slave hither?—He came and knocked. What does he seek?—Freedom; he beseeches you to free him from his bonds. Why does he not apply to those who have bound him?—They will not set him free; his servitude benefits them. Who has made him a slave?—Society, the State, false Religion. . . . Does he respect persons? Ask him who was the man whose skeleton he sees before him; was he a king, nobleman, or beggar?—He does not know; he only knows that he was a man like one of ourselves. He wants only to be a man. Then let him be introduced. The candidate was then brought into the middle, and finally into the last room, and after some more catechising, invested with the dress of the Regent. The sign was holding out both arms towards a brother; the grip taking hold of his elbows, as if to support or raise him up; the word was *Redemtis*.

356. *The Greater Mysteries*.—Such was the initiation into the Lesser Mysteries. The Greater Mysteries, with their two degrees of Magus and Rex, were never worked out by Philo, as Baron de Knigge called himself. But according to statements found in the writings of Weishaupt, the Magus degree was to be founded on the principles of Spinoza, showing all to be material, God and the world One, and all religions





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before Christ, Jezdegerd, and the year began with them on the 21st March. They corresponded, till initiated into the higher degrees, in cypher, which consisted in numbers corresponding to letters in the following order :—

12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	13	14
<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>o</i>
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
	<i>p</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>z</i>			

When admitted to the higher degrees, they used either the one or the other hieroglyphic shown on page 309.

The word Order was never written in full, but always indicated by a circle with a dot in the centre, thus ⊙.

The Order made considerable progress, including among its members priests, prelates, ministers, physicians, princes, and sovereign dukes. No doubt, few of them were initiated into the higher degrees. The Elector of Bavaria became alarmed at the political tenets betrayed by some recreant brothers of the Order, and at once suppressed it in all his territories.

358. *Secret Papers and Correspondence*.—It was only after the suppression of the Order that the mode of initiation into the higher degrees, and the true doctrines taught therein, became known. A collection of original papers and correspondence was found, by illegally searching the house of Zwack, in 1786. In the following year a much larger collection was found at the house of Baron Bassus, a member. From these we learn that one of the chief means recommended by the leaders for the success of the Order was that of gaining over the women—not a bad plan, and not objectionable when the aim is a good one. “There is no way of influencing men so powerfully as by means of the women,” says the instructor. “These should, therefore, be our chief study. We should insinuate ourselves into their good opinion, give them hints of emancipation from the tyranny of public opinion, and of standing up for themselves; it will be an immense relief to their enslaved minds to be freed from any one bond of restraint, and it will fire them the more, and cause them to work for us with zeal,” &c. Similar views are enunciated in a letter found among the correspondence :—“The proposal of Hercules (a member not identified) to establish a Minerval school for girls is excellent, but requires circumspection. . . . We cannot improve the world without improving the women. . . . But how shall we get hold of them? How will their mothers,



immersed in prejudices, consent that others shall influence their education? We must begin with grown girls. Hercules proposes the wife of Ptolemy Magus. I have no objection; and I have four stepdaughters, fine girls. The eldest in particular is excellent. She is twenty-four, has read much, and is above all prejudices. They have many acquaintances. . . . It may immediately be a very pretty society. . . . No man must be admitted. This will make them become more keen, and they will go much farther than if we were present. . . . Leave them to the scope of their own fancies, and they will soon invent mysteries which will put us to the blush. . . . They will be our great apostles. . . . Ptolemy's wife must direct them, and she will be instructed by Ptolemy, and my stepdaughters will consult with me. . . . But I am doubtful whether the association will be durable—women are fickle and impatient. Nothing will please them but hurrying from degree to degree . . . which will soon lose their novelty and influence. To rest seriously in one rank, and to be silent when they have found out that the whole is a cheat (!), is a work of which they are incapable. . . . Nay, there is a risk that they may take it into their heads to give things an opposite turn, and then, by the arts in which they are adepts by nature, they may turn our order upside down.” And a circumstance, affecting the personal character of the founder, which was brought to light by the discovery of the secret correspondence, but was totally unconnected with the principles advocated by the Order, contributed as much as anything else to give the Order of the Illuminati a bad name. Another circumstance was taken advantage of by the enemies of the Order to crush it. In the handwriting of Zwack were found a description of a strong box, which, if forced open, should blow up and destroy its contents; a recipe for sympathetic ink; how to take off impressions of seals, so as to use them afterwards as seals; a collection of some hundreds of such impressions, with a list of their owners; a set of portraits of eighty-five ladies in Munich, with recommendations of some of them as members of a lodge of sisters *illuminatæ*; injunctions to all superiors to learn to write with both hands, and to use more than one cypher; and other matters.

359. *Refutation of Charges*.—So says Robison in his “Proofs of a Conspiracy.” But he does not say that this “one Zwack, a counsellor, holding some law office”—he was a judge and electoral councillor—in a published letter disproved all the scandalous charges brought against the Illu-



minati, showing that the idea of utilising the influence of women was taken from an essay on the Mopses, and that the list of recipes given above was copied by him for his own private amusement and instruction, he being a criminal lawyer and judge, from the works of the Jesuit Kircher and other orthodox authorities, and had not the slightest connection with the Illuminati. The "set of portraits of eighty-five ladies in Munich" was actually stolen by the police from the wardrobe of Von Zwack's wife!

360. *Suppression.*—The society having been established in the small state of Bavaria, and so quickly suppressed, never made any lasting impression on the affairs of its own time, nor on those of the future. All the terrible effects attributed to its doctrines by Robison and other opponents of the Order existed more in the imagination of the writers than in reality. If, as Robison says, the founders only wanted liberty to indulge their ambition and passions, they might, and, according to the secret correspondence quoted, seem to, have done so without the cumbrous machinery of a society whose members appeared so unmanageable. Weisshaupt was deprived of his professor's chair, and banished from Bavaria, but with a pension of eight hundred florins, which he refused. He first went to Regensburg, and afterwards entered the service of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha. Zwack also was banished, and went into the service of the Prince of Salms, who soon after had so great a hand in the disturbances in Holland. Of the German society of the Illuminati, it may truly be said that it was before its time; all enlightened nations now adopt and advocate its aims. But it was not without its influence on the French Revolution, and it may have inspired Bahrtdt with the idea of the German Union.

361. *Illuminati in France.*—As early as the year 1782, *Philo* and *Spartacus* had formed the plan of introducing Illuminism into France, especially as some adepts already existed in that country. Dietrich, the Mayor of Strasbourg, was one of them; Mirabeau was another, who had been initiated at Berlin, to which city he had been sent by Louis XVI. on a secret mission. On his return to France he initiated the Abbé Talleyrand de Perigord, and Bode, privy councillor, at Weimar, known in the sect as *Amelius*, and William, Baron de Busch, whose sectarian name was *Bayard*, who shortly after came to Paris, continued the work of initiation, choosing their adepts chiefly in the masonic lodges. The most zealous and trusted members were formed





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means of ridding the earth, by death or stupefaction, of those who revile truth, or seek to wrest it from our hands.

“Avoid Spain, Naples, and every other accursed country; also avoid all temptation to betray what thou hast now heard. Lightning does not strike so quickly as the dagger which will reach thee wherever thou mayest be.”

The candidate having repeated these words, a candlestick with seven black wax tapers was placed before him, together with a vessel full of human blood. He had to wash himself with the blood, and drink half a glassful. Then the string round the *pudenda* was untied, he was placed in a bath, and on leaving it regaled with a dish of roots.

363. *Credibility of above Account.*—No doubt all this sounds very horrible, and is very incredible. But as to the horrors, they were simply theatrical; and as to credibility, writers near the time when these horrors were said to have been practised seriously believed in them! The Abbé Barruel, who gives some of the above details in his work, “*Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*,” does “not hesitate to consider them as historical truth.”

The Marquis de Jouffroi, in his “*Dictionary of Social Errors*,” positively asserts that the meetings at Ermenonville were scenes of the grossest debauchery. Why should we doubt that they also were occasions for all sorts of ridiculous absurdities?

*Note.*—In the (London) *Monthly Magazine* for January 1798 there appeared a letter from Augustus Böttiger, Provost of the College of Weimar, in reply to Robison’s work, charging that writer with making false statements, and declaring that since 1790 “every concern [*sic*] of the Illuminati has ceased.” Böttiger also offered to supply any person in Great Britain, alarmed at the erroneous statements contained in the book above mentioned, with correct information.



## THE GERMAN UNION

364. *Statements of Founder.*—This society, of which Robison and Barruel give such dreadful accounts, never was anything but an attempt at a commercial speculation by the famous Dr. Charles Frederick Bahrdt, a German theologian, possessing great literary talent, but little moral principles. His plan was first propounded in a pamphlet addressed “To All Friends of Reason, Truth, and Virtue,” and asserting that there existed a society of twenty-two statesmen, professors, and private persons for the dissemination of natural religion, the rooting out of superstition, and restoring mankind to liberty by enlightening them. “It is for that purpose,” the pamphlet stated, “that we have formed a secret society, to which we invite all those who are actuated by the same views, and are properly sensible of their importance.” The society was to have its periodicals and journals, its libraries and reading clubs—the books read, of course, to be those published by direction of the Twenty-two, or in reality by Bahrdt. The society was to some extent a resuscitation of the Illuminati. Frederick William, King of Prussia, alarmed at the progress their teaching was making, allowed his pietist minister of the Public Cult, John Christian von Wöllner, to publish the notorious retrograde “Edict of Religion” of 1788, which caused universal dissatisfaction, and was satirised in a pamphlet bearing the same title as the Edict. Bahrdt was betrayed as the author thereof by one Samuel Röper, whom, from charity, he had made his secretary, and was sent to prison, where he wrote his *Memoirs*, which were published at Frankfurt in four volumes in 1790. Von Wöllner was personally interested in opposing the German Union and its liberal dogmas in religion and politics, because he himself was secretly a zealous Rosicrucian, and the Rosicrucians preferred working in the dark. A violent attack on the German Union was made in a book called “More Notes than Text,” and attributed by some to J. J. C.



Bode, late Privy Councillor at Weimar, and by others to Göschel, a bookseller at Leipzig, by whom it was published in 1789. Bahrdt having in consequence of study and reflection adopted and advocated pure Deism, and being, moreover, an advanced politician, too enlightened for his day, he made himself many enemies among the transparency (*Durchlaucht*) and parson-ridden burghers of the various cities in which he successively held appointments. He gradually lost them all, and eventually set up a tavern near Halle, which he called "Bahrdt's Repose." He died in 1793, after which nothing more was heard of the German Union. He is known in England by Barruel's and Robison's writings only, and misrepresented, to his disadvantage, by both. Neither of them being a good German scholar, both have mistranslated many passages taken from Bahrdt's works, and others they have, evidently intentionally, so twisted to their own purpose—that of abusing their author—that their statements, as far as they refer to Bahrdt, and, I may add, as far as they refer to Weishaupt, are of very little value.





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The workman, moreover, unlike the master, was not tied to any city or country, but could wander from place to place—a life which, in fact, he must prefer to staying for ever in one workshop or factory, where the experience needed for the mastership could not be attained. Hence arose the ancient custom of the “Tour of France” and the multiform *compagnonnage*, which, whilst a source of pleasure to the workmen settled in a town, became a necessity for the travelling, the persecuted journeyman; who thus withdrew himself from under the regular legislation, which only protected the manufacturer, and joined, as it were, a subterranean association to protect himself and his affiliates from the unpunished injuries inflicted on them by burghers and masters.

366. *Connection with Freemasonry*.—Freemasonry was early mixed up with the *compagnonnage*, and the construction of the Temple, which is constantly met with in the former, also plays a great part in the latter—a myth undefined, chronologically irreconcilable, a poetic fiction, like all the events called historical that surround the starting-points of various sects; for sects, existing, as it were, beyond the pale of official history, create a history of their own, exclusive of, and opposed to, the world of facts. The Solomon of the legend, so different from that of the Bible, is one of the patriarchs of the *compagnonnage*; and, like the masonic ceremonies, the rites of these journeyman associations continually allude to that *moral* architecture, that proposes to erect prisons for vice, and temples to virtue. Further, and in the same way, the embraces and kisses of the craftsmen remind us of the symbolic grips of the Freemasons, and the brotherly kiss of ancient knighthood.

367. *Decrees against Workmen's Unions*.—We are often obliged to seek for information concerning secret societies in clerical invectives and judicial prosecutions; these are lamps shedding a sinister light on associations whose existence was scarcely suspected. Thus *compagnonnage* existed before Francis I.; for this king, though he protected the Carbonari, and actually introduced the Carbonari term of “cousin” into the language of Courts, issued an edict against the former, forbidding journeymen to bind themselves with oaths; to elect a chief; to assemble in greater numbers than five in front of the workshops, on pain of being imprisoned or banished; to wear swords or sticks in the houses of their masters or the streets of the city; to attempt any seditious movement; or to hold any banquet at the beginning or the



end of an apprenticeship. A subsequent regulation, A.D. 1723, prohibits any community, confraternity, assembly, or cabala of workmen; and a parliamentary decree of 1778 renews the prohibition, and enjoins on tavern-keepers not to receive into their houses assemblies of more than four craftsmen, nor in any way to favour the practices of the pretended *devoir* (duty). The language of the clergy is equally energetic. A deliberation of the Parisian clergy of 1655 says: "This pretended *devoir* consists in three precepts — to honour God, protect the property of the master, and succour the companions. But these companions dishonour God, profane the mysteries of our religion, ruin the masters, withdrawing the workmen from the workshop, when some of those inscribed in the 'cabala' complain of having been injured. The impieties and sacrileges they commit vary according to the different trades; but they have this in common, that before being received into the association, every member is bound to swear on the Gospel that he will not reveal either to father or mother, wife or son, either to cleric or layman, what he is about to do or will see done; and for this purpose they choose an inn, which they call the mother, wherein they have two rooms, in one of which they perform their abominable rites, whilst in the other they hold their feasts." Even before 1645 the clergy had denounced the tailors and shoemakers to the authorities of Paris for dishonest and heterodox practices; and the faculty of theology had prohibited the pernicious meetings of workmen, under pain of the greater excommunication; so that the companions, to escape ecclesiastical persecution, held their meetings in those purlieus of the Temple which enjoyed the right of sanctuary. Even thence they were removed, however, by the decree of the 11th September 1651.

368. *Traditions*.—The members of the *compagnonnage* are divided into two great parties, the *compagnons du devoir*, the Fellows of Duty, and the *compagnons de liberté*, the Fellows of Liberty. The former are followers of James and of Soubise, the latter of Solomon. The former assert that they call themselves the Fellows of Duty because they are descended from the workmen who remained dutiful at the time of Hiram's murder, whilst the latter claim that their *compagnonnage* was instituted by Solomon himself. Their traditions are strangely confused. Solomon, we are told, built the Temple. James was said to be the son of a famous architect, Joachim, born at St. Romily. James, having gone to Greece, heard the summons of Solomon, and went to him;



and having received from Hiram the order to erect two columns, he acquitted himself with such zeal and skill that he was at once made a master and the companion of Hiram. The Temple being finished, he returned again to Gaul with master Soubise, who had been his inseparable companion at Jerusalem. However, the pupils of master Soubise, jealous of James, attempted to assassinate him, and the latter threw himself into a marsh, where the reeds supported and concealed him, saving his life; but eventually he was discovered by the pupils of Soubise, who was unaware of their nefarious design, and slain. Soubise long mourned James; and when his end approached, he taught the companions their “duties,” and the mode of life they ought to pursue. Among the rites he placed the kiss of brotherly affection and the custody of a reed—the acacia of the Freemasons—in memory of James. A variation of this legend represents Soubise as an accomplice of the murder, and a suicide from desperation. The reader will at once see that this is the story of Hiram, nay, of Osiris, and all the great deities of antiquity, over again. In the Legend of the Temple, Solomon also is an accomplice in the murder of his architect.

369. *Names and Degrees.*—The sons of Solomon assumed different denominations, such as “wolves” and *Gavots*, which latter designation they retained, because coming from Judæa to France they landed on the coast of Provence, whose inhabitants are still called Gavots. The wolves, stonemasons, have two degrees, fellow-crafts and youths. The *Gavots*, carpenters and ironsmiths, are divided into three: accepted fellow-crafts, advanced fellow-crafts, and initiated fellow-crafts. They all commemorate the death of master Hiram.

The sons of master James called themselves by various names, such as *Compagnons Passants*, *Dévorants*, &c. The sons of father Soubise were known as “Jovials, or Companions of the Foxes,” or as *Drilles*, an ancient French word signifying “merry companions,” and by that scarcely desirable one of “dogs,” in commemoration, it is said, of the dog who discovered the body of Hiram. It is more probable, however, that this denomination had the same origin as that of “wolves,” for which dogs may easily be mistaken; or that it refers to the star Sirius, in which case the name Soubise might be a corruption of the epithet Sabazius, given to Bacchus (70). With the second of these branches of companionship, comprising at first the three trades of stonemason, locksmith, and joiner, and with the





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of water, a lighted taper, and a crucifix placed on it. The kneeling aspirant swore on the salt and water faithfully to keep the secrets of the association. He was then taught the words by which he could know, and make himself known to, his brethren in the forest, as well as the symbolic meaning of the objects before him : the tablecloth signified the winding-sheet in which every man shall be wrapped up ; the taper, the lights burning round the deathbed ; the cross, man's redemption ; the salt, the theological virtues. This ritual was austere and sad, like the existence of the poor charcoal-burners, whose joys are numbered, but whose griefs and privations are endless : it prevailed in the Jura, the Alps, and the Black Forest. The catechism of the hewers contains passages of pathetic simplicity. Segregated in the immense forest, they fix their eyes on the heaven above and the earth beneath ; their religion bears a resemblance to that of the pilots of Homer ; earth and heaven, nature and God, such is their worship, whence arises a moral of tender and passionate fraternity.

“ *Q.* Whence come ye, cousin of the oak ?

*A.* From the forest.

*Q.* Where is your father ?

*A.* Raise your eyes to heaven.

*Q.* Where is your mother ?

*A.* Cast your eyes on the earth.

*Q.* What worship do you pay to your father ?

*A.* Homage and respect.

*Q.* What things do you bestow on your mother ?

*A.* My care during life, and my body afterwards.

*Q.* If I want help, what will you give me ?

*A.* I will share with you half my day's earnings and my bread of sorrow ; you shall rest in my hut and warm yourself at my fire.”

How much resignation in this brief dialogue, how much warm affection ! Another society of hewers, called the society of the “ Prodigal Son,” had a still more dismal ritual. Over three doors of a symbolic tower was written : “ The past deceives me ; the present tortures me ; the future terrifies me.” A triangle with the letters S. J. P. reminded them of the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, and the repentance of the Prodigal Son. On the white apron was represented a heart surrounded with black, over which rolled a red tear, a tear of blood and despair. The pangs and wretchedness of life depressed the imagination of these poor woodmen ; still they had faith in Time as the repairer of all, and on one



of their symbolic objects they wrote, *Le temps vient à bout de tout*. Another society, of which very little is known, called itself *Moins diable que noir*; as if to indicate that the blackness of their outside did not prevent goodness of heart.

372. *Customs in various other Trades*.—The saddlers and shoemakers had their own initiatory practices. In the room where the initiation took place there arose a rough altar, on which were placed a crucifix, tapers, a missal, and whatever is necessary for the celebration of divine service. This was performed, many peculiar phrases being intermingled therewith; after which the neophyte was made acquainted with the rites of the *devoir*, the signs and passwords, and the symbolic meaning of the forms and jewels. The reception of the hatters in its purifications and funereal myth approached still nearer to the ancient initiations. A stage or *daïs* was erected in a large hall; on the stage were placed a cross, a crown of thorns, a palm branch, and all the instruments of the Passion of Christ. Close by stood a large basin of water. The aspirant represented Christ, and passed through the various episodes of the Passion of the Redeemer; and finally knelt down before the basin, when the water, the baptism of regeneration, was poured on his head. No doubt the original institutors of this rite had honest and elevated views; but in course of time the whole degenerated into a farce à la Ran-Tan Club. In the reception of the tailors the candidate was led into a room, in the centre of which stood a table covered with a white cloth, whereon were placed a loaf of bread, a salt-cellar overturned, three sugar loaves, and three needles. He also passed through the various stages of the Passion of Christ. He was then conducted to a second room, where a banquet was prepared, and, as it is asserted, pictures were exhibited of the *vie galante* of three journeymen tailors, pleasing to the senses; which may remind us of the peculiar worship entering into all the ancient mysteries.

These initiations gave a certain importance to the various trade-unions and their members; it was their common patrimony that kept up the *esprit de corps*, though it was not free from the arrogance and exclusiveness which multiplied rites, intolerance, jealousies, and enmities, that periodically ended in sanguinary struggles—the tragic episodes of a drama, now barbaric, now heroic.

Disturbances at Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, disgraced the *compagnonnage*. In the middle of the last century the rivalry between the two sections of the stonemasons of Lyons ended in the expulsion of one of them from that city,



and their attempt to return led to the most terrible scenes of violence and bloodshed. Even at the present day these disputes not only between rival trades, but even between members of the same trade, continue. But a few years ago the carpenters of Paris at last settled their quarrel by arranging that the Fellows of Duty shall work only on the right, and the Fellows of Liberty only on the left bank of the Seine, and no member of one society dares to trespass on the ground of the other. Those also newly received into either are badly treated, and called by opprobrious names; for instance, as among German students, *renards*, foxes. Once these latter would no longer submit to this injustice; they seceded and formed a society of their own, calling themselves *Compagnons Renards de la liberté*, though they did not think it wrong to treat their aspirants in the same cruel manner in which they had been treated themselves!

How intense was the hatred once between the Duty and the Liberty workmen may be inferred from a stanza of a song once current among the former:—

“Tous ces Gavots infâmes  
Iront dans les enfers,  
Brûler dedans les flammes  
Comme des Lucifers.”





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accustomed to the word, sign, and grip of the Freemasons. The operative masons were divided into *Wort-Maurer* (Word Masons) and *Schrift-Maurer* (Writing or Diploma Masons). The former had no other proof to give of their having been regularly brought up to the trade of builders but the word and signs; the latter had written indentures to show. There were laws enjoining master masons to give employment to journeymen who had the proper word and signs. Some cities in this respect possessed more extensive privileges than others. The word given at Wetzlar entitled the possessor to work over the whole empire. With the German journeyman also the three years' travel in search of improvement is an universal condition, and the usual time for setting out is the spring. The *Handwerksbursche* is even now a German institution; though he is now not so frequently met with on the high-road, because railways enable him to travel more cheaply than he could on foot.

375. *Initiation of a Cooper*.—Every trade again has its particular mode of initiation; but as there necessarily is a great similarity of ritual and ceremonies, their details would become a tedious repetition. I therefore confine myself to one craft—that of the cooper. Permission is first asked to introduce to the assembly of companions or fellow-crafts the youth who is to be made one of them, and who is called the “Apron of Goatskin.” The companion who introduces him says: “Some one, I know not who, follows me with a goatskin; a murderer of staves, a wood-spoiler, a traitor; he is on the threshold, and says he is not guilty; he enters, and promises, after having been ‘rough-hewn’ by us, to become a good journeyman.” Leave having been given, the apprentice seats himself on a stool placed on a table, and the companions try to upset him; but his guide keeps him up, whereupon he is repeatedly baptized and consecrated with beer. The patron then says: “What do you call yourself now? Choose a name, genteel, short, and that pleases the girls. He that has a short name pleases every one, and every one drinks a cup of wine or beer to his health. . . . And now to pay the expenses of the baptism, give what every one else has given, and the masters and journeymen shall be content with you.” The candidate also receives numerous instructions how to conduct himself on his wanderings. He is not to be deterred by the difficulties that encounter him at the outset. After having passed through a forest full of dangers, he is supposed to arrive in a pleasant meadow, and to behold a pear-tree full of tempting fruit.



Is he to lie down under it, and wait till the pears fall into his half-open mouth? Is he to mount the tree? No; the farmer or his men would see him, and give him a beating. He is to shake the tree, and some of the fruit will fall down, with which he is to regale himself, leaving some on the ground for some companion who may come after him, and perhaps not be strong enough to shake the tree. Pursuing his way, he comes to a torrent, over which the trunk of a large tree serves for a bridge. Then he encounters a young girl leading a goat. What shall he do? Push the girl and the goat into the water, and pass on? No; let him take the goat on his shoulder, the girl in his arms, and cross the bridge. He may afterwards marry the girl, because he needs a wife, and kill the goat for the nuptial feast, and the skin will make him a new apron. Arriving in a town, he is to go to the inn kept by a master; if his daughter shows him the way to his bedroom, he is to keep a guard over himself; and on the next day he is to go about looking out for work. Perhaps he will be offered it by three masters—the first is rich in wood and hoops; the second has three handsome daughters, and regales his workmen with plenty of wine and beer; the third is poor: with which one is he to accept work? With the first he would become a first-rate cooper; with the second he would be happy, having drink in plenty, and dancing with the charming girls; but with the third? He is to be as ready to work for the poor as for the rich master. This discourse, of which there is much more, being ended, the novice attempts to run into the street and cry fire! The companions restrain him, and copiously baptize him with cold water; and then, of course, follows a dinner.

376. *Curious Works on the Subject.*—There exist in Germany numerous works on the rites and customs of various traders; the following are some of them—"The Millers' Crown of Honour, or a Complete Description of the True Nature of the Circles of the Company of Millers. By a Miller's Apprentice, George Bohrmann." We here get into masonic symbolism. One woodcut represents a circle with mystic sentences, and the explanation says that everything was created from or by the circle. Then there follows the history of bakers according to the Scriptures; then a poetically described journey, with particulars of the most celebrated mills of Lusatia, Silesia, Moravia, Hungary, Bohemia, &c. The names of the three most famous millers that, according to the author, ever existed, are placed in the form of a triangle; and the book concludes with an invoca-



tion to the Architect of the Universe. A work of a similar nature is entitled, "Customs of the Worshipful Trade of Bakers; how every one is to conduct himself at the inn and at work. Printed for the use of those about to travel." Another is called, "Origin, Antiquity, and Glory of the Worshipful Company of Furriers; an accurate Description of all the Formalities observed from time immemorial in the Initiations of Masters, and the manner of examining the Journeymen. The whole faithfully described by Jacob Wahrmond (True Mouth)." All the companies boast of their ancient descent, but none more than that of the Furriers, who claim that God Himself was at first one of their fellow-workers, seeing that the Bible says that God made aprons of skins for Adam and Eve—an honour shared by no other company.

377. *Raison d'être of the Compagnonnage*.—The *compagnonnage* may be called an operative knighthood. Its rites, symbols, and traditions are only its tangible form. The necessity for workmen to find, on their arrival in a new town, a nucleus of friends, a rendezvous, a *mother*, in the midst of the exclusion into which the constituted trades corporations would have thrown them, was the *raison d'être* of these associations. The possibility of struggling by means of associative force and the passive resistance of numbers against the oppression of manufacturers, and of equalising forces otherwise disproportionate, was a further cause of the sodalities. In the Middle Ages, in which the central power was barely sufficient to oppress, but did not avail to protect, and when the individual was exposed to arbitrary treatment, and deprived of all means of defence, secret associations on behalf of justice necessarily arose in many countries, Holy Vehms providing for public security.

378. *Guilds*.—The Guilds had the same origin, but can scarcely be reckoned among secret societies, though their influence was often secretly exercised; and kings frequently turned them to account in their opposition to the aristocracy, as, for instance, Louis the Fat, who was himself the founder of an association called the "Popular Community," intended to put a stop to the brigandage of the feudal lords, whose castles were in many instances but dens of thieves. In England, the first guilds of which clear records have been preserved were established in the eleventh century. By the laws of guilds, no person could work at a trade who had not served a seven years' apprenticeship to it. But with the introduction of machinery this custom gradually fell into disuse,





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building had originally been the place where the Kalends Brethren held their festive meetings.

380. *Knights of Labour*.—A formidable association in the United States. It was founded in 1869 by Uriah Stephens, a tailor of Philadelphia. It was a secret society, designed at first merely to supplement an existing garment-cutters' union. For a year or more none but garment-cutters were admitted, but after a time other members, known as "sojourners," were invited to join the Order. In 1873 a committee "on the good of the Order" was appointed to control its growing business. A ritual was devised, and every member took an oath of strictest secrecy with regard to its name, constitution, and aims. Officers were appointed under the titles of Master Workman, Worthy Foreman, Venerable Sage, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Worthy Inspector, Almoner, Unknown Knight, Inside Esquire, Outside Esquire, &c. Each industry had its own local assembly, and its own officers; the local assemblies and the district assemblies again sent delegates to the general assembly, which meets once a year, and whose authority is final. The strict secrecy observed at first was gradually relaxed under the influence of the Catholic Church, especially after the founder had resigned the office of Grand Master Workman in 1879. In 1881 the secret character of the Order was finally renounced. Its chief aims now are those of trade-unions and benefit societies.



## GERMAN STUDENTS

“What shall I call thee, thou high, thou rough, thou noble, thou barbaric, thou lovable, unharmonious, song-full, repelling, yet refreshing life of the Burschen years? . . . Thy ludicrous outside lies open, the layman sees that, . . . but thy inner and lovely one, the miner only knows, who descends singing with his brethren into the lonely shaft.”—HAUFF’S *Rathskeller in Bremen*.

381. *Customs of German Students*.—A fellowship of a very different kind, but still a *compagnonnage*, is that of the students at German universities, to which a few lines may therefore be devoted. The student or *Bursch*—from the mediæval German Burse, *i.e.* *Bursarii*, the college buildings being called *bursæ*—looks upon the inhabitants of the town, whose university he honours with his presence, as “Philistines”; and town and gown rows are as usual in Germany as in this country. All non-students are Philistines, whether they be kings, princes, nobles, or belong to the *canaille*. The students form two grand associations, the *Burschenschaften*, consisting of students from any state; and *Landsmannschaften*, composed of students of the same state only. Each has its own laws, regulations, and officers, ruling according to a charter; but all members of the universities acknowledge moreover a general code, called the “Commentary.” Such as refuse to belong to one of these associations are held in very slight estimation, and are called by all kinds of opprobrious names, such as *Kameele* (camels), *Finken* (literally, “finches,” figuratively, “low fellows”), and others still more abusive. The collegiate students (sizars), called *Frösche* (frogs), cannot take part in the meetings of the *Burschen*. The freshman anciently was called a *Pennal*, from the middle-age Latin *pennale*, a cylindrical box for pens, which the newly-arrived student had to carry after the older students for their occasional use. He was afterwards called *Fuchs* (fox), which nickname alludes both to the timidity of the animal and that of the new student, and its use in this



sense is very ancient, for we find it mentioned in the Salic Law (fifth century), which imposes a fine of 120 pence for applying it to a person. The freshman is also called a *Goldfuchs* (golden fox), because he still has a few gold coins from home. After six months he becomes a *Brandfuchs* (*Canis melanogaster*); to explain the cause of this term being applied to him would take us too far, but his arrival at that state is celebrated with ridiculous ceremonies. In the second year the *Brandfuchs* rises to the dignity of *Jungbursch* (young Bursch); in the third he becomes an *Altbursch* (old Bursch), *altes Haus* (old house), or *bemoostes Haupt* (mossy head. Students who are natives of the university town are called *Curds*, because their mothers can send them, if they please, a dish of that article of food for their suppers. To rise from one degree to another the *Fuchs* has to go through a series of probations, especially putting to the test his powers of drinking and smoking. On his first visit to the *Commerzhaus*, as the tavern which the students patronise is called, he is unfailingly made drunk, at his own expense, and while at the same time entertaining all the "old houses." The next morning he awakes with the *Katzenjammer* (cat's lamentation). He dresses in a fantastic style, wearing a Polish jacket, jack-boots with spurs, and a cap of the colour of the society to which he belongs; to his button-hole is attached an enormous tobacco-pouch; in his mouth he carries a long pipe, and an iron-shod stick in his hand. He endeavours above all things to become a *flotter Bursch*, a student *de pur sang*, and is proud if an "old house" makes him his *Leibfuchs* (favourite fox). The Philistine who offends the students is condemned to the *Verruf* (outlawed); and frequently the students have turned out against the citizens, forming with their *Stiefelwichser* (boot-cleaners, or gyps) an array not to be despised by the military. The cry of *Burschen 'raus!* students turn out! would send terror through the small peaceable towns of Germany. Sometimes they would punish the town by leaving it in a body, and only return on their terms being agreed to. Such emigrations took place at Göttingen in 1823, at Halle in 1827, and at Heidelberg in 1830. A few details of these "emigrations" may be amusing. On the last-named occasion the students, who had again secretly formed a *Burschenschaft*, put under the ban the Museum of that town, because the rules for its management displeased many of them. For this the ringleaders were seized and brought to trial. But on the cry of *Burschen 'raus!* all the students, hastily snatching up what





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the sentence itself, its origin is not explained thereby. The fact is, the word is a corruption of the French *Bec jaune*, shortened into *Béjaune*, literally, a yellow beak (the German *Gelbschnabel*), a term applied to a young, inexperienced person (because young unfledged birds have yellow beaks); the French term is *blanc-bec*, meaning a greenhorn. The word *béjaune* in mediæval Latin became *Beanus*. Sometimes, by way of variety, the *beanus* was called a *bestia cornigera*. It would seem that a trace of this appellation has survived at Cambridge, where a student, who has not come into residence, and thus has no claim to be called a “Varsity man,” is necessarily a *beast*. On arriving at the university the *Beanus*, or modern “Fox,” announced himself to the dean of the philosophical faculty, and prayed that he might through the deposition be received among the students. When the *Beani* amounted to a certain number, the dean appointed a day on which to celebrate the deposition; and summoned, besides the *Beani*, the depositor with his instruments, and an amanuensis. They appeared on the appointed day before the dean; the depositor in the first place put on a harlequin’s dress, caused the *Beani* to attire themselves in the same style, and put on them other ludicrous articles of dress, especially hats and caps with horns, and distributed amongst them the instruments with which the deposition should be executed—coarse wooden combs, shears, axes, hatchets, planes, saws, razors, looking-glasses, stools, and so on. The depositor then marshalled the *Beani* in rank and file, placed himself at their head, and conducted them to the hall, where the deposition should be performed, and there addressed a speech to the dean and the spectators, who consisted of students. The depositor commenced the deposition by striking the *Beani* with a bag filled with sand or bran, and compelling them to scamper about with all manner of laughable gestures and duckings in order to escape the strokes of the sand-bag. He then propounded to them certain questions or riddles, and they who did not answer them quickly received so many strokes with the sand-bag, that the tears often started from their eyes. The *Beani* then gave up the instruments which they had held in their hands, and laid down on the ground, so that their heads nearly touched each other. The depositor then planed their shoulders, filed their nails, pretended to bore through and saw off their feet, hewed every limb of their bodies into shape, knocked off their goat’s horns, and tore out of their mouths with a pair of great tongs the satyr’s teeth stuck in on purpose. The *Beani* were then caused



each to sit on a stool with only one leg. The depositor then put on them a dirty napkin, soaped them with brick-dust, with shoe-blackening, or even viler and more filthy matter, and shaved them so sharply with a wooden razor that the tears often started from their eyes. The combing with the wooden combs was equally rough, and after the combing their hair was sprinkled with shavings. After all these operations the depositor with his sand-bag drove them out of the hall, took off his grotesque attire, put on his proper costume, and commanded the Beani to do the same. He then reconducted them to the hall and commended them in a short Latin speech to the dean, who replied also in Latin, explaining the custom of deposition, and adding much good advice. Luther, who occasionally presided at such ceremonies, and was not superior to the coarse tastes of his time, found in the *depositio* a figure of human life, with all its troubles and misfortunes. The dean finally gave to each of them, as a symbol of wisdom, a few grains of salt to taste, scattered in sign of joy some drops of wine over their heads, and handed to them the certificate of the accomplished deposition. The last ceremony of this sort is said to have been performed by a professor of Altdorf (Bavaria) in 1763. The university of that town, founded in 1622, was merged in that of Erlangen in 1809.

It is scarcely necessary to point out the analogies between the above initiation into student life and that into the ancient mysteries and modern Freemasonry; the disguises, trials, addresses, and whole ceremonial are all on the model of the secret society, most of them foolish, and not a few barbarous. Hoffmann's *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr*—"Opinions of the Tom-cat Murr," or, as we might say more briefly, *Tom Murr*, is a capital satire on German student-life. The German scholar—there is, as far as I know, no English translation of the work—may there see how "Tommy" becomes a *Flotter Katzbursch*. The political secret associations of the Burschenschaft are described in Book XIII.









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