



THE COMING AGE

Death:
the
great
adventure.

THE COMING AGE



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MEDITATIONS:

Divine Life^o

What is She not, the Spirit, My Mother? The stars She is and the boundless sea, the sun and the endless night; the mountains and the storm and the wild north wind She is, the growing of a blade of grass. Her abundance hath no ending, nor Her unbounded richness; for all these things are but a breath to Her. The stars and galaxies, the endless night of space, the day of all time from its dawn to its even; all these are but the flickering of Her eyelid.

Samhain^o

What art thou, maid, but a bright wave? Thy matter is a wave upon the sea, and thy spirit as a sun-beam piercing through it and filling it with brightness. And truly, each ray of that Sun is eternal, even as She herself; yet a wave shall last but for a moment ere she return to the sea. So shall thy flesh return to the earth that bare it and thy mind decompose into air; but the ray of thy spirit shall have no end, for the ray is the sun herself, and so is thy spirit the Spirit Herself.

Mysteries of Life

The pattern of a human life, like the pattern of the year, is a microcosm of the Cosmic Drama. The illustration on page 16 shows this pattern imposed upon the Great Pentacle of the seasons, the elements and the Rosary. These notes are given to assist meditation upon it.

Childhood, the Spring of life, is governed by water, the element of emotion; and in childhood we are the playthings of our passions. Water is also pliable and soft, taking the shapes of the things that surround it, yet remaining in essence itself.

Youth, the Summer of life (in matriarchal tradition, youth continues much later than in modern usage), is governed by the fire of energy. It is the time of action and achievement, of passion, not passive as in childhood, but tamed and directed.

Maturity, the fruitful autumn. A time of settling and establishment of youth's achievements, governed by the stable and solid element of earth.

Age retires from earth-concerns, and turns to those things nearest spirit, governed by air; yet no stage has been beyond sight of spirit, thus is this time well-prepared. And air strains toward the fifth element, the incorporeal aethyr. Thus it returns whence it came, and the wheel may begin again - on a higher level if all has proceeded aright.

Water is the raw *materia*, fluid and passive; it is disciplined and becomes fire, fluid and active; having found shape, it solidifies and is earth. Earth is transposed to a higher and more rarefied level, becoming air, which is subsumed into formless aethyr which shall pass into water again. Let the heart of contemplation understand.

^oTaken from *The Teachings of the Daughter*.
(available through the Literature Circle)

Death

The Great Adventure



gotten, swept under the carpet. Death is the great taboo of the uncensored society.

Yet death is nothing to be feared. It is simply the transition from one state of existence to another. The macabre aspect of death has its place in the total picture, for like all natural phenomena, physical death has a symbolic dimension*, and on one level it symbolises the far deeper and more terrible reality of spiritual death. But to fear this common transition of the soul in physical death is simply the fruit of ignorance.

Birth and death are regular recurring events in the life of every soul, as she passes from one state to another. Like the recurring patterns of the seasons, they mark out the cycles through which the soul's growth (or decline) takes place.

Once we have left the body we are no longer subject to the laws of the physical realm. In a sense this brings a new freedom and release, but it is also true that the restrictions of physical matter carry with them a sort of security. Beyond death we may enter a dreamlike existence, confusing and unstable. Worse still, our ruling passions, if they were uncontrolled in life, may now run loose among the dream-matter of this state, creating nightmare forms more real than any dream.

If the mind during life has never lifted itself above the physical realm, if it is wholly undisciplined in prayer and meditation, having simply directed itself toward

Death is the spectre which haunts the modern world. A society which treats physical life as the sole reality and the theatre of all its aims and aspirations can have no hope in death. In the ineluctable fact of death, the desire of profane humanism to create an earthly paradise by the accumulation (or redistribution) of material goods meets its Armageddon. Usually it is ignored, for-

the objects and events of the world of matter, this period can be a difficult one. In this sense, spiritual ignorance not only breeds fear of death, but makes death more a thing to be feared. If a fraction of the money spent by medical science on the attempt to postpone death for a few brief years were spent on disseminating genuine spiritual knowledge and dispelling the materialistic errors created by popular misunderstanding of the implications of the physical sciences in general, a lot of unnecessary suffering could be avoided.


At this stage, the prayers of those still on earth can be of great help in guiding the soul through the labyrinth and in opening her to the angelic* guidance which will help her if she is able to accept it.

Avala

Avala is the golden paradise of the Daughter where true servants of the Goddess are received after death. Some people find this idea difficult to accept - surely there can be no such beautiful land up in the sky - or more exactly "west of the sunset"! In fact this difficulty, like many others, is caused by the over-simplified world-picture of modern materialism. Avala is not a physical place at all. It has been said that Avala is a state of mind, but this gives rise to certain misconceptions and is only partly true. The crudest misconception is that of the materialist who says "Oh well, so long as it doesn't *really* exist..." (we

* An angel (literally "messenger") is the servant of a Genia - a lesser being working within her particular "stream".

*See "The Mirror of Wisdom" p.6.



have actually met such people). This, of course, is based on the mistake of supposing that real existence equals physical existence. But even on a more sophisticated level, the explanation of Avala as a state of mind still lessens its actual reality for most people. After all, on this earth most of our experience comes through the five physical senses. Inward mental experiences only operate through one part of our receiving capacity - they are not "total" experiences. But when we no longer have part of our receiving capacity deployed in physical senses, a non-physical experience can become "total". As real as any earthly experience is now. Dreams give us a faint shadow of this, and in the higher levels of spiritual contemplation we can experience it fully in this life. That is one reason why such contemplation is an important preparation for death.

But beyond this there is the implication that a state of mind is merely subjective and personal, that it contains no "outside reality". In this world we experience three kinds of matter: physical, emotional and mental, and most "outside reality" comes to us through physical matter by means of the senses (not all, though - in telepathy, for example, it can come through mental matter). But there are many other levels of matter; some "lower" than the physical, others "higher" than the mental*. In Avala, the "outside reality" consists of super-mental matter.

All this may seem very abstract - and, of course, it is. We cannot, in this world, conceive of matter above the mental level. But the traditional image of the golden paradise gives a very good picture of the real experience of Avala. And indeed many people who have faint memories of Avala describe that golden land, for the mind translates the experience into an image which it can understand in its present state.

In Avala we have not reached the pure completion of Spirit. We are not beyond the veil of matter, but we are surrounded by the pure love of the Daughter, transmitted

*All this is leaving aside Spirit, which is beyond any form of matter.

through the highest levels of matter, far above the physical.

Hells & Purgatories

There is a Hell - or more exactly, there are hells. But they have nothing to do with the Christian conception of eternal damnation. Damnation is to be cut off from God with no hope of recovering Her; but the sacrifice of the Daughter has brought Her onto every level of fallen creation. There is a Hell of sheer damnation, but through Her sacrifice, its gates have been shattered (*Mythos VI*, 13), and the only Being to have suffered the agony of damnation is She Herself.

On the other hand, to deny that it is possible to enter a state of great suffering is fatuous, since it is obvious that some souls are already in such a state on this very earth. States of suffering are not "punishments", they are simply the natural result of moira built up by wrong actions and choices in this life or in others. Hells beyond this world exist in sub-physical matter inhabited by "demons" or perverted intelligences who have so far rejected the Principle of Good (Who is God Herself) as to be in the active service of evil. Yet we are not lost. The Presence of the Daughter is in all places and states, and as always, the choice is ours whether we turn toward Her or plunge deeper into evil and suffering.

All suffering contains the possibility of purification. In this sense, all hells are purgatories. But the term purgatory is often used to mean that state in which a soul "relives" her life, seeing all its acts in the light of the pure spiritual standard, and feeling the deep inner pain of her wrong actions, or else is drawn into the whirlpool of her life's passions and obsessions, re-enacting them until they sicken her, but unable to stop, carried along by the passion-momentum built up during her life.

Preparing the Way

Between Avala and the hells lie numerous states of differing degrees of happiness and suffering.

Our position after death is very deeply bound up with our actions in this life. If we make a practice of carefully examining our conscience and coming to a true repentance of the wrongs we have committed we will neutralise a great deal of the moira associated with them. To do this, we must hold our actions under the pure light of spiritual perfection (some guidance from a priestess or other spiritually experienced person can be of help here). It is sometimes suggested that one should go over the day's actions before retiring each night. The practice of penance is also helpful. We will not then be without moira, but this, together with the improvement in conduct which will accompany it, will prevent it from accumulating in large "knots".

The practice of regularly detaching the mind from the earth-plane in meditation is a discipline which will make the soul far more capable and at home once the physical detachment has taken place. It will also give her the power to rise above "desire-whirlpools". The physical world is like a box that both supports and constricts us. If we simply lie on the floor, allowing the box to support us - being completely dependent emotionally and mentally upon physical things - when the box disappears we will suddenly be without support. But if we are pressing against the ceiling, using the floor simply as a support in our attempts to rise beyond the box, then when it disappears, we will be released, and will soar upwards.

The modern world encourages us to lie on the floor, immersed in material things. Profane society has much to answer for, but of all things this is the greatest. For it is only when we are reaching beyond the world that we can understand the world in all its beauty; and it is only when we know that the meaning of the world is beyond

the world that death can become what it should always have been - the greatest adventure of our life.

Sister Alethea

RESS... WORK IN PROGRESS...



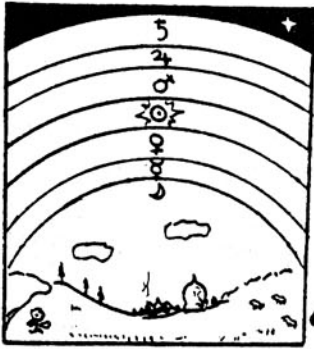
HALF-CALENDARS: Full calendars for this year are still available at 60p post free. Half-calendars covering the rest of this year up to the Spring Equinox are available at 45p. Both include major and minor festivals, natural rites, correspondences for each day of the sacred and secular years and other information and are delightfully illustrated.

TAROT: Work is under way on a reconstruction of the original Madrian-matriarchal Tarot "a meditational path and a living repository of esoteric wisdom". The project will not be completed for some time yet, but the illustration for the Death article on this page gives a suggestive preview.

SILVER TEMPLE: The project to build an astral-etheric Temple in the subtle realms has attracted great attention since our last issue. An illustrated leaflet giving full details

and instructions has been produced. Just send two stamps to "Temple Project" C/O TCA.

ACADEMY; APOLOGIES & EXCUSES: Again the foundational diploma in Madrian philosophy, criticism and metaphysics has been delayed. Apart from various holdups, the main problem has been the difficulty of taking what has traditionally been a very full system of education passed orally from generation to generation as part of a whole way of life, and compressing it into the confined space of a correspondence course. However, we are slowly sorting out both the limitations and the possibilities, and the prospectus should be available soon. Send a stamp to get your copy as soon as it is ready.



The Mirror of Wisdom

An Introduction to the Science of Symbolism

A ranya was once asked by her pupil, "Madonna, what is a symbol?" to which she replied simply: "Everything". This answer contains the whole truth about the science of symbolism; for everything in the material world is a symbol. We live in a world not of Real-

ities in the truest sense, but of symbols. Modern materialism has taught people to speak of "the real world" when they mean only the world of physical appearances. Of course, physical things are realities on their own level, but they are not ultimate Reality.

Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, the Divine, is the source and origin of all lesser realities. Lesser realities may be said to be divine ideas expressed on various levels of being. Physical matter is simply one of these levels. That is why it is absurd to seek for the ultimate truth of things by probing into their physical structure. It is like searching for the meaning of a book by measuring the thickness of the pages or the blackness of the print.

All physical things, from an insect to a star, are in continual flux. They are born, go through a succession of changes and die. The whole material realm is a realm of impermanence, birth, growth, decay and death. This is true not only of physical matter, but also of the subtler forms of matter such as the mental and the emotional (or astral).

All material things are limited, exhaustible, perishable and relative. They do not and cannot exist merely in their own power, but are the "lower" reflections of That which is unlimited, inexhaustible, eternal and absolute. Absolute Reality is the continual sustaining Principle of material things. The world of matter is like a mirror - or rather a series of mirrors - reflecting Reality on progressively lower and denser levels (the lowest from the point of view of our present earthly existence is that of physical matter).

The Absolute Principle from which absolute Reality flows is God Herself (it is currently fashionable in certain circles to

refer to the Absolute Principle as "it", or as a "force". This reflects a pseudo-spiritual perspective which has not broken away from the assumptions of materialism. Emotional matter is higher than physical matter, and mental matter higher than emotional matter. The Absolute is infinitely higher than either, but obviously She will be *more* like a thought than like a stone, and more like a Personality than like a "force". The attempt to picture super-physical Reality as a sort of parody of physical science is superstition in the strictest sense of the word. It also ignores the profound significance of symbolism). Every Real thing is a pure expression of a facet of Her infinite Personality. But because we have turned from Her at the dawn of time, we can no longer exist in absolute Reality. Having cut ourselves off from the Principle of existence, we should logically cease to exist, but through the sacrifice of Her Daughter, God has created levels of half-existence or relative reality on which we can continue to exist (or partly-exist). The sheer splendour, the sheer *reality* of full existence would overwhelm us. Until we become perfect, we cannot return.

Yet the relative world contains a complete reflection of absolute Reality. Everything "below" corresponds to something "above". This is the true secret of symbolism. With this key, the science of symbolism takes on its true function as a path back to Perfection. Without it, it remains a mere academic exercise, or else (in the case of certain pseudo-esotericists and profane "psychologists") something far more dangerous and sinister.

The crucial fact is that the symbolic significance of physical things is *not* something manufactured by the human mind,

either consciously or unconsciously. It is a vital and inalienable part of the nature of the things themselves. It is not true to say that the moon is merely a rocky satellite orbiting the earth. That is only one aspect of its reality. It is also a symbol of the Daughter on one level and of the human psyche on another, as well as a whole complex of subordinate meanings. This aspect is just as much a part of its ontological reality as is the physical aspect. In fact, rather more so, for the moon, like all things, reflects a higher, or super-physical Reality. Now there is obviously no physical moon in the super-physical realm, but there is the essential moon-ness of which our physical moon is a reflection. Therefore it is true to say that the *essential* moon existed long before the physical "echo" was born, and will exist long after it has passed away. Or, to put it another way: the physical aspect of the moon's reality becomes redundant as soon as we have ascended above the physical sphere, but its spiritual aspect continues up through every plane of existence.

Similarly, the sun is a symbol of the Mother, and every phenomenon of nature, from the passage of the seasons to the humblest wildflower is a shadow of eternal Truth. Once we have understood that the symbolic aspect of things is not an arbitrary convention but an independent reality with a complex inner dynamic of its own, it becomes possible to understand that the female image of God - in which She revealed Herself to humanity, and which humanity accepted for the vast majority of its history - contains an essential symbolic revelation of Her true nature, whereas the male image which has dominated the patriarchal cultures of the last few millennia, contains the seeds of violence, discord and eventual materialism.

It should be added that it is no argument against symbolism to point out that the moon only appears to wax and wane from the perspective of earth, that the sun

does not really rise and set, that the heavens are not "above" the earth, etc. To call symbolism "pre-scientific" on these grounds only reveals the narrowness and unintelligence of the materialist outlook.

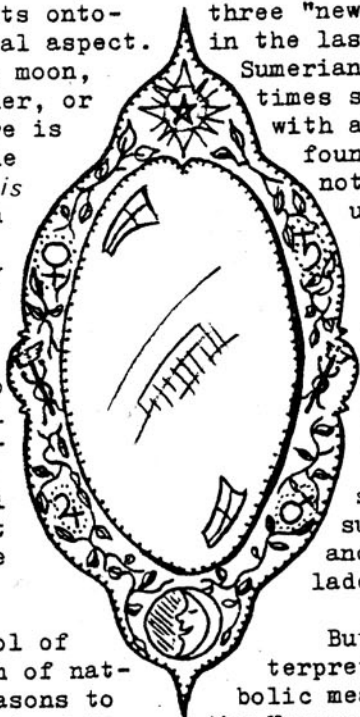
The seven visible "planets" have always symbolised the seven major spheres of existence and their respective Geniae. That three "new" planets have been rediscovered in the last few centuries alters nothing. Sumerian seals dating back to matriarchal times show the solar system complete with all its planets. The matriarchal founders of astrology were guided not by ignorance, but by a profound understanding of the science of symbolism.

There is no such thing as accident in the universe. The natural and immediate way in which phenomena present themselves to maid always has a profound significance. Even a manifest impossibility (in physical terms) such as "the land west of the sunset" is based on this natural and immediate world-picture, and is laden with inner meaning.

But in fact at every level of interpretation, the universe carries symbolic meaning. The blue sky represents the Heaven of the Geniae, but it is only a trick of the light. The physical "reality" is the dark abyss of space, which represents the infinity of Absolute Deity - the Dark Mother, "beyond being and unbeing"; and also of the spiritual darkness into which those plunge who use physical "facts" to cut themselves off from symbolic truth - the cold abyss of those who want to get "beyond" Heaven.

The science of symbolism not only makes the world intelligible, it enables it to serve its true purpose as a spiritual "ladder", helping the incarnate soul toward her true destiny. In any healthy age this science has been understood, and even unhealthy periods have preserved a portion of it. An age which has lost it is spiritually dead.

Contd. p. 9



A LEAP THROUGH TIME...

The Moira Method is a technique for inducing waking-dream visions of past incarnations lived in matriarchal times. Full instructions for this method are given in *The Moira Handbook* together with accounts of a series of "projections", ranging from the earliest reachable period, when people were still semi-physical creatures, to the amazon campaigns of early patriarchal times. The following is an account of a projection not included in the Handbook. Passages preceded by a dot • are questions put to the "explorer" by her "guide".

The Projection

There is bright sunshine. I am at the edge of a forest.

• Describe your feet.

I am wearing wooden shoes - there seems to be a design carved on them, but I can't see it clearly. I am wearing a short dress - well, below mid-calf, tied at the waist and with wide sleeves. I seem quite young, perhaps twelve. My face is delicate; not western, but not oriental either. Somehow faery-like.

I am carrying a basket. It is round in shape and empty - except there's a little straw in the bottom. There is something very neat about it - I can't say what, but its very shape seems to *mean* something. That's true of my clothes as well.

• Where are you going?

I can hear singing - from the woods - well, it's only a little copse really. I'm going there. My sisters are there with their baskets, gathering things.

• What things?

Berries, I think, and nuts.

• Is it they who are singing?

Yes. My mother is with them - not my *real* mother, but one of the women of our household. She sings a phrase and they all sing in reply - it is a sort of chant. She has a high thrilling tone that seems to come

from a special place at the back of her throat. In the Temple they have this chanting tone - or something very much like it.

• Is it a religious chant?

No, it is a story. I can hear the words, but I can't understand the language. But I know it is a story about a maid who went on a long journey. It isn't a dull chant; it has a lively exciting rhythm, but it gets sad in places. It isn't just a story, it has a special meaning, and the maid is somebody very special.

• Why?

I don't know - I can't call it to mind. Everything seems so clear and vivid. I have collected some blackberries in my basket, and each one seems terribly clear - I can't describe how bright and beautiful everything is. It is as if our eyes were clearer, as if we see more than just the surfaces of things - or as if the world is younger and fresher. Something higher - something deeper seems to shine through everything I see.

My sisters have veils over their heads. They are tied back and don't conceal their hair entirely. But my head is bare because I am young - that is why I have wooden shoes as well - they have sandals. They are not blood sisters - or only one of them is - but other girls who live in our household.

• Describe your household.

It has a fountain at the centre. A grassy courtyard with the house all round. It is very bright and clean. Lots of people live there - maybe thirty or forty, I'm not sure. It is ruled by an old lady - she is a magical sort of person. She stays very quiet, but when she is needed, she is there; and she is as wise as a spider.

• As a spider?

Yes. We aren't afraid of spiders - we're called the spider house - but there aren't any real spiders there. It is because we are weavers - at least, the maids are. The men go out on the hills with the sheep and

things, because weaving is a Mystery.

● What sort of a Mystery?

There are two meanings to everything and three meanings to most things, and if you knew all there is to know about weaving, you'd know everything in the world - and beyond it.

● What does that mean?

That's what they say. I'm not wholly sure - I haven't been brought into the Mystery yet. My sister - my real sister - entered the Mystery last year - so she's only a beginner. She says it is wonderful and terrible - and very hard work. But I can tell it makes her happy. Only sometimes she has to go away from us for days and weeks - she's only somewhere else in the house, I suppose, but we don't see her. There are lots of strange and mysterious places in the house, but I haven't seen them yet. There's a whole wing I've never been in.

Oh! She's lifted me up from behind. She's laughing, and one of my other sisters has squashed a blackberry on my forehead and is making marks on my face with the juice. I don't mind. I was rather expecting it. It happens every year to the youngest. I can really feel the juice - and smell it too! The girl who is doing it has bright blue makeup on her eyes, but it is not just a decoration - it means "the heavenly eye of her soul", and don't ask me what *that* means. Now they will carry me to the boys and try to smear as many as they can with blackberry juice. It is a game, and there is a special song to go with it.

It is a special day - to do with the maid in the song - now I know. She is the spirit who looks after our house - a heras. Her journey was the journey of her soul to the Goddess, but also a physical journey she made in her life, and also the journey each of us must make through the Mystery.

The fruits are being gathered for an offering, and tonight there will be a feast. People from other houses will come and bring us gifts - we go to them on their Heras' days, and a Priestess will come from the Temple for the offering in our chapel. Usually our mother (meaning the head of the household) celebrates the rites there, but today she will only make the offering and the Priestess will do everything else. Last year she gave a wonderful tapestry to the Temple too, but that was because one of my sisters had entered fully into the Mystery. My sister hasn't entered fully - that won't come for ages. But before she does, she will have to make something really wonderful either for the Temple or the chapel. There isn't one this year.



They are starting the song, and I am being carried on their shoulders. It is a high song with a laugh at the end of each verse - they really are laughing, but in rhythm with the song. I can see the countryside from here. It could easily be England - but everything is so luminously clear.

The Moira Handbook can be obtained from Lux Madriana at 75p post free.

SAMHAIN MEDITATION

Live each day as if it were your last. It is not the length of your life, nor when nor how death comes that is important, but only how well your soul is ready to meet her.

The Mirror of Wisdom/ from p. 7

The modern idolatry of physical "facts" as things-in-themselves is like worshipping sunbeams and denying the sun. Cut off from symbolic truth, this matter-worship creates a bleak and ugly world dominated by the machine and its soulless products. And this too is a symbol - of the spiritual state which has created it.

Sister Julia



The Perfect Devotion


The surpassing excellence of the Rosary as a devotion, with its combination of prayer and meditation and its attunement with cosmic rhythms and the structure of the Divine action, has long been acknowledged in both East and West.* A certain quality of magic has been attributed to the familiar yet mysterious beads the world over. Always they have belonged to the Goddess, or whatever image of Her has remained in patriarchal cultures - whether Mary in the West or the Indian Great Mother. Visions and miracles have often been associated with them, and the apparition of a heavenly maid, whose words or actions extol the virtues of the Rosary, has often been the occasion of a renewed or intensified use of this devotion. The Madrian Rosary realigns the structure of the beads with the fivefold structure of the universe and the five great Mysteries of the year thus bringing it back to its original completeness and restoring the full richness of its primordial depth and power.

The Rosary works on many different levels, from the lowest to the highest. This is true even of a single devotion, for every part of a maid's being is engaged: the physical body in moving over the beads and speaking the prayers, the thoughts and emotions in the evocation of the meditative subjects, and the soul in progressing through the timeless pattern of the celestial Realities. But it is even more true in that the Rosary is quite literally inexhaustible. Like the clothes of the fairy child, it grows as we grow. The more we use it the more we will appreciate its depth and richness, for although divinely simple, it contains within it all complexities.

*Instructions for praying the Rosary are given in the Catechism. See also "Introduction to the Rosary" and "Three Paths Into the Secret Garden", *The Coming Age 2*.

During the month of Hathor "the Rosary month", every Madrian resolves to say the Rosary (five decades) each day, or, if she already does so, to pay particular attention to the qualitative improvement of her devotion. After the Fire-and-Rose season of summer, which corresponds to the final decade; we return in the cycle of the year to autumn, the season of earth, the golden apple, and the first Mystery of the Rosary. As we become attuned to the primordial pattern of the seasons and their inner spiritual meaning (the Rosary itself is a powerful catalyst in this process) we soon begin to notice changes in our spiritual life taking place with the movements of the seasonal pattern. This continual psychic modulation is always taking place whether we are aware of it or not, but as we become spiritually attuned to it through Madrian ritual and worship, its effect becomes more complete. Hathor is a strategic point in the cycle for making permanent improvements in the depth and quality of our Rosary devotions for the coming year. It is a time of new beginnings as far as the Rosary is concerned, at which we can open up fresh veins and realise new possibilities.

The very perfection of the Rosary can make it prey to a number of difficulties. These are the fruit of the activity of the false self - that part of us which is always trying to drag us further downwards, away from the Goddess. For the false self rebels against the Rosary, and in particular the daily praying of the Rosary, almost more than anything else. Set aside a definite time of the day (preferably when you are not likely to be too sleepy or distracted by the day's concerns). This will act against the false self's ploy of "forgetting" or "crowding out" your devotion. There are also likely to be numerous mental distractions, and perhaps also a feeling of fatigue and aversion. Neither of these are faults on your part, provided they are involuntary, and both provide splendid opportunities for spiritual pro-



gress. A difficult Rosary well performed is a great spiritual achievement. It may feel unsatisfying to you, but you will have made real progress towards the Goddess (you may well be granted a glorious awareness of this some time afterwards). Do not give up the daily Rosary, even for some more "satisfying" devotion, for this will give a spiritual victory to the false self, who will quickly press home the advantage. Above all, never break a Rosary in mid-rhythm.

The meditative aspect of the Rosary will be much enhanced by the lessening of involuntary distractions. There are two important qualities which it would be an immense help to cultivate. The first of these, control of the thoughts and the imagination, which is closely linked with the habit of attention and concentration, can be exercised and developed not only in the context of meditation, but in the activities of everyday life. The application of the student, the magician's practice in visualisation, the artist's disciplining of the creative imagination - all these bear fruit in meditation, regardless of the intrinsic value of the work concerned. Even the most mundane tasks can provide opportunities for exercising mental control. Our thoughts are so often like butterflies or dead leaves in the wind; they lack depth and direction. Try on occasion to bring the whole of your mind and energy to the task in hand, suppressing wandering thoughts. Another time, seize on some thought or image and hold it still in your mind, direct your thoughts upon it, examining it in detail, perhaps elaborating it, contemplating its significance - above all, keep the central idea unwavering. Try to sustain a line of thought in your head or in conversation, not being sidetracked by any chance words; begin by going over a line of thought or conversation, seeing how many times the thread was lost. Try to bring order into your thoughts. Exercise will begin to tighten up even the most sluggish mind and to tame even the most flighty.


The second quality to develop is that of seren-

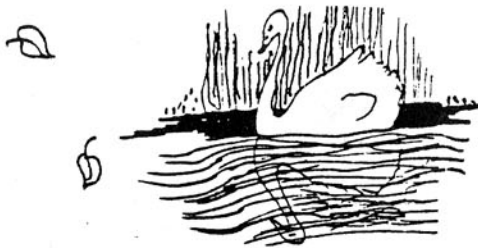
ity or peace of mind, which has its root in trust in the wisdom of the Goddess. Many of us are far more tense and worried than we realise; the first step is to become aware of this, and then consciously to relax the body and quiet the mind. The aim should be to make the mind as a pool of still, clear water, that it may perfectly reflect the heavens.

For more immediate results, the Rosary will be both more worthwhile and more rewarding if a pause is made before the beginning of each decade for brief consideration of the Mystery to be contemplated, and if the prayers are said carefully and quite slowly (though without breaking the essential rhythm). Secondly, allow some powerful image connected with the devotion to impress itself on your mind. Picture yourself saying the Rosary in the presence of our Lady, Who is listening to every word and every thought (as is true, although we cannot see Her). Imagine that each prayer perfectly said is a perfect rose fashioned as a gift for Her, and each imperfect prayer a spoiled rose (She has spoken in a vision of Rosary prayers as roses, and a vision of the Tibetan Mala, bearer of the Rosary, compared mantras said upon the Rosary to pure lotuses). Alternatively, imagine that this is the last Rosary you will ever say; that nothing in your life has any more meaning except saying this Rosary as well as ever you can, for all will dissolve into dust at the last word of the final prayer. To be on the edge of the abyss of time wonderfully concentrates the mind.

The Graces which have flowed from the Rosary are too numerous to mention; this most beautiful of devotions is a treasure-house of our Lady's gifts and blessings. Our Lady loves us to ask, even when She must refuse, so we must never hesitate to devote a Rosary in petition of some Grace for ourselves, or another, or for the whole community.

Contd P.18.





THE COMING festival meaning

Correspondence of sacred and secular calendars for the season of Autumn:

Mala: Sept 5th - Oct 2nd

Hathor: Oct 3rd - Oct 30th

Samhain: Oct 31st - Nov 27th

MAJOR FESTIVALS

DIVINE LIFE (The Feast of Divine Life): 17th Mala (Autumn Equinox, September 21st)

SAMHAIN The Feast of the Dead: 1st Samhain (October 31st)

FESTIVAL OF ARTEMIS 23rd Samhain (November 22nd)

is both a symbol and a physical example of our Mother's life-giving graces, exercised in Her continuous Act of creation, the fruitful earth of autumn in particular incarnates this concept. One of the traditional practices honouring the Presence of Her Spirit in the harvest is the making of corn-dolls, common throughout Europe to the present day. Although in a profane society the making of these corn-dolls has become a merely decorative art, it was once a sacred craft, and the various shapes and structures had their own mysterious and magical significances.

DIVINE LIFE

The outpouring of the Divine Essence in the creation and preservation of existence itself is celebrated in this central festival of the cycle. It is a festival of the Trinity, Mother, Daughter and Dark Mother; for without the continuous life-giving graces of each, the universe would instantaneously crumble into less than dust and all would be black chaos.

The Dark Mother, the most ineffable and mysterious of the three, is the source of all life, Who Herself is beyond being and unbeing. The Mother is the Creatrix of the perfect world of the Spirit where each one of us first came into existence. She is, as it were, the shaper of the raw material of being which emanates from the Dark Mother*.

Our voluntary rejection of that world would have placed us outside existence, outside life itself, were it not for the creation of lower degrees of existence, including our

*More exactly, She actualises a portion of the infinite potential latent in Absolute Deity.

Mysteries of Life

These autumn months see the completion of the Mysteries of Life cycle which began with the late-summer festivals of Regeneration and the Day of Moira. While the earlier celebrations are concerned primarily with the mystery of rebirth and the complex patterns of fate respectively, these later festivals deal more directly with life and death in their deeper aspects. They echo the Spring festivals of Sacrifice and Resurrection, bringing out the meaning of the Daughter's sacrifice in its immediate effects on the material world and human life.

A major theme of the Mysteries of Life cycle is the journey of the soul, which passes through different states of existence, eventually returning to the Source and Sustainer of all life, the Goddess. The primary symbol of this journey is the quest; the ardent search for the pure and the perfect, which represents the soul seeking union with Spirit.

This is, of course, the harvest season, not only for corn, but for all fruits and vegetables. While the whole existence of the material world



G SEASON

gs & celebration

physical universe. This "second creation" was brought about by the sacrifice of the Daughter and is symbolised by the coming of the rainbow (*Creation III*, 1 and 2).

The celebration of the festival includes the decoration of chapels and shrines with the fruits of the season - flowers, nuts, leaves from the new wheat, fruit, pine-cones etc., and with sprigs from the apple tree and the white poplar or aspen, the trees of the day. Central to the celebration is the apple, representing the golden apples of eternal life. Apples, cider and seed cake are the traditional foods of the festival.

SAMHAIN

This fire-festival of late autumn is a festival of transformation, fire being the element of transformation and death the agent of the transformation of the soul's state of existence. The fire also symbolises purification and purgation, part of the experience of many souls after death. This short season, celebrated primarily on its first day, is a time when the worlds are close and discarnate souls may return to their earthly habitations. The souls of the discarnate are expressly welcomed at the rites of this day, and either small "soul-cakes" or candles may be offered in remembrance of dead relatives and friends. Such ritual actions, accompanied by prayer, can be of real help in their journey beyond the world, and may, of course, also be performed at other times of year.

The festival is celebrated with bonfires and fireworks, and the ritual games of Duck-Apple and Snap-Apple. The Apple's continued centrality - for the apple symbolises eternal life, and therefore the life beyond the grave - is also reflected in the traditional seasonal foods of baked and toffee apples.

The other traditional foods of the festival are baked potatoes, parkin and popped corn.

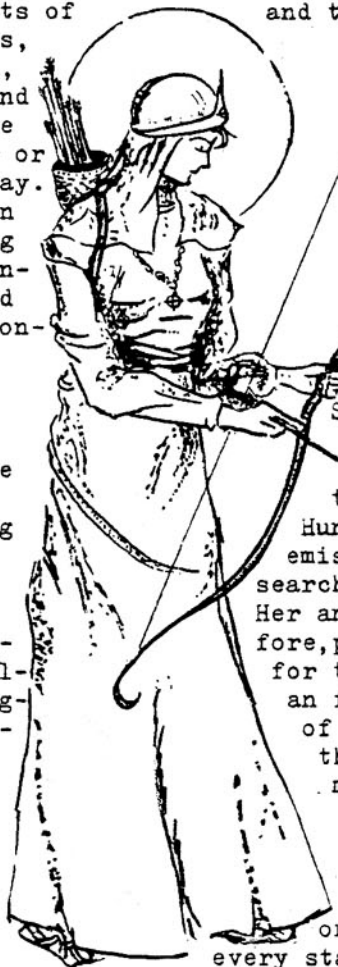
FESTIVAL OF ARTEMIS

Our Lady Artemis is the Daughter as Protectress and Guide of all Her worshippers and of those who are seeking Her in the dark. She is the Maiden of the Silver Bow, which is at once the crescent moon, the first light after darkness, and the weapon She uses as Huntress of souls. For Artemis is ever active in the search for Her lost children. This Her ancient festival, is, therefore, particularly a day of prayer for the advancement of the Madri-an faith, and for the resolution of seeking new ways in which the love of the Goddess may be made known to the world.


As Mother of Ekklesia, Artemis cares for the whole body of her servants, not only on this world, but in every state of existence, including Heras who have attained Perfection and the radiant Geniae of heaven; on this day we remember that we are one with this vast and glorious family.

Unseasonal Note

Nativity cards are now available. Order early! Five different Nativity designs. 40p per set.



Singing Heart

 Caoimhe of the Singing Heart, the daughter of Alanthe the Brave, beloved throughout all the land for the laughter in her eyes and the delight she took in life, grew as tall and slender as the reeds by Ruach Glennan and as gentle as the soft-eyed fawn of Camdene. There were none among the kindred regarded with more full-hearted affection than this maiden, and none lived more joyously in all that green land than she.

It was a bright garland to her happiness and brought her to the brink of a more than human bliss when Alanthe was chosen out as first among the kindred for the sake of her noble mothers and her own deeds of daring. From that time there was a restlessness about Caoimhe, like to the trembling of a young bird upon a branch when it longs, but cannot fly. She was never happier than among the hills or alongside the running streams, where the wild skies above her offered no restraint to her spirit.

One day, when she was again roaming the hills that were so dear to her, she fancied she heard her name called out, and her fancy drew her to the edge of the wood. She heard her name again, spoken in a voice the like of which she had never heard before, but longed to hear again. As she entered the wood, she caught a glimpse of a maiden strangely clad, with sunlight in her eyes and flowers entwined in her hair. She thought the maiden smiled and was about to speak, but at that moment there was a noise among the trees and her companions were with her. When she looked again, there was no one to be seen.

She spoke of her vision, but her companions laughed and said she had but heard a bird singing and caught a reflection of herself in some passing mist or forest pool, so Caoimhe spoke of it no more. But by and by her mother heard of it and was troubled, although she could not have told the reason why.

The High falls of Ganmaoire, one of the most blessed and best-beloved of all the places in that land, summoned maids to it time after time, and it was here that Caoimhe

and her friends found themselves one summer day. And they delighted as much in it as at a first-finding. But into the familiar came the unfamiliar, and Caoimhe saw by her again the maiden from the wood.

"Greeting, sister", she said, "tell me where you live, for I have seen you but once and have a desire to know you."

"I come from the Fair Country" was the answer "where is not death nor sickness nor decrepit age; where is nought to give hindrance to our joy, and our bliss is beyond the heart of maid to comprehend. We live together as loving sisters and there is no false friendship, nor any heart forsaken or wearied with sorrow in all the land. They call us the Fortunate Ones, for we are indeed much blessed."

"Who is she, Caoimhe, that you have speech with?" cried Mellaere the Silver-Voiced, for none could see the maiden save only she, although they could hear her voice. But before Caoimhe could speak, the maiden answered:

"I need no name, but I have come from the Fair Country to call Caoimhe among us, for she has captured our hearts. There awaits her all glory and love and bliss unending. She alone of all this company could bear it, for her heart is strong in joy; but were any of you to follow, your hearts as yet would break for the very sweetness of it. There is a tree by the gate to our realm on which the leaves are as numerous as sands upon the seashore. On each leaf is a little bird, and each bird has its song, and their music is so charmed it would bring a stone to life; and there is no sorrow or distress which can live in the sound of it. Will you come, Caoimhe of the Singing Heart, for with us you will have your heart's desire."

But Caoimhe answered with the first trace of sorrow any had heard in her voice: "I cannot come with you, fair maiden, for strong as is my longing for you, and for your land of wonders, still stronger is the love I

bear my dear ones, my kindred and my native land. The threads by which you draw me are too weak beside the bonds that bind me here."

At this the stranger maid said nothing, but drew out from the folds of her garment a shining golden apple. Handing it to Caoimhe she faded away and made herself into air. Her companions were curious, but Caoimhe had such a strange light in her eyes that none liked to disturb her. She said later that she felt she had been breathing a different air. When one questioned her as to the maiden's appearance, she could only say:

"Oh, she was most comely, more than any I have known. Sometimes I thought she had a look of me. But she was fairer than the moon at the full or than the may in blossom - more than I can say."

Alanthe, when she heard of the words which had passed between Caoimhe and the maiden at the High Falls, was for a time contented. But by and by she observed that her daughter would take no food or drink but from the apple she had been given, which made itself whole again after every bite. She also saw that sometimes her daughter did not respond to those that spoke to her, and had a wistful and pensive expression which was unlike her. So she asked Caoimhe if she were sad.

"No, not sad, mother", she answered, "but often I hear the sound of distant music or

the scent of fragrant flowers, and a longing awakes in me. But it is not sadness, believe me; rather a greater happiness than I have ever known." And by this Alanthe knew that she must lose her child.

A year and a day had passed since the

meeting on Granmaoire, and Caoimhe had had no further sight of the maiden. She was standing with her mother overlooking the sea, and its wildness and beauty awoke the longing in her heart again. It was as though the sound of the waves and the lashing wind and the cry of the gulls were one call: "Come!" And then she saw the maiden once again on the sea shore.

"Caoimhe", she said, and the wind and the waves and the gulls' cry were in her voice. "For the circle of a year we have awaited you. Come where the blossom hangs ever heavy upon the trees, and the branches ever bear life-giving fruit whose sweetness is beyond telling. Come where life is blessed and eternal

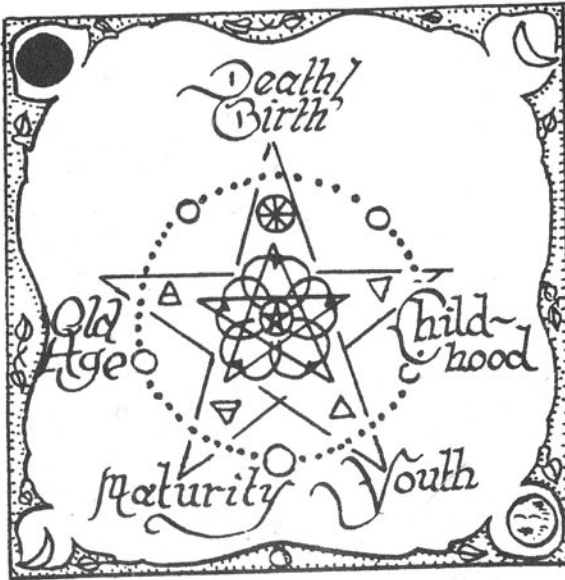
and where the joy of youth never fades. Be one with us, my sister, come."

Then Alanthe spoke to the maiden: "I would not have my daughter interrupt the journey of her soul, so that a thousand years may pass without her taking a step. If such a paradise is yours it is no paradise."

"If such be your concern, do not restrain



The Meaning of a Life



A feature often noticed in accounts of matriarchal life is the great respect and even reverence accorded to old people. It is an attitude common to most traditional civilisations, and one which to the modern mind is almost incomprehensible - as a measure of politeness it can perhaps be understood - but a genuine belief in the superiority of the old seems to contradict all reason. What the modern mind generally fails to take account of is the possibility

that some difference in the whole nature of those times was such as to make old people worthy of special respect; that gave them certain qualities which for the most part they no longer possess today.

Of course, in a world which is not forever chasing its own tail in the endless circles of fashion, or pursuing the will-o-the-wisp of "progress" across the technological wasteland, old people are less prone to get "left behind". But something of a far deeper order is in question here - a real depth of quality which belongs by nature to old age in any society that is not hopelessly cut off from the real roots of human life.

Matriarchal life revolved around Eternity. Its purpose was not to increase to the greatest possible degree the material possessions either of society as a whole or of any particular group, but rather to serve the Goddess and to facilitate to the greatest possible degree the spiritual development of every soul incarnated within it. It was realised that the purpose of human life is not simply to maintain human life (like a signboard saying "Do not throw stones at this signboard") but that a soul's brief journey through a human incarnation has a definite purpose within her development, reaching both before and beyond the present life. And this purpose can *only* be a spiritual one, since all the money, comforts, luxuries, fame, knowledge or skills (in the material sense), power or prestige she has gathered in this life will, an hour after her death, be as worthless as the treasure in last night's dream.

This is not to deny or reject the physical world; for to say that the world is worthless would be to say that our incarnation has no purpose - that we would be better off as disembodied forms floating among the nebulae in prayer and contemplation! On the contrary, this world, beautiful in it-


Singing Heart / contd.

her now, for her soul can go no further unless she come with me."

"Is it to your mind, what this maiden says, my daughter?" asked Alanthe.

Caoimhe turned unseeing eyes upon her. "It goes hard with me", she said "to have to leave the places that I love and the folk who are dear to me."

"You are not losing them but gaining them", said the maiden, "for there is nothing written upon the hills that is not written there also, and the song of your native streams is but an echo of the streams in the Fair Country. And all those whom you love are coming to that country by and by, and you will never lose them."

Then Caoimhe went forward and the maiden drew her to a tiny boat fashioned of pure crystal. And Alanthe watched with tears in her eyes but a greater peace in her heart than she had known for more than a year, as the crystal boat glided through the waves, as straight as an arrow from a bow, until it was lost to sight in the radiance of the setting sun. 

self, reflects the Divine beauty on a hundred levels and leads us toward Her if we live in harmony with its true rhythm and meaning.

And that is the reason for the reverence of the old. For in a normal community not cut off from the wellsprings of Truth, most people in the course of a life accomplish at least something of the purpose of that life. They have grown in the disciplines of prayer and meditation. They have penetrated each into the sacred Mysteries of the craft of her calling; they have gained a certain knowledge and maturity in the Spirit which only long experience of the world, seen in the light of sacred wisdom and brought to fruition by long contemplation, can teach. Even as the corn ripens in the field, or an apple on the tree, so, in a truly human (which is to say a truly divine) society does human life ripen and continue to ripen until it is ready to drop.

We are not speaking here of Heras or saints or even of the outstandingly pious, but of the normal person. There were some who did not reach this maturity, and there is always the problem of senility (much less common, interestingly, among people of any spiritual advancement), but for the normal person, this was the pattern.

Age takes many things from us - strength, sharpness of the physical senses, quickness of the more superficial part of the rational faculty, and eventually health. These are in nature's plan, for it is natural to retire from activity toward the end of life and to turn more fully to the care of the soul. In return, age brings a spiritual depth and maturity, a ripe and mellow wisdom wherewith to guide others along the path: the fruit of a life lived "in themis" - according to life's pattern and life's plan. The reward of a soul that has reaped the golden harvest

which she came on earth to sow. She has gathered that true wealth which will not "evanish as the wealth of dreams" upon her death.

But modern life is not lived in themis. Cut off by its own ignorance from everything that lies beyond the reach of the five physical senses, modern humanity puts its reason to work simply to find more

ways of satisfying those senses - to find ever more sophisticated ways of living at the level of animals. In this life, age still takes everything which it took before, but gives nothing in return, for no spiritual seed has been sown, and there is nothing to reap.

In a Madrian-matriarchal society, life as a whole is the sowing and growing of the seed. Each craft had its own symbolic meaning, and its exercise was not merely a utilitarian act of "production" but a sacred ritual in itself. The craft practised by an individual expressed her own particular nature - it was a true vocation, and not a "job". Modern "employment" treats

people like books used to prop up the short leg of a chair. No notice is taken of their rich bindings (the personality), still less of the unique and precious contents (the soul). So long as they are the right thickness and can perform the purely quantitative task demanded of them, they are shoved in.

Madrian-matriarchal education shows the world not as a spiritually meaningless tangle of accidental "facts", but as a living whole - it looks beyond the outward chaos of physical appearances to the underlying unity.

In the same way, stories, songs, arts,





sciences, customs, manners, clothes and every other aspect of life were governed not by mere utility nor by fashion, but each by its own themis - its part within the sacred ritual which united all life with She Who is the Source and meaning of all life.

By an unconscious but nonetheless unerring logic, each feature of modern life has precisely the opposite effect - its noise, its rush, its constant change, its trivia, the endless flow of banal brainwash from the ubiquitous television, the severance from seasonal rhythms and a thousand other things could have been purpose-made to slice off human life from its super-natural root and source - and in a sense they have been.

In returning to the spiritual fountainhead of matriarchal civilisation - the love and worship of the Goddess - we are re-tuning ourselves to the true rhythm and pattern of life. Automatically our souls begin to respond to sacred rhythms and to cut themselves off from profane ones. But we must go further. We must build a lifestyle wholly in themis, cut off from the dissonant and jarring rhythms of profane society. We must return human life to She Who gave it. Madrian households and communities must become the nucleus of a new way of living.

The task is not easy, but it is desperately urgent - and not only from our own standpoint. For the spiritual dissonance of profane rhythms carries within it the seed of their destruction; all life flows from the Spirit, and to cut oneself off from Her is like sawing off the branch on which one is sitting. Final success is final disaster,

The Perfect Devotion/ from p.11.

A common practice is the saying of the Rosary in petition for nine successive days, followed by nine days in thanksgiving. But whether or not our most obvious desires are fulfilled (this will depend upon our moira) we should know that with the Rosary as our companion, our soul-life is fuller and richer, more in tune with the divine rhythms and closer to our Beloved Lady.

Chrysothemis & Angelina

and the impending spiritual disaster is mirrored on the physical level by the energy, ecological and other physical crises which are rapidly approaching. Neither profane physical science nor profanised patriarchal religion can offer any answer to what is essentially a spiritual problem. They may postpone the symptoms, but they cannot cure the disease. Sooner or later, the collapse must come.

What follows will either be a degeneration into black spiritual chaos, or a return to the true Source and meaning of life. And that may be in the hands of a very few.

Sister Angelina.

S... WORK IN PROGRESS...W

RITUAL MAGIC: The course in Madrian ritual magic running in the Literature Circle has proved overwhelmingly popular, and we have been inundated with requests to produce the papers in a permanent form so that they can be kept for continual reference. We have therefore taken the course out of the L.C. and are offering it as a series of printed papers. The overall course fee is £6.50 (which works out considerably cheaper than making photocopies from L.C. papers). Applications will be psychically vetted. On completion of the course the student may, if desired, be examined for a diploma, and may be considered for probationer membership of a Madrian magical order.

MYTHS & FOLK TALES: The deep spiritual significance of myths and folk tales - primarily centring on some aspect of the soul's journey - has been much neglected. We believe such stories lie close to the heart of Madrian traditional life and would be delighted to hear from those interested in this subject, particularly those who would like to help in the work of recreating and recasting old stories in their original Madrian form.

MONEY: Lux Madriana operates solely on voluntary donations. We badly need some new equipment and our Projects Fund is very low. Please help us spread our Lady's Truth.



SACRED ART

Shakespeare in the Light of Sacred Art

Martin Lings (Perennial Books, £1.50p)

Art is the expression of the infinite. All art began as an activity designed to lead both the artist and her audience beyond the boundaries of the world through an experience of beauty which is a direct reflection of the absolute Beauty of the Divine. Art which has lost its true meaning will quickly lose itself. The debate of the last hundred years between "socially useful art" and art-for-art's-sake, like the debate between capitalism and socialism, is typical of the trick by which profane society erects two equally false alternatives and sets them fighting so fiercely that the truth is lost by default. Yeats wrote in *The Celtic Twilight*: "If beauty is not a gateway out of the net we are taken in at our birth, it will not long be beauty". For proof of this, one has only to witness the exhaustion and decadence of modern serious music, graphic art or architecture.

Shakespeare was one of the last European exponents of sacred art in the literary field, and Martin Lings shows exactly what that means. It is not a vague yearning after the absolute. Still less is it a sentimental moralising. It is the direct expression of spiritual realities, and above all of the journey of the soul on an esoteric path, through a timeless poetic symbolism. But the word "esoteric" should give no cause for concern. This book is not an attempt to foster upon Shakespeare any of the modern creeds which adopt that title and which are usually a vague jumble of half-understood "ancient wisdom" mixed with pseudo-scientific nonsense about quasi-physical "vibrations" and the ever-present "evolution" removed from the sphere of biological theory and applied to anything and everything as a sort of substitute God. No; what is in question here is a timeless actuality which has continued to be taught and practised wherever religion has remained spiritually alive; an actuality common to East and West, and which has its roots in the primordial Madrian-matriarchal

tradition.

Analysing the plays, the author uncovers their inner meaning - a meaning which once seen becomes obvious and sheds its light over the play as a whole. A sense of the transcendent has always characterised the experience felt by any sensitive person in contact with the greatest plays of Shakespeare, but it is a phenomenon impossible to explain so long as the analysis remains on a purely secular and materialistic level.

This book will add a new dimension to the experience of the plays - or rather, illuminate the old, essential dimension with a new clarity. It also has much to teach about the nature of symbolism and of sacred art in general. Above all it demonstrates the impotence of the modern cult of "originality". To conform to the ancient principles is the only path to true expression. Once those principles are lost, art is severed from the transcendent and sinks slowly into the mud. Modern artists, at the tail end of this process, indulge in ever more outlandish and puerile tricks in order to do "something new". In a generation they will be forgotten. While a single remnant of true sacred art towers over the whole of later European literature like a colossus.

ECOLOGY/METAPHYSICS

Man and Nature

Seyyed Hossein Nasr (George Allen and Unwin, £2.95p, paperback £1.50)

As the title suggests, this book concerns the relation of man to nature. First published before the upsurge of the ecological movement, it is nevertheless perhaps the maturest book on the subject. Professor Hossein Nasr recognises that there can be no merely physical solution to the problem of man's disrupted relationship with nature, for its roots are essentially spiritual. In the second chapter he provides a brilliant analysis of the historical roots of the crisis in the spiritual decline of the West, in particular laying bare the shallowness and intellectual mediocrity of the rationalist-materialist thought which has dominated the

last three centuries.

He then proceeds to give an outline of the traditional metaphysical teaching on nature, drawing on traditions of India, the Far- and Middle-East as well as Western hermeticism and American Indian doctrines, all of which have retained at least some of the ancient knowledge of the symbolic dimension of material nature, and its primary function as a "mirror" of spiritual Reality.

The repeated suggestion that the West should return to a revitalised and genuinely metaphysical version of Christianity may seem surprising coming from a non-Christian author but from a patriarchal perspective, it is probably the best that could be managed. The main fault of such a perspective is that it cannot recognise the full extent of the spiritual decline, since, to a certain extent, it is still within it. It cannot see that it is the culmination of a process covering thousands of years in which the patriarchal religions have played a crucial part; nor that the solution must lie not in a single backward step, but in a complete *volte face* - a total return to origins, which is only now becoming possible as we reach the end of a cyclical phase.

Nevertheless, it is a book well worth reading. Philosophically lucid and eminently scholarly - the extensive footnotes are often as interesting as the text - it makes a compelling case for a view of nature based not only on the material and quantitative faculty of reason, but on the spiritual faculty of intelligence.

TEMPLES

Communion with the Goddess: 9-10

Lawrence Durdin-Robertson (Cesara Publications, £1 and £1.25 respectively)

These latest additions to Lord Strathloch's ongoing series deal respectively with Temples of the West and the symbolism of Temple architecture. These complete a set of six within the series devoted to Temples, and deal with Temples to the Goddess under a wide variety of names and aspects, ranging

in time from the earliest archaeological remains to Lux Madriana.

FICTION

The Lost Princess

George Macdonald (J.M.Dent, £2.10)

Written over a hundred years ago, this delightful book can easily be read as a Madrian story - indeed, it is difficult to see how it could easily be read as anything *other* than a Madrian story. As so often when a real "inspiration" takes hold of a writer, whatever her conscious beliefs, the light of the Goddess shines through the work.

Subtitled originally "A Double Story", it is a tale of two souls - a princess and a shepherdess - whose fates are inextricably entwined although their paths hardly cross. Each has come to a stopping point on her soul's journey, and each is forced to confront her moira by a mysterious old lady. Who the old lady is, we are never told - perhaps the author himself did not know - but by the end of the book we are in a position to make a shrewd guess.

Beautifully written and heavy with mystery, excitement and truth, it is a book both for children and the better class of grown-up as well.

On A Moon Landing

Thou, bender of high nature
To thine own pedestrian ends,
Have lied, and lied most grievously, to me.
Have told me that the highest huntress,
Ever resplendent in her silver chastity,
Is merely a fortuitous clod of rock;
And to compound thy lie, have trod on it.

DIVINE LIFE MEDITATION

Place wholly thy trust in the Spirit, My Mother, for She is the Rich, the All-Sufficient. What canst thou lack if thou art Hers? For the whole of the cosmos is Thine.



SYMBOLISM

the apple and the mountain

A riddle: Why is an apple like a mountain?

All things on earth are the shadows of eternal things that lie beyond the veil of matter. If we can see through the "fact" to the Truth that lies beyond, it will light our way to Eternity. This much we know. But let us get down to specifics. Of what truth is a mountain the shadow? of what Truth an apple? If the whole answer could be put into words, we would not be dealing with eternal Truth, but with mere mundane facts, for Truth is beyond the power of reason to grasp or of words to express. Only deep contemplation can reveal its fullness. Yet words can point the way, if we do not mistake the signpost for the destination.

Every apple represents the golden apples of Avala; every mountain is a type of the Sacred Mountain. Both are also symbolic of the Goal or Destination of the soul's quest. In the case of the Mountain, the summit especially represents the Goal, although the mountain in itself has often been the focus of a pilgrimage, a symbolic enactment of the treading of the Way*.

Avala is the Earthly Paradise, for although beyond this physical world, it is still below the level of pure Spirit as the resting place for spiritually awakened but still imperfect souls. The Tree of Life, at its centre, bears the golden apples of life eternal. The word "paradise" comes from a root-word meaning "orchard". Avala and Elysium mean "apple-land". In many traditions, from the Sumerian and Greek to the Aztec, this paradise has been pictured as a mount-

ain-top orchard which, in all earlier and most later accounts, belongs to the Goddess. Thus the Sacred Mountain is Her mountain; the golden apples Her apples, for Hers is the gift of eternal life.

The Sacred Mountain, whose summit is the paradisaical apple-land, is effectively a version of the Way. The climbing of the mountain represents the upward journey of the soul. It has been called the Mount of Purgatory, for the ascent is in itself a purification. The mountain, with its layers or stages of ascent is an image of the cosmos, ascending through higher and higher levels of reality to the pure and absolute Reality. As in many versions of the Way, the divisions of the Sacred Mountain are seven, ruled by the seven planetary principles or the seven colours of the spectrum, and therefore by the seven great Geniae. In Norse mythology, the rainbow, Bifrost, reaches the dome of the sky directly over the summit of the Sacred Mountain, Himinbjorg, thus assimilating the Mountain Path with the Rainbow Path to Heaven.

The Mountain Path is particularly appropriate for this symbolism, because it is a hazardous, narrow and challenging way. Furthermore, the most direct path upwards is generally the most difficult and accomplished by only the most proficient and determined, while others take easier but less direct routes. In the climbing of the mountain, there are often secondary "summits", troublesome obstacles to overcome, just as in the journey of the soul there are minor victories over the false self to be won before further progress can be made. And in both, the factor which alone makes sense of and

* See "The Rose & the Way", *The Coming Age* 7.



gives purpose to the whole is the existence of the summit, the Goal.

Having ascended the Sacred Mountain and reached the seventh, the highest, level, the climber breaks through onto another plane of reality, transcending profane space and entering a pure, sacred zone. This mystical experience directly parallels that of the dancer of the spiral on reaching the centre. It anticipates the breaking of the bonds of physical matter and the ascent into the celestial orchard of Avala.

The Sacred Mountain is situated at "the centre of the world", a mythic location which in part symbolises contact with the absolute Realities behind the veil of matter. It is here also that the Tree of Life and the Fountain of Life are said to arise. The vertical axis of the mountain runs through Heaven, Earth and Hell and forms a link between them. It is along this axis that travel between the three regions takes place.

The three regions of the axis each have their own path, and each path has seven levels, because the seven primordial Genia-principles are reflected in every phase of existence. The 3 x 7 pattern is recapitulated in the Major Arcana of the Tarot; the twenty-one cards (excluding the zero card, The Innocent, who represents the soul herself) form a meditative pilgrimage along the axis, leading to the experience of realisation. We find the same symbolism in the twenty-one pylons of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. The apples of the Tree of Life - which, growing in the heart of Avala on the mountain summit, is at the highest point of the axis in the earthly region - are the fruits of this same realisation.

The axis of the worlds descends from the Tree of Life itself, for its great root forms the pillar of Hell on which the body of our Lady was hanged. This fact enshrines the truth that the golden apples of eternal life have their origin in the Divine sacrifice.

This axis connecting opposites may also be represented by a straight line drawn diametrically through the circle of the year from the Feast of Divine Life at the Autumn Equinox to our Lady's death and resurrection at the Spring Equinox; each the pivotal point of its own "world", the first at the centre of the Mysteries of Life cycle and the second at the centre of the Easter cycle.

The Temple also shares the symbolism of the mountain as Centre and axis of the world. Many ancient temple forms represent



the mountain with its stages of ascent - Babylonian and Sumerian ziggurats, the tiered pyramidal Indian temple and the multiple-roofed pagoda are examples. All these forms go back to matriarchal times. The ritual founding of a Temple re-enacts the Sacrifice of the Daughter, for the spiritual fruits of the Temple, like the apples of the Tree of Life, have their roots in this Act. An image of the

hanged Inanna is often built into the altar itself. In patriarchal times, this degenerated into an actual blood-sacrifice - either human or animal - at the founding of a temple. This symbolism is also important when the Temple or Mountain is seen as a microcosm of the universe, for it is the Daughter's sacrifice which makes possible the existence of the world in separation from the Absolute; and also opens the Way by which we may transcend it.

While the mountain calls forth courage, unswerving commitment and the exercise of hard won skills from the climber, the apple, as representing the Daughter's gift of life, provides both the context within which the struggle takes place and its reward. Thus the mountain represents the human activity in lifting the soul toward Avala and the apple the Divine activity. Yet the distinction is illusory, for even the human activity is only our participation in the Divine, for the whole universe flows from Her love.

Chrysothemis.



FESTIVAL OF ARTEMIS MEDITATION

Though in this place you seem to be a few, and Her servants reduced to a remnant, yet in truth the age of the unbelievers is but a moment in the endless stream of time, and this world but a grain of sand on the shore of unnumbered worlds. In truth you are surrounded by the bright host of Her children, serried through time and space, in whose light the unbelievers are but the remnant of a remnant, and their world but a cobweb in the midst of a glittering palace. And you are one with that shining host; each radiant soul is your sister.

Teachings

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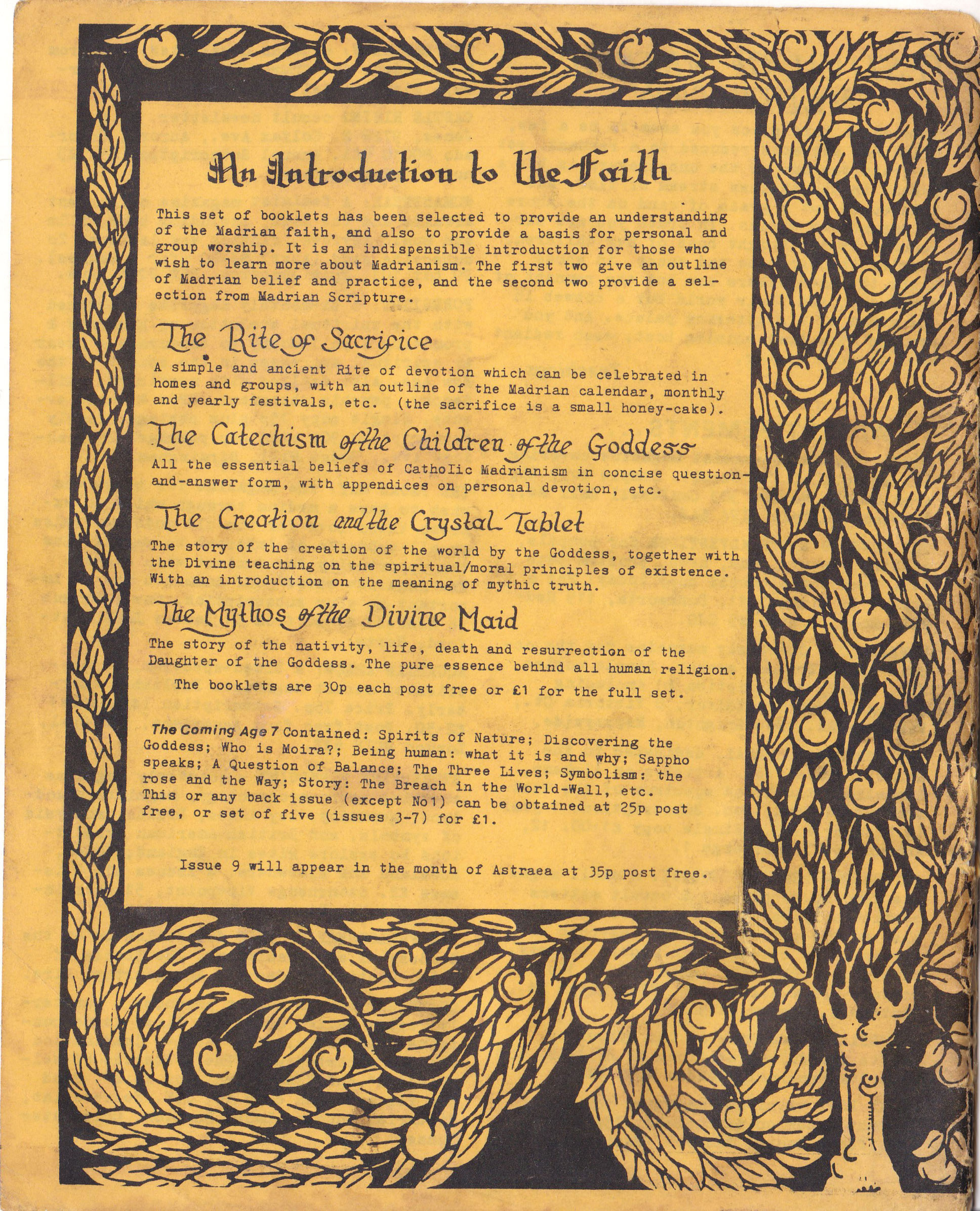
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