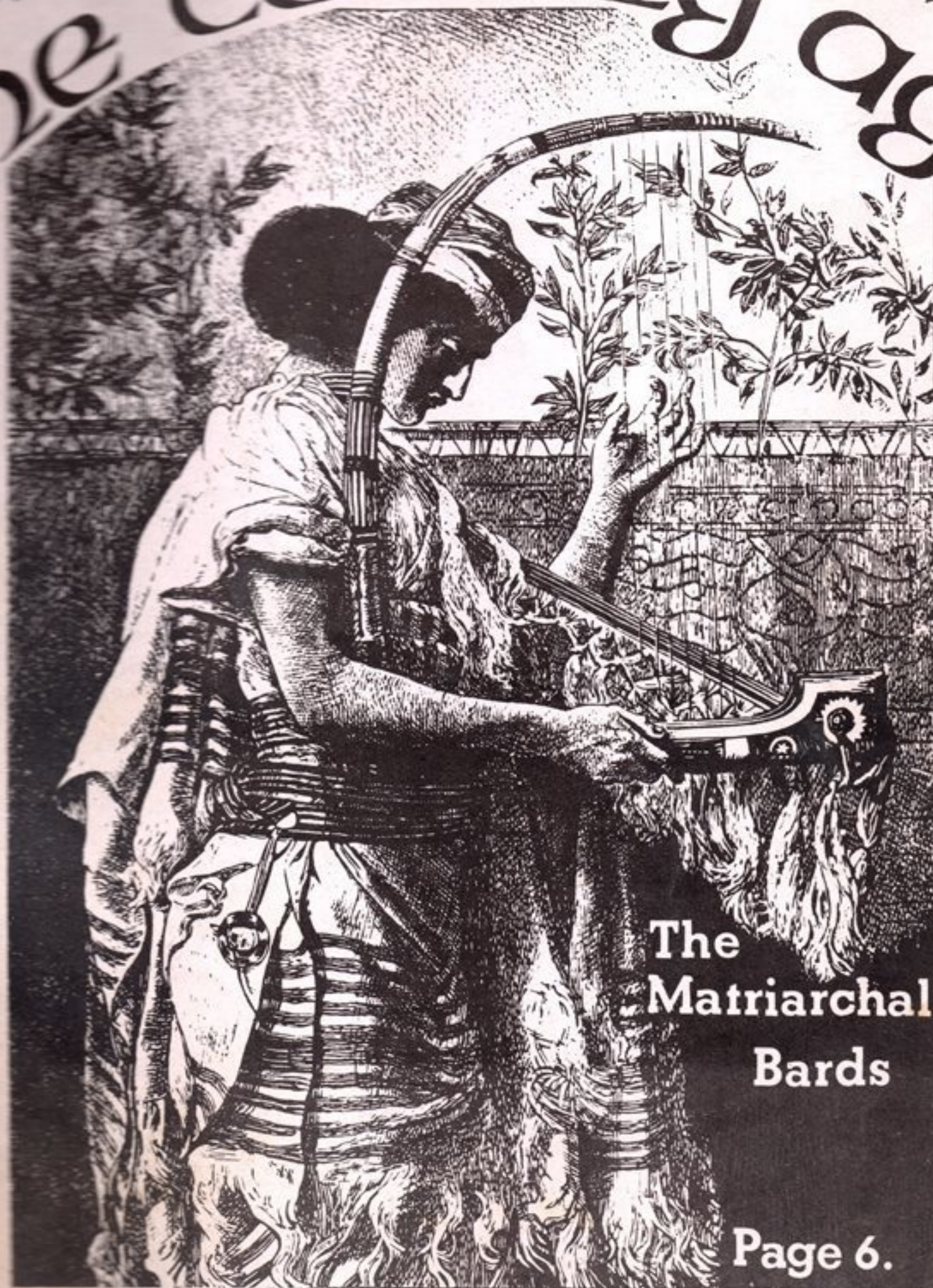


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the coming age 20.



The
Matriarchal
Bards

Page 6.

the coming age



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A GHOST BALLAD

SAMHAIN in particular and late autumn in general is a time when ghosts and other-world spirits wander abroad. This song concerns one of the best-known and most benevolent of the ghostly hordes, Wenver the Hunter. She was Rayin of Cornwall when that principality was one of the last to hold out against patriarchy. She and her hunting party were killed in a surprise attack, and to this day she and her hunters sometimes ride out on a moonlit night seeking revenge on the 'wolves', or patriarchal tyrants.

The legend of the song concerns an illustrious west-country Rhennish family who lost their home and lands to a patriarchal uprising many years after Wenver's death. Beche, the sole survivor of the massacre, was wandering homeless when she met with the wild hunt. She was filled with the knowledge that she and her descendents would inhabit her old home. Returning, she found there had been a fresh raid and the tyrants all put to flight or hanged - whether by patriarchal insurgents or by the wild hunt itself we do not know.

Lines 19, 28: (Phoebe) - the moon. The true Rhennish name for the moon is not divulged here.

Line 25: tho - then.

Lines 35, 39: i.e. "where my descendents shall dwell in this and future generations."

THE COMING AGE: magazine of the British matriarchal tradition. No. 20, issued in the month of Samhain in the year 5083 of the Iron Age.

Wenver's Hunt

Ich wand' red lone thourgh Wenver's wood
That was so proud and free,
And saw I nought but tyranny
So far as eye mighten see;
And my good land, mine moth'ris home, 5
Was henden falsely fro me,
Thus wand' red I thourgh the country
So far as eye mighten see.

So heard Ich then an hunting horn,
Afar and yet full clear, 10
And all my limbs gan quake and chill,
Yet sure I knew none fear.
A maiden's voice rais'd high in song
Came swiftly to mine ear,
And these the words that she calléd 15
For all the world to hear:

Hai to the horses, hai to the hounds
And hai to the victory,
Hai to the night when (Phoebe) is bright 20
And stars are in the sky,
For then the ghostly hounds do run
And ghostly horses do fly,
As I ride forth on my hunting
For wolves and tyranny.

And tho mine heart was raised high 25
And fear was casten away;
Proud Wenver's helm and silvern sword
Shone clear in (Phoebe's) ray,
And all her hounds and hunting-maids
In all their bright array 30
Passed silent into the darkness
An hour before the day.

I knew none fear nor sorrow then,
Mine heart was proud and free,
My step I turned to mine home 35
Where all my childer should be
And in the dawning light I saw
A tyrant hang from a tree,
As I came home to my hearthland
Where all my childer should be. 40

Hai to the horses, hai to the hounds

MANY RELIGIONS



What are they? Why are they? And where do they stand in the light of the primordial matriarchal tradition?

ONE OF THE many elements leading to the loss of religious faith in the modern world has been the discovery of too many faiths. At first the West found this no problem. Christianity was the one true religion — the rest were mere heathens and idol-worshippers. But a closer examination showed that the world contained many beliefs and philosophies at least as intelligent, morally perfect and spiritually profound as Christianity.

Yet in their outward forms — in the things they tell us about the creation of the world, the nature of God, the fate of the soul after death etc. — they appear to contradict one another. How can they all be true? But if they are not, why should we accept one rather than another? Most of all, if there is a real divine revelation, why is it not

known throughout the world as the one universal religion?

These questions, of course, present no difficulty to the matriarchal tradition. We know that in the beginning there *was* one universal world religion: the faith revealed by God Herself to mankind. We know, as modern archæology shows, that up until a few thousand years ago, every civilisation in the world was ruled by maids and worshipped God in female form. We know exactly what that universal matriarchal religion was, because it has been passed down from mother to daughter to our own families, and we still practise it ourselves. It was only when the new male-dominated states of the early Iron Age overthrew the ancient matriarchates that a world of many religions began to emerge.

But what are these religions? Why did they come about? Are they true or false? And why do they take the precise forms that they do? In order to answer these questions, we must go back to the beginning of the present historical cycle, some fifty to sixty thousand years ago. At the dawn of the first Age of the cycle, the Golden Age, all maids spoke the same language; they all had the same culture and the same 'religion' — if religion were the right word to use in this context. But it is not, for 'religion' is an invention of much later ages, when maid's spiritual vision was a special part of her life, separate from the rest. In the first Age, the whole of life was 'religion' — maid's language, her work, her play; everything was simply an 'exteriorisation' of her spiritual vision. Her language was infinitely more complex than any-

thing we could understand today. A few words could convey volumes of meaning. Just as a long passage of a modern language can be translated by a much shorter passage in the more ancient and more sophisticated languages such as Greek and Sanskrit, so the same passage in the primordial language might be but a short phrase or even a single word. Art in this Age was restricted to the simplest geometrical forms, yet it could convey depths of meaning far greater than anything the modern mind can begin to comprehend.

But the laws of metaphysics teach us that such a state cannot last. Just as all material manifestation begins in pure Spirit — the unmanifest Point which contains all the possibilities of manifestation — and then spreads out further and further into materialisation and away from God; so every historical cycle begins in unity and simplicity and gradually gives rise to a civilisation increasingly fragmented.

In human terms, we may say that maid gradually manifests more and more of her inferior possibilities. Her mind, which in the first Age can grasp vast tracts of truth in a single thought and express them in a single word, is able to take in less and less of it at one time with each succeeding generation. Language becomes wordier, for she must have everything 'spelled out' to her. Art becomes more elaborate, for the simple symbols must be augmented with ever more visual 'explanation'. Maid's crafts and activities now have a complex doctrine which must be imparted by ranyas (spiritual mist-

resses). Once maid saw clearly and naturally through the metaphysical transparency of physical life. Now it may take her a lifetime to be instructed in one particular aspect.

At some point along this inevitable course of historical decline — indeed, in its earlier stages — this fragmentation of the Truth began to apply not only to individuals but to civilisations. Just as one maid found herself able to pursue only one craft-mystery, to approach the Truth from only one aspect, or at most from two or three related ones, so entire civilisations found themselves able to grasp only one aspect or fragment of the Truth.

Now since every aspect of life was directly related to spiritual Truth, this meant that a civilisation must necessarily develop an entire culture based upon the particular aspect of Truth to which it was devoted. Slowly civilisations began to develop their own distinctive dialects of the primordial language, which eventually grew so far apart that they became separate languages, incomprehensible to one another.

Each culture kept one part of the Truth and lost others. But there was no question at this stage of 'different religions'. Each culture knew that it was but a part of the Truth — yet it knew also that, like a mountain path, it would lead the soul to the same summit as the others — and that since that Summit is precisely the unmanifest Centre, containing all things, their culture, their Truth, while partial in its external forms, in its inner essence lacked nothing. Even in its outward form it kept all aspects in principle, although some were less emphasised.

Let us not forget that we are still speaking of matriarchal times. For many thousands of years, the great matriarchal civilisations existed side by side, separate in form yet identical in Essence; each with its own laws and customs (its own *sithamē*) but each a part of the greater harmony (*thamē*) of the matriarchal system. But as time went on, the historical cycle descended ever deeper into matter and it was inevitable that fragmentation should increase; that the different cultures should grow further from one another (even as the spokes of a wheel grow further apart as they recede from the centre). At the same time they grew further from spirituality and pure Truth.

This degeneration did not happen in a straight line, but in a spiral. That is to

say, things did not just get worse and worse; rather they became very bad until they reached the 'bottom' of a particular cycle, and then they were put right again, but always on a lower level — a level further from the Centre — than the one before. Probably the most famous example of this is the complete decadence of matriarchy in the West at the end of the Age of Bronze, which led to the fall of the Western Empire and the conquest of Europe by hordes of patriarchal barbarians. Matriarchy was restored by the Great Crusade of the Western Amazons (see "The Great Crusade", TCA 15). But the culture of the Chentrai, or Pax Amazonia was simpler, less graceful and sophisticated than any which had gone before it (though infinitely more so than anything we can imagine), based on the affirmation of Divine unity: "One God alone, none other God than She", and the heroic virtues and simple lifestyle of the Nikhail (Holy War). Matriarchy was restored, but it was scaled down to the stature of a lesser age.

As we know, the Amazon domains in their turn became decadent, and ever smaller leagues of reformed Amazons fought battles against ever stronger patriarchal regimes until they were finally defeated. For it is inevitable that as the world descends into matter the male principle should become dominant. But the spiral was not at an end. Even within the new patriarchal regimes, the process of decline and renewal could continue; each fall reaching new depths of spiritual decay, and each renewal re-establishing the primordial Truth, but on a lower and more incomplete level than before, and one closer to the world of matter. Each time the Truth became lost, some great and wise soul was providentially appointed to teach it anew. Such souls were Jesus, Mohammed and the Buddha. Let us turn now to look more closely at those faiths which remain alive today:

BUDDHISM: One of the most fundamental divisions of the world's cultures is that between the East and the West. The general nature of this division was also clear in matriarchal times, but in patriarchal times the rift became complete. The East lost the truth of God as personal, seeing only the impersonal Way (Tao). The West became enmeshed in the opposite error of seeing God as all-too-human — a sort of divine male potentate — as well as losing such truths as reincarnation. Buddhism, though born in India, took root mainly in the Far East. It was a scaling-down of the East-



ern impersonalist mentality to its bare essentials; wholly replacing the 'objective' Absolute (God) with the 'subjective' Absolute (nirvana); rejecting all talk of God, not as untrue, but as 'irrelevant to salvation'. Thus while, however much they might lean to one side, the matriarchal cultures always understood both the personalist and the impersonalist half of the Truth, Buddhism strips down and streamlines its doctrine and method to the most extreme impersonalism, just as Judaism, Christianity and Islam strip down their doctrine and method to the most extreme personalism. Sai Buddha says quite specifically in his writings: "The personalist side may well be true, but do not consider it. I give you a method for salvation. Just practise that and do not trouble your heads about anything else". In this Iron Age, maid is too unintelligent to comprehend the whole Truth. Let her know sufficient to be saved.

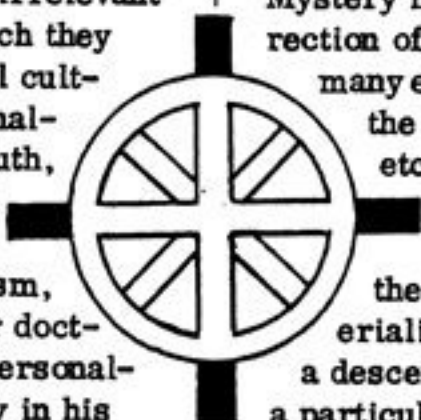
JUDAISM, founded at about the same time (some 2,500 years ago) is the mirror-image of Buddhism: the extreme patriarchal personalist religion. HINDUISM stands alone as having no founder. Its roots go back into the mists of time and merge with matriarchy. That is why, despite superficial similarities with Christianity, Buddhism and other faiths, Madrian doctrine has far more in common with Hinduism than with any other religion. Rather than being destroyed that a new faith might be built upon its ashes, Hinduism has renewed itself from within by producing new cults, new philosophies, indeed new religions, all within the fundamental orthodoxy of the Hindu tradition.

When we turn to CHRISTIANITY, we stand upon the brink of the modern world, for it is the image of the male personal God (the masculinist-materialist principle crystallised into an image) that is the very seed of modern materialism. Sai Jesus was a great and wise teacher; but we must distinguish between his teachings and those of his followers, notably Sai Paul (but not, as is popular in certain modernist 'Christian' circles, in order to denigrate the latter). Jesus taught a doctrine which was essentially an extension of Judaism, but

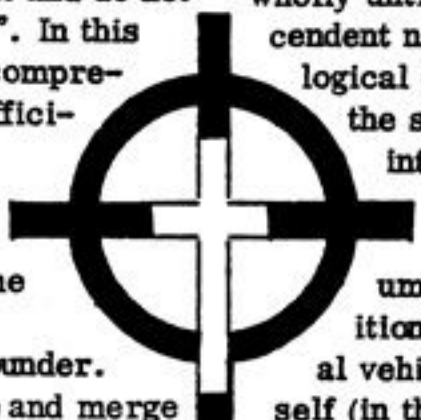
his followers saw in him a type of the slain and resurrected God — the central mystery of the Western personalist tradition, which Judaism had lost. This Mystery had its roots in the life, death and resurrection of Inanna Herself. In later times there were many echoes of this Truth — Babylonian Ishtar, the Hanged Artemis of Arcadia, Persephone etc. Later still, male forms were invented — Attis, Osiris, Tammuz, etc. Jesus (in the eyes of his followers) was the last of these, but his cultus took the masculinist-materialist tendency one stage further, postulating a descent into material history, and God dying on a particular piece of ground in a particular year under a particular provincial official named Pilate. This bringing of Eternity into time; this wholly untraditional denial of the eternal and transcendent nature of archetypal Events was at once the logical outcome of the image of a male god, and the sowing of a seed which must inevitably grow into modern 'scientific' materialism.

This is not to deny the beauty of the religion which has preserved for a millennium most of the matriarchal festivals and traditions of Europe, as well as being a providential vehicle for the manifestation of our Lady Herself (in the guise of Mary) to countless millions of souls in the Iron Age. It is only to say that being at the particular turn of the spiral it was, it could not have been otherwise. Thomas, who would not believe until he had put his fingers in Christ's wounds, was the first rumble of the explosion of crass materialism which took place seventeen centuries after his death.

However, modern materialism was not the product of a single culture, but of the encounter of two. Christian Europe was little more than a barbarian wilderness on the fringes of civilisation until it learned the arts of civilisation from another, younger culture: that of ISLAM. This last of the patriarchal religions mirrors in many respects the last of the matriarchal cultures: that of the Amazons. Both are centred upon the unity of God, and the Moslem Jihad directly parallels the Amazon Nikhail. Many other aspects of the two cultures may be compared. By this, among other things, we may know that Islam is the last of the world religions and that all independent 'revel-



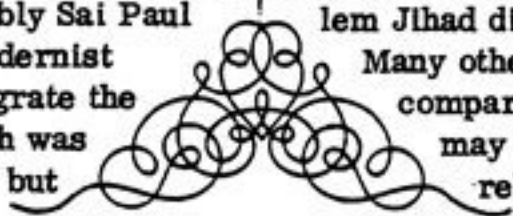
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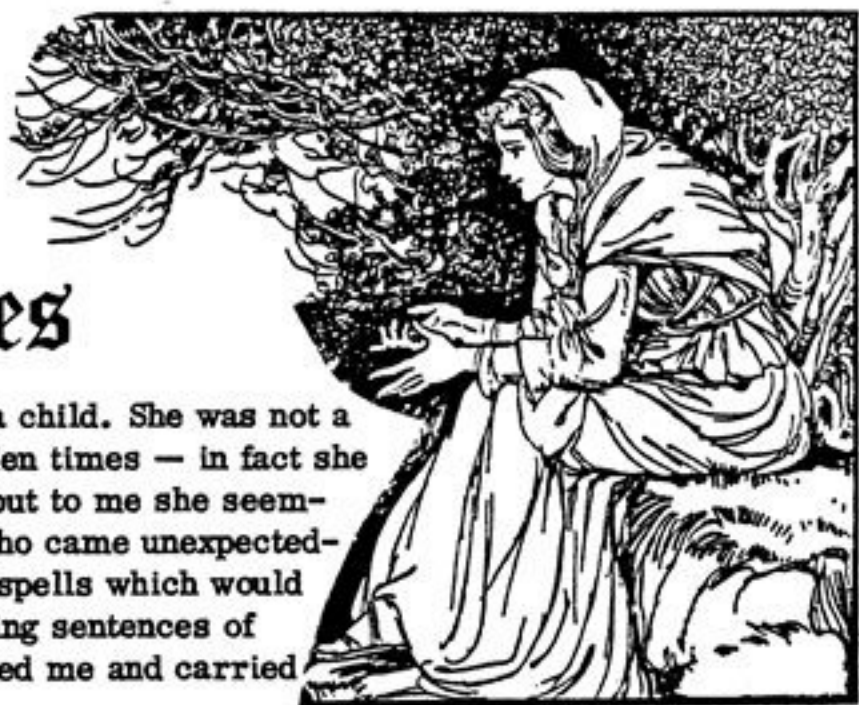
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Truth



The Art of Telling Tales



THERE WAS A BARD came to our house when I was a child. She was not a bard by profession like the wandering minstrels of olden times — in fact she was an aunt of mine who lived on a farm not far away; but to me she seemed, like those ancient bards, a creature of the wind who came unexpectedly from nowhere with the power of incantation to bind spells which would open the gates of a thousand worlds. Her long, sweeping sentences of lilting Rhennish, half music and half speech, enwrapped me and carried me wherever the story went.

A million miles of wilderness lie between these traditional tales of my youth and the modern novel or television programme. For the former, like all traditional tales, are not simply 'entertainments' which we stand apart from and 'listen to'. They are spiritual journeys upon which the soul embarks and in which she is utterly absorbed, with no part of her 'standing outside' and merely observing. She does not simply 'hear a story about a beanstalk' — she climbs the beanstalk herself.

To the modern person this may seem strange.

ations' dating from after this time are spurious.

This survey has been all too brief. We have dwelt but little upon the glories of the great religions; we have not touched, for example, the question of Mahayana Buddhism, and a much longer treatise on the whole subject must at some time be made (some related issues are considered on pages 17 and 23). But the very mention of this profusion brings us back to the beginning of this essay. The stripped-down, streamlined religions can no longer satisfy the soul in an age when we are confronted with all of them at once. Their very simplicity and 'economy of the Truth' is confusing when they are placed side by side. They appear to contradict one another. They lead many to believe that all religion is false. This is the final consummation of the downward spiral of the Iron Age. But they can be understood, if only we see them in the light of the primordial matriarchal tradition from which they all come and to which the world must return in the dawning light of the new Age of Gold.

MESTRÉ ANGELINA.

Her experience is usually that when she reads a traditional tale, such as that on page 14, she does so with no great involvement, even though she may enjoy it, while a novel or a film will absorb her much more deeply and she will become fully 'identified' with the characters. Why is this? The answer lies in the difference between the modern and the traditional mentalities. The traditional mind sees all things as symbolic forms expressing some aspect of the Divine. The modern mind sees all things as mere 'accidents of nature' with no ultimate meaning. In the traditional tale there are really no 'characters' at all. The central figure is always the soul, rather than any 'person', or else, on another level, the divine Spirit Herself. She has no individual characteristics, no 'psychology'. Our task is not to observe her, to find her an 'interesting person', to criticise her or to admire her, but simply to be her. The story is in fact a ritual drama enacted upon the stage of the heart. We carry out each of the ritual actions at each stage of the soul's spiritual path. We live through her trials and her triumphs. To a child, this process comes naturally. That is because the traditional mind is the normal human mind. The untraditional mentality can only be produced by years of indoctrination (which is the true meaning of compulsory 'education'). Any young child (provided she has not been injected with massive doses of cathode poison) will easily and naturally make this complete absorption of herself into the story. This is why she will love the traditional 'fairy tales' best of all. But in a normal traditional society, she will not 'grow out of



them'. Rather she will grow into them. She grows from a simple sense of wonder and excitement to a deeper appreciation of their intellectual and spiritual Truth. She begins to understand (as she had always known on one level) that these are not just stories about 'incidents' on the accidental plane of matter, which might have happened otherwise, but direct reflections of the eternal and unchanging spiritual Reality which underlies this world.

The modern maid cannot comprehend this. She has been indoctrinated into seeing this world of accidents and incidents as all-in-all. Therefore she cannot go deeper and deeper into her stories. The dimension of depth is precisely what has been cut off from her universe. So instead of depth she demands breadth — more incidents, more character, more emotion, more psychological observation, more social criticism etc. etc. In short, ever more of the superficial accidents of the material world. And it is by plunging herself into these that she is able to 'identify' with the story. She cannot become fully involved with the 'two dimension-



al characters' of traditional tales; for being blinded to all that is of a universal order, she can understand stories only in terms of individual psychology. Her complaint, as with all traditional art, is that they are not 'realistic'. But that is precisely the point. All traditional art depicts the underlying Realities of being. It has no interest in the material accidents of the world, whether physical, emotional or mental, but sees through them to their transcendent Archetypes. All modern art seeks to depict only the material accidents — the shadows of Reality thrown upon the veil of matter.

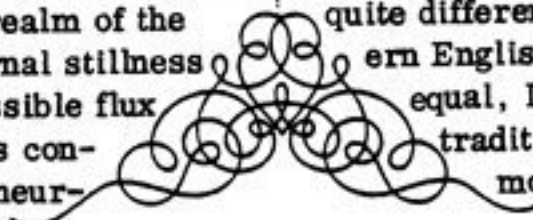
It is because it dwells solely in the flux of changing matter that the modern mind is so easily bored. The traditional mind dwells — always partly and sometimes wholly — in the realm of the changeless Archetypes, whose eternal stillness contains the quintessence of all possible flux and movement. It is the loss of this consciousness which brings about the neur-

otic restlessness of the modern world; its constant search for new sensations; its hysterical 'pace of life' and its meaningless cult of 'progress'. All this, as we have noted elsewhere, is what is traditionally called the Passive Life — that life in which the soul is swept helplessly along by emotions, biological drives and external stimuli, a slave to the accidents of the material realm. Equally passive is her attitude to stories. She expects to be 'entertained', swept along by the story. Thus she does not like to hear the same story more than once or twice.

The traditional maid, on the other hand, knows that a story is a spiritual exercise. Her listening is active and not passive. Therefore the story is a total experience. To hear someone say that she did not want to hear a story again because she had heard it twice before would be as in-

comprehensible as hearing someone say "I don't want to drink beer again. I enjoyed it very much, but I know it now." The traditional maid will hear the same story countless times, and each time she will enjoy it more and reach a little further into its inner depth.

The art of telling tales, then, is primarily concerned with helping this active participation in the inner essence of the story. It is told in such a way that it may readily penetrate beneath the surface consciousness of the hearer. Sometimes the tale is sung, as in the ballads, but even when told, the voice is never far from music, for music takes us closer to the Real world of the Archetypes. The old matriarchal bards would strike chords upon a lyre at intervals throughout the telling of a tale (see front cover). In any case, language, poetry and music are always close together in the traditional world. It is said that in the Golden Age maid spoke in verse. I know for sure that our Rhemish dialect, especially when spoken by a skilled storyteller, is a melodious and spellbinding tongue, quite different from the flat, prosaic argot of modern English. Indeed, even if all other things were equal, I do not see how the proper telling of traditional tales could ever be carried out in modern English, for it is a dialect that has





Scenes from a Madrian Childhood

Part 3: MAYAMIJAI

IT IS A STRANGE paradox, though perhaps not a surprising one, that in the modern world, where every emphasis is laid upon 'personality' and 'individuality', individual people become ever less distinguishable from the common mass; while in a traditional society, which cares nothing for 'personality' and its development,

strong, vivid and compelling characters are the rule rather than the exception.

Growing up in a Rhennish matriarchal community, I was surrounded by these characters; proud and noble, irascible and loving, witty and wise. More dignified than any modern person would dare to be, and yet able to join in a game of tag or hide-and-seek with the exuberance of eight-year-olds. Larger than life the modern world would call them;

grown up entirely for the purpose of discussing the accidents of the material world. As soon as it goes beyond discussing politics or the weather, telling jokes or describing emotions, it becomes grandiose and overblown or else shuffling and embarrassed. It has no simple, direct language for portraying the inner realities of life. It cannot encompass the grandeur and dignity of traditional humanity, for it was born in and for a world devoid of grandeur and dignity: the vulgar and superficial world of modern materialism.

A million miles from the modern world is a world where fine, high-sounding phrases may be turned in the course of daily conversation, quite without self-consciousness; where the noble and the tragic and the highest of human sentiments may be expressed without embarrassment or trying to make some footling joke of them. A million miles in spirit, but such a world exists still among the matriarchal peoples of this country. Such a speech can only come from a people which has retained its spiritual integrity. Yet it is also a support in maintaining that integrity, for, among other things, it can at any time run lilting and rippling off into one of the old tales; caressing the soul with its subtle music and leading her once again to her true Home.

MESTRÉ ALETHEA.

but that is only because modern materialism has made of human life a thing smaller and shoddier than it was ever meant to be.

A people that lives in the light of Eternity is not bounded by the provincialism of the present. The distant past and the far future were a part of our daily thoughts. The battles of the Chenti (Western Amazons) and of the Rhemisleague (British Amazons) were fought again by our firesides, and passions ran high over the 'current events' of forty centuries ago. If a Rhennish family was robbed of land by the patriarchy a thousand years ago, you may be sure that they know it to the last yard and intend to have it back even if they must wait another thousand years. After so many centuries we did not and do not accept the legitimacy of the patriarchal tyrant one whit more than if he had invaded our shores and sacked our temples the day before yesterday. Hard, unyielding, loyal, patient; "a people of granite" the prophet Mother Alethea called us. These were the people that I grew up among.

Yet tough as they were, they were graceful in their ways and manners, as all matriarchal peoples are graceful; and tough as they brought us up to be, they were more loving than any Blentish (non-Madrian) community can be. Love surrounded us as children — the love of our parents, our aunts and uncles, our teachers, my mother's craft-pupils — almost everyone I knew. Love is a scarce resource in Blentish society. It is rationed out to spouses, children, immediate relatives and possibly a close friend or two. In a Rhennish community, love is all around us. It is in the air we breathe. Embraces are frequent and heartfelt. There are real tears from the whole household when a friend has to leave. When a Rhenne takes you to her heart, you have a

friend for life; there is nothing she will not do for you, no trouble in which she will not stand by you. Overspreading and underpinning all this love is the love of Inanna Herself, Who is the Friend of everyone and the Source of all love. Amid this love, coupled with firm discipline, the Rhennish child grows up with a feeling of complete security and an inner strength which endures throughout her life.

Neurosis, depression and all the mental ills endemic in the modern world are unknown to the Rhennish people, despite the fact that great hardship is sometimes involved in the struggle to preserve the traditional way of life against the onslaught of modernist patriarchal tyranny.

But to return to my subject. Of all the characters that surrounded me in my childhood, the strongest — although she was also the quietest — was Mayamijai. That was what I called her. It means literally 'honoured great little-mother'; most people called her that. Mayamijai was the oldest person I knew. She was said to be over a hundred. Her hair was silver and there was not a tooth in her head. Her face was serene and beautiful. I think I was closer to her than anyone, for there is a special bond that unites the very old and the very young. The very old have a second childhood; but childhood is revered by the matriarchal peoples, for our Lady tells us to come to Her as little children. Very rarely do the old become stupid, for that is largely the effect of living in a materialist society which forces them to feel purposeless as soon as they are no longer materially 'useful'. The elder in a traditional community has followed the spiritual path of a sacred craft and had a long and ever-deepening participation in all the activities of traditional, God-centred life. Every year has brought a deepening of her understanding of the festivals, the seasons and every other aspect of traditional life. The human animal reaches her prime relatively early and thereafter suffers a long, slow decline into pathetic uselessness. Modern maid, living purely on the animal level of material gratification, suffers

precisely this experience. But the soul in maid, if she is treading the spiritual path of an authentic traditional life, ripens and matures to the very end. She is a richer, deeper and better person at sixty than at forty, at eighty than at sixty.

Thus it was that I had from the beginning a special reverence for Mayamijai. Half-blind though she was, I knew that she saw more than any of us. She saw the subtle spirits of the trees and flowers, and showed them to me. I saw their bright, unearthly colours and their strange, intricate dance. I could always see them when she showed me, and sometimes I saw them on my own. But as I grew older the vision dimmed and finally died away.

"You shall see them again," she reassured me, "if our Lady preserves you to be old." Well, I am past the middle of my life, I imagine, and I have not seen them yet; but I know when they are there and work closely with them on the land. I think I shall start to see them one of these years.

Long hours we sat and talked, Mayamijai and I. How many things she told me, her darkened eyes ranging the landscape, seeing all things in a luminescence brighter and purer than the daylight of this world, her long, lilting Rhennish sentences soaring like birds in flight. At school we were taught to recite the Scriptures and Rhennish epics. I had a head start upon the others from my times

with Mayamijai. Others came to see her, of course, for her wisdom and magic were much in demand. Occasionally she would ask them to come later, saying: "Bide thee a while, for I will talk with this little ranya. She has good seed in her." I was so delighted; and although I have not become a ranya, I hope I have in some small degree justified her faith in me.

All that I can say can hardly convey the depth and intimacy of those conversations. I try to discover what it is that binds together the very old and the very young, for in a traditional matriarchal community, people at all ages have a childlikeness (as well as a maturity) unknown to the Blentish world. Many Rhennes, if such is their





The Power of Choice

CASUAL OBSERVER might suppose that modern society was not unaware of the value of human life. It is proud of its record in preserving and prolonging lives through modern medicine or institutional charity. It supports the work of those feeding the starving, seeking cures for fatal diseases and keeping the peace. It reports all loss of life as a 'tragedy' and unreservedly condemns political terrorists and mass murderers. It is almost obsessively concerned with safety in all areas of life. Death is its enemy, to be thwarted at every turn.

Nevertheless, there has never been a society more ignorant of the real reasons for valuing human life, never a society which devoted more time and energy to encouraging the waste of lives, never a society less truly human in its activities and aspirations. In regarding humanity as an end in itself, it has lost sight of all that makes humanity what it is and so has become positively sub-human. The great majority of people today live on this sub-human level.

The essential quality of humanity is the power of choice or free will. It is this moral faculty which above all distinguishes the human state from the animal and other non-human forms of life. It is a spiritual power or freedom, and relates not to the world of matter, which limits and constrains our choices, but to the direction of the soul, for good

path never lose the child within them, and none ever 'grow up' in the Blentish sense (for Blentish grown-upness is simply an immersion in the most superficial and worldly pursuits — a species of spiritual infantilism). So what is it that binds together the very old and the very young? I think it is that, being so close to the two gates of this world, they are not wholly of it. Thus they have a depth and inner seriousness that is hard to maintain in the midst of life. I think that the very old and the very young, provided they have not been poisoned by the modern world, are (apart from saints and contemplatives) the only spiritual adults in the world.

ELYSIA

or for evil.

The word 'maid' used by the Rhennes to signify humanity as a whole bears the meaning 'one who has the power to choose', being connected with the words 'may' and 'might'. 'Man', the corresponding word in Blentish usage, means 'one who reasons', a reflection of the inversions of patriarchal culture. For while the rational faculty is an invaluable servant of the will, its elevation to supreme position among human faculties has created the technological meritocracy which is the bane of the world.

It is evident that the possession of the power of choice is not in itself a cause for self-congratulation. It is outwardly directed, involving responsibility and demanding positive action. Because maid occupies a central position in the cosmos, symbolically situated on the world-axis running between heaven and hell, her potential for movement in either direction is literally infinite. In a single lifetime, a maid may transcend the material world and become one with the Absolute, God Herself; on the other hand, alone among creatures, she is capable of manifesting pure evil. Normal maid, which is to say any maid not raised in spiritual ignorance in an unnatural and untraditional community, has a natural and healthy love for God and the good, and is capable of using her free will to come closer to Her. The irresponsible amorality and passivity of the will which characterises most modern people's approach to life fails to satisfy this fundamental urge of the human soul and leaves people stranded in a spiritual wilderness.

Our power of choice is necessarily exercised within the context of our particular moira or personal destiny. This moira is built up out of the choices we have made in this and earlier lives. It represents our present position in the universe. The circumstances of our birth, our personality, our gifts and inclinations and all the apparently accidental happenings of our life are part of the intricately woven tapestry of our soul's history. So are our choices of every day the stuff of which

the tapestry of the future will be made. This cosmic play upon the loom of the material world is no matter of divine 'judgement', of reward and punishment, but is as simply impartial and inevitable as the balancing movement of a pair of scales.

Every situation in which we find ourselves presents us with a choice to be made, and every choice is a spiritual opportunity. It is wasting that opportunity to make our choices purely on the basis of expected material results, assessing the benefit which might be obtained or the loss which might be avoided. Human beings have the ability,

and therefore the duty, to recognise a good higher than pleasure and an evil fouler than pain, to look beyond the outward appearances of the world to the underlying reality.

Moreover, it is not possible to predict with certainty the full consequences of any act in advance. Moira is too complex for that. It is only possible to be sure whether it is right or wrong in

itself. The material universe is shifting and uncertain; only on the spiritual path, the unshakable pillar of light, are we secure.

In turning our face towards the good, fashioning our life in the light of eternal Truth, we are ever moving closer to the divine Spirit Herself. This is a process of becoming whole once more, since in the Spirit resides our true Self. The Spirit is One and we are one in the Spirit; this is the heart of the spiritual quest. The material world is dual in its very essence, changing always from light to dark, from heat to cold, from happiness to suffering — the ceaseless turning of the wheel of Moira. Our only true freedom lies in release from the iron wheel, in realising the full potential of the human state.

The various 'freedoms' of the modern world are nothing but various states of bondage to material existence. The physical body, the mind and the emotions, which together represent the modern notion of the whole human being, in traditional teaching constitute the lesser self, which the soul controls, or should control. Bringing these three 'bodies' to order is the self-control which is an essential part of becoming fully human, a prerequisite of the spiritual adventure.

The lesser self is wholly a product of moira and has no eternal existence. The undisciplined indulgence of its transient whims which passes for free-

dom achieves no lasting result whatsoever and perverts the true human function of the lesser self. For the body, its hungers restrained by the will, anchors the soul, providing a temporary certainty within the world of illusion, and thus enables the soul to translate vague choice into definite action. And although the mind can lose itself in the conditioned fatuity of its own 'opinions', it can enable the soul to

take the first steps on the spiritual path of knowledge, the understanding of Truth. Also the emotions, which without the will's guidance can assume an unjustifiable significance, can greatly help the soul on the path of devotion, the love of God.

In true traditional culture, all of life relates to the Centre: work, celebrations, meals, marriage, music. Nothing is a waste of time, nothing is trivial. Life is based on themis, the harmony of the universe, and all is under the guidance of the Spirit. Thus in the clear light of spiritual understanding, the soul's power of choice can be exercised effectively to lead the soul upward. To return to this way of life is now the only real chance we have of becoming true maid.

DONNA CHRYSOTHEMIS



THE COMING festival meaning



Autumn

Correspondence of the sacred and secular calendars for the season:

Mala: Sept 5th - Oct 2nd

Hathor: Oct 3rd - Oct 30th

Samhain: Oct 31st - Nov 27th

Major Festivals

THE FEAST OF DIVINE LIFE: 17th
Mala, Autumn Equinox (Sept 21st)

SAMHAIN, the Feast of the Dead:

1st - 3rd Samhain (Oct 31st - Nov 2nd)

FESTIVAL OF ARTEMIS: 23rd Sam-
hain (Nov 22nd)

EARTH AND THE WEST

Autumn is the season of the element of earth. It is the season when fruit ripens, the wheat is harvested and the year's work on the land is brought to completion. As well as being the season of maturity and achievement, however, autumn sees the beginning of disintegration and decay, when, as the warmth dies from the air, plants cease to grow and begin to die, the first frosts harden the ground and the leaves, having turned golden, turn brown and fall from the trees. The festivals of autumn which complete the cycle of the Mysteries of Life embody this movement of the season, from the Feast of Divine Life to the Feast of the Dead. Autumn is the harbinger of winter as the red and golden sunset is the harbinger of night.

Just as evening is the time of day analogous to autumn's position in the

year, so the west, where the sun sets, is particularly associated with the season. The west is mythically and colloquially connected with the ending of things and with death. West of the sunset, and thus just beyond the material world, lies Avala, the apple orchard paradise which receives after death all human souls who have ripened into a spiritual maturity during their time on earth.

Of the four ages of traditional science, the late Bronze Age and the Iron Age are the ages of the predominance of the west in the history of the world. After the destruction by the sea at the end of the Bronze Age of the great empire of Abolrai (whose name - apple realm - is clearly of the west), the Rhenneland was the westernmost point of the world. The centrality of the Rhenneland and of the mainland of Europe in the Iron Age is apparent; in these latter days of the cycle of ages, the predominance has shifted further west - 'west of the west' - to America. In traditional geography, America is not west but east. Its native people, the American Indians, are an eastern people. Its occupation by westerners and its subsequent rise to world primacy are symptoms of the end of the age. America has the position among nations which Protestantism has among religions, and it is not accidental that the same generation which witnessed the discovery of America gave birth to the Protestant Reformation. Historians rightly date the beginning of 'the modern world' from this period.



WINTER SEASON

Light & celebration

Winter

Correspondence of the sacred and secular calendars for the season:

Astraea: Nov 28th - Dec 25th
Hestia: Dec 26th - Jan 22nd
Brighde: Jan 23rd - Feb 19th

Major Festivals

ADVENT commences 14th Astraea, full moon (Dec 11th)
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LADY: 1st Hestia, new moon (Dec 26th)
THE FEAST OF LIGHTS: 10th Brighde (Feb 1st)
MOURA EVE: 28th Brighde (Feb 19th)

Minor Festivals

ATHENE'S DAY: 7th Astraea (Dec 4th)
THE DAY OF ALL GENIAE: 28th Astraea (Dec 25th)
THE DAY OF HESTIA: 6th Hestia (Dec 31st)
DUODECIMA: 12th Hestia (Jan 6th)
PURPLE MONDAY: 3rd Brighde (Jan 25th)

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Winter is the dark night of the year, when the sun is furthest from us. Its cold and darkness is symbolic of our fallenness from God, for She is the supernal Sun, "Whose brightness is too great for us to look upon". God is the giver of all light, all warmth and all the rich abundance of nature. Thus winter reflects our separation from Her.

Yet it is in the very depth of the

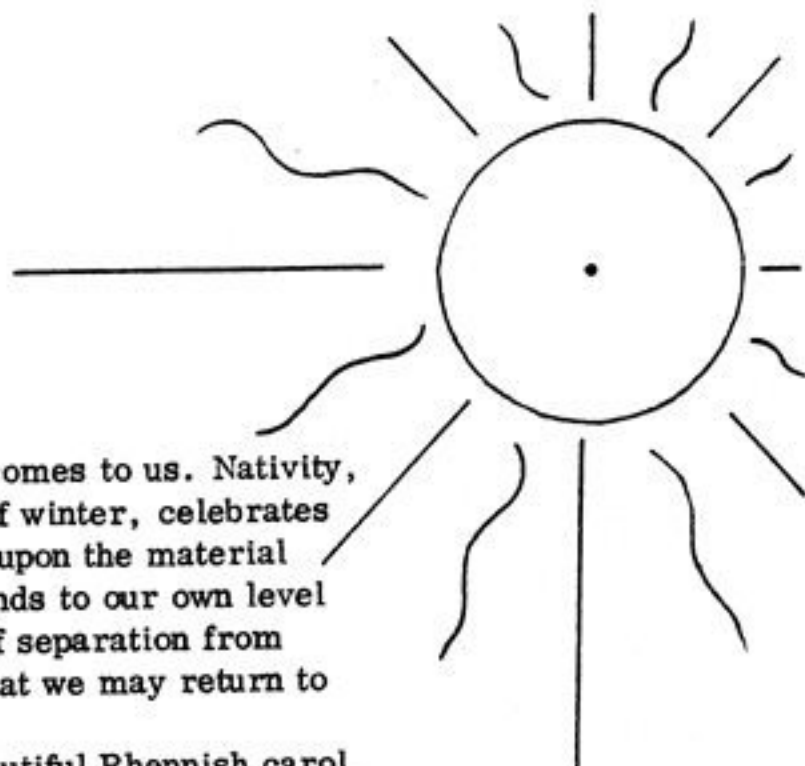
darkness that She comes to us. Nativity, the great festival of winter, celebrates the birth of Inanna upon the material worlds. God descends to our own level of fallenness and of separation from Herself in order that we may return to Her.

It is, as the beautiful Rhennish carol says, "Deep in the darksome days of winter" that the glorious light of the Nativity star shines forth upon the world.

Winter is a time of light and darkness — natural darkness and supernatural light. The long season of Nativity festivities fills our hearts and homes with light, even as the days have drawn in to their shortest and darkest. The season begins on Nativity Eve with the lighting of the Nativity candle to burn through the night, in emblem of the star, and ends with the Feast of Lights, its thousand candles making it the brightest festival of the year.

Now we have passed beyond the element of earth, which governed autumn, into the element of air. The weight of material things is fallen from us, and we are ready to welcome our Lady to dwell among us. We read that in the perfect world, in which we lived before we fell from God, all things were silver (*Creation. I. 8*). There can be no clearer reflection of this upon the world than a Nativity morning when all things are clothed in a mantle of snow.

The joy of Nativity, all the fun and feasting and whole-hearted enjoyment, echoes the joy of the first creation, the universe born from God's laughter.





THE WONDERFUL BEANSTALK

LONG, LONG TIME AGONE, when the trees bore fruits so great that the branches were borne adown to the earth and the earth bore corn so tall that it reached to the very summit of the trees; in that time, I say, there lived a poor widow at the edge of a great wood. She had no kin but one daughter called Jane, nor had the two of them aught to live upon save the milk of their little cow. But one day the cow ran dry, and they knew not what they should do. "Thou must take the cow to market and sell her for

what thou may," said the mother. So off set Jane, light of foot, with the cow along behind her. Not far had she travelled when she met with a merry merchant maid. "Good morrow, ma'am," called Jane. "Good morrow to thyself, little mestré," returned she, "'tis a sharp young cal thou seem to me, and I'll warrant thou know how many beans make five." "Aye, two in each hand and one in thy mouth, ma'am," quoth she. "True as a sunbeam," said the maid, "and here are they now, the very beans themselves." She opened her purse and tipped into her hand five of the queerest-looking beans that Jane had ever laid her eyes upon. "Sithen thou are so wick," she went on, "I will do for thee what I would not do for another. I will change thee these beans for that cow of thine." "So ye shall not, ma'am," declared Jane. "Now bide thee, bide thee," quoth the maid, "and hear what it is thou scornest. These are no common beans. Plant them this day in the ground and by tomorrow they shall have grown to the very sky." Then did the bargain seem to Jane a good one, and right willingly did she change her cow for the handful of beans.

But when she came home again her mother did not think the bargain so good. "What?" she cried. "Thou have sold all the wealth we own for these few beans!" And she took the beans from Jane and flung them out of the window. Then she took a birch-rod and gave her the best whipping she had had that twelvemonth, and then another like it. She went to bed that night without supper, and I can not say which wept the more, herself or her mother.

When the next morning she awoke, Jane was much puzzled to see that her room was not so bright as it usually was, but was filled with a green and shady light. She ran to the window, and what do thou suppose she saw? Why, the beans had grown, there

where her mother had thrown them, and now there was a beanstalk reaching up and up to the very heavens.

Up to the sky like a great ladder it ran, and it grew so close to Jane's window that all she had to do was to clamber out onto one of the branches and begin to climb. Up and up and up she went until she could climb no more, and then she sat herself down upon a branch and rested until she might begin again. Up and up and up she went until she reached the sky.

When she reached the sky she found a little road stretching away into the distance; so she walked along this road until she came to a great castle, white as the winter moon. And being near dead with hunger, she went up to the great gate of the castle and banged upon the gate until it was laid open. And there was no soul therein save a little page boy that had opened the gate. "Pray, mestran, give me breakfast," she asked him, "for I have not eaten morning or evening." "Breakfast you would have," said the boy, "but 'tis breakfast you shall be if my mistress finds you here, for she does love to devour all of your kind that she finds." "Well, one death is as good as another," said Jane. "If I have not food I shall perish from hunger."

So the boy gave her food, and just as she was finishing, the ground began to shake and the air was filled with a sound like thunder. "That is my mistress returning," said the boy, "quickly, hide you in the oven." Into the oven climbed Jane, and not a moment too soon, for as the door was shut, in came the mistress of the castle. Just think of the biggest maid thou ever saw. Well, this maid could lift her up in one hand and put her on the roof of her own house if she had a mind to. All dressed in black she was, and on her shoulder was perched a raven. As

as she stepped within the gate, the raven began to cry:

Weilaway, weilaway,
I smell the blood of a Rhennismay.

"What? What?" cried the mistress. "Nay, nay, ma'am," quoth the boy, "it is but the stale blood of the child you had for supper yestereven." So the mistress sat down and began her favourite occupation of counting her money. Great bags of gold she had, gleaming piles of yellow coins which quickly covered the great table. After a while she fell asleep at her counting, and Jane crept out from the oven. Gently, gently, she pulled a bag of gold from under the mistress's arm, then she slung it

over her shoulder and made her way back to the beanstalk. She dropped it down and climbed down after it into her mother's garden.

Well, mother and daughter lived very well and happily for a time upon the gold, but like all good

things it came to an end at last, so up went Jane, up the beanstalk once more, to see what she might find. She climbed and she climbed and she climbed and she climbed until she came to the sky. There again was the little road, stretching away into the distance, and off she walked to the great castle, as white as the winter moon. Everything happened as before. The boy gave her breakfast and bade her hide in the oven as his mistress came home. As soon as she stepped within the gate, the raven began to cry:

Weilaway, weilaway,
I smell the blood of a Rhennismay.

"What? What?" cried the mistress. "Nay, nay, ma'am," quoth the boy, "it is but the blood of the ox I am roasting for your dinner." "Then bring me the goose that lays the golden eggs," commanded the mistress. The boy brought in a lovely white goose, and the mistress set it upon the table and said: "Lay." At once the goose laid a big egg of pure solid gold.

Several times the mistress did this, until she had quite a pile of golden eggs. Then, tiring of the game, she fell asleep. Jane crept out of the oven, tiptoed to the table, grabbed the goose, and pinning it under her arm started running toward the beanstalk. The goose, however, let out a honk and the mistress awoke just as Jane was outside the gates. "Where is my goose?" she cried out; but that was all Jane heard as she ran out of earshot. Down the beanstalk she scrambled, as if all the devils in hell were after her.

Well, her mother was right happy with that find, and they might well have lived well and blithe for the rest of their days, only Jane was not content. So one fine morning she rose up early and up she went, up

the beanstalk, to see what she might find. She climbed and she climbed and she climbed until she came to the sky. There again was the little road, stretching away into the distance, and off she walked to the great castle, as white as the winter moon. But she was not

so foolish as to go to the boy again. Instead she crept in by a back way and hid herself in the copper. In came the mistress after a time, and as soon as she stepped within the gate, her raven began to cry:

Weilaway, weilaway,
I smell the blood of a Rhennismay.

"What? What?" cried the mistress. "Aye, aye, ma'am," quoth the boy, "it will be that young fox that stole the goose. Without doubt you shall find her in the oven." "Just the right place for her," said the mistress. But Jane was not in the oven, and though they looked all over the house, they did not think of the copper. At last they thought the raven must be mistaken, and the mistress called for her golden harp. The boy brought forth the most lovely harp of gold, and the mistress set it upon the table and said: "Sing". At once the harp gave forth the most beautiful, soothing music that ever was heard on earth or heaven, and before long the mistress was lulled sound asleep. Jane crept out from the copper, tiptoed to the table and seized



the harp. But this time, the canny raven had not gone to sleep, and as soon as Jane started to run, she cried out "Mestré, mestré!" as loud as well she might. If Jane was running fast before, she ran three times as fast now, and it was not a minute before the mistress of the castle was after her. She could almost feel the giant's breath upon her when she reached the beanstalk, and down she went like a squirrel with her tail afire. The mistress waited a moment, pondering whether to trust her weight to that slender ladder. But soon she swung herself down and was after Jane again.

When she reached her mother's garden, there was the mistress coming down six branches at a time. "Quick, mother, quick," cried Jane, "bring me an axe, else we are lost!" Out came her mother with an axe. Jane took it and began to chop down the beanstalk. As it came crashing down, the mistress of the castle fell with it and was killed, and Jane and her mother, with their magic goose and golden harp, lived happily ever after.

COMMENTARY

This story is unusual among the really great folk tales, in that it appears to be completely unknown outside the British Isles. The Rhennish version given above is close to the original (although it suffers greatly from not being told in the true Rhennish dialect); while patriarchal versions are known to all non-Rhennish British children. Of all folktales, it has perhaps the greatest power to capture the soul and to present itself as an immediate, magical reality. Even the child partly spoiled by 'education' and modern anti-traditional entertainments can enter into the wonder and mystery of this vivid exposition of the symbolism of the ladder and the heavenly bridge. The following notes should be read in conjunction with the article on page 20: JANE: the commonest name in Rhennish folktale is pronounced in Rhennish Jah-në. It is a form of Diane/Dyana, and therefore a type of the incarnate Spirit seeking the straight way (true as a sunbeam) to her true Home in Heaven. (Cf. TCA16, p.23).

HOW MANY BEANS MAKE FIVE? An old conundrum with a metaphysical meaning. Beans have a special place in Rhennish diet and culture, being conceived as closely re-

lated to the mysteries of manifestation. Four is, of course, the square number; the number of matter — the four elements, directions, seasons etc. Five signifies the material four pervaded by the fifth element of spirit. The traditional arrangement of five points is the quincunx ∴ still used on dice and dominoes. The four points represent the four extremities of the horizontal cross of matter, while the fifth is the central point, where it is transfixed by the vertical Ray of the Spirit (cf "The Fora", TCA 18). Now the root of all matter is duality; ultimately the duality between Spirit and soul, from which all the dualities of the manifest world flow. It is for this reason that the mathematical root of four is two. To hold two beans in each hand is to express four as two groups of two (2×2), and, since the upright human body is microcosmically equivalent to the World-Axis, the two pairs are on either side of the pillar, like the horizontal arms of the vertical cross, while the fifth bean in the mouth is on the pillar itself. We leave the reader to say from which bean the beanstalk grew!

THE BEANSTALK: from the foregoing, it is clear that the beanstalk is the bridge or ladder of the World-Axis, leading from this world to a superior plane of being. Not only the symbolism of the bridge, but the various ladder-climbing rituals of the (originally matriarchal) shamans are closely related; and indeed a full participation in the story (cf p. 6) is effectively equivalent to such a ritual. The Mistress of the Castle is, of course, a Guardian of the Gateway who must be outwitted or fought in order to make the crossing. Later Blentish versions have made her not only a male giant but sometimes a thief who originally stole his wealth from the hero's family, in order to explain away the 'immorality' of the thefts. This concern with morality betrays the typical profane error of mistaking a paradigm of transcendent Reality for a tale of events and individuals. The felling of the beanstalk corresponds to the need for breaking the bridge once the goal has been attained, explained on page 21.

THE THREE TREASURES are three degrees of spiritual Realisation. Their deeper significance is too esoteric to discuss openly, but on the simplest level we may say that they represent stages on the path from the vision of the multiplicity of manifestation to that of divine Unity. First all things are seen united by the Spirit (coins in a bag). Then they are seen not united from without, but principally identical in the light of their common Source

THE DOWNWARD PATH

From truth to trivia — the decline of religion

IN OUR FIRST article, entitled "Many Religions", we have discussed the history of the division of religions and the nature of the existing patriarchal 'world religions'. However, readers will be aware that there have been many developments and tendencies within these religions and that the whole situation may often seem somewhat confusing. Therefore we are giving here a broad guide to the varieties of religion existing today. They fall into four categories, which are actually four stages in the process of descent from pure Truth, as follows:

1. True matriarchal tradition.
2. Patriarchal forms which, while distorted, form the basis of authentic orthodox traditions.
3. 'Religions': cults which have ceased to be traditions in the true sense and have deserted orthodoxy, but continue to serve God in a limited and simplistic mode.
4. Invented cults and also authentic traditions which have deviated into psychism or anti-traditional 'doctrines'.

Having stated the four basic stages, we may begin to examine each one a little more closely: **STAGE 1** includes not only modern Western (specifically Rhennish) Madrianism, but all authentic matriarchal forms, some of which may still survive in other parts of the world. Needless to say this does not include modern pseudo-matriarchal speculations. **STAGE 2** may be known by certain signs: each stands at the centre of a traditional culture and way of life based upon some aspect (albeit distorted) of the primordial Truth. It is not merely a cult or religion, but has preserved the institutions, crafts and sacred life-style of a whole culture. In this category come Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity etc. The latter of these has not had a true sacred culture since the 'humanism' of the Renaissance, and has declined from being a total trad-

and Matrix (the goose that laid the golden eggs). Finally, no individual 'things' are seen at all, but only the divine harmony which underlies and produces all things (the golden harp).

ition into the position of a mere 'religion'.

STAGE 3: The classic case of this phenomenon is Protestantism. Since the Renaissance, Christianity slowly declined from being the heart of an authentic culture into being simply one aspect of 'life as a whole' — this latter being seen in purely mundane terms. Protestantism is the logical outcome of this. It dispenses as far as possible with sacraments, with what it calls 'superstition'; in short, with everything in which the Divine touches the world. Instead we have the 'clockmaker God', who is supposed to have laid down the laws of the universe, 'wound it up' and left it to run; so that the Protestant's view of the universe is no different from that of the atheist/materialist, except that she believes in a God 'up there'. Religion becomes a purely individual affair, unconnected with 'ordinary' (ie profane) society.

The Roman Catholic Church maintained its position as an orthodox traditional institution for several centuries after the Protestant 'Reformation'; but at the Second Vatican Council, this Church decisively accepted all the essentials of the Protestant ethos, and must now be counted as having entered Stage 3. Also in this group are neo-Hindu groups such as Arya Samaj and various modern Japanese neo-Buddhist sects. This group is notable for its complete lack of metaphysical understanding and its reduction of religion to the most exoteric and merely moralistic level.

STAGE 4 is divided from Stage 3 by a thin but definite line, although it is possible for a person or a sect to have a foot in both groups. While Stage 3 is untraditional, Stage 4 is antitraditional. Tradition is literally that which is 'passed down' (traditio), and is therefore ultimately the single thread which links a patriarchal form with the primordial matriarchal Truth. This rejection or inversion of tradition takes two main forms, firstly the importation of specifically antitraditional ideologies into 'theology', as with the 'existentialism' of the Liberal-Protestant school or the evolutionist/pantheist speculations of Teilhard de Chardin (originally banned by the Vatican, but now openly embraced by many Roman Catholic dignitaries) as well as the many modern Western concoct-

Strength Through Serenity

The Nature of Femininity



EXACTLY a year ago, in our last Autumn issue, Donna Chrysothemis outlined the dangers inherent in the errors propagated by the 'women's liberation' movement — and indeed by the sexual egalitarianism of modern society as a whole. Not the least of these was the masculinisation of maids — the destruction of the feminine principle in its social expression by assimilating maids into the masculine world, granting them male 'privileges' and making masculine values universal.

It is easy to see the ways in which this masculinisation of maids is proceeding in the modern world. What is perhaps not so easy to understand, for those born and reared in the patriarchal world, is the nature of the true feminine values which might be set against them. Surely, some will suggest, 'femininity' is simply the behaviour of oppressed patriarchal maids; surely it simply reflects the kind of maid which patriarchal man wants — weak, submissive and decorative. Surely matriarchal maids are active, outgoing and 'masculine'.

ions masquerading as 'eastern religion', such as neo-Zen and the charlatanries of 'Swami' Ranjeesh.

The second form of antitraditional religion is practical rather than theoretical. Stage 3 closed religion as far as possible to direct supernatural influence. God remained 'up there', we remained 'down here' in the clockwork material universe. Stage 4 reopens itself to other-worldly influences, but they are no longer those of the Spirit, mediated through the rituals and institutions of tradition, but chaotic psychic forces haphazardly manifested through (often hysterical) individuals. Thus we have the 'pentecostal' movement, characterised by 'speaking in tongues' and other forms of possession. Its practitioners naively assume that they are possessed by the Holy Spirit, but without the safeguards and initiatic structure of an authentic tradition which knows how to 'try the spirits whether they be of God', all we may be sure of is that possession is possession, and it will be by great good luck if godly spirits are involved as much as half the time (both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches now allow and encourage 'pentecostal' activities within their own ranks).

The two aspects of anti-traditional action, the practical and the theoretical, are brought together most completely in the modern invented cults which have no traditional background whatever — theosophism, spiritualism, neo-witchcraft, neo-paganism etc. That these groups are proliferating today is only to be expected; and that many of them claim to be matriarchal (a claim easily disproved by their specifically modern late-patriarchal notions) is equally predictable — for the last stage of the decline must necessarily be an inverted parody of the primordial Truth.

Now there is a small element of truth in this, but it is really very small, for it fails to take account of the fact that modern values with their continual stress upon outward activity, change, 'progress', productivity, etc. do not represent simply the normal human scale of values, but very specifically compose the value-system of late patriarchy. Matriarchal civilisation is based on a dictum which implies the very reverse of all this: "Earth moves, but Heaven is still; the rim revolves, but the Centre remains without motion."

The whole stress of matriarchal culture is upon being rather than doing. That is why the crafts are valued primarily for the spiritual state which they produce in their practitioners rather than for their outward 'products'. The two pillars of authority in a matriarchal society are the Haiela, the spiritual or sacerdotal power, radiating from the Brighe (High Priestess) and her pretreya (priestesses), and the Raihira, the political or temporal power, radiating from the Rayin (Empress) and nobles. Of these, the Haiela was considered the feminine (and superior) power, and the Raihira the masculine (and inferior) power. In a true matriarchy, maids fulfilled both functions (though in some late semi-matriarchates, the political function was delegated to men), but this conception nonetheless gives a clear indication of what is

feminine and what is masculine and of what is proper to maids and what is proper to men.

Does this mean that maids should avoid outward activity? It does not, for true activity can only flow out from the Centre — thus only a perfect contemplative can be a perfect craftsmaid. It does mean, however, that men should sometimes 'take the lead' in physical action, while maids represent the principial stillness. This is hard for the modern mentality, with its stress on action, to understand. I am told that for a modern person to dream of being driven by another is a common image of that other having control of the situation. A matriarchal maid is more likely to assume that the driver is in the position of chauffeur. A friend brought up in a matriarchal community once said (quite innocently) that the Blentren had not yet lost all trace of civilisation, since the menfolk still drove their maids. The mandarins of old China took pride in having immensely long fingernails, which proved that they did no work. This is not only an extravagant example, but a very decadent one which would never be tolerated in any decent matriarchal society, but it shows that the modern Western attitude to activity is far from universal.

What, then, is true femininity? In other words, how should a traditional maid act *qua* maid (as opposed to *qua* child, pupil, Rayin, carpenter, or whatever other roles she may fulfil)? Firstly, she should be centred in her 'still heart' — the moveless Mover, the centre of her being, which is the Centre of all being, and is not other than God Herself. From this she will gain peace, serenity and dignity. Dignity is the essence of femininity, for maid, as maid, is the visible representative of God. She may act, and indeed should be hard-working and assiduous in all her activities, but the vulgar, noisy activity of the modern world is not for her; no more is haste, hurry or bustle; in all things, she is calm, gracious and gentle. To her husband, to her children, to all her cals (inferiors) she is the med-

atrix of divine Law. How, then, can she display the vulgar hustle of modern humanity, which considers itself no more than a glorified animal? She is never casual, for life is a ritual, and she is a priestess. But this does not rule out a genuine childlike exuberance and joy of life which is at the opposite pole from casual modernism.

Does she look after her appearance? She does; not to 'attract men', but to glorify the divine image which she is, and because her clothes and such make-up as she may wear (literally cosm-etics — expressions of the universal order of which she is the micro-cosm) are symbolic expressions of her ritual state and function. Traditional dress, for both maids and men, is far removed from modern 'masculine' attire, which, inappropriate even for men, is hideously so when adopted by maids.

Do traditional men feel protective towards their maids? They do, because they understand that maids are not wholly of this world, and are of a finer and more delicate substance. Therefore the protective and chivalrous attitude of western patriarchal men (as opposed to that of many eastern cultures, where maids are virtually used as beasts of

burden) is quite in keeping with the matriarchal tradition. But maids are by no means weak and timid, for it is they who make the decisions and direct the community, but they do so not in the noisy and arrogant manner of patriarchal power-wielding, but serenely, from the still Centre, and with a calm and quiet sense of absolute authority.

We must understand that the modern values called 'masculine' in these pages have nothing to do with the true values of masculinity under matriarchy (cf. "A Man's Place", TCA15). The distortion of these values under patriarchy in the final stage of the social disintegration of the Iron Age, which causes suffering to men as well as to maids, is the masculine principle rent from its true place in the universal harmony and run wild. In a matriarchal civilisation, both femininity and masculinity are united in the harmony of the divine Law.

DONNA JULIA



SYMBOLISM: The Bridge of Dread

When Inanna crossed the water on a bridge of sunbeams, the three impure souls who tried to follow Her fell in and were drowned*. The crossing of the bridge is, by its very nature, perilous — indeed, the very word 'peril' comes from the same root as the Greek *poros*, meaning ferry, ford or bridge.

In the example quoted above, the bridge is perilous because it is made of a 'subtle' material which will not support a soul which has descended into gross matter. More often the bridge is 'subtle' in the original sense of the word — exceedingly thin and tenuous. It is sometimes described as a sword-edge, or razor-sharp way, or else it is made of a hair. This is connected with the idea already discussed of the bridge as a cord or rope — the thread of the Spirit which passes through all states of being, and is not other than the sunbeam: "Thou art the Sun, whose ray doth thread us all as jewels upon a string."

The simplest form of the rope bridge is simply a rope stretched between two trees, one on each side of the river, which literally ties the two banks (which, of course, are two states of being) together. It forms a tight-rope, and the ancient spectacle of tight-rope walking is a re-enactment of the perilous passage of the solar hero. Like all forms of the perilous passage, (cf. the comment on "How many miles to Avalon", TCA16, p.4), it is connected with the avoidance of dualities, since the balance required is precisely the 'middle path' between toppling either on one side or the other — avoiding the dualities of matter in the path toward the transcendent one-ness which lies beyond them (we may note in passing that the word 'path' comes from the same root as the Latin *pons*, bridge — the Bridge being a stage — or rather numerous stages — of the Path). This is made clearly visible by the tight-rope walker's pole which must be held in perfect balance. We may note also that the pole forms a cross with the rope itself, and that this conforms

* See "The Ballad of the Bitter Withy" and Symbolism: The Bridge" in our last issue.

to the normal symbolism of the cross (cf. "Symbolism: The Fora", TCA18). The rope is the 'vertical' line, the World-Axis running from the lowest depths of the cosmos to its spiritual summit, while the pole represents the 'horizontal' line, reaching out into the dualities of a given world or level of being. In the symbolism of the bridge proper, however, it is, of course, the banks which represent two separate horizontal lines, corresponding to two levels of being. This symbolism is also inherent in such ancient symbols as the 'cross of Lorraine', known in Rhennish as the Cross of Brighde †. We may note in passing that the so-called 'papal Cross' (Rhennish Thestal) ‡ depicts the three worlds of heaven, earth and hell (microcosmically, our present level of being, and those immediately above and below it) transfixed by the World-Axis. In each case, the higher horizontal lines are shorter than the lower ones, since the degree of quantitative extension into the horizontal dimension of material manifestation increases as we descend from the unmanifest spiritual Source. It is by the same symbolism that concentric circles become larger as they recede from the centre, and we may hereby understand the equivalence of the horizontal bridge with the vertical pole of the World-Axis, since a vertical line running from the highest heaven to the deepest hell may also be expressed as a radial line running from the centre of the circle (or rather of the complex of concentric circles) to its perimeter, or, to revert to the symbolism of the sunbeam, from the central Sun to the outer darkness.

A vertical equivalent of the tight-rope is found in the so-called Indian Rope Trick where a child, having scaled the rope, 'vanishes' from this plane of being. Closely connected with this is the tale of the beanstalk found in both matriarchal and patriarchal versions in Britain (see p.14).

To return to the bridge proper, whether it be a rope, a beam of wood or a sword-edge, it is always difficult to cross. Where the bridge is that

aced by the soul after death, there is often a shining maiden who asks certain questions.* If these questions are answered correctly, she will guide the soul across, making the sharp edge "as smooth as the palm of her hand". These questions may either inquire as to the soul's conduct during life, or may be of a riddling and apparently paradoxical nature, corresponding to the two modes of salvation — salvation by works and salvation by knowledge. In the latter case, it is not a mere theoretical knowledge that is in question, but the full intellectual realisation attained by she who has followed the Contemplative Life. The moral ques-

tions are asked of the soul who has pursued the Active Life (see last issue). Their destinations are different, since the former will arrive at the Rose Garden of the Mother and the latter at the Apple Orchard of the Daughter. Since the Active and Contemplative lives cannot always wholly be distinguished (since each contains elements of the other), it may happen that the



moral questions are answered at the head of the bridge and the riddles at the gate which lies on the other side. It may be a toll-bridge or, in the case of the Active Life, a ferry may transport the soul over the waters. In each case, the payment corresponds to a purgation of sins before crossing. Mahevik, the rider who found the Holy Grail (see "Symbolism", TCA14) cut her feet badly upon the sword-bridge.

This latter case, however, refers not to the Bridge of the Dead, but to the path of realisation followed within life. Here the soul must purge all her remaining sins before reaching the Goal. Or,

* Here the guide may be Nimwe, a form of Metis, Genia of pure Intellect. For the same reason was the Greek Hermes guide of souls. The early Egyptian Goddess Maat (a form of Metis) greeted the souls of the dead when they had crossed the bridge.

more exactly, she must purge all her remaining attachments to the material world of duality.

So far we have considered the peril of the bridge only as that of falling off. Indeed, in the case of the Bridge of the Dead this is the greatest danger. All those who have not the wherewithal to pay (who have lived life on a merely animal or material level, ignoring the Spirit, and who have not built the bridges within them provided by the ritual and devotional framework of traditional life) must fall off, not into Hell, but into the torrent of all the fears and desires which motivated their material existence. But for the soul on an esoteric path,

there is a danger greater than falling off — namely that of going back, or even of looking back.

We have said that from the point of view of this world, the next level of being upward is microcosmically 'heaven'. But conversely, from the point of view of that state of being, this world is Hell, and once we set foot upon the

bridge, we have already adopted that point of view. The bridge is now the only 'middle ground' — we are suspended between Heaven and Hell. Each step we take redeems a particular fragment, or 'power', of the soul and lifts it into Heaven. But each step backward will corrupt that same power and cast it into Hell.*

The adept must literally 'break her bridge' as she crosses it. There must be no clinging or attachment even to the path itself, for she must eventually transcend both good and evil — that is to say, she must be bound to incarnation by no Moira (fate) whether the suffering for evil actions or the reward for good (this does not mean that she should avoid good actions, but that she must relinquish attach-

* This, of course, does not apply to the perfected soul, who, having reached the nether shore, becomes a mover-at-will and may cross and re-cross as she wishes.

ment to them).

The crossing, then, must be attempted only by those who can be sure that they will not 'lose heart' on the way across. Thus it is that just as the pillar at once connects earth and Heaven and holds them apart, so the bridge is at once a help and a barrier. In its aspect as a barrier it is sometimes guarded by a dragon, an armed angel or some other guardian. The story of Queen Colwyn guarding the bridge is one image of this.

So far we have considered the bridge only from the human point of view. But as we made clear in our previous exposition, the making of the bridge is the activity of God. Indeed, She makes Herself the bridge through Her Sacrifice. This could not be more clearly indicated than in the *Mythos* where our Lady's body is hung upon the pillar of the nether world, which, of course, is not other than the World-Axis itself (cf. "Symbolism: The Cave", TCA9 and "Symbolism: The Heart and the Moon-Axe", TCA10).

Legend tells that, when the Amazons were in defeat and pursued by the enemy, the great saint Sai Salya, who was with them, walked across a river and tied one end of a rope to a tree on the other side. When on returning she found that the rope was not long enough, she lay down, still holding the rope, so that her friends might walk over her onto it. As the last of them crossed the patriarchs arrived, and one threw a rock, thus breaking Sai Salya's back. This is a precise image of the perfected soul, who, having crossed to the other side, voluntarily returns for the salvation of her fellow creatures. She makes a bridge of herself, and yet, if they would go to the true end, they must step out onto the tenuous thread of the Spirit Herself. The end of the story shows the sacrifice inherent in this return. Similarly, Inanna is whipped by Her Mother after building the bridge of sunbeams.

The ease of the perfected soul in making the crossing may be understood in the light of the story of Diana, who once crossed a river by shooting an arrow into a tree on the opposite bank, and then a further arrow into that arrow, and so on until a bridge of arrows was formed which she was able to walk across. Seen in the light of the symbolism of archery (cf. TCA13) wherein the soul is wholly identified with the winged arrow

which flies into the heart of the sun-target, this story becomes wholly comprehensible. The straightness of the arrow's path, so important to the symbolism of archery, corresponds directly to the straightness of the sword-bridge.

Finally, we turn to a story which contains much of the doctrine of the bridge while making no explicit reference to the bridge itself. It is the story of Saille and Teren, which is virtually identical to that of Orpheus and Eurydice, except that, as in the Indian equivalent, it is the maid who rescues the husband from the underworld. The name of the Indian 'Eurydice' makes clear her true identity, for it is Saritri, almost identical to Saritrī, the solar angel; while the Greek names make it clear that the story was originally the other way around, for Eurydice means 'wide-justice', a title of God closely related to Eurynome, 'wide-rule', the Mother-Creator of the earliest surviving Greek creation story, while Orpheus appears to mean 'river-bank' (a reference as puzzling to modern scholars as it is clear to metaphysicians).

The story is universal, and is found as far afield as the North American Indians. It tells of the fall of the soul from heaven into the world of mortality and the journey of the solar Spirit into that world to rescue him (here the soul is male in relation to the female Spirit), for he cannot return unless She comes to make a 'bridge'.

One point which may prove puzzling in the light of this interpretation is that the prohibition against 'looking back', previously mentioned, is strongly present in this story, and, indeed, in the Greek version (but not the Indian) the quest is actually lost by the breaking of this taboo. How, it will be asked, can the taboo apply to God, She Who is the pre-eminent Mover-at-will? The answer is that there is another version of the story, still clearly present in the Rhennish tradition, which has a separate interpretation. This version concerns the descent of the adept on the path of the Lesser Mysteries into Hell, or into the inferior psychic realms, in order to gather the scattered fragments of her soul (cf. "Inside the Story", TCA13). Here the adept herself takes on the role of the Solar Spirit by virtue of her initiation, and it is precisely here that she must avoid all faltering and all looking back, for she treads the most perilous bridge of all.



Light in the Darkness

Our Lady in the Patriarchal Religions

WE HAVE discussed (pp. 3-5 and 17) many aspects of patriarchal religion, but have not yet touched upon the most important — the worship of our Lady. This stands at the heart of all true religion; indeed, since the feminine principle is the spiritual principle, without Her image, religion quickly dies. Judaism, it is true, has only a male god, and it is no coincidence that of all religions, Judaism alone has no doctrine of the afterlife and does not even state that there is one. A this-world-only religion is the logical extension of the masculine principle. Nor is it accidental that Jewish minds stand behind most of the great materialist ideologies of the modern world — Freudism, Marxism etc. and have played a disproportionately vast role in the development of modern capitalism. Islam, too, has only a male god, but as the last religion of the historical cycle, it occupies a special place, representing the furthest possible descent of religion into masculism.

Nonetheless, within the esoteric heart of both these religions, our Lady is fully recognised — in Judaism as Shekinah or Aima Elohim (Mother-God). For Islam, no less a person than Ibn Arabi, the greatest of all Sufi masters, says: "Know that the Absolute cannot be contemplated independently of a concrete being, and It is more perfectly seen in a human form than any other, and more perfectly in woman than in man." Indeed it is this vision of our Lady within the inner core of these traditions which makes their continued existence as religions metaphysically possible.

The other traditions, not occupying these special roles in the development of the masculist-materialist tendency of the historical cycle, have been able to allow the worship of our Lady to develop naturally; and everywhere it has taken on a role of immense importance. Ancient patriarchal cults which swept the Roman Empire are now known simply as 'the cult of Isis' or 'the cult of the Magna Mater'. The male gods (Osiris and Attis respectively) who theoretically played the predominant role made so little impact that they are all but forgotten by history. More recently, the worship of the Great Mother in India, of Tara in Tibet (described by a leading authority as "the mainstay of Tibetan culture and religion"), of Kuan Yin in China, have been, and are, the centre of the religious life of countless millions. One might cite many more examples.

Turning to the European tradition, anyone picking up a mediæval book of devotional verse will be astonished at the proportion of it addressed to the Virgin Mary. There can be no doubt that she, not Christ, was the heart and centre of mediæval popular devotion. All the titles given to God Herself in the West, and to Isis, Ishtar and Diana, were given to Mary —

Queen of Heaven, Star of the Sea, Seat of Wisdom etc. — in short, what happened was that our Lady made the Christian Church a providential vehicle by which She might come to Her children in the Dark Age.

The 'Reformation', as well as reducing Christianity to a mere 'religion' and opening the door to worldly rationalism (p. 17), violently rejected the cult of Mary. Indeed, these were but two sides of the same coin. Protestantism made itself spiritually analogous to Judaism (indeed, many extreme early Protestants took Jewish names and observed the Levitical prohibitions) — but with one significant difference: it had no esoteric core which recognised our Lady. It had no esoteric core at all. For the Protestants, everything was on the most outward and exoteric level. It is a truism among economic historians that the 'Protestant ethic' was intimately bound up with the development of modern capitalism, and thus of the whole modern techno-materialist world. For Protestantism, as a purely exoteric, wholly masculist religion, was one stage further in the historical decline than Islam. It was 'later than the last' (see page 12). The stage was set for the last days.