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JULY, 1913

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# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER



JULIEN OFFRAY DE LA METTRIE.

The Open Court Publishing Company

CHICAGO

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, \$1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE,

INDIA'S GREATEST LIVING POET.

BY BASANTA KOOMAR ROY.

ALTHOUGH it is perhaps not known to many, America is at the present time harboring a guest who is not only the greatest living poet of his own country, but whose work bids fair to live for all time. With the nations of the West, poetry has come to be looked upon as the language of the unusual, perhaps even the eccentric. The epic and lyric feeling does not penetrate into the masses of Western population as it did when poetry was still transmitted by oral tradition; nor do many of the West have the feeling that thought and sentiment expressed in poetry is a necessary element in every-day existence. So the great poets live their immortal lives confined largely to the book shelves. It is the written, rather than the living, word that tradition preserves. Only a very few have their memories stored with treasures of poetry, and even those who have literary tastes are often more ready to read about great poetry than to steep themselves in the poet's own thought. Now there has come to America one who, indeed, is one of the choicest intellects of his race and nation, but whose thoughts are not confined to the printed page; if his verses are read by the thousands, they are known by heart, sung, and recited by the millions. No Western poet has ever had such a constituency of contemporaries. Not only is this Hindu singer imposing through the vast chorus whose feelings he has interpreted, but his lines have a force which ranks them with the finest things the world has yet produced.

William Butler Yeats, in introducing Rabindranath Tagore to the literati of London, at a recent banquet in the Trocadero Hotel, said: "To take part in honoring Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is one of the greatest events of my artistic life. I have been carrying about with me a book<sup>1</sup> of translations into English prose of one hundred of his Bengali lyrics, written within the last ten years. I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics."

The enthusiasm at the banquet waxed high. The British literary men were lavish in showing admiration of a very "unusual degree." Some even, in Hindu manner, touched his feet by way of salutation, others were disappointed in not being able to do so. Rev. C. F. Andrews, a British missionary to India, and one of India's truest friends, thus tells us of his own disappointment: "I should like to have made obeisance to the poet, who has so raised his nation by his songs, but in a moment he had clasped my hand." It was a scene of great international significance. As art transcends all physical limitations, so in this gathering of artists everything else but art was lost sight of. The feeling of race difference, the apathy between the conquerors and the conquered, the gulf between the European and the Asian, all vanished before the illuminating spirit pervading the finer things of life.

As a result of Rabindranath's visit to England, British literary men are demanding the translation of his works; and already some half a dozen Hindus are at work to accomplish the task. On the other hand, many British literary men and women have begun studying the Bengali language so that they may read his works in their original beauty. The poet's short story "Dalia" has been dramatized as "The Maharani of Arakan" and produced in the Royal Albert Hall Theater in London.

If family tradition has anything to do with culture, then Rabindranath has nothing to complain of. He was born in the illustrious Thakur, anglicized into Tagore, family which has loomed high in the horizon of the intellectual and social life of India ever since the tenth century. Amongst the Tagores are counted men like Prosonno Koomar Tagore, a landowner, a lawyer of great reputation, an editor, a writer on legal and educational subjects, founder and president of the British India Association; Raja Sir Sourindra Mohun Tagore, undoubtedly one of the highest musical authorities in India, the founder of the Bengal Music School and the

<sup>1</sup> *Gitanjali* (song offerings) published, with an introduction by William Butler Yeats, by the India society of London.



Bengal Academy of Music, and author of many volumes on Hindu Music and musical instruments; Mr. Abanindranath Tagore, a distinguished painter, and an undisputed leader in the Hindu art revival; Maharaja Ramanath Tagore, brother of our poet's grandfather, a political leader and writer; Dwarakanath Tagore, the grandfather of the poet, a landlord, a founder of the Landholders' Society, a philanthropist, a social reformer, preeminently an agitator against the *suttee*, an ardent worker for the "identification of the feelings and interests of the Indians with their government," anxious to "strengthen the bond which unites India with Great Britain."

Debendranath Tagore, the father of the poet, was not a Maharaja (great king). He did not care to be decorated that way. Instead he was decorated by the people with the title of Maharsi (great sage). He was one of India's greatest spiritual leaders and intellectual giants. His godliness was contagious. Once a skeptic friend of his came to him and asked: "You talk of God, ever and again of God! What proof is there that there is a God at all?" Maharsi pointed to a light and asked his friend, "Do you know what that is?" "Light," was the reply. "How do you know that there is a light there?" "I see it; it is there and it needs no proof; it is self-evident." "So is the existence of God," replied Maharsi, "I see him within me and without me, in everything and through everything, and it needs no proof, it is self-evident."

It was in such a family—a family that combined culture with wealth and leisure, that Rabindranath first saw the light of day. It is said that born poets are generally handsome. Rabindranath was no exception to the general rule. He has long been famous in India both for his poetry and beauty. Indeed, his youthful portraits bear a striking resemblance to the best pictures of the poet of Galilee who wrote not a single verse, but who hallowed the world with the majestic poetry of his life and sayings. The Hindu poet's flowing hair; his broad, unfurrowed forehead; his bright, black, magnetic eyes, chiseled nose, firm but gentle chin, delicate sensitive hands, his sweet voice, pleasant smile, keen sense of humor, and his innate refinement, make him a man of rare and charming personality. To look at him is to notice the true embodiment of the artist.

That Wordsworth is right when he says, "The child is the father of the man," is witnessed by the early life and later development of Tagore. His childhood was the most constructive period of his life. It was then that he was imbibing the spirit of nature

which was to color all his life and all his writings afterwards. It really did bid fair to be of supreme importance to himself and his motherland. In one of his letters, the poet tells us about some of his childhood experiences:

"I but faintly remember the days of my early childhood. But I do remember that in the mornings, every now and then, a kind of unspeakable joy, without any cause, used to overflow my heart. The whole world seemed to me full of mysteries. Every day I used to dig the earth with a little bamboo stick thinking that I might discover one of them. All the beauty, sweetness and scent of this world, all the movements of the people, the noises in the street, the cry of the kites, the coconut trees in the family garden, the banyan tree by the pond, the shadow on the water, the morning perfume of the blossoms—all these used to make me feel the presence of a dimly recognized being assuming so many forms just to keep me company."

The future poet was then only six or seven years old. He was so busy looking at and enjoying things natural, that he hated to be hemmed in by the walls of the class-room. They were all the more unbearable for him because of his dislike for the teacher of Bengali literature, a man of ordinary intellect who was notorious for his coarse manners. The impertinent pupil would not answer any oral question asked by this man, consequently he used to gravitate to the bottom of his class. But he surprised the same teacher by capturing the first place in every written examination.

Maharsi Debendranath, after closely studying the inborn proclivities of his son, took him out of school, never to return for any length of time, and started with him for a trip to the heights of the Himalayas to train him in the school of nature. Young Tagore was glad to get out of school and beyond the reach of his teacher's care, and his heart leaped with joy now that he was about to see the mountain world. The first night out of Calcutta, as he was being carried in a *palanquin* to the Bolpur Shanti Niketan (peace cottage at Bolpur, his father's country home for meditation), he closed his eyes all the way to the bungalow simply not to see the beauties of nature by the faint light of the falling darkness, that he might take keener delight in the rich landscapes under the morning light.

When in the course of time the boy reached the Himalayas, he knew that he had found what his heart was craving for—a wealth of the beauty of nature resplendent with the luxury of lovely color and majestic form. Here his father introduced him to the sylvan deities, who, in their turn, unfolded to the boy poet a thousand and one mysteries of nature and the majesty of all these mysteries. Here

his father also taught him English, Sanskrit, Bengali, and in the sciences, botany and astronomy.

Then a boy of only eleven summers, having been born in the spring of 1860, Rabindranath had already finished reading some of the most important books in Bengali literature, and had just begun to "lisp in numbers for the numbers came." The next year his mother died, and his intense love for her now went to reinforce his worship of nature. At this time he was living at Chandranagore, in a garden house by the River Ganges. Such a contrast of change from the majestic grandeur of the Himalayas to the soft melody of the Ganges enriched and strengthened his imagination, and sharpened his intellect, until he became inspired with the nectar of nature; and he would spend hours together watching the mystic flow of the Ganges or seeing the moon kiss the sacred river into ripples. Here he would spend night after night upon the flat roof of the house, musing on the mystery of the star-lit universe.

Thus he spent several years in dreaming, studying English and Bengali literature, (Bengali, a daughter of Sanskrit, and the language of Mr. Tagore's poems), composing poems, and writing essays for different magazines, especially for his family magazine, *The Bharati*, which is now edited by his erudite sister, Sreemati Swarna Koomari Devi. At the age of seventeen, he made a short visit to Europe. His learned letters from there show his command over the Bengali language, his breadth of vision and keen sociological insight. In England he perfected his knowledge of English and acquired a lucid prose style which few have equaled in India.

Mr. Tagore's versatility is astonishing. To name a few of his activities and accomplishments: he is a profound philosopher, a spiritual and patriotic leader, an historical investigator, a singer and composer, an able editor (having edited four different magazines, *Sadhana*, *Bangadarsan*, *Bharati* and *Tattvabodhini*), a far-sighted educator, and a kind and considerate administrator of his vast "Zamindari" estate. But he is, above all, the poet—the poet of love. Love flows from his heart, mind and soul in a continuous stream, assuming all different forms in its windings from the gross to the spiritual, from the known to the unknown, from the finite to the infinite. He interprets love in all its multiform expressions—the love of mother, of son, husband, wife, lover, beloved, patriot, of the Dionysian, nature-drunk, and of the God-frenzied. Each and every one of these he portrays with his characteristic softness of touch that recalls the lyrics of Théophile Gautier, and with the exquisite felicity of Shelley and Keats. His verses carry within them

an emotion which thrills, enraptures, and causes every fiber of a human being to ache with joy that almost stops the throbbing of the heart and draws tears to the eyes.

Expression of love is so natural to him because of the fact that he has, like many other poets, passed through all the phases of love and life. Like the prose-poet Tolstoy, he has traveled from the worship of the senses to the quiet of sainthood. He understands the thrills of love, the romantic passion, the gloom of disappointment, the depth of despair, the profundity of quiet, and the ecstatic realization of "being, intelligence and bliss" (*sat, chit, anandam*).

When the surging tide of youth overtook the young poet quite unawares, he, in the onrush, could see only love and romance. The same nature, the same people, the same life; still everything looked different to him. He was at a loss to know whether it was himself or the world that had changed; and it did not take him long to discover that as he changed first, so the world changed to keep in touch with him. Love was no longer a thing far off—something to be imbibed from without; but instead, it became a reality to be drawn out from within. It was no longer a fancy, but a thing tangible, that first overpowered him. Thus for a time he became an epicure and *bon-vivant*; fashionable dress—the finest of silk robes—delicious dishes, ardent romances, love lyrics, literary production, constituted his interests, though there was always present in his sub-conscious self a strong under-current of spirituality which he inherited from his father.

It cannot be denied that in spite of this under-current many of his youthful poems were colored by the still stronger surface-current of his life. Indeed, some of them shocked the old-fashioned Hindu moralists, who received them with disdain. I remember one day in a students' boarding house in India, when I was trying to sing one of Mr. Tagore's songs, some of the young men that were present shouted: "What makes you sing that nautch-song?" When told that it was one of Rabi Babu's songs they were more than surprised and would not believe it until the printed verses were shown. Then they all changed their mind and confessed that it was quite proper to read or sing anything that Rabi Babu wrote. The song in prose translation reads:

"Hither, O beloved, come hither! step forth in this pleasure garden of mine and see where my flowers are blowing in beauty. Gentle breathes the west wind laden with the perfume of the blossoms. Here moonlight glimmers and a silvery stream murmurs down the forest ways.

"Hither, O beloved, come hither! for we shall unfold the depths of our

hearts gleaning the beauty of the immortal flowers; and in consuming ecstasy weave garlands each for the other, and watch the stars until they fade in the dawn.

"Beloved! in this joyous garden of ours we shall ever dwell and sing songs in rapturous joy. Here shall our hearts thrill in the mystery of life. Yea, and the days and nights shall pass as Visions of the Lord of Love, and we shall dream together in a languor of everlasting delight."

Again listen to his musings on "The Pensive Beloved":

"The young girl who sits by the window alone has forgotten to garland the flowers for her beloved. With her head resting on her hand she seems entirely rapt, while about her the gathered blossoms of the summer lie all neglected.

"For the breeze gently blows in to her, whispering softly, caressingly, as she sits by the window in a solemn rapture.

"The clouds fleet in the blue, and the birds flutter in the forest, and the odorous *bakul* blossoms fall intermittently before her eyes: Yet she is unregardful.

"But in sweet repose she smiles, for now the tender chords of her heart stir melodiously in the shadowland of dreams."

The conservative Hindus were up in arms against Rabindranath, thinking that he was likely to demoralize the youth of India by the sensuousness of his love poems and songs, especially the ones in "Love" (*Prém*), "Youthful Dreams" (*Jouban Sapna*), and "Chitrangada," a poetic drama. They were afraid that he was going to introduce the romanticism of the West, of Byron and Shelley, into India, and to depart from the classic severity of Indian literary treatment of the human passions. But they, in their over-zealousness to preserve for the youths of India the pleasures of Nirvanic bliss, forgot to take notice of the fact that in the writings of the young poet there could not be found anything like the coarse vulgarity of an earlier Bengali poet, Bharat Chandra Rai Gunakar, who was widely read by the young Bengalis at the time.

Mr. Tagore has all along held that he was not for salvation by *Bairagnya*, renunciation. In one of his poems he plainly says:

"My salvation shall never come through renunciation. I shall enjoy the triumph of salvation amidst the innumerable bondages of this world. . . . My *Maya* will evolve itself into *Mukti*, and my love will transform itself into adoration."

Dividing his time between his palatial home in Calcutta and Bolpur Peace Cottage, he was on the one hand receiving the



message of life, action, noise, politics and society in Calcutta, while on the other he was profiting by the inspiration of nature and quiet at Boalpur, but devoting most of his time to writing plays, essays, songs and poems. As the two outward forces were acting and reacting on each other; similarly, the opposite currents of the sensuous and the spiritual within him were struggling to harmonize themselves. During this period of doubt, despair and uncertainty, the poet wrote poems on such subjects as, "The Call of Sorrow," "Lamentation of Happiness," and "Despair of Hope."

At last the under-current of spirituality came to the surface again and in the process drove the opposite current out of existence. His entire life was now saturated with the spirit of this renaissance. He got what he sought; and the story of such a transformation he gives in a letter which in translation reads:

"One morning, the moment I saw from my veranda the sun rising from behind the foliage of the trees in the garden, the scales fell from my eyes. A singular glory covered the entire universe for me—bliss and beauty seemed to ripple all over the world....Then nobody and nothing whatsoever remained unwelcome to me. The people whose company was heretofore unpleasant to me, now on their approach my heart would run before me to offer them a cordial welcome. Even the coarse forms and features of some of the members of the laboring class, as they passed by on the street, had an inner glory for me."

With the change in the man, changed the tone of his poems. Now, filled to the brim with the love for God and looking upon this universe as the visible expression of God's love, he touches nothing, he writes nothing, that he does not saturate with the thought of divine love of spiritual life, and of eternal beauty and splendor in nature. The sun, the moon, the stars in heaven, and the trees and flowers on earth speak a language of love for the Supreme Being whose handiwork they are. Mr. Yeats speaks of the spirituality of Mr. Tagore's later poems in these words: "In all his poems there is one single theme: the love of God. When I tried to find anything western which might compare with the works of Mr. Tagore, I thought of "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a Kempis. It is like, yet between the work of the two men there is a whole world of difference. Thomas a Kempis was obsessed by the thought of sin; he wrote in terrible imagery. Mr. Tagore has as little thought of sin as a child playing with a top. His poems have stirred my blood as nothing has for years."

Here follow two of his spiritual poems in prose translations. In the first he thus addresses God as a passer-by:



"In the deep shadows of the rainy month with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers.

"To-day the morning has closed its eyes, heedless to the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and over the ever wakeful blue sky a thick veil has been drawn.

"The woodlands have hushed their songs, and doors are all shut at every house. Thou art the solitary wayfarer in this deserted street. Oh, my only friend, my best beloved, the gates are open in my house—do not pass by like a dream."

In the second he dwells on the mysteries of the final home of the soul:

"Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. Oh, how beautiful! There in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colors and sounds and odors. There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth. And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.

"But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor color, and never never a word."

If by a natural disaster all of Mr. Tagore's thoughtful essays, profound philosophical dissertations, learned historical interpretations, soul-stirring short stories, powerful dramas, carefully wrought novels, and his exquisite books of ballads and lyrics are destroyed forever from the face of this earth; still as long as men live in India he will be remembered as one of India's greatest poets, for they could never forget the message of his national songs. His songs have made such an indelible mark on the life of the nation that they will continue to shower their beneficent influence as long as the name India shall endure. Imagination itself is at a loss to comprehend, and language feels its inadequacy to express, the real usefulness of his patriotic songs in the up-hill task of nation-building in India. The Philippics of the political agitators, and the diatribes of the caustic editorial writers are mere pin-pricks when compared with the majestic sweep of the patriotic-fire songs of our poet. These deep appeals are lashing the little ripples into mountainous waves of unalloyed nationalism that are, in the India of to-day, dashing against and engulfing the rocks of selfishness and provincialism and thus helping to form a mighty, homogeneous nation out of a multitude of conflicting interests.

His patriotic songs are sung everywhere. In the morning

when the rising sun darts its rays of liquid gold we hear his songs being sung in the bathing *ghats* and in *sankirtan* parties that go about in the streets to wake people up from sleep to join in the service of God and Motherland. At scorching noontide, under the shade of the spreading banyan trees in lonely *maidans* when the shepherds play the king, they sing the same songs to themselves, to the birds on the trees and the cattle in the fields. And again, when the Indian landscape is bathed by the vermilion sprays of the setting sun, and as the boatmen go down the river or as the village peasants flock homeward—they all sing the songs of Rabindranath. They are sung in the national congresses and conferences, they are sung by the athletes in the gymnasiums, the beggars in their begging excursions, and the washermen in the *dhobi Khanas*; and they are sung at weddings and at times of religious ceremony.

There are critics who claim that Rabindranath's national poems are too gentle, too effeminate, to suit the present requirements of India. It is true that he has not the fire of Hem Chandra Bandopadhyaya, nor the masculine force of Nabin Chandra Sen. It is also true that he appeals to the softer emotions, and they to the sterner, and it cannot be denied that the latter also is needed in India. Indeed, the "Sleep no More" of Hem Chandra Bandopadhyaya, and some of the stanzas of "The Battle of Pallasy" (*Pallashir Judho*) of Nabin Chandra Sen are mighty factors in the present crisis in India. Yet, in spite of all, it must be acknowledged by those who know anything about the imaginative and speculative nature of the Hindus, that of the two sentiments—"Awake, arise, conquer and dash to earth the oppressor's rod," and "Your Motherland is struggling, she is suffering, O! she is starving, who else but a dutiful son can assuage the sorrows of the mother!"—the latter appeals to the Hindu soul more strongly and has a more enduring influence than the former. Rabindranath decidedly follows the latter path. He idealizes the motherland, he speaks of her in a thousand different ways, arousing in the hearts of his readers as many different shades of passionate emotion. He speaks of her waving rice fields, her smiling blossoms, perfumed flowers, singing birds, talking streams, awe-inspiring mountains, noisy bazars, sweet homes, her granaries and her play-grounds full of dear little children—and he clothes them all with the hallowing love of the motherland—*Bharat Mata*, as she is called in India. Over and above that, with his characteristic insight into Hindu traits and temperaments, he gives some of his best national songs a touch of colloquialism and the cadences of Baul and the Ramprasadi religious songs. They

both have peculiar tunes that appeal to Hindu higher emotions and devotional nature. Incessantly he pleads the cause of India in a hundred different ways and always in his inimitable style. Thus he sings of consecration :

“To thee, my motherland, I dedicate my body, for thee I consecrate my life; for thee my eyes will weep; and in thy praise my muse will sing.

“Though my arms are helpless and powerless; still they will do the deeds that can only serve thy cause; and though my sword is rusty with disgrace, still it shall sever thy chains of bondage, sweet mother of mine.”

Then in another place he rebukes the mother by saying :

“Mother should you send your children as beggars to the doors of strangers, who, at sight of begging bowls, begin to hate and throw stones at them in contempt?”

Again he consoles her by saying :

“Sweet mother! You can hope nothing from these children of yours, they will give you nothing, though you are giving them everything you have.—air, water, grains, and your age-long culture. Forgive your ungrateful children, who promise you so much, but at the next breathing break all their solemn promises.”

When the young patriots of India find themselves deserted on all sides, when their friends, relations, alas! even their own parents disown them for the crime of patriotism, they find a mine of inspiration in the song, “Follow the Gleam”:

“If nobody responds to your call, then follow the path all alone, all alone; if every one is afraid and nobody wants to speak to you, then, O, you unfortunate! speak to yourself the story of your sorrow; if while traveling in the wilderness, everybody deserts you and turns against you, mind them not, but trample the thorns and bathe your feet with your own blood and go all by yourself; if again in the stormy night you do not find a single soul to hold the light for you, and they all close their doors against you, be not faint-hearted, forlorn patriot, but take a rib out of your side and light it with the fire of lightning and then follow the gleam, follow the gleam.”

Love, pathos, encouragement and the spirit of sacrifice inspire his patriotic poems: but in them there is not even a suggestion of anger, jealousy or hatred for anybody in the world. That is what marks him out as a representative of world-wide humanity. His universalism has reached the very height of perfection. He, as a twentieth century idealist, believes in the unity of the human race—unity in the richness of its diversity. He holds with Goldwin Smith, that “above all nations is Humanity.” He holds also that the presence of the national, the racial, the creedal and the continental

elements and their cooperation in human society are essential for the harmonious development of the universal; just as the presence and the cooperation of the distinct organs of the body are essential for the normal development of the man. He thinks that "as the mission of the rose lies in the unfoldment of the petals which implies distinctness, so the rose of humanity is perfect only when the diverse races and the nations have evolved their perfected distinct characteristics, but all attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love."

That is the reason why he believes that the East and the West have their special lives to live, and their special missions to fulfil, but their final goal is the same. That is exactly why he does not, as no sensible man any longer does, believe in the cynic charlatanism of

"Oh East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

Thus he spoke in the banquet where the master minds of Great Britain and Ireland gathered to welcome him in their midst:

"...I have learned that, though our tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom our hearts are one. The monsoon clouds, generated in the banks of the Nile, fertilize the far distant shores of the Ganges; ideas may have to cross from East to Western shores to find a welcome in men's hearts and fulfil their promise. East is East and West is West—God forbid that it should be otherwise—but the twain must meet in amity, peace and mutual understanding; their meeting will be all the more fruitful because of their differences; it must lead both to holy wedlock before the common altar of humanity."

The story of his love for the universal, for "things both great and small," for people both rich and poor, is best told in one of his poems:

"The myriads of human beings that inhabit this globe of ours enter my heart and find unspeakable joy in one another's company; there lovers enter and look at each other, and children stand and laugh in merriment... My heart is full to the brim with transcendent joy, and I find the world without a single human soul in it. It is all empty. O, I know! How can it be otherwise when all have entered into my heart!"

Exactly in the same strain he writes his dainty little poem, "The Small," which in prose translation is as follows:

"What is there but the sky, O sun, which can hold thy image?  
I dream of thee but to serve thee I never can hope,  
The dew drop wept and said,

'I am too small to take thee unto me, great lord,  
And thus my life is all tears.'

"I illumine the limitless sky,  
Yet I can yield myself up to a tiny drow of dew.'  
Thus said the sun and smiled.  
'I will be a speck of sparkle and fill you,  
And your tiny life will be a smiling orb.'"

In his poem, "The Infinite Love," Rabindranath Tagore, who combines in his poetry the idealistic flights of Shelley, the luxuriant imagery of Keats, the exalted beauty of Tennyson, and the spiritual fervor of Thomas a Kempis, strikes the dominant note of his life and work, both of which have been tremendously influenced by the sublime philosophy and the eloquent natural beauties of India. The poem as translated by the poet himself reads:

"I have ever loved thee in a hundred forms and times,  
Age after age, in birth following birth.  
The chain of songs that my fond heart did weave  
Thou graciously didst take round thy neck,  
Age after age, in birth following birth.

"When I listen to the tales of the primitive past,  
The love-pangs of the far distant times,  
The meetings and partings of the ancient ages—  
I see thy form gathering light  
Through the dark dimness of Eternity  
And appearing as a star ever fixed in the memory of the ALL.

"We two have come floating by the twin currents of love  
That well up from the inmost heart of the Beginningless.  
We two have played in the lives of myriad lovers  
In tearful solitude of sorrow  
In tremulous shyness of sweet union,  
In old, old love ever renewing its life.

"The onrolling flood of the love eternal  
Hath at last found its perfect final course.  
All the joys and sorrows and longings of the heart,  
All the memories of the moments of ecstasy,  
All the love-lyrics of poets of all climes and times  
Have come from the everywhere  
And gathered in one single love at thy feet."



## TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT ARARAT.

BY EDGAR J. BANKS.

“YOU can not ascend Ararat, Effendi. No man has ever been to the top of the mountain, and no man ever can. Ararat is the mother of the world, and Allah forbid that any man see her face. Men come from England and from France, and they go into the mountain for three days or for four days or for a week, and then say they have climbed to the summit, but they speak not the truth, for when they reach a certain place in the mountain, Allah casts a deep sleep upon them and bears them back to the base. Seek not to go up Ararat, Effendi, lest you too become a man of lies.”

The aged Kurd, who would dissuade me from climbing Ararat, was sincere. He was expressing the belief of most of the Kurds and Armenians and Turks and Persians who live in the little villages about the base and on the sloping sides of the great mountain. And yet in the wonderfully clear air the summit of Ararat, all white with snow, was distinctly visible; it seemed an easy climb of but an hour or two.

The belief that the summit of Ararat is unattainable dates back at least several centuries, perhaps even to a great antiquity. Sir John Mandeville, the tale of whose wonderful travels was written about 1332, refers to it. He says:

“And there beside is another hill that men clep Ararat, but the Jews clepe it Taneez, where Noah’s ship rested, and yet is upon that mountain. And men may see it afar in clear weather. And that mountain is well a seven mile high. And some men say that they have seen and touched the ship, and put their fingers in the parts where the fiend went out, when that Noah said *Benedicte*. But they that say such words, say their will. For a man may not go up the mountain, for great plenty of snow is always on that mountain, neither summer nor winter. So that no man may go up there, no man never did, since the time of Noah, save a monk that, by the



grace of God, brought one of the planks down, that yet is in the minster at the foot of the mountain.

“But upon that mountain to go up, this monk had great desire. And so upon a day, he went up. And when he was upward the three parts of the mountain he was so weary that he might no further, and so he rested him, and fell asleep. And when he awoke he found himself lying at the foot of the mountain. And then he prayed devoutly to God that he would vouchsafe to suffer him to go up. And so he did. And sith that time never none. Wherefore men should not believe such words.”

In 1330 Friar Odoric, who actually traveled in the region, refers in his journal to the same tradition. He says:

“In the foresaid country there is the very same mountain whereupon the ark of Noah rested: unto the which I would willingly have ascended, if my company would have stayed for me. Howbeit, the people of that country report that no man could ever ascend the said mountain, because (they say) it pleaseth not the highest God.”

Ararat is of special interest, not only because of its unusual beauty and height, but because of the story that Noah's ark rested there. However to connect the story with this particular peak is somewhat difficult. In ancient Assyrian times the name Ararat referred to the entire mountain range, rather than to an individual peak. St. Jerome, an early Christian writer, speaks of Ararat as the plain of the Araxes, which lies at the northern base of the mountain. It seems, therefore, that only in comparatively modern times has the name been attached to the highest peak of the range. The Armenians, to whom the mountain is specially sacred, call it Massis. The Kurds and Turks call it Egri Dagh, or the Crooked Mountain, because of its double summit. The Russians know it by its European name.

Ararat lies just where three great empires meet,—Russia, Turkey and Persia. The surrounding region, therefore, is generally infested with robbers and brigands, and is specially unsafe. The mountain may be said to consist of three peaks, forming an equilateral triangle, the sides of which are about seven miles in length. The western and the tallest of the three peaks is Ararat proper, or Big Ararat, as the natives call it, rising to the height of 17,260 feet. Seven miles to the east is Little Ararat, a great conical peak 12,840 feet high. Were it not overshadowed by Big Ararat, it would be a mighty mountain in itself. There drifts of snow remain all summer long in the hollows, and there too is a small Arabic cemetery of

considerable antiquity. The third peak, Takelti, lies a few miles to the north of the other two, and from a distance resembles the first of three steps by which in ancient times some mighty god may have ascended to heaven. Connecting Big and Little Ararat is a sharp ridge, Muchtepe, which at its lowest point is about 8800 feet high.

To climb Big Ararat, in spite of the belief that the gods forbid it, has been the aim of many a traveler; few have succeeded. Tradition says that before the Christian era twelve wise men long stood on the summit watching for the star of Bethlehem to appear,



THE THREE PEAKS OF ARARAT SEEN FROM THE NORTH.

and when it did appear three of them followed it to the Christ child. Though but a tradition, the story suggests that possibly in those early days men may have climbed the mountain to its summit. The tradition to which Sir John Mandeville refers, is still repeated by the natives, for they still tell how Hagop or St. Jacob frequently tried to reach the summit, but was always brought back to the base during the night. Finally when he succeeded, he brought back a plank from the ark, and some of the pitch with which the ark was smeared. The plank was shown in the monastery at Aghurri until 1840, and the pitch was sought for its wonderful medicinal

properties. The pictures of Ararat of two centuries ago plainly show the ark standing on the summit of the mountain between its two peaks.

The first ascent of Ararat, of which there is a record, was made by the Frenchman Dr. Parrot, in 1829. He succeeded in reaching the summit only in his third attempt, and though he wrote a book, describing the ascent in detail, his story was long doubted. In 1834, Spassky Aftonomoff, a Russian astronomer, climbed to the summit to prove his theory that from that height the stars were



THE TWO GUIDES ON THE HIGHEST PEAK OF ARARAT.

visible at noon. In 1845 the Russian general Chodzko, with a party of surveyors, camped on the summit for three days. In 1876 Mr. James Bryce, lately British ambassador to the United States, reached the top. Other ascents have since been made, but of the many who try to climb the mountain, few succeed.

On August 7, 1912, with my companion, Dr. Gibson of Chicago, I arrived at Erivan, a Russian town about forty miles to the north of Ararat; even from that distance the great mountain with its cap of snow seemed but a few hours away. We had come to climb

to its summit. Ice axes were made by the local blacksmiths; shoes were provided with sharp, long nails, and the necessary provisions were purchased. Then we discovered that Ararat was under military control, and that special permission from the government must be had before we could climb it. To obtain the permission we sent telegrams which received no answers, and at length in despair we started for the mountain. Our first stop was at Etchmiadzin, the seat of the head of the Gregorian church. The little place has always been associated with the mountain, for though at a distance it seems to stand at its very base, and carefully preserved in a chamber of the church, in the rear of the altar, is a piece of dark wood, three inches long and an inch in width, carved with the figures of Christ and of the Virgin Mary. The priests claim that it is a part of the ark. Further up the valley, at Nachtchevan, is the reputed tomb of Noah.

Alikizil is the little Armenian village close to the northern foot hills of Ararat. There we secured an ox team to carry us and our goods to Sadar Bulak, the military station near the ridge between the two peaks. The road was merely a trail, and so rough that progress was slow. Great stones, hurled in ancient times from the craters of Ararat, frequently blocked our way. Our first night on the mountain was spent in a little Kurdish village near the entrance to the great chasm which reaches into the very heart of the mountain. Aghurri is a modern town near the site of an earlier town of the same name. There it is said that Noah settled after he left the ark. There he cultivated the vine, and there he made the wine of which he drank. Seventy years ago his very vine used to be pointed out. There too used to grow the willow trees which sprang from the planks of the ark. But these interesting things may be seen no more, for on June 20, 1840, an earthquake shook the mountain to its foundation; a part of the mountain fell upon the village and completely buried it. Not one of its two hundred houses escaped, and not a soul, save two men who happened to be away from their homes for the day, survived. Huge rocks, thousands of tons in weight, were hurled for miles down the slope, and the once fertile fields and vinyards are now so thickly strewn with them that they are fit only for the grazing of sheep. The shrine of Saint Jacob, far in the gorge, together with the plank from the ark, perished; only the sacred spring remained, for that no earthquake may ever destroy. Its waters still slowly trickle down from the rocks, drop by drop, into the tank beneath. When there is drought in the valley below and the wheat is parched, the Christians and Mohammedans

together, for it is sacred to them both, climb to the spring to obtain water for their priests, and as the priests pray over it, rain comes to dispel the drought. When swarms of locust devour the grain, again the peasants take water from the spring to sprinkle over the fields, and the *tuti* bird, like a large gray crow, is attracted by the sacred water, even from a great distance, and devours the locusts. Though the water drips but slowly from the rocks, there is always an abundance of it, for however much of it is taken away, the tank is always full; at least the peasants say so.

From Aghurri up the mountain to Sadar Bulak is but ten



ARARAT FROM THE BARRACKS OF SADAR BULAK.

miles, but for us it was a full day's journey. There between the two high peaks was the military post with about thirty soldiers, and about the post were a hundred or more tents of those who would escape the excessive heat of the Araxes valley. Still higher up the mountain sides, wherever grass would grow and foothold could be had, the shepherds were grazing their flocks of sheep and goats. It is from Sadar Bulak that the ascent of the mountain may best be made. We called upon the commander of the post for permission to climb the mountain; he promptly informed us that it was not in his power to give it. However we persuaded him to telegraph to



his superior, and during the two days we were waiting for the reply, he entertained us royally. The reply was favorable, and though we were already about eight thousand feet up the mountain, the real ascent began on August 18th.

The guide, whom the commander recommended, was Ahmed Beg Shemsiddin, a powerful Kurd of forty. For his services we paid ten rubles a day. He claimed to have made a dozen ascents of the mountain. Seven strong men at two rubles a day were employed to pack the provisions and blankets. Each man carried a load of about twenty pounds; one carried a bundle of sticks for fuel. At



THE HOME OF THE KURDISH GUIDE AT SADAR BULAK.

seven o'clock we set out on horseback to slowly ascend the ridge between the two peaks, but after three hours the horses were returned, for they could go no farther. Tales are told of the fierceness of the Kurdish shepherds of Ararat, but these lonely mountaineers received us kindly and brought us milk to drink. From the summit of big Ararat a brook of cold snow water came bounding down over the rocks. Along its side we saw the fresh tracks of a bear. The wolf and the fox also inhabit the mountain, and large harmless snakes lurk among the rocks, but we saw nothing of them. The occasional call of a mountain bird excited our packmen, and



had they possessed guns, they might have abandoned us for the chase. In the warm moist places between the stones were mountain flowers in abundance; some were of a beautiful blue or white, but the best of all were the great clusters of forget-me-nots. Great stones of black diorite, jagged and rough as if they were freshly blasted from a quarry, frequently blocked our way.

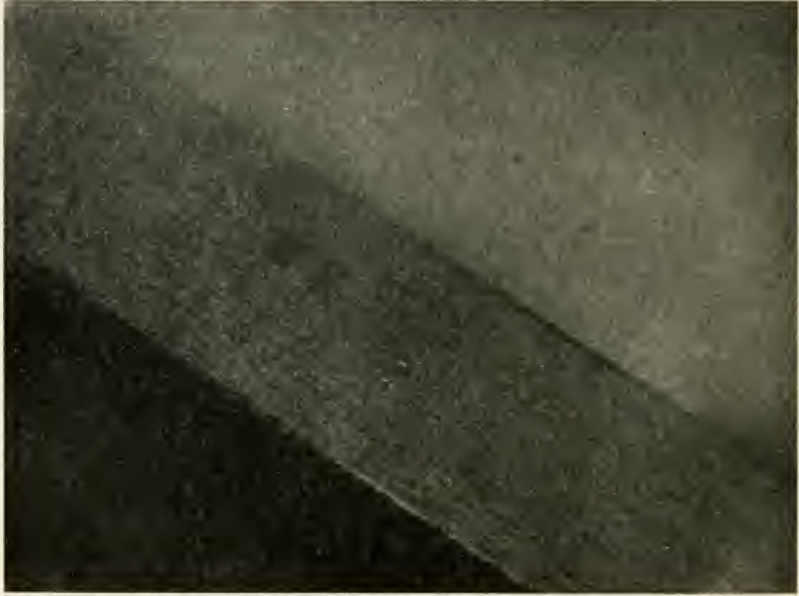
The first night we camped about eleven thousand feet high by the side of a stream of melted snow. To protect us from the cold



A HARD CLIMB NEAR THE SUMMIT OF ARARAT.

wind which swept down from the snowy heights above we heaped stones about the beds. The Kurds, doubled up in their great black capes shivered the night away, or sang to keep up their spirits. In the morning the stream of water was nearly dry, for during the night the snow did not melt, and what little there was, was solidly frozen over. At sunrise we were again on our way. Up over great heaps of stones we climbed, sometimes with great difficulty, or now and then a snow field made the ascent easier, but the Kurds, with

their simple, raw-hide, fur-covered shoes, always clung to the rocks. At the height of twelve thousand feet the air became rarer; the heart beat faster, and it was difficult to breathe. Frequently we stopped to rest. At night fall we found a camping place on a projecting rock, by the side of a great snow field, about fourteen thousand feet in height. The Kurds called the place Kis Kalesi, or Maiden's Castle, but it is doubtful if any maid ever climbed so far up the side of Ararat. Here we heard the streams of water trickling far down beneath the rocks, and melted snow was our drink.



A SNOW PLANE REACHING THE SUMMIT. THE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE SLOPE.

The night air was bitterly cold. Clouds were about and below us, and the stars above alone were visible.

At daylight we were awake eager for the final climb to the summit, three thousand feet above. Once the rumble of thunder seemed to warn us to go no higher, and the clouds became so thick that we could see but a few yards ahead. My companion, already fatigued, decided to go no farther, and the men remained with him. Hesitatingly the guide wrapped up his head, and we two alone started on. Finally as the clouds broke away, one of the men joined us, and we were three. Higher up the mountain the rocks were

steeper and more difficult to climb; in places they were almost perpendicular. Once I tried to cut my way along a snow field which reached to the summit, but it was too steep for safety. Finally a thousand feet from the summit we reached the last barrier of great diorite rocks; beyond, the slope was not so steep, but loose stones of reddish porphyry, mixed with ashes, made climbing even more difficult. When half way up the ash field we observed the strong odor of sulphur, yet no fissures in the mountain side could be seen. The guide asserted that it was there that one always fell asleep while climbing the mountain, and he complained of a severe headache.



THE AUTHOR ON THE SUMMIT.

The bottle contains the names of earlier climbers.

It is sometimes asserted that smoke is seen issuing from near the summit of Ararat, but the craters, all of which have long been extinct, are low down on the slope, and the odor came from the sulphur which was mixed with the ashes on the surface. However every native believes that at some future date Ararat will again belch forth fire as it did in ancient times. Five and a half hours of climbing brought us to the summit of the rocky ridge which ran along by the side of a snow field, and exhausted, we stepped out upon a comparatively level plain. As we stood there the wind drove the clouds away for an instant, and in the bright sunlight, not more than

a quarter of a mile away, and a hundred feet above us was the sparkling, snow-covered peak of Ararat. Excitedly we hurried up the slope: our climb was at an end. At a little distance away was another peak, but at a slightly lower level. In the hollow between the two summits it is said that the ark rested.

At the edge of the snow-capped summit there project from the snow two wooden poles which once supported a large wooden box. It was placed there by some Russian officials several years ago to contain a book, that all who climbed the mountain might record their names, but the strong wind had broken the poles and hurled down



THE SUMMIT OF ARARAT IS GENERALLY OBSCURED BY CLOUDS.

the box, and we found it half buried in snow and ice. Once a Russian flag waved above the box, but the flag, now in shreds, was also frozen into the ice. Near the box is a pile of stones; search among them revealed a bottle and a tin box containing the names of those who had reached the summit. Of the few names which I saw, all were written in Russian; one man, more ambitious than the others, had left there a bronze plate engraved with his name and a date.

The Summit of Ararat is frequently very cloudy, even when it is perfectly clear in the valley below. During the daytime the hot air from the valley rushes upward, and reaching the snow fields near

the summit is cooled. Thus the clouds are formed. It has been said that Ararat is always concealed by clouds from about ten o'clock in the morning till sun-set, but of the two weeks I spent within sight of its summit, more than half of the time there were no clouds to be seen. Unfortunately, when we were on the summit, it was one of the times when Ararat preferred to veil her face. Consequently the air was bitterly cold; the wind swept over the snow in a gale, and only now and then, for just an instant, did the sun penetrate the clouds so that I could make use of the camera which I had brought to the summit with great effort.



ON THE SUMMIT OF ARARAT.

The view from the highest mountains is seldom the best; frequently it is the least interesting. So it is with Ararat. The mountain rises so abruptly from the plain to such a great height that everything below is almost too far away to be seen distinctly. Even little Ararat, which is a mighty mountain, seemed to be flattened out, and the lower peaks were but little knolls on the level plain. The edges of the horizon seemed to be tipped up, as if the earth were shaped like a huge dish, and we were standing on a knob in its center. Forty miles to the north is Ali Goez, 13,400 feet in



height. To the east is Kara Dagh, 11,000 feet high, but the clouds hid them from our view. It is said that the Caspian in the east, and the Black Sea in the west, are visible, but we could see nothing of them.

An hour upon the summit chilled us through. The descent to the camping place took less than half the time of the ascent, for in places we merely stood upon the loose stones and ashes, and they carried us down, but the climb over the large rocks was even harder than the ascent. Finally when we stumbled into camp, and dropped from exhaustion, my companion had brandy ready to revive us, and the Kurds were preparing coffee over a tiny fire. The next day, the fourth, we were at the post of Sadar Bulak.

Two days later, in the little town of Igdirdir to the east of the mountain, while sipping the delicious Russian tea in the public garden, an aged Armenian approached.

"Whence did you come?" he asked.

"From America."

"Why did you come?" he continued with the customary directness of the Oriental.

"To climb Mount Ararat."

"God forbid; that may never be."

"But, Effendim, I have already climbed the mountain."

"May God keep your tongue from such falsehood."

"But, Effendim, it is no falsehood. I climbed to the very summit, to that white peak you see yonder, above the clouds."

"God forbid that my old ears hear such words."

Then I took from my pocket a formidable looking paper which the commander of the post of Sadar Bulak had given me. The old man carefully looked at the seal at the bottom and then in Russian he slowly spelled out these words:

"A Certificate. August 8 (Aug. 21), 1912.

"Post of Sadar Bulak.

"This certificate is given to the American subject, Edgar J. Banks, who has come to the post of Sadar Bulak, and from there, with the guide Ahmed Beg Shemsiddin, has mounted to the summit of Big Ararat. In evidence of this fact, namely the mounting of Big Ararat, I attach hereto the official seal.

"Commander of the Post of Sadar Bulak,

"(Signed) Captain Shatiloff."

Silently the old man handed the paper back, arose, and shaking his head as if bewildered, went on his way.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LA METTRIE AND PERTINENT MATERIALS.

BY ERNST BERGMANN.<sup>1</sup>

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

THE April *Monist* contains a discussion on the mechanistic principle and publishes in this connection an exposition of La Mettrie's contention that man is a machine. At the same time the Open Court Publishing Company has brought out an edition of La Mettrie's book *L'homme machine* in both French and English, the English translation being, strange to say, the first that ever appeared of this remarkable book.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Ernst Bergmann, of Leipsic, has recently published a meritorious book<sup>3</sup> setting forth among other things the several phases of La Mettrie's discussion with his great antagonist Haller, known to his contemporaries better than to the present generation as both a poet and a prominent professor of physiology. His fame has waned, his verses are no longer read and his scientific accomplishments are placed in the background by the great strides which physiology has made since his day. Many know him only in the lines which Goethe dedicated to him in criticism of his pious agnosticism. Haller had the conviction that the core of everything was ultimately unknowable, and he expressed it in these words:

"Nature's within from mortal mind  
Must ever lie concealed.  
Thrice blessed e'en he to whom she has  
Her outer shell revealed."—Tr. by P. C.

<sup>1</sup>The translations of the chapters from Dr. Bergmann's book and of the additional matter from the French edition of La Mettrie have been made by Lydia G. Robinson.

<sup>2</sup>Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Man a Machine*. French-English. Chicago, Open Court Publishing Company, 1912.

<sup>3</sup>*Die Satiren des Herrn Maschine*. Leipsic, Ernst Wiegandt, 1913.

To which Goethe replied :

*"Nature's within from mortal mind,  
Philistine, sayest thou,  
Must ever lie concealed?  
To me, my friend, and to my kind  
Repeat this not. We trow  
Where'er we are that we  
Within must always be.*

*"Thrice blest e'en he to whom she has  
Her outer shell revealed!  
This saying sixty years I heard  
Repeated o'er and o'er,  
And in my soul I cursed the word,  
Though secretly I swore.  
Some thousand thousand times or more  
Unto myself I witness bore :  
Gladly gives Nature all her store,  
She knows not kernel, knows not shell,  
For she is all in one. But thou  
Examine thou thine own self well  
If thou art kernel or art shell."*

—Tr. by P. C.

Goethe's criticism of Haller was mild in comparison to the onslaught of his radical enemy La Mettrie, who fought this pious pedant of Swiss birth with a weapon which the German professor could not handle, namely, the trenchant sarcasm of French wit. In the spirit of irony La Mettrie dedicated his book to Haller, as if Haller had been the originator of these materialistic principles, and the poor good Haller, not catching the full import of the satire, was very indignant at this misrepresentation of his views.

We here collect material which will be supplementary to the new edition of *Man a Machine*, consisting (1) of the preface written by the publisher of the first French edition which proves that according to his idea the publication of such an irreligious book was very hazardous; (2) La Mettrie's dedication of *L'homme machine* to Haller which does not appear in the new edition and has probably been omitted by the translator because it seemed unintelligible without historical explanation (which is here furnished by extracts from Dr. Bergmann's book *Die Satiren des Herrn Maschine*); (3) Dr. Bergmann's dedication of his book addressed to the spirit of La Mettrie in a style worthy of La Mettrie himself; (4) an article of Dr. Bergmann on "La Mettrie and his Mechanistic Theory," followed by (5) his account of the beginning of the La Mettrie-Haller controversy, and of (6) "La Mettrie's Personality." For reasons

of convenience so as to introduce the reader gradually into the complication of La Mettrie's satirical controversy with Haller we reverse the order and shall begin with Bergmann's essays and follow these with the preface of the Dutch publisher of La Mettrie's French edition, and the satirical dedication to Haller. P. C.

#### BERGMANN'S DEDICATION TO LA METTRIE'S SPIRIT.

My dear Mr. La Mettrie:

As you see, I have carefully collected and brought together into a booklet the mischievous little satires with which you made yourself troublesome to my countrymen now a century and a half ago. Do not let this fact too greatly startle you. The librarians of your own time, it is true, dropped these little volumes into the waste basket from their finger tips. This is why they are so rare. But to-day we are not living in the age of Louis XV. To-day we understand better how to appreciate things of this sort, and—we have a science of history. And if the results of this science do not always serve tangible purposes, it nevertheless affords us great pleasure to make unusual heads, such as you were, sir, stand out in high sculptured relief from the mediocrity of their contemporaries, and to take this opportunity to observe from our own height the many complicated paths up which you were then obliged to toil so painfully.

You have, my worthy Mr. Machine—for you yourself say this is your *nomen et omen*—treated our good German Leibnitzians with but little respect because they were not willing to waken quickly enough from their dogmatic noon-day nap. You aroused Messrs. Haller, Hollmann, Tralles, and all the rest of those *savantissimi et pedantissimi professores* rather roughly with your grotesque machine theory, and then all at once while they were still rubbing their eyes in amazement you served them with that *Antiseneca* in which it seems to me you were not so much engaged in discovering the truth as in having your own fun. To be sure the fright did not harm the worthy gentlemen in the least. They fell asleep again after you, sir, I am sorry to say, had left us so early, and they rested on the soft pillows of the three rational sciences for quite a while until a greater came who interrupted their sleep forever. But the affair has turned out quite badly for you, sir. History has outlawed your name and we are compelled to make the painful discovery that with all your brilliant gifts you have injured more than you have served the good cause of intellectual progress and civilization. Whoever lays his hands on the loftiest possessions of humanity which he regards as hollow, from him we

demand the peaceful objectivity of our Kant or the holy gravity of a Spinoza.

Meanwhile—time has overcome these antagonisms, and justice has been meted out to you, sir. And as the great king suffered it smilingly when you cast aside your periwig in his presence, and—you know you did!—unbuttoned your vest a little after dinner, because in other respects you were a good fellow and a jolly companion, so we too for the sake of your wit and your many lusty jokes and repartees will pardon you for introducing yourself into our literature in so unceremonious a fashion. Farewell, and may you mend your ways.

Leipsic, October 21, 1912.

The Author.  
[Ernst Bergmann.]

#### LA METTRIE AND HIS MECHANISTIC THEORY.

"None e'er comprehended  
How soul and body wedded are and blended."

Faust II, Act II, Scene II.

It took one hundred years before the slowly stepping human race could catch up with the far-advanced genius of Spinoza. One hundred years have passed ere that lesser exile of the eighteenth century, the notorious author of *L'homme machine*, celebrated his resurrection before the face of history.

How nervously the metaphysicians of the academy stirred in their seats when on January 19, 1752, M. Darget read aloud to them the eulogy from the hand of the master ("*de main de maître*") in which the ill-famed atheist and materialist De la Mettrie was granted by the royal hand a pure heart and an obliging disposition! What loud applause came from all the benches one hundred years later when on the same spot Du Bois-Reymond applied to the bold much-slandered pioneer of civilization in the darkness of pre-Kantian dogmatism, the verse of Heine:

"Beat the drum and fear thee not,  
Drum the people from their sleep,  
Drum reveille in strength of youth,  
Drumming, drumming march along!"<sup>4</sup>

Truth can wait; it is unchanging.

Up to the sixties of the nineteenth century it was customary either entirely to pass by this most original of all the materialists

<sup>4</sup> *Lametrie*. An address delivered in the open meeting of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences held in memory of Frederick II, on January 28, 1875. Berlin, 1875. 23 pages.



in the history of philosophy and literature or to prejudice the originality of his teaching in a way quite contrary to truth by asserting that La Mettrie followed in the train of Diderot,<sup>5</sup> or to slander his name in the most insulting way together with the whole eighteenth century.

Among other writings, the histories of Hettner<sup>6</sup> in Germany and of Villemains<sup>7</sup> in France were characteristic of this last mode of procedure. Then in 1866 came the great deliverance ("*Rettung*") of Friedrich Albert Lange in his *Geschichte des Materialismus*,<sup>8</sup> the inspiring address of Du Bois-Reymond in the Berlin Academy (1872), the monographs of Jules Assézat,<sup>9</sup> Nérée Quépat,<sup>10</sup> and Picavet<sup>11</sup> in France, Poritzky<sup>12</sup> in Germany, the new edition of *L'homme machine* by Ritter,<sup>13</sup> etc. With what impartiality of judgment we of the 20 century are now able finally to judge the former scapegoat of materialism is shown by Max Brahn's sensible introduction to his translation of *L'homme machine*.<sup>14</sup>

To-day we know that La Mettrie is the earliest advocate of a whole series of thoroughly modern views in the realms of medicine, natural science, and philosophy. To select a few details, we remember his humane opinion that the criminal like the mentally diseased should first be put into the hands of the physician;<sup>15</sup> then too the doctrine of the localization of brain functions which he was the first to bring forward in an exact form;<sup>16</sup> and finally the circumstance that La Mettrie has anticipated in great detail Lange's vasomotor theory of feeling as Rolf Lagerborg of Helsingfors<sup>17</sup> has pointed out, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Thus still in 1896 in the fourth edition of a well-known history of philosophy. Diderot became converted to materialism in 1754, La Mettrie died in 1751. His main philosophical work appeared one year before Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, 1745.

<sup>6</sup> "La Mettrie is a bold libertine who sees in materialism only the justification of his profligacy." Even the fifth edition of 1894 is not just to La Mettrie.

<sup>7</sup> *Cours de littérature française*. 2d ed., Paris, 1891, page 101.

<sup>8</sup> Pp. 163-186. English translation by E. C. Thomas (London, Trübner, 1880), Vol. II, pp. 49-91.

<sup>9</sup> *Singularités physiologiques*, Vol. II: "Homme Machine." 51 pages. Paris, 1865.

<sup>10</sup> *Essai sur Lamettrie, sa vie et ses œuvres*. Paris, 1873. 202 pages.

<sup>11</sup> *Lamettrie et la critique allemande*. Paris, 1889.

<sup>12</sup> *Lamettrie, sein Leben und seine Werke*. Berlin, 1900. 356 pages.

<sup>13</sup> *Der Mensch eine Maschine*. Leipsic, 1875.

<sup>14</sup> *Philosophische Bibliothek*, Vol. 68. Leipsic, 1909. 22 pages.

<sup>15</sup> Vigorously emphasized by Brahn on page 18.

<sup>16</sup> To which Poritzsky refers on page 103.

<sup>17</sup> In *Das Gefühlsproblem*, Leipsic, 1905, pp. 38 and 134 ff.

As a practising physician and a voluminous writer on medical subjects (1737 to 1745) the pupil and enthusiastic adorer of Boerhaave, the great reformer of medical science, disclosed a many-sided activity in fundamental studies and observations; as philosopher (1745 to 1751) in a consistent evolution of Boerhaave's ideas including Cartesian and Spinozistic elements in anticipation of Didérot, Condillac, etc., he attained his peculiarly materialistic, mechanistic, and deterministic standpoint.

Averse to all systematic philosophizing and all rationalism he chose the experimental sciences, anatomy, physiology and pathology, in the very spirit of Boerhaave, to be his guide in the solution of the anthropological problem which formed the center of his philosophical reflections. As an anti-spiritualist, which he was most fond of calling himself,<sup>18</sup> he contended with the same inconsiderate severity against those powerful temporizing and harmonizing attempts to explain the mutual relations between body and soul as well as against Cartesian dualism and the theory of innate ideas, in order to found his monism in the very spirit of Locke's sensualism, "No sense, no ideas!"

Accordingly, in the important tenth chapter of his first work on "The Natural History of the Soul" (1745) he rejects rational psychology and the theory it advanced, without reference to experience, of one simple soul-substance whose existence can be thought of as independent of the body. Numerous anatomical and physiological experiments convinced him that psychical phenomena are directly dependent on the organic processes of the body, and that the soul is nothing but the aggregate of the functions of the nervous system in the living animal body and consequently ceases to exist with the annihilation of this body. Immortality and freedom of will are phantoms. God is the whole of nature (Spinoza!). Man is like a machine, just as the animal is (Descartes!); yes, man is nothing but a highly developed animal, a statement which at that time called forth a storm of opposition.

In his second and far more impassioned work *L'homme machine* (1748), La Mettrie, following Descartes's thought to its consistent conclusion, developed his paradoxical machine theory. The two most interesting errors of La Mettrie are the following: he is firmly convinced that the breeding of a gifted animal up to man is only a question of education, and *vice versa* that a man growing up in a complete wilderness without any education would sink at once back to the level of an animal; that the orang-outang like the deaf mute

<sup>18</sup> *Petit homme*, p. 35.

needs only instruction to be able to speak, a statement which especially called forth the jibes of his contemporaries.

La Mettrie without reservation could not deny that it would not be possible some day to construct an artificial human machine in a purely mechanical fashion by the combination of numerous springs and spirals, which would move like the first automaton of Vaucanson at that time exciting much comment at Paris, yes perhaps would even be able to speak and perform all of man's customary acts. These views were based on ancient Utopias of Arnobius then being revived in Condillac's idea of a statue gradually coming to life. We who have seen the course of history can scarcely put ourselves back to-day into the indistinct hopes of that period of civilization. But in these very Utopias do we not hear the mystical tinkle of the Homunculus vial which once intoxicated a century of Fausts?

"Insane, at first, appears a great intent;  
We yet shall laugh at chance in generation;  
A brain like this, for genuine thinking meant,  
Will henceforth be a thinker's sure creation."

—Tr. of Bayard Taylor.

To us the personality of La Mettrie is still a book with seven seals. To be sure we have long known that behind the apparently immoral author of the *Antiseneca* and the *Art de jouir* lay hidden the exact opposite of a licentious and dissipated character, that this dissolute Frenchman who had trailed for decades through the history of literature as a profligate and glutton was in reality an unusually industrious and laborious man who in the short period of a decade and a half published a very presentable list of writings. The Marquis D'Argens, one of La Mettrie's most bitter antagonists, declared of his own accord that in the intervals of his foolishness La Mettrie possessed "*plusieurs vertus civiles*,"<sup>19</sup> and Frederick the Great, certainly not without reason, was far more closely attached to him than to any other member of his Round Table. Lange's defence is well known: "He neither sent his children to the orphan asylum like Rousseau, nor deceived two girls like Swift; he was never convicted of bribery like Baco nor was he ever suspected of forging documents as was Voltaire."<sup>20</sup>

But these facts do not suffice to solve the enigma in La Mettrie's character. We do not know why he set himself in sharpest contradiction to the whole world often on the flimsiest pretexts and ran

<sup>19</sup> *Ocellus Lucanus*, Berlin, 1762, p. 248.

<sup>20</sup> *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 1st ed., p. 182.

the risk of the Bastille for the sake of a repartee. Above all we do not know why he played such an ugly trick on the good Haller. Precisely this quarrel with Haller is the point where most people give him up. Even Lange, his powerful advocate, characterizes him here as "mischievous and low in the choice of his methods" (p. 166). According to Du Bois-Reymond also, this incident brought him little honor, more than that, it shows him from his worst side.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless Brahn seems to be right in regarding the entire quarrel more from the esthetic than the moral point of view, and in seeing in La Mettrie's procedure not so much a malicious intention as an overweening pleasure in mockery and satire.

In La Mettrie's behaviour towards Haller we see nothing that should serve as a model or is worthy of imitation, and we do not hesitate a moment to condemn his mode of procedure from the ethical point of view. But in the form in which this satyr play has issued from the ever swelling womb of history, it is as interesting and edifying a picture of the civilization of the eighteenth century as the pen of the historian of philosophy could produce, illustrating as it does the historically memorable contest between two world-conceptions and lines of thought (the rationalistic and empiricistic), and characterizing very aptly the representatives of two directly opposed types of men (spiritualist and materialist).

How delightful it would be if the worthy Göttingen professor would don his coat and register his protest before the civilized world! With him we are filled with indignation, but we laugh with his opponent. Our moral sympathies belong to Haller but our esthetic sympathies to La Mettrie.

It is now some time since Du Bois-Reymond declared in 1875 that a new fundamental treatment of the subject was hardly likely to contribute any new facts of consequence about La Mettrie. Today we bring forward such new facts of consequence. When Brahn declares that it is worth while to enter more extensively into the controversy because it has been made more familiar to us in all its phases through Ludwig Hirzel's work *Albrecht von Haller's Gedichte*,<sup>22</sup> we can not agree with him. Hirzel is acquainted with the first and last (fourth) phase of the controversy counting on the basis of our own classification. Moreover his exposition is scarcely objective. The French expositions, as they have been presented (but

<sup>21</sup> Page 6. Similarly Poritzky, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Frauenfeld, 1882. Hirzel's discussion is on pp. 253-262.

very tersely) by Jules Assézat,<sup>23</sup> more extensively by Nérée Quépat in the above mentioned monograph<sup>24</sup> and by the eminent Desnoires-terres in his large work on Voltaire,<sup>25</sup> are on the whole very defective, and this is the more surprising since all these investigators ascribe great weight to this remarkable literary quarrel so abounding in characteristic circumstances.<sup>26</sup> We must also criticize Poritzky in spite of the rich material gathered together with such remarkable industry which he brings forward in his voluminous work on La Mettrie.<sup>27</sup> He permits himself to be misled into foolishly carrying on a polemic against the illuminating exposition of the well-informed Johann Georg Zimmermann,<sup>28</sup> and consequently gropes in the dark.

#### HOW THE CONTROVERSY STARTED.

Insurmountable contradictions in the thought and feeling of Haller and La Mettrie soon lent the resonance of personality to what was in the beginning an insignificant conflict. On the one hand the devout, austere, somewhat pedantic German professor, on the other the former army surgeon, of earnest endeavor but lacking in discipline and reared in the atmosphere of French corruption; on the one hand the spiritualistic Leibnitzian who in his famous poem "On the Origin of Evil"<sup>29</sup> gave the arguments of theodicy in poetical form, on the other hand the confident empiricist and materialist who adhered strictly to natural science. Haller believed in a personal God, freedom of the will and immortality; La Mettrie was a pantheist, a determinist and a monist. The circumstance that both were prominent physicians and belonged to the same school does not diminish the frictional surface, but on the contrary furnishes precisely the external occasion for the quarrel. But of decisive importance is the fact that the poet of "The Alps," this primitive, wholesome and natural Swiss who anticipated Rous-

<sup>23</sup> Haller's letters in complaint of La Mettrie have been reprinted by Assézat, Paris, 1865. Pp. 161 to 173.

<sup>24</sup> Pp. 22-23.

<sup>25</sup> *Voltaire et la société au XVIIIe siècle*. 8 volumes, 2d ed., Paris, 1871. Vol. IV, 39-48.

<sup>26</sup> According to Desnoires-terres, IV, 39, the contest is "one of those episodes which indeed troubled this distracted brain (of La Mettrie) more than any other consideration or any other occurrence had ever affected it."

<sup>27</sup> Poritzky, pp. 17-31.

<sup>28</sup> *Das Leben des Herrn von Haller*. Zürich, 1755. Pp. 226-238.

<sup>29</sup> Hirzel, pp. 118-142. Georg Bondi can not convince us in his superficial dissertation on "The Relations of Haller's Philosophical Poems to the Philosophy of His Time," Leipsic, 1891, that Haller was not a Leibnitzian.



seau's ideals of civilization, had no receptivity for the excessive refinement of La Mettrie's French wit of the Swift school which could find expression only in irony. You ought to read that absolutely uncomprehending critique of La Mettrie's brilliant satire on the charlatanry of the medical profession!<sup>30</sup> Haller has no sense of humor. He takes satire at its face value, no matter how thickly laid on. La Mettrie was not so far off when he had his dedication of *Man a Machine* to Haller reprinted in the first complete edition of his works "*cum bona venia celeberrimi, savantissimi, pedantissimi professoris, whom the advanced age of fifty years can not free from childish prejudices.*"<sup>31</sup>

\* \* \*

The facts leading up to this dedication are for the most part well known, although there is still a good deal which deserves to be placed in a clearer light.

In 1745 Haller joined the editorial staff of the *Göttingen Gelehrten Zeitungen* and assumed entire charge in April, 1747.<sup>32</sup> Among the new publications of medical literature, a French translation of the *Institutiones medicae* of the famous Boerhaave (1668-1738) must have aroused his particular attention some time previously. This translation, which appeared in 1743 under the title "De la Mettrie, *Les institutions de médecine de Boerhaave avec un commentaire,*" made use of the notes which Haller had added to his own commentary on Boerhaave's text in such a wholesale fashion that Haller felt obliged to enter a protest in his review.<sup>33</sup> Rather unceremoniously, but by no means with any malicious purpose (in the preface Haller is mentioned as his source), La Mettrie reports a physician's experiences as if they were his own, whereas they are in reality those of Haller which he translated literally, rendering Haller's preliminary *vidi* into a *j'ai vu*. His behavior was the more inexcusable, thought Haller, as he incidentally gave specific credit to Haller for one of his notes, in order (as Haller thought) to give the impression that the rest were his own literary property.

In the same year (1745) appeared La Mettrie's first important work, "The Natural History of the Soul." Here too La Mettrie was alleged to have again given out the mental labor of another (Haller) for his own. In his criticism<sup>34</sup> Haller arranged a formal

<sup>30</sup> "Ouvrage de Pénélope." *Gött. Gel. Zeit.*, August 1, 1748.

<sup>31</sup> *Œuvres philosophiques*, Berlin, 1751, p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> Hirzel, p. 247.

<sup>33</sup> *Gött. Gel. Zeit.*, June 10, 1745.

<sup>34</sup> *Gött. Gel. Zeit.*, June, 26, 1747.

list of plagiarisms, confronting La Mettrie's text with his own, page by page. He speaks of the "evil intention" of the anonymous author whom he rightly recognizes as "the de la M. who disappeared from France." The word "theft" escapes him. The truth is that La Mettrie drew inspiration from Haller's commentary as from Boerhaave's *Institutiones* only in a very general way. The leading ideas are his own property. But Haller is indignant at the "culpable injustice" that the statements of the righteous Haller following the strictly spiritualistic Boerhaave should be summoned by La Mettrie as star witnesses for the grossest materialism.

There is no doubt but La Mettrie had before him this second much more cutting criticism of the end of June, 1747, when, while still living in Holland, he finished *Man a Machine* (according to our calculation probably in August, 1747) and, providing it with a polite dedication to Haller, let it loose upon the world in an anonymous character.<sup>35</sup> *L'homme machine*, although to be sure it bears 1748 upon its title page as the year of publication, was reviewed by Haller on December 28, 1747. Even as early as November 19, 1747, Frederick the Great was aware of the persecutions which the book caused its author in Holland.<sup>36</sup> In short, La Mettrie's dedication is the direct answer to Haller's attacks, than which all other attempts to ascribe motives to La Mettrie's mode of procedure have missed their mark.

This is shown clearly enough by the ironical style with which in his dedication—and this, by the way, deserves to be called a little rhetorical masterpiece—La Mettrie intentionally plagiarizes one of Haller's poems.<sup>37</sup> Through a Swiss who happened to be studying in Leyden at the time, La Mettrie, who was not very well versed in German, received a French translation of Haller's poem, "Vergnügen an den Wissenschaften,"<sup>38</sup> and with an unmistakable intention worked the contents of this poem into his dedication, an artistic

<sup>35</sup> The alleged original editions of *L'homme machine* extant in German libraries are all reprints of a later date (in spite of the date 1748) and all contain 109 pages. The true original has only 108 pages and probably not more than six or eight copies have been preserved. One of these is in the possession of the present writer [and a second in that of the editor].

<sup>36</sup> Du Bois-Reymond (page 25) is mistaken in doubting the accuracy of these dates. They agree exactly. The year 1748 is an advance dating which was customary even at that time.

<sup>37</sup> Even Zimmermann (as Lessing later in another case) did not discover the satirical purpose of the plagiarist and simply mentions the fact with scornful satisfaction (p. 226). Hirzel too believes this is another thievery (p. 154).

<sup>38</sup> The same as Haller's ode "To Gessner." Hirzel, pp. 190 ff.

stroke which he took pleasure in utilizing in his controversy against Haller.

The dedication, by the way, contains nothing injurious. Haller is praised in most extreme terms, even if with too great irony, as the "two-fold son of Apollo," and spiritual enjoyments are enthusiastically praised at the cost of sensual pleasures. Happy the man who can enjoy the pleasures of study! They are more enduring than sensual delights. All this is just like Haller's own writings. La Mettrie characterizes himself as the pupil and friend of the Göttingen professor, whom in fact he never saw. He even pretends—the satirical purpose could not be more distinctly evident—that the orthodox Haller who had taken Boerhaave under his protection against the charge of materialism, was the spiritual father of *Man a Machine*.

#### LA METTRIE'S PERSONALITY.

Contemporary opinion differs widely with respect to La Mettrie's character. Hate and fanaticism have ever been a troubled spring from which to draw history. Little credence can be given to Voltaire's vile abuses and likewise the spiteful obituary of the Marquis D'Argens offers scarcely any points of departure which can be used in a characterization. It avails us little when we hear that the vain marquis was airing his spite for the neglect he suffered in such expressions as *ignorant, insensé, fou, frénétique, énergumène*, etc.<sup>39</sup> But even the fine public eulogy of Frederick, the only friend La Mettrie possessed, must be reviewed with discretion. "Nature had made La Mettrie an orator and a philosopher; but a yet more precious gift which he received from her was a pure soul (*âme pure*) and an obliging heart. All those who are not imposed upon by the pious insults of the theologians mourn in La Mettrie a good man (*honnête-homme*) and a wise physician."<sup>40</sup>

In personal letters Frederick gives his opinion with less regard for effect: "He was a happy-go-lucky good-natured devil, and an excellent physician. If one didn't read his books one could be very well satisfied with him."<sup>41</sup> This agrees pretty closely with the well-meaning characterization sketched out by La Mettrie's countryman and patron Maupertuis in his letter to Haller. "You are mistaken," writes he,<sup>42</sup> "if you think that there is as much malice in

<sup>39</sup> *Ocellus Lucanus*, pp. 238-245.

<sup>40</sup> End of the Eulogy. *Man a Machine*, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> To the Countess of Bayreuth, November 21, 1751.

<sup>42</sup> Page 53.

his writings as there seems to be. This is a paradox to all who are not personally acquainted with him. I knew his frenzy for writing, his dangerous power of imagination. I heaped accusations upon him; he was touched and swore to leave religion and ethics out of the question in the future, but still could not keep his promise. He wrote his books without any set purpose. He wrote against every one and yet would have done a service to his bitterest enemy. He found excuses for the most abandoned customs and possessed almost all the civic virtues (*presque toutes les vertus sociables*). In short, he deceived the world in an entirely different way from that in which it is usually deceived." Maupertuis expressed his judgment though not very successfully in the following couplet:

"A kindly heart, but muddled brains, you see,  
In German means, a fool was La Mettrie."

[Ein gutes Herz, verwirrte Phantasie,  
Das heisst auf Deutsch, ein Narr war La Mettrie.]

Hence a happy-go-lucky good-natured devil, a sort of philosophical court fool who occasionally takes up the pen! Is that really to be the quintessence of this man? Let us ask the man himself. No one else can answer the question why he chose irony and satire in which to speak of his age. In his last work the *Petit homme*, written a few weeks before his unhappy end, he himself puts the key into our hands (pp. 32-34).

"Since I have always," he writes, "valued the courageous author who battles against the prejudices of the public with open vizor, you will wonder, sir, that I should have chosen the language of irony which dominates all my writings. It is my way to lash the ocean in order that I may ride upon it the more safely. If behind my veil I laugh excessively, run back and forth so busily, make so many detours in order finally to get around again to the same point from which the (criticized) author started out, I do this only *because I find myself in the position of a seaman for whom the favorable season has not yet arrived*. The season is always favorable, as you know, only for the opposite port. To the man who dares to steer to the harbor of reason and truth, almost all winds are so contrary that one could not bring into play enough cunning and skill were we *not living in this climate where a philosopher reigns*.<sup>43</sup> In other regions one can hardly take two steps in entire security unless he understands how to steer a middle course, an art without which the ship is either utterly wrecked in the storm, or those who steer

<sup>43</sup> The words, "*dans ces climats gouvernés par un Sage*," are made prominent by spaced type.



it soon become the prey of the holy corsairs in clerical vestments whom the stupid public still respects."

What a bitter reproach for his own time! A recollection of his childhood is revived in this comparison—of his home, the Brittany port of St. Malo surrounded by the roaring sea where the storms of the Atlantic Ocean regularly destroyed anew each successive season the painstaking labor of the bold seamen. "I was not born under a lucky star, and must be ready any moment to fall a sacrifice to the fanaticism of wretched pietists (*à la fureur des dévots méprisés*). No God would save me from shipwreck."<sup>44</sup>

How they hounded him through all lands, those holy corsairs in clerical vestments! The smoke of the *Pensées philosophiques* had not yet cleared away when on July 9, 1746, the executioner of Paris prepared a similar fate for La Mettrie's writings. La Mettrie was deprived of his post as army surgeon. An atheist can not heal French guardsmen. Already the Bastille stood open for him, and what sinister comparisons it furnishes in his works!

He fled to the Calvinistic Netherlands where two centuries previously William of Orange had spoken the resounding words: "Faith is free. The prince does not rule the conscience of his subjects." But now—it is Frederick who wrote this sentence: "Calvinists, Catholics and Lutherans forgot for the time that consubstantiation, free will, mass for the dead, and the infallibility of the pope divided them, and all united to persecute the philosopher."<sup>45</sup>

He barely escaped the storm. A Leyden book dealer came to his assistance. "They start away on foot at night without shelter, without provisions, without any other equipment than La Mettrie's indomitable cheerfulness."<sup>46</sup> In the midst of his deepest distress, he received the call of the king. "I would like to have with me the La Mettrie of whom you told me," Frederick wrote to Maupertuis.<sup>47</sup> "He is the victim of priests and blockheads. Here he will be able to write in peace. I have a feeling of sympathy for the persecuted philosopher." Royal words indeed!

This seaman knows the sea and its dangers. "Since life is nothing but the sport of nature, we must know how to laugh in the tempest." Thus reads the conclusion of *Le petit homme*. They are La Mettrie's last words. He wrote them in the arrogance of life born upward on the wave of good fortune.

<sup>44</sup> *Le Petit Homme*, p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> Frederick the Great in his Eulogy. [See *The Open Court*, Dec. 1910.]

<sup>46</sup> Frèron, *Lettres sur quelque écrits de ce temps*. Nancy, 1753, X, 106.

<sup>47</sup> *Vie de Maupertuis par Beaumelle*. Paris, 1856, p. 368.



Spinoza had disciples and followers and saw his ideas take root. He had friends who helped him to bear the contempt of his age: La Mettrie had no one but Frederick. Neither in his native land, nor in Holland extolled as the Capua of free spirits, nor even in the home of Leibnitz and Wolff, did he ever have an apostle or even adherents, and for this he was not alone to blame. Never had a time rejected and opposed new ideas with such absolute unanimity as that murky pre-Kantian epoch opposed this bold pioneer of civilization and his theories, no small part of which to-day have long since become the scientific common property of all educated people. Among all the voices of the contemporary press which we have had the opportunity to hear, there is not one that betrays a spark of understanding.

A feeling of bitterness must arise in every unprejudiced observer when confronted with this wall of stupidity against which every sensible thought falls to pieces in ridiculous impotence. We can understand how a man who began by desiring only the best finally comes to renounce certain ideals which we value highly and hurls only the scourge of a lacerating satire whistling over the heads of his contemporaries.

For the man who steers for the harbor of truth and reason the season is nearly always unfavorable. The climes of a Frederick are of rare occurrence in history. La Mettrie was fortunate enough to find one and to escape shipwreck. Do you now understand why I laugh so excessively behind my veil? Do you now understand why I have become a writer of satires and deceive the world in a different way from that in which it is used to being deceived?

La Mettrie died at the age of forty-two years in the fulness of his strength. His literary activity in the realm of philosophy covered scarcely six years. No descent can be perceived in his activity, but a constant ascent. *Deus nobis haec otia fecit!* These words of Virgil were written by the exile shortly before his death in grateful reference to Frederick, on the title-page of the first collection of his philosophical writings.

Had he not been obliged to exchange so soon the hospitality of the great king for Pluto's Bastille, what would not this restlessly active spirit, this industrious worker, this bold battler in the ranks of civilization—if not always exactly unobjectionable in the choice of his methods—have performed for humanity! How much riper fruits might not a discreet and refined old age have thrown into his lap! How far might he not have spread his branches in the shadow of the royal oak! And how many sleepers would he not have

awakened from their celebrated dogmatic slumber, this drummer of the dawn!

“Beat the drum and fear thee not!  
 Drum the people from their sleep,  
 Drum reveille in strength of youth,  
 Drumming, drumming, march along!”

#### APPENDIX.

##### *Publisher's Preface to the First Edition of La Mettrie's L'homme Machine.*

It may cause some surprise that I have ventured to put my name to so daring a book as the present. I would certainly not have done so had I not believed religion to be safely sheltered from all possible attempts to overthrow it; and if I could have persuaded myself that some other publisher would not have done most gladly what I would have refused to do from conscientious principles. I know it is the part of prudence not to give occasion to lead astray the feeble-minded. But while duly considering them I perceived at the first reading that there would be nothing to fear for them. Why need we be so careful and on the alert to suppress arguments against the ideas of divinity and religion? Can they not serve to make people believe that they are being deluded? As soon as they begin to doubt, goodbye conviction and consequently religion! By what means and with what hope of success can we ever confound the irreligious if we seem to fear them? How can they be reclaimed if, while forbidding them to make use of their reason, we content ourselves with inveighing against their practices on general principles without informing ourselves as to whether these deserve the same censure as their mode of thought?

Such conduct would but decide the case in favor of the skeptics. They would make fun of a religion which we in our ignorance would try to keep from conciliating with philosophy; they would shout victory in their intrenchments which our mode of combat would cause them to consider invincible. If religion is not triumphant it is the fault of the unskilful authors who defend it. Let good men but take up the pen, let them but show that they are well armed, and theology will carry the day with a high hand over a rival that will prove weak enough. I compare atheists to those giants who would fain scale the heavens; they will always meet the same fate.

These are the things I have thought it necessary to place at the beginning of this little booklet in order to forestall any uneasiness which might arise. It does not become me to refute what I

publish nor even to express my feeling with regard to the arguments that may be found in this work. The well-informed will easily see that these arguments offer no difficulties but those which present themselves whenever the attempt is made to explain the connection between soul and body. If the consequences which the author deduces from them are dangerous it should be remembered that they are only a hypothesis for a working foundation. Is it therefore the more necessary to destroy them? Nevertheless, if I may assume what I do not in the least believe, then even if these consequences should prove difficult to overthrow, there would only be the greater opportunity to shine. "To conquer without danger is to triumph without glory."

The author, who is entirely unknown to me, sent me his work from Berlin with the one stipulation that I should send six copies to the address of M. le Marquis d'Argens. Surely he could take no better means to preserve his incognito for I am persuaded that even this address is nothing but a jest.

*La Mettrie's Dedication to Haller.*

(Here translated for the first time in English.)

This is not in any sense a dedication. You are far above all praise which I could render you, and I know of nothing so useless or so vapid as an academic discourse. Nor is it an exposition of the new method I have followed in reviving a hackneyed and worn-out theme. You may find in it at least this merit, and for the rest you will judge whether your disciple and friend has attained his end.

The pleasure I have had in preparing this work is what I wish to speak about. It is myself and not my book which I address to you that you may enlighten me upon the nature of the sublime pleasure of study. That is the subject of this dissertation. I would not be the first writer to take a theme requiring no imagination when he had nothing to say to redeem the barrenness of his own. Tell me, then, O twofold child of Apollo, illustrious Swiss, modern Fracastor, who know at the same time how to sound the depths of nature, to measure her, what is more, to sympathize with her, and what is still more, to express her—erudite physician, still greater poet, tell me by what seductions study can transform hours into moments, and what is the nature of these intellectual pleasures so widely different from the pleasures of the crowd. But the perusal of your charming poems has entered too deeply into my heart for me not to try to tell what they have inspired within me. Man con-

sidered from this point of view, is not in the least irrelevant to my theme.

Sensual pleasure, however desirable and cherished it may be, whatever praises have been rendered it by the pen of a young French physician, evidently as appreciative as it is delicate, has but one single gratification and this is its grave. If perfect pleasure does not permanently destroy it, at least it takes a certain time to revive it. How different are the resources of intellectual pleasures! The nearer one comes to truth, the more charming he finds it. Not only does its gratification increase the desire, but here we enjoy as soon as we seek to enjoy. The enjoyment is long and yet swifter than lightning travels.

Should we be surprised that the pleasure of the mind is as much better than that of sense, as the mind is superior to the body? Is not the mind the leader of the senses and so to speak the meeting place of all sensations? Do they not all, like as many rays of light, meet at that one center which produces them? Then let us not seek further by what invincible magic a heart inflamed by the love of truth finds itself all at once transported as it were into a world more beautiful where it tastes pleasures fit for the gods. Of all the attractions of nature the most powerful, at least for me as for you dear Haller, is that of philosophy. What greater glory than to be conducted to her temple by reason and wisdom! What conquest more flattering than the submission of all the spirits!

Let us enumerate all the objects of those pleasures which are unknown to commonplace souls. What great beauty and how wide a scope do they possess! Time, space, infinity, the earth, the sea, the firmament, all the elements, all the sciences, all the arts, everything enters into this kind of pleasure. Too confined within the limits of this world, it imagines a million more. All nature is its sustenance and imagination its victory. Let us enter into some detail. At one time it is poetry or painting; at another, it is music or architecture, singing, dancing, etc., which give to connoisseurs a taste of these ravishing pleasures. Look at Madame Delbar (wife of Piron) in a box at the opera. Pale and flushed in turn she keeps time with Rebel,<sup>48</sup> is touched with Iphigenia and raves with Roland. All the impressions of the orchestra are shown upon her face as on a canvas. Her eyes become tender, fatigued, they laugh or are armed with a warrior's courage. People take her for a fool, but she is far from it unless it be folly to experience pleasure. She is merely affected by a thousand beauties which escape me.

<sup>48</sup> Leader of the orchestra.

Voltaire can not refuse the meed of tears to his *Mérope* because he feels the value both of the work and of the actress. You have read his writings, and unfortunately for him he is not in a position to read yours. In whose hands, in whose memory are they not? And what heart is so hardened as not to be moved by them. How would it be possible not to spread abroad their flavor? He speaks of them with enthusiasm.

When a great painter (as I have recently seen with pleasure when reading a preface of Richardson) speaks of painting, what praise does he not bestow upon it! He adores his art, and places it above everything else; he almost doubts whether a man can be happy unless he is a painter, so enchanted is he with his profession.

Who has not felt the same enthusiasm as Scaliger or Malebranche in reading certain fine passages from the Greek, English or French tragic poets, or certain philosophical works? Madame Dacier never counted on what her husband promised her, and yet she found a hundredfold more. If one experiences a kind of enthusiasm in translating and developing the thoughts of another, how much more if he himself is a thinker? What is this procreation, this birth of ideas produced by the love of nature and the search for truth? How depict that act of the will or of memory by which the soul is in some way reproduced when one idea follows in the track of another similar one, so that from their resemblance, and as it were from their union, a third is produced? Therefore marvel at the creations of nature. Such is their uniformity that almost all of them are accomplished in the same manner.

When the pleasures of sense are ill controlled they lose their keenness and are no longer pleasures. The pleasures of the mind are like them to a certain extent. They must be interrupted in order that they may be stimulated. In fine, study has its ecstasies as well as love. If I may be allowed to say so, there is a catalepsy or immobility of mind which is so delightfully intoxicated by the object which claims its attention and enraptures it that it seems detached by abstraction from its own body and from all that surrounds it in order to throw itself entirely into the subject it is pursuing. It feels nothing because it feels so much. So great is the pleasure one enjoys both in seeking and in finding truth! Judge of the power of its charms by the ecstasy of Archimedes. You remember it cost him his life.

Let other men throw themselves into the crowd that they may avoid knowing themselves, or rather may hate themselves; the wise man flees from the wide world and seeks solitude. Why is he not



happy except with himself or with his kind? Because his soul is a faithful mirror; to see himself mirrored in it satisfies his proper self-love. The virtuous man has nothing to fear from acquaintance with himself unless it be the agreeable danger of falling in love with himself.

As to the eyes of a man who would look down upon the earth from the height of the skies, all the greatness of other men would vanish, the most superb palaces would be changed into cabins, and the largest armies would resemble hills of ants fighting over a grain with ridiculous zeal, so matters appear to a wise man like yourself. He smiles at the vain activities of men when their number embarrasses the earth and they struggle for a nothing, with which it is certain that none of them would be content.

How grandly Pope starts out in his *Essay on Man*! How petty seem great men and kings beside him! O you, less my teacher than my friend, who have received from nature the same power of genius as he, which you have abused—you ingrate who do not deserve to excel in the sciences—you have taught me to laugh like this great poet, or rather to groan at the playthings and trinkets which engage the serious attention of monarchs. To you I owe all my happiness. No, the conquest of the entire world does not afford the pleasure that a philosopher enjoys in his study surrounded by dumb friends who yet tell him all he desires to learn. That God will not deprive me of the necessities of life and health is all that I ask of him. With good health my heart without repugnance would love life. With the necessities of life my mind contented would always cultivate wisdom.

Yes, study is a pleasure for every age, for every clime, for every season, and for every moment. To whom has not Cicero given the longing to enjoy this delightful experience? It is a diversion in youth whose fiery passions it moderates; in order to enjoy it aright I have sometimes been obliged to yield to love. Love causes a wise man no fear. He knows how to combine everything and to make one thing of greater value by means of another. The clouds which obscure his understanding do not make him idle, they only point out to him the remedy that will scatter them. Truly the sun does not scatter more quickly the clouds in the sky.

In old age, the age of ice, when a man is no longer in a position to give or to receive other pleasures, what a great resource he has in reading and in meditation! What a pleasure to see a work come into being and take form day by day under one's eyes and by his hands which will delight future centuries and even his contempo-

raries! One day a man whose vanity was beginning to feel the pleasure of being an author said to me, "I would like to spend my life in passing between my home and the printers." Was he wrong? And when one gains applause, could a tender mother be any more happy in having brought into the world an attractive child?

Why vaunt so highly the pleasures of study? Who does not know that it is a possession which brings in its train neither dissatisfaction nor the uneasiness caused by other possessions, an inexhaustible treasure, the surest antidote for cruel ennui, which accompanies us and travels with us and in short follows us everywhere? Happy the man who has broken the fetters of all his prejudices. He alone will taste this pleasure in all its purity; he alone will enjoy that sweet tranquillity of spirit, that perfect contentment of a strong soul free from ambition, and this is the father of happiness if it is not happiness itself.

Let us stop a moment to strew flowers on the path of those great men whom like you Minerva has crowned with an immortal garland. Here Flora invites you with Linnæus to climb by new paths the icy summit of the Alps, to admire under another snow peaked mountain a garden planted by the hands of nature, a garden which was formerly the heritage of the celebrated Swedish professor. Thence you descend into the prairies whose flowers await his coming to range themselves in an order which they seem hitherto to have disdained. There I see Maupertuis, the honor of the French nation, which another land has better deserved to enjoy. He leaves the table of a friend who is the greatest of kings. Where is he going? To the council board of nature where Newton awaits him.

What can I say of the chemist, of the geometrician, of the physicist, of the anatomist, etc.? The latter experiences almost as much pleasure in examining a dead man as did the one who gave him life.

But all of this yields place to the great art of healing. The physician is the only philosopher to whom his country is indebted, as has been said long before me. Like the brothers of Helen, he appears in the storms of life. What magic, what enchantment! The very sight of him calms the blood, brings peace to a troubled soul and revives tender hope in the heart of wretched mortals. He foretells life and death as the astronomer predicts an eclipse. Each has the torch which illuminates him. But if the mind has had the pleasure of discovering the rules which guide it, what a triumph

this delightful experience gives you every day, what a triumph when the result has justified its rashness.

Therefore the greatest usefulness of the sciences lies in their cultivation. This in itself is a very real and lasting joy. Happy the man who has the taste for study, happier the one who succeeds by its means in freeing his spirit from illusions and his heart from vanity—a desirable end to which you were led at a tender age by the hand of wisdom, whereas so many pedants after half a century of night watches and of labor, more bowed under the burden of prejudices than under that of time, seem to have learned everything except to think. That knowledge is indeed rare especially among the learned, and yet it ought to be at least the fruit of all the rest. It is to this knowledge alone that I have applied myself since childhood. Judge, sir, whether I have succeeded, and may this homage of my friendship be forever cherished by your own.

## DID JOHN THE BAPTIST EXIST?

BY A. KAMPMEIER.

AS the historical existence of John the Baptist is now also denied, and as a first-century secular testimony to him is declared "a shameless interpolation,"<sup>1</sup> it surely is not out of place to lay that testimony in full before skeptical readers, together with a comparison of it with the accounts of the gospels, in order to see whether it is independent and genuine or not.

In the *Antiquities* of Josephus (XVIII, 5) we read: "At this time [about 34 A. D. according to the preceding paragraph] Aretas, the king of Petra, and Herod had a quarrel for the following reason. Herod, the tetrarch, had married the daughter of Aretas and had already lived with her a long time. But on the way to Rome he stopped with Herod his brother, though not of the same mother, for this Herod was born of the daughter of Simon the highpriest. Now he [the tetrarch] fell in love with Herodias, the wife of this Herod, a daughter of Aristobulos, their brother, and a sister of Agrippa the Great. He therefore dared to talk about marriage to her. Since she accepted his proposal, they agreed that she change her abode and come to him as soon as he would leave Rome. It was also arranged that he should divorce the daughter of Aretas, and so he sailed for Rome, having made this agreement. But when he returned, after having accomplished the business in Rome for which he had set out, his wife, having found out his agreement with Herodias before he knew that she had learned everything, asked him to send her to Machærus on the border of the land of Aretas and Herod, but did not betray her design. So Herod sent her out, thinking she had not perceived anything. But because she had previously sent to Machærus, which was tributary both to Herod and her father, and everything had been prepared for the journey by the general, as soon as she arrived she set out to Arabia under the escort of several generals in succession, and came to her father as

<sup>1</sup> These words are cited from Grätz (*History of the Jews*, 1888, III, 278) in a footnote by Drews (*Christ Myth*, p. 129). I have looked up Grätz (English translation, 1893) and cannot find them anywhere. Grätz in that translation rather assumes the Baptist to be historical.

quickly as possible and told him of the intentions of Herod. But Aretas made this a cause of hostilities together with the boundaries in the land of Gamalitis, and both gathered armies and came to war, sending their generals instead of themselves. In the ensuing battle Herod's whole army was destroyed on account of the treachery of some fugitives who had set out with him from the tetrarchy of Philip. This Herod wrote to Tiberius. But the latter, enraged at the attempt of Aretas, wrote Vitellius to make war and either capture him alive and put him in bonds, or kill him and send his head to him.

"But to some of the Jews it appeared that the destruction of Herod's army was brought about by God as a very just retribution for the murder of John called the Baptist. For Herod had killed him, a good man who commanded the Jews to practice virtue and to follow righteousness towards each other and piety towards God, and to come to baptism. For thus baptism would appear acceptable to God, if not used as a propitiation for sins, but as the purification of the body, inasmuch as the soul had been previously purified by righteousness. Now when all the others assembled in crowds—for they were greatly carried away by hearing his words—Herod, fearing that his persuasion to such a degree over the people might lead to some uprising, for they seemed likely to do anything on his advice, thought it would be much better to capture him before he should bring about any innovation, and to put him out of the way, than to repent after difficulties had arisen from a change of things. And thus through the suspicion of Herod he was sent bound to Machærus, the castle mentioned before, and there put to death. But to the Jews the destruction of the army appeared to be a retribution for this deed in that God wished to punish Herod."

This is the report of Josephus on John the Baptist. Now to compare this report with the accounts of the gospels.

1. According to Mark vi. 17, the husband of Herodias is Philip (evidently the tetrarch of Gaulanitis and Trachonitis is meant), the son of Herod the Great by Cleopatra. According to Josephus it is another Herod, a son of Herod the Great by Mariamne. Philip, instead of being the husband of Herodias as Mark states, was the husband of Salome, who according to Josephus (*Ant.* XVIII, 5, 4) was the daughter of Herodias by her divorced husband.

2. If this was the Salome meant by the gospels, she could not very well have been "a little girl,"<sup>2</sup> as in Mark, dancing at the birth-

<sup>2</sup> *κόρῃσιον*. Some manuscripts have "the daughter of Herod, Herodias," as if noticing the error.



day of Herod. Her husband Philip died 34 A. D., about the time the troubles started between Herod and Aretas (compare *Ant.* XVIII, 5, 6).

3. According to the gospels the beheading of John takes place at Tiberias, the residence of Herod. This is surely meant by the words of Mark: "Herod made at his birthday a banquet to his lords, captains and the first men of Galilee." Tiberias was the residence of Herod according to Josephus. In the *Antiquities* John is executed at Machærus.

4. According to the gospels Herodias is the cause of John's death. According to Josephus Herod executes him for fear that he might stir up a revolt.

5. Herod could never have promised half of his kingdom to the girl, because he held his kingdom subject to Roman control. The gospel account is very probably a popular legend as it arose gradually among the people and the early Christians.

On the other hand the gospels and Josephus agree in this, that John is a great preacher and practices baptism, though the nature of his preaching and the meaning of his baptism are stated differently in the two sources. The eschatological character connected with John's preaching is wanting in Josephus.

We further find in Josephus an indirect testimony in agreement with the gospels concerning the locality of John's preaching. The gospels say that the Baptist preached in the Judean desert, i. e., east of Jerusalem towards the Dead Sea and the country around the Jordan.<sup>3</sup> This agrees with Josephus that Herod not only had jurisdiction in Galilee but also in Perea (comp. *Ant.*, XVIII, 7, 1 and *Jewish Wars*, II, 9, 1). From this we see why it is just at Machærus, east of the Dead Sea, that John is imprisoned. This was near the locality of his preaching.

The possibility that a Christian interpolator should have written the account about the Baptist in Josephus is, as far as I can see, absolutely excluded. Nobody who had the gospel accounts before him could have written a passage with such glaring contradictions to those of the gospels. We might rather say that the gospel story is a further legendary elaboration concerning the causes of John's death on the basis of the popular hatred against Herod and Herodias of which Josephus speaks. Not only do the people see in Herod's defeat a divine retribution according to Josephus, but he himself at other places expresses his strong condemnation of Herodias. In *Ant.*, XVIII, 5, 4, he speaks of her as "confounding the laws of

<sup>3</sup> *περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου.*

our country and divorcing herself from her husband while he was alive, marrying Herod," and in *Ant.*, XVIII, 7, he writes a long chapter about the intrigues of this ambitious woman. He relates that when Agrippa, her brother, became king, she continually harassed her husband to seek the kingship in Rome also. The consequence was that when Herod finally yielded to her, he not only lost his tetrarchy by the counter-intrigues of Agrippa, but was also banished to Lyons, Gaul. Josephus, though relating the redeeming trait of this intriguing and ambitious woman, that she shared her husband's exile voluntarily, telling emperor Cajus (Caligula), she would not forsake Herod in his misfortune, having been his partner in prosperity, closes his account with the words: "Thus did God punish Herodias for her envy of her brother and Herod also for giving ear to the vain discourses of a woman." It seems more probable that the gospel account, which lays the greatest blame on Herodias in regard to John's death, is an outgrowth from the popular opinion in which this woman was held and of which Josephus gives such a strong reflection, than that a Christian interpolator should have written the account of the Baptist in Josephus. We may also remark here that while Origen knows nothing of a passage in Josephus with reference to Christ, he is acquainted with the reference to John the Baptist.

The relations of Herod Antipas to the death of John the Baptist had an indirect bearing also upon the final fate of Jesus. Luke tells us (ix. 7-9) that Herod, when hearing of the work of Jesus in his dominions and what the people said about John having risen again from the dead was wrought up about it, and that a warning was given to Jesus through some Pharisees to leave Galilee as Herod intended to kill him (xiii. 31). This was toward the end of the career of Jesus in Galilee. Evidently the tetrarch (Jesus treats those Pharisees as emissaries of Herod) wished to get rid of him without soiling his hands with another murder.

John's existence would probably never have been denied if a similar deifying process had not taken place later with regard to his personality as with that of his contemporary Jesus. In the syncretic system of the Mandæans (from Aramæan *Manda*, knowledge, enlightenment) or Sabæans (Aramæan *saba*, to baptize) John has become the last incarnation of *Manda de Hajje*, i. e., the knowledge or enlightenment of life, "the beloved son" of *Manarabba*, i. e., the great *Mana* (comp. either Iranic *manas* or Arabic *mana* in the sense of mind or spirit), the god of light and knowledge. But probably *Manarabba* is ultimately only a form for the more ancient Baby-

lonian god *Hea* or *Hoa*, who dwells in the ocean, his holiest element, and who according to the ancient legend arose under a fishlike form from the sea, the Persian Gulf, near which the Mandæans live, to bring knowledge to mankind. The Babylonian priest Berosus, who translated this myth into Greek, calls that being by the Hellenized form *Oannes*.

But originally the ocean, in which *Hoa* dwells, was meant to be the heavenly ocean, an idea which recurs in the Mandæan system under the name *Ajar-Jora*, i. e., the heavenly Jordan. *Ajar* = Greek *aër*, air, a word early taken into the Aramæan languages.<sup>4</sup>

Because the often repeated baptism of the Mandæans is a theurgical-magical act which aims at a continually growing insight into the secrets of the realms of light and knowledge by interposition of the elements of *Mana rabba*, the king of light, namely water, John the Baptist was assumed to be the last incarnation of *Mana rabba's* son, *Manda de Hajje*, who answers to the personified divine wisdom of the Old Testament (comp. Prov. viii. 23), the pre-existent, heavenly Christ of Jewish apocryphal and rabbinical literature and of Paul, and to the divine *Logos* of Philo and the fourth gospel. John the Baptist as the last incarnation of this *Manda de Hajje* thus became the eponymic hero of the gnostic baptism of the Mandæans.

The Hellenized form *Oannes* used by Berosus for *Hoa* has philologically no connection with the Hellenized form *Joannes* used in the New Testament for John the Baptist, and even if it had, it would not disprove John's historical reality and make him originally a god, any more than the original mythical divinities Gunther and Brunhilda, occurring in the *Niebelungenlied*, disprove the historical existence of a Burgundian king Gunther actually destroyed by Attila and likewise of a historical Burgundian queen Brunhilda, who met a tragic fate. Both of these characters were unquestionably worked up into that epic, just as John the Baptist has been in the complicated system of the Mandæans. And if John has been worked into that system, Jesus, who can not be disconnected from him and has been worked up in the Christian system in a similar way, must likewise be a historical reality. The existence of both stand and fall together.

<sup>4</sup>The present-day Mandæans imagine heaven as being formed of the purest water, but which at the same time is so hard that no diamond can cut it.

## POSSESSION AND THE STABILITY OF THE PERSONALITY.

BY HERBERT CHATLEY.

AMONG primitive peoples there is an almost universal belief in the frequent occurrence of demoniacal possession, and, as ethnologists often point out, those peculiar nervous complaints which are now called epilepsy and insanity are ascribed to this cause.

It is a matter of interest to inquire why such a belief should have developed. Primitive man, simple as his logic must have been, would need some definite foundation for an idea which involves considerable complexity. There can be little doubt that the phenomenon of "modified personality" provides such evidence and the fact that such a condition may be voluntarily produced provided a further basis for much of the working hypothesis of magic. In *The Monist* of January, 1912, the writer called attention to the psychological features of the "Boxer" outbreak, in the course of which artificial production of "possession" occurred. A book on this subject, *A Thousand Miles of Miracle* by Rev. A. Glover, M. A., (Hodder and Stoughton) gives some further particulars:

"He [the Boxer recruit] was required to repeat over and over a certain brief formula '*until the gods took possession* and the subject fell backward to the ground, foaming at the mouth and lying for a few minutes as in trances, then rising to drill or fight; whereupon he was declared to be invulnerable to foreign sword or bullet" [p. 11, italics in original].

The writer of this particular book (who displayed extreme fortitude in the persecution) is a believer in the reality of possessions, and quotes certain other examples of non-Boxer origin of considerable interest. It is of course somewhat difficult to say to what extent his theological bias has colored the descriptions but there can be little doubt of his sincerity.

In one case, a woman whose house he sheltered in, suddenly became "possessed" when addressed on doctrinal matters, sat with vacant stare and then commenced an imprecatory incantation which finally convinced the missionary of the presence of a Satanic influence.

Another case he mentions of a girl who sat in the road and similarly chanted, like the classical case in the Acts of the Apostles.

Several missionaries whom the present writer has met give similar accounts, but it is noteworthy that all such reports are tinged by the belief or otherwise in the reality of possession. All agree that Chinese women are liable to go into a trance, and, following this, *ma* (= curse) for hours or even days, after which they naturally pass through a phase of extreme exhaustion, followed by normality. Both men and women occasionally *sheng-ch'i* (= "generate breath," i. e., become furious) to an extent which culminates in illness or death, while it is a common feature of the Taoist ceremonies for the Tao-shih or Wu (exorcist) to go into a fit in which he is insensible to pain and utters oracles in the rôle of a second personality.

Amongst orientals generally there seems to be less "stability of personality" than amongst occidentals. Possibly vegetarian diet (which is the only marked point of difference in habits) may affect the coordination of the psychic elements. There may also be some relation to sex-functions. Hysteria, which appears to be the first stage in the displacement of personality, is notoriously associated with imperfect health in this respect (note the etymology of the word), and it is well known that certain modifications of personality (ecstasy, etc.) are producible by suppression of sexual instincts (celibacy). So close is the relation between these phenomena and the eccentricities of sex that some extremists have thought "religion" explicable on this basis alone. The sexual element in antique cults probably was considered of value as means of producing abnormal psychic states. The fact probably is that the state of equilibrium defined as personality suffers disturbance whenever a great emotion is experienced, and repeated similar emotions or a violent emotional shock will permanently modify the conditions of equilibrium so giving rise to a second personality. Recovery implies a reversal of shock or natural reversion to a more stable state. It is noteworthy that modifications of personality are most frequent among peoples who allow themselves to become excessively "excited," i. e., disturbed by emotion. Furthermore all philosophical thinkers (particularly among certain nations such as the Hindus) have realized that per-

<sup>1</sup> See Note at end on mechanical definition of stability.



sonality can only be "held" by the cultivation of placidity and resistance to emotion, although there is the paradoxical fact that extreme developments in this direction again tend to critical states (Nirvana, etc.).

There is a considerable weight of evidence in favor of the efficacy of "exorcism" in curing cases of "possession." The suggestion theory will go far to explain even this. The ecclesiastical doctrine of the priestly "absolution" is a simple form of the same idea, viz., the modification of a mental state (remorse, conviction of sin) by an insistent suggestion reinforced by the responsivity of the person (his belief in the remission of sins by such a process, etc.). One may go further and say that the phenomena of "conversion" (so ably described by Harold Begbie in his book *Broken Earthenware or Twice-Born Men*) afford a similar example of transition from one critical state of personality to another.

Psychologists have found that in all cases of mutation of personality certain associations persist, and it is conceivable that the human soul can remain in a number of adjacent conformations, some of which involve so large a displacement from the position of unanimous stability (normal personality) that the sense of identity vanishes, whereas others are less remote and while involving a great change in the mental attitude do not imply discontinuity of identity. Theologians speak of "perversions" as well as "conversions," and argue the existence of a special spiritual factor for each. It would seem far less cumbersome to regard them in the light suggested above. Christianity undeniably includes many of the processes of soul-culture by suggestion and there need be no hesitation in accepting such a hypothesis because it conflicts with dogmatic theology. Hudson in his *Psychic Phenomena* has made almost the best defence of Christianity extant by following somewhat similar lines.

#### *Stability.*

Stability may be defined as the *permanence of equilibrium*, and implies that any disturbance ("perturbation") of a body from its state of equilibrium (not necessarily of rest) is accompanied by forces which will restore it to that condition when the disturbing forces are removed.

In all practical cases stability is limited, i. e., with a sufficiently great perturbation the restoring forces cease or are insufficient. The extent of the perturbation within which recovery can occur is called the *range of stability*. Thus if a ship can heel either way through

an angle of  $30^\circ$  before the righting moment of the buoyancy vanishes, it has  $60^\circ$  range of stability.

Permanent stability is only possible when (1) The slowly applied disturbing force never exceeds the maximum righting force, and (2) when the work done by the disturbing force however applied cannot exceed the work done against the righting force within the range of stability.

Temporary disturbance of equilibrium is followed by oscillations unless there is great friction (damping). If the disturbance is periodic and the period coincides with that of the natural oscillations, energy will be supplied at each application of force and instability must finally happen. This is known as *synchronism*.

The only true criterion of stability is the decrease of the amplitude of oscillation, so that a mathematical analysis of the conditions of equilibrium in any case needs to be supplemented by an investigation into the oscillations which follow any disturbance. If these have a decreasing amplitude the body is stable, and not otherwise.

## THE PANAMA CANAL QUESTION.

BY THE EDITOR.

ONE of the international problems prominent in our politics to-day is the question of the toll for American ships through the Panama Canal and the meaning of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. It seems that both our Solons and our diplomats have acted rashly, the former in passing a bill according to which American ships engaged in coastwise trade shall pass through the canal free; the latter in making treaties which prove to be traps. The bill concerning the Panama Canal toll bestows an unusual privilege upon one class of the people, and there is a principle in government that favors should not be given to a special class or a special industry or special individuals. Whether the motive of the bill was to favor Americans against Canadians need not be investigated. Be it sufficient to state that it is a bill of singular favoritism, and it ought to be reconsidered and revoked. This might be done without reference to the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, on which, as it is claimed by many experts, the bill is an infringement.

Whether or not the bill is contrary to the Hay-Pauncefote treaty is a question in itself, and we repeat the bill ought to be revoked. But if, on the other hand, the bill indeed violates the treaty, then the treaty ought to be canceled. It is true that if we make a treaty we ought to keep it. If a treaty involves us in the payment of money we ought to pay it, but if a treaty supersedes the sovereignty of our national independence, it indicates that we have suffered a crushing defeat, for we would submit quietly to humiliating conditions only if compelled to yield to a stronger force, and no one would blame us if at the first opportunity we try to regain our independence by shaking off the yoke thus imposed upon us. If the Hay-Pauncefote treaty really implies that the government of the United States forfeits the right to dispose of and administer its

own property, we ought to repudiate the treaty on the risk of going to war for our independence.

It seems clear that Mr. Hay did not understand the treaty in any such sense as submission to English sovereignty. Otherwise he would never have acceded to its terms without being driven thereto by dire necessity. It is true that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty supplants the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, the unacceptability of which had made itself felt. But it now seems that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty is, in intention at least, only a little more favorable than the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and if this is the case serious steps ought to be taken to redress the wrong which we have foolishly permitted ourselves to suffer.

Geographical points of such vital importance in peace and war cannot be left in an unfortified and unsafe condition on the supposition that all the powers on earth will be so meek and well-intentioned that they would never make use of an advantage by which in case of war they could cripple our offensive and defensive forces. It has always been customary that in case of an intended war any advantage may be taken, and it would be lamentable for the United States if suddenly some strong power would pounce on the canal, seize it, and retain it. No peace congress, no idealists, no committee of international judges can change these conditions. It is a law of nature, and we can as little legislate against it or abolish it by treaty or arbitration as we can abolish thunderstorms or hurricanes.

The Hay-Pauncefote treaty demands that the canal should be rigorously neutral, but it appears to be understood that it shall have to be fortified, for it would be a gross neglect if the United States would trust too much in the general good-will of the warlike powers.

If the Hay-Pauncefote treaty really deprives the United States of the right to administer her own property, it ought to be canceled, and this ought to be done at once, the sooner the better. It should be done frankly, freely and openly by declaring that the whole treaty was a mistake, that it infringes upon the dignity of the United States and that its abolition is tantamount to a reassertion of our independence.

While we thus advocate the canceling of the bill to allow free passage of the American coastwise ships through the canal we at the same time insist that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty ought to be plainly and unequivocally interpreted in a broad sense that would not involve a surrender of American independence, or if that be not conceded by the other contracting party, it ought to be unreservedly renounced.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### A BREATH FROM NIRVANA.

BY H. BEDFORD JONES.

I gripped the coverlet in pain, and there  
Death's fore-word came to me. I saw the great  
Ineffable, the nameless glory-state  
That waited on my soul, and loomed so fair  
Across the Void; the angel-throngèd Stair  
Leading unto the Throne, the sun-streamed Gate—  
These lay before me, seeming but to wait  
Death's final kiss, within my heart a prayer.  
"Now come, sweet Death, and close this Heaven-pact!"  
Then sudden fell a light across the sun,  
And I—I shrieked and died; for, heavenless,  
My sundered spirit thro' the Nature Fact,  
Cast unto fragments, joined within the One  
And All, the *Universal Nothingness*.

### SCHILLER'S SKULL.

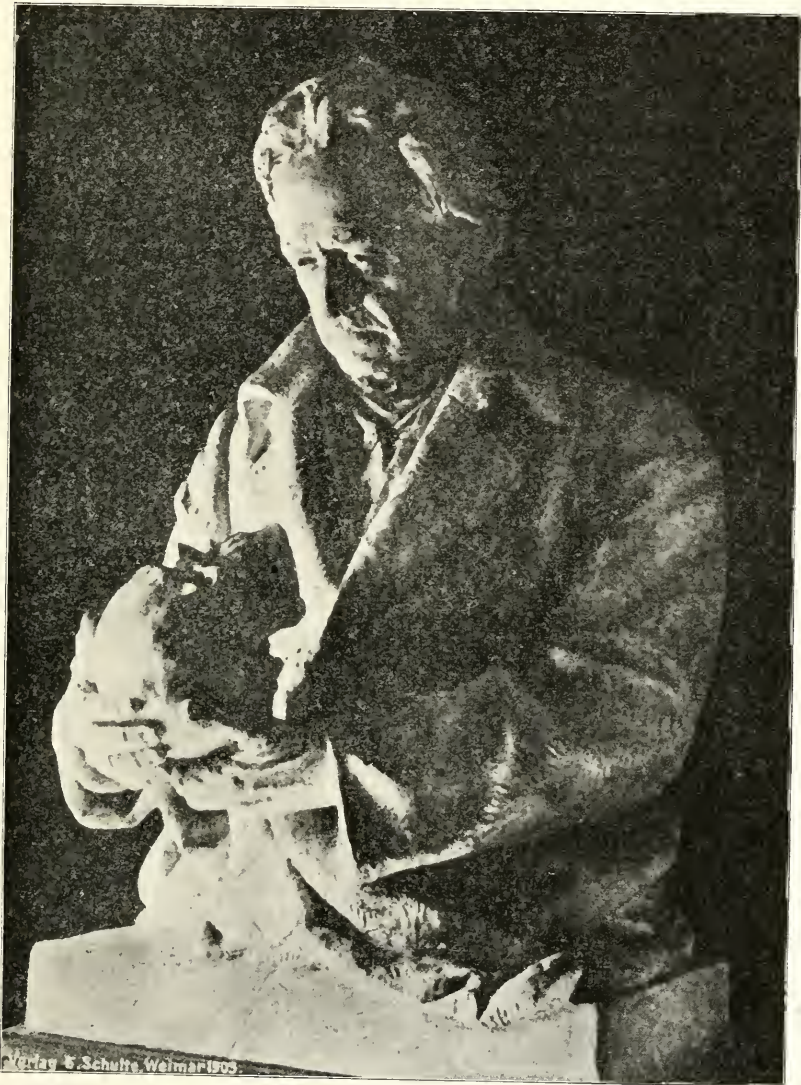
Goethe has written a poem on the contemplation of Schiller's skull, and it is well known that the great German poet kept this skull on his desk before him in constant commemoration of his beloved friend. The skull was dug up from the Grand Ducal mausoleum where Schiller's body had been placed soon after his death. In 1826, twenty years after Schiller's death, the mausoleum had to be rebuilt so as to make room for more bodies, and at that time the Mayor of Weimar, Carl Leberecht Schwabe, selected this skull, fully convinced that it was the skull of the great poet, and some highly respected physicians confirmed him in this view. In the meantime the suspicion grew stronger and stronger that the skull could not have been that of Schiller, and that Goethe had wasted his reverence on the relics of a lesser man.

Prof. Hermann Welker, an anatomist of Halle, was led to this conclusion from a number of corroborating circumstances. There is a death mask of Schiller made in plaster of Paris, and also a plaster of Paris reproduction of his skull, made before the great poet's body was deposited in the mausoleum. The mask is still in the possession of the Schwabe family, the descendants of the Mayor of Weimar. Both casts differ from the skull which was in Goethe's possession, and are positive evidence that it can not be genuine.

Dr. von Froriep, a native of Weimar, took a deep interest in the question and has finally succeeded in discovering the genuine skull of Schiller. He



searched the Weimar archives and learned from Herr G. Schnaubert that the current opinion that all the bones found in the mausoleum were buried in the northeastern corner of the cemetery was based on mere gossip and had no



GOETHE CONTEMPLATING SCHILLER'S SKULL.

foundation. Archives disclosed the fact that no remnant of the dead bones had ever been removed from the mausoleum, and that therefore Schiller's skull ought to exist still in that vault of the mausoleum where it had been originally deposited, which was known under the name *Kassengewölbe*. Dr.

Froriep acquired the permission to dig in this place and discovered at a depth of three meters a great collection of human bones covered with debris of old walls and rubbish, among them fifty-three well preserved skulls, and in addition fragments of other skulls so as to make the complete number of bodies between sixty and seventy. In continuing his digging he discovered half a meter lower a number of bones with the skull which he could identify as that of Schiller. It was difficult to identify the bones or to distribute them to the several skeletons to which they belonged, for they were well arranged in a kind of classified order, the skulls heaped together in one place, the jaw-bones in another and legs and arms somewhere else so that it would be difficult to identify the bones of different individuals.

It was well known that Schiller's teeth were very regular, and that only one, the second upper molar on the left side, was missing. This information is well attested by Schiller's servants and in general also by other people who were intimately acquainted with the poet, and proves that the jaw-bone discovered by Professor Froriep must be that of Schiller himself, especially as the lower jaw belonging to this skull showed a perfect set of sixteen teeth regular in formation and position. Further, there was an undeniable agreement with both the death mask and the plaster of Paris cast of Schiller's skull. The skull shows a broad forehead although not unusually high, a weak development over the eyebrows which is so strong in the Neanderthal skull, delicate nasal bones but rather high so as to indicate the aquiline formation which was one of the poet's prominent features.

Professor Froriep recently submitted his discovery to his colleagues at the Anatomical Congress which met on April 22 to 24, 1912, at Munich, and there was not one voice which contradicted the argument.

We learn that Professor Froriep will publish a book on the subject which will contain photographic reproductions that are expected to be fully convincing of the truth of his contentions.

P. C.

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### THE LIFE OF AUGUST BEBEL.

August Bebel's autobiography (*My Life*, University of Chicago Press, Price \$2.14 postpaid) is a human document of remarkable significance. It gives a first-hand report of the rise and growth in Germany of the Social Democratic party. Though Mr. Bebel has been the leading spirit in this important political and economic movement for the half-century of its existence he looks upon it as in any case inevitable and upon himself as "a willing helper at a birth of whose origin he is entirely innocent." He goes on to say:

"Into the rôle of an assistant at a historical process of evolution I was thrust by the conditions of my life and as a result of my experience. Once driven into the movement that originated in the sixties of the last century among the German working-classes, it was my duty and my interest, not only to take part in the conflict of opinions born of this movement, but also to examine the ideas which were then newly emerging, and as judiciously as I could to decide for or against them. It was thus that in the course of a few years from being a convinced and decided opponent of socialism I became one of its most zealous adherents...and so I shall remain to the end, as long as my strength is left me."

The Social Democratic party had suffered much persecution from the German government, especially Bismarck, but it must be conceded that the policy of the Iron Chancellor in this regard was a serious blunder and the persecution of the leaders of the movement served only to strengthen the party. We will not here discuss the feasibility of a social democracy, but we must insist on the noble character of many of its representatives of whom Bebel certainly stands in the first rank. Much of the respect that has been reluctantly accorded to the recognition of the character of the Social Democratic party in Germany is certainly due to him, and the probability is that if he had ever been admitted to the cabinet it would have been a great benefit to the cause for it would have matured a man like Bebel and would have helped to educate the multitudes who believed in him.

Bebel's youth was spent in poverty, and his trade was that of a turner, though he says he never became an artist at the lathe. His early education was necessarily limited and he felt his deficiency in this respect very keenly when he became interested in political matters. His political persecution included several convictions for treason and *lèse-majesté*. He made excellent use of his incarcerations in filling up to some extent the gaps in his education, and during the first imprisonment of 31 months at Hubertusburg he read the political works of Plato, Aristotle and Sir Thomas More, as well as Marx, Engel and John Stuart Mill. His political influence and activities continued during his imprisonment. He was most impressed by Buckle's *History of Civilization*. As an instance of the treatment he received in prison, we quote literally from his book:

"Before I set out for the fortress a friend wrote, in a farewell letter: 'If it were not for your families, I could almost shout for joy over the stupidity of your enemies. You, for example, will certainly profit largely in health and will learn much; then you will be a dangerous fellow indeed, and your good wife, in spite of the pangs of separation, will be content if you undergo a cure which will strengthen you for good....'

"On the afternoon of the 8th of July I started on my journey to Hubertusburg. A crowd of both sexes was at the station to bid me goodbye. Amidst my luggage was a large cage with a cock canary, the gift of a Dresden friend. 'as a companion in the prison cell.' I got him a wife, and a goodly number of children and grandchildren were hatched to him in prison....

"The Castle of Hubertusburg is quite a considerable pile of buildings in the baroque style. Our cells had large iron-barred windows, which overlooked the great kitchen garden, where we took our regulation walks, and beyond the walls over forest and field to the little town of Mutzchen.

"The cleaning of our cells was done by a so-called 'calefactor.' We had to pay for this cleaning and rent as well—for the State does not give even prison-room for nothing—at the rate of some fifteen shillings monthly. We got our food from an inn in a village near by. Our daily routine was as follows: We had to be dressed by seven o'clock, when the cells were opened for cleaning. In the meantime we had breakfast in the large corridor. Our friend Hirsch used to take this opportunity to play chess with another civilian prisoner, with whom he used to be continually quarrelling over the game. From eight to ten we were locked in our cells; then we took our regulation walks in the garden. From twelve to three in winter and four in summer we were once more locked up, and then took our second walk, to be locked up



at five or six, according to the season, until the cells were unlocked next morning. We had the right to burn a light until 10 p. m., and these hours I devoted to study. After some months I obtained permission to have Lieb-knecht locked up with me in my cell, from 8 to 10 a. m., that he might give me lessons in English and French. Of course, we used to discuss our party affairs, and I answered the business letters which my wife sent me every day.

"Liebknecht and I were great lovers of tea; but we could not get any, and we were forbidden to make it ourselves on account of the danger from fire. However, rules are made to be broken, and I managed to smuggle in a spirit lamp and kettle and the necessary ingredients. As soon as we were locked up for the night I began to brew my tea; and in order to give Lieb-knecht the pleasure of indulging in his favorite beverage, I had cut a pole in the garden, which was about nine feet long, to the end of which I attached a net of my own making. As soon as tea was ready I knocked on the wall—Liebknecht's cell was next to mine—and I placed a glass of tea in the net; I then thrust the pole out of the window and swung the glass round to Lieb-knecht's. In the same way we exchanged newspapers....

"I experienced a great need of bodily exercise, and the notion struck me that I would do some gardening. We could not get garden plots allotted to us, but were allowed to cultivate as much as we liked of the fallow land along the garden wall. We set to work with great energy. Lieb-knecht, who was just then writing his essay on the land question, regarded himself as an expert on agrarian matters, and assured us that this fallow land was one of the most fertile soils. But when we began to dig we found nothing but stone. Lieb-knecht pulled a long face, but we all laughed. We then took to spreading manure—not a very nice job, and one which we should have refused with indignation had the authorities forced us to do it.

"We sowed radishes and awaited the harvest. They came up beautifully—at least, the leaves did—but there were no radishes. Every morning when we started to take our walk there would be a race to see who should first pull up a radish. But always in vain. There were no radishes; and finally the warden told us the reason: we had manured the ground too well. The soil was too fat. We looked very foolish indeed."

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#### NOTES.

The chief propagandist work of the Ethics of Nature Society has reached its third edition in the French language under the title *Morale fondée sur les lois de la nature*. It is written by the president of the society, M. Marius Deshumbert, and was reviewed extensively with comprehensive quotations from the English edition in *The Open Court* of April, 1912. Copies of the French version will be furnished without charge to any one applying to the Hon. Secretary, Dewhurst, Dunheved Road, Thornton Heath, England. ρ

# ISIS

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