CHAPTER I

THE SECRET OF THE EAST

What is that great and vital principle that underlies all Eastern faiths? What is that truth that finds so varied and so different an expression in Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism, and many another religion, in the philosophies of Laotze and Confucius? What is the understanding of the world that is acceptable alike to prince and peasant, to philosopher and labourer, to soldier and recluse; that is the basis of all truth? The West has sought it always. It has recognised that from the East came light, that in the East there rose a fountain of the spirit that dried up never. The West has sought, but has not found.

It has never looked deep enough. It has mistaken things, taking the non-essential for the essential, the form for that which it encloses, the temporary for the eternal. It has borrowed and then has found that what it took away was but a dead thing, and that the life was left behind.

The East has ever been and is religious, not in part of its life but in the whole of it. It has held that
religion is not of one day but of all time, not of time only but of eternity, not of eternity only but of every moment. To its mind religion embraces everything, not man's soul only but his body, all of him; and not man alone but the whole universe; not some virtue but all virtues, all that is good and all that is evil. It is not therefore a theory, a teaching, a method, nor an ideal, a dogma, a thought; for these, however great, however true, must always be narrow, cannot hold but a little part of truth. They are finite, whereas religion is infinite. It is none of these. Religion is a way of looking at life and at the universe, it is a way to see and understand.

But to the West it is not so, and when it has gone to the East and asked for truth, it meant by truth a moral, or a virtue, or an ideal, or a dogma. It has sought the clothes in which truth shows itself and not the truth. Therefore, despite all the books written of Eastern forms of faith, none have been understood. The writers have explained nothing because they saw nothing, felt nothing, knew nothing. More especially is this true of Buddhism, that latest expression of an all-world view.

When I have read the Western books on Buddhism, when I have heard Western people talk about it and explain this faith, it has always seemed as if they were as travellers who describe a landscape dimly seen through fog and mist. To these wayfarers nothing is clear, there are no outlines. The mist wreaths open now and then and show long vistas—leading some-
times nowhere, sometimes ending in a cliff or chasm. At times they see the bases of the hills that have no summits, they are mist-hidden; or they catch momentary glimpses of far mountain peaks that hang all unsubstantial in the heavens. The mists move to and fro full of suggestions of unseen, undreamt of things, of ghosts and spirits wandering homeless in the void. Nothing is fixed, or real, there is no sunshine; all is unhappy, sad, and formless. You are afraid of it, you would not care to go forward and affront what it may hold. For there is no clear light to show what is before, nothing but lightning gleams and meteors shot across the clouds, and a cold phosphorescence in the atmosphere that comes and goes. No one could see by that. It is a phantom land, a place of visions, like to the Western faiths. But to the Eastern it is otherwise. To him life seen through his religion is a landscape under clearest sunshine, gay and happy. His seas are all alive with waves and sparkle, and the purple hills stand up beneath a clear blue sky. Where there are rifts, morasses, dangers for the traveller in this land, the light displays them. He can see and stop in time and find another way. He sees not very far ahead, the horizons bar him as they must every mortal eye. He does not seem to see so far as those who look through mists and shadows that give delusion of great distance, yet he sees farther, and what he sees is clear. He does not take a shifting cloud for solid certainty, or rainbow shadows in the heavens for gates of
paradise. He knows his view has bounds. This does not trouble him. He knows he cannot see the far sides of the hills, the bases of the world, infinity of space. He knows his brain and eye are limited. But he sees far enough for daily use. He sees the path before him, the turns and angles, the diversions of the ways. He knows whither he would go. The horizon is not walled with shadow, there are no wraiths nor ghosts that live there, no fear that has its kingdom there beyond.

And he is sure that the line that bounds his sight is not the limit of the world, of light and life. Beyond it there are other countries not less fair, where the sun is not less bright. He is not afraid to journey on, and he is sure that he will be always able to see enough to guide his steps. Distance will stretch to an infinity, there is a future soft with pearly lustre in a world beyond his ken.

That is the way he sees it.

For Buddhism is a very simple faith. It is not made of dreams nor revelations, nor founded upon the supernatural. It is the science of the evolution of the soul within the body. It is what men have seen and feel and know. It has ideals, beautiful ideals. They are not sunset clouds hung far in space remote from us: their base is on the earth, the spires ascend from the strong and sure foundations of the things that are. It has a theory of this world that agrees with all that science has discovered. It has a promise of Immortality, the only beautiful and reasonable Immortality the world
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has known. It is a study of man, not as he impossibly "ought" to be but as he is, and of what he may be judged from what he has been. It recognises the soul because it sees it, and it knows it comes from some great Power because it feels that this is so. There is no cast-iron dogma. Whatever statements or deductions it makes are liable to correction if wrong. Never does it consider it has found the absolute. Its thoughts and its ideas are but a step. It seeks always new truths to add, new steps to climb towards an infinite.

The reasons of the errors of Western writers explaining Buddhism arise, I think, mainly from two causes. The first is this: it is assumed that the only part of Buddhism which they know—the written teachings of Buddha and his followers—forms a system offered as being complete in itself; that it embraces all truth, all that a man need know and follow. It rests on nothing, rose from nothing, has no base, but drifts indefinite in space. They begin with the life of Buddha, they take his message and they end with the additions made by the disciples. Nothing is said of what the world was when Buddha was born into it, of the truths that then were widely known and followed. It is assumed Buddha ignored them. He only found them insufficient. It is assumed he made new discoveries of new truths, but he only pushed the old a further step. What he taught was the complement of all that went before.

The teachings of the Buddha are no complete
scheme of conduct, of faith, of immortality. They rest on Hinduism—not the corrupt Hinduism of to-day with its caste and ceremonies, but the Hinduism of twenty-five centuries ago. For Buddha did not come to destroy but to build, not to deny but to affirm. The world he lived in was one that in all the earlier virtues was as advanced as any is to-day. It was brave, and free, and learned. It was a happy world, of family love, of patriotism and honesty. Yet it was a world that made its only happiness in the current hour, that had a righteousness only of this world; which knew of nothing beyond. It drifted towards the grave and passed, fearful, into the unknown.

With the happiness of the day, with the righteousness that was necessary and true for this world the Buddha had no quarrel. He saw it and experienced it, and he knew that it was good and true.

But he knew, too, that it soon passed. Life is but short, its pleasures are but evanescent, we are drifted down the great river to the sea of death, and in that sea the righteousness of this world saveth not. That is what he said. And his message was of another life, of another righteousness, another happiness beyond the grave. He did not come to denounce this world or to rob it of happiness, but to add another world, to add a higher, more enduring happiness to that which passes so quickly from us. He came not to displace one truth with another, but to perfect truth with truth, joy with joy; to round our fleeting time with an eternity. And therefore Buddhism is nothing by itself. It is
not, it never pretended to be a complete truth, to be a temple in itself. It was but another story added to that great building whose feet are in the earth, whose summit rises up towards heaven.

Therefore to understand the theory and practice of the Buddha it is necessary to know on what they stood and stand. If you would understand the pinnacle you must know also of the base. You cannot have one without the other. The higher the spire rises towards heaven the broader and deeper must be its base upon this earth. That is what makes it firm and strong, what makes it real. They are only unrealities and dreams that float unsupported.

If to the West Buddhism as it has been explained has seemed entirely vague and unsubstantial, theory and mystification, this is one reason, because its base was never perceived and understood.

When I wrote The Soul of a People I included in that ‘soul’ not only the Buddhism of the people but their other beliefs as well. I was sure then that these were as essential as the Buddhist teachings; that they were even essential to the Buddhist teaching, which could not stand without them. Yet at that time I did not clearly see that they were one whole. I did not understand how they completed one the other; sometimes these even seemed in contradiction. I thought that the creed said one thing and the people believed another. But I know now that this is never so. All the beliefs of a people—any people—are a whole. They are not a patchwork, not a medley taken here
and there. There is in every man and every people, allowed to develop naturally, an instinctive consciousness of Truth, and everything in which they really believe is an expression of it. Their traditions, their legends, their moralities, their faith and creeds, are all but ways of setting forth this truth, this view of life. Whatever they believe they do so because it rings to them true. It has truth therein, hidden in imagery and phrase but still felt by them. Therefore they believe.

But what this truth which underlay all their beliefs might be I did not know, I could not guess. I was unable to get behind the words, because the words seemed clear and definite. Yet words are but a vehicle to express something that is inexpressible, they are the body in which the truth is able to manifest itself. The words are never the truth, any more than the body is the life of man. You may dissect the creed, the legend, tradition, custom, formula as much as you like, and you will understand no more of the truth it is meant to express than by dissecting a dead body will you find the life. The essential thing to know about any belief is not the form that belief is expressed in, not the words that actually are said; you want to know what the teller wanted to say, what the hearer heard.

Words are but images as stone or wood are. The savage roughly hews a god of stone to express a fear, a hope, a force, an emotion. To him and to those like him the image does express, does incarnate it. When he sees it he feels that fear or hope; the image is
alive. To the stranger it expresses nothing, it is dead. He may analyse the material and the workmanship for ever and he will find nothing. It is exactly the same with any form of words in which a belief is contained. To the believer it is alive, to the non-believer dead. Because, like beauty, which is the beholder’s echo to the beauty that is without, the spirit of the image, of the legend, of the creed is not really in the thing itself but in him who sees or hears and feels. Therefore to understand what is meant you must attune yourself to feel as do those who believe in these things. When you have done that, all else is easy. You understand, you feel, and doing this you can form for yourself other images, other phrases, other explanations more in accord with your own mode of expression whereby to show these beliefs to yourself and those who think as you do.

That is my first point, that Buddhism cannot be taken as a part but as a whole. We must never divorce it from its base. And although the Burmese were not Hindus before they became Buddhists, they had in their beliefs and traditions all the essentials of early Hinduism, and these survive to-day. Did they disappear, Buddhism would topple into ruin. You cannot have a pinnacle without a base. That is the point essential for trying to realise what Buddhism really is.

But again—this faith of daily life must rest on something. There must be some conception of this world, of man, of his relation to the universe, on which
this earlier faith must rest. And what is that? It is usually assumed it is what ours is. What do we think of the earth and all the world without us? That it is not connected with us in any way. We stand apart, a separate creation. That is our theology, the theory of our souls, though our science tells us differently, as far as our bodies are concerned. What do we think of birth? That our soul was then made anew from nothing. What of life? That between the cradle and the grave our destiny for all eternity is decided. What of death? That our soul then goes to judgment, or to await judgment. Our personality remains unchanged for ever, and the endless cycles of eternity are spent either in hell or heaven.

These are our fundamental thoughts, they are our axioms now. Perhaps they were not always so, and we have only arrived at them by clinging to the letter which kills, because we have not the spirit which lives. But anyhow these are our beliefs, and we think that all the world must hold them, not perhaps exactly as we do, details may vary, but certainly in essentials. In fact it never occurs to us that there can be any other conception, so we use these axioms to work out and explain Eastern beliefs. And what do we make thereby? To take an illustration the East believes in the transmigration of the soul. We think this means that the unchanged, unchangeable entity of the soul of man is incarnated now in a beast, now in one man, now in another, as a lighted candle might glow moved through a series of lamps. We cannot
understand such an idea, for it seems to us absurd. Indeed it is so, but the absurdity is not in what the East believes, but the way the West understands it. Transmigration means a very different thing from this, because the soul is not to them what it is to us.

Then take Nirvana.

This is the Buddhist heaven, and we explain it that after centuries of effort in this world, in many different incarnations the weary soul acquiring sufficient righteousness is absorbed into the infinite. It loses its identity. 'The dewdrop falls into the shining sea.'

It seems to us only another way of expressing annihilation and death. It has no attraction but fills us rather with fear and distrust. Because we misunderstand its meaning; we read it in terms of our own premises.

But when you have abandoned these ideas, when you have learnt what to Eastern eyes the soul of man is now, and may be, you are then enabled to understand the strength and beauty of the conception, surely the most wonderful the world has known. Then alone can you understand them when they say that this Nirvana of which they speak is not annihilation, it is not death.

It is the opposite of all these things. It is the realisation of self in a greater, grander self than ever we have dreamed of; it means a fuller, more glorious life than this world gives us now. That is what Nirvana means to those who understand it rightly.

It is to explain and illustrate really what Buddhism
is that I have written this book. It may be objected that in doing so I go to some extent over the same ground as in my former book, but it is not so. In my former book I wrote: 'My object is not to explain what the Buddha taught but what the people believe.' My object now is different. I want to explain as clearly as may be that conception of the world, man’s life, the past, the present and the future, which finds its latest, not its last, expression in Buddhism. I use the Burmese as my illustrations because they alone of modern people retain the spirit of Buddhism as it was understood. They are a simple people, and very often they do not see very clearly all that their faith means, and even when they understand they are not strong enough to follow. They are my illustrations as much by their failures as successes; for when they have succeeded it is because they have understood and been able to follow their faith, and when they have failed it is because they could do neither. If it be objected that we of the West are far wiser, stronger, cleverer in a thousand ways than this little people in their eastern valley and can have nothing to learn from them, I make this answer: It is true we are stronger, far, we are more civilised, far, we have many qualities, many virtues they have not. We have very much to teach them. We have in fact cultivated a side of Buddhism they have neglected.

But, after all, life contains more things than these, great as they are—than strength, organisation, civilisation, energy, and learning. There is happiness.
that worth nothing? There is a serenity of courage in all the troubles of life. Is not that something? There is a conception of the world which rings always true. And at the end, to be able to see in Death, not fear, not horror, not the end of things, to find him not the King of Terrors but the Great Romance, is that for nothing?

To have a religion that makes for happiness and hope, never for fear, that is based on truth we see, that has its future high above, is it not worth considering how it may be achieved? We who are always saying that we are decadent, that life is not worth living, that faith is dead?

One word as to the form of this book.

Every one who writes or speaks does so in that way in which he thinks he can best express what he has to say.

This is my way.

Whether the man here spoken of really existed or not, whether each scene occurred exactly as described or not, what does it matter? This is not the history of a man, but of a discovery: it is the explanation of a vision of the world from its foundation upwards. But the history of the way one man saw, or might see it is the simplest way to make it plain to others.
CHAPTER II

THE GOLDEN HOURS

It was deep noon. Right overhead the sun hung in a sky of blue so pure, so strong as almost to seem dark, and his golden light flooded the world. It fell in a tide of life upon the fields filling them with glory, it touched with fire the tops of the pagodas,—it made a magnificence even on the bare hillsides. Beneath the trees the shadows were as clear as crystal water, as full of lustre and of life.

There was a silence and a peace. The ploughmen who had worked from early dawn now slept beneath the palms, the cattle all were hidden, nothing moved. Even the crickets in the trees were still.

A man came riding down a lane that led across the uplands to the river. His European dress showed like a blot upon the landscape. The sun, beat on him as on an enemy. He seemed a swimmer fighting against a flood that knew him not, this son of the misty North. The pulses throbbéd in his ear-drums and his eyes were clouded.

Of a sudden the pony gave a start, a swerve, for he had nearly trodden on a snake, and the rider lost his
balance. The pony was frightened, and a moment later the man had fallen and was alone.

The sun beat on him pitilessly, he must find shelter from its cruelty. So he crawled on, dragging a broken leg, and came at length to the shadow of a palm grove near at hand. There was a well there, fresh with the coolness of the water spilt about it and the greenness of moss and fern. With a last effort he reached the curb, and then his senses failed. The world became dark and void. A squirrel came and looked at him and fled, and a chameleon hid behind a tree.

When he again regained his consciousness he found himself within a little wooden chamber in a monastery. His leg was set and bandaged with rude efficient village surgery. Upon his head were leaves damp with fresh water. The night had fallen and a breeze sweet with the scent of flowers blew in from opened jalousies. He felt a peace come on him and he fell asleep.

But in the village there was trouble. The villagers were gathered under the big tree beside the gate and grumbled. They did not want a stranger in their village, a foreigner, one of those strong and restless men who went about and pushed every one and everything aside. They were a quiet people, and they loved their distance from the strife and noise of money-making. They were a timid people, and they feared intruders. Why should this white man stay within their monastery, let him go to his own kind. It was not so very far down to the river station where the
steamer came each day. They would take him there by cart, now in the dark and coolness of the night; they would put him on board a steamer, and be rid of him. So they determined. They yoked the oxen and they went up to the monastery. The monks were at their prayers, the children chanted, the night was full of prayer sung by their earnest voices. The villagers sat and waited.

When the prayer was finished the old monk came forth and standing on the steps between the carved balustrades under the stars he asked them what they wanted. They told him, 'Bring out the foreigner. He cannot stay. We will send him to his own people.'

The monk shook his head. 'He cannot go. He is too ill.'

'It is not far,' they urged; 'three hours in the cart will take us to the river; there we will put him in a steamer and send him to the city where the white government is. We will give him to his own people.'

'He will die if he be moved. He has fever.'

'He will die if he stay. If die he must, let it be amongst his own, and our hands will be clean.'

The monk refused.

'Consider,' said the headman, 'how can he stay? Who is he? no one knows him here. He has dropped upon us as it were from the clouds. It is not good to have anything to do with these strange foreigners if you can help it. He had no one with him, no horse, nothing. He is some wanderer it were as well
to be suspicious of. A deserting soldier, a sailor who has run away, as we had before. If he stay, he must be fed, must be looked after. If he die, he must be buried. It is not our business to do either except for our own folk. Let us take him at once now when the night is cool, that the way may be easier.'

* But the monk would not.

'Charity,' he answered; 'did harm ever come to any one from charity? Let him be. When he is better we will see. And for the rest, what will he want?—a little rice, a little fruit, a little water. Have you not charity to that amount?'

* They murmured they were afraid. A wolf within a sheepfold, that is what they thought him, and wolves are wolves even if sick. They were not unkind, they did not lack a charity and open-handedness. But until now they had lived in peace in their little village far from the roads of change and bustle. They feared the introduction of a ferment. 'No, no,' they said; but there was no conviction in their voices.

And the monk knew that he had won. 'Now go,' he said, 'and be sure that charity has always its reward. To give to your own where is the virtue? Charity is to the stranger. Be glad that there has been sent you a chance to earn merit that will be eternal. He must stay here. But send word to the city that they may know.'

He stood there upon the steps looking down at them and his confidence removed their fears. With the ready acquiescence of young children in what they
feel, is right, they turned away cheerfully. Going down the village road back to their homes they laughed and sang. 'Yes, the monk is right,' they said, and their hearts were lightened.

And the old monk went slowly to the chamber where the man lay. In the darkness he could hardly be made out, only his face made a slight pallor in the gloom. The monk listened and stooped down and touched him. 'Yes, he will live,' he said. 'He is not ill, but only very tired. He wants rest, long rest and peace—our peace—and that is all.' So in the shelter of a great compassion the sick man lay and slept.

They came to see him when they heard the news, Gallio and the doctor. They would have removed him, had he been willing, carrying him in a litter to the river, but he would not.

'No, no,' he murmured, 'I am better here. I love this place. I like to sit and look out at the fields across the river to the hills. I like the air, for it is fresh and pure. I like the monks, they are so silent. I like to hear the children singing in the dawn. I am quite happy.'

So they did not press him, and the doctor said to Gallio: 'Leave him alone for a time. His broken limb will mend quickly, but it is more than that. His blood is full of fever. He is weak and tired. He has been doing too much, going up and down regardless of sun and rain, working without a pause in this hot climate. He will do well here, better than anywhere, till we can send him home.'
They went away and left him as he asked them.

So he stayed there in the monastery. His chamber had windows on three sides that looked out upon the land. From high up where he was upon a watershed he could see the whole great valley from mountain range to range with the broad river winding through it. By day it glowed and trembled under the sun, at night the moon threw silver dreams upon it. The life was full of quiet and of rest. The only sounds that broke them were the village voices far away, the lowing of the cattle coming home, drowsy sounds that drifted up half heard, and the chanting of the prayers.

Three hours after sunset and just before the dawn they sang. The slow Gregorian music was like a song out of the night, full of unknown things of this world and every other. It was a farewell to the day that passed, a welcome to the dawn. The night was deeper and the day more glorious because of it. He lay, and thoughts came to him out of the silence—new thoughts from a new silence.

He had been as other men are, he had moved through life and never looked about him. He had never seen a sunrise, the noon and sunset marked but times of day when to do something or cease doing it. The moon he had seen by chance, and had learnt from books as to its changes. On no particular day had he any idea whether it was new or full save from an almanac. He did not know one star from another. The earth was simply a place to be travelled over, where countries and cities are, described in geographies.
Fields were to grow crops in, mountains were good maybe to climb or for mountain sheep. The seas were ways for ships and to provide fish. They were all dead mechanical things ruled by unconscious forces which he thought he knew all about.

The trees and plants, the animals and birds were little better. They were for food, for sport, for clothing. These also mechanical forces ruled, force and chance. His religion told him the world was evil and soulless, his science told him it was a rude, imperfect mechanism. As for himself, he had found it a place to work and play in, that was all. It had no other connection with him. He had a soul, as he supposed; it had not. And this soul of his was on this earth but for a fleeting moment and went thereafter otherwhere. Of what use to interest oneself in a world that was so dull in itself and so brief an habitation? It might be pretty sometimes in its mechanical way, but really all that he had to do with it was to make use of it. There was no tie between him and it. So it had seemed to him. But now, lying quietly there with leisure to feel instead of always doing, with time to think, Nature began to call to him. He shared her moods. He felt her sadness when the sun was dying in the west and bathed the world in glory; the serenity of the night was as a peace that held his spirit, and when the dawn silvered all the east, when the earth awoke again and laughed with utter happiness, his heart leapt with the gladness of all things.

He felt his pulses rise and fall answering to the
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pulse of all the world. The life about him was his life also, and he was part of it. The spirit called to him; he answered.

The birds and beasts no longer seemed automata, to use, to drive, to kill just at his pleasure. From out the oxen’s dreamy eyes something looked forth to his. The birds without his windows singing in the trees their love and gladness, had they no souls? The dogs obedient to the call, who died to save the flock entrusted to them, had they no righteousness? Had indeed the soul of man no kinship with them? Were they ‘the beasts that perish’?

And of a sudden it came to him that life was beautiful. Not effort only, not work nor play, success, achievement, wealth or fame or honour, but life itself. To live was good. The hours, the golden hours, were not just empty spaces between two clock-beats, to fill with acts. They were themselves a glory. To sit and let the crystal flood of time pass over him was purest pleasure. Not his life only but all life was good. To feel the great and glorious stream of the world’s life pass on, to be one with Nature and to hear her sing. For she goes forward to a music. It is not always a battle chant she moves to. In her song there are all things. The shout of triumph and the cry of those who fall are there; but there are also other notes, the ripple of the river on its stones, the murmur of the trees, the rhythm of the sap that rises in them, the thunder in the hills. It is a song of infinite harmonies.

Now for the first time he heard it.
Then 'he began to think.

His life had all been occupied by work, with play between. From boyhood up he had always worked, always pressed forward. There had been a fever in his blood, a restlessness that would not leave him. He had gone forward from one thing to another, and everything he gained he threw aside for something more. He was as a man who started forth at dawn to march. He went quickly, surmounting ridge after ridge, ever finding new rises on before him. He had been proud he went so fast and surely, delighting in the difficulties he met only to overcome, in the pleasures by the way. Then at noon he sat him down to rest. He looked back on the way he came, and on all sides, and wondered. He had travelled far, but where was he arrived? Certainly at no goal. Whither did he go in future? He had no map. He knew not what lay before. And more, he did not know whither he wished to arrive, if there was any place that he would care to get to. What use was there in ever climbing up a ridge to find another and another, and at the end nothing; to find he had gone round and round and had arrived nowhere, was at last where he started? 'After all,' he thought, 'though work is good, and play is good, it would be as well to know whither it leads. Does it lead anywhere? Living is being, and dying is but a part of that. Existence includes the past, the present, and the future. And effort, incessant, intense and unreflective, is pursued only because an anodyne is necessary to prevent the recognition that we know
nothing of what we have been, are, and will be. We dare not lift our eyes from the earth before us lest we should see at once that we are lost and arrive nowhere except at death.

'And then? What then?'

He had heard many explanations—one had been taught to him from his childhood—he had paid little heed to any of them. They had seemed to him unreal, apart from life, not concerned with the affairs of every day. They were indeed inconsistent with the work of life and might safely be neglected. They were sad, and he disliked sadness as a form of weakness to be faced and defeated. The troubles of life brought sadness enough without cultivating it. They were mainly concerned with death while he was concerned with life; they denounced this world and all it held. They held out to him a code, which, containing much that he admired, was imperfect, and they offered him a reward he cared not for.

For to him it seemed, little as he had realised of it, that the world was mainly a pleasant, not a dreary place at all, though the devil might have some hand in it here and there. Life should be made the best of, not the worst. His ideals were gaiety, happiness, courage, not tears, sorrow, fear. He recoiled from these. He did not believe a gate of tears would lead anywhere worth going to.

If there was truth in this world, it must be strong, not weak, it must be like wine and make a man glad and firm. It must support and not enfeeble. And if
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in reality, this that he had been taught was the only truth there was, then why have truth at all? Falsehood could do no more than make men miserable and lead them through unrestful lives to a place that they had no desire to reach.
CHAPTER III

THE TRUTH AND THE IMAGE

Therefore when again a month later Gallio returned and urged him to come back, he shook his head. 'Come back?' he said; 'why should I come back? I am quite happy here.'

And Gallio answered: 'It is not "why should you come back," but "why should you stay?" How can you be happy here? What is there to do?'

He laughed. 'To do? There is nothing, nothing I must do, nothing I could do. That is the beauty of it. Therefore I do just what I like, and that is—nothing.'

'How do you kill the time?'

'I do not kill it, I do not want to kill it. The hours are my friends. I love them and they linger with me unafraid. They give me time to see things and to understand.'

'What things?' asked Gallio.

He answered, looking through the window to the sun-steeped land that lay before it. 'Everything: the sun, the light, the fields, the rivers and the winds; the people who live in these little villages beneath the
trees, who have their thoughts and dreams, about the world; the monks who sit above here and strive through all the hours—and in the end perhaps, myself.'

Gallio laughed. ‘The sun,’ he said; ‘you will not learn much about it here except that it is hot. You have no books on science that I see with you, though I can lend you some. As to the stars, the monks here know little of astronomy and of that little most is wrong. The fields are cultivated well, but in a rough, unscientific manner; you will learn more from the Agricultural Ledger in my office than from the cultivator in the fields. As to their thoughts and dreams and their religion, what value have they? Animism thinly overlaid with Buddhist teachings; that is all.’

‘Oh,’ was the answer, ‘I do not mean the things you say. I mean quite other matters. Is there any book that tells you what life is, all life? and is there nothing in a beast or bird or plant but just how best to bring it to material use? And do you think that sticking little labels of “Animist” and “Buddhist” on beliefs and on traditions brings you any nearer knowing what they mean and whence they came? They are not pots of jam, “raspberry and currant mixed,” or “apple flavoured with lemon.” Is there anything more shallow than to attribute names to things you cannot understand, and thereupon try and persuade yourself, and others, that you know anything about them?’

‘Do you think that there is anything worth learning in them?’
'It is the beginning of knowledge, of understanding. Do you suppose that beliefs and superstitions are things that exist separately, that can be classified, and that a people takes a patch here and a patch there and makes itself a many-coloured garment therewith to clothe its spiritual nakedness? I know that men who do not want to think satisfy themselves with such a theory, but...

'But? You are about to ask if I am one of them. Well, no. But the fact is this, that though I have learned many of the people's traditions, I never saw anything in them but a childishness natural to an uncivilised people. We had similar ones and have grown out of them. Some are poetic truly, but of what possible significance save as nursery stories? You think differently?'

The man was silent; then after a long pause he said: 'Yes, I think differently. I think that the beliefs of a people, any people, are not a patchwork but a whole. I think that they are not ideas merely but the varied expressions of some innate and infinite truth; of one truth; that is of one concept of the world. Legends and tales, the spirits of hills and rivers, of the trees and flowers, of the birds and beasts are but expressions, dimly, almost dumbly, told of some great concept of their nature and their relationships to each other and to man. For man is of this world, he is not apart from it but of it, not his body only, but the life and soul that has built and animates that body. We are in the world and of the world, and that is what
the East knows and feels now, and has always done. It is an impossible thing to imagine that you can by considering man alone arrive at any truth worth having. Life is a great whole. There are not different lives but one life, manifested in different ways but always one. That is what the East has been sure of, what the West has never known. The West has studied man, the East has studied the soul that is the world. The Eastern peoples' conception of man is bound up with their conception of all life. Religion means to them not a little bit of the soul of man, but it embraces all the whole universe as far as they can see it and the whole of man. It is Catholic as the word is never known in the West. Religion is everything to them. Therefore to understand that part of it which is concerned with man you must begin at the beginning, for man is but the end, the present climax.'

'You think,' said Gallio musingly, 'that they think otherwise than we do? and that you can learn what it is they think?'

'Of the answer to the first question I am sure,' he answered. 'All their conduct, all their legends and traditions show that they have some concept of nature differing from ours. All the East has it. Whether I can learn it is not so certain. I can but try. And I think—I think that I may learn it.'

'Suppose you do,' said Gallio. 'What then? Is it that you think that their concept is true?'

'It will be surely true because it comes to them from nature. It is given to them. It will be a facet
III THE TRUTH AND THE IMAGE

of the truth and it will be a key to many things, it is the secret of the East. Why does the East believe, why has the West never done so? You know it never has. All history shows the West as unbelievers. There have been Churches who have dragooned the people, who have driven them to prayers, forced them into the faith, killed them for heresy and unbelief. Yet they have never believed. They have but hidden their scepticism, and once the pressure past have broken into unbelief again. The history of all Churches is of perpetual struggle to enforce a creed, never successful. There have been religious men, there have been waves of faith that came, and ebbed and disappeared.

At its best never has it received more than a tithe of life or conduct. But in the East all men have their religion, all men believe truly and earnestly. They have not to be driven, to be forced to a pretence. Only the Semitic Faith of Islam has persecuted and conquered and converted. The Great East has held its faiths because they were in accordance with the whole of life. No man is ashamed because of his religion, no man scoffs at it secretly. It is a nature with them. Why?

'But tell me, how can you learn their view of life? Truly the East has been studied enough, Buddhism has been written of and explained till one is weary of it. There is little new in it, and what is new is not intelligible, is vague and dim and misty. What new theory can you discover?'

'I will begin at the beginning. No one has done
that. They have studied but the top. They have
done as the West has always done, convinced that
religion concerns man's soul alone, not the world about
him, not his body even. I will begin at the begin ning.

'What is that beginning?'

'Their beliefs of nature, their legends, those that
they believe with heart and soul as they do many.'

'Idle allegories of the sunset or the dawn, or old-
world tales.'

'Not so. They are a way of saying something,
a something that is true to them and therefore true
for all the world, a side of truth, a glimpse of the
great Light. Why do they all believe in transmigra-
tion? What is transmigration? What do they mean
by it?'

'A foolish fancy.'

'To us yes, to them no. To us yes, because we
do not understand what they wish to say. To them
no, because it expresses something true. We mistake
the form for the truth and cannot see below, they are
careless of their creeds and images because every one
of them is conscious of the truth that lies beneath.
Each Oriental understands the other because each has
the key. We have not. So we mistake. We laugh,
and when we laugh the folly is ours. We think we
laugh at them, but what indeed we jeer at is our own
misconceptions. We laugh the laugh of ignorance.'

'Why then,' asked Gallio, 'trouble about the East?
Are there none in Europe that may serve your
purpose?'
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There used to be. All peoples emerging from their childhood bring with them in their superstitions expressions of primæval truths. These are the bases on which all other truths are formed. But in Europe they have all been killed. They are dead, and their casings but survive in books as you may find a fossil in a rock. Yet they are not really dead but only asleep, and would awaken if allowed. For truth never dies completely or changes, though the form in which it is made manifest may and must change. But it has never time now to grow and to develop and to express itself anew. It is stifled in its birth. From their earliest childhood now the people are brought up in and taught the grimmest, saddest materialism. They are never allowed to feel, never allowed to think. They have a science that knows only the body, not the spirit; they have a faith that tells them that nature is an evil, soulless thing. The truths that are within the hearts of all are never allowed to grow. There is no ignorance so deep as that of the schooled European. I feel it, for I shared it. Now it is leaving me, and I know that the secret beginnings of all truth lie not in the heaven above, not in men's hearts or souls, but in the world about us. All Nature has a message to us if we would but listen to her voice. These people listen, they have heard it and they hear it. I will learn it from them; or I will learn from them how I may hear it too.'

Then Gallio went away and wondered, for he cared nothing for all these things. Legends, he thought,
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traditions, belief in fairies, stories of naiads and of wood gods were all imagination, tales from the nursery days of men. What could one find in them any more than one could find in nursery rhymes, in 'Little Jack Horner,' or 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'? They were amusements of a people's childhood or, at best, natural phenomena seen vaguely and mistakenly. Such tales as did not take their origin in this way, were inventions of priests to stupefy the vulgar, as indeed were all religions. He went away and left his friend to what he considered very foolish waste of time.

But the days that came and went in golden glory, the nights with diamond-studded darkness, brought to him very other counsel.

'Imagination! can men imagine what has never existed? Is it any explanation to say a thing has been imagined? What is imagination? It is that which reflects the image of things that are. No one has ever imagined that which was not. It is a magic mirror held to nature. If the mirror be distorted, the likenesses of things are all awry, they may be misty, dim, and faint. But beautiful or not, imagination only reflects what is. And when the mirror is a true one, then it reflects also that which lies beneath the face of things. To say that any belief is the product of imagination is to say that it is a reflection of something. What does it reflect? What real thing was before the mental glass that cast this image?

'Therefore their meaning is something true and something that exists.
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As to the words, the form in which the tales are told, all words which tell of immaterial things are only symbols taken from the concrete. We "understand," that is to say, that mentally "we stand under." All our emotions, thoughts, ideas, all the inner life must be expressed in symbols that are taken from the outer. We cannot express any spiritual idea except by material figures. It is so with single words, and with the tracery into which the words are wrought. We speak in parables, every one does, must do. We speak in finite terms, for all we know is finite. If we want to speak of what we call the infinite, we have only a negative, "that which is not finite," therefore inexpressible. We know a spiritual truth, a love, a hate, an insight into life, but we have only earthly words to express our knowledge.

All legends and beliefs that people have, that they believe, that they are sure are true, are parables of some spiritual truth. The parables may be clear or less clear. When they were new, when they were spoken they were clear. He who spoke them, they who heard them knew the truth beneath, they felt the life beneath the outer garment. The words awoke in them the music, the thrill, the sense of truth. They heard and understood, because they were in harmony, because they held the truth. A speaker is he who plays upon his hearers' heartstrings; they who hear and understand are they whose heartstrings are in one accord. As violin answers unto violin so does heart to heart. And they who made these legends heard the music of the
spheres, and brought it closer to earth and gave it unto men.

‘But words and images grow old. They may become but cases where no life lingers, like the empty shells of life once built that now lie derelict and dead.

‘You will never learn of the life from looking at the shell alone. Life learns from life, catching its waves and its emotions. Brain learns from brain, and heart from heart.

‘Therefore,’ he said, ‘to sit and study the forms that these beliefs are wrapped in were a foolish thing. Many men have done it and learned nothing, how should they learn of life from death?

‘The life and truth of these beliefs lies not in their words, but in that meaning the believer feels in them. It is he who makes the dead forms live with life from out himself. Melody lies not in the notes upon the paper, not in the instrument, not in the player’s fingers, but in his heart and in the hearts of those who thrill to hear. It is an echo. If you are deaf no echo comes, aye, though you should read the notes and watch the player’s fingers move. I have been deaf and am. Now I will learn to hear the music. I will attune myself so that I may hear that which they hear. Then shall I know what these things mean. And once I have the key, that key, once I can hear, then shall I be able to explain perhaps in other words and other images which may be understood.’

He waited listening in this silence, letting his heart go out to the glory and beauty of the world. And behold the music came.
CHAPTER IV

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

The rains were over; the warm, wet wind that blew from the seas of the south was stilled, the thunderstorms that had stalked forth from the mountains like great purple giants, full of sound and fury, came no more. The days were still, but at evening came a whisper from the north, a wind that told of different things. It was fresh with the breath of mountains that rose into the roof of the world, it was cool from the touch of snows that had lain untainted through the centuries. It crisped the river into ripples of gay laughter, it laid its fingers on the skin sodden with months of heat and stung it into vigour, it chased the languid currents of the blood into a swifter life. For it brought with it the gladness and the eagerness of youth, the beauty of new things new made for those who love them. His strength increased and he began to go abroad.

When he first went down among the village people they regarded him with fear and with suspicion.
What did he want with them, this stranger from so far away? Was he one of their rulers trying to learn things, how to increase the taxes maybe; or had he some scheme for making money presently out of them? They feared him, that he might laugh at them or sneer, or, worse than all, lecture and try to improve them. They kept away from him, and in his presence a silence fell upon them.

But as day after day passed and they found in him only a smile or a word the suspicion passed. He came and went so quietly, he listened to them when they talked to him, he spoke so little that they forgot. And after a while they ceased to take especial notice of him, he had become familiar to them, part of their daily life, and they were friends.

So evening by evening as the long shadows passed across the land he went down from his monastery dwelling to the village. Sometimes he would sit by the well curb where the women drew their water. He saw them coming down in twos and threes running, lingering, laughing by the way, dipping the water into their earthen jars, casting sidelong looks at the lads who watched from far. They tossed him little greetings and told him the village gossip. He joined the elders by the great tree near the gate and listened to their talk of crops and seasons. And as he grew stronger he went further abroad, going with the reapers in the dark before the dawn to their fields beside the forest edge, passing the hot hours in the shadow of the trees, and coming back with them at nightfall when the
home-going cattle filled the lanes. And so the life of the people, of the earth, the woods and the streams, the forest creatures passed into his blood. He grew in harmony with them and understood them.

It seemed to him sometimes that he had stepped back into the ages when the world was young. Here was the world the Greeks had lived in, here was what the poets sang. Glory and loveliness had never passed away but still existed. All the gods yet lived to those who still had ears to hear their voices in the forest sounds, eyes to see them flitting through the darkened woods or bathing in the mountain pools. The people knew them, and they talked of them and told him stories. Were the trees alive? Surely they were. They had their life, they were not dead unlovely things, but living. Every grass and bush and tree had its own life that came straight from the fount of life. There was not a little separate life hid in each plant, but there was a flood of life coming from who knows where, that poured upon the world and passed into its veins. It made the sap move, the blood flow, it was life, and where it was not there was death.

The life came from that which is unknown, all present, what shall we call it? God? It were better without a name this nameless source of life, for the word God is mixed up with ideas of personality and limitation very foreign to their thoughts. Yet it is not a blind force, it comes not undirected, nor by chance, dumbly, without consciousness or knowledge. No!
All forms of life are under the care and the direction of a Consciousness, a Righteousness, a Knowledge, are subject to it, are one with it. It is never a dull, blind stream of energy ruled by a hapless chance, but a life ruled by a Right.

That was the first thing that he learned, not because the people told him but because he felt that it was so. He felt the presence of the great throbbing life that filled all things, which answered to the life within himself. Nature grew very near to him. He listened to the voices of the dawn. He watched it arise, the immeasurable miracle of day; he saw the couriers of the sun beat crimson light along the mountain's brow. He saw the king arise in all his majesty and look in strength and glory over all the world. He listened in the woods and heard the branches whisper secrets to each other. The breezes rustled in the palm fronds overhead and talked and laughed and moaned.

At eve the jungle fowl came out to feed in open places. The cocks, proudest and gayest of brave birds, strutted and stamped and called defiance,—the meek brown hens ran to and fro. The partridges laughed out ha-ha, ha-ha, the brown quails crept and whistled in the grass. The day died in scarlet agony, and across the throbbing skies the wild geese passed in long processions.

Then the night came in majesty with robes of softest velvet. In the deep gloom the whole world changed. You could not see things, only divine what they might be; the darkness hid them in a veil of
mystery. The deer came down to drink, the leopard padded stealthily towards his prey. Birds of ill omen cried, the owl, the night-jar. And there were sounds that came he knew not whence, voices of the night.

Then again the dawn.

Dead Nature? Dead souls they are who have not felt the fellowship of all the life that lives.

Not such were these he lived among. They knew and felt that all life was one, came from one source. The reapers told him of the grasses and the crops and trees, how in order to get your daily food you must have knowledge of the laws, the righteousness that govern their increase. How you must be acceptable to the god of harvest. The hunters told him of the animals. They have their laws, their god who cares for them. He tells them what to do and what they must not. Do you think the deer, the leopard, the little partridge that runs amid the corn, have never any laws? Is man the only living thing that has a right and wrong? Every living thing has right and wrong. There are things that are right and wrong for them to do, things that are right and wrong for others to do to them.

The deer when in herds have laws that no one may transgress; the wild dogs have a code of discipline harder than any army. He who transgresses it is killed. The leopards have their beats each for himself. All wild nature has its ethics differing for each kind. And the hunter has his ethics too, that nature made.

'There is that hill,' the hunter said, 'that lies above
the stream where the wood is thick, that is the sanctuary. No one may hunt there. And why? Because the forest god forbids it. There are such places everywhere. And if there were not, if the forest god had never made such sanctuaries, the game would disappear. That is the law the god has given us, so that we kill not all the jungle beasts. He lets us kill at time and place, but there are other times and places when they must have rest. That is a law. Those who break it suffer.

And the man laughed because he had often heard it called a stupid superstition of the people, these sanctuaries for game. And he knew how in places where these had been broken by those who had no belief in the gods of Nature, the game had disappeared.

They told him all they knew of the souls of trees and beasts, and he listened and he understood, because the truth was coming to him. He told them all that Western science has discovered of the body, how it had evolved from lower forms, and they listened and they understood, because the truth was in them. He showed them sometimes how the beasts and birds were coloured for protection to enable them to hide, sometimes their colours were conspicuous for other purposes. He told them how in the long history of the world the forms had changed under the stress of necessity. They heard him and they understood. It was not a new idea, but one they had always held though dimly, and not worked out as Western science
has worked it. They had known always that the bodies of men and animals had risen. This truth was in harmony with other truths they had within them.

'True, true,' they said. 'It is true. We have seen, and though we could not explain as you do, we know that it is so.'

Yet sometimes they dissented, not from his principles but from his facts.

'No, no,' they said about the leopard. 'How could his colour, his yellow and his spots, be given him to hide him? Why should he hide? Who does he fear? No one. And he is nocturnal, he seeks his food by night and not by day, not in the sunshine. His gold and mottled skin cannot be for this reason. He would be coloured grey for use, if use were all.'

'What then do you think?'

'Because it is beautiful.'

For to their eyes everything that Nature does, everything she makes is beautiful. It is the strongest, most abiding feeling that comes to every one who knows, that in all her acts Nature seeks beauty. Not perhaps as the first necessity, not perhaps as an end, but because it is her way. The tiny pencillings upon the partridge are as wonderfully done as the gay colours of the parrakeet. The bronze gloss upon the snipe is as glorious as the pheasant's magnificence. The hidden things are no less beautiful, no less carefully finished than those that show. She works for no eye but for her own, she cares not if what she makes be
visible or hidden. She sees, she knows. 'The rootlet in the earth is perfect as the grass blade above. She has her conscience and her consciousness.

The wild world is beautiful and happy. There is a sense of peace and gladness and of order in the woods and those who live there. All are happy. There are men who live away from nature in cities or shut up within their own imaginings, who think and say that nature is unhappy. 'Bird preys on insect and on lesser birds, beast upon beast, and death is very near. It hides beneath the leaf, it lurks behind the tree. All live in terror.'

Not so. Truly death is near, but the world fears not death. It does not go in daily, hourly terror. Death is a sudden fear, pang, a medicine to cure all ills. The snipe you fired at a few minutes since and missed is now as happy as it was before. They live in glorious happy health, and when they are sick they die. Nature cannot tolerate disease, pain, ugliness, unhappiness, despair among her children. She ends it suddenly, and in abandoning life lives on.

Is this world evil? No a thousand times, seen with true eyes it is a wonder of magnificence. Did it grow by chance, by blind forces acting on dead matter? How came the beauty and the order and the happiness? Animals have consciousness and a sense of right and wrong, and men have higher consciousness. Is consciousness a product of unconscious forces working in unconscious matter?

Men are intelligent, at least some are, and is
intelligence a spark that unintelligence brings forth? Is it a science that tells us this? Is it not rather blindness? Could ever any one believe such things? No one who leaving his laboratory stood face to face with Nature and listened to her voice. Our bodies have risen slowly, developed from the beginning, built up from earth's elements. But the life that working in them built them, the life that makes our higher forms to manifest itself more fully in, that life is divine. The East has seen this always, and the West sometimes in glimpses. The world about us, the grasses, trees, the birds and beasts and man, are, as one Western said, 'the living garment of God.' It changes, drawing ever nearer to perfection.

But the East knows it always. It has built upon this knowledge, on a sure foundation. If there are naiads in the streams, spirits of the hills, and fairies in every flower that blows, that is their way of saying what they know. It is a childish way, maybe, but what it says is true.

'It is a greater thing to believe in one Great God than in a myriad gods. The first is true, the latter is a superstition.'

So says the West. Let us consider.

'God's in His heaven,' says the poet of the West. In His heaven far away from us, waiting to judge us maybe. 'God is on earth,' the East declares, for God is everywhere, is everything. All life is God, straight from His Power House, a thrill of the eternal life. And because to our finite minds to postulate the One,
is to place Him in one place, with one set of attributes, the East prefers to think of many gods. The Eastern God is infinite, and it is truer sometimes to express infinity by very many than by one. That is what the East means, that is what it says. And it understands its own words though we have failed to do so. Yet to the East all gods are God.

Without the village, near a ruined shrine, beside a well that filled itself with ferns, there grew a giant tree. It was a fig, the sacred peepul, under whose branches understanding comes to him who listens. The great branches gave a shade, and some pious soul had placed a drinking vessel full of clear water for the traveller. On the branches hung a tiny house of wood, and in front were placed the offerings of the people—fruit and rice and flowers. 'Tell me,' he asked, 'what is that tiny box, and why these offerings? For whom are they?'

They answered that in the tree there lived a spirit. The house was for him, and the fruit, the flowers. 'He lives there, he is the tree's life, the life of all the trees that grow. Trees are all beautiful, we love them, what would be the world without these temples? A life is in them, for a life has built them up, and that life is a god. They are all temples that a divinity has made and given us.

'So because we wish to remember this, because we do not desire our children should forget it, this the foundation of all truth, we put the symbol of the little
house, and we bring flowers and fruit. The flowers fade, the birds eat the fruit. No matter. We are realising something we know is true.'

Child's words, child's deeds. Maybe. Have not men grown up from childhood? Would you destroy the child because he is not a man? Would you destroy a truth because in its expression it is young? Great truths grow up from small ones.

The world was not built by chance, the life is not a dead unconscious force. The world has grown up from the beginning as the expression of an 'increasing purpose.' That is the way the East has always seen it.
CHAPTER V

EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL

Sometimes he would leave his monastery chamber where he lived so quietly and go with a party of woodcutters or of hunters into the hills that lay towards the north. There they made camps in the ravines near water, building little huts of branches, a shelter more from the heat of day than the cold of night. Yet it was cold, too, when the north wind blew at night, and then they made great fires of logs and brushwood and sat about them. The tawny light flickered upon their faces and gave to them, wearied by the day's work, a new energy. They laughed and talked and they told stories. Sometimes they told him of the gossip of the country side, how there was a child who remembered dimly of a former life and spoke of it. Many such tales there were, and the men who told them laughed. Why did they tell them, why did they laugh? Was it because they thought such tales arose from a truth but were perhaps not a truth? Life is eternal, a previous life there is for every one from the beginning. Just as the body has risen in one unbroken chain through various lower forms hidden in the backward centuries,
so has the soul. Yet though the body is one body with that which has seen so many changes, though it bears in it the result, it has no conscious memory. And the life—can it bring a conscious memory of bygone days? They thought not.

They told him birth stories of the Buddha brought from India hundreds of years ago and changed in bringing; they told him legends of their own country. And these were always the best, these were what the hearer wanted, for they came out of their simple hearts—an image of the truths that lay therein. They had a beauty and reality, told as they were.

- About them stood the trees in circle, far off upon the hills a long fire burnt, a scarlet circlet that climbed slowly upwards. Out of the dark came sounds—a sambur belled, an owl cried harshly, and sometimes a jackal howled in long-drawn melancholy notes. A falling star would shoot athwart the sky and disappear.

This was one of their favourite tales.

Far in the north there are great mountains growing ever higher towards the unknown land. Dense forests are there, trees such as we never see here, so high and thick, tied to each other by long creepers. And the undergrowth is thick; the sunlight hardly penetrates, and men can scarcely move forward and backward.

- There are deep ravines, as black almost as night, where silent rivers flow, and there are rocks and precipices and many unknown things.

In these forests there are many deer and there are elephants who crush their way careless of what oppose
There are wild cattle, bison and bears, and there are many tigers. If you go even a little way into these hills you feel afraid and as if you were lost, for there are no paths.

A wild hill people live there. They are small in stature, dark and timid. They are rarely seen except when sometimes they will move into the plain and change some skins for cloth and salt. They speak a tongue we cannot understand. They have no villages, but camp now in one place, now in another.

The people of the plains are much afraid of them. They think them half devils, hardly men, and they have stories of them. They say that they can use enchantments and that they speak the language of the beasts. They hear and understand the deer talking to each other and the tigers' growls. They even say that sometimes they change themselves into animals for a time, and then again become men. So frightened are the plain people of these mountains they never go far into them. On the outskirts they cut timber and gather forest produce, but they do not penetrate. They think that once caught among the hills they never could return.

But once there was a man who did go in. He was young and rash and restless, as young men are, and the quiet life of the villages in the plain wearied him. He was tired of ploughing, sowing, reaping, going to little festivals. He wanted adventure and to see new things. So one day he disappeared from his home, and for two years he was not seen. They thought that he was dead, lost in the hills, and they
wrote his name from off the village list. Yet one day he returned walking out of the forest changed from a youth into a man, tall and strong, with the keen eye of the hunter and the step of a mountaineer. He had seen and done many things in these two years and they had left their mark on him. He was not alone. Walking behind him as he came out of the forest was a girl. She was young and her limbs were slender but strong like those of the deer. And her eyes were like the deer’s eyes, large and soft, and timid except when she looked at him she followed, when they grew full of confidence and laughter. He brought her to the village and they settled there.

But the village women did not like her. She was strange, spoke a strange tongue, and her ways were not as theirs were. She did not understand them. She could not enter into their life. She was an outsider, a savage from the hills, and they would none of her.

So the two left the village and built them a hut near to the forest edge beside a stream. And here they lived more happily and in peace. The man hunted and worked and the woman stayed at home, and presently a little girl was born. Then for a time there was complete content.

But the man got weary of this lonely life. He wanted to talk with other men, he wearied for the wider intercourse of his own people. The loneliness fatigued him. Therefore he took to going to the village, sometimes in the day, sometimes in the evening, to hear the news and take a share in village matters.
Often he would return quite late. And he would go to the further villages lower down the plain, staying away a day, two days or three.

The woman was much alone. She would spin and weave and prepare the rice, and in the evenings when her husband did not come she would take her baby and go and sit beside the stream looking across. There were the forests and beyond them rose the hills where she was born, where her people roamed. A great desire came upon her to return. The mountain spirits called her, the trees waved to her, the stream went murmuring of the heights whence it had come, of the coolness of the deep ravines. The bonds of a life all in one place, the heat, the solitude oppressed her. The tears would come into her eyes for all that she had lost. But yet she had her daughter, and when she looked at her, the trouble vanished, laughter came back again and she was content. But the man never noticed. He was employed, he had friends, the plains were his home. He thought his wife grown stupid, that was all.

Then the child died; a fever came out of the swamps and killed it. Husband and wife sorrowed together. For a time they grew nearer. Then they were parted more than ever; the man went oftener to the village and the girl was left alone. She had no one then to talk to, only she called aloud her troubles to the hills that they might hear her.

One night the man returned home late. The door was open and the hut was desolate; he called aloud but no one came. He searched but he found nothing.
His wife was gone. But of the cause or reason he could find no sign, until at last searching in the dawn beside the river he came upon a tiger's tracks. He stared at them and he remembered the tales he had often heard. Yes. His wife had changed into a tigress and had gone back to her mountains. She was lost to him for ever. Suddenly the old love he had borne her returned. He remembered how he had found her as a young girl among her people, how he had called and she had followed him. He felt his life was emptied of all happiness. He fell upon the ground, and there they found him lying nearly dead. They took him to the village and cared for him, but when he spoke of his wife they shook their heads. 'It is wiser to forget. Such women are best back among their hills.'

But the man would not listen, and at last he heard news he hoped would help him. In the great City down the far river lived a man reputed of deep wisdom. He might tell the husband what to do, how to get his wife again, for he knew everything. The husband started for the Golden City.

A week he travelled floating on a raft down the great water, passing hamlets, forts, and cities, and on the eighth day he saw the morning sun strike into fire upon a clustered throng of minarets and spires. He knew that he was arrived, and before long he came to where the wise man lived. The wise man saw him and told him certain things, and he, without waiting to see the wonders of the city, turned on the homeward road again. Day and night he marched, quickly with
little rest, for hope was in his heart, and at last he came again to his hut beside the stream. Here he made a load of what he wanted, and taking in his hand a spear he went straight into the forest. The way was difficult, there was no path, the trees grew thickly, creepers caught his feet, ravines and precipices barred his way. But he kept on, guiding himself by what he had been told.

At last he came to the place he sought. It was a valley shut between high walls that made it dark. Great rocks dripped water from their sides and there were caves where night lived always. Just before sunset the husband came there and found a cavern underneath a precipice about which creepers hung as in a curtain. Before the cave were strewed white bones and skulls, and there was a sense of horror and of fear.

Opposite the cave mouth he chose a tree and climbed it and waited for the night, for he knew that in that cave there lay a tigress and that she would come forth at dusk. The tigress was his wife.

He watched and waited, and as the dusk fell she came out, grim and horrible with burning eyes. For a time she stood at the mouth of the cave looking forth. Then suddenly with a bound she leapt into the forest. The man waited still, waited till the full night was come, and descending from the tree set ready those things he had brought with him. Then he sat down by the cave and waited.

In the early dawn the tigress returned from her night
ravaging. Faint pearly light was dropping from above making all things clear. Far overhead upon the hill-tops was a red sunrise.

She came up to the cave, sated with her prey, her lips stained with blood—she stopped, she stared. For there before her was a spinning-wheel with cotton in it, there was a loom with a half-woven cloth upon it—her own. She stared and of sudden she remembered. She was a woman and no tigress. The woman's heart moved in her, the tawny hide dropped off, her form changed, and she fell upon the ground in tears, for she remembered all—herself, her husband, her baby who had been, whose half-wove garment hung upon the loom. Her husband came to her and put his arms about her, and as the sun dropped scarlet arrows through the forest aisles they turned and went away—together. The future was before them and the past forgotten as a dream before the day.

For the most part the stories had a moral. When a soul rose from being a beast's soul inhabiting a beast's body, to a man's soul in the body of a man, it was the result of righteousness upon the soul. When it fell it was the result of bad actions, of retrogression. He saw that this theory of transmigration of the soul was the exact counterpart of the evolution of the body. The latter has arisen, little by little, by acquiring new characteristics, a higher form, a more varied complexity. So it is with the soul. Each individual is not a body only but a soul within a body, acting through it,
expressed through it. Where an individual is, because his whole personality has risen, because the expression of a higher soul within a more body. Our bodies have developed from beasts and as they have acquired merit, so have risen. We acknowledge that in the West because science has shown it to us. But science has stopped half has ignored the other partner. Man is a life made manifest in body. The body has evolved the West, and the East answers that evolution of both body and soul. As our bodies have have our souls. As our souls have grown, have they evolved higher bodies to inhabit. They developed according to the 'merit' it acquired partnership. That is what transmigration means.

And more, men have not always developed. Nations have come and gone, been young and died and disappeared, while new ones took their place. There is a constant ebb and flow, but the greater. Life as a whole advances. The increasing purpose doubly manifested. So it was easy. It was evolution. But yet there was a still, one that lay underneath.

We are the products of an evolution of a soul. The body in some way we understand of what we speak. It is not an abiding and yet the chain is never broken, never has living forms are in unbroken sequence beginning. But they are subject to continue. Each child comes from two parents, inherits
can it be that the soul preserves for ever one unbro
en entity? Is it a little nut within a changing kernel?

That is what the West conceives it as. But the
East does not. It cannot do so. The East has some
conception of our life different to that we have. Life,
maint's soul is not a separated atom incarnated in a
body. How can a force, an energy, a life be separated?
Even the lower forces, can they be separated? Can
you take a piece of sunlight and place it in any lamp?
Life is a stream and not a substance, it is a spirit, not
a material thing.

Even material things that live are never permanent.
Our bodies are but streams of matter ever changing,
ever dying, ever renewed. But dead things are
constant, stones and metals. Can life be as a stone
is? What are our souls? Until we know how the
East understands that much, how shall we understand
that which they tell of it?

He asked the people to explain to him, but they
would not answer. Why?

What are the things that have a ready answer?
those things that we have learnt, that have been
taught to us.

Those that have no answer are the things we know.
We see, we hear; can any one define, explain what
sight and hearing are? Does any one except the deaf
and blind desire to do so? We hear and see, that is
enough.

We love, we hate. Did ever the boy who loved
sit down to analyse his feelings? Never. It is
when we doubt if we are really feeling it that we inquire. It is when love has passed we try to bring remembrance of it back by definition and by attribute. What is sunlight? Do you feel it less because you cannot define it? What is a sense of beauty? Who cares who has it clearly? We all have life; and what is life? When you have a conception of what life is that fits into your consciousness as true, that is in harmony with the facts of life, why should you bother? Why should you seek the imagery of words to express to yourself what you have but what you can never fully define? It is when the definition of what life really is, of what our souls are made of, has grown old and untrue, as all dogmas and definitions of the undefinable must do, that finding we are holding a falsehood we look round for truth.

The East has a true conception of what life is. It does not define it. There is no dogma of the soul. The truth is never found within an iron bond. Life is life.

'And yet,' he thought, 'I must have words. When you have a wrong expression the only thing that will correct it is an expression that is nearer truth. Life is not what we conceive it. Life is not an entity. It does not come merely into us at birth and disappear at death. We do not win our futures in the few years between one cradle and one grave. Life is eternal and is subject to the change of evolution always. Then what is life? Where are the words that will come near what I desire to say, that will enable this to be understood? I want a new symbol of what our souls are.'
CHAPTER VI

Where is he who knows? From the great deep to the great deep he goes.

They sat and watched the night veiling the world in sleep. The darkness stretched into eternity and the stars wheeled upwards in a grand procession. Orion blazed above them and the Pleiad cluster hung like a pearl upon the bosom of the night. There was a deep stillness, for the winds were hushed, a stillness not of death but of a great life that slept and dreamed.

Suddenly from the village down below there came a sound, a cry that pierced the stillness like a pain, and on the cry there came a music. It rose and fell upon the night; now keen with the shrilling of a flute, and brazen with the clang of cymbals, now sad and slow with the sound of strings. Then it failed into the throb of drums that beat—that beat—that beat a measured sadness of monotonous refrain; and the flutes cried again.

The peacefulness of the night was broken, the dark that had been so clear became opaque, the distances closed in. The finiteness of things became more manifest. For in the music was a harshness and a discord that drove the thoughts back into the heart.
They would not go abroad in such companionship. The sounds occupied the shrunken night alone.

A man was dead.

He knew that this was the music of the dead. Some one had died down there. His body lay, a cold and empty shell within the house, amid the mourners. The soul had died, had passed. He whom they had known was gone. But whither? What was it that was gone?

Had it passed through the darkness leaving earth to go to some place very far away, beyond the stars, unknown, to hear its sentence? Had it within a few short years by a little observance of certain maxims, a few good deeds, earned a happiness for ever? Or was it sent to limbo for eternity?

Hell must be very large by now; full of tortured souls without a hope. And Heaveh, was not that a word for some place whither no one desired to go?
The air seemed full of fears, of strange, unseen, unhappy things that passed.

The music ceased and the night grew wide again. The stars looked down with clear, bright eyes upon the world, an immense beauty and a peace filled the heavens, and a whisper came from out the space which said, 'No, no. It is never so. These are but dreams of evil made within the brain. 'Look upward into the spaces of the sky. No Hell is there.'

Life, what is life?

'Tell me,' he asked the monk, 'what is it you think of life?'

The monk sat silent and did not answer.
"What is man's soul, whence did it come, and whither does it go? A man is dead below there. Men pass upon the wings of every moment that fleets by us. Men are born and die. I am here, whence did I come and what am I? That man is dead. Where is his soul?"

The monk shook his head and answered: "What is life? How shall I tell you? Could I measure to you the sea in cupfuls? Yes, more easily than one may measure out infinity in finite words. For life is infinite, it holds the two for-évers."

"Tell at least one aspect of it. Give me a cupful from that sea."

And the monk answered: "So be it. A cupful I will give. Only remember it is but a little cup, words are such tiny vessels for the truth."

He held his hand aloft.

A light wind came from the sleeping earth and breathed across the garden. It murmured in the palm leaves overhead and shook the bushes. The long grasses near at hand bent down before it, shook their feathered heads and swayed like dancing girls.

"Tell me whence comes the wind and whither does it go? Life is a wind that blows upon the world. Whence does it come and whither does it pass? It blows and moves the grasses, and they live. Is then the life within them that they move?"

The wind increased, it brought a scent of meadows, far below, of frangipanni odours from the bushes. Some dead leaves fell and the grasses bowed more
deeply. 'It comes and goes,' he said; 'no one knows why, nor whence, nor whither.'

He bent and caught a long grass stem and broke it. The slender reed lay, lifeless on the ground. Its sisters rustled, swayed and bowed while it lay dead.

'Why does it lie still? Where is its life that made it move? Did a spirit live in it and move it; and has that spirit fled? or is the spirit dead?'

'Life is a breath that comes from the eternal here to us. It is not a thing, a substance that lies within us, but a tide that pouring on this world builds up our bodies and is itself our souls. It builds our bodies to manifest itself in. Consider. Suppose we sat not in gardens but on a barren rock, and we could only see, not feel. The wind might blow but we should know nothing. It could not stir the rock. The air might move but could not manifest its presence. Life must have proper form to manifest itself in. It has built up our bodies little by little through the ages that it may show itself, that life may live. It raises them ever to manifest itself more fully. Life is from without. It is not a prisoner held in bondage in an earthy cage, from which when the bar breaks it flees.'

'And the man's soul?'

'Life lives for ever.'

'The body goes back to earth. Can it not rise again?'

'My friend,' the monk answered, 'think. What are you? Are you the body or the life that built it up and made it live? The frame returns to earth, the wind moves other grasses. Life is not a thing bound
to one body, it is not a product of the body. Is the wind a product of the grass? This stem is dead and will return to earth, a man dies and his flesh and bones go back to dust. A body, is a finite thing, life is infinite. Would you have the life that moved the leper, for he was a leper whom they mourn below, compelled for all the ages to manifest itself only in that poor body, or in any body however good? Life is a progress and a change. The stream of spirit ever widens and requires greater power to work in, to live in. Each body passes, and from its dust are built our new bodies greater and stronger, better able to perform the behests of the greater spirit.'

'Is there then no immortality of body? Must we go always into forgetfulness? The spirit has an immortality, the body 'gone?' The monk leant closer and took the broken grass and held it up. The wind had ceased and it stood motionless. 'The wind is gone, the grass is dead. The wind has gone to move the leaves and grasses far away. This grass is a dead body. Has it no immortality?' The monk sat long in silence and the stars climbed upward. The night was deeper, it held a personality and a presence.

'It is so hard,' he said, 'to speak of, to put in words, that which one sees and knows to be beyond all words. I thought that all men felt the consciousness of what life is. And yet I remember two thousand five hundred years ago, that was the difficulty. And those who saw and taught were called Mystics, splitters of words, dealers in cloud and fog because they tried to say
what‘never can be fully said. Yet as you ask, I will try. Every living thing we see is twofold, it is spirit expressed in matter. Matter is built up by brute forces which act according to fixed laws. The spirit which takes this matter and makes it into living forces is also twofold, unconscious and conscious.

'Take myself or you. Our bodies are built and kept by forces that are unconscious; we breathe, our pulses move, our food is turned to blood by no conscious effort of our own. They will work when our conscious life is asleep or absent. By them is our body formed. It comes from our parents and inherits from them its qualities, its strength and weakness. The rewards that they have earned it reaps, the punishments they have incurred it suffers from.

'But conscious life is different. That comes not from inheritance, not from our parents. It manifests itself within the body, but is not of it. It affects it. The greater our consciousness, the greater the master, the more obedient is the servant. It is affected by the body, which is its instrument through which it manifests its life and consciousness. They are bound together; yet each is different, and each gives to other immortality. Each has its laws which it obeys or disobeys. Again there is this difference.

'The soul is immortal always, but the body, that stream of bodies which began so far back we cannot see it, and came through our parents to ourselves, may suddenly be stopped.'

He took the grass and held it up. The ears were
full of seeds. 'There is its immortality,' and he shook them to the ground. 'The grass that is well-grown and healthy, that is strong and can maintain itself, that is capable of change as the surroundings change, it lives.

'And so on with personalities that we call "I." We are a conscious spirit in a living but unconscious body. When the body deserves to live, when the future needs it, then it lives in children, but if not, then is the race cut off. The stream of bodies ends. The force goes to other streams, to other children. That is our immortality, and before consciousness came that was the only immortality, of personality, of type.

'But our conscious life is different, a man's body is continued in his children, but not his soul, his conscious life. That is the wind that passes.'

'The wind passes,' said the man, 'and has no personality. And when man dies is that so too with him, his consciousness, his soul? Does that too merge into a formless wind?'

The monk shook his head.

'That personality continues also. It goes on with all the merit and demerit it has acquired. It goes on for ever, until—until—'

'Until?'

'What is beyond the stars, beyond the utmost star? What is infinity?'

'No one can tell.'

'That is the answer. No one can tell. Why should we wish to know? Is it not enough to see a
little space before you, a day's march on in front? One idea is this, that as there was a time when unconscious life existed alone without consciousness, so in time we may grow to that perfection that Consciousness and Will and Righteousness may exist without the confining bounds of matter and unconscious life. But the truer thought is that the conscious life, the Soul, will, be blended with all the forces into one great whole, infinite, universal.'

There was a long silence, and the man sent his soul into the night to seek from its peace, its dignity, its space a little of its truth.

Then the monk rose and said:—

'The night is late. I go. My friend remember this. Knowledge and wisdom are not plucked down from heaven. They grow on earth. They are built up from lower things, from right and understanding.'

He passed away into the shadow of the monastery.

But the man sat there and thought. 'Truly,' he said, 'no one can define life, and any definition, any attributes must be but temporary and even in its time but partly true. It were better there were no need to try and make any definitions; yet there is need. Because if you do not consciously give a meaning to the word "life" you will do so unconsciously. And the unconsciously given meaning will arise from the letter and form of mere imagery, and so be quite untrue. No one in the West ever began by formulating to himself the soul as a little material nut, a piece of matter. Yet there is no doubt
that is how the West has come now to regard it. Some even say they have seen the soul escape—a filmy gas; others say they have weighed it, an ounce or so. The West now unconsciously uses the words “soul” and “life” with meanings which when consciously faced are absurd.

Therefore we must have a conception, some definition, some attributes, even if they are negative attributes like those of the geometric point. Remembering always that at best they can be but a glimpse at truth. Therefore what is life? Where is the image, where the words?

The long reaches of the river showed a faint reflection far below, and suddenly in the distance came a light. It was a long and ghastly greenish ray that pierced the darkness like a spear. And brandished by an unseen giant hand it touched now one bank, now the other. Wherever it was laid it called, like a magic wand, visions out of the night. Things before invisible suddenly became seen, trees and rocks and stretches of bare sand started into a sudden vividness, and disappeared again.

And through the silence came the faint throbbing of the steamer's heart as she beat her way up against the current.

Then she came into sight, a cluster of bright lights, a myriad-jewelled water creature breasting the stream, and ever before her she held her arc light feeling her way with it round curve and island. She passed beyond the bluff and out of sight.
Then he remembered how many years before the first steamer came with incandescent lights in place of the old lamps. She was a wonder on the river. The people crowded down at night to look at these bright globes that shone on nothing. They came on board and looked and touched but did not understand. What was the light within the little glasses? How was it lit and how fed? How was it killed?

When some told them that the light did not live within the globes but came every moment to them along a hidden wire, they laughed; surely he joked with them. The wires did not glow, in fact they saw no wires. How could light come unseen and shine? how come from without? That was not the way of lights. No! No! Some one put the light in and took it out again.

That was twenty years ago, and now it seems to any one the simplest thing. There need not even be a wire.

Life comes for ever from the Power House of God. Where is that House? No one can tell. What does it matter to the light? And when the lamp is broken and the light suddenly goes out, what is become of the energy that made it glow? Does it wander homeless in the void? Is it gone to judgment because the light was dim?

That is a parable of life.
The night grew later. Down below the music had long ceased, only the drums throbbed softly now and then. The cries were stilled, but there was the sobbing of a woman half unheard.

*Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe.* *Et tout renait.*
CHAPTER VII

The tree whose roots were in the earth, whose branches stretched to heaven.

'If you are interested in those superstitions, I have a story to tell you,' said Gallio. 'Do you believe in ghosts?'

They were in his camp pitched near the river where he had come to shoot.

'Do you believe in ghosts?' he asked again. 'The people do, and so if you care for their beliefs and think that they sometimes contain truth, you should accept their ghosts.'

The hearer laughed. 'Tell me your story first,' he answered. 'I have heard many tales of ghosts. I have looked often to see a ghost but never successfully. Tell me your story.'

'It began with a mystery and a probable crime,' said Gallio. 'Have you heard of the disappearance of a broker down the river?'

'I hear little,' was the answer, 'of the gossip of the countryside or of the crime. What was the disappearance?'

'He lived in a village on the other side the river, forty miles or more below here. He was a broker
who dealt in grain and seeds and was reputed rich. He used to advance money to farmers against their crops and be repaid in produce. It is a lucrative trade enough except when bad years come and the farmers cannot pay. Last year was such a season, and he had many debtors who could not pay him, as their crops had failed.

One afternoon about two months ago his clerk, whom he had sent to try and collect some debts, returned. The times were bad, he reported; the debtors could not repay either in cash or produce, and asked for more delay. This made the broker angry, and he declared that no delay would be given. They must pay at once, and as the clerk had not been successful, he would go himself. He had his pony saddled and went off at once alone. There was nothing unusual in this. He was a man of hasty decision and who acted on the spur of the moment.

That night he slept at a village some eight miles up the river, and next morning early he went into another village where two of his heaviest debtors lived. He had a stormy interview with them. They said they could not pay, and in the afternoon he rode on again declaring he would go to the police post, some twelve miles higher up, and lodge a complaint that they had cheated him.

The way for some distance lies across the open fields, where tracks cross and recross. There is a well there, near a little rest-house, and two women who were at the well saw him come over the fields.
He inquired the way of them, saying he had never been that road before. Then he rode on. That is the last that we could hear for certain of his movements. He disappeared. Next morning his pony was found wandering loose in the scrub jungle near the river and caught. That first raised inquiry. The matter was reported and the police went down.

'But little more could be elicited. Two herd boys said they saw a man on a black pony with his face muffled in a cloth, riding through the bushes near the river bank at dusk. There is no road there, and it was quite out of the broker's way if going to the village where the police station is. Still it might have been he, gone in some way astray.

'A search through all the country near had no result. Nothing was found, no body, no traces of any kind. The broker had disappeared utterly.

'There were of course several theories. He had fallen over the river bank and been drowned; but though the banks there are high and steep, there was at that time no water under them. The river was at its lowest and left a broad belt of sand on either side. If he had fallen it would have been on sand.

'That he had been murdered was another theory. His creditors, knowing where he was going, had slipped ahead of him, and waylaid him in the dark. There was a belt of jungle further on. But if so, where was the body? And, as it happened, there was a festival that night at an intermediate village, and the road, usually lonely, was traversed by numerous people.
None of these had seen the broker. No one had heard anything. Variations of these theories supposed him to have been run away with by his pony, which was a spirited little beast, thrown and killed; or carried off a prisoner by his enemies. The only objection to each and every theory was that it had not the least scrap of evidence to support it. The man had disappeared, that was all we knew. The whole countryside was turned upside down but nothing was discovered.'

'And the ghost?'

'We are coming to it. The broker had a daughter, a girl about sixteen. A few days after her father’s departure, in the afternoon, she was sitting in the house and thought she heard her father call her. She thought he had returned, and saying to her mother, who was in an inner room, "Here is father back," she ran out and down the steps. Her father was standing by the entrance gate, but she noticed at once that something was the matter. His head was dropped on one shoulder, there was blood upon his face, and in a moment he disappeared. The girl gave a cry and fainted, and the neighbours running in found her senseless on the ground.

'That was the first appearance of the ghost. The second happened a week or so later. Two fellow-villagers of his were returning from a journey to the north, riding in a bullock cart, and travelling at night, as is the custom in the hot weather. On their way they passed the place where the broker was last seen.
The remembrance of him came to them and they wondered what had happened. For sure, they thought, he must be dead, and his ghost lost in these distant fields must be weary and sad so far from home. They were full of compassion for the ghost so lonely, far away, and standing up in the cart one called—"Brother villager, if your ghost is here, come home with us." His voice echoed over the empty fields and had no answer. But, so they tell the story, a sudden fear came over them, a silence and the sensation that they were not alone. Some one had joined them. And so driving through the night they came to their village with the ghost in company. That very morning early, fishermen returning from their night fishing, found a corpse on a sandbank just opposite the village. They towed it in, and though much disfigured, it was identified by the wife and buried. So ghost and body came home the same day to their old village. What think you of that for a ghost story?'

'It is a strange tale and yet——'

'Do you believe in ghosts? I have told you my story, answer now my question? Do you think ghosts exist?'

The man pondered. 'Yes,' he said, 'and No. If you mean that man's soul does not become extinct at his death, then Yes. If that it exists as a filmy shadow, half-lunatic, helpless and ghastly; that it lingers in graveyards and old places to frighten people, unable to speak or communicate with us except by signs or knocks, then No. If you mean, do I believe the broker's
daughter and the cartmen saw his disembodied spirit, I answer that I do not believe anything of the sort.'

Gallio laughed. 'Then I will end my story. The broker had no ghost, his spirit was never disembodied, he never died. He ran away to cheat his creditors, and hid for three months up the river. He has now returned.'

'And the body?'

'Was that of a boatman drowned a hundred miles above, a week before.'

'And the ghost? Was it an invention?'

'For that, No. I am sure the girl was honest and thought she saw something. So too were the cartmen. I have ascertained that they did not know that the broker was not dead. And even if, in that case, there could be any doubt, I know many others. Only two days ago when riding here my orderly thought he saw a ghost. We were riding through the low hills and lost our way. The country was barren, and wastes of rock and sand, with here and there a thorn bush. There were faint tracks which led here and there and ended. We were far from any village or any cultivation, and I stopped to look about and consult my orderly as to the way. While we were talking he suddenly said, "There is a woman over there, I will ask her." He galloped off and I followed. I saw no woman, and presently the orderly stopped too, bewildered, looking round. "I saw a woman pass," he said; "she came from behind that rock, and went behind this bush; she is not there."
There was no woman, could never have been any, we must have found her had there been. There was no place to hide in. Except for that one rock and a dozen widely divided bushes there was nothing within half a mile that would have hidden a dog. We searched the place thoroughly: I, certain that there must be a woman somewhere; the orderly pale as a ghost himself, sure he had seen one. At last we gave it up and rode on. But for that matter you may find as many stories of ghosts, as many people who are sure they have seen them, as you desire. And whatever they are, they are not conscious frauds.'

'I will tell you,' he answered, 'what Buddhism says of these things. Beliefs like this are never based entirely on conscious frauds. But this idea of ghosts, of visions, of revelations, stands on a different footing from legends and tales. For they are declared to be discovered facts. If they were but legends, it would be easy to say that they were merely one way of expressing our instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul and the survival of personality. Indeed, it is no doubt only because the belief in ghosts is in accordance with this firm and strong conviction, that the majority of people will accept ghosts at all. That the soul persists they are quite sure, and when it is declared to them that this soul has been seen, they are not prepared to deny that it might be seen. They are in fact glad, because they welcome any evidence at all that tends to confirm their hope and belief of a survival after death. This sufficiently explains the wide acceptance of the
idea by those who have never seen and never wished to see anything supernatural. The childishness of the ghosts when they appear, the absurdity of the circumstances under which they are seen weighs as nothing compared to this fact. It is expressive of a vital truth, and as such is cherished. There is no difficulty in perceiving this, in understanding why all the absurdities have not killed the idea. To each believer the absurdities are extrinsic, the truth intrinsic.

The question of those who declare they see ghosts, hear prophecies, and receive revelations is another matter. No one can prove or can disprove them. A man declares he saw a spirit; he is sincere, but he cannot prove to you he saw anything but a phantom of his brain. You cannot prove to him he did not see a "something" which might be the spirit of some one dead.

A man comes to you with a revelation or a vision; it is the same. For he is sure he heard and saw, but the certainty remains with him alone. He cannot pass it on to you. Such things remain, as far as direct proof or disproof can go, for ever in the misty region of uncertainty.

There are only two things that can ever entirely destroy the belief: one is a disbelief in any immortality at all, a decadence, a materialism which denies aught but the body. The second is a clearer, wider, saner concept of our immortality. Whoever holds this disbelief or this conception laughs at ghosts, and in the stories sees the childishness. Both these are rare. Yet those who have understood the Buddhist view of life
and death and immortality believe in none of these things. They reject ghosts because in their conception the after life is so much saner, more beautiful, more wide than any theory of ghosts can give. They reject dreams and visions and revelations because they are sure that all we need to know, all we can conceivably understand about our souls, about our righteousness, about the everlasting verities, is near enough and clear enough to be seen without any supernatural aid. True religion is the real science, and like all knowledge that is sure is built up from below. There are those who say that all religions are built on ghosts and dreams and visions, but that is not so. Only Semitic faiths are so built even in theory—every Eastern faith is a science; expressed, no doubt, in hyperbole, extravagance, with many accretions of the marvellous added to the religion, nevertheless a science. Remember what the Buddha said, that whoever should claim to have seen visions or revelations, to have heard voices or dreamed dreams, should be expelled from out his monasteries.

'And who can doubt which is the way to build a faith that is true, that will last, that will expand to suit man's rising needs? How far did science go when it held to the Mosaic account of the Creation? Yet that account may be in essence true.

'Suppose you think that truth can only come by revelation, by dream and vision, prophecy and other supernatural means, how can you stand on firm ground? Most dreams, most visions, most prophecies are loathsome things. What do the generality of ghosts do?
They behave like lunatics aimlessly. They haunt graveyards and ruins, they give us a high ideal surely of what we will be after death. Most dreams are horrors, formless nightmares from which we wake with gladness to reality and light. Most prophecies are but denunciations of your enemy. You cannot injure him, for he is too strong for you, so you attempt to frighten him with tales of revenge to come. It is the refuge of those who have neither strength nor reason. These are the antipodes of truth.

'Ghosts and all that pertain to them are the very cult of fear— they are a horror; truth is the cult of hope.

'Who in all stories is the King of ghosts; whom do you invoke to bring them? It is the Devil, the Spirit of wickedness and evil, of death and of damnation. Have you seen any one gain happiness thereby? If they be untrue, only hallucination, then are they disease. If there be really ghosts, then are they to be avoided more than any death. For they are the denial of all that men hope and live for, they are a warning and a terror, a devil's brood.

'But say that there are true visions, true spirits who arise, that there are those who really hear celestial voices, are you any better off? How do you know this truth? How can you tell the true from the false; what test will separate the true revelation from the hallucination? Most of them must be hallucination, they are too stupid to be anything but that. All that man can do under these circumstances is to put his
trust in some self-appointed authority, in some man or body of men. He must surrender his will and sense to them. And they, how can they determine? They cannot in fact have any criterion but their own theories of right and wrong. They must trust themselves and declare themselves the mouthpiece of God, the sitters of the true and false. There must be a Church, and all men must be in spiritual bondage to that Church or be outcasts. It claims authority, and yet it can never prove it has any right to any authority at all, has in it any truth. This Church must ally itself with worldly power, with Kings and Governments, to enforce an authority that would otherwise be rejected, that always is rejected when the secular authority ceases.

'But the difficulty does not end there. A revelation must be given in words, and what are words but symbols? They can at best when new express but a little facet of the truth; the other facets are ignored. They are given for a time and place and people, but these all change. The newer times and peoples need another aspect of the truth. How can they get it? Is truth to be petrified in little 'morsels'? Words are but signs and their sense varies with each person always, even at the time, while every year makes greater divergence. How can you be sure that you understand what the voice tried to say? The interpreter may be in fault. Who is to declare the real meaning? Are you to have new revelations or to be content with dead truths? Truth is a living thing
and grows. If it be founded on revelation, how can it grow except by new revelation? And if there be no new revelation, you are confined within the narrow limits of an ancient saying.

"Religion must stagnate and die, stifled by word and letter, or it must live by often repeated revelations, all incapable of proof. No living knowledge could progress like that. Science is not like that, it could not live in such a condition. It was attacked by dogma, stifled, declared contrary to truth, science that is the only true way of finding truth. And true religion is the science of the soul. It is built up from little things, it is susceptible of proof or disproof. It grows, and it is ready always to discard the false and narrow, to welcome the wider view. Science is so, despite the scientific men perhaps, who try to make themselves high priests; but they pass, and truth progresses because it is true.

"That is the principle that Buddhism has always worked upon. It never says, "You must believe because I say so." It says, "This is truth as far as we can see, and those who doubt let them test and try if it is truth or not."

"Build upward from below.

"The great teachers of Buddhism in the past did so. They said, "We see things, and see thou too." They said, "We think that we see parts of truth, but truth is infinite, and as the world grows it will see more; we lay the foundations only. All truth is welcome to us, truth that is proved and sure. Truth is the tree of
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Life. Its roots are in the earth, and in the hearts of men, its branches rise towards heaven; and that they may grow ever higher, greener, more full of fruit, remember to keep the roots always watered with reality."
CHAPTER VIII

RAYS OF THE INFINITE LIGHT

The year grew older and the power of the sun increased. That golden King looked down upon an uncontested realm and filled it with his glory. In the air was a flood of light and heat that fell upon the earth; and the children of the sun, the brown-eyed, brown-skinned people loved it. They went out in it at all hours, they rejoiced and laughed in it, they let it bathe them, filling them with its happiness and strength. But the son of the pale North sat through all the midday hours sheltered within his room. He feared the sun's touch, yet he loved to see its light. Without his window stood a tree with feathery leaves and scarlet blossoms, and the light came filtering through it in tiny golden shafts of light. In the afternoon the light came right into his chamber and made a sunny diaper of light and shade upon the matted floor.

He lay and watched it spread further and further, and he wondered to see the beauty it brought into the bareness of the chamber.

The sun is the source of light and heat, and without it we should have no life. It draws the waters of the
seas into the heavens and gives them to the land. All
down power comes, or has come, from it. The wood we burn
has gained its heat from heaven and keeps it for a
while. The protoplasm in the plant vibrates to the
same energy. Life is not in it but in the sun that
gives it. Sun worshippers have recognised this, and
they have used him as the symbol of the science of all
the life that is. It comes always from without as does
the sunlight.

The sunlight comes upon us in a flood, but that
great tide is made of tiny beams, and in each beam
lies all the properties of the whole; visible and invisible
rays they all are there. Each little beam that filters
through the leaves is a completeness in itself, an entity,
a personality. Yet when incarnated in a leaf its ex-
pression differs from all the rest.

We are such beams from the eternal sun. We
come straight from the source of life and consciousness,
a beam bound up with others but distinct, manifest in
flesh.

The sunshine fell upon the lamp hung low beside
the window. The cut glass crystals underneath it
broke the golden stream into many colours. They
passed a shining band across the shadow and fell upon
the wall. He traced it with his finger, and he said:
' This is the symbol of life as the East has always seen
it; not as a substance, shadowy, filmy, still a substance
placed within our bodies, but as a beam and a force,
made up of many forces.

'This is the symbol that I sought. The heavens
have given me what I could not find. This light that comes down from the sun is the allegory of the life that comes from God. It comes upon us from above, and in it are many forms, as in the light are many rays.

He laid his finger on the red ray. 'Here,' he said, 'is the first we see, but there are rays beyond, dark rays. These are, as it were, the blind forces that built up the earth, that made the crystals in the rocks, that hold the water-drops together, that make the winds move to and fro. There is no light in them, no intelligence, only force and power. So God built the world with the dark rays before the higher life could come.

'And when the world was built, when the seas were made, the mountains lifted up, the earth divided from the water, He added just another tiny ray, not dark this time, but with the faintest light of life. And it made protoplasm from the materials gathered for it. So rose the humbler forms of vegetable life. Little by little the ray grew brighter and the life increased. This ray it is that is the life. That is what makes the sap to rise and fall, the leaf to spread, the bud to open. Yet not this ray alone, but this added to all that went before. For alone it could do nothing. The dark rays made and keep the world, and to them light and life is added. And so life broadens. So the invisible merges into the visible, the brute forces into the unconscious life. As the forms in which life is manifested are made more and more perfect, so the life to be shown therein is increased.
Then came the further rays that lie beyond the visible. There came upon the world the first faint ray of consciousness, of conscious life, of will, of power to move and act, to do right and wrong. These put into the protoplasm the life that grew up into animals. The rays increased, and the increasing unconscious and conscious life built up little and by little the animal form to manifest itself in. Out of animals came man, and man rises ever. His consciousness, his conscience which is his knowledge of right and wrong, his will to do that which he sees. That is the evolution of the entity of man, which is the compound of all the forces from the beginning—the brute forces, the unconscious life, the conscious life. He is a compound of them all, and they are all in the beam that is his life. They are all one, and yet they fall into three parts, with three moralities, three laws, three forms of righteousness.

First, the blind forces, gravity and heat, expansion and contraction, electricity and many another. They have their laws, which laws are their morality, their righteousness. They cannot disobey them. They never act but in one way, the way directed. Gravity cannot draw faster or slower, light cannot pass whither it would, the crystal forms ever in one fixed way. They have no life and they endure, but do not grow or change.

Then came the unconscious life of plants who have a right and wrong, for they may live and spread or else disappear. They may grow and become a fuller manifestation or they may cease to be. As they adapt
themselves to the world about them, as they fortify themselves by strength and beauty and usefulness, so they have immortality. Yet it would seem they have no conscious life, only unconscious.

With the conscious life there came a conscience, a steady growing knowledge of right and wrong, a steady growing will to do that which is right, a steady growing control over the lower forces. That is our soul. From the first beginnings in the earliest years our souls have grown as our bodies have developed in one stream, and the life in them; and the soul that is added to the life has increased.

The knowledge of right and wrong which we recognise in animals has become ever more clear, the will to do that which we see proportionate to our knowledge grows with it, our power to enforce our will grows also. The lesser rays have found little by little their master. The soul rules. As yet his control is slight because his knowledge still is slight. Knowledge comes first, control later. So is man now a beam of life manifested in a body it has built.

And that is how the East sees the world.

How easy now is the belief in transmigration. The increasing life and soul has built itself up by slow degrees a form to show itself in. The imperfect beam showed in the animal, the higher in the man, still the same beam only with additions. It is an evolution of the soul manifested in an evolution of the body. And evolution acts both ways.

As the life of man has arisen from that of animals
by the addition of a moral consciousness, so if in successive lives that consciousness, that soul be not cultivated and followed, we may fall back again. The higher ray may fade and the beam become again the same as that the beasts have. So the life of man has been in animals and may be so again.

'That is the underlying faith of all the East, that is their view of life. Man's soul, his life is not a kernel made fresh at birth and which in death is liberated and banished from the world. It has existed always and has won its way upwards. It is not an inherent quality of certain forms of matter as science would seem to tell us, it is a force that comes from God and manifests itself in matter.

'We are the products of an evolution. Yes. Not our bodies only but our souls. As our bodies grew fitter to incarnate the greater life, so the life was added from above. And our powers have grown, governed not by blind forces but by life direct from an Intelligence who gave them their work to do, told them how to progress. And such intelligence as we may have is not the product of unintelligence acting in unintelligent matter, but a ray from the Divine.

'That is what the East believes and always has believed. It expressed it in its own dim way, but it understood always what it meant. The evolution of the scientific man which staggered the Churches of the West means only to the East that by great work and great research, through infinite weariness and trouble, the wise men of the West have learnt a little of what
the East has always known. It is what the East believes, not only the Buddhistic East but all religions. It is the conception on which all are founded. It comes out clearly in them all whenever you go below the image to that which is within.

'Surely,' the man said to himself, 'I have the key. I see, as they do. I see at last the world as the East has always done as the incarnation of God, not of all God but of some rays from His infinite glory.'

He turned and through his window gazed upon the world without. He saw the fields clothed with green garments; he saw the palms in stately columns stand. He saw the flowing river, and the hills a dream in the far distance; he saw the living light that flooded all this world.

And looking thus it took a new meaning to him. It had been always beautiful, he had always felt his heart come to his lips in looking on it. Now it was different; not less beautiful but more, not less happy but happier. For it had a soul. He felt in it the life of all the world, of all that has been, all that is and will be. It was the expression of the Will of God.

For a long while he stayed so. Then he turned and threw the spectrum on the mat again.

'Still,' he said, 'I have my symbol and it has meaning yet. I will follow it to the end.

'So far have we come, what of the rest? What of the future? This beam is finite. We pass into the last bright colour, and there are invisible rays and then
an end. But the beam of life is infinite. Yet, as we progress, as we add ray to ray, so we come nearer to the whole. As Knowledge increases so does Will to will it, so does Power to do it. Until in the infinite future Knowledge and Will and Power are one.

'And again, we must not forget that we rise, not by rejecting the lower forces but by keeping them and adding to them. The Higher cannot exist alone. For the great white light consists of all the rays. Not of the brightest only, but of all, visible and invisible.

'The highest life is not a part but a whole, it does not ignore the world but includes it. The Truth is made up of all the truths.

'How came the East to this conception? Did men work it out long ago, arguing back from effects to causes? They might do so. In no way can many phenomena of the life be explained except by some such theory of what life is. Perhaps the great thinkers, the simple-minded of the simple East worked back in some such manner. This must be partly true, because only the clever-minded see it quite so. Or was there in all of them instinctively a recognition that life is from without? This also must be true, because not only to the thinker but to the peasant the faiths built on this conception appear true. It may be that there is in all the same instinctive understanding that comes with the life itself, but only the thinkers fully recognise it.

'Both are true. Instinct has been tested against
fact, to see if one contradicts the other. If the only way to explain facts is by the key of their instinct, then is the instinct true. But if the instinct be true, it must explain the facts of life. Does it do so? They say it does. Well, I will try as best I can. I will take it into the life about me and see if it gives an explanation. In all essentials life here is the same as elsewhere in the world, East or West. Men are born and grow up, work and play, suffer and are happy, and at last die, just as do all men. All life is one, and whatever helps to explain life here, will help to explain it everywhere.

But I must remember this. It is but a symbol this of the light. It is a simile and must not be pushed too far. It may have truth, but at best can have but a side of truth. If it contains a little, that will be all it can.

Western science to explain phenomena of forces uses a symbol it has invented, that of the ether. It does not know that there is ether, it does not understand how there could possibly be an ether, or how it could have properties. And yet it uses it as a symbol till it can see more clearly. Such is the symbol of the ray.'
CHAPTER IX

A WINDOW ON ETERNITY

It was the evening and he sat beside the river. Down the long reach the sunset made a glory. Gold faded into red, red into pink that throbbed with the last life of the dying day. Light clouds swam into sudden gorgeousness and glowed like fairy islands on an emerald sea. The flush spread across the sky till even the eastern mountains veiled themselves in colour.

And ever into the sunset’s heart the river flowed. The cattle came down to the drinking-places and stood knee-deep gazing far away. The dust they had raised hung like a crimson pall upon the bank; for the winds were dead, stilled in day’s agony.

Some children played and bathed and laughed. Their brown, wet bodies caught the glow and turned from bronze to gold. Their laughter thrilled in the still air.

Girls came and drew their household water. Like the cattle they waded into the stream, which made curved ripples round them, their shadows stretched far up.

They passed away; the sunset faded, the light was
A boy came out of the village gate and passed along the bank. He moved slowly, loiteringly, looking out into the night. Sometimes he broke into a snatch of song suddenly stillled again. He sat down on a rock beside the river, but his back was turned to it. He looked back at the path on which he had come with bright, expectant eyes. Presently the watcher became aware that some one else was coming down the path. He heard a leaf rustle, a branch was put aside. The boy heard it too, and his attitude became tenser. He stretched forth his arms with a little unconscious gesture and withdrew them. The newcomer came along uncertainly. Somewhere the footsteps ceased, and in the strained stillness a soft breathing could be heard; then she moved on. And the boy rising listened, called a name and stepped forward.

A girl came out of the oleander bushes and they met.

He put his arm about her and drew her forward. For a moment they stood side by side and looked to where far off the last flames of the sunset burned; and then he took her hand. They moved along the river. They passed as in a dream, faces downturned; their fingers lightly held.

Yet they were not alone. With them there passed the two eternities, all the years that have ever been and all the years to come.

' I made her for thee,' said the Past, whispering into
his ear. 'I made her for thee, shaping her through all
my years that thou mightest love her. Have I done
well? Is her cheek soft? Her eyes, are not they
bright?'

The boy laughed and looked.

'Go to him,' said the Future in her ear. 'Go to
thy husband. All my years that are to come are
empty of delight. It is for thee and thine to help to
fill them. They need his strength, thy beauty.'

She listened and she drew nearer to his side.

The boy stopped and turned his face to hers, and
in his eyes were thoughts he could not utter, those
thoughts that have no words.

He leant against her and heart beat to heart.

The night bent down and listened, the moving
branches stayed, a wandering wind caught on a palm
and held its wings in stillness. The river spirit pressed
his finger to his lips. They listened to the song of all
the world. Love touched the heartstrings, and they
trembled. From their trembling came the music to
which all life is lived, the song of immortality.

He drew her and they passed slowly along the
river brink and out of sight.

Love? What is love? Let us consider it.

What was the boy before it came to him? He
lived a narrow life within a very narrow world. He
had his duties to himself, to find food and clothing and
material things to keep himself alive and happy. He
worked that he might gain, he sowed that he himself
might reap. The rays of life that were in him brought him no other righteousness but this: 'Care for thyself; make thyself happy, strong, and free. The world is thine as far as thou canst make it so, to take, to use, to throw away. Remember thy future rests upon thyself alone. If thou art weak thou failest, if thou art brave and clever, success will come to thee. But remember there is a limit. To be too brave and die, what use were there in that? Death is the end. Keep it far from thee. It is a fear, a barrier beyond which thou canst not see. Make the best of life, for it is very short and no one knows what is beyond. Thou art thyself a God unto thyself, to worship and to serve. There is one unfailing test to apply to all things. Will it advantage thee? then it is good; if not, then it is evil.'

Such was he, was she, an hour ago before the village gate had closed behind them. True, they had heard of other duties then, heard but had not understood. The words had passed them, idle words that woke no response. Duty to wife and child, to village, to country, what were such things? They had not felt them. They were as strange as stories of light and colour to those who are born blind; and for the future, surely next week was far enough to look.

And now what has come to them? To their stream of life has been added the rose-red ray of love, and it has changed the whole world for them. Their lives are broader, deeper, stronger, their pulses move in other fashion. They have 'a mystery in their heads, and in their hearts a flame.' The old life is not altered, it is
still there, the old righteousness still persists, is true. But there is an added life, and with it a righteousness that sometimes confirms, sometimes denies the one which went before. Each has still the duty to himself to keep alive, to be strong and happy, and well-doing, a duty felt all the more keenly because any failure would fall on two. The result of his own errors, his idleness, or foolishness he can bear easily; that now another should also suffer makes them more bitter, more to be avoided. For the sake of the wider self into which he is now drawn he must be now more careful of the narrower self. He must work harder, suffer more, obtain more, exercise an even narrower selfishness than he did before. The present intensifies the past—and then denies it. He must remember self and also must forget. His pleasure was sweet to him, he may be called upon to give it up. He must affront suffering that before he would avoid. He may not run, because others cannot run with him. It may be that he must die that his family, his wife and child may live. To justify this righteousness which he must obey is given to him an immortality. If he should ask, 'Why should I sow? I cannot reap'; 'to him is answered, 'Yourself persisting in your sons will reap.' If he should ask, 'Why should I die? Why should I give myself to forgetfulness and death?' is answered, 'That your greater self may live.' Love has come down and drawn two units into one, and made that unit but a link in the long chain that reaches from the beginning to the end.
The life they had before stopped at their individuality. The greater life they have now is that of all the ages. 'Thy children shall endure, and as thou now and they after thee observe the righteousness that is given to thee and them, so shall they prosper. The children reap that which the parents sow.'

The life that was before, this life which is added to it comes from without. They are the unconscious life. We live because life is put into us, not because we wish to, or because we will to do so; our emotions that are our life come to us unconsciously, unbidden, and with them the righteousness proper to them. With life comes the desire to live, to protect the life that is in it, to cultivate it, to give it all it needs; when love is added it brings with it the instinctive desire to protect the other members of the family, the knowledge that individual self must be subordinate to them. The wolf, the deer, the human parent suffer and die willingly, gladly for their young, that these latter may endure. They do not think it out, the righteousness comes unbidden. It is the law to which love is subordinate, within whose limits it moves.

The immortality that love gives is the continuance of the unconscious life, on which alone conscious life can be built. Our children inherit from us their bodies with all that they mean of good or evil. Their weakness or their strength, their beauty or their ugliness, their quick or languid passions are an inheritance. As we have done well to our bodies so will our children benefit, as we have done evil so will they suffer. As
we have made our names of good or evil savour to the world so will our children's be. Wealth or poverty, honour or contumely, health or sickness, all the products and the results of our bodily life we have inherited; and modified by our actions we again transmit. But the Soul, the Will, the Conscience, which is the accumulated knowledge of good and evil, that is our Personality, that is ours always. The soul that is in our children is not our soul—as their body is—their life is—has not come from us. It is their own enduring possession. The expression of their Souls is limited by the capacity of the bodies we hand down: they may be good lamps that give clear light, they may be dull, imperfect ones. But the Soul that is in them is not ours. The Personality of the Soul is constant from the first faint ray of it. It grows or fades. It inherits from incarnation to incarnation the result of its previous existence: the Will, the Consciousness, the Conscience, increase or fade again.

It is dependent on life for its manifestations; when later the rays of conscious life and will are added, when the Soul begins to grow, the conscious life attempts to understand the unconscious. It observes and notes the laws to which it is subordinate. It attempts to understand those laws, to co-ordinate them with other laws that knowledge may decide what restraint or help to give the unconscious desire. The Soul is Knowledge and Will. But power is of the unconscious life. The Soul could never exist alone; it has no power, it could do nothing; it is as a helmsman added to a full-
powered ship to direct its course. The force which drives the ship is in the unconscious steam or winds. As life grows and becomes more complex, containing more forces, they act in different ways. The helmsman has to decide which in each case is the course to follow. But alone he could do nothing.

The perfect Beam of Light contains absolute Knowledge, absolute Will, absolute Power to do what will dictates. But the Power belongs to the unconscious forces.

This life which lives through love, though unconscious, is divine. It has formed the basis on which religions have all been built. This Divinity of love is the first God, its laws are the first morality, children are the first Immortality.

To the Greeks and Romans, who were the earliest gods, Zeus, Saturn, Aphrodite, Jupiter, Venus, Mars? Not so. The gods of hearth and home, of family, the Lares and Penates. They were the foundation, their recognition and their service were the base of all the Grecian glory, all the Roman grandeur. What does it matter what you think about the heaven or earth compared with what you know of yourself and your life and that which proceeds from you?

Hinduism, Judaism, Shintoism are great faiths built on the same foundation. What immortality knew Abraham or Isaac, save of children? What morality save that which love brings? The Hindu who dies without a son goes to limbo, to that hell which is oblivion and forgetfulness. And Shintoism,
greatest of all the family cults, whose expression is Bushido, whose justification lies upon Manchurian battlefields. But expressed or unexpressed, it is the beginning on which all faith is built. The life comes first, the soul later; so far as we may see, the soul's rays come always after those of life, are superposed upon them. Therefore must the religion of life come, before that of soul. It is its base, its safety and its sanity. One love springs from another.

This is the Hinduism that Buddhism was built upon twenty-five centuries ago. It existed then a pure and simple faith, a recognition of the divinity of life and love, of the morality that is their law, of the desirableness of children.

Now think of it another way. How are our bodies built but by attraction of particle to particle making one whole? The little corpuscles of the blood have life of their own, they live, they move, they act, but they are one with the greater life of the whole. So is it in continuing sequence, in an increasing purpose. There comes from heaven a greater and a greater force that draws particles into greater wholes. The individual man and woman have a narrow present and a swift-coming end. But love comes like an electric force making them magnets each to each, drawing them into one whole, giving them all the future. Units are sand, love makes of them a never-ending strand. So also with the later loves. A later force draws families into communities, communities into nations, and nations into humanity. Peoples and
nations are not built from individuals but from families. Can you make ropes of sand? Well, some have tried, but where have they succeeded?

It is an old saying through all the world that Love is what makes the world, what gives it Immortality, that God is love. Now with this symbol of the beam we can see how in reality this must be so. Life and soul are increasing rays that attract and bind the lower entities into ever greater forms. If they should cease, then should we fall apart and become as the formless ooze again. We grow by being increasing aggregates. We rise as pyramids rise from below; and the higher the pinnacle the firmer and deeper must be the base.

Whatever more the Soul may have to give us, it cannot deny the life, the love that builds the body. Those who would do so are like the man who climbed a tree and then in order to climb higher, vexed at the branch that seemed to stop his upward flight, cut it away to render himself free to soar into the heavens. He fell, and learned too late that the tree held him up, not down.

What a wonderful thing is love. It is the base not only of all religions, but of all happiness, all beauty.

Take love from out the world and search to find what has become of Literature and Art and Music? They may contain other things as well, but at the base is love. All higher emotions of our life rise from it, the love that gathers man and woman into one organism,
that weaves the threads of families into the ropes of nations. In it are all the glories and truth of sacrifice and duty, of honour and of courage. Even the soul finds alone in love an image to express its meaning.

We live and love because our parents did so. The world exists because it loved. And love it is that holds the secret of immortality. It is love’s hand that opened first a window on eternity.

The night was fully come. The heavens were dark yet full of stars, and from them fell a lustre that filled all space. Along the banks were lit fires that glowed and sent red trails across the water. The earth was not dead but sleeping, and breathed lightly in her sleep.

There was a movement down below. The lovers came slowly passing home. They moved in unison, their hands hung idly but their shoulders touched. Love held them in a dream. They were in a new world full of new thoughts, new hopes, new strength, new weakness. They knew not why. Suddenly it had come, unheralded, unearned, a free gift of heaven.

They love, and because they love the centuries yet unborn shall know them. They will inherit.

They disappeared, and a minute later the gateway clanged.

Adown the river came a boat soft sliding on the flood. A light burned in her bows and burned again within the ebon water; and a voice gave forth a love-song to the night.

The music rose and fell, passionate, sweet and true.
It thrilled from the heart. The unseen singer sang the song of all the worlds, the Song of Songs. It filled the night with music.

The stream flowed on and bore the boat and singer out of sight.

Again a silence.

And far away a monastery gong rang silver sweet across the night.
CHAPTER X

ONE TIME, ONE TRUTH

It was the middle of the hot weather. The crops were reaped, the fields lay bare and brown and desolate. A hot wind blew that burnt the life from blade and leaf, that stripped the trees and drove the dead, brown leaves in whirlwinds to and fro. The streams were all dried up, and even the great river shrank between broad banks of sand. A grey haze filled the air and hid the distance. Day after day, the sun rose up a rayless crimson ball, climbed higher and became a blazing, pitiless tyrant in the cloudless heavens, and sunk again into the haze. All nature gasped and fainted and had rest. Then was the time of leisure and of festival. There was no field work, waiting till the showers came. So the people gathered to the great pagodas and made fairs and feasts. They slept by day, but were awake through the long hot nights.

Then was the Burmese New Year. It and the Christians' Easter come at nearly the same time, and in the Burmese tradition of the festival there is a strange likeness to that of the Western story. For there the Great Spirit leaves his Heaven and comes

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down to the earth for three days and three nights, and then ascends again. It were an interesting matter to compare the two stories. But this is a book of Buddhism, and the Burmese New Year is local and not concerned with Buddhist teaching. It is no doubt connected with the change of the seasons, the spring of the new agricultural year. For then may the earliest showers be looked for. And it was a custom in the Burmese times for girls to come and throw water on the bachelors, and make them pay a fine—for remaining bachelors, no doubt. It was a girls' festival as in Europe when the maids kept May Day. Now it has died away, the innocent fun and merriment. They say that we have killed it by our rule.

But the pagoda festivals remain more popular than ever, and there are many marriages, for there is leisure now, and the reaped crops have brought in money, and in the future comes the Buddhist Lent when no one may wed.

The little village down below the monastery was gay and happy; for messengers had gone abroad to all the neighbourhood and told how the headman's daughter was to be married, and had brought the tiny parcels of green tea wrapped in a leaf which are the invitations. There was rumour of great preparations, of actors brought from Mandalay, of well-known singers, of jugglers famed through all the country-side. Festival sheds of mats and palm leaves had been built, and rice was boiling in great pots, and fruit stood in fragrant pyramids. In the cool early morning all the lanes
were full of folk who came to laugh and to make merry at the wedding, and the village folk went out to meet the visitors and welcome them. They told them tales, how the bridegroom had been caught the night before and held to ransom. It is an old custom for the village boys to band themselves together in a company. They have a captain and they have rules. They must be faithful to their company and help their companions in all ways. But when one of them marries he ceases to belong to the company; for he is about to enter into another and a wider life. He is to marry, to lose his individuality in the organism of the family. He is to enter into the village life, to be a 'household.' His time of freedom and of carelessness is past, of responsibility and work is come. He is absorbed into a greater whole. He is a deserter and a traitor to his fellows.

Therefore they lay in wait for him and caught him as he went home at night, and taking him without the village gate, they tried him and found him guilty. With mock ceremony was he condemned to be expelled from out their ranks and pay a fine wherewith his comrades might drown their sorrow at his desertion. Then with laugh and song, to the light of torches, they took him home in long procession. It is a jest maybe, and yet it has its meaning. For marriage is a real change. And it is not without good that this change should be impressed on him who is about to make it; that he should know and realise that he has entered into a new phase of life.

With the girl there is no such ceremony. She
belongs always to her family, and the change for her
though not less real, is not so much from individualism
to community as from one family to another. All day
the festival went on, and in the late afternoon the young
folk were married.

There was a signal and the music ceased, and from
out of an inner room the boy came forth and sat upon
a mat prepared for him. The girl was brought and
placed beside him, and together, shy, and yet glad, they
faced the company. And now, how were they to be
married? Who was to tie the knot that fastened the
strands of their lives into one cord? What was to
mark the change? In law nothing more is necessary
than that they should eat together before witnesses and
declare themselves as man and wife. A word, a gesture
would suffice in law. And yet, can it be good to pass
thus from one state to another without solemnity and
thought? Can it be that marriage, which is the
foundation stone on which is built all life, should be as
unregarded as the buying of a farm? Religion, all is
built on it, and has religion then no part in it? Within
the monastery are many monks, will none come down
to sanctify this union? It seemed as if their duty
called to them. That very morning had they not come
in long procession to receive the presents that the
parents gave, thanksgiving offerings for the happiness
that was come to the children? Gave they no return?

But no. Upon their hill they sat apart and thought
far other thoughts. Marriage was no affair of theirs,
they could not come. Sometimes a village elder joins
the hands, sometimes the bride’s father, and sometimes another.

Silently one came from out the press and stood before the people, then he turned and sat him down before the boy and girl. There could not be a greater contrast than he made to all surrounding him. His face was long and lean and very dark amidst a throng of round, brown, merry faces. His was the face of those peoples whose memories are very long, who are very old, full of retrospection, of thought, of finesse, of dream. Theirs were simple as a child’s. His garb was white, but bride and bridegroom, parents and guests were clad in gayest colours. This was a Burmese marriage in a Burmese village and the priest was Indian. A marriage among Buddhists firmly holding to their faith—and he who married them a Brahmin.

It was the strangest contrast, one more strange could hardly be imagined. For what had they in common, the Hindu with the Burman, the Brahmin with the Buddhist? Were they not contradictions of each other in race, in custom, aspiration and in faiths?

Such the West thinks, the East knows better.

He sat before the boy and girl and took their hands in his and joined them. He took a cup and poured therefrom water over the joined hands. He took a thread and bound the two together; then loosening their hands he bid them eat out of the same dish.

They were made one, and in few words he told them what it all meant.

They were made one, no longer man and woman
but one entity. They complemented each the other, strength fitted into weakness, the one succeeded where the other failed. They had been parts imperfect, they were now one whole. And from that unit there would draw out an immortality. The years would know not one, nor other, but the two together. They shared this world's life henceforth and forever.

There was a deep silence. Perhaps by him and her the words were hardly heard, came dimly through the mist of their emotions to their consciousness. But they would remember later, and in the troubles that would arise,—must arise, a truth would grow from them.

But through the elder folk who listened ran a thrill of recognition. They knew, they knew. A woman sobbed, and so there came an end.

The sun set, a red globe behind the palms, and with the dusk there came a peace. The strain of day was over, the heat, the light, the fever passed away. A golden moon rose up behind the mountains. It made a magic on the world, a charm of silence, and the tired earth lay in waking dreams of rest.

'My friend,' the old monk answered, 'let us recall the world that was, the world to which came the Great Teacher; let us remember the life he lived and what he taught. There—in these lie the answers to your questions.

'He was a prince, he was learned in all the science of those days, he was a good soldier, a good ruler; he tried in all things to do as well as possible. He was
married and he had children. In all these matters he followed the knowledge and understanding of those days, he accepted the religion which was based on the family and civic virtues and had its justification in children and in nation. They were great and happy peoples in those days in Upper India. It was there that arose the beginnings of all knowledge and of all religion. They were simple peoples and saw things clearly. Did the Great Teacher in his after years when he had found the Light ever condemn all that he had learnt, all that he had done? Did he say men should not be princes, rulers, soldiers, that they should not make money, or seek learning? Did he speak against marriage or the reward of children?

'He denied none of these things, for he knew that in them was truth. What he sought for and he found was a further truth, something added to those early truths, a later truth. That was what he sought and found and taught. The early truths are true, but they alone are insufficient. As man grows in soul, that soul requires its truths as his unconscious life has required theirs. And the soul's truth must be sought. It does not come instinctively as do the earlier truths.

'It is this later truth that is called the faith of Buddha. It is that we teach, we practise; for we are his monks, his followers from afar.

'But not he nor we deny the earlier truths. Can a pagoda spire deny its base? We know our truth is true because it rests on the broad base of other lower truths. We never forget that this is so. The states-
man, merchant, soldier, farmer, are as necessary to the world as we are. The truths that come in family and in national life are true as ours are. Love’s Immortality, that broad stream of life that passes from forever to forever, is the stream on which our Immortality floats down. Never believe that we think that because we have a truth we think we have all truth. Never believe that we think that one truth is higher or more essential than another. To the pagoda every brick is equally a necessity. Truth is made up of all the myriad truths of life.

‘Why should we mind because the people go to Hindu priests to marry them? In the Buddha’s time was Hinduism. Did he oppose it, did he wish himself to have the marrying of people? The Hinduism of to-day is not perhaps that of two thousand five hundred years ago, still it is founded on the same truths, it teaches the same Immortality. It is the science of the unconscious life, of the body and its virtues. Marriage belongs to it, is its sacrament. In olden days maybe, before you English came, marriages were made by elders in the villages. That was enough then. The feeling of the people recognised it as more than a mere contract, an agreement, and enforced it. But now the new leaven you have brought has disturbed all things. The sacredness of custom has been injured. Because there was no sanction of religion our boys and girls began to think marriage was but a partnership as between two men, and had no other law or consequence but that. Could anything be more terrible? Can
you wonder the older people feared for the future, sought some way to impress upon their children what marriage was, the forging of a link in an eternity, the foundation on which rests all righteousness, the beginning of knowledge.

'That truth is in their keeping not in ours. For we think this. Truth is infinite, man is very finite. No man can show more than one facet of the truth. He will do well if he can keep that facet clear. No man can do more. No man can blow both hot and cold. We have one truth and no man will deny but that we keep it. The other truths let others keep.

'There is a faith that is based on love and children. With that faith we have no quarrel, we are sure that it has truth.

'Why should we care if the people go to the priests of that ancient faith to marry them?

'A man can do but one thing well. Does the soldier grieve, does he think less of his truths, his bravery, self-denial, self-restraint, obedience, love of his country, because all men are not soldiers, because there are also physicians? Does the physician interfere when war has come? Does the merchant say: "In the wisdom of buying and selling lies all truth"? When the enemy threatens we go to the soldier, when we are sick to the physician, when we want food to the farmer and the fisherman, when we want justice to the judge.

'Our truths are not concerned with marriage and with children. We stand aloof.
But think you that we do not know?"

He paused, in his dim eyes there came a light.

'I too was young. I too have loved. I felt the blood run hot within my veins. I had a wife and children. Do you think I do not know these things are true?

'My wife is dead, my children are grown up. The light of love is turned from me and I see other lights. My earthly eyes are very dim. But I know the sun still shines, that men are young, that love is true. If it were not, then nothing could be true. Were that not light there could be no light at all. Did that sun fade, then were all the world dark and dead. All light is from the sun.'

He ceased, and through the silence of the night came softly floating up the music of the players. They talked, they sang, and every now and then murmurs of laughter and of pleasure rose from the crowded listeners. Life was good, and love was true, and Truth is of all the truths. There is a time to laugh, a time to weep, a time to kill, a time to save alive. To each man one truth at one time, truth upon truth, and in eternity the Truth.

One question more he asked.

'Do you not fear that if your people take to Brahmin priests to marry them they may in time go to them for other matters and forget you?'

The old monk shook his head. 'Is the physician's truth less true and less acknowledged because men do not go to him to help them till their fields or weave their cloth or defend their homes? Would it make his
truth greater if he were to attempt to meddle with everything? It would but bring derision on him and scorn. For now two thousand and five hundred years have we kept our truth. Are we less honoured because we have not tried to make ourselves rulers and arbiters in all affairs of men?

'Where Buddhism has fallen into disrepute what has been the reason? Always the same, because its monks tried to be all things to all men, and so became nothing to any one, even to themselves.

'But where they have kept their truth they have reaped honour and their truth has lived.'

The man knew that this was true. Nothing could be more true than this. To acknowledge all truths, to keep one; no man can do more, and it is given to very few to do as much.

The monk rose, yet ere he went he raised his hand and pointed. 'We do not forget,' he said. 'We have remembrance of that first immortality on which ours lives.'

He passed away and the man looked silently remembering. A giant post rose long, slender, and straight, and on its summit raised above the palms a great bird glittered. The moonlight trembled on the gold and silver of his feathers till he seemed almost a living creature poised against the night.

All night along the river banks the feeding sheldrakes cry, mate unto mate, across the dark. 'Chakwi where art thou?' and her answer 'Chakwa I come.' All day they sit together side by side, or fly in pairs
along the river's edge. Life never parts them, and to death they go together. When one dies then the other follows. If you kill one, then must you shoot the other too from very pity, for it will not leave its partner.

Through all the East they are the emblem and the symbol of married love.

And so by every monastery you see the post, the bird upon its summit and the streamers that the winds blow to and fro.

One love rests on another, one immortality upon another. Though man can follow but one at one time, he should remember all.
CHAPTER XI

LIFE THAT GROWS EVER WIDER

So they were married and in a little house beside the palms they began their new life, they began to learn the first lesson of their personality. In that organism which is the family they found that each had duties, virtues, rights, and weaknesses. They were as eye and ear, they were as head and body. But which in each case directed and which acted depended on the circumstance. Were it a village matter wherein his nature and his work gave him aptitude and strength, he acted—for them both. Were it a household matter, she acted, or she bade him act for both. Sometimes he was the brain, and sometimes she. Sometimes he was the hand, and sometimes she. They were not enemies, competitors, rivals striving for supremacy. Does the eye despise the hand because it cannot see? Does the hand contemn the eye because it cannot strike? Each had its duty, and if to the outer world of village and government he represented both, to that inner world of the household god it was she who spoke for both. She was the priestess there. Upon the niche she placed the flowers and leaves that the god
of love, of home, of children might never forget them. That was her cult, her knowledge, her religion, for both of them. For the relationship of man and woman in marriage differs nowhere and at no time. They are one unit. The circumstances of life may call for varied activities in that unit, may to the careless observer sometimes make the husband sometimes the wife the more important, but in fact it is never so. The relationship is constant, never varied in essentials; savage or decadent it is always the same. It is the relationship of heart and brain. Whether a man earns his living by digging in the earth or by writing at a desk, the relationship of heart and brain do not vary. And whether the family be savage or civilised, the essential relationship of man and woman do not change. They are not a mechanical mixture but a chemical fusion.

And what they learn is this. No matter how strong the man be, how able, how active, he alone can never be complete. However beautiful the woman, full of all womanly graces and virtues, she too can never be complete. The better, stronger each may be, the more completely does each realise that a personality is but a part. This 'I' we are so proud of, this 'I' which seems to us so essential, so full of potentialities, has in fact alone no potentiality at all. It can but show a few of the infinite possibilities, it can but manifest one ray of an infinite spectrum. And this 'I' which we think has endured and will endure, nay must endure for ever, can of itself remain but a very
short time. It is dependent on its fusion with another 'I' for its continuance. It is not man that lives, it is not woman that persists in children, it is the organism which is made up of both. This is the beginning of that essential truth that lies below the Buddhist view of the universe that the unit is not a man, a woman, a family, a nation, a world; not matter, life, or soul; it is the Universe, it is Infinity. All the innumerable 'I's' of every form of life are but fractions of that Unit and must be joined to make One.

So begins the lesson that we can read in life. Man the individual, woman the individual, what can they effect? At best so little it can hardly be perceived. How long their life? A few years in infinity. But joined and their potentiality is not merely doubled, far more than that; and their seed endures. The 'I' can only be continued by being merged in 'we.'

So it continues. The household, man and wife, how slight, how frail, an accident may end them and their children. But with their marriage they are drawn into the wider current of the village life.

It was not always so. With men. At first in the far days when men emerged slowly from the lower forms the family alone obtained. But as men grew there came from heaven another force, another love. As the first love drew man and woman into one and made the family, so the second love drew families together into communities. It comes from heaven, it is another ray. Think you that it is from within, that men reason themselves together? No more does a man
reason himself into love of a woman, than the family reasons itself into that feeling of community with its neighbours, of identity with them that makes the village. It is a force that comes when men are fit to manifest it; it makes magnets of the lesser parts and draws them into a greater. It is the analogy of the love of men and women. It is as great, as true, as independent of all thought.

And like the earlier love it brings with it a righteousness that is its law, and as its justification it offers an extended vision towards eternity.

What are its laws? What are men's duties to their village? A man feels towards his family, so does the family to the community? A father or mother will suffer and will die to save their children willingly, gladly, if necessity arise; the family will suffer and will die to save the village. Because they think it right? Not so; because the love that has come to them makes them do so, whispers in their ear, 'You must, you must; it is my law, my righteousness.'

And for justification of this law, this righteousness, there is another stronger, wider Immortality. What a man does for his children is repaid not to him but them, what is done for a community is paid to the community. Not to the little 'I' but the greater 'I.' A man may not see or understand, but that is what love does and says. And if we cannot see or understand how a man profit should he and his family perish for his community, it is because we do not understand what life is. We think of it as an unit—'I' am 'I,'
and 'I' exist alone for ever. Put all the loves, all these forces that come to us direct from the immensity, say No! Life is a stream. The unit is Infinity. And the 'I' can persist only by merging itself ever into greater 'I's.'

Men believe it, because they obey what love tells them; they are sure its laws are right, although they know not why and cannot understand the justification.

'We wonder,' they told him, 'often at two things in you. It seems to us that you have so little of that family affection that is so strong in us. You come out here so far from your own people, from your parents and all your kinsfolk, from your village, your town. You leave them all behind, you do not care; even you are glad. We could not do that. Our hearts are one with our people, our kin; we would do anything to help them. And our bodies are one with the trees, the streams, the fields whose fruits have nourished us and made our limbs. We love our village, and its customs, its ways, for they are ourselves. When we go away, as we have to go often to the lower country to the rich fields there, we are never happy till we return. A man hopes always that he will come back soon, dreams of it; he feels as if there were a cord that drew him. He thinks that nowhere in the world does the sun shine as it does in his home, nowhere are the palms so high, the flowers so sweet; nowhere are there men and girls like those who live within its boundaries. If he inherit but a patch of land too small
to live on, too small even to let sometimes, he will not sell it. The field is his, is part of him. We do not live alone as you do, our life is part of that life that is in all things in our homes. 

*And if in a far country we meet a fellow-villager, he is our brother, though no kindred blood be in his veins.

‘But you, how different is it! You leave all that is yours and go away to a far country, and you live alone where everything is strange to you. You live within yourselves. Your family is all forgotten. You have no home, no village, no community. You marry sometimes and after a time your wife goes home. Your children grow from childhood and you do not know them. It seems to us terrible. You are like fish, like stones. You do not understand so many things. Our family life, our village life is as strange to you as if you had been made, not born. You talk and say that they are good and should be preserved, and then you do your best to destroy both. You move every one of us that enters your service far away from all he knows, for fear, you say, that he may show favour to his kin; you break up our villages and try to alter all the organism that keeps them alive. We are sure that you do not know and do not feel as we do. You lack much that we have.

‘Yet you have one thing that we have not got. We have been drawn into families and into small communities, but the force that makes communities into a nation has not yet come to us except in very slight degree. We had our own Kings, our own Government,
but they were weak. The people never stood about them solidly, never had much pride in them, never took much notice of them. We never felt that we were all one. And as the energy to draw us together was almost wanting, so the righteousness it brings with it never entered into us. That strong and fervent love, which is patriotism, which makes a man a great King, a wise minister, a brave soldier, an upright judge, never came into our hearts. So our officials were weak, they had not that steadfastness that comes of love of country. Each man was for himself, his family, his village. He thought of them and worked for them, but had no wider thought. For nation he cared little, for Government even less. True, it might punish or dismiss him, but as long as he avoided that, he felt himself free. If he received an order, he obeyed it or not just as he thought most convenient and safe. He would sacrifice himself even to the death for family or village, but not for Government. They were master and servant, that was all. With your people it is different. It is not only that when you get an order you obey it, though it come from so very far away—that is wonderful enough to us—but you obey it willingly. You act as if it was something you wanted to do, yourself, something you thought of in yourself for your own advantage. You understand not only what the order says but what it means, almost as if you yourself had said it. You are not servants who obey orders, you are as the hand or foot that acts as the brain designs. You live here widely separated, many thousand miles from your small
island, but yet you are not divided from it. You are all held together by nerves in the invisible air that make you one. Therefore your Government is you, not your master, your teacher, your commander, but yourself. You feel as we do about our family and our village, that it is ourselves. That is what we notice and wonder at in you. When we see two or three Englishmen alone governing a great district, you appear to us not individuals but tiny finger-tips of a great living thing whose heart and brain are far away. Yet if the finger-tip be touched the whole responds. And what one of you does, that is the act of the whole. Therefore you are strong, and we are weak. You will suffer and die for your Government gladly because it is yourself, but our officials ran away. You will not do what will bring dishonour to your Government because it brings dishonour to yourself. You must surely feel that one life runs in all of you. And when you die your soul will live still in that great current which is the nation’s life.’

‘Can you not learn to do what we do; can you not cultivate that sense of duty to the nation and the Government you say we have?’ he asked.

An old official laughed.

‘Does one learn such things? Does the boy learn to love the girl who is to be his wife? Love comes to him from heaven and draws the two together. Does he learn from books or teachers to love his village, his fields, his neighbours? are such things of the brain or memory? No, it is a vibration in his blood. It is
another love that comes to him and draws him to them, makes his heart beat to them. We have two loves; we have them stronger than you have, they come to us in fuller measure. But the third has not yet come. We know and feel the deficiency. We see what difference it makes: how you are strong because you are one, and we are weak because we are many; how you have a righteousness we have not got because the energy of which it is the law has not yet fallen on us. You think we do not know and feel it, but we do. Some day it will come to us too.'

And the man thinking over what he saw and heard tried to put it clearly to himself like this:

'It is the symbol of the rainbow still.

'As the life of the plant was built by the addition of another ray of energy to those which built the crystal, as the animal life was formed by addition of consciousness and volition to the forces which were in the plant, as man the individual was given a brighter ray of consciousness and freewill; so he is compounded into families, communities, and states by the addition of still further forces which bind the component parts together.

'It is an evolution ever into higher forms, ever into a higher, wider life, a broader consciousness, a more extended necessity for freewill and choice. The crystal and the drop of water have no consciousness and no freewill. The forces that form them have laws which cannot be broken, which have no exceptions. They cannot disobey, their righteousness is fixed for them.
'The trees and plants and grasses have life, they have perhaps a consciousness and a volition, though of the very slightest kind. They may within very narrow limits obey or disobey. Therefore they are not unchangeable as is the crystal or the water. They live and die, they flower or they fade; they have descendants or they have none according as they obey within the very narrow limits allowed them.

'The animals and birds have a little more life, a little more of choice of evil and of good, and so man has slowly evolved rising from the beast, every new ray of power bringing with it laws to be obeyed, or to be disobeyed, the limits within which disobedience is possible ever widening, his possibility of rise or fall ever increasing. And so it is when he is gathered into the higher organisms. Every new ray that is added to his sum of life draws him into more and more complex forms, till he becomes a State. Sometimes perhaps it will draw States into a great whole called humanity.

'Thus his life-history is of the increase of the rays that form it, the rays that come from heaven; his physical history is of a rise to ever more complicated forms wherein to manifest the higher life in; his ethical history is of the new forms of righteousness that come to him, of his power of choice, of his ability to choose rightly, of his will to do that which he chooses. He becomes more and more the master of his destiny as he is drawn into higher organisms and realises that families, communities, nations are not aggregates of
individuals, but complete organisms with their own laws of life, of growth, of righteousness. Men are the blood-corpuscles in the nation's blood.

'The love that draws men into nations is a new love, a new ray that comes and makes the communities magnets to each other, that makes them into one flesh. It has a righteousness like the other loves. It makes a man as ashamed to fail his country as to fail his family, because it is himself, his wider self. Instinctively he feels it, and he dies willingly and gladly to help his country. This righteousness like every other has its Immortality. The nation lives, endures, is strong and glorious. He dies, but it lives on and he in it. This bodily manifestation disappears but the life continues in other manifestations. His identity goes not to a heaven or hell afar, but lives and reaps what it has sown. The wind that was his life, blows and shakes the world.

'It fades and disappears, and nations fall back into that chaos of men which we call individuals. No nation has endured. They have their lives and live and die like men. They fail from the roots up; they fail because their bases crumble. Their history is always the same. The family dies, then the community, last of all the nation. The pyramid becomes top-heavy, the individual bricks of which it is built crumble. Nations are made of communities and they of families; these last are based upon the soil.

'If it be true that our family instinct is departing from us, that we are learning to consider ourselves as
individuals bound into a state, then is the end not far. So fell Rome, so has fallen every state.

‘But the force endures. It builds again, beginning at the beginning, taking the units, the individuals, and crystallising them again into new forms. Nations live and die as men do, but always the stream comes from the Power House to manifest itself anew. And every new manifestation is a greater than the last.’
CHAPTER XI

DAVID

It was the festival of the end of Buddhist Lent.

For three months there had been the time of fasting, of prayer and thoughtfulness. In these months there had been no festivals, no songs, nor music in the villages, no making of love, no giving nor taking in marriage. For three months the heavy, enervating wind from the south had blown, and the skies had lowered, and the lights had faded. But now was come the change. Blue skies, so blue, so blue and deep and full of glory that the eyes ached to look, and there were lucent shadows alive with the shimmer of reflected lights, and at night a moon of gold, set in a velvet firmament. It was the festival of joy, and all the world made merry. In the fronts of the houses were myriads of tiny lamps arranged in all manner of designs, lines and circles, loops and roses, ships and monasteries. From the trees hung paper lanterns, like big glowing fruits, and on the hill-tops all the pagodas were ringed with glittering lights. The air was still and soft, and full of scents. The streets were alive with people. Every one was out, dressed in gay
silks, moving to and fro, laughing and talking. They stopped at little wayside stalls to buy their fairings, they joined their friends till from twos and threes they were grown into little parties. There were men and women, boys and girls, and little children, and then they moved away slowly to the north towards the bluff whereon the great pagoda stood.

There was the gayest sight of all. The hill-top had been levelled and paved with stone, and on it was built a tall pagoda. Everywhere there were lights: upon the winding stairways of the hill that led to it, around the platform and on the pile itself, ring after ring of lights. And the crowd moved to and fro. They stopped sometimes, a woman lit a candle or made a little prayer—of happiness, no doubt, for all were happy. Then they moved on again. A singer out of sight among the trees sang to the night.

'Surely,' the observer thought, 'they are a happy people, and surely their faith must be a happy one. It does not make them weak, but makes them strong; it does not make them fear, but makes them hope. This is their holy place, and all about are statues of their Teacher. They do not fear to look at him and smile; he does not make them think of sin but righteousness, not of the dark but of the light; of life, not suffering and death. They come to show that they are glad.'

He sat and watched them from the shadow. The colour and the movement and the joy made his pulses move. The great moon made silver glories on the hills.
They came and went before him as he sat unseen beside the giant lions, the people gay in silks and muslins, and the monks in sober garb. The latter passed silently with steps of dignity. Yet they were happy too.

Then suddenly it seemed to him that a note jarred, the colour seemed dimmer, there was a discord in the harmony, something was strange, untrue, unfeat. He wondered what, and looking up he saw a man pause near him. It was a monk. His robe was the same the monks all wear—the yellow garment thrown across leaving one shoulder bare, the shaven head was bare, the feet unsandalled. Nothing in dress or manner showed a difference from the many monks who paced the platform. Yet he was not as they were. There was a subtle difference.

And of a sudden he perceived the monk was not a Burman. He was of Europe. His bared arm and shoulder, though sunburnt, showed the whiter hue of colder climates, his face the sharp profile of an older race.

What did he here amid an alien people? Can a man change his race, his nation? He was the jarring note. And he looked sad, was sad. The gaiety and happiness and truth that lay upon the Burmese people passed him by. What did he there?

The observer turned and went away.

Towards the east the bluff fell steeply to the river. There were loose stones and jutting rocks and little bushes clinging to the crevices. But a path went
down there, winding to and fro, narrow and laborious. Half way there was a resting-place, a broad slab of rock some few yards square, and here he sat to rest.

Above, the lights shone and the sound of the voices came like a subdued murmur; underneath the river ran. The land dreamed beneath the moon, and here and there dotted across its wide expanse were tiny pyramids of fire, other pagodas, other festivals. He sat and gazed at it. Suddenly he was aware he was not alone. Some one came climbing down, some one in boots which rattled on the stones. No Burman surely, no one wears even shoes upon the sacred hill; none would leave the festival there to come down here to solitude.

The stranger emerged from behind the bushes and came into the moonlight. He was dressed in European dress and wore a bowler hat. He paused upon the rock and the man recognised him.

'David,' he asked, 'and is that you?'

The newcomer stared, then recognised the speaker.

'Yes,' he said, 'it is I.'

'And what do you down here away from all the people, all your friends, and all the gaiety?'

He looked confused. Then sitting on a stone he said, 'It is not my festival.'

'No, of course not. I had forgotten. Still you are here, and have been there, at the festival.'

'I brought my sisters.'

'Ah, and what does your father think of that—of coming to this Buddhist festival?'
The boy, for he was little more, shrugged his shoulders.

'All their friends are there. They wanted to come. They did not want to stop at home when every one else amused themselves.'

'Certainly it would be hard. And does not the festival amuse you too?'

The boy kicked sulkily at a pebble that fell and rattling down the rocks dropped into the river.

'Yes,' he admitted, 'only—'

'Only?'

'They did not like my feet being covered,' and he looked down at his European boots. 'And yet,' he added, 'one cannot go without boots in English dress.'

'Do they mind? They don't notice mine.'

'They mind because I am a Burman. You are not. I am a Burman but not a Buddhist. That makes them angry. They turned me off.'

'Your sisters are in Burmese dress?'

'Yes, they like it. But I could not do it. I have risen above the people's dress. I am European.'

'Well then, why come at all?'

The boy kicked angrily against the stones. 'Can one live alone? Can one have no friends, and see everything going on and stand aside? I would join but they won't let me.'

'Suppose you too wore Burmese dress?'

'I mayn't. And if I did it would be all the same. They say I am not one of them. They look at me so,' and he scowled. 'If the other young men make
friends with me, their fathers stop them. It does not so much matter to my sisters, for they are women, and besides—'

'But what besides?'

'They also light their candles at the pagoda. And why not?' raising his voice, as if replying to some inner question. 'Are they to have no husbands? Are they to live their lives alone?'

'You cannot light a candle?'

'They would not let me if I could. I want to go to England and forget these people. But my father says he cannot afford it.'

'Do you think you would be happier there?'

'I should be one of them there, would I not?' he asked wistfully.

To which was answered:—

'Perhaps it would not be so. After all, David, one belongs to one's own people. It is the first thing of all, to be part of one's own community, to live the wider life that is in our own nation. Nothing can make that loss good.'

The boy did not answer. He was angry, hurt, and lonely. He wanted friends, companions, the sense of being part of a greater whole. Suddenly he rose and went away, his footsteps echoed along the path that led away from the bluff towards the turn. Fainter they grew until they ceased, but up above the music and the pleasant murmur sounded still.

To him, sitting there in the moonlit solitude, there came thoughts of the two men—of their unlikeness in
all but this, that each had left his people, to find something outside. They seemed to him as men who thinking to climb up have kicked away the ladder underneath them, and wondered that they fell. How can men so misread the facts of life?

Lafcadio Hearn becoming a Buddhist in Japan wondered that as they grew the Japanese children drifted further from him. He did not understand. He too supposed as the West have always done that Buddhism is a faith apart from the facts of life. It is built on the facts of life. The Japanese children growing older were crystallised in the nation's whole, he as a foreign body was left without. He thought himself a Buddhist, and he did not know that its whole strength is that it stands on other truths. How can a child of Europe come into an Eastern nation's life? And if he could not, how could he be a Buddhist? For Buddhism is the wider nationality.

And this Oriental who thought because he professed a Western faith that he would attain to Western virtues and ideals, how could they so mislead him? Can a truth be based upon a vacancy—or on a ruin? Hold fast to that you have and build upon it as best you can. How can you become a Buddhist by making yourself a bad Englishman? How can you be a good Christian by becoming a bad Burman? Is it a good start in righteousness to be a renegade?

The world knows better, and the world is wise.

The unit is not a man. His soul does not, cannot continue to exist alone in all its littleness and poverty.
To live it must be drawn into ever-widening streams of life. And the true religion is not of one virtue, but of all; it includes all life.

So it has always been in all the world with every faith, in fact, though not maybe in theory. Truth has been stronger than a phrase, a creed, a dogma. Religion includes the whole of life, it includes the whole of men. Are the Buddhist monks the only men who cultivate religious truth? Is the soldier's honour less religious than the monk's self-denial? Is the tiller of the fields, the graver of the silver cup employed less in religious acts than those who meditate and pray?

Not so to those who understand.

And in this country they do understand that fact.

Their faith of Buddhism stands not apart, but is of the nation's life. It is but another and a later ray of light.

Above, the music and the ring of cheerful voices sounded yet. It came and went in little waves of sound. The people were very happy and they were one.

A sense of solitude came over him. It comes to all who go to a far land, sometimes. It grows with time, till it may become a sickness. It is longing for one's own, that country and that people far beyond the seas. True, across land and sea the fibres held, the impulses came still. Yet he was far away and very much alone amid a strange people in a foreign land. His own called to him and he could not go—not yet.
Sometime—not yet. An immense desire for the cool winds, the rainy skies, the misty meadows, the sounds and ways and faces of his land came into his heart as they sometime or another come to every one.

He moved down closer to the river and leaned and listened. The waters swirled and moved, they lapped against the bank. There was a stir as of a woman wandering through a dream, it was the river passing on drawing her silken skirts behind her. And as she went she sang:

'Life is not many things but one; all life is one.
'I draw for ever from the mountains to the sea, I rise for ever from the sea to fall and make new rivers. I am part of the world and the spirit of all life is in me.
'My waters have been sap within the trees, they have been blood within men's veins; they will be so again. And the life that moves me, it is from the same source as that which thrills the tree, that makes men's hearts beat.

'All life is one life, straight from one source. There is not such a thing as solitude. No one is quite alone, no one is for ever apart, there cannot be any strangers in our world. Each is a portion of the whole; we come out of the same past into the same future. No one can be alone.'

So sung the river, passing—passing always to the sea.

Later in the night he came into the town again. The people were returning home, the lights were