

PREFACE.

When Humboldt first ascended the Andes and saw the trees, shrubs and flora he had long before studied on the Alps, he had only to look at his barometer, or at the sea of mountains and hills below, the rocks and soil around, and the sun above, to understand this seeming marvel of creation; while those who knew less of the laws of order and universal harmony might be lost in conjectures about pollen floating in the upper air, or seeds carried by birds across seas, forgetting that preservation is perpetual creation, and that it takes no more power to clothe a mountain just risen from the sea in appropriate verdure than to renew the beauty and the bloom of spring.

Max Mueller, who looks through antiquity with the same clear vision with which Humboldt examined the physical world, when he found the most ancient Hindoos bowing in worship before Dyaus Pitar, the exact equivalent of the Zeus Pater of the Greeks and the Jupiter of the Romans, and of "Our Father who art in the heavens" in our own divinely taught prayer, instead of indulging in wild speculations about the chance belief of some ancient chief or patriarch, transmitted across continents and seas and even across the great gulf that has always divided the Aryan from the Semitic civilization and preserved through ages of darkness and unbelief, saw in it the common yearning of the human soul to find rest on a loving Father's almighty arm; yet when our oriental missionaries and scholars found such fundamental truths of their own religion as the common brotherhood of man, and that love is the vital force of all religion, which consists not in blood-oblations or in forms and creeds, but in shunning evil and doing good, and that we must overcome evil by good and hatred by love, and that there is a spir-

itual world and life after death embodied in the teachings of Buddha—instead of finding in this great fact new proof of the common Father's love for all His children, they immediately began to indulge in conjectures as to how these truths might have been derived from the early Christians who visited the East, while those who were disposed to reject the claims of Christianity have exhausted research and conjecture to find something looking as if Christianity itself might have been derived from the Buddhist missionaries to Palestine and Egypt, both overlooking the remarkable fact that it is only in fundamental truths that the two religions agree, while in the dogmas, legends, creeds and speculations which form the wall of separation between them they are as wide asunder as the poles.

How comes it on the one theory that the Nestorians, whose peculiar creed had already separated them from the balance of the Christian church, taught their Buddhist disciples no part of that creed to which they have adhered with such tenacity through the ages? And on the other theory, how comes it, if the Divine Master was, as some modern writers claim, an Essene, that is, a Buddhist monk, that there is not in all his teachings a trace of the speculations and legends which had already buried the fundamental truths of Buddhism almost out of sight?

How sad to hear a distinguished Christian scholar like Sir Monier Williams cautioning his readers against giving a Christian meaning to the Christian expressions he constantly met with in Buddhism, and yet informing them that a learned and distinguished Japanese gentleman told him it was a source of great delight to him to find so many of his most cherished religious beliefs in the New Testament; and to see an earnest Christian missionary like good Father Huc, when in the busy city of Lha-ssa, on the approach of evening, at the sound of a bell the whole population sunk on their knees in a concert of prayer, only finding in it an attempt of Satan to counterfeit Christian worship; and on the other hand to see ancient and modern learning ransacked to prove that the brightest and clearest light that ever burst upon a sinful and benighted world was but the reflected rays of another faith.

And yet this same Sir Monier Williams says: "We shall not be far wrong in attempting an outline of the Buddha's life if we begin by

assuming that intense individuality, fervid earnestness and severe simplicity, combined with singular beauty of countenance, calm dignity of bearing, and almost superhuman persuasiveness of speech, were conspicuous in the great teacher." To believe that such a character was the product of a false religion, or that he was given over to believe a lie, savors too much of that worst agnosticism which would in effect deny the universality of God's love and would limit His care to some favored locality or age or race.

How much more in harmony with the broad philosophy of such men as Humboldt and Mueller, and with the character of a loving Father, to believe that at all times and in all countries He has been watching over all His children and giving them all the light they were capable of receiving.

This narrow view is especially out of place in treating of Buddhism and Christianity, as Buddha himself predicted that his Dharma would last but five hundred years, when he would be succeeded by Matreya, that is, Love incarnate, on which account the whole Buddhist world was on tiptoe of expectation at the time of the coming of our Lord, so that the wise men of the East were not only following their guiding-star but the prediction of their own great prophet in seeking Bethlehem.

Had the Christian missionaries to the East left behind them their creeds, which have only served to divide Christians into hostile sects and sometimes into hostile camps, and which so far as I can see, after years of patient study, have no necessary connection with the simple, living truths taught by our Saviour, and had taken only their New Testaments and their earnest desire to do good, the history of missions would have been widely different.

How of the earth earthy seemed the walls that divided the delegates to the world's great Congress of Religions, recently held in Chicago, and how altogether divine

The love which like an endless golden chain
Joined all in one.

Whatever others may think, it is my firm belief that Buddhism and Christianity, which we cannot doubt have influenced for good

such vast masses the human family, both descended from heaven clothed in robes of celestial purity which have become sadly stained by their contact with the selfishness of a sinful world, except for which belief the following pages would never have been written, which are now sent forth in the hope that they may do something to enable Buddhists and Christians to see eye to eye and something to promote peace and good-will among men.

While following my own conceptions and even fancies in many things, I believe the leading characters and incidents to be historical, and I have given nothing as the teaching of the great master which was not to my mind clearly authenticated.

To those who have read so much about agnostic Buddhism, and about Nirvana meaning annihilation, it may seem bold in me to present Buddha as an undoubting believer in the fundamental truths of all religion, and as not only a believer in a spiritual world but an actual visitor to its sad and blissful scenes; but the only agnosticism I have been able to trace to Buddha was a want of faith in the many ways invented through the ages to escape the consequences of sin and to avoid the necessity of personal purification, and the only annihilation he taught and yearned for was the annihilation of self in the highest Christian sense, and escape from that body of death from which the Apostle Paul so earnestly sought deliverance.

Doubtless agnosticism and almost every form of belief and unbelief subsequently sprang up among the intensely acute and speculative peoples of the East known under the general name of Buddhists, as they did among the less acute and speculative peoples of the West known as Christians; but the one is no more primitive Buddhism than the other is primitive Christianity.

While there are innumerable poetic legends—of which Spence Hardy's "Manual of Buddhism" is a great storehouse, and many of which are given by Arnold in his beautiful poem—strewn thick along the track of Buddhist literature, constantly tempting one to leave the straight path of the development of a great religion, I have carefully avoided what did not commend itself to my mind as either historical or spiritual truth.

It was my original design to follow the wonderful career of Buddha until his long life closed with visions of the golden city much as described in Revelation, and then to follow that most wonderful career of Buddhist missions, not only through India and Ceylon, but to Palestine, Greece and Egypt, and over the table-lands of Asia and through the Chinese Empire to Japan, and thence by the black stream to Mexico and Central America, and then to follow the wise men of the East until the Light of the world dawned on them on the plains of Bethlehem—a task but half accomplished, which I shall yet complete if life and strength are spared.

A valued literary friend suggests that the social life described in the following pages is too much like ours, but why should their daily life and social customs be greatly different from ours? The Aryan migrations to India and to Europe were in large masses, of course taking their social customs, or as the Romans would say, their household gods, with them.

What wonder, then, that the home as Tacitus describes it in the "Wilds of Germany" was substantially what Mueller finds from the very structure of the Sanscrit and European languages it must have been in Bactria, the common cradle of the Aryan race. There can scarcely be a doubt that twenty-five hundred years ago the daily life and social customs in the north of India, which had been under undisputed Aryan control long enough for the Sanscrit language to spring up, come to perfection and finally become obsolete, were more like ours than like those of modern India after the, many—and especially the Mohammedan—conquests and after centuries of oppression and alien rule.

If a thousand English-speaking Aryans should now be placed on some distant island, how much would their social customs and even amusements differ from ours in a hundred years? Only so far as changed climate and surrounding's compelled.

I give as an introduction an outline of the golden, silver, brazen and iron ages, as described by the ancient poets and believed in by all antiquity, as it was in the very depths of the darkness of the iron age that our great light appeared in Northern India. The very denseness of the darkness of the age in which he came makes the

clearness of the light more wonderful, and accounts for the joy with which it was received and the rapidity with which it spread.

Not to enter into the niceties of chronological questions, the mission of Buddha may be roughly said to have commenced about five hundred years before the commencement of our era, and with incessant labors and long and repeated journeys to have lasted forty-five years, when at about the age of eighty he died, or, as the Buddhists more truthfully and more beautifully say, entered Nirvana.

HENRY T. NILES.

TOLEDO, January 1, 1894.

Since this work was in the hands of the printer I have read the recent work of Bishop Copelston, of Columbo, Ceylon, and it was a source of no small gratification to find him in all material points agreeing with the result of my somewhat extensive investigations as given within, for in Ceylon, if anywhere, we would expect accuracy. Here the great Buddhist development first comes in contact with authentic history during the third century B.C. in the reign of the great Asoka, the discovery of whose rock inscriptions shed such a flood of light on primitive Buddhism, while it still retained enough of its primitive power, as we learn from those inscriptions themselves, to turn that monarch from a course of cruel tyranny, and, as we learn from the history of Ceylon, to induce his son and daughter to abandon royalty and become the first missionaries to that beautiful island.

H.T.N.

INTRODUCTION.

The golden age – when men were brothers all,
The golden rule their law and God their king;
When no fierce beasts did through the forests roam,
Nor poisonous reptiles crawl upon the ground;
When trees bore only wholesome, luscious fruits,
And thornless roses breathed their sweet perfumes;
When sickness, sin and sorrow were unknown,
And tears but spoke of joy too deep for words;
When painless death but led to higher life,
A life that knows no end, in that bright world
Whence angels on the ladder Jacob saw,
Descending, talk with man as friend to friend –
That age of purity and peace had passed,
But left a living memory behind,
Cherished and handed down from sire to son
Through all the scattered peoples of the earth,
A living prophecy of what this world,
This sad and sinful world, might yet become.

The silver age – an age of faith, not sight –
Came next, when reason ruled instead of love;
When men as through a glass but darkly saw
What to their fathers clearly stood revealed
In God's own light of love-illumined truth,
Of which the sun that rising paints the east,
And whose last rays with glory gild the west,
Is but an outbirth. Then were temples reared,
And priests 'mid clouds of incense sang His praise
Who out of densest darkness called the light,
And from His own unbounded fullness made
The heavens and earth and all that in them is.
Then landmarks were first set, lest men contend
For God's free gifts, that all in peace had shared.

Then laws were made to govern those whose sires
Were laws unto themselves. Then sickness came,
And grief and pain attended men from birth to death.
But still a silver light lined every cloud,
And hope was given to cheer and comfort men.

The brazen age, brilliant but cold, succeeds.
This was an age of knowledge, art and war,
When the knights-errant of the ancient world,
Adventures seeking, roamed with brazen swords
Which by a wondrous art – then known, now lost –
Were hard as flint, and edged to cut a hair
Or cleave in twain a warrior armor-clad
And armed with shields adorned by Vulcan's art,
Wonder of coming times and theme for bards.[1]
Then science searched through nature's heights and depths.
Heaven's canopy thick set with stars was mapped,
The constellations named, and all the laws searched out
That guide their motions, rolling sphere on sphere.[2]
Then men by reasonings piled up mountain high
Thought to scale heaven, and to dethrone heaven's king,
Whose imitators weak, with quips and quirks
And ridicule would now destroy all sacred things.
This age great Homer and old Hesiod sang,
And gods they made of hero, artist, bard.

At length this twilight of the ages fades,
And starless night now sinks upon the world –
An age of iron, cruel, dark and cold.
On Asia first this outer darkness fell,
Once seat of paradise, primordial peace,
Perennial harmony and perfect love.
A despot's will was then a nation's law;
An idol's car crushed out poor human lives,
And human blood polluted many shrines.
Then human speculation made of God
A shoreless ocean, distant, waveless, vast,
Of truth that sees not and unfeeling love,

Whence souls as drops were taken back to fall,
Absorbed and lost, when, countless ages passed,
They should complete their round as souls of men,
Of beasts, of birds and of all creeping things.
And, even worse, the cruel iron castes,
One caste too holy for another's touch,
Had every human aspiration crushed,
The common brotherhood of man destroyed,
And made all men but Pharisees or slaves.
And worst of all – and what could e'en be worse? –
Woman, bone of man's bone, flesh of his flesh,
The equal partner of a double life,
Who in the world's best days stood by his side
To lighten every care, and heighten every joy,
And in the world's decline still clung to him,
She only true when all beside were false,
When all were cruel she alone still kind,
Light of his hearth and mistress of his home,
Sole spot where peace and joy could still be found –
Woman herself cast down, despised was made
Slave to man's luxury and brutal lust.
Then war was rapine, havoc, needless blood,
Infants impaled before their mothers' eyes,
Women dishonored, mutilated, slain,
Parents but spared to see their children die.
Then peace was but a faithless, hollow truce,
With plots and counter-plots; the dagger's point
And poisoned cup instead of open war;
And life a savage, grim conspiracy
Of mutual murder, treachery and greed.
O dark and cruel age! O cruel creeds!
O cruel men! O crushed and bleeding hearts,
That from the very ground in anguish cry:
"Is there no light – no hope – no help – no God?"

[1]See Hesiod's description of the shield of Hercules, the St. George of that ancient age of chivalry.

[2]See the celebrated zodiac of Denderah, given in Landseer's "Sabaean Researches," and in Napoleon's "Egypt."

The Dawn and the Day

or

The Buddha and the Christ.

BOOK I.

Northward from Ganges' stream and India's plains
An ancient city crowned a lofty hill,
Whose high embattled walls had often rolled
The surging, angry tide of battle back.
Walled on three sides, but on the north a cliff,
At once the city's quarry and its guard,
Cut out in galleries, with vaulted roofs[1]
Upborne upon cyclopean columns vast,
Chiseled with art, their capitals adorned
With lions, elephants, and bulls, life size,
Once dedicate to many monstrous gods
Before the Aryan race as victors came,
Then prisons, granaries and magazines,
Now only known to bandits and wild beasts.
This cliff, extending at each end, bends north,
And rises in two mountain-chains that end
In two vast snow-capped Himalayan peaks,
Between which runs a glittering glacial stream,
A mighty moving mass of crystal ice,
Crushing the rocks in its resistless course;
From which bursts forth a river that had made
Of all this valley one great highland lake,
Which on one side had burst its bounds and cut
In myriad years a channel through the rock,
So narrow that a goat might almost leap
From cliff to cliff – these cliffs so smooth and steep
The eagles scarce could build upon their sides;
This yawning chasm so deep one scarce could hear

The angry waters roaring far below.

This stream, guided by art, now fed a lake
Above the city and behind this cliff,
Which, guided thence in channels through the rock,
Fed many fountains, sending crystal streams
Through every street and down the terraced hill,
And through the plain in little silver streams,
Spreading the richest verdure far and wide.[2]
Here was the seat of King Suddhodana,
His royal park, walled by eternal hills,
Where trees and shrubs and flowers all native grew;
For in its bounds all the four seasons met,
From ever-laughing, ever-blooming spring
To savage winter with eternal snows.
Here stately palms, the banyan's many trunks,
Darkening whole acres with its grateful shade,
And bamboo groves, with graceful waving plumes,
The champak, with its fragrant golden flowers,
Asokas, one bright blaze of brilliant bloom,
The mohra, yielding food and oil and wine,
The sacred sandal and the spreading oak,
The mountain-loving fir and spruce and pine,
And giant cedars, grandest of them all,
Planted in ages past, and thinned and pruned
With that high art that hides all trace of art,[3]
Were placed to please the eye and show their form
In groves, in clumps, in jungles and alone.

Here all a forest seemed; there open groves,
With vine-clad trees, vines hanging from each limb,
A pendant chain of bloom, with shaded drives
And walks, with rustic seats, cool grotts and dells,
With fountains playing and with babbling brooks,
And stately swans sailing on little lakes,
While peacocks, rainbow-tinted shrikes, pheasants,
Glittering like precious stones, parrots, and birds
Of all rich plumage, fly from tree to tree,

The whole scene vocal with sweet varied song;
And here a widespread lawn bedecked with flowers,
With clumps of brilliant roses grown to trees,
And fields with dahlias spread,[4] not stiff and prim
Like the starched ruffle of an ancient dame,
But growing in luxuriance rich and wild,
The colors of the evening and the rainbow joined,
White, scarlet, yellow, crimson, deep maroon,
Blending all colors in one dazzling blaze;
There orchards bend beneath their luscious loads;
Here vineyards climb the hills thick set with grapes;
There rolling pastures spread, where royal mares,
High bred, and colts too young for bit or spur,
Now quiet feed, then, as at trumpet's call,
With lion bounds, tails floating, neck outstretched,[5]
Nostrils distended, fleet as the flying wind
They skim the plain, and sweep in circles wide –
Nature's Olympic, copied, ne'er excelled.
Here, deer with dappled fawn bound o'er the grass,[6]
And sacred herds, and sheep with skipping lambs;
There, great white elephants in quiet nooks;
While high on cliffs framed in with living green
Goats climb and seem to hang and feed in air –
Sweet spot, with all to please and nothing to offend.

Here on a hill the royal palace stood,
A gem of art; and near, another hill,
Its top crowned by an aged banyan tree,
Its sides clad in strange jyotismati grass,[7]
By day a sober brown, but in the night
Glowing as if the hill were all aflame –
Twin wonders to the dwellers in the plain,
Their guides and landmarks day and night,
This glittering palace and this glowing hill.
Within, above the palace rose a tower,
Which memory knew but as the ancient tower,
Foursquare and high, an altar and a shrine
On its broad top, where burned perpetual fire,

Emblem of boundless and eternal love
And truth that knows no night, no cloud, no change,
Long since gone out, with that most ancient faith
In one great Father, source of life and light.[8]
Still round this ancient tower, strange hopes and fears,
And memories handed down from sire to son,
Were clustered thick. An army, old men say,
Once camped against the city, when strange lights
Burst from this tower, blinding their dazzled eyes.
They fled amazed, nor dared to look behind.
The people bloody war and cruel bondage saw
On every side, and they at peace and free,
And thought a power to save dwelt in that tower.
And now strange prophecies and sayings old
Were everywhere rehearsed, that from this hill
Should come a king or savior of the world.
Even the poor dwellers in the distant plain
Looked up; they too had heard that hence should come
One quick to hear the poor and strong to save.
And who shall dare to chide their simple faith?
This humble reverence for the great unknown
Brings men near God, and opens unseen worlds,
Whence comes all life, and where all power doth dwell.

Morning and evening on this tower the king,
Before the rising and the setting sun,
Blindly, but in his father's faith, bowed down.
Then he would rise and on his kingdom gaze.
East, west, hills beyond hills stretched far away,
Wooded, terraced, or bleak and bald and bare,
Till in dim distance all were leveled lost.
One rich and varied carpet spread far south,
Of fields, of groves, of busy cities wrought,
With mighty rivers seeming silver threads;
And to the north the Himalayan chain,
Peak beyond peak, a wall of crest and crag,
Ice bound, snow capped, backed by intensest blue,
Untrod, immense, that, like a crystal wall.

In myriad varied tints the glorious light
Of rising and of setting sun reflects;
His noble city lying at his feet,
And his broad park, tinged by the sun's slant rays
A thousand softly rich and varied shades.

Still on this scene of grandeur, plenty, peace
And ever-varying beauty, he would gaze
With sadness. He had heard these prophecies,
And felt the unrest in that great world within,
Hid from our blinded eyes, yet ever near,
The very soul and life of this dead world,
Which seers and prophets open-eyed have seen,
On which the dying often raptured gaze,
And where they live when they are mourned as dead.
This world was now astir, foretelling day.
"A king shall come, they say, to rule the world,
If he will rule; but whence this mighty king?
My years decline apace, and yet no son
Of mine to rule or light my funeral pile."

One night Queen Maya, sleeping by her lord,
Dreamed a strange dream; she dreamed she saw a star
Gliding from heaven and resting over her;
She dreamed she heard strange music, soft and sweet,
So distant "joy and peace" was all she heard.
In joy and peace she wakes, and waits to know
What this strange dream might mean, and whence it came.

Drums, shells and trumpets sound for joy, not war;
The streets are swept and sprinkled with perfumes,
And myriad lamps shine from each house and tree,
And myriad flags flutter in every breeze,
And children crowned with flowers dance in the streets,
And all keep universal holiday
With shows and games, and laugh and dance and song,
For to the gentle queen a son is born,

To King Suddhodana the good an heir.

But scarcely had these myriad lamps gone out,
The sounds of revelry had scarcely died,
When coming from the palace in hot haste,
One cried, "Maya, the gentle queen, is dead."
Then mirth was changed to sadness, joy to grief,
For all had learned to love the gentle queen—
But at Siddartha's birth this was foretold.

Among the strangers bringing gifts from far,
There came an ancient sage—whence, no one knew—
Age-bowed, head like the snow, eyes filmed and white,
So deaf the thunder scarcely startled him,
Who met them, as they said, three journeys back,
And all his talk was of a new-born king,
Just born, to rule the world if he would rule.
He was so gentle, seemed so wondrous wise,
They followed him, he following, he said,
A light they could not see; and when encamped,
Morn, noon and night devoutly would he pray,
And then would talk for hours, as friend to friend,
With questionings about this new-born king,
Gazing intently at the tent's blank wall,
With nods and smiles, as if he saw and heard,
While they sit lost in wonder, as one sits
Who never saw a telephone, but hears
Unanswered questions, laughter at unheard jests,
And sees one bid a little box good-by.
And when they came before the king, they saw,
Laughing and cooing on its mother's knee,
Picture of innocence, a sweet young child;
He saw a mighty prophet, and bowed down
Eight times in reverence to the very ground,
And rising said, "Thrice happy house, all hail!
This child would rule the world, if he would rule,
But he, too good to rule, is born to save;
But Maya's work is done, the devas wait."