

clothed in "sweet religion," with irresistible force, overspread and submerged the ancient world. Art and philosophy disappeared. Morality itself, in becoming more intense, became also contracted. Justice, upon which the State depends, seemed, as involving punishment and a measure of cruelty, no fit virtue for the Kingdom of Heaven. It was a mere secular virtue, a function of the Emperor, upon whose neck the Pope set his foot. The man supposed dearest to God lived in a cloister, and held up the banner of the Ideal of unqualified Love, self-sacrifice and non-resistance. The Church's moral effect upon the European man, though gradual, must finally have been immense, and by the dawn of the sixteenth century the purpose of the World-Spirit, to strengthen the moral fibre of humanity, was sufficiently achieved. But in the absence of art and philosophy, Europe remained uncultured and superstitious, and; through a cloistered virtue, the self-seeking and ambitious were left to govern the world, and even the Church itself. New needs had thus arisen for mankind, and there followed those great spiritual movements called the Reformation and the Renaissance. The Reformation, while it was a return to primitive Christianity, was also a movement for justice. The monks came out of their cloisters and thundered in the market-place against wickedness in high places. The people, in sympathy, rose and brought war about the ears of Machiavellian popes and princes. This universal tempest was the moral law of love avenging itself, or, in symbolic language, Christ coming to judge the world. The promised signs and wonders of his second coming were interpretable in terms of natural events. And as Christ came again with the Reformation, so great Pan lived again with the Renaissance—the wonderful revival of the art and philosophy, of the universality, of the ancient world.

But where, in this outbreak of new spiritual forces in the sixteenth century, was the Avatar? Where was the person of Christ come to judge the world, where was the visible presentment of great Pan?

When the writings of Shakspeare are surveyed in their order of production, it will be found that about the year 1597 a great change took place in his spirit. Before that date he had written joyously; only one tragedy—*Romeo and Juliet*, in which the joy is more than the sorrow, and the sorrow itself is a high and holy joy—had proceeded from his pen. With this exception, happy love-plays and comedies had followed one another, and histories crowded with the splendour and the glory of life. But from 1597 the poet becomes grave, satirical, and, finally, the great tragic poet, whom Victor Hugo has compared to Isaiah and Ezekiel. A close inspection of the textual evidence