

# The Lamp

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"I am your voice—It was tied in you—In me it begins to talk."

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF KNOWLEDGE.

"We learn in action," says an old Scripture.

Most people in civilized communities imagine that we can only learn from books or from the counsel and admonition of our betters. Our betters are in the habit of encouraging this view.

Experience teaches.

The best books we have and the best advice we get are differently interpreted by those who read or listen. We learn in action. We must carry the wisdom of the books and the sages into practice before it becomes our own in habit and character, and in the thought-begetting illumination of a steady purpose.

The items and detail of life are infinite, and change and dissolve like the cloud-wreaths on an April sky. The unchanging quality of the elemental forces underlies cloud and sky and day and night and life and death. Knowing the laws of life and light we are unmoved amid shadow and change.

The great books of old, the Scriptures, the Epics, the Folk-tales, embody the largest and broadest and most general conceptions of the ages they represent. As they express the universal laws, as they exhibit their most ordinary applications, as they describe their most usual results, the old books have become vital to the race.

The tendency of our age appears to be too special and particular to permit the development or creation of any literary product that will take rank with the millennial works of the past. The few great books that have touched the cosmic levels in our days are scouted

by the majority of readers. The narrow applications and investigations which are such a virtue in the pursuit of physical science become vicious in the realms of religion and art. Each generation, however, settles its own standards, and gains such skill as may be had in the game of life as modified by its own artificial rules and conditions. The principles of war remain the same whether it be waged with the balista or the cannon, the spear or the bayonet, the arrow or the bullet. The laws of chastity and continence are operative whether the social system permit the patriarchal concubinage, the polygamy of Islam, or the prostitution of Christendom.

The leader of a humanitarian organization recently wished "for a whirlwind, a cyclone, to sweep away the debris of literature which has accumulated for ages." The sentiment seems narrow. "False learning is rejected by the wise and scattered to the winds by the good law." We can trust Nature not to permit any accumulations that are unnecessary.

The only books that endure are those which reflect the everlasting wisdom of the righteous Book of The Law, the stern Book of Judgment, the gracious Book of Nature, and the glorious Book of Life.

The world has never lacked those who bring such books into being. Whether it be the Hindu turning to Krishna, the Buddhist to Gautama, the Moslem to Mahomet, the Christian to Jesus, or the western thinker to the latest Poet and Answerer, the chronicles of humanity indicate that he who