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MARS.

The chief astronomer at Harvard University has committed himself unreservedly to the statement that the planet Mars is inhabited by creatures of great intelligence and wonderful achievement in the way of engineering works and the solution of social problems. He thinks this is as well proved as it can be, without our absolutely seeing the beings themselves. The installation of high-powered telescopes in the clear atmosphere of the desert regions of America has permitted a nicety of observation which was impossible when observatories were confined to the lower levels, where there was more or less moisture in the air. The professor referred to has devoted a great deal of attention to those markings on the face of Mars which are known as the canals. All astronomers, strange to say, are not able to see these canals even though they look through the same telescopes. Some have sought in vain to distinguish them; others have seen them only in an obscure way; but no one disputes the fact that they are there, and so many indications have been made of their existence that their general distribution is accurately known. In discussing these markings are, the first step necessary is to eliminate any probability of their being due to natural causes. It has been demonstrated beyond doubt that natural cracks or fissures in the surface of a body like the earth or Mars would be marked by great irregularity and only very rarely would be straight for any considerable distance. But the markings on Mars are in some cases three and four thousand miles long, and apparently as straight as an arrow for their entire length. They are arranged according to a system, which resembles in its general features the canals of Holland, and if they are the result of natural causes, the conditions existing on that planet must be radically different from what they are on earth. The suggestion which finds acceptance among contemporary astronomers is that these canals are gigantic irrigation ditches. The ruddy light of Mars is thought to be due to the fact of the greater part of its surface being desert. Seen through a telescope there are wide tracts on the planet which resemble the arid regions of America when viewed from a distance, and the argument is that, as this ruddy light is reflected from deserts on the earth, we are justified in inferring that this characteristic feature of Mars is due to a similar cause. But Mars is not all ruddy. Over the equatorial and what would correspond to our north and south polar zones, it is thought that there is no rain, but at the poles every year, that is every year in the calendar of Mars, snow accumulates in large quantities, as is shown by the fact that when the snow begins to melt the canals become more conspicuous, and the land bordering them becomes green in color, turning to a deep brown in winter approaches. This is thought to establish the fact that the canals are used for irrigation and that the inhabitants of Mars are dependent for food upon the crops grown in the canal zones.

The magnitude of these works, if you are, is something very far beyond anything that has been achieved on the earth. The canals measure many thousands of miles in length and it has been estimated that they must be at least two hundred feet wide, perhaps very much more, in order to make them visible even in our most powerful telescopes. They all seem to form a part of one great system from which the water is carried to the various canals. It is argued either that the inhabitants of Mars are all under one government, or else they have advanced so far in civilization as to have learned the folly of war and to be willing to work together harmoniously for the promotion of the general good. Granting that these canals are artificial, there seems to be no doubt that the conclusion that they are the work of beings of superior intelligence. This is not a matter of surprise. Mars is older than the earth, perhaps not measured by years, but measured by geological epochs. It has reached a stage which the earth will not attain for a long time, and to assume that intelligent beings there, if there are any, have progressed much further than we have, is not more unreasonable than to suppose that some day in the future we will have learned the folly of national distinctions, the setting up of divergent interests and the refusal to co-operate for the advancement of those things which are for the betterment of mankind in general.

This is about as far as our astronomer feels safe in going. He does not venture to suggest what sort of beings live on Mars. Naturally we associate the ability to plan and carry out great works with great intellect, and it is not surprising that the Martians, if they are any such people, are like ourselves in that respect. If we should see a Martian he might be as great a source of wonder to us as we should be to him, so that if you are disposed to give your finer nature, there is no particular reason why you should not be in the nearest neighbors in the solar system being quite different from us in very many essential particulars. It is difficult to suggest any valid reason for supposing that in all the myriads of stars scattered throughout the universe is filled, the relatively few that are in our neighborhood will be of a comparatively easy Providence.

ings. Time was when theologians would not tolerate a suggestion that other worlds might be inhabited. It interfered with too many of their theories. But in this respect, as in many others, the theology of the schools will have to recede itself, to be content to be written down as too absurd for acceptance by intelligent, unprejudiced men.

THE GOSPEL OF THE WEST.

"For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone,
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of the singing of birds is come,
Arise, my fair one, my dove,
And come."

It is nearly two thousand years now since the angels brought us the message, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy," and for two thousand years, we, the most of us, have looked upon the gospel of Christ more as a sorrowful than as a joyful thing. Over and over again we are reminded that Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that he lived a life of bitterness and disappointment because of our transgressions; that his death at the last was the climax of a tragedy that history before or since cannot parallel; that we are, one and all of us, sinners, miserable, despicable sinners, and that we are approaching God's footstool upon holy days with hearts ashamed and tears of repentance. A few years ago there were a great many people who thought that all this was the expression of the evil one within us. There are many and women yet who believe this, and who even smile upon the Sabbath as if they had committed a very black crime indeed. The gospels give us a history of the life of Christ, but perhaps they do not give us a fair idea of his character. Surely to one who was given the power of healing the sick and the blind to see, life must have been full of sweetness and immeasurable satisfaction. It is true he was betrayed by one and denied by another of his friends, but there were many who loved him and were true to him, and followed him in the light of his smile, and followed him steadfastly to the end. He whom children unquestionably accepted must have been thrilled to the heart many times with the tender joy that only the love of little children can bring. He who was so often comforted by the broken in heart, and raised the degraded from depths of immortality must have been lifted to the very sublimest heights of happiness. Besides, if we accept all that is told of him, our Saviour must have been a man of magnificent physique, strength and power, and a man of great beauty. And at the last we, who have lived and known the very fulness of life, know too that we close our eyes only to open them again upon the never-ending springtime of God's Bye and Bye.

N. de B. L.

Surely it is better to think that as his burden of sorrow was heavy, so was his joy in living the greater, and even his death was not all unhappy when he must have realized that the principles for which he died embodied a gospel that was to bring light and happiness to all God's children.

"Good tidings of great joy," the angels sang them at our Saviour's birth and the angels are bringing us the message today. At night the stars are twinkling. By day the white hills are smiling; and ever and ever the sea is beginning to sing. It is the glad tidings of great joy." We in the west are on the threshold of things. We are young, even the oldest of us. Our hearts beat high, and our hopes are in the ascendant. The world out here is ours for the making. Our possibilities are unlimited. We are at the beginning of a new year, a new year that is full of promise—A new year that means the wonderful springtime, with the lilacs thick under the oak trees, the low hills golden with broom, the daisied and buttercupped grass and the resolute smile of the leafless trees; a new year that means the autumn and the wonderful harvest of fruit and grain; a new year that means the winter with its days of grand storm, the mighty wind and the drenching rain sweep in from the ocean, and over the land, and cleanse the earth and the air and the very thoughts of us until we feel a kinship to the beautiful clear days that come after the storm, when the mountains, rainbow-tinted, reflect the smile of the skies, and the sun in setting fills the whole world with glorious loveliness.

"Glad tidings of great joy." There is another good thing that the West teaches and that is the joy of growing old. For the most part we have been taught to believe that happiness is an especial possession of youth. "Enjoy your selves now, my dears," we have been told, when as they were young they go off to the wars, or to the sea, or to the mines, or to the plantations. He never expects that the children will be any more than the up-side-downness of life. "Enjoy yourselves now, these are your happiest days." Perhaps we were a little agitated at the time, feeling that the future would be very black indeed if it were much more than the present. But the worst of childhood often looks larger and blacker than any of those that come in after years. But what happiness does not last until old age, and indeed until the very end of things, is an exploded theory. We have all of us felt the enraptured rapture that comes to us now and then in the springtime of life. The world is a mystery to us,

a wonderful enchanting mystery. We are on the brink of the river where womanhood or manhood or childhood meet. There is a shining, fairy light over the coming year and presently we are going to lift the veil and see marvelous things; presently we are going to walk along that erstwhile hidden path and do great and glorious deeds. Looking back later, we realize that life was very beautiful then, and that God was very near us, then, and that what after all were our imaginations to the wonderful glorious fulfillment of our dreams. It is always so in God's world the realization is never less and often greater than the promise. If life is full to us as children, it is clearer far when the grow older and learn to love. If life is beautiful to us when we call "halve our griefs and double our joys" with the man or woman whom we believe has made for us, it is not infinitely more precious when we have learned to know the touch of our babies' arms and to listen for the patter of their little feet. And afterwards when we live our own years over again in our children what can equal the blessedness and the completeness of life? The pleasure that went with the realization of our own ambition in earlier days, was a pale satisfaction beside the intense pride we feel, as parents, in the success our sons and daughters win for themselves.

As the years go by to those who desire it so, the heart of one who is constantly enlarging, the sphere of one's influence is more wide-spreading. Added years mean added hopes. Perhaps all these truths are not so readily credible to men and women in the more crowded portions of the world, where the life-giving sunlight is shut away by the walls of great buildings and the black smoke of ever-vomiting chimneys. Perhaps to those who have never watched for the unfolding of the flowers in the springtime, nor listened to the glad laugh of the waterfalls that race down the hillside to the sea, nor smelt the pinny breath of the wind among the timber lands, perhaps to these unfortunates with the weight of years, the heart grows heavy also. But it is not so with us. No matter how many years pass over us, we of the west must always be young for the spirit of the west is the spirit of youth, and it is a spirit that is all-pervading and all-embracing. The Gospel that the West teaches is a gospel of joy, and there is no room in a gospel of joy, for useless repining and regret. There is room only for thanksgiving and praise and thanksgiving. And at the last we, who have lived and known the very fulness of life, know too that we close our eyes only to open them again upon the never-ending springtime of God's Bye and Bye.

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As the years go by to those who desire it so, the heart of one who is constantly enlarging, the sphere of one's influence is more wide-spreading. Added years mean added hopes. Perhaps all these truths are not so readily credible to men and women in the more crowded portions of the world, where the life-giving sunlight is shut away by the walls of great buildings and the black smoke of ever-vomiting chimneys. Perhaps to those who have never watched for the unfolding of the flowers in the springtime, nor listened to the glad laugh of the waterfalls that race down the hillside to the sea, nor smelt the pinny breath of the wind among the timber lands, perhaps to these unfortunates with the weight of years, the heart grows heavy also. But it is not so with us. No matter how many years pass over us, we of the west must always be young for the spirit of the west is the spirit of youth, and it is a spirit that is all-pervading and all-embracing. The Gospel that the West teaches is a gospel of joy, and there is no room in a gospel of joy, for useless repining and regret. There is room only for thanksgiving and praise and thanksgiving. And at the last we, who have lived and known the very fulness of life, know too that we close our eyes only to open them again upon the never-ending springtime of God's Bye and Bye.

N. de B. L.

Surely it is better to think that as his burden of sorrow was heavy, so was his joy in living the greater, and even his death was not all unhappy when he must have realized that the principles for which he died embodied a gospel that was to bring light and happiness to all God's children.

"Good tidings of great joy," the angels sang them at our Saviour's birth and the angels are bringing us the message today. At night the stars are twinkling. By day the white hills are smiling; and ever and ever the sea is beginning to sing. It is the glad tidings of great joy." We in the west are on the threshold of things. We are young, even the oldest of us. Our hearts beat high, and our hopes are in the ascendant. The world out here is ours for the making. Our possibilities are unlimited. We are at the beginning of a new year, a new year that is full of promise—A new year that means the wonderful springtime, with the lilacs thick under the oak trees, the low hills golden with broom, the daisied and buttercupped grass and the resolute smile of the leafless trees; a new year that means the autumn and the wonderful harvest of fruit and grain; a new year that means the winter with its days of grand storm, the mighty wind and the drenching rain sweep in from the ocean, and over the land, and cleanse the earth and the air and the very thoughts of us until we feel a kinship to the beautiful clear days that come after the storm, when the mountains, rainbow-tinted, reflect the smile of the skies, and the sun in setting fills the whole world with glorious loveliness.

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