

LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

THE CREATION

Introductory Remarks

Of the visions of her childhood Sister Emmerich tells us: When in my sixth year I reflected on the first article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth," there passed before my soul innumerable pictures of the creation of Heaven and earth. I saw the Fall of the angels, the creation of the earth and Paradise, that of Adam and Eve, and the Fall of man. I thought everyone saw this as we do other things around us, and I spoke of it freely to my parents, brothers, sisters, and playmates. But they laughed at me. They asked me whether I had a book containing all these things, and so I began to keep silence concerning them. I thought, though without much reflection, that perhaps it was not proper to speak on such subjects.

I had these visions by night and by day, in the fields, in the house, sitting or walking, and when engaged in all kinds of employments. One day at school, I happened to speak of the Resurrection, describing it differently from what we had been taught. I felt certain that everyone knew it just as I did. I did not dream that there was anything peculiar in my account of it. But the children gazed at me in wonder and laughed, while the master reproved me gravely, and warned me not to indulge such imaginations.

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My visions continued, but I kept them to myself. I was like a child looking at a picture book, explaining the pictures in its own way, but not thinking much about their meaning. They represented the saints or scenes from Sacred History, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another. They produced no change in my faith, they were merely my picture book. I gazed upon them quietly and always with the good thought: All to the greater glory of God! In spiritual things, I have never put faith in anything but what God the Lord has revealed to the Catholic Church for our belief, whether it be written or not. I have never believed so firmly what I have seen in vision. I looked upon the latter as I devoutly regard, here and there, the various Cribs at Christmas. I feel no annoyance at their difference in style, for in each I adore the same dear little Infant Jesus. And so it is with those pictures of the creation of Heaven, earth, and man. In them I adore God the Lord, the Almighty Creator of Heaven and earth.

1. Fall of the Angels

I saw spreading out before me a boundless, resplendent space, above which floated a globe of light shining like a sun. I felt that It was the Unity of the Trinity. In my own mind, I named It the ONE VOICE, and I watched It producing Its effects. Below the globe of light arose concentric circles of radiant choirs of spirits, wondrously bright and strong and beautiful. This second world of light floated like a sun under that higher Sun.

These choirs came forth from the higher Sun, as if born of love. Suddenly I saw some of them pause, rapt in the contemplation of their own beauty. They took complacency in self, they sought the highest beauty in self, they thought but of self, they existed but in self.

At first all were lost in contemplation out of self,

but soon some of them rested in self. At that instant, I saw this part of the glittering choirs hurled down, their beauty sunk in darkness, while the others, thronging quickly together, filled up their vacant places. And now the good angels occupied a smaller space. I did not see them leaving their places to pursue and combat the fallen choirs. The bad angels rested in self and fell away, while those that did not follow their example thronged into their vacant places. All this was instantaneous.

Then rising from below, I saw a dark disc, the future abode of the fallen spirits. I saw that they took possession of it against their will. It was much smaller than the sphere from which they had fallen, and they appeared to me to be closely crowded together.

I saw the Fall of the angels in my childhood and ever after, day and night, I dreaded their influence. I thought they must do great harm to the earth, for they are always around it. It is well they have no bodies, else they would obscure the light of the sun. We should see them floating around us like shadows.

Immediately after the Fall, I saw the spirits in the shining circles humbling themselves before God. They did homage to Him and implored pardon for the fallen angels.

At that moment I saw a movement in the luminous sphere in which God dwelt. Until then it had been motionless and, as I felt, awaiting that prayer.

After that action on the part of the angelic choirs, I felt assured that they would remain steadfast, that they would never fall away. It was made known to me that God in His judgment, in His eternal sentence against the rebel angels, decreed the reign of strife until their vacant thrones are filled. But to fill those thrones seemed to me almost impossible, for it would take so long. The strife will, however, be upon the earth. There will be no strife above, for God has so ordained.

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After I had received this assurance, I could no longer sympathize with Lucifer, for I saw that he had cast himself down by his own free, wicked will. Neither could I feel such anger against Adam. On the contrary, I felt great sympathy for him because I thought: It has been thus ordained.

2. Creation of the Earth

Immediately after the prayer of the faithful choirs and that movement in the Godhead, I saw below me, not far from and to the right of the world of shadows, another dark globe arise.

I fixed my eyes steadily upon it. I beheld it as if in movement, growing larger and larger, as it were, bright spots breaking out upon it and encircling it like luminous bands. Here and there, they stretched out into brighter, broader plains, and at that moment I saw the form of the land setting boundaries to the water. In the bright places I saw a movement as of life, and on the land I beheld vegetation springing forth and myriads of living things arising. Child that I was, I fancied the plants were moving about.

Up to this moment, there was only a gray light like the sunrise, like early morn breaking over the earth, like nature awakening from sleep.

And now all other parts of the picture faded. The sky became blue, the sun burst forth, but I saw only one part of the earth lighted up and shining. That spot was charming, glorious, and I thought: There's Paradise!

While these changes were going on upon the dark globe, I saw, as it were, a streaming forth of light out of that highest of all the spheres, the God-sphere, that sphere in which God dwelt.

It was as if the sun rose higher in the heavens, as if bright morning were awakening. It was the first morning. No created being had any knowledge of it, and it seemed as if all those created things had been

there forever in their unsullied innocence. As the sun rose higher, I saw the plants and trees growing larger and larger. The waters became clearer and holier, colors grew purer and brighter—all was unspeakably charming. Creation was not then as it is now. Plants and flowers and trees had other forms. They are wild and misshapen now compared with what they were, for all things are now thoroughly degenerate.

When looking at the plants and fruits of our gardens, apricots, for instance, which in southern climes are, as I have seen, so different from ours, so large, magnificent, and delicious, I often think: As miserable as are our fruits compared with those of the South, are the latter when compared with the fruits of Paradise. I saw there roses, white and red, and I thought them symbols of Christ's Passion and our Redemption. I saw also palm trees and others, high and spreading which cast their branches afar, as if forming roofs.

Before the sun appeared, earthly things were puny; but in his beams they gradually increased in size, until they attained full growth.

The trees did not stand close together. Of all plants, at least of the largest, I saw only one of each kind, and they stood apart like seedlings set out in a garden bed. Vegetation was luxuriant, perfectly green, of a species pure, sound, and exempt from decay. Nothing appeared to receive or to need the attention of an earthly gardener. I thought: How is it that all is so beautiful, since as yet there are no human beings! Ah! Sin has not yet entered. There has been no destruction, no rending asunder. All is sound, all is holy. As yet there has been no healing, no repairing. All is pure, nothing has needed purification.

The plain that I beheld was gently undulating and covered with vegetation. In its center rose a fountain, from all sides of which flowed streams, crossing one another and mingling their waters. I saw in

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them first a slight movement as of life, and then I saw living things. After that I saw, here and there among the shrubs and bushes, animals peeping forth, as if just roused from sleep. They were very different from those of a later day, not at all timorous. Compared with those of our own time, they were almost as far their superior as men are superior to beasts. They were pure and noble, nimble, and joyous. Words cannot describe them. I was not familiar with many of them, for I saw very few like those we have now. I saw the elephant, the stag, the camel, and even the unicorn. This last I saw also in the ark. It is remarkably gentle and affectionate, not so tall as a horse, its head more rounded in shape. I saw no asses, no insects, no wretched, loathsome creatures. These last I have always looked upon as a punishment of sin. But I saw myriads of birds and heard the sweetest notes as in the early morning. There were no birds of prey that I could see, nor did I hear any animals bellowing.

Paradise is still in existence, but it is utterly impossible for man to reach it. I have seen that it still exists in all its splendor. It is high above the earth and in an oblique direction from it, like the dark globe of the angels fallen from Heaven.

3. Adam and Eve

I saw Adam created, not in Paradise, but in the region in which Jerusalem was subsequently situated. I saw him come forth glittering and white from a mound of yellow earth, as if out of a mold. The sun was shining and I thought (I was only a child when I saw it) that the sunbeams drew Adam out of the hillock. He was, as it were, born of the virgin earth. God blessed the earth, and it became his mother. He did not instantly step forth from the earth. Some time elapsed before his appearance. He lay in the hillock on his left side, his arm thrown

over his head, a light vapor covering him as with a veil. I saw a figure in his right side, and I became conscious that it was Eve, and that she would be drawn from him in Paradise by God. God called him. The hillock opened, and Adam stepped gently forth. There were no trees around, only little flowers. I had seen the animals also, coming forth from the earth in pure singleness, the females separate from the males.

And now I saw Adam borne up on high to a garden, to Paradise.

God led all the animals before him in Paradise, and he named them. They followed him and gamboled around him, for all things served him before he sinned. All that he named, afterward followed him to earth. Eve had not yet been formed from him.

I saw Adam in Paradise among the plants and flowers, and not far from the fountain that played in its center. He was awaking, as if from sleep. Although his person was more like to flesh than to spirit, yet he was dazzlingly white. He wondered at nothing, nor was he astonished at his own existence. He went around among the trees and the animals, as if he were used to them all, like a man inspecting his fields.

Near the tree by the water arose a hill. On it I saw Adam reclining on his left side, his left hand under his cheek. God sent a deep sleep on him and he was rapt in vision. Then from his right side, from the same place in which the side of Jesus was opened by the lance, God drew Eve. I saw her small and delicate. But she quickly increased in size until full grown. She was exquisitely beautiful. Were it not for the Fall, all would be born in the same way, in tranquil slumber.

The hill opened, and at Adam's side arose a crystalline rock, formed apparently of precious stones. At Eve's, lay a white valley covered with something like fine white pollen.

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When Eve had been formed, I saw that God gave something, or allowed something to flow upon Adam. It was as if there streamed from the Godhead, apparently in human form, currents of light from forehead, mouth, breast, and hands. They united into a globe of light, which entered Adam's right side whence Eve had been taken. Adam alone received it. It was the germ of God's Blessing, which was threefold. The Blessing that Abraham received from the angel was one. It was of similar form, but not so luminous. Eve arose before Adam, and he gave her his hand. They were like two unspeakably noble and beautiful children, perfectly luminous, and clothed with beams of light as with a veil. From Adam's mouth I saw issuing a broad stream of glittering light, and upon his forehead was an expression of great majesty. Around his mouth played a sunbeam, but there was none around Eve's. I saw Adam's heart very much the same as in men of the present day, but his breast was surrounded by rays of light. In the middle of his heart, I saw a sparkling halo of glory. In it was a tiny figure as if holding something in its hand. I think it symbolized the Third Person of the Godhead. From the hands and feet of Adam and Eve, shot rays of light. Their hair fell in five glittering tresses, two from the temples, two behind the ears, and one from the back of the head.

I have always thought that by the Wounds of Jesus there were opened anew in the human body portals closed by Adam's sin. I have been given to understand that Longinus opened in Jesus' Side the gate of regeneration to eternal life, therefore no one entered Heaven while that gate was closed.

The glittering beams on Adam's head denoted his abundant fruitfulness, his glory, his connection with other radiations. And all this shining beauty is restored to glorified souls and bodies. Our hair is the ruined, the extinct glory; and as is this hair of ours to rays of light, so is our present flesh to that

of Adam before the Fall. The sunbeams around Adam's mouth bore reference to a holy posterity from God, which, had it not been for the Fall, would have been effectuated by the spoken word.

Adam stretched forth his hand to Eve. They left the charming spot of Eve's creation and went through Paradise, looking at everything, rejoicing in everything. That place was the highest in Paradise. All was more radiant, more resplendent there than elsewhere.

4. The Tree of Life and The Tree of Knowledge

In the center of the glittering garden, I saw a sheet of water in which lay an island connected with the opposite land by a pier. Both island and pier were covered with beautiful trees, but in the middle of the former stood one more magnificent than the others. It towered high over them as if guarding them. Its roots extended over the whole island as did also its branches, which were broad below and tapering to a point above. Its boughs were horizontal, and from them arose others like little trees. The leaves were fine, the fruit yellow and sessile in a leafy calyx like a budding rose. It was something like a cedar. I do not remember ever having seen Adam, Eve, or any animal near that tree on the island. But I saw beautiful noble-looking white birds and heard them singing in its branches. That Tree was the Tree of Life.

Just before the pier that led to the island, stood the Tree of Knowledge. The trunk was scaly like that of the palm. The leaves, which spread out directly from the stem, were very large and broad, in shape like the sole of a shoe. Hidden in the forepart of the leaves, hung the fruit clustering in fives, one in front, and four around the stem. The yellow fruit had something of the shape of an apple, though more of the nature of a pear or fig. It had five ribs uniting in a

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little cavity. It was pulpy like a fig inside, of the color of brown sugar, and streaked with blood-red veins. The tree was broader above than below, and its branches struck deep roots into the ground. I see a species of this tree still in warm countries. Its branches throw down shoots to the earth where they root and rise as new trunks. These in turn send forth branches, and so one such tree often covers a large tract of country. Whole families dwell under the dense foliage.

At some distance to the right of the Tree of Knowledge, I saw a small, oval, gently sloping hill of glittering red grains and all kinds of precious stones. It was terraced with crystals. Around it were slender trees just high enough to intercept the view. Plants and herbs grew around it and they, like the trees, bore colored blossoms and nutritious fruits.

At some distance to the left of the Tree of Knowledge, I saw a slope, a little dale. It looked like soft clay, or like mist, and it was covered with tiny white flowers and pollen. Here too were various kinds of vegetation, but all colorless, more like pollen than fruit.

It seemed as if these two, the hill and the dale, bore some reference to each other, as if the hill had been taken out of the dale, or as if something from the former was to be transplanted into the latter. They were to each other what the seed is to the field. Both seemed to me holy, and I saw that both, but especially the hill, shone with light. Between them and the Tree of Knowledge arose different kinds of trees and bushes. They were all, like everything else in nature, transparent as if formed of light.

These two places were the abodes of our first parents. The Tree of Knowledge separated them. I think that God, after the creation of Eve, pointed out those places to them.

I saw that Adam and Eve were little together at first. I saw them perfectly free from passion, each

in a separate abode. The animals were indescribably noble-looking and resplendent, and they served Adam and Eve. All had, according to their kind, certain retreats, abodes, and walks apart. The different spheres contained in themselves some great mystery of the Divine Law, and all were connected with one another.

Sin and Its Consequences

1. The Fall

I saw Adam and Eve walking through Paradise for the first time. The animals ran to meet and follow them, but they appeared to be more familiar with Eve than with Adam. Eve was in fact more taken up with the earth and created things. She glanced below and around more frequently than Adam. She appeared the more inquisitive of the two. Adam was more silent, more absorbed in God. Among the animals was one that followed Eve more closely than the others, It was a singularly gentle and winning, though artful creature. I know of none other to which I might compare it. It was slender and glossy, and it looked as if it had no bones. It walked upright on its short hind feet, its pointed tail trailing on the ground. Near the head, which was round with a face exceedingly shrewd, it had little short paws, and its wily tongue was ever in motion. The color of the neck, breast, and under part of the body was pale yellow, and down the back it was a mottled brown very much the same as an eel. It was about as tall as a child of ten years. It was constantly around Eve, and so coaxing and intelligent, so nimble and supple that she took great delight in it. But to me there was something horrible about it. I can see it distinctly even now. I never saw it touch either Adam or Eve. Before the Fall, the distance between man and the lower animals was great, and I never saw the first human beings touch any of them. They had, it is true, more confidence in man, but they kept at a certain distance from him.

When Adam and Eve returned to the region of shining light, a radiant Figure like a majestic man with glittering white hair stood before them. He

pointed around, and in few words appeared to be giving all things over to them and to be commanding them something. They did not look intimidated, but listened to him naturally. When he vanished, they appeared more satisfied, more happy. They appeared to understand things better, to find more order in things, for now they felt gratitude, but Adam more than Eve. She thought more of their actual bliss and of the things around them than of thanking for them. She did not rest in God so perfectly as did Adam, her soul was more taken up with created things. I think Adam and Eve went around Paradise three times.

Again I saw Adam on the shining hill upon which God had formed the woman from a rib of his side as he lay buried in sleep. He stood alone under the trees lost in gratitude and wonder. I saw Eve near the Tree of Knowledge, as if about to pass it, and with her that same animal more wily and sportive than ever. Eve was charmed with the serpent; she took great delight in it. It ran up the Tree of Knowledge until its head was on a line with hers. Then clinging to the trunk with its hind feet, it moved its head toward hers and told her that, if she would eat of the fruit of that tree, she would no longer be in servitude, she would become free, and understand how the multiplication of the human race was to be effected. Adam and Eve had already received the command to increase and multiply, but I understood that they did not know as yet how God willed it to be brought about. I saw, too, that had they known it and yet sinned after that knowledge, Redemption would not have been possible. Eve now became more thoughtful. She appeared to be moved by desire for what the serpent had promised. Something degrading took possession of her. It made me feel anxious. She glanced toward Adam, who was still quietly standing under the trees. She called him, and he came.

Eve started to meet him, but turned back. There

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was a restlessness, a hesitancy about her movements. Again she started, as if intending to pass the tree, but once more hesitated, approached it from the left, and stood behind it, screened by its long, pendent leaves. The tree was broader above than below, and its wide, leafy branches drooped to the ground. Just within Eve's reach hung a remarkably fine bunch of fruit.

And now Adam approached. Eve caught him by the arm and pointed to the talking animal, and he listened to its words. When Eve laid her hand on Adam's arm, she touched him for the first time. He did not touch her, but the splendor around them grew dim.

I saw the animal pointing to the fruit, but he did not venture to snap it off for Eve. But when the longing for it arose in her heart, he broke off and handed her the central and most beautiful piece of the clustering five.

And now I saw Eve draw near to Adam, and offer him the fruit. Had he refused it, sin would not have been committed. I saw the fruit break, as it were, in Adam's hand. He saw pictures in it, and it was as if he and Eve were instructed upon what they should not have known. The interior of the fruit was blood-red and full of veins. I saw Adam and Eve losing their brilliancy and diminishing in stature. It was as if the sun went down. The animal glided down the tree, and I saw it running off on all fours.

I did not see the fruit taken into the mouth as we now take food in eating, but it disappeared between Adam and Eve.

I saw that while the serpent was still in the tree, Eve sinned, for her consent was with the temptation. I learned also at that moment what I cannot clearly repeat; namely, that the serpent was, as it were, the embodiment of Adam and Eve's will, a being by which they could do all things, could attain all things. Here it was that Satan entered.

Sin was not completed by eating the forbidden fruit. But that fruit from the tree which, rooting its

branches in the earth thus sent out new shoots, and which continued to do the same after the Fall, conveyed the idea of a more absolute propagation, a sensual implanting in self at the cost of separation from God. So, along with disobedience, there sprang from their indulgence that severing of the creature from God, that planting in self and through self, and those selfish passions in human nature. He that uses the fruit solely for the enjoyment it affords, must accept as the consequence of his act the subversion, the debasement of nature as well as sin and death.

The blessing of a pure and holy multiplying out of God and by God, which Adam had received after the creation of Eve was, in consequence of that indulgence, withdrawn from him; for I saw that the instant Adam left his hill to go to Eve, the Lord grasped him in the back and took something from him. From that *something*, I felt that the world's salvation would come.

Once on the Feast of the Holy and Immaculate Conception, God gave me a vision of that mystery. I saw enclosed in Adam and Eve the corporal and spiritual life of all mankind. I saw that by the Fall it became corrupted, mixed up with evil, and that the bad angels had acquired power over it. I saw the Second Person of the Godhead come down and, with something like a crooked blade, take the Blessing from Adam before he had sinned. At the same instant, I saw the Virgin issuing from Adam's side like a little luminous cloud, and soaring all resplendent up to God.

By the reception of the fruit, Adam and Eve became, as it were, intoxicated, and their consent to sin wrought in them a great change. It was the serpent in them. Its nature pervaded theirs, and then came the tares among the wheat.

As punishment and reparation, circumcision was instituted. As the vine is pruned that it may not run wild, may not become sour and unfruitful, so must it be done to man that he may regain his lost perfection.

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Once when the reparation of the Fall was shown me in symbolical pictures, I saw Eve in the act of issuing from Adam's side, and even then stretching out her neck after the forbidden fruit. She ran quickly to the tree and clasped it in her arms. In an opposite picture, I saw Jesus born of the Immaculate Virgin. He ran straight to the Cross and embraced it. I saw posterity obscured and ruined by Eve, but again purified by the Passion of Jesus. By the pains of penance must the evil love of self be rooted out of the flesh. The word of the Epistle that the son of the handmaid shall not be joint heir, I always understood to mean the flesh and slavish subjection thereto, typified under the figure of the handmaid. Marriage is a state of penance. It calls for prayer, fasting, alms deeds, renunciation, and the intention to increase the Kingdom of God.

Adam and Eve before sin were very differently constituted from what we, poor, miserable creatures now are. With the reception of the forbidden fruit, they imbibed a material existence. Spirit became matter; flesh, an instrument, a vessel. At first they were one in God, they sought self in God; but afterward they stood apart from God in their own will. And this self-will is self-seeking, a lusting after sin and impurity. By eating the forbidden fruit, man turned away from his Creator. It was as if he drew creation into himself. All creative power, operations, and attributes, their commingling with one another and with all nature, became in man material things of different forms and functions.

Once man was endowed with the kingship of nature, but now all in him has become nature. He is now one of its slaves, a master conquered and fettered. He must now struggle and fight with nature—but I cannot clearly express it. It was as if man once possessed all things in God, their Creator and their Center; but now he made himself their center, and they became his master.

I saw the interior, the organs of man as if in the flesh, in corporeal, corruptible images of creatures, as well as their relations with one another, from the stars down to the tiniest living thing. All exert an influence on man. He is connected with all of them; he must act and struggle against them, and from them suffer. But I cannot express it clearly since I, too, am a member of the fallen race.

Man was created to fill the choirs of the fallen angels. Were it not for the Fall of Adam, the human race would have increased only till the number of the fallen angels was reached, and then the world would have come to an end. Had Adam and Eve lived to see even one sinless generation, they would not have fallen. I am certain that the world will last until the number of the fallen angels has been filled, until the wheat shall have been reaped from the chaff.

Once I had a great and connected vision of sin and the whole plan of Redemption. I saw all mysteries clearly and distinctly, but it is impossible for me to put all into words. I saw sin in its innumerable ramifications from the Fall of the angels and from Adam's Fall down to the present day, and I saw all the preparations for the repairing and redeeming down to the coming and death of Jesus. Jesus showed me the extraordinary blending, the intrinsic uncleanness of all creatures, as well as all that He had done from the very beginning for their purification and restoration.

At the Fall of the angels, myriads of bad spirits descended to earth and into the air. I saw many creatures under the influence of their wrath, possessed by them in many ways.

The first man was an image of God, he was like Heaven; all was one in him, all was one with him. His form was a reproduction of the Divine Prototype. He was destined to possess and to enjoy earth and all created things, but holding them from God and giving thanks for them. Man was, however, free; therefore

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was he subjected to trial, therefore was he forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. In the beginning, all was smooth and level. When the little mound, the shining hill upon which Adam stood arose, when the white, blooming vale by which I saw Eve standing was hollowed out, the corruptor was already near.

After the Fall, all was changed. All forms of creation were produced in self, dissipated in self. What had been one became many, creatures no longer looked to God alone, each was concentrated in self.

Mankind at first numbered two, then three, and at last they became innumerable. They had been images of God; but after the Fall, they became images of self, which images originated in sin. Sin placed them in communication with the fallen angels. They sought all their good in self and the creatures around them with all of whom the fallen angels had connection; and from that interminable blending, that sinking of his noble faculties in self and in fallen nature, sprang manifold wickedness and misery.

My Affianced showed me this clearly, distinctly, intelligibly' more clearly than one beholds the things of daily life. At the time, I thought that a child might comprehend it, but now I cannot repeat it. He showed me the whole plan of Redemption with the way in which it was to be effected, as also all that He Himself had done. I saw that it is not right to say that God need not have become man, need not have died for us upon the Cross; that He could, by virtue of His omnipotence, have redeemed us otherwise. I saw that He did what He did in conformity with His own infinite perfection, His mercy, and His justice; that there is indeed no necessity in God, He does what He does, He is what He is!

I saw Melchisedech as an angel and a type of Jesus, as a priest upon the earth; inasmuch as the priesthood is in God, he was an angel priest of the eternal hierarchy. I saw him preparing, founding, building up, and separating the human family, and acting

toward them as a guide. I saw too, Enoch and Noe, what they represented, what they effected; on the other side, I saw the ever-active empire of Hell and the infinitely varied manifestations and effects of an earthly, carnal, diabolical idolatry. And I saw in all these manifestations similar pestiferous forms and figures leading, so to say, by a secret, inborn necessity and an uninterrupted process of dissolution to sin and corruption. In this manner, I saw sin and the prophetic, foreshadowing figures of Redemption which, in their way, were images of divine power as man himself in the image of God. All were shown me from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to the Prophets, also the way in which they were connected and their reference to similar types in our own day. Thus, for instance, with these visions of the Old Testament was connected the instruction I received upon the reason priests no longer relieve or cure, why it is either not in their power, or why it is now effected so differently from what it used to be. I saw this gift of the priesthood possessed by the Prophets, and the signification of the form under which it was exercised was shown me. I saw, for example, the history of Eliseus giving his staff to Giezi to lay upon the dead child of the Sunamitess. In this staff lay spiritually Eliseus's mission and power. It was, as it were, his arm, the prolongation of his arm. And here I saw the interior signification and power of a Bishop's crosier and a monarch's scepter. If used with faith, they unite both Bishop and monarch in a certain way with Him from whom they hold their dignity, with God, marking them out at the same time as distinct from all others. But Giezi's faith was not firm, and the mother thought that only through Eliseus himself could help be obtained; and so between Eliseus's power from God and his staff, the questionings of human presumption intervened, and the staff cured not. Then I saw Eliseus praying and stretching himself, hand to hand, mouth to mouth, breast to breast, upon the boy, and

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the soul of the boy returned to his body. It was explained to me that this manner of healing referred to and prefigured the death of Jesus. In Eliseus, by faith and the power conferred by God, were opened again in man all the avenues of grace and expiation that had been closed after the Fall: viz., the head, the breast, the hands, and the feet. Eliseus stretched himself as a living, symbolical cross upon the dead, closed cross of the boy's form, and through his prayer of faith life was restored. He expiated, he atoned for the sins the parents had committed by their head, heart, hands, and feet—sins that had brought death to their boy. Side by side with the above, I saw pictures of the Wounds of Jesus and of His death upon the Cross, by which I traced the harmony between Jesus and His Prophet. Since the Crucifixion of Jesus, the gift of healing and repairing has existed in full measure among the priests of His Church and in general among faithful Christians; for in the same proportion as we live in Him and are crucified with Him, are those avenues of grace, His Sacred Wounds, opened to us. I learned many things of the imposition of hands, the efficacy of a benediction, and the influence exerted by the hand, even at a distance—all was explained by the staff of Eliseus, which symbolized the hand. That priests of the present day so seldom cure and bless, was shown me in an example significant to that conformity to Jesus upon which depend all such effects. I saw three artists making figures of wax. The first used beautiful white wax, and he was both skillful and intelligent. But he was self-conceited, the image of Christ was not in him, and his work was of no value. The second used wax not so white as that of the first, and his indolence and self-will spoiled all. He did nothing at all. The third was awkward and unskillful; but he worked away in his simplicity and with great diligence on common yellow wax. His work was excellent, a speaking likeness, although the features were coarse. I saw

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renowned preachers vaunting their worldly wisdom, but effecting nothing; while many a poor, unlettered man exercises by the priestly power alone the gift of healing and blessing.

It seemed to me, while all this was shown me, that I was in school. My

Affianced made me see how He had suffered from His conception to His death, always expiating, always satisfying for sin. I saw this in distinct visions of His life. I saw too that, by prayer and the offering of sufferings for others, many souls that have done no good upon earth may be converted and saved at the hour of death.

I saw also that the Apostles were sent over the greater part of the earth to crush the power of Satan and to scatter benedictions. It was just those regions into which they went that had been most thoroughly infected by the evil one. Jesus, by His perfect atonement, acquired that power against Satan for such as had received or such as would receive His Holy Spirit, and He secured it to them forever. I was given to understand that the power to withdraw various regions of the earth from Satan's dominion by means of a blessing, is signified by the words: "Ye are the salt of the earth." For the same reason is salt one of the ingredients of holy water.

I saw, too, in this vision that the punctilios of sensual, worldly life are most scrupulously observed. I saw the malediction following the reversed blessing. I saw the pretended miracles in the kingdom of Satan. I saw that the worship of nature, superstition, magic, mesmerism, worldly arts and science, and all the means employed to smooth death over, to make sin attractive, to lull the conscience, are practiced with rigorous exactitude, even with fanaticism by the very men who regard the ceremonies of the Holy Church as superstitious forms, for which any other may be indifferently substituted. And yet these men subject their whole life and all their actions to certain ceremonious observances. It is only of the kingdom of

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the God-Man that they make no account. The world is served with perfection, but the service of God is shamefully neglected!

2. The Promise of the Redeemer

After the Fall of Man, God made known to the angels His plan for the restoration of the human race.

I saw the throne of God. I saw the Most Holy Trinity and a movement in the Divine Persons. I saw the nine choirs of angels and God announcing to them the way by which He would restore the fallen race. I saw the inexpressible joy and jubilation of the angels at the announcement.

I saw Adam's glittering rock of precious stones arise before the throne of God, as if borne up by angels. It had steps cut in it, it increased in size, it became a throne, a tower, and it extended on all sides until it embraced all things. I saw the nine choirs of angels around it, and above the angels in Heaven, I saw the image of the Virgin. It was not Mary in time; it was Mary in eternity, Mary in God. The Virgin entered the tower, which opened to receive her, and she appeared to become one with it. Then I saw issuing from the Most Holy Trinity an apparition which, likewise, went into the tower.

Among the angels, I noticed a kind of ostensorium at which all were working. It was in shape like a tower, and on it were all kinds of mysterious carving. Near it on either side stood two figures, their joined hands embracing it. At every instant it became larger and more magnificent. I saw something from God passing through the angelic choirs and going into the ostensorium. It was a shining Holy Thing, and it became more clearly defined the nearer it drew to the ostensorium. It appeared to me to be the germ of the divine Blessing for a pure offspring which had been given to Adam, but withdrawn when he was on the point of hearkening to Eve and consenting to eat

the forbidden fruit. It was the Blessing that was again bestowed upon Abraham, withdrawn from Jacob, by Moses deposited in the Ark of the Covenant, and lastly received by Joachim, the father of Mary, in order that Mary might be as pure and stainless in her Conception as was Eve upon coming forth from the side of the sleeping Adam. The ostensorium, likewise, went into the tower.

I saw too, a chalice prepared by the angels. It was of the same shape as that used at the Last Supper, and it also went into the tower. To the right of the tower, I saw, as if on the edge of a golden cloud, grapevines and wheat intertwining like the fingers of clasped hands. From them sprang a branch, a whole genealogical tree upon whose boughs were little figures of males and females reaching hands to one another. Its highest blossom was the Crib with the Child.

Then I saw in pictures the mystery of Redemption from the Promise down to the fullness of time, and in side pictures I saw counteracting influences at work. At last, over the shining rock, I saw a large and magnificent church. It was the One, Holy, Catholic Church, which bears living in itself the salvation of the whole world. The connection of these pictures one with another and their transition from one to another was wonderful. Even what was evil and opposed to the end in view, even what was rejected by the angels as unfit, was made subservient to the development of Redemption. And so, I saw the ancient Temple rising from below; it was very large and like a church, but it had no tower. It was pushed to one side by the angels, and there it stood slanting. I saw a great mussel shell¹ make its appearance and try to force its way into the old Temple; but it, too, was hurried aside.

I saw appear a broad, lopped-off tower² through whose numerous gateways figures like Abraham and

1. Symbol of pagan worship and mythology.

2. An Egyptian pyramid.

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the children of Israel entered. It was significant of their bondage in Egypt. It was shoved aside, as well as another Egyptian tower in staircase form. The latter was symbolical of astrology and soothsaying. Then appeared an Egyptian temple. It was pushed aside like the others, and remained standing crooked.

At last, I saw a vision on earth such as God had shown to Adam; viz., that a Virgin would arise and restore to him the salvation he had forfeited. Adam knew not when it would take place, and I saw his deep sadness because Eve bore him only sons. But at last she had a daughter.

I saw Noe and his sacrifice at the time in which he received from God the Blessing. Then I had visions of Abraham, of his Blessing, and of the promise of a son Isaac. I saw the Blessing descending from firstborn to firstborn, and always transmitted with a sacramental action. I saw Moses on the night of Israel's departure from Egypt, getting possession of the Mystery, the Holy Thing, of which none other knew save Aaron. I saw It afterward in the Ark of the Covenant. Only the High Priests and certain saints, by a revelation from God, had any knowledge of it. I saw the transmitting of this Mystery through the ancestry of Jesus Christ down to Joachim and Anne, the purest and holiest couple that ever existed, and from whom was born Mary, the spotless Virgin. And then I saw Mary becoming the living Ark of God's Covenant.

3. Adam and Eve Driven from Paradise

After some time, I saw Adam and Eve wandering about in great distress. They were no longer beaming with light, and they went about, one here, the other there, as if seeking something they had lost. They were ashamed of each other. Every step they took led them downward, as if the ground gave way beneath their feet. They carried gloom wherever they went; the plants lost their bright colors and turned

gray, and the animals fled before them. They sought large leaves and wove them into a cincture for their loins. They always wandered about separate.

After they had thus fled for a considerable time, the region of refulgent light whence they had come began to look like the summit of a distant mountain. Among the bushes of a gloomy-looking plain, they hid themselves, but apart. Then a voice from above called them, but they would not obey the call. They were frightened, they fled still further, and hid still deeper among the bushes. It made me sad to see that. But the voice became more imperative, and, in spite of their desire to flee and hide, they were compelled to come forth.

The majestic Figure shining with light again appeared. Adam and Eve with bowed head stepped from their hiding places, but they dared not look upon their Lord. They glanced at each other, and both acknowledged their guilt. And now God pointed out to them a plain still lower than the one on which they stood. On it were bushes and trees. On reaching it, they became humble, and for the first time, rightly understood their miserable condition. I saw them praying when left there alone. They separated, fell on their knees, and raised up their hands with tears and cries. I thought as I gazed upon them how good it is to be alone in prayer.

Adam and Eve were at this time clothed in a garment that reached from the shoulders to the knee, and which was girded at the waist by a strip of the inner bark of a tree.

While our first parents were descending lower and lower from the place of their creation, Paradise itself appeared, like a cloud, to be mounting higher and higher above them. Then a fiery ring, like the circle sometimes seen around the sun and moon, came down from Heaven and settled around the height upon which was Paradise.

Adam and Eve had been only one day in Paradise.

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I now see Paradise far, far off like a strip of land directly under the point of sunrise. When the sun rises, it mounts up from the right of that strip of land which lies east of the Prophet Mountain and just where the sun rises. It looks to me like an egg hanging over indescribably clear water which separates it from the earth. The Prophet Mountain is, as it were, a promontory rising up through that water. On that mountain, one sees extraordinarily verdant regions broken here and there by deep abysses and ravines full of water. I have, indeed, seen people climbing up the Prophet Mountain, but they did not go far.

I saw Adam and Eve reach the earth, their place of penance. Oh, what a touching sight—those two creatures expiating their fault upon the naked earth! Adam had been allowed to bring an olive branch with him from Paradise, and now he planted it. Later on, the Cross was made from its wood. Adam and Eve were unspeakably sad. Where I saw them, they could scarcely get a glimpse of Paradise, and they were constantly descending lower and lower. It seemed as if something revolved and they came at last, through night and darkness, to the wretched, miserable place upon which they had to do penance.

4. The Family of Adam

It was to the region of Mount Olivet that I saw Adam and Eve come. The country was very different from what it is at present, but I was assured that it was the same. I saw Adam and Eve living and doing penance on that part of Mount Olivet upon which Jesus sweat Blood. They cultivated the soil. I saw them surrounded by sons. They were in great distress, and they implored God to bestow upon them a daughter, for they had received the Promise that the woman's seed should crush the serpent's head.

Eve bore children at stated intervals. After each

birth a number of years was always devoted to penance. It was after seven years of penance that Seth, the child of promise, was born of Eve in the Grotto of the Crib, where, also, an angel announced to Eve that Seth was the seed given her by God in the place of Abel. For a long time, Seth was concealed in that Grotto, likewise in the cave in which Abraham was afterward suckled, for his brothers like those of Joseph sought his life.

Once I saw about twelve people: Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, two sisters, and some young children. All were clothed in skins thrown over their shoulders like a scapular and girded at the waist. The female dress was large and full around the breast where it served as a pocket. It fell down around the limbs, and was fastened at the sides and once under the arm. The men wore shorter dresses, which had a pocket fastened to them. The skins from which their dresses were made were, from the neck to the elbow, exceedingly fine and white. They all looked very noble and beautiful in their clothing. They had huts in those days, partly sunk in the earth and covered with plants. Their household was quite well-arranged. I saw orchards of low, but tolerably vigorous fruit trees. There was grain also, such as wheat, which God had given to Adam for seed.

I do not remember having seen either grapevines or wheat in Paradise. None of the productions of Paradise had to be prepared for eating. Such preparation is a consequence of sin and, therefore, a symbol of labor and suffering. God gave to Adam whatever it was necessary for him to sow. I remember having seen men who looked like angels, taking something to Noe when he went into the ark. It appeared to me to be a vine branch stuck in an apple.

A certain kind of grain grew wild at that time, and among it Adam had to sow the good wheat. That improved it for awhile, but it again degenerated and became worse and worse. The wild grain was excellent

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in those early times. It was most luxuriant further to the east, in India or China, where as yet there were but few inhabitants. It does not thrive where wine is largely made and fish abound.

The milk of animals was drunk in those days, and they likewise ate cheese dried in the sun. Among the animals, I noticed sheep in particular. All that Adam had named followed him from Paradise, but afterward they fled from him. He had to entice them back with food, that is the domestic animals, and familiarize them to himself. I saw birds hopping about, little animals running around, and all sorts of bounding creatures, such as antelopes, deer, etc.

The household order was quite patriarchal. I saw Adam's children in their separate huts, reclining around a stone at meals. I saw them also praying and giving thanks.

God had taught Adam to offer sacrifice; he was the priest in his family. Cain and Abel also were priests. I saw that even the preparations for their sacrifice took place in a separate hut.

On the head, they wore caps made of leaves and their stalks woven together. They were shaped like a ship and had a rim in front by which they could be raised from the head. Those first human beings had beautiful skin of a yellowish tinge, which shone like silk, and their hair was reddish-yellow like gold. Adam wore his hair long. His beard was short at first, but later he let it grow. Eve at first wore her long hair hanging around her; but later on she wound it around her head in a coil like a cap.

Fire I always saw like a hidden flame, and it appeared to be in the earth. It was given to man from Heaven, and God Himself taught him the use of it. They burned for fuel a yellow substance that looked like earth. I saw no cooking going on. In the beginning, the food was merely dried in the sun; and the wheat, after being crushed, was exposed under twisted covers to the heat of the sun to dry. God

gave them wheat, barley, and rye, and taught them how to cultivate them. He guided man in all things.

I saw no large rivers in the beginning as, for instance, the Jordan; but fountains sprang forth whose waters were conducted into reservoirs.

Flesh meat was not eaten before Abel's death.

I once had a vision of Mount Calvary. I saw on it a prophet, the companion of Elias. The mount was at that time full of caves and sepulchers. The prophet entered one of the caves and from a stone coffin filled with bones he took up the skull of Adam. Instantly an angel appeared before him, saying: "That is Adam's skull," and he forbade its removal. Scattered over the skull was some thin yellow hair. From the prophet's account of what had occurred, the spot was named "The Place of Skulls" (Calvary). Christ's Cross stood in a straight line above that skull at the time of His Crucifixion. I was interiorly instructed that the spot upon which the skull rests is the middle point of the earth. I was told the distance east, south, and west in numbers, but I have forgotten them.

5. Cain. The Children of God. The Giants

I saw that Cain conceived on Mount Olivet the design to murder Abel. After the deed, he wandered about the same spot frightened and distracted planting trees and tearing them up again. Then I saw a majestic Figure in the form of a man refulgent with light appear to him. "Cain," He said, "where is thy brother Abel?" Cain did not at first see the Figure; but when he did, he turned and answered: "I know not. He has not been given in charge to me." But when God replied that Abel's blood cried to Him from the earth, Cain grew more troubled, and I saw that he disputed long with God. God told him that he should be cursed upon the earth, that it should bring forth no fruit for him, and that he should forthwith flee from the land in which he then dwelt. Cain

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responded that everywhere his fellow men would seek to kill him. There were already many people upon the earth. Cain was very old and had children. Abel also left children, and there were other brothers and sisters, the children of Adam. But God replied that it would not be so; that whoever should kill Cain should himself be punished sevenfold, and He placed a sign upon him that no one should slay him. Cain's posterity gradually became colored. Cham's children also were browner than those of Sem. The nobler races were always of a lighter color. They who were distinguished by a particular mark engendered children of the same stamp; and as corruption increased, the mark also increased until at last it covered the whole body, and people became darker and darker. But yet in the beginning there were no people perfectly black; they became so only by degrees.

God pointed out to Cain a region to which he should flee. And because Cain said: "Then, wilt Thou let me starve?"—(the earth was for him accursed)—God answered no, that he should eat the flesh of animals. He told him likewise that a nation would arise from him, and that good also would come from him. Before this men ate no flesh.

Cain went forth and built a city, which he named after his son Henoah.

Abel was slain in the valley of Josaphat opposite Mount Calvary. Numerous murders and evil deeds took place there at a subsequent period. Cain slew Abel with a kind of club that he used to break soft stones and earth when planting in the fields. The club must have been of hard stone, for it was shaped like a pickaxe, the handle of wood.

We must not picture to ourselves the earth before the Deluge as it is now. Palestine was by no means so broken up by valleys and ravines. Plains were far more extensive, and single mountains less lofty. The Mount of Olives was at that time only a gentle rising. The Crib Cave of Bethlehem was as later a wild

cavern, but the surroundings were different.

The people of those early times were larger, though not out of proportion. We would regard them with astonishment, but not with fright, for they were far more beautiful in form than people of a later period. Among the old marble statues that I see in many places lying in subterranean caves, may be found similar figures.

Cain led his children and grandchildren to the region pointed out to him, and there they separated. Of Cain himself, I have never seen anything more that was sinful. His punishment appeared to consist in hard, but fruitless labor. Nothing in which he was personally engaged succeeded. I saw that he was mocked and reviled by his children and grandchildren, treated badly in every way. And yet they followed him as their leader, though as one accursed. I saw that Cain was severely punished, but not damned.

One of Cain's descendants was Thubalcain, the originator of numerous arts, and the father of the giants. I have frequently seen that, when the angels fell, a certain number had a moment of repentance and did not in consequence fall as low as the others. Later on, these fallen spirits took up their abode on a high, desolate, and wholly inaccessible mountain whose site at the time of the Deluge became a sea, the Black Sea, I think. They were permitted to exercise their evil influence upon men in proportion as the latter strayed further from God. After the Deluge they disappeared from that region, and were confined to the air. They will not be cast into Hell before the last day.

I saw Cain's descendants becoming more and more godless and sensual. They settled further and further up that mountain ridge where were the fallen spirits. Those spirits took possession of many of the women, ruled them completely, and taught them all sorts of seductive arts. Their children were very large.

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They possessed a quickness, an aptitude for everything, and they gave themselves up entirely to the wicked spirits as their instruments. And so arose on this mountain and spread far around, a wicked race which by violence and seduction sought to entangle Seth's posterity likewise in their own corrupt ways. Then God declared to Noe His intention to send the Deluge. During the building of the ark, Noe had to suffer terribly from those people.

I have seen many things connected with the race of giants. They could with ease carry enormous stones high up the mountain, they could accomplish the most stupendous feats. They could walk straight up trees and walls just as I have seen others possessed by the devil doing. They could effect the most wonderful things, they could do whatever they wished; but all was pure jugglery and delusion due to the agency of the demon. It is for that reason that I have such horror of every species of jugglery and fortunetelling. These people could form all kinds of images out of stone and metal; but of the knowledge of God they had no longer a trace. They sought their gods in the creatures around them. I have seen them scratch up a stone, form it into an extravagant image, and then adore it. They worshipped also a frightful animal and all kinds of ignoble things. They knew all things, they could see all things, they were skilled in the preparing of poisons, they practiced sorcery and every species of wickedness. The women invented music. I saw them going around among the better tribes trying to seduce them to their own abominations. They had no dwelling houses, no cities, but they raised massive round towers of shining stone. Under those towers were little structures leading into great caverns wherein they carried on their horrible wickedness. From the roofs of these structures, the surrounding country could be seen, and by mounting up into the towers and looking through tubes, one could see far into the distance. But it was not

like looking through tubes made to bring distant objects into view. The power of the tubes to which I here allude, was effected by satanic agency. They that looked through them could see where the other tribes were settled. Then they marched against them, overcame them, and lawlessly carried all before them. That same spirit of lawlessness they exercised everywhere. I saw them sacrificing children by burying them alive in the earth. God overthrew that mountain at the time of the Deluge.

Enoch, Noe's ancestor, opposed that wicked race by his teachings. He wrote much. Enoch was a very good man and one very grateful to God. In many parts of the open fields, he raised altars of stone and there the fruits of the earth flourished. He gave thanks to God and offered sacrifice to Him. Chiefly in his family was religion preserved and handed down to Noe. Enoch was taken up to Paradise. There he waits at the entrance gate, whence with another (*Elias*) he will come again before the last day.

Cham's descendants likewise had similar relations with the evil spirits after the Deluge, and from such connection sprang so many demoniacs and necromancers, so many mighty ones of the world, so many great, wild, daring men.

Semiramis herself was the offspring of demoniacs, consequently she was apt at everything save the working out of her salvation.

Later on, there arose another people esteemed as gods by the heathens. The women that first allowed themselves to be ruled by evil spirits were fully conscious of the fact, though others were ignorant of it. These women had it (*the principle of possession*) in them like flesh and blood, like original sin.

6. Noe and His Posterity. Hom and Dsemschid, Leaders of the People

I saw Noe, a simple-hearted old man, clothed in a long white garment. He was walking about in an orchard and pruning the trees with a crooked bone knife. A cloud hovered over him and in it was a human Figure. Noe fell on his knees. I saw that he was, then and there, interiorly instructed upon God's design to destroy mankind, and he was commanded to build an ark. I saw that Noe grew sad at the announcement, and that he prayed for the punishment to be averted. He did not begin the work at once. Again the Lord appeared to him, twice in succession, commanding him to begin the building, otherwise he should perish with the rest of mankind. At last, I saw Noe removing with all his family to the country in which Zoroaster, the Shining Star, subsequently dwelt. Noe settled in a high, woody, solitary region where he and his numerous followers lived under tents. Here he raised an altar and offered sacrifice to the Lord. Neither Noe nor any of his family built permanent houses, because they put faith in the prophecy of the Deluge. But the godless nations around laid massive foundations, marked off courts, and erected all kinds of buildings designed to resist the inroads of time and the attacks of an enemy.

There were frightful deeds upon the earth in those days. Men delivered themselves up to all kinds of wickedness, even the most unnatural. They plundered one another and carried off whatever suited them best, they laid waste homes and fields, they kidnapped women and maidens. In proportion to their increase in numbers, was the wickedness of Noe's posterity. They even robbed and insulted Noe himself. They had not fallen into this state of base degradation from want of civilization. They were not wild and barbarous; rather, they lived commodiously and had well ordered households—but they were deeply imbued

with wickedness. They practiced the most shameful idolatry, everyone making his own god of whatever pleased him best. By diabolical arts, they sought to seduce Noe's immediate family. Mosoch, the son of Japhet and grandson of Noe, was thus corrupted after he had, while working in the field, taken from them a poisonous beverage which intoxicated him. It was not wine, but the juice of a plant which they were accustomed to drink in small quantities during their work, and whose leaves and fruit they chewed. Mosoch became the father of a son, who was named Hom.

When the child was born, Mosoch begged his brother Thubal to take it, and thus hide his guilt. Thubal did so out of fraternal affection. The child, with the stalks and sprouts of a certain viscous root, was laid by his mother before Thubal's tent. She hoped thereby to acquire a right over his inheritance; but the Deluge was already at hand, and so her plans were fruitless. Thubal took the boy and had him reared in his family without betraying his origin. And so it happened in this way that the child was taken into the ark. Thubal called the boy Hom, the name of the root whose sprouts lay near him as the only sign. The child was not nourished with milk, but with the same root. If that plant is allowed to grow up straight, it will reach the height of a man; but when it creeps along the ground, it sends up shoots like the asparagus, hard with tender tops. It is used as food and as a substitute for milk. The root is bulbous, and from it rises a crown of a few brown leaves. Its stem is tolerably thick and the pith is used as meal, cooked like pap or spread in thin layers and baked. Wherever it thrives, it grows luxuriantly and covers leagues of ground. I saw it in the ark.

It was long before the ark was completed, for Noe often discontinued it for years at a time. Three times did God warn him to proceed with it. Each time Noe would engage workmen, recommence and again discontinue in the hope that God would relent. But at

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last the work was finished.

I saw that in the ark, as in the Cross, there were four kinds of wood: palm, olive, cedar, and cypress. I saw the wood felled and hewed upon the spot, and Noe bearing it himself upon his shoulders to the place of building, just as Jesus afterward carried the wood of His Cross. The spot chosen for the construction of the ark was a hill surrounded by a valley. First the bottom was put in.

The ark was rounded in the back and the keel, shaped like a trough, was smeared with pitch. It had two stories supported on hollow posts, which stood one above another. These posts were not round trunks of trees; they were in oval sections filled with a white pith which became fibrous toward the center. The trunk was knotty, or furrowed, and the great leaves grew around it without branches. (*Probably a species of palm.*) I saw the workmen punching the pith out with a tool. All other trees were cut into thin planks. When Noe had carried all the materials to the appointed spot and arranged them in order, the building was begun. The bottom was put in and pitched, the first row of posts raised, and the holes in which they stood filled up with pitch. Then came the second floor with another row of posts for the third floor, and then the roof. The spaces between the posts were filled in with brown and yellow laths placed crosswise, the holes and chinks being stuffed with a kind of wool found on certain trees and plants, and a white moss that grows very abundantly around some trees. Then all was pitched inside and outside. The roof was rounded. The entrance between the two windows was in the center of one side, a little more than halfway up. In the middle of the roof likewise was a square aperture. When the ark had been entirely covered with pitch, it shone like a mirror in the sun. Noe went on working alone and for a long time at the different compartments for the animals, as all were to be separate. Two passages extended through the middle

of the ark, and back in the oval part, concealed by hangings, stood a wooden altar, the table of which was semicircular. A little in the front of the altar was a pan of coals. This was their fire. Right and left, were spaces partitioned off for sleeping apartments. All kinds of chests and utensils were carried into the ark, and numerous seeds, plants, and shrubs were put into earth around the walls, which were soon covered with verdure. I saw something like vines carried in, and on them large yellow grapes, the bunches as long as one's arm.

No words can express what Noe endured from the malice and ill will of the workmen during the whole time that the ark was building. They mocked him, they insulted him in every way, they called him a fool. He paid them well in cattle, but that did not prevent their reviling him. No one knew why he was building the ark, therefore did they ridicule him. When all was finished, I saw Noe giving thanks to God, who then appeared to him. He told him to take a reed pipe and call all the animals from the four corners of the globe. The nearer the day of chastisement approached, the darker grew the heavens. Frightful anxiety took possession of the whole earth; the sun no longer showed his face, and the roar of the thunder was unceasingly heard. I saw Noe going a short distance north, south, east, and west, and blowing upon his reed pipe. The animals came flocking at the sound and entered the ark in order, two by two, male and female. They went in by a plank laid from the entrance to the ground. When all were safe inside, the plank also was hoisted in. The largest animals, white elephants and camels, went in first. They were restless as at the approach of a storm, and it took several days for them all to enter. The birds flew in through the skylight and perched under the roof on poles and in cages, while the waterfowl went into the bottom of the vessel. The land animals were in the middle story. Of such as are slaughtered,

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there were seven couples.

The ark, lying there by itself on the top of the hill, shone with a bluish light. At a distance, it looked as if it were descending from the clouds. And now the time for the Deluge drew nigh. Noe had already announced it to his family. He took with him into the ark Sem, Cham, and Japhet with their wives and their children. There were in the ark grandsons from fifty to eighty years old with their children small and large. All that had labored at its construction and who were good and free from idolatry, entered with Noe. There were over one hundred people in the ark, and they were necessary to give daily food to the animals and to clean after them. I must say, for I always see it so, that Sem's, Cham's and Japhet's children all went into the ark. There were many little boys and girls in it, in fact all of Noe's family that were good. Holy Scripture mentions only three of Adam's children, Cain, Abel, and Seth; and yet I see many others among them, and I always see them in pairs, boys and girls. And so too, in *I Peter* 3:20, only eight souls are mentioned as saved in the ark; viz., the four ancestral couples by whom, after the Deluge, the earth was to be peopled. I also saw Hom in the ark. The child was fastened by a skin into a bark cradle formed like a trough. I saw many infants cradled in a similar way, floating on the waters of the Deluge.

When the ark rose on the waters, when crowds of people upon the surrounding mountains and in the high trees were weeping and lamenting, when the waters were covered with the floating bodies of the drowned and with uprooted trees, Noe and his family were already safe inside. Before he and his wife, his three sons and their wives entered the ark, he once more implored God's mercy. When all had entered, Noe drew in the plank and made fast the door. He left outside near relatives and their families who, during the building of the ark, had separated from him. Then burst forth a fearful tempest. The lightning

played in fiery columns, the rains fell in torrents, and the hill upon which the ark stood soon became an island. The misery was great, so great that I trust it was the means of many a soul's salvation. I saw a devil, black and hideous, with pointed jaws and a long tail, going to and fro through the tempest and tempting men to despair. Toads and serpents sought a hiding place in the crevices of the ark. Flies and vermin I saw not. They came into existence later to torment men.

I saw Noe offering sacrifice in the ark upon an altar covered with red over which was a white cloth. In an arched chest were preserved the bones of Adam. During prayer and sacrifice, Noe laid them on the altar. I saw on the altar, likewise, the Chalice of the Last Supper which, during the building of the ark, had been brought to Noe by three figures in long white garments. They looked like the three men that announced to Abraham the birth of a son. They came from a city that was destroyed at the time of the Deluge. They addressed Noe as one whose fame had reached them, and told him that he should take with him into the ark a mysterious something that they gave him, in order that it might escape the waters of the Deluge. The mysterious thing was that Chalice. In it lay a grain of wheat, large as a sunflower seed, and a vine branch. Noe stuck both into a yellow apple and put it into the Chalice. The Chalice had no cover, for the branch was to grow out of it. After the dispersion of men at the building of the Tower of Babel, I saw that Chalice in the possession of one of Sem's descendants in the country of Semiramis. He was the ancestor of the Samanenses, who were established at Canaan by Melchisedech. Hither they took the Chalice.

I saw the ark driving over the waters, and dead bodies floating around. It rested upon a high rocky peak of a mountain chain far to the east of Syria, and there it remained for a long time. I saw that

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land was already appearing. It looked like mud covered with a greenish mold.

Immediately after the Deluge, fish and shellfish began to be eaten. Afterward, as people multiplied, they ate bread and birds. They planted gardens, and the soil was so fruitful that the wheat which they sowed produced ears as large as those of maize. The root from which Hom received his name was also planted. Noe's tent stood on the spot where, at a later period, was that of Abraham. In the plain and in the surrounding country, Noe's sons had their tents.

I saw the cursing of Cham. But Sem and Japhet received from Noe on their knees the Blessing. It was delivered to them with ceremonies similar to those used by Abraham when giving over the same Blessing to Isaac. I saw the curse pronounced by Noe upon Cham moving toward the latter like a black cloud and obscuring him. His skin lost its whiteness, he grew darker. His sin was the sin of sacrilege, the sin of one who would forcibly enter the Ark of the Covenant. I saw a most corrupt race descend from Cham and sink deeper and deeper in darkness. I see that the black, idolatrous, stupid nations are the descendants of Cham. Their color is due, not to the rays of the sun, but to the dark source whence those degraded races sprang.

It would be impossible for me to say how I beheld the nations increasing and extending and, in many different ways, falling into darkness and corruption. But with all that, many luminous rays streamed forth from them and sought the light.

When Thubal, the son of Japhet, with his own children and those of his brother Mosoch, sought counsel of Noe as to the country to which they should migrate, they were fifteen families in number, Noe's children already extended far around, and the families of Thubal and Mosoch also dwelt at some distance from Noe. But when Noe's children began to quarrel and oppress one another, Thubal desired to

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remove still farther off. He wanted to have nothing to do with Cham's descendants, who were already thinking of building the Tower. He and his family heeded not the invitation received later to engage in that undertaking, and it was declined also by the children of Sem.

Thubal with his troop of followers appeared before Noe's tent, asking for directions as to whither he should go. Noe dwelt upon a mountain range between Libanus and Caucasus. He wept when he saw Thubal and his followers, for he loved that race, because it was better, more God-fearing than others. He pointed out a region toward the northeast, charged them to be faithful to the commands of God and to the offering of sacrifice, and made them promise to guard the purity of their descent, and not to intermingle with the descendants of Cham. He gave them girdles and breast pieces that he had had in the ark. The heads of the families were to wear them when engaged in divine service and performing marriage ceremonies, in order to guard against malediction and a depraved posterity. The ceremonies used by Noe when offering sacrifice, reminded me of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There were alternate prayers and responses, and Noe moved from place to place at the altar and bowed reverently. He gave them likewise a leathern bag containing a vessel made of bark, in which was an oval golden box enclosing three other smaller vessels. They also received from him the roots or bulbs of that Hom plant, rolls of bark or skins upon which were written characters, and round wooden blocks upon which signs were engraved.

These people were of a bright, reddish-yellow complexion, and very beautiful. They were clothed in skins and woolen garments girdled at the waist, the arms alone bare. The skins they wore were scarcely drawn from the animal when they were clapped, still bloody, on the limbs. They fitted so tightly that my first thought was: Those people are hairy. Not so however,

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for their own skin was smooth as satin. With the exception of various kinds of seed, they did not take much baggage with them, since they were departing for a high region toward the northeast. I saw no camels, but they had horses, asses, and animals with spreading horns like stags. I saw them, Thubal's followers, on a high mountain where they dwelt one above another in long, low huts like arbors. I saw them digging the ground, planting, and setting out trees in rows. The opposite side of the mountain was cold. Later on the whole region became much colder. In consequence of this change in the climate, one of the grandsons of Thubal, the ancestor Dsemschid, led them further toward the southwest. With a few exceptions, all who had seen Noe and had taken leave of him died in this place, that is, on the mountain to which Thubal had led them. They who followed Dsemschid were all born on the same mountain. They took with them the few surviving old men who had known Noe, carrying them very carefully in litters.

When Thubal with his family separated from Noe, I saw among them that child of Mosoch, Hom, who had gone with Thubal into the ark. Hom was already grown, and later on I saw him very different from those around him. He was of large stature like a giant, and of a very serious, peculiar turn of mind. He wore a long robe, he was like a priest. He used to go alone to the summit of the mountain and there spend night after night. He observed the stars and practiced magic. He was taught by the devil to arrange what he saw in vision into a science, a religion, and thereby he vitiated and counteracted the teaching of Henoch. The evil inclinations inherited from his mother mingled in him with the pure hereditary teachings of Henoch and Noe, to which the children of Thubal clung. Hom, by his false visions and revelations, misinterpreted and changed the ancient truth. He studied and pondered, watched the stars and had visions which, by Satan's agency, showed him deformed

images of truth. Through their resemblance to truth, his doctrine and idolatry became the mothers of heresy. Thubal was a good man. Hom's manner of acting and his teaching were very displeasing to Thubal, who was greatly grieved to see one of his sons, the father of Dsemschid, attach himself to Hom. I heard Thubal complaining: "My children are not united. Would that I had not separated from Noe!"

Hom conducted the waters of two springs from the higher part of the mountain down to the dwellings. They soon united into one stream which, after a short course, swelled into a broad torrent. I saw Dsemschid and his followers crossing it at their departure. Hom received almost divine homage from his followers. He taught them that God exists in fire. He had also much to do with water, and with that viscous root from which he derived his name. He planted it, and solemnly distributed it as a sacred medicine and nourishment. This distribution at last, became a ceremony of religion. He carried its juice or pap around with him in a brown vessel like a mortar. The axes were of the same material. They got them from people of another tribe that lived far away in a mountainous country and forged such implements by means of fire. I saw them on a mountain from which fire burst forth, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another. I think the vessel which Hom carried around with him was made out of the melted metal or rock that flowed from the mountain, and which was caught in a mold. Hom never married nor did he live to be very old. He published many of his visions referring to his own death. He himself put faith in them as did also Derketo and his other followers at a later period. But I saw him dying a frightful death, and the evil one carried him off body and soul; nothing remained of him. For that reason his followers thought, that, like Henoch, he had been taken up to a holy dwelling place. The father of Dsemschid had been a pupil of Hom, and Hom left him his spirit in order that he

might then be the one who would succeed him.

On account of his knowledge, Dsemschid became the leader of his people. They soon became a nation, and were led by Dsemschid still further south. Dsemschid was very distinguished; he was well-educated, and had embraced Hom's teachings. He was unspeakably lively and vigorous, much more active and better also than Hom, who was of a dark, rigid disposition. He practiced the religion formulated by Hom, added many things of his own thereto, and gave much attention to the stars. His followers regarded fire as sacred. They were all distinguished by a certain sign which denoted their race. People at that time kept together in tribes; they did not intermingle then as now. Dsemschid's special aim was to improve the races and maintain them in their original purity; he separated and transplanted them as seemed best to him. He left them perfectly free, and yet they were very submissive to him. The descendants of those races, whom I now see wild and barbarous in distant lands and islands, are not to be compared with their progenitors in point of personal beauty or manly character; for those early nations were noble and simple, yet withal most valiant. The races of the present day are also far less skillful and clever, and possess less bodily strength.

On his marches, Dsemschid laid the foundations of tent cities, marked off fields, made long roads of stone, and formed settlements here and there of certain numbers of men and women, to whom he gave animals, trees, and plants. He rode around large tracks of land, striking into the earth with an instrument which he always carried in his hand, and his people then set to work in those places, grubbing and hacking, making hedges and digging ditches. Dsemschid was remarkably strict and just. I saw him as a tall old man, very thin and of a yellowish-red complexion. He rode a surprisingly nimble little animal with slender legs and black and yellow stripes, very much

like an ass. Dsemschid rode around a tract of land just as our poor people go around a field on the heath by night, and thus appropriated it for cultivation. He paused here and there, plunged his grubbing axe into the ground or drove in a stake to mark the sites of future settlements. The instrument, which was afterward called Dsemschid's golden plough share, was in form like a Latin cross. It was about the length of one's arm and, when drawn out, formed with the shaft a right angle. With this instrument, Dsemschid made fissures in the earth. A representation of the same appeared on the side of his robe where pockets generally are. It reminded me of the symbol of office that Joseph and Aseneth always carried in Egypt, and with which they also surveyed the land, though that of Dsemschid was more like a cross. On the upper part was a ring into which it could be run.

Dsemschid wore a mantle that fell backward from the front. From his girdle to the knee hung four leathern flaps, two behind and two before, strapped at the side and fastened under the knee. His feet were bound with leather and straps. He wore a golden shield on his breast. He had several similar breastplates to suit various solemnities. His crown was a pointed circlet of gold. The point in front was higher and bent like a little horn, and on the end of it waved something like a little flag.

Dsemschid constantly spoke of Henoch. He knew that he had been taken away from the earth without undergoing death. He taught that Henoch had delivered over to Noe all goodness and all truth, had appointed him the father and guardian of all blessings, and that from Noe all these blessings had passed over to himself. He wore about him a golden egg shaped vessel in which, as he said, was contained something precious that had been preserved by Noe in the ark, and which had been handed down to himself. Wherever he pitched his tent, there the golden vessel was placed on a column, and over it, on elegant

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posts carved with all kinds of figures, a covering was stretched. It looked like a little temple. The cover of the vessel was a crown of filigree work. When Dsemschid lighted fire, he threw into it something that he took out of the vessel. The vessel had indeed been used in the ark, for Noe had preserved the fire in it; but it was now the treasured idol of Dsemschid and his people. When it was set up, fire burned before it to which prayers were offered and animals sacrificed, for Dsemschid taught that the great God dwells in light and fire, and that He has many inferior gods and spirits serving Him.

All submitted to Dsemschid. He established colonies of men and women here and there, gave them herds and permitted them to plant and build. They were now allowed to follow their own pleasure in the matter of marriage, for Dsemschid treated them like cattle, assigning wives to his followers in accordance with his own views. He himself had several. One was very beautiful and of a better family than the others. Dsemschid destined his son by her to be his successor. By his orders, great round towers were built, which were ascended by steps for the purpose of observing the stars. The women lived apart and in subjection. They wore short garments, the bodice and breast of material like leather, and some kind of stuff hung behind. Around the neck and over the shoulders they wore a full, circular cloak, which fell below the knee. On the shoulders and breast, it was ornamented with signs or letters. From every country that he settled, Dsemschid caused straight roads to be made in the direction of Babel.

Dsemschid always led his people to uninhabited regions, where there were no nations to expel. He marched everywhere with perfect freedom, for he was only a founder, a settler. His race was of a bright reddish yellow complexion like ochre, very handsome people. All were marked in order to distinguish the pure from these of mixed descent. Dsemschid marched

over a high mountain covered with ice. I do not remember how he succeeded in crossing, but many of his followers perished. They had horses or asses; Dsemschid rode on a little striped animal. A change of climate had driven them from their country. It became too cold for them, but it is warmer there now. Occasionally he met on his march a helpless tribe either escaping from the tyranny of their chief, or awaiting in distress the advent of some leader. They willingly submitted to Dsemschid, for he was gentle, and he brought them grain and blessings. They were destitute exiles who, like Job, had been plundered and banished. I saw some poor people who had no fire and who were obliged to bake their bread on hot stones in the sun. When Dsemschid gave them fire, they looked upon him as a god. He fell in with another tribe that sacrificed children who were deformed or who did not reach their standard of beauty. The little ones were buried up to the waist, and a fire kindled around them. Dsemschid abolished this custom. He delivered many poor children, whom he placed in a tent and confided to the care of some women. He afterward made use of them, here and there, as servants. He was very careful to keep the genealogical line pure.

Dsemschid first marched in a southwesterly direction, keeping the Prophet Mountain to the south on his left; then he turned to the south, the mountain still on his left, but to the east. I think he afterward crossed the Caucasus. At that period, when those regions were swarming with human beings, when all was life and activity, our countries were but forests, wildernesses, and marshes; only off toward the east might be met a small, wandering tribe. The Shining Star (Zoroaster), who lived long after, was descended from Dsemschid's son, whose teachings he revived. Dsemschid wrote all kinds of laws on bark and tables of stone. One long letter often stood for a whole sentence. Their language was as yet the primitive one,

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to which ours still bears some resemblance. Dsemschid lived just prior to Derketo and her daughter, the mother of Semiramis. He did not go to Babel himself, though his career ran in that direction.

I saw the history of Hom and Dsemschid as Jesus spoke of it before the pagan philosophers, at Lanifa in the isle of Cyprus. These philosophers had in Jesus' presence spoken of Dsemschid as the most ancient of the wise kings who had come from far beyond India. With a golden dagger received from God, he had divided off and peopled many lands, and had scattered blessings everywhere. They questioned Jesus about him and the various wonders related to him. Jesus responded to their questions by saying that Dsemschid was by nature a prudent man, a man wise according to flesh and blood; that he had been a leader of the nations; that upon the dispersion of men at the building of the Tower of Babel, he had led one race and settled countries according to a certain order; that there had been other leaders of that kind who had, indeed, led a worse life than he, because his race had not fallen into so great ignorance as many others. But Jesus showed them also what fables had been written about him and that he was a false side picture, a counterfeit type of the priest and king Melchisedech. He told them to notice the difference between Dsemschid's race and that of Abraham. As the stream of nations moved along, God had sent Melchisedech to the best families, to lead and unite them, to prepare for them lands and abiding places, in order that they might preserve themselves unsullied and, in proportion to their degree of worthiness, be found more or less fit to receive the grace of the Promise. Who Melchisedech was, Jesus left to themselves to determine; but of one thing they might be certain, he was an ancient type of the future, but then fast approaching fulfillment of the Promise. The sacrifice of bread and wine which he had offered would be fulfilled and perfected, and would continue till the end of time.

7. The Tower of Babel

The building of the Tower of Babel was the work of pride. The builders aimed at constructing something according to their own ideas, and thus resist the guidance of God. When the children of Noe had become very numerous, the proudest and most experienced among them met to resolve upon the execution of some work so great and so strong as to be the wonder of all ages to come and cause the builders to be spoken of as the most skillful, the most powerful of men. They thought not of God, they sought only their own glory. Had it been otherwise, as I was distinctly told, God would have allowed their undertaking to succeed. The children of Sem took no active part in the work. They dwelt in a level country where palm trees and similar choice fruit grow. They were, however, obliged to contribute something toward the building, for they did not dwell so far distant at that period as they did later. The descendants of Cham and Japhet alone were engaged in the work; and because the Semites refused to join them, they called them a stupid race. The Semites were less numerous than the children of Cham and Japhet, and among them the family of Heber and the ancestors of Abraham studiously refrained from encouraging the enterprise. Upon Heber who, as we have said, took no part in the work, God cast His eyes; and amid the general disorder and corruption, He set him and his posterity apart as a holy nation. God gave him also a new and holy language possessed by no other nation, that thereby his race should be cut off from communication with all others. This language was the pure Hebrew, or Chaldaic. The first tongue, the mother tongue, spoken by Adam, Sem, and Noe, was different, and it is now extant only in isolated dialects. Its first pure offshoots are the Zend, the sacred tongue of India, and the language of the Bactrians. In those languages, words may be found

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exactly similar to the Low German of my native place. The book that I see in modern Ctesiphon, on the Tigris, is written in that language. Heber was still living at the time of Semiramis. His grandfather Arphaxad was the favorite son of Sem. He was a man of great judgment and full of profound wisdom. But a good deal of idolatrous worship and sorcery may have been handed down by him. The Magi derive their origin from him.

The Tower of Babel was built upon rising ground, about two leagues in circumference, around which lay an extensive plain covered with fields, gardens, and trees. To the foundations of the Tower, that is up to its first story, twenty-five very broad stone walks led from all sides of the plain. Twenty-five tribes were engaged in the building, and each tribe had its own road to the Tower. Off in the distance, where these roads began, each tribe had its own particular city that, in time of danger or attack, they might flee to the Tower for shelter. The Tower was intended likewise to serve as a temple for their idolatrous worship. The stone roads were, where they took their rise in the plain, tolerably far apart; but around the Tower, they lay so close that the intervening spaces were not greater than the breadth of a wide street. Before reaching the Tower, they were connected by cross arches, and between every two there opened a gateway about ten feet wide into its base. When these gently inclined roads had reached a certain height, they were pierced by single arcades. Near the Tower the arcades were double, one above the other, so that through them one could make the circuit of the building, even around the lowest part, under all the roads. Above the arches that connected the inclined roads were walks, or streets, running horizontally around the Tower.

Those gently rising roads extended like the roots of a tree. They were designed in part, as supporting counter-pillars to strengthen the foundation of the

immense building, and partly as roads for the conveyance from all points of building materials and other loads to the first story of the Tower.

Between these extended bases were encampments upon substructures of stone. In many places the tops of the tents rose above the roads that ran through them. From every encampment, steps cut in the walls led up to the walks. One could go all around the Tower through the encampments and arches and under the stone roads.

Besides the occupants of the encampments, there were others who lived in the vaults and spaces on either side of the stone roads. In and around the whole building swarmed innumerable living beings. It was like a huge anthill. Countless elephants, asses, and camels toiled up and down the roads with their heavy burdens. Although these burdens were far broader than the animals themselves, yet several could with ease pass one another on the roads. On them were halting places for feeding and unloading the animals, also tents on the level spaces and even factories. I saw animals without a guide bearing their burdens up and down. The gateways in the basement of the Tower led into a labyrinth of halls, passages, and chambers. From this lower part of the Tower, one could mount by steps cut out on all sides. A spiral walk wound from the first story around the exterior of the polygonal building. The interior at this point consisted of cellars, immense and secure, covered chambers and passages.

The building was begun on all sides at once. All tended to one central point where at first stood a large encampment. They used tiles, also immense hewed stones, which they hauled to the site. The surface of the walks was quite white, and it glistened in the sun. At a distance, the sight it presented was wonderful. The Tower was planned most skillfully. I was told that it would have been finished and would now be standing as a magnificent monument of

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human skill, had it been erected to the honor of God. But the builders thought not of God. Their work was the offspring of presumption. The names of those that had contributed to the grandeur and magnificence of the building were inscribed with words of praise in the vaults and on the pillars; in the former by means of different colored stones, and on the latter in large characters. There were no kings, but only the heads of the different families, and they ruled according to common counsel. The stones employed in the building were skillfully wrought. They fitted into one another, held one another together. There were no raised figures on the building' but many parts of it were inlaid with colored stones and, here and there, were figures hewn in niches. Canals and cisterns were constructed for water supplies. All lent a helping hand, even the women trod the clay with their feet. The men worked with breast and arms bare, the most distinguished wearing a little cap with a button. Even in very early times, women kept the head covered.

The building so increased in bulk and height that, on account of the shade it cast, it was quite cold on one side, while on the other the reflection of the sun's rays made it very hot. For thirty years, the work went on. They were at the second story. They had already encircled and walled in the interior with tower like columns, had already recorded their names and races thereon in colored stones when the confusion broke forth. I saw one sent by God, Melchisedech, going around among the leaders and the masters of the building. He called upon them to account for their conduct, and he announced to them the chastisement of God. And now began the confusion. Many who had up to this time worked on peaceably, now boasted their skill and the great services they had rendered in the undertaking. They formed parties, they laid claim to certain privileges. This occasioned contradictions, animosities, and rebellion.

There were at first only two tribes among the disaffected and these, it was resolved, should be put down; but soon it was discovered that disunion existed among all. They struggled among themselves, they slew one another, they could no longer make themselves understood by one another, and so at last they separated and scattered over the whole earth. I saw Sem's race going farther southward where later on was Abraham's home. I saw one of Sem's race. He was a good man, but he did not follow his leader. On account of his wife, he preferred staying among the wicked ones of Babel. He became the leader of the Samanenses, a race that always held themselves aloof from others. Under the cruel Semiramis, Melchisedech transplanted them to Palestine.

When in my childhood I had the vision of the building of the Tower, I used to reject it because I could not understand it. I had, of course, seen nothing like it, no buildings but our farmhouses *whence the cows go out by the chimney*.¹ and the city of Coesfeld. More than once I thought it must be Heaven. But I had the vision again and again, and always in the same way I see it still, and I have also seen how it looked in Job's time.

One of the chief leaders in the Tower building was Nemrod. He was afterward honored as a deity under the name of Belus. He was the founder of the race that honored Derketo and Semiramis as goddesses. He built Babylon out of the stones of the Tower, and Semiramis greatly embellished it. He also laid the foundation of Ninive, and built substructures of stones for tent dwellings. He was a great hunter and tyrant. At that period savage animals were very numerous, and they committed fearful ravages. The hunting expeditions fitted out against them were as grand as military expeditions. They who slew these wild animals, were honored as gods. Nemrod also

1. That is, where the door serves as an egress for the smoke, as well as for the cows.

drove men together and subdued them. He practiced idolatry, he was full of cruelty and witchcraft, and he had many descendants. He lived to be about two hundred and seventy years old. He was of sallow complexion, and from early youth he had led a wild life. He was an instrument of Satan and very much given to star worship. Of the numerous figures and pictures that he traced in the planets and constellations, and according to which he prophesied concerning the different nations and countries, he sought to reproduce representations, which he set up as gods. The Egyptians owe their Sphinx to him, as also their many-armed and many-headed idols. For seventy years, Nemrod busied himself with the histories of these idols, with ceremonial details relative to their worship and the sacrifices to be offered them, also with the forming of the pagan priesthood. By his diabolical wisdom and power, he had subjected the races that he led to the building of the Tower. When the confusion of tongues arose, many of those tribes broke away from him, and the wildest of them followed Mesraim into Egypt. Nemrod built Babylon, subjected the country around, and laid the foundation of the Babylonian Empire. Among his numerous children were Ninus and Derketo. The last-mentioned was honored as a goddess.

8. Derketo

From Derketo to Semiramis, I saw three generations of daughters. Derketo was a tall, powerful woman. I saw her clothed in skins with numerous straps and animals' tails hanging about her. Her head was covered by a cap made of the feathers of birds. I saw her with a great train of followers, male and female, sallying forth from the neighborhood of Babylon. She was constantly in vision, or engaged in prophesying, offering sacrifice, founding cities, or roving about. She and her followers drove before them

scattered tribes with their herds, prophesied on the subject of good dwelling places, piled up stones some of which were immense, offered sacrifice, and practiced all kinds of wickedness. She drew all to herself. She was sometimes here, sometimes there. She was everywhere honored. She had in her old age a daughter, who played a part similar to her own. I saw this vision in a plain, by which was signified the origin of the abomination. Lastly, I saw Derketo as a frightful old woman in a city by the sea. She was again carrying on her sorcery by the seashore. She was in a state of diabolical ecstasy, and she was proclaiming to her people that she must die for them, give her life for them. She told them that she could remain with them no longer, but that she would be transformed into a fish and as such be always near them. She gave directions for the worship to be paid her and, in presence of the assembled multitude, plunged into the sea. Soon after a fish arose above the waves, and the people saluted it with sacrifices and abominations of all kinds. Their divinations were full of mysteries, signs, etc., connected with water. Through Derketo's instrumentality, an entire system of idolatry arose.

After Derketo, I saw another woman, the daughter of Derketo. She appeared to me on a low mountain, which signified that her position was more powerful than that of her mother. This was still in Nemrod's time, for they belonged to the same age. I saw this daughter leading a life even wilder and more violent than her mother's had been. She was engaged most of her time in hunting, attended by crowds of followers. She often went to a distance of three hundred miles, pursued wild animals, offered sacrifice, practiced witchcraft, and prophesied. In this way numerous places were founded and idolatrous worship established. I saw this woman fall into the sea while struggling with a hippopotamus.

Her daughter Semiramis I saw upon a lofty mountain

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surrounded by all the kingdoms and treasures of the world, as if Satan were showing them to her, giving them to her. I saw that Semiramis put the finishing touch to every abomination of the Babylonian race.

In the earliest times power over others was held more peaceably and was vested in many; later on unlimited jurisdiction was possessed by single individuals. These latter then became the leaders, the gods of their followers, and they formulated various systems of idolatrous worship, each according to his own ideas. They could also perform wonders of skill, valor, and invention, for they were full of the spirit of darkness. Thence arose whole tribes, first rulers and priests combined, later of priests alone. I have seen that, in those days, women of this stamp were more numerous than men. They were all in interior communication, connected with one another by feelings, thoughts, and influence. Many things narrated of them are imperfect recitals of their ecstatic, or mesmeric expressions relative to themselves, their origin, their doings uttered sometimes by themselves, at others by their devilish clairvoyants. The Jews also had many secret arts in Egypt. But Moses, the seer of God, rooted them out. Among the rabbis, however, many such things existed as points of learning. Later on these secret arts became low, vulgar practices among wandering tribes, and they still exist in witchcraft and superstition. But they have all sprung from the same tree of corruption, from the same low kingdom of darkness. I see the visions of all that engage in such practices either just above or entirely under the earth. There is an element of the same in magnetism.

Water was held specially sacred by those early idolaters. It entered into all their service. Whether divinations or ecstasies, they always began by a gazing into water. They had ponds consecrated to that purpose. After some time, their ecstatic state became

habitual, and even without the aid of water they had their evil visions. I have seen the way in which they had those visions and it was indeed singular. The whole earth with all that it contains seemed to be once more under water, but veiled as in a dark sphere. Tree stood under tree, mountain under mountain, water under water. I saw that those enchantresses beheld all that was going on: wars, nations, perils, etc., just as is done at the present day, only with this difference that the former put what they saw into effect, made good what they saw. Here was a nation to be subdued, here one to be taken by surprise, there a city to be built. Here were famous men and women, and there was the plan by which they might be outwitted; in fine, every item of their diabolical worship was seen before reduced to practice by those females. Derketo saw in vision that she should cast herself into the sea and be transformed into a fish, and what she saw, she hesitated not to carry into effect. Even the abominations practiced in their worship, were all mirrored in the water before they put them into execution.

In the age in which Derketo's daughter lived, dykes and roads began to be constructed. She raided down into Egypt itself. Her whole life was one series of movings and hunting expeditions. Her adherents belonged to the tribe that had plundered Job in Arabia. The diabolical worship of Derketo's people became systematized first in Egypt. Here it took such hold that, while the witches sat in the temples and in chambers on strange-looking seats before various kinds of mirrors, their visions, communicated while actually seen, were reported by the priests to hundreds of men who engraved them upon the stone walls of caverns.

Strange that I should see all those abominable chief instruments of darkness always in unconscious communion with one another! I saw similar actions and things going on in different places among similar

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instruments of the evil one. The only difference among them was that which arose from the diversity of manners and customs among the several nations and the different degrees of depravity into which they had fallen. Some had not as yet sunk so deep in these abominations, and were not so far removed from the truth; those, for instance, from whom the family of Abraham and the races of Job and the Three Kings sprang, as also the star worshippers of Chaldea, and they that had the Shining Star (*Zoroaster*).

When Jesus Christ came upon earth, when the earth was soaked with His Blood, the fierce influence of such practices was considerably diminished, and witchcraft lost much of its power. Moses was a seer from his cradle, but he was according to God and he always practiced what he saw.

Derketo, her daughter, and her granddaughter Semiramis lived to be very old, according to the general age of that time. They were tall, powerful, mighty, such as would almost frighten us in our day. They were inconceivably bold, fierce, shameless, and they carried out with astonishing assurance whatever the evil one had shown them in vision. They felt their own power, they thought themselves divinities; they were facsimiles of those furious sorcerers on the high mountain that perished in the Deluge.

It is touching to see how the holy patriarchs, although they had frequent revelations from God, had nevertheless to suffer and to struggle unremittingly in order to keep clear of the abominations that surrounded them. And again, is it affecting to remember in what secret, what painful ways salvation at last came upon earth, while all went well with demonolatriy, while all things were made to subserve its interests.

When I saw all this, the immense influence exercised by those goddesses and the high worship they received over all the earth; and, on the other side, when I contemplated Mary's little band with whose

symbolical picture in the cloud of Elias, the philosophers of Cyprus sought to couple their lying abominations; when I saw Jesus, the Fulfillment of all promises, poor and patient, standing before them teaching and afterward going to meet His Cross—ah, that made me inexpressibly sad! But after all, this is the history of the truth and the light ever shining in the darkness, and the darkness not comprehending it. And so it has been and so it is still, the same old story even down to our own day.

But the mercy of God is infinite. I have seen that at the time of the Deluge, many, very many were saved from eternal punishment. Fright and anguish converted them to God. They went to Purgatory, and Jesus freed them on His descent into hell.

Numbers of trees escaped being uprooted by the waters of the Deluge. I saw them thriving again, but most of them were covered, choked up by mud.

9. Semiramis

The mother of Semiramis was born in the region of Ninive. Outwardly demur, in secret she was cruel and dissolute. The father of Semiramis was a native of Syria and, like her mother, sunk in the most detestable idolatry. He was put to death after the child's birth, his murder being in some way connected with, or in consequence of their divinations. Semiramis was born far away at Ascalon, in Palestine, and then taken by pagan priests to some shepherds in a wilderness. She spent much of her time during her childhood alone on a mountain. I saw her mother and the pagan priests turning aside, when on their hunting expeditions, to visit her. I saw too the devil under various forms playing with her, like John in the desert going around with angels. I saw near her birds of brilliant plumage. They brought her all kinds of curious toys. I do not remember all that went on connected with her, but it was the most horrible idolatry.

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She was beautiful, full of intelligence and seductive arts, and everything succeeded with her. In obedience to certain divinations, she became the wife of one of the chief shepherds of the King of Babylon, and later on she married the King himself. This King had conquered a nation far to the north, and had dragged a part of them to his own country as slaves. Some time after when Semiramis reigned alone, many of them were oppressed by her and forced to labor at her extravagant buildings. Semiramis was looked upon as a goddess by her nation.

The hunting expeditions carried on by Semiramis' mother were wilder than those which she herself conducted. She, the mother, went about with a little army mounted on camels, striped asses, and horses. Once I saw them in Arabia toward the Red Sea, on a great hunt, at the time when Job dwelt in his city there. The huntresses were very dexterous, and they sat on horseback like men. They were fully clothed to the knee, below which the limbs were laced with straps. On the feet they wore soles with two high heels upon which were colored figures. They wore short, closely fitting jackets made of fine feathers of the most diverse hues and patterns. Crossed over the arms and breast were straps trimmed with feathers. The shoulders were covered with a cape, likewise of feathers, and set with glittering stones and pearls. On the head, they wore a kind of hat of red silk or wool. Over the face fell a veil in two halves, either of which could be used as a protection from wind and dust. A short mantle completed their costume. Their hunting weapons consisted of spears, bows, and arrows; at their side hung a shield. The savage animals had multiplied astonishingly. The hunters drove them together from all parts of immense districts and slew them. They also dug pits and covered them as snares. When the beasts fell into them, they were soon dispatched with hatchets and clubs. I saw the mother of Semiramis hunting the animal described by Job

Semiramis

under the name of behemoth, also tigers, lions, etc. I saw no monkeys in those early times. I saw similar hunts upon the water, upon which idolatry and numerous abominations were generally practiced. The mother was outwardly not so dissolute as Semiramis, but she possessed a

diabolical nature with amazing strength and temerity. What a frightful thing, to plunge into the sea in her struggle with that mighty monster!¹ Mounted on a dromedary, she pursued the animal, until dromedary and rider plunged into the waves. She was honored as the goddess of the chase and a benefactress to mankind.

Semiramis returning home from Africa after one of her hunting or military expeditions, went to Egypt. This kingdom had been founded by Mesraim, the grandson of Cham, who at his coming had found there already several scattered tribes of degenerate neighboring races. Egypt was peopled by several races, and ruled sometimes by one, sometimes by another. When Semiramis went to Egypt four cities were in existence. The oldest was Thebes where a lighter, a more slender, and agile race lived than in the city of Memphis, whose inhabitants were short and thickset. It lay upon the left bank of the Nile, over which was a long bridge. On the right bank was the place where in Moses' time Pharaoh's daughter lived. The darker inhabitants with woolly hair were even in those first ages, slaves, and they had never ruled in Egypt. They that first went thither and built Thebes came, I think, from Africa; the others from over the Red Sea and from where the Israelites entered. A third city was called Chume, later Heliopolis. It lies toward the north below Thebes.

When Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus, I saw extraordinarily large buildings still around this city. Lower down than Memphis, not very far from the sea, lay the city of Sais. I think it is still

1. A hippopotamus.

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older than Memphis. Each of these four cities had its own king.

Semiramis was very highly honored in Egypt where, by her intrigues and diabolical arts, she greatly contributed to the spread of idolatry. I saw her in Memphis, where human sacrifices were common, plotting and practicing magic and astrology. I did not at this period see the bull Apis, but I saw idols with tails and a head like the sun. It was Semiramis who here planned the first pyramid; it was built on the eastern bank of the Nile, not far from Memphis. The whole nation had to assist at its construction. When it was completed, I saw Semiramis again journeying thither with about two hundred followers. It was for the consecration of the building, Semiramis was honored almost as a divinity.

The pyramid happened to be constructed on marshy ground; consequently a foundation of stupendous pillars was built for it. It was like an immense broad bridge. The pyramid was raised upon it. One could go around under it, as if into an immense temple formed of columns. It was divided off into innumerable rooms, dungeons, and spacious halls. The pyramid itself up to the very summit also contained numerous apartments, large and small, with openings like windows from which I saw flags of cloth hanging and waving. All around the pyramid were baths and gardens. This building was the real center of Egyptian idolatry, astrology, witchcraft, and abominable impurity. Here children and the aged were offered in sacrifice. Astrologers and necromancers dwelt in the pyramid and there had their diabolical visions. Near the baths was immense machinery for purifying the muddy waters of the Nile. The baths witnessed the most infamous horrors of idol worship. I saw later on Egyptian women practicing the greatest abominations in them. This pyramid did not long exist; it was destroyed.

The nation was frightfully superstitious. The pagan

priests were in darkness so great and so given to divination that in Heliopolis, even the dreams of the people were collected, recorded, and referred to the stars. Numerous mesmerists arose who, in their diabolical visions, confounded truth with falsehood. According to their visions, idolatry was formulated, and even the cycles of time computed. I saw that the idols Isis and Osiris were no other than Joseph and Aseneth whose coming into Egypt the astrologers foresaw in their demoniacal visions. They consequently incorporated them into their religion. When they did come, they were honored as divinities. I saw that Aseneth wept over such impiety, and wrote against it.

The scholars of the present day who write about Egypt are in gross error. They accept so many things concerning the Egyptians as history, science, and learning, which nevertheless have no other foundation than astrology and false visions. That any nation could remain as stupid and beastly as the Egyptians is a proof of it. But these savants reject such demoniacal inspirations and practices as impossible. They esteem the Egyptians more ancient than they really are, because in those early times they appear to have possessed such knowledge of abstruse and hidden things.

But I saw that, even at the coming of Semiramis to Memphis, these people, in their pride had designedly confused their calendar. Their ambition was to take precedence of all other nations in point of time. With this end in view, they drew up a number of complicated calendars and royal genealogical tables. By this and frequent changes in their computations, order and true chronology were lost. That this confusion might be firmly established, they perpetuated every error by inscriptions and the erection of great buildings. For a long time they reckoned the ages of father and son, as if the date of the former's demise were that of the latter's birth. The kings, who waged constant war with the priests on the subject of chronology,

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inserted among their forefathers the names of persons that never existed. Thus the four kings of the same name who reigned simultaneously in Thebes, Heliopolis, Memphis, and Sais, were in accordance with this design, reckoned one after the other. I saw too that once they reckoned nine hundred and seventy days to a year, and again, years were computed as months. I saw a pagan priest drawing up a chronological table in which for every five hundred years, eleven hundred were set down.

I saw these false computations of the pagan priests at the same time that I beheld Jesus teaching on the Sabbath at Aruma. Jesus, speaking before the Pharisees of the Call of Abraham and his sojourn in Egypt, exposed the errors of the Egyptian calendar. He told them that the world had now existed 4028 years. When I heard Jesus say this, He was Himself thirty-one years old.

I saw in those times, also, a people who honored Seth as a god. They made distant and perilous journeys into Arabia where they supposed his grave to be. It seems to me that the descendants of this people are still in existence, and that the Turks suffer them to pass freely through their territory on their pilgrimages to that grave.

10. Melchisedech

I have often seen Melchisedech, but never as a human being. I have always seen him as a being of another nature, as an angel, as one sent by God. I have never at any time seen any determinate dwelling place, any home, any family, any associates connected with him. I never saw him eating, drinking, or sleeping, and never did the thought occur to me that he was a mortal. He was clothed as no priest at the time on the earth, but like the angels in the heavenly Jerusalem. His robes were such as Moses, upon the command of God, afterward ordained the priestly vestments

should be. I have seen Melchisedech appearing here and there, interposing and legislating the affairs of nations; as, for instance, at the celebration of victories after war, at that time waged with such cruelty. Wherever he appeared, wherever he was, he exercised an irresistible influence by his mere presence. No one opposed him, and yet he never resorted to harsh measures; even the idolaters cheerfully accepted his decisions and acted upon his advice. He had no companion of his own nature; he was entirely alone. Sometimes he had two hired couriers. They were clothed in short white garments, and they ran on before him to announce his coming. He dismissed them when their mission was over. All that he needed, he had without trouble of acquiring. They from whom he received anything could always spare what they gave. They bestowed it upon him with joy. They regarded him with reverential fear, but esteemed themselves happy to be in his company. Although the wicked found fault with him, yet they humbled themselves in his presence. Melchisedech, that being of a higher order, was regarded by the great ones of the pagan world, those sensuous, godless men, in much the same light that an extraordinarily holy man would be looked upon at the present day, if he suddenly appeared amongst us as a stranger doing good to all around.

Thus I saw Melchisedech at the court of Semiramis in Babylon, where she reigned with indescribable grandeur and magnificence. She caused immense buildings to be erected by her slaves, whom she oppressed far more severely than did Pharaoh the children of Jacob in Egypt. The most horrible idolatry was practiced among the Babylonians. Human victims were buried up to the neck in the earth, and thus offered in sacrifice. It is hardly credible to what a degree all kinds of luxury, magnificence, opulence, and the arts were carried. Semiramis also waged great wars; her armies were composed of countless warriors. But these wars were almost always against nations

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off toward the east. She went not much westward. The nations toward the north were dark and sinister-looking people.

As time went on, there arose in the kingdom of Semiramis a numerous people of the Semitic race. After the building of the Tower, their ancestors had remained in Babylon. They lived as a little pastoral tribe under tents, raised cattle, and celebrated their religious ceremonies by night, either in an open tent or under the starry sky. Many blessings attended them, they were prosperous in all things, and their cattle was always remarkably fine. Semiramis, the diabolical woman, resolved to exterminate this tribe and she had already destroyed a great many belonging to it. She knew from the blessing attending them that God had merciful designs over them; therefore would she, as an instrument of the devil, oppress them. When the distress of these people was at its height, Melchisedech appeared. He went to Semiramis, demanded permission for them to depart, and rebuked her for her cruelty. Semiramis yielded to his desires, and he led them in different bands toward Palestine. Melchisedech dwelt in a tent near Babylon, and here he broke that bread to the good people from which they received strength to depart. He pointed out to them, here and there in Canaan, places suitable for settlements, and they received from him lands of various quality. He divided them off according to their purity in order that they should not mix with others. Their name sounded like Samanen, or Semanen. Melchisedech pointed out to some of them as suitable for a settlement the region which was afterward the site of the Dead Sea, but their city was destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrha.

Semiramis received Melchisedech with great reverence. She secretly dreaded him on account of his wisdom. He appeared before her as the King of the Morning Star, that is of the most distant eastern land. She fancied that he might perhaps woo her for his

bride. But he spoke to her sternly, reproached her with her cruelty, and foretold to her the destruction of her pyramid at Memphis. Semiramis grew speechless from terror, and I saw the punishment that fell upon her. She became like a beast. She was for a long time penned up, and they cast to her in derision grass and straw in a manger; only one servant was faithful to her and furnished her with food. She was freed from the chastisement, but she carried on her disorders anew. She came at last to a frightful end, her intestines being torn from her body. She was aged one hundred and seventeen years.

Melchisedech came to be regarded as a prophet, as a teacher, as a being from a higher sphere, with whom all things succeeded. There were at that time, as also later, many such apparitions of beings of a higher order. They were to the people of that age as familiar as were the angels in Abraham's time. But diabolical apparitions also were frequent, in the same way as false prophets rose up by the side of the true. The departure of the Semitic race from Babylon bears some analogy to that of the Israelites from Egypt, although the former were by no means so numerous as the latter.

Of the Samanenses whom Melchisedech settled in Palestine, I saw long before the coming of Abraham three men on the so-called Bread Mountain, in the neighborhood of Thabor. They lived in caves. They were of a browner complexion than Abraham, and were clothed in skins. They bound a great leaf on their head to protect them from the sun. Their life, modeled on that of Enoch, was a holy one. Their religion was simple, though full of mysterious signification, and they had visions and revelations which they easily interpreted. Their religion taught that God would unite Himself with man and for that union they must prepare in every possible way. They also offered sacrifice. A third part of their daily allowance they exposed to the sun, either to be consumed by it

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or, perhaps, for the benefit of other needy creatures. That the latter was the case, I also saw. These people lived quite solitary, apart from the rest of the inhabitants of the country. The latter were not yet numerous and lived scattered, here and there, in abodes built in the style of fortified tent cities. I saw those three men going through the country digging wells, cutting down forests, and laying the foundations of subsequent cities. I saw them driving the evil spirits from the air around whole regions and banishing them to other places, to poor, swampy, foggy districts. I saw again that the wicked spirits prefer such wretched abodes. I often saw these men wrestling with them. At first, I wondered how cities could arise where they laid stones, which so soon became overgrown, and then I had another vision in which I was shown a number of places built on these sites; for instance, Saphet, Bethsaida, Nazareth (where those three men worked on the spot upon which afterward stood the house in which the angel delivered the message to Mary); Gathopher, Sephoris (in the region near Nazareth, where Anne's house afterward stood); Mageddo, Naim, Ainon, the caves of Bethlehem and Hebron. I also saw them founding Machmethat and many other places that I have now forgotten.

I saw them every month assembling on this mountain where Melchisedech broke a large four-cornered loaf (three feet square, perhaps, and tolerably thick) into numerous little pieces which he divided among them. The loaf was of a brownish color and had been baked in the ashes. I saw that Melchisedech always went to them without a companion. Sometimes he bore the loaf quite lightly, as if it merely floated above his hand; and again when he drew near to the mountain, I saw it as a weight upon his shoulders. I think he took this precaution on approaching them that they might look upon him as merely a man. Still they met him with great reverence, prostrating before him. He taught them how to plant vines on Thabor. He

also gave them all kinds of seeds, which they scattered in many parts of the country and which now grow wild there. I saw these people every day cutting a piece off the loaf with the brown spades they used at work. They also ate birds, which flew toward them in great numbers. They had festival days, and they were familiar with the stars. They celebrated the eighth day with prayer and sacrifice, also some days in the course of the year. I saw them also making numerous roads through the still wild country to the places where they had laid foundations, dug wells, and sowed seed. This they did that the people coming after them might, by following these roads, make settlements near the wells and fertile places prepared for them. I saw these three men often surrounded while at work by crowds of evil spirits, whom they could see. I saw these spirits, by prayer and the word of command, banished to swampy wastes. They departed instantly, and the men went quietly on with their work, clearing and purifying.

They made roads to Cana, Mageddo, and Naim, and in this way they prepared the birthplace of most of the Prophets. They laid the foundations of Abelmahula and Dothain, and dug out the beautiful baths at Bethulia. Melchisedech still scoured the country alone and as a stranger; no one knew where he lived.

The three Samanenses were old, but still very active. On the site of the Dead Sea and in Judea, cities already existed. There were some also further north but none as yet in the central regions.

The Samanenses dug their own graves and sometimes stretched themselves in them; one made his near Hebron, another on Thabor, and the third in the caves not far from Saphet. They were, in a certain sense, for Abraham what John was for Jesus. They purified the country, they prepared the land and the ways, they sowed good fruit, and they brought water for the leader of God's people. But John prepared the heart for penance and for a second birth in Jesus

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Christ. The Samanenses did for Israel what John did for the Church. I have seen such men in other places also, where they had been introduced by Melchisedech.

I often saw Melchisedech as he appeared in Palestine long before the time of Semiramis and Abraham, when the country was still a wilderness. He seemed to be laying it out, marking off and preparing certain districts. I saw him entirely alone, and I thought: What is this man doing here so early? There is not a human being in this place! I saw him near a mountain, boring a well. It was the source of the Jordan. He had a long fine instrument which, like a ray of light, pierced the mountainside. I saw him in the same way opening fountains in different parts of the earth. In those early times, that is, before the Deluge, I never saw the rivers gushing forth and flowing as they do now, but I saw volumes of water pouring down from a high mountain in the east.

Melchisedech took possession of many parts of Palestine by marking them off. He measured off the site for the Pool of Bethsaida, and long before Jerusalem existed he laid a stone where the Temple was to stand. I saw him planting in the bed of the Jordan the twelve precious stones upon which the priests stood with the Ark of the Covenant at the departure of the children of Israel. He planted them like seeds, and they increased in size.

I always saw Melchisedech alone, save when he had to busy himself with the uniting, the separating, or the guiding of nations and families.

I saw that Melchisedech built a castle at Salem. But it was rather a tent with galleries and steps around it, like the castle of Mensor, in Arabia. The foundation alone was solid, for it was of stone. I think the four corners where the principal posts stood, were still to be seen even in John's time. It had only a very strong foundation of stone, which looked like a fortification overrun with verdure. John had there his little hut of rushes.

That tent castle was a resort for strangers and travelers, a kind of safe and convenient inn near the pleasant waters. Perhaps Melchisedech, whom I have always seen as the guide and counselor of the still unsettled races and nations, kept this castle as a place in which to harbor and instruct them. But even at that time, it bore some reference to Baptism.

This was Melchisedech's central point. From it he started on his journeys to layout Jerusalem, to visit Abraham, and to go elsewhere. Here also he gathered together and distributed families and peoples, who settled in various places. All this took place previously to the offering of bread and wine which, I think, was made in a valley south of Jerusalem.

Melchisedech built Salem before he built Jerusalem. Wherever he labored and constructed, he seemed to be laying the foundation of a future grace, to be drawing attention to that particular place, to be beginning something that would be perfected in the future.

Melchisedech belongs to the choir of angels that are set over countries and nations, that brought messages to Abraham and the other Patriarchs. They stand opposite the archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

11. Job

The father of Job, a great leader of the nations, was brother to Phaleg, the son of Heber. Shortly before his time occurred the dispersion of men at the building of the Babylonian Tower. Job was the youngest of thirteen sons. They dwelt north of the Black Sea near a mountain chain which was warm on one side, and on the other cold and covered with ice. Job was forefather of Abraham. Abraham's mother was a great granddaughter of Job, who had married into the family of Heber. Job may have still been alive at the time of Abraham's birth. He dwelt in different places, and his afflictions came upon him in three different abodes. Between the first and the second, there intervened a

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period of nine years' prosperity; between the second and the third, seven years; and after the third, twelve years. His sufferings always befell him in a different dwelling place. But he never was so absolutely ruined as to have nothing left; he merely became quite poor when compared with his former circumstances. He always had enough left to pay all his debts.

Job could not remain in his parents' house. His ideas and inclinations did not accord with theirs. Job adored in nature the one only God, especially in the stars and in the change from day to night. He spoke frequently of God's wonderful works, and offered to Him a worship purer than that of those around him. He moved with his followers northward from the Caucasus to a very miserable swampy region. I think it is now inhabited by a nation distinguished by their flat noses, high cheekbones, and small eyes. Here Job first settled, and things went well with him. He gathered around him all kinds of poor, abandoned creatures who dwelt in caves and bushes, and who lived exclusively upon the raw flesh of birds and animals taken in hunting. Job was the first who taught them how to cook their food. With their help he dug up and cultivated the land. He and his people wore at that time but little clothing and they dwelt in tents. Job soon found himself the owner of immense herds in this place, among them numerous striped asses and spotted animals. Once three sons were born to him at one birth, and three daughters at another. He had as yet no city here, but went around among his fields which extended to a distance of seven leagues. No grain was cultivated in those marshy districts; but they raised a large sedge, which grows also in water, and whose pith was eaten either boiled or roasted. They dried their meat in holes dug in the earth, and exposed to the sun, until Job taught them how to cook it. They planted many species of gourds for food.

Job was unspeakably gentle, affable, just, and benevolent.

He assisted all in need. He was, too, exceedingly pure and very familiar with God, who communicated with him through an angel, or "a white man," as the people of that period expressed it. These angelic apparitions were like radiant, but beardless, youths in long white garments that fell in heavy folds or strips around them, I could not distinguish which. They were girded, and they took food and drink. God consoled Job during his sufferings by means of these apparitions, and they passed sentence on his friends, his nephews, and his other relatives. He did not, like the nations around him, worship idols. They made for themselves images of all kinds of animals and adored them. But Job fabricated for himself a representation of the Almighty God, the figure of a child crowned with rays. The hands were held one above the other, and in one was a globe upon which was depicted a little vessel riding on the waves. I think it was to represent the Deluge of which, as well as of the wisdom and mercy of God, Job often spoke to his two confidential servants. The figure was portable and shone like metal. Job prayed before it, and burned grain before it as a sacrifice. The smoke arose from the top of it as through a funnel. It was in this place that Job's first affliction befell him. The time that intervened between the different misfortunes recorded of him, was not for him a time of peace. He always had to combat and struggle against the wicked races by whom he was surrounded. After his first affliction, he removed further up the mountain range, the Caucasus, where he again began anew and where prosperity again followed him. He and his followers now began to clothe themselves less scantily, and their mode of life exhibited more refinement.

From this, his second dwelling place, Job went, accompanied by a numerous train of followers, to Egypt where at that time strangers called shepherd kings, and who were from his own native land, governed a part of the country. These shepherd kings were afterward

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expelled by an Egyptian monarch. Job's mission to Egypt was to conduct thither one of his own relatives, who was to be the bride of one of the shepherd kings. He took with him rich presents, about thirty camels, and many servants. When I saw him in Egypt, Job was a large, powerful man of agreeable appearance; he had a yellowish-brown complexion and reddish hair. Abraham was fairer. The Egyptians were of a dirty brown. Job was not contented in Egypt. I used to see him looking back longingly toward the east, toward his fatherland which lay more to the south than the most distant country of the Three Kings. I heard him complaining bitterly to his servants telling them that he would rather live with wild beasts than with the people of Egypt. The horrible idolatry that everywhere prevailed in that country afflicted him. The Egyptians worshipped a frightful idol with an upraised head, like that of an ox, and broad open jaws. They heated it intensely, and laid living children as offerings on its glowing arms.

The shepherd king, for whose son Job conducted the bride into Egypt, would fain have kept him there, and he assigned to him Matarea as a dwelling place. The region was at that time very different from what it was at a later period when the Holy Family sojourned there. Still I saw that Job dwelt on the spot afterward occupied by them, and that the Fountain of Mary was already shown him by God. When Mary discovered this well, it was already lined with stone, though still covered over. Job used the stone by the well for religious worship. By prayer he freed the country around his dwelling place from wild and venomous animals. Visions referring to man's salvation were vouchsafed him here, and he saw, too, the trials in store for him. With burning zeal he exclaimed against the infamous practices of the Egyptians and their human sacrifices. I think these latter were in consequence abolished.

When Job had returned to his native country, his

second misfortune overtook him; and when, after twelve years of peace, the third came upon him, he was living more toward the south and directly eastward from Jericho. I think this country had been given to him after his second calamity, because he was everywhere greatly revered and loved for his admirable justice, his knowledge, and his fear of God. This country was a level plain, and here Job began anew. On a height, which was very fertile, noble animals of various kinds were running around, also wild camels. They caught them in the same way as we do the wild horses on the heath.

Job settled on this height. Here he prospered, became very rich, and built a city. The foundations were of stone; the dwellings were tents. It was during this period of great prosperity that his third calamity, his grievous distemper, overtook him. After enduring this affliction with great wisdom and patience, he entirely recovered, and again became the father of many sons and daughters. I think Job did not die till long after, when another nation intruded itself into the country.

Although in the Book of Job this narrative is given very differently, yet many of Job's own words are therein recorded. I think I could distinguish them all. Where the story says that the servants came quickly one after another to Job with news of his losses, it must be remarked that the words: "And as he still spoke of it," signify, "And while the last calamity was not yet effaced from the mind of men," etc.

That Satan appeared before God with the sons of God and brought an action against Job, is told in this way only for the sake of brevity. There was at that time much communication between the evil spirits and idolaters to whom they appeared in angelic form. In this way, Satan incited his wicked neighbors against Job, and they calumniated him. They said that he did not serve God properly, that he had a superfluity of possessions, and that it was very easy for him to be

good. Then God resolved to show that afflictions are often only trials, etc.

The friends who spoke around Job symbolized the reflections of his kinsmen upon his fate. But Job longingly awaited the Saviour, and he was one of the ancestors of the race of David. He was to Abraham, through the mother of the latter (who was one of his descendants), what the ancestors of Anne were to Mary.

The history of Job, together with his dialogues with God, was circumstantially written down by two of his most trusty servants who seemed to be his stewards. They wrote upon bark, and from Job's own dictation. These two servants were named respectively Hai and Uis, or Ois. These narratives were held very sacred by Job's descendants. They passed from generation to generation down to Abraham. In the school of Rebecca, the Canaanites were instructed in them on account of the lessons of submission under trials from God that they inculcated.

Through Jacob and Joseph, they descended to the children of Israel in Egypt. Moses collected and arranged them differently for the use of the Israelites during their servitude in Egypt and their painful wanderings in the wilderness; for they contained many details that might not have been understood, and which would have been of no service in his time. But Solomon again entirely remodeled them, omitting many things and inserting many others of his own. And so, this once authentic history became a sacred book made up of the wisdom of Job, Moses, and Solomon. One can now only with difficulty trace the particular history of Job, for the names of cities and nations were assimilated to those of the land of Canaan, on which account Job came to be regarded as an Edomite.

12. Abraham

Abraham and his forefathers belonged to a very peculiar type of a mighty race. They led a pastoral

life. They were not really natives of Dr, in Chaldea, but they had removed there. They exercised special authority and jurisdiction. Here and there, they took possession of certain regions where good pasturage was found. They marked off the boundaries, erected an altar of stones, and the land thus enclosed became their property. Something happened to Abraham in his early childhood similar to that which occurred to the child Moses by which his nurse saved his life. It had been prophesied to the ruler of the country that a wonderful child would be born whose birth would be very fatal to his interests. The ruler took measures accordingly, on which account Abraham's mother concealed herself before his birth in the same cave in which Seth had been hidden by Eve. There Abraham was born, and there secretly reared by his nurse, Maraha. She passed for a poor slave who worked in the wilderness. Her hut was near this cave, which was named after her the *Milk Cave*. She was, after her death and in accordance with her own request, buried there by Abraham.

Abraham was a remarkably large child. When, on account of his unusual size, he was of an age to pass for a child born before the prophecy alluded to, his parents took him home. But his precocious wisdom exposed him to danger, so the nurse fled with him, and again concealed him a long time in the same cave. Many children of his age were massacred at that time. Abraham tenderly loved Maraha, his nurse. In after years, in all his peregrinations he took her with him on a camel. She also dwelt with him at Socoth. She died at the age of one hundred years. Abraham hewed out a tomb for her in the white stone which, like a hill, enclosed the cave in which he was born. The cave became a place of devotion, especially for mothers. Throughout the whole of this history, we discover a mysterious prefiguring of the early persecutions which Mary with the Child Jesus had to endure. It was, too, in this same cave that they hid

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from Herod's soldiers when they sought the Child.

The father of Abraham received great graces from Heaven, and understood many mysteries. His race possessed the gift of discovering gold in the earth, and he fabricated out of it little idols similar to those that Rachel purloined from Laban. Dr is a place in the north of Chaldea. I perceived in many parts of this region, on mountains and plains, white flames arising, as if the ground were on fire. I know not whether this fire was spontaneous or kindled by man.

Abraham was a great astronomer. He understood the properties of things, and the influence of the stars upon birth. He saw all kinds of things in the stars, but he turned all to God. He followed God in all things and served Him alone. He imparted his knowledge to others in Chaldea, but he traced all back to God.

I saw that in a vision he received from God the order to depart from his own country. God showed him another land, and Abraham next morning, without asking any questions, led forth all his people and departed. I afterward saw him pitching his tent in a region of Palestine which seemed to me to lie around the place where Nazareth subsequently stood. Abraham himself erected here an oblong altar of stone with a tent over it. Once when kneeling before the altar, a light descended from Heaven upon him. An angel, a messenger from God, appeared, said something to him, and presented to him a shining, transparent gift. The angel spoke with Abraham, and the latter received the mysterious Blessing, the Holy Thing from Heaven; he opened his garment and laid it upon his breast. I was told that this was the Sacrament of the Old Testament. Abraham, as yet, knew not what it contained. It was hidden from him, as from us is concealed the substance of the Most Holy Sacrament. But it was given to him as a sacred thing, as a pledge of the promised posterity. The angel was exactly of the same kind as the one that announced

to the Blessed Virgin the conception of the Messiah. He was also as gentle and tranquil as Gabriel in the execution of his commission, not so hasty and rapid as I see other angels under similar circumstances. I think Abraham always carried the mysterious gift about with him. The angel spoke to him of Melchisedech who was to celebrate before him the sacrifice which, after the coming of the Messiah, would be accomplished, and which should be continued forever.

Abraham then took from a casket five large bones which he laid upon the altar in the form of a cross. A light burned before it, and he offered sacrifice. The fire burned like a star, the center white and the rays red.

I also saw Abraham with Sara in Egypt. He went thither in obedience to a command from God; first, on account of the famine; and, secondly, to take possession of a treasure which had been carried there by one of Sara's relatives. The treasure consisted of triangular pieces of gold strung together to form a genealogical table of the children of Noe, and especially of Sem down to Abraham's own time. It had been taken into Egypt by a daughter of Sara's maternal aunt, who had gone thither with a pastoral tribe, some of Job's lateral descendants, who afterward degenerated into a wild state. She had there hired herself as a servant. She had stolen that treasure as later on Rachel did the gods of Laban. The genealogical table was made like the scales of a balance hanging on cords. The latter consisted of small triangular pieces strung together, and from them depended single collateral strings. On the gold pieces were figures and letters denoting Noe's, and especially Sem's descendants. When the cords were let down, the various pieces all lay together in the dish. I heard, but I have forgotten, the number of shekels (so the sum is called) to which the whole amounted. This family register had fallen into the hands of Pharaoh and the priests. They made on it various reckonings connected

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with their own unending chronological calculations, but they never rightly understood it.

When Pharaoh was visited by heavy afflictions he consulted with his idolatrous priests, and granted to Abraham all he demanded.

Upon Abraham's return to Palestine, I saw Lot by him in a tent. Abraham was pointing all around with his hand. In his bearing there was something of the deportment of the Three Kings. He wore a long white, woolen garment with sleeves; a plaited white girdle with tassels; and a sort of cowl hanging down the back. On his head was a small cap, and upon his breast a shield in the shape of a heart made of metal or precious stones. His beard was long. I have no words to say how kind and generous Abraham was. If he had anything that pleased another, especially if it were cattle, he offered it to him at once, for he was a declared enemy to envy and covetousness. Lot's clothing was almost like that of Abraham, but he was not so tall, nor so noble-looking. He was indeed, good, but at the same time a little covetous. I often saw the servants of the two disputing, and I saw Lot separating from Abraham. But as he went, I saw him enveloped in fog. Over Abraham, I saw light. I saw him take down his tents and wander about. He built an altar of field stones, and raised a tent over it. The people of that time were skillful in building out of rough stones, and the master with the servant put his hand to the work. The altar just mentioned was in the region of Hebron, the subsequent dwelling place of Zacharias, the father of the Baptist. The region to which Lot removed was very good, as was all this part of the country toward the Jordan. I saw the cities around Lot's dwelling place plundered, and Lot himself with all his goods and chattels carried off. I saw a fugitive bear the news to Abraham, who immediately invoked the aid of Heaven. Then gathering his servants together, he surprised the enemy and freed his brother. The latter thanked him gratefully, and

Melchisedech's Sacrifice

was full of regret for having separated from him. The enemy and the warriors in general, especially the giants, were not clothed like Abraham's followers. Their garments were narrower and shorter; their

dress was in many pieces, covered with buttons, stars, and other ornaments. The giants were extraordinarily large people. They brutally and insolently carried off all they could lay their hands upon, but they were often obliged to yield their booty to others who plundered them in turn.

13. Melchisedech's Sacrifice of Bread and Wine

I often saw Melchisedech with Abraham. He appeared to him in the same way as did the angels at different times. Once he commanded him a triple sacrifice of doves and other birds, and he prophesied concerning Sodom and Lot. He told him that he would come to him again to sacrifice bread and wine, and he indicated to him, also, for what he should pray to God. Abraham was full of reverence before Melchisedech, and he eagerly awaited the promised sacrifice. As a preparation for it, he built a very beautiful altar and surrounded it with an arbor. When about to come for the sacrifice of bread and wine, Melchisedech sent messengers to command Abraham to make his coming known and to announce him as the King of Salem. Abraham went out to meet him. He knelt before him and received his blessing. This took place in a valley southward from the fertile vale that lies toward Gaza.

Melchisedech came from the region where Jerusalem afterward stood. He had with him a very nimble animal of a gray color. It had a short, broad neck, and it was laden on both sides. On one was a vessel of wine, flat on the side that lay against the beast; on the other, was a box containing rows of flat, oval loaves, likewise the Chalice that I afterward saw

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used at the Last Supper for the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. It had cups in the shape of little barrels. These vessels were neither of gold nor silver, but transparent as of brownish precious stones. They did not appear to me to have been fabricated by man, they looked as if they had grown. The impression made by Melchisedech was similar to that produced by the Lord during His teaching life. He was very tall and slight, remarkably mild and earnest. He wore a long garment so white and shining that it reminded me of the white raiment that surrounded the Lord at His Transfiguration. Abraham's white garment was quite dingy compared with it. He wore also a girdle with letters similar to that worn later by the Jewish priests, and like them his head was covered with a small gothic miter during the sacrifice. His hair was shining yellow like long glittering strands of silk, and his countenance was luminous.

Upon Melchisedech's arrival, he found the King of Sodom already with Abraham in his tent, and around were numbers of people with animals, sacks, and chests. All were very grave and solemn, full of reverence for Melchisedech whose presence inspired awe. He stepped to the altar, which was a kind of tabernacle, wherein he placed the Chalice. There was also a recess in it, I think for the sacrifice. Abraham had laid upon the altar the bones of Adam which Noe had had in the Ark. They now prayed before them that God would fulfill the Promise made to Adam of a future Messiah. Melchisedech spread upon the altar first a red cover, which he had brought with him, and over that a white transparent one. The ceremony reminded me of the Holy Mass. I saw him elevate the bread and wine, offer, bless, and break. He reached to Abraham the Chalice used afterward at the Last Supper in order that he might drink. All the rest of those present drank from the little vessels which were handed around by Abraham and the most distinguished personages. The bread, too, was passed around

in morsels larger than those given at Holy Communion in the early times. I saw these morsels shining. They had only been blessed, not consecrated. The angels cannot consecrate. All that partook of the food were filled with new life and drawn nearer to God.

Melchisedech gave bread and wine to Abraham, the former more luminous than that received by the others. Abraham derived from it great strength and such energy of faith that later on at the command of God, he did not hesitate to sacrifice his child of promise. He prophesied in these words: "This is not what Moses upon Sinai gives the Levites." I know not whether Abraham also offered the sacrifice of bread and wine, but I do know that the Chalice from which he drank was the same used by Jesus at the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament.

When Melchisedech at the sacrifice of bread and wine blessed Abraham, he at the same time ordained him a priest. He spoke over him the words: "The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at My right hand. Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent."

He laid his hands upon Abraham, and Abraham gave him tithes. I understood the deep signification of Abraham's giving tithes after his ordination. But the reason of its importance, I no longer recollect.¹

I saw also that David, when composing this Psalm, had a vision of Abraham's ordination by Melchisedech, and that he repeated the last words prophetically. The words, "Sit thou at my right hand," have a peculiar signification. When the eternal generation of the Son from the Father was shown me in vision, I saw the Son issuing from the right side of the Father as a luminous form surrounded by a triangle, as the Eye of God is depicted, and in the upper corner I saw the Holy Ghost. But it is inexpressible!

I saw that Eve came from the right side of Adam,

1. See *Heb.* 7.

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that the Patriarchs carried the Blessing in their right side, and that they placed the children to whom they delivered it upon their right. Jesus received the stroke of the lance in His right side, and the Church came forth from the same right side. When we enter the Church, we go into the right side of Jesus, and we are in Him united to His Heavenly Father.

I think that Melchisedech's mission upon earth was ended with this sacrifice and the ordination of Abraham, for after that I saw him no more. The Chalice with the six cups he delivered to Abraham.

14. Abraham Receives the Sacrament of the Old Covenant

Abraham sat in front of his tent under a large tree by the roadside. He was in prayer. He often sat thus waiting to show hospitality to travelers. As he prayed, he raised his eyes to Heaven and saw, as in a sunbeam, an apparition from God that announced to him the coming of the three *white men*. He arose and sacrificed a lamb on the altar, before which I saw him kneeling in ecstasy begging for the Redemption of mankind. The altar stood to the right of the large tree in a tent open at top. Further on was a second tent in which the vessels and other utensils for sacrifice were kept. It was to this last that Abraham generally retired when superintending the shepherds who dwelt around here. Still further on, and on the opposite side of the road, was the tent of Sara and her household. The females always lived apart.

Abraham's sacrifice was almost accomplished when he beheld the three angels appear on the high road. On they came in their girded garments, one after another, an even distance between them. Abraham hurried out to meet them. Bowing low before God, he saluted them, and led them to the tent of the altar. Here they let down their garments and commanded Abraham to kneel. I saw the wonderful things

that now happened to Abraham through the ministry of the angels. He was in ecstasy, and all the actions were rapid, as is usual in such states. He heard the first angel announce to Abraham as he knelt that God would bring forth from his posterity a sinless, an immaculate maiden who, while remaining an inviolate virgin, should be the mother of the Redeemer, and that he was now to receive what Adam had lost through sin. Then the angel offered him a shining morsel and made him drink a luminous fluid out of a little cup. After that he blessed him, drawing his right hand in a straight line down from Abraham's forehead, then from the right and the left shoulder respectively down under the breast, where the three lines of the blessing united. Then with both hands the angel held something like a little luminous cloud toward Abraham's breast. I saw it entering into him, and I felt as if he were receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

The second angel told Abraham that he should before his death impart the Mystery of this Blessing to Sara's firstborn, in the same way that he had himself received it. He informed him also that his future grandson, Jacob, would be the father of twelve sons from whom twelve tribes should spring. The angel told him also that this Blessing would be withdrawn from Jacob; but that after Jacob had become a nation, it should be again restored and placed in the Ark of the Covenant as a Holy Thing belonging to the whole nation. It should be theirs as long as they gave themselves to prayer. The angel explained to Abraham that, on account of the wickedness of men, the Mystery would be removed from the Ark and confided to the Patriarchs and that at last it would be given over to a man who would be the father of the promised Virgin. I heard also in this promise that by six prophetesses and through star pictures it had been made known to the heathens that the Redemption of the world should be accomplished

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through a virgin.

All this was made known to Abraham in vision, and he saw the Virgin appear in the heavens, an angel hovering at her right and touching her lips with a branch. From the mantle of the Virgin issued the Church.

The third angel foretold to Abraham the birth of Isaac. I saw Abraham so full of joy over the promised holy Virgin and the vision he had had of her that he gave no thought to Isaac, and I think that this same promise made the command he subsequently received to sacrifice Isaac easy to him. After these holy communications, I saw first the entertainment of the angels and then the laughing of Sara. I saw Abraham escorting the angels at their departure, and I heard him supplicating for Sodom.

When Abraham awoke from ecstasy, he led the angels under the tree and placed stools around it. The angels sat down, and he washed their feet. Then Abraham hurried to Sara's tent to tell her to prepare a meal for his guests. This she did and, veiling herself, she carried it halfway to them. The meal over, Abraham accompanied the angels a short distance on their journey. It was then that Sara heard them speak to him of the birth of a son. She had approached them behind the enclosure of the tent. She laughed. I saw numbers of doves tame as hens before the tents. The meal consisted of the same kind of birds, round loaves, and honey.

Abraham at his departure from Chaldea had already received the Mystery of the Blessing from an angel, but it was given to him in a veiled manner, and was more like a pledge of fulfillment of the promise that he should be the father of an innumerable people. Now, however, the Mystery was resuscitated in him by the angels, and he was enlightened upon it.

15. Jacob

Rebecca knew that Esau had no share in the Divine Mystery. Esau was dull, rough, and slothful; Jacob was very active and shrewd, more like his mother. Isaac, however, was more partial to Esau as his firstborn. Esau was often away from home hunting. Rebecca often pondered how she could procure the birthright, the Blessing, for Jacob, and she taught him how to go about buying it. The mess of pottage for which Esau sold it was composed of vegetables, meat, and green leaves like lettuce. Esau came home tired from the chase. Jacob coaxed him, and received the surrender of the birthright.

Isaac was at this time very old and blind. He feared he would soon die, and consequently he was anxious to give his Blessing over to Esau. Rebecca, who knew that Jacob should and must have it, could not persuade Isaac to give it to him. She was on that account very much afflicted, and went around quite anxious. When she found that Isaac would no longer be withheld from imparting the Blessing, and that he called to him Esau who was in the neighborhood, she laid her plans. She told Jacob to hide when his brother came in that he might not be seen. Isaac ordered Esau to go bring him something of his hunting. Then Rebecca sent Jacob to get a kid from the flock, and hardly was Esau gone when the dish for Isaac was prepared.

Esau's best clothes, which Rebecca now put upon Jacob, consisted of a jacket very like Jacob's own, only stiffer and embroidered on the breast in colors. Esau's arms and breast were covered with thick, black hair like wool, his skin being like the skin of an animal; therefore Rebecca wrapped a part of the kid's skin around Jacob's arms and put a piece upon his breast where the jacket lay open. This jacket differed from the one usually worn only by the amount of work upon it. It was slit at the sides, and passed over

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the head by a hole which was bound with soft, brownish leather. The side slits were fastened together with leather strings, and when a girdle was worn over it, the fullness around the breast served as a pocket. No garment was worn under this jacket, which was sleeveless and left the breast bare. The headgear and apron worn with the jacket were brownish, or gray.

I saw Isaac feeling Jacob's breast and hands where Esau was full of hair. I saw that he wavered a little, he was troubled and doubting. But then came the thought that, notwithstanding his doubts, it was certainly Esau and that God willed him to have the Blessing. And so he made over to Jacob that Blessing which he had received from Abraham, and Abraham from the angel. He had, with Rebecca's assistance, previously prepared something mystical which was connected with it; viz., a drink in a cup.

The other children of the Patriarchs knew not of it. Only the one that received the Blessing knew of the Mystery which, however, still remained to him, as to us the Blessed Sacrament, a mystery. The cup was rather flat on one side. It was transparent and shone like mother-of-pearl. It was filled with something red, something like blood, and I felt that it was Isaac's blood. Rebecca had helped to prepare it.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, they were alone. Jacob bared his breast and stood before his father. Isaac drew the hand with which he gave the Blessing from Jacob's forehead straight down to the abdomen, from the right shoulder to the same point, and the same from the left shoulder. Then he laid his right hand on Jacob's head and his left upon the pit of his stomach, and Jacob drank the contents of the little cup. And now it seemed as if Isaac delivered to him all things, all power, all strength, while with both hands he took, as it were, something out of his own person and placed it in that of Jacob. I felt that this something was his own strength, that it was the Blessing. All this time, Isaac was praying aloud. While

giving over the Blessing, Isaac sat erect on his couch; he became animated, and rays of light streamed from him. When Isaac drew his hand down in giving the Blessing, Jacob held both of his open and half-raised, as the priest does at the *Dominus vobiscum*; but when the father merely prayed, Jacob kept them crossed on his breast. When Isaac delivered the Blessing to Jacob, the latter received it and crossed his hands under his breast like one who is holding something. At the close of the ceremony, Isaac laid his hands upon Jacob's head and upon the region of the stomach, and then Jacob received the cup out of which he had drunk.

When the imparting of the Blessing had been accomplished, I saw Isaac swooning, either from exertion or from having actually given over and parted with his strength. But Jacob was radiant, quickened, full of life and strength. And now came Esau from the hunt.

When Isaac discovered that the Blessing had been transferred to the wrong one, he had no regret, he recognized it to be God's will. But Esau was mad with rage, he tore his hair. Still, in his fury there seemed to be more envy of Jacob than grief for the lost Blessing.

Both Esau and Jacob were full-grown men, over forty years old at the time of the transfer of the Blessing. Esau already had two wives who were not much liked by his parents. When Rebecca saw Esau's rage, she sent Jacob away secretly to her brother Laban. I saw his departure. He wore a jacket that reached to the waist, an apron as far as the knees, sandals on his feet, and a band wrapped round his head. In his hand was a shepherd's staff, a small sack containing bread hung from his shoulder, and under his arm was a flask. This was all he took with him. I saw him hurrying off followed by the tears of his mother. Isaac had blessed him a second time, and commanded him to go to Laban, and to take a wife in his new home.

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Isaac and Rebecca had much to endure from Esau. Rebecca especially had much sorrow.

I saw Jacob, on his journey to Mesopotamia, lying asleep on the spot where Bethel afterward stood. The sun had set. Jacob lay stretched on his back, a stone under his head, his staff resting on his arm. Then I saw the ladder that Jacob beheld in his dream, and which in the Bible is described as "standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven." I saw this ladder rising up to heaven from Jacob where he lay upon the earth. It was like a living genealogical tree of his posterity. I saw below on the earth, just as those genealogical trees are represented, a green trunk as if growing out of the sleeping Jacob. It divided into three branches which arose in the form of a triangular pyramid whose apex reached the heavens. The three branches were connected by other smaller ones that formed a three-sided pyramidal ladder. I saw this ladder surrounded by numerous apparitions. I saw on it Jacob's descendants, one above another; they formed the ancestry of Jesus according to the flesh. They often crossed over from side to side, stepping past and even before one another. Some stood back and others from the opposite side stepped before them, according as the germ of the Sacred Humanity was clouded by sin and then again purified by continence until at last the pure flower, the Holy Virgin in whom God willed to become Man appeared on the highest point of the ladder touching the heavens. I saw Heaven open above her and disclose the splendor of God. God spoke thence to Jacob.

I saw Jacob awake the next morning. First, he built a round foundation of stone on which he laid a flat stone, then he raised upon this the stone which he had placed under his head the preceding night. Lastly he made a fire and offered something in sacrifice; he also poured something into the fire on the stone. He knelt while praying, and I think he kindled the fire

as the Three Kings did, that is, by friction.

I saw Jacob in many other places also, at Bethel for instance, as he journeyed to Laban, staff in hand. I saw him at Ainon where he had been before and where he repaired a cistern which later on became John's fountain of baptism. I saw him even at that early period, praying at the spot Mahanaim. He begged Almighty God to protect him and also to keep his clothes from becoming shabby lest, on his arrival in Mesopotamia, his uncle Laban on account of his miserable appearance might not acknowledge him. Then he beheld two troops of angels hovering on either side of him like two armies. This was shown him as a sign of God's protection over him, and of the power which should be given unto him. The fulfillment of this vision, he saw on his return journey.

Then I saw him going further eastward, along the south side of the river Jabok, and passing a night on the spot where he afterward wrestled with the angel. Here too, he had a vision.

On Jacob's return from Mesopotamia, his encampment lay east of the encampment of the subsequent Jabesch Gilead. I saw Laban, his father-in-law, following him in pursuit of his lost idols. He overtook him, and words ran high between them on the score of the idols, for Jacob did not know that Rachel had secretly brought them with her. When Rachel saw that her father, who had been searching the whole encampment for his lost treasures, would soon reach her tent, she took the stolen idols and hid them under a heap of fodder not far from her own tent. The idols were metal dolls, about two and a half arms long in swaddling clothes. The heaps of fodder were on a slope of the valley south of the Jabok, and were for the use of the camels. Rachel muffled herself up and sat down on one of them, as if she were sick and had retired for awhile. Many other women sat like her on the other heaps. On a similar, though somewhat larger straw heap, I have seen the leprous Job sitting.

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That on which Rachel sat was of the size of a full harvest wagon. They brought quantities of fodder with them on the camels, and on the way often laid in fresh supplies of it. These idols had long been a subject of scandal to Rachel, and she carried them off merely to disengage her father from them.

Jacob had sent messengers to Esau, of whom he was in dread. They returned with the news that Esau was at hand with four hundred men. Then Jacob divided his whole train into two bands. His best flocks he divided into several and sent them on to Esau. He led his followers to Mahanaim where he had for the second time the vision which he had seen on his setting out; viz., the vision of the angelic armies. He said: "With my staff did I set out, but I am now richer by two armies." He now understood the signification of that first vision.

When his whole train had crossed the Jabok, Jacob sent his wives and children over by night, and remained alone. Then he ordered his tent to be erected on the spot where, on his journey from Palestine, he had seen the face of God. He wanted to pray there by night. He ordered his tent to be closed on all sides, and bade his servants retire to some distance. Then I saw him crying with his whole heart to God. He laid all things before Him, especially his great anxiety with regard to Esau. The tent was open above, that he might better send forth his sighs to Heaven.

Then I saw him wrestling with the angel. It took place in a vision. Jacob arose and prayed. Then there descended from above a light in which was a great luminous figure, which began to wrestle with Jacob, as if wanting to push him out of the tent. They wrestled here and there, up and down, in all directions through the tent. The apparition acted as if wanting to draw Jacob toward all the cardinal points, but Jacob always faced about to the center of the tent. This struggle prefigured the fact that Israel, though pressed on all sides, should not be forced from Palestine.

But when Jacob once again faced to the middle of the tent, the angel grasped him by the hip. I saw this took place when Jacob, who was wrestling in vision, wanted to cast himself upon his couch, or sink back upon it. When the angel touched Jacob's hip and at the same time did what he wanted to do, he said to the latter who was holding him fast: "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!" Then Jacob ceased struggling and awoke from his vision. Seeing the angel of God still standing before him, he cried: "No, I will not let thee go until thou bless me!" He felt the need of God's blessing, for he knew that strength had departed from him and that Esau was at hand. Then spoke the angel: "How art thou called?" (This belonged to the Blessing. Abram also at his Blessing was named Abraham). He answered: "Jacob." Then said the angel: "Thou shalt be called Israel, for thou hast wrestled with God and men and hast not been vanquished." Then Jacob said: "How art thou called?" And the angel answered: "Why dost thou ask me how I am called?"—which words signified: "Dost thou not know me? Hast thou not already learned who I am?" And Jacob knelt before him, and received the blessing. The angel blessed him as Abraham had been blessed by God, as Abraham had imparted the blessing to Isaac, and Isaac to Jacob; viz., in three lines. This blessing was especially to ensure patience and perseverance. And now the angel vanished. Jacob saw that the dawn was breaking, and he named the place Phanuel. He ordered his tent to be taken down, and he crossed the Jabok to his family. And now the sun arose upon him. He limped on the right side, for he had there been deprived of strength.

When Esau turned off, Jacob went with all his family, his servants, and his herds, to Mahanaim and took possession of the country from Socoth to the hill Aion. He dwelt ten years at Aion. He afterward extended his settlement westward from Aion and over the Jordan to Salem. His tents reached to

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where Sichem dwelt, for there he bought a field.

I saw Dina walking around there with her maids, and conversing out of curiosity with the Sichemites. I saw Sichem caressing her, for which reason her maids went away, and he took her with him into the city. This was the cause of great sorrow to Dina while bloodshed and slaughter accrued from it to the Sichemites. Sichar¹ at that time was not yet a great city. It was built of large, square stones and had only one gate.

The Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had more strength in their right side than in their left; it was not, however, noticeable, for their garments were wide and full. There was in their right side a certain fullness like a swelling. It was the Holy Thing, the Blessing, the Mystery. It was luminous, in shape like a bean, and it contained a germ. The firstborn received it from the father, hence the prerogatives of primogeniture. Jacob received it instead of Esau, because Rebecca knew that he was the one destined for it. In his struggle with the angel, it had been taken away from Jacob, though without producing a wound. It was like a drying up of the swelling. But after the removal of the Blessing, Jacob no longer lived so securely, so immediately under God's protection. While he possessed the Blessing, he was like one strengthened by a Sacrament; afterward, however, he felt himself humiliated, he was careworn and he experienced great troubles. He was conscious of the Blessing's having been withdrawn from him, therefore he would not let the angel go until, by a benediction, he had strengthened him. Joseph later on, when in the prison of Pharaoh, in Egypt, received that same Blessing from an angel.

1. Sichem.

16. Joseph and Aseneth

Joseph was sixteen years old when he was sold into Egypt. He was of middle height, very slender and agile, active both in body and mind. He was indeed very different from his brothers, and all felt drawn to love him. Were it not for the marked preference shown him by his father, his brothers also would have loved him. Reuben was of a more lively disposition than the others. Benjamin was a large, ungainly man, but very good-natured, easily led. Joseph wore his hair divided into three, one part on either side of his head, the third falling down behind in long curls. When ruler over Egypt, he wore it short, but afterward allowed it again to grow.

When Jacob bestowed the many-colored coat upon Joseph, he gave over to him also some of the bones of Adam, without telling him, however, what they were. Jacob gave them to Joseph as a precious talisman, for he knew well that his brothers did not love him. Joseph carried the bones on his breast in a little leathern bag rounded on top. When his brothers sold him, they took from him only the colored coat and his customary outer garment, but left the band and a sort of scapular on his breast beneath which he had hung the little bag.

The colored coat was white with broad red stripes. It had on the breast three rows of black cord crossing one another, in the center of which were yellow ornaments. It was full around the breast. When bound at the waist, the fullness served as a pocket. It was narrower toward the lower part of the skirt and had slits at the side, to render motion easier. It fell below the knee, was somewhat longer in the back and open in front. Joseph's ordinary dress did not reach to the knees.

Joseph was known to Pharaoh and his wife before his imprisonment. Putiphar's affairs were so flourishing under Joseph's management, Putiphar himself

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was so blessed during Joseph's stay under his roof, since he conducted all things so well for Pharaoh, that the latter was eager to see the faithful servant. Pharaoh's wife, who was religiously inclined and very desirous of salvation and who had, at the same time, like all the Egyptians, a great hankering after new gods, was so astounded at the wise, intelligent, extraordinary young stranger, that she honored him interiorly as a divinity. She said repeatedly to Pharaoh: "This man has been sent by our gods. He is not a human being like ourselves." Hence it came to pass that he was thrown, not into the common dungeon, but into the prison reserved for the nobility, and there he was made the overseer. Pharaoh's wife sincerely deplored his conviction as a malefactor, and thought that she had been mistaken in him. But when he was liberated and again appeared at court, she treated him with great distinction. The cup that Joseph ordered to be placed in Benjamin's sack was the first present the queen had made to him. I know it well; it had two handles, but no foot. It seemed to have been cut out of one precious stone or one solid transparent mass, I know not which, and was in shape exactly like the upper part of the Chalice used at the Last Supper. It was also among the vessels that the children of Israel took away with them from Egypt, and it was afterward preserved in the Ark of the Covenant.

Joseph was seven years in prison. During his greatest affliction, he received the mysterious Blessing of Jacob in the same manner as the Patriarchs had done. He had a vision also of a numerous posterity.

I know all about Putiphar's wife. I saw how desirous she was to pervert Joseph, but after his elevation, she did penance and became chaste and devout. She was a tall, powerful woman, her skin of a yellowish-brown and shining like silk. She wore a colored robe over which was one of figured gauze. The lower one shone through it as if through lace.

Joseph was thrown much with her, since his master's affairs were all entrusted to him. But when he became aware of the fact that she had grown more familiar in her manner toward him, he no longer remained in the house overnight during his master's absence. She often intruded herself upon him when he was busy at his writing. Once I saw her enter his presence in immodest attire. He was standing writing in one corner of a hall. (In those days, they used to write upon rolls of parchment which hung on the wall. The writer either sat or stood before them). She addressed him and he replied. Then she grew bolder, seeing which he turned hurriedly away. She grasped his mantle, but he fled leaving it in her hand.

I saw Joseph with Putiphar's pagan priests at Heliopolis. Aseneth, the daughter of Dina and the Sichemite, lived with them as a prophetess and a decorator of the idols. Seven other maidens were her companions. Putiphar had bought her from her nurse in her fifth year. This nurse had fled with her to the Red Sea by order of Jacob, that the child might not be murdered by his sons. Aseneth possessed the spirit of prophecy, and was esteemed by Putiphar as a prophetess. Joseph knew her, but he knew not that she was his niece. She was of a very earnest character, she sought seclusion, and in spite of her great beauty, she abhorred the society of men. She was favored with significant visions, was familiar with the Egyptian star worship, and had a secret presentiment of the religion of the Patriarchs. I saw no witchcraft connected with her. She saw in vision the whole mystery of life, the transplanting, the coming to, and the departure of Israel from Egypt, even the long journey through the wilderness. She wrote many rolls on the leaves of a water-plant or on skin. The letters were strange-looking, they were like the heads of birds and animals. These writings were, even during her lifetime, misunderstood by the Egyptians and

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misconstrued into a sanction for their wicked abominations. Aseneth grieved deeply over this misconception brought about by the evil one, and she shed many tears. She had more numerous visions than any other of her time, and she was filled with wondrous wisdom. She conducted herself gravely, and refused advice to none. She could weave also and embroider. Her enlightened spirit detected man's corruption of truth, therefore was she grave, reserved, retiring, and silent.

I saw that the misconception of Aseneth's visions and writings led to her being worshipped under the name of Isis, and Joseph under that of Osiris. This perhaps was the cause of her abundant tears. She also wrote against their erroneous conception of her visions which had led to their proclaiming her the mother of all the gods.

When Putiphar offered sacrifice, Aseneth ascended a tower upon which she seemed to be, as it were, in a little garden. Here she gazed upon the stars by moonlight. She fell into ecstasy, and read all things clearly in the stars. The truth was shown her in pictures, because she was chosen of God. I have seen the pagan priests introduced into strange, diabolical worlds where they beheld the most abominable things. By such diabolical visions were the secret communications of Aseneth disfigured and made to contribute to the abominations of idolatry.

Aseneth introduced many useful arts and domestic animals into Egypt, among the latter, for instance, the cow. She taught the art of making cheese, that of weaving, and many others hitherto unknown to the inhabitants. She also healed many diseases. The plow was introduced by Joseph, who was himself skilled in its use. There was one thing that seemed truly wonderful to me. Aseneth ordered the flesh of the numerous animals slaughtered for sacrifice to be boiled down until it became a gelatinous mass, which served for food on campaigns and in times of scarcity.

The operation was carried on in the open air and in caldrons in the earth. The Egyptians were rejoiced and amazed at this new mode of procuring food.

When Joseph met Aseneth at the pagan priest's dwelling, she approached to embrace him. This she did not through boldness, but impelled by the Spirit. It was in her a kind of prophetic action, and took place in presence of the pagan priest. Aseneth was looked upon as holy. But I saw Joseph keep her off with outstretched hand and address earnest words to her. Then Aseneth, deeply agitated, retired to her own room where she remained in tears and penance.

I saw her in her chamber. She stood concealed by a curtain, her wealth of long and beautiful hair falling around her and curling at the ends. There was impressed on the skin of the pit of her stomach a wonderful sign. In a figure like a heart-shaped shell stood a child with outstretched arms, holding in one hand a small dish, in the other a cup, or chalice. In the dish, were three young ears of corn that appeared to be just breaking out of the husk, and the figure of a dove which seemed to peck after the grapes in the cup held by the child. Jacob knew of this sign; but notwithstanding, he had to send the child away in order to shield her from the rage of his sons. But when he came down into Egypt, and Joseph told him all things, he recognized his granddaughter by this mark. Joseph, too, had a mark of the same kind upon his breast, a very full bunch of grapes.

Now I saw an angel appear in resplendent raiment, holding a lotus in his hand. He saluted Aseneth. She glanced at him and drew her veil around her. He commanded her to dry her tears, to adorn herself in festal robes, and he also requested her to bring him food. She left the room and returned adorned as directed, bringing with her a low table, small and light, upon which were wine and little flat loaves that had been baked in ashes. Aseneth evinced no fear. She was not shy, but simple and humble,

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just like Abraham and the other Patriarchs when treating with apparitions. When the angel now spoke to her, she unveiled. He asked her for some honey, but she replied that, unlike other maidens who are fond of it, she had none. Thereupon the angel told her that she would find some among the idols that stood in the chamber. These idols were of various forms; they had heads of animals and for bodies serpents coiled downward.

Aseneth looked, and found a beautiful, coarse celled honeycomb, white as the Host of our altars. She set it before the angel, who bade her eat of it. He blessed it, and I saw it shining and flashing between them. I cannot now express the signification of this heavenly honey; for when one sees such things, it is just as they actually are, one knows all. But now, when I try to recall it, the honey appears to be what is called honey, yet I know not what the flowers, the bees, and the honey properly signified. I can only say this much: Aseneth really possessed in herself only bread and wine (or that which is typified by bread and wine), but she had no honey. By the reception of this honey, she issued from idolatry into the light of Israel, into salvation through the Old Law. It signified also that she should aid many souls, that many like bees should build around her. I heard her say that she would drink no more wine, for that now she was more in need of honey. I saw numbers of bees and vast stores of honey in Median near Jethro.

In blessing the honeycomb, the angel directed his finger toward all regions of the world, which signified that, by her presence, her types, and the mystery of its own, the honey's signification, Aseneth should be a mother and a leader. When later on she was honored as a divinity and represented with numerous breasts, it was in consequence of the misconception of her vision that she should nourish many.

The angel told her that she was destined to be

Joseph and Aseneth

united with Joseph, that she should be his bride, and he blessed her as Isaac had blessed Jacob and as the angel had blessed Abraham. The three

lines that constituted the formula of the blessing, were drawn upon her twice, once to the pit of the stomach and once to the abdomen.

After this, I saw in vision Joseph going to Putiphar to demand Aseneth for his wife; but I can only remember that, like the angel, he carried a lotus in his hand. Joseph knew of Aseneth's wonderful wisdom, but their mutual relationship was hidden from both.

I saw that Pharaoh's son likewise was in love with Aseneth, on which account she had to remain secluded. He had persuaded Dan and Gad to espouse his cause, and all three lay in ambush to slay Joseph. But Juda (obeying a divine inspiration, I think) warned Joseph to take another route. Benjamin also conducted himself nobly in this affair, and defended Aseneth. Dan and Gad were punished by the death of their children; for even before it was known to anyone, they had been warned not to enlist in the murderous design.

When Joseph and Aseneth appeared in public, like the pagan priests of Putiphar, they bore in their hand a sign regarded as sacred and emblematic of the highest authority. The upper part was a ring; the lower, a Latin cross, a T. It served as a seal, and when grain was measured and divided the heaps were marked with it. It was used in the same way for the building of granaries and canals, also for the rising and falling of the Nile. Writings were sealed with it after they had first been marked with a red vegetable juice. When Joseph discharged any official duty, this symbol of authority, the cross being clasped in the ring, lay on a cushion at his side. It seemed to me also like a distinctive sign of the mystery of the Ark of the Covenant still enclosed in Joseph.

Aseneth also had an instrument like a wand. When in vision, she followed wherever it led. Where it

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quivered she struck the earth, and so discovered springs and water. It was made under the influence of the stars.

In the processions of high festivals, Joseph and Aseneth rode upon a glittering chariot. Aseneth wore an ancient shield which enclosed the whole person from below the arms. On it were numerous signs and figures. Her dress reached to her knees, below which the limbs were tightly laced. A wide mantle fell over the back, the sides of which were clasped together over the knees. The toes of her shoes were turned up like skates, and her headdress of colored feathers and pearls was shaped like a helmet.

Joseph wore a tight-fitting coat with sleeves, and over it a golden breastplate covered with figures. Straps with golden knots were crossed around the hips, and from his shoulders fell a mantle. His head ornament was of feathers and precious stones.

When Joseph went to Egypt, New Memphis was being built about seven leagues north of Old Memphis. Between the two cities, built on a dyke, was a highway with walks. Scattered among the trees were idols with grave, sad female faces and bodies of dogs. They sat upon stone slabs. There were as yet no beautiful buildings, only great, long ramparts and artificial stone mountains (*pyramids*) full of vaults and chambers. The dwellings were slight with a superstructure of wood. There were still great forests and morasses all around. At the flight of Mary into Egypt, the Nile had already changed its course.

The Egyptians worshipped all kinds of animals: toads, serpents, crocodiles. They looked on quite coolly while a person was being devoured by a crocodile. At Joseph's coming, the worship of the bull had not yet come into practice. It was introduced in consequence of Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat and the seven lean cows. They had numerous kinds of idols; some like swaddled children, others like coiled serpents, some of which could be made longer or shorter at pleasure.

A great many of the idols were adorned with breastplates on which the plans of cities and the course of the Nile were curiously inscribed. These shields were made in accordance with the pictures which the pagan priests traced in the stars, and after whose plan they built cities and canals. New Memphis was founded in this way.

The evil spirits at that time must have possessed a different, a more material power, for I saw that Egyptian sorcery came out of the earth, out of the abyss. When a pagan priest began his enchantments, I saw figures of all kinds of ugly animals arise out of the ground around the sorcerer and enter his mouth in a current of black vapor. He became thereby entranced and clear-sighted. It was as if, at the entrance of each spirit, a world hitherto closed was opened up to him and he saw things far and near, the abysses of the earth, countries, human beings, in fine, all things over which each particular spirit exerted an influence. Modern witchcraft always appears to me to be more under the influence of the spirits of the air. What the wizard saw by the aid of these spirits appeared like a delusion, a mirage, which they conjured up before him. I could see far beyond these pictures, for they were like shadows. It was as if one looked behind a curtain.

When the Egyptian pagan priests intended to read the stars, they fasted as a preparation, performed certain purifications, clothed themselves in sackcloth, and sprinkled themselves with ashes. While they gazed upon the stars from their tower, sacrifices were offered. The pagans of those times had a confused knowledge of the religious mysteries of the true God which had been handed down from Seth, Enoch, Noe, and the Patriarchs to the chosen people, therefore were there so many abominations in their idolatry. The devil made use of them, as later on of heresy, to weave the pure, unclouded, authentic revelations of God into a snare for man's destruction. Therefore

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God enveloped the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant in fire in order to preserve it.

The women of Egypt in Joseph's time were still clothed like Semiramis.

When Jacob went into Egypt to Joseph, he pursued the same route through the wilderness by which later on Moses journeyed to the Promised Land. Jacob knew that he would see Joseph again; he always had a presentiment of this in his heart. He had even on this journey to Mesopotamia at the place upon which he erected the altar (not where he saw the ladder) a vision of his future sons. One he saw, in the region where Joseph was sold, sink from sight and like a star rise again in the south. He exclaimed therefore when they brought him the bloodstained coat, the foregoing circumstance almost forgotten recurring to him: "I shall weep for Joseph until I find him again."

Jacob had, through Reuben, made many inquiries as to whom Joseph had married, but had not yet been entirely enlightened on the point that Joseph's wife was his own niece. Reuben and Putiphar were old acquaintances. Owing to the influence of the former, the latter received circumcision and served the God of Jacob.

Jacob dwelt about a day's journey distant from Joseph. When he fell sick, Joseph drove in a chariot to see him. Jacob questioned him closely about Aseneth and, when he heard of the sign on her person, he exclaimed: "She is flesh of thy flesh. She is bone of thy bone!" and he revealed to Joseph who she was. Joseph was so deeply affected that he almost lost consciousness. On his return home, he told his wife, and both shed tears to their heart's content over the news.

Some time after, Jacob grew worse, and Joseph was again by his side. Jacob put his feet from the couch to the floor, and Joseph had to lay his hand under his father's hip, and swear to bury him in Canaan. While Joseph swore, Jacob adored the Blessing

hidden in him, for he knew that Joseph had received from an angel the Blessing that had been withdrawn from himself. Joseph bore this Blessing in his right side until death. Even after death, it lay enclosed in his body until the night before the departure of the Israelites, when Moses took possession of it and placed it in the Ark of the Covenant, together with the remains of Joseph, as the Sacred Thing of the chosen people.

Three months after his visit, Jacob died. Both Jews and Egyptians celebrated his obsequies and sounded his praises, for he was greatly loved.

Aseneth bore to Joseph first Manasses and Ephraim, then other children, in all eighteen, among them several twins. She died three years before Joseph, and was embalmed by Jewish women. As long as Joseph lived, her body stood in his own monument. But the ancients of the people had taken some part of her intestines which they preserved in a little golden figure; and as the Egyptians also aspired to its possession, it was entrusted to the Jewish midwives. One of these women placed it in a reed box smeared with pitch and concealed it in the bulrushes near the canal. On the night of the Departure, a nurse of the tribe of Aser brought this secret thing to Moses. The woman's name was Sara.

Joseph, at his death, was embalmed by the Jews in presence of the Egyptians. Then were placed together the remains of Joseph and Aseneth in compliance with the notes that the latter had made from her visions and had left to the Jews. The Egyptian priests and astrologers had placed Joseph and Aseneth among their own divinities. They had some inkling of the notes left by Aseneth and a presentiment of the high influence, the blessing that she and Joseph would be for Israel. But that blessing they coveted for themselves, and therefore, they sought to oppress Israel. It was on this account that the Israelites, who multiplied astonishingly after Joseph's

death, were so harassed by Pharaoh. The Egyptians knew well that the Israelites would not leave the country without the bones of Joseph; consequently at several different times they stole some of the remains of Joseph and at last got entire possession of them. The Jewish people at large knew only of Joseph's corpse, but not of the Mystery that it contained. That was known to only a few. But the entire nation grieved deeply when the ancients found out and made known to them that the Holy Thing upon which the Promise rested had been stolen. Moses, who had been reared at Pharaoh's court in all the Egyptian wisdom, visited his people and learned the cause of their grief. When he murdered the Egyptian, God ordained that as a fugitive he should go to Jethro, since the latter by his connection with Syble Segola would be able to help him to discover the purloined Mystery. Moses had, also, at the command of God, married Sephora in order to incorporate that family into the house of Israel.

Segola was the natural daughter of Pharaoh by a Jewish mother. Although reared in the Egyptian star worship, she was very fond of the Jews. It was she that had divulged to Moses while still at court that he was not a son of Pharaoh.

Aaron, after the death of his first wife, had to marry a daughter of this Segola, in order that the mother's influence with the Israelites might be increased. The children of this marriage went with the Israelites at their departure from Egypt. But Aaron was obliged to separate from his wife that the Aaronic priesthood might spring from a purely Jewish stock. Segola's daughter, after her separation from Aaron, married again. Her descendants, at the time of the Saviour, dwelt at Abila whither her mummy had been brought by them.

Segola was very enlightened and possessed great influence over Pharaoh. She had on her forehead a bump such as many of the Prophets had in olden

times. She was led by the Spirit to procure numerous favors and gifts for the Israelites.

On the night upon which the angel of the Lord struck the firstborn of the Egyptians, Segola, wrapped in her veil, accompanied Moses, Aaron, and three other Israelites to two sepulchral mounds which were separated by a canal over which lay a bridge. The canal flowed between Memphis and Goshen into the Nile. The entrance into the mounds was under the bridge and below the surface of the water. Steps led from the bridge down to it. Segola descended alone with Moses. She cast into the water a scrap of paper upon which was inscribed the name of God. The water retreated and left the entrance to the monument free. They struck on the stone door and it opened inward. Then they called to the others to come down. When they did so, Moses bound their hands together with his stole and made them swear to protect the Mystery. After the oath, he loosed their hands, and all entered the vault where they struck a light, which showed all kinds of passages with images of the dead standing therein.

Joseph's body, with the remains of Aseneth, lay in an Egyptian tauriform, metal coffin, which shone like polished gold. The back formed a cover. This they lifted off, and Moses took the Mystery out of the hollow body of Joseph, wrapped it in cloths, and handed it to Segola who carried it in her arms concealed under her garments. The remaining bones were placed together upon a stone, wrapped in cloths, and carried away by the men. Now that they had gained possession of the Sacred Thing, Israel could depart from the country. Segola wept, but Israel was full of joy.

Moses concealed a relic of Joseph's body in the top of his staff. This top was in form like a medlar, or persimmon; it was yellowish and surrounded by leaves. It was different from the shepherd's staff that Moses was commanded to cast on the ground before God and which was there changed to a serpent. It

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was a reed, the upper and the lower end could be pushed in and drawn out. With the lower point, which appeared to me to be of metal and which was in form like a sharp pencil, Moses touched the rock as if tracing words upon it. The rock opened under the point, and water gushed forth. Water flowed also from the sand wherever Moses made signs upon it with this staff. The upper part of the reed staff, in shape like a medlar, could be pushed in and drawn out; before it the Red Sea divided.

From Joseph's death to the departure of Israel from Egypt, there were about one hundred and seventy years according to our manner of reckoning. But they had at that time another way of reckoning, other weeks and years. This was often explained to me, but I cannot now recall it.

While the Israelites lived in Egypt, they had no temple, but only tents. They piled up stones, poured oil over them, sacrificed grain and lambs, sang, and prayed.

17. The Ark of the Covenant

On the same night that Moses took possession of the Holy Thing, a golden casket shaped like a coffin was prepared, in which at their departure the Israelites took it with them. It must have been large enough for a man to rest in it, for it was to become a church, a body. This was the night upon which the doorposts were signed with blood. As I witnessed the rapid working at the chest, I thought of the Holy Cross which, too, was hurriedly put together on the night before the death of Jesus. The chest was of gold plate and shaped like an Egyptian mummiform coffin, broad above and narrow below. On the upper part was a picture of a face surrounded by beams. On the sides were marked the length of the arms and the position of the ribs.

In the center of this coffin-like chest, was placed

a little golden casket wherein was contained the Holy Thing which Segola had taken out of the sepulchral vault. In the lower part of the chest were sacred vessels, among them the chalice and cups of the Patriarchs which Abraham had received from Melchisedech and which with the Blessing had been entailed upon the firstborn. This was the first form of the Ark of the Covenant, and these were its first contents. It had two covers, the lower one red, the upper one white.

Only afterward on Mount Sinai, was made the chest inlaid with gold inside and outside, and in it the golden mummiform coffin with the Holy Thing was placed. The coffin did not fill the chest. It reached only about halfway up the chest and it was not so long; for at the head and foot there was still room for two small compartments in which were placed relics of Jacob's and Joseph's family and later on the rod of Aaron. When the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Temple upon Sion, its interior had undergone a change. The golden mummiform coffin had been removed, and in its place was a little mass of whitish substance shaped like the coffin.

Even when a child, I often saw the Ark of the Covenant. I saw it inside and outside, and I knew of all that was put into it from time to time. All the precious holy things that the Israelites preserved were kept in it, but it could not have been heavy, since it was easily carried.

The chest was longer than broad, its height being equal to its width. It had below a projecting ledge. The top was wrought skillfully in gold for about half an ell in breadth: flowers, scrolls, faces, suns, and stars, all in different colors. All was magnificent, although the ornamentation was not very much raised. The apex and leaves arose only a little above the top of the chest. At the corners below this border, at either end, were the two rings through which ran the bars for carrying it. The whole chest was of

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setim wood covered with gold and beautifully inlaid with figures of different colors.

In the middle of the Ark was a small but unnoticeable door, by which the High Priest, when alone in the Most Holy, could take out the Holy Thing for blessing or for prophesying. It opened in two parts toward the interior right and left, and was large enough to admit of the High Priest's reaching in easily. Where the bars for carrying it extended over these doors, they were slightly curved. When the doors were opened, the golden casket, in which was preserved the Holy Thing in its precious coverings, also opened like a book.

Above the top of the Ark arose the Throne of Grace. It consisted of a hollow table covered with gold-plate, and in it lay holy bones. It was as large as the roof of the Ark, but only deep enough to rise a little above it. It was fastened to the Ark by eight setim wood screws, four at either end. It did not rest exactly on the Ark; there was space enough between them to afford a sight from side to side. The heads of the screws were of gold and shaped like fruit. The four outer ones fastened the table to the four corners of the Ark, the four inner ones ran into the interior. Each end of the Throne of Grace was concave, and in each cavity was securely fastened a golden cherub about the size of a boy. In the center of the Throne was a round opening by which a tube ran through the roof of the Ark. One could see it in the space between the roof and the hollow table. This basket shaped opening was surrounded by a golden crown. Four transverse pieces fastened the crown to the rod, which from the Holy Thing in the Ark arose through the tube and the crown and, like the petals of a flower, spread out into seven points. The right hand of one of the cherubs and the left of the other clasped the rod, while their outspread wings, the right of the one and the left of the other, met behind it. The two other wings, only slightly expanded, did not meet,

but left the sight of the crown from the front of the Ark free. Under these wings, the cherubs extended their arms with warning hands. One knee only of each cherub touched the Ark; the other limb was in a hovering attitude. The cherubs turned their face a little to one side with a slightly agitated expression, as if they felt a holy awe before the radiant crown. They were clothed around the middle portions of the body only. On long journeys, they were removed and carried separately.

I saw on the petal-like points of the rod, flames burning, which had been enkindled by the priests. The substance used for these lights was brown. I think it was a sacred resin. They kept it in boxes. But I have often seen great streams of light shooting up out of the crown, and similar streams descending from Heaven into it, also oblique currents breaking out of it in fine rays. These last signified the route by which the people should journey.

On the lower end of the rod inside the Ark, were hooks from which hung the two Tables of the Law and below them the Holy Thing. Below the latter, though not resting on the floor of the Ark, was a ribbed vessel of gold containing manna. When I looked sidewise into the Ark, I could not see the altar, nor the Holy Thing. I always regarded the Ark of the Covenant as a church, the Holy Thing as the altar with the Most Blessed Sacrament, and the vessel of manna as the lamp before the altar. When I entered a church in my childhood, I used to associate its different parts with the corresponding parts of the Ark of the Covenant. The Mystery, the Holy Thing of the Ark, was to me what the Blessed Sacrament is to us, only not so full of grace, although it was something full of strength and reality. It made upon me a more obscure, a more awe-inspiring impression, but still one very sacred and full of mystery. It always seemed to me that all in the Ark of the Covenant was holy, that all our salvation was in it, as if rolled

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up in a ball, as if in a germ. The Holy Thing of the Ark was more mysterious than the Most Blessed Sacrament. The former seemed to be the germ of the latter; the latter, the fulfillment of the former. I cannot express it. The Holy Thing of the Ark was a mystery as hidden as is Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament to us. I felt that only a few of the High Priests knew what it was, that only the pious among them knew it by divine enlightenment and made use of it. To many it was unknown and they profited not by it, just as with us so many graces and wonders of the Church pass unheeded. They are lost as all salvation would be, were it founded on human will and intellect, instead of upon a rock.

I could weep over the sad state, the blindness of the Jews. They once possessed all in the germ; but the fruit, they would not recognize. First, they had the Mystery, the Holy Thing; it was the pledge, the promise. Then came the Law and afterward the grace. When I saw the Lord teaching in Sichar, the people questioned Him as to what had become of the Holy Thing of the Ark of the Covenant. He answered them that mankind had already received a great deal of it, that it was even then among them. The fact of their no longer possessing it as they once did, was a proof that the Messiah was born.

I saw the Mystery, the Holy Thing, in a form, in a kind of veil, as a substance, as an essence, as strength. It was bread and wine, flesh and blood; it was the germ of the Blessing before the Fall. It was the sacramental presence of that holy propagation of man before he fell. It was preserved to man by religion. It was possible for it to be ever more and more realized in subsequent generations by a continuous purification through piety, which purification was perfected in Mary thus rendering her fit to receive through the Holy Spirit the long-looked-for Messiah. Noe, in planting the vineyard, had made the preparation; but here in the Holy Thing were

contained already the reconciliation and protection. Abraham had received it in that blessing which I saw bestowed upon him as something tangible, as a substance. It was a Mystery entrusted to one family, therefore the great prerogative of the firstborn.

Before the Departure from Egypt, Moses took possession of the Holy Thing. As before this it had been the religious Mystery of one family, so now it became the Mystery of the whole nation. It was placed in the Ark of the Covenant as the Most Holy Sacrament in the tabernacle and in the ostensorium.

When the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf and fell into gross errors, Moses doubted the power of the Holy Thing. For this he was punished by not being allowed to enter into the Promised Land. When the Ark fell into the hands of the enemy, the Holy Thing, the bond of union among the Israelites, was removed by the High Priest, as was always done when danger threatened. And yet was the Ark still so sacred that the enemy under the pressure of God's chastising anger were forced to restore it. Few comprehended the Holy Thing or the influence it exerted. It often happened that one man by his sins could interrupt the stream of grace, could break the direct genealogical line that was to end in the Saviour, or rather in that pure vessel that was to receive Him from God. In this way, the Redemption of the human race was long delayed. But penance could again restore continuity to that line. I do not know for certain whether this Sacrament were in itself divine, whether it came forth simply and purely what it was, directly from God, or whether it owed its sacred character to a kind of priestly, supernatural consecration. I think, however, that the first proposition is the true one, for I know for certain that priests often opposed its action and thus retarded Redemption. But they were heavily punished for it, yes, oftentimes even with death itself. When the Holy Thing operated, when prayer was

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heard, it became bright and increased in size, shining through the cover with a reddish glow. The blessing proceeding from it increased and diminished at different times according to the purity and piety of mankind. By prayer, sacrifice, and penance, it appeared to grow larger.

I saw Moses expose it before the people only twice: at the passage through the Red Sea and at the worshipping of the golden calf, but even then it was covered. It was removed from the golden casket and veiled as the Blessed Sacrament is on Good Friday. Like It, it was carried before the breast, or raised up for a blessing or a malediction, as if exerting its influence even at a distance. By it, Moses restrained many of the Israelites from idolatry and saved them from death.

I often saw the High Priest making use of it when he was alone in the Holy of Holies. He turned it in a certain direction, as if to strengthen, to protect, to shield, sometimes to shower a blessing, to grant a petition, sometimes even to punish. He never touched it with uncovered hands.

The Holy Thing was also plunged by him into water. This he did with a religious intention, and the water was given as a sacred draught. Deborah, the Prophetess, Anna the mother of Samuel in Silo, and Emerentia, the mother of St. Anne, drank of this water. By this holy drink, Emerentia was prepared for the conception of St. Anne. St. Anne drank not of this water, since the Blessing was in her.

Joachim, through an angel, received the Holy Thing out of the Ark of the Covenant, and Mary was conceived under the Golden Gate of the Temple. At her birth, she herself became the Ark of the Holy Thing which then reached its destination, and the wooden Ark in the Temple was deprived of its presence.

When Joachim and Anne met under the Golden Gate, they were surrounded by dazzling light, and the Blessed Virgin was conceived without original

sin. A wonderful sound was heard; it was like a voice from God.

Men cannot comprehend this mystery of Mary's sinless conception in Anne, therefore is it hidden from them.

The ancestors of Jesus received the germ of the Blessing for the Incarnation of God; but Jesus Christ Himself is the Sacrament of the New Covenant, the Fruit, the Fulfillment of that Blessing, to unite men again to God.

When Jeremias at the time of the Babylonian Captivity hid the Ark of the Covenant and other precious objects on Mount Sinai, the Mystery, the Holy Thing, was no longer in it; only its coverings were buried by him with the Ark. He knew, however, what it had contained and how holy it was. He wanted, therefore, to speak of it publicly and of the abomination of treating it irreverently. But Malachias restrained him, and took charge of the Holy Thing himself. Through him it fell into the hands of the Essenians, and afterward was placed by a priest in the second Ark of the Covenant. Malachias was like Melchisedech an angel, one sent by God. I saw him not as an ordinary man. Like Melchisedech, he had the appearance of a man, differing from him only inasmuch as was suited to his time.

Shortly after Daniel's being led to Babylon, I saw Malachias as a boy of seven years, wearing a reddish garment, and wandering around with a staff in his hand. He seemed to have lost his way, and he took shelter with a pious couple at Sapha of the tribe of Zabulon. They thought him a lost child of one of the captive Israelites, and they kept him with them. He was very amiable, and so extraordinarily patient and meek that everyone loved him; he could therefore teach and do what he pleased without molestation. He had much intercourse with Jeremias, whom he assisted with advice when in the greatest perils. It was through him also that Jeremias

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was freed from prison in Jerusalem.

The ancient Ark of the Covenant, hidden by Jeremias on Mount Sinai, was never again discovered.

The second one was not so beautiful as the first, and it did not contain so many precious things. Aaron's rod was in possession of the Essenians on Horeb, where also a part of the Holy Thing was preserved. The family that Moses appointed as the immediate protectors of the Ark of the Covenant, existed till the time of Herod.

All will come to light on the last day. Then will the Mystery become clear, to the terror of all that have made a bad use of it.

THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN

1. Genealogy, Birth, and Marriage of St. Anne

The ancestors of St. Anne were Essenians. These extraordinarily pious people were descended from those priests who, in the time of Moses and Aaron, carried the Ark, and who received precise rules in the days of Isaias and Jeremias. They were not numerous in the beginning. Later on in Palestine they lived in communities occupying a tract about forty-eight miles long and thirty-six wide.¹ Some time after, they migrated to the region of the Jordan where they dwelt chiefly on Mount Horeb and on Mount Carmel.

In early times, before Isaias gathered them together, the Essenians lived scattered as pious, ascetic Jews. They neither changed nor repaired their garments until they actually fell to pieces. They married, but observed great continence in the married state. With mutual consent, husband and wife frequently lived apart in distant huts. They also ate apart, first the husband and on his departure the wife. Even in those early times some of the forefathers of Anne and of other members of the Holy Family were found among them. From them sprang those that are called the children of the Prophets. They dwelt in the desert and around Mt. Horeb. There were many of them likewise in Egypt. For a long time war drove them from Mt. Horeb, but they were gathered together again by their Superiors. The Machabees belonged to this sect. They greatly revered Moses. They had a piece of his garment. He had given it to Aaron, and through

1. A German mile equivalent to four and one-half English miles.

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the latter it came into the possession of the Essenians. They preserved it as a sacred thing, and I had a vision in which I saw that fifteen of the Essenians had perished in its defense. Their Superiors knew of the Mystery, the Holy Thing, in the Ark of the Covenant. The unmarried among the Essenians formed a special congregation like a religious order. They had to undergo a probation of long years before being admitted to it, and then they were received for a longer or a shorter time as the prophetic inspiration of Superiors might dictate. The married Essenians, who exercised strict vigilance over their children and household, bore to the real Essenian Community the same spiritual relationship that the Franciscan Tertiaries do to the Franciscan Order. In all affairs they were guided by the counsel of their spiritual Superior on Horeb.

The unmarried Essenians were unspeakably chaste and devout. They wore long white garments, which they kept scrupulously clean. They received children to educate. The aspirant to their rigid life had to be fourteen years old. Postulants of advanced piety were kept only one year on probation; others, two years. They lived in perfect chastity and carried on no kind of business; they exchanged their agricultural products for the various necessities of life. If anyone of their number were so unfortunate as to sin grievously, he was excommunicated, which excommunication was followed by consequences such as attended St. Peter's malediction against Ananias—he died. The Superior of the Essenians knew by divine inspiration whenever anyone had fallen into sin. I saw also some who lived only to do penance; one, for instance, stood in a sort of stiff coat, with outstretched, inflexible sleeves, lined with prickles.

They had caves on Mt. Horeb which served as cells. Attached to them by wicker-work was a large cave for general assembly. At the eleventh hour all met here for a meal. Each had before him a small loaf

and cup. The Superior went around and blessed the loaf of each. The meal over, all returned to their own cells. In the large hall was an altar upon which lay blessed loaves. They were covered and intended for distribution to the poor. There were numbers of tame pigeons around which fed out of the hand. The Essenians used these doves for food, also for religious ceremonies. They uttered some words over them, and they let them flyaway. I saw them also performing the same ceremony over lambs; they spoke some words over them and then let them run into the wilderness.

I saw that they went three times every year to the Temple of Jerusalem. They had among them priests, whose special care was the preservation of the sacred vestments; they cleaned them and prepared new ones, to the purchase of which they had contributed. I saw these people engaged in agriculture, in cattle raising, and especially in gardening. That part of Mt. Horeb which lay around their cells was covered with gardens and fruit trees. I saw many of them engaged likewise in weaving and plating, and in embroidering the sacerdotal garments. I saw that they did not manufacture the silk themselves. It came in bundles for sale, and they exchanged their products for it.

In Jerusalem, they had a special dwelling place, also a particular part of the Temple assigned to them. They were objects of dislike to the other Jews. I saw them sending offerings to the Temple for sacrifice, huge bunches of grapes that two men carried between them on a pole, and lambs. But these lambs were not slaughtered; they were allowed to run. I never saw them bringing offerings for slaughter. Before going up to the Temple, they prepared themselves by prayer, rigid fasting, disciplines, and other penitential exercises. He who, with unatoned sins, ventured to the Temple, might fear a sudden death; and indeed, this happened to some. If on their way to the Temple they met a person sick or helpless, they paused and went no further until they had in some manner assisted

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him. I saw them gathering herbs and preparing teas. They healed the sick .by the imposition of hands, or by stretching themselves upon them with extended arms. I saw them also exerting their healing power at a distance. If a sick person could not go himself to the Essenians, he sent to them another as his representative. All that would have been done for the sick person himself, had he really been present, was done for his representative, and the sick man was cured at the same hour.

The Superior at the time of Anne's grandparents was a Prophet named Archos. He had visions in the cave of Elias on Horeb, which visions referred to the coming of the Messiah. Archos knew from what family the Messiah would come and, when he prophesied to Anne's grandparents concerning their posterity, he saw that the time was drawing near. He knew not exactly how far off it was nor how it might still be retarded by sin; but he exhorted to penance and sacrifice.

Anne's grandfather, an Essenian, was before his marriage called Stolanus; but by his wife and in consideration of her dowry, he received the name Garescha, or Sarziri. Anne's grandmother was of Mara in the desert. Her name was Moruni, or Emorun, that is, *noble mother*. She married Stolanus upon the advice of Archos, the Prophet, who was the Superior of the Essenians for about ninety years. He was a very holy man with whom counsel was always taken by those intending to enter upon the married state, that they might make a good choice. It seemed to me strange that this divinely enlightened Superior always prophesied respecting the female descendants, and that the ancestors of Anne, as well as Anne herself, always had daughters. It was as if the religious education of the pure vessels that were to conceive the holy children destined to be the precursors of the disciples, of the Apostles, and of the Lord Himself, devolved upon them.

Genealogy of St. Anne

I saw Emorun going to Archos before her marriage. She entered the hall on Horeb, passed thence into a side apartment, and conferred with the Superior through a grating like that of a confessional. Then Archos went up a long flight of steps to the summit of the mountain where was found

the cave of the Prophet Elias. The entrance was narrow, and a few steps led down into the cave, which was neatly hollowed out. The light fell through an opening in the vaulted roof. I saw by the wall a small stone altar, upon which was the rod of Aaron and a shining chalice as of one precious stone. In this chalice lay a portion of the Ark of the Covenant. The Essenians had come into possession of it at a time when the Ark had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The rod of Aaron stood in a little tree as in a box. The tree had yellowish leaves wreathed in spirals. I cannot say whether this little tree was really growing or whether it was artificial. It was, for instance, something like a root of Jesse. If the Superior prayed concerning a marriage, he took the rod of Aaron into his hand. If the union in question would contribute to Mary's lineage, the rod put forth a bud from which sprang one or more blossoms bearing the sign of the choice. The forefathers of Anne were legitimate descendants of this lineage, and their chosen daughters had been by such signs designated. New blossoms burst forth whenever a chosen daughter was to enter the married state. The little tree with its spiral leaves was like a genealogical table, like the root of Jesse, and by it could be seen how far the advent of Mary was distant. There were on the altar, also, some small bunches of herbs in pots. Their flourishing or withering denoted something. I saw all around on the walls grated compartments wherein were preserved ancient holy bones very beautifully encased in silk and wool. They were the bones of Prophets and holy Israelites who had lived upon the mountain and in its vicinity. I saw such bones in the cells or caves of the Essenians.

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They used to place lighted lamps and flowers before them, and there offer prayers.

When Archos prayed in this cave, he was vested precisely like the High Priest in the Temple. His clothing consisted of about eight pieces: First, he placed upon his breast a kind of broad scapular such as Moses used to wear next to his person. It had an opening in the middle for the neck and fell in equal length before and behind. Over this, he wore a white alb of twisted silk bound by a cincture that fastened also the wide stole which, crossing on the breast, reached down to the knee. Over the alb was a kind of chasuble of white silk. It reached to the ground behind, and had two little bells at the lower edge. Around the neck was a standing collar buttoned in front. The beard was parted over this collar. Last of all came a small, shining mantle of white untwisted silk. It was fastened in front by three stone clasps upon which something was engraved, From either shoulder toward the breast ran a row of six precious stones, upon which also signs were engraved. On the back of it and in the center, was a shield upon which were inscribed some letters. This mantle was also adorned with fringes, tassels and artificial fruit. On one arm he wore a short maniple. The headdress was of white silk rolled in puffs one above another and ending in a silken tuft. Over the forehead was a plate of gold set with precious stones.

Archos prayed prostrate on the earth before the altar. I saw that he had a vision of a rose tree with three branches springing from Emorun. On each branch was a rose, and that of the second was marked with a letter. He saw also an angel writing letters on the wall. In consequence of this vision, Archos told Emorun that she should marry her sixth suitor, that she should bring forth a chosen child who would bear a sign and who would be a vessel of the approaching Promise. The sixth suitor was Stolanus. The married pair did not dwell long in Mara; they removed

to Ephron. Again I saw their daughters, Emerentia and Ismeria, consulting with Archos. He commanded them to embrace the married state, for they also were cooperating vessels of the Promise. The elder one, Emerentia, married a Levite named Aphras, and became the mother of Elizabeth, who gave birth to John the Baptist. A third daughter was named Enue. Ismeria was the second daughter of Stolanus and Emorun. She had at her birth the mark that Archos, in his vision of Emorun, had seen on the rose of the second branch. Ismeria married Eliud, of the tribe of Levi. They were wealthy, as I judged from their great household. They owned many herds, but they kept nothing for themselves, they gave all to the poor. They dwelt in Sephoris, four leagues from Nazareth, where they possessed property. They had property also in the valley of Zabulon whither they used to remove in the warm season. After Ismeria's death, Eliud took up his abode there permanently. Joachim's father with his family had likewise settled in the same valley.

The eminent chastity and mortification of Stolanus and Emorun had descended to Ismeria and Eliud. Ismeria's first daughter was called Sobe. She married Solomon, and became the mother of Mary Salome who married Zebedee and gave birth to the future Apostles, James the Greater and John. When at Sobe's birth, the sign of the Promise was not found on her, her parents were greatly troubled. They journeyed to the Prophet on Horeb. He exhorted them to prayer and sacrifice, and promised them consolation. For about eighteen years they were without children, and then Anne was born. Both father and mother had the same vision one night upon their couch. Ismeria saw an angel near her writing on the wall. On awakening she told her husband, who also had had the same vision, and both still saw the written character on the wall. It was the letter M. At her birth Anne brought with her into the world the same sign upon the region of the stomach.

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Anne was especially dear to her parents. I saw her as a child. She was not strikingly beautiful, though prettier than some others. Her beauty was not to be compared with Mary's, but she was extraordinarily pious, childlike, and innocent. She was the same at every age, as I have seen, as a maiden, as a mother, and as a little old grandmother. Whenever I happened to see a very childlike old peasant woman, I always thought: "She is like Anne."

When in her fifth year, Anne was taken to the Temple as Mary was later. There she remained twelve years, returning home in her seventeenth year. Meantime, her mother had had a third daughter, whom she named Maraha, and Anne found also in the paternal house a little son of her eldest sister Sobe, who was called Eliud. Maraha afterward inherited the paternal property of Sephoris and became the mother of the subsequent disciples, Arastaria and Cocharia. The young Eliud was afterward the second husband of Maroni, of Naim.

One year later, Ismeria fell sick and died. She called her household around her deathbed, gave them her parting advice, and appointed Anne as their future mistress. Then she spoke alone with Anne, saying that she must marry, for that she was a vessel of the Promise. About eighteen months after, Anne, then in her nineteenth year, married Heli, or Joachim. This she did in obedience to the spiritual direction of the Prophet. On account of the approach of the Saviour's advent, she married Joachim of the House of David, for Mary was to belong to the House of David; otherwise she would have had to choose her spouse from among the Levites of the tribe of Aaron, as all of her race had done. She had had many suitors and, at the time of the Prophet's decision, she was not yet acquainted with Joachim. She chose him only upon supernatural direction.

Joachim was poor and a relative of St. Joseph. Joseph's grandfather Mathan had descended from

David through Solomon. He had two sons, Joses and Jacob. The latter was Joseph's father. When Mathan died, his widow married a second husband named Levi, descendant of David through Nathan. The fruit of this marriage was Mathat, the father of Heli, or Joachim. Joachim was a short, broad, spare man. St. Joseph, even in his old age, was very handsome compared with him. However, in disposition and morals, Joachim was a superior man. Like Anne, he had something very distinguished about him. Both were true Israelites; but there was something in them that they themselves knew not, a yearning, a wonderful earnestness. I have rarely seen either of them laugh, although in the early part of their married life they were not particularly grave. Both possessed a calm, uniform disposition; even in early youth, they were something like sedate old people.

They were married in a small town that possessed only one obscure school, and only one priest presided at the ceremony. Courtship in those days was carried on very simply. The lovers were very reserved. They consulted each other on the subject and regarded their marriage merely as something inevitable. If the young girl said yes, her parents were satisfied; if no, and could she give good reasons for her refusal, they looked upon the affair as ended. First the matter was settled before the parents, and then the promises were made before the priest in the synagogue. The priest prayed in the sanctuary before the rolls of the Law, the parents in their accustomed place, while the young couple in an adjoining apartment deliberated in private over their intention and contract. When they had taken their determination, they declared it to their parents. The latter again conferred with the priest, who now went to meet the couple outside the sanctuary. The nuptial ceremony was celebrated the next day.

Joachim and Anne lived with Eliud, Anne's father. There reigned throughout his household the severe usages and discipline of the Essenians. The house lay

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in the environs of Sephoris. It formed one of a group of houses of which it was the largest. Here Joachim and Anne dwelt seven years.

Anne's parents were in good circumstances. They had numerous herds and a house handsomely furnished with beautiful carpets, table furniture, etc. The servants, men and women, were many. I never saw them engaged in agriculture, but herding cattle on the pasture grounds. Ismeria and Eliud were pious, devout, charitable, and just. They frequently divided their herds and other possessions into three parts: one part for the Temple, whither they drove it themselves and where it was received by the servants of the Temple; a second part they gave to the poor or to their needy relatives, some of whom were generally present to receive it; and the third part they reserved for their own use. They lived very frugally and gave to all that asked help. When I saw all this, even in childhood, I thought: Giving lasts long. He who gives gets back double, for I perceived that the third part again rapidly increased. It was soon so large that it could be again divided into three parts as before. They had many relatives who upon all solemn occasions assembled at their house. But I never even on those occasions saw much feasting. Food was indeed distributed among the poor, but grand entertainments I never saw. At these assemblies the guests generally reclined in circles on the ground, and conversed of God with earnest expectancy. It frequently happened that some of these relatives were bad people. They looked angry and displeased when Eliud and Ismeria, full of heavenly longing, glanced upward as they spoke of God. But to these evil-minded people, the holy couple were ever kind; they never omitted to invite them to their reunions, and they gave twice as much to them as to others. I used to see that they, with bitter feelings, impatiently coveted what Eliud and Ismeria gave them with so much good will. It was no uncommon thing for the holy couple to give sheep, sometimes one, sometimes

more, to the poor belonging to them.

Here in her father's house, Anne gave birth to her first daughter, who was called Mary. I saw her full of joy over her newborn babe. It was a lovely child. I saw it growing stout and strong. It was gentle and pious, and the parents loved it. But yet, there was something about the child that I could not understand, something that indicated that it was not the one looked forward to by the parents as the fruit of their union. There was always a shade of trouble and anxiety about them, as if they had offended God, therefore they did penance, lived in continence, and multiplied their good works. I often saw them going apart to pray.

They had lived in this way with their father, Eliud, seven years (which I could guess by the age of their first child), when they resolved to withdraw from the paternal house. Their design was to live in privacy, to begin their married life anew and, by performing actions pleasing to God, to draw down His benediction upon their union. I saw them take this resolution in the paternal home and I also saw Eliud setting aside a portion of his riches for them. The herds were divided, oxen, asses, and sheep set apart for the new household. The animals named were much larger than those of our country. On the asses and oxen were packed all kinds of movables, furniture and clothing. The good people were as skillful in packing as were the animals ready to receive and carry away their loads.

We do not pack our goods so skillfully on our wagons as these people could upon their beasts. They had beautiful vessels, all more highly ornamented than those of the present day. Beautiful, fragile, curiously-shaped pitchers, upon which were all kinds of ornamentation like carving, were stuffed with moss, enveloped in wrappings, fastened to the ends of a strap, and hung over the back of the animals upon which were laid bundles of colored covers and garments.

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Some of the covers were embroidered in gold and were very costly. Father Eliud gave the departing couple a small, but heavy lump of something in a bag; it was like a lump of gold, of precious metal. When all was ready, the servant men and maids formed in procession and drove the herds and beasts of burden before them toward the new dwelling, about five or six leagues distant.

The house stood upon a hill between the vale of Nazareth and the valley of Zabulon. A terebinthine walk led to it. In front of it, on a bare, stony foundation, was a courtyard surrounded by a low stone wall, upon or behind which grew a hedge. On one side of this courtyard were sheds for the cattle. The door of the house, which was tolerably large, was in the center of the building and hung upon hinges. Through it one entered a kind of anteroom, which extended the whole breadth of the house. Right and left of the hall were small apartments cut off by lightly woven partitions, or screens, that could be removed at pleasure. It was in this hall that the principal meals were laid on feasts as, for instance, when Mary was taken to the Temple. Opposite the entrance, a light wicker door led from the hall into a passage upon either side of which were four apartments lying right and left. They were separated by movable wicker partitions, the upper part ending in gratings. These partitions were so placed as to form a rounded, or rather a kind of triangular space, in the middle of whose central side, just opposite the door, was the fireplace. Behind the two oblique sides, right and left, were other chambers. In the center of this kitchen there hung from the ceiling a many-branched lamp. Around the house were fields and orchards.

When Joachim and Anne entered their new abode, they found everything in order, owing to the diligence of the domestics who had preceded them. They had unpacked all things as nicely and carefully as they had packed them, and everything was in its

place. Anne's servants were so handy, they did everything quietly and intelligently. They were not like the servants of our day, who have to be told every single thing.

And now the holy couple began here a new married life. They made a sacrifice to God of all the preceding years, and began again as if they had only just now been united. Their only aim was by a life pleasing to God, to attract upon themselves that blessing for which alone they sighed. I saw them both going to and fro among their herds. They divided them into three parts, and drove the best to the Temple. The poor received the second part, and the worst was retained for themselves. They acted in the same manner with all that belonged to them.

2. The Holy and Immaculate Conception of Mary

Anne had the assurance, the firm belief that the coming of the Messiah was very near, and that she herself would be of the number of His relatives according to the flesh. Her prayer was continuous and she constantly aimed at greater purity. It had been revealed to her that she was to bring forth a child of benediction. Her firstborn daughter, who had remained with her grandfather Eliud, Anne recognized and loved as her own and Joachim's child; but she felt certain that she was not the child whom, by interior enlightenment, she knew that she was to bear. For nineteen years and five months after the birth of this first child, Joachim and Anne were childless. They lived in continued prayer and sacrifice, in mortification and continency. I frequently saw them dividing their herds, which rapidly multiplied again. Joachim often remained far away with his flocks in humble supplication to God.

The anxiety of both and their longing after the promised blessing had reached their height. Many of

their acquaintances upbraided them because of their sterility, which they attributed to some wickedness. They said that the child living with Eliud was not really Anne's daughter, otherwise she would have it with her. When Joachim, absent with the herds, went again to the Temple to offer sacrifice, Anne used to send servants out to the fields to him with numbers of things, doves, and other birds in baskets and cages. Joachim loaded two asses from the meadow with them, also with three little long-necked animals, white and nimble, and lambs and kids in wicker baskets. He carried a lantern at the end of a stick; it looked like a light in a scooped-out gourd. I saw him with his offerings journeying over a beautiful green field between Bethania and Jerusalem. I often saw Jesus in the same spot. Toward evening, Joachim reached the Temple. The asses were stabled in the same place as subsequently at Mary's Presentation, and the offerings were carried up the steps of the Mount that led to the Temple. When they had been received by the attendants, Joachim's servants returned while he himself went on into the hall in which were the water basins for the cleansing of the gifts. Thence he passed through a long corridor to a hall upon the left of the Sanctuary where were the altar of incense, the table of show bread, and the seven-branched candlestick. The hall was filled with those that had brought offerings. Joachim was received in a very contemptuous manner by a priest named Reuben, who would scarcely admit him. He was shoved into a corner behind a grating, and his offerings were not, like those of others, conspicuously placed behind the gratings to the right of the courtyard, but indifferently set on one side. The priests were around the altar of incense, upon which an offering was being made. Lamps were burning, and lights were lit on the seven branched candlestick, but not all seven at once. I have often noticed that different arms of the candlestick were lighted on different occasions.

I saw Joachim leaving the Temple in great trouble. He went from Jerusalem through Bethania, and into the country of Machaerus, where he sought consolation in the house of an Essenian. The Prophet Manahem had once dwelt here, and also in the family of an Essenian at Bethania. This Prophet had foretold to Herod while still a child his future kingdom and wickedness. From this place, Joachim went to his most distant herds on Mount Hermon. The way led through the wilderness of Gaddi and over the Jordan. Hermon is a long, narrow, unbroken mountain whose sunny side is green and blooming when the other is still covered with snow. Joachim was so dejected, so mortified that he would not allow his people to inform Anne where he was staying, while the trouble of the latter when she heard how things had gone at the Temple and saw that Joachim did not return home, was indescribable. For five months Joachim thus remained in concealment on Hermon. I saw him praying and weeping. When he went to look after his flocks and his lambs, he was often so overcome by sadness that he cast himself with covered face prostrate on the ground. His servants questioned him upon the cause of his grief. But he did not tell them that it was because he was childless. Again he divided his magnificent herds into three parts. The best he sent to the Temple, the second to the Essenians, and the least he kept for himself.

Anne, in the midst of her anxiety, had much to endure also from an insolent maid servant who bitterly taunted her with her sterility. She bore with her a long time, but at last she sent her from the house. The maid had requested permission to go to a feast. This was not in accordance with the strict discipline of the Essenians. Anne refused the permission, and then the maid reproached her, telling her that she deserved to be sterile and abandoned by her husband on account of her harsh and unreasonable temper. Then Anne sent her, with gifts and

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accompanied by two servants, back to her parents, that they might receive her safe and sound as she had come to her. She sent them also the message that she could no longer take charge of their daughter. After the girl's departure, Anne went in sadness to her chamber and prayed. When evening closed, she threw a long scarf over her head and enveloped herself entirely in it, took a covered light beneath her mantle, went out under a spreading tree that stood in the courtyard, lit the lamp and prayed. This tree was one of those whose branches strike root again and again, and thus form a whole tract of covered walk under their foliage. Its leaves are very large. I think it was with such that Adam and Eve clothed themselves in Paradise. The whole tree had the characteristics of that of the forbidden fruit. The pear shaped fruit hung usually in fives at the end of the branches. It was fleshy inside with blood-colored veins; in its center was a hollow space in which reposed the kernel. The Jews made use of the large leaves chiefly at the Feast of Tabernacles. They adorned the walls with them, laying them like the scales of a fish, so that their edges closely fitted together. The tree was surrounded by groves and seats.

When Anne had long besought God not to separate her from Joachim, her pious husband, although He had been pleased to deprive her of children, an angel appeared to her. He hovered above her in the air. He told her to set her heart at rest, for the Lord had heard her prayer; that she should on the following morning go with two of her maid servants to the Temple of Jerusalem; that there under the Golden Gate, entering by the side of the valley of Josaphat, she should meet Joachim, who was even now on his way thither, that Joachim's offering would be accepted, that his prayer would be heard, that he (the angel) had appeared also to him. The angel likewise directed Anne to take some doves with her as an offering, and promised that the name of the child she was soon to

conceive should be made known to her.

Anne thanked the Lord and returned to the house. When, after her lengthy prayer, she lay on her couch asleep I saw light descending upon her. It surrounded her, yes, even penetrated her. I saw her, upon an interior perception, tremblingly awake and sit upright. Near her, to the right, she saw a luminous figure writing on the wall in large, shining Hebrew characters. I read and understood the writing word for word. It was to this effect: that she should conceive, that the fruit of her womb should be altogether special, and that the Blessing received by Abraham was to be the source of this conception. I saw Anne's anxiety as to how she should communicate all that to Joachim; but the angel reassured her by telling her of Joachim's vision. I received then a clear explanation of Mary's Immaculate Conception. I saw that, in the Ark of the Covenant, a sacrament of the Incarnation, of the Immaculate Conception, a Mystery for the restoration of fallen humanity was contained. I saw Anne, with surprise and joy, reading the red and golden letters of this luminous writing. Her gladness increased to such a degree that, when she arose to set out for Jerusalem, she looked far younger than before. I saw on Anne's person at the instant the angel appeared to her a beam of light and in her a shining vessel. I cannot better describe it than by saying that it was like a cradle, or a tabernacle which had been closed but was now opened, and made ready to receive a holy thing. How wonderfully I saw this, is not to be expressed; for I saw it as if it were the cradle of salvation for the whole human race, and also as a kind of sacred vessel now opened, and the veil withdrawn. I saw it quite naturally as if one and the same holy thing.

I saw, too, the apparition of the angel to Joachim. The angel commanded him to take his offering up to the Temple, promised that his prayer should be heard, and told him that he should pass under the Golden

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Gate. At this announcement, Joachim was troubled. He felt very timid about going again to the Temple. But the angel assured him that the priests had already been enlightened with regard to him. It was the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Joachim and his shepherds had already erected their tabernacles. With a large herd of cattle as an offering, Joachim reached Jerusalem on the fourth day of the feast, and put up near the Temple. Anne arrived in Jerusalem also on the fourth day of the feast. She stopped with the family of Zacharias near the fish market, and met Joachim for the first time only at the end of the feast.

When Joachim approached the Temple, two of the priests came out to meet him. They did this acting upon a divine inspiration. Joachim had brought with him two lambs and three kids. His offering was accepted, slaughtered, and burned at the customary place in the Temple. But a part of it was taken and burned at another place to the right of the entrance porch, in the center of which stood the large teacher's desk.

When the smoke arose, I saw a beam of light descend upon Joachim and the officiating priest. There was a pause, the beholders looked on in amazement, and I saw two priests go out to Joachim and lead him through the side apartments into the Sanctuary before the altar of incense. Then the priests laid incense upon the altar, not in grains but in the lump; it kindled of itself. The priests immediately retired to a distance and left Joachim alone before the altar. I saw him on his knees, his arms extended, while the incense offering slowly consumed itself. He remained shut up in the Temple all night, praying with great and ardent desires. I saw that he was in ecstasy. A luminous figure appeared to him in the same manner as to Zachary, and gave him a roll written in shining letters. On it were the three names: Helia, Hanna, Mirjam, and near the last one the picture of a little Ark of the Covenant, or a tabernacle. Joachim

laid the roll on his breast under his garment. The angel spoke: "Anne will conceive an immaculate child from whom the Redeemer of the world will be born." The angel told him moreover not to grieve over his sterility which was not a disgrace to him, but a glory, for that what his spouse would conceive should not be from him but through him, a fruit from God, the culminating point of the Blessing given to Abraham. I saw that Joachim could not comprehend these words. Then the angel led him behind the curtain that concealed the grating before the Holy of Holies. The space between the curtain and the grating afforded standing room. Then the angel held up before Joachim's face a shining ball that reflected like a mirror. Joachim breathed upon it and gazed into it. When I saw the angel holding the ball so close to Joachim's face, I thought of a custom in use at our country weddings, where one kisses a painted head and gives fourteen pennies to the sexton. And now, as if called up by the breath of Joachim, appeared all kinds of pictures in the globe. He saw them clearly, for his breath did not dim them. It seemed to me that the angel then said to him that Anne should conceive although remaining just as unsullied by him as this ball. The angel then took it from Joachim and raised it on high. I saw it hovering in the air and, as if through an opening, innumerable and wonderful pictures went into it. They were like a whole world, one picture growing out of another. Up in the highest point appeared the Most Holy Trinity, and below, to one side, were Paradise, Adam and Eve, the Fall, the Promise of a Redeemer, Noe, the Ark, scenes connected with Abraham and Moses, the Ark of the Covenant, and numerous symbols of Mary. I saw cities, towers, gateways, flowers, all wonderfully connected together by beams of light like bridges. They were all assaulted and combated by beasts and spirits, which, however, were everywhere beaten back by the streams of light that burst upon them.

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I saw also a garden enclosed by a dense thorn hedge. All kinds of horrible animals were trying to enter, but could not. I saw a tower stormed by numerous warriors who were, however, always repulsed.

And in this way I saw innumerable pictures all bearing some reference to Mary. They were bound together by passages or bridges. In them I saw obstacles, hindrances, struggles, all of which were overcome, and the pictures disappeared successively on the opposite side of the globe, as if they had entered into the Heavenly Jerusalem. But as I gazed at them dissolving in the interior of the globe, the globe itself mounted on high and I saw it no more.

The angel now removed something from the Ark of the Covenant, though without opening the door. It was the Mystery of the Ark, the Sacrament of the Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception, the Consummation of the Blessing of Abraham. I beheld it under the appearance of a luminous body. The angel blessed or anointed Joachim's forehead with the tip of his thumb and forefinger; then he slipped the shining body under Joachim's garment and it entered into him, how I cannot say. He also gave him something to drink out of a glittering chalice which he held supported by two fingers. The chalice was of the same shape as that used at the Last Supper, but without a foot. Joachim was directed to take it with him and keep it at his home.

I understood that the angel forbade Joachim to reveal anything about this Holy Mystery; and then, too, I understood why Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, was struck dumb after receiving the blessing and the promise of Elizabeth's fruitfulness through the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant. Not till later was this Mystery missed from the Ark by the priests. Then were they at first confounded; afterward they became altogether pharisaical. The angel now led Joachim out of the Holy of Holies and vanished. Joachim lay on the ground like one stupefied.

I saw the priests enter the Sanctuary, lead Joachim out reverently, and place him upon a seat that stood on a raised platform where usually only priests sat. The seat was almost like that used by Magdalen in her grandeur. They bathed his face, held something to his nose, and gave him to drink; in short, they treated him as one in a swoon. Joachim was, by virtue of what he had received from the angel, quite radiant. He looked as if he had returned to the bloom of youth.

Joachim was afterward conducted by the priests to the entrance of the subterranean passage that ran under the Temple and under the Golden Gate. This was a passage set aside for special purposes. Under certain circumstances, penitents were conducted by it for purification, reconciliation, and absolution. The priests parted from Joachim at the entrance, and he went alone into the narrow, gradually widening, and almost imperceptibly descending passage. In it stood pillars twined with foliage. They looked like trees and vines, and the green and gold decorations of the walls sparkled in the rosy light that fell from above. Joachim had accomplished a third part of the way when Anne met him in the center of the passage directly under the Golden Gate, where stood a pillar like a palm tree with hanging leaves and fruit. Anne had been conducted into the subterranean passage through an entrance at the opposite end by the priest to whom she and her maid had brought the offering of doves in baskets, and to whom also she had told what the angel had revealed to her. She was also accompanied by some women, among them the Prophetess Anna.

I saw Joachim and Anne embrace each other in ecstasy. They were surrounded by hosts of angels, some floating over them carrying a luminous tower like that which we see in the pictures of the Litany of Loretto. The tower vanished between Joachim and Anne, both of whom were encompassed by brilliant light and glory. At the same moment the heavens above them opened, and I saw the joy of the Most

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Holy Trinity and of the angels over the Conception of Mary. Both Joachim and Anne were in a supernatural state. I learned that, at the moment in which they embraced and the light shone around them, the Immaculate Conception of Mary was accomplished. I was also told that Mary was conceived just as conception would have been effected, were it not for the fall of man.

After this, Joachim and Anne, praising God, turned toward the outer gate of the passage. They went under an arch into a space like a chapel where numerous lights were burning. Thence they passed to the gate where they were received by the priests who accompanied them back. The Temple was all thrown open and decorated with garlands of leaves and fruit. Divine service was performed under the open sky. In one place stood eight pillars at some distance from one another, and over them were twined garlands of green.

Joachim and Anne went for awhile to one of the priests' houses in Jerusalem, and then immediately journeyed homeward. I saw them in Nazareth holding an entertainment at which many of the poor were fed and presented with alms. Joachim received numerous congratulations upon the acceptance of his offering.

Upon their arrival home, the holy couple published the mercy of God with feeling, joy, and devotion. From that time they lived in perfect continence and in great fear of God. I received at this time an instruction upon the great influence exerted upon children by the purity, the continence, and the mortification of parents.

Four and one-half months less three days after St. Anne had conceived under the Golden Gate, I saw the soul of Mary, formed by the Most Holy Trinity, in movement. I saw the Divine Persons interpenetrating one another. It became a great shining mountain, and still like the figure of a man. I saw something from the midst of the Three Divine Persons rising toward the mouth and issuing from it like a beam of

light. This beam hovered before the face of God and assumed a human shape, or rather it was formed to such. As it took the human form, I saw it, as if by the command of God, most beautifully fashioned. I saw God showing the beauty of this soul to the angels, and from it they experienced unspeakable joy.

I saw that soul united to the living body of Mary in Anne's womb. Anne lay asleep upon her couch. I saw a light hovering over her and from it a beam descending toward the middle of her side. I saw that beam enter into her in the form of a small, luminous, human figure. At the same instant Anne sat up. She was entirely surrounded by light, and she had a vision. She saw her own person, open as it were and in it, as if in a tabernacle, a holy, luminous virgin from whom proceeded all salvation. I saw, too, that this was the instant that Mary first moved in her mother's womb.

Anne arose and announced to Joachim what had taken place. Then she went out to pray under the tree beneath which a child had been promised to her. I learned that Mary's soul animated her body five days earlier than is customary with ordinary children, and that she was born twelve days sooner.*

3. Symbols of the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception

I saw the whole earth parched and dried up. I saw Elias with two servants climbing up Mt. Carmel. They first crossed a high ridge, then went up steps cut in the rock to a terrace; from this terrace they ascended by similar steps to a level place from which arose a hill. The hill contained a cave, and up to this Elias mounted alone. He left his servants on the borders of

* "The terms 'quickened' and 'animation' in present usage are applied to the child after the mother can perceive its motion, which usually happens about the one hundred and sixteenth day after conception." (The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, Vol. 1, p. 49). —Publisher, 2004.

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the level place, that they might look down upon the Sea of Galilee. Its waters were dried up, and its bed lay full of holes, mud, and putrefied carcasses. Elias sat down, his head resting upon his knees, covered himself with his mantle and prayed earnestly to God. Seven times did he call to his servants as to whether no cloud out of the sea had yet arisen. At last I saw in the middle of the sea a white vapor out of which came a little black cloud. In the latter was a small, shining figure which, rising on high, gradually increased in size. As the cloud rose, Elias perceived in it the figure of a radiant virgin. Her head was surrounded by rays, her arms were outstretched in the form of a cross, one hand grasping a victor's wreath, and her long garments fell as if bound below her feet. She appeared to be hovering over Palestine. In this vision, Elias learned four mysteries relative to the Blessed Virgin. One was that she would come in the seventh age, and another was the family to which she should belong. He also saw on one shore of the sea a low, spreading tree, and on the other a very lofty one whose summit drooped over upon the lower one.

I saw the cloud break up and fall in fleecy vapors upon certain holy places and upon the abodes of certain pious people who were in prayer. These vapors were bordered by rainbow edges, and in them was the blessing like a pearl in its shell. I was told that this, though typical, was a true representation of how the preparation for the coming of the Blessed Virgin would develop from those various blessed points.

Soon after this vision, Elias enlarged the cave in which he was accustomed to pray. He made new regulations for the prophet children, of whom from that time some in that cave constantly supplicated for the coming of Mary and honored her advent.

Elias had by his prayer called up the clouds, and he directed them according to interior enlightenment; otherwise a sudden and destructive rain gust might have resulted from them. At first I saw these clouds

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dropping down dew, settling in white plains, forming eddies with

rainbow-colored edges, and finally dissolving in drops. I recognized some connection between them and the manna in the desert which in the morning lay brittle and thick like a skin upon the ground. It could be gathered in rolls. I saw the vapors floating along the Jordan. They did not fall in all places indiscriminately, but only here and there, at Salem, for instance, where John baptized at a later period, and at the spot where subsequently his pool of baptism stood. I asked for the signification of the colored edges, and it was explained to me by a certain shell of the sea which, too, has shining colored margins. The shell under the sun's rays absorbs the light, reflects its colors at the edges, thus purifying the ray as it were, until in its own center the pure, white pearl is formed. I cannot express it, but I understood that that dew and the rain following it did more than what is commonly signified by a refreshing, a watering of the earth. I received the clear assurance that, without this dew, Mary's advent would have been delayed one hundred years longer; while through that watering and blessing of the earth, the different families living on its produce were quickened and enlivened. Thus their flesh received a new blessing by which it became more purified and ennobled by propagation. The vision of the pearl in its shell bore reference to Jesus and Mary.

The drought that I saw was not confined to the earth alone; there was also a great drought, great sterility among men. But the spray of the fructifying dew descended from generation to generation down to the flesh of Mary. I cannot express it. At times, there appeared upon the colored edges of the cloud, one or several pearls, and upon these a human figure, breathing forth something spirit-like which again seemed to amalgamate in the others.

I saw also that, by the great mercy of God, the pious heathens of that age knew that the Messiah

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would be born of a virgin of Judea. This knowledge was imparted to the star worshippers of Chaldea by the appearance of a vision either in a star or in the heavens. They prophesied concerning it. I saw the same tidings of salvation proclaimed in Egypt.

Elias was commanded by God to bring together into Judea several pious families scattered to the north, east, and south. He sought for three prophet scholars suited to the mission, and he implored a sign from God by which he might recognize them, for it was a distant and very hazardous undertaking.

One went north; the second, east; and the third, south. This last route led to Egypt where Israelites could not enter without risk. I saw the third messenger journeying along the road subsequently traversed by the Holy Family, and also at Heliopolis. He came, at last, to a great pagan temple surrounded by numerous buildings and situated in a wide plain. A live bull was worshipped in this temple, and in it were also the image of a bull and other idols. Deformed children were sacrificed to the animal. As the prophet was passing the temple, he was seized and led before the priests. Fortunately for him, they were exceedingly inquisitive, else perhaps they would have murdered him at once. They questioned him as to whence he came. He answered fearlessly, telling them that a virgin would be born from whom should proceed the salvation of the world, then would all their idols be shattered. They were amazed and impressed by what they heard, and allowed him to go on his way. But they afterward took counsel together and resolved to make the image of a virgin. When it was finished, they placed it high in the center of the temple roof, and in a position as if in the act of floating down. The virgin's headdress was like that of so many of the other idols, half-woman, half-lion, that were in the temple. The upper part of the arms was close to the body, the forearms extended as if warding off something. Feathers radiated from both upper and

lower arms, two clasping together like crests, or combs; similar feathers ran down the sides and the middle of the body to the tiny feet.

The Egyptians honored this image and offered sacrifice to it, that thereby the virgin might not destroy their god Apis and their other idols. But they still continued in their usual abominations. The only change the prophet's communication wrought was that they thenceforth invoked the image of the virgin and honored it according to the various interpretations they put upon his words.

I saw much of the history of Tobias and the marriage brought about by the angel, between young Tobias with Sara. The latter was a type of St. Anne. The old Tobias represented the race of pious Jews that yearned after the Messiah. His blindness signified that he was to be the father of no more children, and that he should devote himself entirely to meditation and prayer. His quarrelsome wife was an image of the vain and troublesome ceremonies of the pharisaical doctors of the Law. The swallow, a messenger of spring, heralded the coming salvation. Tobias's blindness chiefly betokened the faithful, though obscure waiting and longing for salvation and the ignorance of whence it should come. The angel had indeed spoken truly when he said that he was Azarias, the son of Ananias, for this word signifies *the help of the Lord out of the cloud of the Lord*. This angel was the guide of the races, the protector and administrator of the Blessing even unto the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. In the prayer offered together by young Tobias and Sara, and which I saw carried by angels to the throne of God where it was favorably received, I recognized the supplications of the pious Israelites and the daughters of Sion for the coming of the Saviour, also the simultaneous prayers of Joachim and Anne for the child promised to them. The blindness of Tobias and the reproaches of his wife signified also the contempt shown to Joachim

and the slighting of his offerings. The seven murdered husbands of Sara represented those among the ancestors of Mary who had placed obstacles to her coming and, consequently, to the salvation of man. They likewise denoted the suitors dismissed by Anne before her marriage with Joachim. The reproaches of Sara's maid signified the derision of pagans, of unbelievers, and of godless Jews upon the delay in the coming of the long-looked-for Messiah. Such impious taunts drove the pious to still more earnest prayer. It was also and very particularly a symbol of the scorn that Anne endured from her maid, at which being confused, she had recourse to prayer with so great earnestness that she was heard. The fish about to devour the young Tobias typified the prolonged sterility of Anne; but the removal of its heart, liver, and gall denoted good works and mortification. The little kid brought home by Tobias's wife as the wages of her work, was really a stolen one that the people had given to her cheap. Tobias knew the people as well as the whole transaction, and that was the reason that they despised him. It bore also some signification to the relations that existed between the pious Jews and the Essenians on the one hand, and the Pharisees and merely ceremonious Jews on the other, also the scorn felt by the latter for the former; but what that signification was, I cannot now recall. The gall, by which the blind Tobias was restored to sight, symbolized the suffering and bitterness by which the elect among the Jews arrived at the knowledge of salvation and attained to a participation in the same. It signified the entrance of light into darkness, Jesus entering upon His bitter Passion from His very birth.

4. Symbolical Vision

I saw a slender pillar arise out of the earth. It was like the stalk of a flower, and like the calyx, or the capsule, of the poppy, I saw the octagonal church

upon the top of this pillar. The pillar arose through the center of the church and there, like a tree, divided into several branches. Upon these branches stood the members of the Holy Family and their relatives. They were indeed the central objects of veneration in this vision. They stood as if on the stamens of flowers. Anne stood above between two holy men, Joachim and her father, or some other member of her family. Below St. Anne's breast I saw a brilliant space almost in the shape of a heart. In this light, I saw the figure of a shining child unfolding as it were, becoming larger. Its hands were clasped upon its breast, its head inclined, and it constantly shed toward one quarter of the globe numerous rays of light. I noticed with surprise that the rays did not stream in all directions. On the surrounding branches and inclining toward this middle one, were adorers, and all around in the church, in groups and choirs innumerable, were saints inclining in prayer toward the holy central point. The sweetness, fervor, and simplicity of this sacred service can be compared to nothing but a flowery field swayed toward the sun by a gentle breeze, and sending its perfumes and colors to those beams to which all flowers owe their gifts, yes, their existence itself. Above this picture of the Immaculate Conception, arose the stem of grace. It extended above Anne, and upon this stem, crown like sat Mary and Joseph. Below them in adoration sat Anne. But above them all, on the very summit of the tree sat the Child Jesus in unfading splendor, the imperial globe in His hand. In adoration around these groups, were first the choirs of the Apostles and disciples and, in more distant circles, those of the other saints. High above all, I saw in the brightest light, figures and powers of indeterminate form, and over them something like a half-sun rayed out its beams. This second picture seemed to signify the advent. First I saw the region below and around the pillar, then I saw the church and its adorers, and

lastly the child developing in the shining heart. I received at the same time an unspeakable assurance of the sinless Conception. I read it plainly as if in a book, and I comprehended it. I was also informed that a church had once stood on this spot, but on account of its being the scene of many scandalous disputes on the subject of the Immaculate Conception, it had been given over to destruction. The Church Triumphant, however, still celebrates the feast on its site. I heard also the words: "Every vision contains some mystery until its fulfillment."

5. Eve of Mary's Birth

What gladness throughout all nature! Birds are singing, lambs and kids are gamboling, and swarms of doves are fluttering with joy around the spot upon which once stood Anne's abode. I see only a wilderness there at the present day ... But I had a vision of pilgrims in the far-off times who, girded and with long staves in their hands, wended their way through the country to Mount Carmel. On their head they wore a covering wound around like a turban. They, too, participated in the joy of nature. And when in their astonishment they asked the hermits that dwelt in the neighborhood the cause of this remarkable exultation, they received for answer that such manifestations of gladness were customary. They were always observed upon the eve of the anniversary of Mary's birth around that spot where once stood Anne's house. The hermits told them of a holy man of the early times who had been the first to notice these wonders in nature. His account gave rise to the celebration of the feast of Mary's Nativity which soon became general throughout the Church. And now I, too, beheld how this came to pass.

I saw a pious pilgrim, two hundred and fifty years after Mary's death, traversing the Holy Land, visiting and venerating all places connected with the

actions of Jesus while on earth. He was supernaturally guided. Sometimes he tarried several days together in certain places in which he tasted extraordinary consolation. There he prayed and meditated, and there also he received revelations from on high. For several years he had, from the seventh to the eighth of September, noticed a great jubilation in nature and heard angelic voices singing in the air. He prayed earnestly to know the meaning of all this, and it was made known to him in a vision that that was the birth night of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was on his way to Mount Sinai when he had this vision. In it he was informed also of the existence of a chapel built in Mary's honor in a cave of the Prophet Elias. He was told to reveal this, as well as the circumstance of Mary's birth night, to the hermits on Mount Sinai.

I saw him again when he arrived at the mount. Where the convent now stands there dwelt, even at that early period, hermits scattered here and there. It was then as inaccessible from the valley as it is now. To reach the top of the mountain from that side, hoisting machines were used. I saw that in consequence of the pilgrim's communication, the eighth of September was here first celebrated in the year 250, and that later it was introduced into other parts of the Church.

I saw hermits accompanying the pilgrim to the cave of Elias to visit the chapel that had been built therein to Mary's honor. But it was not easy to find, for the mountain was covered with gardens that still produced magnificent fruits, though long allowed to run wild, and there were numerous caves of hermits and Essenians. The pilgrim who had had the vision told them to send a Jew into the different caves, and that the one out of which he should be thrust would be the cave of Elias. He had been thus instructed in vision. I then saw them sending an old Jew into the caves; but, as often as he tried to enter a certain

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one that had a narrow entrance built up before it, he was repulsed. By this miracle the cave of Elias was recognized. On entering it they found another cave, the entrance to which had been closed by masonry; this was the chapel in which the Prophet Elias had in prayer honored the future Mother of the Saviour. Many holy relics were still preserved in it, bones of the Prophets and Patriarchs, screens and vessels that had once been used in ceremonies of the Old Law. These latter were appropriated to the use of the Church.

The spot upon which the thornbush had stood was called in the language of that country: *The Shadow of God*. It was entered only barefoot. The Elias chapel was walled up with beautiful large stones through which ran flowerlike veining. They were afterward employed for the erection of the church. In the vicinity is a mountain entirely of red sand on which, nevertheless, there is very beautiful fruit.

I learned from St. Bridget that if pregnant women fast on the eve of Mary's birth and say fervently nine Hail Marys to honor the nine months she passed in Anne's womb; if they frequently repeat these prayers during their pregnancy, and especially on the eve of their delivery, receiving then the holy Sacraments devoutly, she will offer their prayer to God herself and bring them through even very critical circumstances to a happy delivery.

I saw the Blessed Virgin on the eve of her nativity. She said to me: "Whoever says this evening," (Sept. 7th) "nine times the Hail Mary lovingly and devoutly to honor the nine months spent in my mother's womb as also my birth, and continues the same devotion for nine consecutive days, daily gives to the angels nine flowers for a bouquet. This bouquet they bear to Heaven and offer to the Most Holy Trinity to obtain some favor for the one that prays."

I was transported to a high place between Heaven and earth. I saw the earth below me gray and somber,

and above me Heaven where, among the choirs of angels and the orders of the blessed, was the Blessed Virgin before the throne of God. I saw prepared for her two thrones of honor, two buildings of honor, which finally became churches, yet, whole cities, and they were formed out of the prayers of earth. They were built entirely of flowers, leaves, garlands, the various species typical of the different value and characteristics of the prayers of individuals and of whole congregations. Angels and saints took them from the hands of those that offered them and bore them up to Heaven.

6. Birth of Mary

Several days previously, Anne informed Joachim that the time of her delivery was at hand. She sent messengers to her sister Maraha, at Sephoris, also to the widow Enue, Elizabeth's sister, in the valley of Zabulon, and to her sister Sobe's daughter Salome, the wife of Zebedee, of Bethsaida. The sons of Sobe and Zebedee, James the Greater and John, were not yet born. Anne sent for these three women to come to her. I saw them on their journey. Two of them were accompanied by their husbands, who returned, however, when they had reached the neighborhood of Nazareth. Joachim had sent the men servants off to the herds, and had otherwise disposed of the domestics not absolutely needed in the house. Mary Heli, Anne's eldest daughter, now the wife of Cleophas, took charge of the household affairs.

On the evening before the birth of the child, Joachim himself went to his herds in the field nearest his home. I saw him with some of his servants who were related to him. He called them brothers, but they were only his brother's children. The pasture grounds were beautifully divided off and hedged in. In the corners were huts wherein the servants were provided with food supplied from Anne's house.

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There was also a stone altar before which they prayed. Steps led down to it, and the space around it was neatly paved with triangular stones. Behind the altar was a wall with steps at the sides. The whole place was surrounded by trees.

Joachim, after praying here awhile, selected the finest lambs, kids, and bullocks from his herds, and sent them by his servants to the Temple as offerings. He did not return to his home before night.

I saw the three women approaching Anne's abode toward evening. When they arrived, they went straight to her apartment back of the fireplace. Anne embraced them, told them that her time drew near, and standing intoned with them a Psalm. "Praise God, the Lord. He has had pity on His people and has freed Israel. Truly, He has fulfilled the promise that He made to Adam in Paradise: "The seed of the woman shall crush the serpent's head." I do not remember all, verse for verse, but Anne rehearsed the different types of Mary, and said: "The germ that God gave to Abraham has ripened in me. The promise made to Sara and the blossom of Aaron's rod are fulfilled in me." During all this time, Anne was shining with light. The room was full of glory, and over Anne hovered Jacob's ladder. The women around her were amazed, entranced. I think they too saw the ladder.

And now a slight refreshment was placed before the visitors. They ate and drank standing and toward midnight lay down to rest. But Anne remained up in prayer. After awhile, she went and roused the women. She felt that her time was near, and she desired them to pray with her. They all withdrew behind a curtain that concealed an oratory. Anne opened the doors of a little closet built in the wall. In it was a box containing sacred treasures, and on either side lights so contrived that they could be raised in their sockets at pleasure, and rested on upright supports. These lamps were now lighted. At

the foot of the little altar was a cushioned stool. The box contained some of Sara's hair, which Anne held in great reverence; some of the bones of Joseph, which Moses had brought with him out of Egypt; something belonging to Tobias, relics of clothing, I think; and the little, white, shining, pear-shaped cup from which Abraham drank when he received the Blessing from the angel, and which was later on taken from the Ark of the Covenant and given to Joachim along with the Blessing. This Blessing was like wine and bread, like a sacrament, like a supernatural, invigorating food. Anne knelt before the shrine, one of the women on either side, and the third behind her. Again I heard them reciting a Psalm. I think that the burning bush on Horeb was mentioned in it. And now a supernatural light began to fill the chamber and to hover around Anne. The three women fell prostrate as if stunned. Around Anne the light took the exact form of the thornbush on Horeb, so that I could no longer see her. The flame streamed inward, and all at once I saw Anne receiving into her arms the shining child Mary. She wrapped it in her mantle, pressed it to her heart, laid it on the stool before the relics, and went on with her prayer.

Then I heard the child crying, and I saw Anne drawing forth some linen from under the large veil that enveloped her. She swathed the child first in gray and then in red, leaving the breast, arms, and head bare, and then the luminous thornbush vanished. The holy women arose and in glad surprise received the newborn child into their arms. They wept for joy. All intoned a hymn of praise while Anne held the child on high. I saw the chamber again filled with light and myriads of angels. They announced the child's name, singing: "On the twentieth day, this child shall be called Mary." Then they sang *Gloria* and *Alleluia*. I heard all these words.

Anne went to her chamber, and lay down upon her couch. The women bathed and swathed the child,

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and laid it by the mother. Next to the bed was a little portable basket-crib furnished with wooden pegs, by means of which it could be stuck into holes on the right or left, or at the foot of the bed as might be desired. One of the women went and called Joachim. He entered, knelt by Anne's couch, and his tears fell in torrents over the child. Then he took it up, held it aloft, and intoned a canticle of praise like unto that of Zachary. He spoke words expressive of his longing now to die, and he alluded to the germ given by God to Abraham and perfected in himself, also to the root of Jesse. I noticed, though not till afterward, that Mary Heli was not among the first to see the child. She must at this time have been for some years the mother of Mary Cleophas. Still she was not present at Mary's birth, because the Jewish custom does not permit the daughter to be with the mother at such a time.

When Mary was born, I saw her at one and the same time before the Most Holy Trinity in Heaven and on earth in Anne's arms. I saw the joy of the whole heavenly court. I saw all her gifts and graces in a supernatural way revealed to her. I often have such visions, but they are for me inexpressible, for others unintelligible, therefore am I silent with regard to them. Mary was also instructed in innumerable mysteries. As this vision ended, the child cried upon earth.

I saw the news of Mary's birth announced also in Limbo, and I beheld the transports of joy with which it was received by the Patriarchs, especially by Adam and Eve who rejoiced that the Promise made them in Paradise was now fulfilled. I saw also that the Patriarchs increased in grace, their abode became lighter and less constrained, and that they began to exercise a greater influence on earth. It was as if all their good works, all their penance, all the efforts of their life, all their desires and aspirations had at last brought forth fruit.

All nature, animate and inanimate, men and beasts were stirred to joy, and I heard sweet singing. But sinners were filled with anguish and remorse. I saw, especially around Nazareth and in other parts of Palestine, many possessed souls who at the hour of Mary's birth became perfectly furious. They uttered horrible cries, and they were tossed and dashed about. The devils cried out of them: "We must withdraw! We must go out!"

My greatest delight was to see the old priest Simeon in the Temple on this night of Mary's birth. He was aroused by the fearful cries of the possessed confined in one of the streets on the Temple mountain. Simeon with others had charge of them. He went that night to the house in which they were, and asked the cause of those shrieks that roused everyone from sleep. The possessed man nearest to the entrance cried out fiercely that he must get out. Simeon released him, and then the devil cried out: "I must go forth! We must go forth! A virgin is born, and there are upon earth so many angels who torment us. We must go forth, and never again shall we dare possess a human being!" Then I saw the poor creature horribly tossed to and fro by the devil, who at last went out of him. Simeon was in prayer. I rejoiced greatly at seeing old Simeon then.

I saw, too, Anna, the Prophetess, and another one of Mary's future teachers in the Temple aroused and instructed in vision upon the birth of the child. They told each other what had happened. I think they knew of Anne.

In the country of the Three Holy Kings, certain prophetesses had visions of the birth of the Blessed Virgin. They told their priests that a Virgin was born, to welcome whom many spirits had come down upon earth, but that other spirits were troubled. The stargazing Kings also saw pictures of it in their stars.

In Egypt, on the night of the birth, an idol was hurled from its temple into the sea, and another fell

from its place and was dashed to pieces.

Next morning I saw a great crowd from the neighborhood around the house along with Anne's servants, male and female. The women in charge showed the child to them. Many of them were very much affected, and many wicked hearts were changed. They had gathered around the house because they had seen a light over it during the night and also because the birth of Anne's child was looked upon as a great blessing.

Later on other relatives of Joachim from the valley of Zabulon arrived, also the servants from a distance. The child was shown to all, and a repast was prepared in the house.

On the following days people flocked in numbers to see the child Mary. Her little cradle, which was in the form of a boat, was placed upon a raised pedestal, something like a sawing-jack, in the front apartment. The lower coverlet was red, the upper one white, and on them lay the child swathed up to the armpits in red and transparent white. She had tiny, golden curls.

I saw also Mary Cleophas, the child of Mary Heli and Cleophas, the grandchild of Anne. She was then a little girl of only a few years. She was playing with the infant Mary and caressing her. She was a stout, healthy child. She wore a little white, sleeveless dress bordered with red from which hung tiny red balls, like apples. Around her little bare arms were twined rows of white stuff, maybe feathers or silk or wool. The child Mary had also a little transparent scarf around her neck.

7. The Child Receives the Name of Mary

I saw a great feast in Anne's house; all was gladness. The wicker partitions in the front of the house had been taken away, and a large room was thusly made ready. All around it ran a low table upon which

stood plates, glasses, etc., but as yet no eatables. In the middle of the room was an altar covered with red and white, and a stand upon which scrolls were laid. A small basket-cradle stood on the altar. It was shaped like a shell, and woven in white and red; the coverlet was sky-blue. Priests from Nazareth were present in their sacred vestments; among them was one robed more magnificently than the rest. Many of the female guests, relatives of Anne, were also in their holiday garments. Among them were Anne's eldest daughter Mary Heli, espoused to Cleophas, Anne's sister from Sephoris, and others. Several of Joachim's relatives also were present. Anne was up, but she did not appear. She remained in her chamber behind the fireplace. Enue, Elizabeth's sister, brought the infant Mary, swathed as described in red and transparent white, and gave her to Joachim. The priests approached the altar, the attendants bearing the chief priest's train, and prayed from the scrolls. Joachim placed the child on the arms of the chief priest, who held her aloft, prayed for awhile, and then laid her in the little cradle on the altar. Then he took a pair of scissors, furnished with a little box at the end for catching the clippings, (something like a pair of snuffers), and cut a little hair from both sides and from the middle of the child's head. The hair thus removed, he burned it upon a pan of coals. Then he took a box of oil and anointed the five senses of the child. With his thumb, he pressed the ointment upon the ears, the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and the heart of the child. He wrote the name Mary on a scrap of parchment, and laid it on the child's breast. Then the little Mary was, by Joachim, given back to Enue, who took her to Anne. The women stood back during the ceremony, at the end of which other Psalms were sung. I saw then all kinds of table furniture, dishes, etc., that I had not before noticed. There were vessels on the table that were quite light, their covers pierced with holes. I think they were baskets into which flowers were put.

On a side table, I saw numbers of little white rods, as if of bone, also spoons. There were also bent tubes lying on it, but I know not for what use. I saw no more of the meal itself.

8. Preparations for Mary's Presentation

Mary was three years and three months old when she made the vow to join the virgins in the Temple. She was very delicately built and had golden hair inclined to curl at the ends. She was already as tall as a child of five or six here in our country. Mary Heli's daughter was a few years older than Mary, and much stronger and stouter. I saw in Anne's house the preparations for Mary's admittance into the Temple. It was made the occasion of a great feast. Five priests had assembled from Nazareth, Sephoris, and other places, among them Zachary and a son of the brother of Anne's father. They were about to perform a sacred ceremony over the child Mary, a kind of examination as to whether she was sufficiently mature in mind to be admitted to the Temple. Besides the priests, there were present Anne's sister from Sephoris with her daughter Mary Heli and her child, and several other little girls and relatives.

The robes worn by the child at this feast were cut out by the priests themselves and the different parts quickly sewed together by the women present. The child was clothed in them at certain periods when subjected to a series of interrogatories. The ceremony was in itself very grave and solemn, although the faces of the aged priests were at times lit up by smiles of admiration at the expressions and answers of the little Mary, and it was frequently interrupted by the tears of Joachim and Anne. Three entire suits were prepared for Mary and put on her at different times during the ceremony, the questioning and answering going on in the meantime. All this took place in a large room next to the dining hall. Light entered

through a square opening in the center of the roof, which opening was often covered by a net. The floor was covered with a red carpet. In the middle of the room stood a table, intended for an altar, with a red cover, and over that a white transparent one. Upon it lay a case with rolls of writings and a curtain upon which the picture of Moses was either embroidered or laid on and sewed down. He was represented in the large mantle in which he used to pray, the tables of the Law hanging on his arm. I have always seen Moses represented as a tall, broad-shouldered man. He had a high, somewhat pyramidal head, a large hooked nose, and upon his broad, high forehead, were two bumps inclining toward each other and giving him a very remarkable appearance. In his childhood, they were like little warts. His complexion was brown, bright and ruddy, his hair inclined to red. I saw many such protuberances as those possessed by Moses on the foreheads of the ancient Prophets and hermits; sometimes only one such excrescence appeared upon the middle of the forehead.

On the altar lay the three outfits for the child Mary along with various materials, etc., presented by the relatives for her dowry. A kind of throne stood upon steps before the altar. The priests entered the hall with naked feet. Three of them only proceeded to the examination and blessed the child, who was as yet in her usual clothing. Joachim and Anne were present with their relatives; the women stood back, the little girls at Mary's side. One of the priests took the garments from the altar, explained their signification, and handed them to Anne's sister, from Sephoris, who put them on the child.

First came a little, yellow, knitted robe, and then a colored, laced bodice, which was put on over the head and fastened around the body. It had on the breast something like cords. Over that came a brownish mantle with armholes, from the upper part of which hung lappets. It was cut out around the neck,

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and closed under the breast. On her feet were brown sandals with thick, green soles. Her reddish-yellow curls were arranged, and a silken crown with feathers in it placed upon them. The feathers were a finger in length, and they bent over toward the inside of the crown. I know to what bird in that country they belonged. A large square, ash-colored kerchief was thrown over her head like a large veil. It could be drawn together under the arms in such a way that they might rest in it as in slings. It appeared to be a mantle used in time of prayer and penance, also in travelling.

The priests now put to the child all sorts of questions relative to the discipline enforced in the Temple. Among other things, they said to her: "Thy parents, having promised thee to the Temple, have made a vow that thou shouldst drink no wine nor vinegar, shouldst eat no grapes nor figs. Now what wilt thou add to this vow? Think upon this during thy meal." The Jewish people, and especially the young maidens were accustomed to drink vinegar. Mary, too, was fond of it. On these and similar things, was she interrogated.

And now the second suit was put upon the child, It consisted of a sky-blue body, a mantle of the same color, but of a lighter shade, a richer bodice, and a white veil, glossy like silk, which fell behind in folds something like the consecrated veil of a nun. Over this was a fine, closely-fitting wreath of colored flower buds made of silk and intermixed with small green leaves. Then the priests threw over her face a white veil gathered on top like a cap. It was caught by three clasps, one below the other, by means of which the veil could be raised upon the head, either one third, or one half, or even the whole.

The child was instructed upon the use of this veil, when to be raised or lowered in eating or answering questions. In this array, Mary went to table where she sat between two of the priests, the third opposite

to her. The women and children sat at one end of the table apart from the men. During the meal, the priests practiced the child in many points upon the use of the veil, asking questions and receiving her answers, and also in many other of the customary ceremonies. They reminded her that she still could partake of everything, and they offered her different dishes, tempting her in order to see how far her abstinence would go. But Mary excited their admiration by all that she did and said. She tasted sparingly of only a few dishes, and answered all their questions with simplicity and wisdom. During the meal and the whole of the examination, I saw angels hovering around her, directing and assisting her in all things.

After the repast, she was clothed anew before the altar in the next room. Anne's sister from Sephoris assisted the priest in the ceremony, during which the latter explained the signification of the garments and spoke of spiritual things. The robes now put on the child were the most beautiful of all. A violet-blue bodice, and over it a breast-piece embroidered in colors. The latter was now fastened to the piece that covered the back, caught to the plaited skirt, and fell below in a point. Over this fell a violet-blue mantle, full and magnificent, rounded in the back very much like a chasuble. When it was closed on the breast, it formed puffs on the arms, like arches, wherein they could rest, and yet be exposed to view. It had five rows of gold embroidery down the front, the middle one furnished with the buttons or hooks that fastened the mantle. It was also embroidered around the edge. A large changeable-colored veil was then put on, which glanced from white to violet-blue. Upon this veil rested a crown, closed on top by five clasps. It was a thin, broad circlet lined with gold, the upper edge spreading into points tipped with little balls. A network of silk covered the outside, which was ornamented with small roses of the same material

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in whose center were fastened five pearls. The five points also were of silk and surmounted by a ball. The breast piece was fastened behind, yet had cords also in front as if for lacing. Her mantle was caught first over the breast by a cross band, which was prevented from pressing upon the breast ornament by a button with a long shank; it closed again under the bodice and fell behind the arms in folds.

In this festive attire, Mary was placed upon the steps before the altar, the little girls at her side. She now repeated her resolve to abstain from flesh, fish, and milk, to make use of only a certain drink prepared from the pith of a reed soaked in water. This was much used by the poor of Palestine, just as here in our own country rice or barley water is drunk by them. To this beverage, Mary proposed to add occasionally some terebinthine juice. This juice is like a white, viscid oil and is very refreshing, though not in the same degree as balsam. Mary expressed her resolution to refrain also from spices and fruits, with the exception of a kind of yellow berry that grows in bunches. I know them well. Children and poor people eat them in that country. She said also that she would lie on the bare ground and nightly rise three times to pray. The other maidens rose but once.

Upon hearing this, Anne and Joachim shed tears, and the aged Joachim pressed his child in his arms, saying: "Ah, my child, that is too hard! If thou livest so mortified a life, I, thy poor old father, shall never see thee again." This scene was very affecting.

But the priests replied to the child that she should, like the others, rise once only during the night, and they laid down other and milder conditions for her. Finally, they said, "Many of the other virgins enter the Temple without a dowry or even wherewith to pay their board. On this account and with their parents' consent, they engage to wash the blood-besprinkled garments of the priests and the rough woolen cloths. This is a very heavy work, and not accomplished

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without bleeding hands. But thou wilt never be called upon for such services, since thy parents are able to maintain thee at the Temple."

But Mary quickly replied that she was ready even for this work, were she esteemed worthy to perform it. At this speech, Joachim again betrayed his emotion.

During these holy ceremonies, I beheld Mary becoming at times so tall that she even rose above the heads of the priests. This was for me a sign of her wisdom and grace. The priests were filled with amazement, at once solemn and joyful.

At last, Mary was blessed by the priests. I saw her radiant with light as she stood on the little altar throne, two priests on either side of her and one opposite. They held rolls of writing, and prayed over the child, their hands outstretched above her. At that moment, I saw a wonderful vision in the child Mary. She seemed, by virtue of the blessing, to become transparent. In her was a glory, a halo of unspeakable splendor, and in that halo appeared the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant, as if in a glittering crystal vessel. I saw Mary's heart open like the doors of a temple, and the Holy Thing of the Ark of the Covenant, around which a tabernacle of precious stones of multiplied signification had been formed like a heavenly throne, going into her heart through that opening, like the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies, like the ostensorium into the tabernacle. I saw that by this the child Mary was glorified; she hovered above the earth. With the entrance of this Sacrament into Mary's heart, which immediately closed over It, the vision faded, and I saw the child all penetrated by glowing fervor. During this wonderful vision, I saw that Zachary received an interior assurance, a heavenly monition that Mary was the chosen vessel of the Mystery. From it he had received a ray that had appeared figuratively in Mary.

And now the priests led the child to her parents. Anne caught her child to her breast and kissed her,

but Joachim—deeply affected—reverenced Mary and only took her hand. The elder sister Mary Heli embraced the favored child with much more gaiety than did Anne, who was a very serious, practical, moderate, and self-possessed woman. The little niece, Mary Cleophas, acted as any child would, and fondly embraced the little Mary.

Then the priests took the child again, disrobed her, and led her forth in her customary dress. I saw them standing drinking out of a cup, and then departing.

9. The Journey to the Temple

I saw Joachim, Anne, and their elder daughter busied during the night packing and preparing for a journey. A lamp with several wicks was burning, and I saw Mary Heli busily going about with a light. Some days before, Joachim had sent his servants up to the Temple with offerings of cattle, five of the finest of every kind. They made a nice herd. Now he saddled two of the beasts of burden, and loaded them with all kinds of baggage: clothes for the child and presents for the Temple. A broad package was laid on the back of each beast, and formed a comfortable seat. The baggage was all in bundles. On both sides of one of the beasts platter-shaped baskets with arched covers were fastened. In them were birds as large as partridges. There were also oval baskets containing fruit. A cover with heavy tassels was thrown over the whole load.

Two of the priests were still present. One was very old. He wore a cap pointed on the forehead and with lappets over the ears. His upper garment was shorter than the under one, and over it was a kind of stole. He had much to do with the child. The other priest was younger.

I saw also two boys present. They were not human. They appeared there supernaturally and with a spiritual signification. They carried long standards rolled

upon staffs furnished with knobs at both ends. The larger of the two boys came to me with his standard unfurled, read, and explained it to me. The writing appeared entirely strange to me, the single, golden letters all inverted. One letter represented a whole word. The language sounded unfamiliar, but I understood it all the same. He showed me in his roll the passage referring to the burning thornbush of Moses. He explained to me how the thornbush burned, and yet was not consumed; so now was the child Mary inflamed with the fire of the Holy Spirit, but in her humility she knew nothing of it. It signifies also the Divinity and Humanity in Jesus, and how God's fire united with the child Mary. The putting-off of the shoes, he explained thus: "The Law will now be fulfilled. The veil is withdrawn and the essence appears." By the little standard on his staff was signified, as he told me, that Mary now began her course, her career, to become the Mother of the Redeemer. The other boy seemed to be playing with his standard. He jumped about and ran around with it. By this was signified Mary's innocence. The great Promise is to be fulfilled in her, rests upon her, and yet she plays like a child in this holy destiny. I cannot express the loveliness of those boys. They were different from all others present, and these latter did not appear to see them.

There were besides Anne about six female relatives with their children and some men who accompanied them. Joachim guided the beast, upon which the child Mary sometimes rode. He carried a light, for it was still dark when they set out. A servant led the other. The little procession was also accompanied by the other apparitions of the Prophets. As Mary hastened from the house, they pointed out to me a place in their rolls, wherein it was declared that, although the Temple was indeed magnificent, yet Mary contained in herself still greater magnificence. Mary wore the little yellowish gown and the

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large veil so fastened around her that her arms could rest in it. When she rode, the Prophet boys followed behind her; but when she walked, they were at her side, singing the *Psalms* 44 and 49. I knew that the same would be sung at her reception in the Temple. The child Mary saw those boys, but she said nothing about it. She was perfectly silent, wholly recollected in self.

The journey was difficult, over mountain and valley. In the latter lay chilling mists and dew. Once I saw the travelers resting at a fountain under some balsam trees, and again stopping overnight at an inn at the foot of a mountain.

Twelve leagues from Jerusalem, they came up at an inn with the herd that had been sent on in advance as an offering, and which was just about starting anew. Joachim was well known here, and was quite at home. When taking his offerings up to Jerusalem, he had always stopped at this inn; and when, from his penitential stay among the shepherds he returned to Nazareth, he had also put up here.

I again saw the holy travelers in the city Bethoron, six leagues from Jerusalem. They had crossed a rivulet, had passed Gophna and Ozensara, and were still distant about two leagues from a road whence Jerusalem could be descried. At Bethoron, they put up at a Levitical school. Relatives of Joachim and Anne from Nazareth, Saphoris, Zabulon, and the country around, had come hither with their daughters, and there was quite a little festival in Mary's honor. She was conducted with many other children to a hall in which a special place had been prepared for her on an elevated seat like a throne. She was then crowned. The teachers questioned her, and were struck with all her answers. Mention was made of the wisdom of another maiden who not long since had returned from the Temple to her home at Gophna. She was called Susanna, and I think that it was her place Mary was going to take in the Temple. Susanna

was then fifteen; later, she joined the holy women that followed Jesus.

Mary rejoiced at being now so near to the Temple. Joachim embraced her, weeping and saying, "I shall never see thee again!" During the repast, Mary went here and there. Several times she reclined by Anne's side at table, or stood behind her with her arm around her neck.

On the following day, accompanied by the teacher of the Levitical school and his family, they started very early for Jerusalem. The young girls carried beautiful fruits and garments as presents for the child. It looked to me as if there was going to be a real feast in Jerusalem. The nearer they approached the Holy City, the more eager and desirous became Mary. She generally ran on before her parents.

I saw the arrival of the procession in Jerusalem, and also beheld the roads and paths and buildings more distinctly than I had done for a long time. Jerusalem was a very singular-looking city. We must not represent it to ourselves with its streets thronged as the great cities of the present day. Many steep and hilly streets ran around behind the city walls, from which no gates led. The houses lying high behind those walls faced the opposite side, for many parts of the city were built at subsequent periods, new ridges of hills being taken in accordingly. The old city walls, however, were always allowed to remain standing. Many of the deep valleys were spanned by massive stone arches. The courtyards and rooms of the houses all opened toward the back of the building' the entrance only being on the street. The walls were surmounted by terraces or balconies. The houses were kept closed the greater part of the time. When the inhabitants had no affairs to call them to the public places of the city or to the Temple, they remained for the most part in their own houses and courts. It was tolerably quiet on the streets, excepting in the neighborhood of the markets and palaces

where there was much going to and fro of soldiers and travelers. On certain days, at the time when all were gathered in the Temple for worship, the city in many localities was entirely deserted. On this account and the seclusion of the people in their houses, Jesus and His disciples were enabled to go undisturbed through the solitary streets and deep valleys. Water was not plentiful in the city; one often sees high buildings to and from which it was conveyed, also towers in which it was pumped. They were very careful of water at the Temple where such quantities were needed for washing and purifying the various vessels, etc. They had great engines for pumping it up. There were numbers of shopkeepers and merchants in the city; they had their booths all together in the markets and open squares. So stood, for instance, not far from the sheep gate, many dealers in all kinds of gold trinkets and shining stones. Their booths were round and light, and quite brown as if streaked with something, pitch or resin, probably. Though light, they were very strong. There they carried on their business and, under tents stretched from one to another, they exposed their different wares. There were also certain localities, near the palaces for instance, where there was more life in the streets, where it was more brisk. Old Rome was indeed more pleasantly situated. It was not so steep, and its streets were more lively. On one side of the mountain upon which the Temple was situated, the declivity was more gentle. Here there were several streets upon terraces and on top of the thick walls, where some of the priests and servants of the Temple dwelt, as did some laboring people who performed the lowest services, such as purifying the ditches wherein was thrown the offal of the cattle slaughtered for the Temple. On the other side, the mountain was very steep, and the ditch quite black. Around the summit of the mountain was a green ledge whereon the priests had all kinds of little gardens.

Even in Christ's time, there was upon certain parts of the Temple work constantly going on.

There were quantities of ore in the mountain upon which stood the Temple, and much was dug out and used in the building. Inside the meadow were numbers of smelting vaults and furnaces. I never felt at home in the Temple, for I never could find in it a place well-suited for prayer. It was all so immensely solid, so massive, so high, the numerous courts were so narrow, dark, and obstructed by so many elevated platforms and seats, that, when the people were in it, it presented a somewhat frightful spectacle, and even looked confined with its high, massive walls and lofty pillars. The constant slaughtering going on and the quantities of blood flowing in consequence, I found most repulsive, though words cannot express the wonderful order and cleanliness that reigned in everything connected with it.

10. The Entrance into Jerusalem

I saw the caravan that conducted Mary approaching Jerusalem from the north, and winding toward the east around the outlying gardens and palaces of the city. They crossed the valley of Josaphat and, leaving the road to Bethania on the left, entered the city by the sheep gate leading to the cattle market. There was a pool here in which the sheep were washed. Thence their way turned to the right and ran between walls to another section of the city. Then they followed a long road through a valley, and at last reached the neighborhood of the fish market at the west side of the city. Here stood the house at which Zachary, when engaged in the service of the Temple, always put up. Out of this inn came men, women, and children with garlands to meet the caravan and to conduct them in ceremony to the house, about a quarter of an hour's distance, at which they were to stop. Zachary was not present, but I saw a

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very old man there, his father's brother I think; and among those that came out to welcome Mary, were relatives with their children from the country around Hebron and Bethlehem. There was a fine feast prepared for them in the house at which they stopped. The child Mary wore the second festival suit with the little blue mantle.

Zachary called here for them, in order to take them to the feast inn that he had hired for them. This was an inn which could be hired on festival occasions like the present. There were four such inns on the northeast side of the mountain on which stood the Temple. That hired by Zachary was very large. Four halls surrounded a large court, along whose walls were sleeping places and long, low tables. A spacious saloon and a kitchen were also prepared for the guests. On two sides of this feast inn, dwelt some of the servants of the Temple, whose duty it was to see to the animals intended for sacrifice. The court wherein was placed the herd that Joachim had brought as an offering, lay hard by.

A procession was formed when Zachary was about to lead the travelers into the inn hired for the feast. He himself walked first with Joachim and Anne; then came Mary surrounded by four little girls in white, and followed by the other children and relatives. Their way led to Herod's palace and passed that of the Roman governor, leaving the citadel of Antonia behind; at last they reached a high wall, up which there was a flight of more than fifteen steps. Mary, to the astonishment of all, mounted them without assistance. Her friends wanted to help her, but she refused. Upon their entrance into the inn, their feet were washed. Then they were shown into a large hall in the center of which a lamp was suspended from the ceiling over a large, metal basin of water. Here they washed their face and hands.

Joachim and Anne then went up with Mary to the dwelling of some of the priests. Here, likewise urged

by an interior spirit, the child hurried to mount the steps. The two priests cordially received them into the house. Both had been present at Mary's examination in Nazareth. They called one of the women belonging to the Temple, where she executed all kinds of works common to females, and educated little girls. Her abode was at some distance from the Temple, among the added rooms forming the sleeping apartments of the Temple virgins. Out of these rooms, one could—unseen—look down into the sanctuary. The widow was so enveloped in her mantle that one could see only a little of her face. The priests and the parents delivered the child Mary over to her as her future pupil. She received her gravely, but cordially, while the child was all submission and reverence. She (the widow) accompanied the party to the feast inn, and received a package as the child's dowry.

The following day was taken up with preparations for Joachim's sacrifice and for Mary's entrance into the Temple.

Joachim went early with his offering of cattle to the Temple, in front of which the animals for the sacrifice were selected. Those not chosen were at once led back to the cattle market. Joachim had to lay his hand upon the head of each animal before it was slaughtered and he afterward received some of the flesh and blood of each. There were in this place many pillars, tables, and vessels, where the sacrifices were cut up, divided, and arranged. The scum of the blood was put aside; the fat, the spleen, and the liver separated, and all parts were salted. The entrails of the lambs were cleaned, filled with something, and again restored to the animal so that it looked like a whole lamb. The feet were bound cross-wise. A great portion of the meat was taken to a court in which were some of the Temple virgins. They seemed to have something to do connected with it; perhaps they had to prepare it either for themselves or for the priests. All was carried on with indescribable

order. The priests and Levites came and went, two and two; and during the difficult and multifarious work, all progressed as if by line and level. The pieces prepared for sacrifice lay over till the next day.

In the inn was held a feast, and there was also a repast, at which about one hundred people assisted along with the children, among them twenty-four girls of different ages. Among others, I saw Seraphia, who was called Veronica after the death of Jesus. She was already well-grown, probably from ten to twelve years old. They prepared garlands and wreaths for Mary and her companions, and ornamented for them seven scepter-shaped lamps on whose summit burned a flame. During the feast many priests and Levites went in and out of the inn, taking part also in the repast. When they expressed surprise at the greatness of Joachim's offering, he bade them recall the ignominy he had endured at the Temple when his former offerings were rejected, and the great mercy of God who had heard his supplications, and he asked them whether he should not now express his gratitude according to the extent of his power. I saw the child Mary and the other girls taking a walk in the neighborhood of the house.

11. Mary's Entrance into the Temple and her Offering

Zachary and the other men had already gone to the Temple, and now Mary was led thither by the women and the virgins. Anne and her elder daughter Mary Heli, with the little daughter of the latter, Mary Cleophas, walked first; then came Mary in her second suit, the sky-blue dress and mantle, her neck and arms adorned with garlands, and the flower wreathed candlestick in her hand. On either side walked three little maidens with similarly trimmed candlesticks. They were dressed in white embroidered

with gold, and wore bluish mantles. They were quite covered with garlands, even their arms were twined with flowers. Then followed the other virgins and little girls, about twenty in number, all dressed beautifully, but somewhat differently though all wore mantles. Then came the elderly females. They could not proceed straight to the Temple from this point; they had to take a circuitous route of nearly half an hour. They passed through some streets and before Veronica's house. From many of the dwellings the procession was saluted, the spectators gazing in wonder at the child and her beautiful train of attendants. There was something very extraordinary in Mary's appearance. At the Temple, men were busy opening a large and wonderfully beautiful gate upon which were carved grapevines, ears of wheat, and heads of various kinds. It was the Golden Gate. The priests led the Holy Virgin up numerous steps to this gate. Joachim and Zachary met them at the gate, which opened into a long archway, and led them through several passages into a hall. Here Mary was again questioned by the priests, after which she was clothed in the third holiday suit, the violet-blue, embroidered one.

And now Joachim went with the priests to offer sacrifice. He took fire from a certain place and stood between two priests at the altar. The approach to the altar from three sides was free, but not so on the fourth. At the four corners of the altar, stood small copper pillars and a pipe of the same metal, shaped like a large inverted funnel, which ended in a spiral tube. By this arrangement the smoke from the burning sacrifice rose and escaped over the head of the priest. On three sides of the altar a shelf could be drawn out to receive what was to be laid on the middle of it, since to reach that far would be impossible.

When the sacrifice was kindled, Mary went with the women and children to her place of prayer in the women's porch, where she and her young companions

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stood in the front row. The porch was separated from the court of the altar of burnt offerings by a wall, in which was a gate with a grating above. Through this gate Joachim entered the subterranean passage when, upon the day of Mary's Immaculate Conception, he met Anne under the Golden Gate. The women back in the court could see the altar better, when mounted on steps raised in tiers. In another court was standing a crowd of white-robed boys belonging to the Temple, playing upon flutes and harps.

After the sacrifice, a portable altar was set up under the arched gateway, and before it were placed a couple of steps. Zachary and Joachim, with some priests and two Levites, entered from the court of the altar of burnt offerings, carrying rolls and writing materials, while Anne led Mary to the steps before the altar. Mary knelt upon the steps, while Joachim and Anne, laying their hands on her head, uttered some words bearing reference to the offering of their child, which words were written down by the two Levites. Then one of the priests cut a lock of hair from the child's head, and cast it upon a pan of live coals, after which he threw around her a brown veil. During this ceremony, the girls sang *Psalm 44* [current numbering *Psalm 45*], *Eructavit cor meum*; the priests, *Psalm 49* [current numbering *Psalm 50*], *Deus deorum Dominus*; and the boys played on their musical instruments.

And now the priests led the Holy Virgin up a long flight of steps in the wall that separated the sanctuary from the rest of the Temple. They stood her in something like a niche, from which she could see into the Temple where were ranged numbers of men who seemed to be consecrated to its service. Two priests stood at Mary's side, and several others on the steps praying and reading aloud from rolls. Behind Mary and on the other side of the wall, a priest was standing at the altar of incense, only half of his person visible from the point at which Mary and her attendants were placed. Through an opening contrived for the purpose, one could cast incense upon

the altar without entering the court. The priest now at the incense altar was a holy old man. While he offered sacrifice and the cloud of incense arose around Mary, I saw a vision, which grew in magnitude until at last it filled the whole Temple and obscured it.

I saw above the heart of Mary the glory and the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant. At first it looked exactly like the Ark of the Covenant; and lastly like the Temple itself. Out of the Mystery and before Mary's breast, arose a chalice similar to that of the Last Supper; above it and just in front of her mouth appeared bread marked with a cross. Beams of light radiated around her, and in them shone her various types and symbols. The mysterious pictures of the Litany of Loretto and the other names and titles of Mary, I saw ranged up the whole flight of steps and around her.

From her shoulders, right and left, stretched an olive and a cedar branch crosswise above an elegant palm tree with a small tuft of leaves that stood directly behind her. In the intervening spaces of this verdant cross, appeared all the instruments of Christ's Passion. Over the vision hovered the Holy Spirit, a figure winged with glory, in appearance more human than dovelike. The heavens opened above Mary and the central point of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God, floated over her with all the gardens, the palaces, and the dwellings of the future saints. Angels in myriads hovered around, and the glory that encircled her was full of angelic faces.

Ah, who can express it! Infinite variety, unceasing change, all these pictures following quickly upon and, as it were, growing out of one another. Innumerable points of this vision, I have forgotten. All the splendor and magnificence of the Temple, the richly ornamented wall before which Mary was standing—all grew dark and somber. The whole Temple disappeared, for Mary and her glory alone was visible.

In this vision, symbolical of Mary's spiritual

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signification, I saw her not as a child, but full-grown. She hovered in the air. And through and through the vision, I still saw the priests, the incense offering, and everything else. Then the priest at the altar appeared to prophesy, and to call upon the people to thank God and to pray, for that great things were to come upon the child. The crowd in the Temple, greatly awed—although they had not seen the vision that I saw—maintained a solemn stillness. The vision faded away just as gradually as it had unfolded. At last, the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant shone again in its glory over her heart, and the child once more stood there alone in her rich attire.

Then the priests, among whom Zachary was one of those standing on the lower steps, led Mary down by the hand. One of them took the light from her and the little garlands off her arms, and handed them to the other girls. Mary was then led through a door into another hall where six other Temple virgins, their mistress Noemi, (who was the sister of Lazarus's mother) Anna, and another female met them and scattered flowers before her. To them the priest delivered the child.

When the singing was ended, Mary took leave of her parents. Joachim was especially affected. He took the little child up in his arms, pressed her to his heart, and said weeping: "Remember my soul before God."

Mary now accompanied the women and children belonging to the Temple to their dwelling on the north side, from which passages and winding stairs led up to little chambers adjoining the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, where they went to pray. The others (that is, Mary's relatives and friends) returned to the apartments near the entrance, and took a repast with the priests, the women apart. There were still in the Temple some devout adorers. Many had followed the procession to the entrance. There were numbers among those present who knew that Mary was a child of promise in her family. I remember,

though not distinctly, that Anne had dropped some such expressions to her friends as: "Now does the vessel of the Promise enter the Temple. Now is the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple." It was by a special manifestation of the Divine Will that this feast was so solemnly and magnificently celebrated.

Joachim and Anne were indeed wealthy, but they lived very frugally. They gave all to the Temple and to the poor. I do not now remember how long it was that Anne took for herself nothing but cold victuals, but she treated her domestics generously and provided them with dowries. I think she and Joachim returned that same day with their whole company to Bethoron.

I saw also a feast among the Temple children. They had a meal at which Mary had to question first the mistresses and then the maidens separately as to whether they were willing to have her among them. This was the custom. Then the girls had a dance among themselves. They stood two and two opposite one another and danced, changed places across, and formed figures in and out. There was no leaping, but certain swaying movements of the whole person, which seemed somewhat expressive of the Jewish character. Some of the girls accompanied the dance with the music of flutes, triangles, chimes, and an instrument that gave forth sounds at once strange and agreeable. It consisted of a little box with oblique sides, over which were stretched strings which the players touched with their fingers. The center of the box contained bellows out of which projected several pipes, some crooked, others straight. The performer pressed sometimes here, sometimes there on the center of the bellows which mingled its sounds with those of the strings. The instrument was rested either upon the knee of the performer, or upon a stool under which the knee was placed. In the evening, Noemi took Mary to her cell, from which she could see down into the Temple. Here Mary mentioned to Noemi her

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desire to get up more frequently in the night to pray, but Noemi refused her request for the present. The women belonging to the Temple wore white robes, long and wide, girdled at the waist. Their flowing sleeves were turned up when at work.

Far back in the Temple were numerous chambers built in the wall and connected with the dwellings of the women. Mary's cell was one of the most distant, one nearest the Holy of Holies. From the passage that led to it, one raised a curtain and stepped into an apartment, a sort of antechamber separated from the cell by a light, semicircular, movable screen. Here in the corners right and left, were shelves for clothing and other things. Opposite the door in the screen that led into the cell was an opening hung with gauze and tapestry, and looking down into the Temple. It was rather high in the wall; one had to mount upon steps to reach it. On the left of the cell, lay a cover rolled into a bundle, which Mary unrolled at night for a couch. A branched lamp stood in a niche of the wall. I saw the holy child standing on a stool near it and praying out of a roll with red knobs on the rod. It was indeed a touching sight. The child wore a little coarsely woven, striped dress, blue and white, with yellow flowers. A small round table like a stool stood in the room, and on it I saw Anna setting a dish of fruit the size of beans, and a little jug. The child was skillful far beyond her years. She could already work on little white cloths for the service of the Temple. The wall of her cell was inlaid with colored, triangular stones.

I often saw the child Mary seized with holy longing for the Messiah and saying to Anna: "Oh, will the promised Child be born soon? Oh, if I could only see that Child! Oh, if only I am living when He is born!" Then Anna would give this reply: "Think how old I am and how long I have waited for that Child! And you—you are still so young!" And Mary would shed tears of longing for the promised Saviour.

The maidens reared in the Temple under the care of the matrons occupied themselves with embroidery, with all kinds of ornamental work, and with cleansing the priestly garments and the vessels belonging to the Temple. From their cells, they could see into the Temple, pray and meditate. They were, by the fact of their parents' having placed them there, entirely dedicated to the Lord. Upon reaching a certain age, they were given in marriage, for there was among the more enlightened Israelites the pious, though secret hope that from such a virgin dedicated to God, the Messiah would be born.

I never saw that Herod built the Temple anew. Under him there were indeed many changes made in it; but at the time of Mary's entrance, eleven years before the Birth of Christ, the Temple itself had not been touched. The additions and changes had been made as heretofore on the outbuildings alone.

12. A Glance at the Obduracy of the Pharisees

How obdurate and obstinate the priests and the Pharisees of the Temple were, may be discovered from the small esteem in which they held the distinctions bestowed upon the Holy Family.

First Joachim's offering was rejected; but after some months both his own and his wife's were, by God's command, received. Joachim was admitted even into the presence of the Holy of Holies and he, as well as Anne, was—though unknown to each other—led into the passage under the Temple. There they met, Mary was conceived, and priests awaited them at the entrance of this cave under the Temple—all that took place by God's command. I have seen that sometimes, though not often, the sterile were commanded to be led in there.

Mary entered the Temple in her fourth year, and in all things was she distinguished and remarkable.

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The sister of Lazarus's mother was her teacher and nurse. Her whole manner of acting was so remarkable, so marvelous, that I have seen great rolls written by aged priests about her. I think they still lie hidden with other writings.

Then came the wonderful manifestations at Joseph's espousals and the blossoming of his rod, the accounts of the Three Kings and of the shepherds, the Presentation of Jesus, Anna's and Simeon's testimony, and the teaching of Jesus at the age of twelve in the Temple.

But all this, the priests and Pharisees noticed not. Their mind was preoccupied by business and court affairs. Because the Holy Family lived in voluntary retirement and poverty, they were forgotten in the crowd. The more enlightened, however, such as Simeon, Anna, and others, knew of them.

But when Jesus appeared and John bore witness to Him, the teaching of the Pharisees was so directly contradictory that, even if the signs of His coming had not been forgotten by them, they would certainly not have made them known. Herod's reign and the Roman yoke had so involved them in quarrels and intrigues that their taste for spiritual things was weakened. They did not esteem John's testimony, and they soon forgot him after he was beheaded. They cared little for the teaching and miracles of Jesus, and their ideas of the Prophets and the Messiah were altogether erroneous. It is not surprising, therefore, that they so shamefully treated Jesus, and put Him to death, that they disavowed His Resurrection, the wonderful signs that followed it, and even the fulfillment of His prophecy respecting the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor is it to be wondered at that they neglected the signs that heralded His advent, since He had not at that time either taught or wrought miracles. Were the blindness, the obduracy of these men not so incomprehensibly great, could it have lasted even to this day?

When I go over the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem of the present day, I frequently see under a certain ruined building a large vault, or many adjoining vaults, which are partly fallen in and filled with water. Standing in the midst of the water, which rises almost to a level with it, is a table. From the center of the table to the roof of the vault, rises a pillar around which are hung little coffers filled with rolls of writings. Under the table also I saw rolls lying in the water. Perhaps these vaults were once burial places. They lie under Mount Calvary. I think the ruined building is the house wherein Pilate once dwelt, and the treasure will after some time be discovered.

13. John Promised to Zachary

I saw Zachary conversing with Elizabeth. He was telling her how sad he was because his turn to offer sacrifice in the Temple was drawing near, and how he dreaded the contempt that would there await him on account of his being childless. Zachary went twice a year to the Temple. He did not live at Hebron itself, but at a place called Juta about fifteen minutes' walk from Hebron. The ruins of former buildings still lay between the two places, leading one to fancy that they had once been connected. Many such ruins were to be found on the other side of Hebron, for the place was once as large as Jerusalem. At Hebron dwelt priests of a lower degree; in Juta, those of a higher rank. Zachary seemed to be the Superior of them all. He and Elizabeth were regarded with extraordinary veneration from the fact of both having descended in a direct line from the race of Aaron.

I saw Zachary with many people of this locality, going to a little property that he owned in the neighborhood of Juttah.¹ It consisted of a house, an orchard,

1. Juta.

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and a spring. I saw him there also with the Holy Family at the time of Mary's Visitation. At the period of which I am speaking, Zachary was teaching the people and praying with them. It seemed to be a preparation for a feast. He told them of his great dejection, and of his presentiment that something remarkable was going to happen to him.

Again I saw Zachary with the same people going to Jerusalem, where he had to wait four days before his turn to sacrifice came round. Until that time, he prayed in the forepart of the Temple. At last when his turn came, he went into the sanctuary outside the entrance to the Holy of Holies. The roof over the altar of incense was opened so that the sky could be seen. The priest offering sacrifice was not visible to those outside. A partition concealed him, but the smoke of the incense could be seen rising. I think Zachary told the other priests that he must be left alone, for I saw them leaving the sanctuary. Zachary went into the Holy of Holies where it was dark. It appeared to me that he took the Tables of the Law out of the Ark of the Covenant, and laid them upon the golden altar of incense. When he kindled the incense, I saw to the right of the altar a light coming down on him and in it a luminous figure. Zachary, frightened, stepped back and sank, as if in ecstasy, at the right side of the altar. The angel raised him up and spoke some words to him. Zachary replied. Then I saw something like a ladder let down from Heaven, and two angels ascending and descending to him. One took something from him; but the other—after Zachary had opened his garment—inserted a shining little body in his side. Zachary had become dumb. I saw him before leaving the Holy of Holies, writing on a little tablet that lay there. This tablet he sent at once to Elizabeth, who likewise had had a vision at that same hour.

I saw that the people outside were troubled and anxious on account of Zachary's remaining so long

John Promised to Zachary

in the sanctuary. They were even moving toward the door to open it, when Zachary replaced the Tables in the Ark and came forth. The crowd questioned him about his long stay in the sanctuary. He tried to answer,

but could not. He signified to them by signs that he had become dumb, and went away. Zachary was a tall and exceedingly majestic old man.

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THE MOST HOLY INCARNATION

1. Mary Espoused to St. Joseph

Joseph was the third of six brothers. His parents dwelt in a large mansion outside of Bethlehem. It was the ancient birthplace of David, but in Joseph's time only the principal walls were in existence. His father's name was Jacob. In front of the house was a large courtyard, or garden. In it was a stone spring house built over a spring whose waters gushed forth out of faucets, each of which represented some animal's head. The garden was enclosed by walls and surrounded by covered walks of trees and shrubbery.

The lower story of the dwelling had a door, but no windows. In the upper story there were circular openings, over which ran around the whole top of the house a broad gallery with four little pavilions capped by cupolas. From these cupolas, a view far into the surrounding country was afforded. David's palace in Jerusalem was provided with similar towers and cupolas. It was out of one of them that he saw Bethsabee. Above the center of the flat roof arose another smaller story, likewise crowned by a tower and cupola.

Joseph and his brothers occupied that last story with an aged Jew, their preceptor. The latter occupied the highest room in the story, while the brothers slept in one chamber, their sleeping places separated from one another by mats, which in the daytime were rolled up against the walls. I have seen them playing up there, each in his own separate space. They had toys shaped like animals, like little pugs. Their preceptor gave them all sorts of strange instructions that I could not understand. He laid sticks on the ground in various figures and stood the

boys in them. The latter stepped into other figures which they had formed by rearranging the sticks. They laid sticks also in various positions, as if for measurement. I saw too the father and mother of the boys. They did not appear to trouble themselves much about their children, for they paid very little attention to them. They, the parents, appeared to me to be neither good nor bad.

Joseph was perhaps eight years old. He was very different from his brothers, very talented, and he learned quickly; but he was simple in his tastes, gentle, pious, and unambitious. The other boys used to play him all kinds of tricks and knock him around at will. They had little enclosed gardens, at whose entrance there stood on pillars covered images like swaddled infants. I often saw similar figures on the curtains of oratories, those of Anne and the Blessed Virgin, for instance. The only difference was that Mary's picture held in its arms a chalice above which something arose. In Joseph's parental home these images were like swathed infants with round faces environed by rays of light. There were many such pictures in Jerusalem, especially in the olden times, and also among the decorations of the Temple. I have seen them in Egypt also; and among the idols that Rachel purloined from her father, were similar figures though smaller. Many of the Jews had swathed puppets like them lying in little chests and baskets. They were intended to represent the child Moses in his little basket, and the swathing signified the binding power of the Law. When gazing at these figures, I used to think: The Jews honored the little image of the child Moses, but we have the images of the Child Jesus.

In the boys' little gardens grew bushes, small trees, and plants. I saw that his brothers often slyly trod down and tore up the plants in Joseph's little garden. They always treated him roughly, but he bore all patiently. Sometimes, when kneeling in prayer in

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the colonnade that ran around the courtyard, his face turned to the wall, his brothers would push him over. Once I saw one of them, when Joseph was thus praying, kick him in the back; but Joseph appeared not to notice it. The other repeated his blows, until at last Joseph fell to the ground. Then I saw that he had been absorbed in God. But he did not revenge himself; he merely turned away quietly and sought another secluded spot.

Outside and adjoining the garden wall, were some small, low dwellings. In them dwelt two elderly, veiled females, as is often the case near the schools. They were servants. I saw them carrying water into the house. The domestic arrangements were similar to those of Joachim and Anne's house, the beds rolled up and wicker partitions before them. I often saw Joseph's brothers talking with the servant maids and helping them in their work; but Joseph never interchanged words with them; he was always very reserved. I think there were also some daughters in the family.

Joseph's parents were not well-satisfied with him. They would have wished him, on account of his talents, to fit himself for a position in the world. But he was too unworldly for such aims, he had no desire whatever to shine. He may have been about twelve years old when I often saw him beyond Bethlehem opposite the Crib Cave, praying with some very pious, old, Jewish women. They had an oratory hidden in a vault. I do not know whether these women were relatives of Joseph or not; I think that they were connected with Anne. Joseph often went to them in his troubles and shared their devotions. Sometimes he dwelt in their neighborhood with a master carpenter, to whom he lent a helping hand. The carpenter taught him his trade, and Joseph found his geometry of use. The hostility of his brothers at last went so far that, when eighteen, Joseph fled from his father's house by night. A friend, who lived outside

of Bethlehem, had brought him clothes in which to make his escape. I saw him in Lebona carrying on carpentry. He worked for his living in a very poor family. The man supported himself by making such rough wicker partitions as those Joseph knew how to put together. The latter humbly assisted the family as far as he could. I saw him gathering wood and carrying it to the house. His parents, in the meantime, believed that he had been kidnapped; but his brothers discovered him, and then he was again persecuted. Joseph, however, would not leave the poor people nor desist from the humble occupation of which his family was ashamed. I saw him afterward in another place (Thanach). There he did better work for a well-to-do family. Though a small place, it had a synagogue. Joseph lived very piously and humbly, loved and esteemed by all. At last he worked for a man in Tiberias, at which place he lived alone near the water.

Joseph's parents were long since dead, and his brothers scattered; only two of them still dwelt in Bethlehem. The paternal mansion had passed into other hands, and the whole family had rapidly declined. Joseph was deeply pious; he prayed much for the coming of the Messiah. I noticed, too, his great reserve in the presence of females. Shortly before his call to Jerusalem for his espousals with Mary, he entertained the idea of fitting up a more secluded oratory in his dwelling. But an angel appeared to him in prayer, and told him not to do it; that, as in ancient times, the Patriarch Joseph became by God's appointment the administrator of the Egyptian granaries, so now to him was the granary of Redemption to be wedded. In his humility Joseph could not comprehend the meaning of this and so he betook himself to prayer. At last he was summoned to Jerusalem to be espoused to the Blessed Virgin.

There were seven other virgins who were with Mary to be dismissed from the Temple and given in marriage.

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On this account St. Anne went to Jerusalem to be with Mary, who grieved at the thought of leaving the Temple. But she was told that she must be married. I saw one of the distinguished old priests, who was no longer able to walk, borne into the Holy of Holies. An incense offering was enkindled. The priest prayed sitting before a roll of writings, and in vision his hand was placed upon that verse in the Prophet Isaias (*Is. 11:1*) in which it is written that there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse and a flower shall rise up out of his root. Thereupon I saw that all the unmarried men in the country of the House of David were summoned to the Temple. Many of them made their appearance in holiday attire, and Mary was conducted to their presence. I saw one among them, a very pious youth from the region of Bethlehem, who had always ardently prayed to be allowed to minister to the advent of the Messiah. Great was his desire to wed Mary. But Mary wept; she wished not to take a husband. Then the high priest gave to each of the suitors a branch which was to be held in the hand during the offering of prayer and sacrifice. After that, all the branches were laid in the Holy of Holies with the understanding that he whose branch should blossom, was to be Mary's husband. Now when that youth who so ardently desired to wed Mary found that this branch, along with all the others, had failed to blossom, he retired to a hall outside the Temple and, with arms raised to God, wept bitterly. The other suitors left the Temple, and that youth hurried to Mount Carmel where, since the days of Elias, hermits had dwelt. He took up his abode on the mount, and there spent his days in prayer for the coming of the Messiah.

I saw the priests, after this, hunting through different rolls of writing in their search for another descendant of the House of David, one that had not presented himself among the suitors for Mary's hand. And there they found that, among the six brothers

of Bethlehem, one was unknown and ignored. They sought him out and so discovered Joseph's retreat, six miles from Jerusalem, near Samaria. It was a small place on a little river. There Joseph dwelt alone in a humble house near the water, and carried on the trade of a carpenter under another master. He was told to go up to the Temple. He went, accordingly, arrayed in his best. A branch was given him. As he was about to lay it upon the altar, it blossomed on top into a white flower like a lily. At the same time I saw a light like the Holy Spirit hovering over him. He was then led to Mary, who was in her chamber, and she accepted him as her spouse.

The espousals took place, I think, upon our 23rd of January. They were celebrated in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion in a house often used for such feasts. The seven virgins that were to leave the Temple with Mary, had already departed. They were recalled to accompany Mary on her festal journey to Nazareth, where Anne had already prepared her little home. The marriage feast lasted seven or eight days. The women and the virgins, companions of Mary in the Temple, were present, also many relatives of Joachim and Anne, and two daughters from Gophna. Many lambs were slaughtered and offered in sacrifice.

I have had a clear vision of Mary in her bridal dress. She wore a colored, woolen under dress without sleeves, her arms encircled by white, woolen fillets. On the breast and as high as the neck, lay a white collar ornamented with jewels, pearls, etc. Then came a kind of gown open in front, wide like a mantle from top to bottom, and with flowing sleeves. This gown was blue, embroidered with large red, white, and yellow roses and green leaves, something like the ancient vestments worn at Mass. It fastened around the neck on the white collar, and the lower border was edged with fringes and tassels. Over this was a kind of scapular of white- and gold-flowered silk, set over the breast with pearls and shining

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stones. It lay upon the front opening of the dress, and reached to the edge of the same; it was about one-half an ell wide and was fringed with tassels and balls. A corresponding strip hung down the back, while shorter and narrower ones fell over the shoulders and arms. These lappets were caught under the arms from front to back with the gold cords, or delicate chains, with which the broad upper piece of the bodice was fastened, as also the breast piece that was placed over the upper body. By this arrangement, the flowered stuff of the dress was puffed out between the cords. The wide sleeves were tightly fastened in the middle of the upper and the lower arm by buckles, puffing out around the shoulders, the elbows, and the wrists.

Over this costume fell a long sky-blue mantle. It was fastened at the neck by an ornament, and over it was a white ruffle seemingly of feathers or silk dots. The mantle fell back from the shoulders, forming a large fold on the sides, and hung behind in a pointed train. It was embroidered around the edge in flowers of gold.

Mary's hair was arranged with such skill as is difficult to describe. It was parted on top of the head and divided into numerous fine strands, which were caught together with pearls and white silk. It formed a large net that fell over the shoulders and down the back to the middle of the mantle. It looked like a web. The ends of the hair were rolled in, and the whole net edged with fringe and pearls.

On her head was placed, first a wreath of white raw silk or wool, closing on top with three bands of the same meeting in a tuft. On this rested a crown about the breadth of one's hand, set with many colored jewels. Three pieces arose from the circlet and met together in the center, where they were surmounted by a ball.

In her left hand Mary carried a little garland of red and white roses made of silk, and in the right

a beautiful candlestick covered with gold. It had no foot, but was furnished like a scepter with knobs above and below the point at which it was to be grasped by the hand. The stem began to swell out in the middle and ended in a little dish upon which burned a white flame.

On her feet she wore heavy sandals about two fingers in thickness under which, before and behind, was a support like a heel. They were green, and gave the foot the appearance of standing upon sods. Two straps, white and gold, went over the foot and held them in their place.

The virgins at the Temple arranged Mary's skillfully woven hairnet. I saw them thus engaged. There were many busied with it, and the work went more swiftly than one could imagine.

Anne brought all the beautiful clothes, but Mary was so modest that it was only with reluctance that she allowed herself to be arrayed in them.

After the nuptial ceremony, her braided hair was wound around her head, a milk-white veil reaching up to the elbows thrown over her, and the crown placed upon it.

The Blessed Virgin had auburn hair, dark eyebrows, fine and arched, a very high forehead, large downcast eyes with long, dark lashes, a straight nose, delicate and rather long, a lovely mouth around which played a most noble expression, and a pointed chin. She was of medium height, and she moved very gently and gravely, looking very bashful in her rich attire. After the marriage feast, she wore another dress. It was striped and less magnificent than the one described. I have a scrap of it among my relics. This striped dress she wore at Cana and on other holy occasions. She wore her wedding suit once again in the Temple.

The very wealthy among the Jews changed their dress three or four times during a marriage feast. Mary in her magnificent apparel presented an appearance

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somewhat similar to the richly adorned women of a much later period, the Empress Helena, for instance, and even Cunegundis herself. The usual clothing of the Jewish women enveloped them closely, giving them an appearance of being wrapped up; but Mary's wedding dress was very different; it was something on the Roman style.

Joseph wore a long, wide blue coat fastened from the breast down with loops and buttons. The wide sleeves were laced at the sides, a broad cuff turned up at the wrist, the inside provided, as it were, with pockets. Around the neck was something like a brown collar, over which lay a kind of stole, and upon the breast hung two white bands.

After the marriage, Joseph went to Bethlehem on some business, and Mary with twelve or fifteen women and maidens went to Anne's house near Nazareth. They made the journey on foot. When Joseph returned, I saw at Anne's house a feast at which, besides the usual household, there were about six guests and several children present. Cups were on the table. The Blessed Virgin wore a mantle embroidered with red, white, and blue flowers. Her face was covered with a transparent veil over which was a black one.

I afterward saw Joseph and Mary in the house of Nazareth. Joseph had a separate apartment in the front of the house, a three-cornered chamber this side of the kitchen. Both Mary and Joseph were timid and reserved in each other's presence. They were very quiet and prayerful.

Once I saw Anne making preparations to go to Nazareth. Under her arm she carried a bundle that contained some things for Mary. To reach Nazareth, which lay in front of a hill, she had to go over a plain and through a grove. Mary wept very much when Anne was leaving and accompanied her a part of the way. Joseph was alone in his apartment in the front of the house.

Mary and Joseph had, properly speaking, no regular housekeeping affairs; they received from Anne all that they needed. I saw Mary spinning and sewing too, but yet with wide stitches. The clothes then worn had not many seams and were entirely in strips. I saw her embroidering also, and with little white sticks knitting or working. The cooking she did was very simple and, while it was going on, the bread was baking in the ashes. They used sheep's milk, and of meat generally pigeons only.

2. The Holy House of Nazareth

The little house at Nazareth which Anne fitted up for Mary and Joseph, belonged to Anne. From her own dwelling, she could, unnoticed, reach it in about half an hour by a cross path. It lay not far from the gate. It had a small courtyard in front and nearby was a well, a couple of steps leading down to it. It was near a hill, but not built on it. A narrow path dug out of the hill separated it from the back of the house, in which there was one little window. It was darker on this side of the house than on the other. The back part was triangular and built on higher ground than the front. The foundations were cut in the rock; the upper part was a light masonry. Mary's sleeping compartment was in the back, and there it was that the angelic Annunciation took place. This chamber had a semicircular form, on account of the movable partitions placed around the walls and which were of coarser wickerwork than that ordinarily used for the light screens. The patterns in which these screens were woven were similar to wafers, and the colors used were designed to bring the figures out. Mary's sleeping place was on the side just behind a wicker screen. On the left was a little closet with a small table and stool. This was the Blessed Virgin's oratory.

This back room was separated from the rest of the house by a fireplace, which consisted of a graded wall

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from whose center over the slightly raised hearth, a chimney rose up to the roof and ended in a tube above it. Over the opening through which the tube projected was built a little roof. On top of the chimney, I saw in after years two little bells hanging. To the right and left of the chimney and opening into Mary's rooms were doors up to which three steps led. In the chimney wall were all kinds of nooks in which stood the little vessels that I still see at Loretto. Behind was a rafter of cedar wood, upon which the wall of the chimney rested. From this upright rafter ran a crossbeam to the center of the back wall, and into this there were others dovetailed from the two side walls. These beams were of a bluish cast with yellow ornaments. Between them one could see up through the roof, which was hung with large leaves and matting, and in three places, namely in the three corners, adorned with stars. The star in the middle corner was large like the morning star. Later on the ceiling was adorned with numerous stars. Over the horizontal rafter, which extended from the chimney to the back of the wall, was an opening in the center for the window, and under this was hung a lamp. There was a rafter under the chimney also. The roof was not high and pointed, but so level that one might walk around the edge. It was flat on top, and there rose the chimney with its tubes, protected by the little roof.

When after Joseph's death the Blessed Virgin removed to the neighborhood of Capharnaum, the Holy House was left beautifully adorned like a sacred shrine. Mary often went from Capharnaum to visit the scene of the Incarnation and to pray there. Peter and John, whenever they went to Palestine, visited the House of Nazareth and celebrated Mass in it. An altar was erected where the fireplace used to be. The little cupboard once used by Mary was placed as a tabernacle upon the altar.

I have often in vision witnessed the transporting

of the Holy House to Loretto. For a long time, I could not believe it, and yet I continued to see it. I saw the Holy House borne over the sea by seven angels. It had no foundation, but there was under it a shining surface of light. On either side was something like a handle. Three angels carried it on one side and three on the other; the seventh hovered in front of it, a long train of light after him.

I remember that it was the back of the house, the part that contained the fireplace, the altar of the Apostles, and the little window, that was transported to Europe. It seems to me when I recall it that the rest of the building was in some danger of falling. I see in Loretto the Crucifix also that the Blessed Virgin had when in Ephesus. It was formed of different kinds of wood. Later on, it came into the possession of the Apostles. Many miracles take place before that Crucifix.

The wall of the Holy House of Loretto is entirely the original one. Even the rafter under the chimney is still in its place. The miraculous picture of the Mother of God stands on the altar of the Apostles.

3. Mary's Annunciation

On the day upon which the Church celebrates the feast, I had a vision of Mary's Annunciation.

I saw the Blessed Virgin a short time after her marriage in the house of Nazareth. Joseph was not there. He was at that moment journeying with two beasts of burden on the road to Tiberias, whither he was going to get his tools. But Anne was in the house with her maid and two of the virgins who had been with Mary in the Temple. Everything in the house had been newly arranged by Anne. Toward evening, they all prayed standing around a circular stool from which they afterward ate vegetables that had been served. Anne seemed to be very busy about the household affairs, and for a time she moved around here

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and there, while the Blessed Virgin ascended the steps to her room. There she put on a long, white, woolen garment, such as it was customary to wear during prayer, a girdle around her waist, and a yellowish-white veil over her head. The maid entered, lighted the branched lamp, and retired. Mary drew out a little, low table, which stood folded by the wall, and placed it in the center of the room. It had a semicircular leaf, which could be raised on a movable support so that when ready for use the little table stood on three legs. Mary spread upon it a red and then a white, transparent cover, which hung down on the side opposite the leaf. It was fringed at the end and embroidered in the center. A white cover was spread on the rounded edge. When the little table was prepared, Mary laid a small, round cushion before it and, resting both hands on the leaf, she gently sank on her knees, her back turned to her couch, the door of the chamber to her right. The floor was carpeted. Mary lowered her veil over her face, and folded her hands, but not the fingers, upon her breast. I saw her praying for a long time with intense fervor. She prayed for Redemption, for the promised King, and that her own supplications might have some influence upon His coming. She knelt long, as if in ecstasy, her face raised to Heaven; then she drooped her head upon her breast and thus continued her prayer. And now she glanced to the right and beheld a radiant youth with flowing, yellow hair. It was the archangel Gabriel. His feet did not touch the ground. In an oblique line and surrounded by an effulgence of light and glory, he came floating down to Mary. The lamp grew dim, for the whole room was lighted up by the glory.

The angel, with hands gently raised before his breast, spoke to Mary. I saw the words like letters of glittering light issuing from his lips. Mary replied, but without looking up. Then the angel again spoke and Mary, as if in obedience to his command, raised

her veil a little, glanced at him, and said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done unto me according to thy word!" I saw her now in deeper ecstasy. The ceiling of the room vanished, and over the house appeared a luminous cloud with a pathway of light leading up from it to the opened heavens. Far up in the source of this light, I beheld a vision of the Most Holy Trinity. It was like a triangle of glory, and I thought that I saw therein the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

As Mary uttered the words: "May it be done unto me according to thy word!" I saw an apparition of the Holy Ghost. The countenance was human and the whole apparition environed by dazzling splendor, as if surrounded by wings. From the breast and hands, I saw issuing three streams of light. They penetrated the right side of the Blessed Virgin and united into one under her heart. At that instant Mary became perfectly transparent and luminous. It was as if opacity disappeared like darkness before that flood of light.

While the angel and with him the streams of glory vanished, I saw down the path of light that led up to Heaven, showers of half-blown roses and tiny green leaves falling upon Mary. She, entirely absorbed in self, saw in herself the Incarnate Son of God, a tiny, human form of light with all the members, even to the little fingers perfect. It was about midnight that I saw this mystery.

Some time elapsed, and then Anne and the other women entered Mary's room, but when they beheld her in ecstasy they immediately withdrew. The Blessed Virgin then arose, stepped to the little altar on the wall, let down the picture of a swathed child that was rolled above it, and prayed standing under the lamp before it. Only toward morning did she lie down. Mary was at this time a little over fourteen years old.

An intuitive knowledge of what had taken place was conferred upon Anne. Mary knew that she had conceived the Redeemer, yes, her interior lay open

before her, and so she already understood that her Son's kingdom should be a supernatural one, and that the House of Jacob, the Church, would be the reunion of regenerate mankind. She knew that the Redeemer would be the King of His people, that He would purify them and render them victorious; but that in order to redeem them He must suffer and die.

It was explained to me likewise why the Redeemer remained nine months in His mother's womb, why He was born a little child and not a perfect man like Adam, and why also He did not take the beauty of Adam in Paradise. The Incarnate Son of God willed to be conceived and born that conception and birth, rendered so very unholy by the Fall, might again become holy. Mary was His Mother, and He did not come sooner because Mary was the first and the only woman conceived without sin. Jesus when put to death was thirty-three years, four months, and two weeks old.

I thought all the while: Here in Nazareth, things are different from what they are in Jerusalem. There the women dare not set foot in the Temple, but here in this church at Nazareth, a virgin is herself the Temple and the Most Holy rests in her.

4. Mary's Visitation

Mary's Annunciation took place before Joseph's return. He had not yet settled at Nazareth when, with Mary, he started on the journey to Hebron. After the Conception of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin experienced a great desire to visit her cousin Elizabeth. I saw her travelling with Joseph toward the south. Once I saw her passing the night in a hut made of wickerwork and which was all overrun with vines and beautiful white blossoms. From that point to Zachary's house, it was a journey of about twelve hours. Near Jerusalem they turned off to the north in order to take a more solitary route. They made the circuit of a little city two leagues from Emmaus,

and took a road traversed by Jesus in after years. Although it was a long journey, they made it very quickly. They now had to cross two hills. I saw them resting between them, eating some bread and refreshing themselves with some balsam drops which they had collected on the way, and which they mingled with their drinking water. The hill was formed of overhanging rocks and caves. The valleys were very fertile. I remarked on the road one particular flower. It had fine green leaves and a cluster of nine tiny bell-shaped blossoms, white, lightly flushed with red.

Mary wore a brown, woolen under dress over which was a gray one with a girdle, and a yellowish covering on her head. Joseph carried in a bundle a long brownish garment with a cowl, and bands in front. It was one that Mary was accustomed to wear whenever she went either to the Temple or the synagogue.

Zachary's house stood upon a solitary hill, and other dwellings were scattered around. Not far from it, a tolerably large brook flowed down from the mountain.

Elizabeth had learned in vision that one of her race was to give birth to the Messiah; she had dwelt in thought upon Mary, had very greatly desired to see her, and had indeed beheld her journeying to Hebron. In a little room, to the right of the entrance to the house, she placed seats, and here she tarried, often looking long and anxiously down the road, in the hope of catching the first glimpse of Mary. When Zachary was returning from the Passover, I saw Elizabeth, urged by an impetuous desire, hurrying from the house and going a considerable distance on the road to Jerusalem. When Zachary met her, he was alarmed to find her so far from home and that, too, in her present condition. But she told him of her anxiety and that she could not help thinking that her cousin Mary was coming from Nazareth to see her. Zachary, however, thought it improbable that the newly married couple would at that time undertake

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so great a journey. On the following day, I saw Elizabeth taking the road again under the influence of the same impression, and now I saw the Holy Family coming to meet her.

Elizabeth was advanced in years. She was tall, her face small and delicate, and she wore something wrapped around her head. She was acquainted with Mary only by hearsay. As soon as the Blessed Virgin saw Elizabeth, she knew her and hurried on to meet her, while Joseph purposely held back. Mary had already reached the houses in the neighborhood of Zachary's home. Their occupants were enraptured at her beauty, and filled with such reverence by her demeanor that they stood back modestly. When the cousins met, they saluted each other joyfully with outstretched hands. I saw a light in Mary and issuing from her a ray which entered into Elizabeth, who thereby became wonderfully agitated. They did not pause long in sight of the beholders, but arm in arm passed up the courtyard to the door of the house, where Elizabeth once more bade Mary welcome. Joseph went around to the side of the house and into an open hall where sat Zachary. He respectfully saluted the aged priest, who responded in writing on his tablet.

Mary and Elizabeth entered the room in which was the fireplace. Here they embraced, clasping each other in their arms and pressing cheek to cheek. I saw light streaming down between them. Then it was that Elizabeth, becoming interiorly inflamed, stepped back with uplifted hands, and exclaimed, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.

"And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?

"For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

"And blessed art thou that hast believed, because

those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."

At these last words, Elizabeth took Mary into the little room prepared for her that she might sit down and rest. It was only a few steps from where they then were. Mary released her hold upon Elizabeth's arm, crossed her hands on her breast, and divinely inspired, uttered her canticle of thanksgiving: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.

"Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is His name.

"And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.

"He hath showed might in His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

"He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich He hath sent empty away.

"He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of His mercy.

"As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to His seed forever."

I saw Elizabeth, moved by similar emotion, reciting the whole canticle with Mary. Then they seated themselves on low seats. A small goblet was on the little table. And, oh, I was so happy! I sat nearby and prayed with them the whole time.

I saw Joseph and Zachary still together. They were conversing by means

of the tablet, and always about the coming of the Messiah. Zachary was a tall, handsome old man clothed like a priest. He and Joseph sat together at the side of the house that opened on the garden, in which Mary and Elizabeth were now sitting on a rug under a high, spreading tree. Behind

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the tree was a fountain from which gushed water when a spigot was pressed. I saw grass and flowers around, and trees bearing little, yellow plums. Mary and Elizabeth were eating rolls and small fruits out of Joseph's travelling pouch. What touching simplicity and moderation! Two maids and two men servants were in the house. They prepared a table under the tree. Joseph and Zachary came out and ate something. Joseph wanted to return home at once, but they persuaded him to stay eight days. He knew not of Mary's conception. The women were silent on that subject. They had a secret understanding together about their interior sentiments.

When all, Mary and Elizabeth, Joseph and Zachary, were together, they prayed making use of a kind of litany. I saw a cross appear in their midst, and still there was no cross at that time. Yes, it was as if two crosses visited each other.

In the evening they all sat together again in the garden near a lamp under the tree. A cover like a tent was stretched under the tree, and low stools with backs stood around. After that I saw Joseph and Zachary going to an oratory, while Mary and Elizabeth retired to their little chamber. They were inflamed with divine ardor, and together they recited the Magnificat. The Blessed Virgin wore a transparent white veil which she lowered when speaking to men.

Zachary took Joseph on the following day to another garden at some distance from the house. He was in all things most exact and methodical. This second garden was set out with beautiful bushes and trees full of fruit. In the center was an avenue of trees, and at the end of it a small house whose entrance was on the side. Above were openings with slides like windows. A woven couch filled with moss or some other fine plant, stood in one room in which there were also two white figures as large as children. I have no clear knowledge of how they came there nor

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what they signified, but they appeared to me to be very like Zachary and Elizabeth, only much younger.

I saw Mary and Elizabeth much together. Mary helped with everything around the house and prepared all kinds of necessities for the child. Both she and Elizabeth knit on a large coverlet for the latter, and they worked also for the poor.

During Mary's absence, Anne frequently sent her maid to see after Mary's house at Nazareth, and once I saw her there herself.

I saw Zachary and Joseph spending the night of the next day in the garden at some distance from the house. They slept part of the time in the little summer house, and prayed during the other part in the open air. They returned quite early in the morning to the house where Mary and Elizabeth had passed the night. Mary and Elizabeth recited together morning and evening the hymn of thanksgiving, the Magnificat, which Mary had received from the Holy Ghost at the salutation of Elizabeth. During its recital they stood opposite each other against the wall, as if in choir, their hands crossed upon their breast, the black veil of each covering her face. At the second part, which refers to God's promise, I saw the previous history of the Most Holy Incarnation and the mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, from Abraham down to Mary. I saw Abraham sacrificing Isaac, also the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant, which Moses received on the night before the departure from Egypt, and by which he was enabled to escape and conquer. I recognized its connection with the holy Incarnation, and it seemed to me as if this Mystery were now fulfilled or living in Mary. I saw also the Prophet Isaias and his prophecy of the Virgin, and from him to Mary visions of the approach of the Most Blessed Sacrament. I still remember that I heard the words: "From father to father down to Mary, there are more than fourteen generations." I saw also Mary's blood taking its rise

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in her ancestors and flowing nearer and nearer to the Incarnation. I have no words to describe this clearly. I can say only that I saw, sometimes here, sometimes there, the people of different races. There seemed to issue from them a beam of light which always terminated in Mary as she appeared at that moment with Elizabeth. I saw this beam issuing first from the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant and ending in Mary. Then I saw Abraham and from him a ray, which again ended in Mary, etc. Abraham must have dwelt quite near to Mary's abode at that time; for during the Magnificat I saw that the beam which proceeded from him came from no great distance, while those from persons nearer to the Mother of God in point of time seemed to come from afar. Their rays were as fine, as clear as those of the sun when they shine through a narrow opening. In such a beam, I beheld Mary's blood glancing red and bright, and it was said to me: "Behold, as pure as this red light must the blood of that Virgin be from whom the Son of God will become incarnate."

Once I saw Mary and Elizabeth going in the evening to Zachary's country place. They took with them rolls and fruit in little baskets, for they intended to stay overnight. Joseph and Zachary followed them later. I saw Mary going to meet them as they entered. Zachary had brought his little tablet, but it was too dark for writing. I saw Mary speaking to him. She was telling him that he should speak on that night. He laid aside his tablet and conversed orally with Joseph. I saw all this to my own great astonishment. Then my guide said to me: "Why, what is that?" and he showed me a vision of St. Goar, who hung his mantle on the sunbeams as on a hook. I received then the instruction that lively, childlike confidence makes all things real and substantial. These two expressions gave me great interior light upon all kinds of miracles, but I cannot explain it.

They, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, and Zachary, all

spent the night in the garden. They sat or walked two by two, prayed now and then, or retired into the little summer house to rest. I heard them say that Joseph would return home on the evening of the Sabbath, and that Zachary would go with him as far as Jerusalem. The moon shone bright in a starry sky. It was indescribably calm and lovely near those holy souls.

Once also I had a peep into Mary's little chamber. It was night, and she was at rest. She was lying on her side with one hand under her head. Over her brown under-dress she wound from head to foot a strip of white, woolen stuff about an ell in width. When preparing for rest, she took one end of this strip under her arm and wound it tightly around her head and the upper part of her person, then down to the feet and up again; so that she was entirely enveloped, and could not take a long step. She did this near the couch, at the head of which was a little roll of something for a pillow. The arms from the elbow down were left free, and the veiling of the head opened on the breast.

I often saw under Mary's heart a glory in whose center burned an indescribably clear little flame, and over Elizabeth's womb a similar glory, but the light in it was not so clear.

When the Sabbath began, I saw in Zachary's house, in a room that I had not before seen, lamps lighted and the Sabbath celebrated. Zachary, Joseph, and about six other men from the neighborhood were standing and praying under a lamp and around a little chest upon which lay rolls of writing. They had on their heads something like a small veil. They did not make so many distorted movements of the body as do the latter-day Jews, although like them they frequently bowed the head and raised the arms.

Mary, Elizabeth, and two other women stood apart in a grated partition from which they could see into the oratory. They were entirely enveloped, their

prayer mantles over their heads.

Zachary wore his festive robes the whole of the Sabbath. They consisted of a long, white garment with rather narrow sleeves. He was girdled with a broad cincture, wound many times around him. On it were letters, and from it hung straps. This garment was provided with a cowl, which hung in plaits from the head down the back like a folded veil. When he moved or performed any action, he threw this garment rolled together with the ends of the girdle up over one shoulder, and stuck it into the girdle under his arm. His lower limbs were loosely bound, and the strip enveloping them fastened by the straps that kept the soles in place upon his naked feet. He showed his priestly mantle to Joseph. It was sleeveless, wide and heavy and very beautiful, flashing with white and purple intermixed. It was closed on the breast with three jeweled clasps.

When the Sabbath was over, I saw them eating again for the first time. They took their repast together under the trees in the garden near the house. They ate green leaves previously dipped into something, and sucked little bunches of herbs which too had been soaked. There were little bowls of small fruits on the table and other dishes, from which they partook of something with brown, transparent spatulas. It may have been honey that they were eating with horn spatulas. There were also little rolls, and I saw them eating them.

After the meal, Joseph accompanied by Zachary started on his journey home. The night was calm, the moon shining, and the sky studded with stars. Before parting, all prayed separately. Joseph took with him his little bundle in which were a few rolls and a small jug of something. Both the travelers had staves; but Joseph's was hooked on top, while Zachary's was long and ended in a knob. Both had travelling mantles which they wore over their head. Before starting, they embraced Mary and Elizabeth,

alternately pressing them to their heart. But I saw no kissing at that time. The parting was calm and cheerful. The two women accompanied them a short distance, and then the travelers proceeded alone. The night was unspeakably lovely.

Mary and Elizabeth now returned to the house and went into Mary's chamber. A lamp was burning upon a bracket on the wall, as was usual while Mary slept or prayed. The two women stood facing each other, and recited the Magnificat. They spent the whole night in prayer, for what reason I cannot now say. Through the day I saw Mary busy with all kinds of work, weaving covers, for instance.

I saw Joseph and Zachary still on the road. They spent the night under a shed. They took very circuitous roads and, I think, visited many people, for they were three days on their journey.

Again I saw Joseph at Nazareth. Anne's maid took charge of the house for him, going to and fro between the two houses. With this exception, Joseph was entirely alone.

I also saw Zachary returning home, and I saw Mary and Elizabeth reciting as usual the Magnificat, and doing all kinds of work. Toward evening, they used to walk in the garden. There was a well in it, a rare occurrence in this part of the country; therefore travelers always took with them in a little jug some kind of juice to drink. Sometimes also, and generally toward evening when it grew cool, Mary and Elizabeth walked some distance from the house, for it stood alone in the midst of fields. They usually retired about nine o'clock, and always rose again before the sun.

The Blessed Virgin remained with Elizabeth three months, until after the birth of John, but she returned to Nazareth before his circumcision. Joseph went to meet her halfway on the journey, and for the first time noticed that she was pregnant. But he gave no sign of his knowledge, and struggled with his doubts.

Mary, who had feared this, was silent and preoccupied, thus increasing his uneasiness. When arrived in Nazareth, Mary went to the parents of the deacon Parmenas and remained some days with them, Joseph's anxiety had meanwhile increased to such a degree that, when Mary returned home, he determined to flee from the house. Then the angel appeared to him and consoled him.

5. Feast Pictures

I saw a wonderful and almost indescribable vision of a feast. I saw a church that looked like a slender, delicate, octangular fruit, the roots of whose stem touched the earth over a bubbling fountain. The stem was not high, one could just see between the church and the earth. The entrance was over the spring which bubbled and bubbled, casting out something white like earth or sand, and rendering all around green and fruitful. There were no roots over the spring in front of the church. The center of the interior was like the capsule in an apple, the cells formed of many delicate white threads. In these cells were little organs like the kernels of an apple. Through an opening in the floor, one could look straight down into the bubbling spring. I saw some kernels that looked withered and decayed, falling into it. But while I gazed, the fruit seemed to be developing more and more into a church; and the capsule at last appeared something like a piece of machinery, like a loose artificial nosegay in the center of it. And now I saw the Blessed Virgin and Elizabeth standing on that nosegay and looking again like two tabernacles, the one the tabernacle of a saint, the other that of the Most Holy. The two blessed women turned toward each other and offered mutual felicitations. Then there issued from them two figures, Jesus and John. John, the larger of the two, lay coiled on the earth, his head in his lap; but Jesus was like a tiny child

formed of light, just as I so often see Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Upright and hovering, He moved toward John and passed over him like a white vapor as he lay there with his face upon the earth. The reflection from the snowy vapor glanced through the opening in the floor down into the spring, and by it was swallowed up. Then Jesus raised the little John and embraced him, after which each returned to the womb of his mother, who meantime had been singing the Magnificat.

I saw also during that singing, Joseph and Zachary issuing from the walls on opposite sides of the church and followed by an ever-increasing flow of people, while the whole building continued unfolding, as it were, taking more and more the appearance of a church and the occasion that of a sacred festival. Vines with luxuriant foliage were growing around the church, and they became so dense that they had to be trimmed.

The church now rested on the earth. In it was an altar, and through an opening over the bubbling spring arose a baptismal font. Many people entered by the door, and there was at last a grand and perfect festival. All that took place therein, both in form and in action, was a silent growth. I cannot relate all; words fail me.

On John's feast, I had another vision of a festival. The octangular church was transparent, as if formed of crystal or jets of water. In the center was a well spring above which arose a little tower. I saw John standing by it and baptizing. The vision changed. Out of the spring grew a flower stalk, around which arose eight pillars supporting a pyramidal crown. Upon the crown stood the grandparents of Anne, Elizabeth, and Joseph; a little distant from the main stem were Mary and Joseph with the parents of the latter and those of Zachary. Up on the central stem stood John. A voice seemed to proceed from him, and I saw nations and kings entering the church and

receiving the Blessed Eucharist from the hands of a Bishop. I heard John saying that their happiness was greater than his.¹

6. The Blessed Virgin's Preparations for the Birth of Christ. Journey to Bethlehem

I saw the Blessed Virgin for many days with Anne, while Joseph remained alone in Nazareth, one of Anne's maids taking charge of the house for him. They, Mary and Joseph, received their principal support from Anne's house as long as she lived. I saw the Blessed Virgin near Anne sewing and embroidering bands and tapestry. They seemed to be very busy in the house. Joachim must long since have been dead, for I saw Anne's second husband there and a little girl of from six to seven years old. She was helping Mary and being taught by her. If not a daughter of Anne, it must have been one of Mary Cleophas's children also called Mary.

I saw Mary sitting in a room with other women and preparing covers large and small. Some were embroidered with gold and silver. There was one large coverlet in a box in the midst of the women, at which all were working, knitting with two little wooden needles and balls of colored wool. Anne was very busy. She went around from one to another, receiving and giving wool. All expected Mary to be delivered in Anne's house, and these covers and other things were being prepared partly for the birth of the Child and partly as gifts for the poor. Everything was of the best, and all abundantly, and richly provided. They knew not that Mary would, of necessity, have to journey to Bethlehem.

Joseph was at that moment on his way to Jerusalem with cattle for sacrifice.

1. John never received the Blessed Sacrament.

I saw Joseph returned from Jerusalem. He had taken thither cattle for sacrifice, and had put up at the house before the Bethlehem gate. It was at this same inn that he and Mary stopped later on, before Mary's Purification. The keeper of the inn was an Essenian. Joseph went from there to Bethlehem, but did not visit his relatives. He was looking around after a place to build, also for some means of procuring lumber and tools, for in the spring after Mary's delivery, which he thought would take place in Nazareth, he intended to remove with her to Bethlehem, as he did not care for Nazareth. He wanted to get a place near the inn of the Essenian. From Bethlehem he went again to Jerusalem, to offer sacrifice. When he was returning from this journey to Jerusalem, and about midnight was crossing the field of Chimki, six hours from Nazareth, an angel appeared to him and said that he should set out at once with Mary for Bethlehem, as it was there that her Child was to be born. The angel told him, moreover, that he should provide himself with a few necessities, but no laces nor embroidered covers, and he mentioned all the other things he was to take. Joseph was very much surprised. He was told also that, besides the ass upon which Mary was to ride, he was to take with him a little she-ass of one year which had not yet foaled. This little animal they were to let run at large, and then follow the road it would take.

I saw Joseph and Mary in their house at Nazareth; Anne too was present. Joseph informed them of the commands he had received, and they began to prepare for the journey. Anne was very much troubled about it. The Blessed Virgin had had all along an interior admonition that she should bring forth her child in Bethlehem; but in her humility she had kept silence. She knew it, also, from the Prophecies. She had all the Prophecies referring to the birth of the Messiah in her little closet at Nazareth; she read them very often and prayed for their fulfillment. She

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had received them from her teachers at the Temple, and by the same holy women had been instructed upon them. Her prayer was always for the coming of the Messiah. She esteemed her happy of whom the Child should be born, and she desired to serve her as her lowest handmaid. In her humility, she had never conceived the thought that she herself was to be the one. From those Prophecies she knew that the Saviour would be born in Bethlehem, therefore she lovingly submitted to the Divine Will and began her journey. It was a very painful one for her, since at that season it was cold among the mountains. Mary had an inexpressible feeling that henceforth she must and could be only poor. She could possess no exterior goods, for she had all in herself. She knew that she was to be the Mother of the Son of God. She knew and she felt that, as by a woman sin had entered into the world, so now by a woman the Expiation was to be born. It was under the influence of this feeling that she had exclaimed: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" I understood, likewise, that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost about the hour of midnight, and about midnight should be born.

I saw Joseph and Mary with Anne, Mary Cleophas, and some servants silently setting out upon their journey. They started from Anne's. An ass bore a comfortable cross-seat for Mary and her baggage. On the field of Chimki, where the angel had appeared to Joseph, Anne had a pasture ground; and here the servants went to get the little she-ass of one year which Joseph had to take with him. She ran after the Holy Family. Anne, Mary Cleophas, and the servants now parted from Joseph and Mary after a touching leave-taking. I saw the two travelers going some distance further and putting up at a house that lay on very high ground. They were well received. I think the proprietor was the lease holder of a farm called the House of Chimki and to which the field belonged. From it one could see far into the

distance, yes, even to the mountains near Jerusalem.

I again saw the Holy Family in a very cold valley, through which they were making their way toward a mountain. The ground was covered with frost and snow. It was about four hours from the House of Chimki. Mary was suffering exceedingly from the cold. She halted near a pine tree, and exclaimed: "We must rest. I can go no farther." Joseph arranged a seat for her under the tree, in which he placed a light. I often saw that done at night by travelers in those parts. The Blessed Virgin prayed fervently, imploring God not to allow them to freeze; and at once so great a warmth passed into her that she stretched out her hands to St. Joseph that he might warm himself by them. She took some food to renew her strength. The little ass, their guide, came up with them here and stood still. The actions of the little animal were truly astonishing. On straight roads, between mountains, for instance, where they could not go astray, she was sometimes behind, sometimes far ahead of them; but where the road branched, she was sure to make her appearance and run on the right way. Whenever they reached a spot at which they should halt, the little creature stood still. Joseph here spoke to Mary of the good lodgings that he expected to find in Bethlehem. He told her that he knew the good people of an inn at which, for a moderate sum, they could get a comfortable room. It was better, he said, to pay a little than to depend upon free quarters. He praised Bethlehem in order to console and encourage her.

After that, I saw the Holy Family arrive at a large farmhouse, about two hours' distance from the pine tree. The woman was not at home, and the man refused St. Joseph admittance, telling him that he might go on further. On they went until they came to a shepherd's shed where they found the little ass, and where they too halted. There were some shepherds in it; but they soon vacated after showing themselves

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most friendly and supplying straw and faggots, or bundles of reeds for a fire. The shepherds then went to the house from which Mary and Joseph had been sent away. They mentioned having met them, and said: "What a beautiful, what an extraordinary woman! What an amiable, pious, benevolent man! What wonderful people those travelers are!" The man's wife had now returned home, and she scolded at their having been sent away. I saw her going to the shepherd's hut at which they had put up, but she was timid and dared not enter. This hut was on the north side of that mountain on whose southern declivity lay Samaria and Thebez. Toward the east of this region and on this side of the Jordan, Salem and Ainon are situated, and on the opposite side, Socoth. It was about twelve hours from Nazareth. The woman came again with her two children. She was quite friendly, and seemed to be very much touched by what she saw. The husband also came and begged pardon. After Mary and Joseph had refreshed themselves a little, he showed them to an inn about an hour further up the mountain.

The host, however, excused himself to Joseph, pleading the numbers already there. But when the Blessed Virgin entered and begged for shelter, the wife of the innkeeper, as also the innkeeper himself, changed their bearing toward them. The man at once arranged a shelter for them under a neighboring shed, and took charge of the ass. The little she-ass was not with them. She was running around the fields; for when not needed, she did not make her appearance. This inn was a tolerably fine one, and consisted of several houses. Although situated on the north side of the mountain, it was surrounded by orchards, pleasure gardens, and balsam trees. Mary and Joseph remained overnight and the whole of the next day, for it was the Sabbath.

On the Sabbath the hostess with her three children visited Mary, also the woman of that other house

with her two children. Mary talked to the little ones and instructed them. They had little rolls of parchment from which they read. I, too, made bold to speak confidently to Mary. She told me how extremely well it was with her in her present condition. She felt no weight. But sometimes, she experienced a sensation of being so immensely large internally and as if she were hovering in her own person. She felt that she encompassed God and man, and that He whom she encompassed carried her.

Joseph went out with the host to his fields. Both host and hostess had conceived great love for Mary; they sympathized with her condition. They pressed her to remain, and showed her a room which they would give her. But very early the next morning she started with Joseph on their journey. They went forward, a little more to the east, along the mountain and into a valley, increasing the distance between them and Samaria to which they seemed at first to be going. The temple upon Garizim was in sight. On the roof were numerous figures like lions or other animals, which shone with a white light in the sun.

The road led down into a plain, or the field of Sichem. After a journey of about six leagues, they came to a solitary farmhouse where they were made welcome. The man was an overseer of fields and orchards belonging to a neighboring city. It was warmer here and vegetation more luxuriant than at any place they had been, for it was the sunny side of the mountain, and that makes a great difference in Palestine at this season. The house was not exactly in the valley, but on the southern declivity of the mountain which stretches from Samaria to the east. The occupants belonged to those shepherds with whose daughters later on, the servants remaining behind from the caravan of the Three Kings had married. In after years also Jesus often tarried here and taught. Before departing, Joseph blessed the children of the family.

I saw him and Mary journeying over the plain beyond Sichem. The Blessed Virgin sometimes went on foot. They rested occasionally and refreshed themselves. They had with them little rolls and a cool, strengthening drink in nice little jugs, brown and shining like metal. The seat that Mary used on the ass was furnished with a pad on either side as a support for the limbs, which were thereby brought more into a sitting posture. The support was over the neck of the ass, and Mary sat sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left. Berries and other fruits were still hanging on the bushes and trees that were exposed to the sun, and these they gathered on the way. The first thing that Joseph always did on arriving at an inn, was to prepare a comfortable seat or couch for Mary; then he washed his feet, as did Mary also. Their ablutions were frequent.

It was quite dark one evening when they reached a lonely inn. Joseph knocked and begged for shelter, but the owner would not open the door. Joseph explained to him his position, telling him that his wife could go no farther. But the man was inflexible; he would not interrupt his own rest. And when Joseph told him that he would pay him, he received for answer: "This is not an inn, I will not have that knocking." The door remained closed. Mary and Joseph went on for a short distance and found a shed. He struck a light, and prepared a couch for Mary, she herself assisting him. He brought the ass in, and found some straw and fodder for it. Here they rested a few hours. I saw them departing early the next morning while it was still dark. They may now have been distant from their last halting place about six hours, about six and twenty from Nazareth, and ten from Jerusalem. The last house stood on level ground, but the road from Gabatha to Jerusalem began again to grow steep. Up to this time Mary and Joseph travelled no great highroads, though they crossed several commercial routes which ran from

the Jordan to Samaria and to the roads that lead from Syria down into Egypt. So far, the roads by which they came, with the exception of that single broad one, were very narrow and ran over the mountains. One had to be very cautious in walking, but the ass could tread its way securely.

Now I saw the travelers arrive at a house whose owner was at first uncivil to Joseph. He threw the light on Mary's face, and twitted Joseph on having so young a wife. But the man's wife took them in, gave them shelter in an outhouse, and offered them some little rolls.

When they left this place, they next sought lodging in a large farmhouse where also they were not received in a manner especially cordial. The innkeepers were young, and paid little heed to Mary and Joseph. They were not simple shepherds, but rich farmers, such as we have here, mixed up with the world, with trade, etc. I saw one old man going about the house with a walking stick. From here they had still seven hours' journey to Bethlehem, but they did not take the direct route thither, because it was mountainous and at this season too difficult. They followed the little she-ass across the country between Jerusalem and the Jordan. I saw them arrive about noon at a large shepherd's house, about two hours from John's place of baptism on the Jordan. Jesus once passed a night there after His baptism. Near the house was another for the farm and sheep utensils, and in the yard was a spring from which the water was conducted through pipes to the bathtubs. There was a large public house here; and numbers of servants who took their meals at it were going and coming. The host received the travelers very kindly and he was very obliging. He insisted upon one of the servant's washing Joseph's feet at the spring. He also supplied him with fresh garments while he aired and brushed those he took off. A maidservant rendered the same services to Mary, for the

mistress of the house was backward in making her appearance; she lived retired. She is the same that Jesus afterward healed of a thirty years' sickness. He told her that her malady had come upon her as a punishment for her want of hospitality toward His relatives. But I know the reason of her nonappearance to Mary and Joseph. She was young and rather frivolous. She had caught a glance of the Blessed Virgin, had spoken a word to her, perhaps, (I do not now recall all the circumstances) and had conceived a feeling of jealousy on account of her beauty. It was for that reason that she kept herself secluded on this occasion. There were some children in the house.

At their departure about noon, Mary and Joseph were accompanied part of the way by some of the people belonging to the inn. They proceeded westward toward Bethlehem, and arrived after a journey of about two hours at a little village consisting of a long row of houses with gardens and courts lying on both sides of a broad highroad. Joseph had connections here such as spring from the second marriage of a stepfather or stepmother. Their house was finely situated and very handsome. But Mary and Joseph did not enter. They passed through the place and went straight on toward Jerusalem for half an hour, when they came to a public house in which a crowd was gathered for a funeral. The frame partitions in the house had been removed from before the chimney and hearth. The fireplace was draped with black, and before it rested a coffin enveloped in the same somber hue. The male mourners wore long black robes with short, white ones over them and some had rough, black maniples on their arms. All were praying. In another apartment sat the women entirely enveloped in their large veils. There was in the yard a large fountain with several faucets. The proprietors of the house, who were taken up with the charge of the obsequies, left to the servants the duty of receiving Mary and Joseph. This was done, accordingly, and the

customary services rendered the holy travelers. Tapestry, or mats, were let down from their rollers near the ceiling, and a curtained space arranged for them. After some time, I saw the people of the house in conversation with them. The white garments had been laid aside. I saw a great many beds rolled up against the walls. They could be entirely separated from one another by means of the mats let down from the ceilings. Early the following morning, Mary and Joseph again started off. The good wife of the house told them they might stay, because Mary appeared in hourly expectation of her delivery. But Mary said with lowered veil that she had yet six or eight and thirty hours. The woman was anxious to keep them, though not in her own house. I saw the husband, as Joseph and Mary were departing, talking to the former about his beasts. Joseph praised the ass very much, and told him that he had brought the other with him in case of necessity. When the people spoke of the difficulty of getting lodgings in Bethlehem, Joseph replied that he had friends there and that Mary and he would certainly be well received. This made me feel so sorry. Joseph always spoke of this with so much confidence. I heard him again making the same remark to Mary on their way.

It so happened on the last days of the journey, when they were nearing Bethlehem, that Mary sighed longingly for rest and refreshment. Joseph turned aside from the road for half an hour to a place where, upon a former occasion, he had discovered a beautiful fig tree laden with fruit. It had seats around it for weary wayfarers to rest upon. But when they reached it they found, to their great disappointment, that it was at that time quite destitute of fruit. In after years something connected with Jesus happened near that tree. It nevermore had fruit, though it continued green. Jesus cursed it, and it withered.

7. The Arrival in Bethlehem

The distance from the last public house to Bethlehem may have been three hours. Mary and Joseph went around by the north and approached the city on the west. A short distance outside the city, about a quarter of an hour's walk brought them to a large building surrounded by courtyards and smaller houses. There were trees in front of it, and all sorts of people encamped in tents around it. This house was once the paternal home of Joseph, and ages before it had been the family mansion of David. It was at this period used as the custom house of the Roman taxes.

Joseph still had in the city a brother, who was an innkeeper. He was not his own brother, but a stepbrother. Joseph did not go near him. Joseph had had five brothers, three own-brothers and two stepbrothers. Joseph was five and forty years old. He was thirty years and, I think, three months older than Mary. He was thin, had a fair complexion, prominent cheekbones tinged with red, a high, open forehead, and a brownish beard.

The little she-ass was not with them here. She had run away around the south side of the city, where it was somewhat level, a kind of valley.

Joseph went straight into the custom house, for all newcomers had to present themselves there and obtain a ticket for entrance at the city gate. The city had properly no gate, but the entrance lay between two ruined walls that looked like the remains of a gate. Although Joseph was somewhat late in presenting himself for assessment, he was well received.

Mary remained in a small house in the courtyard among the women, who were very attentive to her, and offered her something to eat. These women cooked for the soldiers. The latter were Romans, as I could tell by the straps hanging around their hips. The weather was lovely, not at all cold, the sun lighting

up the mountain between Jerusalem and Bethania. One can see it very well from here. Joseph went up to a large room in an upper story, where he was interrogated, who he was, etc., and his questioners examined long rolls of writing, numbers of which were hanging on the walls. They unrolled them and read to him his ancestry, also that of Mary. Joseph knew not before that through Joachim, Mary had descended in a straight line from David. The official asked him, "Where is thy wife?"

For seven years the inhabitants of this part of the country were not regularly assessed, owing to various political troubles. I saw the numbers V and II, and that certainly makes seven. The tax collecting had already been going on for many months, but two payments were still to be made. The people had to remain almost three months. They had indeed paid something here and there during those seven years, but there had been no regular collection of taxes. Joseph did not pay anything on that first day, but his circumstances were inquired into. He told the official that he possessed no real estate, that he lived by his trade and the assistance of his wife's parents. Mary also was summoned to appear before the clerk, but not upstairs. She was interrogated in a passage on the first floor, and nothing was read to her.

There were numbers of clerks and functionaries in the house, scattered throughout the different rooms, and a great many Romans and soldiers were to be met in the upper stories. There were also Pharisees and Sadducees, priests and elders, and all sorts of clerks and officials of both Jewish and Roman extraction. There was no such payment of taxes going on in Jerusalem. But in many other places, in Magdalum on the Sea of Galilee, for instance, taxes were being received. The Galileans had to pay there, and the people from Sidon, too, partly on account of their commercial intercourse, I think. Only those that had no establishments, that possessed no estates, had to

report at their birthplace.

The receipts for the next three months were to be divided into three parts. The Emperor Augustus, Herod, and another king who dwelt in the neighborhood of Egypt, had a share in them. The king near Egypt, having gained some advantage in war, had a claim upon a certain district far up the country; consequently, they had to give him something. The second payment had some reference to the building of the Temple; it was something like a payment on money advanced. The third was for the poor and for widows, who had received nothing for a long time. But it all went as such things do in our own day—little to the right man. Good reasons were easily found for its remaining in the hands of the great. Incessant writing and moving to and fro were kept up.

Joseph then went with Mary straight to Bethlehem on whose outskirts the houses stood scattered, and into the heart of the city. At the different streets they met, he left Mary and the ass standing while he went up and down in search of an inn. Mary often had to wait long before Joseph, anxious and troubled, returned. Nowhere did he find room; everywhere was he sent away. And now it began to grow dark. Joseph at last proposed going to the other side of the city, where they would surely find lodgings. They proceeded down a street, which was more of a country road than a regular street, for the houses stood scattered along the hills, and at the end of it reached a low, level space, or field. Here stood a very beautiful tree with a smooth trunk, its branches spreading out like a roof. Joseph led Mary and the beast under it, and there left them to go again in quest of an inn. He went from house to house, his friends, of whom he had spoken to Mary, unwilling to recognize him. Once during his quest, he returned to Mary, who was waiting under the tree. He wept, and she consoled him. He started afresh on his search. But whenever he brought forward the approaching

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delivery of his wife as a pressing reason for receiving hospitality, he was dismissed still more quickly.

Meantime it had grown dark. Mary was standing under the tree, her ungirdled robe falling around her in full folds, her head covered with a white veil. The ass was nearby, its head turned toward the tree, at the foot of which Joseph had made a seat for Mary with the baggage. Crowds were hurrying to and fro in Bethlehem, and many of the passersby gazed curiously at Mary, as one naturally does on seeing a person standing a long time in the dark. I think also that some of them addressed her, and asked her who she was. Ah, they little dreamed that the Saviour was so near! Mary was so patient, so tranquil, so full of hope. Ah, she had indeed long to wait! At last she sat down, her hands crossed on her breast, her head lowered. After a long time, Joseph returned in great dejection. I saw that he was shedding tears and, because he had failed again to find an inn, he hesitated to approach. But suddenly he bethought him of a cave outside Bethlehem used as a storing place by the shepherds when they brought their cattle to the city. Joseph had often withdrawn thither to conceal himself from his brothers and to pray. It was very likely to be deserted at that season or, if any shepherds did come, it would be easy to make friends with them. He and Mary might there find shelter for awhile, and after a little rest he would go out again on his search.

And now they went around to the left, as if through the ruined walls, tombs, and ramparts of a country town. They mounted a rampart or hill, and then the road began again to descend. At last, they reached a hill before which stood trees, firs, pines, or cedars, and trees with small leaves like the box tree. In this hill was the cave or vault spoken of by Joseph. There were no houses around. One side of the cave was built up with rough masonry through which the open entrance of the shepherds led down into the valley.

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Joseph opened the light wicker door and, as they entered, the she-ass ran to meet them. She had left them near Joseph's paternal house, and had run around the city to this cave. She frolicked around and leaped gaily about them, so that Mary said: "Behold! It is surely God's will that we should be here." But Joseph was worried and, in secret, a little ashamed, because he had so often alluded to the good reception they would meet in Bethlehem. There was a projection above the door under which he stood the ass and then proceeded to arrange a seat for Mary. It was quite dark, about eight o'clock when they reached this place. Joseph struck a light and went into the cave. The entrance was very narrow. The walls were stuffed with all kinds of coarse straw, like rushes, over which hung brown mats. Back in the vaulted part were some air holes in the roof, but here also everything was in disorder. Joseph cleared it out and prepared as much space in the back part as would afford room for a couch and seat for Mary, who had seated herself on a rug with her bundle for a support. The ass was then brought in, and Joseph fastened a lamp on the wall. While Mary was eating, he went out to the field in the direction of the Milk Cave, and laid a leathern bottle in the rivulet that it might fill. He went also to the city where he procured some little dishes, a bundle of other things, and I think, some fruit. It was, indeed, the Sabbath but, on account of the numerous strangers in the city and their need of various necessities, provisions and utensils were exposed for sale on tables placed at the street corners. The price was paid down on the spot. I think servants or pagan slaves guarded the tables, but I cannot remember for certain.

When Joseph returned, he brought with him a small bundle of slender sticks beautifully bound up with reeds, and a box with a handle in which were glowing coals. These he poured out at the entrance of the cave to make a fire. He next brought the water

bottle, which he had filled at the rivulet, and prepared some food. It consisted of a stew, made of yellow corn, some kind of large plant that contained a great many seeds, and a little bread. After they had eaten and Mary had lain down to rest upon her rush couch over which was spread a cover, Joseph began to prepare his own resting place at the entrance of the cave. When this was done, he went again into the city. Previously to setting out, he had stopped up all the openings of the cave, in order to keep out the air. Then for the first time, I saw the Blessed Virgin on her knees in prayer, after which she lay down upon the carpet on her side, her head resting on her arm, her bundle serving for a pillow.

This cave lay at the extremity of the mountain ridge of Bethlehem. A clump of beautiful trees stood in front of the entrance, and thence could be descried some of the towers and roofs of the city. Over the entrance, which was closed by a door made of wickerwork, was a shed. From the door, a moderately wide passage led into the cave, an irregularly formed vault, half-round, half-triangular. On one side of the passage was a recess rather lower than the general surface, and this Joseph had enclosed by curtains for his own sleeping place. The rest of the passage, from the recess to the entrance, he cut off by hangings, and there had a kind of storeroom.

The passage was not so lofty as the cave itself, which was vaulted by nature. The inner walls of the cave, where they were formed entirely by nature, though not perfectly even, yet were pleasing and clean; indeed to my eye, there was something about them quite charming. They pleased me more than did those parts upon which some attempts had been made at masonry, for these latter were coarse and rough. The foundation of the right side of the entrance appeared for some distance to have been hewn out of the rock; only the upper part seemed to have been made by the hand of man. There were also some

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holes in this passage. In the middle of the vaulted roof was an opening and, I think, three others cut obliquely halfway up the same. These oblique openings presented a smoother appearance than the topmost one; they looked like the handiwork of man. The floor of the cave was deeper than that of the entrance, and was on three sides surrounded by a stone seat somewhat raised, broad in some places, in others narrow. At one of the broad parts, the ass took its stand. It had no trough, but a large leathern bag was placed before it or hung in the corner. Behind was a small side cave just large enough to allow the animal to stand upright. There the fodder was stored. A gutter ran along by this corner, and I saw Joseph cleaning the cave out every day.

Where Mary reposed before the birth of the Child and where I beheld her elevated above the ground at the moment of her delivery, there was a similar seat of stone. The spot in which the Crib stood was a deep recess, or side vault. Near it was a second entrance into the cave, which was in the ridge of a hill that ran toward the city. In the rear, the hill sank into a very charming valley planted with rows of trees. This valley led to the Suckling Cave of Abraham, situated in a projection of the opposite hill. The valley may have been one-eighth of an hour in width, and through it flowed that little rivulet from which Joseph had procured the water.

Besides the real Crib Cave, there were in the same hill, but lying somewhat deeper, two other caves, in one of which the Blessed Virgin often remained hidden.

When in after years St. Paula laid the first foundation of her convent at Bethlehem, I saw a small, lightly-built chapel erected in the valley and on the east side of the cave. It was so constructed as to be contiguous to the rear of the Crib Cave and directly back of the spot upon which Jesus was born. This little chapel of wood and wicker walls was hung inside

with tapestry. Four rows of cells opened into it, which were built as lightly as the shepherd's cots generally are in Palestine. In every row were separate cells, each surrounded by its own little garden, and all connected by covered passages leading to the chapel. Here Paula and her daughter gathered around them their first companions. In the chapel and free from the wall, stood an altar with its little tabernacle. Behind it hung a red and white silk curtain, which concealed the facsimile of the Crib Cave that St. Paula had caused to be made. It was separated from the real cave, from the exact spot upon which Jesus was born, only by the rocky wall. This crib was made of white stone, and was a faithful imitation of that of Jesus. The manger also was represented, and even the hay hanging through its sides. The infant in it was likewise of white stone, and closely swathed in a blue veil. The figure was hollow and not very heavy. I saw St. Paula often taking it up into her arms while she prayed. Upon the wall over this crib, hung a banner upon which was represented the ass with its head turned toward the crib. It was embroidered in colors, and the hair made of thread, so natural that it looked like real hair. Above the crib was a hole in which a star was fastened. I saw that the Child Jesus often appeared here to St. Paula and her daughter. In front of the curtain and right and left of the altar were hanging lamps.

8. Birth of the Child Jesus

I saw Joseph on the following day arranging a seat and couch for Mary in the so-called Suckling Cave of Abraham, which was also the sepulcher of Maraha, his nurse. It was more spacious than the cave of the Crib. Mary remained there some hours, while Joseph was making the latter more habitable. He brought also from the city many different little vessels and some dried fruits. Mary told him that the birth hour

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of the Child would arrive on the coming night. It was then nine months since her conception by the Holy Ghost. She begged him to do all in his power that they might receive as honorably as possible this Child promised by God, this Child supernaturally conceived; and she invited him to unite with her in prayer for those hard-hearted people who would afford Him no place of shelter. Joseph proposed to bring some pious women whom he knew in Bethlehem to her assistance; but Mary would not allow it, she declared that she had no need of anyone. It was five o'clock in the evening when Joseph brought Mary back again to the Crib Cave. He hung up several more lamps, and made a place under the shed before the door for the little she-ass, which came joyfully hurrying from the fields to meet them.

When Mary told Joseph that her time was drawing near and that he should now betake himself to prayer, he left her and turned toward his sleeping place to do her bidding. Before entering his little recess, he looked back once toward that part of the cave where Mary knelt upon her couch in prayer, her back to him, her face toward the east. He saw the cave filled with the light that streamed from Mary, for she was entirely enveloped as if by flames. It was as if he were, like Moses, looking into the burning bush. He sank prostrate to the ground in prayer, and looked not back again. The glory around Mary became brighter and brighter, the lamps that Joseph had lit were no longer to be seen. Mary knelt, her flowing white robe spread out before her. At the twelfth hour, her prayer became ecstatic, and I saw her raised so far above the ground that one could see it beneath her. Her hands were crossed upon her breast, and the light around her grew even more resplendent. I no longer saw the roof of the cave. Above Mary stretched a pathway of light up to Heaven, in which pathway it seemed as if one light came forth from another, as if one figure dissolved

into another, and from these different spheres of light other heavenly figures issued. Mary continued in prayer, her eyes bent low upon the ground. At that moment she gave birth to the Infant Jesus. I saw Him like a tiny, shining Child, lying on the rug at her knees, and brighter far than all the other brilliancy. He seemed to grow before my eyes. But dazzled by the glittering and flashing of light, I know not whether I really saw that, or how I saw it. Even inanimate nature seemed stirred. The stones of the rocky floor and the walls of the cave were glimmering and sparkling, as if instinct with life.

Mary's ecstasy lasted some moments longer. Then I saw her spread a cover over the Child, but she did not yet take It up, nor even touch It. After a long time, I saw the Child stirring and heard It crying, and then only did Mary seem to recover full consciousness. She lifted the Child, along with the cover that she had thrown over It, to her breast and sat veiled, herself and Child quite enveloped. I think she was suckling It. I saw angels around her in human form prostrate on their faces. It may, perhaps, have been an hour after the birth when Mary called St. Joseph, who still lay prostrate in prayer. When he approached, he fell on his knees, his face to the ground, in a transport of joy, devotion, and humility. Mary again urged him to look upon the Sacred Gift from Heaven, and then did Joseph take the Child into his arms. And now the Blessed Virgin swathed the Child in red and over that in a white veil up as far as under the little arms, and the upper part of the body from the armpits to the head, she wrapped up in another piece of linen. She had only four swaddling cloths with her. She laid the Child in the Crib, which had been filled with rushes and fine moss over which was spread a cover that hung down at the sides. The Crib stood over the stone trough, and at this spot the ground stretched straight and level as far as the passage, where it made a broader flexure toward the

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south. The floor of this part of the cave lay somewhat deeper than where the Child was born, and down to it steps had been formed in the earth. When Mary laid the Child in the Crib, both she and Joseph stood by It in tears, singing the praises of God.

The seat and the couch of the Blessed Virgin were near the Crib. I saw her on the first day sitting upright and also resting on her side, though I noticed in her no special signs of weakness or sickness. Both before and after the birth, she was robed in white. When visitors came, she generally sat near the Crib more closely veiled.

On the night of the Birth there gushed forth a beautiful spring in the other cave that lay to the right. The water ran out, and the next day Joseph dug a course for it and formed a spring.

In those visions to which the event itself, and not the feast of the Church, gave rise, I saw, indeed, no such sparkling joy in nature as I sometimes see at holy Christmastide. Then the joy has an interior signification. But yet, I saw extraordinary gladness, and in many places, even in the most distant regions of the world, something marvelous on that midnight. By it the good were filled with joyful longings, and the bad with dread. I saw also many of the lower animals joyfully agitated. I saw fountains gushing forth and swelling, flowers springing up in many places, trees and plants budding with new life, and all sending forth their fragrance. In Bethlehem it was misty, and the sky above shone with a murky, reddish glare. But over the valley of the shepherds, around the Crib, and in the vale of the Suckling Cave floated bright clouds of refreshing dew.

I saw the herds of the three oldest shepherds near the hill under sheds; but those further on near the shepherds' tower, were partly in the open air. The three eldest shepherds, roused by the wonders of the night, I saw standing together before their huts, gazing around and pointing out the magnificent light

that shone over the Crib. The shepherds at the distant tower were also in full movement. They had climbed up the tower and were looking toward the Crib over which they, too, saw the light. I saw something like a cloud of glory descend upon the three shepherds. I saw in it figures moving to and fro, and heard the approach of sweet, clear voices singing softly. At first, the shepherds were frightened. Soon there stood before them five or seven lovely, radiant figures holding in their hands a long strip like a scroll upon which were written words in letters a hand in length. The angels were singing the *Gloria*.

The angels appeared also to the shepherds on the tower and where else, I do not now recall. I did not see them hurrying off at once to the cave. The first three were indeed an hour and a half distant from it, and those on the tower as far again. But I saw that they began at once to reflect upon what gifts they should take to the newborn Saviour, and to get them together as quickly as possible. The three shepherds went to the Crib early next morning.

I saw that Anne at Nazareth, Elizabeth in Juttah, Noemi, Anna, and Simeon in the Temple—all had on this night visions from which they learned the birth of the Saviour. The child John was unspeakably joyous. But only Anne knew where the newborn Child was; the others, and even Elizabeth, knew indeed of Mary and saw her in vision, but they knew nothing of Bethlehem.

I saw something very wonderful taking place in the Temple. The writings of the Sadducees were more than once hurled by an invisible force from the places in which they were kept, which circumstance gave rise to unaccountable dread. The fact was ascribed to sorcery, and large sums of money were paid to hush the matter up.

I saw that in Rome, across the river where numbers of Jews dwelt, a well of oil gushed forth spontaneously, to the wonder of all the witnesses. And

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when Jesus was born, a magnificent statue of the god Jupiter fell with violence from its place. All were struck with fear. Sacrifices were offered and another idol, I think Venus, was interrogated as to the cause. The devil was forced to speak by its mouth, and he proclaimed that it had happened because a virgin unmarried had conceived and brought forth a son. He told them also of the miracle of the oil well. Where this took place now stands a church in honor of the Mother of God. I saw that the pagan priests were deeply perplexed at the whole affair. They searched their writings, and discovered the following history. About seventy years previously, this idol (Jupiter) had been greatly venerated. It was magnificently ornamented with gold and precious stones, grand ceremonies were held in its honor, and numerous sacrifices offered to it. But there was in Rome at that time an extraordinarily pious woman who lived on her own means. I know not for certain whether she was a Jewess or not; but she had visions, uttered prophecies, and informed many persons as to the cause of their sterility. This woman had thrown out words to this effect that they should not honor the idol at so great a cost, for that they would one day behold it burst asunder in their midst. This speech proved so offensive that she was imprisoned and tormented until by her prayers she obtained from God the information as to when that misfortune would happen. The pagan priests demanded what had been revealed to her, and when at last she replied: "The idol will be shattered when an Immaculate Virgin shall bring forth a son," they hooted at her, and released her as a fool. And now the people recalled the fact and declared that the woman had spoken truly. I saw also that the Roman consuls, of whom one was named Lentulus and who was a friend of St. Peter and an ancestor of the martyr-priest Moses, made notes of this occurrence, as well as that of the bursting forth of the oil well.

On this night, I saw the Emperor Augustus at the Capitol where he had an apparition of a rainbow upon which sat the Virgin and Child. From the oracle that he caused to be interrogated upon what he had seen, he received the answer: "A Child is born, and before Him we must all flee!" The emperor at once erected an altar and offered sacrifice to the Son of the Virgin, as to the "Firstborn of God."

I had also a vision of Egypt far beyond Matarea, Heliopolis, and Memphis. There was in that region a large idol that used to give answers to all kinds of questions. Suddenly it became mute. The king ordered immense sacrifices to be offered throughout his whole dominions. Then was the devil, upon the command of God, forced to say: "I have become silent, I must give place to another. The Son of the Virgin is born, and a temple will be here erected to His honor." Upon hearing this, the king wanted to raise a temple to the newborn Child next to that of the god, but I do not clearly recall the story. I know, however, that the idol was put aside and that a temple was erected to the Virgin and Child whom it had proclaimed, and who were afterward honored with pagan rites.

I beheld a great wonder in the country of the Three Kings. There was a tower on a mountain to which the Kings retired in turn with a retinue of priests, in order to observe the stars. What they saw they committed to writing and communicated to one another. On this night there were two of them there, Mensor and Seir. The third, who dwelt toward the east side of the Caspian Sea, was called Theokeno. He was not present. There was a certain constellation at which they always gazed, and whose variations they noted. In it they saw visions and pictures. Upon this night also, they had several visions of various kinds. It was not in one star alone that they saw those visions, but in several that formed a figure, and there seemed to be a movement in them. They

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saw the vision of the moon over which arose a beautiful rainbow-colored arch on which was seated a Virgin. The left limb was drawn up in a sitting posture, the right hung a little lower and rested on the moon. To the left of the Virgin and rising above the arch, was a grapevine, and on her right a sheaf of wheat. In front of the Virgin was a chalice like that used at the Last Supper. It appeared to issue, but with greater clearness and brightness, from the brilliancy that emanated from her. Out of the chalice arose a Child, and over the Child shone a bright disk like an empty ostensorium. It was surrounded by radiating beams. It reminded me of the Blessed Sacrament. On the Virgin's right was an octangular church with a golden door and two small side-doors. With the right hand, the Virgin put the Child and the host into the church which, meanwhile, grew larger and larger, and in which I saw the Most Holy Trinity. Above the church arose a tower. Theokeno, the third king, had similar visions in his own home.

Over the head of the Virgin sitting on the arch shone a star, which suddenly shot from its place and skimmed along the heavens before the Kings. It was for them a voice announcing as never before that the Child, so long awaited by them and by their ancestors, was at last born in Judea, and that they were to follow that star. For some nights immediately preceding that blessed one, they had from their tower seen all kinds of visions in the heavens, kings journeying to the Child and offering their homage to It. So now they hurriedly gathered together their treasures and with gifts and presents began the journey, for they did not want to be the last. I saw all three after a few days meeting on the way.

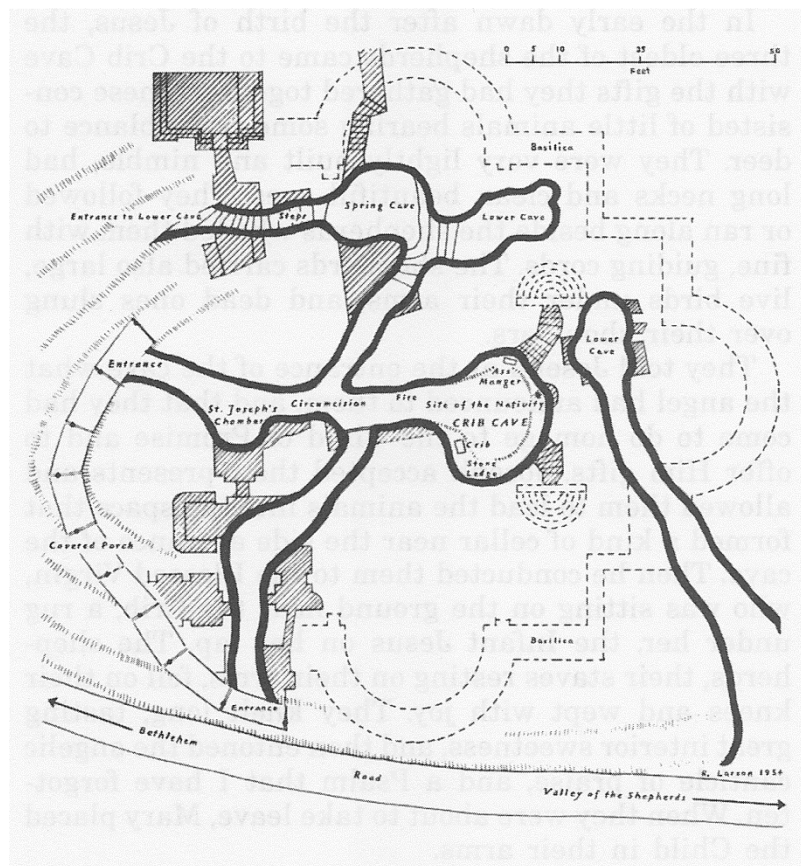
9. Adoration of the Shepherds. Devout Visits to the Crib

In the early dawn after the birth of Jesus, the three oldest of the shepherds came to the Crib Cave with the gifts they had gathered together. These consisted of little animals bearing some resemblance to deer. They were very lightly built and nimble, had long necks and clear, beautiful eyes. They followed or ran along beside the shepherds who led them with fine, guiding cords. The shepherds carried also large, live birds under their arms, and dead ones slung over their shoulders.

They told Joseph at the entrance of the cave what the angel had announced to them, and that they had come to do homage to the Child of Promise and to offer Him gifts. Joseph accepted their presents and allowed them to lead the animals into the space that formed a kind of cellar near the side entrance of the cave. Then he conducted them to the Blessed Virgin, who was sitting on the ground near the Crib, a rug under her, the Infant Jesus on her lap. The shepherds, their staves resting on their arms, fell on their knees and wept with joy. They knelt long, tasting great interior sweetness, and then intoned the angelic canticle of praise, and a Psalm that I have forgotten. When they were about to take leave, Mary placed the Child in their arms.

Some of the other shepherds came in the evening, accompanied by women and children, and bringing gifts. They sang most sweetly before the Crib the *Gloria*, some Psalms, and short refrains of which I remember the words: "O Child, blooming as a rose art Thou! As a herald Thou comest forth!" They brought gifts of birds, eggs, honey, woven stuffs of various colors, bundles of raw silk, and ears of corn, also several bundles of a corn with heavy grains growing on a stalk with large leaves like those of rushes.

Cave of the Nativity, Bethlehem



The site of the Nativity is attested to by an unbroken tradition dating back to the 2nd Century. This plan is a suggested reconstruction of the original arrangement based on the description in the "*Life of Mary*" and the present form of the caves (shaded areas). During the centuries there have been many additions and enlargements. Sister Emmerich stated that new grottoes were cut in the rock even during the lifetime of Our Lord. The basilica, erected by Constantine over the cave in the 4th Century, and still in use, is one of the oldest Christian churches in the world. —R.L.

The three oldest shepherds came back in turn and helped Joseph to make the Crib Cave and its surroundings more comfortable. I saw also several pious women with the Blessed Virgin, performing some services for her. They were Essenians, and lived in the valley, not far from the Crib Cave, in little rocky cells adjoining one another. They owned little gardens near their cells, and they taught the children of their community. St. Joseph had invited them to come, for he was acquainted with them even in early youth. When he was hiding in the Crib Cave, from his brethren, he visited these pious women who dwelt in the side of the rock. They now came in turn to the Blessed Virgin, bringing little necessities and bundles of wood. They cooked and washed for the Holy Family.

Some days after the birth of Jesus, I saw a touching scene in the Crib Cave. Joseph and Mary were standing by the Crib and gazing with emotion upon the Infant Jesus, when suddenly the ass fell upon its knees and lowered its head to the ground. Mary and Joseph shed tears. I saw Mary at another time standing by the Crib. As she gazed upon the Child, the deep conviction stole upon her that It had come upon earth to suffer. That reminded me of a vision I had had at an earlier period in which I had been shown how Jesus, while still in His Mother's womb and from the moment of His birth, had suffered. I saw under the heart of Mary a glory and in it a bright shining Child. As I gazed upon It, it seemed as if Mary were hovering over It and surrounding It. I beheld the Child growing and all the torments of the Crucifixion inflicted upon It. It was a sad, a fearful sight! I wept and sobbed aloud. I saw other forms around It beating and pushing, scourging and crowning It. Then they laid the Cross upon It, next nailed It to the same, and pierced It in the side. I saw the whole Passion of Christ in the Child. It was a frightful sight! As the Child hung on the Cross, It

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said to me: "All this did I suffer from My conception until My thirty-fourth year, when My Passion was outwardly consummated." (The Lord died when He was thirty-three years and three months old.) "Go and announce it to men!" But how can I announce it to men?

I saw Jesus also as the newborn Child, and I saw how many of the children that went to the Crib ill treated the Infant Jesus. The Mother of God was not there to protect the Child, and the children went with all kinds of switches and rods, and struck It in the face until the Blood flowed. The Child meekly extended Its little hands before Its face, in order to ward off the blows. The smallest children were they that struck the most maliciously. The parents of some even twisted and wrapped the rods for them. They brought thorns, nettles, whips, little rods of all kinds, each having its own signification. One came with a very slender rod, like a reed. But when it was about to strike the Child, the rod snapped, and fell back upon itself. I knew several of the children. Some went about boasting in their fine clothes, but I stripped them, and whipped some of them well.

While Mary was still standing by the Crib in deep meditation, some shepherds drew near with their wives, in all about five persons. To give them room to approach the Crib, the Blessed Virgin withdrew a little to the spot upon which she had given birth to the Child. The people did not actually adore, but they gazed down upon the Child deeply moved, and before leaving they bowed low over It as if kissing It.

It was day. Mary sat in her usual place with the Infant Jesus on her lap. He was swathed, the hands and face alone free, Mary had something like a piece of linen in her hands with which she was busied. Joseph was at the fireplace near the entrance of the cave, and appeared to be making a shelf to hold some vessels. I was standing next the ass. And now came in three aged female Essenians, who were cordially

welcomed, though Mary did not rise. They brought quite a number of presents: small fruits, birds with red, awl-shaped beaks as large as ducks, which they carried by the wings, oval rolls about an inch in thickness, some linen, and other stuff. All were received with rare humility and gratitude. The women were very silent and recollected. Deeply moved, they gazed down upon the Child, but they did not touch It. When they withdrew, it was without farewells or ceremony. Meanwhile, I was taking a good look at the ass. It had a very broad back, and I thought to myself: "You good beast! You have carried a great burden!"¹ and I wanted to feel it, to see if it were real. I ran my hand over its hair, and it felt as smooth as silk.

Now came two married women with three little girls about eight years old. They appeared to be strangers and people of distinction, who had come in obedience to a call more miraculous than that received by any previous visitor. Joseph welcomed them very humbly. They brought presents less in size than the others, but of greater value: grain in a bowl, small fruits, and a cluster of thick, triangular, gold leaves on which was a stamp like a seal. I thought:

"Strange! That looks like the representation of the eye of God! But no! How can I compare the eye of God with red earth!" Mary arose and placed the Child in the ladies' arms. Both held Him a little while, praying silently with uplifted heart, and then kissed Him. The three little girls were silent and deeply impressed. Joseph and Mary conversed with their visitors and when they left, Joseph accompanied them part of the way. Ah! Could we, like these women, behold the beauty, the purity, the innocent wisdom of Mary! She knew all things! But in her humility, she appears unconscious of her gifts. Like a child, she casts down her eyes; and when she raises them,

1. The Creator.

Life of Jesus Christ

her glance, like a flash of lightning, like the truth, like a ray of unsullied light, pierces one through and through. That is because she is perfectly pure, perfectly innocent, full of the Holy Ghost, and without any reflection on self. No one can resist her glance.

These people appeared to have come at least some miles and that secretly, for they avoided being seen in the city. Joseph behaved with great humility during such visits, retiring and looking on from some distant corner.

I saw also Anne's maid and an old man servant coming from Nazareth to the Crib. The maid was a widow and related to the Holy Family. She brought all sorts of necessities from Anne to Mary, with whom she took up her abode. The old man shed tears of joy, and returned with news to Anne.

The day after, I saw the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Jesus leave the Crib Cave with the maid for some hours. Stepping from the door of the cave, Mary turned toward the shed on the right, went some steps forward, and concealed herself in that side cave in which, at the birth of Jesus, a spring had welled up. She remained there four hours, because some men, spies of Herod, had come from Bethlehem, in consequence of the rumor set afloat by the words of the shepherds, that a miracle had there taken place in connection with a child. These men met St. Joseph in front of the Crib Cave. After exchanging a few words with him, they left him with a contemptuous smile at his humility and simplicity.

The Crib Cave was retired, and very pleasantly situated. No one from Bethlehem went there, only the shepherds whose duties called them thither. No one in Bethlehem took any interest in what was going on outside for, in consequence of the influx of strangers, the city was all alive, and much buying and selling going on. Cattle was being bought and slaughtered, for many people paid their taxes in cattle. There were numbers of pagans in the city in the

capacity of servants.

The wonderful apparition of the angels was soon noised among the dwellers of the mountain valleys far and near, and with it the birth of the Child in the cave. The innkeepers from whom the Holy Family on their journey had received hospitality now came, one after another, to do homage to Him whom unknown they had entertained. I saw that hospitable keeper of the last inn, first sending presents by a servant, and then coming himself to honor the Child. I saw also the good wife of that man who had been so cross to Joseph, and other shepherds and good people coming to the Crib. They were very much affected by what they saw. All were in holiday attire, and were going up to Bethlehem for the Sabbath. The good wife might have gone to Jerusalem which was nearer, but she preferred coming here to Bethlehem.

A relative of Joseph, and father of that Jonadab who, at the Crucifixion of Jesus presented a strip of linen to Him, had also come to the Crib Cave on his way to Bethlehem for the Sabbath. Joseph was very kind to him. This relative had heard from people of his place of Joseph's wonderful situation; he came therefore to bring him gifts and to visit the Infant Jesus and Mary. But Joseph would not accept anything, although he pawned the little she-ass to this relative with the understanding that she might be redeemed for the same amount of money received. After that, Mary, Joseph, the maid, and two of the shepherds who were standing in front of the entrance, celebrated the Sabbath in the Crib Cave. A lamp with seven wicks was lighted, and upon a small table covered with white and red, lay the prayer rolls.

The numerous eatables presented by the shepherds were either given to the poor or handed around for the entertainment of others. The birds were hung on a spit before the fire, turned from time to time, and sprinkled with the flour of a reed-like plant which was very plentiful around the area of Bethlehem and

Hebron. From its grain a shining, white jelly was prepared and cakes baked. I saw under the fireplace very hot and clean holes in which birds could be roasted.

After the Sabbath, the Essenian women got a meal ready under the arbors which Joseph, with the help of the shepherds, had put up at the entrance of the cave. Joseph went into the city to engage priests for the circumcision of the Child. The cave was cleared and put in order. The partition that Joseph had put up in the passage was removed, and the ground spread with carpets, for in this passage near the Crib Cave, the place for the ceremony was prepared.

10. The Circumcision

Joseph returned from Bethlehem with five priests and a woman whose services were necessary on such occasions. They brought with them the circumcision stool and an octangular slab with all that was needed for the ceremony. All this was placed in order in the passage. The stool was hollow and formed a chest, which could be taken apart, thus affording a kind of low seat with a support on the side. It was covered with red. The circumcision stone was, perhaps, over two feet in diameter. In the center was a metal plate under which, in a hollow of the stone, were all kinds of little boxes containing fluids. These boxes were in separate compartments, and at one side lay the circumcision knife. The stone was laid upon the little stool which, covered with a cloth, always stood on the spot upon which Jesus was born, and the circumcision stool was placed next to it. That evening a repast was spread under the arbor at the entrance to the cave. A crowd of poor people had followed the priests, as is usual on such occasions, and during the meal they were continually receiving something both from the priests and from Joseph. The priests went to Mary and the Child, spoke with the mother, and took the Child in their arms. They also spoke to Joseph