tions to the heathenism that lay outside of his law. The simple fact was that the petty tribe of Judah could not resist the conquerors of the world. Science has taught us that the limits of a nation's existence and growth are determined by conditions of climate, position, and race; by its relative strength and sagacity; by the currents of civilization, opening or closing paths to power; and by the fortunes of war. Probably no great people was ever so utterly demoralized as to owe its destruction to war alone. The Roman Empire was enervated by self-indulgence. But its conquerors from the northern wildernesses were not models of virtue; and the Rome that could not withstand their blows could at least live an after-life in the conquest of their brutality by her culture and her law. Surely it was not owing to the vices of Rome that horde after horde of barbarians pressed like waves on one another till they overflowed Europe with a physical force that no moral energy could have withstood. The consequences of slavery were certainly sapping the unity of the empire; but so overgrown a dominion must have fallen to pieces by lack of central authority, and by the restlessness of the tribes it sought to hold, even if its provincial administration had been far better than it was. Like all great cities, Babylon doubtless had her share of luxury, covetousness, and crime; perhaps the pictures drawn by Hebrew prophet and Latin historian are within the truth; but to say that for this reason her glory was turned to "heaps" is to forget all the elements of the situation save one. It is to ignore the immeasurable part she has borne in human history, both before and after her visible downfall. It must be remembered that her vices did not prevent her from being, at that very moment, famous throughout Asia for the valor and energy of her campaigns; that a less skilful and fortunate foe than Cyrus would probably have failed to force her enormous defences, which were only carried

by a stratagem played on the effeminacy not of the people, but of the court. With all their excesses, the Babylonians had won repute for honesty and self-possession;[1] and the earnestness of their religious faith and public spirit is shown by their prodigious works and by the inscriptions of their kings. That a city which held from an unknown antiquity down to the last moment of its existence the rank of mistress in commerce and culture,—a metropolis to which all the great roads of Asia converged, and from which the wealth of the Euphrates and Tigris flowed down through the great Persian Gulf to the ocean highway of the ancient world; "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency;" a city that could build walls fifty miles in circumference, and terraced gardens on a similar scale, upheld by columns and watered by hydraulic engines, and river-walls and piers to match them; that combined every known form of industrial achievement and productive craft; the confluence of all races, the home of all beliefs,—that such a city became "heaps" because of its moral and religious rottenness is simply incredible, and would, if true, make it absurd to expect anything from the highest capacities of mankind. Sodoms and Gomorrahs on such a scale are preposterous. The denouncers of Babylon were rebuked in after days by the legend of Jahveh's own promise to Abraham, that ten righteous men were enough to save a city;[2] and by his plea with Jonah, "Thou hast had pity on the gourd which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?"

Whatever its morals, Babylon would doubtless have continued for ages to be the centre of Asiatic civilization, had

[1] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 508.
[2] Genesis, xviii. 32.

not Alexander's plans for its restoration been cut short by death; had not the Persians, at a later time, in their fear of invasion by sea, broken the connection between the Tigris and the Persian Gulf; had not, still later, the discovery of an ocean passage to India destroyed that land traffic of which Babylon was the *entrepôt*, and which our own days are bringing afresh into its ancient track. The vices of Belshazzar's semi-mythic court had less to do with Babylon's desolation than the removal of the Achæmenidan seat of empire to Susa, and the change from Chaldean culture to Persian military ambition in Western Asia, which required a new metropolis and a new basis of nationality. Still more conclusive against the Bible-theory is the actual record of Babylon's influence on universal history, — on the one hand direct and visible, on the other indirect and invisible; of Babylon after the flesh, and Babylon in the spirit. What if her undisputed mastery of the Asiatic world lasted less than a century? It was long enough to gather the scattered lights of past ages into one flame, and transmit to the next master of nerve-power in this process of historic growth what he would never have had the philosophy to concentrate, nor the patience to search out; long enough to mingle the physical stamina and crude capacity of a hundred heterogeneous tribes with the best organic life of wealth and culture that had then been attained, — and thus to make Greece, Judea, Arabia, and through them Europe and America, her unceasing debtors.

Babylon became "heaps;" but when a thousand years have passed over those "heaps," antiquity itself arises out of them, and holds forth the lost fragments of history that prove humanity an unbroken evolution, a movement to universal ends. When Ker Porter's troop first approached the mound of Birs-Nimrud, they saw its desolate summit in possession of three magnificent lions, who moved majes-

tically away at their approach, as if to reprove those nurslings of the ages for forgetting that Babylon, though a shadow, was still a throne for kings.[1]

It has hardly been imagined to what extent Persian civilization was the product of Babylonian elements. A loose congeries of nations, apparently with nothing in common but the tendency to rebellion and separation, were transmitted by Nabonidus to Cyrus, whose hands were so full of conquests that he did little towards shaping political order out of their fruits. But he received more than this chaos of tendencies. We have traced through the Iranian past an energetic germ of unity, in the pressure of ideal motive into immediate act, which I have characterized as nerve-power. The main spring of this energy of purpose could be found only in personal Will. This was its earliest ideal in the East, as it is its latest inspiration in Western society and faith. Its advent on an ethnic scale was in that Iranian exaltation of royal personages, as actual or expectant masters of the world through force of will, of which it is a popular error to suppose that Cyrus and his successors were the founders. It was Iranian, before it was Persian. First noted by the Greeks in the hosts precipitated on Europe by the nod of the king, it was yet, as we have seen, the motive-force of those great empires which had preceded his. The leader of a troop of mountaineers, Cyrus proved,—like the Assyrian, the Mede, the Babylonian before him, only with far greater emphasis,—that personal quality is master of mere human mass. The immense power that belonged to this conviction was already a tradition of these nations, ready to pass from hand to hand along the line of conquerors. So the spirit of

[1] Babylon, as the traveller sees it from the Birs-Nimrud to-day, is no desert. The date groves, palms, and mulberry trees, the beautiful gardens, magnificent crops, and far-spread irrigation, make the scene as lovely as possible, and serve as a benediction of Nature on a mighty historic mission long finished and fulfilled. (For description, see Geary's *Travels in Asiatic Turkey*, chap. xii.)

Nineveh and Babylon moved in the arm of Cyrus when it waved the dispersed Hebrews into national life, as when it chastised the river Gyndes for drowning a sacred horse; in the rage of Xerxes casting fetters into the Hellespont; in the self-invocation of every Achæmenidan on his stone tablets, as sole "King of kings; king by grace of Ormuzd, of this wide earth, afar and near." And at last Alexander himself, pupil of Greek liberty, conquers Persian Babylon only to assume the adored dress of Darius, to prescribe prostration at his own feet, and demand at Susa, even of the Greeks, that they should worship him as their god.

The Persian monotheist did but intensify the personal monarchism of the older worship when he substituted one sovereign will for the many gods in human form of the Semitic and Turanian pantheon, whom he smote into the dust. His symbol of Ormuzd, — a man flying in a winged circle over the king's head, — belonged to Asshur, the god of Assyria, before him. Here was a fit type of that nerve-energy and resistless will by which the Persians carried to a higher point the personal ideal of Nineveh and Babylon. So the winged human-headed bulls of these cities, of similar purport, and the monsters that had typified terrible powers of evil purpose, did but receive from the new dualism of spiritual forces a more practical and realistic form of the same meaning. The old Magian cultus of the elements, slowly built up by Cushite, Turanian, and Semite combined, was also transmitted to the Persians, who accepted its worship of fire, its divining rods, and perhaps its command to destroy noxious animals, and who practised at times, if we may believe Herodotus, its dreadful rite of human sacrifice. Even the Babylonian Venus, Anaitis,[1] found admission at a later period into the religion of these scourgers of idolatry, even among the suc-

[1] According to Haug, who refers to Windischmann (*Essays*, etc., p. 43), Anaitis is in the old Yashts of the *Avesta*.

cessors of that Cambyses who had stabbed the Egyptian Apis and overturned his shrine. They took their writing from the Assyrian cuneiform. Babylon furnished their system of coinage; Egypt and Media, their dress; and into their worship of Ormuzd they absorbed without change the Semitic gods of their subject States.[1]

Spiegel has traced many of the gods of the Zend-Avesta directly to older Semitic originals,[2] and it is but reasonable to believe that the civilization of western Iran, which Herodotus entitled Persian, was in fact the resultant of the manifold traditions and institutions deposited in succession on the soil. But Persia brought also her own gift, her distinctive function. As to what it was, we can judge better after a brief survey of what we know as to the origin and history of her people. On this matter the Hebrew Scriptures, until recently the principal guide as to the races of Western Asia, give very little information. The ram and the butting goat of the book of Daniel convey no idea of the difference of the Persian and Macedonian empires; nor do other Bibles throw much light on the origin of the tribe which Cyrus raised to the throne of Asia. Cuneiform inscriptions, as early as the ninth century before Christ, — if we are not deceived by a resemblance of names, as Schrader thinks we are, — have preserved the important fact that the "country of Par'sua" (Persia) contained a very great number of independent chiefs who submitted to the Assyrians.[3] This is about all we can learn from the stone-records, and the lively Greeks yield nothing but mythic names. The early legends of the Zend-Avesta, like those of the Hebrew Genesis, may cover the religious antagonism of nomadic and settled tribes, and the primeval warfare of their gods of night and

[1] Spiegel: *Studien uber d. Zend-Avesta* (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, ix. 178). Duncker: *Geschichte des Alterthums*, bd. ii. 626, 641. Herodotus, i. 135.

[2] *Erân. Alterth.*, bd. ii.

[3] Black obelisk Inscription of Shalmaneser II., and Inscription of Shamas Rimmon.

day; but, however ancient, these transformed traditions and names throw no light on the special facts of early Persian history. On the origin of the monarchy formed by union of the cognate tribes we have nothing but the name of Achæmenes, who is given in the inscription of Darius at Behistun, as the eponymous chief of his dynasty; though Darius speaks of himself as the ninth Achæmenidan king, which implies that there were five of the race before Achæmenes, the line having probably been interrupted by the conquest of Persia by the Medes.[1] Achæmenes therefore, if a real person, was not the founder of the monarchy, and we find no record as to who was. The Persian was more interested in recording how his "spear reached afar, seeking war far from his land," than in remembering his tribal origin, which was probably humble enough. We do not even know whether, previous to Cyrus, his country was a satrapy of Media, or a kingdom paying tribute, though that it was the former is by far the more probable. Herodotus relates the Median conquest, and brings Cyrus, through his mother, into the royal family, not of Persia, but of Media.[2]

Who, then, were the Persians? The only reply is,—a torrent which descended from its mountain home, and swept all Western Asia into its current almost at one bound, but left no record by which we can trace it to its springs. The typical race of Iran, the Persians, have given their name to its history at every phase; yet we do not even know whether this name comes from that of their principal tribe, or is the Greek form of the "Parsu" or "Bartsu" of the inscriptions. Of the Greek historians, our earliest informant, Herodotus, lived but a century after Cyrus; yet his account of that historic person is, by his own statement, but one of three ways of

[1] See Oppert's translation of the Behistun Inscription, and his note. *Records of the Past*, vii. 87

[2] Herodotus *vs.* Xenophon. Herodotus, P. 112.

telling the story, either of which he was at liberty to select, and is evidently to a great degree mythical. His authorities are Median and Babylonian, and he knows so little of the old Persian religion that he does not even mention Ormuzd or the two principles of the Avesta-faith, but describes a kind of element-cult instead, which is perhaps Magism, — a product of Turanian, Semitic, and Median beliefs. Nevertheless, he is the best existing authority, now that we know how to study his honest work. Ctesias, who wrote a century later, was a physician at the Persian court at Susa, and knew the traditions of the monarchy; but his reputation for honesty is very bad, and his credulity is beyond example. Xenophon, on the other hand, has given in his "Cyropædia" a splendid philosophical romance. Neither of these, nor any other author, can enlighten the darkness of Persian origins. Even the old heroic legend of Firdûsî, while it makes the local chiefs its theme, and describes the feudal liberties of the various States of a great confederacy, throws no special light on the Persians before Cyrus.

But Herodotus' straightforward picture of the Persians of Cyrus' time bears every mark of truth. It has never been contradicted; and it thoroughly explains their marvellous career. Only this makes us pause, — that the Persians whom he must have seen, the actual rulers of Western Asia, were obviously very different from the Persians of his picture. Did he really see at Babylon many of the conquering race? Was his account of them a tradition in the memories of the conquered people, not yet effaced by time? Or how otherwise could he have penetrated through the luxurious and barbarous degeneracy of the Persians of his day, — of which he was fully aware, since he refers it to the influence of Media, — to ideal he gives us of a hardy mountain tribe, of rare desty, dignity, and self-discipline, a national personality

so compact and resolute that it wrought on the feebler *morale* of the older races with the power of fate? The startling contrast to all this, revealed in Plutarch's Life of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the contemporary of Herodotus, renders it a puzzle to comprehend how the old ideal Persians could have been discerned except through traditional survival in the minds of their subjects. On the other hand, such a reputation speaks forcibly for the truth of the picture. And there are good grounds in the character of the historian why we should separate the psychological part of it from the mythological, and accord to the one a credence we must refuse to the other.

That the Persians of Cyrus were the ideal of all the Greek historians does not prove that the picture itself was purely ideal. Nothing but the force of truth seems likely to have extorted such tributes from a people who habitually regarded other races as barbarians, and who must have been specially jealous of the rapid rise to empire of a rude mountain tribe, whose arms were reaching down to the shores of the Ægean. The mingled contempt and fear felt by the Ionian cities toward this Iranian horde advancing upon them over the ruins of Nineveh is illustrated by the advice given to Crœsus by his courtiers, not to waste his time and labor in subjugating these poverty-stricken and worthless barbarians, who, once in Lydia, might do mischief.[1] But a stronger witness to the truth of Herodotus' tribute is found in certain vestiges of those hardy and heroic manners surviving in the well-known institutions of the later Achæmenide empire. Plutarch tells us that the kings of Persia at that period still ate figs and drank milk at their coronation, in memory of the ancestral customs of their race.[2] Xenophon, who may be trusted when he speaks of the Persians of his own day, says they still retained the robust educational principles and gene

[1] Herodotus, i. 71. [2] *Life of Artaxerxes.*

institutions which he describes as those of Cyrus' time, but carried them out in a very perverted way; and he notices the continuance of many ancient customs, such as bringing only small-sized bottles to their feasts and making only one meal a day, which were managed so as to defeat their original purpose. He evidently follows the general tradition when he holds the luxury and cruelty of the court of Persia as all the worse for the heroic manners from which it had fallen away.[1] The rugged tribes devoted to their chiefs, led by Cyrus from their herds and hunting-grounds to startle the pampered Lydians, with their spare diet and clothing of skins, living on what they could get, strangers to wine and wassail, schooled in manly exercises, cleanly even to superstition, so loyal to age and filial duties that parricide was inconceivable to them, hating falsehood as something atrocious, may well be needed to explain certain subsequent traits which Herodotus has recorded of the Persians of his own time,[2] — their pride of personal independence, that held the owing of a debt the next worse thing to telling a lie, and despised the markets of Greek cities as schools of trickery;[3] their scorn of talking about things that ought not to be done; their care to wean their affections from over-dependence upon keeping their children under their own sight; the high honors they paid to their birthdays, and their esteem for another nation in proportion to its relationship to themselves; their fondness for social grades and regulated manners; their feudal dignities, the chiefs giving counsel to the king, even while thoroughly submissive to his person, just as Cyrus himself had been in these conferences but as *primus inter pares*, and laid before the Persian nobles his plan of rebellion against the Mede; the strong instinct of national importance and destiny, which grew naturally out of this personal

[1] *Cyropædia*, viii. 18.

[2] Herodotus, i. 138, 139.

[3] Ibid., i. 153.

pride and force of will, and which made every man a part of the public purpose, working and praying for the whole nation, and particularly for the king's welfare, esteeming prowess even beyond progeny; above all, their stirring ambition to lose themselves in the great world-current, owing partly to magnetic sympathy and passion for personal contact, and partly to the sense of guidance by a victorious star, so that they were "readiest of all nations to accept foreign customs," and became apt pupils of Median excess.[1]

It would seem that nothing but the palpable persistence of those qualities to which had been traced the victorious career of the early Persians could have caused the Greek writers to pay such tributes as they did to the later civilization of the empire, in spite of its equally palpable depravity. It was no doubt only in the line of Xenophon's fine fiction to represent this people as teaching their children virtues as those of other nations were taught letters;[2] but Herodotus, Plutarch, Strabo, Ctesias, Curtius, Ammianus, Josephus, all of whom professed to write genuine history, point us likewise to their laws against ingratitude, against capital punishment for a first offence or without trial, against harsh treatment of households;[3] to the custom of setting the services of a slave against his offences in deciding on his punishment; to that of sometimes substituting the dress of a culprit for his person in inflicting the penalty;[4] to that of deliberating on public matters over their cups, but deciding only when sober;[5] to their signal valor at Platæa and Mycale; to their habitual reward of brave and noble conduct, in both sexes alike; to the interpretation of law by appointed judges;[6] to their belief that nothing was so servile as lux-

[1] Herodotus, i. 132–136.
[2] *Cyropædia*, i. 2.
[3] Herodotus, i. 137.
[4] Brisson: *De Regno Persarum*, p. 593.
[5] Herodotus, i. 133.
[6] Brisson, pp. 191, 192.

ury, nothing so royal as toil; to their religious respect for promises,[1] — most of which had doubtless such practical validity as an absolute monarchy might allow.[2] But these writers have not failed to notice how the intense loyalty of the elder time had degenerated into servility so absolute that the king expected to be thanked by the subject for the punishment he inflicted, and injustice itself was scored by its victim as a benefit;[3] a servility that amounted to worship, and accepted death as the penalty for proposing anything which should displease the king.[4] They have faithfully recorded such atrocities as burying men alive in honor of the elements; flaying judges for bribery; mutilation and stoning; acts of the cruellest caprice; and the shameless crimes of a court life, where monsters of the harem, male and female, ruled with shocking facility the weakest and the wickedest of tyrants.

It may help to reconcile these puzzling contrasts of Persian character if we regard the later Achæmenidæ as simply showing what results imperial self-idolatry had produced even in the line which had borne a Cyrus and a Darius, and which might, but for the fate of war, have found in the younger Cyrus a restorer of its ancient glory. Nor is it fair to judge the people of Persia by the vices of a court possessed by a fury like Parysatis, or a beast like Ochus. They retained the energy to hold their immense empire till another world-conqueror appeared in Alexander; and they preserved their hold on the imaginative and ideal interest of the Greek republics, whose whole political history also was swayed by the wonderful resources of "the great king." A glance at their psychological qualities will perhaps indicate how an excess of nervous energy, unbalanced by contemplation or by associated industry,

[1] Brisson, p. 187.
[2] Brisson, p. 488, from Plutarch's *Alexander*. Brisson, p. 596, from Josephus and Xenophon.
[3] Brisson, pp. 48, 49, from Stobæus' *Sermones*, xii.
[4] 49, from Varro, xii.

consumed itself in its own fires, till the central bases of authority gave way.

It has already been stated that the Persians, who ultimately mastered and absorbed all the tribes from Bactria to Semitic Assyria and Babylonia, may be taken as the typical Iranian race. Shown in their early monuments, as well as in their living representatives, the Tajiks and the Guebres, to have possessed an athletic and elegant physique and highly impressible senses, these Persians, — the Asiatic Greeks, — described as having oval faces, raised features, well-arched eyebrows, and large dark eyes, now soft as the gazelle's, now flashing with quick insight, were the antipodes of those stunted, square-faced, heavy and short-limbed Mongolian tribes, with which, under the name of Turan, they have waged incessant war. They were extremely receptive of moods, biasses, passions; the aptest learners, as they were the boldest adventurers of the East; not patient to study, not skilled to invent, but swift to seize, appropriate, and distribute; terrible breakers-up of old religious spells; Promethean conductors of monopolized fire out into world-wide use; mediators between the sealed thought of the East and the stirring life of the West; and, with all their absolutism, the heralds of liberty. They dissolved the stern old material civilizations of Cushite and Turanian origin, and made them flow to fertilize history, as they had already irrigated the Mesopotamian plains. What magnetic attractions; what passion for vast conquests; what quickness to learn the arts of sensuality and display! Persian magnificence lasts to the very end; from Achæmenidan to Seljuk Turk, from Darius to Alp-Arslân, the boundless ambition, the prodigality and pomp, the sweep of self-deification went on, with every successive dynasty that touched this soil, Parthian, Sassanide, Mongol, still thrilling with the old nerve-currents of this race; for Khosrû, for Timûr, the star of empire

forever beckoned. Herodotus makes Xerxes say to his nobles, "The Persians have never been quiet since the conquests of Cyrus; a deity is our guide, and ever assures us of triumph." "In olden times," says Æschylus, "a divine destiny compelled the Persians to demolish cities, and to brave with the frail tackling of their host-bearing ships the stormy ocean fields."

Here was a new fact in the Oriental world, — a race that believed alike in the actual and the ideal, holding firmly to both terms, following infinite longings like children, and mastering finite means like gods; no Hindu mysticism ignoring the seen; no Chinese matter-of-fact slipping away from the unseen. Every sculptured rock and every formula of prayer attests a religious earnestness not to be stiffened into ritual, or hardened into stone. So quick a sense of the ideal and so real an aspiration towards it could only be satisfied by constantly recognizing the higher personality of each individual as a real presence (*Fravashi*) hovering above his actual form, as protector and guide. The Highest God has his *Fravashi*, and commands Zoroaster to praise it.[1] Not less has every creature, for none can exist without its ideal, — the typical form to which it aspires, and through which it has life and strength.[2] These Fravashis were the better life of the universe, the blessedness of souls, invisible and serene; and with simple devoutness the Persian carved and painted them on his public works, and felt their mighty stress in the ardor of his practical will. Not less significant is his substitution of the ascending line in architecture for the horizontal style of Assyrian art.

This psychological sketch will be seen to illustrate sufficiently our position that the Persian mind was not the pure brain, not the passive muscle, but the flame-conductor between them, — in other words, nerve; and as India and

[1] Spiegel: *Vendidâd*, xix. 46.

[2] *Yaçna*, xvii. 43; xxiii.; liv. 1.

China, in all they did, showed an overplus of these two mental elements respectively, so Persia had this third or mediative element in excess.

We must not fail to note that all the Iranian races were more or less of the same type. Those splendid empires of Babylonia, Assyria, Media, and Persia, each in turn gathering these races into a single impulse or a succession of impulses, to be dissolved as swiftly as the great battery could well be discharged, blazing with perpetual jets of conquest and revolt, we may well, I think, call flashes of nerve-power. Spasmodic, irresistible, the first rush of this living lightning that man had felt within him, they spent themselves on the passionate effort to turn the human world into the play of their magnificent dreams. But the genius of the Persians lifted this element to its ideal form. Well might they take the sun for their emblem, and call their kings by its name.[1] Well might the flashing globe be hoisted on the royal tent, and the golden eagle on the standards, when their glorious Mithra arose above the eastern mountains, giving the sign for the march of those vast armies resplendent with all the circumstance of courts and cities, sweeping the tribes into their torrent, and pouring them on in heat ungovernable till they broke in quivering fragments on the balanced solidity of Greek genius. "The impetuous lord of many-peopled Asia," sings Æschylus again, "urges his godlike armament against every land."[2]

But the ruin of the Persian was not the Greek phalanx only, or even chiefly.[3] Like the Hercules of the solar myth, seen on his gorgeous funeral pyre in the western sky, the Persian perished in his own fires. Cyrus indeed, the great, mild, generous conqueror, father of his people,

[1] Plutarch: *Life of Artaxerxes.* [2] *Persæ.*

[3] The Greeks really had little or no strategy; still less discipline. The accounts of tremendous losses by Persians in battle are probably exaggerations. See Mahaffy: *Rambles in Greece*, p. 194.

idol of Greek philosophy and romance, of Plato and Xenophon alike, in his short reign of thirty years (558–529 B. C.) made the little Persian satrapy or kingdom master of Asia from the Jaxartes to the Phœnician coasts; and, victor in all he undertook, he lay down at last, say most of his biographers, amid purple and gold, in his green paradise, under the truest and loftiest of all royal epitaphs, — "Here lies Cyrus, king of kings."[1] Only death satirized his ambition. But Cambyses, master of nations, must needs master Nature too, and so led his hosts against the sands of Egypt and Ethiopia, and the oasis of Ammon; and being discomfited, he came back an epileptic madman, to vent his rage on the priests of Apis and their sacred calf,[2] to violate temples and tombs, outrage his household, defy the traditions of his ancestral faith, bury his subjects alive, and die of fury on the news of a revolution, leaving no trace behind him in the Nile. And then Darius, the great organizer, and as humane as he was wise and thrifty, so beloved of Egypt for his friendliness to her people and her gods that they gave him alone the worship given their native kings, yet ventures not only to bridge the Bosphorus, but to cast a heterogeneous host of near a million men upon the Thracian wilderness to fight with famine and fire more than with human foes, escaping thence indeed through his wonderful personal resource, and effecting something beyond astonishing a zone of unexplored barbarians, since centuries elapsed before Persia suffered again from Scythian hordes. Then Xerxes, "yoking the ocean, equalling the gods,"[3] hurls a similar swarm upon Greece, set on by dreams and visions against

[1] So says the monument, which is apparently genuine. Herodotus has preserved the tradition that he died in a campaign against the barbarians of Scythia, and that his body was barbarously treated. i. 214.

[2] But see Brugsch Bey about these stories (*Egypt under the Pharaohs*, chap. xix.), especially that of Apis. Cambyses was as full of the idea of universal dominion as Cyrus. But Wiedemann affirms their truth (*Gesch. d. Aegypt.*, p. 230).

[3] Aeschylus: *Persæ*.

all good advice; and after praying to be permitted to subjugate Europe, and answering prayers of Greek refugees in the manner of a god, fares worse than the rest. The splendid bubble of European and African conquest which his father had put to his lips burst on their eager touch.'

Persian failures were mainly due to the vast scale upon which enterprises were projected and prepared. Ten thousand could have penetrated the deserts better than a million. A small army of picked troops might have made front in Greece after Salamis, but the huge horde took fright at its own unwieldiness, and the "king of kings" was the victim of a panic; and though Mardonius had still a great host, the prestige was gone, and his army, like a swarm of locusts, became dead heaps on the land and in the sea. The unity and discipline of Xenophon's famous Ten Thousand made them more than a match for the unmanageable levies of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and their retreat succeeded simply because the Persians had no organization, and no plan for cutting it off. Then the subject States revolted everywhere, and the throne of the Achæmenides crumbled away.

This empire militant was the overflow of unregulated redundant force, hurled forth in gushes of heady drift, and as reckless of waste as a strong boy in the heat of play. It was a rare combination of magnificence with industry, of energy and impressibility. For this thirsty oxygen rushed into the world of sense, with keen relish for all its savors, and plucked ideal raptures from all. The earth was nard and roses, let it come in what pungency it would. This royalty must represent the universe. It appropriated the best of all things; called its builders out of Phœnicia and Egypt, and its physicians from Greece.[1] To the splendid court of the Achæmenidæ all beings and climes must be tributary, all tributes without stint; their harems

[1] Herodotus, iii. 130; vii. 25, 34. Diodorus, i. 46.

the rifling of continents, watched by unsexed guards, the last refinement of jealousy and the self-irony of lust; their tables spread for fifteen thousand daily, though the king himself dined alone, and often frugally; their water brought in silver from the Choaspes, their salt from the Libyan desert, their wine from Syria, and their wheat from Æolia; a thousand pounds of incense came yearly from Arabia; from Armenia tens of thousands of horses and hundreds of thousands of sheep; from Assyria five hundred eunuch-boys to serve at feasts; where, too, they had large towns, all whose revenues went for breeding dogs, and royal stables on an enormous scale; and the daily tribute to the satrap amounted to a bushel of silver.[1] Megacreon of Abdera in a sally of wit advised his fellow-citizens to go to the temples and thank the gods that Xerxes dined but once a day.

The provincial satraps repeated all this on a smaller scale, though with the king's spies beside them, official "eyes and ears," to report their wealth and what became of it. Then there were the nobles, clothed in purple, with painted eyebrows and false hair and stilted heels, covered with jewels and perfumes, protected by gloves and parasols against cold and heat; so that Herodotus found a reason for the special softness of their skulls.[2] The summer and winter palaces rose on the heights of Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis, story above story, of wondrously jointed, massive stones, light and graceful, open like the Greek temple to air and sky, on gigantic platforms set with forests of lofty fluted pillars, not like the Median, of cypress and cedar, but of marble, and soaring through them more than sixty feet, with capitals of bulls or griffins resting on the lotos leaf, the ideal forms of ancient art.[3] Dreamy and delicious

[1] Heeren: *Asiatic Nations*, i. 89, 159, 260, *et seq.* Herodotus, i. 188, 192. Duncker from Ctesias, ii. 610. Gibbon, xxiii., xxiv.

[2] Duncker, ii. 626, 627, from Herodotus. Herodotus, iii. 12.

[3] Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, iii. 304.

with paradises, terraces, and hanging gardens on a colossal scale, Persia may well have wielded, even at that early day, the magical spells which were in after times to be woven about the world by her fountains, nightingales, roses, and wine.[1]

Yet it is obvious that results so prodigious were not achieved by an enervated race. This luxurious people obeyed the sturdy rules of Zoroaster. These world-absorbing kings, who had on their tables the first fruits of every land, were themselves under an ancient law not to eat or drink anything but native products.[2] They were irrigating the plains of Babylonia with all the old energy which had enabled their Semitic predecessors to draw three harvests a year from the fertile alluvion;[3] and a third of their revenue is said to have come from this satrapy alone.[4] "No spot on the globe, Egypt perhaps excepted, displays such masonry as the walls of Persepolis."[5] The Persians rejected the sun-dried brick of Babylonian architecture, and the thin slab-facings of Assyrian, and built platform and pile of solid stone. It was not a frivolous people that lifted those graceful pillar-stems which twenty-four centuries have not stirred. Great roads, beset with post-stations, and traversed by government couriers, "swifter, according to some," says Xenophon, "than the crane flies,"[6] carried safely a vast and busy intercourse, reaching from the steppes of Tartary to the shores of Greece. Over all these regions the genius of Darius organized under a single system, political and financial, the pregnant intermixture of races brought about by Assyrian wars and deportations. Nor did the innate preference of his people for agriculture prevent him from attempting to open canal communication between the Nile and

[1] See Ebers' novel, *An Egyptian Princess.*
[2] Xenophon: *Œconomicus.*
[3] Heeren, i. 151.
[4] Athenæus, bk. xiv.
[5] Herodotus, i. 192.
[6] Herodotus, viii. 98.

the Red Sea, only failing at last from some discovery as to the depth of level between the waters, or some other cause; and his travelling court and camp was itself the best market in the world. But for these constructive energies of the Persian kings, Alexander would have found no foothold for the lasting marriage of Europe with Asia, whose forerunners had crossed the floating bridge flung by Darius across the waters of the Bosphorus. The flourishing condition of Egypt when visited by Herodotus is ample witness to the excellence of Persian rule,[1] though the barbarous rage of Ochus against her gods, after the reconquest of Egypt, rivalled the worst excesses of Cambyses in his madness.

The Persian instructed his children to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth.[2] He rose with the sun, was used to bread-and-water diet at home and acorns and wild fruits on the hunt. When he was seen on foot, he was at work; when not at work, the noble steed was his idol and companion. He really scorned those who scorned toil. When the younger Cyrus led Lysander through his pleasure-grounds at Sardis, and told him he had planned and planted them with his own hands, the aristocratic Spartan looked incredulously on his golden chains and gorgeous robes. "I swear to you as a servant of Mithra," exclaimed the Prince, "that I never taste food till on my brows is the sweat of toil."[3] Strabo says, from Onomacritus, that the tomb of Darius bore the inscription: "Among the hunters I took the palm; what I would do, that I could."[4] Artaxerxes wore upon his person the worth of twelve thousand talents, yet shared the hardships of his army on the march, carrying quiver and shield, leading the way up the steepest places, and lightening the hearts of his soldiers by footing it twenty-five miles a day. The common people had a

[1] Wiedemann: *Gesch. d. Aegypt.*, pp. 242, 259.
[2] Herodotus, i. 136.
[3] Xenophon: *Œconomicus*, p. 6.
[4] Strabo, bk. xv.

religious respect for cultivating the earth and for preserving its signs of productive power.[1] They were loath to cut down ancient trees merely for fuel; but Artaxerxes solved their scruples by himself laying the axe to the finest one in his paradise, and letting the whole go freely to make night fires for his shivering men.[2] Their worship of Ormuzd made them watch and work with religious zeal, and obey the laws of purity and health as the first of duties. Their hatred of Ahriman made them wage life-long warfare against the barrenness and the noxious creatures that constituted his realm. Excess of loyalty to the idea of personal sway, not baseness, explains their amazing endurance under the cruelties of royal caprice. Adorers of the Flame, they shared the spirit of their maddest kings, and were as ready to throw away their lives on an impossibility as the kings were to command it. In war they were, beyond all the races they led forth, the terror even of the Greeks. Heraclides of Pontus based on their example his theory that luxury exalted men above littleness and fear.[3]

What has been said of the old Iranian races is illustrated in their sculpture. Of the wonderful vitality and vigor of the Assyrian hunting and battle scenes, I have already spoken. They are as realistic and practical as the Egyptian paintings of a similar kind, but have a poetic ardor of which that meditative race had no conception. The details of real life are wrought in a glow of spontaneity, by flashes of nerve-energy. The aim is not so much to render the exact image of the action as to convey the

[1] The agriculturalist was in honor; he is mentioned in the *Avesta* as the third class, after priest and soldier, and before tradesmen. *Yaçna*, xix. 18. In the Hindu system there is a trading but no farming caste, unless the Sudra, or lowest, may be so considered. Moreover, the order of the Persian classes, which are not castes, is not material, and implies no subordination.

[2] Plutarch's Lives (Langhorne), viii. 184.

[3] Athenæus, xii. Also Julian's tribute, in his *Cæsars*, to the valor and politeness of the Persians (Gibbon).

significance of it in art. There is no literalism about it; and it even contains hints of unconscious symbolism.

In some respects, Persian sculpture falls behind Assyrian. There is equal stiffness of outlines and failure of perspective, with certainly less elaboration of detail. But the ideal aspiration overflows all defects, and shows itself, both by choice of subjects and mode of treatment, to be the supreme gift of the Persian. Instead of common and domestic life, here are heroic combats of men with beasts, triumphant marches or processions bearing tributes, kings at worship or upon thrones; and always the literal fact melts into the symbol, the human meaning beyond and above it. The fighting bulls and lions are not brutes, but massive human strength and energy of will. You do not see this or that king fulfilling his functions; you see royalty, war, worship, in their significance for sense and soul.[1] There stands — Darius, it may be, the "king of kings," with plain fillet on his brow, short dress and naked arms, and a poise of limb that seems to make living force an attribute of repose; with one hand he grasps the horn of a semi-human monster, with the other drives the dagger home. There again, with equal majesty, he masters the man-like lion or the wild ass. There his human god is hovering above him in winged circle, and his right foot rests upon a prostrate man. Nine kings stand before him, low of stature, with bare heads and bound hands; and this the inscription: "When the lands rebelled against me, I fought nineteen battles and took captive nine kings: it was through the grace of Ormuzd that I did it. Thou who shalt be king hereafter, beware of sin, and punish it. So shall thy realm be invincible." [2]

We shall better understand what force there is in this term *nerve*, as applied to the Iranian races (Lydians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians), when we have fully

[1] Kugler: *Gesch. d. Baukunst*, i. 73–75, 94. [2] *Records of the Past*, i. 126, 127.

considered the fact that, whether Semite or Aryan, they were all worshippers of the Flame. What indeed but Fire could symbolize that ambition which no enterprise was vast enough to match, that sensuous susceptibility that turned everything into food for passionate desire. Yet the nobler elements of the moral ideal, — magnanimity, ardor, devotion to the best, — are also equally natural fruits of that "purity in thought, word, and deed," which Zoroaster taught his followers was the meaning of the creative Fire. A devouring flame is like the lusty youth of human aspiration, as these races made manifest: undisciplined, capable of ideal good and ideal evil, their darkness and their light were two warring powers for the conquest of the world. The lassitude and exhaustion of their mighty efforts, the despotic license and caprice that constructed world-empires, the swift disintegration of ill-organized power; the gigantic sweep of vision and desire, the impulse to universality, the sense of movement never to pause nor turn back, — what word shall express the meaning and function of all this in the development of man?

Frequent as its analogue may be in the life of individuals, the phenomenon will never again be seen in the history of nations. Psychologically, as well as geographically, Iran was the transition from Oriental to Western civilization. Never again can the psychical brain, muscle, nerve of the human races be so separated that in each civilization one element shall be in overwhelming excess of the others, as these studies have shown them to have been in the Hindu, the Chinese, and the Persian civilizations previous to the maturer fusion of these forces in the development of Europe, which has in fact been in this respect the flowering of the mediative Iranian type of mind. The intercourse of races, the fusion of temperaments and beliefs, the scientific knowledge and rise of universal laws, has insured a more balanced activity of the human facul-

ites in every civilized people than was possible under the older isolating conditions. Yet we have also seen that the vital germs of all that we now hold to be best were vigorous enough to prove, even in these fragmentary ethnic types, that the moral and spiritual nature needed no supernatural grafting nor change of law. What was needed is equally plain. In place of the pure thought of the Hindu and the plodding work of the Chinese, we have now a third type, which conducts the cerebral into muscular energy, and makes both effective. The Iranian mind was thus the first mediator on an ethnic scale between thought and work, ideal and real, mind and its material, and therefore the harbinger of progress. We may say that the function of Persia, as its leading representative, was to be herald of the claims of the infinite to mould the finite, of the ideal to become real; but herald only because its special quality always was in excess. What India and China represented is not therefore superseded. Without due balance from brain and muscle, the nerve-fire must consume itself. And so we who inherit in special the gift of Iran are working out those of India and China too, but under freest conditions; which must create a fourth type of mind, including more than brain, muscle, and nerve, because it is these in the proper unity of their relations.

To arrive at the full meaning of our relation to the Iranians, we must translate the physiological symbol into philosophical terms, which represent the self-affirmation of the ideal in its cruder stage; namely, as has been said, the exaltation or worship, of personal Will. Deficient in the cerebral and muscular types of mind, this factor conjoins the two in the form of a concentrated energy of aim. Will, the true force of personality, is thus the supreme ideal of those races whose life is not in thought as thought, nor in work as work, but in the act of converting the one into the other; that is, in action itself as action. The his-

tory of this ideal is written in the faiths and cultures whose cradle is Western Asia, and whose maturity constitutes modern civilization. We live amid its closing epochs, full of the foregleams of a higher and better worship than that of personal Will; and the study of its opening phases, in the Iranian empires, so typical of what has succeeded them, will greatly help us to understand where we are.

The self-deification of Iranian monarchs was simply a political expression of the faith of their peoples in the ideal of personal Will. However rapidly leaving behind them the extremes of what is called "personal government," Europe and America still embody this ideal in their anthropomorphic religious beliefs. They deify not only the higher forms of human virtue, but also human qualities fully in keeping with Oriental autocracy in its worst forms. Assyrian or Persian royal barbarities pale before the systematic cruelty ascribed to the God of Christian creeds, and defended in his name. The worship of the Achæmenidan king was thus in its evil as well as its good the natural germ of the worship of a Christ. A personal Divine Will is at the root of both forms of incarnation, however different in many moral and spiritual respects may be the Zoroastrian and the Christian God. These specially religious bearings of the subject will hereafter come under consideration. At present we must show how thoroughly the ancient Persians represented the nerve-type, the authority of personal Will.

The testimony of Greek and native writers makes it highly probable that the old Persians inherited the social organization which recent researches have shown to lie at the base of Indo-European as well as Sclavonic and Mongolian society, — that of the Village Community, where the family household was the social unit, expanded by adoption and other fictions into clans bound together by traditional usages and more or less hereditary functions. But

however this may have been, we find them advanced to a higher stage of individualism for which the mere village community afforded no place. While many of the tribes were free nomads, the most appear to have been agricultural; and society had developed into a congeries of clans, which the Avesta describes as under the "chieftainship of heads of families, of villages, of tribes, and of provinces, with Zoroaster for the fifth,"[1] and as divided into four classes, "priests, soldiers, farmers, and artisans," among whom there seems to have been no distinction, at least as to choice of spiritual guides, which was "the duty of every righteous man."[2]

These chiefs (*Pehlevânân*) had become nobles in a kind of feudal constitution, wherein the king was limited by the free traditions of certain heroic families, or individuals, who were often closely related to the royal house, and had scarcely inferior following; led the armies of the kingdom, could act the offended Achilles, if they pleased, with great effect, and were, if they chose to be so, the real pillars of the throne. They are the heroes of the Persian epic,[3] and their allegiance appears to have been a traditional loyalty rather than any sense of inferiority.[4] They regard the king, as the Homeric heroes regard Agamemnon, with conditional and provisional respect, simply as meeting their necessity for gathering around a central Will. This, it will be perceived, is obviously such an outgrowth of the tribal patriarchalism which lies at the basis of all ancient society, as would naturally become a people in whom the worship of will was a growing instinct. In nothing does this instinct more strongly appear than in their intense feeling of the dignity of their own persons, and of their divine function or commission as a people to

[1] *Yaçna*, xix. 17, 1.

[2] See also Spiegel: *Erân Alterth.*, bk. v. chap. i.; Herodotus, i. 125, 101; Spiegel, i. 555; Haug: *Essays*, etc.

[3] Mânoshchihr, Sâm, Zâl, Rûstam. 188.

[4] Spiegel: *Erân Alterth.*, i. 555, 556.

incarnate a kind of personal sovereignty. They were thoroughly aristocratic, therefore; the worship of will is essentially so, because it rests on an inherent right of command, and would not be will if it had not subject powers. For the Persian noble, his own dignity was a religious charge. His education, so full of generous discipline and incentives to public service, cut him off from the masses, who, as Herodotus distinctly tells us, had not the means nor leisure for such culture, free and open as it was. For his king he must be ready to die, yet his own self-respect makes him the king's counsellor; and neither Cyrus nor Darius does aught of moment without consulting his peers.[1] The Greeks with one accord put into their mouths, often doubtless with truth, at least to custom, wise maxims and brave advice. A conspiracy of seven nobles overturns the usurper who pretended to the name of *Smerdis*, as Cyrus and his leagued nobles had revolted against the Mede. By their united councils, according to Herodotus, every form of government was canvassed, the monarchical deliberately selected, and Darius chosen as king by an appeal to signs from heaven. They were called *Khshaêta* (*Shâh*), the same as the king; dressed as he did, coined money,[2] held courts. He was only *pâdishâh*, chief of the chiefs; or *Shâhân-Shâh*, king of the kings of Iran, — and under them were chiefs of lower order.[3]

Observe the dignity to which these high-born Persian wills were trained. Their education was not in reading and writing, which are democratic, but in manners, — how

[1] Gobineau's fascinating picture of the free life of the Iranian feudatories, whom Cyrus not changed to subjects, contains perhaps a good measure of truth. But its main sources are rows but the Greek writers, but later traditions, Persian and Mussulman; and the *Avesta* little light on the subject.

[2] "The right of coining money was a right inherent in every community in the Persian the whole period empire, great or small. Local sovereigns and satraps exercised it during of that empire." (Waddington, quoted in *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xxi. 442.) The Arsacide coins, investigated by Levy in this article, as shown to be the earliest Pehlevi literature, prove this.

[3] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, i. 467.

to bear themselves towards each other. They were so clothed that no naked part of the body appeared, to offend another's eye; they kept silence at meals; they guarded their emotions, allowed themselves no outbreak of surprise or delight; did not spit or blow the nose before others; at meeting they kissed, but spoke not,—a Spartan self-restraint; a Spanish hauteur and distance.

But better than this was their theory, at least, of moral self-respect. To lie was cowardice; the secret falsehood that made one ashamed to look in his neighbor's eye was the unpardonable sin. After lying, the greatest of sins was to owe another, and so make oneself his slave.[1] The unspoken hint of honor in the pressure of the hand was the most binding of pledges. Artaxerxes, according to Ctesias, was persuaded by Megabyzus to hold to his promise of pardon to a rebel, who was discovered after capture to have murdered the king's brother.[2] Laws against ingratitude had their basis in the idea of falsehood implied by that vice. This respect for truth and this horror of lying as contamination are here very largely incidents of pride, and associate the beginnings of personal worship with the sense of honor and the law of duty. The cultivation of them had become in the Persian nobles a tradition of their personal dignity. In the history of personality as an ideal principle their prevalence in the early civilizations is of great significance, and will be more fully considered hereafter. Though found at the threshold of all those ethnic faiths and forms which conspired to the production of our own, they are perhaps nowhere so emphasized as in Persian ethics. Thucydides says of this people, that with them it was held better to give than to receive. Their schools, according to Xenophon, were placed aloof from the noises of trade, that the eager passions of those who were haggling with each other might not disturb their culture of

[1] Plutarch: *Artaxerxes.* [2] Ctesias, 34-37.

justice and self-control.[1] He doubtless reports a traditional ideal at least, when he says that in his day the young nobles were brought up at the court, that they might not see anything immodest.[2] Cyrus spurns the Greek cities on the score of their great markets;[3] and Strabo even says of educated Persians, that they will have nothing to do with buying and selling.[4] This would be contrary to Zoroastrian precept if it meant indolence, and served to distinguish them from the masses, who most certainly did labor, and pay respect to whatever trading it involved. The Persian cities did not show any lack either of toil or traffic. It was natural enough for the national ideal of personal dignity to have its extreme representatives in a class who made pursuit of this ideal their exclusive business, and a function guarded from all suspicion or suggestion of self-seeking. "The Persians," says a careful student of their manners, "strove for the ideal, — the great, noble, manly, true; yet forgot not the practical world."[5] This is in accordance with the views already stated; contempt for traffic is one thing, and contempt for toil is another. The Persian noble was a laborer, as his faith enjoined; but in his day the connection of labor with the art of "doing business" was not so palpable as it now is, while its religious meaning lay in its direct association with the earth, in the toils of production, not of distribution. The Persians were made for soldiers; their ideal was of the heroic type, and the arts they found congenial were those which fitted them to master the world and prepare the way for vital civilizations. Such arts could culminate only in the culture of such personal qualities as self-reliance, self-assertion, and absolutism of will. In their noblest form, these qualities became a lofty magnanimity, which knew how "to spare

[1] *Cyropædia*, i. 2.
[2] *Anabasis*, i. 9.
[3] Herodotus, i. 153.
[4] Strabo: *De Situ Orb.* xv.
[5] Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, xx. 128).

fallen enemies," to reject the death penalty for a single offence, and to forbid even kings to treat their slaves with harshness.[1]

This self-respect, in so many ways characteristic of the Persians, was to a great degree a form of pride. Here, for the first time in human history, we find the sense of a really historic function. The confluence and conflict of Asiatic races had necessitated the appearance of a select tribe capable of commanding these vast materials, whose ferment was now heading towards a definite world-result. The force must be in personal Will, not in mass nor even in organization, — in will, conscious of right to rule, and intensified both by self-indulgence and self-respect. In the Persian genius for sway begins that worship of personality which has been the shaping force for good and ill of European civilization.

Its absolutism may be illustrated by the treatment of woman. In Persia, far more than in India or China, she is subject to the will of man. Here the harem reaches its full development, and the eunuchs, or keepers of women, are installed around it. Here seclusion was but little modified by custom or by circumstance. In the inscriptions and sculptures woman is wholly ignored. One would not know there was any sex but the male. What a record of slavery is in that deportation by Darius of fifty thousand women to populate Babylon, drawn like tributes of food or cattle from the several provinces of the empire![2] or in the custom of taking concubines with the army on distant marches, in great numbers, and with luxurious attendance, and leaving wives at home under close supervision![3] or in that story of the concubine, dressed in splendid robes, who came to the Greek victors after Platæa,

[1] Herodotus, i. 137, 138; ix. 109. Gobineau, i. 403.
[2] Herodotus, iii. 159.
[3] See authorities in Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, iii. 238. Brisson, p. 549.

and besought them to deliver her from the Persian lord who had carried her off by violence and held her as a slave![1] The Persian could marry his nearest kindred,[2] and the law imposed on him no such strict commandment of chastity as the law of Manu enforced on the Hindu; still less did it resemble the sexual asceticism of the Buddhist. The will of the Persian was his law; and the story of the seven nobles sent to the king of Macedonia to demand earth and water, and who were all assassinated on account of their indecent behavior at a banquet towards the wives of their hosts, sounds all the more probable for being related by Herodotus of the Persians.[3] The demand of these ruffians that the Macedonian women, contrary to the custom of the land, should be brought out to sit with them at table, shows that in their own country even the rule of seclusion yielded to arbitrary will. The Biblical romance of Esther, to the same effect, tells us of the queen of Ahasuerus, that the king commanded her to appear before the crowd at a feast, and that she refused to obey. Artaxerxes was glad to have his queen Statira ride in an open chariot, that the country women might salute her; at the same time no male must approach or pass her, upon penalty of death.[4]

But, on the other hand, woman must have found her account in the national respect for personality itself. A son could not sit in his mother's presence without permission; and if a king, he occupied at table a place lower than hers. A law dating from Cyrus decreed that when the king entered a city, every woman in it should receive a piece of gold; and this was done in honor of the women who by their reproaches turned back his fleeing army in the Median war.[5] Cyrus, always the national ideal, had but one wife, and at her death commanded that the whole

[1] Herodotus, ix. 76. [2] Duncker, ii. 419. [3] Herodotus, v. 18–20.
[4] Plutarch: *Artaxerxes.* [5] Plutarch on the virtues of women.

nation should go into mourning.[1] His chivalrous treatment of women is a leading feature of Xenophon's portrait, and far surpasses anything of the kind in Greek manners. The education of the Persians in childhood belonged to the mother; and the crimes of Parysatis and Amestris prove that their customs permitted the queen, as wife and as mother, an almost absolute power in public and private affairs. In the later times of the empire women were made priestesses of Anaitis, or of the sun, and dedicated to chastity. The honor paid by Cyrus to women, their names given in the army-lists of Xerxes, and the constant reference to them as important political and social forces throughout the histories of the Achæmenide kings, are evidences of no slight recognition of female capacities and rights.[2]

In political as in domestic life, the ultimate appeal was to arbitrary Will. The law of the Medes and Persians,[3] that could not be changed, was nothing else than the rigor of the king's decree for the time being. Personal government, as developed in modern times, except in its theological form, is either limited by recognized laws and customs, as even the autocracy of the Czar; or checked by international relations, as that of the Sultan; or obliged to make appeal in some real or pretended way to the popular voice, as that of the French emperor. In China it is controlled by an immemorial ritual; in India, by an equally immemorial religious tradition. But the later Persian autocrat had the personal government of an omnipotent Will. There was no precept of the Persian national religion which he did not violate whenever he pleased; no foreign custom he did not adopt or reject as he preferred. It is entirely impossible to reconcile the Zoroastrian law with the history of any Achæmenide king. Cyrus punishes the

[1] Herodotus, ii. 1.

[2] Herodotus, vii. 61; Ctesias, *passim*. Plutarch: *Artaxerxes*. Justin, x. 2.

[3] Daniel, vi. 15.

(sacred) water of the Gyndes for drowning his horse, and Cambyses violates tombs and burns bodies. Cyrus is deterred from burning Crœsus not by religious scruples, but by sympathy and respect. Xerxes treats the Hellespont with contempt. There is no record of the Avesta ritual being performed by these kings, and their Magi were quite other than the Avestan Âthravâ. They gave the Greeks the impression which a sublime self-idolatry is wont to make on nations, of a divine right to rule; so that even Xenophon wrote his "Institutions of Cyrus" in order to show how the difficult problem of personal government and popular consent might be solved, and the world be ruled by one person whose character should cause all men to desire to be governed by his opinions and will.

Our Greek authorities make the rise (Cyrus), organization (Darius), and extension (Xerxes) of the empire pure products of individual Will. Only the royal personality holds together these loose principalities and tribes, its "eyes and ears" being omnipresent; and the satraps, Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus, by merely aping its desires and doings in their own spheres, are able to direct the fortunes of the free Greek States. It is the king's wisdom that conquers nations, as with Cyrus; the king's folly that loses battles, as with Darius at Issus; his iconoclastic rage that tramples old religions under foot, as with Cambyses in Egypt;[1] his person whom the enemy in battle makes the objective point, as when Cyrus the Younger made directly for Artaxerxes, and Alexander for the tent of Darius. Only one sin is known to the cuneiform records of nations subdued and punished, — "They rebelled against me, the king of kings, and deserved their fate at my hands." No sense of presumption in all this, no suspicion of wrong-doing, more than in the Hebrew Jahveh when he lifts up and

[1] But see Brugsch Bey's *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, chap. xix., where the stories of Cambyses' rage against Apis, etc., are denied, from the monuments.

casts down at his will. "I was not wicked," writes Darius, proudly, "nor a tyrant, nor a liar; neither I, nor any of my race. I have obeyed the laws; and the rights and customs I have not violated."[1]

We must not suppose that any Persian regarded this supremacy as an arbitrary Will imposed from without. The Hebrews were not the only "chosen nation." Every Persian shared the "manifest destiny" of his king. The king was the ideal. The fire was extinguished at his death. This was a nation of kings, of gods. They alone, of all subjects, paid no tribute to the throne. They were not ground into powder, like Assyrian or Babylonian multitudes at toil. Their chiefs associated with the king, reasoned and joked with him, gave him counsel, heard his schemes with approval or doubt.[2] But the rights of his will they did not doubt. Even in Herodotus' story that Cyrus persuaded them to join him in rebellion against the Medes by setting them at hard work one day and feasting them the next, to show them the difference between subjection and freedom, the prince acts as one who knows that he has authority to enforce their consent. Herodotus himself seems to have no other conception of him than as one divinely made for ruling men.[3] The boys at school elect him king. Astyages sees by his manners that he is a king in the disguise of a herdsman's child. He revolts against Media with no other visible authority to seize the empire than a spurious letter appointing him general of the Persian levies. His studious regard for feudal rights and personal feelings is made by Xenophon to appear, as we have already said, as a conscious policy of conferring liberties and lavishing favors that men might feel free in an obedience that flowed naturally from gratitude and love. And in after

[1] Behistun, iv. 13.

[2] The old heroic legends of the native Iranian chronicles, preserved in Firdûsî and Hamza, make the relation of the king to his chiefs the same as we find it in Herodotus.

[3] Herodotus, v. 121.

days, when the taste of power had become sweet to the pampered lords of Persia, the "king of kings" takes care to protect his supremacy by putting the provinces under governors of native birth.[1] Alexander pursued the same policy, and thereby offended Greek and Macedonian pride of race and desire of exclusive power.

Historically, then, the beginning of respect for personality is in aristocratic institutions; not in honor to an ideal self, in which all may prospectively share, but in a kind of worship for powers of will, great enough to distinguish some persons above all others. In India, the ideal is in a religious law, embodied in a hereditary priesthood. In China, it is a labor-power embodied in a homogeneous multitude. In Persia, it has become a strictly personal Will embodied in an individual, a class, a tribe, who are capable of showing its power. The early Persians chose their bravest for king, and they never forgot the connection between authority and personal energy. Darius was himself, like Cyrus, the choice of a body of revolting chiefs. Although absolute over his satraps, he was satirized by his nobles. "Cyrus ruled as a father, Cambyses as a master, Darius as a trader."[2] Yet the administrative force of this politic ruler was what made Persia an empire; and while his nobles were free to criticise, they failed not to recognize the mighty constructive will that was felt alike at the centre and circumference of his dominions, restraining, balancing, harmonizing powers, and reconciling the intellectual, social, and even religious differences of the tribes. The mildest of conquerors, the mediator of nations, explorer of the continent, opener of the ways from sea to sea,[3] Darius stands, perhaps, the strongest justification in history for the worship of personal Will.[4] The weakness

[1] Gobineau, ii. 43. [2] Herodotus, iii. 89. [3] Ibid., iii. 135.

[4] It is the report of Diodorus that Darius was the only king who had been deified by the Egyptians in his lifetime, and that they rendered him after his death the same honors which they were wont to pay to their ancient kings. Diodorus, i. 95.

of his successors could not stand the ideal test that Persian freedom still knew how to apply; and real power passed gradually from their hands into those of overbearing court favorites and satraps of energy and skill, and even of Greek generals and refugees.

There is thus a very positive sense in which we can speak of Persian freedom. Not a democratic sense of the word, but one that meant rights and powers, and even anticipated very important elements in Greek liberty, — which was always more or less an appeal by the masses to personal government by the strongest will, and on the part of the more thoughtful minds, such as the Socratic school, a protest against crude democracy as usurping the political rights of the best and highest wills. Not more pronounced was the Greek consciousness of manifest national destiny than that Persian sense of a great historic function which every Persian noble shared with his king. It ran in their blood, as in his, to make the world their footstool. The proudest autocrat could not disregard this community of faith and feeling, nor fail to consult it. Xerxes, on the whole, despite a few terrible acts of power, the most forgiving of kings, persuading his lords to make war on Greece, says: "I only pursue the path appointed me. From the beginning we Persians have never been at rest: a deity impels us. I need not recount the conquests of my predecessors. Sufficient to say, I am resolved to invade Greece and punish Athens. But that I may not seem to act arbitrarily, I commit the matter to your reflection, allowing every one to speak with freedom."[1] Influenced by certain chiefs to give up the plan, he is again brought to his first resolution by supernatural visions, which call him to fulfil his destiny, and march to universal sway.[2]

We have here the explanation of the remarkable fact that the "Great King" was in many ways an ideal, politi-

[1] Herodotus, vii. 8. [2] Ibid., vii. 19.

cal and ethical as well as religious, to the Greek republics. The germs of liberty in Persian life were quite sufficient to overcome their reluctance to accept what would seem to be directly contrary to the individualism of these warring democracies. Not only were the literary representatives of a citizenship that refused to prostrate itself before a throne so fascinated by the "Great Barbarian" that his institutions are the material of their Utopias, but the party and personal strifes of Greek States are constantly referred to him for settlement, and their exiles compete for his favorable interference. This was not so much a tribute to his wisdom or humanity (although the ethical contrast of king and politician is usually by no means to the credit of the latter) as it was a recognition of the necessity on the part of a swarm of bitter partisans to take refuge from political chaos in the grandeur of one omnipotent Will. The Greek republics were nowhere based on a universal principle; the liberty they pursued was the liberty to will and to do; and here was its ideal embodied, not in the personal centre of the State alone, but in the prestige and pride of the chiefs of families and clans. The majestic proportions of this development of personal power; its day of judgment for the weak empires of the East; its splendid illustration of capacity in Cyrus and Darius, and of magnificence in Xerxes; the colossal growth that pointed back to sturdy simplicity and self-control, and the consciousness of immense educational obligations in art and science, — combined to produce an effect on Greek imagination it would not be going too far to call religious. Xenophon, who had led his Ten Thousand on the most perilous march in all antiquity, and who had fully learned the superiority of the Greeks as soldiers to Persian levies and leaders, was not a man to be dazzled or awed by a mere Eastern despot, least of all by an Artaxerxes in the last stages of Persian decline. Yet it is Xenophon who has paid the highest

possible tribute to Persian institutions. And Plato himself is scarcely behind him in the praises of these institutions, and especially of the training of the kings, which he puts into the mouth of Socrates, who contrasts them with the moral and religious crudeness of Greek disciplines.[1] No deity could compare with Destiny for Hellenic reverence. And the infection of the Persian's confidence in his star greatly helped to bring about the extraordinary fact, that Cyrus the barbarian became the politico-religious ideal of the cultivated Greek.

This religious prestige, which gathered about Cyrus from the first moment of his appearance on the historic field, so rapidly covered his name with mythic honors, that but few definite facts can be discerned through their haze. The coming of a great man seems to dwarf history and open the gates of imagination for the common mind. Nature melts at his coming into poetry and legend, and the world inherits a new meaning from the soul of man with which it is slow to part. As late as the second century of Christianity, Pausanias interrupts his praise of Antoninus to say that in his opinion Cyrus was after all the "father of mankind."

Greek testimony leaves us in doubt whether Cyrus was Persian or Mede; while a third theory made him both, giving rise to the story that an oracle had warned Astyages against the coming of a mule to the throne.[2] This notion of a mixed origin impressed itself on the Persian heroic legend, as appears in the later Shâh-Nâmeh, where he is the son of an Iranian father and a Turanian mother; and the Mahometan prose historians follow the tradition.[3] His name has stood for the communion of races and religions, the pride of each making him its conquest and its crown. Both the Hebrew and the Mussulman

[1] First Alcibiades, 36, 37. [2] *Description of Greece*, viii. 43.
[3] Mirkhond.

tradition claim him as their convert. A Mahometan poem of the twelfth century, working up earlier beliefs, derives him from a female demon (*d.v*), gives him a hideous countenance and immense strength, in other words, makes him a barbarian; rescues him from exposure in the forests, and educates him in Iran, where he recurs to barbarian faith and habits, but recovers himself, conquers Turan, becomes the saviour of his people and the master of the world.[1] Then falling from grace, and exalting himself as God, he is punished by rebellion, and converted to the true faith and ethics by meeting a hermit in the forest, who humbles his pride and teaches him the wisdom and might of Allah. This, as the reader will observe, follows the usual dealing of Semitic religions with the names of great heathens whom they could not but respect. But it is also the ordinary type of the old Iranian legend, as in Yima. In the same way the older Shâh-Nâmeh transports him and his paladins to practise devotions among the holy mountains of Elburz, making the old Iranian feudalism end in mystical piety. And Mirkhond, who collected the Islamized traditions of old Persian kings (fifteenth century), describes Kai-Khosrû, by that time probably identified with Cyrus, as the benefactor of laborers and the saviour of his country, and makes him at last a Sufi, who prays for release from self and absorption into God, — "convinced," after a hundred years of success in all his desires, that "this world is but a mirage, and we the thirsty travellers"![2]

The infancy and growth of Cyrus, as treated by the mythologists, are of messianic type. The similarity of the mythic forms by which national religions express the sense of gratitude to an appointed deliverer, and of the bitter resistance he meets from the evil he comes to overthrow, is fully illustrated in the cycle of legends of Herodotus,

[1] *Kuschnameh*, or History of Cyrus. See Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses.*
[2] Shea: *Kings of Persia*, p. 260.

in the dream of Mandane prefiguring her son's glory, the dream of Astyages that his throne was in peril from his own grandson; in his consulting the Magi, and commanding the death of the child; in the escape of Cyrus through the power of Destiny; in the king's merciless revenge on his counsellors and agents, and his discovery of the boy's identity by the innate royalty of his behavior among his playfellows and before the great men. These legends, and those of his maturer life, of which Xenophon's romance is also a variation, must have been very largely of Persian rather than Greek origin. Their extension shows how widely spread was the recognition of a vast and beneficent change wrought by Cyrus in the west of Asia. They are of great value as indicating the far higher civilization introduced by the Persians in place of the Median. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between their picture of Median despotism and barbarism, and that which Xenophon has ventured to draw of the splendid humanity and statesmanly policy of Cyrus. It points strongly to a difference of race, and gives color to Oppert's recent theory in explanation of the different lists of kings in Herodotus and Ctesias, — that Median civilization was Turanian.

The same ideal prestige ascribed to Cyrus that choice wisdom of apologue, parable, and proverb which Hebrew admiration ascribed to Solomon, and Christian to Jesus. His symbolical appeal to the Persian nobles already mentioned; animal legends, such as the letter sent to them sewed up in a hare's belly, and the suckling of Cyrus by a dog (an etymological myth); his parable of the piper and the foolish fishes,[1] told to the chiefs who had only submitted to him when compelled; and the maxims of political and moral wisdom which are ascribed to him by the Greeks, — that those who would not do good for

[1] Herodotus, i. 141.

themselves should be obliged to do good for others, that no one ought to govern who was not better than those he governed, and that the Persians should not change their rocky and rude country, because the seeds of plants and the lives of men resemble the soil they inhabit;[1] above all, his relation with Crœsus, of which we are about to speak more fully, — all show the drift of gnomic and oracular repute to this favorite of the gods.

As the hero of philosophical romance, Cyrus receives in Xenophon's "Cyropædia" the finest personal tribute of the kind now mentioned in all antiquity. Here he acts the part of an ethical and political saviour, coming into the world with authority and insight to rectify all wrong. He is the incarnation of "sweetness and light." He shows this absolute function in rebuking Median luxury and intemperance, even as a boy; in conveying reproof and instruction to his chiefs by elaborate logic, practical illustrations, aphorisms, and even cheerful raillery and ready wit, and to soldiers, courtiers, sages, not only in a constant didactic tone, like the Socrates of Plato or the Jesus of the Gospels, but in a minute pedagogy, as if authorized to create anew in every detail the administration of society and law. He is more than teacher; he is the centre of teachers, who lay at his feet all the experience of man, that in him it may be lifted to universal ends. All that the Socratic Xenophon has imbibed from the best society of the ancient world is not too much to be worked up into the mere outfit for this inspired guide of mankind, not in the theory and practice of the virtues only, but in the most difficult functions of political and military life. At the feet of his father, Cambyses, he listens respectfully to maxims of faith and conduct which have never been surpassed, — that the gods act according to laws; that we should pray only after striving to render ourselves such as

[1] Plutarch: *Apophthegms of Kings.*

we ought and hope to be, holding it impious to ask the gods for gifts we do not struggle to earn; that there is no way of *appearing* wise so certain as to *be* wise; that the commander's care of his army should be of a nobler sort than merely to keep physicians to cure their diseases, even the wisdom to prevent their falling sick; that by perfect sympathy he should win their confidence and love, — to which ends hosts of practical maxims are supplied.[1] How humbly he accepts the paternal admonition never to use the Persians for his own interest alone! How respectfully he listens to the Lydian king, till the day of his falling into his own power the wisest and greatest of earthly kings,[2] ever consulting his prudence and tact, and moved to tenderness by his sufferings; learning from his downfall the instability of success; requiting his noble confession of insufficiency to contend against the greater one whom Destiny had provided by the generous restoration of his family and goods![3] How he caps these lessons of human pride and failure with the royal philosophy, that happiest is the man who can earn most through justice, and use most with honor![4] By what choice disciples he is surrounded! Tigranes thrills his soul by describing the sage (a reminiscence of Socrates) who forgives his king for condemning him to death "since he knows not what he does."[5] Chrysantas delights to discern in him the proofs that a good prince can be a good father of his people, and only adds to his master's ethics of rational obedience that reason which his own modesty had not emphasized, — the right of one to claim it whose fitness to lead men to their own best good was past all doubt.[6] Gobryas praises his simple and hardy habits; and having committed a beautiful daughter to his care, is rewarded by his assurance that to enjoy such confidence is a more precious treasure in his sight than all the wealth

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, i. 6.
[2] Ibid., viii. 2.
[3] Ibid., vii. 2.
[4] Ibid., viii. 2.
[5] Ibid., iii. 1.
[6] Ibid., viii. 1.

of Babylon.[1] Pheraulas, whose courage to withstand the temptations of riches, and to exchange their burdens for independence with poverty, finds an appreciative king.[2] And both father and mother warn him to govern, unlike the Median kings, by obeying the laws, and never to imagine that one man ought to possess more than all others.[3] He believes that even the worst men will think it a service to themselves that the best should have the leading of them.[4] He holds everything noble or beautiful possessed by his subjects to be an ornament to himself. He rejects great presents, even those of gratitude, saying, "You shall not make me such a man as will run up and down, bartering my services for money." He "lays up resources by means of his conduct."[5] He treats women with noble delicacy and deep respect,[6] and his advice to young men on matters of love are mingled with genial humor. He opens battle with prayer: "They who fear the gods in peril, are all the less afraid of men."[7] He creates not only a perfect commissariat and perfect discipline, but an *esprit de corps*. He disparages excited appeals to soldiers, as compared with the systematic culture of valor and virtue. He conducts war with unheard-of mildness, dismissing prisoners, forgiving foes, slaying only those in arms, leaving the nations free from exactions and service. He frees slaves and makes them soldiers.[8] He pities heroic men in defeat and fighting hopelessly, and even draws off his conquering army to preserve their lives.[9] He treats his allies with great delicacy, deferring the dinner-hour for himself and his army till their arrival, as well as all partition of booty, and doing nothing without regard to their feelings. He wins all hearts not only by nobility

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, v. 2, 3.
[2] Ibid., viii. 3.
[3] Ibid., i. 3; viii. 5.
[4] Ibid., ii. 2.
[5] Ibid., iii. 12.
[6] See dying address to his sons.
[7] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, iii. 3.
[8] Ibid., iv. 4, 6.
[9] Ibid., vii. 1.

and kindness, but also by tact, overcoming in this way the jealousy of Cyaxares the Median king, whom he supersedes in the love of the army, and who finds himself reduced to a cipher by the man he has made general of his troops.[1] He takes up the cause of laboring men, sees that the agricultural populations are well cared for, and praises the lot of those who live by honest toil. He enforces division of labor. He lays down wise principles of production and distribution, and living use of capital, and prescribes due order in all administration, makes litigants go to referees, raises the best to power without distinction of rank, sends judges through his States to rectify disorders, and opens postal roads and stations for swift couriers. He honors the fine arts, and spares Sardis on their account. For himself, he is better pleased to give than to receive, and leads others by force of example to virtue. He is husband of one wife, and thoroughly loyal to his vows. He excels not so much in military conduct as in love of man, and dies grateful for a life of perfect success, exhorting his children to love each other, to believe in immortality, and next to the gods to seek the good of all mankind. He enjoins that no splendor be seen about his remains, which must be as speedily as possible returned to earth.

This noble ideal is marred by the limitations of its framer and the conditions of the age. Xenophon's Cyrus, assuming the necessity of willing obedience to a good-willing power from those who have been used to servitude or must be held to it, attempts to reconcile these conditions by a training which presumes them all, and treats the subjects of it with the tenderness of a father for his children, while depriving them of the right of bearing arms and disqualifying them from even desiring the means of freedom.[2] This is

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, v. 4, 5; vii. 4; viii. 3.
[2] Ibid., viii. 1–8.

a piece of Xenophon's Spartan prejudices, quickened to a sense of the duties involved in it for one of such humanity as Cyrus. It was probably in accordance with the observed customs of the Persians of his day, that Xenophon, for the same purpose of securing authority to the world-rulers, makes Cyrus advise his countrymen to wear high shoes to appear taller than they were, and to paint their faces to give them beauty and dignity.[1] His statement that the "adoration" he reports Cyrus to have received for the first time from the Persians on his state-procession from the palace in Babylon, as the spontaneous tribute of his people, should have been allowed him by the cultured Greeks (they certainly refused it to the later Achæmenidan kings), is only to be explained by his sense of a special divine authority in Cyrus to receive the world's worship as the "Star in the East" of a religious faith. How natural it was to form this personal theory of the origin of the Persian custom appears in the later deification of Jesus, even in his infancy, when Christianity had become a religious power, and needed verification of its claims in the history of its founder. The personal character of Xenophon's admiration of Persian royalty is shared by Plato, who makes his Athenian guest in "The Laws" praise Cyrus and his men for moderation in the exercise of power, sharing their freedom with others, and leading them to equality; the magnanimous king "granting liberty of speech to all who were able to advise," so that "progress was effected through freedom, friendship, and communion of intellect." Plato's criticism of Cyrus is confined to ascribing the decay of the State to the custom introduced by him of intrusting the education of princes to women, whose petting made them vicious, — as in the case of Cyrus' own children.[2]

We shall do justice to the significance of these Greek tributes when we consider that they are traceable directly

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, viii. 1–3.

[2] *Laws*, bk. iii.

to the very highest moral and intellectual authority in ancient history. The teaching of Socrates produced two fruits in philosophical romance, — the Atlantis of Plato, and the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon. The description of the early inhabitants of the great Atlantic Island, — of the rise of their vast empire through their frugality and sobriety, their gentleness and wisdom, their piety and humanity, and their willing obedience to divine kings: of their gradual corruption through luxury, and of the valor with which the Athenians met their immense invading hosts, till both nations were destroyed by earthquake and flood ten thousand years before, — can have been suggested only by the history of the rise and fall of the Great Empire of the East, and its relations with Athens in recent times.[1] It grew confessedly out of the same desire to illustrate the ideal Socratic State, with Xenophon's "Cyropædia;" although in this case not Persia, but a primeval Athens is the central figure, while the perfection of Atlantis also is, like Persian virtues, concentrated in her earliest royalty. Xenophon wrote his "Cyropædia" to illustrate the philosophical principle of free government, as consisting in the willing obedience of men to what they recognized as just and humane, as he wrote his "Hiero the Despot" to show the converse of the same principle, — that unwilling obedience is slavery and ruin. In his praise of the aristocratic side of Cyrus' institutes, we see the Socratic dislike of extreme democracy as it existed in Greece. Cyrus is himself a pure disciple of Socrates in his constant presumption that all men desired to do right and to be rightly governed, in his identification of politics with ethics, in his cardinal principles of temperance, justice, courage, and love, in respecting the religions of all nations; and while not hesitating to join in their rites, yet dispensing with diviners, and obeying the inward voice, making

[1] Jowett's Translation of *Timæus*, 19; *Critias*, 109–120.

humbleness and noble endeavor his true prayer, because the gods could act only by laws, never by caprice.[1] His doctrine of forgiveness, and his death, looking forward to a future life, are both Socratic. It is true that Socrates would not have approved the suicide of Panthea upon the death of her husband; but this event is but an incident of the most tender and touching story of mutual love, honor, and fidelity between the sexes in all ancient fiction, and is so related as to show Cyrus in the noblest light. It is safe to say that no tribute so exalted was ever paid to any people, when the position and character of those who paid it are fully weighed, as those of Plato and Xenophor to the founders of the Persian State. It becomes the more striking when we consider that the tribute of the latter especially was almost wholly to *personal government*, in a high sense of the word, as a righteous resort from the excesses of Greek democracy or ochlocracy. And here we must note Xenophon's purpose to present the practical as well as philosophical ideal of sovereignty. He was in most respects one of the clearest heads in all antiquity on matters of political and military science. And we may well ask what a name must Cyrus have left behind him, when we find such a man ascribing to him almost every great economical principle or measure by which later monarchies have combined their own preservation with the prosperity of their subjects! At the same time, the condition of the ancient world was thoroughly recognized, from the best Greek experience, as needing above all things the remedy of personal government righteously applied. From this should issue a systematic moral training in ideals suitable to free men, combined, as in the Spartan discipline, with contempt for the mere pursuit of wealth. The king must carry the force of personal example into immediate contact with his subjects. Hence every one must come to the palace to

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, i. 6.

prove his loyalty, the rich must not live away from the capital, a standing army must take the place of uncertain feudal services,[1] the best people must dine at the king's table, administration must be watched by secret police, the civil and military powers be vested in distinct persons,[2] and offices be rightly and gifts generously bestowed. The king must be the moral ideal,[3] and rule by incessant toil and vigilant foresight, as one personally responsible for the welfare of his people, with a "thirst for doing good," and for winning obedience through love.[4]

We have thus presented Xenophon's ideal Cyrus in full, not because of its historical truth, which is probably much inferior to the story of Herodotus, nor as unaware that this is the wisdom of Greece rather than of Persia; but because the power of Cyrus' name to draw it out from such a source, is mark of a position in the ancient world which deserves the most profound regard.

To the Greek mind, to the simplicity of Herodotus no less than to the philosophy and ethics of the Socratic school, Cyrus was the child of Destiny, as he was of Providential purpose to the Hebrew, — to the one as a grand personal force transforming human society and politics; to the other as the instrument of Jahveh to restore and exalt his chosen race. The story of Crœsus is constructed in the interest of this belief. In his relations with the king of Lydia, this Son of Destiny, raised from the depths of the far East, at once recognizes the existing moral and intellectual achievements of mankind, and proves his own superiority to the will of the gods of Asia and of Greece. In this view I think I can hardly be mistaken. Crœsus for the Greeks, especially the Ionians, is king of the typical tribe in Asiatic civilization, and conqueror of the most advanced Ionian cities of Asia Minor. The Lydians had the

[1] Xenophon: *Cyropædia*, ii. 1.
[2] Ibid., viii. 6.
[3] Ibid., i. 6.
[4] Ibid., v. 1.

prestige of political wisdom and social resource; they were the first employers of gold and silver coin, the first retailers of goods; they had the wit to invent games, as diversion from suffering in a long and grievous famine.[1] Crœsus' resources were fabulous, his conquests vast, his wisdom proverbial alike for shrewdness and breadth. His capital was the resort of Greek sages, the mother and nurse of Greek literature. So great was his interest in Hellenic culture, that he sent splendid gifts to the temples, consulted the oracles, testing their knowledge, and followed the guidance of Apollo in making war on Persia. He was the common ally and honored friend of Babylon, Egypt, Greece. Nothing could exceed the contempt of his wise men for the rude hosts of Iran. On the funeral pyre he calls upon Solon, as the one sage who could comprehend his downfall and despair. In the Greek worship of Cyrus, Crœsus holds a place similar to that of the Magi in the Christian legend of the destined Christ. It was this great historical figure that naturally expressed the failure of all existing wisdom, power, and even faith, before the advent of the new Sun rising in the East, — an event which might well stir the Greek world to serious thought. Conquered by Cyrus and cast on the funeral pile (probably, as Herodotus intimates,[2] and as may be inferred from Xenophon, without intention to carry out the barbarity, since it was wholly contrary to the spirit of Cyrus to do so), he acknowledges this decree of Destiny, — reproaching the Pythian oracle with urging him on by delusions to war against one whom none can withstand. Apollo can send rain to put out the fires; but even he cannot turn back the destiny of Cyrus to supersede both Lydian and Greek. Permitted to send a message to the Delphian god to ask if he is not ashamed of his doings, and if the gods of Greece

[1] Herodotus, i. 94.
[2] Ibid., i. 86, 88. See Rawlinson, note A. to Herodotus, bk. i.

were usually ungrateful, Crœsus receives for answer that it was not in Apollo to contravene the decrees of Fate. The Greek Prometheus is illumined by suffering to foresee the coming of Destiny to release him, and overthrow the existing gods in the interest of man. Here it is not a defiant Titan that throws himself on the deliverance to come, but a conquered religion, confessing its day to be passed in presence of the actual destined deliverer. Is it fanciful to find this hinted in the smile with which Cyrus grants to Crœsus permission to reproach the oracle instead of rebuking him, as a loyal Greek would have done, for the impiety of the thought?

Moreover, it is in recognizing what is noble in the older beliefs and their confessors, that the new becomes noble and free. Whether intending or not to burn Crœsus, Cyrus is moved to tenderness by the self-humiliation of the noble victim and his piety in view of death, reflecting that he also is a man, and must meet the changes of fortune and the retribution of just laws. The man of Destiny must respect morality, and learn its sovereignty over all human things. The supernatural must be under the same rule. The miracle of rain which protects Crœsus, helps also to convince Cyrus that his captive deserves human as well as Divine care.[1] The wisdom of the past fails not to serve the noble purposes of the new epoch and the higher fate. Cyrus consults Crœsus in important matters, listens to his maxims practical and prudential, his reflections on the instability of things. None the less is it always as master of the occasion that he listens and accepts them. The central force of the teaching is in his own personal character and will.

The ideal personality of Cyrus, thus depicted by the imagination of the ages which followed his career, points, as few historical ideals do, to an actual force in some degree

[1] Herodotus, i. 87.

correspondent to its supposed effect. As founder of the great empire which directed Greek history, even when wasted on the field, and as restorer of the Jews to their native land, carrying with them the faith and culture which have made them so large a factor in modern civilization, he is in many important respects the most impressive figure of ancient times, and a root whence the world's progress springs. Mr. Grote says that "while the conquests of Cyrus contributed to assimilate the distinct types of civilization in Western Asia, — not by elevating the worse, but by degrading the better, — upon the native Persians themselves they operated as an extraordinary stimulus, provoking alike their pride, ambition, cupidity, and warlike propensities." [1] This judgment seems to me to overlook both the historical conditions and the character of the great Persian's work. I must regard it as a very imperfect estimate of the influence of that large relation to the ancient world to which Cyrus introduced his people; but it is still more unjust to Cyrus himself. He was not a reconstructor of nations only, but a reformer of the barbarous methods of Asiatic warfare. All traditions picture him as of singular humanity in the treatment of conquered nations. Most constructions of this kind in later ages pass over the other Achæmenides, — not only the feeble Darius Codomannus, the sensual Artaxerxes II., the cruel Ochus, the voluptuous Xerxes, but Darius the great organizer, and Cambyses the iconoclast, — pass over the immense influence on foreign States exercised by the gifts and gold of Artaxerxes I., to rest on the person of Cyrus. Down to the latest days of Persian nationality, as we have seen, this precedence lasts, in the poets and historians of Islam. In Cyrus only they find the "father" of nations; he only thinks himself adorned in adorning others; he only strives to heal discord, to reward noble conduct, to win the hearts

[1] Grote: *History of Greece*, iv. 216.

of men by generous appreciation of merit, by forgiveness of injuries, by tender consideration of the weaknesses and wants of others. He is as pure in life as he is powerful in arms; has the majesty of human omnipotence with none of its caprice; would fain unite autocracy of power with democracy of spirit; is at once ideal ruler and ideal man. It is scarcely rational to suppose that all this testimony to one so conspicuous in history as the creator of the Persian empire, so known to Babylon, Egypt, and Greece, can be without historical guarantees; that a repute which all the admitted degeneracy of the Persian kings and people since his day could not cover up from the sharpest eyes and finest minds of that Athenian people, to whom the name of barbarian was an offence, can be a baseless fiction.

As we have already said, that but for the preparatory work of the "great kings" Alexander would not have found Asia open to his unifying march; that the consciousness of a common empire, and the demand for a common political administration did far more than the little troop of fifty thousand with which he penetrated Asia, to effect the conquest of the multitudinous tribes,—so we may now add that the powerful initiation of these influences must be ascribed to "Cyrus the Great." As it is greater to create than to organize, he eclipses even Darius, without whom the empire would have perished in a day. A single sentence will perhaps express the direct bearing of his life upon the Alexandrine campaigns. No mere helplessness of a disorganized State, no weakness of Oriental nerve, no absence of leaders, no over-confidence of Darius II., did so much to effect their amazing success as the previous preparation of the people of Asia to accept the personal government of one who deserved to hold sway; the sense of community in an expectation of world-purpose and destiny with which Cyrus and his conquering Persians had at once inspired the East. From his day

Iran meant no more a vast desert of warring hordes, but the Persia of the Great King, the chosen Solar Fire of the World. The savage warfare of Iran and Turan gave place to an empire making firm stand against incursions from the Northern wilds. The feudal chiefs of Iran were subordinated to the throne, without loss of freedom or self-respect; and the conquest of Ionia opened the civilization of the East and of the West to each other. From his constructive conquests dates not the first but the most radical intermixture of races, whence grew the breadth of European experience. He raised the barrier to the Northern swarms whose mastery of Persia would have swept back Aryan civilization, delayed for centuries Aryan immigration into Europe and the Germanic conquests with their vast results to freedom and science, and so altered the whole course of history. Rome herself, broadened by her Parthian and Sassanide wars, and stirred by Persian passion out of her narrow and hard materialism, showed in the humanities of her later legislation that she had felt the pressure of Cyrus' heroic hand. Hebrew psalmody, Hebrew law, the piety of Jahvism, as the mother of Christian trust and love, born and nurtured in the exile, reached its height in the exaltation of Cyrus, the "Righteous One whom Jahveh loveth," the "Messiah," the "Anointed Saviour of the World." No other messiah has the Hebrew found but this one, for whom the girdle of the loins of kings was loosed, that he might open the prison gates; at whose touch the wilderness and the solitary place were made glad, a highway was opened for the ransomed of Jahveh, and the deserts of Judea rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. To be the inspirer of the later Isaiah was to hold a place second to none in the sources of Hebrew and Christian faith. His capture of Babylon broke the pride of Semitic polytheism. His restoration of the Jews effaced at a word the hostilities of races and creeds, and gave the

first strong impulse to universal religion, to the brotherhood of nations and of times. The victories of Cyrus were indeed the sunrise in the east. The turning of the river that rolled through Babylon was the original of that wonderful picture of a great Deliverer which Christianity has made Jesus claim as meant for himself,[1] — the turning-point of ancient history. The same hand which smote down the old gods of Asia, set up the coming God of Europe. To the feet of this great Master of Nations converge the lines of religious movement as we trace them backward from their widest expansion in modern times. And while studying the manifold bearings of his life on succeeding ages, I am scarcely surprised that a brilliant French historian, whose ingenious conclusions concerning the Persians, however imperfectly sustained in some respects, are highly worthy of consideration, should say emphatically that "there is nothing else of so intense an interest in all human history;"[2] and that without him "the Europe of to-day never would have existed."

We pause before this magnificent landmark of progress. Let us reflect that we see the forerunner and type of that principle which, for good and for evil, has controlled the great religions of modern times. A man stands in the place of God. It is not meant that the man is here held to *be* God, though this is the tendency; and both in earlier and later Iranian phases of monarchy the monarch often assumes the name and worship of the god. The Persian did not *worship* his king, certainly not in the days of Cyrus. He was forbidden by his religious law even to make images of Ormuzd, an invisible god. He made only symbolic signs of deity hovering over the king. But these were signs of personal Will, the essence of sovereignty alike in God and king. Though the king was not God to the Persian, then, he was the image of God, — an image if not

[1] Isaiah lxi. 1; Luke, iv. 16–21. [2] Gobineau: *Histoire des Perses*, i. 511.

made with hands, yet representing in human form the authority of that Will of whose human and divine elements — choice of chiefs, and commandment of God — he was the combined result. Later times and religions show how naturally the personal God himself becomes identified with the man specially made in his image. Though for the Persian the reality of Ormuzd soars over the head of the Achæmenide, yet a man stands in the place of God. It is the form of a Person that we discern dimly through the shadows of the past, and the ancient world is at his feet. It is the sovereignty of a will. But this will worships; it recognizes moral laws, and obeys the spirit of love; it desires to command a *willing* obedience, to win the hearts of men, to reconcile and succor them; it knows that its rights involve duties; it treats the tribes of a continent as one race, which needs and wishes to be governed, but has the right to be governed well. And we thus discern the justification in its own day and for those conditions in which it was born — for the true birthday was in the Persia of the great Cyrus — of the principle of *Personal Government;* a principle which more than two thousand years of political and religious history were to develop and work through, until it now finds its value in having prepared the way for a higher stage of progress no longer to be delayed.

Such is the Cyropædia of real history, holding in its bosom an end and purpose beyond the "great kings," ancient and modern, beyond the Messiahs, the Prophets of Jahveh and of Allah, the authoritative Incarnations, the theological types of Personal Government, of whom it is made up, and whose sway, both ideal and actual, but foreshadows a real unity of man with God above and beneath these limitations by exclusive types of personal Will. It is in Cyrus that we see its fine foreshadowing in its largest prophetic aspect. Not the "bright altars" of a Hebrew

Jahveh, but the altarless presence and fane of a human potentate standing for justice and mercy, are "thronged with prostrate kings."

> "See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
> Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend!"

II.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

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WHEN Alexander of Macedon destroyed the Achæmenidan dynasty at a blow, he not only assumed the style and embraced the system of the native rulers, but became at once the national ideal. Greece denounced him as the destroyer of her liberties, the arrogant restorer of her twenty thousand political convicts from exile.[1] Persia, on the contrary, hailed him as her deliverer from national disintegration and dynastic decay. Plutarch relates that Darius himself exchanged his contempt of the stripling who sought to snatch his crown, for a recognition which went so far as to pray that if it went ill with himself, the gods would "suffer none but Alexander to possess the throne of Cyrus;" and adds: "So true is it, that virtue is the victor still."[2] Only an overmastering personality could hold the numerous principalities of Iran under a common sway; and this inflexible requirement of their nature and traditions could find nothing but its own irony in the later Achæmenidan kings. But when this young hero, fresh from the conquest of Greece and Egypt, threw himself single-handed, with the assurance of a god and as a retributive fate, upon the vast empire of the "king of kings," the thunder of his tread, the most rapid and resistless in the history of war, awoke the old Iranian loyalty to personal Will, with its glorious traditions; and the prestige of Cyrus and of Rustem, of the historical and the mythological ideals alike, gathered about his head. A million spears were grounded at the lifting of his arm. The Gordian knot flies apart at the touch of his sword;

[1] Grote, xii. 306.

[2] *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, ii. 6, 7.

he needs not untie it to prove himself the master for whom its mystery waits. From his first defiance of Darius, described in the legend[1] as a refusal of the accustomed tribute of golden eggs, because "the vital bird of him who sent the eggs has deserted the cage of the body," or as the return of a bitter herb for the bat and ball sent by that monarch to satirize his youth,[2] through the successive capture of Babylon, Susa, Persepolis, Ecbatana, the subjugation of eastern Iran, the Bactrian and Southern campaigns, to the coronation and apotheosis at Babylon,— every step in that marvellous march was almost as much an ovation as a struggle. The magnificent record of heroic toils and pains which his Greek eulogist brings to prove him independent of the favors of fortune,[3] has its counterpart in the ardor of submission, as to an expected one, which greeted his coming as soon as the quality of the man was felt.[4] The Lydian confederacy welcomed him. Babylon and Susa threw open their gates to receive him. Tribe after tribe gave in their adhesion. "After the battle of Arbela," says Plutarch, "Alexander was acknowledged king of all Asia."[5] This expectancy is indeed an element needed to explain the unparalleled success of a handful of Macedonian soldiers. No great effects in political or religious reconstructions are explicable without such conditions precedent. The first resistance was made by Darius with vast resources. But after the first blows the empire could never be rallied, and there remained only outbreaks of individual States, jealous of their local liberties. The power of Alexander's prestige was made cumulative by events; and the fact is worth emphasizing, that no great rebellion of conquered tribes occurred in his campaigns, save that

[1] Shea: *Mirkhond*, pp. 361, 362.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Plutarch: *Fortune or Virtue of Alexander*, ii. 8–13.

[4] Arrian: *Expedition of Alexander*, iii. 17, 23, 28; iv. 1, 15. Curtius, v. 1, 2. Arrian, i. 25; ii. 13.

[5] Arrian, *passim*. Plutarch: *Life of Alexander*.

of the Bactrians, which was caused by the propagation of a false story that Alexander intended to seize and put to death all the leading men.[1]

When the Iranian tribes saw the one general who could have resisted him, Memnon of Rhodes, die before striking a blow; when they saw their king Darius ignobly seeking safety in flight from the field of Issus, and the conqueror enhancing a noble behavior towards his captive family by punishing his assassins; when they saw the conqueror rush like a tempest across Central Asia to destroy the Bactrian rival who had thought to rise to empire by the murder of his king; when satrap after satrap tried his hand at rebellion in vain; when every hour proved the tremendous capabilities of a will which suppressed the conspiracies of generals, shamed away the reluctance of soldiers, and broke into ungovernable wrath at the very suspicion of disloyalty in a friend; when he dared to offend his own followers by committing the satrapies to native chiefs; when he left the States their own institutions and freedom of worship; when he took counsel of the Chaldean Magi, rebuilt the fallen shrines of Babylon, restored the abandoned tomb of Cyrus, and espoused the daughters of native kings, — we cannot wonder that the national dislike of an invader should be absorbed in admiration for one, even though a Greek in speech, and plainly purposing to play the part of a god, on whom rested so visibly the tokens of the right to rule. No wonder native volunteers crowded forward to garrison his conquered towns. No wonder that when his army refused to follow him farther, he found such a host of native youth rise ready to his hand that the legions were roused to new zeal, and his march to India showed miscellaneous hordes of Persians trained in the disciplines of the Greek.[2] No wonder cities sprang

[1] Williams: *Life of Alexander* (Family Library). Arrian, iv. 7.
[2] Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 562.

up as by magic on navigable streams and in the desert, as if a new birth had come over the whole land. No wonder that the sympathies of races could be fertilized by intermarriage on the largest scale, beginning with his own example and followed by eighty of his chiefs. No wonder that the hordes of the ancient monarchy found free circulation to revive enterprise and trade, and that this intercourse of races opened with electric speed into the nobler commerce of ideas and faiths. But these effects, which seemed supernatural to historians and philosophers for many ages after his day, were as largely due to the supreme command always exercised over Iranian thought and conduct by idealizations of personal Will, as to the actual qualities of Alexander's genius. It is plain that these qualities would have had but little power to move the world, but for the immense leverage afforded by the other.

The pupil of Aristotle, the reader of Homer by day and night, the preserver of Pindar's house from the sacking of Thebes; whose camp[1] was a lyceum of philosophy and science, a school of historians and poets as well as of generals; the enthusiast for a civilization that should embrace and unify the world, aspiring to teach humanities to the rudest tribes, and Greek order and law to the jealous feudal lords of Asia, and "by mixing lives, manners, customs, wedlocks, as in a festival goblet, to make every one take the whole habitable world for a country, of which his camp and army should be the metropolis," — this man, without looking too closely at the strange mixture of dispositions and motives, or at the uncertainty of tradition which besets a true estimate of Alexander's life, was indeed the higher ideal for which Nineveh, Babylon, Mede, and Persian had educated the races of Iran. Again the native genius finds its living symbol; nerve-fire condensed into personality,

[1] Pyrrho the sceptic, Anaxarchus, disciple of Democritus, Callisthenes, Ptolemy, Perdiccas, accompanied him. Diogenes Laertius, ix. Also Zeller's *Stoics*.

darting like the lightning east and west, and filling the world with its flames. For him the elements are made; his foot plays all the pedals of the world's music; history is but the echo of his march. The continents are dead and silent everywhere, save where he moves and summons them to renovated life.

Alexander is not European after all. He belongs to Iran. Of the thirteen years of his reign, eleven are spent on the soil of Asia. Once leaving Macedon for the East, he never returns. Greece emigrates in him; her gods follow the star of a master which may have risen in the West, but which stays proudly in the Eastern sky, and the Magi are not his guests but his hosts. Greek Dionysus found a home in Eastern Asia, and men saw in the debauches in which the conqueror stained his hand with the blood of friends the god's revenge for his neglected worship, or for the woes of his beloved Thebes. A new Hercules frees Prometheus on a new Caucasus at the opposite boundary of Iran, and his name is Alexander of Macedon.

It was not without more positive grounds than these that Iranian tradition adopted the invader into the line of native kings.[1] For this was in ethnic truth the Agamemnon of the East returning to claim his ancestral domain as well as to punish the Achæmenides for invading Greece. He is Iranian not only by the scene of his triumphs, but by his Aryan descent, and even by the Orientalism of his government, manners, and dress, and by the ungovernable passions which the situation developed in him, over which even his Greek panegyrist can only mourn.[2] This personality has the true Iranian dimensions, is the true type of inward Iranian Dualism and moral struggle. The fierce war of Ormuzd and Ahriman rages here on a scale which

[1] Firdûsî: *Shâh-Nâmeh*. Hamza of Ispatian; El Masûdî; Tabarî.

[2] Arrian, iv. 8.

involves the fate of civilization. So the native legend adopts him, and he becomes for it, as afterward for the Mahometan chroniclers, the legitimate son of Dârâb (Darius) by a daughter of Philip of Macedon, and the half-brother of Darius Ochus, who is Dârâb's son by another wife.[1] He is the Iskander of the Shâh-Nâmeh,[2] brought up at his father Philip's court, unconscious, like Cyrus, of his royal rights, and succeeds to a tributary throne only to throw off allegiance, and by defeat of Dârâ to reach his ancestral crown. The historical groundwork of the conquest is worked up into a tale of mutual tenderness and trust between the brother kings. Iskander weeps over the dying Dârâ, receives his blessing, promises to avenge his murder, to marry his daughter, and to spread the faith of Zoroaster. The empire receives him with joy, and there follows an epoch of order, prosperity, and glory; while the true successor of Kaiânian kings makes Egypt and India his tributaries, and attended by prodigies and omens visits all the sacred shrines of Iran, and restores the supremacy it had once enjoyed. The legend knows nothing of the enormities which historians have ascribed to that march from Tyre to the heart of India, the massacres in Phœnician cities, the deportations, the burning of Persepolis, and the slaughter on the sacred soil of Bactria. But they had not been forgotten; nay, in some of the religious traditions, they have been greatly exaggerated. It was this very interfusion of terribly destructive elements with far more conspicuous ones that were truly creative and humane, which made his history attractive to a race whose very consciousness turned on the struggle of good and evil powers for

[1] The *Shâh-Nâmeh*, the heroic epos of Persian legends and traditions covering the whole life of Iran down to Alexander, gathered and compiled at the court of Ghuznîn, was finally wrought up by Firdûsi, in the eleventh century.

[2] Even Spiegel, who singularly enough thinks the Iranians did not like Alexander, cannot find any ground for believing this tradition to have a foreign origin. *Erân. Alterth.*, ii. 599.

possession of the heroic will. These traditions endowed Iskander with the symbolic gifts of this personal ideal, its spells for commanding Nature, its talismans to bind demonic powers. They gave him the physical strength to slay monsters, to repeat the labors of Hercules and his prototype the sun, the intuition to foresee his destiny, the piety to recognize the insignificance of kingdoms compared with the service of God and man.

Nor does it appear that Firdûsî, the restorer of the Iranian legendary history, added any more of Islamitic coloring to the traditional fame of Iskander than he gave to those earlier heroes of the national legend, whose type, thoroughly the same as Iskander's, has evidently preserved its original features even under his Mussulman hands. As it was the fitness of Alexander to fill this old type of ideal personality that attracted the national genius, so only in him could it rise to the height of its historical function. To all ordinary personal forces that genius refused to respond. The succession he bequeathed "to the strongest" did not command its allegiance. The brief career of the Seleucidæ, lasting little more than half a century, only irritated the people by using the powers he had gained to suppress their religious faith and the local self-government by which he had won their hearts. Though the dynasty was not without energy as a whole, though Seleucus I. had great gifts and swayed an empire almost as large as that of Alexander himself, and though Antiochus Epiphanes achieved a fame as wide as it was odious (the Ahriman of Jew and Gentile), these heirs (*diadochoi*) of Alexander's empire were a blank for Persian imagination, and furnished it no ideal food. The Seleucidæ on the Tigris and the Orontes, and the Parthian and Græco-Bactrian dynasties which ruled respectively the western and eastern provinces that seceded from their empire, were dropped from the national chronology. It wholly passed

over the five and a half centuries between the death of Alexander and the advent of the Sassanide Ardeshîr, who in the very spirit of the old heroic legend restored Iranian freedom and faith.

It was the glory of Iran to feed the imagination of those races which were making history with colossal types of heroic Will. By no mytho-poetic accident did her great Caspian headland front Europe with that eternal symbol of Prometheus, unconquerable sufferer for the good of man; while close beside it towers the form of Zohâk, image of tyranny and hate, bound in hopeless chains by Ferîdûn, the spirit of freedom. Here personality first becomes a universal idea, a world-consciousness. As Cyrus had been the ideal of the highest Hebrew and Greek intelligence, so Alexander became the ideal of far more widely-spread intellectual and religious forces at a later date. From the fascination of his world-opening career no corner of civilization was exempt. For centuries hosts of chronicles, itineraries, romances, myths, and legends multiplied around it, of every race and every quality; but all so dominated by his dazzling personality, that the thoughtful historic annals of Arrian and Diodorus and Strabo, and the learned (but not so trustworthy) compilation of Plutarch, prove often as puzzling to the historic sense as the palpable tissues of fable spun by a pseudo-Callisthenes, or a Quintus Curtius, or by those mythologists of Egypt, Armenia, and Rome, from whom their threads were borrowed.

This grasp of the imagination, then first, we may say, set free to work upon genuinely historic materials and forces, knew no limits in geographical space. All the weird stories of supernatural phenomena and monstrous shapes of beasts and men, with which the unexplored wilds of Central Asia had been peopled, mainly on the authority of Ctesias's Persian history, were woven into the marching robes of