

Karmic Visions

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Compilers Note

[This remarkable and prophetic study of the workings of karmic law in European history from the fifth century onwards, was written by H.P.B. twenty-six years before the First World War of 1914-18. Though not explicitly so stated, it is abundantly evident from the narrative that H.P.B. depicts the life and sufferings of Emperor Frederick III of Prussia, who was the same individual who earlier inhabited the body of Clovis, King of the Franks. The story was published the very month Emperor Frederick III passed away, after a brief reign of only 99 days.

In the January, 1888, issue of *Lucifer*, H.P.B. had written in her New Year Editorial:

“It is not likely that much happiness or prosperity can come to those who are living for the truth under such a dark number as 1888; but still the year is heralded by the glorious star Venus-Lucifer, shining so resplendently that it has been mistaken for that still rarer visitor, the star of Bethlehem. This too, is at hand; and surely something of the Christos spirit must be born upon earth under such conditions.”

In the January, 1889, issue of her magazine, she had the following to say, a year later:

“A year ago it was stated that 1888 was a dark combination of numbers; it has proved so since. . . Almost every nation was visited by some dire calamity. Prominent among other countries was Germany. It was in 1888 that the Empire reached, virtually the 18th year of its unification. It was during the fatal combination of the four numbers 8 that it lost two of its Emperors, and planted the seeds of many dire Karmic results.”

Reference is made here to the death of Emperor William who died March 9, 1888, and of Emperor Frederick III whose death took place June 13th of the same year.

In connection with the present story, the following remarks from H.P.B.'s pen should also be borne in mind. They occur in her essay on the nature of Dreams, originally published as an Appendix to the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* of the Theosophical Society, Part I (1890), summarising the discussions held at 17, Lansdowne Road, London, on December 20 and 27, 1888. She says:

“. . . Our ‘dreams,’ being simply the waking state and actions of the true Self, must be, of course, recorded somewhere. Read ‘Karmic Visions’ in *Lucifer*, and note the description of the real Ego, sitting as a spectator of the life of the hero, and perhaps something will strike you.”

From Section II onwards, in the story of “Karmic Visions,” a very clear distinction is being drawn between the “Soul-Ego” and the “Form” in which it is re-born. It appears that at one point of its life as Clovis, the Soul-Ego inhabiting the “Form” was prompted by the surge of some older savage instincts to the murder of a seeress belonging to the pagan faith, by means of a sword-point piercing her throat. In the embodiment centuries later, as Frederick, the Soul-Ego reaps its karmic fruitage through a “Form” finally becoming voiceless as a result of incurable throat cancer. The disease yielded to no known treatment, and it might be surmised that the entity had imprinted on its own mind—and therefore on its astral model-body—the deformed picture of its erstwhile victim.

Before reading H.P.B.’s amazing story, the serious student is recommended to peruse the biographical sketches concerning Clovis, Frederick III, and his physician, Sir Morell Mackenzie, in the BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INDEX of this volume. —Compiler.]

Oh sad *No More!* Oh sweet *No More!*
Oh strange *No More!*
By a mossed brookband on a stone
I smelt a wildweed-flower alone;
There was a ringing in my ears,
And both my eyes gushed out with tears.
Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
Lowburied fathomdeep beneath with thee, NO MORE!

—TENNYSON (“The Gem,” 1831).¹

¹ See Compiler’s Footnote

Compiler's Footnote

[There is an interesting story connected with this particular poem. According to Bertram Keightley (*Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky*, pp. 21-23. Adyar: Theos. Publ. House, 1931; orig. publ. in *The Theosophist*, September, 1931), H.P.B. always wrote her *Lucifer* Editorials herself, "and she had a fancy for very often heading [them] with some quotation, and it used to be one of my troubles that she very seldom gave any reference for these, so that I had much work, and even visits to the British Museum Reading Room, in order to verify and check them, even when I did manage, with much entreaty, and after being most heartily 'cussed,' to extract some reference from her.

"One day she handed me as usual the copy of her contribution, a story for the next issue headed with a couple of four line stanzas. I went and plagues her for a reference and would not be satisfied without one. She took the MS. and when I came back for it, I found she had just written the name 'Alfred Tennyson' under the verses. Seeing this I was at a loss: for I knew my Tennyson pretty well and was certain that I had never read these lines in any poem of his, nor were they at all in his style. I hunted up my Tennyson, could not find them: consulted every one I could get at—also in vain. Then back I went to H.P.B. and told her all this and said that I was sure these lines could not be Tennyson's, and I dared not print them with his name attached, unless I could give an exact reference. H.P.B. just damned me and told me to get out and go to Hell. It happened that the *Lucifer* copy *must* go to the printers that same day. So I just told her that I should strike out Tennyson's name when I went, unless she gave me a reference *before* I started. Just on starting I went to her again, and she handed me a scrap of paper on which were written the words: *The Gem*—1831. 'Well, H.P.B.,' I said, 'this is worse than ever: for I am dead certain that Tennyson has never written any poem called *The Gem*.' All H.P.B. said was just: Go out and be off.'

"So I went to the British Museum Reading Room and consulted the folk there; but they could give me no help and they one and all agreed that the verses could not be, and were not Tennyson's. As a last resort, I asked to see Mr. Richard Garnett, the famous Head of the Reading Room in those days, and was taken to him. I explained to him the situation and he also agreed in feeling sure the verses were not Tennyson's. But after thinking quite a while, he asked me if I had consulted the Catalogue of Periodical Publications. I said no, and asked where that came in. 'Well,' said Mr. Garnett, 'I have a dim recollection that there was once a brief-lived magazine called the *Gem*. It might be worth your looking it up.' I did so, and in the volume for the year given in H.P.B.'s note, I found a poem of a few stanzas signed 'Alfred Tennyson' and containing the two stanzas quoted by H.P.B. *verbatim* as she had written them down. And anyone can now read them in the second volume of *Lucifer*: but I have never found them even in the supposedly most complete and perfect edition of Tennyson's Works."

We reproduce herewith in *facsimile* the title page of the magazine called *The Gem*, as found in the holdings of the British Museum, and the page on which appears the poem entitled "No More."—*Compiler*.]



THE GEM,

A Literary Annual.

"Buds and Flowers begin the Year,
"Song and Tale bring up the Rear."

LONDON:

W. MARSHALL, 1, HOLBORN BARS.

MDCCCXXXI.



But pause no more, on thy homeward flight,
 In dalliance soft and sweet! --
 While thy heart is a free and happy thing,
 Away never more, by wood or spring,
 Wake, from it' peaceful slumbering,
 The laughing eye of love! --
 Oh! Sport not with his flowery spell,
 It is a flowery *chain*, --
 As many a mortal breast may tell,
 And many a mortal brain!
 And, half immortal as thou art,
 What were thy gift of years?
 The boon to drag an aching heart
 Through many an age of tears, --
 To wear *unfading* poison-flowers, --
 And long to die, through *deathless* hours!

NO MORE.

BY. A TENNYSON, ESQ.

OH sad *No More!* Oh sweet *No More!*
 Oh stranger *No More!*
 By a mossed brookbank on a stone
 I smelt a wildweed-flower alone;
 There was a ringing in my ears,
 And both my eyes gushed out with tears.
 Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
 Low buried fathomdeep beneath with thee, NO MORE!

Part I - Clovis

A camp filled with war-chariots, neighing horses and legions of long-haired soldiers. . .

A regal tent, gaudy in its barbaric splendour. Its linen walls are weighed down under the burden of arms.

In its centre a raised seat covered with skins, and on it a stalwart, savage-looking warrior. He passes in review prisoners of war brought in turn before him, who are disposed of according to the whim of the heartless despot.

A new captive is now before him, and is addressing him with passionate earnestness. . . . As he listens to her with suppressed passion in his manly, but fierce, cruel face, the balls of his eyes become bloodshot and roll with fury. And as he bends forward with fierce stare, his whole appearance—his matted locks hanging over the frowning brow, his big-boned body with strong sinews, and the two large hands resting on the shield placed upon the right knee—justifies the remark made in hardly audible whisper by a grey-headed soldier to his neighbour:

“Little mercy shall the holy prophetess receive at the hands of Clovis!”

The captive, who stands between two Burgundian warriors, facing the ex-prince of the Salians, now king of all the Franks, is an old woman with silver-white dishevelled hair, hanging over her skeleton-like shoulders. In spite of her great age, her tall figure is erect; and the inspired black eyes look proudly and fearlessly into the cruel face of the treacherous son of Gilderich.

“Aye, King,” she says, in a loud, ringing voice. “Aye, thou art great and mighty now, but thy days are numbered, and thou shalt reign but three summers longer. Wicked thou wert born . . . perfidious thou art to thy friends and allies, robbing more than one of his lawful crown. Murderer of thy next-of-kin, thou who addest to the knife and spear in open warfare, dagger, poison, and treason, beware how thou dealest with the servant of Nerthus!”² . . .

“Ha, ha, ha! . . . old hag of Hell!” chuckles the King, with an evil, ominous sneer. “Thou hast crawled out of the entrails of thy mother-goddess, truly. Thou fearest not my wrath? It is well. But little need I fear thine empty imprecations. . . . I, a baptized Christian!”

² “The Nourishing” (Tacitus, *De Germania*, 40) —the Earth, a Mother-Goddess, the most beneficent deity of the ancient Germans.

“So, so,” replies the Sibyl. “All know that Clovis has abandoned the gods of his fathers; that he has lost all faith in the warning voice of the white horse of the Sun, and that out of fear of the Allemanni³ he went serving on his knees Remigius⁴, the servant of the Nazarene, at Rheims.

But hast thou become any truer in thy new faith? Hast thou not murdered in cold blood all thy brethren who trusted in thee, after, as well as before, thy apostasy? Hast not thou plighted troth⁵ to Alaric, the King of the West Goths, and hast thou not killed him by stealth, running thy spear into his back while he was bravely fighting an enemy? And is it thy new faith and thy new gods that teach thee to be devising in thy black soul even now foul means against Theodoric, who put thee down? . . . Beware, Clovis, beware! For now the gods of thy fathers have risen against thee! Beware, I say, for. . . .”

“Woman!” fiercely cries the King— “Woman, cease thy insane talk and answer my question. Where is the treasure of the grove amassed by thy priests of Satan, and hidden after they had been driven away by the Holy Cross? . . . Thou alone knowest. Answer, or by Heaven and Hell I shall thrust thy evil tongue down thy throat for ever!” . . .

She heeds not the threat, but goes on calmly and fearlessly as before, as if she had not heard.

“. . . The gods say, Clovis, thou art accursed! . . . Clovis, thou shalt be reborn among thy present enemies, and suffer the tortures thou hast inflicted upon thy victims. All the combined power and glory thou hast deprived them of shall be thine in prospect, yet thou shalt never reach it! . . . Thou shalt . . .”

The prophetess never finishes her sentence.

With a terrible oath the King, crouching like a wild beast on his skin-covered seat, pounces upon her with the leap of a jaguar, and with one blow fells her to the ground. And as he lifts his sharp murderous spear the “Holy One” of the Sun-worshipping tribe makes the air ring with a last imprecation.

“I curse thee, enemy of Nerthus! May my agony be tenfold thine! May the Great Law avenge. . . .”

The heavy spear falls, and, running through the victim’s throat, nails the head to the ground. A stream of hot crimson blood gushes from the gaping wound and covers king and soldiers with indelible gore. . .

³ The Alemanni (also known as the Alamanni and the Alamans, meaning "All Men" or "Men United") were a confederacy of Germanic-speaking people who occupied the regions south of the Main and east of the Rhine rivers in present-day Germany.

⁴ Clovis converted to Catholicism at the instigation of his wife, Clotilde. He was baptized on Christmas Day, 496, in a small church in the vicinity of the subsequent Abbey of Saint-Remi in Reims; a statue of him being baptized by Saint Remigius can still be seen there.

⁵ Troth - One's pledged fidelity; Good faith; fidelity; To pledge or betroth.

Part II – A Soul Ego is Reborn

Time—the landmark of gods and men in the boundless field of Eternity, the murderer of its offspring and of memory in mankind—time moves on with noiseless, incessant step through aeons and ages. . . Among millions of other Souls, a *Soul-Ego* is reborn: for weal or for woe, who knoweth! Captive in its new human Form, it grows with it, and together they become, at last, conscious of their existence.

Happy are the years of their blooming youth, unclouded with want or sorrow. Neither knows aught of the Past nor of the Future. For them all is the joyful Present; for the Soul-Ego is unaware that it had ever lived in other human tabernacles, it knows not that it shall be again reborn, and it takes no thought of the morrow.

Its Form is calm and content. It has hitherto given its Soul-Ego no heavy troubles. Its happiness is due to the continuous mild serenity of its temper, to the affection it spreads wherever it goes. For it is a noble Form, and its heart is full of benevolence. Never has the Form startled its Soul-Ego with a too-violent shock, or otherwise disturbed the calm placidity of its tenant.

Two score of years glide by like one short pilgrimage; a long walk through the sun-lit paths of life, hedged by ever-blooming roses with no thorns. The rare sorrows that befall the twin pair, Form and Soul, appear to them rather like the pale light of the cold northern moon, whose beams throw into a deeper shadow all around the moon-lit objects, than as the blackness of night, the night of hopeless sorrow and despair.

Son of a Prince, born to rule himself one day his father's kingdom; surrounded from his cradle by reverence and honours; deserving of the universal respect and sure of the love of all—what could the Soul-Ego desire more for the Form it dwelt in.

And so the Soul-Ego goes on enjoying existence in its tower of strength, gazing quietly at the panorama of life ever changing before its two windows—the two kind blue eyes of a loving and good man.

Part III - The Warrior of Old Awakens

One day an arrogant and boisterous enemy threatens the father's kingdom, and the savage instincts of the warrior of old awaken in the Soul-Ego. It leaves its dream-land amid the blossoms of life and causes its Ego of clay to draw the soldier's blade, assuring him it is in defence of his country.

Prompting each other to action, they defeat the enemy and cover themselves with glory and pride. They make the haughty foe bite the dust at their feet in supreme humiliation. For this they are crowned by history with the unfading laurels of valour, which are those of success. They make a footstool of the fallen enemy and transform their sire's little kingdom into a great empire. Satisfied they could achieve no more for the present, they return to seclusion and to the dreamland of their sweet home.

For three lustra⁶ more the Soul-Ego sits at its usual post, beaming out of its windows on the world around. Over its head the sky is blue and the vast horizons are covered with those seemingly unfading flowers that grow in the sunlight of health and strength. All looks fair as a verdant mead⁷ in spring.

IV – An Evil Day Comes and the Soul-Ego Beams no longer

But an evil day comes to all in the drama of being. It waits through the life of king and of beggar. It leaves traces on the history of every mortal born from woman and it can neither be scared away, entreated, nor propitiated. Health is a dewdrop that falls from the heavens to vivify the blossoms on earth only during the morn of life, its spring and summer. . . . It has but a short duration and returns from whence it came—the invisible realms.

“How oft ’neath the bud that is brightest and fairest,
The seeds of the canker⁸ in embryo lurk!
How oft at the foot of the flower that is rarest—
Secure in its ambush the worm is at work”

The running sand which moves downward in the glass, wherein the hours of human life are numbered, runs swifter. The worm has gnawed the blossom of health through its heart. The strong body is found stretched one day on the thorny bed of pain.

The Soul-Ego beams no longer. It sits still and looks sadly out of what has become its dungeon windows, on the world which is now rapidly being shrouded for it in the funeral palls of suffering. Is it the eve of night eternal which is nearing?

V – By the Sea

Beautiful are the resorts on the midland sea. An endless line of surf-beaten, black, rugged rocks stretches, hemmed in between the golden sands of the coast and the deep blue waters of the gulf. They offer their granite breast to the fierce blows of the north-west wind and thus protect the dwellings of the rich that nestle at their foot on the inland side. The half-ruined cottages on the open shore are the insufficient shelter of the poor. Their squalid bodies are often crushed under the walls torn and washed down by wind and angry wave. But they only follow the great law of the survival of the fittest. Why should *they* be protected?

Lovely is the morning when the sun dawns with golden amber tints and its first rays kiss the cliffs of the beautiful shore. Glad is the song of the lark, as, emerging from its warm nest of herbs, it drinks the morning dew from the deep flower-cups; when the tip of the rosebud thrills under the caress of the first sunbeam, and earth and heaven smile in mutual greeting. Sad is the Soul-Ego alone as it gazes on awakening nature from the high couch opposite the large bay-window.

⁶ lustra - A plural of lustrum; lustrum - 1. A ceremonial purification of the entire ancient Roman population after the census every five years. 2. A period of five years.

⁷ mead - an archaic or poetic word for meadow

⁸ canker - A localized diseased or necrotic area on a plant part, especially on a trunk, branch, or twig of a woody plant, usually caused by fungi or bacteria.

How calm is the approaching noon as the shadow creeps steadily on the sundial towards the hour of rest! Now the hot sun begins to melt the clouds in the limpid air and the last shreds of the morning mist that lingers on the tops of the distant hills vanish in it. All nature is prepared to rest at the hot and lazy hour of midday. The feathered tribes cease their song; their soft, gaudy wings droop, and they hang their drowsy heads, seeking refuge from the burning heat. A morning lark is busy nestling in the bordering bushes under the clustering flowers of the pomegranate and the sweet bay of the Mediterranean. The active songster has become voiceless.

“Its voice will resound as joyfully again to-morrow!” sighs the Soul-Ego, as it listens to the dying buzzing of the insects on the verdant turf. “Shall ever mine?” And now the flower-scented breeze hardly stirs the languid heads of the luxuriant plants. A solitary palm-tree, growing out of the cleft of a moss-covered rock, next catches the eye of the Soul-Ego. Its once upright, cylindrical trunk has been twisted out of shape and half-broken by the nightly blasts of the north-west winds. And as it stretches wearily its drooping feathery arms, swayed to and fro in the blue pellucid⁹ air, its body trembles and threatens to break in two at the first new gust that may arise.

“And then, the severed part will fall into the sea, and the once stately palm will be no more,” soliloquises the Soul-Ego as it gazes sadly out of its windows.

Everything returns to life in the cool, old bower at hour of sunset. The shadows on the sun-dial become with every moment thicker, and animate nature awakens busier than ever in the cooler hours of approaching night. Birds and insects chirrup and buzz their last evening hymns around the tall and still powerful Form, as it paces slowly and wearily along the gravel walk. And now its heavy gaze falls wistfully on the azure bosom of the tranquil sea. The gulf sparkles like a gem-studded carpet of blue-velvet in the farewell dancing sunbeams, and smiles like a thoughtless, drowsy child, weary of tossing about. Further on, calm and serene in its perfidious beauty, the open sea stretches far and wide the smooth mirror of its cool waters—salt and bitter as human tears.

It lies in its treacherous repose like a gorgeous, sleeping monster, watching over the unfathomed mystery of its dark abysses. Truly the monumentless cemetery of the millions sunk in its depths . . .

“Without a grave, unknell’d, uncoffin’d, and unknown.”¹⁰

while the sorry relic of the once noble Form pacing yonder, once that its hour strikes and the deep-voiced bells toll the knell for the departed soul, shall be laid out in state and pomp. Its dissolution will be announced by millions of trumpet voices. Kings, princes and the mighty ones of the earth will be present at its obsequies¹¹, or will send their representatives with sorrowful faces and condoling messages to those left behind. . .

⁹ pellucid - admitting the passage of light; transparent or translucent.

¹⁰ [Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, clxxix.]

¹¹ obsequy - funeral rite

“One point gained, over those ‘uncoffined and unknown,’” is the bitter reflection of the Soul-Ego.

Thus glides past one day after the other; and as swift-winged Time urges his flight, every vanishing hour destroying some thread in the tissue of life, the Soul-Ego is gradually transformed in its views of things and men. Flitting between two eternities, far away from its birthplace, solitary among its crowd of physicians, and attendants, the Form is drawn with every day nearer to its Spirit-Soul. Another light unapproached and unapproachable in days of joy, softly descends upon the weary prisoner. It sees now that which it had never perceived before. . . .

VI

How grand, how mysterious are the spring nights on the seashore when the winds are chained and the elements lulled! A solemn silence reigns in nature. Alone the silvery, scarcely audible ripple of the wave, as it runs caressingly over the moist sand, kissing shells and pebbles on its up and down journey, reaches the ear like the regular soft breathing of a sleeping bosom. How small, how insignificant and helpless feels man, during these quiet hours, as he stands between the two gigantic magnitudes, the star-hung dome above, and the slumbering earth below. Heaven and earth are plunged in sleep, but their souls are awake, and they confabulate, whispering one to the other mysteries unspeakable. It is then that the occult side of Nature lifts her dark veils for us, and reveals secrets we would vainly seek to extort from her during the day. The firmament, so distant, so far away from earth, now seems to approach and bend over her. The sidereal meadows exchange embraces with their more humble sisters of the earth—the daisy-decked valleys and the green slumbering fields. The heavenly dome falls prostrate into the arms of the great quiet sea; and the millions of stars that stud the former peep into and bathe in every lakelet and pool. To the grief-furrowed soul those twinkling orbs are the eyes of angels. They look down with ineffable pity on the suffering of mankind. It is not the night dew that falls on the sleeping flowers, but sympathetic tears that drop from those orbs, at the sight of the Great HUMAN SORROW. . . .

Yes; sweet and beautiful is a southern night. But—

“When silently we watch the bed, by the taper’s flickering light,
When all we love is fading fast—how terrible is night. . . .”

VII

Another day is added to the series of buried days. The far green hills, and the fragrant boughs of the pomegranate blossom have melted in the mellow shadows of the night, and both sorrow and joy are plunged in the lethargy of soul-resting sleep. Every noise has died out in the royal gardens, and no voice or sound is heard in that overpowering stillness.

Swift-winged dreams descend from the laughing stars in motley crowds, and landing upon the earth disperse among mortals and immortals, amid animals and men. They hover over the sleepers, each attracted by its affinity and kind; dreams of joy and hope, balmy and innocent visions, terrible and awesome sights seen with sealed eyes, sensed by the soul; some instilling happiness and consolation, others causing sobs to heave the sleeping bosom, tears and mental torture, all and one preparing unconsciously to the sleepers their waking thoughts of the morrow.

Even in sleep the Soul-Ego finds no rest.

Hot and feverish its body tosses about in restless agony. For it, the time of happy dreams is now a vanished shadow, a long bygone recollection. Through the mental agony of the soul, there lies a transformed man. Through the physical agony of the frame, there flutters in it a fully awakened Soul.

The veil of illusion has fallen off from the cold idols of the world, and the vanities and emptiness of fame and wealth stand bare, often hideous, before its eyes. The thoughts of the Soul fall like dark shadows on the cogitative faculties of the fast disorganizing body, haunting the thinker daily, nightly, hourly. . . .

The sight of his snorting steed pleases him no longer. The recollections of guns and banners wrested from the enemy; of cities razed, of trenches, cannons and tents, of an array of conquered spoils now stirs but little his national pride. Such thoughts move him no more, and ambition has become powerless to awaken in his aching heart the haughty recognition of any valorous deed of chivalry. Visions of another kind now haunt his weary days and sleepless nights

What he now sees is a throng of bayonets clashing against each other in mist of smoke and blood; thousands of mangled corpses covering the ground, torn and cut to shreds by the murderous weapons devised by science and civilization, blessed to success by the servants of his God. What he now dreams of are bleeding, wounded and dying men, with missing limbs and matted locks, wet and soaked through with gore.

VIII

A hideous dream detaches itself from a group of passing visions, and alights heavily on his aching chest. The nightmare shows him men, expiring on the battle field with a curse on those who led them to their destruction. Every pang in his own wasting body brings to him in dream the recollection of pangs still worse, of pangs suffered through and for him. He sees and feels the torture of the fallen millions, who die after long hours of terrible mental and physical agony; who expire in forest and plain, in stagnant ditches by the road-side; in pools of blood under a sky made black with smoke. His eyes are once more rivetted to the torrents of blood, every drop of which represents a tear of despair, a heart-rent cry, a life-long sorrow.

He hears again the thrilling sighs of desolation, and the shrill cries ringing through mount, forest and valley. He sees the old mothers who have lost the light of their souls; families, the hand that fed them. He beholds widowed young wives thrown on the wide, cold world, and beggared orphans wailing in the streets by the thousands. He finds the young daughters of his bravest old soldiers exchanging their mourning garments for the gaudy frippery of prostitution, and the Soul-Ego shudders in the sleeping Form. . . . His heart is rent by the groans of the famished; his eyes blinded by the smoke of burning hamlets, of homes destroyed, of towns and cities in smouldering ruins. . . .

And in his terrible dream, he remembers that moment of insanity in his soldier's life, when standing over a heap of the dead and the dying, waving in his right hand a naked sword red to its hilt with smoking blood, and in his left, the colours rent from the hand of the warrior expiring at his feet, he had sent in a stentorian voice praises to the throne of the Almighty, thanksgiving for the victory just obtained! . . .

He starts in his sleep and awakens in horror. A great shudder shakes his frame like an aspen leaf, and sinking back on his pillows, sick at the recollection, he hears a voice--the voice of the Soul-Ego—saying in him:

“Fame and victory are vainglorious words. . . . Thanksgiving and prayers for lives destroyed—wicked lies and blasphemy!” . . .

“What have they brought thee or to thy fatherland, those bloody victories!” whispers the Soul in him. “A population clad in iron armour,” it replies. “Two score millions of men dead now to all spiritual aspiration and Soul-life. A people, henceforth deaf to the peaceful voice of the honest citizen's duty, averse to a life of peace, blind to the arts and literature, indifferent to all but lucre and ambition. What is thy future Kingdom, now? A legion of war-puppets as units, a great wild beast in their collectivity. A beast that, like the sea yonder, slumbers gloomily now, but to fall with the more fury on the first enemy that is indicated to it. Indicated, by whom? It is as though a heartless, proud Fiend, assuming sudden authority, incarnate Ambition and Power, had clutched with iron hand the minds of a whole country. By what wicked enchantment has he brought the people back to those primeval days of the nation when their ancestors, the yellow-haired Suevi, and the treacherous Franks roamed about in their warlike spirit, thirsting to kill, to decimate and subject each other. By what infernal powers has this been accomplished? Yet the transformation has been produced and it is as undeniable as the fact that alone the Fiend rejoices and boasts of the transformation effected. The whole world is hushed in breathless expectation. Not a wife or mother, but is haunted in her dreams by the black and ominous storm-cloud that overhangs the whole of Europe. The cloud is approaching. . . . It comes nearer and nearer. . . . Oh woe and horror! I foresee once more for earth the suffering I have already witnessed. I read the fatal destiny upon the brow of the flower of Europe's youth! But if I live and have the power, never, oh never shall my country take part in it again! No, no, I will not see—

“The glutton death gorged with devouring lives. . . .’

“I will not hear—

'... robb'd mothers' shrieks
While from men's piteous wounds and horrid gashes
The lab'ring life flows faster than the blood!"

IX

Firmer and firmer grows in the Soul-Ego the feeling of intense hatred for the terrible butchery called war; deeper and deeper does it impress its thoughts upon the Form that holds it captive. Hope awakens at times in the aching breast and colours the long hours of solitude and meditation; like the morning ray that dispels the dusky shades of shadowy despondency, it lightens the long hours of lonely thought. But as the rainbow is not always the dispeller of the storm-clouds but often only a refraction of the setting sun on a passing cloud, so the moments of dreamy hope are generally followed by hours of still blacker despair.

Why, oh why, thou mocking Nemesis, hast thou thus purified and enlightened, among all the sovereigns on this earth, him, whom thou hast made helpless, speechless and powerless? Why hast thou kindled the flame of holy brotherly love for man in the breast of one whose heart already feels the approach of the icy hand of death and decay, whose strength is steadily deserting him and whose very life is melting away like foam on the crest of a breaking wave?

And now the hand of Fate is upon the couch of pain. The hour for the fulfilment of nature's law has struck at last. The old Sire is no more; the younger man is henceforth a monarch. Voiceless and helpless, he is nevertheless a potentate, the autocratic master of millions of subjects. Cruel Fate has erected a throne for him over an open grave, and beckons him to glory and to power. Devoured by suffering, he finds himself suddenly crowned. The wasted Form is snatched from its warm nest amid the palm groves and the roses; it is whirled from balmy south to the frozen north, where waters harden into crystal groves and "waves on waves in solid mountains rise"; whither he now speeds to reign and—speeds to die.

X

Onward, onward rushes the black, fire-vomiting monster, devised by man to partially conquer Space and Time. Onward, and further with every moment from the health-giving, balmy South flies the train. Like the Dragon of the Fiery Head, it devours distance and leaves behind it a long trail of smoke, sparks and stench. And as its long, tortuous, flexible body, wriggling and hissing like a gigantic dark reptile, glides swiftly, crossing mountain and moor, forest, tunnel and plain, its swinging monotonous motion lulls the worn-out occupant, the weary and heartsore Form, to sleep. . . .

In the moving palace the air is warm and balmy. The luxurious vehicle is full of exotic plants; and from a large cluster of sweet-smelling flowers arises together with its scent the fairy Queen of dreams, followed by her band of joyous elves.

The Dryads¹² laugh in their leafy bowers as the train glides by, and send floating upon the breeze dreams of green solitudes and fairy visions. The rumbling noise of wheels is gradually transformed into the roar of a distant waterfall, to subside into the silvery trills of a crystalline brook. The Soul-Ego takes its flight into Dreamland. . . .

It travels through aeons of time, and lives, and feels, and breathes under the most contrasted forms and personages. It is now a giant, a Jotun, who rushes into Muspelsheim, where Surtur rules with his flaming sword.

It battles fearlessly against a host of monstrous animals, and puts them to flight with a single wave of its mighty hand. Then it sees itself in the Northern Mistworld, it penetrates under the guise of a brave Bowman into Helheim, the Kingdom of the Dead, where a Black-Elf reveals to him a series of its lives and their mysterious concatenation.

“Why does man suffer?” enquires the Soul-Ego. “Because he would become one,” is the mocking answer. Forthwith, the Soul-Ego stands in the presence of the holy goddess, Saga. She sings to it of the valorous deeds of the Germanic heroes, of their virtues and their vices. She shows the soul the mighty warriors fallen by the hands of many of its past Forms, on battlefield, as also in the sacred security of home. It sees itself under the personages of maidens, and of women, of young and old men, and of children. . . . It feels itself dying more than once in those forms. It expires as a hero-Spirit, and is led by the pitying Walkyries from the bloody battlefield back to the abode of Bliss under the shining foliage of Walhalla. It heaves its last sigh in another form, and is hurled on to the cold, hopeless plane of remorse. It closes its innocent eyes in its last sleep, as an infant, and is forthwith carried along by the beauteous Elves of Light into another body—the doomed generator of Pain and Suffering. In each case the mists of death are dispersed, and pass from the eyes of the Soul-Ego, no sooner does it cross the Black Abyss that separates the Kingdom of the Living from the Realm of the Dead. Thus “Death” becomes but a meaningless word for it, a vain sound. In every instance the beliefs of the Mortal take objective life and shape for the Immortal, as soon as it spans the Bridge. Then they begin to fade, and disappear. . . .

“What is my Past?” enquires the Soul-Ego of Urd, the eldest of the Norn sisters. “Why do I suffer?”¹³

A long parchment is unrolled in her hand, and reveals a long series of mortal beings, in each of whom the Soul-Ego recognises one of its dwellings. When it comes to the last but

¹² Dryads - divine maidens of the woods. [Gk. and Rom. Myth.: Wheeler, 108]; Nymph

¹³ Norns (Scand.). The three sister goddesses in the *Edda* [an Old Norse term that has been attributed by modern scholars to the collective of two Medieval Icelandic literary works], who make known to men the decrees of *Orlog* or Fate. They are shown as coming out of the unknown distances *enveloped in a dark veil* to the Ash Yggdrasil (q.v.), and “sprinkle it daily with water from the Fountain of Urd, that it may not wither but remain green and fresh and strong” (*Asgard and the Gods*). Their names are “Urd”, the Past; “Werdandi”, the Present; and “Skuld”, the Future, “which is either rich in hope or dark with tears”. Thus they reveal the decrees of Fate “for out of the past and present the events and actions of the future are born” (*loc. cit.*). (TG)

one, it sees a blood-stained hand doing endless deeds of cruelty and treachery, and it shudders. Guileless victims arise around it, and cry to Orlog for vengeance.

“What is my immediate Present?” asks the dismayed Soul of Werdandi, the second sister.

“The decree of Orlog is on thyself!” is the answer. “But Orlog does not pronounce them blindly, as foolish mortals have it.”

“What is my Future?” asks despairingly of Skuld, the third Norn Sister, the Soul-Ego. “Is it to be for ever dark with tears, and bereaved of Hope?”

No answer is received. But the Dreamer feels whirled through space, and suddenly the scene changes. The Soul-Ego finds itself on a, to it, long familiar spot, the royal bower, and the seat opposite the broken palm-tree. Before it stretches, as formerly, the vast blue expanse of waters, glassing the rocks and cliffs; there, too, is the lonely palm, doomed to quick disappearance. The soft mellow voice of the incessant ripple of the light waves now assumes human speech, and reminds the Soul-Ego of the vows formed more than once on that spot. And the Dreamer repeats with enthusiasm the words pronounced before.

“Never, oh, never shall I, henceforth, sacrifice for vainglorious fame or ambition a single son of my motherland! Our world is so full of unavoidable misery, so poor with joys and bliss, and shall I add to its cup of bitterness the fathomless ocean of woe and blood, called WAR? Avaunt, such thought! Oh, never, more. . . .”

XI

Strange sight and change. . . . The broken palm which stands before the mental sight of the Soul-Ego suddenly lifts up its drooping trunk and becomes erect and verdant as before. Still greater bliss, the Soul-Ego finds *himself* as strong and as healthy as he ever was. In a stentorian voice he sings to the four winds a loud and a joyous song. He feels a wave of joy and bliss in him, and seems to know why he is happy.

He is suddenly transported into what looks a fairylike Hall, lit with most glowing lights and built of materials, the like of which he had never seen before. He perceives the heirs and descendants of all the monarchs of the globe gathered in that Hall in one happy family. They wear no longer the insignia of royalty, but, *as he seems to know*, those who are the reigning Princes, reign by virtue of their personal merits.

It is the greatness of heart, the nobility of character, their superior qualities of observation, wisdom, love of Truth and Justice, that have raised them to the dignity of heirs to the Thrones, of Kings and Queens. The crowns, by authority and the grace of God, have been thrown off, and they now rule by “the grace of divine humanity,” chosen unanimously by recognition of their fitness to rule, and the reverential love of their voluntary subjects.

All around seems strangely changed. Ambition, grasping greediness or envy—miscalled *Patriotism*—exist no longer. Cruel selfishness has made room for just altruism, and cold indifference to the wants of the millions no longer finds favour in the sight of the

favoured few. Useless luxury, sham pretences—social and religious—all has disappeared. No more wars are possible, for the armies are abolished. Soldiers have turned into diligent, hard-working tillers of the ground, and the whole globe echoes his song in rapturous joy. Kingdoms and countries around him live like brothers. The great, the glorious hour has come at last! That which he hardly dared to hope and think about in the stillness of his long, suffering nights, is now realized. The great curse is taken off, and the world stands absolved and redeemed in its regeneration!

Trembling with rapturous feelings, his heart overflowing with love and philanthropy, he rises to pour out a fiery speech that would become historic, when suddenly he finds his body gone, or, rather, it is replaced by another body. . . . Yes, it is no longer the tall, noble Form with which he is familiar, but the body of somebody else, of whom he as yet knows nothing. . . . Something dark comes between him and a great dazzling light, and he sees the shadow of the face of a gigantic timepiece on the ethereal waves. On its ominous dial he reads:

“NEW ERA: 970,995 YEARS SINCE THE INSTANTANEOUS DESTRUCTION BY PNEUMO-DYNO-VRIL OF THE LAST 2,000,000 OF SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD, ON THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE GLOBE. 971,000 SOLAR YEARS SINCE THE SUBMERSION OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENTS AND ISLES. SUCH ARE THE DECREE OF ORLOG AND THE ANSWER OF SKULD. . . .”

He makes a strong effort and- is himself again. Prompted by the Soul-Ego to REMEMBER and ACT in conformity, he lifts his arms to Heaven and swears in the face of all nature to preserve peace to the end of his days—in his own country, at least.

A distant beating of drums and long cries of what he fancies in his dream are the rapturous thanksgivings, for the pledge just taken. An abrupt shock, loud clatter, and, as the eyes open, the Soul-Ego looks out through them in amazement. The heavy gaze meets the respectful and solemn face of the physician offering the usual draught. The train stops. He rises from his couch weaker and wearier than ever, to see around him endless lines of troops armed with a new and yet more murderous weapon of destruction—ready for the battlefield.

SANJNA.¹⁴

¹⁴ [A nom-de-plume used by H.P.B. only once, and which stands most likely for one of the five skandhas in Buddhist philosophy, namely samjñā, which means perception. It also means agreement, mutual understanding, harmony, consciousness, clear knowledge. —Compiler.]

Appendix

Clovis

Clovis (Chlodovech or Hlodowig, ca. 466-511). King of the Salian Franks,¹⁵ son of Childerich I, whom he succeeded in 481 at the age of 15. The Salian Franks had by then advanced to the river Somme, and were centred at Tournai. Of the first few years of his reign, we know next to nothing; in 486, he defeated the Roman general Syagrius at the battle of Soissons, and extended his dominion over Belgica Secunda, of which Reims was the capital. In 493, Clovis married a Burgundian princess, Clotilda, who was a Christian. Although he allowed his children to be baptized, he himself remained a pagan until the war against the Alamanni. After subduing a part of them, Clovis was baptized at Reims by St. Remigius on Christmas Day, 496, together with a considerable number of Franks. This was an event of some importance, as from that time the orthodox Christians in the kingdom of the Burgundians and Visigoths looked to Clovis to deliver them from their Arian kings. Clovis seems to have failed in the case of Burgundy, but was more fortunate in his war against the Visigoths; he defeated their king Alaric II, 507, and added the kingdom of the Visigoths as far as the Pyrenees to the Frankish empire. The last years of Clovis' life were spent in Paris, which he made capital of the kingdom, establishing the dynasty of the Merovingian kings. He can be rightfully considered as the true founder of the Frankish kingdom, the first to arise out of the wreck of the Roman Empire. Between the years 486 and 507, he had the Salian law drawn up. Much of his success was due to his alliance with the Church, whose property he took under his protection, convoking a Council at Orleans, in 511. While protecting the church, he maintained his authority over it. He was vigorous and ambitious, and had but few scruples and not much pity, though a nobler side of his character can be detected also.

The chief source for the life of Clovis is the *Historia Francorum* (Book II) of Gregory of Tours.

¹⁵ The Salian Franks, also called the Salians (Latin: Salii, Greek: Saliói), were the western subgroup of the early Franks who first appear in the historical records in the third century. At that time they lived between the Rhine and the IJssel river in the modern day Dutch region of the Veluwe, Gelderland.

Frederick III - Friedrich Wilhelm Nikolaus Karl

Frederick III. King of Prussia and German Emperor¹⁶, b. at Potsdam, Oct., 18, 1831, eldest son of prince William of Prussia, later first German Emperor, and princess Augusta. After careful education, studied at the Univ. of Bonn, 1849-50. Next years spent in military duties and travels in the company of Moltke.¹⁷

Visited England, 1851. Married Victoria, princess royal of Great Britain, in London, Jan. 25, 1858. On the accession of his father, 1861, became crown prince of Prussia, being known as Frederick William. Was a liberal at heart and disliked Bismarck's policies. In June, 1863, ceased to attend meetings of the council of state and was much away from Berlin. Performed valuable services during the war with Denmark, and commanded an army in the 1866 campaign against Austria. Played a conspicuous part in 1870-71, being appointed to command the armies of the Southern States; his troops took part in the battle of Sedan and the siege of Paris. During the years that followed, little opportunity was open to him for political activities; he and his wife took great interest in art and industry, especially the museums; he was chiefly responsible for the excavations at Olympia and Pergamum¹⁸. In 1878, when the Emperor was incapacitated by the shot of an assassin, he acted for some months as regent, and his future accession was looked forward to by many. Unfortunately, he developed cancer of the throat, which, from a small beginning grew into a fatal condition. After various unsuccessful treatments had been tried, Sir Morell Mackenzie, the famous English medical authority, was sent for, May 18, 1887. Frederick made an effort to attend the Jubilee Festivities in London in June, 1887. Leaving London in September, he went to Toblach, Venice and Ravenna.¹⁹ On Nov. 3, 1887, he settled at San Remo²⁰ for the winter months. Sir Morell saw him a number of times during this period. Finally the operation of tracheotomy had to be performed by Dr. Bramann in San Remo, February 9, 1888.

On March 9, 1888, Emperor William died and Frederick became Emperor. He left San Remo March 10 for Charlottenburg. His very brief reign was characterized by a number of liberal reforms which Frederick attempted to initiate, and by bitter attacks from the adherents of Bismarck. His illness took a turn for the worse, and on June 1, 1888, he went to stay at Potsdam, where Queen Victoria visited him. Frederick died On June 13th, at about 11 a.m., after a reign of 99 days.

¹⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Nikolaus Karl, (18 October 1831 – 15 June 1888) known informally as "Fritz", was the only son of Emperor Wilhelm I and was raised in his family's tradition of military service.

¹⁷ Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (26 October 1800, Parchim, Mecklenburg-Schwerin – 24 April 1891, Berlin) was a German Field Marshal. The chief of staff of the Prussian Army for thirty years, he is regarded as the creator of a new, more modern method of directing armies in the field.

¹⁸ Olympia and Pergamum Greek cities; Pergamon was an ancient Greek city, currently located 26 kilometers (16 mi) from the Aegean Sea. Today, the main sites of ancient Pergamon are to the north and west of the modern city of Bergama in Turkey.

¹⁹ Cities in Italy; Ravenna may be Ravenna

²⁰ Sanremo or San Remo is a city on the Mediterranean coast of western Liguria in north-western Italy.

As is often the case, the treatment of his illness gave rise to an acrimonious controversy between several physicians and Sir Morell was accused of various mistakes. His work entitled *The Fatal Illness of Frederick the Noble* (London: Sampson Low, etc., 1888. 246 pp.) presents the case in what appears to be an impartial manner. Sir Morell had a very high regard for Frederick III and spoke of him as a man of commanding intellect, of compassion for the sufferings of others, of chivalrous forbearance, and of great kindness of heart. His sincerity and honesty were particularly striking.

In the light of the above-mentioned facts concerning the life of Frederick III, H.P.B.'s remarkable story acquires an even greater meaning.

Sir Morell Mackenzie

Mackenzie, Sir Morell. Eminent British physician, son of a surgeon, b. at Leytonstone, Essex, July 7, 1837; d. Feb. 3, 1892. Studied at the London Hospital, at Paris, Vienna and Pesh, where he learned the use of the newly-invented laryngoscope under J. N. Czerinak. In 1862, became specialist in diseases of the throat; in 1863, helped to found the Throat Hospital in King Street, Golden Square, becoming a leading authority.

In May, 1887, was summoned to attend the German Crown Prince Frederick, whose illness was difficult to diagnose. The German physicians (Karl Gerhardt, Tobold, E. von Bergmann, and others) had diagnosed his disease on May 18, 1887, as cancer of the throat, but Mackenzie insisted, on the basis of a microscopical examination of portion of the tissue by R. Virchow, that this was not the case, and that an operation for the extirpation of the larynx was then unjustifiable. His opinion was accepted. He was knighted in September, 1887, for his services. In November, however, it was admitted that Frederick's disease was cancer, though Mackenzie hinted that it had become malignant since his examination as a result of the irritating effect of the treatment by the German doctors, for which there seems to exist some evidence. Tracheotomy was performed in San Remo, February 9, 1888. The Crown Prince became Emperor on March 9, 1888, and died on June 13 of the same year. For a time, a violent quarrel raged between Mackenzie and the German medical world. The German doctors published an account of the illness, to which Mackenzie replied by the work entitled *The Fatal Illness of Frederick the Noble* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1888. 246 pp.). This resulted in his being censured by the Royal College of Surgeons. Mackenzie had a very high opinion of the moral character of Frederick III and stated so publicly.