

A Message From the Gobi

Chant the praise of Science, golden-throated Muse,
For the hero of the wilderness, Roy Chapman Andrews,
Whose penetrative eye sees far into the ground,
Where relics of past ages have been preserved sound;
Who dares to battle elements and face the sandy gales.
This hardy seeker wanders over long deserted trails;
Despite the wind, despite the cold, he travels on and on,
Through the Empire of Temuchin and the land of Prestler John,
And here he finds a fossil bird and there a buried leg,
A pterodactyl skeleton or dinosaur egg—
Another chapter written in the records of geology,
Another museum built for studying anthropology.
He moves across Mongolia and thence to far Khokand,
And everywhere discovers things beneath the desert sand.
O wondrous treasures buried beneath the desert sand!
Beneath the desert sand.

Come and read the history of the world,
Written by God's hand upon its face,
Perpetual palimpsest which becomes
The grandest of all Bibles—that of Nature—
A Bible which can enlighten the hearts of all,
A Bible which can satisfy every mind,
A Scripture in a universal language.

This universal Scripture we revere
Not more nor less than other sacred books.
All revelation is not enclosed in canons:
Thus, in these modern times were found in Egypt
The words of Jesus enscrolled upon papyri
And hidden mummies of crocodiles.
Among such precious logia there are
Passages equal in beauty to those of the Gospels,
Full of the Master's spirit, among them this:
"Cleave the wood and thou shalt find me,
Raise the stone and there am I."

In the early aeons, whose countless years we barely
Can conceive, God engraved the original runes
On wood and stone, in sand and mountain side,
With every stratum a leaflet of this tome,
And every bone secreting a wonder tale.
Even now the forest trees preserve their glyphs,
And there is not an atom in existence
Which hides its story, nor can Truth be concealed.
The all devouring jaws of Time have not

Destroyed the marvelous libraries of Nature,
And thus are kept intact for seekers of knowledge
The precious gems that they desire to find

With the blood of monsters was Earth's story written,
And hieroglyphics carved upon their bones,
Preserved for ages in the desert museums,
Patiently waiting for the discoverer.
There, tragedies more vivid than Shakespeare's tales,
Romances seldom equalled, and supreme comedies
Are enscribed upon the Book of Life which declares,
"The Universe is One and Life is One."
The forms are many, but the spirit behind,
From the basest animalocule
To the highest of all existent beings,
Is the Spirit of Unity; the Brotherhood
Of man is true only if we perceive
The Brotherhood of Life as its foundation:
That from the lowest atom of this sphere
To the greatest sages that were ever born,
There are series of links in an eternal chain.
Who cares therefore about his family tree,
What places his ancestors have occupied?
They willingly sacrificed themselves to bring
A nobler race of creatures to existence—
For ever onward and upward moves Life's course.

O Christians, do not forget the Holy Grail,
For which the Knights of old surrendered their privileges!
Becoming wealthless, humble, bare-foot pilgrims,
Wandering over moors and countrysides,
Scaling high mountains and crossing stormy seas
To far off unknown lands in their glorious quest.
How can you go and martyr the modern seeker!
Was it not Jesus Himself Who uttered these words:
"Knock and it shall be opened. Seek and ye shall find."

"Seek and ye shall find."
On that continent
The noble Bhikkus once traversed those mighty
Ranges of the Hindu Kush and Himalaya,
Teaching both plodding peasant and royal ruler
That Life was One, and station did not matter—
That in Time's serpent mouth all were dissolved,
That everything with form was but a smoke;
That Life was One and Brotherhood extended
Down to the lowest of the crawling vermin.
Nay! Even the plants, the hills, the winding rivers,

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Were subject to the Law of Growth and Decay.
They preached to the people, beasts, and even stones;
And now the listening mountains whisper to
Our scientists those lessons Long since taught to them,
The Universe is One and Life is One.

(But did Jesus of Galilee say otherwise?
"I am the Vine and ye are the branches thereof."
He was Life's Essence, we the manifestation,
He the Sum Total, we the parts independent.)

The fossils of those gigantic reptiles,
Of flying lizards, Lindberg's of their age,
Of sabre-toothed tigers and dinosaurs,
Of hardy armor-covered triceratops,
Of savage ichthyosaurs and other monsters,
Who strove by might of flesh to conquer the world,
Tell what is the fate of all who depend
On weapons of strength and not on nobility.

The myriad ruins buried in the sand,
Where fiery Jagatais once led their cohorts,
The cities covered by the wind-blown loess,
The battered walls, ruined by ravaging Tatars,
Where rapine and destruction held full sway,
Or where the raiding Huns and savage Uzbeks
Wreaked havoc, overthrowing great empires—
Bespeak of many Sodoms and Gommoras,
Whose number is beyond imagination.
But through these tragic years, all-seeing Nature
Has kept her records safe within her bosom.

How can you call them civilized who rant
So loudly of their faith in God and raise
Stupendous armaments? Study the sciences
And learn that creatures long since roamed the earth
Who strove to build dominions based on force.

I weep for you who value numbers only
When they represent material goods,
Blinded to the grander aspects of life.
What are our stocks and bonds and market values?
Here today and with the passing clouds are gone.
If we do not achieve our selfish aims,
We seem to feel the earth would cease revolving.
Let us go out with Andrews and learn with him
Something of the magnitude of the cosmos—
The distance of the guiding stars, the aeons

Since the lowest strata found their places.
Time, the Master Sculptor, from the earliest
Archaic period, has lain one stone upon another,
Where Nature has scratched on her eternal slate,
A diary of inestimable worth,
Which all may read, and gather wisdom therefrom.

Let us be humble, not legislate and say:
We are going to limit the Illimitable;
And if we do not accept some theory,
The exponent must repine within our prisons.
Afraid of numbers we shun thought as disease,
Ignoring what the Master declared to us:
"Knock and it shall be opened. Seek and ye shall find."
And the answer: "Raise the stone and there am I."

Dauntless spirit of the American pioneer,
Which having crossed one continent, aspires
Like Alexander for more worlds to conquer;
And when in the vastness of Asian wilderness
Our modern heros make discoveries,
And open new fields for adventurers,
It continues onward as in former days
To find more room for liberty, until
The human race unites for the common good,
And artificial boundaries are erased.