

keep up his life during his wandering in the desert. The *building* symbol has also the three primary colors: the wood is nearly red, the nails are yellow, the *plumb* is blue; for love, even if it be imperfect, is the substance of temple work, wisdom *determines* its form (as the nails of the level make firm its shape)—but the divine strength is that which enables man to build so that the produce does not fall to the earth spontaneously. The *knight's* symbols are, of course, also red (the mantle), yellow (the lance), and blue (the blade of the lance)—for God's strength will strike down the enemies who will prevent the building warrior from living in the land of the fathers. The butterfly, symbol of *regeneration*, has—also of course—the three primitive colors that we now have mentioned so very often: for she is the representative of the High Priest! The *wheel of time*, finally, is reddish-yellow; for it must be a flaming wheel of fire: "The chaff is to be burned with inextinguishable fire"—and this our life is destined for the separation and annihilation of "the chaff."

On the mosaic are, as far as we can see, two *white* figures: the string of the level, and the scarp of the knight. The string in man which points towards the center of the earth, and towards the highest point of the sky—you may call this string "conscience," or something else—this string is white: it is the Divine in man. But in the warrior it will grow until, like a scarp, it will twine round his whole being. Maybe there is (it was there about twenty years ago) on the upper part of the blue blade of the lance a *white square* like this:



Probably this figure is explained by the mystic words of Rev. ii. 17:

"To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written."

CARL MICHELSEN.

St. John's day, 1902.

MR. MICHELSEN'S POMPEIIAN MOSAIC.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

Mr. Michelsen's "Pompeiiian Mosaic" is very interesting, and its reproduction will be welcome to the readers of *The Open Court*, although we cannot accept his interpretation that we are here confronted with Christian symbolism. The truth is that the ideas which permeated Christianity, viz., that life is transient, that all living beings are wanderers to a goal that can be reached only in the consummation of death, and that we have to struggle for the attainment of the eternal, were quite common all over the Roman empire during the first century of the Christian era. The Stoic philosophers are imbued with the same spirit; the life and teachings of Apollonius of Tyana reflect the same views; and the Mithraic religion is so similar to Christianity in all these and in a few other points, that for a long time it was a powerful rival, contending for supremacy in the Western world.

Mr. Michelsen's interpretation of the level as *A* and the wheel as *O* is rather bold. The wheel, in addition, is a symbol frequently used by other religions, especially Buddhism. The spokes of the wheel, it is true, form a six-rayed star, but there is not the slightest reason to interpret it as the symbol of *I* and *X* (the Greek *CH*), to mean *Jesus Christ*. The same six-rayed star served as the symbol of Julius Cæsar, and in many other ways.

The butterfly has been a symbol of the human soul among the Greeks since time immemorial, so much so that the words *soul* and *butterfly* are both called *psyche* in Greek. The presence of the butterfly proves that the owner of the house in which the mosaic was found not only believed in the transiency of life, but also in immortality.

Though the color interpretations of Mr. Michelsen are ingenious, we have not the slightest reason to believe that his ideas prevailed among the early Christians.

Summa summarum, the Pompeiian Mosaic is interesting as proving the prevalence of religious meditation on the vanity of life and the hope that after his journey's end man will reach an eternal goal. But we may be sure that the man who put it up in his house knew nothing as yet of Christ or Christian doctrines. Had he been a Christian, he would certainly have given expression to his faith by some definite Christian symbol,—the fish or the $\Lambda\omega$, or the Christogram. P. C.

FROM THE ADI GRANTH.

I.

Say not that this or that distasteful is,
In all the dear Lord dwells,—they all are his.

Grieve not the humblest heart; all hearts that are,
Are priceless jewels, all are rubies rare.

Ah! If thou long'st for thy Beloved, restrain
One angry word that gives thy brother pain.

II.

All creatures, Lord, are thine, and thou art theirs,
One bond Creator with created shares;

To whom, O Maker! must they turn and weep
If not to thee, their Lord, who dost all keep?

All living creatures, Lord, were made by thee,
Where thou hast fixed their station, there they be.

For them thou dost prepare their daily bread,
Out of thy lovingkindness they are fed;

On each the bounties of thy mercy fall,
And thy compassion reaches to them all.

III.

One understanding to all flesh He gives,
Without that understanding nothing lives;

As is their understanding,—they are so;
The Reckoning is the same. They come and go.

The faithful watch-dog that does all he can,
Is better far than the unprayerful man.