

his disciples"? If the disciples believed Jesus would come as the Messiah in a supernatural manner, surely the *post mortem* appearances were after all not so unexpected as we have been given to suppose, and the legends did have some better understood cause than Renan or Strauss etc. have held forth.

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#### LAO-TZE AND YIN-HI.

Sze Ma Ch'ien, the historian of China, says in his Historical Records when speaking of Lao-tze, the Old Philosopher:

"Lao-tze resided in Cho most of his life. When he foresaw the decay of Cho, he departed and came to the frontier. The custom-house officer, Yin-Hi, said: 'Sir, since it pleases you to retire, I request you for my sake to write a book.'"

The artist who made our frontispiece represents this scene. Yin-Hi with two attendants reverently approaches the philosopher and causes the venerable sage to write that famous book which has been a power in China down to the present day throughout its subsequent history of over two and a half millenniums. The book on "Reason and Virtue" was declared a canon by Emperor Ching (156-143 B. C.), and since that time has been called "The Canon of Reason and Virtue." It consists, as states Sze Ma Ch'ien, of about five thousand and odd words. These have been quoted and requoted by authors who lived from about 300 to 200 B. C., and in these ancient quotations about three quarters of the book has been verified. No one doubts that these quotations are genuine and that they were taken from the Canon of Reason and Virtue, which was known to Sze Ma Ch'ien. In modern times Lao-tze's Canon of Reason and Virtue is considered genuine by practically all sinologists with the sole exception of Professor Herbert A. Giles, who believes that the present book is a garbled reconstruction of the true Lao-tze from these many quotations, and he thinks that the original was lost at the time of the burning of the books. Professor Giles, however, stands alone in his opinion, for the very shortcomings of the book, its rambling composition and its lack of system and coherence, are evidence of the reliability of Sze Ma Ch'ien's report. Lao-tze's little book on "Reason and Virtue" bears all the imprints of the conditions under which it is reported to have been written. The old sage who is commonly supposed to have reached the mature age of three score and ten, is depressed with the ominous condition of his native land and quits the country and the misery that is sure to come upon it. He is old and ill at ease but his soul is full of profound wisdom welling over with sentences of far-reaching significance. Nevertheless he has not the time to arrange his thoughts in logical order. His brush glides over the paper hurriedly, nor does he take the trouble to revise what he has written. Thus his sentences are rambling. He quotes from his predecessors, the sages of yore, and he gives new meaning to some homely phrases.

Normally his book is divided into the first part on the *tao* or reason, and a second part, on *teh* or virtue; but according to the sense of his sentences, this distinction is not justified. He speaks of virtue or *teh* as much in the first part as of reason or *tao* in the second. We have no reason to doubt the genuineness of the book, nor the statement of the ancient Chinese historian on the mode of its composition.

The world is indeed indebted to Yin-Hi for having requested Lao-tze to write the book. Had he not done so, the life of one of the most venerable,

the most profound, and the most religious thinkers would have passed by without leaving a trace or a monument of its paramount significance.

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### BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE I OR EGO; OR, The Metaphysics of an Interloper and Imposter, Himself in the Role of Confessor. By *Charles Kirkland Wheeler*. Boston, 1903. Pages 115. Price \$1.00 net.

Charles Kirkland Wheeler boldly attempts to prove that not he nor any one else is self-conscious or even conscious. He claims that that we are conscious or self-conscious is an illusion. "This is not to say that there is not consciousness, not self-consciousness of a sort; but that it is not I, that it is not you, that are either conscious or self-conscious."

On page 29 he proposes a theorem: "That consciousness cannot be conscious of itself, that is, be self-conscious; that there is no such thing as the self-consciousness of self-consciousness. Or, to state it again, that the self in any mental attitude of self-consciousness is but an abstraction, and, so, nothing itself conscious, and so, again, not anything that might be self-conscious."

Of his own experience which is typical he says: "I was first aware of myself *as myself* on seeing, as by reflection in a mirror, myself as object."

Thus consciousness attaches to an object, and every act of self-consciousness which any one may experience is consciousness not of one's self but of something outside or of somebody else (page 53).

But what is that self-consciousness which we experience? Mr. Wheeler answers that it is a mere idea, and this idea might just as well be a mistake. At any rate it is a phantom. He illustrates it thus: "That the distinction I am making may be clearly understood, let me, as it were, call to the stand Macready lost in the idea of being King John.

"'Macready, where did you say you were going?' 'Macready!—that's not I,—Who's Macready? I am King John.' 'Then you are King John, are you?' 'Certainly.' 'Then, if you are at any time self-conscious as you think, it is King John conscious of King John?' 'Why, yes; who else could it be consciousness of?' 'Then in your mind, your self-consciousness is consciousness of the king.' 'Why, of course.'

"Here, Macready's whole experience of self-consciousness is an *idea* of King John's being self-conscious. He has no consciousness of Macready, and so, of course, no experience of Macready's being self-conscious. And this is what I mean by having only an idea of self-consciousness as contrasted with an experience of itself, as would be Macready conscious of Macready.

"Need I insist that to have the former is not to have the latter? To have an idea simply of going to the moon is not to go."

Mr. Wheeler explains the situation rather stiltedly in these words: "While there is the thought object, there is at the same time the *thought* subject *thought* conscious; but no conscious subject itself at all. It is the thought subject thought conscious that is the correlate of the thought object."

The conclusion at which he arrives is that the ego is an interloper and an imposter, but in answer to what we are, he quotes on the title page as his motto the following lines:

"Art thou not thyself, perchance,  
But the universe in trance?"