

COLLECTANEA HERMETICA

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VOLUME V.

SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

WITH AN ESSAY

“THE VISION OF SCIPIO
CONSIDERED AS A FRAGMENT OF
THE MYSTERIES”

By L. O.

THE GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS

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SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS.

THE VISION OF SCIPIO

BY

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO.

CICERO, who was almost the most celebrated orator of antiquity, was born B.C. 107, and was educated by Crassus. He served as a Roman warrior under Sylla, and subsequently became a philosopher. After many years he entered political life, becoming Quæstor of Sicily, then Ædile, and finally Consul. At the last he retired to Tusculum, and was assassinated B.C. 43. He left many classical works, among which are the beautiful essays on "Friendship" and on "Old Age." His only mystical work was the *Somnium Scipionis*, or *Vision of Scipio*, of which a translation by L. O. is here produced, with an Essay upon its connection with the doctrines taught in the ancient Mysteries.

This Scipio was named Africanus the Younger; he had died in B.C. 128; he was the grandson by adoption of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder. The account of this dream or Vision is put into the mouth of the younger Scipio Africanus, who relates that, in early youth, when he first served in Africa he visited the Court of Masinissa, the steady friend of the Romans, and particularly of the Cornelian family. During the feasts and entertainments of the day, the conversation

turned on the words and actions of the first great Scipio. His adopted grandson having retired to rest, the Shade of the departed hero appeared to him in sleep, darkly foretold the future events of his life, and encouraged him to tread in the paths of Patriotism and true glory, by announcing the reward prepared in a future state for those who have served their country faithfully in this life. The scene is laid in the suburban garden of the younger Africanus, and the *dramatis personæ* consist of certain intimate friends and acquaintances.

A few literary and suggestive Notes have been added.

THE VISION OF SCIPIO

Translated by L. O.

WHEN I came to Africa, where, as you know, I was Tribune to the Fourth Legion of soldiers, under the Consul Manius Manilius, nothing appeared to me more desirable than that I should meet Masinissa, a Monarch who had ever been most friendly to our family for just reasons. When I came to him, the old man, having embraced me, wept, and, after a pause, looked up to Heaven: "Ah, thanks," said he, "to Thee I render, Oh highest Sun, and to ye other Celestial companions, in that before I depart this life, I am permitted to behold in my own Kingdom and under these skies P. Cornelius Scipio, whose name itself refreshes me: for, never from my soul has the memory of that best and most invincible of men departed!" Then I inquired of him concerning the affairs of his Kingdom, and he of me respecting our Republic; and our day thus passed in lengthened conference. After a royal entertainment our talk again drew out into the far night, when the old man would speak of nothing save the elder Scipio (Africanus Major): everything about him he remembered, not only his deeds, but even his sayings. When, therefore, we parted to retire to rest, what with the journey and our nocturnal sitting, I was more than usually tired and fell sound asleep.

Whereupon (as I believe arising out of the subject of our talk;—for it often happens that our thoughts and conversation produce some such result in sleep as that

which Ennius³ relates to have happened concerning Homer, whom it appears he was frequently accustomed to meditate upon and to talk about during his waking hours) Africanus appeared to me in a form⁴ which I recognised more from his bust than from my knowledge of the man himself. When I recognised him, I trembled indeed: he, however, speaking said, "Take courage and banish fear, O Scipio; commit to memory what I have to say."

"Seest thou yonder City, which, compelled by me to submit to the Roman people, yet renews its former wars, unable to remain at peace? (Here he shewed me Carthage from a certain clear and brilliant spot in the celestial heights, full of stars) and to the assault of which thou comest, as yet a mere boy? This City, in two years from the present time, thou as Consul shalt overthrow, and that hereditary name, which hitherto thou bearest from us, shall belong to thee by thine own exertions. When moreover Carthage has been razed by thee, thou shalt effect thy Triumph and be made Censor; then as Legate thou shalt proceed to Egypt, Syria, Asia and Greece, being made Consul a second time during thy absence, and undertaking thy greatest war, destroy Numantia. But when thou are borne upon the triumphal car to the Capitol, thou shalt find the Republic thrown into confusion by the policy of my grandson.⁵ Here, O Africanus, it will be necessary for thee to display to the Fatherland the light of thy spirit, thy genius, and thy wisdom; at this period of thy life I see but darkly the course of thy destiny, though when thine age shall have completed eight times seven circuits and returns of the Sun, thus bringing thee to the fatal epoch of thy life⁶ by the natural circuit of these two numbers (each of which is held to be perfect, the one from a different reason to the other); to thee alone and to thy name the whole State will turn; to thee, as Senator, all good people, the Latin allies and

the Latins themselves shall turn; thou shalt be the one upon whom the whole salvation of the State shall rest, and, lest misfortune befall, it behoves thee as dictator to firmly establish the Republic if you would escape the impious hands⁷ of thy kinsmen:" at this portion of the recital Laelius⁸ cried out and the others bitterly lamented, but Scipio, smiling slowly, said: "I beseech you not to arouse me from slumber; peace for a little, and hear the rest."

"But, O Africanus, in order that thou mayest be the more devoted to the welfare of the Republic, mark this well: for all those who have guarded, cherished, and assisted their Fatherland, a particular place in Heaven is assigned, where the blessed enjoy everlasting life. For nothing on earth is more acceptable to that supreme Deity who reigns over the whole Universe, than those assemblages and combinations of men united by Law which we call States; the rulers and preservers whereof coming forth from this place, return thither."

At this point, although I was thoroughly terrified, not so much by the fear of death, as by the treachery of my own kinsmen, I asked notwithstanding whether he himself was really alive and my father Paulus and others whom we believed to be annihilated?

"Yea," said he, "in very truth, those still live who have flown forth from the bonds of the body as from a prison: for indeed, what is called your life, is but a death! Why, dost thou not see thy father Paulus coming to thee?"

At that sight I indeed burst forth into a flood of tears: he, on the other hand, embracing, kissed me and forbade me to weep; and then, when my tears had been repressed, and I began to be able to speak, "Prithee tell me," said I, "most revered and excellent father: Since this is life, as I have heard Africanus say, Why do I tarry upon Earth? Why do I not hasten to come hither to you?"

“It may not be,” he replied, “for, unless that Deity who is the Lord of this Universe which thou beholdest, shall liberate thee from the prison of your body,¹⁰ hither approaching, it is not possible to come. For men are born under this Law to be faithful guardians of that Globe which thou seest in the midst of this Universe and which is called the Earth: and a Soul has been given to them from those sempiternal fires which you call Stars and Constellations; these being spherical and globular bodies, animated with divine Souls, pursue their circling orbits with marvellous celerity. Wherefore, O Publius,¹² both by thee and all pious persons, the Soul should be retained in the keeping of the body: not without His command, by whom that Soul is given to you, must it depart from mortal life, lest you should appear to be untrue to that duty to Mankind which has been assigned to you by the Deity. But do thou cultivate justice and piety, O Scipio, following in the steps of thy Grandsire and of myself, who begat thee. These qualities, although excellent among parents and relations, become still more noble when practised towards one’s Country: through this life lies the road to Heaven and to the assemblage of those, who have already lived upon earth and now, released from the body, inhabit this place which thou seest (this Sphere shone forth with the most resplendent brightness amid blazing stars) and which, after the Greeks, you call the Milky Way. From this place all other bodies appeared to my gaze exceedingly bright and marvellous. There were, moreover, those Stars which are never seen from Earth: and the magnitude of all of them were such as we have never suspected: among these I beheld the smallest¹⁴ to be the farthest from Heaven and the nearest to Earth, shining with a borrowed Light. Moreover, the spheres of the Stars far transcended the size of the Earth. Thus, the Earth itself already appeared small to me, so that I

was grieved to observe how small a part of its surface we in reality occupy."¹⁵

As I continued to gaze steadfastly, Africanus continuing said, "How long wilt thy mind remain rivetted to the Earth? Dost thou not behold into how glorious a Temple thou art come? Now know that the Universe consists of nine circles or rather Spheres, all connected together, one of which is celestial and the furthest off, embracing all the rest, the supreme Deity preserving and governing the others. In this sphere are traced the eternal revolutions of the Stars and to it are subject the seven spheres which revolve backwards with a contrary motion to that of the Celestial Sphere. The first (of these Seven) Spheres is occupied¹⁷ by the Star which on Earth is called Saturn. Next comes the sphere of that splendid Star, salutary and fortunate to the human race, called Jupiter. Then comes the Red Sphere, terrible to the Earth, which you call Mars. Following beneath these spheres, and in almost the middle region, is placed the Sun, the Leader, Chief and Governor of the other Lights, the mind¹⁸ of the World and the organizing principle,—of such wondrous magnitude that it illuminates and impregnates every part of the Universe with its Light. The Spheres of Venus and Mercury in their respective courses follow the Sun as companions. In the lowest Sphere the Moon revolves illumined by the rays of the Sun. Below this in truth nothing exists which is not subject to death and decay, save indeed the Souls, which by the gift of the Gods are bestowed upon the human race. Above the Moon all things are eternal, but the sphere of the Earth, which occupies a middle place and comes ninth¹⁹ does not move: it is the lowest and to it all ponderable bodies are born by their own gravity."

When I had recovered from my amazement at the sight of these things, "What," said I, "is this sweet and wondrous melody which fills my ears?"

“This,” said he, “is that harmony, which, affected by the mingling of unequal intervals, yet notwithstanding in harmonious proportions and with reason so separated, is due to the impulse and movement of the spheres themselves: the light with the heavier tones combined,—the various sounds uniformly going to make up one grand symphony.²⁰ For, not with silence, can such motions be urged forward, and Nature leads us to the conclusion that the extremes give forth a low note at the one end and a high note at the other. Thus the celestial sphere, whose motion in its starlight course is more rapid, gives forth a sharp and rousing sound: the gravest tone being that of the lunar sphere, which is lowest; but the Earth, the ninth sphere, remains immovable, always fixed in the lowest seat encompassing the middle place of the Universe. Moreover, the motions of those eight spheres which are above the earth, and of which the force of two²¹ is the same, cause seven sounds supported by regular intervals; which number is the connecting principle of almost all things. Learned men, having imitated this divine mystery with stringed instruments and vocal harmonies, have won for themselves a return to this place, just as others, who, endowed with superior wisdom, have cultivated the divine sciences even in human life.”

“Now to this melody the stopped ears of men have become deaf;²² nor is there any duller sense in you. Just as at that place which is called Catadupa,²³ where the Nile falls from the highest Mountains, the people living there lose the sense of hearing on account of the magnitude of the sound, so, indeed, such a tremendous volume of sound arises from the rapid revolution of the whole Cosmos that the ears of men are not capable of receiving it, just as you are unable to look straight at the Sun whose rays would blind the eye and conquer the sense.”

Filled with wonder at these things, my eyes ever and anon wandered back to Earth.

Hereupon Africanus said: "I perceive that even now you gaze upon the habitation and abode of mortals. But, if it appear as small to thee, as indeed it is, thus seen, strive ever after these heavenly things and lightly esteem those of earth. For what glory or renown really worthy of being sought after canst thou derive from the mouths of men. Thou seest that the earth is inhabited in scattered places confined within narrow limits, such inhabited regions are in themselves mere specks upon its surface with vast wildernesses intervening: and those who dwell upon the earth are not only separated thus, so that no communication is possible amongst them from the one to the other, but they occupy positions partly oblique, partly transverse, partly even opposite to yours; from these you can certainly hope for no glory. Also thou wilt perceive this same earth to be, as it were, circumscribed and encircled by zones, two of which, the most widely separated and situated at each end under the very poles of heaven, are ice-bound as thou seest²⁴: while the middle and largest zone is burnt up with the heat of the Sun. Two zones are habitable, one of which lies to the South, those who dwell therein planting footsteps opposite to your own, and having nothing to do with your race. As to the other zone which you inhabit, and which is subject to the North wind, see how very slender a part has to do with you: for the whole surface inhabited by your race, restricted towards the poles and wider laterally, is indeed but a small island surrounded by the sea, which you call on earth the Atlantic, the Great Sea, or Ocean. Yet, notwithstanding its name, it is but small as thou seest. How then is it possible that from these known and cultivated countries either thy name or that of any of us can cross those Caucasian Mountains, which thou seest, or pass beyond the

Ganges? Who, in the remaining parts of the East, in the uttermost regions of the wandering Sun, either in Northern or Southern Climes, will hear thy name? So then, with these parts taken away, dost thou indeed perceive within what narrow limits your glory seeks to spread itself; and how long even will those who sing your praises continue to do so?

“Yea, indeed, if generations hence posterity shall seek to perpetuate the fame of anyone of us handed down from father to son, yet notwithstanding, on account of fire and flood, which will inevitably happen at certain fixed periods²⁶ of time, we are unable to attain lasting renown, much less eternal glory. Moreover, of what importance are the things which shall be said concerning thee by those to be born hereafter, when no one who existed before will then be alive? More especially, when of those same men who are to come, not one will be able to remember the events of even one year. Now, according to common custom, men usually measure the year merely by the return of the sun, or, in other words, by the revolution of one star. But when the whole of the constellations shall return to the original positions from which they once set forth, thus restoring at long intervals the original configuration of the Heavens, then can that be truly called ‘the Great Year,’²⁷ within which period, I scarcely dare say how many generations of men are comprised. For, just as in time past, when the Soul of Romulus entered into these sacred abodes, the Sun appeared to fail and be extinguished, so when the Sun shall again fail in the same position and at the same time, then, when the Signs of the Zodiac shall have returned to their original position, and the Stars are recalled, the cycle of the Great Year shall be accomplished; of this enormous period of time, know that not a twentieth part has yet passed away.²⁸

“Wherefore, if thou despairst of a speedy return to

this quarter, wherein all things are prepared for great and excellent men, pray of what value is that human glory which can scarcely endure the smallest part of one cycle? And so, if you would look on high and fix your gaze on this state and your eternal home, thou shalt pay no heed to vulgar talk, neither allow thy actions to be influenced by the hope of human rewards. True virtue for its own sake should lead thee to real glory. Leave to others the care of ascertaining what they may say of you: they will assuredly speak of you beyond all doubt. Human fame is wholly restricted within these narrow limits which thou seest, and never at any time has anyone gained immortal renown, for that is impossible through the annihilation of men and the oblivion of posterity."²⁹

Whereon I said, "If indeed O, Africanus, for those who have deserved well of their country a Path, as it were, lies open to Heaven"³⁰—although from my youth up I have followed in the footsteps of yourself and my father, and never tarnished your great renown—now nevertheless, with such a prospect before me, I will strive much more vigilantly."

"Strive on," said he, "with the assurance that it is not you who are subject to death, but your body. For thou art not what this form appears to be, but the real man is the thinking principle of each one—not the bodily form which can be pointed out with the finger."³¹ Know this, then, that thou art a God,³² inasmuch as Deity is that which has Will, sensation, memory, foresight, and who so rules, regulates and moves the body to which his charge is committed, just as the supreme Deity does the Universe, and as the Eternal God directs this Universe, which is in a certain degree subject to decay, so a sempiternal Soul moves the frail body.

"Now, that which is always in motion is eternal, whereas that which only communicates motion, and

which itself is put in motion by some other cause, must necessarily cease when the motive impulse is withdrawn. Accordingly that alone which moves spontaneously because it is ever all itself, never indeed ceases to move, and is moreover the source of motion in all things. Now a primary cause is not derived from any other cause; for forth from that do all things proceed, and from no other. That which springs from something else cannot be the primary cause, and if this indeed never had a commencement, neither will it ever have an end. For the primal cause once destroyed could neither be generated afresh from any other thing, nor itself produce anything else: for all things must necessarily proceed from the primal cause. This eternal principle of all Motion arises out of that which is moved by itself and of itself, and cannot therefore be born or perish; or else of necessity the whole heavens must collapse, and all Nature come to a standstill, unable any longer to derive the impulse by which it was set in motion at the first.

“Since, accordingly, it is manifest that that is eternal which moves of itself, who will deny this eternal principle to be a natural attribute of Souls. For everything which is moved by an external impulse is inanimate: but that, on the other hand, which energizes from within is truly animated, and this is the peculiar operation of the Soul. If then the Soul is the one thing above all, which is self motive, it certainly is not born, but eternal. Do thou then exercise this Soul of thine in the noblest pursuits: solicitude and care for the welfare of one’s country are the best: for, animated and controlled by these sentiments, the Soul passes more swiftly to this sphere—its true home. And this may be the more speedily achieved if, while imprisoned in the body, it shall rise superior to terrestrial limitations, and by the contemplation of those things which are beyond the body, it shall abstract itself to the greatest degree from its earthly tabernacle.

“For the Souls of men who have delivered themselves over to the desires of the body, and of those women who, as abettors, have surrendered themselves, and by the impulse of passions obedient to sensual gratifications, have violated the laws of God and of Man, once liberated from the body, are whirled around this world, and such tortured Souls will not return to this place, save after many centuries.”

Here he ceased, and I awoke from sleep.

THE VISION OF SCIPIO CONSIDERED AS A FRAGMENT OF THE MYSTERIES.

BY L. O.

“To some he gave the ability of receiving the knowledge of Light, which may be taught, but to others, even when asleep, he extended the fruit of his strength.”—SYNESIOS.

As a literary production merely, this is one of the most beautiful and imaginative compositions bequeathed to us by Cicero. A careful examination of the ideas unfolded in its few short pages will prove instructive to every earnest student of the Mysteries—those great Institutions of Antiquity, guardians of a sacred science, the echoes of which still linger herein. This opinion has been entertained by more than one commentator upon the strength of internal evidence, and constitutes the *raison d'être* of the present translation.

The Vision of Scipio is suggestive, resuming as it does so many of the leading conceptions involved in the mystical philosophy of the old world, and, in this respect, it but rarely happens that so much is conveyed in so brief a fragment. To those, however, who have grasped the many beauties of the Magian philosophy, or such traces of it as appear discernible in the lapse of time, any attempt to reconstruct the scattered fragments which remain to us must be welcome, and hence the

object of this article is to examine the leading conceptions of the *Somnium*, in order to arrive at a coherent view of the philosophy which underlies it. That philosophy, it is reasonable to conjecture, was alike the system inculcated in the ancient Mysteries of every nation—those Mysteries being considered as the organised endeavour of illuminati to elucidate the great problems of Life and Death, the nature of the Soul and its relation to the Deity.

Men have ever found themselves face to face with these great difficulties, striving to unravel the skein of life with all the poverty of language, and the restrictions of human thought. But human thought alone is powerless for such sublime ascents—a higher faculty of the Soul being requisite. “Strive,” says the Zoroastrian* Oracle, “to understand the Intelligible which exists beyond the Mind, with the extended flame of an extended intellect.”

The solution of these momentous questions is of the first importance, because of the moral consequences involved; morality being largely modified in scope and direction by the conclusions arrived at in philosophy. Thus the influence of a system of thought purely of the intellect, must obviously differ from that resulting in the case of a Religio-philosophical system: while it is worthy of remark that no influence has proved so powerful in the direction of human affairs—no sentiment so ineradicably implanted in the human breast—as that of Religion. Here lies the supreme bond of union between all human beings—the most highly vitalized sentiment of which humanity is capable.

It seems probable that the Mysteries—which were almost cosmopolitan †—had for object to draw men

* *The Chaldean Oracles* form Volume VI. of this Series.

† Vide *L'immortalité de l'ame chez les anciens Egyptiens*, by Wiedemann.

closer to each other by bonds of union deeper than those of mere worldly interest, and this was only possible by an appeal at once to both the philosophic and religious sides of the nature. Before the instinct of veneration had been dwarfed, as, generally speaking, it has now largely become, and, at a time when the whole activities of the higher mind functioned, so to speak, under the ægis of Religion, it is not surprising that the Mysteries should have exerted an enormous influence in the lands where they were established.

What, it will be asked, was the nature of the revelations vouchsafed to participants, or the benefit to be derived from initiation therein? Our information on this subject is confined to certain meagre historical details, from which we gather that these Institutions professedly existed to celebrate the mythological histories associated with certain divinities. That they were held in universal esteem and treated with profound reverence is certain—a fact which sufficiently points to the serious nature of these activities, and the lofty intentions which animated them. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how any suggestions to the contrary could gain credence in face of the fact that the most cultured and luminous minds in the past have contributed to elucidate our reflections upon this subject—all the resources of poetry and philosophy in the early days of the world being mainly burthened with this one theme in some shape or form.

The best thought of the ancient world was, to a large extent, the Theosophy we know to-day in another dress. From Plato to Proclus, from Homer to Ovid—the thoughts of such men have lived after them, and even if to-day largely misunderstood, they nevertheless succeeded in investing the traditions of their time with a significance which none but a student of the Mysteries can hope to understand.

The peculiar Mythologies of Egypt and Greece re-

spectively were but the machinery of a symbolism, the interpretation of which formed alike the science of the Soul and the system of the Mysteries. Herein lay concealed those great truths which serve to explain the immediate mysteries of our environment, the development and elucidation of which served to enlighten and astonish the Neophyte; these culminating in appropriate theurgic formulæ, conferred a clearer hope of immortality—a perception of the Universal Presence, such as the *Entheast** alone could derive.

Needless to say that such results are not attainable by any process of thought *per se*: all that thought can do is to dimly apprehend a higher faculty of the Soul—a mode of perception transcending the merely intellectual.

In the Vision of Scipio this higher faculty takes the form of a clairvoyant perception, a marvellous insight superior to all bodily limitations, whereby the consciousness is brought into *rappport* with other worlds than those normally perceived by the senses.

Apuleius, who was initiated into the Isiac Mysteries, thus refers to his experience: "I approached the confines of death, and having trod on the threshold of Proserpine, I returned therefrom, being borne through all the elements. At midnight I saw the Sun shining with its brilliant Light, and I approached the presence of the Gods beneath and the Gods above, and stood near and worshipped them. Behold, I have related to you things of which, though heard by you, you must necessarily remain ignorant."†

Although the initiates themselves appear to have remained true to their trust and we are thus denied a direct statement, professedly expounding the system

* A word used by the Neoplatonic writers meaning "Immersed in God."

† *Metamorphosis of Apuleius*, 11th Book.

in question, there yet remain to us a collection of utterances attributed to Zoroaster and others, known as the Zoroastrian Oracles, which were continually appealed to by the ablest commentators* on the Mysteries and are of great assistance in solving this difficult problem. These fragments tersely resume many of the most daring conceptions of mature thinkers and theurgists long ago—conceptions which endow Religion with enterprise and the Soul with God-like attributes. Little wonder then at the old proverb “Man, know thyself,”—when that knowledge involved so much. Such self-knowledge—the most profound homage that man can render to the divinity—was by no means an analysis of the *human self*, but an attempt to consider the principles working in the great Universe around us as all reflected in the total constitution of each human being. It is for this reason that the Vision of Scipio is *apparently* devoted to an exposition of the divine Potencies operating in the Universe around us.

The Gods, in the antient conception, around which so many classic traditions have clustered, were representations through images and similitudes of certain mighty powers, considered to exist between Man and the Supreme Principle: these powers, although rooted in this Principle, were yet regarded as possessing energies distinct from their ineffable cause. “These mighty powers,” says Taylor, “are called by the Poets a Golden Chain, on account of their connection with each other and incorruptible nature, . . . they are rooted in this Supreme Principle like trees in the Earth, which have a distinct energy of their own at the same time that they energize in conjunction with their cause.”†

* *Vide* the writings of Proclus on the Philosophy of Plato, also of Plotinus and Porphyry.

† Taylor's *Miscellany*, p. 129.

But what, it may be asked, about the Supreme Principle of things, that which is so incomparable to its attributes:—was this not lost sight of in the multitude of divinities? “To that God,” says Porphyry, “who is above all things, neither external speech ought to be addressed, nor yet that which is inward, when it is defiled by the passion of the soul, but we should venerate him in pure silence and through pure conceptions of his nature.”

With this view in mind the student is led to regard the Pantheon of any Nation as a collection of symbols, more or less appropriate, and intended to convey some idea of the totality of divine attributes.

It is moreover comparatively easy to discover certain fundamental similarities which may be said to underlie the great classic Pantheons, and such comparisons clearly indicate a unity of conception which enables us to identify as essentially one and the same the Mystical Systems pervading alike Chaldea and Greece on the one hand, and Egypt on the other.

The divinities of Mythology were symbols;—symbols which translated to the trained perception of the initiate the factors of his great equation, those supra-mundane forces which are most reverently defined as deific. One in many and many in One. It was the intimate knowledge of these and of the various entities correlated therewith which constituted the “Divine Sciences” to which reference is made in the Vision of Scipio.

These Divine Sciences, by the practice of which wise men have attained release from the gross and the nether, gaining the upper air and endless light, were formulated on Universal Truths, proceeding from Universals to Particulars. The unspeakable harmony in the bosom of the world which causes all things to sympathise with all, justified the Hermetic Axiom,

Qui se cognoscit, in se omnia cognoscit,* and hence our consideration of Macrocosmic truths implies in reality much more than their merely phenomenal observance would seem to warrant.

The nine Spheres alluded to in this Vision, and which for the purposes of study are more properly regarded as either seven or ten—are primal powers and the roots alike of force and form. Hence the “divine sciences” derived from the decimal numeration rest upon a basis of mathematical accuracy—mathematics being an exact science. Here we find the first traces of the Kabalistic Sephiroth,—three Triads of Powers resumed in a Tenth,—the Ennead or procession of nine Gods occurring alike in Chaldean and Egyptian Theology as well as in the Platonic system.†

This idea was no doubt based upon the principle that as the numbers from 1 to 10 formed the base of every possible numerical variation, so every manifested thing in Nature is ultimately referable to these Ten primordial powers, for number guides form and lies at the root of sound. Pursuing this conception further, it will be seen that the linear equivalents of numbers 1 and 2 cannot of themselves produce a concrete form: for the first would be represented by one straight line, and the second by two straight lines, neither of which can enclose a space. These two numbers must therefore ever remain abstractions, and the succeeding number Three become the first concrete expression: on the other hand,

* Who knows himself knows all things in himself.

† Compare also the Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto of the Greeks and Romans ruling respectively over three great Realms—Heaven, “The Sea,” and Infernal Regions. Also in *Lydus (de Mensibus)* p. 121, Taylor, we read “That the number nine is divine, receiving its completion from three triads, and preserving the summits of Theology according to the Chaldaic philosophy as Porphyry informs us.”

the number Ten is a synthetical return to Unity, or the commencement of a fresh series. It is for this reason that the objective powers of manifestation are septenary, and these, corresponding to their geometrical forms, are also allied to colours and sounds, as suggested in the *Somnium*.

These Seven divine forces were anciently supposed to reside in the Planets, the ruling intelligences of which were thus regarded as the Vicegerents of the Sephirotic powers; and the administration not only of the whole physical world, but even of human affairs, came to be attributed to the celestial wanderers.

This Septenate—called also the “Tree of Life”—was traced in every created thing—in the Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral departments. This theoretical procession, from primal natures down to the more complex, also laid the foundation of Alchemy, for some subjects, from the simple integrity of their nature, were considered as peculiarly appropriate vehicula for the Anima Mundi.

It is important to notice in the Vision of Scipio, that the Planets are regarded as in a way distinct from the Spheres within which they energize, and here also lies a conception which will repay attention.* According to Hermetic teaching, everything which has culminated in idea or materiality—in form, *per se*, or its physical expression—is regarded as ensphered, and thereby individualized: such intangible and magnetic circuli are conceived to be forces evolving form—form being static force. Each individual or entity—whether a stone, a plant, an animal, or a man—energizes according to its nature, *i.e.*, gives expression to the archetype of its sphere, and this is the work of evolution: while the

* “According to the Orphic theology, each of the planets is fixed in a luminous ethereal sphere called *ολοτης* or *Wholeness*, because it is a part with a total subsistence and is analogous to the sphere of the fixed stars.” *Metamorphosis of Apuleius*, eleventh book, Taylor’s translation.

crown of manifested life is naturally considered to be the production of spiritually perfect man—the form of forms.

In just the same way as the planetary spheres are here said to be comprised within the sphere of the fixed Stars, so all entities are vested in the Anima Mundi in varying degree, according to vehiculum; in the higher kingdoms increased complexity obtains, culminating in the human being—as it is said, “Oh, Man of a daring nature, thou subtil production!”*

The Unity of the Divine One—“circumscribing the Heavens with convex form”—which is considered to underlie all manifestation, is a necessary conception to the doctrines of Macrocosm and Microcosm, the greater and lesser worlds: that which is a part, of necessity partakes of the nature of the whole, and thus every entity is a microcosm, or little world, reflecting the greater world or macrocosm after a certain formula—but reflection involves reversal. This latter truth, resumed also in the old axiom, “As above, so below, but after another manner,” is probably the explanation of more than one incongruity in the *Somnium*.

Man being made in the likeness of the Gods, the planetary forces find their representatives in the constitution of his being, but whereas in macrocosmic action their operation is, as it were, without within—in the human organism it is rather within without, and not only are the Seven great Sephirotic powers distributed throughout the entire human system as a whole, but also the three worlds in Man, *viz.*, the head, the chest, and vital parts, are said to each contain Seven important centres or orifices.†

* See Vol. VI. *The Zoroastrian Oracles*.

† *Vide Sepher Yetzirah*, Westcott, and Mather's *Kabbalah Unveiled* p. 50.

In the ancient conception, the Planets were the presidential heads of the elemental permutations—exciting forces which communicated their own peculiar energies through one or another of the Signs of the Zodiac. To understand the action of the Planets, it is necessary to consider what these Signs of the Zodiac are. The celestial definition is of course familiar to everyone, but that does not throw light on the Chaldean theory. The twelve constellations were related to the three conditions of each of the four elements of the ancients, thus making twelve elemental variations in all: these are not, however, to be confounded with the Fire, Air, Water, and Earth usually recognized under these terms, but to the subtil æthers underlying them, and necessary for the manifestation of the gross elements. Thus the fiery Signs, *viz.*, Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, were all considered to transmit the influence of subtil Fire, but in three different conditions, these being respectively the Fiery, Watery, and Airy degrees of ætheric Fire—and so on with each of the other elemental triplicities.

In one complete diurnal revolution of the Sun, the successive influences of the whole of these twelve constellations are transmitted around the circuit of our Earth: this would give an *average* time of two hours to each Sign, during which its elemental current would be operative.* These influences are intensified, or the reverse, by the presence or absence of the planets from the Signs, because some planets are considered to harmonize with the elemental vibrations of certain Signs, and *vice versa*.

This, in its human application, will be the better understood when it is stated that the four elements referred to were especially connected with the constitution of the human being, and the proportion in which these

* Compare the Eastern theory of the Tatwas.

mingled would thus regulate the temperament of the individual under the regimen of the planets. According to the Hermetic system, it is only when these ætheric vibrations are disposed with due interval and proper balance that the spirit can be rendered manifest—the dead Osiris be raised to life, and the Lord of this World enter into his Kingdom. Some Souls lack qualities in which others abound, but the perfect man is fully representative. The elemental constitution of the individual is derived from the vivific fountains of Nature's energies: the Zodiacal hierarchies having successively endowed the human race at certain stages of its evolution, under the presidency of the Sephirotic powers.

The history of human evolution passing in its different phases, from the blackness of putrefaction “through all the colours,” to the golden glory of spiritual perfection, presents a perfect parallel with the Alchemical process of the “Great Work,” with which, indeed, in a major aspect it is identical. The period of the *Annus Magnus*, or Great Year, comprising 25,868 solar years, or thereabouts, is that of one complete “circulation,” for a minor revolution of the Zodiacal powers is both begun and finished within that time. The great celestial phenomena thus become coincident with the progress of the Race, and its final apotheosis approximately predicable.

The Earth is now under the dominion of Sorrow and Sadness: “When, Oh Lord of the Universe, shall she turn from her evil ways, and *again* behold Thy face?”

“The music of the Spheres,”*—a doctrine attributed to Pythagoras (who probably learnt it from the Egyptians)—is another cardinal Mystery tenet: by the skilful blending of these celestial harmonies, we are

* *Vide* “Creation by Voice and the *Ennead* of Hermopolis,” Maspero.

told, sages achieve their apotheosis. This is an allusion to the secret of the Lagash (mystical speech or incantation) and probably has the same significance as the Seven Thunders of Revelations (accompanied by lightning). As it is written, "Thy splendour, Oh Lord, shall fill the ends of the Universe!" But, in addition to this, the subtil forces of our spiritual being have long been denoted by the Rainbow of Glory, our perception of which is the promise of a new life.

This blessed vision has been vouchsafed to other Seers of the World. Hai Ebn Yokdhan also perceived and described the essences of those Spheres: in each "he saw distinct immaterial essences, like the image of the Sun reflected from one glass to another, according to the order of the Spheres . . . in all he discovered infinite beauty, brightness and pleasure, such as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man . . . except those who have attained it or *experimentally known it*."*

No wonder then at the exclamation of the younger Scipio, "*Quid moror in terris? Quin huc ad vos venire propero?*"†

To so reasonable a suggestion as this the reply given is not one which it is easy to appreciate. Upon this head Plato observes:—"The instruction in the doctrine given in the Mysteries that we human beings are in a kind of prison, and that we ought not to free ourselves from it or seek to escape, appears to me difficult to be understood, and not easy to apprehend."‡

On the other hand, it is of course not clear that the suicide really escapes from his prison by reason of

* *Vide Platonist*, Vol. III., p. 335.

† "Why tarry upon the earth? Why do I not hasten to come to thee?"

‡ *Phædo* 16:

having put off the material body: the explanation appears to be that the term of our life period is imposed by the astral forces prior to birth, and is therefore not dependent for its determination on physical circumstance during the individual career. The result therefore of such an abrupt termination of human life as that involved by suicide,* would be to transfer the life energies to the astral centres where they would still be operative, thereby enormously intensifying the unimpeded phantasy of excarnate life to which the Soul of the suicide would be subject.

In early life the disciples of the magi learnt to resolve the bonds of proscription, and by loosening the ungirders of the Soul, to enter the immeasurable region.

“Explore the River of the Soul,” says the Oracle, “so that, having become a servant to the body, you may again rise to the order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason.”

The Magian and Hermetic philosophies appear to have persistently considered the body as the charnel house of the Soul, “occultly intimating that the death of the Soul was nothing more than a profound union with the ruinous bonds of the body.”†

Perplexing possibly, but none the less is it a great truth that the exterior and sensuous life is death to the highest energies of the Soul, *for all divine natures are incorporeal.*

This identification of the spiritual and, comparatively speaking, immortal being, with the impermanent and fleeting nature, was overcome by the purifications. The method adopted seems to have been that, after a certain period of rigour of life and practice of the virtues, the latter were, so to speak, confirmed and established by

* *Vile Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, p. 31

† Taylor.

initiation into the Sacred Mysteries. Julian says, "The Oracles of the Gods declare that through purifying ceremonies, not the Soul only, but bodies themselves become worthy of receiving much assistance and health: 'for (say they) the mortal vestment of bitter matter will by these means be preserved.' "*

According to Plato, "Purification is to be derived from the five mathematical disciplines, *viz.*, from Arithmetic, Geometry, Stereometry, Music and Astronomy." But the parts of initiation into the sacred Mysteries were also five, and the first of these parts consisted of the purification. "The fifth gradation is the most perfect felicity . . . and according to Plato an assimilation to divinity as far as it is possible to mankind."† It is possible that this five-fold initiation had reference to the regimen of the four elements of the ancients and the Eternal Spirit operating therein.‡

The Hermetic doctrine, which explains and resumes these ideas, considers these four Elements to intervene, as it were, between man and the divine Spirit. They are the Zones immediately penetrated by Souls departing this life, and their period of detention therein is regulated by the past spent life. Some few Souls coming forth pure, traverse these without let or hindrance and others require a long purification therein. The following allegorical fragment of Empedocles, cited by Plutarch, is doubtless a true echo of the ancient Mystery teaching concerning this matter. Speaking of the unpurified Souls which enter these Regions, he thus describes the treatment they undergo: "The ethereal force pursues them towards the Sea. The Sea vomits them forth upon its shores, the Earth in turn flings them upwards

* *Julian Orat.* V., p. 334. † *Mathematica*, Theon of Smyrna.

‡ *Vide Hermes in Asclepius*, Part III.

to the untiring Sun, and the Sun again drives them back into the Whirlwind of Space. Thus all the elements toss them from one to another, and all hold them in horror."*

Purity of Soul is therefore a *sine quâ non* to all, who, while yet upon the Earth, would come "forth from the bands of body step by step." But purity itself is not sufficient, it must be accompanied by Intelligence and Will: Intelligence to direct the life to the highest Good, Will to preserve the "equilibrium of balance,"—that steady mean between two opposing forces, which to pursue is indeed difficult.

The exhortation to devote attention to divine things, while faithfully performing the duties of practical life, is one which must echo universal response. The calms of lofty contemplation expand our being, enlarging the purview of life, and the true dignity of the Soul is alone maintained when in alliance with its own divine summit. For not until the Spirit has penetrated beyond the limitations of body, and the mind been raised amid the stately solitudes of the Universal Temple, can the Man be said to be really Man, or the "Mercury of the philosophers" "truly animated."

The value of right motive in the direction of human life is forcibly exemplified in the *Somnium*, and while the noblest activities in incarnation are recognised to be those which benefit collective interests, yet the fallacy of identifying the self with a life of even political celebrity or warlike achievement for their own sake, is clearly shown; personal fame is but the meteoric gleam flashing at intervals down the avenues of time, and cannot permanently endure. The cataclysms of Water and Fire, which at regular intervals visit our Earth, are vicissitudes too sweeping and vast in their nature to

* *Asclepios*, Part X.

permit the unbroken continuity of the human race; these "baptisms" of the two primal elements confirm and initiate each new phase in the great work of the world's perfectionment: marking stages alike in the spiritual history of Mankind.

The human Soul—the child of the Night of time—tends ever to the phenomenal and transient on the one hand, and the noumenal and essential on the other: situated between the divine and the animal, it is assimilable unto either. The channel to the other world is a still-covered way—often impassible, formed of spiritual aspirations—stepping-stones across the River of Lethe. This efflorescence of the human mind opens up a pathway into Heaven, a means whereby the identity may be transferred to the higher spheres by those who, while yet in the body, study the divine science. This off-shoot of the "Tree of Life" was, in the Kabbalistic initiation, resolvable into a septenary of perfections, reflecting the glories of the Seven Heavens, denoted respectively as Wisdom and Understanding, Mercy and Severity, Beauty, Glory and Victory.

The great revelation vouchsafed to the illuminati of all ages, and which has been the constant experience of Seers and initiates throughout the past, is a perception of Light—a brilliance unperceived by the normal senses—compared to which physical illumination is but darkness. It is this LVX AOURE or Limitless Light pervading the primeval vastnesses of Universal Nature, the attainment of which confers unspeakable content upon the "subterranean workers"—dwellers in this material sphere—for it is the divine radix of all things. "The mortal who approaches the Fire shall receive a Light from divinity: for unto the persevering mortal the blessed Immortals are swift!"

NOTES

ON THE

SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS.

1. M. Manilius was introduced as a sharer in the dialogue.

2. The *just causes* were that the elder Scipio had amply rewarded Massinissa, Prince of Numidia, for his fidelity in the Second Punic War.

3. Ennius not only said that Homer used to appear to him in dreams, but also that he was indeed a re-incarnation of Homer.

4. That is, his adoptive grandfather appeared to him; but as Africanus the Elder had died when our Scipio was but a year old, he could have had no idea of his personal appearance.

5. Tiberius Gracchus, a Tribune of Rome, died B.C. 133.

6. That is fifty-six years of age.

Seven was esteemed venerable, holy, divine and motherless. See Westcott on *Numbers*, p. 31. Eight was called Perfect, being the first cube; it is the only evenly even number of the decad.

7. Scipio was found dead in bed in B.C. 128, murdered by order of Caius Gracchus, and it is said that the chamber door was opened by his wife, Sempronia, to give admission to the assassins.

8. Lælius was a character seen as an actor in the vision.

9. Paulus Æmilius, the conqueror of Perseus, son of Philip King of Macedon, was his natural father, but our Scipio was adopted by the son of the Elder Scipio Africanus.

10. A condemnation of suicide, which deprived one of the entry to the Heaven, before mentioned.

11. The heavenly bodies are inhabited by egos in certain states of progress, but not necessarily by men, perhaps by those higher than men.

12. Publius Cornelius Æmilianus Scipio was the full name of the dreamer; Africanus Minor was added by his admirers.

13. This heaven was in the Via Lactea.

14. The Moon, which is not itself a luminary, but is illuminated by the Sun.

15. The Roman Empire was but a small spot of the whole exposed surface of the earth.

16. Eight similar spheres enveloped in a ninth vast and glorious envelope.

17. Note the distinction between the Sphere and the Planet pertaining to it.

18. Mens; in ancient occult works, this word is of far higher import than our word, *mind*. Compare the Chaldaic philosophy in Stanley's *History of Philosophy*.

19. G. R. S. Mead in his remarks on the *Somnium*, calls attention to this paragraph as demonstrating the early existence in Europe of the present Theosophic system. Of the Nine, omitting the first universal sphere, and the last, the Earth, there remain Seven types, which are traced in Man as the Seven human Principles.

20. This is a statement of the Pythagorean doctrine of the "Music of the Spheres," so frequently referred to in occult works. In this consideration refer to the first chapters of the *Timæus* of Plato.

21. G. R. S. Mead suggests Mercury and Venus.

22. The hearing of this Music being constant, is not perceived by men.

23. The Great Cataract.
24. H. P. Blavatsky suggested that at the true poles this was not so.
25. Island: the word is *Insula* in all the Latin versions I have seen. Mead reads *Infula*, a strip.
26. H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophic cosmology states that the dominant races are successively overthrown by alternate cataclysms of water and fire. The words are indeed here "eluviones exustionesque."
27. The Romans knew of this Great Cycle of rather more than 25,000 years. Hipparchus noted the Precession of the Equinoxes, which forms a reason for this cycle.
28. Only about 600 years had passed.
29. Kill out ambition, is the burden of this passage; both Western and Eastern schools of Occult Science dwell on the need of subjugating the lower Self.
30. Even patriotism is not the Highest Path. Compare the Thirty-two Paths of *Sepher Yetzirah*.
31. The constant theme of the Mystic, but one utterly neglected by the man in the street.
32. A truly Rosicrucian idea.

THE GOLDEN VERSES & THE SYMBOLS OF PYTHAGORAS.

THIS most eminent philosopher, the founder of the Italic School, was born about the year 580 B.C., at Samos, an island in the Ægean Sea; he studied in Greece and in Egypt and is said to have visited also India, Persia and Palestine. He settled at Crotona, a notable city of Greek colonization in the south of Italy; here he taught for forty years, but was at last obliged to leave the country on account of the disturbances accompanying a revolution there, he reached Metapontum where he died about the year 500 B.C.

It is said that he left no written works, and all that remains of his doctrine is derived from his pupils and successors. Mnesarchus, his son, and Aristæus, who married his widow, were the immediate successors who carried on the school of philosophy and they were succeeded by Bulagoras, Tidas and Diodorus. At a later date the teachings were continued at three centres, Heraclea, Metapontum and Tarentum.

The oldest authors who have left any record of his teachings are Philolaus, circa 370 B.C.; Archytas of Tarentum; Aristotle, B.C. 322; Theon of Smyrna; Jamblichus of Chalcis; Proclus; Simplicius; and lastly Photius of Constantinople, who lived about 850 A.D., and left a Bibliotheca of ancient philosophy. During the middle ages Meursius, Meibomius, Kircher,

Beroaldus and Marsilius Ficinus reprinted the old remains of the Pythagoreans.

Later editors have been Michael Neander, André Dacier, Thomas Stanley, 1700, and J. C. von Orelli, 1819.

The "Golden Verses" and the "Symbols" enshrine the Pythagorean doctrine in a concise and convenient form; they are the only works extant directly attributed to the great master, but history records that many treatises were written by his pupils to explain his philosophy; such are—Three Treatises, paideutic, politic and physic; the Universe; the Sacred discourse; the Soul; on piety; arithmetic; prognostics; and Magical virtues of herbs.

There are however two short *epistles*, one to Anaximenes and one to Hiero, which are thought to be authentic; and lastly, there is a short paragraph on the letter Y as a symbol of human life.

The Notes are chiefly gleaned by A.E.A. and by S. A. from the commentaries of Hierocles, who lived about 330, from Jamblichus of Chalcis, 320, and André Dacier, whose treatise is dated 1706, of which there is an English edition of 1707, by N. Rowe.

S. A.

THE GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS

Translated by A. E. A.

1. FIRST worship the immortal gods as the Law ordains.

2. Reverence thy oath, and next, the illustrious heroes.

3. Then supplicate the good terrestrial demons, with proper offerings.

4. Honour also thy parents, and those most nearly related to thee.

5. Of other men, make him thy friend who is most distinguished by virtue.

6. Listen to his kind words, and copy his good deeds.

7. Do not hate thy friend for a small fault.

8. Now, Power is a near neighbour to necessity.

9. Know these things ; accustom thyself to be the master of thy Passions :

10. First gluttony, then sloth, luxury, and anger.

11. Do no shameful act in private with thyself, nor with another :

12. And above all things respect thyself.

13. In the next place be just both in deed and word.

14. And let it not be thy habit to behave thyself in any matter thoughtlessly,

15. But consider this,—that all must die.
16. And that as the good things of Fortune may be acquired, so also they may be lost.
17. As to those calamities which befall men through Divine Fortune,
18. If thou suffer, suffer in patience, and resent them not.
19. Do thy best to remedy them, and bear in mind,
20. That Destiny does not give the largest share to good men.
21. Many sorts of reasonings, good and bad, are to be found amongst men ;
22. But be not disturbed by them, nor allow them to harass thee.
23. But if anything false of thee be put forth, bear it patiently.
24. Listen now carefully to what I am about to tell thee.
25. Let no one ever seduce thee by his words or acts,
26. Nor make thee do what is not seemly.
27. Deliberate before doing, in order that what thou doest may not be foolish.
28. For it is the part of a stupid man to speak and act without thought.
29. But do thou act so that thou shalt not be troubled by the result.
30. Do nothing also which thou dost not understand,
31. But learn all that thou shouldest know, and so thou shalt lead a pleasant life.
32. Neglect not the health of thy body.
33. Be moderate in food, and drink, and exercise.
34. Now by moderation I mean what will not injure thee.
35. Accustom thyself to a style of living which is simple but not luxurious.
36. Avoid anything which can give rise to envy.

37. Spend not unseasonably as one who knows not what is right.

38. Be not niggardly nor covetous.

39. Moderation in all things is most excellent.

40. Do only those things which cannot hurt thee, and think before doing (even them).

41. Never sleep before going over the acts of the day in thy mind.

Wherein have I done wrong? What have I done? What have I left undone?

Examine thyself. If thou hast done evil, blame. And if thou hast done well, rejoice.

45. Practise thoroughly all these maxims; think on them; love them.

46. They will put thee in the way of Divine Virtue;

47. I swear it by Him who has put into our soul the Quaternion.

48. Who is the Eternal Source of Nature?

49. But go to thy work only after having prayed the gods to accomplish it.

50. Having done this, thou shalt know the constitution of the immortal Gods and of mortal men;

51. How far the different Beings extend, and what contains them and holds them together.

52. Thou shalt know also, according to right, that Nature is alike in all;

53. So that thou shalt not hope for that which thou shouldst not, and nothing shall be hidden from thee.

54. Thou shalt know also that men draw their misfortunes upon themselves of their own choice.

55. Wretches! they neither see nor understand that their Good is close at hand.

56. Few know how to free themselves from their misfortunes.

57. Such is the Fate that takes away the senses of men.

58. Some like wheels are carried in one direction,
some in another, pressed down by ills innumerable.

59. For fatal strife, innate, ever following, unseen
afflicts them.

60. They ought not to provoke this, but yield and
so escape.

61. O Jove, mighty Father, wouldst Thou deliver
them from many evils.

62. Show them what Fate is about to overtake
them.

63. But be of good heart, the race of man is divine.

64. Holy Nature shews them all her mysteries.

65. If thou knowest these things, thou wilt do what
I bid thee do ;

66. And, having healed thy soul, thou wilt deliver it
from these evils.

67. But abstain thou from the food, of which I have
spoken, in the purifications,

68. And in the deliverance of thy Soul, decide between
the courses open to you, and thoroughly examine all
things.

69. Take the Supreme Mind as thy guide (who
must ever direct and restrain thy course).

70. And when, after having thrown aside thy body,
thou comest to the realms of most pure ether,

71. Thou shalt be a God, immortal, incorruptible.

NOTES BY A. E. A.

SUGGESTED BY THE COMMENTARIES OF
HIEROCLES AND DACIER.

It is doubtful whether we have in these verses the work of the philosopher himself, for they were probably written by one of his disciples, and the ancients ascribed them to Lysis. They bear the name of Pythagoras not only because they contain his doctrines, but also because his disciples never put their names to their works, which they all imputed to their Master to do him honour and to testify their gratitude.

“Among all the Rules that contain a Summary of Philosophy, the verses of Pythagoras, called the Golden Verses, justly hold the first Rank, for they contain the general Precepts of all Philosophy, as well for what regards the Active, as the Contemplative. By their means every one may acquire Truth and Virtue, render himself pure, happily attain to the Divine Resemblance, and as is said by Plato in the *Timæus*, after having regained his Health, and recovered his Integrity and his Perfection, he may see himself again in a State of Innocence and Light.”

Pythagoras begins with the precepts of active Virtue. Practical Philosophy is the mother of Virtue, as we are taught by these Verses, where practical Philosophy is called “Human Virtue” — and where the contemplative is celebrated under the name of “Divine Virtue” (45, 46).

V. i. Damascius says "God (the First Principle, that is) is raised above the reach of thought ; He is an unknown and impenetrable obscurity:" while the Egyptians did not, it is said, worship this First Being, as they did not know him. And this may be the reason why, in this verse, we are bidden to worship not God, but the Sons of God.

V. ii. Pythagoras taught that God created before all things the reasonable beings: the highest and most excellent of all substances, *the Immortal Gods*, were created by his first Thought—the middle Substance, the *Heroes*, by the second Thought—the *Souls of men* by his third Thought.

V. iii. "Terrestrial"—*lit.* "under the Earth." The phrase has been explained as meaning "those who are dead after having lived a virtuous life." But Pythagoras taught that the souls of men went not under the Earth but to the *Ether*. *Demons*=endowed with knowledge. [The good Demons were the heads of the hierarchies of Elemental and planetary spirits.—S.A.]

V. vii. Or "Give way to thy friend by speaking to him mildly, and be kind to him."

Vv. xiii.-xvi. The school of Pythagoras accounted for the various states and conditions of men by asserting them to be the results of their first Life, which the souls had led in their spheres before bodies had been assigned to them. Jamblichus defends the Gods against the charge of injustice in the distribution of good and evil by saying that they knew the whole of the previous lives of each soul: lib. iv., cap. 4. Compare also Plato, *De Repub.*, lib. x.

V. xx. Because these evils then change their nature, for the good suffer patiently, and are supported by the certainty that divine good is reserved for the perfect. Compare Plato, *The Laws*: lib. x.

V. xxix. Compare the teaching of the Bhagavat Gita.—S.A.

Vv. xxx., xxxi. Comp. Plato, *Philebus*. The Pythagoreans called the first Cause or Principle, *Opportunity*; and the Master himself made a Precept of *Opportunity*. Plato in *Phædrus* says, "For this vicious Horse (the 'body') grows unruly and prances, his weight drawing him towards the Earth, unless the groom take care not to feed him too high."

Here, too, we find the reason for the choice of food made by Pythagoras.

V. xxxv. An effort has been lately made to form a guild of "Simple life."—S.A.

Vv. xli.-xliv. Porphyry tells us that Pythagoras advised his disciples to be particularly careful of two hours—that when they rise, and that of going to bed: of the first, to reflect on what lay before them; and of the second to give an account of the day's actions, and that he said of the first:—

"When drowsy sleep to morning Thoughts gives way,
Think what thou hast to do th' ensuing day."

Comp. M. Aurelius at the beginning of the second book, "We ought every morning when we rise to say to ourselves, 'To-day I shall have to do with an impertinent fellow, an ungrateful person, etc.'"

V. xlvii. Quaternalion, *i.e.*, the occult powers of the number 4, meaning God. How comes God to be the Quaternalion? Pythagoras is said to have treated of this question in his *Treatise of the Gods*, which is now lost: in it he is also said to have explained the teaching of Orpheus, "That the essence of number was the Principle of Things, and the Root of the Gods and of the Demons." Aristotle, too, says of numbers, that they "can never be the Principles of Actions and of changes; that they may denote certain Causes, but they can never be those Causes." The Master taught that God was the unit, that all the numbers were derived from the unit, and that the finite

interval of number was ten. The Power of ten is four, for before we reach the Decad, we find all the virtue and all the Perfection of the ten in the four: $1+2+3+4=10$; four is an arithmetical middle between one and seven, for the excess above one = its defect from seven. Now the unit contains the Powers of all other numbers, and the seven being a Virgin (for it produces no number between itself and ten, nor can it be produced by any of the numbers in that interval). So, too, the first solid is found in the Quaternion—for the Point answers to the Unit, the Line to a Binary, for from one Point we go to another Point; the superficies answers to the Ternary, for a Triangle is the most plain of all rectilineal Figures: but solidity is the nature of the Quaternion, for in the Four we find the Pyramid. There are Four Faculties that form a Judgment—Understanding, Knowledge, Opinion, and Sense. Aristotle teaches this, and adds Understanding answers to One, Knowledge to Two, Opinion to Three, or the Superficies, and Sense to the Quaternion or Solid. Plutarch in *The Opinions of the Philosophers*, chap. iii., explains the reasons.

Vv. lii., liii. Pythagoras and Socrates included Morality in Physics. In his commentary on these verses Hierocles plainly asserts that by Metempsychosis, Pythagoras meant that Vice changes man into the likeness of a beast, while Virtue makes him resemble God; and that he can be neither the one nor the other by his nature.

Vv. lxvii.-lxix. For an expanded statement of this teaching consult Plato, *Phædrus*.

THE SYMBOLS OF PYTHAGORAS

BY SAPIERE AUDE.

I.

Jugum ne transileas.

Go not beyond the Balance.—Dacier.

Do not exceed the necessities of the case : be accurate in judgment, and moderate in all your undertakings.

Transgress not the laws of justice.—Plutarch.

Obey not the dictates of avarice.—Athenæus.

This latter has a similar meaning, because covetousness is the common cause of injustice.

The Kabalah makes great use of this symbol of the Balance, and expatiates upon the need for equilibrium ; “forces which are unbalanced, perish in the void.” The kings of Edom are Kabalistic types of the results of the action of unbalanced forces.—S.A.

II.

In chœnice ne sedeto.

Sit not down upon a bushel.—Dacier.

The chœnix was a Greek measure for corn, and each slave was allowed this quantity per day ; it was equivalent to a pint and a half English measure. The symbo

should mean, do not rest content with a bare subsistence.

A curious little book is *Dissertation sur le Chénix de Pythagore*, par J. Du Rondel, 1690.

III.

Coronam ne vellito.

Tear not the crown to pieces.—Dacier.

Some authors read "*vellica*."

Do not transgress the laws of the country, for the laws are the crown.—Hierome.

Vellico, not only means to tear up, but also to *defame*, so that the symbol may mean, "do not speak evil of dignitaries;" this will be analogous to the dictum of Solomon in Ecclesiastes, c. 10, v. 20. "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought."

IV.

Cor non comedendum.

Eat not the heart.—Dacier.

It has been suggested that this symbol means that we ought not to wear out our hearts with grief, nor to abandon ourselves to despair. Homer uses the same expression in regard to Bellerophon, "eating his own heart." The brain is usually associated with the intellect, and the heart with the emotions. Some of the ancients held that by eating the heart of an animal, man obtained a tinge of the peculiarities of that animal, in a much greater degree than by eating the flesh of other parts.

V.

Ignem gladio ne scalpas.

Stir not up fire with a sword.—Dacier.

Some old authors say that this symbol means that we ought not to inflame any further, persons who are

already at enmity. Hermetic adepts say that the true meaning is that the Elementals of the Fire should not be threatened by the use of a steel sword, for fire and iron are analogous, but that these may be coerced by the correct pentagrammatic use of the sword when it is used with a due knowledge of the correspondences. H. P. B. in *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I. p. 247, refers to this symbol and points out that this maxim is familiar to the folk-lore of many nations, Tartars, Laplanders, Russians and the Aborigines of North and South America; see Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, who quotes *De Plano Carpini* of 1246.

VI.

Non revertendum, quum ad terminos perveneris.

When you have arrived at the end, desire not to turn back.—Dacier.

This has been applied to a human life,—when you have come nigh unto death, do not be dismayed and desire not to live. We know that an old proverb says, “*vestiga nulla retrorsum*,” “no returning footsteps are visible.” This symbol seems to be a statement of the law of Karma, that there is no escape from the proper reward or punishment of one’s own deeds; as one has made one’s bed, so one must lie upon it. A craven repentance made when one has no longer an opportunity of re-adjusting the effects of action, is of no value. As the tree has fallen so must it lie. Jamblichus gives, “Having started do not turn back, for the Furies have followed you.”

VII.

Per viam publicam ne vadas.

Go not in the public way.—Dacier.

Old commentators have said that we ought not to follow public opinion, but rather the counsel of the

wise. Avoid the broad way, and take instead the narrow path. Carlyle has said, "the majority of mankind are fools," and so the common procedure in any case is erroneous. Christianity teaches that "many are called but few chosen," so that one needs to be exceptional in purity and goodwill to earn the reward. Each man has a natural constitutional peculiarity, and so is suited to progress in some particular path, and not in any common mode of advancement. This assurance should lead us to be charitable in judging of the lives of others, and not to be hasty in judgment, for if one have fallen how do we know "that we could have withstood the same temptation."—S.A.

Go not into crowded places or mix freely with the multitude if you do not harmonise therewith: if you are regardless of this injunction, beware of ill effects therefrom. There are occult or astral influences emanating from all human beings: and in addition to that, astral entities love to keep men company, as they derive *vitality* from them, which is more easily effected in the contingency mentioned.—L.O.

VIII.

Domesticas Hirundines ne habeto.

Suffer no swallows about your house.—Dacier.

We may be sure that this symbol does not mean that we ought to interfere with the visits of these birds of passage, and that a philosophical maxim is here intended. Old commentators translated this symbol into the instruction:—do not encourage great talkers to visit your family. Perhaps rather, do not estimate and encourage temporary acquaintances by the standard of, and with the welcome due to familiar permanent friends. The feelings of many an old and valued companion have been hurt by effusive sympathy shown to new acquaintances.

IX.

In annulo, imaginem Dei, ne circumferto.

Wear not the image of God upon a ring.—Dacier.

We ought not to profane the name of the God we adore by speaking of Him at every turn, and before unsympathetic persons. It was, of old, deemed an offence to wear a ring, or bear a coin of the ruling monarch, when on an illegal errand, or in an unseemly place. Dion writes of a young man condemned for visiting a scandalous place while bearing a coin of the Prince of the city, Caracalla. Seneca and Suetonius report the same fact of the illegality of wearing a ring bearing the image of a king when engaged in immoral conduct. Philostratus says that one was found guilty of treason for beating a slave who bore a medal of Tiberius Cæsar.

The Hebrews were forbidden to make or wear any image of their divine Ruler. The Kabalist teaches that no representation of the Ain Soph is possible, while the emanations of the Sephiroth may be fitly typified by number, letter and word. Neither Buddhist nor Brahman makes any image of the Supreme, although numerous representations of the members of the issuant triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are permissible.

N. O. M.

X.

Hominibus onus simul imponendum, non detrahendum.

Help men to burden, but not to unburden themselves.—Dacier.

Reward is not to be obtained by throwing aside responsibility, but by undertaking it. So that by relieving others of a duty, you assume their responsibility, and deprive them of an opportunity for good deeds. When one man assumes the Karma of another

he does him no good service, and yet is himself answerable for the result.

XI.

Ne cuiquam dexteram facile porrigito.

Shake not hands easily with any man.—Dacier.

Or rather, do not give the right hand too freely. The right hand given to another was the special sign of suretyship. Solomon gives special warnings in the book of Proverbs, chap. vi., v. 1, and chap. xvii., v. 18, against a careless pledging of oneself to or for others, such a one, he says, is "void of understanding." But the right hand when given with due preparation is of the utmost service, for it is of the Pillar of Geburah, carrying intensity and efficiency. The instructed occultist does not shake hands readily with the chance interviewer, and the Freemason regards the giving of the right hand as a sure pledge of brotherhood.

XII.

Olla vestigium in cinere confundito.

Leave not the mark of the pot upon the ashes.—Dacier.

This symbol refers to the cooking utensil, an earthen or iron vessel, and to the ashes of a wood fire. Having cooked, remove the signs of the vessel having rested upon the heap of ashes. Having realised your aims, do not dwell upon the efforts that have been expended. Some say, that having effected a reconciliation with one who has been in enmity with you, do not again refer to the cause of your estrangement. Do not rake up old grievances. Do not add insult to the triumph you have gained over another.

XIII.

Herbam Molochen serito, ne tamen mandito.

Sow the seeds of the Mallow plant, but do not eat the fruits thereof.—Dacier.

This symbol is explained by the old commentators to mean—use mildness to others, and not to yourself; pardon offences of others, but do not overlook your own. The mallow and marsh-mallow are plants having a soothing property, and were sown and grown as medicinal herbs. Do good to others, but not for your own reward. Do not look for gratitude and expressions of thanks for good actions, and if possible, do not accept any reward for a deed done from a conscientious motive.—S. A.

Look for the medicinal virtue of the mallow plant in the leaves, not in the flowers.—L. O.

XIV.

Faculæ sedem ne extergito.

Wipe not out the place of a torch.—Dacier.

This symbol must be compared with number twelve: wipe out the mark of the pot, but do not obscure the place of the enlightenment. Do not dwell upon the history of a past success, but do not forget the Light which has illuminated you in your search for inspiration; for the same Light may illumine the path for others, but the material steps will be different for others.

XV.

Augustum annulum ne gestato.

Wear not a straight ring.—Dacier.

The translation of Dacier leaves much to be desired; in what sense can a ring be called straight? The Greek adjective is "*stenos*," not straight but narrow, confined, too tight. Still the word is used in the same

sense as in the New Testament where the narrow way is called "straight." The maxim then, is "Do not wear a tight ring." Liberty of action is to be desired, and is of great advantage if liberty be not allowed to degenerate into license, and into folly, and thence into sin. Do not be fettered by custom and fashion, but do that which conscience prompts as right to be done by you. Fashion is a great slavery unto us all, brave souls alone save themselves from the current of common stupidity.

XVI.

Animalia unguicurvia ne nutrito.

Feed not animals that have crooked claws.—Dacier.

Curved claws and nails are a sign of rapacity and of such as prey upon other animals: vegetable feeders have hoofs or soft cushiony feet—among animals. Do not encourage or be familiar with anyone whom you have known to profit by an injustice to others, for such a one will one day turn and rend you also. The appetite grows by what it feeds upon. Do not hold a candle to the Devil for him to see his work by. Do not participate in ill-gotten gains.

XVII.

A fabis abstineto.

Abstain from beans.—Dacier.

This symbol has been interpreted in very various manners, as follows:—

1. In the natural sense; that Beans were a faulty article of food.
2. That Beans were a type for errors, sins, or any other impurity.
3. That Beans referred to civil offices of the state, because in elections and judgments, beans were used in voting; in a similar manner to our English form of lodge ballot by black and white balls.

Hesychius says that the bean signified the suffrages of judges, and that a synonym for a judge was a bean-caster.

4. For a theological reason in Egypt, as Herodotus tells us that the bean was sown but not eaten, and that a priest was forbidden even to look at them lest he should become unclean. See Book xi.

Hippocrates in chapter 15 of his second book on Diet, condemns beans as an article of food, calling them too astringent, and tending to cause intestinal gases.

Bonwick says that the cult of Ceres condemned the bean, and the Sabeans of Syria also refused it. There was a Sacred Egyptian Bean, which was thrown upon graves as a symbol of a renewal of life, from a notion of a sexual resemblance.

XVIII.

Melanuros ne gustato.

Eat not fish whose tails are black.—Dacier.

Melas means black, and *ouris* means tail, but it is not certain what sort of fish was so called; some say the perch, others the sea bream. This symbol has been explained, thus:—

Frequent not the company of infamous men. Black-tailed may be a fair simile for persons of seeming good aspect, who have a hidden evil side behind them, or who have left behind them an evil record.

Do not accept a doctrine which has a hidden failing, simply because its first appearance is attractive.—S.A.

Jamblichus of Chalcis, gives “Abstain from him who hath a black tail, for it belongs to the infernal gods.”

N. O. M.

XIX.

Ne Erythimum edito.

Do not eat the gurnet (or gurnard—a fish).—Dacier.

It is a curious fact that so many of these symbols are apparently directions for diet. No doubt the Pythagoreans fully recognised that diet largely affected the health and tendencies of a man, and it is equally certain that these symbols have always been understood to require a double interpretation; one upon the material plane, and another of a philosophic or religious nature.

Pliny, the ancient naturalist, says that the Erythrinus was a fish all red excepting a white belly. The fish we now call gurnard is red; mediæval authors say it was an emblem of blood.

The symbol may mean, Do not shed blood, or avoid revenge which may lead to bloodshed.

I have not found that this fish was condemned as food by any other teacher than Pythagoras. Some authorities, however, read in the Greek *proslambanon* and not *esthiein*, or do not *take up*, instead of do not *eat*.

Rubrum aliquid ne suscipias; Do not undertake anything red; do not shed blood, is another reading found in *Marsilius Ficinus*.—S. A.

XX.

Animalis vulvam ne comedito.

Eat not the matrix of animals.—Dacier.

Vulva is not synonymous with matrix—the womb. The Latin should be *uterus*, not *vulva*, for the oldest Greek version reads *Metran*. The symbol may mean, avoid all that leads to sensuality; do not ponder over the ideas of sexual relation. This is almost entirely a man's failing; women are generally the victims of affection rather than passion. The apparently natural dissimilarity of the human sexes in this respect seems inexplicable.

XXI.

A morticinis abstineto.

Abstain from the flesh of animals that die of themselves.—Dacier.

On the purely material plane this rule is almost universally applied in our times; all butcher's meat is slaughtered, and presumably only healthy animals are chosen: but Christian butchers outvie the Jews in their rush for wealth, for among the Jews no meat is sold for human consumption when it is found post mortem that the animal has been suffering from disease; such carcasses are handed over to the Christians, who buy them readily. Meat duly passed by the official appointed by the Rabbi is called "Kosher," that is, really fitted for use as human food. It is believed that this procedure is one reason for the smaller percentage of deaths from communicable diseases among the Hebrews.

The moral meaning of the symbol is not clear. Some old authors have said—Share not in the flesh of profane animals that are not fit for sacrifices, and renounce all dead works. Perhaps, renounce all unprofitable works; such as have no imprint of spiritual progress. Do not long follow a path which leads to no good result; or perhaps—abstain from dwelling on past events, rather look forward to future good results

S. A.

XXII.

Ab animalibus abstineto.

Abstain from eating animals.—Dacier.

There is here no necessary reference to eating. Abstain from animals is the simple translation. This might mean, spend your energies upon your fellow men and women, rather than in making pets of animals. Some have referred the word animals to unreasonable men, as animals are believed to be without reason.

XXIII.

Salem apponito.

Always put salt upon the table.—Dacier.

Provide salt, simply. The material sense may be as Dacier suggests. Salt was a Greek symbol for Justice, for as salt preserves substances, so Justice preserves the rights of men, and without Justice there is corruption. Leviticus, c. 3, v. 13, says “Thou shalt add salt to all thy offerings.” Compare the old proverb concerning the spilling of salt, which was regarded as the precursor of evil.

XXIV.

Panem ne frangito.

Never break the bread.—Dacier.

What this may mean on the material plane is not clear, for bread is clearly meant to be broken, unless indeed cut, from which no gain is apparent. Greek bread was made in long portions, with surface markings dividing each loaf into four pieces. When given to the poor, it was frequently broken into these pieces and so distributed; so perhaps the meaning is, give a whole loaf, do not be mean to the poor.

Bread was also a symbol of Life, and this symbol has been interpreted, do not too much distribute your energies, but choose some good aim in life, and devote all your strength to that end.

XXV.

Sedem oleo ne abstergito.

Spill not oil upon a seat.—Dacier.

There is some error here, for “*ne abstergito*” and the original Greek “*ne omorgnusthai*” both mean “do not wipe,” and have no reference to “spilling.”

Old authors said, *oil* was intended for praise, and *seat*

referred to official positions ; their explanation was that dignitaries should not be praised. The English version needs to be changed to, "Do not clean a seat with oil;" meaning, use the proper remedy in each case. Jacob at Bethel poured oil upon the stone upon which his head rested when he dreamed of the ladder to heaven, in token of his gratitude, and he did not wipe it away. Genesis, c. 28, v. 18.

XXVI.

Ne cibum in matellam injicite.

Put not meat into a foul vessel.—Dacier.

On the material plane this is sound advice, for nothing will make meat decay so rapidly as exposure to animal excreta. A foul vessel is the symbol of a wicked man, the New Testament calls the wicked, "vessels of dishonour." It is useless, if not worse, to give to the vicious the spiritual knowledge which a good man will appreciate and be thankful for.

XXVII.

Gallum nutrito, ne sacrificato, Lunæ enim et Soli sacer est.

Feed the Cock, but sacrifice him not, for he is sacred to the Sun and the Moon.—Dacier.

The ancients used to sacrifice a cock to Æsculapius, as the thank-offering for recovery from sickness : even in our century, the great Platonist Thomas Taylor did this in pursuance of ancient usage.

The Cock was a symbol of Watchfulness and care for others. The Templar degrees of Freemasonry refer to this idea. The people of Crotona and Metapontum, colonies of Greeks among whom Pythagoras laboured, were not mindful of the maxim, for they killed him ; and the Athenians sacrificed Socrates, who had been as the symbolic Cock to them. In our own days Madame

Blavatsky, who introduced to Europe the exalted ethics of the mystic East, was sacrificed in honour and reputation, if not indeed as to her life, by the modern Christian Pharisees. Jesus clearly held that the teacher should be tended by his pupils, and he sent out his disciples with orders to possess nothing themselves and to trust to sympathizers for maintenance.

XXVIII.

Dentes ne frangito.

Break not the teeth.—Dacier.

The Romans used this formula to mean “do not revile,” or “avoid satire.” Do not break your teeth is a wise maxim, for the teeth are necessary to good digestion, and in ethical matters a good perception must precede clear development and real progress.

XXIX.

Acetarium vas abs te removeto.

Keep the vinegar cruet far from you.—Dacier.

This is a wise maxim as to diet, and in a moral sense sourness of temper, malice and bitterness of expression ought to be avoided.

XXX.

Capillorum et Unguium tuorum præsegmnia conspuito.

Spit upon the parings of your nails and the clippings of your hair.—Dacier.

The act of spitting upon anything meant the casting off and rejection of it: these parings were things of no farther use, superfluities which, if allowed to remain, would only be sources of mischief, so they are to be cast off remorselessly; this clearly must be extended to our faults, which are excrescences.

XXXI.

Pros Helion tetrammenos me ourei. Contra Solem ne meito.
In sight of the Sun do no indecency.

No comment is needed upon this maxim, Erasmus, contrary to all rules, says Dacier, holds that this symbol means, "Do no evil Magic." Hesiod has a similar caution to men, as to public decency. The Sun as chief light-giver was also the symbol of divine purity, to which no unworthy action should appear.

XXXII.

Ad Solem versus, ne loquitur.

Speak not, facing the Sun.—Dacier.

It has been said that this maxim means, do not publish your thoughts to the world. Perhaps, do not dictate in the presence of those wiser than you are: or as the Sun was the emblem of the Greatest, the chief benefactor of the earth, do not speak when you have turned unto him, but be humble and presume not to speak.

XXXIII.

In meridie ne dormito.

We ought not to sleep at noon.—Dacier.

This symbol was considered to mean that when light is offered to you, do not accept darkness; nor ignorance, when wisdom is tendered to you.

Do not neglect opportunities, work while day is at its brightest, "for the night cometh when no man can work."

XXXIV.

Surgens e lecto, stragulam conturbato, vestigium que corporis confundito.

Stir up the bed, as soon as you have risen, and leave on it no print of your body.—Dacier.

Suffer not anything to make you remember by day, what has passed during the night, for when the night has gone, and it has become day, think not of the concerns of the darkness, but expend all your energies in attaining to the knowledge which the Light may bring.

XXXV.

Carminibus utendum ad Lyram.

Never sing but to the harp.—Dacier.

It is said that Pythagoras objected to all musical instruments but the harp. The Greek words are “Songs are suited to the Lyre.” There should be a certain congruity maintained in all human concerns.

XXXVI.

Stragula semper convoluta habeto.

Always keep your things ready packed up.—Dacier.

Or, always have your coverings rolled up.

Be always ready for emergencies. The Greeks had to gather up their flowing robes in order to run. Live, so that you may be always prepared to die.

XXXVII.

Injussu Imperatoris, de Statione et præsidia, ne decedas.

Quit not your post, without the order of the General.—Dacier.

This is not only a phrasing of the well-known military rule, but also means do not take your own life, which the Divine Ruler—the General—will require of you at the proper time.

XXXVIII.

In via, ne ligna cædito.

Cut not wood by the way.—Dacier.

Do not convert to private use what is intended for the public welfare.

Otherwise, the cutting of wood was a menial task, among Greeks and also among the Hebrews; so the maxim may mean, do not be content to labour at low employments, when higher occupations are within your ability.

Stanley quotes the following meaning:—Do not disquiet your course of life with excessive cares and vain solicitude.

XXXIX.

Quod elixum est, non assato.

Roast not that which is boiled.—Dacier.

Do no things which are superfluous.

XL.

Gladium acutum avertito.

Avoid the two edged sword.—Dacier.

The words are “a sharp sword.” This is a common symbol for a slanderer, who should be always avoided.

XLI.

Quæ ceciderunt e mensa, ne tollito.

Pick not up what has fallen from the table.—Dacier.

This maxim was believed to encourage charity; leave the crumbs for the birds, and the loose ears of corn for the gleaners.

XLII.

Ab arca cyparissina abstineto.

Abstain even from a cypress chest.—Dacier.

Do not provide expensive funerals.

The rich affected coffins of cypress, a very expensive wood, and one believed to tend to long preservation of a dead body. Plato and Solon also condemned expenditure on funerals.

XLIII.

Cælestibus, imparia sacrificato ; inferis vero paria.

Sacrifice an odd number to the Celestial Gods, and to the Infernal an even number.—Dacier.

Odd numbers cannot be halved and so were considered the most perfect ; even numbers could be equally divided.

Deity was typified by Unity, and Matter by the Dyad.

XLIV.

Ex imputatis vitibus, ne Diis libato.

Offer not to the Gods the wine from an unpruned vine.—Dacier.

This has been rendered as an encouragement to agriculture : some have thought that “the wine of an unpruned vine” meant Blood, and that the symbol was intended to condemn the sacrifice of living animals and birds.

XLV.

Ne sine farina sacrificato.

Never sacrifice without meal (or flour).—Dacier.

Barley flour was sprinkled over the heads of animals before sacrifice. It has been suggested that the meaning is to substitute vegetable offerings for animal sacrifices. Or perhaps, as was done in Egypt, to offer a cast or mould of flour, shaped like a certain animal, rather than a living being.

XLVI.

Nudis pedibus adorato et sacrificato.

Adore the Gods, and sacrifice barefoot.—Dacier.

Reverence was indicated by the baring of the feet, by the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans. Remember the instruction to Moses. The maxim refers to spiritual humility, as well as to bodily procedure.

XLVII.

Circumactus adora.

Turn round when you worship.—Dacier.

Or rather “turn around,” not alone reverse your position. This seems to mean that God is everywhere, and is not to be approached in any one place or direction; nothing but a complete circle can assimilate with His universality.

XLVIII.

Adoraturus sedeto.

Sit down when you worship.—Dacier.

Kneeling was not an accepted position for prayer among the ancient Greeks, they stood or sat. Perhaps the maxim may mean, be seated, in the sense of devote some considerable time to devotion, and do not be content with hurried prayers, it is not always the Passover.

XLIX.

Ad sacrificia ungues ne pracidito.

Pare not your nails during the sacrifice.—Dacier.

Pay attention to your devotions, and do not let the mind wander to commonplace ideas, nor carry on commonplace actions. Jamblichus reads this symbol to mean, “do not exclude poor relations from your festivals.”

The following are less clearly appropriated to Pythagoras, although they have come down to us from his school of thought :

L.

Cum tonat terram tangito.

When it thunders, touch the ground.—Dacier.

Be submissive to the trials sent by the gods. Some moderns have seen in this maxim electrical reference ; no doubt a recumbent posture would attract a flash of lightning less than a form erect, but any mere stooping to touch the ground with the hands would not conduce to safety.

LI.

Ad lucernam faciem in speculo ne contemplator.

Regard not yourself in the looking glass, by the light of a torch.—Dacier.

A mirror is apt to be deceptive, but the distortion is increased by artificial light. We should not estimate ourselves by fallacious standards. Jamblichus says a mirror represents only the surface of things, and the torch means opinion : do not judge by appearances aided by unlearned representations.

LII.

Unum, Duo.

One, Two.—Dacier.

By the number One was intended the Divine ; by Two, Nature : if we know nothing of God, we cannot understand his works.

LIII.

Honorato imprimis habitum, tribunal et triobolum.

Honour the marks of dignity, the Throne and the Ternary.—Dacier.

The Kabalist would say, First Kether, the Crown, and then the Supernal Triad.

LIV.

Flantibus ventis, Echo adora.

When the winds blow, adore Echo.—Dacier.

Lilius Giraldus explains thus : the winds mean revolts and sedition, and Echo means a desert place, and so the maxim means, leave your homes in the towns when there are conspiracies.

Leave the room when men quarrel.

When there is disputation, the calm where an echo can be heard, is the haven of peace.

LV.

Ex curru, ne comedito.

Eat not in a chariot.—Dacier.

In the olden Greek, *currus* was *diphros*, a seat as well as a carriage.

Life may be symbolised as a drive through time, and the meaning may be that life is not for enjoyment alone.

LVI.

Dextrum pedem primum induito, sinistrum vero primum attolito. (Or *calceato* and *lavato*.)

Put on the right shoe first, but wash the left foot first.—Dacier.

Or in the first case, put on the right shoe first, but in taking shoes off, take off the left first.

Be more ready to take up rightful work than to begin a pleasure.

LVII.

Cerebrum ne edito.

Eat not the Brain.—Dacier.

Do not consume your faculties of mind by over-study.

LVIII.

Palman ne plantato.

Plant not the Palm tree.—Dacier.

This is supposed to mean, do not transplant a growing palm tree, but raise it from seed; because the Babylonians reckoned up 367 advantages to be derived from the Palm tree, but as a matter of experience it was known that a transplanted Palm bore fruit of no value. Do no useless works.

LIX.

Libamine Diis facito per Auriculam.

Make libations to the Gods by the ear.—Dacier.

Apollonius has it that this means that religious services should be accompanied by music and singing.

Do not make drink offerings to Gods, but rather pray so steadfastly that they may hear you.—S. A.

Some authorities give another version; "*Libamina Diis facienda juxta auriculam poculorum.*" Libations to the Gods are to be made from near the ear (or handle) of the cups.—N. O. M.

LX.

Sepiam ne edito.

Eat not the cuttle fish.—Dacier.

This animal when attacked is able to eject a black fluid which discolours the water around it, in which obscurity, the fish that attack lose its whereabouts. Have no concerns with those who revile when displeased.

LXI.

In limine non consistendum.

Stop not at the threshold.—Dacier.

Do not waver, choose one path or the other and continue upon it. Having put your hand to the plough, look not back.

LXII.

Prægredienti gregi e via cedendum.

Give way to a flock passing by.—Dacier.

Do not openly oppose the multitude.

LXIII.

Mustelam devita.

Avoid the weazel.—Dacier.

Avoid tale-tellers is said to be the meaning, referring to an old fancy that the weazel bore its young through its mouth.

LXIV.

Arma a muliere sumministrata rejice.

Reject the weapons a woman offers you —Dacier.

When your own conscience does not lead you to combat, do not consent to fight because a woman encourages you. The ancients said that woman's weakness made her more liable to be revengeful, and that men should not prove themselves weak also, by acting with impropriety at their dictation.

LXV.

Colubram intra ædes collapsum, ne perimito.

Kill not a serpent that chances to fall within your house.—Dacier.

Do not harm your enemy, when he is your guest as suppliant.

LXVI.

Lapidem in fontem jacere, scelus.

It is a crime to throw stones into fountains.—Dacier.

It is wrong to cast obloquy upon those who are doing public service.

LXVII.

Sinistrum, cibum ne sumito.

Do not feed yourself with your left hand.—Dacier.

Support yourself honourably, and not by left hand, or as we now say, by underhand devices.

LXVIII.

Sudorem ferro abstergere, tetrum nefas.

It is a horrible crime to wipe off the sweat with Iron.—Dacier.

It is wicked to take by force from another, the thing he has earned by his own exertions. Compare Ecclesiasticus, c. xxxiv., v. 21.

LXIX.

Hominis vestigia, ferro ne configito.

Stick not iron into the footsteps of a man.—Dacier.

Do not attack the character of the dead.

LXX.

In sepulchro ne dormito.

Sleep not upon a grave.—Dacier.

Do not rest content with the property left to you by parents, but make a living of your own.

LXXI.

Integrum fasciculum in ignem ne mittito.

Lay not the whole faggot upon the fire.—Dacier.

Live thriftily, and do not squander your estate. Do not put all your eggs in one basket.

LXXII.

De rheda, junctis pedibus, ne exilito.

Leap not from a chariot with your feet close together.—Dacier.

Do not make sudden changes of attitude or of occupation; unless indeed your feet are ready to support you in the new condition.

LXXIII.

In astrum ne digitum intendito.

Do not threaten the stars.—Dacier.

This is an error by Dacier; *intenta* would mean *threaten*, but *intendere digitum*, means to point with the finger at anything, as in derision.

The meaning is, do not condemn the astral influences, which you cannot evade.

LXXIV.

Candclam ad parietem ne applicato.

Place not a candle against the wall.—Dacier.

This was said to mean, do not persist in endeavours to teach those who are too stupid to understand, for they will resist your instructions even as a wall throws back the rays of the sun. Perhaps, do not apply the candle flame to the wall, for that would be a mischief and cause a blackening: so occult Light must be conferred with caution, and not be delivered to the stupid or vicious; this necessity is insisted upon by both Eastern and Western schools of Esoteric knowledge.

LXXV.

In nive ne scribito.

Write not in the snow.—Dacier.

Do no unprofitable task; the Greeks also had the maxim, Do not write upon water.

LXXVI.

Cachinno ne indulgeto.

Do not indulge in immoderate laughter.

LXXVII.

Non propter opes, ducenda uxor.

Do not marry for money.

LXXVIII.

Locum ubi humanus sanguis effusus est.

Lapidibus obruito.—J. Castalio.

Cover up with stones the place where human blood has been shed.

LXXIX.

Deum imitatus, silentium serva.—J. Castalio.

Imitate the Deity by keeping silent.

Another similar maxim is simply :—

Silentium servato.

Keep silence.

LXXX.

Templum dextra ingredito, sinistra egredito.—J. Castalio.

Enter a church by the right hand side, and leave it by the left.

LXXXI.

De rebus Divinis etsi incredibilia narrentur visu abstineto.—
J. Castalio.

When Divine things are told to you, restrain from smiling, even if they are incredible. In the middle ages, it was said, *Credo quia impossibile est*, I believe because of its impossibility.

LXXXII.

Clara voce precandum.
You should pray in a clear voice.

LXXXIII.

In terra ne naviges.
Do not go to sea on dry land.
When at Rome do as the Romans do.

LXXXIV.

Neque in aquiminali intingendum, neque in balneo lavandum
Neither bathe in a hand basin, nor wash yourself in a bath.

There is a place for every purpose under heaven, and a place designed for one purpose should not be converted to another use.

LXXXV.

Ad famineam divitem ne accedito sobolis procreanda causa.
Do not give a rich woman the means of having children. Because such women are apt to think most of their pleasures and their appearance, and do but seldom give that personal attendance to children which is so necessary to the health and growth.—S. A.

LXXXVI.

Mitem neque vires neque cædas plantam.

Neither injure nor destroy the tender plant.

LXXXVII.

De Pythagoreis sine lumine, ne loquitor.

Do not criticize the (doctrines of the) Pythagoreans without light (unless you understand them).