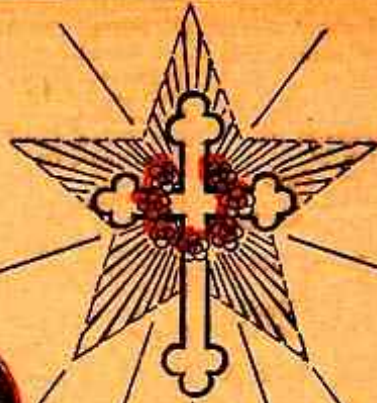


DECEMBER



Rays from the Rose Cross a Magazine of Mystic Light



LEADING ARTICLES OF THE MONTH
THE LEGEND OF POINSETTIA
MOTHER SHIPTON'S
PROPHECIES
SPIRIT MATERIALIZATION
THE KEY OF HEAVEN AND HELL
THE CONQUEROR OF PAIN
THE SAILORS OF THE INVISIBLE



Edited by Max Heindel

1917



RAYs FROM THE ROSE CROSS



EDITED BY

MAX HEINDEL

VOL 8

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General Contents

The Mystic Light

A Department devoted to articles on Occultism, Mystic Masonry, Esoteric Christianity, and similar subjects.

The Question Department

Designed to give further light upon the various subjects dealt with in the different departments, where queries from students and other subscribers make this necessary.

The Astral Ray

Astrology from an original angle, Cosmic light on Life's Problems.

Studies in the Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception

Our Origin, Evolution and ultimate Destiny is religiously, reasonably and scientifically explained in this department.

Nutrition and Health

Our body is 'A Living Temple', we build it without sound of hammer, by our food. In this Department articles on diet teach how to build wisely and well.

The Healing Department

The Rose Cross Healing Circle, its meetings and their results.

Echoes from Mount Ecclesia

News and Notes from Headquarters

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The Mystic Light

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DECEMBER 1917

The Builder

By James A. Edgerton

This is the song of the builder;
My hammer swings and rings
In harmony with the vital key
Of the song at the heart of things;
The chord of the Master Builder
That sounds when the worlds have birth
Is the music sweet I seek to repeat
As I rear the homes of earth.

From rock, from mine and from forest
I shape the cities of man;
The ships that flee down the ways of the sea
I fashion, improve and plan;
The jungle I make a garden;
The distance I dwarf with steel
Till a continent wide is a few hours' ride
When spanned by the spinning wheel.

So busy am I with helping,
Constructing the good of earth,
That I cannot halt for finding fault,
But have plenty of time for mirth.
If there's joy, or cheer, or laughter,
I am there with all my heart,
For a right success spells happiness
And that is the nobler part.

There is room for work and for gladness
And making the good prevail,
But there is no place for the carping race,
For the spite and the weakling's wail,
There is space for the life constructive
And for helping the world along;
To create is the sign of the power divine,
This this is the builder's song.

The Legend of the Hoinzettia

Corinne Dunklee

IN the years ago, when man walked on earth hand in hand with the angels, knowing only their stainless innocence and radiating only their perfect beauty. When never a thought of evil had tinged his consciousness to be reflected abroad in divers colors. Flowers that are reflections of consciousness all shone in purest white, making the world a veritable dream-garden of pure and fragrant beauty.

As ages passed and the vibration of a mighty star opened the portals of matter for the entrance of man, and the spirit became more firmly enmeshed in its material form, gradually the deli-

cately sensitive petals caught and held the colors given to them by the varied thoughts and emotions of men. Only the rarest and finest of the flower-souls were able to blossom in all their pristine purity.

For a long time still there grew a flower so white that it rivaled the breath of mountain snows, and the neck of the swan was pale beside it. Tradition holds that wherever a pure soul lived unspotted by the world these flowers blossomed in wondrous profusion. Along pathways steeped in meditations of Saints they shone as fair as the thought they reflected.

On that Holy Night, when the shepherds were watching upon the Judean hills, and the golden star guided them on their way to the sacred manger, their path was covered with these white, mystic blooms, and the rays from the Star of the East turned their petals into shimmering silver.

When the Holy One carried the cross up the steep ascents of Golgotha the ground was a white carpet of their beauty. They clustered lovingly about his bruised feet as though they would fain make amends for the cruel nails and the crown of thorns. Silently their white faces watched in mute appeal the enactment of the crucifixion. The fragile petals shivered in sympathy with the great cosmic thrill that trembled through worlds when the mighty spirit broke his bondage of flesh.

As the blood flowed from the cut of nails and the clasp of thorns, one sacred drop fell deep into the heart of a little white blossom and nestled there. Almost imperceptibly the petals bent low beneath the horror, then softly, gently flamed to blood-hued crimson. All through the heart of the earth this wave was carried until everywhere that these mystic flowers had blown in radiant white their color was changed into the crimson of blood.

The purest soul of all the flower-world through ages to come must bathe its heart in the blood of the Christ and give to the world its message through the beauty of flaming petals.

II

The closing time of the flower-year is come. Each petal month has blown into fragrant sheaves of memory. The Weavers of Flower-land sit in council to decide what flower shall be held sacred to the Christmas time. What blossom is fair enough to represent the month of Cosmic Birth. On silken pinions of the wind messages have gone to the Guardian Deities of the months asking them to come and present their claims before the council of the Flower-world.

Crooning the slumber-song of winter in faint notes of flickering sunlight, comes pale January clad in sable garments. Her snowwhite arms are laden with fragile hyacinth bells, that tremble in soft music to the yearning song her soul must ever

sing of Silence and of Sleep.

Toward the short days' end, across the western edge of a low, grey sky, February draws a line of gold. While from the earth's grey' heart she gathers tear-drops and transmutes them into golden daffodils of promise for the weary world. Miracles she tells to land and sky. For her name of names is Hope.

March wraps the world in veils of vague and tender greens, and stands with clasped and eager hands, while the world-soul plays the wonderful prelude of awakening. Violets spring from her thoughts as blue as the sky toward which they lift their eyes. For the inner name of March is Aspiration.

Virgin April, clad in shimmering tears, bends above the tired world. Gathering up its pain and sorrows she bends lily-lips upon them. When they are filled with a holy consciousness of peace, she fashions them into the Lily of Annunciation, to breathe upon humanity the secret of her soul-Attainment.

May, with lilting laughter, whispers deep to the heart of the woodland, causing him to open the doors or his treasure-house to her, where she wraps herself in fairy garlands to awaken the beautiful. For May is the soul-string of harmony, that must ever be sowed to bring to life the latent beauties of the world.

Young June, the Soul of Love, in ecstatic music of dreams dips her brush in the tones of the sky, to the crimson of dusk and the white mists of dawn, the rose-blush of sunrise and the amber gleam of gloaming, she adds the smooth luster of starlight, and the sweet breath of dreams from human hearts. When, lo, the world knows the birth of a rose.

Resting idly upon blue, hazy pillows of sky, with coverlets formed in white, fleecy clouds, breathing an incense distilled from the hearts of millions of soft-hued poppies, rests calm July, the Home of Repose.

Bearing aloft rank upon rank of stately blossoms, that have fashioned their petals from the gold of the sunlight, and woven their hearts with love for its God, stands, the month of shivering glory that is the very breath of the sun—stately

August—the Soul of Perfect Beauty.

September, the great cosmic mother, whose innermost name is Purity, shines across the sky. Building the treasures of her secret thoughts into rich boughs of waving goldenrod to caress the world, and to make it fairer while she holds it on her heart.

In the calm stillness, broken only by a fitful sighing through the trees, October, who is the Soul of Meditation, bends her head. All before and around, her magnificent forests of the world are shedding half-wistful, golden tears for the summer's ebbing beauty, and half fearful, crimson tears for the bleakness just ahead.

With majestic mien and stately tread comes the royal November. Crowned with garnered treasures and golden diadems. Bearing a cherished blossom of her heart. The queenly chrysanthemum, that flower born of consciousness of too great a pride. From November breathes Temptation, a breath so subtle that by it the brightest angels fell.

Cosmic bells are ringing throughout infinite space. A chorus of joy that first must be pain. A song of achievement that proclaims the coming of December, whose heart of hearts is Sacrifice. Her blossoms are wondrous tall and stately, with blood-crimson petals that enclose a golden heart.

Involuntarily the Weavers of Flower-land give homage to them, while the beauties of the other months lie half-forgotten. All during the long-years the sacred blood-drop has lived in the heart of the little blossom, whispering day by day the wondrous meaning of its message, until, with the joy of knowing, the flaming petals have grown and the golden heart expanded into perfection of stately beauty. For as the white petals shone with the crimson of blood this purest flower-soul awakened to the beauty of its cosmic mission, and knew that it must also take on the color of the flesh and go out into the flower world to bring its souls back into a realization of purity and love, that manifests only in petals of purest white.

So each year when the Christ-life is born into the earth at Christmas time comes the soul of the poinsettia in the gorgeous, sacrificial robes of red to bring its message to the world of flowers.

CHRIST MASS

Blanche Cromartie

The Christ Mass had just been celebrated, the benediction bestowed; priests and people were kneeling in the solemn hush which followed. Outside icy rain, mingled with great snowflakes, was falling in blinding sheets and the choking fog of a great manufacturing city shrouded everything in its stifling pall and penetrated into the dimly lighted church, filling aisles and arches with murk and gloom.

Kneeling among the other communicants, the Dreamer became suddenly aware of a bright light emanating from her own brow and forthwith her whole person seemed to become a star, lusterful and fair.

"If I am a star all the others must be stars too," said the Dreamer within herself, and with that she raised her eyes to look at her fellow-worshippers.

What joy! Every one of them had a light, or rather, *were* lights; some of them just trembling flamelets, others mere sparks, some glowing with a steady radiance, others gleaming like tropic-seen stars. And while she gazed at this glad sight every single light was magnified in its shining till the dim church was filled with gleaming stars. Such gladsome lights they were, having a certain tender mellowness in their radiance which revealed its origin, for the Dreamer perceived that such harmony is in immortal souls, that there are some rare moments when this muddy vesture of decay can no longer avail to cloak it, and that all, even the most backward in heaven's way, are Christs in potential, none the less; so that under the hallowing gracious influence of the Christ Mass we can beam forth with that radiancy of light which some day it will be ours ever to wear.

And, as the Dreamer left the church to plunge into the winter cold without, her heart o'erflowed with warmth of thankfulness that so glorious an assurance had been granted her of our essential Christhood, our oneness with the Children of Light.

CHRIST'S YEAR DAYS AND YEAR NIGHTS

J Casey.

“Why is it,” asked my friend, “each year at this time’ when the harvests have been gathered for the winter and the leaves begin to fall, there comes over me a desire to turn my mind to spiritual things? I read a chapter from my Bible each day and I really put my soul into practicing the beautiful, simple teachings of Christ. I take great pleasure in doing those things which I think will help others to live His teachings. As Christmas comes that feeling grows upon me. I cannot just explain it, but I think I must feel toward my fellowmen somewhat as Christ felt when he stood before Jerusalem and said, ‘How often I would have gathered you together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.’ I want to share my fellow-man’s sorrows and troubles. But as winter passes and spring comes with its balmy days and April showers; when the trees are budding and the meadow larks calling in the fields, there comes over me the sense of a great loss. It is as if I had met a great disappointment; so much had been promised and so little realized. Something tells me I must turn my energies to the material side of life; I must now provide for the physical. I do not dislike that for I am a practical man, but why has that altruistic feeling left me?”

“Your question,” I answered, “is explained very logically in the Rosicrucian Teachings. As they are thoroughly Christian, their explanations are particularly helpful to the followers of Christ, and in perfect harmony with Christian ideals. They teach that Christ is the Earth Spirit. When He was crucified, the Bible says, ‘A great darkness came over the earth.’ But it wasn’t a darkness, it was a great light that blinded the people, and that light was the Christ Spirit entering the earth. Before the time of Christ, Jehovah was the Earth Spirit, but Jehovah influenced the earth and us *from without*, for He was the Lawgiver. Christ said, ‘I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.’ Love tends to lift us above the law and it comes from within. Hence Christ’s influence upon us and the earth comes *from within*.

“During the latter part of September, when the Sun enters Libra, which is Saturn’s exaltation

sign—Saturn’s influence being to destroy and obstruct—we find the rays of the Sun growing less powerful, the days becoming shorter and the material side of life upon the wane. But the night time of the body is the day time of the soul. While material activities are ebbing, spiritual activities are increasing. At this time it is said if we had spiritual sight we could see a great wave of golden light descending toward us from the Sun. That is the Christ, who has been with the Father during the physically active summer, returning again to give His life for us. At Christmas time, when the days are shortest, His uplifting and purifying influence is the strongest. As the Sun starts upon its journey northward and the days lengthen, He withdraws from the earth and at Easter ascends again to the Father. He says, ‘I came forth from my Father into the world; again, I leave the world and go to my Father.’ He has spent His year day with us.

“If He did not make His yearly visit to us during the Fall, there would be no more holiday feeling at Christmas time than there is during a mid-summer day. And, you, my friend, because you were trying to attune your life to His, felt His help and His presence during the Fall and Winter, and when He withdrew in the Spring, you sensed His absence.

“We maintain balance by focusing our energies for part of the year upon physical duties and the other part upon spiritual verities. We gain strength and learn to stand alone, as it gives us the opportunity to put into practice during the Summer those principles upon which we have been theorizing during the Winter. And as we are Christs in-the-making, there comes to us each year at this time great opportunity to work with Him and become like Him.”

MOTHER SHIPTON'S PROPHECIES

Half a century before America was discovered, “Mother Shipton,” the Yorkshire Seeress, prophesied the discovery of an unknown land in which gold would abound. She saw the automobiles and railroads of today with the many accidents they would cause, the telephone and the telegraph, divers submarines, airships and the great iron ships which have superseded vessels of wood. She

foresaw the great political upheavals in the world, notably in France, her alliance with England, and an amalgamation of the Anglo-Saxon races which may yet come to pass, notwithstanding their present strife. She beheld the emancipation of the Jew and his preferment to positions of prominence and an unprecedented spread of knowledge among those of even the most lowly estate, ending with the prediction of certain upheavals of the earth's crust, whereby old lands will become submerged and new land appear, and in 1991 she foresees the end of the world.

The last-named prophesies will probably cause most of us to shake our heads in a skeptical manner, but if we give the matter a little thought the idea may not seem so farfetched. We know that upheavals of the earth have taken place in the past, and earthquakes and volcanic outbursts show us that the subterranean activities are not suspended by any means.

The writer has seen for a number of years great subterranean caverns filled with oil and gas, which run in a general direction from Maine across the American continent in a southwesterly direction, beneath Southern California and far out into the South Pacific Ocean. Their explosion would make a great gap in the earth. At the same time he sees an archetype in the process of construction which shows the shape the earth will take at that place when a cataclysm or series of cataclysms have broken up the present shape of this continent and the adjoining ocean.

Perhaps it is hazardous to set a time when this remodeling of the earth will begin, but the archetype or matrix molded in mindstuff, and representing the creative thought of the Grand Architect and His builders, seems so nearly complete that judging by the progress made during the years the writer has watched its construction it seems safe to say that by the middle of the present century (1950), if not before, the upheavals will have started, and it is not at all incredible that there may be one of such a magnitude in 1991 that the ancient Seeress was justified in judging it the end of the world.

Or perhaps the writer is premature in judging that the upheavals will start in the middle of the

century; they may be deferred to the end, only time can decide, but certain it is that preparations for a great change have been going on for centuries and are now nearing their completion in the invisible world. Therefore we may expect soon to see Mother Shipton's prophesy concerning this matter fulfilled, as the ones mentioned in the beginning of our note have been.

We append the prophesy so that our readers may judge for themselves.

Carriages without horses shall go,
 And accidents fill the world with woe;
 Primrose Hill in London shall be,
 And in its centre a Bishop's See;
 Around the world thoughts shall fly
 In the twinkling of an eye;
 Water shall great wonders do.
 How strange! yet shall be true,
 The world upside down shall be,
 And gold found at the root of trees;
 Through hills man shall ride,
 And no horse or ass by his side;
 Under water men shall walk,
 Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk;
 In the air men shall be seen,
 In white, in black and in green.

A great man shall come and go!
 Iron in water shall float
 As easy as a wooden boat,
 And gold shall be found
 In a land that's not now known.
 Fire and water shall more wonders do,
 England shall at last admit a Jew;
 The Jew that was held in scorn
 Shall of a Christian be born.
 A house of glass shall come to pass
 In England, but alas!
 War will follow with the work
 In the land of the Pagan and Turk,
 And State and State in fierce strife
 Will seek each other's life.
 But when the North shall divide the South,
 An Eagle shall build in the Lion's mouth.
 Taxes for blood and for war
 Shall come to every door.
 Three times shall lovely France

Be led to play a bloody dance,
 Before her people shall be free,
 Three Tyrant Rulers shall she see—
 Three Rulers in succession see,
 Each sprung from different dynasty;
 Then shall the worser fight be done,
 England and France shall be as one;
 The British Olive next shall twine
 In marriage with the German Vine.
 Men shall walk over rivers and under rivers.
 All England's sons that plough the land
 Shall be seen book in hand;
 Learning shall so ebb and flow,
 The poor shall most wisdom know.
 Waters shall flow where corn doth grow.
 Corn shall grow where waters doth flow;
 Houses shall appear in the vales below.
 And covered by hail and snow.
 The world then to an end shall come,
 Nineteen hundred and ninety-one.

“OUR FATHER”

Janie Morgan

How often we repeat these words, but how little we think of and understand them. At the present stage of evolution it is so much easier to realize “My Father,” and to feel the union between “My Father and me.” But to say “Our Father” aright is so enormously big, one trembles at the thought. “Our” being the plural of “my,” means that “my” is merged into “our”; that my personality no longer exists as a single unit separate from every other, but each and all are embraced in the word “our.” Therefore, when we address the Author of our being, in Whom we literally live and move, as “Our Father,” we tacitly express our belief that He is the Father of us all, as a united humanity; also of those we alas, too often, dislike or despise, showing that we are all brothers.

In this time of war, when passions are running wild, let us stop and remember that in “Our Father” are included our so-called enemies; that they are just as precious to Him as we are, and that they are His children as much as we.

While we denounce and abhor acts of cruelty and oppression in anyone, let us distinguish between the *Ego* and the *Personality*. It is this lat-

ter which is sinning, having gotten the upper hand. When this has been overcome, the Ego will shine out in all its radiance and we shall then be able to say from our hearts, as did the Christ, “Our Father.”

“NO MAN’S LAND”

Janie Morgan

In the present war-terminology “No Man’s Land” means the tract of land lying between the most advanced line of trenches of the fighting armies, across which no man can pass from either side without being shot at; where the dead must lie, and from where, if possible, the wounded are taken away by stealth at night.

* * * *

She dreamed, yet she knew she was awake and out of her body. All around was brilliant light, and she was with her dearly loved mother, who had left her many years previously. The mother was clothed in a shining garment and her face was radiant. They were talking over certain points in the Rosicrucian Teachings, when the Dreamer began to read aloud a poem entitled “No Man’s Land,” and as she continued reading the exquisite description of this land, the most beautiful visions opened out, and the poem seemed gradually to change into reality. Her mother, taking her by the hand, led her on into a sphere of unspeakable light, where the most perfect bliss and happiness reigned. She said: “This is ‘No Man’s Land,’ and it is so called because it belongs to no one special man, race, or nation. All are brothers here.” They stood together at the threshold and looked in, and there the Dreamer saw myriads of beings, all clothed like her mother, with the same radiant love beaming from their faces, while a voice said to her, “We are all one here, although we have come from every nation and country on earth. There are no enemies here.”

As the Dreamer watched, she saw people who, like herself, were on the threshold, contemplating this glorious multitude, returning to earth to their daily work. As they got nearer to their bodies, they seemed to forget what they had seen. She asked her mother the reason, who replied, “It is because

(Continued on page 59)



The Astral Ray

* * * * *

The Sailors of the Infinite

Compiled by Geo. Schindler

FURTIVE shadows flitting across the prairies in the twilight, the forest raising its silhouette bathed in purple gleams of the last rays of the vanishing sun, golden cloudlets sailing like illuminated little airships driven by zephyrs o'er the enchanting scene. Below, a belated bee humming by, a cigale chirping her evening song, and in the far distance on the other side of the moat spread like a black cloth behind which twinkles a scintillating little light trembling through the increasing darkness—this is the time the stars wake up.

Slowly are they coming, breaking through the twilight one after another, grouping themselves into those well known configurations we have seen as children, which the men, like the centenarian, still finds in the same place and form, just as though there were no passing of time. And we who stand awed at the thought of their infinitude see the chariot in the sky exactly as thousands of years ago it has been seen by our ancestors, the cavemen.

Reader, you may see the circle of Orion and the refulgent Sirius just as the oldest Egyptians saw them when they went down into their pyramids, the walls of whose vaults, the burial grounds of their dead, were directed towards Sirius. And when of those sarcophagi and pyramids not one stone is left one upon the other at the border of the desert, and all the modern magnificence has passed away with them and been forgotten, still

the eternal stars will be in their same relation as when first seen by infant man. And yet, they are not *eternal* from the cosmic viewpoint, they only seem so when we approach the problem from the finite human angle. Man is like a moth on an apple below, looking at the steeple of the village church, thinking it infinite light because the perspective is always the same if he looks at it from either pole of the apple. He is like the fly that lives only one night and looks at the morning purple as the blazing fire of its world's destruction, the annihilation of its whole generation. This short-lived creature perceives no change in its surroundings in the few hours of its existence, so us with the stars. The one-day fly certainly thinks the oak tree eternal, but we know that our great grandfather has planted it and that its large boughs are already beginning to wither and die; but still, our great grand children will be looking for little oak pipes and acorns in the shelter of its shady branches. Could you make thousands of years into seconds and millions of miles into yards, you could see how the stars whirl hither and thither, this way and that way, like fireflies in a summer night, like leaves of a tree in an orchard driven by the storm across field and prairie, like snowflakes before a whirlwind. Yet the distances from each other are so inconceivably great, the space from star to star so tremendous, that it takes dozens of years before you can, with the finest measuring instrument,

detect the approach or change of alignment one thickness of a spider's thread. With all this, the stars are moving with a velocity through space exceeding that of a cannon ball over one hundred times.

The Sun itself and the earth on which you now stand, looking towards the other sailors in the Sea of the Infinite, is steering our craft towards the constellation of Hercules at the rate of twelve and one-half miles per second. The beaming Sirius approaches you four and three-fourth miles every second; the beautiful Vega, the principal star in the constellation Lyra, comes eight miles closer to you with each of your pulse beats; and if you stood still to the end of your days, you could not perceive the slightest change. Think of it, yet there is no cause for apprehension when we consider the tremendous distances separating our Solar System from those of Sirius or Vega, etc.

The Sun is ninety-three million miles distant from us. How great a distance is this? A cannon ball would have to travel ten years and an electric spark, the quickest of all messengers, traveling 180,000 miles per second, would require five and one-half minutes to cross that distance by direct wire from the earth to the Sun. But infinitely farther away is our next sister Sun. Tremendous spaces stretch between those two fire balls, those beaming oases in the desert of space, and all those other eyes are suns like ours. The nearest neighbor of our Sun is in the constellation Centaurus, 275,000 times farther from us than the Sun is from the earth.

And this is our neighbor! Our telegrams would require three years to reach it, but we also have to consider stars in other constellations as our neighbors, though they are, like Sirius, five times, or Capella fifteen times, or as the North Star, twenty-five times farther away in space than *Alpha Centaurus*, because all that you can see with your terrestrial instruments for measurement lies just like the empire of our Sun in the same province of the universe. Astronomers classify the stars according to their brightness, from one to sixteen, but only those from one to six can be seen by the naked eye, and by moonshine even those of the

fifth and sixth magnitude disappear. Those different magnitudes are in principle quite clear and are in relation with distances from our Solar System.

We have grown to believe that their diameters do not differ much, at least those suns we have been able to measure and compare to date. The light of the stars is therefore our measuring stick for their distances. But what is the number of all visible stars you can see by your naked eye, compared with those uncountable milliards of suns floating in those endless depths of the universe which appear in our most powerful telescopes like diamond splinters on the black robe of the Goddess Urania?

Look up, right over you stands the Swan; you scarcely see a dozen stars with the naked eye, but look through the latest glass of the astronomer and you discover those concealed from your imperfect natural vision. You are unable to count them all; a world of worlds appear before you; scintillant sparks in the infinite, glittering snowdust, and yet nothing else but giant suns, each one many millions bigger than our earth ball, whirling through space with a velocity thousands of times faster than our fastest express train. Here you have stars thousands of times farther away in space than those glittering ones in the constellations, stars of the eighth and tenth magnitude with a distance of 780 to 1,000 light years. Light travels in the form of waves, those waves run a distance of 197,000 miles per second, and patters through the distance from the Sun to the earth in eight and one-fourth minutes.

A light year is then the distance a light wave can travel in one year. You can easily figure that that distance is 588,282,047,500 miles long. Then the next neighbor sun, Alpha Centaurus, is four and three-fourths light years distant from us and even that is nothing compared with those little diamond splinters of the eighth and tenth magnitude, from which the light waves now perceived by your eye began to travel at the birth of Christ.

Those stars, however, are yet in that province of the universe in which our Solar System is a little village. But as you have found in your school atlas, the colored lines surrounding the province

marking its border, so you can see in the firmament the gigantic contour of the border of the state composed of milliards of suns, the Milky Way, spreading its arched ribbon before you, but mind you, you see only one-half of the ring. The inhabitants of the other half of our little earth see the other half, for the whole is a broad girdle encircling the firmament, appearing to us like a delicate picture Woven out of soft misty cloudlets; but look through the telescope and it dissolves into uncountable stars, like snowflakes in a snowstorm. A spot you can cover with your hand contains thousands of Solar Systems, side by side, over and under each other, an infinite sea of radiant sparks, each a sun accompanied by one or several planets, each probably populated by milliards of thinking beings, the great light that rules the day of its own Solar System.

Approximate estimates show that about five hundred million suns up to the sixteenth magnitude constitute the Milky Way girdle. The farthest stars in the Milky Way are the astounding distance of 3,000 to 3,500 light years. The diameter of that tremendous ring is estimated at from five to seven thousand light years. Here the intellect stops. What can such inconceivable numbers signify and mean to mortal man? Many of those stars have probably been extinct for thousands of years, but you can still see them radiating their light, the last wave of which is yet on its journey, may be for hundreds of years, until it finally reaches the distant point we call our Sun.

A conflagration, probably due to a collision between two heavenly bodies, was suddenly discovered in *Novo Persci* in 1901. It was calculated that this catastrophe had in reality taken place during the war of thirty years, only the messenger, the light, was so long underway that it was not seen by the dwellers on earth till that year.

We have in the Milky Way an immense ring of suns which again encircles another great swarm of suns, these stars of the constellations to which our own Sun also belongs. Our Solar System is situated not far from the middle point of the Milky Way ring. If you could fly upward and upward for hundreds of thousands of years with the swiftness of

light, you would finally behold this tremendous system as a shimmering star island. There are probably as many such Milky Way systems as there are Solar Systems. Several such systems are known at the present day. From the sun of one of those systems, the Milky Way would appear to the spectator as a small gray spot, and the fire of those five hundred million suns would glimmer together to a disappearing spot in space and be lost to the eye of the astronomer at his telescope, even as a flash of a match.

The group of stars in the Andromeda consists of millions of suns crowding each other so that in the latest telescope they appear indistinguishable, and are seen as a spirally formed light spot. In other similar star clusters somewhat nearer to us, but smaller, astronomers are able to segregate the stars fairly well. Such an object is the swarm of stars in the constellation Hercules. How far those Milky Way Systems, those individual provinces of the state of *Urania* are separated from each other, who can say? Small parasite of the earth, your question is amiss, we do not know, we cannot know. Maybe 10,000, maybe 50,000 light years; what is that number to us, we one-day flies? Let us drop the inquiry into that labyrinth out of which there is no Ariadne's thread leading. We would sink in the stream of the infinite that has no shore. Here is where presentiment triumphs over knowledge, but what appeared to you so sure and true, what you took for eternity itself, sways before your eyes, whirls and breaks.

Those suns up there turn in the light of modern science to be comparatively short-lived pictures. Were you not a one-day fly you could see them lighted and extinguished as you do the coals in the poor man's grate across the street. The suns will cool down and extinguish, the congeries of suns will disappear as flowers and grass disappear before you, but they will also be resurrected in the eternal creation, in that economy of Nature in which not a grain is lost. Naturally, of this we know nothing, though many speculations and discoveries of new stars are entertained, and deductions made as if Nature were letting us have a glimpse in the workshop where suns are shaped.