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*THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY AT  
EPHESUS.*<sup>1</sup>

III. EARLY WORSHIP OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN  
EPHESUS.

<sup>2</sup> THE Ephesian tradition has all the appearance of being a popular growth, frowned on at first by the Church, and never fully and cordially accepted, but only permitted as a concession to popular feeling. The Orthodox Church gained the general support of the populace in the fifth century by tacitly (or even sometimes openly) permitting the reinvigorating of the old paganism under outwardly Christianized forms, and freed from the most debasing elements and accretions which were attached to it in former times, but which formed no essential part of it. The people longed for those impersonations of the deepest principles of human life and society, which had been to them of old gods and guides. The Divine Mother, the God-Son, were ideas that came close to the popular nature and lay deep in the popular heart, and the purely Christian ethics and theology were too remote and incomprehensible to insufficiently educated minds. The old paganism, amid much that was ugly and hateful, had contained in its hieratic forms much of the gradually elaborated wisdom of the race. The rules of worship and

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my friend and old pupil, Professor A. Souter, of Mansfield College, for much help and all the quotations which are here printed. The article had to be written far from books during the journey, in the course of which I visited Ephesus at the beginning of May 1905.

ritual were the rules of useful practical life and conduct in the family and society. The ugliest part was mere degeneration and degradation.<sup>1</sup> The earlier steps in this recrudescence of pagan ideas in the Christian Church of Asia (a growth which was vainly, and not always wisely or rightly, resisted by the various Iconoclastic sects) cannot now be traced. In the fifth century the traces become clear and evident: in the fourth century they can be guessed.

The oldest allusion to the worship of the Virgin Mary at Ephesus as already an established cult (perhaps the earliest<sup>2</sup> in the whole of Anatolia) is contained in the Acts of the Council which met at Ephesus in 431 A.D.<sup>3</sup> The sermon, which had been preached by Proclus, bishop of Cyzicus, in 429, is incorporated in the record of the Council; and this fact seems to show that the proceedings and the sermon must be read in the light of each other. The sermon was considered to be a fair statement of the view which the Council regarded as right. Thus we must interpret the formal business of the Synod, which was held in "the church called Maria." The very existence of a church bearing that name is in itself a proof of an already established cult in Ephesus. The Synod was called as a protest against the depreciation of the worship of the Virgin Mother of God by Nestorius and his followers.

Theodosius II. had summoned Nestorius from Syrian Antioch to be patriarch of Constantinople; and he brought

<sup>1</sup> This is a brief, and therefore too dogmatic and harsh, *résumé* of the thesis which was gradually worked out in the process of writing the article on *Religion of Greece and Asia Minor* in *Hastings' Dictionary*, vol. v.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion in the epitaph of Avircius Marcellus (St. Abercius), c. A.D. 192, shows great respect for her, and places her relation to Jesus among the most sacred and fundamental articles of the Christian faith; but that stage is already clearly marked in the letters of Ignatius.

<sup>3</sup> Several extracts from the exordium of this sermon have been quoted on pages 409 f.; for the complete sermon, see Migne *P. G.* lxxv. p. 680 ff.

with him Anastasius, a presbyter of Antioch. The latter in a sermon had declared that the title "Mother of God" ought not to be applied to Mary, inasmuch as God cannot be born of woman; Mary was the mother only of the man Jesus, while the divine Jesus was the Son of God alone. Mary, as he said, was only the mother of Christ, not Mother of God (Christotokos, not Theotokos). The orthodox majority of the Church rose in horror against this duplication of the person of Christ, and condemned the authors at the Council of Ephesus. Along with this condemnation it was inevitable that the actual worship of the Virgin Mother of God (as she was now officially called) received new strength in the popular mind, as if it had been now formally sanctioned.

It may be regarded as possible that the name attached in Ephesus to the church called "Maria," was popular rather than official.<sup>1</sup> The expression used strongly indicates this; and no other origin for the name seems possible. The church was in 431 B.C. not "the church of Maria," or "dedicated to her"; it was "the church called Maria." Probably the full expression of the meaning of the Greek would be "the church (of God) which bears the name Maria." Popular feeling attached the name, and gave its own character to the worship; but the official, or sacerdotal, view did not formally recognize this, though it went a long way in making concession to it, and in practice apparently gave almost full freedom to it. Where a strong popular feeling is concerned, the Council which condemned the one great opponent of that feeling, and formally authorized, as binding on all Christians, one expression of that feeling (viz. the expression "Mother of God"), must be regarded as tacitly permitting those other expressions, public at the time, which it did not condemn. It is of course certain that afterwards the dedica'tion to the Virgin

<sup>1</sup> ἐν τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Μαρίας.

Mary of this and other churches was fully accepted by the priesthood and by most of the Church leaders.

It may be noted here in passing that the recent Austrian excavations have strongly confirmed the opinion<sup>1</sup> that the "church called Maria," in Ephesus, is to be found in the double church whose remains must be familiar to all visitors to the ruins, as they are among the loftiest and most imposing buildings on the site. In a visit to Ephesus in May 1905 the present writer was informed that the eastern church in this connected pair, which is the later of the two, has been found to be of the age of Justinian, that the older western half was almost certainly in existence before 431, that it was dedicated to the Virgin, and that Mr. Heberdey, the distinguished director of the Austrian enterprise, considered it to be the church in which the council was held. It remains uncertain as yet whether the eastern church also was dedicated to her.

It was only during the fourth century that the leaders or the great writers of the Christian Church seem to have begun to interest themselves in the story of the life of the Virgin Mary for her own sake. Epiphanius about 375 A.D. remarks that the Scriptures say nothing about the death of the Virgin, whether she died or not, whether she was buried or not, and that in the Scriptures there is no authority for the opinion that when John went away into (the Province) Asia, he took her with him.<sup>2</sup>

But from these words of Epiphanius it seems clear and

<sup>1</sup> This opinion is, if I am not mistaken, expressed in my *Letters to the Seven Churches*; but at the moment of writing I have not access to a copy of the book. The opinion was certainly in my mind, but may perhaps have been cut out of the proof sheets as too conjectural. [It is stated in the writer's article on *Ephesus* in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, but not in the *Letters to the Seven Churches*.]

<sup>2</sup> Epiph. *adv. Haer.* III., 1, haer. 78. § 11 (Migne *P. G.* xlii. 716a): 'Αλλά καὶ εἰ δοκοῦσι τινες ἐσφάλθαι, ζητήσωσι τὰ ἔχνη τῶν γραφῶν, καὶ εὗρωσιν ἂν οὐτε θάνατον Μαρίας, οὐτε εἰ τέθνηκεν, οὐτε εἰ μὴ τέθνηκεν, οὐτε εἰ τέθαπται, οὐτε εἰ μὴ τέθαπται. Καίτοι γε τοῦ Ἰωάννου περὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐστυλαμένου τὴν πορείαν, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ λέγει ὅτι ἐπηγάγετο μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον κτλ.

certain that popular tradition had already before his time been busy with her later life. Starting from the one recorded fact that she remained until her death under the care and keeping of St. John, it had woven into this something in the way of an account of her death, and the circumstances connected with it and with the burial. Doubtless it had interwoven some marvellous incidents in the story; and it would be possible to guess how these originated and were gradually elaborated. But the one thing that concerns our purpose is that Epiphanius must have known of the story that the Virgin had gone with St. John to Ephesus; otherwise he would not have taken the trouble to deny that it rested on any scriptural foundation. The popular tradition in Asia is therefore as old at least as the middle of the fourth century. And, whereas in the fifth century the Church leaders (as we have already seen) in the time of the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, refrained from either contradicting or confirming expressly the popular Ephesian belief, Epiphanius in the fourth century points out that this and all other stories about her death and burial were devoid of authoritative foundation. We are in presence of a popular belief, disclaimed and set aside as valueless in the fourth century, but treated with more careful respect, though not confirmed, in the fifth century. The sacerdotal teaching could not admit the popular belief as authoritative, but it tacitly permitted the belief to reign in the popular mind, and to govern popular action and religion, in the same way as it gradually came to acquiesce, without either affirmation or denial, in most of the popular local cults of saints.

This Ephesian tradition has continued in effective operation to the present day. When the Roman Catholic discoverers of the "House" of the Virgin began to inquire into the situation, they found that the Greeks of Kirkindje, a village among the hills south-east of Ephesus, to which

the remnants of the Christian population are said to have retired in the middle ages, regarded the place as sacred, called it Panagia Kapuli,<sup>1</sup> and held certain annual ceremonies there. Since the Catholics made the discovery, they have bought a large tract of ground round the ruin; and the Greeks have in some degree lost their devotion to the spot. An English lady, however, who speaks Greek as fluently as she does English, told me that she asked the Greek servant who guided her to the Panagia Kapuli whether the Orthodox Christians<sup>2</sup> held a Panegyris at this place. He replied that they had no Panegyris there, but only a Litourgia; and that in case of trouble or sickness it was customary to take a priest to the place and perform service and offer prayers there. The annual ceremony, therefore, seems to have been abandoned, though popular belief still clings to the holy place, and attracts to it those who are in trouble. But the Greek priests appear not to have held, and certainly now they utterly disclaim, the belief that the Panagia herself ever was there; and they maintain that this house is only a ruined little church dedicated to her.

As to the ruins, the photographs show clearly a small mediaeval building, with an apse. One would unhesitatingly set it down as a mediaeval church, for the religious needs of the population of the secluded glen in which it is situated.

By an unfortunate accident at Ephesus I was prevented from visiting the Panagia Kapuli, after all arrangements had been made; and, while others went, I had to rest in the house for two days. But, as I understand, a friend of trained and practised experience in archæological research

<sup>1</sup> Kapuli is a Turkish word, "possessed of or connected with a door."

<sup>2</sup> In strict Greek expression "Christians" are the Orthodox alone; other sects are Catholics, Protestants, Armenians, etc., but none of these are in popular phraseology denominated Christians.

considers that part of the building is older than the walls generally, and might date from as early as the first century.

The glen in which the building is situated is divided from the city of Ephesus by a high, jagged ridge of mountain, along the crest of which ran the south wall of the Grecian city, built by Lysimachus about 280 B.C. This part of the wall is still fairly well preserved: its lofty position and remoteness from the haunts of men have saved it from destruction at the hands of mediæval or modern builders.

#### IV. THE VISION OF ANNE CATHARINE EMMERICH.

Now arises the question how far any value as evidence can be set on the vision of the German nun, Anne Catharine Emmerich. In the first place, I should repeat what was already stated in Part I. of this article, that it seems unjustifiable to throw doubt on the honest intentions both of the seer and of the reporter, the poet Brentano. After fully weighing all the evidence, I do not entertain the smallest doubt that she saw those visions or dreams, and that they have been faithfully reported to us. The visions are exactly what a nun in such surroundings as Anne Catharine's would think, and ought to think. But they lie almost wholly within the narrowest circle of commonplace mediæval pseudo-legend, hardly worthy to be called legendary, because it is all so artificial.

The experience of a foreign friend whose name (if I were free to mention it) would be a certificate of wide reading and literary power, narrated to me by him some years ago, illustrates the probable bent of Anne Catharine's mind. His family travelled for some time in the company of a lady educated in a convent: her conversation generally showed quite remarkable lack of knowledge or interest, but in picture-galleries she displayed an equally remarkable familiarity with lives of the saints, identifying at a glance



every picture relating to them, telling the story connected with each sacred picture in the fullest detail, and explaining numerous little points about the symbolism, which might escape even well-informed observers.

In hurriedly reading over the visions about the life of the Virgin in a French translation, while I was visiting Ephesus in the beginning of May 1905, I have observed only two points which seem to lie outside of this narrow circle.

One of these is the date of the birth of Christ. It is not fixed at Christmas, but on the 24th November. I do not know how far this divergence may be connected with any stories or legends likely to be within the ordinary circle of knowledge of a German nun, of humble origin and without any special education, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But it seems not at all impossible or improbable that she may have come in contact with educated persons, or may have learned in other ways so much of the results of historical investigation as to hear that there is no substantial foundation for the common ceremonial practice of celebrating the birth of Christ at the end of December.

The other and by far the most interesting passage in the whole book is the minutely detailed account of the home of the Virgin and the small Christian settlement in the neighbourhood of Ephesus. It is worth quotation in full.

“After the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, Mary lived three years on Sion, three years at Bethany, and nine years at Ephesus, to which place John had conducted her shortly after the Jews had exposed Lazarus and his sisters on the sea.

“Mary did not live exactly at Ephesus, but in the environs, where were settled already many women who were her friends. Her dwelling was situated three leagues and a half from Ephesus, on a mountain which was seen to the left in coming from Jerusalem, and which rapidly descended towards Ephesus—coming from the south-east

the city was seen as if altogether at the foot of a mountain, but it is seen to extend all round as you continue to advance. Near Ephesus there are grand avenues of trees, under which the yellow fruits are lying on the ground. A little to the south, narrow paths lead to an eminence covered with wild plants. There is seen an undulating plain covered with vegetation, which has a circuit of half a league; it is there that this settlement was made. It is a solitary country, with many small, agreeable and fertile elevations, and some grottoes hollowed in the rock, in the midst of little sandy places. The country is rough without being barren; there are here and there a number of trees of pyramidal form with smooth trunks, whose branches overshadow a large space.

“When St. John conducted to this spot the Blessed Virgin, for whom he had already erected a house, some Christian families and many holy women were already residing in this country. They were living, some under tents, others in caves, which they had rendered habitable by the aid of carpentry and wainscoting. They had come here before the persecution had burst forth with full force. As they took advantage of the caves which they found there, and of the facilities which the nature of the places offered, their dwellings were real hermitages, often separated a quarter of a league from each other; and this kind of colony presented the appearance of a village with its houses scattered at a considerable distance from each other. Mary’s house stood by itself, and was constructed of stone. At some distance behind the house the land rises and proceeds across the rocks to the highest point of the mountain, from the top of which, over the small elevations and trees, the city of Ephesus is visible,<sup>1</sup> with

<sup>1</sup> [Some words are omitted here (by the fault of either translator or transcriber): the text should be to the effect, “and the sea with its numerous islands.”]

its numerous islands. The place is nearer the sea than Ephesus itself, which lies at some distance. The country is solitary and little frequented. In the neighbourhood was a castle, occupied, if I mistake not, by a deposed king. St. John visited him frequently, and converted him. This place became, later on, a bishopric. Between this dwelling of the Blessed Virgin and Ephesus a river flowed, winding in and out with innumerable turnings."<sup>1</sup>

What value can be set upon this extremely interesting passage?

It is unnecessary to do more than mention the impossibility of the assumption made in the vision that St. John could have gone to Ephesus in the sixth year after the Crucifixion and found there already a Christian community.<sup>2</sup> But it might quite fairly and reasonably be argued by any defender of the general trustworthiness of the nun's visions, that in regard to numbers and estimates of time and distance her evidence stands on a less satisfactory basis than in other more important respects. Her statements of distance seem to be only conjectural estimates according to the appearance presented in her vision, and therefore stand as it were outside of the vision as being her own opinion about what she saw. The lapse of years was expressed as part of the visions: she saw the numbers of years presented to her eyes in Roman figures,<sup>3</sup> and in relating what she had seen she stated

<sup>1</sup> *The Death of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Her Assumption into Heaven, containing a Description of Her House at Ephesus, recently discovered. From the Meditations of Anne Catherine Emmerich. Translated from the French.* By George Richardson (Dublin: Duffy and Co., 1897), pp. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> At this time, too, Thomas is said to have already evangelized India and Bactria, Philip Egypt, James Spain, etc.

<sup>3</sup> The editor of the French translation mentions this in a footnote, and explains the discrepancy between two statements about the time of the Virgin's residence at Jerusalem (which is given as four years in one passage, and six in another) as due to Anne Catharine's unfamiliarity with Roman symbols, which caused to confuse between iv. and vi.

that she saw a V. with a I. beside it which she understood to mean six, viz. the number of years that the Virgin remained in (or near) Jerusalem after the Crucifixion. Such a defender might point out that the Virgin is described as being in extreme old age, and yet the years of her life are stated as sixty-four; and he might fairly argue that a healthy Jewess of sixty has not the appearance of extreme age, and that the numbers must therefore be regarded on a secondary plane, so that St. John's journey to Ephesus with her can be placed at a reasonable and possible date, later than the formation of a Christian Church in Ephesus, and probably even later than the death of St. Paul, when the Virgin Mary was a very old woman, over ninety years of age.

That seems a quite fair method of interpretation; but though it avoids chronological difficulties, it leaves others untouched. The idyllic picture of the Christians living in a little community of their own away from the city, apart from the ways of men, separate from their pagan fellow-townsmen, is the dream that springs from a mind moulded by monastic habits and ideas, but is as unlike as can be to the historic facts. Had Christianity begun by retiring out of the world, it would never have conquered the world. Every inquirer into history knows that the Christians of that first period were involved in the most strenuous and crowded struggle of life. The nun's vision is a picture of quiet seclusion and peace. This alone is sufficient to show that the vision has a purely subjective origin.

Still more evident is the nature of the vision, when we consider the localities described. The minuteness of detail with which the description is given stands in remarkable contrast to the rest of the book. There is a clear conception of the approach from Jerusalem (through the Mæander valley and) across the mountains, reaching

Ephesus from the south-east. The view of the city, as one comes near it, is very beautiful; and the description in the vision, though rather general in its character, is quite good, except in three important respects.<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, at a distance of three leagues and a half no view of the city can possibly be got; the road at that point is still entirely secluded among the mountains: only when one comes within about two or three miles of the south-eastern gate of Ephesus, the Magnesian gate, does the city come into view.

In the second place, there is not at any point on the road, or near it on the left, this complete view of the city as a whole. From any such point considerable part of the city is hidden behind Mount Pion. This complete view can be obtained only by approaching from the north, as modern travellers and tourists do in almost every case.

In the third place, a winding river is described as running between the approaching travellers and the city. This winding river is the Cayster, now called the Menderez (i.e. Mæander). Its course is quite as circuitous and tortuous as the vision represents it; but it is hardly visible from the south-eastern road, or from a point on the left hand of that road. It is only as one comes from the north that this river and its wanderings form so striking a part of the scene; and further, one must come over the higher ground in order to get the view perfectly. Moreover, this mæandering river runs on the north side of the city; so that only to the traveller coming from the north does it flow between him and the city.

In the fourth place there are not at the present day

<sup>1</sup> The plan of Ephesus in the writer's *Letters to the Seven Churches* will make the following paragraphs clearer.

[Reading over this extract from the English translation, as it has been inserted in the proof sheets by the care of Mr. Souter, I feel that it gives a different impression from the French translation, which I read at

numerous islands<sup>1</sup> visible from the peak above Kapuli Panagia. Samos shuts out the view of those beyond it. But in ancient times there were several islets in the gulf of Ephesus (which is now silted up and converted into solid land or marsh), so that the ancient state of things was less unfavourable to the nun's description than the modern state is. It is however uncertain whether the islets in the gulf would be visible from the peak: this point has never been investigated.

It seemed beyond doubt or question to me, as I sat in the Ephesian plain and read the description, that the whole has taken its origin from a description given by some traveller or tourist of his approach to Ephesus. How this came to Anne Catharine's knowledge is uncertain; but there seems no difficulty in supposing that some traveller or some reader of a printed description had talked to her (she is said not to have been a reader); and the narrative had sunk into her mind and moulded quite unconsciously the vision that she saw. Only the appearance from a rising-ground on the north is inaccurately represented as seen by the traveller coming from the south-east. There is, thus, a curious mixture of accuracy and inaccuracy. St. John approaches, as he would in fact do, from the south-east; but he sees the view that would be presented to a traveller coming from the north, who diverged a little from the low road to a rising-ground, or who approached by a path through the hills.

Again, it is a detail which at first sight seems very impressive that the travellers approaching from the south-east diverged a little from the road towards the left and there found the small Christian community. In such a

Ephesus. I have not the opportunity of comparing the two; but the English (published after the discovery of the House) is more in accordance with the localities than the French (published before) seemed to be.]

<sup>1</sup> The expression in the French translation, I think, is *innombrables*.

situation, some miles off to the left, the so-called "House" of the Virgin was found by the Catholic explorers. This "House" lies among the mountains in a secluded glen, divided by the high ridge of Mount Coressus from the city; and beyond doubt no modern traveller had ever penetrated into those mountains away from the regular paths, until the Catholic explorers went to seek for the "House" and found it beside the spring.

It is also a striking point that there is a peak over the "House," and that this peak is nearer the sea than Ephesus is, just as the vision has it; but from the peak one sees (as I am informed by several visitors) only the site of the temple of Diana outside the city, together with the Magnesian gate and the walls on the highest ridge of Coressus, while the city as a whole is hidden behind Coressus.

In short, the view of the city which is described in the vision is plainly and certainly the view got from a ledge or shelf on the hills that bound the valley, where they slope down towards the city and the plain, and not from a point shut off from most of the plain by a lofty ridge of mountains. A continuous slope with an uninterrupted view down over the city is described in the vision; and one could almost look to identify the shelf that is described, were it not that such a feature can be found in almost any similar sloping hillside.

It is needless to touch on the supposed correspondence between the shape and interior arrangements of the "House" and those described in the vision. To the nun it seemed clear that the Virgin must have lived and died in a building of the nature and shape of a church, having an apse: she had acquired sufficient knowledge of the form of the eastern churches. It cannot be doubted that the mind of the person who saw those visions was fixed steadily on those subjects; and I cannot but think that she

must have often conversed and asked about eastern places and things, and that from the little knowledge she thus acquired, combined with her training in the mediæval western legends of the saints and the Holy Family, the visions gradually took their form without conscious effort on her part.

## V. CONCLUSION.

We have thus arrived at the result, first, that the Ephesian belief as to the residence of the Virgin Mary in their city, though existing at least as early as the fourth century, rests on no recorded authority, but was a purely popular growth, and is therefore possessed of no more credibility than belongs to the numberless popular legends, which everywhere grow up in similar circumstances; and, secondly, that the nun's vision, interesting as it is, furnishes no real evidence.

The Roman Catholic writer <sup>1</sup> of a book already quoted, *Panaghia-Capouli*, p. 90, while fully admitting that the entire body of Greek clerical opinion has been against that Ephesian tradition, argues that a tradition which persists in the popular mind through the centuries, in spite of the contrary teaching of the clergy, is likely to rest on a real foundation.

We can only repeat what has been shown in detail in Section II., that numberless examples can be quoted of the growth of such popular beliefs without any historical foundation. They spring from the nature of the human mind; and they prove only the vitality of the old religious ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Though it has no bearing on the question of credibility, it is right to guard against the impression that general Roman Catholic opinion is in favour of the Ephesian tradition. The ruling opinion in Roman Catholic circles is against it; but as a rule the Catholics of the Smyrna district favour it.



Take an example which came to my knowledge after the former part of this paper was printed. Three or four miles south of Pisidian Antioch we found in a village cemetery an altar dedicated to the god Hermes. On the top of the altar there is a shallow circular depression, which must probably have been intended to hold liquid offerings poured on the altar, and which was evidently made when the altar was constructed and dedicated. A native of the village, who was standing by, as we copied the inscription, told us that the stone was possessed of power, and that if any one who was sick came to it and drank of the water that gathered in the cup, he was cured forthwith of his sickness. This belief has lasted through the centuries; it has withstood the teaching and denunciation of Christians and Mohammedans alike; but it is not therefore possessed of any real foundation. It springs from the superstitious nature of the popular mind, and the stubborn persistence of the old beliefs. You may in outward appearance convert a people to a new and higher faith; but if they are not educated up to the level of intellectual and moral power which that higher faith requires, the old ideas will persist in the popular mind, all the stronger in proportion to the ignorance of each individual; and those ideas will seize on and move the people especially in cases of trouble and sickness and the presence or dread of death.

Such is the nature of the Ephesian tradition. The Virgin Mother in Ephesus had been worshipped from time immemorial; and the people could not permanently give her up. They required a substitute for her, and the Christian Mother of God took her place, and dwelt beside her in the hearts of the people. This belief soon created a locality for itself, for the Anatolian religion always found a local home. The home was marked out at Ortygia in the mountains on the south of the Ephesian valley, where the pagan Virgin Artemis was born, and where probably her

original home had been, until she as the great Queen-bee led her mourning people to their new home in the valley by the shore of the sea<sup>1</sup> and became the "goddess and mother and queen" of Ephesus. The Christian worship of the Virgin Mother seems to have originated at so early a period that it could not establish itself directly on the home of the older Virgin Artemis. It could only seek a neighbouring home in the same hilly country a little further eastwards. When this home was found for the new belief, a sacred legend inevitably grew up around it according to the usual process in the popular religion of antiquity. The legend had to be adapted to the Christian history. It could not imitate exactly the pagan legend that the Virgin was born at Ortygia; but the belief that the Mother of God had lived in old age and died there, grew up and could readily be adapted to the record.

It will always remain a question, as to which opinions will differ widely, how far it is right or permissible to make concessions to so deep-seated a feeling as that belief must have been. On the one hand, a concession which takes the form of an unhistorical legend and a ceremonial attached to a false locality will meet with general disapproval. On the other hand, it seems certain that injudicious proselytising combined with wholesale condemnation and uprooting of popular beliefs has often done much harm in the history of Christianity. The growing experience and wisdom of primitive races wrought out certain rules of life, of sanitation, purity, consideration for the community, and many other steps in civilization; and these rules were placed under the Divine guardianship, because there was no other way of enforcing them on all. Practical house-

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to the Seven Churches*, p. 217. On the map there Ortygia, which lies really outside of the limits of the map, is indicated wrongly. It was necessary to put in the name, but the actual locality is a little south-east of the place where the name stands.

hold wisdom was expressed in the form of a system of household religious rites. It is true that these rules were often widened by false analogy, and applied in ways that were needless and useless; but there remained in them the residuum of wisdom and usefulness.<sup>1</sup> It has often been an unwise and almost fatal error of Christian missionaries (an error recognized and regretted by many of them in recent time) to treat all these rules as superstitious and try to eradicate them before any system of habitual good conduct in society and ordinary life had been settled and rooted in the minds of proselytes.

That the belief in the Mother, and especially the Virgin Mother, as the teacher, guide, and nourisher of her people, was capable of infinite expansion as a purifying and elevating principle, has been shown in Section I. That it has been of immense influence on Asia Minor is patent in the history of the country; even Turkish Conquest, though it attained its purposes by general massacre especially of the male population, has not wholly eradicated it. That it is a principle which belongs to a settled and peaceful age and state of society, and that it must be weakened in a state of war and disorder, is evident in itself, and has been shown in detail elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The vision of the nun in Westphalia and the rediscovery of the House of the Virgin form simply an episode in the history of that religious principle, and a proof of its vitality.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Religion of Greece and Asia Minor* in Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, v. 133, and *passim*. The process of degradation constantly came in to make these rules deteriorate, as is shown in that article.

<sup>2</sup> See the article quoted in the preceding footnote.