

**THE MAN JESUS; BEING A  
BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE  
AND TEACHING OF THE  
PROPHET OF NAZARETH. [1915]**

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The Man Jesus; Being a Brief Account of the Life and Teaching of the Prophet of Nazareth.  
[1915] by Mary Austin

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**MARY AUSTIN**

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BY  
MARY AUSTIN



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*Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.—Deut. xxxiii, 4.*

[The above was taught to every Hebrew child by his father as soon as the child was old enough to speak. A little later he was taught the first part of the Shema, which follows. The whole Shema, including Deut. ix, 18-21, and Num. xv, 37-41, was recited by every devout Hebrew morning and night.]

*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord:—*

*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as a frontlet between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.—Deut. vi, 4-9.*

# THE MAN JESUS

## I

**W**HEN Tiberius Cæsar had been some fifteen years upon the seat of Roman Empire there arose, in an inconsiderable quarter of his realm, a man of a destiny so tragic and a character so commanding that a score of centuries have scarcely served to dim the appeal of his unique personality. He arose upon the Bridge of the World, shaken as it was with the passing of Roman power between Egypt and Asia, among the people whose voice among the nations was as the voice of one crying small wares in the midst of traffic. They were the Keepers of the Bridge. Their race had been born amid its ribs and buttresses; they had been swept from it by Egypt and Assyria, whence, after generations of captivity, they had found their way back to it with the instinct of homing-pigeons. They sat upon the Bridge between the desert and the sea and trafficked with the nations going past; they



## THE MAN JESUS

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trafficked even for the right to sit and traffic in their ancient seats. Sometimes they fought for it, but that was only when they were threatened in their sole other distinction. For they were not only a race of traffickers; they dreamed greatly.

When the bazars were shut and the smoke of the evening sacrifice gone up, they forgathered upon the housetops with their feet tucked under them and dreamed a splendid and orderly heaven with Him of the Ineffable Name sitting in the midst of the vault, surrounded by rank on rank of Seraphim and Cherubim, angels and archangels, all singing and with flaming wings. They went further and dreamed a world of men in the same order and symmetry, a world dripping with milk and honey where there should be none hurt and none crying any more, and the lion and the lamb lying down together. It was perhaps a shopkeeper's heaven, with everything ticketed and tucked away in it—think of a people undertaking to name the whole heavenly host!—but it surpassed in grandeur, in singleness of conception, the hybrid theogonies of the pagan world as much as the Græco-Roman Zeus-Pater, the Thunderer, was surpassed by their *High and Holy One Who Inhabiteth Eternity*.

And for the right to worship this One-God in their own fashion and to keep undefiled His holy places the Jews would fight on occasion, but it was the only

## THE MAN JESUS

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thing they would fight for. Their two great national achievements—the winning forth from Egypt and the return from captivity—they owed not to the sword, but to that quality which has made them before all others a business people. Once religious freedom was assured to them, they made what terms they could for a degree of political independence.

These are two things to remember about the Jews in thinking of the man who arose among them: that their dreaming was all of God, and that when there was anything of great import to be done they thought of every other way to go about it rather than by fighting. It is well to keep these in mind because, however much a man of any race may seem to oppose the genius of the tribe that produced him, it is impossible that he should not take from them in some fashion the line of his direction. The third item in the resolution of the external forces that determined the mold of the man Jesus, was the fact that he was sprung from a mountain people.

That was a country split into shoulders and summits, into narrow, knife-cut valleys and flowering oases between high, tumbled barrens. It followed that the inhabitants were divided into tribes and half tribes, and these into factions. It is always so in mountain countries where field is separated from

## THE MAN JESUS

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field by waste, and village is buttressed against village. Carmel has its foot in the sea, Lebanon is cut off, Hermon the white-haired stands up over Naphthali, Gilead and Ephraim are divided. The Samaritans were despised by the Judeans, who found the Galileans crude; and the Galileans themselves doubted if any good thing could come out of Nazareth. When they needed, therefore, a common bond they did not find it, as other tribes are prone to do, in political advantage or identity of material interests; they found it in the common dream, in the reality of a common spiritual experience. They fought for Jehovah and the holy places, even though they could not agree among themselves which places were the holiest. That was how it happened that the people who never achieved anything like national integrity for themselves, except for the briefest periods, were the first to effect a movement toward the universal state. For when their great man came, he walked, though they failed for the time to appreciate it, in the deep-rutted track which Hebrew thought had made for him.

The first that was heard of him was in connection with one of those singular characters which seem to have arisen from time to time among all ancient peoples, a true prophet by all the marks, of the stripe of Malachi and Habakkuk and Jeremiah.

This John, called the Baptist, must have been a