

from

GALACTIC EXODUS

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Locksley Hall, 1.i.

Apology and Proem

by The Historians of Eanpahta

F*uture cultures will be bathed in new light.* Changing worlds present fresh perspectives spawning unfamiliar, even bizarre views of life and the cosmos. Some will be truly advanced, others merely far-removed from concepts generally entertained by Earthians of the third millen after the Cryst.

The GALACTIC EXODUS begins long after the demise of your age. (You thought there would be no more demises?) Eanpahta is established tens of thousands of years later, at the end of the first stage of that wondrous adventure we are about to relate. The problems encountered in transforming the concepts and events of a far distant future into understandable language for you, our ancestors of dim antiquity, warrant this explanation.

In a comprehensive portrait of a new and unusual culture, its 'deeper' and 'heavier' aspects must share space with the colorfully superficial, the adventurous, the romantic, and even the mundane. Science and philosophy and religion have important moments on this stage, along with art, history, and personal drama; for there are many stories in the future, just as there are many histories of the past; none perfectly true, but all containing important instruction. While it is dearly our hope and fully our intention that this work be accessible and intelligible to all literate individuals of the early 21st century, A.D., be ever mindful that we are presenting an entire new world; a chronicle of a whole civilization—more accurately, a series of civilizations, developing, decaying, evolving, sometimes prospering, but more often struggling to escape the mire inherited from self-indulgent ancestors.

At times, in this convoluted history, we may seem overly cerebral, philosophizing shamelessly and chastising ruthlessly. That is our way. It is to be expected, for we are your future. We suffer over and over for your every fault and your every mistake. We have more than a right to be judgmental; it is a duty—to ourselves and, inadvertently, to you—to jostle some sense into you.

While we cannot direct your actions or even suggest specific improvements, we can call attention to ourselves, make known our plight at your hands, and point out your responsibility to us and to all future humans: to whole worlds waiting to be born beyond your era.

Should you encounter descriptions of events or explanations of processes and contraptions that seem involved and complex, bear with us. Though we do not expect you will find it all that insufferable, certain of such difficulties were unavoidable due, if only in part, to the very nature of our subject: our remote and shrouded past, your still distant but inexorably approaching future. If third millennium Earthians are unwilling to act in behalf of their own children and grandchildren, we, from inconceivably greater time-distance from you, can hardly expect to influence your behavior by means of long lectures or dark warnings or essays on virtue and the seeking of the Good. While we have in no way abandoned such tactics, our primary intention is to show you a future; and not only to paint it for you, but to take you there; acquaint you with its people and their perils, their hopes and desires, their lives and loves. Then, perhaps (not likely, but perhaps), through empathy with your projected friends; your unborn distant descendants, you will turn, if ever so slightly from your ruinous ways.

We confess that we could not translate languages and letters directly and literally from your distant future into this virtually forgotten book-form. Nor could we transmit the richness, the beauty and color of these stories across unfathomable time-space without depreciation by your long dead, primitive tongue. In that light, an apologetic word also is due regarding the work of our interpreter.

Before criticizing, however, we should mention that we feel fortunate to have found a receiver of such pliable mentality as this Somers of America. His experience is unusually wide-ranging, even if much of it is of little direct use. We hope his multi-faceted life and his miscellaneous interests will be of benefit to us, broadening our potential audience and increasing the general appeal of our message by lowering our naturally higher tone and quickening the beat to suit your ancient ears.

It has been more difficult than we expected. Our chosen scribe exhibits the required willingness (though inconsistently) to dabble in somewhat deeper thinking and, yes, even to take risks in time and effort and personal fortune. All well and good. His potential seemed high at our first encounter, though we have since re-graded his brain to somewhere between 'almost adequate' and 'not quite unsatisfactory.'

His mind works well enough when he applies himself. But our concepts are futuristic and difficult for him to grasp, making it even more difficult for him to explain them in print. Would that we had found one more knowledgeable in the sciences, the politics, the psycho-sociodynamics and historical substructure of at least his own era. Still, after weighing and debating all the difficulties, including the time and effort involved due to the significant improbability factor to be overcome in discovering another such ancient instrument so susceptible as he to new music, we decided we would make-do with this tolerable specimen.

Finding intelligent people who are also future-resonant—sympathetic to our polydimensional frequencies—is no everyday task. Time-free communication was apparently undeveloped, or was a lost faculty in your day. Perhaps it was simply too little known, or misunderstood and distrusted. Whatever the case,

reaching you has not been as easily accomplished as we had presumed. We found it especially difficult to find a servant inducible to devoting the necessary years and energy to completing this outsized project. We would have worked, rather, with someone more talented and experienced in writing; more proficient in description and explanation and dramatic sequencing; someone with more ambition, as well—and who, from the very commencement of our work, at least possessed his own, up-to-date writing equipment.

In sum, our amanuensis has been willful, at times. But, if his training and abilities range between meager and mediocre, his energy and enthusiasm for this project and his power of concentration are all too often sadly lacking.

It is through this Somers, in fact, that we, Eanpahtians, have come to know the powerful motivation of sheer exasperation; the impetus, perhaps, behind the reprehensible practice of corporal punishment that remains such an ugly blotch on the historical record of humankind. By his exceeding indolence he has engendered in us a sense of shame, having to admit ascendance from such wasteful and inattentive beings. Times beyond recounting we have experienced, communally, the urge to flog him into submission. Refusing to see the importance; to comprehend the scope and urgency of our task, he all too frequently deserted his ancient typewriter to indulge in his favorite pleasures of the flesh, consuming food in vast quantity, drinking and inhaling stultifying compounds—we hesitate to mention the endless parade of females of every description, much to his apparent delight and to our growing disgust.

Moreover, we have heard him boast of the magnitude of 'his' product, a mere fragment of our intended work, which, to him, after finishing only one volume, already seemed enormous. Stalling and complaining and anguishing over every paragraph, he considered each completed chapter, or even subchapter, as something of monumental importance. Bursting with undue pride, he would often quit our work and venture forth to seek congratulations for his remarkable diligence—after we virtually had forced his compliance, wringing what meager writing we could from him. We found a trace of humor in this for, from our perspective, the minimal work thus far accomplished is a monument only to his slothfulness. Yet in a more serious mode, we must admit, regrettably, the unlikelihood of his completing anywhere near the portion of GALACTIC EXODUS we still hope to present to your world.

Judging from his performance to date, that task will require a veritable army of Earthian writers, and several generations of them. So we take this opportunity to invite you, Readers, one and all, any who might be interested in the experience, to face toward the future. Open the aperture of your imagination to its widest and we shall approach, and assist you in adding to the foundation stones that Somers has so sparsely (but not all that unattractively) laid in our behalf. For this work we do thank him, but we cannot pretend to be satisfied.

H*indsight is not always perfect.* Histories of the world or of civilizations or nation-states must all come to rest some time before the reader's present-day. There are irresolvable arguments among antiquarians, to be sure, as to how

closely a historian might approach his own era without seriously misinterpreting the importance of events, ideas, and personalities; or, in the case of your Marxists, without misreading, as they often have done, the 'pattern of change'; or, for those of even more democratic historical persuasion, without misjudging (or being swept-up in) the ebb and flow of 'irresistible tides of transformation.' To use a colorful Earthian metaphor, the closer the historian approaches the forest of the present, the greater is the tendency for the medium-sized trees in the immediate foreground to seem very great, reducing and distorting his or her perception of the true character and extent of the whole woods.

Furthermore, to write history up to the present would involve the absurdity of guessing at some of it before it takes place, if only to gain time for printing and distribution, not to mention the reading and thinking process—a time and processing problem even the most advanced communications technology cannot hope to alleviate. Correspondingly, in this inverted history, we must avoid writing about your immediate 'present,' so that it will not have become the past before you read it.

More seriously and importantly, we are not concerned with pointing out all the nearby trees that should be obvious to you in your relatively insignificant part of the woods. We mean to describe towering giants beyond your line of sight—those in the general direction of your projected movement through the time-space wilderness.

Therefore, we shall take up our history of events and conditions prior to the Galactic Exodus at a time beyond your era. How far beyond we cannot tell precisely. Judging only from indirect evidence and having sifted through our traditional interpretations of the obscure records of your existence, we feel confident that one of the epic landmarks (one by which future calendars will be set), 'The Gross Contamination,' is not so very far from your present era—perhaps even within the reader's lifetime.

We can offer a few clues, for whatever good they might do: The century just preceding the 'Contamination' suffered through several major wars. A cursory review of Earth history, it seems to us, would provide a wide variety of ages that could meet that minimal qualification. More specifically, the era just prior to the Contamination was also a century of noteworthy advances in technology: triumphs of science that made each major conflict more devastating than all its nonetheless woeful predecessors. Huge conglomerations of humans were artificially organized into politico-economic units. 'Progressively' abandoning their deep racial, ethnic, and/or religious roots, some (especially in the cases of the most massive units) were practically purged of what were once widely shared traditions. The extremely diversified populations of these vast hives were connected, even across the most rugged natural boundaries, by a network of economic interdependency bound by the strong cement of improving technology. Paradoxically, hordes of these otherwise supposed 'rational' beings were helplessly confined by arbitrary and imaginary borders: lines that shifted with the imbalance of power, and stretched according to changing perceptions of the wealth and power gaps between the several global contestants.

The limited territories of Earth were an element of constant contention between governments of more than one-hundred competing nations. Their armies went forth from time to time, as did portions of their burgeoning populations, to annex, steal, destroy, or buy each other's land, labor, technology, and resources. More than your outmoded, fanatic faiths or ignorant racism or deficiency of statesmanship, the unchecked momentum of archaic economic dogma impelled the world lurchingly toward the event-horizon of civilization's black hole: *The Gross Contamination*.

International organizations, though they had opportunity windows, ultimately lost effectiveness in an increasingly corrupt and distrustful world. Governments were (apparently) elected in many of these nations; but in most, they imposed themselves by force upon unempowered populations. Those considered by the future to have been the more advanced recognized the principle of government by the consent and in the interest of the governed, although it did not always work out that well for them. In the end it worked out rather poorly for everyone.

There were a multitude of problems, not the least of which were the lack of sufficient consideration (on the part of governors and governed alike) for the worsening condition of your planet, and the incorrigible tendency to include under the meaning of 'consent' the mere failure of revolutionaries to gain sufficient popular support to vote-out or violently oust the current power mongers. If the population (unarmed, misdirected, frightened, ignorant, and hungry) could not manage to get rid of their oppressors, the incumbents assumed the people were generally in favor of the treatment they had been receiving (low wages, high prices, low-quality services, high taxes, diminishing employment, rising crime, declining living standards, increasing racial and ethnic tensions, scandalous political corruption, etc.). The leaders would see to it, then, in a show of appreciation for their constituencies' apathetic weakness and cringing cowardice, that they got more of the same.

In the interest, ostensibly, of securing liberties for its citizens (but all too often only to increase the fortunes of the ruling few and their supporting parties), governments built armaments to great excess, including weaponry of global destructive capability. Such weapons threatened not only rival states but also the entire international system, including any tempted perpetrators of armed conflict. Victory was thus rendered improbable, if not impossible in a case of all-out war, through the distinct likelihood of mutual annihilation. Ironically, this system actually worked, discouraging world-scale war-making by virtually turning the Earth, herself, into one huge nuclear minefield.

Progress toward global enlightenment, unfortunately, was also discouraged during a standoff between two clearly dominant states, while weaker nations vacillated, each to its own perceived advantage. Overwhelmed economically (actually spent into oblivion by its rival), one of the super-states collapsed. Heralded as a great day for democracy, it was not so great for world stability. Instead of relaxing into a simpler, more peaceful condition, due to the removal of a very threatening major military power, the international system became more complex and confusing – crumbling rather than coalescing.

To us, your distant children, it appears that the unchecked struggle for material goods, due to inevitable exhaustion of finite resources, developed into a desperate battle for national survival, while underdeveloped countries scrambled to industrialize and gobble-up the crumbs falling from the sumptuous feast of the 'great powers.'

Overpopulation, not surprisingly, seems to have played the leading role, intensifying all the other problems that plague any system that expands without regard to the limitations of its container. Yet among Eanpahtian scholars it is considered beyond doubt that the means of controlling human growth were well known and readily at hand. Consequently, several raw materials would soon be approaching depletion, seriously threatening certain traditionally powerful industries. The importance of these industries must have been significantly magnified as seen through the lens of the prevailing economic philosophy, which had softened toward big capital due to fear of instability and its twin, volatility. Avoidance of these two ogres was attempted through the security of favoritism, afforded by governments whose policies had been purchased and shaped for the protection of the most prominent and powerful, even if they were not the most productive or ethical of corporations. Unfettered capitalism, with its continual winning and losing, may not seem conducive of economic stability. Attempts to control market ups and downs are understandable, but over-protection of a 'great obsolete' only worsens the effect of its inevitable demise.

The problem seems straightforward enough, wanton and out-of-control rates of production and consumption, in a word: 'waste'—waste of magnitude far beyond our comprehension. The future finds it difficult to forgive what it cannot understand. Insufferable gorging by the more prosperous few (individuals and organizations alike, including the 'great power' nations and global corporations) did not go unnoticed by the poor and less-fortunate many; and could hardly be expected to ease the increasingly panicky atmosphere as internal corruption ate into liberty and self-interest inexorably dissolved the cultural glue of loyalty and patriotism during your Age of the Id.

Economic thought (economic policy, at least) failed to keep pace with social evolution. Outmoded, threatened, but still powerful principal industries resisted transformation. Their most profitable products, in many cases, were being replaced by other goods, many of them more natural and less harmful to Earth and its populations; some of newly synthesized compounds containing more readily available (even if more expensively processed) materials. Unmitigated market forces alone cannot be allowed to dictate or negate social policy. What is good and right is not necessarily what is most desired—or least expensive.

In the larger picture, though—to us, from our advantage of hindsight, the alternative methods and materials look much cheaper than they may appear to you. Future thinkers generally concur that many of your traditional, profit-intensive products were simply unnecessary for human health and happiness. A surprising number of those products are actually known by your present society to be harmful—or at least very dangerous. Yet you buy such things, and use them. This is not ignorance, then, but carelessness—well, let us be blunt: *stupidity*. You are knowingly feeding the monster that would destroy you.

Consider the principle that scarcity of certain desirable but non-replenishable resources raises their monetary value beyond the point of no return; i.e., guaranteeing (rather than preventing) their exhaustion via the black market. Their fate is sealed through covert dealings beyond the control of the governed—though arranged, more often than not (in the interest of gaining or retaining power and wealth), by the hidden hands of the very governments that, ideally, should be serving ‘the good’ rather than circumventing the best interest, well-being, and even the ‘general will’ of their people.

More could be said along these lines, but the point we are laboring to bring into focus is that the knowledge, the technology, the complete capability for Earth’s salvation was—*is*, now, for you—at hand. The problem, which those of the last century, Pre-Contamination (possibly you), must solve, is three-fold:

- (1) how best to apply your vast knowledge and considerable creative power to overcome what you now (or soon will) view as a crisis of depleting energy (the practically infinite plentitude of which, to those of us looking back upon your predicament, seems almost laughable, were it not that the results of your blindness would be so tragic);
- (2) dealing with the tidal wave of waste you are increasingly generating, before you find yourselves drowning in your own filth; and,
- (3) negotiating a mutually advantageous sharing of the remaining territory and productive capacity of the Earth, while preserving and improving its overall health as a living bio-system. (Such an agreement will have to bypass such impedance as nationalism; racism; many of the mutually antipathetic and illogical socio-religious memes; the practically oracular status achieved in your time by corporate profit-and-loss charts; and the capitalistic veneration of securities-exchange tendencies).

Certain ancient faiths especially need cleansing. Man is the thinker, the analyzer, the decision-maker. That is what supports his elevation above all other creatures, and makes him ultimately responsible for their fate. Such is his natural destiny and purpose in the Universe. To close a potentially human mind by means of dangerously outmoded doctrines, even in the face of ultimate disaster, can hardly be seen as helpful to that individual—although it seems, incongruently, that fear and hatred are actually favorable, even vital to the endurance of the dogma; the religion itself. In your present period of human development, such closed-mindedness can be fatal: a threat to all humankind. The powerful but dark faiths that evolved out of the early need for tribal and, later, imperial control are barbarous holdovers hiding in various, sometimes tricky modern disguises.

There is a way, however, of recognizing the outmoded aspects of one’s religion—the most dangerous ones, at least. So much as your faith teaches hatred of other beings; so much as it preaches murder, even genocide; however much it ignores practical humanitarian necessity in striving to gain and maintain economic and political power and in tightening control over its captured souls; as much as it despises or ignores the temporal world and its problems and surrenders the power of human reason, and thus the future of mankind, totally

unto Divine Providence, that much is it a headwind against the progress of your crowded vessel—already well behind schedule in the quest for salvation.

Land is not yet in sight and your position is uncertain on an uncharted sea. Turning back is out of the question. Panic will only quicken your demise. A transformation of values is needed. A rationing of supplies might be prudent. Too late for mutiny, now. Violent resistance will be met violently—consuming even more of your precious and dwindling resources. A balance must be found and maintained between the governed and the governors. The need of the many must be acknowledged while the greed of the few is tempered.

E*quality and freedom*: though each is a noble idea, these two are mutually incompatible in their absolute forms. Neither can find completion without annihilating or, at least, obstructing the other. Thus are they always qualified: *equality* ‘of opportunity,’ ‘of political rights,’ ‘of legal protection’ or *freedom* ‘of worship,’ ‘of speech and expression,’ ‘of privacy.’ Even within these restricting categories we find exceptions: legal and moral barriers beyond which even liberty and equality may not proceed. Individuals and groups alike need both restrictions and protections in their rights.

While complete agreement as to the ideal interpenetration of equality and freedom is impossible, as is eternal peace in a socio-dynamic world, the extreme latitudes on either hand must be avoided—just as, geographically, prosperity is elusive in the uncongenial polar regions. Therefore, while opportunities surely will arise for the establishment of new leadership, be wary of the screaming reactionaries; be patient with restrictions; bear up under oppression. Change is needed and change is inevitable. But keep your wits! Let mutiny be only the last, desperate resort. If it must be employed, beware the chief mutineers. Should the rebels win, they will likely be as unbending and repressive as the despots they once heroically overpowered.

You ought to know by now that the vain attempt to enforce unnatural, total equality across a nation or throughout a world is no less detrimental (nor less expensive) than trying to ignore or deny political equality on the basis of race, sex, health, economic status, intelligence, religion, or way of life. All humans have some share in these latter categories, but there is nothing at all equal about it. There are varying degrees of adjustment available to each person. Admittedly, it makes no sense to pretend that mobility is unlimited. Still, one’s position in the human race is determined by one’s actions, based largely on the power of reason. That above all else, it seems, is what humans are about.

Is ‘reason’ a defining attribute of humanity—perhaps, *the* defining attribute? Do you agree—even partially? Then, to that degree at least, those whose minds are free to reason and trained to think (and who actually do so) are more fully human. Whatsoever minds are captive or blinded, be it by nature; accident; cruelty; drugs; or by hypocritical evangelists and mendacious propagandists, those must experience a lesser, more limited existence. Less thoughtful, less informed, less rationally motivated people, whatever their status in the order of

homo sapiens, may still find a basic equality: they, too, have a right to life (and the right to risk it for a better one – or in protecting rights of others), and they should not be abused, purposefully, to the point of annihilation by those above them.

Is that too little? Do they not have a right to housing and health, welfare and wealth? They certainly have the right (some would say even a duty) to take what action is available to them, given their particular life-situation, in the attempt to improve that situation. They have the right to change locations, friends, partners, careers, their ways and their views, and the right to try (through reason, expression, demonstration, and even pity) to influence the ways and views of others – keeping in mind that rights are not exclusive of obligations; that others have the right to disagree with any arguments and to ignore all pleas; and that even the best of ideas must ripen, some for many human lifetimes, before they are widely palatable.

It is true that some of the actions just described will be dangerous in certain situations. The rights mentioned are not widely guaranteed, or even recognized. Agreed, one should not have to die for trying to leave town. Nor should blood have to be shed to change governments. But until they *are* changed, courage in regard to reform will often be confused with treason, and will likely be rewarded with investigations, shame, blacklisting, prison, even political martyrdom.

As with persons and nations and races, not all religions are the same. They, too, must be malleable; subject to nature and the power of reason, for the unchanging shall perish in an ever-changing world. In every life, great and small, there come times for modification of memes. In the life of your Earth, the time has arrived for cooperation and coordination in planet maintenance. The necessary attitude will not be easy to instill. Expect hard resistance, and for quite a long while.

Many of your fellows will ignore or reject our message, as thus far delivered, because they do not find it pleasing or compatible with their present, unexamined assumptions. Eventually, however, those who cannot seem to think logically about the kinship and the preservation of humanity and its natural environment, due to some defect either in their beliefs or in their brains, will be nullified as pests in the global garden.

Notice: we did not say ‘annihilated.’ Nor is that our meaning. We do not advocate genocide or fratricide, infanticide, patricide, or even suicide. But look around you. Are all of these not occurring more frequently? And why is this so?

The answer is simple: more people. The more people; the more occurrences – more famine, more pestilence, more war, more death – more of practically everything except food and space and non-replenishable resources. So, more and more fighting, more and more killing – until struggling and dying manage to counterbalance the uncontrolled growth of the human ‘culture.’

Pardon our digression. We were not speaking of nullifying people, but only stale concepts: putting exhausted, fruitless, outmoded, restrictive ideas to rest. For, blows the wind toward good or ill, to sail anywhere at all anchors must be aweigh – or, if irretrievably fouled, they must be cut away. If not, in heavy weather they will be torn away.

Look through your history for examples of the nullification of old and feeble concepts, and the cultures that clung to them. However beautiful they might have been, just that pitiful must seem their loss. Nonetheless, too rigid to bend in the rising winds of change, they collapse. If not conquered or destroyed by outsiders, they finally erode into the dust from which they arose. Once blessed with birth and youth and health, they flowed briskly along on the current of time, only to be cursed in the end, struggling against the tide of obsolescence, weakening, aging, finally drowning in the swirling, unrelenting dynamism of the material universe.

Develop or decay, sink or swim: the way of the cosmos. The wise must take control over the selfish in your world or you will all visit the bottom with your ship of fools. So, Ancients, open your cobwebbed minds. Think and see with your souls!

There are, as always, and thick among you now, religions preaching fear of the unknown and hatred of the stranger; faiths that promise salvation, but which may well deliver damnation according to the actions they invoke or disparage among their flocks. Distrust mystic tales told only to control you. They limit your potential to think and to see for yourself, denying you the fullest expression of humanhood; setting your place closer to the foot than to the head of life's banquet table.

Despite our advancement in time and perspective, we cannot tell you exactly how to go about these necessary modifications of your culture. Even if we knew of a way—a magic formula or incantation or a ready-made peace treaty that would be acceptable to every nation and group; one by which all organizations, each finding it in its own best interest, would forever abide in perfect balance—still, we could not reveal it to you. To do so would be to sin unpardonably against our muse, History, and against the many cultures that shall arise, thrive, and decline after your own demise—thus, sinning even against ourselves, and altering posterity by criminally tampering with the past.

The temptation is strong, however, to do such tampering. In a way, this very book might be seen as a violation of our rule. That is only true, however, in as much as any book of history commits that sin, unavoidably, by simply interpreting or reinterpreting the past: trying to picture it, study it, understand it by compiling a most uncharacteristic composite of historical elements. Thus it is ultimately, distorted by the very choices made as to inclusion or exclusion of available facts and the manner of their presentation, the method of examining them, and even their order of importance. Thus is the past always changed by the future. But we shall not direct your actions. How could we? We will merely present a story in which you may find value; situations from a future that will, perhaps, help you recognize yourselves as integral parts of humankind—past, present, and yet to be.

Some may see it as a call to duty. Very well—the greater the army, the more likely is victory. Nonetheless, salvation is uncertain. We can only sound the alarm. The battle is yours alone. We pray that you will act responsibly.

Even while leaving you to solve your own problems, we feel no compunction whatever in reminding you of your prodigious obligation: to maintain the species as best you can in your own era and to preserve your world for the next. Humanity, intelligence, life itself, just as it extends through space, stretches also across time. As the past is necessary to your present, preparing and shaping it, so is the 'present' necessary (logically enough it would seem, though widely under-appreciated) to your future—and ours. With you, then, and with your offspring, rests the responsibility for its brightness.

Now you are stuck in the great, stinking quagmire of your own excrement. If you cannot pull yourselves out, the 'Gross Contamination' will thwart your proliferation soon enough, drastically reducing your excessive number—maybe to zero. And there remains the possibility that a thermonuclear conflagration will simply vaporize all waste and valuables alike. If you are among the lucky, you will not survive to face the dire consequences of either of those alternatives. Most—perhaps your own children—will not be so fortunate as to die quickly.

You ought to know that we of your distant future consider it unlikely that you will find a timely solution. A law of historicism holds that wisdom and understanding tend to evolve more slowly than science and technology. So, now and again, power will exceed reason, just as in an explosion when expansive force exceeds containment. We do not expect you to disprove that long established principle.

Still, you are bound by human instinct in attempting to avoid doomsday—or postpone it. Do not be disheartened by our seeming pessimism, or by what you now perceive as insurmountable obstacles to the continuance of our species and the health of your planet. Views change with progress along the steep and tortuous (and endless) pathway toward survival. After all, change is the one rule that cannot be broken: a law of nature deriving from the First Fact: infinite imperfection.

As historical relativists, we have argued that even the past is altered as we reach the higher ground. If 'real' events (that is to say, 'facts' of history) cannot be changed, certainly our use of them and our understanding and notions of their causes and effects are constantly subject to rearrangement and 'revision.'

What we see, then, when we look back, and when we look at ourselves, depends on the elevation we have attained as a civilization on the mountainside of time. The height of personal awareness of the individual observer or reader-of-records affects his perceived reality, as does the cloudiness or clarity of the overall cultural atmosphere, the often thick and sometimes noxious vapors of which can severely limit visibility regardless of the reader's historical location or intellectual altitude.

Foresight is always imperfect. We shall do our best to paint colorful pictures of your future as we view it from so very far beyond, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Even if we were completely successful in surmounting the transmission difficulties, the study of history (as we have discussed above) is not an exact science.

We cannot really see our past much more clearly than you can see ahead. In fact, no one can see the whole of even his present time without distortion. While documentation can never be complete, our uncertainty is hardly due to lack of records. We have more information than we could possibly examine concerning our particular branch of the great Gaeian family tree, and yet the view grows increasingly murky as we search back toward our roots so deeply implanted in the ancient Earth.

How to interpret the information is the problem. There is disagreement among the membership of our psyconglomerate over the meaning and importance and the proper understanding of cause-and-effect patterns found among the various bits of data. There is the further problem of selecting, from the overwhelming number of these bits and pieces of history, a sensible mixture to serve the special purposes of this unique presentation.

In this endeavor we are guided exclusively by our own values. We can only offer what we, Eanpahtians, mostly agree is intrinsically important, and what we think (or, more accurately, what we 'guess') will be of interest and of use to you. We shall focus on some of the problems likely to be faced by those of your future; on the joys to be shared; the dangers and enemies that might be encountered; and, most important, on how your descendants feel, and think, and comprehend their distant worlds and their various and unusual predicaments.

Our method is called 'envisionment.' We gather and combine our mental energies, here, at Eanpahta, and send the ideas flowing into the consciousness of our transcriber, your contemporary. We convey to his mind exceedingly deep impressions of the time-space coordinates to be depicted, complete with feelings, intuitive concepts, and structured philosophies. Somers, in turn, describes within the limitations of your own, quaint language what he then 'sees' and 'feels,' as best he can understand it, and attempts to translate all we give him to 'know.' His recounting of our interpretations of these life-episodes, surrounded and interspersed with scientific and technological descriptions; transcripts of future documents; psycho-sociological observations; and philosophical discourse, is our best hope of communicating with your world.

We have attempted to help him in his task, but there is little we can do beyond encouraging, cajoling—sometimes, we admit, torturing him (with remarkable restraint). For that, we ask his and your forgiveness. But we have had little choice in the matter. The work is much more difficult for him than we had anticipated. Yet it is the only way we could conceivably transmit any information at all to your world.

While we regret causing him periodic discomfort, there do seem to occur, from time to time (despite general denial of this in our era), situations wherein great ends—let us say, 'crucial ends'—justify extraordinary means. Consider, also, his reward: expansion of consciousness and improvement in mental and organizational skills—thus, advancement (albeit ever so slight) in status as a human being.

Professional historians and scholars of your coordinates will surely scoff at such 'history' as bad form. It is, indeed, an attempt at popularization, but only in

the finest meaning of that much abused term. It is intended to inform the many, even to motivate rather than to delude or pacify. Its effect surely would be minimized if written too specifically for the intellectual. Its distribution would be intensely focused and thereby restricted, shrinking its chance of being forwarded to the future. Understand: this is an experiment in historiology. We want it to be widely read and discussed—a strong influence in our choice of a layman as medium.

Consider, finally: What scientist or professor would risk a well-established reputation by association with such a publication? He would surely be laughed out of academia—at least, out of his job. Besides, the general public is seldom appreciative of his meticulous construction, logical progression, marshalling of complex arguments and carefully sifted evidence. Even less likely are they to be moved by the oft-resulting dryness and dullness of scholarly tomes. We thought our purposes might be thwarted rather than advanced by a professional thinker (though certainly the improvement in speed, in perseverance, in organization, and in scientific and conceptual accuracy would have been a welcome improvement over the sluggishness of this relatively ill-equipped scribe).

Furthermore, when presented with the above-described ‘visions,’ instead of taking notes as a foundation for a book, the established and trained academic might turn himself in at his institution’s psychiatric facility for treatment. Or, should he hesitate in that, he would risk being committed thereto by colleagues, friends, even family (justifiably, perhaps, based merely on this introduction).

So, if the most brilliant were rejected, as they could not or would not present such a work for publication, they also might not, now or ever, be bold enough to recommend it, finding much of the wild theorizing; speculative philosophizing; and general mental ruminating, which Somers and we have come to so enjoy, academically objectionable. They may resist being drawn out of their perceived ‘reality’; thus driven to dismiss the likelihood of the situations, actions, and events we have described here as too fantastic. Still, secretly, between bouts of serious research, disciplined study, and ponderous pontificating, they, too, might enjoy reading our story as much as anyone—as much as we hope you will.

Now, explanations and excuses having been duly advanced and elaborated, with the much appreciated assistance of our beleaguered amanuensis (who despite our psychic cudgeling and stringent criticism has become a dear friend) we are pleased to present for your amusement and deliberation these unique and precious fragments of a future beyond Earth.

Telepathically transmitted, 2011 AA

Αντιθυαριαν Πσψκονγλομερατε Εανπαητα
(*Antiquarian Psyconglomerate at Eanpahta*)

Scribe's riposte:

Wherefore I nil have neither thank ne blame
Of al this werk, but pray yow mekely,
Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
For as myn auctor [my author] seyde, so saye I.
Eek though I speke of love unfeelingly,
No wonder is, for it no -thing of newe is;
A blind man can nat juggen [judge] wel in hewis [hues].¹

Chaucer

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Proem to the Second Book, v.3

¹ TROILUS AND CRISEYDE, Edited by W.W.Skeat; Sequence by Thomas Tyrwhitt; GREAT BOOKS OF THE WESTERN WORLD, vol.22, *CHAUCER*; Wm.Benton, Pub.; ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, Inc. [explanatory text in brackets added by 'Scribe']