Notes: Autobiographical work James Hilton

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James Hilton in the "Lost Horizon" in making the acquaintance of the Lama discovers among the ancient Lama's the extraordinary visit and understanding view of their past lives. They are unlockers.

"One of the first steps towards the clarifying of the mind is to obtain a panorama of one's own past and that, like any other view, is more accurate in perspective. When you have been among us long enough you will find your old life slipping gradually into focus as through a telescope when the lens is adjusted. Everything will stand out still and clear, duly proportioned and with its correct significance. Your new acquaintance, for instance, discerns that the really big moment of his entire life occurred when he was a young man visiting a house in which there lived an old parson and his three daughters." (1)

"One white-haired and benevolent-looking Lama, for instance, asked Conway, after a little conversation, if he were interested in the Brontës. Conway said he was, to some extent, and the other replied: "You see, when I was a curate in the West Riding during the 'forties, I once visited Hawarth and stayed at the Parsonage. Since coming here I've made a study of the whole Bronte problem — indeed, I'm writing a book on the subject. Perhaps you might care to go over it with me sometime?" (2)

Probably here is the secret of effective, autobiographical work. You have got to get down to the motives which

1) Hilton, James. "The Lost Horizon" Page 204, 205
2) Iden. Page 204
really were moving you, motives which really controlled you. You have to dig out what really are the big moments. That is, I should say these moments were the ones which you recall and which today you would gladly go back and do like the old Lama about the Brontes—make a study, write a book on the subject.